

T.C.
UNIVERSITY OF GAZIANTEP
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**SUB SAHARAN AFRICAN STUDENTS IN
GAZIANTEP: ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL
CHALLENGES**

MASTER'S THESIS

HALID ZEWDU FELEKE

GAZIANTEP
AUGUST, 2020

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ABSTRACT

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In this globalized world, the internationalization of higher educational institutions became a trend. Countries around the world —mostly developed countries— recruiting a high number of international students in their highly qualified educational institutions. The trend attracts many talented students who want to pursue their education in the international arena. Scholarships, student exchange programs, internships, and fellowships have been playing a role in the internationalization of universities around the world. To be a part of this phenomenon and acquire quality education, students started striving for better opportunities. International students' movement in recent times has increased with the emergence of technologies facilitating the accessibility of opportunities offered by higher educational institutions. The study focuses particularly on the Sub Saharan African students in Gaziantep — one of the biggest cities in Turkey. Even though the recruitment of international students in Turkey started decades ago to recruit students, primarily from Turkic Republics, the country became one of the top international students' destinations in recent times. As a part of international students, Sub Saharan African students share a certain number in this educational movement. This study stress on assessing and understanding the living condition of Sub Saharan African students in Gaziantep. The study explains the push and pull factors for Sub Saharan African students' migration to Turkey, the cultural adaptation process, and the challenges they face as African students in a different environment. For this research, semi structured deep interview data collection method was applied. Twenty-one students were selected purposely and took part in the interview. The study found out cultural and economic challenges, which the students encounter in Gaziantep during their stay. Language, cultural adaptation, shortage of finance, stereotypes and negative attitudes were discovered as the most important challenges for the Sub-Saharan African students.

Keywords: Acculturation, Cross-cultural adaptation, Ethnocentrism, Stereotype, Discrimination

ÖZET

GAZİANTEP'TE SUB SAHARAN AFRİKA ÖĞRENCİLERİ: EKONOMİK VE KÜLTÜREL ZORLUKLAR

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Bu küreselleşmiş dünyada, yüksek öğrenim kurumlarının uluslararasılaşması bir eğilim haline geldi. Dünyanın dört bir yanındaki ülkeler- en gelişmiş ülkeler- nitelikli eğitim kurumlarına çok sayıda uluslararası öğrenci almaya başladı. Bu eğilim, eğitimlerini uluslararası alanda sürdürmek isteyen birçok yetenekli öğrenciyi cezbetmektedir. Dünya çapında üniversitelerin uluslararasılaşmasında öğrenci değişim programları, stajlar ve burslar rol oynamaktadır. Öğrenciler bu fenomenin bir parçası olmak ve kaliteli eğitim almak için hem de daha iyi fırsatlar yakalamak için çabalamaya başladı. Son yıllarda uluslararası öğrencilerin hareketi, yüksek öğrenim kurumlarının sunduğu fırsatların erişilebilirliğini kolaylaştıran teknolojilerin ortaya çıkmasıyla artmıştır. Bu çalışma, özellikle Türkiye'nin en büyük şehirlerinden biri olan Gaziantep'teki Sahra altı Afrikalı öğrencilere odaklanmaktadır. Türkiye'de uluslararası öğrencilerin kabulü onlarca yıl önce başlamış olsa da- başta Türk Cumhuriyetlerinden olmak üzere- ülke son zamanlarda en iyi uluslararası öğrencilerin destinasyonlarından biri haline geldi. Uluslararası öğrencilerin bir parçası olarak, Sahra Altı Afrikalı öğrenciler bu eğitim hareketinde önemli bir sayıyı oluşturuyor. Bu çalışma, Sahra altı Afrikalı öğrencilerin Gaziantep'teki yaşam durumlarının değerlendirilmesi ve anlaşılmasına vurgu yapmaktadır. Çalışma Sahra Altı Afrikalı öğrencilerin Türkiye'ye göç için itme ve çekme faktörlerini, kültürel uyum sürecini ve farklı bir ortamda Afrikalı öğrenciler olarak karşılaştıkları zorlukları açıklamaktadır. Bu araştırma için derinlemesine görüşme yöntemi uygulanmıştır. 21 öğrenci ile derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Çalışma, öğrencilerin Gaziantep'te kaldıkları süre boyunca karşılaştıkları kültürel ve ekonomik zorlukları ortaya çıkarmıştır. Sahra altı Afrikalı öğrenciler için en önemli zorluklar olarak dil, kültürel uyum, finansman eksikliği, klişeler ve olumsuz tutumlar olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültürlenme, Kültürlerarası Uyum, Etnosentrizm, Stereotip, Ayrımcılık

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of international students is the attainment of advanced education in foreign countries, which frequently gives higher quality education contrasted with what can be obtained in their country. Getting one's education in an alternate setting enables numerous international students to gain a more profound valuation for the culture, values, and norms of their host nations and to fill in as cultural ambassadors between their home and host nations. These students are regularly the best and brightest in their country and are frequently observed as specialists in their fields with solid employment prospects back home upon completion of their studies.

The striking increasing rate of international students in Turkey shows how the country is becoming preferred for higher education in recent years. According to Snoubar and Celik, (2013), most of the students, who are attending in Turkish educational institutions, come from Turkic republics¹, Africa, the Middle East, and Balkan states. They also added that when the homeland of students which are choosing Turkey identified, “the highest number of students come from Azerbaijan, Republic of Northern Turkish Cyprus, Turkmenistan, Bulgaria, Iran, Germany, Greece, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, Albania and Syria” (Snoubar and Celik, 2013:760).

According to the Association of Researchers on Africa (AFAM²) (2018), the international students' mobility in Turkey increases by doubling from 2013 to 2018. The number of international students, which was 48,169 in the 2013-2014 academic year, exceeded 125,000 students in the 2017/2018 academic year. In 2013/2014, the

¹ According to Encyclopedia, Turkic peoples, any of various peoples whose members speak languages belonging to the Turkic subfamily of the Altaic family of languages.” Countries including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, and Turkmenistan fall in this group of people. Britannica Turkic Peoples. Date of Access September 20, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Turkic-peoples>

² Association of Researcher on Africa. Sahraalti-Afrikali-Ogrenci-Haraketililigi. Date of Access October 15, 2018. <https://www.afam.org.tr/turkiyede-sahraalti-afrikali-ogrenci-haraketililigi-2014-2018/>

number of male and female international students was 33,420 and 14,749, respectively, and this number was increased to 81,706 male and 43,324 female students in the 2017/2018 academic year. The increase in the number of students coming from Sub-Saharan African countries also shows a significant change. The number of sub-Saharan students, which were 4,532 in the 2013/2014 academic year, reached 11,378 in the 2017/2018 academic year. According to AFAM (2018) report, the Turkish government is planning to increase the number of international students in Turkey to 350 thousand students in 2023 and making Turkey one of the top five destinations of international students in the world.

The number of international students coming to Turkey is increasing each year because of different factors. One of the elements, which leads to an influx of high number of international students in Turkey, is the Turkish government scholarship. This scholarship has been playing a significant role in the internationalization of Turkish higher education institutions. According to Anadolu Agency³ (2018), in 2012, 42,000 students from 131 countries applied for Turkish government scholarships, and the number grew to 56,000 from 165 countries in 2013, 82,000 applicants from 179 countries in 2014, 114,000 applicants from 175 countries in 2015, and 120,000 applicants from 164 countries in 2016. According to the report, the Turkish government scholarship gives educational opportunities to over five thousand students every year all over the world. Apart from this scholarship, the number of students who can pay their school fee increases in alarming numbers from time to time. To facilitate this trend, the government also supports universities in order to bring international students through promoting the higher education institutions' capacity and interest to the students from all around the world (Yilmaz, 2017).

Within the increase of international students in Turkey, the Sub Saharan African students also have a significant place in Turkish higher education institutions. The number of Sub-Saharan African students in Turkish universities is increasing with time. According to AFAM⁴ (2018) report, the number of Sub-Saharan Africa students in Turkey in 2013/2014 was 4532, and this number increased in the 2014/2015 academic year to 6958. In the academic year of 2015 / 2016, the number of students

³ Anadolu Agency. International Students in Turkey. Date of Access November 3, 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/education/over-100-000-international-students-study-in-turkey/1148030/>

⁴ Association of Researcher on Africa. Sahraalti-Afrikali-Ogrenci-Haraketliligi. Date of Access October 15, 2018. <https://www.afam.org.tr/turkiyede-sahraalti-afrikali-ogrenci-haraketliligi-2014-2018/>

was 8738. This number also increased in the following academic years of 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 to 9882 and 11378, respectively. According to the report in 2018, the number of Sub-Saharan African students who enrolled in Turkish educational institutions based on countries was leading by Somalia with 2310 students and followed by Nigeria with 1296 students, Sudan with 533 students, Cameroon with 529 students and Ethiopia with 506 students respectively.

With the increase of international students in Turkey, the most critical situations, which could be raised many times, are the living conditions of international students. Parallel to education, international students have day-to-day interaction with Turkish citizens. At the same time, the economic, social, cultural factors including language barriers can affect the living conditions of students in many ways. Based on Snoubar and Celik (2013), despite the fact that international students focus on the different choice procedure, to the cultural similarity and nations' closeness, it is obvious for them to have social consistency issues. Driving reasons for consistency issues, which lead to stress, are language barrier, emotional problems, segregation, and many other challenges.

Researchers pointed out that there are many problems and challenges, which are faced by international students around the world. Even though the obstacles are worldwide and common everywhere, some challenges and issues are specifically attributed to some groups of students, especially to African students. Notwithstanding the way that is going to an outside country is cutting edge thinks about incites hopefulness, such guarantee can be compelled by vulnerability and confusion, and students can face when finding their way around another social and scholastic milieu (Hellstén, 2002).

African international students face several new circumstances and encounters as they endeavor to live and think about effectively in a new social and foundation setting. The level of such circumstances needs to manage the distinctions in individual identity, sex roles, and honor or bias experiences (Hayes and Lin, 1994). In most countries, individuals from the host society frequently have a negative view of the home culture of these African students because of the negligible position of their nations in the international financial condition. The miss understanding of the culture and the norms of African countries leads to the prejudice of students in many areas of the higher education institutions towards African students (Lee and Rice, 2007).

Turkey is one of the emerging destinations of African students. The influx of a high number of African students in Turkey for the last many years indicates how Turkey is a preferable destination for the students. Even though the Sub-Saharan African students flow to Turkey have been increasing in recent times, there could be many factors, which affect and challenge the life of those students. From a general perspective, it is not easy being black in a community where most of the population is white and light-skinned. Nowadays, it is common to see people being mistreated because of their skin color, especially in western society.

This research aims to assess and understand the living conditions of Sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep. Gaziantep is one of the biggest cities in Turkey, which is found in the South-Eastern Anatolia. The city is a home to a high number of Syrian refugees and international organizations. The city also has a considerable number of international students from around the world. According to the Turkish Higher Education (YÖK⁵) report, in the 2017/2018 academic year, 3344 international students have been studying in Gaziantep. The number of sub-Saharan African students in the same academic year was 242.

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Moving from one's own country to another country in order to settle for a short or a long time is a tough decision for international students, even though the degree of difficulties differ from person to person. Adjusting situations and settling life in a country where the culture, language, religion, and, most importantly the difference in the color of people are difficult and challenging. The way toward settling in and adjusting to life in another nation and foundation is regularly portrayed as progress whereby one is leaving from the old world and entering into the new; a procedure that begins with completion and completions with a starting. The end of the old circumstance and character happens before the move, which can be the most significant trouble that individuals face in any progress.

Genep (1960) describes the End stage, which he called “separation.” It includes the individual separating themselves from their past networks, families, and companions, and the former self-being deleted in anticipation of the new one.

⁵ Yükseköğretim Kurulu. Date of Access November 13, 2018. <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>

Individuals try to remove their past in order to fit into new situations and adjust their living. The separation stage is the most challenging stage for individuals because it forced them to leave their former networks and social environment in order to adjust to a new environment.

Nonetheless, regardless of their positive social and financial commitments, international students frequently experience challenges in the new environment because of many reasons, such as; language barriers, social, educational, and other cultural components. Parallel to this, when we see the challenges based on the students' background, it is obvious that African students have a tough time handling their situation in a white-dominant society than students from other backgrounds.

According to Evivie (2009), racial discriminations and stereotypes have been difficult for students from African backgrounds, especially when they travel to racially homogenous countries; they may not have encountered racial discrimination until they became ethnic minorities in the host countries. He also added that these situations create challenges for those African students to cope and fit with the educational system and, at the same to handle situations in the new community where they live outside of the educational compounds.

Osikomaiya (2014) pointed out that, acculturative pressure, for example, language issues, discrimination, separation from their old environment, biased actions and fatigue have been found to lead Sub-Saharan African students to work more earnestly, look for help inside their very own networks, and to discover approaches to absorb rapidly into a host countries' social ways.

The encounters of African students may not be extraordinary in what is an exceedingly assorted multicultural condition, as all students must change in accordance with and grow better approaches for living and examining. A few pieces of research investigating the experiences of the African students have added to the range of student change in accordance with their new learning situations (Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso, 2000). Some studies have appeared showing that African students effectively adjust to their new learning environment, in spite of the changing difficulties that the students face in progressing into another condition. (Jones, Castellanos, and Cole 2002).

A subjective report, including twenty-one postgraduate African students, uncovered that African students experience social rejection and unwelcome frames of mind from local students (Hyams-Ssekasi, et al.2014). Disengagement and feeling of

unwelcome were found to affect the capacity of the African students to cooperate with the local student, thus making the integrative procedure substantially more troublesome. The degree of every one of these experiences could differ upon the individual identity, sex role, and the world they are in.

Turkey, one of the diverse countries in the Middle East, is not new to Black Africans in some parts of the country, especially in the region of Izmir because of Afro Turks, which are the Ottoman slaves and warriors brought from Africa (Edman, 2018). In addition to this, the flow of a high number of international students to Turkey for the last two decades proves how the country is becoming familiar to the African students and important for higher education. For a reason of using the opportunity of studying in Turkey, a higher number of Sub Saharan African students have been flowing to the country to be accepted by Turkish educational institutions. With the increasing number of sub-Saharan African students in Turkey, the most important issue related to this flow is the life of the students in a new country. How Sub-Saharan African students handle and cope with the problems, challenges, and opportunities that they experience in Turkey are the most important subjects for this research.

In every city of Turkey, it is easy to find an African student nowadays. As long as the students are living in the societies of the country, it is apparent that they will create relation with the residents and the other local students. Within this connection, African students may have some difficulties related to day-to-day activities in schools and outside of the school compounds. Especially in a city like Gaziantep, where the residents are new to black African, and home to a massive number of Syrian refugees⁶, living and handling difficulties related to culture and economy challenge the Sub Saharan African students.

1.2. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to assess and understand the living conditions of Sub Saharan African Students in Gaziantep. This study aims to reveal

⁶ According to the UNHCR, receiving a high number of refugees increasing burden on one's country economy and social life. Even though the refugees can be a source of work force, the emergence of high number of refugees may influence the life of the local people. Based on this perspective, the high volume of Syrian refugees in Gaziantep can influence the welcoming of the people for other foreigners including African Students (Date of Access May 22, 2020. <https://www.unhcr.org/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html/>).

the conditions, which created complexities and challenges at the same time to see the cultural interaction of the students.

The study will have the following specific objectives;

- To identify the daily challenges and problems of Sub Saharan African students in Gaziantep.
- To understand the effects of the socio-economic and cultural obstacles on the Sub Saharan African students in their educational and social life and to figure out the strategies implemented by students to find solutions for the obstacles.
- To assess the challenges of being a sub-Saharan African student in Gaziantep and their interaction with the local people.
- To identify the opportunities and benefits they are getting as a sub-Saharan African student in Gaziantep.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this research, the researcher has strived to assess and understand the living conditions of Sub-Saharan students in Gaziantep. The results of this research may contribute the future studies in the following ways:

- This study has an importance as it adds to further researches by giving a set to understanding about Sub Saharan African students' living conditions in Gaziantep/Turkey.
- The essentialness of the study is to contribute valuable data to experts, colleges, and students. It will be beneficial in terms of giving some background knowledge and information to other researchers.
- The research will be valuable for prospective international students especially for Sub Saharan Africa students in order to understand the difficulties and the opportunities of being in Turkey/Gaziantep as a student.
- The research will add a significant knowledge on the international students' educational migration movement for the readers.
- This study will give better understanding of the importance of cultural adaptation in order to survive in a new environment.
- This research will feature some basic proposals that may provide with more instruments on the best way to manage the different difficulties among the

various populace of international students to have important educational experiences.

1.4. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organized into four parts.

- The first part extends the background information of the research, problem statement, and the goals of the research, the research questions address, the limitation for the research, and the methodology (the methodology part presents the examination configuration, testing strategies utilized in enlisting members, the information accumulation techniques and how the information was breaking down).
- The second part of this study is a literature review that addresses the experimental investigations and the review of existing information identified with the reason for this present study. In this part, many sources have been explored and assessed in order to get background for the research.
- The third section shows the outcomes produced by the participants' reactions. In this main part of the study, the results from the interviews with the participants have been analyzed.
- Finally, the fourth section entires up with the conclusions and recommendations. This part is all about the finalization of the research by concluding and recommending it.

1.5. METHODOLOGY

This part describes the methods utilized for the examination, including the research design, the populace, the sample, and the sampling method. It likewise portrays the research instruments and the data collection strategies embraced. Similarly, referenced in this segment are the way access was picked up to the destinations and how the participants were recognized and selected. Following that, data collection and data analysis are mentioned separately. In addition, ethical consideration is also discussed.

1.5.1. Research Design, Participants' Selection and Sampling Methods

A research design is a study plan, which gives the main idea for data collection, and it also arranges the means to be taken in dealing with the study questions and how data is gathered and investigated. The qualitative research method is one of the most important methods of research. It allows the researchers to get more deep data on the topic of the study by allowing the participants to generate more data from their personal experiences and knowledge. According to Kumar (2013:118), "qualitative research is a systematic scientific inquiry which seeks to build a holistic, largely narrative, description to inform the researcher's understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon." This indicates the data collected through qualitative data collecting methods will be in-depth and comprehensive. According to Evvie (2009), qualitative research is based on the personal or subjective interpretation of an individual from the context of their life experience. He also added that;

Social phenomena do not exist independently of their participants; therefore, different participants have different meanings for social phenomena. The primary purpose of qualitative research is to discover the nature of those meanings through an in-depth study of the phenomenon in its natural context (Evvie, 2009:98).

In this study, a qualitative research method utilized to investigate the challenges and experiences of the Sub Saharan African students in Gaziantep. Through participants' self-narration, this approach will help to address and assess the challenges students faced in the city.

In social science study, there are many kinds of sampling techniques, which are applied for the selection of research participants. Such as; purposive sampling, random sampling, snowball sampling, and so on. One of the most widely used sampling techniques is purposive sampling, in which the researchers select the participants purposely and deliberately in order to get the needed information on the topic.

