Uluslararası öğrencilerin üniversiteye uyum süreçleri bağlamında okulu bırakma eğilimlerinin incelenmesi

Examining international students' school dropout tendencies in the context of university adaptation processes

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ÖZ

Yükseköğretimde uluslararasılaşma, birçok alanda etkileşim ve gelişim fırsatları sağlaması nedeniyle dünya genelinde önem kazanmıştır. Bu nedenle üniversiteler de uluslararası öğrenciler tarafından tercih edilmek için çaba göstermekte ve bu yönde kendilerini geliştirmeye çalışmaktadır. Bu durum da yabancı öğrencilerin uyum süreçlerini gündeme getirmiştir. Uluslararası öğrencilerin bulundukları ülkeye, şehre ve üniversiteye uyum sürecinde yaşadıkları sorunlar okul terkinde rol oynayabileceği için üzerinde önemle durulması gereken bir konudur. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinin eğitim fakültesinde öğrenim görmekte olan uluslararası öğrencilerin uyum süreçleri ve uyum ile öğrencilerin okul terki eğilimi arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenolojik desen ile yürütülen bu araştırmaya sekiz uluslararası öğrenci katılmıştır. Katılımcılar, Afganistan, Suriye, Türkmenistan, Pakistan ve Uganda'dan gelmiş olan öğrencilerdir. Veriler, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilmiş olan yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme formu aracılığıyla toplanmış ve betimsel analiz ile çözümlenmiştir. Çalışmada, katılımcı öğrencilerin yurtdışında öğrenim görme nedenleri, katılımcıların akademik, sosyal, kültürel, iletişimsel, psiko-sosyal, ekonomik, örgütsel uyum süreçleri ve üniversite eğitimini bırakmaya ilişkin düşünceleri incelenmiştir. Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre, uluslararası öğrencilerin çoğu üniversiteyi bırakmayı düşündüğünü belirtmiştir. Katılımcılara okuldan ayrılmayı düşündüren nedenler değerlendirildiğinde, akademik uyum ve kültürel uyum süreçlerinde yaşanan sorunların en önemli boyutlar olduğu görülmüştür. Buradan hareketle uluslararası öğrencilerin yükseköğretimde okulu terk etmelerini önlemek için akademik ve kültürel uyumlarına önem verilmesi gerektiği söylenebilir.

*Anahtar Sözcükler***:** okul terki, uyum süreçleri, uluslararası öğrenci, yükseköğretim, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

Internationalization in higher education has gained importance across the world because it provides opportunities for interaction and development in many fields. While universities endeavor to be preferred by international students, the adaptation processes of students have become a current issue. The problems experienced by international students in the process of adapting is an issue that should be emphasized because it can play a role in school dropout. In this study, adaptation processes of international students in the education faculty of a public university in Turkey and the relationship between adaptation and the tendency of students to dropout were examined. Eight international students participated to this qualitative research, which was carried out with a phenomenological design. Participants were from Afghanistan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Uganda. The data were collected with a semi-structured interview form developed by researchers and analyzed with descriptive analysis. In the study, the reasons for studying abroad and the adaptation processes of the participant students in seven themes, and their opinions on dropping out of university education were examined. According to the results of research, most of the participants of this study stated that they have thought dropping out the university. When the reasons that make them think dropping out were evaluated, academic adaptation and cultural harmony was the most important dimensions. Based on this, it can be said that it is necessary to give importance to the academic and cultural adaptation of international students in order to prevent their school dropout in higher education.

*Keywords***:** dropout, adaptation process, international student, higher education, Turkey

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GİRİŞ

Adaptation is defined as the cognitive, attitudinal, behavioral and psychological changes that an individual experiences in a new or foreign culture (Dorsett, 2017). Hannigan (1990) evaluated adaptation as a psycho-social concept related to the process of achieving harmony between the individual and the environment. According to the author, adaptation results in satisfaction, feeling better in the new environment, improved performance, and increased interaction with people in the host country. Nonetheless, when there is a mismatch between the needs of the individual and the opportunities provided by the social and academic environment, its reflection on the students will be negative and it will cause a decrease in the motivation, interest and performance of the students (Eccles et al., 1996). Studies have shown that international students with adaptation problems encounter common problems such as difficulties in academic studies, academic failure, social isolation and the need for support (Gebhard, 2012; Ramsay et al., 2007). Furthermore, it was reported that international students also deal with exceptional problems such as, difficulties with language, adaptation to social norms, food, homesickness, stress and loss of existing social networks (Church, 1982; Mesidor & Sly, 2016; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Huisman et al. (2021) expressed that it can be difficult to adapt to a new culture, traditions etc. and the method of adaptation is unique to each student. Lewthwaite (1996) stated that the main obstacle to the adaptation of international students is the lack of intercultural communication competence. According to Andrade (2006), the most common adaptation problems that international students experience are language inadequacy, lack of cultural knowledge, difficulties in friendship with local students and teamwork. Naeeni et al. (2015) found that the most important adaptation problems for international students in Malaysia are language insufficiency, relations with local people, climatic conditions, extremely spicy food culture, new academic environment and economic conditions.

Student mobility in Turkey started in 1981 with the Foreign Students Examination, which was organized for those who want to continue higher education (Kıroğlu et al., 2010). Following this, policies supporting internationalization were put into practice through formations such as joint education and training programs, signing protocols, making regulations, and providing scholarship opportunities (YÖK, 2019a). There have been significant developments in the number of foreign students in Turkey over the years. Internationalization in higher education has remained an important issue in the Strategic Plan of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), and it is aimed to increase the number of foreign students to 200,000 by 2023 (YÖK, 2019b). It is considered that one of the factors that will affect the fulfilment of this objective is the experiences of foreign students studying in our country. For instance, in a study conducted by Zavalsız and Gündağ (2017) with international students in Turkey, it was figured out that more than half of the students had difficulties in adapting to the university.

The factors relevant to the adaption process of the foreign students can be categorized as academic, social (Özçetin, 2013), cultural (Usta et al., 2017), communicative, organizational (Bülbül & Acar-Güvendir, 2014), psychosocial and economic (Kıroğlu et al., 2010; Yardımcıoğlu et al., 2017). Academic adaptation was considered as a combination of four categories by Baker and Siryk (1984). These categories are students' attitudes towards academic aims and tasks; how much effort they put into academic studies; the efficacy of their academic efforts; and their satisfaction of the academic environment. Correspondingly, Van Rooji et al., (2018) conceptualized academic adaptation as the skill to have prosperous relations with the new academic environment and to overcome with its academic requirements. Social adaptation is discussed as joining to social activities, interpersonal relationships, social relocations, and students' level of interiorization of the social environment (Baker & Siryk, 1984). According to Gudykunst and Hammer (1988) "cultural adaptation refers to the degree to which people fit into a new cultural environment" (cited by Wilczevski & Alon, 2022). Cultural adaptation is also characterized as a combination of cultural empathy, open-mindedness, emotional stability, social flexibility and host-language proficiency (An & Chiang, 2015). Additional to this, international students' thoughts about cultural differences are discussed in this scope as well (Yardımcıoğlu et

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al., 2017). Communicative adaptation can be defined as the ability, willingness and host language competence to communicate with local people, lecturers and peers (Wilczevski & Alon, 2022; Zimmermann, 2009). Organizational adaptation can be described as students' commitment to the university and students' willingness and ability to interact with university staff (Baker & Siryk, 1984; Tinto, 1975). Psychosocial adjustment is interpreted as a concept consisting of self-esteem, ethnic identity, interethnic attitudes, perceived ethnic discrimination, perceived in group status, and interethnic relationship (Smith-Castro, 2003). Economic adaptation includes information on how much international students can spend on food, housing, school fees, educational materials, transportation and social activities etc., and where they get the necessary resources for these expenses (Gautam et al., 2016; Savaşan et al., 2015; Yardımcıoğlu et al., 2017).

