

INTERNATIONAL IRANIAN STUDENTS' PROFILES, EDUCATIONAL AND
SOCIAL EXPERIENCES AT AN ENGLISH MEDIUM UNIVERSITY IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this research was to identify Iranian students' profiles, educational and social experiences at an English medium state university in Mid Anatolia through a survey research design.

The sample of the study ($N=115$) were volunteer participants from the entire Iranian students population in the particular university. In order to collect data, a researcher-based instrument, International University Students' Questionnaire (IUSQ), including both open-ended and close-ended items was developed. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics were calculated and the open-ended items were subjected to inductive content analysis.

Findings show that the Iranian students come from a high or moderate socio-economic status. Most of them are academically successful with high honor degrees. Besides, they have good language skills both in English and Turkish. Moreover, students came to the

International University (psydonym, IU), with high rankings that gave them the opportunity to be in an international university with an English medium instruction.

Regarding educational experiences, the students' prior knowledge is sufficient to adapt to the education at IU and they are confident with their academic skills. In terms of social experiences, Iranian students tend to have friends from different nationalities and they work in teams with international groups. They understand the cultural behavior of both the international and local students, and ultimately, the code of conduct of how to behave on campus. Finally, Iranian students feel empowered because of the multicultural and multilingual environment of IU and they felt comfortable since the instructors know that they are international students.

Keywords: English-Medium Instruction, Student Profiles, Educational Experiences, Social Experiences, International Iranian Students

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DE EĞİTİM DİLİ İNGİLİZCE OLAN BİR ÜNİVERSİTEDE ULUSLARARASI İRANLI ÖĞRENCİLERİN PROFİLLERİ, EĞİTİM VE SOSYAL DENEYİMLERİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’de İç Anadolu Bölgesinde bulunan ve eğitim dili İngilizce olan bir devlet üniversitesinde eğitim gören İranlı öğrencilerin profillerini eğitim ve sosyal deneyimlerini anket yoluyla belirlemektir.

Çalışmanın örneklem grubunu ($N=115$) yukarıda belirtilen üniversiteden gönüllü olarak katılan İranlı öğrenciler oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplamak için araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen, açık ve kapalı uçlu maddelerden oluşan Uluslararası Üniversite Öğrencileri Anketi (IUSQ) kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde kapalı uçlu maddeler için betimleyici istatistiksel değerler hesaplanmıştır, açık uçlu maddeler için ise tümevarımsal içerik analizi yapılmıştır.

Bulgular, İranlı öğrencilerin yüksek veya orta seviye sosyo-ekonomik düzeyden geldiklerini göstermektedir. Öğrencilerin büyük bir çoğunluğunun akademik olarak

başarılı ve yüksek onur derecesine sahip oldukları görülmektedir. Ayrıca, iyi seviyede İngilizce ve Türkçe dil becerilerine sahiptirler. Bununla birlikte, öğrenciler eğitim gördükleri uluslararası üniversiteyi yüksek sıralaması olduğundan dolayı tercih etmişlerdir ve bu sayede İngilizce eğitim veren uluslararası bir üniversitede bulunma fırsatını yakaladıklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Eğitim deneyimleri bakımından sonuçlara bakıldığında; İranlı öğrenciler, geçmiş öğrenim yaşantılarını geldikleri yeni uluslararası üniversitedeki eğitime adapte olmaları açısından yeterli görmektedirler ve akademik beceriler yönünden kendilerine güvenmektedirler. Sosyal deneyimler açısından ise, İranlı öğrencilerin farklı milletlerden arkadaş bulmayı ve buldukları arkadaşlar ile uluslararası takım halinde çalışmayı tercih ettikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Diğer bir bulguya göre, İranlı öğrenciler, uluslararası ve yerel öğrencilerin kültürel davranışlarını anladıklarını ve sonuç olarak üniversite yerleşkesindeki davranış kurallarını bildiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Son olarak, Uluslararası üniversitenin birçok çok kültüre ve dile ev sahipliği yapıyor olması öğrencilerin kendilerini güçlenmiş hissettirdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Benzer bir şekilde, öğretim üyelerinin uluslararası öğrencileri farkındalığı öğrencileri rahat hissettirdiği tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce Eğitim Dili, Öğrenci Profilleri, Eğitimsel Deneyimler, Sosyal Deneyimler, Uluslararası İranlı Öğrenciler



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the theoretical background and the rationale of the study. It represents internationalization and its reflections on internationalization of higher education in Turkey. Then, the purpose of the study is included in this chapter together with the research questions. Finally, the significance of the study and the definition of terms are given.

1.1. Background of the Study

During the Reza Shah period, the French educational system was admitted by Iranian government and French was the second educational language for schools, superior culture and the official relations with other countries as well. The higher education had a big influence on socializing, and gaining a place in society. Following the revolution in 1979, sixteen higher educational institutions were closed and the Islamic government reopened them after regulating their curriculum by Islamic rules (Moshfegh, 1989). Apart from that, all of the higher educational institutions in Iran had 154.000 students and 13.900 professors in 1979 (Abrahamian, 1989; Moaddel, 1992).

Throughout the period of 1900 – 1940, the government of Iran gave scholarships to the children of aristocrat families and top government officials in order to encourage them continue their academic studies in different countries of Europe including Germany, Sweden, England, and Switzerland. However, majority of them pursue their academic career in France and Belgium. Following World War II, the Iranian government developed and intimacy with American educational model which was caused by global change in power relations (Moshfegh, 1989).

Considering high willing of studying abroad, Iranian families sent their children to other

countries including Turkey to continue their education. According to the statistics of the Council of Higher Education in Turkey (HEC, 2019), a total number of Iranian undergraduate and graduate students are reported as 7154 girls and boys who are studying at different universities in Turkey. This group of Iranian students are divided throughout different cities and universities. There are 1267 Iranian students in Ankara which is the capital city and International University (IU) has 265 Iranian students at undergraduate and graduate levels (HEC, 2019).

Elaborating internationalization as one of the top issues of higher education, there are several studies relevant to organization, policy makers, implementers, both foreign and local students. Therefore, this study investigates Iranian students' profiles, and their experiences in educational and social contexts. The rationale for this research stems from considering internationalization as one of the top issues of higher education, as well as huge number of Iranian students traveling to Turkey in the past years to study in public and private universities. According to the observations many of them prefer English medium Universities with high rankings such as IU.

There are different countries which send students to Turkey and most of them are Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Greece, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan (UNESCO, 2016). A large number of studies have been conducted to examine international students' preference to come to Turkey. This study is accomplished to fulfill the gap of a specific group of international students in Turkey. Iranian students at the International University (IU) are determined the sample of this study to be examined. Since there is insufficient data in the literature in International Higher Education regarding Iranian students' profiles, educational experiences and social experiences the current study examines these issues to understand the students and recognize their needs from the educational sciences perspective.

As far as the concept of Internationalization at IU has been included as one of the strategic plans, this study is considered to raise the awareness of Iranian students and other international students' experiences for further improvement. According to a research

(Sahin, 2017) conducted through analyzing 44 Turkish universities' strategic plans in terms of internationalization objectives, the most cited objectives are increasing student mobility, increasing teaching staff mobility, benefiting from international research funds, increasing the capacity of international publications, conducting international joint projects, organizing international conferences in the university, increasing mobility partnerships, increasing the number of international students .

The development of strategic administration in academic institutions is a growing trend among countries that completed their industrialization (Skilbeck & Connell, 1996). Principles for internationalization utilized by academic institutions have an incisive effect on the level of internationalization of the academic institutions. It was suggested that the academic institutions ought to establish a plan about internationalization covering both for diversification of shareholders and performing as a course of action for their precedencies (Childress, 2009).

1.2. Purpose of the Study

International Iranian students confront a great deal of educational experiences and challenges due to differences between their educational system in their home country and at an English medium state university in a non-native English speaking country. Beside the educational challenges, students may engage with social complexities as international individuals.

Moreover, internationalization has its own ethos and structure that lead academic institutions, nations, academic staff and students face and challenge with new systems and practices. Therefore, there is a high possibility of emerging issues between internationalization and academic institutional systems both at individual and intuitional levels. Even though the internationalization brings along a lot of positive consequences, the troubles diminish the usefulness of internationalization. Comprehending and finding solutions to these troubles may help to the academic staff and institutions benefiting more from it.

Since internationalization has an important impact on three levels of national, institutional and individual levels, the main purpose of the study is to identify Iranian students' profiles, in-class educational experiences as well as out of class social experiences at an English-medium state university through a survey design.

In the light of the issues mentioned above this study attempts to answer the following questions;

1. What are Iranian student profiles studying at an English-medium state university in Turkey?
2. What are the educational experiences of Iranian students at an English-medium state university in Turkey?
3. What are the social experiences of Iranian students at an English-medium state university in Turkey?

1.3. Significance of the Study

As far as internationalization of higher education concerns, students confront different experiences and challenges such as social, personal, new language experiences, cultural shock and unfamiliar educational experiences. Considering educational problems as a situation wherein a student experiences difficulty arranging for classes or performing in classes due to inadequate skills or knowledge required to succeed. Also according to the large number of Iranian students enrolled at the context of study, Iranian international students' profiles appear as trustworthy information to collect.

This study explores the tension between internationalization along with individual orientations of foreign students. Educational and social experiences of Iranian students while studying at English medium state university was found as a controversial problem to be examined. Consequently, these students come up with different aspects and expectations that convey them feel empowered during their educational life.

Unfamiliar educational system is one of the important difficulties of international students. Iranian students received their elementary, secondary and higher education in a totally

different educational system and they are not familiar with student centered learning environment. As an example they used to listen to their instructors rather than speaking in class. Teachers teach the lessons that are presented in the textbooks and students have no chance to learn individually. In some cases, students are not accustomed to testing by essay examination and are given good points when they write what they learn from teachers and the things they memorize from their textbooks (which is considered as plagiarism in other learning styles). Besides, studying in an English medium state university is another challenging issue for Iranian students who study in different programs at the institution of study.

The internationalization is a very popular and growing issue across Turkish Higher Educational Institutions. Thus, a detailed investigation is needed to find out how academic intuitions and Iranian students perceive this situation. 15.8 % of Turkey's population is considered as youth population and it is the first country with the youth population among European countries in 2018 (TÜİK, 2018).

In addition to that, the number of universities has increased during the last decade and reached to 186 (HEC, 2018). Likewise, there has been an increase in the number of university students which is around 7.560.371 in the academic year of 2017-2018 and this number is growing continually (ÖSYM, 2018). Consequently, the internationalization is indispensable for academic institutions around the world and it is anticipated that there will be more students from other countries within internationalization practices.

In general, universities have three basic operational areas namely education, research and services for the society and this research encapsulates all these functions and their relationship with international students. This study covers all the issues with Iranian international students in higher education to help them attain educational achievements. Furthermore, the current study leads to other international students' success, better service and facilities in their academic life. As a Consequence, this study fosters the curriculum and instruction improvements correspondingly.

1.4. Definition of Terms

Student Profiles

Student profiles give a snapshot of the specific student population in a descriptive way. Briefly, student profiles reflect the background of the students and their educational attainment (CCSC Report, 1980). In this study profiles refer to the students' socio-economic status, accommodation preferences, citizenship and career aspirations, link between arrival years to turkey and starting years of the students at IU, social club membership status, Turkish language skills, Turkish language level and applying for a Turkish citizenship and the driving forces to come to Turkey

Social Experiences of Students

Social experiences includes the students' personal relations with their families and friends in the campus. Moreover, their relationship with other people off campus which is related to job circumstances (Pace, 1980).

Educational Experiences of Students

Educational experiences cover the incidents that the students encounter during their education period like attending classes and equilibrating various priorities in life (Pace, 1980).

Empowerment

The empowerment is about the level of control that a person can apply to his/her life and the advancement over life quality (Dickerson, 1998; Wilson, 1998).