The purposive sampling technique, also known as judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of the participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim 2016:4).

According to Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and McKibbin (2015), purposive sampling is implemented when the researcher wants to know in-depth information about the research problem and to generate a more profound understanding of the issues. Participants who are selected through purposive sampling are those individuals

who have a deeper understanding of the problem that the researcher wants to know and those individuals who are capable of transferring their thoughts in good manners.

The study population where the participants were selected is the Sub Saharan African students who are living in Gaziantep. For the research, the participants have been chosen purposely depending on the information and the data that they could generate for the study. Because of this, the sampling method implemented in this research is purposive sampling. This is very useful to select the participants who have in-depth information and interest in the research. The researcher tried to select participants purposely who are very active and have enough information on the research problem. During the selection of participants, the students accessed through different mechanisms. One of the mechanisms, which facilitated the accessibility of the students, is the WhatsApp group of Sub Saharan African Students in Gaziantep. The researcher contacted many of the participants through this application in order to make the students to take part in the interviews. The rest of the participants selected and contacted during Sub Saharan African students' meetings inside and outside of the Gaziantep University. In addition, the selection process was based on the selection of students from different countries in order to make the data more diverse and comprehensive.

1.5.2. Data Collection Methods and Data Analysis

Data collection is a vital part of social science researches by collecting and gathering information for a study. Many researchers describe data collection as the backbone of social science researches and studies. According to Syed Muhammed (2016:202), "data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes." He also added that whatever the researcher has the best research design, without data collection it is impossible to achieve the desired outcomes.

In this study, the researcher applied one qualitative data collection method to gather the data and information for the research, which is semi-structured in depth interview.

A semi-structured interview is one of the types of interviews, which help to collect deep data in qualitative research. The data collected through semi-structured

interviews are comprehensive and state the subjective interpretation of the individual participant. Semi-structured interviews are a set of open and close-ended questions that are responded by the participant directly and from different contexts. The interviewer also has a right to paraphrase the responses and ask other questions. According to Harrell and Bradley, a semi-structured interview is described as follow:

The interviewer has some discretion about the order in which questions are asked, but the questions are standardized, and probes may be provided to ensure that the researcher covers the correct material. This kind of interview collects detailed information in a somewhat conversational style. Semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided (Harrell and Bradley, 2009:27).

Semi-structured in-depth interview included both close-ended questions (kind of interview questions in which the participants of interviews respond a short answer) and open-ended questions (kind of interview questions in which the participants of interviews respond brief explanations, and the interviewer may ask another question by paraphrasing the responses). For this research, 28 semi structured interview questions (nine close ended and 19 open-ended questions) have prepared. The reason the researcher has applied semi-structured questions is to generate enough data and to understand the responses in a better way possible.

In this interview, the researcher applied two languages (English and Turkish) to generate responses from the participants. The researcher prepared the interview questions with both languages and the participants were asked to choose the language which is suitable for them communicate. From the total 21 participants 18 of them preferred English and the rest three students⁷ preferred to do in Turkish. Even though some students took several minutes to express their ideas, the interview with each student took approximately 35 minutes on average. Besides the interviews took place inside the Gaziantep University compound and the students' dormitory between May 7, 2019 and June 10, 2019.

According to Creswell (2007:148), data analysis is “preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion.” Data analysis is the process of reducing and minimizing a large amount of data into small and making the data more meaningful for a research (Creswell, 2007).

⁷ Students from Comoros, Chand and Mali did the interview in Turkish. According to the students they don't speak English as the rest of the students. The language of instruction in their country is not English. They speak Turkish fluently to express their ideas and opinions.

According to Patton (1987), during the application of data analysis in research three process will happen. The first one is organizing the data, which is the process of arrangement of the data collected, the second one is summarization and categorization of the large data into small and more meaningful way, and the third one is the ideas generated identified and linked to each other.

In the data analysis stage, the recorded data were written down in a more precise and meaningful way and the preliminary reading applied to understand the main idea of the data collected without applying coding. In the second reading, open coding applied and individual participants' thoughts, words, and phrases, which are relevant to the research, were written down — the similarities and differences in the data assessed and examined. Themes, which are essential and necessary for the research, developed from the data analyzed. By using the raw data with different sources from different researches, the data analyzed stage broadened and several themes created.

1.5.3. Ethical consideration

In social science research, ethical consideration is the most important subject to be considered when a researcher collects and analyzes data. There is always the need for ethical consideration in quantitative and qualitative research during data collection, data analysis, and discussion of data (Johnson & Christensen 2012). The potential participant was fully informed about the procedure and all that is involved in this study. They were asked to give their consent to participate and given the right to withdraw at any point in time. The participants in the data collection are informed about the procedure and the overall purpose of the study in detail. They were asked their willingness to participate in the interview and focus group discussion.

During the data collection, the participants were not asked to reveal their names for the researcher, and the researcher did not use the participants' real names in the data analysis and discussion parts. The participants were not forced to answer any questions without their consent; the researcher also refrained from asking private questions, which are sensitive for the participants.

Additionally, to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' names and other recognizable data, was not made available to anyone not directly involved in this study. Participants were assigned with unreal names to protect their

identities. In the next section, the researcher analyzed the data that was derived from participants during the interviews.



1.6. LIMITATION

In social science research, many things could hinder the researcher when he/she tries to get data and information on the topic. Constraints challenge the generation of quality research in any field of education. Limitations are any restrictions during the study, which can happen out of the researchers' control.

In this research, the researcher has faced some limitations, which challenge the data collection and literature review in general. Some of the restrictions are the following.

- The shortage of written materials on the chosen research topic is the most important limitation of the research. There are many kinds of researches and articles on the movement and life of international students in general. Still, specific studies and articles on the living conditions of Sub Saharan African students in foreign countries are limited. It was struggling to find those specific researches and articles for literature review.
- Some of the participants were unintentionally hiding some information from the researcher because of their similar background. They were thinking that the researcher already knew the problems and they repeatedly used the phrase “You already knew this.”
- The personal closeness of the researcher with a few of the participants was another challenge for the data collection. Some students were not taking the topic as a serious issue.
- Because Turkey is a newly emerging country of taking international students, including Sub-Saharan Africans, the movement of the students to the country is not addressed in many researches. There is a shortage of studies in Turkey about the movement of international students, especially related to Sub-Saharan African ones.
- The unwillingness of some Sub-Saharan African students to participate in the data collection process. On the other hand, the participants' hesitation (some of the participants were not willing to expose their feelings for unknown reasons which the researcher could not manage to know about it) to reveal some of their opinions and ideas also the limitation for the research.

- The shortage of female participants in the research also one of the most important limitations to be considered. Compared to males, the number of female Sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep is fewer. Besides, some female students are not willing to participate in the research because of some personal reasons.⁸



⁸ Some of the female students tried to avoid the interview because of their personal reasons. Some of the believed that the researcher will record their voice and video and will affect their confidentiality, even though the researcher never applied video records except voice records. At the same time, the researcher also applied taking notes without any record for few participants to respect their preference.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The purpose of this topic is to present the most important theoretical frameworks that explain students' living conditions in a culturally different area. As culture is the most significant component of one's society to describe people's lifestyle, understanding the culture of the targeted environment is crucial for foreigners to penetrate the system. The acculturation and cross-cultural adaptation models give a framework for how individuals in a new environment try to adapt the culture in order to adjust their living. The acculturation model illustrates that when two different cultures come into repeated direct contact, the change in one or two sides of the culture happens. In this case, the culture of the majority can affect the culture of minorities. On the other hand, learning a new environment's culture is the most crucial element of the cross-cultural adaptation model. Communication between the two parties; the strangers and the locals is an important component of this model.

2.1.1. Acculturation Model

The idea of acculturation has begun to be utilized by American social anthropologists towards the end of the nineteenth century. Its full application to the investigation of social changes and social contacts between various networks incited the magazine American Anthropologist to distribute an update on the study of cultural assimilation during the 1930s (Guarnaccia and Stabile, 2016). The idea of acculturation has a long history in the social and behavioral sciences, especially among anthropologists and sociologists. Acculturation has been utilized to comprehend the modernization forms that different societies and networks were experiencing in the

mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth century. According to Berry (1997), acculturation describes a condition where a group of people from different cultures and customs come in direct contact with each other, and this contact leads to the cultural changes on the one side or from both sides. "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either one or both groups" (Herskovits, 1936 cited in Berry, 1997: 7). Acculturation is a double procedure influencing the individuals from at least two social gatherings as each adjusts to the nearness of the other. Berry described how acculturation happened in different forms:

Many kinds of cultural groups may exist in plural societies, and their variety is primarily due to three factors: voluntariness, mobility, and permanence. Some groups have entered into the acculturation process voluntarily (e.g. immigrants) while others experience acculturation without having sought it out (e.g. refugees, indigenous peoples). Other groups are in contact because they have migrated to a new location (e.g. immigrants and refugees), while others have had the new culture brought to them (e.g. indigenous peoples and "national minorities"). And third, among those who have migrated, some are relatively permanently settled into the process (e.g. immigrants), while for others the situation is a temporary one (e.g. sojourners such as international students and guest workers, or asylum seekers who may eventually be deported) (Berry, 1997: 8).

As indicated by Berry, acculturation is where an individual immigrant experience in a mental change to draw in with another culture in regular collaboration with the people surrounding in the host environment. Despite the fact that there is an example with various foreigner groups, acculturation includes an emotional exchange in which an individual must choose how to embrace another culture, custom, and way of life. Berry (1992) added that an individual immigrant's character and choice, the progress coming because of acculturation relies upon social and mental qualities of the gathering which the individual immigrants are living in, length of time staying in the group, lastingness of contact, and the reason he/she to the gathering.

The idea of immersion is also another vital factor for the degree and results of acculturation. Immersion is the actual penetration and absorption by an individual migrant into another social, cultural, and economic life of the host environment. This immersion can encompass different characteristics, which make the individual's immersion process actual and successful, such as, political participation in the host environment, social relation, learning the language, changing religion, attending schools, working in the market, and participating in the host environment's activities (Berry, 1992).

2.1.2. Cross-Cultural Adaptation Model

We are all born and raised in a community, which has its own cultures and customs. The culture that we have learned from the community has shaped our way of life and the personality we possess. Cultural adaptation is a lifelong process for every human being. Many people have defined culture in different ways, but the common definition, which is applicable to most of the people is, culture is a way of life for human beings.

Culture can be described as a system of knowledge, beliefs, procedures, attitudes, and artifacts that is shared within a group. That the cultures with which each of us connects exert a strong influence on our behaviors is beyond dispute (Gill, 2013:71).

A considerable number of individuals, including students, change homes every year by crossing boundaries from immigrants and refugees resettling, looking for another life in different countries, for example, students, soldiers, and ambassadors. According to Kim (1988), the cross-cultural movement is becoming a contemporary phenomenon around the world. People are travelling in different countries for many purposes; for education, work, and settlement. He also added that, even though it is different in individual conditions, all people in a new country put a lot of effort in order to make a cultural adjustment, which helps them to set up and keep up a moderately steady and corresponding association with the host environment. In many circumstances, individual sojourners have to adapt and act as local people in the new environment in order to cope with the customs and cultures. Therefore, the shared cultural interaction with the local people and the adaptation of a new culture are the focal point of cross-cultural adaptation theory.

The cross-cultural adaptation process is challenging for many immigrants in the new environment because of many conditions. Many immigrants struggle to cope with the new culture and way of life to become more active members of the community they migrated to.

According to Kim;

Numerous people struggle to cope with the feelings of inadequacy and frustration in the changing environment: some resist change and fight for the old ways, others desperately try to 'go native', often experiencing a sense of failure and despair. Whether for a long or short term, international migration represents a situation where the newly arrived strangers are required to cope with substantial cultural change (Kim, 1988: 5).

According to Kim (2001), in the cross-cultural adaptation process, the most important mechanism is communication between the immigrant and the local people. Communication is the most important tool in cultural adaptation in many cases, even

though communication could be the most critical challenge because of the shortage of communication ways, such as language. He also conveys that in order to adapt to the new environment, we should communicate with the local people based on the culture and the custom of the host environment. We should acquire new knowledge and information as long as we are in a new environment in order to adapt quickly to the betterment of our life in a new culture and custom.

The cross-cultural adaptation model has two categories: *psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation*. The psychological adjustment indicates the adaptation of the person in a new environment without stress or psychological problems, whereas the socio-cultural adaptation indicates the learning process of new culture and customs in the new environment. These two categories of cross-cultural adaptation have different variables. The psychological adaptation depends on the individual personality, support from the society, and coping mechanism whereas socio-cultural adaptation is based on the length of time the individual lives in the host nation, the cultural knowledge and understanding, and the language capability of the individual immigrant (Ward and Searle, 1991 cited in O'Reilly, Ryan and Hickey, 2010:4)

According to Kim (2001), the cross-cultural adaptation theory also conveys, when the individual is trying to adapt to a new culture in a new environment, the person may experience a personal unconscious change because of the adaptation. The personal transformation that the individual faces in the host environment because of the new culture could be another challenge for the person when he/she is back to the home country. Even though the immigrant could not forget the culture of their home country during the adaptation of the new culture, in order to learn and adapt to the new culture in the host environment they intentionally stop practicing their own culture. During this time, they start to familiarize with the new culture and begin to behave the way the local people behave in order to get a place in the new environment and to socialize easily. This indicates the cross-cultural adaptation is the mechanism for an individual to get a better place in the host environment by adapting the culture, customs, and norms of the local people, even though the capability of cultural adaptation of individuals is different from person to person.

Kim (2001) described that cross-cultural adaptation communication is the most important mechanism to adapt to a new culture. Even though communication is an essential way of the intercultural adaptation process, the individual capability of

communication can affect the way people adapt to a new environment. He said in most cases, people who have outstanding personal communication capabilities can easily communicate with the local people and adjust to the new environment easily compared to others.

Strangers realize successful adaptation only when their internal communication systems sufficiently overlap with those of the natives. The capacity of the personal communication system serves as the innermost dimension in the structure of cross-cultural adaptation, enabling strangers to organize themselves mentally, motivationally, and emotionally in and with their socio-cultural milieu, developing ways of seeing, hearing, understanding, and responding to the environment appropriately and effectively (Kim, 2001:71)

Kim conveys the other form of communication that he called the “*host communication competence*,” which is the ability to communicate with the locals in the way the host environment's culture and custom after a lot of trying and failures. He defined host communication competency as "the overall capacity of the stranger to receive and process information appropriately and effectively (decoding) and to design plans to initiate messages or respond to others (encoding) in accordance with the host communication system" (Kim, 20001:73). Based on the definition after the stranger successfully acquires the host communication competence, the cross-cultural adaptation facilitates.

Oberg (1960:142-145) describes every stranger may experience four stages of cross-cultural shock. He proposes four stages (levels) of cross-cultural shock, which lead an individual to cultural adaptation: the honeymoon stage, the crisis stage, the recovery stage, and the adjustment stage. The honeymoon stage is the time of excitement and full of curiosity about the new environment during his transition. This stage is about the person's initial feelings before entering deep into the new environment. The crisis stage is the second stage of cross-cultural adaptation. In this stage, the stranger started to get in cultural shock, frustration, and anger because of the new environment. In the recovery stage, the stranger begins to fix his/her problems and difficulties, and he/she recovers from the crisis stage by learning the language and the culture of the new environment. The adjustment stage is the time of adapting to the culture, and the stranger will start to appreciate the cultural diversity in the host environment.

2.1.2.1. The challenges of cross-cultural adaptation

Cross-cultural adaptation has many challenges and obstacles when strangers are trying to adapt to the new environment. Beil and Mayor (2018) stated that the cross-cultural adaptation process is a very tough and frustrating moment when an individual stranger struggles to adapt and manage his/her life in a new environment. They also added that many factors might contribute to the cultural adaptation process of an individual stranger positively and negatively. They mentioned depending on the individual stranger conditions, the adaptation process could be changed. In some cases, the stranger who has close cultural and language similarities with the host environment might not struggle as the other individuals who came from culturally different areas.

Although the cross-cultural adaptation process could be realized after paying a lot of effort, many factors might make the process very challenging and struggling. According to Sharma and Dahiya (2017), cross-cultural adaptation is a complicated process because of the shortage of knowledge of the host environments' culture and language. Cross-cultural adaptation is a process of adjusting one's self into the culture and norm of the host environment. As mentioned above, cross-cultural adaptation is not the same kind of process for every individual. In most cases, people who are from a country that has a close culture and language can easily adapt to the changing environment.

Language proficiency is one of the most important factors, which facilitate cross-cultural adaptation efficiently. However, the lack of language proficiency for strangers⁹ in a new environment could be a prominent challenge in the process of cultural adaptation. A stranger who can communicate easily could adapt the culture quickly by making a connection with the locals, but an individual who lack the language of the host environment struggle a lot to make relation, and this situation makes the cross-cultural adaptation process very challenging.

In many cases, the international students' main challenge in the process of cultural adaptation in the host nation is lack of language proficiency to express their

⁹ According to Simmel, G. (1950:402) "stranger is not a wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow rather the person who comes today and stays tomorrow." The stranger is the member of the system but not strongly attached to that system. The stranger is the one who is not part of the community starting from the beginning. Even though the stranger has close contact and relation with the locals, he/she always perceived as extraneous to the group. The local mostly perceived him/her as a distance rather than near to them.

feelings and ideas as they want. In the work of Sivtceva a Malaysian student called Rina, who studied in the Czech Republic, expressed her idea on the language barriers.

When I want to tell something like a story or something like gossiping so I am thinking like oh my God, how to express my feelings with this English because my English is not really good. However, here I mean when I came here I had to know some Czech, I was studying Czech, and I talk in English all the time, so it is like (voice up), but it is good for me! It's good for (.) for my language, but at the same time there are some barriers yeah (Sivtceva, 2016:34)

Based on the above expression we can identify that the students struggle to communicate with local people and it required to learn the language of the host environment in order to make relations with people. According to Beil and Mayor (2018), for cross-cultural adaptation, the individuals' skills and knowledge on different factors, which are contributed to the adaptation process, play a significant role in many occasions. From these factors, the knowledge of the host environment language is the prominent factor to penetrate into the new culture.

For many people, the **cultural shock** is a primary challenge for strangers when they move to a country, which has different cultures and customs. Many researchers defined cultural shock in different ways. Oberg (1960), described cultural shock as:

Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not (Oberg, 1960:142).

Based on the above definition cultural shock is a situation where an individual leaves his/her adapted culture and penetrate into another culture, which makes them feel shocked while they encounter a culture they haven't seen or heard before.

Researchers pointed out that the characteristics of the individuals could influence cultural shock.

Many factors influence culture shocks, such as individual personality characteristics, demographic factors, and organizational support. Personality traits such as cultural flexibility, ethnocentricity, stress reactions, interpersonal and relational skills are most likely to affect the individual (Sims & Schraederm 2004. et al. Rajasekar & Renand 2013:145)

The individuals' ability to cope with the new environment and personal characteristics can contribute to the adaptation of a new culture quickly. In many contexts, strangers who have no knowledge or skill about the new environment may experience culture shock, and this situation could make cross-cultural adaptation very challenging.