When students have problems with the adaptation processes mentioned, they cannot complete the education level they are in, in other words, they are faced with the school dropout. According to Woosley and Miller (2009), university adaptation is a determining factor in students' decision to continue their education or dropout. Battin-Pearson et al., (2000) grouped the factors causing school dropout under five headings called general *deviance theory, deviant affiliation theory, academic mediation theory, poor family socialization theory*, and *structural strains theory*. According to the general deviance theory, when a student encounters attitudes and behaviors that disturb her/him at school, the student's commitment to school decreases and this situation causes school dropout. Also, one of these factors, *structural strains theory*, focused on the effect of demographic factors on early leaving. According to this theory, demographic and structural characteristics such as gender, having a low socioeconomic status, being a member of an ethnic group, being a minority are effective in school dropout. However, all these demographic characteristics cause school dropouts through the decrease in academic achievement. In this context, the adaptation process, which constitutes an important part of the lives of students in a different country, and school dropout, which can be one of the negative possible consequences of this process, appears as remarkable issues.

When the studies about the adaptation process of international students in Turkey were examined, it was determined that some of them focused on the problems of foreign students (Onat-Kocabıyık et al., 2019; Paksoy et al., 2012) and some of them included both problems and solutions (Şahin & Demirtaş, 2014; Yardımcıoğlu et al., 2017), but no study was found that related the adaptation process with the school dropout. In this context, in the current study, the relationship of adaptation problems to the school dropouts is tried to be determined by clarifying which adaptation issues would promote students' dropout behavior. Accordingly, it is aimed to make inferences about whether school dropout can be reduced with the effective management of the adaptation process of international students.

METHOD

Research Design

In this study phenomenological method is used to explore the problems of international students in the adaptation process and the tendency to drop out. The phenomenological method is used for understanding and evaluating how individuals interpret the events around them in a certain time and in a certain context, based on their experiences (Merriam, 2018), discourses, feelings and thoughts (Silverman, 2014). In phenomenological research the problem handled is investigated within its own nature (Tekindal & Uğuz Arsu, 2020). The phenomenon discussed in this study is the process of adaptation to school as a determinant of school dropout.

Participants

Participants of the study were selected from 24 international students at the education faculty of a state university in Turkey by using maximum variation sampling (MVS), one of the purposive sampling methods. MVS aims to reflect the diversity of people who may be an actor of the issue

(phenomena) at the maximum level (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, 136). 24 students were invited to the research and 8 students participated voluntarily. From Table 1. the demographic information of study group can be seen.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Study Group

Nationality	Afghanistan	Turkmenistan	Syria	Pakistan	Uganda
n	2	1	3	1	1
Department	Primary School Mathematics Teaching (PSMT)	Social Sciences Teaching	Classroom Teaching	Computer Education And Instructional Technology Teaching (CEIT)	Psychological Guidance &Counselling (PGC)
n	1	1	3	2	1
Time of living in Turkey	3 years and less	4 years and more			
n	3	5			
Continued level of education at university	1. grade	2. grade	3. grade	4. grade	
n	1	-	4	3	
GPA	2.73-2.50	2.49-2.00	1.99-0.85		
n	2	4	2		

According to Table 1, students from Syria, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Uganda participated in the research, while most of the participants are Syrian. Students continue their education in classroom teaching, CEIT, PGC, social sciences teaching and PSMT programs and most of them are in the department of classroom teaching. Majority of the participants have been living in Turkey for 4 years or more and are in the 3rd grade of the programs. The highest GPA is 2.73 and the lowest is 0.85. The GPA of the majority of the participants is in the range of 2.49-2.00.

Instrument

A semi-structured interview form was developed to collect the data. Semi-structured interview forms are one of the most useful tools to collect information to test a certain hypothesis in the mind of the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 455). Firstly, the relevant literature was reviewed (Bülbül, 2012; Bülbül & Acar Güvendir, 2014; Sungur et al., 2016; Usta, Sayın, & Güzelipek, 2017; Yarımoğlu, Beşel, & Savaşan, 2017). Correspondingly, 11 questions were drafted, and follow-up questions were added as regarded necessary. Follow-up questions were necessary because the participants' mother languages were different.

Accordingly, an expert evaluation form presented to five educational administration experts to be assessed in terms of content validity, and the interview form was rearranged according to their feedback. In this context, modifications were made in four questions and three follow-up questions to increase the clarity of and consistency between the questions. In order to test the accuracy and intelligibility of the final form, a preliminary application was performed with two international students, and as a result it was decided that the interview form with 11 questions was clear and understandable.

Data Collection Process

The data of the study were collected between December 2019 and February 2020, following the approval of the ethics committee. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the office of one

of the researchers. The participants were informed that the attendance in the study is on a voluntary basis and that their personal information would be kept confidential. In order to record the audio, the interview was started by asking the permission of the participants. During the interview process, the questions in the form were asked to the participants, and follow-up questions were used when necessary. Throughout the interview, attention was paid to the phases such as encouraging the participants, asking questions without skipping, and getting answers to all questions as mentioned by Uysal (2020, p. 143). While the shortest interview was 22 minutes, the longest interview lasted 63 minutes.

Data Analysis

The research data were evaluated with descriptive analysis. Primarily, the literature on the adaptation of foreign students to university was reviewed (Bülbül, 2012; Bülbül & Acar Güvendir, 2014; Sungur et al., 2016; Usta et al., 2017; Yardımcıoğlu, Beşel & Savaşan, 2017) and in line with the conceptual framework of the research, it was determined under which main themes the data would be organized. These main themes were determined as follows: the reasons why foreign students prefer to study abroad, the reasons for choosing to study at the relevant university in Turkey, academic, social, cultural, communicative, psycho-social, economic, organizational adaptation process, individual characteristics that make it easier or harder to adapt to university, additional thoughts about adaptation to university and thoughts about dropping out of university education.

After data collection, each participant was given a code name, and the transcript of the collected data was made ready for analysis. The entire text was coded separately by two researchers with open coding. Each researcher was also asked to identify sub-themes based on their coding. Merriam (2018, p. 170) defines open coding as a coding in which any piece of data that may be useful can be determined by the researcher. Afterwards, the researchers determined the sub-themes by considering the patterns between the codes. In identifying the sub-themes, the researchers selected the concepts that best reflected their data groups (Merriam, 2018, p.176). After individual coding, two researchers consulted to compare the coding process and the sub-themes, and the codes and sub-themes were rearranged. It was observed that there was a consistency among the researchers in coding.

In the study, "inter-coder reliability" was taken into account for credibility (Arastaman et al., 2018, p. 58). It was seen that there was a compatible coding among the researchers. One of the strategies that can be used for external validity (transferability) is detailed description and direct quotations are frequently used in this context (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 304). In this study, it was tried to increase the transferability by directly quoting the participants' expressions. For the reliability (consistency) of the study, the processes of the research were reflected in the report in detail, as expressed by Arastaman et al. (2018, p. 61). For reliability individual assumptions were not reflected to study.