Internationalization

The continuum of aggregation among nations, cultures or worldwide extent under an aim (Knight, 2004).

Internationalization of Higher Education

The definition of the internationalization of higher education was suggested by the Soderqvist (2002), as the alteration period of the higher educational institution from national level to international level which is causing to reach all dimensional viewpoints of the international higher educational management standards so as to increase the teaching and learning quality and to attain intended skills.

English-Medium Instruction

Utilizing the English language in order to teach academic topics in countries where the official language is not English or the overall population is not from English speaking countries (Dearden, 2014).

Non-Anglophone Country

Non-Anglophone country where the English language is not used for the general communication within the borders of a country. Mostly used for communication among foreign people who are from various native language antecedents and specifically in academic or business environment (Kachru, 1986). Indicating a non-colonial nation using Turkish as their official language in education and bureaucracy.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, review of the literature is presented under five subtitles. Firstly, literature related to internationalization of higher education is given. In the second part, individual internationalization is given together with international student decision making to go to a destination country. In the third part, educational and social life of international students is introduced; literature on this field is presented under the headings of educational and social integration of international students. Lastly, the summary of literature review is presented at the end of this chapter.

2.1. Internationalization of Higher Education

The international education concept first appeared in the 20th century following the emergence of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York, USA. According to IIE's initial declaration that they will include entire main actions of the international education in their scope. The IIE was exemplifying the education in America mutually with the other countries around the globe by assigning and accepting scholars, establishing educational agreements with other countries and organizing congresses & conferences related to main issues of international education with the support of American Political Science Association and American Historical Association. Thus, the IIE became the center for international education. In other words, the IIE took an active role in creating exchange environment on international education among other countries around the globe. In addition to this, the institute was helping to establish International Relations Clubs in the premises of the universities. This means that international educational exchange and international studies concepts were existing from the very beginning of this process (Klasek, 1992).

The term international education has been argued more than 60 years and it is in a maturation period. International education is a crucial part of the educational continuum and its supremacy has been increasing over time. The meaning of the international education varies from person to person. Furthermore, different terms were utilized to imply the international education concept in conferences and manuscripts (Klasek, 1992).

There are several definitions of internationalization has been made by several authors. Arum and Van de Water (1992) defined international education as three main elements: 1) transnational content of the curricula; 2) teachers' and students' mobility around the world with the purposes of training or investigation; 3) international collaboration programs and practical support. In another definition by Knight (1999) as following "the process of integrating the international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of an institution of higher education".

There are several methods to extend overseas education programs. The premises of the universities should be under the guidance of international education leadership so as to make right choices. For instance, diversifying the geography and enhancing the attendance in overseas education (Klasek, 1992). Hackbarth & Gastaldi (1983) investigated the challenges of overseas educational programs and their educational systems and they concluded that countries of the Middle East had insufficient premises and academicians.

In 1999, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasized that the internationalization of higher education is a process of consolidation in universities with different cultural and national backgrounds around the globe in terms of teaching and all other related activities (OECD, 1999). But, during the last decades, there have been some difficulties in identifying the internationalization of higher education which was caused by distance learning, overseas education and recent techniques on transfrontier. Accordingly the internationalization of higher education is more likely connected with the word globalization (Knight, 2004; Yang, 2002). The main role of the internationalization of higher education is to develop comprehension among different nations and cultures, however it was not fulfilled its needs (Kim, 2009).

Similarly Huang (2006) examined development of internationalized curricula in three non-English speaking countries. In China, 273 new programs with international subjects were increased from 1990 to 2002. For example, different programs appear at universities in Hong Kong which lead to joint or double degrees in partnership with foreign countries such as Norway, Hong Kong, Australia and the USA. In Japan, large number of English language programs have been organized for international students which have been provided in many institutions. Additionally, in private universities, they try to employ more foreigners to work as faculty members in order to accelerate development and implementation of international programs.

There are several educational underlying reasons for internationalization of higher education institutions. Most especially, educational institutions are seeking recognition to be known internationally by meeting the global academic norms (De Wit, 2002; Knight 1999). Namely, the internationalization is a chance for educational institutions in terms of academic quality development. Moreover, the curriculum about internationalization is described as an academic justification by educational establishments (Sahin, 2017). In one of the studies, Altbach (1989) considered different impacts on internationalization and its consequences in both Third world nations and Western academic system. He named the foreign study as a phenomenon in which one of the most crucial elements is transferring knowledge. It has been concluded that key sources of educational life are students and scholars who provide expertise and cross-cultural ideas.

There were definitions made regarding the transnational academic mobility, internationalization and interculturality in higher education and considered their relations as well (Kim, 2009). The transnational academic mobility in higher education is defined as the movement of the academic staff and students among or outside of national borders (Kim, 2009). According to the OECD (1999), the term internationalization of higher education is an aggregation of cultural and national dimensions in an international channel with the universities' all aspects. The idea of interculturality of international higher

education is described as the common intellection and interactive relation among multifarious cultures (Gilroy, 2004; Kim, 2009).

Conclusions with regard to internationalization stated that the main reason for globalization implementations in United Kingdom was economic concerns. Because there has been a great rivalry among countries with regard to economy of knowledge. In other words, foreign students get their education by international scholars and this helps cross-cultural diversity for the local faculty teachers (Kim, 2009).

Each country has goals for achieving the transnational academic norms in order to generate farther knowledge of science and attract more students from overseas. So as to enhance economic and scientific rivalry there is a significant attention finding the best students and scientists from abroad (Knight, 2004). In addition to this, there is a strong relationship between the economic & technological development level of the country and transnationalization of the higher education (Knight, 1999).

From 1990 (1.3 million \$) to 2011 (4.3 million \$), there has been a triple increase on transnational higher education service expenditures (OECD, 2013) and in 2025 it's expected that the amount will be around 7.2 million \$ (Bohm et al., 2002). Another formal report revealed that from 2005 to 2012, there was a 50% increase in students enrolling overseas educational institutions (OECD, 2015). There is an immense petition from Asian countries (70% of the cumulative global demand) which will rule the transnational higher education marketplace by 2025 that is approximately 27% rise starting from 2000 (Bohm et al., 2002).

In 2014, there was about 5 million international students in the World. The United States of America (USA) was the biggest country holding 19.4% of the international students around the globe in 2013 and still maintaining its first place. Ensuing the USA, the United Kingdom is the second with 10.3%, Australia is the third with 6.2%, France is the fourth with 5.7%, Germany is the fifth with 4.9% and the Canada is the sixth with 3.4% hosting almost half of the transnational students in the World respectively. This demonstrates the importance of the students from Asia which were the biggest group composing 53% of all

students (Australian Education International [AEI], 2016b). The main reasons for international students choosing these countries are; the quality of the research institutions, English-medium university programs and having a partnership with elite educational institutions from main countries. (OECD 2009).

Iran is generally well-known country sending students to overseas for undergraduate and graduate education. Especially, from the year 1974 up to 1983 Iran was the major country which was sending students to United States. The highest ratio was seen in the 1979-1980 academic year with 51.310 Iranian students pursuing their academic education in USA. But, following the revolution which was took place in Iran, the ratio of the Iranian students going USA dramatically decreased from 1980s to 1990s. In 1998, there was only 1700 students. Nevertheless, the number of the students has been increasing substantially since 1998. In the academic year of 2015-2106 there was 12.269 students which was the highest number after the revolution (Open Doors, 2016).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) predictions showed that in 2015 there were total 50.053 international students from Iran and it has been increasing since the early periods of 21st century. According to estimations there was a sharp increase from 2000 (21.701 students) to 2013 (50.053 students) that is 130% rise in 14 years. UNESCO (2016) reported that Iranian students generally prefer United States of America, Canada, Italy, Germany and Australia for their overseas education. Iranian students made significant amount of contribution to the USA economy which was about US\$ 971 million in 2014-2106 and there has been 47% increase from 2014 (US\$ 262 million) to 2016 US\$386 (Open Doors, 2016).

2.2. International Students in Higher Education

It is essential that students need to have a global point of view not only for having good quality education but also being ready for life at international arena following graduation. Thinking critically and investigating on complicated issues concerning relationships of between nations and geographical regions are the fundamental factors for students as an academic justification. Moreover, students involving in oversea education experience a

diversified academic point of view in their study area by means of internationalization (Yang, 2002). Therefore, educational institutions send their students overseas for a short periods and acknowledge this as worthwhile as studying home intuitions (Teichler, 1996).

Another academic justification for students is to getting ready for the life at overseas thereafter graduation from university and academic skills were approved as obligation to achieve that. In other words, having international education and learning another language through internationalization experiences are perceived as beneficiary by individuals (Murphy, 2007).

Altbach and Knight (2007) stated that people decide upon several important things regarding their area of interest and geographical locations of colleges in which they will pursue their education. Migration laws have an effect on students' decisions if they will continue their career abroad or return to their home country after graduation. Majority of the students (approximately 2 millions) studying in foreign countries are supported financially by their families or relatives for their educational expenses. Consequently, students are the greatest monetary source for transnational education which is more than the scholarships given by the governments, universities and charity organizations.

The students go to study in other countries with different profiles and demographic information regarding their gender, age, marital status, living arrangement, employment, language skills, educational background, etc. In a study of foreign language learning strategy use, 599 international students were examined in Taiwan and Japan. Chang (2016), studied language learning strategy and students' profiles. The findings showed that, International students' tendencies change according to their gender, academic programs, language skills and previous experiences in different studying countries. A study examined the experiences of international students at The University of Toledo. There were recommendations of initiatives for the profile of international students for instance, specific gender, religious or cultural differences in the experiences of international students (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010).

Katkins (2013), examined the profile of international students (from China, Hong Kong, Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan and other countries) in a private Higher Education in Sydney, Australia. Findings showed that among 232 respondents, the largest percentage (84%) included the age range of 19-23 years. The students claimed different languages as their native (first) language. Some of them speak additional languages (other than English and their native tongue). There were more male participants (59%) than female participants. Majority of the participants were single (91%), and a number of them were married. The most predominant housing preferences of the students were “living by yourself” (33%) and “with other international students from their home country” (31%). In addition, most of the students were not looking for a job (68%).

In terms of English language skills, students indicated that they have good quality of speaking (57%) and writing (53%) skills. Regarding employment preferences, 58% of the students stated that they would like to have a graduate degree after finishing their undergraduate studies in order to find a good employment opportunities. Besides, 25% of them want to return their home country and work there, 22% of them want to stay and work in Australia, 22% of them would like to look for job opportunities around the World.

Furthermore, it was seen that the student’s aspirations changes from country to country. Accordingly, 36% of Chinese students stated that they would like have graduate degree and others want to return their country for working (25%). Students from Hong Kong claimed that they want to live and work in Australia (29%). Students from Indonesia specified that they can work anyplace in the World (58%). Students from Korea expressed that they want live and work in their home country.

Most of the countries have tendency on student exchange programs and international students. However, the students are driven by diverse motivations from their own countries. Some of the students can not get into university due to compelling entry exams and insufficient quota. Besides, students go to overseas if they do not find the field of study in their home country, particularly at the graduate study level. Furthermore, students escape from their countries due to politics and social issues. There are many reasons that

United States of America attracts a lot of people for education. Students think that graduating from an American university is prestigious and better than their local universities. Vast majority of the students going abroad for having a career in the country. (Altbach, 2004).

2.3. Internationalization of Iranian Students in Turkey

Tekeli (2010) expressed that universities in Turkey is in search of getting accreditation from internationally well-known associations. Hereunder, the American Board for Engineering and Technology gave accreditation to 4 universities and 7 universities was being evaluated by the European Universities Association. Moreover, Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programs (MÜDEK) was formed in 2002.