Ethnocentric acts of the host environment's residents are other challenges for cross-cultural adaptation. Ethnocentrism is the tendency of people to consider their

culture and custom is superior to the others. "Ethnocentrism is often grouped together or even used interchangeably, with concepts such as racism, nationalism, discrimination, prejudice, and xenophobia" (Bizumic, 2015:3). According to Bizumic (2015), ethnocentrism is the idea of ethnic superiority of one's own culture over others. The superiority complex of a group of individuals over others' cultural and ethnic identity can lead to a rigid ethnocentric ideology. He also added that ethnocentric ideology seems acceptable by the group of individuals who behave as their culture is superior. Still, the people who are experiencing hate and discrimination because of ethnocentrism have a difficult time of handling the problem not to affect their life.

Some individuals' attitudes may prohibit the people who came into the new culture to adapt it (Berry, 2002). According to Brewer (1999), the ethnocentric beliefs could create the 'in-group' (people who are the part of the certain culture where the members believe that their culture is superior) and 'outgroup' (the outsiders who are not the part of the host environment culture) assumptions. During this time, the outsiders could feel they are not welcomed, and they could start to hate the host environment's culture.

According to many types of research, ethnocentrism leads people to negative behaviors, stereotypes, and prejudice against the minority ethnic groups. These negative ideologies and beliefs create misconceptions between individuals and groups, paving the way for the weak interaction of different cultures. Zikargae (2013) stated that ethnocentrism could have a positive effect on the construction of a country's cultural identity and in the creation of patriotic citizens. However, a high level of ethnocentrism leads to the fading away of cross-cultural interaction between individuals. He believes that in a country where majorities over minorities develop ethnocentric culture, strengthening unity and constructing a better interpersonal communication will be difficult.

2.2. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT'S MOVEMENT

For the last three decades, the internationalization of higher education had become a significant movement in educational sectors (Bodycott, 2009). According to Mazzarol (1998), the internationalization of higher educational institutions became the most important service sector in developed countries, especially starting from the end of the 1980s. In the work of Mazzarol, Soutar & Seng (2003:90-91), three waves of

globalization have been explained in the global educational trends. These three waves tried to explain the students' movement in international educational institutions in different contexts.

The first wave stated the students' movement to host countries at chosen foundations and this became common at the start of the twentieth century and remains common today. The first stage is all about the movement of students to other countries for educational purposes through scholarships or by covering their educational costs.

The second wave was when educational institutions maintain alliances or coalitions through twinning programs with other institutions to have a presence in the international market. Throughout the 1990s, this became common in Asia and students can study a foreign degree at the campus provided by the institutes in their home country. In this case, the students had not to travel to other countries for education; instead, they stay in their countries and can have access to other countries' university courses in their home country.

The last wave was when new branch campuses were created in foreign markets, and information and communications technology was used to deliver 'online' courses. In this wave, educational courses are given through the internet to the target students without moving to other countries.

Different reasons encourage students to international higher education enrollment. Traditionally, they have been driven by expectations to get more economical and social status, especially within the higher education sector. Over the second half of the twentieth century, a lack of access to higher education in many countries in Asia and Africa has been a key driver for international student flow. Besides, the historical or colonial links between host and home countries have also played a role in determining where students travel for study (Mazzarol & Soutar, Seng, 2002).

The internationalization of higher education is a rapidly growing trend that challenges and alters the way higher education has been conceptualized and practiced for an extended period of time. The enrollment of only local students in higher educational institutions has become an old-fashioned way of educational policy. By considering these outdated policies, many educational institutions around the world changed their policies and procedures and started to enroll international students in their institutions. Even though many institutions accepted students from different countries, the rationale for and approaches to the internationalization of their

institutions vary by institution and country. In general, the inspiration behind the internalization of higher educational institutions could be the financial reason for getting students going to pay their costs. The institution will get monetary benefits from international students. The second one is the inspiration to create relationships with other international higher education institutions in order to improve the quality of education. The third one is the inspiration behind transferring different political ideologies and ideas through educational exchange. Particularly during Western countries, inspiration to expand capitalism led them to facilitate various educational opportunities for international students (Knight and de Wit, 1999).

Whether to the internationalization of higher education institutions or the internationalization of the economy, the international students' enrollment and participation have been increasing and becoming the core parts of higher education institutions. "The global population of students who move to another country to study continues to rise, reaching almost 5 million in 2014 – more than double the 2.1 million internationally mobile students in 2000 – with an annual increase of 10%.¹ The OECD has projected that, with demographic changes, international student mobility is likely to reach 8 million students per year by 2025." (Oxford University, 2015:5). In another article, the number of international students moving to foreign countries for education also indicates another figure. According to Kayange and Msiska (2016), for the past 10-15 years, the number of students studying abroad has significantly increased, and they stated that in 2011 the number of students studying abroad was estimated at about 3.3 million and his number is projected to grow to 8 million by the year 2020.

This alarming increase of international students may be related to different aspects, facilitating the way to get a chance to study in other countries. "Over the last decade, many countries have emphasized widening access to higher education, bringing rapid growth in the number of universities and degree programs on offer" (Oxford University, 2016-2017:9). It is believed that the opportunities created by higher educational institutions for international students, lead the movement of a large number of students throughout the world. Many factors could be the pushing and pulling factors for international students to become part of one institution.

Çetin, Bahar and Griffiths stated that;

There are several reasons why students go abroad for international academic programs. These include the opportunity to experience another culture and its educational system, to make new friendships, to develop cultural competency skills, to improve self-esteem and confidence, and to broaden horizons and academic quality (Andrade, 2006; McClure, 2007; Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2009 as cited in Çetin, Bahar and Griffiths 2017:468).

Although students have a significant interest in studying abroad in order to get better education and experience, at the same time, many higher educational institutions also have huge motives to enroll international students in their universities. Because of this, many international students are motivated and started to search for opportunities. According to Hawawini (2011), an important encouraging factor should underlie the rationale of genuinely higher educational foundations, which are not to train the international students but to gain from the international students to improve the organization's ability to make new learning and grow worldwide citizens. On the other hand, a lot of people also discuss and ask about internationalizing higher educations from the perspective of its benefit and impact on the local people. According to Hawawini (2011), when confronted with the decision to internationalize and enrolling international students in their institutions, the most crucial point they have to consider is the institution's educational mission. The most important question that higher educational institutions have to ask themselves is whether their institution can accomplish the mission without enrolling international students.

Many theoretical perspectives related to the movement of international students have explained frequently. From those researches, one of the most important studies done by Lee and Tan (1984), which adopted a model of international students' movement and to investigate the elements that influence the movement of international students from underdeveloped countries to developed countries. According to their model, the movement of students from developing to developed countries is examined by the higher demand for advanced education by third world countries' students. Their model additionally traces that in addition to higher demands, numerous components influence the movement of students to the developed countries, such as historical connections, nature of advanced education in the developing countries, shared language, cost of living, and economic relations.

We have discussed three theoretical frameworks, which can shape the finding of this research. In this study the cross-cultural adaptation model and the pull and push models will be implemented and the research will follow these models. As we discussed, the cross-cultural adaptation is the most challenging and important process in the life of students in their stay in a foreign country. Therefore, in this study the cross-cultural adaptation process will shape the study. In addition, the pull and push factors, which lead the students for educational migration, will be discussed briefly.

For this reason, the pull and push model will be one of the theoretical frameworks, which shape the finding of this research.

2.3. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Many researchers figured out a lot of push and pull factors, which lead students to travel to different countries for higher education. An important part of the research concerning international students' study place decisions based on Mazzarol, Soutar, and Seng (2002:4) thought of a push-pull model. Their model recommends a few factors that push students to consider studying outside of their nation of origin; on the other hand, pull factors lead a student toward a specific goal. Based on their review of four countries; China, India, Taiwan, and Indonesia, they recognized six pull factors that they observed significant to study place decisions among international students. Such as geographic nearness to home nation, accessibility of information about the host nation, environment, family and friends' recommendations, cost, and social connections inside their host nation.

In many cases, the *proximity* of the host country to the home country has been a significant influence on the students' choice of destination. Most of the time, families and friends recommend a host nation that is easily accessible and close to the home country.

Accessibility of information about the host nations' general conditions and the way of life could significantly affect the choice of students' destination. The information about the host countries' image for education and the information about the quality of life could be the most important factors that lead students to travel for education.

The *environmental condition* of the host nations is an important factor for students' choice of education. The huge difference in weather conditions between the home country of students and the host nation could be an essential element to be considered during the selection of the destination.

In the decision of study places, the role of families and friends is the most important and vital. Before the students are going to choose a study place for higher education, the families and friends could be the primary individuals who are helping the student in the decision-making process. Many students around the world decided

where to study because of the *recommendations* from their friends who are already studying in the target country.

The *educational and living cost* of the countries have a vital effect on the selection of study place. The students prefer to go to a country that is affordable compared to others. Costs related to housing, tuition fees, accommodations, and other extra costs are the most important elements considered in the selection of study countries for many students. Even though some students are getting scholarships from different organizations, still the costs are always important factors.

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) additionally look at a chance accessible for students to look for some kind of employment abroad, noticing that for international students, this might be a critical factor. The prospects of getting jobs in the host country are the most important pull factor for international students abroad.

In addition, McMahon (1992) explores the elements influencing the movement of students from 18 developing nations to the host nations, especially to the United States. She put forward, push and pull models dependent on two distinct arrangements of factors. The "push model" represents factors inside the nation of origin that influence the mobility of students. These components incorporate the monetary power of the nation of origin, the degree of the country of origin's association in the global economy, the accessibility of advanced education in the nation of origin, and the priority given by the nation of origin of students. The "pull model" centers around the variables present in the host nations, especially the USA, that draw in an inflow of students. The draw elements incorporate political, and monetary linkages between the host and home nation, the financial limit of the country of origin with respect to that of the host nation, and the degree of money related help given to international students by the host nation.

2.4. THE FLOW OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO TURKEY

A large number of students around the Middle East and other parts of the world have been coming to Turkey for higher education in recent times. In Turkey, private and public universities, there is a higher number of quotas for international students (Snoubar, 2017). As stated in the article of Yilmaz;

Turkey is one of these countries attempting to increase international students 'recruitment and to become a regional center for higher education. The "Grand Student Project" which started in 1992 and provided scholarships to the students from Turkic Republics and related

communities became a starting point in this manner and led to significant developments in terms of international students. Turkish universities have hosted many international students since then. Yet, the number of students that benefited from this program did not record a stable increase in those years and scholarships that had been devoted to project were not fully employed. In addition, graduation rates of students remained low. Thus, the success of the program was put into question, and new policies and regulations have been issued for pursuing a more effective international student strategy from 2010 onwards (Yılmaz, 2014 cited in Yılmaz et al., 2017:24).

Yılmaz (2017) also describes that to facilitate the enrolment of international students in Turkish universities; a responsible office is opened in the name of “Turkey scholarships¹⁰” in 2012. This scholarship contributes for the emergence of high number of international students in Turkey as it awards approximately five thousand students every year.

Dziwornu, Yakar and Temurçin (2016:230) describe that “Over the years, Turkey, an emerging economy has invested heavily in its education system by providing scholarship opportunities to attract students from other emerging and developing economies.” They explain that the Turkish government is working to increase and balance the distribution of scholarships to the countries.

The number of international students is rising through times and Turkey become an essential destination for international students. Especially for the last ten years, the number of international students increased with a huge number. After the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) taking the responsibility of creating procedures and regulations in order to implement the international students' issues, the number of international students increased from 15,000 in 2008 to 95,150 in the 2015-2016 academic year (Özer, 2016). Özer also describes that the Council of Higher Education make significant steps to make Turkey a destination for international students throughout the world by collaborating with different organizations and institutions. Such as the “Turkish Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Development, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), and the Yunus Emre Institute support projects related to international students and programs” (Özer, 2016:59).

¹⁰ According to Turkey Scholarships “Within the framework of the tasks entrusted to the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities following its establishment in 2010, "Turkey Scholarships" program has been implemented with our Presidency's initiatives and in cooperation with all respective agencies in 2012, as a result, higher education scholarships provided by our country for international students were updated and relaunched under the brand name of Turkey Scholarships.” Retrieved from <https://turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/en/page/about-us/turkiye-scholarships>. Date of Access May 29, 2020.

Many pieces of research suggest that scholarships and other forms of higher education opportunities for international students are some of the most important mechanisms in order to facilitate foreign relations with many countries around the world. At the same time, the selection of enrolling students in the institutions is based on the relation between the sender and the host country of the student. Snoubar (2017:802) explained that “Turkey's political and economic situation and its policies have been particularly effective in the selection of students from the Middle East.”

The *Grand Student Project*¹¹ scholarship program which launched in 1992 by targeting students from the Turkic Republics as well as Turkish and cognate communities in the former Soviet Union and Eurasia, aims at building lasting bridges of friendship in the Turkish world, promoting Turkish language and culture, and strengthening traditional links among the countries of the Turkish community (Kavak and Baskan, 2001). This scholarship program, along with several other scholarships offered through bilateral agreements with other countries, accounted for more than half of the new inbound students during the 1990s. This indicates that earlier internationalization processes in the 1990s were primarily driven by social and political rationales toward Turkic countries and communities. According to Özoğlu, Gür ve Coşkun (2012:57-58), approximately 40% of international students in Turkey are scholarship holders, which are implemented by the Great Students Project and Turkish Government Scholarships Committee.

The Turkish Government Scholarship is an award available for all international students around the world. This scholarship came to effect in 2003, and afterward, a large number of students have been coming to Turkey for higher education (Özoğlu, Gür ve Coşkun, 2012). Turkish Government Scholarships is one of those rare international programs, which include university placements. It pays standard monthly stipends to beneficiaries and covers accommodation, general health insurance, tuition fee, Turkish language education, and one-time arrival and departure transport cost.

Based on some research, in recent times almost all Turkish universities have a significant number of international students from around the world. This increasing

¹¹ Grand Student Project is a big educational program launched in 1992 in the purpose of helping countries, which gains independent after the downfall of the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Turkic republics gain their independence. However, to make these countries capable of handling their needs the republic of Turkey had to take a responsibility. In this regard to help improve the educational activities of those countries the Grand Student Project launched by Turkey (Date of Access May 23, 2020. <http://sahipkiran.org/2018/11/21/buyuk-ogrenci-projesi/>).

rate of international students in Turkey, is basically related to the high demand of the Turkish government to have international students in the country's higher educational institutions. According to the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities¹² (YTB), the Turkish Government is working in order to increase the number of international students in Turkish higher educational institutions. The number of international students in the country is almost 110 thousand in the present time, and from this number, 25 thousand students are scholarship holders. At the same time, there is a plan for increasing the number of international students in Turkish higher educational institutions by 2023 with 200 thousand students. The reasons for the internationalization of Turkish higher educational institutions are in order to create economic, social and cultural interaction between countries.

The Turkish scholarship has been playing a significant role by the internalization of Turkish higher education institutions. According to Anadolu Agency¹³ (16 May 2018), in 2012, 42,000 students from 131 countries applied for Turkish government scholarships, a number which grew to 56,000 from 165 countries in 2013, 82,000 from 179 countries in 2014, 114,000 students from 175 countries in 2015, and 120,000 students from 164 countries in 2016. According to the report, the YTB gives over five thousand scholarships every year to the students from all over the world.

According to Yılmaz (2017), the number international students for the year 2016/2017 in Turkey were 108,076. Even though this number is not enough compared to the country's potential to host more international students, the number is increasing every year at an alarming rate. He also figured out the top 10 countries, which are represented by more students compared to others, in Turkey. Based on the Article Syria ranked the first, and followed by Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

Table 1. The number of international students in Turkey (2016/2017)

Rank	Countries	Number of Students
1	Syria	15042
2	Azerbaijan	14878

¹² The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities which is responsible for the implementation of the Turkish Government scholarship program.

¹³ Anadolu Agency. International Students in Turkey. Date of Access November 3, 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/education/over-100-000-international-students-study-in-turkey/1148030/>

3	Turkmenistan	10418
4	Iran	6099
5	Afghanistan	5251
6	Iraq	5012
7	Germany	3755
8	Greece	2285
9	Bulgaria	2030
10	Libya	1943

Source: 2016–2017 Statistics of Council of Higher Education (Yilmaz 2017: 25)

2.5. COMPARING HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA AND THE DESTINATION COUNTRIES

Education is the primary developmental goal of most African countries in recent time, even though the continents educational quality remains low compared to the rest of the world. Within the increase rate of enrolment in higher education in Sub Saharan African countries, the accessibility of and the quality of education still faces many challenges. However, higher education in Africa showed many reforms recently due to the increase of other development efforts in the continent.

In recent years, higher education in Africa has undergone unprecedented transformation, including phenomenal expansion of the sector in terms of numbers and diversity of institutions and academic programs, rapid growth in enrolments, development of quality assurance frameworks, and enhancement of institutional governance, among other things. These transformations are a consequence of many new developments, both local and global, which have allowed the sector to start regaining its key position in terms of Africa's development (Jowi et al., 2013:13)

Despite the fact that the higher education development in Africa shows positive changes in recent times compared to the past many decades, still the shortage of contemporary educational technologies in the continent is the most important drawback of high-quality education (Jowi et al. (2013). The quality of education is the most important component of higher educational institutions. In this regard, the quality of education in Africa shows some changes despite many challenges, which are still obstacles for the educational system. According to Winthrop, quality of education is what parents and civil societies are demanding from their government in Africa.

Quality in education is something that parents and communities in sub-Saharan countries want. Civil society movements have organized to demand quality education from their countries' governments. Nongovernmental organizations in East Africa have formed to expose the often

poor and varied quality of schools and to hold their governments accountable for improving education outcomes (Winthrop, 2011:192).

According to QS University Ranking¹⁴ of 2020, only eight Sub Saharan African Universities managed to enter the top thousand universities in the world. Most importantly all of the eight universities found in the Republic of South Africa. Based on this ranking the Sub Saharan countries have small number of universities which managed to be in the top thousand compared to other continents and even countries. As example, Turkey as a country managed to have nine universities in the QS University Ranking of 2020. This shows how a country managed to have a better place in university ranking than Sub Saharan African countries.

One of the most important components of higher education is the accessibility of universities per number of students. Africa is the second most populous continent in the world next to Asia but the number of officially recognized higher educational institution are lower than the rest of the continents. According to the uniRank¹⁵ database in 2020 there are currently 1,225 officially recognized higher-education institutions in Africa.

Table 2. Number of universities per continent

Country	Number of Higher Educational Institutions
Asia	5,984
Africa	1,225
Europe	2,725
North America	1,893
Latin(South) America	1,834
Oceania	62
Total	13,723

Source: uniRank database (2020)

African countries are known by sending high number of students to other countries. Scholarships, fellowships, exchange and internships are the most important

¹⁴ QS University Ranking is one of the most reliable university ranking website, which publishes every year, and ranks universities based on overall and subject based ranking. <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2020>. Date of Access June 23, 2020.