Research Ethics

All the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed in the entire process from the planning, implementation, data collection to the analysis of the data. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Actions" have been carried out.

During the writing process of this study, scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; no falsification was made on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

Research ethics committee approval information

Name of the committee that made the ethical evaluation: Ethics Committee of Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University

Date of ethical review decision: 02.12.2019

Ethics assessment document issue number: 86837521-050.99-E.36968

FINDINGS

In this section, the analyzes of the data collected in order to evaluate the school adaptation processes of the students at the higher education level and to interpret the relationship between the problems in their adaptation process and their tendency to dropout are presented in tables and supported by quotations. The findings regarding the answers to the question "Why did you choose to study abroad?" are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Theme 1- Reasons Why Foreign Students Prefer to Study Abroad

Sub-Theme 1: Not being able to continue higher education in their own country	f	Sub-Theme 2: Awareness of the Turkish higher education system	f	Sub-Theme 3: Features of Turkey	f	Sub-Theme 4: Other	f
-Because of war	3	-Quality of education	1	-Affordability of higher education	1	-Curiosity and enthusiasm to travel	1
-Inability to enter university in their own country	1	-Promotional activities of Turkish universities in their own country	1	-Positive relations between countries	1	-Motivation to know different cultures	1
						-A childhood dream	1
				-Influence of media	1		
Total	4		2		3		3

According to Table 2, the participants mostly expressed their reasons for choosing to study abroad as "because of the war" (f:3) for the sub-theme "Not being able to continue higher education in their own country". An example of the comments expressed by the participants under the code "because of the war" is as follows:

> P6: We actually came to Turkey because of the war...

In the sub-theme of "awareness of the Turkish higher education system", one participant drew attention to "quality of education" and "promotional activities of Turkish universities in their own country". Again, in the sub-theme of "features of Turkey", one participant emphasized the issues of "affordability of higher education" and "positive relations between countries". In the other sub-theme, one participant stated the reasons for studying abroad as "a sense of curiosity and enthusiasm to travel, a motivation to know different cultures, a childhood dream and being influenced by the media".

The findings regarding the answers to the question "Why did you prefer to study in Turkey and at the relevant university?" are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Theme 2- The Reasons Why Foreign Students Prefer to Study in Turkey and at the Relevant University

Sub-Theme 1: Acquaintance effect	f	Sub-Theme 2: Features of Turkey and the city	f	Sub-Theme 3: Other	f
-Influence of the family	2	-Affordability	3	-Getting accepted to the relevant university	2
-Influence of relatives	1	-To be accepted as an immigrant	2	-To know Turkish language	1
-Influence of friends	1	-Quality of education	1		
		-To know the city previously	1		
Total	4		7		3

According to Table 3, the participants mostly expressed the reasons for preferring to study in Turkey and the relevant university as "the influence of the family" (f:2) for the "acquaintance effect" sub-theme. An example of the comments expressed by the participants within the scope of "the influence of the family" code is as follows:

> P6: My family lives in Konya and I thought about choosing nearby and I won this university.

Regarding the "Features of Turkey and the city "sub-theme, the participants mostly emphasized "Affordability" (f:3)

> P3: The university is cheap and the education level is high.

In the "other" sub-theme, more emphasis was placed on "getting accepted to the relevant university" (f:2).

> P5: *We have Turkey scholarships for foreigners. I applied to this. I wanted PGC. PGC came out in my first choice. I landed in Niğde. I won here. I was very happy that I won...*

Findings related with adaptation process

The findings regarding the answers to the question of "How do you evaluate the academic adaptation process in your university life?" can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4
Theme 3-Academic Adaptation Process of Foreign Students

Sub-Theme 1: Academic adaptation level	f	Sub-Theme 2: Evaluation of language skills	f	Sub-Theme 3: Problems encountered at university	f	Sub-Theme 4: Methods to overcome problems	f
-Low	3	-Needs improvement in at least one area (such as reading, writing)	5	-Language problem	6	-Working harder/Increasing the time allocated to study	4
-Moderate	3			-Problems with classmates	3		
-High	2	-Finds enough	2	-Not being able to find what is expected in social life	1	-Other	4
		-Needs improvement in terms of academic language	2	-Reluctance to classes	1	-Getting support from friends	3
				-Psychological problems	1	-Getting support from instructors	3
				-Problems with instructors	1	-Ignoring the problem	2
				-Problems with the department	1	-Benefitting from different sources	2
				-Problems due to cultural differences	1		
Total	8		9		15		18

According to Table 4, "academic adaptation level" sub-theme, two of the participants stated the academic adaptation level as high, three as medium, and three as low. The participants mostly stated that they needed improvement in at least one area (such as reading, writing) in the sub-theme of "evaluation of language skills" (f:5). The examples expressed by the participants in this context are as follows:

> P6: So while I'm reading, I can't understand everything, so I'm having a bit of a hard time.

The participants mostly emphasized the "language problem" (f:6) in the sub-theme of "problems encountered at university". In this context, an example of what was expressed by the participants is as follows:

> P7: ... I entered the class on the first day, the teacher is talking but I can't keep up with writing, other Turkish students write but I can't, what happened next, I was sitting with one girl, she was writing, I was writing while looking at her, I was a little late; for example, I talked about mathematics.

In the same sub-theme, the participants drew attention to the issue of "problems with classmates" (f:3), as an example can be seen below.

> P4: Yes, most of all, with students, we are not tolerated that much and they talk behind us a lot and no one helps.

In the sub-theme "methods to overcome problems", the participants mostly emphasized that they "worked harder" (f:3). Examples of what was expressed by the participants in this context are as follows:

> P1: To work more. Making personal effort.

The findings regarding the answers to the question "How would you evaluate your social adaptation process in your university life?" can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5
Theme 4- Social Adaptation Process of Foreign Students

Sub-Theme 1: Social adaptation level	f	Sub-Theme 2: Attitudes of people in the city	f	Sub-Theme 3: Methods of solving problems with local people	f	Sub-Theme 4: Attitudes of housemates or dormmates	f	Sub-Theme 5: Whether there is a conflict due to collisions	f	Sub-Theme 6: Groups of close circle	f
-High -Moderate	4 4	-Positive -Both positive and negative -Negative	3 3 2	-Avoidance of the problem situation and place -Talk out -Getting support from the social environment -Contacting the authorities	5 3 2 1	-Positive -Both positive and negative -Negative	6 1 1	-No -Yes -Sometimes	4 3 1	-Turkish -Foreigners -Both	3 3 2
Total	8		8		11		8		8		8

According to Table 5, half of the participants stated their social cohesion level as high and the other half as medium. Three people evaluated the attitude of the people in the city they live in as positive, 3 people as both positive and negative, and 2 people as negative. The explanation of one of the participants who made a positive evaluation is as follows:

> P7: ... There is a bond between Turkey and Pakistan. Accordingly they behave very well, you are one of us etc., we are brothers, they behave very positively....

The explanation of one of the participants who made both positive and negative evaluations is as follows:

> P1: There is good and there is bad. Some see foreigners negatively. It is seen that we are getting their rights, we are getting their scholarships. I don't get a scholarship, I pay money to study. I love the people in the city.