There are different data in order to evaluate the internationalization process of the universities in Turkey. However, the most significant one is the mobility of students and academics (Erdoğan, 2014). Turkey had a sending position till 2015. In other words, there were more student went abroad than came to Turkey. Thereafter, the UNESCO published the number of incoming and outgoing students in 2015 and it was stated that there were more incoming students (48.183) than outgoing students to Turkey (44.652). It was also mentioned in the report that United States of America, Germany, United Kingdom, Bulgaria and Austria was the top five countries for the Turkish students going to abroad respectively. On the other hand, the top five countries for students coming Turkey from abroad were; Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Afghanistan and Syria. There was an increase in the number of international students coming to Turkey, but the main driving force in this increase is that refugees who immigrated in Turkey. Besides, a great majority of the international students are coming from Central Asia, Balkans and the Middle East (Kondakci, 2010).

There is an increasing interest on decision-making and selection of transnational higher education field among researchers and they mainly focused on this process, preference and factors (Petruzzellis & Romanazzi, 2010; Wilkins, Shams, & Huisman, 2013). The preferences are known as unstructured, complex and multi-criteria including several

factors (Pimpa, 2005). Decision-making process regarding studying overseas has different phases. Some studies stated that the decision-making period starts after the student wants to pursue their education overseas and finishes after choosing the host university (Roberts, Chou, & Ching, 2010).

It is very hard for students making a selection among the higher educational institutions which are in high level of rivalry to each other. Students are sensitive, clever, and demanding while deciding on their host countries (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003). Nevertheless, they pair their abilities and enthusiasms in accordance with the features of the host country as much as possible (Hemsley-Brown, 2012). Mazzarol (1998) implied that choosing to study overseas is the most expensive and important judgement taken by students. The process about choosing study destinations causes loss of time, very expensive and depends on the students' field of interests (Pimpa, 2005). Students argue that the decision-making period is very dicey and complex (Moogan, Baron, & Harris, 1999; Pimpa, 2005). Students may face dilemma throughout the period of decision-making. They may feel their weaknesses by understanding how hard the selection process conducting by universities. Conversely, choosing their destinations, study areas and universities makes them feel special (Hemsley-Brown, 2012).

According to the statistics of the Council of Higher Education in Turkey (HEC, 2019) the total number of Iranian university students are reported as 7154 during 2018-2019 academic year. At the same academic year, 1267 Iranian students were studying at different universities in Ankara which are mentioned in Table 2.1. Overall number of Iranian students studying at different levels of prep-school, undergraduate and graduate are 265 at Middle East Technical University during 2018-2019 academic year.

Table 2. 1 *Number of Iranian students in Ankara, 2018-2019 academic year*

University Name	Type	Male	Female	Total
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University	Public	37	36	73
Ankara University	Public	183	126	309
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University	Public	30	40	70
Atılım University	Private	10	8	18
Başkent University	Private	20	25	45
Çankaya University	Private	2	4	6
Gazi University	Public	80	59	139
Hacettepe University	Public	100	116	216
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University	Private	77	31	108
Lokman Hekim University	Private	1	3	4
Middle East Technical University	Public	151	114	265
TED University	Private	1	1	2
TOBB Ekonomi ve Teknoloji University	Private	6	5	11
Türk Hava Kurumu University	Private	1	0	1
Total		699	568	1267

In a study, determining the pulling or pushing factors of the students to Turkey, selecting country for studying abroad was described as a two-dimensional fact. Accordingly, these factors can be public or private. Private factors are related to students' tendencies, ages, motivations, academic abilities, aspirations and choices. Public factors, concerning the viewpoints of life in the host or home countries which may influence the students' choices (Kondakci, 2011).

Results in this study show that “finding a job”, “having a relative, family member or a spouse in Turkey” and “having scholarship” as public rationales influence students to come to Turkey. On the other hand private rationales that cause the students to come to Turkey are “academic quality”, “field of the study, the institution”, “desire of learning/experiencing a different culture” and “Turkish people and Turkish culture” (Kondakci, 2011).

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) implied that decision-making period of the students is composed of some evident phases and there are also push and pull factors influencing decision-making process should take into consideration. They concluded that there are mainly three phase composing decision-making process. The first phase includes if the students wants to study in other countries or not. In the first phase, the home country of the student is the most important determinant on decision-making. The second phase includes choosing a host country. In the second phase, some host countries may attract more students compared to other countries. The third phase includes selecting an educational institution where students get their education.

Ilhan and his friends (2012) investigated different reasons that international students tend to study counseling in Turkey. The most frequent factor was the “Turkish origin” and the second one was “the quality of Turkish higher education”. Apart from that the factors called “recommendation from others,” “no counselor education at home country,” and “geographical proximity” had an effect on international students’ selections.

Another three-stage model regarding decision-making period of graduate students who are pursuing their academic education abroad was suggested by Chen (2007). The first stage called as “predisposition” in which the students evaluate their individual requirements, obtain information about studying overseas and come to a conclusion if they will study in another country or not. The second stage is called as “search, selection, and application” where students inquire about academic institutions, programs, geographical location, tuition fees and countries they would like to study. Following that they compare and analyze the information before making a decision on which academic institutions they will apply. The final stage is called as “choice” in this stage students review the determinants which were taken in consideration in the second stage what are the advantages and disadvantages of the schools, countries and educational programs then consequently make the last decision about their registration.

2.4. Educational and Social Life of International Students

The literature on internationalization in higher education reveals that there are some major educational and social issues that international students experience in their host countries. This part represents different studies which found educational and social problems among international students of higher education in different universities all over the world. Turkey and Iran lack studies which examine learning experiences in the class, there is a much bigger body of research on students' social, personal, financial and cultural problems. Otherwise in other countries there are studies investigating learning and teaching experiences of foreign students. For instance, in one of the studies with Iranian students at Indiana University, it was found out that a large number of students had problems with areas that required skilled personal performance such as reciting or speaking in class, giving oral reports, and getting papers typed were among the most problematic items for the participants (Moshfegh, 1989).

Sawir (2005) gathered data to find out the difficulties of international students in Australia regarding the influence of their prior language learning experience and associated learning problems. In the study students (males and females) from Indonesia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam and Japan were interviewed. They suggested that teachers should have been native speakers of English as they had problems with understanding the lectures in the classroom.

Parallel to Tinto's interaction model, Baker and Siryk (1999) stated that social and academic integration can have an impact on study performance. According to Baker and Siryk (1999) there are 4 distinctive adjustments for academic integration; social, academic, personal, emotional adjustment and attachment. Social adjustment signifies how students cope with social issues which includes taking part on social activities or ability to work in groups and making friends. On the other hand, the academic adjustment represents student's ability to deal with different educational needs including performance, motivation, educational satisfaction and application.

Even though there is a rich and attractive ambience in universities at the Netherlands, there are some issues related to the academic and social integration of students from abroad (Eringa and Huei-Ling, 2009; Van der Wende, 2003). According to mutual belief of academicians, students from abroad having some difficulties in adjusting themselves both socially and academically. Adapting international students to a new academic and social setting which is called as academic integration (Tinto, 1975). However international students are not aligned with the higher educational intuitions' needs (Asmar, 2005; Barrie, 2007; Jochems, 1996; Morrison et al., 2005; Russell et al., 2010).

In a study Zhao, Kuh, and Carini (2005) made a comparison about engagement in academic activities among students from overseas and students from the United States (U.S.). Findings indicated that students from overseas were more motivated in terms of student-faculty interaction, educational challenge and using technology in classes. Moreover, students from overseas had more gains in social and personal development and main educational consequences. However, students from U.S. were motivated on socializing and community service. Findings of another study revealed that, students from U.S. had less engaged on having experience on educational activities and supportive campus environment compared to students from overseas (Korobova, 2012).

Majority of the research about higher education revealed that there is a retention or persistence. According to model of interaction student attrition which was developed by Tinto (1975, 1998) every student has different experiences on education, skills, community backgrounds, values, family backgrounds prior to attending higher education. In consequence, there is an impact from both individual and social issues on students' integration into higher educational institutions. Tinto (1975, 1998) stated that international students should be both decisive to pursue their education so as to graduate and take part in the cultural activities.

2.4.1. Educational Experiences of International Students

A great number of research studies in internationalization of higher education have investigated the impact of educational adjustment among students study abroad. Students

engage with educational experiences through their studies in an international context. Academicians researched the educational challenges and academic learning strategies of international students came across in English-medium countries and the differences on learning strategies between domestic students and students from overseas. By means of learning strategies, students can use their time, strengths, comprehension and concentration more effectively (McKeachie, Pintrich, & Lin, 1985; Riding & Sadler-Smith, 1997). According to Ormrod (2011), there are different learning strategies which helps students to improve their learning ability. Learning strategies can range from note taking in classroom to creating better learning setting. In a study conducted by Ramsay, Barker, and Jones (1999), researched the adjustment and the process of learning in Australian based university. Results showed that international students having hard times understanding the courses caused by the vocabulary used and the pace of the lecture. Students stated that they had benefits from the courses, however, they had problems understanding when the lecturers speak fast.

In Turkish context, Ilhan et al, (2012) indicated that international students have educational problems such as participating in the various activities related to courses, taking notes, and expressing themselves. In another study Ramsey and his colleagues (1999), concluded that there are some differences in learning choices between Australian and international students. For instance, students from overseas stated that feedback from lecturers were useful for learning, on the other hand local students believed that joint work learning and the support from counterparts were more effective ways in learning. As a result, divergent learning styles can cause various expectations from the academic staff. Thereby, the academic staff need to understand the difficulties students came across during learning (Wang, R., & BrckaLorenz, A., 2018).

In one of the studies Subhash (2013) collected data from Indian international students at Bangor University in UK. It is found out Indian students faced by learning difficulties related to learning styles in India and U.K. The biggest problems are reported as different examination and evaluation methods and English language. Participants of the study claimed that they are satisfied with academic adaptation, language skills development,

intellectual growth, academic achievements, development of educational, social, intercultural and interpersonal skills, confidence in learning, learner independence, and gradual changes in their learning conceptualizations. Also there were different aspects that Indian students were happy with such as quality education, practical programs, learning environments, quality services, and effective learning support systems. Although these students found the role of lecture different in India, they admitted that lecturing style was more effective than their own learning style and it helps them learn on their own. On the other hand, one fifth of the respondents also complained that studying in UK required extra effort and they have to work hard outside the class. Moreover, it was investigated that students had problems with English language and they are taught 'how to pass the test' rather than how to communicate in 'real life' situations with fast-talking native speakers. Overall, the biggest barriers which were found by Indian students were; writing critical reviews and essays, business and field reports, research proposals, case study analysis, and making references.

Learning styles of international students were examined in an MBA program in US University. Authors provided strategies for instructors to help international students adapt to education institutions in US. According to findings of a study conducted by Heikinheimo and Shute (1986), students from Asian countries who were studying in a Canadian university had significant troubles during classes in terms of writing, speaking and taking notes. This was attributed to inadequate English levels of the Asian students and their inactive involvement throughout to lectures.

Ladd and Ruby (1999) emphasized that the greater part of the foreign students were educated by method of lecture and it was widely accepted. In their investigation, a questionnaire was applied to the students and in its demographic part they were asked specify main learning approach of their native countries and it was seen that principal technique for learning was the lecture. Nonetheless, findings of the Canfield Learning Styles Inventory which determines the learning style choices based upon emotional attitudes, indicated that international students gave their preferences to direct learning method which was adverse to their conventional learning technique. In other words, they

were educated through the method of lecture in their past educational background, but they have chosen the direct experience as the learning method. They conducted their research in one of the public universities in United States of America which was acknowledged by American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and its mission was to support globalization in education and give opportunities to the foreign students.