¹⁵ uniRank. Universities in Africa: Higher Education in Africa. Date of Access May 25, 2020. <https://www.4icu.org/Africa/>

mechanisms for students to get admission in different universities outside of the continent. This trend has been contributing for the effort of generating better students who can change the fate of the continent after getting education in international arena. According to World Education News Reviews¹⁶ 2017 report, countries like Nigeria, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Senegal, Angola and Ghana lead the top Sub Saharan African counties by sending the highest number of students to international universities.

Sub Saharan African students migrates to the world countries for the purpose of education for a long period of time. The accessibility of financial supports for the students have been encouraging them to attend qualified educational institutions in developed countries. Even though the students' destinations are changing over time, according to Campus France (2016), in 2013 the top destination countries for African students were France, United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Malaysia, Italy and Australia.

2.6. SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATION BETWEEN TURKEY AND AFRICA

Since the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire has had excellent political and economic relations with most African countries, especially with East African countries. The Ottoman Empire contributed a significant role by sending military assistance against the Spanish forces in their intervention in North and South Africa, and the spread of Portuguese colonialism in West Africa. The empire has had a significant relationship with the African countries before the existence of the colonial European countries in the continent. After the European colonial powers' presence, the Ottoman Empire and African countries' relations became weak. (Şengül, 2015: 68-70).

Even though Turkey and Africa had a good relationship since the Ottoman Empire, the economic relationship of Turkey with Africa from 1923 to the independence of most African countries from European colonizers (most African countries got independence in the 1960s) was not enough and strong. Turkish government preferred to have a connection with European countries. The reason

¹⁶ World Education News Reviews. African Student Mobility: Regional Trends and Recommendations for U.S. HEIs. Date of Access May 25, 2020. <https://wenr.wes.org/2017/03/african-student-mobility-insights-and-recommendation-for-u-s-heis/>

behind this weak relation was that African countries were not independent enough to make any foreign relations without permission from their colonial masters (Tepeciklioğlu, 2017). After the independence of African countries from European colonial powers, the Turkey Africa relation started again; however, the link was not important and enough. Even though the Turkish government tried to rebuild relationships with African countries, most of its relationship was with Northern African countries (Şengül, 2015).

The "Opening to Africa Action Plan" of the late 1990s is generally perceived as the beginning stage of Turkey's interest to make relations with Africa in the Republican (Cumhuriyet) time. The arrangement for the action plan was fulfilled in 1998 by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to create relations with Sub-Saharan African nations in every aspect, even though the financial relationship was the prominent one. Because of the economic crises that happened in 2001 after the Marmara earthquake, the Turkish Opening to Africa plans was delayed and postponed for another time by the Turkish government. Then after the announcement of 2005 as the "Year of Africa" by the Turkish officials, mutual high ranked state authority visits were arranged, and new financial and trade contract was signed among Turkey and African nations. At that point, Prime Minister Erdogan visited Ethiopia and South Africa in March 2005, and the African Union concurred spectator status to Turkey around the same time (Tepeciklioğlu 2017). In this way, the relation between Turkey and Africa becomes stronger and encompasses other forms of relationship other than the economy.

In the present time, Turkey is becoming the most important partner for most African countries. Particularly after Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power, Turkey started to strengthen its relationship with African countries. This economic and political relationship is not only between the governments but also between private sectors. Turkey has also been implementing relations with regional organizations like the African Union, IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development Partners Forum), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), EAC (East African Community), COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) and ECCAS (Economic Community of Central Asian States) (Tepeciklioğlu, 2017:11). Turkey's aspiration to become an increasingly dynamic player in changing international politics and answering to the demand of Turkish business for new markets brought about its receiving a philanthropic discretion. The

alarming increment of the Turkish civil society in international strategy making procedure has likewise added to Turkey's development as a compelling actor in giving humanitarian aid and a rising exchange assistant for Africa (Tepeciklioğlu, 2017).

Humanitarian diplomacy is one of the most significant factors that pave the way for diplomatic relationships between countries. Many developed countries in the world have been implementing the strategy of humanitarian diplomacy in order to penetrate to the target developing country for raw industrial materials, especially to Africa. Turkey is also one of the newly developed nations implementing humanitarian diplomacy in Africa and other parts of the world. According to the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2014), Turkey spent 1.6 billion US dollars on humanitarian assistance to developing countries, which made Turkey the third biggest donor state next to Britain and America.

Turkey's philanthropic methodology has chiefly been executed through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), which keeps up abroad coordination workplaces in 48 nations, 14 of them being in Africa. TİKA organizes advancement extends in 26 African countries. In 2013, Africa was the biggest recipient of help from TİKA and positioned first at 33.7 percent of TİKA's complete guide payment, with 525 tasks in the territories of water and sanitation, wellbeing, managerial and common framework, financial foundation, horticulture and domesticated animals, recreation areas, training, and others (TİKA, 2013).

Africa became one of the essential continents for economic and other forms of relationships in the 21st century. The continent is becoming potential for investment and with its abundant natural resources. Most of the countries on the continent have started to become significant economic power for the world, such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya, etc. The economic and political relation with Africa for most of the world powers is significant. With this intention, Turkey is also becoming the most important partner by making great relationships with most of the African countries. Even though the rapprochement to the African continent by Turkey started in 1999, the large-scale expansion of Turkey began in 2005 (Şengül, 2015).

The Turkish closeness to Africa has been an escalated endeavor to revive relations in a few different ways. From one viewpoint, Turkey has expanded its budgetary guide to Africa through both global organizations and its official guide and participation office - TİKA. Then again, Turkey reported 2005 as "The Time of Africa," and facilitated the primary Turkey-Africa Summit at Istanbul in 2008 and

opened eight new government offices in 2009 – expanding the complete number of Turkish occupant international safe offices in Africa to 20. In their talk on the opening to Africa, Turkish authorities usually have underlined developing exchange relations with Africa and financial advancement (Özkan and Akgün 2010).

2.7. AFRICAN STUDENTS' MOBILITY TO TURKEY

One of Turkey's key foreign strategy motivations is establishing a mutual connection with Africa. This included seeking after both financial and political associations dependent on common respective exchange understandings and improvement help with the type of grants to African students. Many scholarships given to African students somewhere in the range of 1991 and 2014 excluded different categories, for example, cost paying African students (Dziwornu, Yakar, and Temurçin, 2016). The increase in the number of students coming from Sub-Saharan Africa has changed through time with a high number. The number of sub-Saharan students, which were 4532 in the 2013-2014 academic year, reached 11,378 in 2017-2018. In the 11th International Students Meeting, Prime Minister Erdogan stated that Turkey is planning to increase the number of international students to 350 thousand in the coming few years. In this regard, Turkey expected to be one of the top five countries in the world by hosting international students (AFAM, 2018).

The Sub-Saharan African countries' students' flow to Turkey indicated a high number of changes in every academic year for the last five years in a row. According to AFAM¹⁷ (2018), the number of sub-Saharan Africa students in Turkey in 2013/2014 was 4532, and this number increased in the 2014/2015 academic year to 6958. In the academic year of 2015 / 2016, the number of students was 8738. This number also increased in the following academic years of 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 to 9882 and 11378, respectively. According to the report in 2018, the number of sub-Saharan African students who enrolled in Turkish educational institutions based on countries is led by Somalia with 2310 students and followed by Nigeria with 1296 students, Sudan with 533 students, Cameroon with 529 students and Ethiopia with 506 students respectively.

¹⁷ Association of Researcher on Africa. Sahraalti-Afrikali-Ogrenci-Haraketiligi. Date of Access October 15, 2018. <https://www.afam.org.tr/turkiyede-sahraalti-afrikali-ogrenci-haraketiligi-2014-2018/>

Table 3. Number of Sub Saharan African Students per academic years from 2013/2014 to 2017/2018.

	Sex	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018
Sub Saharan African students	Male	3.518	5.322	6.749	6.749	8788
	Female	1.014	1.636	2.089	2.089	2.590
	Total	4.532	6.958	8.738	9.882	11.378

Source: Association of Researchers on Africa (2018)

Table 4. Number of Sub Saharan African Students in Turkey from 2013 to 2018.

Sub Saharan Africa	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Angola	13	19	27	22	17
Benin	24	50	88	110	115
Botswana	2	5	9	13	10
Burkina Faso	55	108	123	144	153
Burundi	39	103	123	153	171
Cabo Verde	1	2	3	2	—
Cameroon	143	275	331	407	529
Central Africa	77	102	108	112	103
Chad	48	105	173	223	460
Comoros	33	43	60	71	95
Congo	114	164	186	183	181
Congo Democratic	8	27	50	99	125
Djibouti	60	124	168	198	326
Equatorial Guinea	11	14	13	10	6
Eritrea	5	14	32	43	44
Ethiopia	184	328	432	477	506
Gabon	34	52	60	62	46
Gambia	48	79	104	133	151
Ghana	155	264	312	351	362
Guinee	138	206	217	262	448
Guinee Bissau	38	60	57	76	101

Ivory Coast	22	57	89	132	159
Kenya	344	443	475	432	439
Lesotho	7	9	14	8	5
Liberia	23	44	62	73	80
Madagascar	48	64	80	92	98
Malawi	91	119	129	124	119
Mali	140	271	348	353	308
Mauritania	82	129	151	168	177
Mauritius	12	17	26	28	19
Mozambique	53	78	102	93	76
Namibia	7	10	15	13	9
Niger	108	163	206	208	214
Nigeria	876	1176	1392	1287	1296
Ruanda	2	9	39	59	102
Sao Tome and Principe	—	2	3	4	4
Seashells	—	—	—	—	—
Senegal	105	135	177	171	163
Sierra Lone	12	24	36	47	54
Somali	638	915	1383	1735	2310
South Africa	48	134	164	172	268
South Sudan	3	1	18	27	38
Sudan	132	226	349	473	533
Swaziland	6	11	16	20	18
Tanzania	317	399	345	397	357
Togo	28	46	63	71	73
Uganda	121	185	221	220	238
Zambia	62	108	132	163	179
Zimbabwe	15	39	57	79	93
Total	4.532	6.958	8.768	9.800	11.378

Source: Association of Researchers on Africa (2018)

According to the above data, the number of Sub Saharan African students in Turkey is showing an increment every year. By considering the data, it is effortless to conclude that the numbers of Sub Saharan African students will increase more and more.

2.8. THE CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

International students experience scope of difficulties in their first educational period in another nation; they are required to make changes to a new culture, norm, and social conditions. Gennep (1960) distinguished three stages included in the change in accordance with another culture; these are, separation, transition, and incorporation proclaim that these three stages are applied for everyone. The separation stage comprises the movement of people from one place to another in order to settle temporarily or permanently. This stage would be difficult because of the separation from the known one and moving to the unknown. On the other hand, the transition stage is the learning stage for the newcomers about the culture, the language, and the norm of the new community. This stage is all about learning and struggling to adapt to the new environment as much as possible. In this stage, students will have a tough time learning and figuring out new things in order to incorporate into the new society. In the third stage, incorporation is the critical stage for international students to become part of the community or foundation. In this stage, the student will have the opportunity to integrate into the system and the overall culture. This stage is the outcome of the former stages in the process of separating from families and learning another culture.

International students could encounter many difficulties when they are travelling to a new country for education. Stressors in international students have been analyzed in many types of research. The most recurring stressors have been observed to be personal and social; challenges in alteration and acculturative stressors, such as troubles related to language incapability, confinement, separation, and scholastic stressors, such as school workload and educational performance (Lee and Rice, 2007). Because of these difficulties, international students have detailed encounters of loneliness, separation, tension, and depression.

Language incapability is one of the noticeable issues that every foreign student face. Researches demonstrate that this issue is far-reaching in international

students' educational life. Numerous researchers have suggested that students who feel they lack capability in language encounter tension and culture of silence. There are a few models and detailed proof of this pattern in writing. Regularly, international students state that their way of speaking one's language (accent) was an issue for them when they tried to communicate with the target person. They feel frequently misjudged, in some cases cannot take an interest in class discourses, or are disregarded when they endeavor to take part in discussions (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011; Nwabah and Heitner, 2009).

Foreign students who took part in an Australian research program reported English proficiency as a significant challenge (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011:11). Discoveries demonstrated that poor English language capability brings about poor educational achievement, stress, sadness, and poor social cooperation with local communities (Brown, 2008:75); these encounters are portrayed as inspiring "feelings of anxiety, shame, and inferiority." The lack of English language proficiency challenges international students in many ways, and leads them to problems related to their personal, academic and social life. The issue related to language proficiency is related to not only English language proficiency, at the same time a lot of international students who are travelling to study to the non-English speaking countries also conclude as a problem for international students (Brown, 2008).

According to the article of Soubar, he described the main challenge of international students in Turkey related to Turkish language proficiency.

92.4% of the international students were found to have a medium and advanced level of Turkish. However, it has been reported that students have problems in language skills, especially in writing, speaking, and understanding what they read and heard. 89.7% of the students find Turkish levels sufficient to be successful in their education and academic life. At the same time, they point out that the most important problem they experience in social and cultural life due to language inadequacy is the communication problem (Snoubar, 2017: 803).

The lack of language proficiency negatively affects the students' social life because they cannot easily communicate and create relationships with local students (Brown, 2008). These poor social relationships also affect their educational performance in many aspects. At the same time, being unable to engage in-group discussions, unable to understand the lectures very well and miscommunicating with the teachers affect their educational achievements.

The phenomenon of an alarming increase of international students in advanced education establishments has stimulated the enthusiasm of culturally diverse studies with regards to student learning. Social measurement has empowered different

educational perspectives models to investigate the divergence of educational achievement between home students and international students. *Culture* has a significant effect on the life and educational performance of a student living in foreign countries. In some cases, students can experience a cultural shock when they travel to a country that is very far from their homeland. According to Gang Li, Wei Chen, and Jing-Lin (2010), students from the Far East have been experiencing a cultural shock and facing cultural adjustment problems when they are travelling to Western countries. As of Erel (2010), the migrants who are travelling to other countries bring different cultural capital, which can be fit or not. Those cultural capitals could be cultural tastes, styles, and habits: knowledge and practical art, theatre, linguistic capital, sport, education, music, aspirations. The differences in cultural capital could create difficulties in getting into the culture of the new environment. Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke, and Weiss (2006), described how cultural capital is important in the integration of high skilled migrants in the work market. According to them, in the culturally dominant country, an individual migrant who accumulated different cultural capital will struggle in the new environment to be acceptable as a member of society. In this case, the only solution to challenge the difficulties is accumulating some of the most important cultural capital of the host environment.

“*Cultural shock* is a multifaceted experience resulting from numerous stressors occurring in contact with a different culture” (Winkelman, 1994:21). According to Winkelen (1994), cultural shock can create a psychosocial problem for the person who experienced it. Most of the individuals experiencing cultural shock are those who are not from a diverse and multicultural country. The people who came from a diverse country have the ability to adapt to different cultures and norms when they are getting into a new culture. “Culture shock is a process that develops at different levels depending on individual characteristics. When individuals have failed to interact with cultural differences, culture shock continues to increase and deeply affects immigration experience.” (Aksoy, 2012:299).

The cultural differences are one of the most critical problems for international students to create relationships with the locals and this unsuccessful interaction with locals might lead the international students into loneliness (Mona and Nyland, 2007). As indicated in the article of Mona and Nyland, one Pakistani student who was studying in Australia mentioned how difficult it was to create relationships with local students from a different culture.

No, not many locals [friends] because they have the difference (sic). They don't - how should I put it? It's easier for you too - for me, it wasn't tough to mix with the locals. I did mix with them, but the thing is they tend to be ... I would say they are materialistic. Not all of them, don't get me wrong on that, but when you tend to be you know studying with them, they would be in contact with you, but after that, I've had some really bad experiences, but then once you get to I used to everything, but now I am more into people from my country because the more you get into the atmosphere, the more you get from it (Mona and Nyland, 2017: 169).

2.9. EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN STUDENTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Mentalities exist in many prosperous host countries that are connected to the stereotyped view about Africa in the context of development and other social and cultural construction that enormously impacts the educational life of black African students in white-dominant higher educational foundations. The students' encounters have regularly been ascribed to existing generalizations in the overwhelming society about the individual's social foundation. Albeit different researchers have endeavored to reveal the living conditions of students studying in different nations, the living conditions of African students in the white dominant institution have not been completely investigated.

Researches have demonstrated that African students effectively adjust to their new learning situations, in spite of the modification challenges that the students face in transitioning into another condition (Jones, Castellanos, and Cole 2002). In fact, changing in accordance with the life and the culture of the host organization exposed numerous foreign students to the sentiments of alienation, it is likewise recorded that the encounters of the African students are combined with unfair and biased treatment that inclines them to stress-related cultural assimilation (Boafo-Arthur, 2014).

Researches have outlined the experiences of African students as they endeavor to modify the current culture and institutional conditions. Qualitative research, including twenty-one masters African students, revealed that African student experiences social avoidance and unwelcome frames of mind from the host country's students. (Hyams-Ssekasi, Mushibwe, Caldwell, 2014). Separation and feelings of unwelcome were found to affect the capacity of the African student to cooperate with the local students, subsequently making the integrative procedure considerably more troublesome. The degree of every one of these experiences could change depending upon the individual characters, sex roles, and the community.

The experience of African students in foreign countries' universities is not very different from the rest of the world students. However, in some contexts, the

experiences and the challenges that the African students face would be different from the students who came from the rest of the world. As Sidoryn and Slade (2008:1) stated that, "the place students are coming from affects their experiences at university in relation to the social and academic environment, as they come from the familiar to the unfamiliar." One of the factors, which makes the experiences of sub-Saharan African students different from other international students, is skin color or colorism. As a matter of fact, most of the Sub-Saharan African students are traveling to the white dominant countries for education. This indicates they will be in the universities where most of the students are different from them by skin color, and this difference creates alienation and stress. According to Fleming, 1985:

The stress of racial tension and inadequate social lives borne by Black students in White schools generates feelings of isolation that often lead to serious adjustment problems. These stresses lead to psychological withdrawal that impairs academic functioning. The factors that provide a positive climate at predominantly Black colleges are largely absent or unavailable to Black students in White schools. Consequently, Black students perform below ability levels. (Fleming, 1985: 3)

From the above expression, we can identify that the enrolment of black students in the white dominant institution could create a psychological problem because of the discrimination and stereotype the students face every day. Based on this premise, the black students' educational performance in white schools could be low compared to white students.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings from the data collection method applied for the research (in-depth interview) are presented to assess and understand the life of Sub Saharan African students in Gaziantep. During the interview, the students asked to answer their experiences and living conditions from different contexts. The questions were mostly prepared to obtain answers from the students' point of view and the general context. Students were asked to describe their personal information, the reasons to choose Gaziantep, the push and pull factors related to their educational migration, the cultural adaptation process, the challenges and the opportunities, and so on.