In the sub-theme "Methods of solving problems experienced with local people", the majority of the participants stated that they solved their problems with "avoidance of the situation and place that is the problem" (f:5). An example of what was expressed by the participants in this context is as follows:

> P4: For example, I encountered a problem in the dormitory, I went to the administration and then it was not solved, nobody listens or helps because I am a foreigner, then I left the dormitory and went to the private apartment.

Most of the participants drew attention to positive attitudes (f:6) in the sub-theme of "attitudes of housemates or dormmates". In this context, a participant's opinion is as follows:

> P6: I am glad that I stayed in the dormitory with friends I know.

Half of the participants stated that they "did not experience conflict due to differences of opinion". In this context, a participant's opinion is as follows:

> P6: Yes, for example, the class I started in first grade made me angry, why did you come. Someone said that you can stay in Syria, so why did you come, I said, I came for a tour, so I got angry. Then he said, why did you give me such an answer, don't sit next to me etc. I'm happy here, you can change it if you want... But this affected me a lot because it was the first time I came and I didn't have any friends.

Three of the participants stated that there were Turkish people in their close circle, three of them foreigners, and two of them stated that there were both.

Table 6 shows the findings regarding the answers to the question "How would you evaluate your process of cultural adaptation to this city (other cities, if any) and Turkey, where you came to continue your university life?"

Table 6
Theme 5- Cultural Adaptation Process of Foreign Students

Sub-Theme 1 : Cultural adaptation level	f	Sub-Theme 2: Being close to Turkish culture	f	Sub-Theme 3: Information resources on Turkish culture	f	Sub-Theme 4: Problems due to cultural differences	f	Sub-Theme 5: The level of adaptation to the cultural structure of the city	f
-High -Moderate -Low	6 1 1	-No -Yes	5 3	-Internet -Social environment -Media -Family -Own experiences -Other	3 3 2 2 2 1	-Differences in food culture -No problem occurred -Differences in clothing culture	4 4 2	-High -Moderate -Low	6 1 1
Total	8		8		13		10		8

According to Table 6, the majority of the participants stated that their level of cultural adaptation was high (f:6). The students who determined the level of cultural adaptation as high drew attention to the following issues:

> P6: I didn't see much difference culturally. So there is a difference from our culture, but not much, it looks like.

More than half of the students stated that they do not have familiarity with Turkish culture (f:5). When asked about the sources of information about Turkish culture, three people mentioned the internet and the social environment as sources of information. The explanations of the participants on these issues are as follows:

> P4: From the internet. I also have relatives in Hatay.

In the sub-theme of "problems due to cultural differences", the participants mostly talked about the differences in food culture (f: 4). The explanations of the participants on this subject are as follows:

> P7: I didn't have much trouble but I was having some trouble with the food...

Six of the students stated "level of adaptation to the cultural structure of the city" as high, one as medium and one as low. An example of the participants reporting a high level is as follows:

> P4: It is very good because it is very close to our culture.

The findings regarding the answers to the question "How would you evaluate your communicative adaptation process in your university life?" can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7
Theme 6-The communicative adaptation process of foreign students

Sub-Theme 1: Communicative adaptation level	f	Sub-Theme 2: Ability to express their thoughts in public	f	Sub-Theme 3: Difficulty communicating with university stakeholders	f
-High	5	-Yes	4	-Sometimes	4
-Moderate	2	-Sometimes	2	-No	4
-Low	1	-No	2		
Total	8		8		8

According to Table 6, five of the students stated the level of communicative adaptation as high, two as medium, and one as low. Half of the participants stated that they could express their thoughts in public. An example of participant statements on this subject is as follows:

> P3: I didn't say before. I was a little hesitant. If there is any problem this year, we can comfortably say. We don't hesitate.

Half of the participants stated that they sometimes had adaptation problems in communicating with stakeholders at the university, while the other half stated that they did not experience any difficulties.

The findings regarding the answers to the question "How would you evaluate your psycho-social adaptation process in your university life?" can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8
Theme 7- Psycho-Social Adaptation Process of Foreign Students

Sub-Theme -1 Psycho-social adaptation level	f	Sub-Theme -2 Respect for personality	f	Sub-Theme -3 Encountering with social pressure	f	Sub-Theme -4 Feeling of loneliness	f	Sub-Theme -5 Being exposed to discrimination	f	Sub-Theme -6 Feelings of psycho-social adjustments	f
-High	4	-Sometimes	5	-No	7	-Yes	4	-No	4	-Depression	2
-Moderate	2	-No	3	-Sometimes	1	-Sometimes	3	-Yes	3	-Sadness	1
-Low	2					-No	1	-Sometimes	1	-Despair	1
										-Anxiety	1
										-Stress	1
Total	8		8		8		8		8		6

According to Table 8, four of the participants had a high level of psycho-social adaptation to university, two are medium, and two stated that it was at a low level. When the answers given by the participants under the sub-theme "respect for personality" are examined, it is seen that they mostly answered "sometimes" (f:5). Similarly, participants mostly answered "no" (f:7) under the sub-theme of "encountering with social pressure". Only one of the participants stated that he sometimes faced social pressure. An example of the answers given by the participants who stated that they did not face social pressure is as follows:

> P8: No. Just in the bazaar, naughty children (adolescents) come to me and shout. They are mocking. But sometimes I laugh too.

Regarding the "feeling of loneliness" sub-theme, it is seen that four of the participants experience the feeling of loneliness, three of them sometimes experience it, and one does not feel lonely. An example of the answers of the participants who felt lonely is as follows:

> P5: Yeah. Very even. I feel very lonely because I have moved to a new dorm.

Regarding the "being exposed to discrimination" sub-theme, it is seen that half of the participants (f:4) state that they have not been discriminated against. While three of the participants stated that they were discriminated against, one stated that they were sometimes discriminated against. An example of the statements of the participants who think that they have not been discriminated against is as follows:

> P7: I have never felt discriminated against as a country. And I had no trouble. I'm not experiencing so I haven't had any problems. I told you about my previous problems, other than that I haven't encountered.

An example of the statements of the participants who think they have been discriminated against is as follows:

> P6: Yeah. I mean, because I hear this word a lot, you're Syrian or something, you're a foreigner, that's why I think sometimes...

Regarding the "feelings of psycho-social adjustments" sub-theme, it is seen that the participants mostly feel depression (f:2), followed by sadness (f:1), despair (f:1), stress (f:1) and anxiety (f:1). The expression of one of the students who felt depression is as follows:

> P6: It makes me feel very bad, I want to go to my country as soon as possible, so if I can, I would go now, but I can't do it.

The expression of one of the students experiencing stress is as follows:

> P7: Stress, of course, happens. It is normal to be stressed before the exam. It's a stress. I have another stress. Collecting notes. Yes, this is stress too. I go through this stress before the exam. For example, this is my current stress. How will I take notes, how will I collect them. From whom will I get it? Will he/she give? What can she/he ask for in return? For example, sometimes I say things to take notes. I mean, if you give it to me, I'll buy you a meal or something. So there are situations where I have to say things like this. Some even say that I helped you. Now buy me a meal. There are those who say it even as a joke. These stresses happen. Other than that, I don't experience any stress.