There is another issue that students engage through their education in a foreign context which is interaction between students (collaborative learning). In order to accomplish collaborative learning, students need to interact with each other. Large number of researchers implied that students from other countries do not collaborate with students from United States (U.S.) during learning process (Lee & Rice, 2007; Yuan, 2011). Lee and Rice (2007) conducted a qualitative study with 24 students from 15 different countries and they concluded that due to worrying about English proficiency, students from abroad had hard times interacting and co-working with other students from U.S. Consequently, majority of the international students tend to collaborate with students from the similar cultures or same countries (Sarkodie-Mensah, 1998).

Many investigations were conducted to determine the influence of student-faculty interaction on the development of students and the consequences of their learning process (Kuh & Hu, 2001; Kuh et al, 2006; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). According to Kezar and Moriarty (2000), there is a positive relationship between various kind of student outcomes and the student-faculty interaction. Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) implied that the role of academic staff is crucial for student learning, Tseng and Newton (2002) revealed that there was a connection between transnational students, academic staff and advisors which had important effects on learning of the students.

It was emphasized that if academic staff use collaborative teaching strategies, and show respect to the students' behaviors, they become more successful in terms of their learning outcomes (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Chickering (1969) implied that sense of purpose of the students can be improved when the student faculty interaction is enhanced.

According to mentioned studies above, faculty members have positive impact on students' academic success.

2.4.2. Social Experiences of International Students

Social experiences and challenges relate to cultural differences, housing, language, religion and the school environment, etc. Social experiences of international students falls into two different categories of institutional and individual levels. In terms of institutional level, it has been stated that alumni who have powerful knowledge and skills in transcultural relationships is one of the most important justification for internationalization (Knight, 1999).

Regarding individual level, having experience on different cultures is a significant factor for individuals to be transnationalized. Exchanging academic staff and students is a type of social learning through experience in different cultures (De Wit, 2002). For example, students who had experience on Erasmus programs were better understanding diversified cultures (Teichler, 2012). In one of the studies with international students in Turkey, Ihan et al, (2012) reported experiencing adjustment problems, such as male–female relationships, food, housing, language, religion and the school environment.

Karaoğlu (2007) emphasized that most of the students coming Turkey from abroad have positive feelings about Turkish people. Moreover, foreign students have not got so many problems during the adaptation period to the Turkish culture and environment. Furthermore, another study conducted by Bektaş (2008) concluded that students who are mainly from neighboring countries use counseling services of universities more than local Turkish students. Main findings of the studies suggested that international students having problems during the adaptation period to the Turkish culture is relatively less than the international students who were studying in United States of America. (Delgado-Romero and Wu, 2010; Mittal and Wieling, 2006; Ng and Smith, 2009).

Social experiences of international students also includes their engagement at faculty. Studies conducted related to experiences of faculty members who are working with students from foreign countries suggested strategies for helping overseas students (Carroll

& Ryan, 2005; Groccia, Alsudairi & Buskist, 2012; Lee, 2014). Trice (2003) carried out a research in U.S. and findings indicated that there were significant differences in language problems and cultural adaptation between domestic graduate students from U.S. and oversea graduate students. Another study investigated the educational experiences and internationalization of the faculty and proposed more international content in the curricular design (Carlin, 2010). Dunn and Carrol (2005) argued that the requirement of unofficial communities about learning for the education of foreign students.

Yuan (2011) investigated faculty staff who was teaching Chinese students in United States. The results revealed that the more they understand the U.S. culture the more they feel belong the courses which supported students understanding, participating the classes. Besides, understanding the culture of United States helped students to express their expectations during lectures. For instance, students should be active during the courses in U.S. being silent is one of the signs of incompetency. On the other hand, being silent is the sign of a good student's behavior in Asian countries. According to findings of Yuan (2011) it is important that members of the faculty and other staff assisting students from overseas to understand the U.S. culture (Sahin, 2017).

2.5. Empowerment of International Students

Norton (2000) specified that the term power generally refers the structured connections between people, foundations and societies by symbolical resources that are validated, generated and dispensed in a community. At macro level the power manages universities and at micro level, interactions among individuals who have various level of access to symbolical materials.

Raymond and Parks (2004) discussed empowerment in relation to the experiences of Chinese students study a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in a Canadian university. The findings reported on three issues related to empowerment: the literacy demands and the socialization processes enacted within the educational institution, resistance and the way in which the Chinese students were able to voice their concerns regarding certain aspects of their program, and education as commodity.

It was stated that there is a significant relationship between empowerment and cultural interaction (Reid, Brown, Andrew Peterson, Snowden, & Hines, 2009). Empowerment defined as the immediate consequences of a one's learning to use proper abilities (Zimmerman, 1990). According to Frymier and Houser (1999), empowered individuals sense qualified to finish learning duties. Therefore, transnational students who have a feeling of empowerment more likely to adapt themselves to the environment and build adequacy which give them reliance in the host country. In other words, universities should encourage the cultural and educational experiences of the students from overseas by increasing their feeling of learning empowerment. Nonetheless, its effectiveness on empowerment required to understand clearly.

Some factors (belongingness, cultural distance, relevance, prior knowledge) if they have an effect on empowerment were investigated by utilizing 196 university students from overseas in New Zealand. Findings indicated that the strongest influence on empowerment was the level of prior knowledge of the English language (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014).

Conger and Kamungo (1988) proposed that empowerment is motivational matter of fact relevant to theories of expectancy and self-sufficiency. Similarly, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) is concentrated on the motivational perspective of empowerment and they determined some cognitive factors which generates motivation. Therefore, they asserted that the term empowerment is an inbred task motivation with the dynamics of endorsement and expectancy.

In a study, Mistler-Jackson and Songer (2000), implemented internet-rich science program for middle school learners. Results indicated that students feel empowered with positive motivations to learn and do science. The empowerment is generally used to deliver the emotions of self-sufficiency which have positive effect on individuals 'achievements. Thus, it was concluded that the results of this study presents the increasing self-efficacy of students and their empowerment.

2.6. Summary for the Literature Review

This literature review examined the limited research conducted on internationalization of higher education and revealed strategic plans of Turkish higher education council.

The analysis of the literature revealed that there are pulling or pushing factors of the international students to prefer studying in other countries. Regarding decision-making period, Iranian students encounter different challenges and obstacles to come to Turkey as a non-Anglophone country with different profiles and demographic information.

In fact, International students experience several kinds of educational and social engagements in foreign countries. Iranian students as one of the majorities in Turkey are exposed to educational and social experiences. Educational experiences range from various language skills and learning process to in-class activities and integration with educational staff and other classmates. Social experiences are extended to cultural differences, accommodation, employment, etc.

Moreover, International students encounter different expectations as make them feel empowered during their academic life at higher educational institutions. As can be seen from the review, there is a need for doing more research regarding international students' profiles, educational and social experiences and empowerment in Turkish context and their adopting process as a major part of internationalization in higher education. To fill the gap in the literature and provide more insights on internationalization in a non-Anglophone nation a survey research is employed in the current study. The following section provides details about the method of this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter provides information related overall research design, research questions, sample, instrumentation, research questions, analysis of data, data collection procedures and the limitations of the present investigation.

3.1. Overall Design of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to describe Iranian students' profiles, their educational and social experiences and challenges at an English medium university, pseudonym International University (IU).

In line with this aim, a survey design was employed. The major purpose of survey research is to define some certain characteristics of the particular population (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2012). Using this research design can be called as appropriate to identify the key areas where students are facing difficulties, as well as areas where University programs need to be improved. In survey studies researchers provide number of questions to ask large group of people regarding to their opinions, beliefs etc. (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2012). Since the data was collected with the same sample at just one point in time, the design of this study is categorized as a cross-sectional survey design.

Accordingly, an online questionnaire that includes both open-ended and close-ended items was developed to investigate participants' profiles, educational and social experiences. Firstly, a structured cognitive interview revealing a SWOT analysis was used for generating items and developing the survey instrument (See Appendix D). Therefore, this study is a descriptive in nature and it is mainly includes quantitative items, and is supported with qualitative open-ended items to receive a greater insights from the respondents.

The sample were all Iranian students attending International University (IU) in Mid-Anatolia are the accessible population and all Iranian students ($N= 277$) were reached online. A return rate of 41.5% ($n=115$) was enhanced that constiutes the sample of this study.

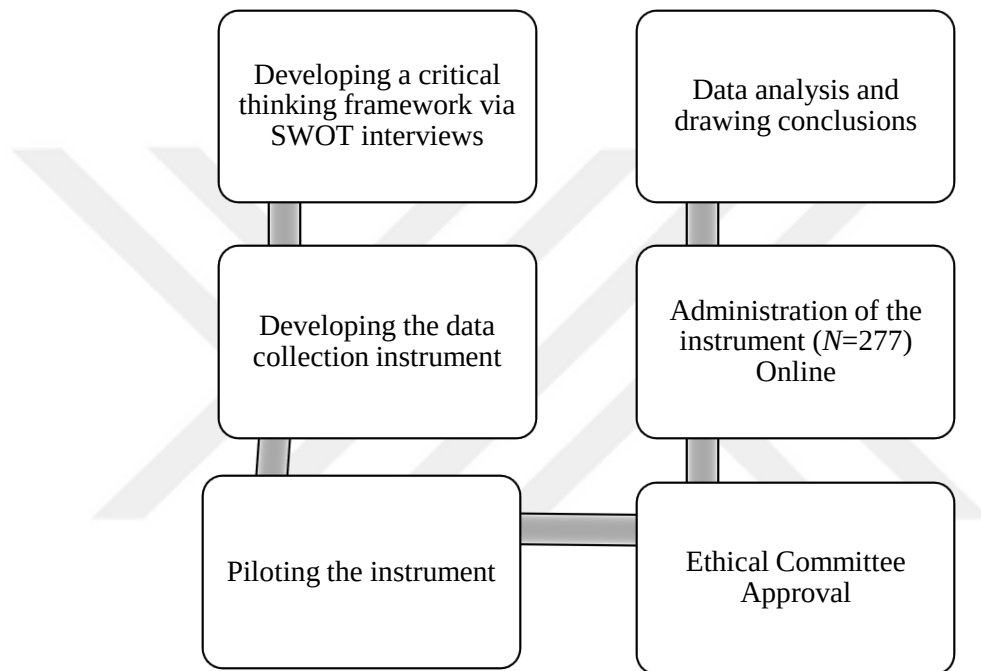


Figure 3. 1 Scheme for the Overall Research Design of the Study

Figure 3.1 shows the schematic presentment of the sequential phases followed over the course of research and the following information give details about the overall design of the research.

The research was designed after discussing with the advisor of the thesis in order to determine the Iranian students' ($N=115$) profiles, educational and social experiences at an English medium state university in Mid Anatolia through a research based survey within the 2017-2018 Academic Year.

Initially, the review of literature were performed to develop a critical thinking framework for the research and to gather an extensive knowledge about the topic and via a SWOT interview to generate items. Afterwards, the keywords of the study were determined and

systematical search on academic Internet databases (e.g. Google Scholar, ProQuest SocINDEX, PsycINFO, ERIC, Academic Search Premier and Web of Science) were done. In accordance with the literature review on the field, the thesis proposal and research questions of the study were formed.

The data collection instrument was formed by the researcher and after discussing the experts and the thesis advisor the required alterations on the instrument were done. Prior to administer the instrument the pilot study was performed and the Ethical Committee Approval was gathered. Following that the questionnaire was administered to all the Iranian students at IU via and invitation in an e-mail message during the summer and fall semester of 2018. Finally, the collected data were analyzed and its findings reported.

3.2. Research Questions

The main intent of this study is to explore, international Iranian students' profiles, their educational and social experiences at IU. More specifically, this study attempted to find answers to the following research questions;

1. What are Iranian student profiles studying at an English-medium state university in Turkey?
2. What are the educational experiences of Iranian students at English-medium state university in Turkey?
3. What are the social experiences of Iranian students at English-medium state university in Turkey?