3.1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

In this research, 21 students participated in the interviews, and from the total participants, 14 were male, and the remaining 7 were female students from the Sub-Saharan Africa countries. From the total participants, 12 students were enrolled in various undergraduate programs, whereas the remaining nine students were in master's degree programs. All students but two were receiving a financial support from the Turkish Government Scholarship Program. The average age of the participants was 24 and they had been staying in Turkey for two to eight years. To diversify the participants' country of origin, the researcher tried to have interviews with students from different Sub-Saharan African countries as written down in the table.

Table 5. The demographic information of the interview participants.

No	Name	Sex	Age	Country of Origin	Level of Education	Duration of Stay In Turkey	Scholarship Holder
1	Omar	M	21	Zambia	Undergraduate	3	Yes
2	Mohammed	M	21	Djibouti	Undergraduate	3	Yes
3	Solomon	M	22	Ghana	Undergraduate	2	Yes
4	Samira	F	25	Djibouti	Masters	3	Yes
5	Elsa	F	22	Madagascar	Undergraduate	4	Yes
6	Hamza	M	23	Chad	Undergraduate	4	Yes
7	Bilan	F	22	Somalia	Undergraduate	3	Yes
8	Rawda	F	23	Sudan	Undergraduate	4	Yes
9	Ahmad	M	27	Somalia	Masters	3	Yes
10	Hassan	M	28	Mali	Masters	3	Yes
11	Abdurrahman	M	27	Ivory Coast	Masters	3	Yes
12	Eric	M	29	Burundi	Masters	3	Yes
13	Hanan	F	25	Ethiopia	Masters	3	Yes
14	Emmanuel	M	23	The Gambia	Undergraduate	4	Yes
15	Ismael	M	23	Comoros	Undergraduate	3	Yes
16	Trevor	M	23	South Africa	Undergraduate	5	Yes
17	Abeo	M	26	Nigeria	Masters	8	No
18	Mahfuza	F	27	Somaliland ¹⁸	Masters	3	Yes
19	Ali	M	26	Nigeria	Undergraduate	5	No
20	Daniel	M	25	Ethiopia	Masters	8	No
21	Gloria	F	25	Congo	Undergraduate	5	Yes

3.2. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS OF STUDENTS TO CHOOSE TURKEY FOR STUDY

As discussed in the previous chapters, the students' educational movement throughout the world has many reasons. In the contemporary educational migration movement, many rationales arise to shape the students' choice of a country for

¹⁸ Somaliland is a self-declared state, internationally considered to be an autonomous region of Somalia. Even though Somaliland is not a recognized country, one of the participants of the interview prefer to be called from Somaliland.

education. According to Mazzarol, Soutar, and Seng (2002), the motives could be the push factors, the factors that arise in the students' home country that push them for education migration, and the pull factors, the factors that occur in the host nation to pull students for education. The students who participated in the interview stated many motives for their choice of Turkey. They described the most important pull, and push factors, which led them to come to Turkey.

3.2.1. Push Factors

As demonstrated by the students who took part in the interviews, several complexities of getting educational opportunities in the home country prompted them to search for a scholarship in foreign countries. As per the majority of the participants, the economic underdevelopment in the home country is one of the factors shaping students' decisions in their educational life. The economic backwardness hinders many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa from building a quality education accessible to all students

One of the interviewees from South Africa stated how economic problems pushed him to search educational opportunities in Turkey.

The economic problem pushed me to leave my country¹⁹. Even though we have good universities in my country, the cost of education²⁰ was not affordable for me. I tried to cope with the costs as much as I could, but later I gave up. I never planned to move to another country to study. However, the economic problem played a significant role in my presence in Turkey because, now, I have a fully covered scholarship (Trevor, 23, South Africa).

The lack of quality education and full access to educational equipment in the universities of some African countries also prompted students to find opportunities in a foreign country. The participants said that one of the most important push factors is a lack of quality education in the home country. They believed a university with a good

¹⁹ As South Africa is the most developed country in Africa, the country's educational quality is higher than the rest of the countries in the continent. Thus, the country's higher educational institutions are not affordable for students with low financial incomes. The cost of living in South Africa shows differences from place to place. In the country's biggest city Johannesburg, the cost of living is higher than in Istanbul. The cost of living index in Johannesburg is 13.64% higher than in Istanbul. Rent in Johannesburg is, on average, 52.94% higher than in Istanbul. The cost of living ranks 338th out of 492 cities in the world. Retrieved from <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Johannesburg/> Date of Access on May 30, 2020.

quality education could contribute positively to shape their future life by giving them a high level of knowledge and experience after the completion of their education

A participant from Ivory Coast expressed that he came to Turkey for a better education, which he could not get in his country.

At least I have to get a better education for my future career. Most of the universities in my country do not have enough quality education. I was very disappointed when I did my first degree. For me continuing for the Master's degree was comfortable there. But I could not make it because the education I got was not nice so I decided to apply for Turkish Universities (Abdurrahman, 27, Ivory Coast).

3.2.2. Pull Factors

As per the participants of the interviews, their decision to come to Turkey mostly shaped by the pull factors from the host nation, Turkey. In their study, Macready and Tucker (2011) recommend that the factors, which shape the international students' movement, are mostly the pull factors in the host country. Depending on the participants' responses, the opportunities, and accessibilities of scholarships and other forms of assistance for international students played a significant role in their decision to attend Turkish universities. According to them, the pull factors for their existence in Turkey are the accessibility of full scholarships, better education, religion of Turkey, the geographical closeness, the historical linkage, and the affordable cost of living.

3.2.2.1. The Accessibility of Full Scholarship

In Turkey, many scholarships are accessible for international students. One of the most significant scholarships, which covers the total costs of the international students, is the Turkish Government Scholarship Program. As indicated in chapter two, the Turkish Government Scholarship is one of the world's most prestigious scholarships, which covers the full cost of the students. It provides scholarships for more than five thousand students every year.

As indicated above, most of the participants are the beneficiary of the Turkish Government Scholarship. They stated that this full scholarship has helped them overcome economic problems while learning, and this one of the reasons to apply for the scholarship. Two participants of the interview from Ghana and South Africa

confirmed how the scholarship helped them to attend in Gaziantep University without worrying about their financial problems.

Before I apply for this scholarship, I didn't have any information about it. One time when I was searching for an award in a foreign country, I found this scholarship. When I read about it, I found out it was a full scholarship. That is why I applied for this scholarship. Believe me, if it was not a full scholarship, I would have never applied for it because, without a full scholarship, I do not have even a penny to cover my cost (Solomon, 22, Ghana).

Because of an economic problem, I found myself in the middle of a dilemma of applying to scholarship or just drop out of school. But later I found the Turkish scholarship's calls for application on the internet. Then I rushed to apply for a scholarship as soon as possible. I applied and won the award. That was a dream for me. For the last five years, I have been studying without any problem (Trevor, 23, South Africa).

3.2.2.2. Better Quality Education in Turkey

The participants mentioned that Turkey's quality of education is better than that in most of the countries in Sub Saharan Africa. They believed that Turkey is in a booming educational development period with high-quality education and accessible educational materials. According to them, technological advancement and access to good internet, which are essential components of contemporary education, are better developed in Turkey than in their own countries.

Apart from that, the students stated that Turkey is giving great attention to higher education these days. The government is trying to make the Turkish higher educational institutions a home for international students to boost the quality of education. Moreover, the academicians have a good experience and a close connection with their students to solve students' academic problems.

3.2.2.3. The Religion of Turkey

Turkey is a Muslim majority country located in the middle of Europe and Asia and most of the country's population practice Islamic faith. Having a similar religious affiliation with the host country and the international student is a key factor influencing students' destination choice.

Almost all of the interviewees stated that religion is the most important pull factor for their destination choice. According to them, Turkey is a peaceful Islamic country to exercise their Islamic faith without any discrimination. The following participants from Mali and Chad stressed how the religion of Turkey influenced them to choose Turkey as their educational destination.

I studied an undergraduate degree in theology in Mali. Then I was looking for a master's degree in the same department. Then I applied for the Turkish scholarship, and I succeeded to come here. Before I came here, I had a chance to study in other countries, however, I chose Turkey because I believe that Turkey is the centre of the Islamic world. Moreover, Turkey is a strong and peaceful country to practice my religion without any worry (Hassan, 28, Mali).

I was planning to apply for admission to a Western country before I got information about Turkish scholarship. Then when I heard from social media, being a Muslim in a Western country is difficult. There are a lot of abuses because of religion. Therefore, I changed my tune to Turkey, and I came here. Now here I am living my life and practicing my faith with freedom (Hamza, 23, Chad).

3.2.2.4. The Geographical Closeness, the Historical Linkage with Turkey, and the Affordable Cost of Living

The geographic proximity, the historical tie with Turkey, and the affordable cost of living are other key pull factors for the interviews' participants. Most of the participants from the Horn of Africa stated that the geographical closeness to Turkey played a significant role in shaping their study area preference. On the other hand, according to the participants' view, the historical linkage between countries of Sub-Saharan Africa with Turkey also has a considerable impact on the choice of study area according to them. They believed that Turkey and their country's historical ties made everything easy for them to adapt to the new environment quickly. The historical linkage with countries can affect the flow of migrants in many different reasons. As of Castles and Miller (1998), the developed countries in Europe were taking migrants from their colonial-based countries with strong historical linkage because of colonialism. For this historical linkage, France could be an example by taking the highest number of African migrants, including students.

Any form of migration has motives that lead migrants to choose a country suitable for them to migrate. In migration, cultural and language similarities between the migrant's home and destination country play a significant role. Kohnert (2007) describes how cultural and language similarities of countries in Africa with some European countries created by historical linkage during colonization motivate the migrants in their destination country choice. Even though the culture is not completely similar to the destination countries, the adaptation of the culture does not take a lot of effort.

The participants also declared that Turkey is the most affordable country for international students in terms of housing and the cost of living compared to other students' destination countries. Students from Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Chad stated the

following ideas about the pull factors of the geographical closeness, the historical linkage with Turkey, and the affordable cost of living respectively.

Turkey is close to my country Ethiopia compared to other students' destination areas. The geographic proximity will help me to back to my country to see my family because the flight cost cheaper than other countries. Even my family also feels that I am very close to them. I know many of my friends who came from remote areas are struggling to go and see their family because the flight is expensive and they cannot afford it (Hanan, 25, Ethiopia).

My country Djibouti has a close connection with Turkey starting from the Ottoman Empire period. The historical link we have with Turkey is made me choose Turkey for education. Even after, I came here; I realized how the culture is similar to us and helped me to adapt to the environment quickly (Samira, 25, Djibouti).

Before I came here, I read a lot about the cost of living in Turkey, and I realized it is affordable. I had a friend who is studying in Canada with a full scholarship. He always tells me how Canada is expensive, and it is difficult for students to handle all the costs. But when I see my conditions here, I realize how Turkey is affordable for international students. I have a full scholarship from the Turkish government. The award is covering my costs without any shortage (Hamza, 23, Chad).

3.3. THE STUDENTS' EXPECTATION BEFORE THEY CAME TO GAZIANTEP

The participants of the interview mentioned several expectations they were afraid of and eager to experience. For many of the participants, their expectations of Turkey were different from their expectations of Gaziantep. One of the participants from Djibouti stated that he was expecting Gaziantep would be a dangerous place to live because of its closeness to Syria. He said that the media pictured Gaziantep as a bad place when he read the news on the internet. However, when he came here, everything seemed different, and Gaziantep was a safe place. Many of the students had a lot of expectations from the news they read and the Turkish Cinema they had watched. A student from Ethiopia noted that she was expecting Turkish people would be too religious.

My expectation was in spiritual practice in Turkey. I expected Turkey is a very conservative Muslim country and the practice of religion would be very deep. But I always see many women don't cover their hair while they are Muslims. There are many mosques, but a few people are praying. I am covering my hair in an Islamic way, and many Turkish people ask whether I am a Muslim or not. I surprised whenever they ask me like this. Covering the hair is one of the traditions of Islamic activities (Hanan, 25, Ethiopia).

A student from Burundi was expecting the residents of Gaziantep would behave like Europeans, and the culture would be the same as the Western. However, he realized that the culture was more of a Middle Eastern culture. He added that he learned a lot of European cultures because of the colonialization and was expecting it would be the same in Gaziantep. Another participant from Ethiopia said that he was in

Istanbul for two years before he came to Gaziantep. When he was settled here, he was expecting Gaziantep to be the same as in Istanbul. However, Gaziantep was different. He added that he started learning the culture and some dialects of Turkish language again in Gaziantep.

Some of the participants responded that the living conditions they were expecting and what they found was different. They were expecting the cost of living in Gaziantep would be affordable, but it was expensive and challenging. On the other hand, some participants confirmed that they found an affordable city, Gaziantep, as they were expecting. Two participants of the interview from Zambia and Ghana had different sights on their expectations on the cost of living.

I was expecting the cost of living would be cheap and the scholarship would enough to cover the whole expenses without shortage. Unfortunately, I could not handle the cost of living as I was expecting. I was struggling a lot before I told my parents to send me some money. Now everything is ok because I am getting assistance from my family (Omar, 21, Zambia).

Some students complain about the cost of living, but for me it is ok. Before I came to Gaziantep, a friend of mine told me that Gaziantep is an affordable city for the students. I came here, and I found out he was right. I do not face any challenges because of the high cost. The scholarship I am receiving is enough to manage my day-to-day life as a student (Solomon, 22, Ghana).

Participants also mentioned their expectations towards the educational activities at Gaziantep University. They found even more than their expectations in terms of high-quality education with experienced academicians. They noted that Gaziantep University is a well standard educational institution compared to their home countries' universities. In contrast, some other students are not satisfied with the university's overall educational activities. They mentioned that their expectation was beyond the reality. In the following two statements, the interview participants from Gambia and Djibouti reflected their ideas on the educational expectation of students, respectively.

Before I came to Gaziantep, I was expecting an excellent education with experienced academicians. Unfortunately, I found everything below my expectations. I do not say totally it is terrible, but my hope was very high. I cannot say education is not good at Gaziantep University, but there are a lot of things that need attention. Imagine that at this big university you cannot find English language books easily. There are many things to be fixed to make the university more competitive (Emmanuel, 23, The Gambia)

In my country, we have very few universities. When you see the quality of education and their reputations, you will appreciate Gaziantep University. This university has an outstanding education and standard system organized by technology. The academicians are very experienced and hard worker. I do have nothing to complain about this university. I found it even more than my expectations (Mohammed, 21, Djibouti).

3.4. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STUDYING IN THE HOME COUNTRY AND GAZIANTEP

Students who wish to study in foreign countries have different reasons, which encouraged or prompted them and shaped their decisions. As discussed above, students have several factors to attend international universities other than their home countries' universities, such as accessibility to scholarships, quality education, cost of living, historical linkage, and so on. Students may try to discover the differences between studying in their home country and foreign nations after attending international universities. Those differences may inspire them or discourage them from having a better accomplishment in their educational life.

The participants of the interview noted that they figured out many differences between studying in their country and Gaziantep. They stated that studying in Gaziantep is better than their educational experience in a home country. Other participants described that studying at Gaziantep is complicated than studying in their home country in terms of family support and companion. According to them, when they were studying in the home country, they were surrounded by family members and friends who support in any educational activities. However, in Gaziantep, they faced everything on their own with the absence of guidance from family or friends. Students from Burundi and Nigeria noted the following ideas on the differences in studying the home country and Gaziantep.

It is nice to experience a new culture and to get a free education in a foreign nation. However, studying in the home country is more comfortable than going abroad. When you study in your country, you have a family and friends' support. You will have strong social support when you face challenges. However, here in Gaziantep, you will face everything on your own merits. You will face cultural, social and economic problems. In foreign nations, you have to fight alone for yourself (Eric, 29, Burundi).

I always feel strange here in Gaziantep, even though I have been living for five years. I feel that I do not belong here. The education is good, but the difference in culture and race make me feel uncomfortable. The difference between studying in my country Nigeria and Gaziantep is that in Nigeria I never felt not belonging to the society because they are the same people like me but here in Gaziantep everything is different from my previous experience. Therefore, these kinds of differences have some impact on educational achievements. However, if you accept and face the differences, you will be successful in your education (Ali, 26, Nigeria).

As opposed to the above thoughts, a few participants agreed that despite the fact that there are difficulties due to an absence of support from family and feeling of non-belongingness to the new country, these challenges forced them to experience another lifestyle and to have better education. They stated that the Gaziantep has well standard universities with various international students from all around the world compared to many Sub Saharan African universities. This is a significant difference in

studying in Gaziantep rather than in their home countries. They believed that studying in a university with diverse students adds value to their education. Besides, they noted that the life experience they have been learning in Gaziantep is invaluable.

The following thoughts were shared by two participants from Gambia and Sudan highlighting their views on the differences of studying in in their home countries and Gaziantep.

I know studying in my home country is comfortable than Gaziantep because of the social support you get in your country. However, studying in Gaziantep is for me better than studying in my home country with its challenges. For the first time, I take the responsibility to manage my life and to make a decision. I teach myself how to become a self-independent person. Studying in Gaziantep doesn't' gave me only education also gave me life experience (Emmanuel, 23, The Gambia).

Whenever you go to Gaziantep people may stare at you and make you feel strange. However, this is your life experience. Gaziantep has many international students from all over the world. You are one of those international students. If I were in my country, I would never experience such a kind of educational or personal life. Being a student here in Gaziantep and my country has considerable differences in terms of international students' enrollment (Rawda, 23, Sudan).

The quality of education also one of the essential differences mentioned by participants of the interview. The reputation and the quality of education between home universities and Gaziantep have huge differences. They believed that they are getting a better education here in Gaziantep.

3.5. INEVITABLE CHANGES IN STUDENTS LIFE

Within the changing environment, international students living in different places other than their home country could experience many changes in their personal, social and academic life. The changes they experience could be negative or positive depending on their preferences or influences from friends and environment. For the change they encounter many factors like culture, language, interaction with students from different backgrounds, the challenges they face, and education contribute during their stay in the host environment.

The participants were asked to describe the changes they experienced in Gaziantep, and all of the participants believed they experienced changes in their personal and social life. They explained that changes are inevitable in international student's life as a result of the changing environment and culture.

3.5.1. Changes in Personal Life

The new environment could affect the students' personal life. In most important cases, the students' overall life, especially their personality, is negatively or positively affected when they merge in a new community or school (Sorin, 2006). Participants mentioned their personal changes after they came to Gaziantep. Most of them believed that they have become more open-minded and decision-makers in their own life. Besides, the freedom they acquired in Gaziantep and their experiences assisted them to develop personality changes. Participants from Ethiopia and Ghana explained the changes in their personal life as follow.

There are many changes in my personality. I learned how to manage my daily life by myself without support. I was the only black girl in the whole dormitory at that time. It was strange to me for the first time. Many people wanted to help me, but I could not speak Turkish; they could not speak English. Through many difficulties and challenges, I successfully started to manage everything by myself without any assistance for the first time (Hanan, 25, Ethiopia).