The findings regarding the answers to the question "How would you evaluate your economic adaptation process in your university life?" can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9

Theme 8- Economic Adaptation Process of Foreign Students

Sub-Theme -1	f	Sub-Theme -2	f	Sub-Theme -3	f	Sub-Theme -4	f	Sub-Theme -5	f	Sub-Theme -6	f
Economic adaptation level		Sources of income		Adequacy of income		Expenses		Expenditures beyond basic needs		Satisfaction with the conditions of the accommodation	
-Moderate	6	-Family	7	-Sufficient	5	-Food	7	-Yes	8	-Yes	7
-High	1	-Job	5	-Moderate	2	-Accommodation	6			-No	1
-Low	1	-Scholarship	1	-Insufficient	1	-Social activities	4				
		-Relatives	1			-Education expenses	3				
						-Clothing	3				
						-Transportation	1				
Total	8		14		8		24		8		8

As can be seen from Table 9, while most of the participants described their economic adaptation levels as medium (f:6), one participant described it as high and the other as low. One of the

statements of the participants who stated that they have a moderate level of economic adaptation is as follows:

> P5: Sometimes it's good... We're in a bad situation right now.

Regarding the "sources of income" sub-theme, it is seen that most of the participants' income sources are their families (f:7), followed by job (f:5), scholarship (f:1) and relatives (f:1).

One of the statements of students whose income source is family is as follows:

> P7: My family sends me money monthly.

One of the statements of the participants who earn income by working is as follows:

> P7: ...and I'm working now. I'm doing uhm... I work with international artists. When they have concerts, I also work for a commission. I'm going to the concert with them. I am a tour manager. I'm with them during the concert. The money I earn from there is also a source of income for me, but it is not a constant source. Because a concert is not something that happens every day...

Regarding the "adequacy level of income" sub-theme, it is seen that most of the participants find their income sufficient (f:5), two find it at a medium level and one at a low level.

When the "Expenses" sub-theme is examined, it is seen that the participants mostly emphasized the food expenditure (f:7), followed by accommodation (f:6), social activities (f:4), education (f:3), clothing (f:3) and transportation (f:1). An example of the participants emphasizing food expenditure is as follows:

> P7: ... We usually cook at home, but I also dine out a lot. Because when I'm hungry, I can't think of anything. I want to eat directly. I'll give it no matter how expensive it is...

Within the scope of the sub-theme "expenditures beyond basic needs", all the participants expressed their opinions about their ability to spend. One of the expressions for this is as follows:

> P1: I play football and billiards.

P2: Playing games, travelling, seminars. Regarding the "satisfaction with the conditions of the accommodation" sub-theme, it is understood that most of the participants (f:7) are satisfied with the conditions of the place where they stay. An exemplary statement regarding this finding is as follows:

> P1: I am very satisfied, it is comfortable.

> P6: So let's say 70%, it is well organized, so there is no problem, only the food... I am glad that the friends I know stay in the dormitory.

The findings regarding the answers to the question "How would you evaluate your organizational (university) adaptation process in your university life?" can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10

Theme 9- Organizational Adaptation Process of Foreign Students

Sub-Theme -1: Level of organizational (university) adaptation	f	Sub-Theme -2: Adaption to the university's goals	f	Sub-Theme -3: Quality of relations with student affairs and foreign students unit	f	Sub-Theme -4: Interaction with student societies	f	Sub-Theme -5: Level of interaction with university administration	f
-High	6	-High	4	-Good	6	-Yes	4	-Good	4
-Moderate	2	-Moderate	1	-Moderate	2	-None	4	-No interaction	4
		-Abstained	3						
Total	8		8		8		8		8

As can be seen from Table 10, six of the participants stated that their level of adaptation was high, and two of them stated that they were at a medium level, within the scope of the "level of organizational adaptation" sub-theme. Regarding the "adaption to the university's goals" sub-theme, it is seen that four participants describe the level of adopting the goals as high and one participant as medium. Three of the participants abstained from this issue. An example of the statements of the participants who think that their adaptation to university's aims at a high level is as follows:

> P7: We had a course as Technology Design. There, the teacher mentioned a mission-vision. Yes, it is similar to the purposes of our university, we do not differ much. And for that purpose, I think this realized my vision.

Within the scope of the sub-theme "Quality of relations with the student affairs and foreign students' unit", it is seen that most of the students (f:6) have good relations with these units. In this context, an example of participant statement is as follows:

> P1: In the lessons, the student affairs call. They give information like your exam will be here etc. They help us without asking.

> P5: ... So, their behavior towards foreign students is very good. They don't cause any trouble.

Regarding the "interaction with student societies" sub-theme, it is seen that four of the participants have good interaction and four of them have no interaction at all. An example is as follows:

> P1: I participated in mountaineering. I loved. Events like this keep me hooked.

> P3: Cycling club, youth center… I applied for an English course but no answer.

An example of what the students who do not interact with the student societies said are as follows:

> P4: ... if I have more friends, maybe I can go to such activities, but maybe, because I have only one close friend, and he doesn't go, and I don't go either. But normally I like things like that so.

Regarding the "interaction with the university administration" sub-theme, it is seen that four of the participants have good relations and four of them do not interact. An example of the statements of the participants who stated that they have good relations with the university administration is as follows:

> P7: Yes, the rector is on good terms with us. Head of department teacher, I'm on good terms with him. I've never had a problem at all. Even though I am a foreign student, he is very interested in me… We interact. We follow on social media. I am not having any problems. They never misbehaved.

> P8: We have good communication with our department head, I love him very much.

The statement of one of the students who do not interact with the university administration is as follows:

> P3: I haven't had much to do.

> P5: In truth, I had no relationship with the rector.

The findings regarding the answers to the question "What are your individual characteristics that make your adaptation to university life easier or harder?" can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11
Theme 10- The Individual Characteristics of Foreign Students That Make It Easier and More Difficult to Adapt to University

Sub-Theme -1: Complicating characteristics	f	Sub-Theme -2: Facilitating characteristics	f
-Aggressiveness	1	-Sociability	2
-Inability to socialize	1	-Be patient	2
-Ignorance	1	-Anger management	1
		-Being disciplined	1
		-Knowing a foreign language	1
		-Sparingness	1
		-Decisiveness	1
		-Silent	1
Total	3		10

According to Table 11, within the scope of the sub-theme "facilitating characteristics", it is seen that the participants mostly mentioned about being sociable (f:2) and being patient (f:2).

An example statement of the sociability code is as follows:

> P1: I am friendly, social...

An example of the code to patience is as follows:

> P3: If you're patient, you'll get over it...

The findings regarding the answers to the question "Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your university adaptation process?" can be seen in Table12.

Table 12
Theme 11- Additional Thoughts of Foreign Students about University Adaptation

Additional Thoughts	f
-Language problems.	2
-Problems from the education system.	2
-The advantage of the city.	1
-Opportunity to self-development.	1
-Thinking about postgraduate at the same university.	1
-The importance of choosing the department consciously.	1
-Longing for the life lived in own country.	1
Total	9

According to Table 12, it is seen that the participants mostly mentioned the language-related problems (f:2) and the problems stemming from the education system (f:2). The examples of participant statements regarding these sub-themes are as follows respectively:

> P1: In terms of language, it was very difficult to understand because I do not know Turkish.

> P3: Foreigners receive now separate education on Turkish language and Turkish history. We couldn't learn this way. This was a problem for us, as it didn't happen to us. Exams are both classic and test. They did it in 10 minutes, I couldn't.