3.3. The Context of the Study

This study is a survey study and it was conducted in an English-medium state university in Ankara. The case of this study was chosen from Ankara since Ankara is the second highest rank city in Turkey in terms of the number of higher education institutions, with 6 state and 13 foundation universities. Among them, a university with the highest number of Iranian students was purposefully selected. The institution is an English medium University and is located in an accessible place that attracts more international students.

On the other hand, the IU is an information-rich case as being older than 30 years and being among the flagship universities in Turkey. It holds the largest number of international students in Ankara, offers English medium instruction, is part of joint undergraduate and graduate joint international programs, and has an off-campus university abroad.

It was the only university from Turkey took part in the top 100 universities of the World in 2015, indicating it is a high ranking university with high reputation in its context (THE, 2015).

More specifically, in the academic year of 2018-2019 there were 1.615 international students which is one of the biggest international student number studying in Turkish universities (YÖK, 2018). Besides, it has 780 agreements with international universities over 5 continents and more than 50 countries (METU, 2018).

Totally, there are 154.446 international students studying in Turkish universities. Among Turkish universities, IU has one of the highest number ($N=1615$) with regard to incoming students. The main reason for that IU started to make bilateral agreements with the non-European countries such as Japan, Canada, USA, and Australia before the implementation of Erasmus Program. The initial trans-nationalization efforts of the IU and adopting English language as the language of education.

The Strategic Plan of IU (METU Strategic Plan, 2018) that include the working period of this study 2018-2022 highlights the strategic plans about internationalization that are considered to be related to the current study are as follows;

Goal 1: To develop awareness of internationalization and multi-cultural life experiences of all the university components.

Objective 1.1: Increasing international students' satisfaction about interacting with university components

Objective 1.2: Organizing activities that will increase our students' awareness of multicultural life,

Objective 1.3: Organizing activities to increase IU faculty members' and staff's awareness of and skills related to multiculturalism and internationalization,

Goal 2: To develop a sustainable institutional structure compatible with internationalization.

Objective 2.1: Coordinating all units involved in internationalization and ensuring institutional support to promote the establishment and development of international cooperation,

Objective 2.2: Creating an on-campus database to document, archive, and make accessible the current experiences and processes related to internationalization,

Objective 2.3: Ensuring that all communication of academic units, administrative units and student communities within the university take place in English, as well as in Turkish.

Objective 2.4: Increasing the number of incoming and outgoing participants within the framework of international mobility.

3.4. Population

The target population is all of the Iranian students studying at IU. All Iranian students who are studying at IU were invited to participate in the study via an e-mail message. In other words, the accessible population ($N=277$) is all the Iranian students studying at IU. The population were administered the questionnaire (IUSQ) online and 115 responses were reached indicating a return rate of 41.5%. While determining the samples of students, it is important that they are representative of the actual population so, participants consist of male and female students who are studying at IU.

Students participated from different education levels as Prep-school, Undergraduate, Graduate and Post-graduate. A large number of students attended in different faculties such as Engineering, Architecture, Social sciences, Sciences, Education, etc. The Iranian

students were educated in various departments at IU, and their demographics indicate the followings.

In terms of gender, the majority of the participants were male students 65 (56.5%) and there were 50 (43.5%) female students. Considering the age, they were ranged between 18-38 years and they were largely populated $n=53$ (46.1%) within the range of 28 to 32 years old (See Table 3.1).

Table 3. 1 *Gender and age of sample*

Category		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	65	56.5
	Female	50	43.5
Age	18 - 22	6	5.2
	23 - 27	30	26.1
	28 - 32	53	46.1
	33 - 37	24	20.9
	38 - 42	2	1.7

Participants were from various faculties. However, since the IU was formed as a technical university, a large part of the students were studying in the Faculty of Engineering ($n=62$; 53.9%) and the Faculty of Architecture ($n=17$; 14.8%). Besides, the rest of the students were studying in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences ($n=11$; 9.6%), Economic and Administrative Sciences ($n=4$), Education ($n=10$; 8.7%) and other ($n=11$; 9.6%).

Furthermore, their level of study, as follows; Master of Arts or Master of Science ($n=58$; 50.4%), Doctoral degree ($n=41$; 35.7%) and Undergraduate ($n=16$; 13.9%). Therefore, it can be said that more than 86% of the Iranian students came to IU for their graduate studies after completing their bachelor's degrees in their home country. In addition to that, most of the prep or undergraduate students (80%) had plans for a graduate degree. Thus, it may be said that they would like to have an academic career.

Moreover, the vast majority of students ($n=92$; 80%) had required English proficiency and they did not attend prep-school. On the other hand, just under a third of students ($n=23$; 20%) were attended to the prep-school prior to start their education. Besides, all of the participants were asked to mention their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and a

clear majority of the them were very successful high honor students (n=62; 50%) with the CGPA between 3.50 and 4.00 and more than 30% of the participants were honor students (n=35; 30.4%) with the CGPA between 3 - 3.49. Nearly fifteen percent of the students (n=16; 13.9%) had satisfactory CGPA between 2 - 2.99. Lastly, there were only a few students (n=2; 1.7%) who had unsatisfactory CGPA between 1.00 – 1.99 (See Table 3.2).

Table 3. 2 *Educational characteristics of participants*

Category		<i>f</i>	%
Faculty	Architecture	17	14.8
	Arts and sciences	11	9.6
	Econ. and adm. sci.	4	3.5
	Education	10	8.7
	Engineering	62	53.9
	Other	11	9.6
Level of study	Undergraduate	16	13.9
	M.A./M.Sc.	58	50.4
	Ph.D.	41	35.7
Attended prep school	Yes	23	20
	No	92	80
Plans for grad. degree	Yes	12	80
	No	3	20
CGPA	1.00 – 1.99	2	1.7
	2.00 – 2.99	16	13.9
	3.00 – 3.49	35	30.4
	3.50 – 4.00	62	50

3.5. Data Collection Instrument

The IUSQ questionnaire including both open-ended and close-ended items was developed for this study to find out Iranian international students' profiles, educational experiences, social experiences at English medium state university in Mid Anatolia. Therefore, there were instrument development phases for the study. Survey items were generated through a process which are explained in the questionnaire formation part.

3.5.1. Questionnaire Formation Process

In the study, there are three phases to develop International University Students' Questionnaire (IUSQ) and collect the data through the online survey. In first phase, a structured cognitive interview with the help of a SWOT table was conducted with 14

Iranian students to explore students' educational and social experiences at English medium state university in Mid Anatolia. According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), interviews are the main paradigm in which one can get information from various and well-informed communicants with different point of views. Investigators gather more reliable data by means of interview method and it also allows the investigator see the subjects' point of view which you cannot observe directly with the quantitative methodology (Patton, 2002). The interview benefited from SWOT analysis examining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organization in which international students are studying. Secondly, during the interview the students received a form which is designed as a table to fill in four different parts of SWOT Analysis (See Table 3.3). Gorski (1991) suggested SWOT analysis to increase minority enrollment in community and other regional colleges. Using this tool is appropriate to identify the key areas where different programs are performing at a high level, as well as areas that need to be improved.

Since all of the questions were related with the concept of internationalization, this concept has been explained in written form and verbally before each interview to avoid misunderstanding. Internationalization may have many different meanings for different people. To avoid this confusion, a comprehensive definition of internationalization was written by the researcher by taking literature into account.

Followings are the structured open-ended questions that are asked in the interview for item generations;

1. What are the strengths of being a (international) student at IU?
 - a) Educational: learning environment, instructional materials, student assessment.
 - b) Social:
2. What are the opportunities of being a student at IU? What are the provisions?

- a) What services are there that students can benefit during their education?
 - b) What benefits are there that students can achieve after their education?
- 3. What are the weaknesses of studying at IU?
 - a) What are the difficulties that students confront in the classes/ library/ exams/ lectures?
- 4. What are the threats of studying at IU? What challenges/barriers do you confront?
 - a) What are the barriers that students confront during their education?
 - b) What are the opportunities that students could not take (but adopted by competitors) during their education?

Finally, the answers of interviews were transcribed to prepare raw data into meaningful items. Second step is careful reading of transcripts in order to classify and categorize repeatedly. After that it is necessary to identify draft codes which share similar meanings or qualities with raw data. Then a code book was created and finalized with multiple readings of the transcripts. Finally, codes and themes were calculated to interpret and analyze data in order to answer research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The final version of the codes and themes were also inspired by the SWOT analysis steps; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

In conclusion, the SWOT emerged into two dimensions for the questionnaire, which are explained in the following section. These dimensions were classified into educational and social experiences. Properly there were found three different categories among educational experiences that are; “students’ learning experiences”, “interactions with academic staff at IU”, “educational related international issues at IU”. For social experiences there were three categories; “students’ social experiences”, “students’ cultural experiences” and “students’ needs and social problems”.

Table 3. 3 *SWOT analysis of international Iranian students' educational and social experiences*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
What are the strengths of being a (international) student at IU? 1. Educational: 2. Social:	What are the weaknesses of studying at IU? What are the difficulties that students confront in the classes? 1. Educational : 2. Social:
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS / BARRIERS
What are the opportunities of being a student at IU? What are the provisions? 1. Educational: 2. Social:	What are the threats of studying at IU? What challenges/barriers do you confront? 1. Educational : 2. Social:

3.5.2. Piloting of the IUSQ

Since the International University Students' Questionnaire (IUSQ) was developed by the researcher in this study. Then IUSQ was pre-tested in order to check the applicability of this instrument. A good piloting involves selecting a sample, negotiating access, delivering the instrument, calculating response rates and analyzing the results in the same way as aimed for the final study (Gorard, 2003). Accordingly, to ensure that the instrument is consistent before the final administration, it was tested on a group of foreign students ($n=23$) excluding Iranians studying at IU. International University Students' Questionnaire was administered in online format. The process was accomplished by asking the International Students Office where they sent an e-mail to all of the international students (except Iranian students) at IU.

The students were informed about the purpose of the study and an abstract was attached through the e-mail with necessary description. The responses ($n=23$) for questionnaire were sent back by students through the online questionnaire and they were used for data analysis. All the data were entered into the SPSS software and the questionnaire was checked for its reliability before analyzing the data further for descriptive statistics. The “Cronbach’s alpha” was used to check the reliability of the IUSQ. The overall internal consistency was estimated as 0.82 highlighting the instrument to be almost perfect reliable in measuring students’ experiences. As Landis and Koch-Kappa’s Benchmark Scale describes that the extent of agreement can be qualified as: “< 0.0 Poor”, “0.0 to 0.20 Slight”, “0.21 to 0.40 Fair”, “0.41 to 0.60 Moderate”, “0.61 to 0.80 Substantial”, “0.81 to 1.00 Almost Perfect”.

3.5.3 Reliability and Validity of IUSQ

The terms reliability and validity are the essential parts of the quantitative study. Reliability defined as the concurrency of the measurement and the validity stands for the scope whether the notion evaluated in an accurate way (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In other words, there are certain statistical analyses which must be run during the instrument development phase in order to eliminate disputable issues related the new data collection instrument. Hence, in the present research, the evidence about the reliability, face and content validity were presented. Face validity and content validity were established during the development process of this research by piloting the questionnaire and consulting to experts from the field of education.

The first version of the International University Students ‘Questionnaire (IUSQ) was prepared exclusively to send to experts from the field of educational sciences. The exclusive questionnaire was sent to the experts with specific explanations and the purpose of this study. Accordingly, one of the experts recommended to change the negative items which included educational and social problems to a positive format of the experiences at IU. Another agreement of the experts’ side was on removing some duplicated items for the final version of IUSQ.

3.5.4. International University Students' Questionnaire (IUSQ)

International University Students' Questionnaire (IUSQ) consists of three different parts. Part one is about demographics and student profiles, part two includes questions about educational and social experiences of students and finally part three has questions about Iranian students feeling empowered along with their expectations as International students. The questionnaire was developed based on the findings of SWOT analysis on the needs of international students. The questions in the questionnaire were also derived from answers of focus group interviews with Iranian international students conducted at IU from May to July, 2018.