I was a timid person when I was in Ghana. Speaking in front of people and handling my problems were impossible for me without any support from my family. However, after I came to Gaziantep, everything changed and I became mature. I started to face everything by myself because nobody is here to support me. Now I have many friends, and I can do whatever I want without any assistance (Solomon, 22, Ghana).

Based on the above views of participants, we can conclude that changes are happening in the personal life of students. The freedom they acquired in Gaziantep helped them to developed decision making skills and strengthened their independence.

3.5.2. Changes in Social Life

Changes in social life are other important and fundamental changes they experienced in Gaziantep, according to the participants of the interview. They mentioned that attending in Gaziantep University created many opportunities to broaden their social life by creating relations with other international students and the locals. Participants mentioned that changes in their social life would never be broadened without the international experiences of Gaziantep University. Although some participants agreed that they experienced negative social life, most of the participants believed that they had great social life experiences after attending at Gaziantep University.

Participants mentioned some of the most important elements, which helped them to have changes in their social life. The freedom they got helped them to create relation with anyone without family pressure. According to the participants, when

they were in their country, they were forced by families to have a limited social life. However, in Gaziantep, they are free to have many friends and to participate in different social activities. The existence of many international students in Gaziantep also helped them to have a diverse social life during their stay. Besides, the participants of the interview believed that having black skin color facilitated the way to get friends easily in Gaziantep. Most people in Gaziantep are curious to know about students, and they usually want to be friend with them. Most importantly, learning a new language and culture helped them to communicate and create relationships with many people.

Participants from Zambia and Sudan stated that attending Gaziantep University helped them to have a meaningful social life compared to their home country.

Before I came to Turkey, I never had any social life. My family was controlling me a lot. They never allowed me to have friends and to play outside. Especially my father was the one controlling me a lot in any situation. Moreover, I was timid to communicate with people. However, after I came to Turkey, everything changes. I became a free man. Now I got many friends, and I do everything I want without any interference. At the same time, I learned a new language and culture, which helped me to have a better social life in Gaziantep (Omar, 21, Zambia).

My social life was limited back home because I did not have time to meet friends. I was working with my father after school to cover my educational costs. When I had free time from work, I used that for studying. I had a few friends in school. However, here in Gaziantep, I managed to get many friends, which helped me to have a great social life. I have a full scholarship to cover my costs, so I do not think to work. In Gaziantep, there are many social activities. I always participate in and having new friends (Rawda, 23, Sudan).

On the other hand, two participants of the interview from Comoros and Mali stated that they experienced less interesting social life in Gaziantep because of the feelings of loneliness and homesickness. According to them, they had a better social life in their home countries because of their friends and families. In Gaziantep, they experienced social exclusion, which hinders them from having active participation in social activities.

It is challenging to have a good social life in Gaziantep, especially if you are from Africa. People make you uncomfortable to go out and participate in social activities and to have friends. In Gaziantep, everywhere I go people ask me ridiculous questions, which make me angry. Therefore, I prefer to stay in the dormitory after school. When I was in Comoros, I was active and had many friends (Ismael, 23, Comoros).

I do believe people in Gaziantep are helpful for foreigners, but they are not as friendly as I expected. I tried a lot to have friends and to communicate with people, but I could not make it. I spend most of my time sitting in a dorm and studying. I have two kids back home. I think about them all the time. My body is leaving here, but my mind is with my kids. I feel bored all the time. My only intention is to go back home after finishing the education (Hassan, 28, Mali).

3.6. THE GAZIANTEP RESIDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS AFRICAN STUDENTS

Being a minority in a foreign country has several feelings and challenges. According to Sidoryn and Slade (2008), being a foreigner in a different country with different culture and norms might be difficult and challenging for international students. However, being a sub-Saharan African in white-dominant countries is particularly more complicated and challenging.

In Gaziantep, many African students are attending universities and interacting with the local people and other international students from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, and so on. In their interaction with the people, the students come across with many coincidences. In the interviews, students were asked to reflect their feelings toward being an African in Gaziantep. According to them being an African in Gaziantep is challenging and struggling to cope with the stereotypes of many people. Most of the participants believed that the most important challenges they are facing in Gaziantep are stereotypes and negative attitudes of the people towards Africans.

Many participants believed that the name of Africa in Gaziantep is always related to hunger and war. On the streets and many places, people had been asking students from Africa stereotypical questions, which they learned from social media. According to the participants, they have been encountered many unnecessary questions towards Africa, which make them uncomfortable to handle their day-to-day life. As mentioned by the participants of the interviews, some of the questions asked by some people to African students are the following.

- Do you have water in Africa?
- Do you have food in Africa?
- Are you a refugee?
- Are you living in a cave in Africa?
- Do you have TVs and Computers in Africa?
- Do you have buildings?
- Why are you black?
- Are there cannibals in Africa?

A participant from South Africa noted the following idea towards the life of African students in Gaziantep.

I love everything about Gaziantep. I feel good being an African student in Gaziantep. I am an ambassador for my country. In Gaziantep, people are very welcoming and polite. However, the information they have about Africa and their attitudes are sometimes disturbing me. Some people are asking me shocking questions, which are very misleading. Once upon a time, a person asked me are there cannibals in Africa, and I was totally shocked. I told him, no, and I tried to explain how some news is fake. I do not know he believed me or not, but that was my bad experience. People are very good, but some are contaminated with bad information about Africa (Trevor, 23, South Africa).

Representing Africa as a student in a foreign country is a significant opportunity to raise awareness of African culture and reconstruct Africa's false image. Based on the participants, the bad image of Africa in many countries around the world discourages African students from achieving educational accomplishments in their studies. The in-depth interviews participants reported that many people in Gaziantep consider them as refugees, which creates uncomfortable situation for the students moving around in the city. The participants believed that the Syrian refugee crises paved the way for many Gaziantep residents to assume African students as refugees who came to Turkey for asylum. Participants from Gambia and Somalia mentioned that they had the same experience during their stay in Gaziantep.

Many people consider me as a refugee before I tell them about my status. They come to me and ask me what I am doing in Gaziantep in a polite way. I have to explain the reason why I came to Gaziantep. Even some people asked me, are you a refugee? When you are a student, and people consider you as a refugee, you will definitely feel it a lot. I think the color we have and the place we came from contributes to experience such kind of questions. If you are black, you recognized as an African, and we know the image of Africa (Emmanuel, 23, The Gambia).

As a Somalian, we have many refugees all over the world because of the war. Being a Somali is equal to a refugee for some people. I have experienced the same way in Gaziantep. Some people recognized me I am a Somali and others ask me where I came from. When I tell them, I am from Somalia, they start to ask me about my country's problems and how can I come to Turkey. Some people did not even believe me when I told them I am living in Somalia and come here just for education. Therefore, I have to challenge such kind of attitudes as long as I came here for education (Ahmed, 27, Somalia).

The participants of the interview agreed that such kinds of attitudes steam from inappropriate news from mass and social media. According to them, some people take for granted any news about Africa without making further investigations. The problems are the attitudes and the constructed assumptions about Africa, which identified from their repeated questions and curiosity. A participant from Nigeria said Gaziantep is a new destination place for African students. At the same time, the people of Gaziantep are not diverse and open to different colors and cultures as expected. They were a closed community that did not have enough exposure to the outside world, especially to Africans. He believed that the stereotypes and negative attitudes came from a lack of cultural awareness and diversity. A participant of the interview from Burundi also had the same assumption about the above idea.

Everywhere I go, people are staring at me and trying to have some conversation with me. Even some people asking me to take a photo with them. In Gaziantep, most of the people did not have an opportunity to see black people face to face. When they see us for the first time, they are wondering a lot. That is why some people are behaving inappropriate way by asking some silly questions. I do not blame them; maybe I would do the same if they came to my country (Eric, 29, Burundi).

The participants mentioned other important points about the real cause of the stereotypes and negative attitudes towards Africans in Gaziantep. According to the students, some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a role in the creation of misleading assumptions about Africa by fabricating inappropriate news and advertisements in the name of supporting poor children in Africa. The news and advertisements are deliberately organized to generate money from individuals and cooperative donors. Students believed that the NGOs' actions of announcing about Africa and posting destitute African children's pictures on public areas created a false image and negative assumptions that people in Africa have been living with poverty and war. The interview participants acknowledged that war and poverty could be a long-term problem in Africa. Nonetheless, the image pictured by NGOs is far different from the reality.

Most of the participants were blaming one Non-Governmental organization in Turkey which made an advertisement for donors to generate money by posting a photo of African children on Social Media with the title called "*Support Africans who never tasted a piece of meat in their entire life.*" When the advertisement released on Social Media, African students were provoked and complained about the situation. The participants stated that although they might encourage the activities intended to support Africans, an exaggerated and inappropriate way of advertising the situation of Africans is distorting their image and contributing into the construction of false stereotypes. Two participants from Ethiopia and Chad have the following ideas about the above incident and their experience on advertisements.

Some non-governmental organizations are established just to collect money for their benefits. In any means, their primary goal is to gather money and to act as if they are helping poor people. I do not blame all the NGOs because there are supportive and real NGOs. When I saw the advertisement on Social Media, I was very shocked even my Turkish friend who saw the post sent to me. I believe we have problems in Africa and we appreciate people who are supportive of us. However, making inappropriate advertisements and collecting money by our name is disgusting (Daniel, 25, Ethiopia).

One time in Gaziantep tramway stations, the pictures of sub-Saharan African kids were hanged, and everyone was looking at them. The photo shows their highly desperate body because of famine. When I was there to use the tramway, I felt terrible to see the pictures. I know it is to help poor people in Africa. However, it also cultivated shame and bad feelings for any African living in Gaziantep. People might believe you also come here to escape the problems in Africa (Hamza, 23, Chad).

Colonization is another important issue, which contributes to the negative African image in many countries. Participants stated that the people had asked them many questions about the colonization impacts and how they managed to survive. The interviewees believed that Africans were colonized by Europeans, however many non-African countries all over the world were also colonized. Participants also complained about the strong association between slavery and colonization with Africa, while slavery and colonization occurred in almost every part of the world. Many people in Gaziantep believe that Africans do not have their languages and cultures and think that Africa is still under-colonization. A participant from Ethiopia said that her country had never been colonized. However, people do not know this information and assume that all of Africa was colonized with no exception. She added that students find it difficult to believe that her country, Ethiopia, was never colonized.

Participants of the interview have the following ideas towards colonization and its impact on the overall image of Africa in foreign countries.

We were colonized by European for many years. They took our resources and killed our people. However, the real problem we are facing is the afterward image we have in the view of other countries. When you are African, people still believe you are a slave and this attitude will follow you everywhere you go. As a South African, we had problems before, but now our country is developing. However, when people asking me where I come from and when to tell them from South Africa, the only thing that comes to their mind is apartheid²¹. Colonization is sucks! (Trevor, 23, South Africa).

Because of colonization, many people still believe that Africans are incapable of having better opportunities and education. It was an unfortunate incident for Africa to be colonized by Europeans, which has been a negative impact on the overall development of Africa. Being an African student outside of Africa is challenging to cope with the stereotypes and attitudes people have towards Africa because of colonization. This also works for Gaziantep (Gloria, 25, Congo).

Apart from this, many participants noted that being in Gaziantep and experiencing such attitudes and curiosity allowed them to show how Africa looks for Gaziantep residents. Some participants believed that the only way to change negative stereotypes and attitudes is by creating awareness and promoting African cultures and customs. According to them, many people have a willingness to learn more about African culture. Therefore, students believed that they should not be offended by other peoples' attitudes; instead, such attitudes should be seen as opportunities to show the

²¹ Encyclopedia Britannica defines apartheid as “a policy that governed relations between South Africa’s white minority and nonwhite majority and sanctioned racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against nonwhites. The implementation of apartheid often called “separate development” since the 1960s, was made possible through the Population Registration Act of 1950, which classified all South Africans as either Bantu (all black Africans), Colored (those of mixed race), or white. A fourth category—Asian (Indian and Pakistani)—was later added.” Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/apartheid>. Date of Access February 12, 2020.

good image of Africa to the world. The students explained that the international students' day organized by Gaziantep University allows African students to show their culture and create awareness for the Gaziantep residents. A student from Sudan has the following opinion about the importance of international students' day for African students.

The international students' day is a big opportunity for African students to show and promote their country. I have participated in the program for four years. During the program, I got an opportunity to show my country cultures and rituals. At the same time, peoples also got a chance to change their negative attitude about Africa. When I was in tents and describe my country, most of the visitors were very surprised. They do not expect those nice things would happen in Africa (Rawda, 23, Sudan).

3.7. THE CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN STUDENTS IN GAZIANTEP

Kim (1988) stated that for every individual migrant in a new environment for different purposes, cultural adaptation is vital in facilitating a smooth relationship with the locals and coping with the changes. For every international student, the cultural adaption process in a foreign country could be challenging and needs many struggles to cope with cultural changes. As of many international students, the Sub-Saharan African students pass the way in struggling with the challenges of cultural adaptation. The participants of the study have different arguments according to cultural adaptation. For most of the participants, adapting the Gaziantep's culture was challenging and needed many efforts to cope with it. However, some of the participants believed that cultural adaptation was not challenging because of many factors related to their cultural similarities, historical linkage, and religion. Beil and Mayor (2018) stated having similarities in culture, and other social norms facilitate the cultural adaptation process without having strong challenges and problems.

The participants who believed in the challenging of the Gaziantep's culture demonstrate their reasons how the culture became challenging for them. Most of them believed that the reason they were challenged a lot was that they found the culture of Gaziantep beyond their expectations.

For me, it is still difficult to adapt to the culture. I feel the culture is rigid and very controlling at the same time; it is much closed for foreigners to adapt quickly. Before I come to Gaziantep, I was in Istanbul. In Istanbul, you are not connected with one culture. It is a vast city, and you will get many different cultures. At the same time in Istanbul, no one will not judge you by your behavior. However, in Gaziantep, you have to cope with the culture. Everything has its way to do. Really, I feel bad for could not adapt to the culture of Gaziantep but still, I am trying (Abeo, 26, Nigeria).

I was expecting that in Turkey, the culture is more like European. But I figured out it is more Middle Eastern, especially in Gaziantep. To adapt to the culture, I struggled a lot. I feel controlled. I was afraid to act the way I was doing in my country before I came here. For the thing you do people will judge you in Gaziantep. If you look something different, they stare at you a lot. But I respect the cultural differences, and still I am trying to adapt in order to have a healthy relationship with the residences (Eric, 29, Burundi).

On the other hand, some of the participants believed that the cultural adaption process was not challenging for them, instead they adjust the Gaziantep's culture easily. The students who believed in the easiness of the cultural adaptation process came from the Horn of African²² countries. According to them, Turkey and their country have had cultural interactions and historical linkages started from the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, they agreed that the cultural interaction and the historical linkage allowed them to have closer awareness about the Turkish culture before they came to Turkey.

My country Somalia and Turkey have been in economic and political relations since the Ottoman Empire. Turkey has been our supporter during the crises that we have been in for a long time. Because of such factors, we used to adapt the Turkish culture. When I came to Gaziantep, I do not feel I am from a different country. The culture is almost similar to ours. I easily penetrated to the culture and created good interaction with the people. I think most of the time, Somali students do not have a cultural adaptation problem compared to other Sub Saharan African students (Bilan, 22, Somalia).

Most of the cultural activities in Gaziantep are similar to my country Ethiopia, especially to my city Harar.²³ Harar had been an independent state before present-day Ethiopia created by encompassing many big and small territories. During the old times in the Ottoman Empire, we had very close interaction with Turkey. Still, we had a healthy relationship. For me, the culture of Turkey is not difficult to adapt and to interact with the people (Hanan, 25, Ethiopia).

Some participants also mentioned the religious similarity to the residents of Gaziantep helped them to adapt the culture without having problems. They believed religion has been becoming a way of life and shaping the culture in many countries. Therefore, having similarities in religion helped them to break the cultural barriers and understand the culture of the new environment easily.

The religious affiliation of most of the people in Djibouti is Islam like Turkey. The two countries have almost similar culture with slight differences, which is shaped by the religion of Islam. As a Muslim, I know how to behave in Gaziantep. If you are practicing Islam and doing the same way as expected from the religion you almost capable of having a better understanding of the culture in a Muslim community. Especially Gaziantep is a conservative Islamic city, and I also lived my whole life in a conservative Islamic city in Djibouti. For me following your religion properly as possible will allow you to catch the culture of Gaziantep (Samira, 25, Djibouti).

In Gaziantep, most of the Sub Saharan African students who have different religions other than Islam have been complaining about the difficulties of cultural adaptation. Unlike them,

²² According to Encyclopedia Britannica Horn of Africa “is the easternmost extension of African land that is home to the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, whose cultures have been linked throughout their long history.” Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Horn-of-Africa>. Date of Access February 13, 2020.

²³ Harar is a historical and old city in Ethiopia. The city known as one of the holiest city in Eastern Africa and most of the population is the follower of Islam.

students from the Sub Saharan Africa with Islamic affiliation have been easily adapting the culture and interacting with people without having problems. I knew a South African student who wears a necklace with a cross to symbolize his Christianity, had a hard time to interact with some people in Gaziantep because of their judgment towards his religion. Sometimes if you have a different faith, some people will ostracize you, and this leads to difficulties to adapt to a new culture in a new environment (Ali, 26, Nigeria).

A participant student from the Gambia had another important opinion about the cultural adaptation process of Sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep. According to him, the culture of Gaziantep is not difficult to adapt whenever you came from. He added that having slight difficulties with the culture at the beginning is acceptable, but these are not long-term difficulties.

In my opinion, Gaziantep is not a difficult place to adapt to the culture. The culture is simple and easily adaptable. I believe there is no cultural shock in Gaziantep, even though this is my personal opinion. The food, norms, and religion are mostly practiced all over the world. I never got any cultural difficulties in Gaziantep; it will not be too. Because you left your country and came to a new environment, some cultural issues my encounter you in the beginning, but they are not severe cultural problems. Unlike many countries in Asia, the weather and the culture of Turkey is easily adaptable (Emmanuel, 23, the Gambia).

Some of the participants of the interview who believed in the difficulties of cultural adaptation in Gaziantep mentioned some reasons, which hinder them from adapting the culture easily. They noted that social exclusion, ethnocentrism,²⁴ and languages are the most important difficulties to adapt to the culture of Gaziantep successfully. They believed that the attitudes and stereotypes of some people in Gaziantep make them exclude themselves from participating in cultural activities and observing the overall culture of Gaziantep. According to them, some people are highly curious and making negative comments about Africa. This kind of behavior hinders the interest of African students and discourages them from becoming part of the community as a foreigner. Besides, they observed some people with ethnocentric sentiments. In some places, they faced problems related to their cultural manifestation when some people are disrespecting and considered the African culture as rubbish. Apart from this, one of the most significant difficulties that made them struggle with cultural adaptation was language. According to them, language is the most important mechanism to learn a culture, especially in Gaziantep, where people are only speaking the Turkish language. They noted that it was challenging to communicate with the local people to learn the culture easily.