Findings related with school dropout tendency

Table 13 shows the findings regarding the answers to the question "Have you ever thought of leaving your education unfinished? If your answer is yes, indicate the adaptation problems that make you think this, in order of importance?"

Table 13

Theme 12- Foreign Students' Thoughts on Dropping out of University Education

Sub-Theme -1 Considering dropping out of university	f	Sub-Theme -2 Reasons	f	Sub-Theme -3 Order of importance	f
-Yes	5	-Difficulty in lessons	2	-Academic> social >cultural > communicative > economic > organizational	1
-No	3	-Social difficulties	2	-Academic> social >cultural > psycho-social > economic> organizational	1
		-Communication problems	2	-Communicative>academic>social> psycho-social >organizational>cultural>economic	1
		-Personal reasons	1	-Communicative >social	1
Total	8		7		4

When the sub-theme of "considering dropping out of university" is examined in Table 12, it is seen that five of the participants stated that they had this thought in mind. Some statements regarding this situation are as follows:

> P5: I thought about it sometimes and then I gave up. No, I will continue. What will I do if I let go?

> P6: Yes, when I first came, I thought of dropping out …

> P8: Yes, in first grade. When I call my family and tell that be the entrepreneur, let them know that you will not be bad or harm them. "Tell them you love them," they said. During that time, I made more friends. It got better and I continued.

Regarding the sub-theme of "reasons for the thought of dropping out of university", the participants mostly mentioned difficulties in lessons (f:2), communication problems (f:2) and difficulties encountered in social life (f:2). Examples of these reasons are as follows respectively:

> P1: Because there was one course, 12 credits. General math, I had a lot of difficulty, I couldn't pass it. My scores were so low, I considered quitting. But I have done this much, I said, I can do it again…

> P6: …because I was teased a lot in the 1st grade and I felt lonely because of it. Then I decided to go over these difficulties. So it is. …I couldn't make a very meaningful sentence in Turkish, they were making fun of me when I first came, I mean, I was going to dropout of school in this first year, then I said that I won't let it affect me.

> P8: Alienation-not being able to communicate-not being understood-not understanding, but all of these are resolved in time… If I had gone to a more racist country, I would have been worse. But Turkey is beautiful. I loved it a lot. My friends were fine…

Regarding the sub-theme of "order of importance of the adaptation problems of the students who have thought of leaving the university", academic adaptation problems are in the first place for two participants and communicative adaptation problems for two participants. It is understood that social cohesion problems are in the second place in terms of three participants. The other four participants did not express an opinion on this question.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The participants mentioned reasons such as the high quality and affordability of higher education in Turkey, the sense of curiosity, the desire to travel, the desire to know different cultures, and the influence of the media for why foreign students prefer to study abroad. Similarly, Cubillo et al. (2006) stated that, along with many different reasons, the cost of living in the country and the academic reputation of the country, as well as the desire to live in a place

with a different culture, are effective in the choice of international students to study abroad. In this study, it was seen that among the reasons why the participants preferred to study abroad, they mostly stated the war in their country. Similarly, in the study of Tamtekin-Aydın (2021), international students cited low living standards, security concerns, inadequate economic conditions and political conflicts in their own country among the reasons for studying abroad. In this context, it can be said that wars in countries are a factor that triggers student mobility. Students whose families fled the war continue their education in the countries where they took refugee. This might be related to the determining role of higher education in terms of job opportunities and life standards.

It is seen that the participants mentioned reasons why they prefer to study in Turkey and at the relevant university in terms of features such as influence of acquaintance, affordability, quality of education, being accepted as an immigrant and knowing the city previously, and reasons such as being accepted to the relevant university and knowing Turkish language. The most emphasized points by the participants are that affordability of the city, the place of residence of the family and being accepted as an immigrant. Based on this it can be said: students tend to attend to the education in the places that makes the adaptation process easier. The reason why foreign students want to continue their education with their families could be that they consider, because of being in a foreign country, they can meet their social support needs by staying with the family and they want to avoid accommodation costs. Similarly, preferring an economically advantageous city can be interpreted as they want to reduce their financial concerns. In the study of Tamtekin-Aydın (2021), international students emphasized among their reasons about preferring Turkey as its closeness to their own country and Europe and the inclusive, positive and cooperative policies of the Turkish Government towards Middle Eastern and refugee students.

It was determined that most of the participants evaluated their academic adaptation levels as low and medium. In addition, they stated that they needed to improve in at least one area in terms of foreign language, that the subjects they had the most difficulty with in academic adjustment were language problems and problems with their classmates, and that they worked harder to overcome their academic adaptation problems and received support from their friends and instructors. In parallel with this study, Hussain and Shen (2019) revealed that academic difficulties, sociocultural difficulties and language inadequacy negatively affect academic adaptation. There are also similar studies in the literature that emphasize the findings that foreign students experience academic incompatibility and language problems (Ercan, 2012; Onat-Kocabıyık et al., 2019; Yavcan & El-Gali, 2017). According to Huisman et al. (2021), language ability can also significantly shape an international student's academic experience, for example, students may not be able to fully participate in academic life in the classroom and other formal/informal environments due to limited language skills.

It was seen that the social adaptation levels of the students were high, and the attitudes of the local people in the city, their home or dormitory were positive; they exhibited the behavior of avoiding the situation, when they had a problem with the local people; and their inner circles were generally composed of Turkish or foreign students. The high level of social adaptation of the participants may be an indication that the foreign students get efficiency from the orientation trainings or guidance and counselling services provided in the university. Because universities play a key role in facilitating the adaptation of foreign students to the new social environment they are in (Aydın-Kartal et al., 2018). Foreign students who participated in the study of Kıroğlu et al. (2010) stated that they preferred to make friends with people from their own countries more, then they made friends with Turkish students, that they did not feel excluded, that the Turkish people did not act prejudiced against them, and that they did not experience adaptation problems due to their similarity of the traditions and customs in Turkey and their own culture.

The information sources of the students about Turkish culture are mainly from internet and social environment, and they adapt to Turkey and the city they live in at a high level, but they do

not identify their own culture close to Turkish culture. It has been observed that they have problems especially due to differences in food culture. Radmard (2017) examined the distribution of international students studying in Turkey according to the sources of information about their universities, and found that 34% of the participants obtained information from internet sources, followed by friend recommendations with a rate of 27%. Similar to the current research findings, Kıroğlu et al. (2010) concluded in their study that the views of foreign students about the food culture in Turkey differ, and that most of the students had difficulty in getting used to the food when they first came to Turkey, but they got used to it over time. In addition, they determined that almost all of the students did not experience any cultural problems because the traditions in their own countries and in Turkey were very similar. In the study of Zavalsız and Gündağ (2017), in which they examined the socio-cultural adaptation of foreign students, very few of the students stated that they had problems with clothing and food, but they could easily adapt later on. They said that there was no big difference between them and that they liked the university they studied at and the city they lived in. Similarly, Özçetin (2013) concluded that foreign students are satisfied with the city they live in, and do not have many problems in adapting to Turkish society and culture.