In the first part of the IUSQ, twenty seven demographic questions were asked for the purpose of descriptive information about students' profiles. Questions related to gender, age, marital status, faculty, level of study, prep-school studies, programs, plan for graduate degree, CGPA, arrival year to Turkey, start year to IU, how did you get known about IU, Turkish language level, applying to other countries, exchange programs, dual citizenship, plans for Turkish citizenship, plans for a career in Turkey, accommodation, housemate, school club membership, financing stay in Turkey, educational level of mother, educational level of father, employment of mother, employment of father. Since the present study was supposed to determine engagement of international students, the instrument has been formed of items representing educational and social experiences and challenges of Iranian students.

In the second part of the IUSQ, fifty one questions were asked about educational and social experiences of Iranian students at IU. In this section the questions are designed as five-point Likert scale and participants were asked to select the choice that best describes how they feel about each statement based on the rating points ("Strongly disagree, for 1", "Disagree, for 2", "Undecided, for 3", "Agree for 4", and "Strongly agree, for 5").

In the last part of the questionnaire, three open-ended question were asked about empowerment to all participants. Open-ended questions let the researcher see the world through the eyes of the respondents and to capture the points of view of other people

(Patton, 2002). For that reason, open-ended questions were asked at the end of online survey to learn whether the participant had anything to add about their experiences and expectations. All the answers of open-ended questions were also included in the analysis of data.

The questionnaire was designed as an online survey instrument because it enabled to access to all of the targeted population and it allows the participants to spend sufficient time to answer to the questions mentioned above. Ultimately, the proposal for this study was presented to the graduate advisory committee in June 2017 and accepted.

Following that the questionnaire was sent as an e-mail during the summer and fall semester of 2018 to the Iranian Prep school, Undergraduate, Graduate and Post graduate students attending different faculties at IU.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

In the process of data collection, the source of data was used as close-ended and open-ended received data in survey questionnaire. After the IUSQ was validated, an e-mail scheme for invitation to the study was prepared and a consent form (See Appendix B), an invitation message (See Appendix D) and a survey link was prepared. Prior to conducting the research, the ethical permission (Protocol number 2018-EGT-004) was gathered from the METU Human Research Ethics Committee (UEAM) (See Appendix C). Since the personal e-mail addresses are not shared with anyone, the International Students' Office was included in distributing the online IUSQ through students' email addresses. After the invitations were sent to the participants, due to the very low return rate, and two reminder e-mail messages were send, and telephone calls or messages were used to invite all Iranian students to fill out the IUSQ.

Finally, online survey questionnaire was sent to all of the Iranian students' e-mail addresses by international students' office in May, 2018 and the number of received responses was 80 at the end of summer. For the second time, the online survey was sent for all the Iranian students as a reminder in September, 2018. At the end of November

there were 35 more responses from participants and the total number of data was 115 were reached between May, 2018 and November, 2018.

3.7. Data Analysis

Descriptive statics including the mean and standard deviation scores were calculated to check the educational and social experiences of Iranian students separately to answer the second and third research questions in the study. Also descriptive statistics were used for the sample to find out their demographic characteristics and profiles separately by using the IBM SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) METU Version 20 for Windows.

Secondly, there were 3 open-ended questions on the questionnaire which need qualitative reading. Creswell (2009) describes that analyzing the data in a qualitative way includes preparation of the data, finding a deeper understanding and making greater meaningful interpretation about the data. Therefore, the data were collected by open-ended questions were qualitative in nature and required to be coded thematically. Following that, an inductive content analysis was carried out by the student trial version of the QSR International's NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis software and the determined themes were shared in the results section of the present investigation.

3.8. Limitations of the Study

First limitation stems from the nature of self-report based surveys. It is assumed that participants may disguise their real experiences and give socially desirable answers (Baker, 1985).

The second limitation is that the data were collected by administering the instrument through an e-mail, it limited the opportunity to encourage the cooperation of the respondents or to provide the assistance to answering the questions of participants or clarifying instructions. Also in mail surveys data collection take a long time, and mostly participants may be reluctant to respond. Being an Iranian student myself may have been a motivation to draw more participants to volunteer in the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study focused on Iranian students' profiles, educational and social experiences at an English medium of instruction University. This chapter is devoted to the results of the research questions included in the study. The reported findings were analyzed under the four themes. First, students' profiles at IU were reported in detail. Second, educational experiences of Iranian students were addressed. Third, social experiences of Iranian students were described. Fourth, the components that make Iranian students feel empowered as an international student at IU along with additional comments or expectations were explored.

4.1. Student Profiles at IU

In this part, a detailed descriptive information of the participants was given. Iranian student profiles studying at IU are as follows;

4.1.1. Socio-Economic Status

Students reflect a rather high or moderate socio-economic status regarding their parents' educational and occupational backgrounds as can be seen from Table 4.1. In terms of educational level of the students' parents, the majority of them had university /undergraduate degree ($n=39$; 33.9% mothers and $n=40$; 34.8% fathers). On the other hand, very small number ($n=2$; 1.7% mothers and $n=1$; 0.9% fathers) of the parents were illiterate. Concerning the employment status of the parents, more than half of them ($n=62$; 53.9% mothers and $n=59$; 51.3% fathers) were retired. Apart from that the large part of their parents were employed ($n=21$; 18.3% mothers and $n=52$; 45.2% fathers).

The participants reflect a diverse community of married and bachelor students. Large number of students were single (81.7%) as expected from a student population, and almost one fifth of the students (18.3%) were married.

Table 4. 1 *Socio-economic status*

Category		<i>f</i>	%
Educational level of mother	Illiterate	2	1.7
	No education but literate	5	4.3
	Primary school	2	1.7
	Middle school	3	2.6
	High school	38	33
	College degree	11	9.6
	University/undergraduate	39	33.9
	Master's degree	7	6.1
Doctoral degree (Ph.D.)		8	7
Educational level of father	Illiterate	1	0.9
	No education but literate	1	0.9
	Primary school	4	3.5
	Middle school	4	3.5
	High school	22	19.1
	College degree	12	10.4
	University/undergraduate	40	34.8
	Master's degree	18	1.7
Doctoral degree (Ph.D.)		13	11.3
Employment of mother	Employed	21	18.3
	Unemployed	12	10.4
	Retired	62	53.9
	House maker	20	17.4
Employment of father	Employed	52	45.2
	Unemployed	4	3.5
	Retired	59	51.3
Marital status	Single	94	81.7
	Married	21	18.3

4.1.2. Turkish Language

The survey demonstrated that generally students had a good Turkish language level. 44.3% of the students had advanced level of Turkish language. Consistently, the students with upper intermediate level of Turkish language were 20.9%, intermediate 21.7% and elementary 13%.

Table 4. 2 *Turkish language level of the students*

Category		<i>f</i>	%
Turkish language level	Elementary	15	13
	Intermediate	25	21.7
	Upper intermediate	24	20.9
	Advanced	51	44.3

4.1.3. Housing

It can be clearly seen from the Table 4.3 a great majority of the students ($n=74$; 64.3%) choose to stay in an apartment or a house. On the other hand, almost rest of the remaining students reside ($n=36$; 31.3%) in dormitory. With regard to house sharing, most of the students ($n=30$; 39.5%) which is almost nearly half of them were living alone. Besides, the second largest group among students ($n=25$; 32.9%) were living with their own family. Correspondingly, the remaining of the students who were sharing their places mostly with other Iranian ($n=11$; 14.5%) and International students ($n=7$; 9.2%). Moreover, only number of students ($n=3$; 3.9%) were sharing their places with local students. This may be the consequences of limited Turkish language skills or willing to stay in an English speaking environment during their life to improve or practice their English language.

Table 4. 3 *Accommodation of the participants*

Category		<i>f</i>	%
Accommodation	Dormitory	36	31.3
	Apartment/house	74	64.3
	Rented room	5	4.3
Housemate	Alone	30	39.5
	With Iranian student(s)	11	14.5
	With other int. student(s)	7	9.2
	With local students	3	3.9
	With own family	25	32.9

4.1.4. Citizenship and Career Aspirations

Regarding the citizenship status, almost all of the students ($n=107$; 93%) had only Iranian citizenship with the exception of a few number of them ($n=8$; 7%) were holding a different citizenship other than Iranian. Besides, nearly half of the students ($n=57$; 49.6%) had plans for applying for a Turkish Citizenship. Furthermore, more than half of the students ($n=59$;

51.3%) had plans for pursuing their career in Turkey. In general, it can be inferred that approximately half of the students would like to live and work in Turkey after their graduation.

Table 4. 4 *Citizenship & career of participants*

Category		<i>f</i>	%
Dual citizenship	Yes	8	7
	No	107	93
Plans for Turkish citizenship	Yes	57	49.6
	No	58	50.4
Plans for a career in Turkey	Yes	59	51.3
	No	56	48.7

4.1.5. Internationalization at IU

In the survey, the participants shared their arrival year to Turkey and IU. Accordingly, 55 (47.8%) of the participants came to Turkey between the years of 2010 and 2014. However, the most of the students ($n=54$; 47%) started their education between the years of 2015 and 2019 at IU.

More than half of the students ($n= 69$; 60%) get known about IU from their friends. Some of them get known from internet ($n= 36$; 31.3%) and a small minority from social media and other ways ($n=10$; 8.6%). So, it can be interpreted that IU has a good reputation among young people in Iran.

On the report of survey, almost half of the students ($n= 52$; 45.2%) have applied for education to other countries before coming to Turkey. Otherwise, 54.8% of them have not applied for education to other countries. Properly, under a third of students (31.3%) have attended to an exchange program during their educational life at IU. Appropriately, 57.4% of them ($n= 66$) are not interested in attending an exchange program.

Table 4. 5 *Educational applications of participants*

Category		<i>f</i>	%
Arrival year to Turkey	2000 - 2004	2	1.7
	2005 - 2009	11	9.6
	2010 - 2014	55	47.8
	2015 - 2019	47	40.9

Table 4.5 (continued)

Category		<i>f</i>	%
Start year at IU	2000 - 2004	2	1.7
	2005 - 2009	9	7.8
	2010 - 2014	50	43.5
	2015 - 2019	54	47
How did you get known about IU	Friends	69	60
	Internet	36	31.3
	Social media	5	4.3
	Other	5	4.3
Have you applied to another country for education?	Yes	52	45.2
	No	63	54.8
Exchange programs	No	13	11.3
	I have	36	31.3
	I am not interested	66	57.4

4.1.6. Financing of Education

Considering the monetary source of the students, findings reflect that a great majority of the students (n=70; 60.9%) were affording their stay in Turkey for their education personally. On the other hand, almost 30 percent of them (n=32; 27.8%) of them had a part-time and full-time job. In addition to that rest of the participants (n=12; 10.4%) were getting scholarships from IU (See Table 4.6).

Table 4. 6 *Financing*

Category		<i>f</i>	%
Financing your stay in Turkey	I afford it personally	70	60.9
	I have a part-time Job	16	13.9
	I have a full-time Job	16	13.9
	I receive scholarship at IU	12	10.4
	Other	1	0.9

Since the study is presenting students' engagement experiences at an English medium university, their English proficiency is an important issue and it could influence the results of the study.

4.1.7. Attending School Clubs

Based on the results of the question whether the students had a school club membership or not at IU, only 30.4% ($n=35$) of them had interest in school membership or participate in extra-curricular activities.