²⁴ Boris Bizumic (2015:1) defined Ethnocentrism as “a kind of ethnic or cultural group egocentrism, which involves a belief in the superiority of one’s own group, including its values and practices, and often contempt, hatred, and hostility towards those outside the group.”

Three participants from Congo, Zambia, and Somaliland manifested the following ideas on the difficulties of cultural adaptation in Gaziantep by relating to the obstacles of social exclusion, ethnocentrism, and language.

Some people are not friendly in Gaziantep. Moreover, friendly people ask me stereotypical questions all the time, especially when I came for the first time. It was irritating me a lot to be around gathered people. Everyone was staring at me. Because of such factors, I stayed most of my time in a dormitory. My interaction with Gaziantep residents is minimal. I feel I excluded from society here in Gaziantep. No one told me not to be around and to exclude from the community, but indirect comments and stereotypes made me refrain from social interactions (Gloria, 25, Congo).

I have some experiences of looking down African cultures. During the international students' day at Gaziantep University, a lot of students and Gaziantep residents are coming to watch several cultural manifests of international students. Most people have positive images of African culture and want to know more about it. However, some people have a negative comment about Africa's culture. I remember one person trying to compare the Turkish and Zambia's culture by looking down my culture and appreciating his own culture. I believe that Turkey has a captivating culture, but at least he had to respect mine also. If someone does not respect my culture, how I am going to learn his/her culture. Nevertheless, I always see positive people (Omar, 21, Zambia).

As long as you are living in Gaziantep, you have to learn the Turkish language to communicate with people and to handle your day-to-day activities. It is complicated to stay in Gaziantep without learning the Turkish language. The language 25 is one of the most important mechanisms to learn the culture. When I came to Gaziantep for the first time, I was struggling to communicate with people. After getting Turkish language lessons, I started to communicate with people and tried to learn and adapt to the culture. Imagine without knowing the language, how can someone learn the culture. Still, I have some problems with cultural adaptation, but I am more capable than before. The more you know the Turkish language, the more you have friends to communicate, and this creates a chance to understand the culture easily (Mahfuza, 27, Somaliland).

Besides, participants asked to explain their ideas about acculturation in Gaziantep. As discussed in chapter two, acculturation occurs when two different culture interacts with each other, and subsequent changes happen on one side or both sides. Based on researches, most of the time, the cultures of majority will dominate the minorities' culture. Acculturation might be different from person to person, depending on the frequency and time of interaction between people. The more interaction with a long period could cause acculturation.

I have been living in Gaziantep for three years. I was having a hard time to adapt to the culture. However, now it seems I can handle the difficulties because I already adapt most of it. However, I never forget my culture. I don't think three years is enough to acculturate oneself. Maybe if I stay more, it will happen who knows. I think as long as I am contacting more with my family and friends back home with social media and telephone, the acculturation is not happening easily. In addition, my interaction with the Turkish people is limited (Abdurrahman, 27, Ivory Coast).

Acculturation is difficult to happen. It is my second year in Gaziantep. I know I adapt the culture easily, but acculturation is too strong never happens easily. I tried to teach my culture

²⁵ According to Shamia and Dahiya (2017) language considered as the most important mechanism for cross-cultural adaptation. They believe that the migrants who can speak the language of the host country can easily adapt to the culture.

to local people, but it was not successful in making them accept and adapt it. I think if the acculturation happens, it will happen from my side because I am a minority here. Until now, I am trying to keep my culture without any change (Solomon, 22, Ghana).

Most of the participants believed that acculturation never happened except the participants who have been living in Turkey for a long time. They believed it is impossible to immerse themselves completely in the language and culture, and they also believed other than adapting to the Turkish culture, acculturation never happened. On the other hand, two participants believed that they are about to lose their culture and to replace it by Turkish culture because they have been living in Turkey for a long time.

Two students from Ethiopia and Nigeria noted that because of the cultural interaction for a long time in Turkey, they are acculturating into the Turkish culture.

I have been here in Turkey for eight years. Two years in Istanbul and six years in Gaziantep. I come to Turkey during my young age for high school. When I finished high school in Istanbul, I placed in Gaziantep. In Gaziantep, I did an undergraduate and master's degree. I am not a scholarship holder because of this I have been working to help myself, and this helped me to know many Turkish people. At the same, most of the time, I was living in an apartment with my Turkish friends. Through time and frequency of interaction, I successfully adapted the Turkish culture, and I am even forgetting some of my cultural manifestations from the home country (Daniel, 25, Ethiopia).

For the last seven years, I have been living in Turkey. And I believe this is more than enough to adapt to the culture. I have a deep understanding of the Turkish culture. Sometimes I feel I am replacing my original culture with the new culture of Turkey. To be honest, when I went back recently to visit my family, I was confusing with some culture of my people. I realize that the more you stay in a foreign country, the more you forget your own culture and penetrate into another culture. I think my frequent interaction with the Turkish people in school and outside of school help me to acculturate myself to the culture of Turkey (Abeo, 26, Nigeria).

3.8. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND XENOPHOBIA IN GAZIANTEP TOWARDS SUB SAHARAN AFRICAN STUDENTS

Racial discrimination and xenophobic²⁶ sentiments have been happening in the world for a long time. Sub Saharan African students have also been the victim of such behaviors and attitudes because of their race and the countries they come from. It is always apparent that race-based discrimination is happening towards international students in many places. Racial discrimination could have many consequences ranging from affecting the targeted students' academic performance and living circumstances. As Turkey is becoming the home of international students, including the Sub-Saharan

²⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2001:2) defines Xenophobia as "attitudes, prejudices and behavior that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity."

students, racially-based discrimination might be happening towards students. For this reason, in this research, the researcher asked the participants to describe their feelings about racial discrimination towards Sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep.

The participants had different feelings about racially-based discrimination in Gaziantep towards Sub-Saharan African students. More than half of the participants believed that they never experienced and witnessed racial discrimination in Gaziantep. Instead, they believed that there are stereotypes and negative attitudes created by misleading news and information from social and mass media in Gaziantep. They noted that people in Gaziantep are welcoming to Sub Saharan African students. According to participants, some forms of stereotypes and negative attitudes originated from false information that could not indicate the existence of racially-based discrimination.

A participant student from South Africa has the following ideas about whether racial discrimination happening or not from his point of view.

Racism is sometimes subjective. I have faced some discrimination even though I don't consider them as racism. For some people, every act of stereotype is a racist act, but not for me. I am very selective; I don't consider every kind of stereotype like racism. I could say there is no racism in Turkey; rather, it is an unawareness with some people. Some people follow me in the street and call me 'Zenci²⁷' and laughing. Sometimes I am upsetting but not all of the time. Because I do not have any idea about the word term. For some people, it is an offensive word, but for some, it is not. Even my own Turkish friends politely call me zenci and I don't feel it. However, if a person on the street calls me by this term I will feel it. In my opinion, even the people who call me zenci are not being racist; rather, it is ignorance (Trevor, 23, South Africa).

Another participant from Ethiopia also agreed that she never experienced racism in Gaziantep. However, she witnessed some Africans being called *zenci* by some people, and she still did not believe this term is enough to prove the existence of racism in Gaziantep.

Turkish peoples are no racist. Sometimes you will see some kinds of harassment in the streets calling Africans 'zenci'. However, I don't know what the word is negative or positive. Nobody used the term to call me just I saw when they call other Africans by using this term. Because my skin colour is a little bit light skinned some Turkish people said to me you are not zenci (long laugh). They forget I come from Africa and I am the part of those people called zenci. I tried to learn about the word, and I asked some Turkish guys, and some of them told me it is positive to address black people, and some of them told me it is a negative term (Hanan, 25, Ethiopia).

On the other hand, some participants believed that racial discrimination happens in Gaziantep. They believed some people are racist towards Sub Saharan African students. A participant from the Gambia admitted, in Gaziantep, many people

²⁷ Zenci is a word to address black people from Africa who has black skin.

are racist towards Africans, but they do not acknowledge their behavior. He added that any forms of stereotypes and negative attitudes are forms of racism.

For me, any form of negative behaviors towards Africans because of our root is racial discrimination. I was fighting in Gaziantep with some people on the street because they called me zenci. I don't want to hear and be addressed by this word. It is ridiculous. When I go some places in Gaziantep peoples stare at me and laughing. For some people, this might be not racism, but for me definitely, it is. Some persons also look down at me. Why I should be looked down and called zenci. Anyway, thanks to God, I am still trying to cope with some challenges (Emmanuel, 23, Gambia)

In many ways, the feeling towards racial discrimination could be subjective to the individuals. All forms of discrimination could be considered as racially-based for some people, while the same is acceptable and normal for others. A student from Ghana explained his experience with local students in class.

Let me tell you, my brother, in Gaziantep; there is no racism; instead, there is a racial stereotype, which is African students, could not be successful in their education. For me, this is not racism. This is more a sign of misled attitude, which can be fixed through good behavior. When I was in class for the first time, I was the only black in the class. I was sitting alone because everyone was sitting with his or her friends. After the courses started, I engaged myself with the subjects, and I successfully managed to become a better student. Everyone was surprised a lot. All most all of my classmates asked me to study with them and to become friends. Racism is the fruit of misunderstanding and stereotype. Here in Gaziantep, there is a stereotype but not racism. If we manage to change the negative stereotypes, we will be successful in preventing racism before happening (Solomon, 22, Ghana).

Fleming (1985) stated that being black in a white-dominant college could give a hard time for the black students in their educational achievement because of discriminations and alienations. In contrast, Solomon from Ghana explained how he managed to become a top student in his white dominant class. Even though the experience of one student could not be generalized for other students, we can conclude that personal strength of the students has an ability to face the stereotypes and to overcome challenges.

As indicated above, xenophobia is strong hate towards outsiders, no matter what race or place they come from. Although xenophobia has many reasons to happen, one of the reasons for the emergence of xenophobia could be the emergence of a massive number of refugees or immigrants in one country. The participants asked to mention whether they witnessed xenophobic sentiments in Gaziantep towards foreigners, including Sub Saharan Africa students. The majority of participants admitted that they had never witnessed xenophobic attitudes and activities in Gaziantep. According to them, xenophobia is another level of intolerance towards foreigners, which is not happening in Gaziantep. They believed that the emergence of a huge number of Syrian refugees in Gaziantep might generate some forms of hostility

towards foreigners because of the effects of refugees on the host environment, which is a usual sentiment everywhere in the world. However, the people of Gaziantep do not have any forms of xenophobic attitude; instead, they are welcoming and supportive to foreigners.

A participant from Comoros and Ivory Coast stated that they never witnessed and experienced any hate from the residents of Gaziantep.

I have never witnessed and experienced any form of hate towards foreigners, including us. The residents of Gaziantep are very welcoming and supportive of us. Sometimes someone may experience some forms of stereotypes, which are not related to hate. When we are moving around in Gaziantep, some people stare at us or asking some unnecessary questions which are generated from misleading information and curiosity. Except for such kind of normally uncomfortable coincidences, I never saw any form of strong hate towards any foreigner in Gaziantep (Ismael, 23, Comoros).

I saw some people in Gaziantep having stress because of the existence of a huge number of Syrian refugees. But this does not indicate the hate towards foreigners. For the last three years in Gaziantep, I have never witnessed or experienced any forms of hostility towards foreigners, especially for African. I encounter many people in Gaziantep telling me they love Africans. Sometimes you may see people are having trouble with refugees in some places. But for me, this is normal. Compared to the number of refugees, the welcoming of Gaziantep residents is impressive to me (Abdurrahman, 27, Ivory Coast).

3.9. THE CHALLENGES TO SUB SAHARAN AFRICAN STUDENTS IN GAZIANTEP

Students travelling to the other countries outside of their home countries could face many challenges and acquire opportunities even though the degree of challenges and opportunities varies from student to student. As explained in chapter two of this study, deciding to become an international student in a foreign country could have many obstacles and challenges, which are inevitable for most of international students. If the students did not cope with the challenges and the obstacles, their educational achievement might be in danger. As discussed in chapter two, some of the international students' difficulties are language, culture, and weather of the host countries.

Participant students asked to mention some of the most critical challenges they faced in Gaziantep. Most of the students mentioned the following challenges, which make them struggle to cope with the changes.

All the participants admitted that language is the primary challenge for students who come from outside of Turkey for education. They stated that in Gaziantep, the only language applicable to communicate with people is Turkish, failure to learn the language, make interaction with the residents almost impossible. Participants believed that the incapability of communicating in the host country's language could engender

hardships in cultural adaptation and handling problems. The inability of the language of the host country is the most important reason for ostracizing international students in a foreign country. A participant from Ghana had the following ideas about the challenges he faced because of language in Gaziantep until he learned the Turkish language.

The first time when I came to Gaziantep, I was expecting at least some people can speak English, and I would not be in trouble. However, I presumed wrong. I found nobody speaking English. People are too nice and wanted to help me, but our communication was very difficult. After I started the Turkish language at TÖMER²⁸ I started to manage some things, but it was not enough. Now I can speak very good Turkish but the first year was challenging too much. If you don't know the Turkish language in Gaziantep, your life will be complicated. But thanks to the Gaziantep residents, they were helping me whenever I go by trying to understand my broken Turkish (Solomon, 22, Ghana).

Understanding and adapting the culture of a foreign country for international students are other challenges. Culture encompasses the overall living conditions of the host environment, which has to be adapted by foreigners to cope with the challenges and to create valuable interaction with the local people. As stated above, the cultural adaptation process of the Sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep was challenging. Students stressed that the culture of Gaziantep was challenging in order to interact with the local people for the first time. They believed that although there are many changes related to their cultural adaptation, many cultural manifestations are still unclear and challenging.

A participant from Madagascar stated that the culture was challenging her to understand and adapt it during her first some months in Gaziantep.

I came to Gaziantep, and I was alone. I was terrified because of the cultural differences from my country. At the same time, my religion also different from the residents of Gaziantep. Especially the first few months until I tried to speak Turkish was very challenging and full of struggle. The people are very helpful other than the silly questions, which I adapted now. After a lot of challenges, I managed to adapt to the culture. But fortunately, the culture of Gaziantep was not that much difficult as I expected (Elsa, 22, Madagascar).

As food is one of the cultural manifestations, some of the participants stated their struggle to adapt the Gaziantep's food culture. Most of the participants admitted that Gaziantep has delicious foods, which are easily adaptable by anyone. However, some students opposed that they were struggling a lot with the foods because of the differences in the food culture between their home country and Gaziantep. According to a participant from South Africa, the food of Gaziantep is not convenient for him even after years of staying in the city.

²⁸ TÖMER stands for "Türkçe Öğretimi Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi." It is a Turkish language center mostly found in the Turkish Universities to teach the Turkish language to foreigners.

The food is totally different from the country and the place I come from. The materials used to make the meal are more similar to us. But the way they do in Gaziantep and my country is different. I have been struggling to eat properly without having a problem. I went to a doctor and took a lot of medicine to adapt to food. Now I have a better adaptation than before. But still, I don't fully adapted the food (Trevor, 23, South Africa).

Most people in Gaziantep think that the whole of Africa is very hot in the weather according to the responses of the participants. Participants stated that they were struggling with the **weather** changes in Gaziantep. Most of the participants believed that their countries have better weather than Gaziantep, even though many non-Africans believe that Africa is hotter than Turkey. A participant from Ethiopia stated that her country Ethiopia has very adaptable and fair weather throughout the year. However, after she came to Gaziantep for the first time, she was struggling a lot to adapt to the weather changes.

My country has perfect weather throughout the year. Gaziantep is very hot for me during the summer. Some of my Turkish friends said to me I already adapted the warm weather in Africa, which is funny for me to hear that. They believe that the whole of Africa is hot and we already adjust to the hot weather. But for me, Gaziantep was like hell until I adapted the hot weather (Hanan, 25, Ethiopia).

According to the participants, one of the most important challenges for African students is the financial challenge triggered by the Turkish economy's crisis. As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, most of the participants are receiving financial support from YTB. However, they stated that they have been struggling to cover expenses because of the high costs in the market in recent times. Participants said that they are receiving the same amount of money as a stipend for the last three years, even though there are many changes in the prices of the market. Although Turkey is an affordable country for international students compared to many countries in the West, the recent increase in the market and the Turkish Lira devaluation have created a hard time for international students.

Some participants have the following ideas about the challenges of recent economic changes in the country and how it affected them.

I am receiving a scholarship that covers the full cost of my study in Gaziantep. The scholarship is very prestigious by covering my entire costs for education. However, the recent changes in the market are challenging me a lot to handle my expenses, and this created stress on my educational achievements. It is also difficult to get a job in Gaziantep because of some reasons, such as limited jobs and extra job seekers. Because of this, I am struggling to manage my costs by reducing some important expenses (Elsa, 22, Madagascar).

I believe Turkey is affordable for international students in many contexts and especially for students like me who get the scholarship life is easy. However, recent time's economic crises are creating difficulties for all international students. Sometimes I afraid to ask my parents for money because they already knew I am a fully sponsored student. The scholarship committee does not make any increment on the stipends for the last three years even though the cost of leaving has been increasing every year (Hassan, 28, Mali).

A few participants are not receiving scholarships; rather, they sponsor themselves. In particular, for students who are not getting any support from the external sources, the cost of leaving could be more difficult. A participant from Ethiopia who has been in Turkey for eight years since his high school period described his ideas about the difficulties he has been in because of financial problems.

I came to Turkey in 2012 with a scholarship from an organization. I came here to study, starting from high school. I did my high school in Istanbul for two years, and I placed at Gaziantep University. The first two years in Gaziantep I was ok to cover my cost because I was receiving a scholarship. However, because of some factors, the organization cut the award and I found myself surrounded by problems; particularly the increment of the market price I struggled a lot to manage my life and to continue my education. I could not get any job in Gaziantep easily. I was teaching students the English language part-time to handle my financial problems. Nevertheless, still, I have some forms of financial problems (Daniel, 25, Ethiopia).

3.10. BEING A SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN WOMAN IN GAZIANTEP

Female students who participated in the interview acknowledged that, compared to the male counterparts, their life was relatively more difficult. They have experienced a number of gender-based discrimination, which are generally common in the world. Female participants stated that the minor experiences they have been facing in Gaziantep are not predominantly related to their background even though they faced some form of race-based sexual comments. They acknowledged the existence of some forms of gender-based violence in Turkey. However, participants believed that gender-based violence on female international students is rarely happening.

A student from Djibouti said that sometimes she surprises when people talk about the prevalence of gender-based violence in Turkey. According to her, she witnessed respect towards females in Gaziantep by male counterparts. She did not experience any forms of sexual abuse or comments while she was in Gaziantep for the last three years. Similarly, a student called Samira from Ethiopia expressed that males are respectful towards young females. She added that no one disturbed her because of her gender and African root. She believed that some African female students, especially those who are not covering their hair, sometimes have a hard time going out in some areas.