It was observed that participants' communicative adaptation levels were high, they could easily express their thoughts in public, but they had problems in communicating with the stakeholders at the university. Considering that the participants of the study were mostly in the third and fourth grades, not experiencing communication problems may be a result of their ability to speak and understand Turkish better over time. In various studies (Ibragimova & Tarasova, 2018; Sawir, 2005; Yeh & Inose, 2003), it has been stated that students who come to a different country for the first time often have communication problems due to language problems. In the study of Malekisanimaleki and Altay (2017), the majority of participants stated that they can reach the instructors whenever they want and share their problems, and that the instructors generally help them. In their study, Savaşan et al. (2015) revealed that more than half of the foreign students do not have difficulty in communicating with Turkish people due to language problems, they do not have problems in communicating with their Turkish friends, and they can communicate easily with their lecturers. In the studies conducted by Aslan and Babirzade (2020) with foreign students, the students stated that they had no difficulty in communicating with people, did not feel excluded, and that they could get along very well with everyone.

Different from the current findings, in the study of Çöllü and Öztürk (2009), students stated that the most important problem they experience in Turkey is communication problem, and they mostly share their problems with friends from their own country. In the study of Sungur et al. (2016), 43% of the students stated that people hesitate to communicate with them because they are foreign nationals. Başaran-Alagöz and Geçkil (2017) emphasized in their studies that the majority of foreign students do not face discrimination from university staff, professors and friends, and found that the biggest problem students experience is speaking and understanding Turkish.

Half of the students participating in the study stated that their psycho-social adaptation level, which is another dimension, is high. Consistent with this finding, the majority of the students stated that they did not encounter social pressures, and half of them did not face discrimination. More than half of the participants stated that sometimes their personality was not respected, and half of them stated that they felt lonely. In the study conducted by Yardımcıoğlu et al. (2017), students also emphasized the term "loneliness". Based on these results, it can be thought that experiencing no social pressure and discrimination strengthens psycho-social adaptation. On the other hand, as stated by the participants, psycho-social incompatibility causes the participants to feel depressed, sadness, hopelessness, stress and anxiety. Similarly, in the study conducted by Ana (2020), foreign students stated that they experienced stress, depression, sadness and disappointment during the social adaptation process.

Most of the participants stated their economic adaptation was moderate. This can be explained with the optional factors. Students stressed on they would like to attend to the education in

countries which they can live with their families with. Similarly, in the study conducted by Yardımcıoğlu et al. (2017), students stated that they partially experienced economic difficulties. As a result of the research conducted by Usta et al. (2017), it was determined that the majority of foreign students do not have sufficient income for education. In the present study, which can be interpreted as a reflection of this situation, some of the students pointed to more than one source of income, and the majority of them stated their families and their own work as sources of income. When the distribution of expenses of the students is examined, it is determined that they spend the most on food, followed by shelter, social activities, education expenses, clothing and transportation. In addition, all of the students stated that they could spend more than their basic needs.

More than half of the students stated their organizational adaptation is high. Most of the participants pointed out that the quality of their relations with the student affairs and foreign students' unit is good. Half of the students stated that they had good interactions with student societies and university administration, while the other half stated that they had no interaction. In this context, as stated in the study of Usta et al. (2017), it is recommended to become a member of student societies or to establish and keep active student societies for foreign students. This reminds they would have positive attitudes if they can interact with.

While some of the foreign students stated that their aggressiveness, inability to socialize and their silence made it difficult for them to adapt to the university, they also pointed out that features such as "sociability, patience, anger control, discipline, knowing a foreign language, sparing of, determination and silence" facilitate their adaptation to the university. When the students were asked if they had anything to add about their adaptation to university, some of the things they drew attention to are "problems stemming from the education system, the opportunity to improve themselves".

The adaptation of the students in different fields was evaluated in the context of their school attendance in this research. More than half of the participants stated that they thought of dropping out of university before. Academic adaptation has been one of the primary issues in the adaptation problems of students who have thought of dropping out the university. For this reason, it is considered important to provide adequate support to international students in all adaptation processes, mainly in academic adaptation processes, in order to eliminate school dropout opinions. Similarly, in the study conducted by Bülbül (2012), academic adaptation problems came forward in the causes of school dropout in higher education. In the study conducted by Bulut et al. (2020), the language problem was stated at the top of the adaptation problems of international students, and in the study by Ana (2020), the fact that many students emphasized the language barrier in terms of academic difficulties brings to mind that the two issues should be considered together. Further, one of the issues that were mentioned as more priority by two students was cultural harmony. In the study of Pirliyev (2010), who studied the adaptation process of students from Central Asia, it was determined that the difficulty of cultural adaptation negatively affected the general adaptation. For this reason, it can be stated that cultural incompatibilities may have negatively affected students' adaptation in other fields and may have made them think of dropping out of school. Although the participants of this study stated the economic reasons in the last place in the context of school dropout, economic reasons were included in the priority reasons for dropout in Bülbül's (2012) study.

In this research, the dropout tendencies of international students were evaluated in the context of various dimensions of school adaptation process. Most of the participants of this study stated that they have thought dropping out the university. When the reasons that make them think dropping out are evaluated, academic adaptation and cultural harmony was the most important dimensions. Based on this, it can be said that it is necessary to give importance to the academic and cultural adaptation of international students in order to prevent their school dropout in higher education. Moreover, universities hold a significant role in promoting the adaptation of the international students. In the universities, there are departments like International Students Unit, that may improve their activities related with the academic and cultural adaptation of these

students. Another step would be visiting the possible countries to introduce the universities for foreign students. In such events, graduated students can also be invited to answer the questions of these students' interest. In order to support academic adaptation, translation services can be provided to the students. Moreover, universities may also present the exams in English for its international students. For cultural adaptations, some social events can be organized like dinner, folk dances etc. In campuses, there might also be places that serve food from different cultures and also places in which several international activities can be done. Another thing can be done is establishing international units for each faculty. These units can supply support to their students when they need.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the opinions of foreign students studying at the education faculty of the relevant university between December 2019 and February 2020 and the questions in the semi-structured interview form developed by researchers that consists of 11 questions. These international students are from five different countries. Another important thing was that not all the students declared they thought about dropping out the school. Further studies can be conducted with a quantitative design and with students from different faculties on the relationship between adaptation and school dropout processes. Moreover, qualitative studies can be conducted with students from different countries or the students who has leaved the school.

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Statement of Contribution Rate

The first author was involved in data collection, preparation of the data collection tool, data analysis, writing-review, and editing of the paper. Other authors were not involved in the collection of data, but made equal effort in all other processes.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Statement of Publication Ethics

All the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed in the entire process from the planning, implementation, data collection to the analysis of the data. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Actions" have been carried out.

During the writing process of this study, scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; no falsification was made on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZ

Giriş

Uyum, bireyin yeni veya yabancı bir kültürde yaşadığı bilişsel, tutumsal, davranışsal ve psikolojik değişiklikler olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Dorsett, 2017). Hannigan (1990) ise uyumu, birey ve çevre arasındaki uyumu sağlama süreciyle ilgili psiko-sosyal bir kavram olarak değerlendirmiştir. Yine yazara göre uyum, memnuniyet, yeni ortamda daha iyi hissetme, performans artışı ve ev sahibi ülkedeki insanlarla artan etkileşim ile sonuçlanır. Bununla birlikte bireyin ihtiyaçları ile sosyal ve akademik ortamın sağladığı imkanlar arasında uyumsuzluk olduğunda bu durumun öğrencilere yansıması olumsuz olacak ve öğrencilerin motivasyon, ilgi ve performanslarında düşüşe neden olacaktır (Eccles vd., 1996). Araştırmalar, uyum sorunu yaşayan uluslararası öğrencilerin akademik çalışmalarda zorluklar, akademik başarısızlık, sosyal izolasyon ve desteğe ihtiyaç duyma gibi ortak sorunlarla karşılaştıklarını göstermiştir (Gebhard, 2012; Ramsay vd., 2007).