Table 4. 7 *Socialization at IU*

Category		<i>f</i>	%
School club membership	Yes	35	30.4
	No	80	69.6

4.1.7. Turkish language level and applying for a Turkish citizenship

It can be said that there was a relationship between the students' Turkish language level and their plans for applying to Turkish citizenship. In total, 57 students want to apply for a Turkish citizenship out of 115 students and 35 of them had an advance level of Turkish language level. In other words, when their level increases their plans for Turkish citizenship. Moreover, only 3 students with an elementary Turkish language level want to apply for a Turkish citizenship.

Table 4. 8 *Cross-tab for link between Turkish language level and applying for a Turkish citizenship*

		Plans for applying to a Turkish citizenship		
		Yes	No	Total
Turkish language level	Elementary	3	12	15
	Intermediate	10	15	25
	Upper intermediate	9	15	24
	Advanced	35	16	51
Total		57	58	115

In IUSQ there was an open-ended question and participants were asked to mention their three main reasons to prefer IU for their education. Although responses to these questions were not part of a formal qualitative research, they were analyzed using qualitative techniques of coding to determine common themes among the responses of the participants. The answers of the question related to the reasons that students prefer to come

to IU were saved and grouped. According to results of the analysis, there were 18 most frequent main reasons (See Table 4.9).

Accordingly, the most significant reasons were as follows; the first one was that IU had high quality of education ($n=27$) and therefore the students were looking for an opportunity to have good level of education. The second one was that IU was an English medium university ($n=25$) so the students may have the opportunity study in an international university and may improve their English language levels. The third one was that IU was a highly ranked university ($n=22$). According to World university rankings in 2019 which was determined by Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings (THE, 2019), this targeted IU was within the band of 600-800 in the World and 159th in Asia which was a very important factor for the students prior to start their education. The fourth one was that IU had a good academic reputation ($n=20$), the fifth one was that IU had a good campus and facilities ($n=18$) and the final one was that IU was located in Ankara Turkey ($n=15$) which was not far from their home country and had cultural similarities with Iran, so that they would like to live and study nearby to their home country and in a similar culture.

Table 4. 9 *Main reasons to prefer IU for education*

Codes	<i>f</i>
High quality of education	27
English medium of instruction	25
High ranking university	22
Academic reputation	20
Good campus and its facilities	18
Proximity to home country and cultural similarities	15
Low cost of life in Turkey and low tuition fees of IU	11
Good Faculty members	10
International university / Multinational atmosphere	9
Equipped laboratory	5
Springboard for going abroad	4
More freedom	3
Friends	3
Easy to apply for / No visa needed for Iranian students	2
Safety and convenience at IU	2
Social life	2
Total	178

4.2. Educational Experiences

The second research question was: What are the educational experiences of Iranian students at IU? The descriptive statistics of each survey question were compiled to provide information about the educational experiences. The frequency numbers, percentages, mean and standard deviation values of each item are presented in Tables below.

In the survey there are 27 items related to educational experiences of students at IU. In this part the educational items are theoretically divided into three themes which are students' learning experiences, interaction with academic staff at IU, and education related international issues at IU. In this section, the results of all educational experiences are presented.

In this part of the study, the educational experiences of the Iranian students in their classes were identified. Descriptive statistics related to students' learning experiences are presented in Table 4.9. From the findings it can be seen that most of the students (62.6% A; 19.1% SA) were familiar with the way they were taught and half of them disagreed that they got confused in the way they taught (43.5% DA; 6.1% SD) indicating that the participants of this study have been adapted to the instructional process of their current University. Also it is found in item 22 that participants can follow the course in the way they are taught (61.7% A; 18.3% SA) and the syllabus in their classes helps them to follow the course easily.

Table 4. 10 *Descriptive statistics for students' learning experiences*

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2. I am familiar with the way we are taught (teaching strategies/methods)	1 (0.9)	9 (7.8)	11 (9.6)	72 (62.6)	9 (19.1)	3.91	.82
11. I am confused with the way we are taught	7 (6.1)	50 (43.5)	29 (25.2)	23 (20)	6 (4.8)	2.75	1.02

Table 4.10 (continued)

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
12. I organize my learning according to the syllabus	0 (0)	8 (7)	21 (18.3)	69 (60)	17 (14.8)	3.83	.76
15. I like the way we are evaluated	6 (5.2)	22 (19.1)	16 (13.9)	54 (47)	17 (14.8)	3.47	1.12
20. I have access to innovative learning materials	4 (3.5)	14 (12.2)	26 (22.6)	58 (50.4)	13 (11.3)	3.54	.97
22. I can follow the course in the way we are taught	2 (1.7)	10 (8.7)	11 (9.6)	71 (61.7)	21 (18.3)	3.86	.88
23. The syllabus helps me to follow the course easily	2 (1.7)	5 (4.3)	22 (19.1)	67 (58.3)	19 (16.5)	3.83	.82
33. What I learn is transferable to the Iranian context	3 (2.6)	13 (11.3)	33 (28.7)	53 (46.1)	13 (11.3)	3.52	.93
34. I can follow the lessons the way they are taught	1 (0.9)	10 (8.7)	8 (7)	76 (66.1)	20 (17.4)	3.90	.82
48. In classes I do not understand what is expected from me.	8 (7)	21 (18.3)	30 (26.1)	48 (41.7)	8 (7)	3.23	1.05
SD: strongly disagree D: disagree U: disagree A: agree SA: strongly agree							

This section of the results shows the descriptive statistics related to students' interaction with academic staff at IU in Table 4.11. It was revealed a high number of the participants claimed that they can reach to contact to their lecturers when they need to consult them (56.5% A; 21.7% SA) and they consult research assistants when they need academic help. On the contrary, participants believe that lecturers are very strict to approach (35.7% A; 50.4% SA).

Table 4. 11 Descriptive statistics for the interaction with academic staff at IU

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
4. I have the opportunity to learn from the experts in my area)	1 (0.9)	10 (8.7)	17 (14.8)	59 (51.3)	28 (24.3)	3.90	.90

Table 4.11 (continued)

21. I can reach my lecturers when I need to consult them	2 (1.7)	9 (7.8)	14 (12.2)	65 (56.5)	25 (21.7)	3.89	.90
41. Lecturers are very strict to approach	2 (1.7)	2 (1.7)	12 (10.4)	41 (35.7)	58 (50.4)	4.31	.86
43. I consult research assistants when I need academic help	4 (3.5)	6 (5.2)	24 (19.4)	65 (52.4)	16 (13.9)	3.72	.89

SD: strongly disagree **D:** disagree **U:** disagree **A:** agree **SA:** strongly agree

In this part, descriptive statistics concerned education related international issues at IU are presented in Table 4.12. Findings report that a large number of participants (41.7% A; 44.3% SA) agreed that instructors know they are international students. In terms of materials and activities used in the classes, many of the participants (54.8% A; 32.2% SA) agreed that course materials have an international focus and course goals are aligned with international standards (practices) in the discipline.

Correspondingly, it is found that more than half of the participants (50.4% A; 32.2% SA) stated they are confident with their academic skills (note taking, writing, etc.) and they mostly (45.2% A; 18.3% SA) agreed that their prior knowledge is sufficient to adapt to education at their university.

Table 4. 12 *Descriptive statistics for education related international issues at IU*

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
6. What I learn in class is internationally valid	0 (0)	4 (3.5)	13 (11.3)	78 (67.8)	20 (17.4)	3.99	.66
9. My prior knowledge is sufficient to adapt to education at my university	3 (2.6)	25 (21.7)	14 (12.2)	52 (45.2)	21 (18.3)	3.55	1.10
10. I am confident with my academic skills (note taking, writing, etc.)	0 (0)	10 (8.7)	10 (8.7)	58 (50.4)	37 (32.2)	4.06	.87
19. The courses I attend contain a global content (open ended)	1 (0.9)	4 (3.5)	18 (15.7)	75 (65.2)	17 (14.8)	3.90	.72

Table 4.12 (continued)

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
24. I compete with local students for high grades	4 (3.5)	20 (17.4)	20 (17.4)	50 (43.5)	21 (18.3)	3.55	1.09
26. I have the opportunity to improve myself academically through academic events offered on campus	6 (5.2)	19 (16.5)	30 (26.1)	43 (37.4)	17 (14.8)	3.40	1.09
30. In class the course goals are aligned with international standards (practices) in the discipline	1 (0.9)	17 (14.8)	21 (18.3)	65 (56.5)	11 (9.6)	3.59	.89
38. Instructors know that I am an international student	3 (2.6)	5 (4.3)	8 (7)	48 (41.7)	51 (44.3)	4.21	.94
39. Course materials/activities have an international focus	1 (0.9)	4 (3.5)	10 (8.7)	63 (54.8)	37 (32.2)	4.14	.78
40. I can follow the lectures in English easily	0 (0)	12 (10.4)	25 (21.7)	63 (54.8)	15 (13)	3.70	.83
47. I have the opportunity to contact with students in other countries through academic activities on campus	2 (1.7)	11 (9.6)	18 (15.7)	64 (55.7)	20 (17.4)	3.77	.91
SD: strongly disagree D: disagree U: disagree A: agree SA: strongly agree							

4.3. Social Experiences

The third research question was: What are the social experiences of Iranian students at IU? According to social experiences, 19 questions were asked and they are theoretically divided into three different themes which are social experiences, Students' cultural experiences, students' needs and social problems. The frequency numbers, percentages, mean and standard deviation values for social indicators are presented in three different tables in this part.

In this part, the social experiences of the Iranian students at IU were identified. Descriptive statistics associated with social experiences of Iranian students are reported in Table 4.13. Findings report that, most of the students (53.9% A; 36.5% SA) stated that they prefer to find friends from different nationalities and they work in teams with international students (49.6% A; 14.8% SA). It is found that the number of Iranian

students who tend to work with international students are more than students who work with native (Turkish) students at school. On the other hand, Iranian students agreed that they (40% A; 31.3% SA) could contact to university administrative staff and native students in Turkish as well and it can be seen that those Iranian students are familiar with Turkish language skills. Finally, it is found that more than half of the participants (58.3% A; 18.3% SA) agreed with item 45 which is “I feel isolated during classes”.

Table 4. 13 *Descriptive statistics for social experiences*

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I work in groups with native students	3 (2.6)	5 (4.3)	28 (24.3)	53 (46.1)	26 (22.6)	3.82	.92
3. I am friends with students from different nationalities	1 (0.9)	3 (2.6)	7 (6.1)	62 (53.9)	42 (36.5)	4.23	.75
8. I work in teams with international students.	4 (3.5)	18 (15.7)	19 (16.5)	57 (49.6)	17 (14.8)	3.57	1.04
13. I can communicate with students when they speak in Turkish	9 (7.8)	13 (11.3)	7 (6.1)	37 (32.2)	49 (42.6)	3.90	1.23
14. I have the opportunity to network with international academicians	9 (7.8)	21 (18.3)	25 (21.7)	45 (39.1)	15 (13)	3.31	1.15
18. In classes I work with international students	1 (0.9)	20 (17.4)	21 (18.3)	58 (50.4)	15 (13)	3.57	.96
25. I can be misunderstood due to my language skills in classes	26 (22.6)	42 (36.5)	16 (13.9)	22 (19.1)	9 (7.8)	2.53	1.25
27. In classes I work with local students	3 (2.6)	14 (12.2)	20 (17.4)	58 (50.4)	20 (17.4)	3.68	.99
32. I can communicate with university administrative staff in Turkish	10 (8.7)	13 (11.3)	10 (8.7)	46 (40)	36 (31.3)	3.74	1.26
37. My close friends are native students	9 (7.8)	35 (20.4)	13 (11.3)	44 (38.3)	14 (12.2)	3.17	1.21
45. I feel isolated during classes	1 (0.9)	4 (3.5)	22 (19.1)	67 (58.3)	21 (18.3)	3.90	.77
SD: strongly disagree D: disagree U: disagree A: agree SA: strongly agree							

In this part, descriptive statistics concerned students' cultural experiences at IU are presented in Table 4.14. In terms of cultural experiences, the highest agreed frequency number belongs to item 50 in which participants stated that they understand the cultural

behavior of other international students (63.5% A; 21.7% SA). Correspondingly, they stated their disagreement with item 29 which is “I do not understand the cultural behavior of local students” and it means that Iranian students are familiar with cultural behavior of local students as well (14.8% SD; 3.1% D).