As a female sometimes, I have some experiences related to sexual comments but it rarely happens to me. As I know, other African female students do not have bad experiences in Gaziantep because of their gender. When I was in my country I had been facing a lot of sexual comments everywhere I go, however in Gaziantep I am really fine to go out whatever I want. In most cases, the female African students who are covering their hair not experience any forms of sexual abuse and assault compared to the other who are not covering their head. I think when

you cover your hair the people believe you are a Muslim and you deserve a respect more (Samira, 25, Djibouti).

Unlike the above participants, some female participants believed that there are some forms of gender-based stereotypes. The respondents believed that particularly female African students who do not cover their hair have been struggling to go out alone, especially in some public places because of sexual comments. Betty from Congo admitted that she has been facing some problems because of her gender and African root to move around in the city of Gaziantep. She said that some people abused her when she walks on the street of Gaziantep by saying *'how much for a night.'* She also mentioned that some people touched her hair frequently without asking permission because the hair looks different. According to her, there are nice places for the female African students to move around in Gaziantep, but at the same time, there are some places that are not safe for them as well.

As a conclusion, all of the participant female students have admitted that Gaziantep is relatively a safe place for female African students. They believe that even though there are some forms of stereotypes and sexual comments towards them from some people, the incidents of sexual violence never happen in Gaziantep on female students from the sub-Saharan African Countries.

3.11. THE PLANS OF STUDENTS AFTER GRADUATION

According to YTB, one of the most important objectives of the Turkish government scholarship is providing education to international students and making them return to their countries in order to encourage them to participate in the developmental activities of the home country. For this reason, the Turkish government scholarship offers a return plane ticket for students to facilitate the plans.

The participants of the interview asked to give a response about their plan after graduation from the university in Gaziantep, and most of the students stated that they are planning to return and work for their home country as expected from the Turkish Government Scholarship committee. Most of the students believed that they have been getting enough knowledge and experience, which are beneficial for them to contribute something to the development of their country but also their continent. Some students, who think the education they received is not enough, are planning to have further education in other countries and/or Turkey. The students are very grateful for

everything they have been receiving from the scholarship committee during their stay in Gaziantep for years. According to them, they do not intend to stay in Turkey other than studying, and they want to become an ambassador for Turkey and their countries by keeping the network of connections between the countries.

Joseph from Nigeria and Modi from Mali shared their plan after graduation from the Gaziantep University.

I have been having a nice time in Gaziantep during my stay for education. For the last five years, I have got enough knowledge and experiences, which is beneficial for me to contribute to the developmental activities of my country. I think five years are enough for me. I don't have any intention of continuing further education and staying in Turkey. Turkey is a beautiful and cheap country to live, but the refugee crisis is making the country not to welcome additional migrants. I advised my fellow African students to go back and work for their country in order to get better development (Ali, 26, Nigeria).

Before I came to Turkey, I was a teacher in high school. I came here to get further education and experiences, and I believe I got what I was expecting. I will be graduated after a couple of months, and I want to back home and continue my teaching profession. At the same time, I have a family with two kids. I separated from them for the last three years, and I don't want to continue for more education. I have big gratitude for the scholarship committee and the Turkish people (Hassan, 28, Mali).

CONCLUSION

Discussions

The higher education landscape has been changing over the past few decades, largely influenced by globalization and internationalization. International student mobility is at the core of the internationalization of higher education and has grown significantly over the past two decades primarily driven by the economic rationale of international students contributing towards the economy of the host or destination country, many universities around the world are now interested in leveraging this mobility for the economic benefits and additional revenue generated from full-fee-paying international students.

Developed countries have been investing in the internationalization of their higher educational institutions in order to enroll diverse students from all around the world. One of the rationales behind this trend is the high demand for a labor force, which can contribute to the development of their economy. On the other hand, the interest of transmitting different socioeconomic and political ideologies to the targeted countries contributes to the expansion and development of the internationalization of higher educational institutions (Wihlborg & Robson, 2018). Within this students' movement, many push and pull factors play a significant role in shaping the students' decisions in their destination area choice (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Within the highly increasing rate of the international student movement, many countries became new destinations for international students. Turkey is one of those new destination countries for international students for the last two decades. Even though the country started to enroll students in the 1990s, most of the students were from the Turkic communities. The implementation of different scholarship programs for international students _ mainly the Turkish government scholarship _ played a role in the internationalization of higher educational institutions in Turkey. The trend of internationalization of the Turkish higher education institutions supported by the government and this action contributed to made Turkey one of the top destinations for

international students. As part of the movement, the Sub Saharan African students' enrolment in Turkish higher educational institutions also increased for the last years. The accessibility of many opportunities to admit in Turkish universities contributed to the movement of the students from African origin.

When students decided to move to another country for education, many challenges and problems could arise in the new environment. Adjusting the culture, learning the local language, and adapting the weather could create hardship for the students. As Turkey is a new destination country for education, the international students' living conditions in Turkey, particularly the living condition of Sub Saharan African Students, have not been studied well. For this reason, the study tried to assess and understand the living condition of the Sub Saharan African students living conditions in Gaziantep, one of the biggest cities in Turkey.

Many kinds of researches have been done related to the movement of international students around the world. Researchers tried to identify the push and pull factors for the students' movement. They discovered the socioeconomic and political factors which are pulling and pushing students for better education opportunities. Apart from this, the living conditions of the students have been assessed in different researches. However, studies that are mainly related to African students are limited. Most importantly, in a country like Turkey, the overall living conditions of the African students are not discovered.

As presented in chapter three of this study, the participants of the interviews asked to describe their living conditions from different contexts. The interview questions have prepared to assess and understand the main conditions of living, ranging from the factors that pushed and pulled them to the cultural adaptation. The participants of the interviews raised many issues as a Sub Saharan African student. They described how the background they came from play a significant role in their overall living conditions positively and negatively.

The push and pull factors for international students' movement are mostly common for every student, even though some important factors are different from place to place. Mazzarol, Soutar, and Seng (2002) described important push and pull factors in their study with Asian students. According to them the geographical closeness, climate, accessibility of information about the host environment, cost of living, and employment opportunities are the most important factors for international students' movement. More or less, the participants of this study also described the

same factors which led them to Turkey. The participants described how the accessibility of scholarship pulled them to search for educational opportunities in Turkey. Most of the students agreed they could have attended in Turkish universities without the scholarship opportunities. Because of the financial problems in the countries of Africa, most of the students aspired to get scholarship opportunities in order to attend quickly without financial problems. In the interviews, students described how the scholarship they were receiving helped them attend without any worries and supported them in focusing on their education. Although religious similarity does not describe as a pull factor for students in many researches, the participants of this study described religious similarity is one of the most important pull factors for them. They believed that as Turkey is the center for the Islamic world, they preferred to attend Turkish Universities to practice their faith with freedom while studying.

The study finds about the students' expectation before they came to Gaziantep. They were expecting Gaziantep would be a dangerous place to settle because its closeness to Syria border. However, they later discovered Gaziantep is the safest place for international students. In addition, the participants were thinking Turkey would be a conservative Islamic country. On the other hand, some of other participants were expecting Gaziantep would be an affordable city for international students. They believed that they found Gaziantep an expensive city for students. Particularly in recent times because of the economic crisis the price of the market is increasing over time and this created a hard time for international students.

Many researchers described how studying in another country is an opportunity to have better experiences and international knowledge. Crhanová (2007) stated that getting an opportunity to study abroad is a life-changing experience for international students. She describes the students' knowledge and experience expected to develop with better education, which can help them build a bright future. In the findings, students stated how the opportunity to study in Gaziantep helped them to have an international experience that could not have been obtained in their countries. Besides, studying abroad created a chance to exercise freedom without family control and boosted their confidence and self-reliance. They managed to create a wide range of social life and matured personality while studying in Gaziantep. Although the students

One of the most important findings of this study is understanding how the residents of Gaziantep city attitudes towards African students. In this study, we

managed to understand some forms of negative attitudes and stereotypes towards African students in Gaziantep, even though the degree of these attitudes differs from person to person. Based on the findings, in Gaziantep, the residents pictured Africa as a backward place where everyone requires support. As mentioned in chapter three of this study several stereotypical questions were asked by the residents, which are the indicators of the existence of stereotypes. Anna and Ndiaye (2014) described how media played a great role in the creation of negative attitudes and stereotypes in Poland in their study "Africa in the Polish Media." In the same way, this research found out that in Gaziantep, different social media posts and advertisements are creating a bad image for Africa, which contributes to the construction of some forms of prejudice towards Africans. The advertisements by different non-governmental organizations in order to generate financial support from the donors and the general public have contributed to the creation of a spoiled image towards Africa. Although the negative attitudes and stereotypes are widespread, the students believed that they have to use every opportunity to create awareness about the real situations of Africa.

This study figured out the cultural adaptation process of the Sub Saharan African Students in Gaziantep was difficult even though some students found out that the adaptation was not difficult for them because of some cultural similarities with Gaziantep. The participants believed that religion is a way of life in many countries, especially for countries in the Middle East. As Turkey is a Muslim majority country, the religion of Islam shaped the culture of the country. They stated that having similarities in religion with Turkish people helped them to adjust the culture easily without difficulties.

As discussed above, language is an essential tool to facilitate the cross-cultural adaptation process in the host environment. The research found out that Sub-Saharan African students' cultural adaptation is affected by the lack of Turkish language proficiency. The students faced a hard time in their living conditions before they learn the Turkish language. Most of the students managed to understand the culture after understanding the language by creating communication with the locals. On the other hand, ethnocentrism is believed to be one of the obstacles for cultural adaptation through creating stratification and hierarchy between cultures. According to Brewer (1992), ethnocentrism will create in-group and out-group sentiments, and the idea of cultural superiority will engender hate between cultures. The finding of the research

also discovered how cultural ethnocentric attitudes of some individuals in Gaziantep affected the cultural adaptation of Sub Saharan African students.

This research discovered that although most of the participants did not believe the existence of racial discrimination in Gaziantep, some of the participants stated that they witnessed racial discrimination in the city. Based on the participants' responses, racial discrimination and racism could be subjective to individuals. The majority of the participants believed that even though they have witnessed many forms of stereotypes and negative attitudes, they do not consider all acts of prejudice like racism. Researchers found out within challenges and discrimination, many students from African origin managed to have better educational achievement in a foreign country. Similarly, this study discovered that some students from Sub Saharan African succeed in coping with the challenges of alienation and scored excellent grades in their departments.

The study also discovered language is one of the main challenges for students from Sub Saharan Africa in Gaziantep. In this study, students stated how unable to understand the Turkish language created a hard time communicating with the locals. From the study, we understood that language is a primary challenge for the students in a new environment. It is also one of the most important weapons of cross-cultural adaptation.

On the other hand, adapting the culture of Gaziantep was another important challenge for the Sub Saharan African students discovered by this study. In their study Gang Li, Wei Chen, and Jing-Lin (2010) stated that Asian students face cultural adjustment problems when they are traveling to Western countries. Erel (2010) stated that the cultural capitals of students accumulated in their country might not fit into the culture of the new host environment, and this trend could create cultural adaptation difficulties. The study discovered that some Sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep were challenged to adapt the culture quickly. In the finding part of this study, a participant from Madagascar described how she was challenged by the cultural differences between her country and Gaziantep. The cultural capital she had and Gaziantep's culture could not be fitted and created a challenge for her.

Summary

The study tried to assess and figure out the overall experiences and living conditions of sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep. As discussed in the second chapter of this research, the number of African students attending the universities in Gaziantep is increasing when Turkey is opening its way for international students. Notably, the implementation of the Turkish Government Scholarship for international students paved the way for students from sub-Saharan African countries. The emergence of international students in Turkey from all over the world could be mostly associated with the availability of government scholarship, which offers an award of approximately five thousand students every year in recent times.

Within the emergence of Sub-Saharan African students to Turkey for education, many opportunities and challenges related to the host country's socio-cultural structure, which are inevitable for every international student, faced the students. Even though the challenges the international students are facing in a foreign country during their stay for education are similar, in some contexts, there could be specific challenges, only the sub-Saharan African students face. Mainly related to their background and socio-economic conditions, they have been a target for negative stereotypes and discriminations. The cultural differences and the incapability of speaking the host country's language as well as the financial problems are affecting students from Sub Saharan African students in a foreign country.

Because of these and many other reasons, the researcher tried to assess and understand the living conditions of the sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep. Gaziantep, a city located in Southeastern Anatolia, hosts a huge number of international students throughout the world. The number of sub-Saharan African students also has a significant share of the total international students. The exposure of the residents of the Gaziantep city for Sub-Saharan students was limited. After the Turkish government scholarship implementation, Gaziantep's recognition as the best university in southwestern Anatolia attracts many international students, including the Sub-Saharan African students. Even though many students during the interviews stated that they did not choose Gaziantep as their preference instead they placed by the Turkish government scholarship committee, they acknowledge that the university is one of the best universities in Turkey, especially in recent times.

In this study, the researcher tried to assess some important conditions related to the students from Sub-Saharan African by preparing the interviews. As discussed in the first chapter of the study, students selected purposely to answer the questions in order to generate the targeted data for the research. During the in-depth interviews, students mostly focused on the cultural adaptation challenges and the stereotypes and negative attitudes of some local people towards Africa, which create a hard time for them. The study mainly focused on the living conditions of students in Gaziantep by figuring out the socio-economic and cultural challenges, which are mainly affecting students from African origin.

In this study, many interview questions addressed to understand and generate the overall conditions of students. Students asked to describe their decision-making process in the selection of Turkey for study and the factors which forced them to leave their country and came to Turkey for education.

Students replied many reasons that shape their study area choice and the push and pull factors from the context of socio-economic and cultural perspectives. Students mentioned that economic problems and low-quality education pushed them to attend to the Turkish universities. On the other hand, the availability of full government scholarships, the geographical closeness, the similarity of culture and religion, and the historical linkage shaped their decision and pulled them to Turkey.

Students also explain their expectations before they came to Turkey and the difference between studying in the home country and a foreign nation. The students mentioned their expectations from the context of security, education, cost of living, and religion. The differences between studying in the home country and Turkey also answered by students by comparing and contrasting different socio-economic and cultural aspects. For some of the students learning in the home country is much better for them because they get better economic and psychological support from the family and society. On the other hand, other students studying in Turkey empowered them to become self-reliant and open many opportunities for their personal and professional life.

As discussed in chapter three, the students experienced many changes related to their personal, social, and academic life, which are inevitable. Students believed that they experienced personal change after they came to Turkey for education through managing their life with difficulties without direct support from the families. The changes in their social life also came from their interaction with the people in the new

environment and other international students in Gaziantep. They believe that attending a good university with quality education and international experiences in school and outside of the school encourages them to have a positive change in their academic life.

Another topic discussed in this study was the feeling of being a sub-Saharan African student in Gaziantep and the residents' attitudes towards students from African origin. The students stated the challenges triggered by the stereotypes and some forms of negative attitudes, mostly generated from over-generalized and misleading news about the continent on social media. Students listed out some common stereotypes which are not intentionally perceived by some people of Gaziantep. Students believed that the main reason for such over-generalized behaviors in Gaziantep is a lack of awareness about the continent's overall condition. At the same time, the participants also admitted that many people in Gaziantep have positive attitudes about Africa and Africans.

One of the most important topics discussed in this study is the cultural adaptations process of sub-Saharan African students in Gaziantep. The cultural adaptation in Gaziantep was challenging for the students in general, even though some of the participants stated that they adapted the culture quickly compared to other students. Participant students who believe in the easiness of the cultural adaptation in Gaziantep mentioned some important reasons, such as religion and culture similarity, historical linkage, and geographic closeness between their countries and Turkey. On the other hand, other participants mentioned language incapability, ethnocentrism, and social exclusions created a hard time for them to adapt to the culture easily.

The topic of racial discrimination and the overall challenges of being in Gaziantep also discussed in the study. Most of the participants stated that racial discriminations rarely happen in Gaziantep towards African students. Participants admitted that serious forms of racial discrimination have never been experienced and witnessed throughout their stay in Gaziantep. They also pointed out some of the most important challenges they have faced in Gaziantep, such as language, weather, food, culture, and cost of living.

The last two topics discussed in this study are the condition of being sub-Saharan African female students in Gaziantep and the student's plans after graduation. Female students described that they have never experienced any forms of discrimination and abuse because of their gender and African root. Most of the

participants mentioned that they are planning to return to their countries and wanting to participate in the developmental activists of their country.



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ANNEXES



ANNEX**A.1.Interview Questions**

A.1.Interview Questions

Part one

1. Sex of the interviewee...
2. Age of the interviewee...
3. Which Sub Saharan African country are you from?
4. How long have you lived in Gaziantep?
5. What are you studying?
6. Which Gaziantep's university are you studying in?
7. Which degree level are you studying?
8. In what grade are you?
9. Are you a scholarship holder or self-sponsored?

Part Two

10. If you are a scholarship holder, is that the scholarship that you are receiving is enough to manage your day-to-day life as a student?
11. If you are self-sponsored, what/who are your sources of income to cover all of your costs?
12. Why did you choose Turkey, especially Gaziantep to study?
13. What are the most important push and pull factors, which make you to choose turkey for education?
14. What were your expectations when you came to Gaziantep for studying?
15. What is the difference between studying in your home country and Gaziantep?
16. What are the changes, if any, that you realized in your personal, academic or social life being in Gaziantep?
17. How do you express being a Sub Saharan African in Gaziantep?
18. Can you describe how you fit into Turkish culture?
19. Do you think the Turkish people are open for other cultures, especially to the African culture? How do you think Turkish people behave about other people's cultures?
20. How do you describe the attitudes of the Gaziantep's residents towards African?

21. Have you experienced any racial discriminations in Gaziantep?
22. Do you believe are there any xenophobic attitudes in Gaziantep? How?
23. How is it to live in Gaziantep as an African woman?
24. What are the most important economic, cultural and political challenges and problems you are facing in Gaziantep as a student and as a resident? Can you list out them?
25. How do you manage the challenges and the problems you are facing?
26. What is your plan after graduation?
27. Are you planning to return to your country after graduation? If yes, do you believe the education and the experience that you get will be enough to do something for your country
28. What advice you can give to other African students studying and intending to study in Gaziantep?

VITAE

Halid Zewdu Feleke was born in 1992 in Ethiopia. He accomplished his primary, and secondary education in Wegidi Primary and Secondary School in South Welo, Ethiopia. In 2016, he graduated from Addis Ababa University School of Social Work. Then, he completed his master's degree in Sociology from the Social Science Institute of Gaziantep University.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Halid Zewdu Feleke, 1992 yılında Etiyopya'da doğdu. İlk, orta ve lise öğrenimini Güney Welo, Etiyopya'daki Wegidi İlk ve Orta Okulunda tamamladı. 2016 yılında Addis Ababa Üniversitesi Sosyal Hizmet Okulu'ndan mezun oldu. Ardından Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü'nde Sosyoloji alanında yüksek lisansını tamamladı.