Woosley ve Miller'a (2009) göre üniversiteye uyum, öğrencilerin eğitimlerine devam etme veya okulu bırakma kararlarında belirleyici bir faktördür. Bu bağlamda farklı bir ülkedeki öğrencilerin eğitim yaşamlarının önemli bir bölümünü oluşturan uyum süreci ve bu sürecin olası olumsuz sonuçlarından biri olabilecek okul terki dikkat çekici bir konu olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Türkiye'de uluslararası öğrencilerin uyum sürecini ele alan çalışmalar incelendiğinde bir kısmının yabancı öğrencilerin sorunlarına odaklandığı (Onat-Kocabıyık vd., 2019; Paksoy vd., 2012), bazılarının hem sorunlara hem de çözümlere yer verdiği (Şahin ve Demirtaş, 2014; Yardımcı vd., 2017) belirlenmiş olmakla birlikte, uyum sürecini okul terki ile ilişkilendiren herhangi bir çalışmaya rastlanamamıştır. Bu araştırmada, yükseköğretim düzeyindeki öğrencilerin okula uyum süreçlerinin bir değerlendirmesinin yapılması ve uyum sürecindeki aksaklıkların okulu terk etme eğilimi ile ilişkisinin uluslararası öğrencilerin görüşlerine dayalı olarak ortaya konması amaçlanmıştır.

Yöntem

Araştırma, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden olan fenomenolojik desen ile yürütülmüştür. Çalışmaya sekiz uluslararası öğrenci katılım göstermiştir. Katılımcılar, Afganistan, Suriye, Türkmenistan, Pakistan ve Uganda'dan gelmiş olan öğrencilerdir. Öğrencilerle gönüllülük esasına dayalı olarak yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Veriler, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilmiş olan yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme formu kullanılarak toplanmıştır.

Araştırma verileri betimsel analiz ile değerlendirilmiştir. Öncelikle yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin üniversiteye adaptasyonu ile ilgili literatür taranmış ve araştırmanın kavramsal çerçevesi doğrultusunda verilerin hangi ana temalar altında düzenleneceği belirlenmiştir. Bu ana temalar şu şekilde belirlenmiştir: Yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin yurtdışında eğitim almayı tercih etme nedenleri, Türkiye'de ilgili üniversiteyi tercih etme nedenleri, akademik, sosyal, kültürel, iletişimsel, psiko-sosyal, ekonomik, örgütsel uyum süreçleri, üniversiteye uyum sağlamayı kolaylaştıran veya zorlaştıran bireysel özellikler, üniversiteye uyum ile ilgili ek düşünceler ve üniversite eğitimini bırakma ile ilgili düşünceler.

Veriler toplandıktan sonra her katılımcıya bir kod adı verilmiş ve toplanan verilerin transkriptleri analize hazır hale getirilmiştir. Metnin tamamı açık kodlama ile iki araştırmacı tarafından ayrı ayrı kodlanmıştır. Her araştırmacıdan ayrıca kodlamalarına göre alt temaları belirlemeleri istenmiştir. Merriam (2018, s. 170) açık kodlamayı, yararlı olabilecek herhangi bir veri parçasının araştırmacı tarafından belirlenebildiği bir kodlama olarak tanımlamaktadır. Daha sonra araştırmacılar kodlar arasındaki örüntüleri dikkate alarak alt temaları belirlemiştir. Alt temaları belirlerken araştırmacılar kendi veri gruplarını en iyi yansıtan kavramları seçmişlerdir (Merriam, 2018, s.176). Bireysel kodlamadan sonra, kodlama süreci ile alt temaları karşılaştırmak için iki araştırmacıya danışılmış, kodlar ve alt temalar yeniden düzenlenmiştir. Kodlamada araştırmacılar arasında bir tutarlılık olduğu gözlemlenmiştir.

Bulgular

Çalışmada, uluslararası öğrencilerin yurtdışında öğrenim görme nedenleri, akademik, sosyal, kültürel, iletişimsel, psiko-sosyal, ekonomik, örgütsel uyum süreçleri ve üniversite eğitimini bırakmaya ilişkin düşünceleri incelenmiştir. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgularda uluslararası öğrencilerin çoğunun üniversiteyi bırakmayı düşündüğünü belirttiği görülmüştür. Katılımcılara okuldan ayrılmayı düşündüren nedenler arasında öne çıkan ilk nedenin akademik uyum ile ilgili sorunlar olduğu ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Akademik uyum sorunlarına ait alt temalar incelendiğinde ise katılımcıların en çok dil konusunda zorlandıklarını belirtikleri görülmüştür. Öğrencilere üniversiteyi bırakmayı düşündüren nedenlerden ikinci sırada öne çıkan nedenin ise kültürel uyum süreçlerinde yaşanan sorunların olduğu saptanmıştır. Bu ana tema altında ise öğrenciler en çok yemek kültüründeki farklılıklar nedeniyle uyumda zorluk çektiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin sosyal, iletişimsel, psiko-sosyal, ekonomik ve örgütsel uyum süreçlerinde nispeten daha az sorun yaşadıkları görülmüştür.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Literatürde yer alan çalışmalarda da uluslararası öğrencilerin başta akademik uyum süreçleri olmak üzere, sosyal, kültürel, iletişimsel, psiko-sosyal, ekonomik, örgütsel uyum süreçlerinde birtakım sorunlar yaşadıklarını ortaya koyan benzer çalışmalar mevcuttur (Çöllü & Öztürk, 2009; Ercan, 2012; Hussain & Shen, 2019; Kıroğlu vd., 2010; Onat-Kocabıyık vd., 2019; Yardımcıoğlu vd., 2017; Yavcan & El-Gali, 2017). Söz konusu uyum sorunları nedeniyle ve özellikle de akademik uyumda yaşanan sorunlardan ötürü uluslararası öğrencilerin zaman zaman üniversiteyi bırakma düşüncesine sahip olmaları bu çalışmada öne çıkan sonuçlardan biridir. Benzer şekilde daha önce yapılan çalışmalarda da uluslararası öğrencilerin uyum süreçlerinde yaşadıkları sorunlar nedeniyle üniversiteyi bırakmayı düşündükleri ortaya koyulmuştur (Ana, 2020; Bülbül, 2012; Pirliyev, 2010). Bu çalışmayla paralel olarak literatürde yer alan çalışmalarda da üniversiteyi bırakma düşüncesinin altında yatan nedenler arasında en çok öne çıkan sorunun akademik uyum sürecinde yaşanan zorluklar olduğu görülmüştür (Ana, 2020; Bulut vd. 2020; Bülbül, 2012). Bu nedenle okul terki düşüncelerini ortadan kaldırmak için uluslararası öğrencilere ağırlıklı olarak akademik uyum süreçlerinde olmak üzere tüm uyum süreçlerinde yeterli desteğin verilmesi önemli görülmektedir.