It is found that Iranian students (53.9% A; 27% SA) know the code of conduct of how to behave on campus. For instance, they would rather attend cultural events (e.g., theatre, cinema, and concerts) on campus. On the other hand, they claimed in item 49 that they do not know the code of conduct of how to act in classes (19.1% SD; 47% D).

Under other conditions, Iranian students disagreed that they can be misunderstood due to their cultural differences in classes caused by cultural differences (2.6% SD; 43.5% SD). Furthermore, majority of students stated that they share their own views in classes without reservations (51.3% A; 13.9% SA).

Table 4. 14 *Descriptive statistics for students' cultural experiences*

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
7. I can be misunderstood due to my cultural differences in classes	3 (2.6)	50 (43.5)	20 (17.4)	30 (26.1)	12 (10.4)	2.98	1.11
16. I know the code of conduct of how to behave on campus	1 (0.9)	6 (5.2)	15 (13)	62 (53.9)	31 (27)	4.01	.83
17. I share my own views in classes without reservations	4 (3.5)	10 (8.7)	26 (22.6)	59 (51.3)	16 (13.9)	3.63	.95
29. I do not understand the cultural behavior of local students	17 (14.8)	45 (39.1)	21 (18.3)	27 (23.5)	5 (4.3)	2.63	1.13
35. I attend cultural events (e.g., theatre, cinema, concerts) on campus	7 (6.1)	34 (29.6)	16 (13.9)	41 (35.7)	17 (14.8)	3.23	1.20
49. I know the code of conduct of how to act in classes	22 (19.1)	54 (47)	19 (16.5)	14 (12.2)	6 (5.2)	2.37	1.09
50. I understand the cultural behavior of international students	0 (0)	4 (3.5)	13 (11.3)	73 (63.5)	25 (21.7)	4.03	.69
SD: strongly disagree D: disagree U: disagree A: agree SA: strongly agree							

This section of the results shows the descriptive statistics related to students' needs and social problems in Table 4.15. Totally, there are three items investigated students' needs

and social problems at IU. More than half of the students agreed that they can solve the problems they encounter by themselves as an international student and this is an outstanding statement belongs to item 46 (55.7% A; 17.4% SA). Accordingly, the Iranian international students know who to consult when they come across a social problem (40% A; 11.3% SA). Finally, in item 31 participants believe that facilities available on campus fit with international student needs (46.1% A; 13.9% SA).

Table 4. 15 *Descriptive statistics for students' needs and social problems*

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
28. I know who to consult when I come across a social problem	7 (6.1)	20 (17.4)	29 (25.2)	46 (40)	13 (11.3)	3.33	1.08
31. Facilities available on campus fit with international student needs	11 (9.6)	12 (10.4)	23 (20)	53 (46.1)	16 (13.9)	3.44	1.15
46. I can solve the problems I encounter as an international student by myself	18 (15.7)	40 (34.8)	25 (21.7)	64 (55.7)	20 (17.4)	2.69	1.17
SD: strongly disagree D: disagree U: disagree A: agree SA: strongly agree							

4.4. Iranian Students Feel Empowered at IU

In the study, it was interested to find Iranian students' conceptions in relation to three open-ended items on the survey as followings;

What are the components that make you feel empowered as an international student at IU? Please, write additional comments or expectations that you would like to share as an international student on campus? and What are the components that you would like to be empowered with as an international student at IU?

In this section, the results of close-ended items related to students feeling empowered are reported in Table 4.16. It is revealed that many of the participants claimed they feel empowered (60.9% A; 19.1% SA) as an international student at IU. Moreover, almost half of the students assert that they can speak out for their rights as an international student (43.5% A; 12.2% SA).

Table 4. 16 *Descriptive statistics for students feeling empowered*

	SD 1	DA 2	U 3	A 4	SA 5		
Items	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
5. I can speak out for my rights as an international student	7 (6.1)	19 (16.5)	25 (21.7)	50 (43.5)	14 (12.2)	3.39	1.09
51. I feel empowered as an international student	0 (0)	6 (5.2)	17 (13.2)	70 (60.9)	22 (19.1)	3.94	.74
SD: strongly disagree D: disagree U: disagree A: agree SA: strongly agree							

Correspondingly, the questionnaire included an open-ended item to gain an in-depth understanding of the aspects that make Iranian students feel empowered as an international student at IU. Almost all of the participants ($n=115$) provided an answer for this question. However, there were a few number of answers included incomprehensible responses which was replied to this item through the statements indicating “there is nothing to be empowered”.

The highest frequency number belongs to the participants ($n=12$) expressed that they feel empowered because of multicultural and multilingual environment of IU. The second largest group of the students ($n=11$) mentioned that atmosphere and facilities at campus make them feel empowered. Moreover, the same number of them ($n=11$) found the quality of education and faculty members empowering. In addition, there were other components that participants raised regarding the having an education in English ($n=10$), equality and students rights ($n=9$), team work ($n=2$).

Table 4. 17 *Theme-1 the international university as means for empowerment*

Item:	<i>f</i>
Multicultural and multilingual environment	12
Campus atmosphere and facilities	11
Quality of education and faculty members	11
Communication with staff in English	10
Equality and students rights	9
Team work	2
Total	55

The second open-ended question was “write additional comments or expectations that you would like to share as an international student on campus”. The main themes raised in the responses included level of Turkish and English language ($n=8$) and one of the participants stated that

As an engineer this is my language skill both in Turkish (to communicate well with local people) and in English that helps me to pose an advantage to Turkish students who do not know English (Male, Doctorate Level).

Another component was introduced as equality and students rights ($n=7$) and one of them shared that

As an international student, I believe that we have raised the bar on expectations; expectations of instructors/supervisors from local students are not always on pair with that of international students which makes education more challenging for international students. Usually we are required to do more to satisfy our supervisors because they tend to believe that not only we have the capacity, but also the time to carry out some extra research work! It would have been better to be a bit more unbiased toward international students regarding expectations (Male, Doctorate Level).

In addition, Iranian students ($n=6$) expected to have the opportunities to get a scholarship for their studies at IU as well as getting benefits of international programs activities ($n=6$).

Table 4. 18 *Theme-2 barriers for empowerment through internationalization*

Item	<i>f</i>
Level of Turkish and English language	8
Equality and Students Rights	7
Getting a scholarship	6
International programs and activities	6
Academic issues	6
Cultural diversity	5
Student clubs and social activities	4
Getting a job	3
Total	45

Another issue was the cultural diversity ($n=5$) and one believed that “International students are generally in minority, and I feel that due to cultural distinctions the inter-peer gatherings are highly polarized. Initially, International students tend to build up intimacy with others of the same kind, regardless of their country, rather than Turkish students, who

do the same, but only with other Turks. This trend, though, withers away as time passes”. Moreover, some of the international students mentioned job opportunities, ($n=3$) student clubs and social activities ($n=4$) as barriers that are not provided for them on the campus.

Apart from two previous open-ended questionnaire items, subjects also had the opportunity to share their concerns and opinions. The highest number of responses related to problems with English and Turkish language in the campus ($n=8$) and there are statements as followings;

In programs like architecture, foreign students feel isolated because some design classes are more productive in Turkish. Turkish students are not self-confident in English so this makes foreign students to think that they are neglected by purpose and this creates a gap. Teachers also, usually have nationalistic views and foreign students (Middle Eastern) are treated differently in a subtle manner, undermining them (Female, Undergraduate Level).

The university e-mails and communications are often in Turkish. They shall always contain at least a brief English translation (Male, Doctorate Level).

The Turkish students have the chance to speak in their own languages and ask question, which is not fair and I cannot understand and get the point even when they've been answered. In general I think it is good if they have Turkish classes for the people who do not know Turkey at all like me (Female, Master of Science Level).

As a consequence, it is derived that some of the Iranian students are required to take Turkish language courses in order to understand conversations between local students and instructors in classes.

Furthermore, some of the respondents ($n=6$) mentioned the negative attitudes or misconceptions of Turkish students and instructors toward Iranian students. For instance, students complained that;

Turkish people think that we are Arab. I have a dream that one day they will know us (Male, Master of Science Level).

Turkish people sometimes act so weird with Iranian students that makes me feel bad about myself, though they do not have any idea about the real Iran they always tell their absurd opinions about it and I do hate it (Female, Master of Science Level).

In addition, they said that they have difficulties in finding a job ($n=5$) for instance;

The regulations stop international students from being an active part of academic activities at IU, for example not being a research assistant. This has very negative influence on our improvements since we do not have the option of being a part of academia. We are only students attending classes and only focusing on our own thesis subjects by our own, especially when it comes to humanities. No research group or center. It is only the adviser and the student (Female, Doctorate Level).

Among the responses there were findings included some issues on official formalities ($n=3$) and followings were some examples of participants' opinions;

Table 4. 19 *Theme -3 challenges at the IU*

Item	<i>f</i>
Language problems	8
Negative attitude of Turkish students toward Iranian students	6
Difficulties in finding a job	5
Issues on student and academic staff	4
Campus atmosphere and facilities	3
Too much homework	3
Issues on official formalities	3
Total	32

One of the things that the administration here METU could improve upon is ensuring that all international students who request it, especially those under 18, receive room and board. I have seen too many instances of international students being left to find affordable housing in a city in which they have no connections or familiarity with as a result of the sheer incompetence of the dormitory administration. Moreover, if the dormitory administration feels that there are not simply enough dorm rooms to compensate all students in need of one, it should take it upon itself to receive the funding necessary to build additional dormitories (Male, Master of Science).

Consequently, overall findings show that the Iranian student population comes from a high or moderate socio-economic status regarding their parents' educational and occupational backgrounds. Most of them are academically successful high honored students with a CGPA between 3.50 and 4.00. Besides their English language skills they also have a good level of Turkish language skills. Findings also show that Iranian students came to an International University with high rankings that gave them the opportunity to be in an international university with an English medium of instruction.

Regarding educational experiences, Iranian students believe that their prior knowledge is sufficient to adapt to education at IU and they are confident with their academic skills (note taking, writing, etc.). Also, students stated that they are familiar with the way they are taught (teaching strategies/methods) and the syllabus helps them to follow the course easily. It is explored that course materials/activities have an international focus and the course goals are aligned with international standards (practices) in the discipline. Iranian international students reported that they can reach their lecturers and research assistants when they need academic help and the instructors know that they are international students. On the contrary, participants believe that lecturers are sometimes very strict to approach.

In terms of social experiences, Iranian students prefer to find friends from different nationalities and they work in teams with them. They understand the cultural behavior of both international and local students. They know the code of conduct of how to behave on campus however, they do not know how to act in classes. It is found that Iranian students are able to solve their social problems they encounter as an international student and they know who to consult when they come across a social problem.

Also Iranian students felt empowered because of the multicultural and multilingual environment of IU and they felt comfortable since the instructors know that they are international students. Additionally, they feel empowered as they are confident with their English language skills and can communicate their needs effectively with university administrative staff in Turkish.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents discussions and implications related to present research. Firstly, a brief summary of the results of each research questions and results on different cases were provided along with the literature review and previous research. Then, discussion of the results, implications for practice as well as suggestions for further research are presented in this chapter.

5.1. Discussion

In this section, the results of the study are given in a discussion with the theoretical base of the study. This section comprises two parts, namely; first, international Iranian students, their profiles and indicators that Iranian students feel empowered, and second, educational and social experiences at university.

5.1.1. International Iranian students in Turkish Context

The results of the study indicated that there are several reasons that students prefer to come to IU. Some of these reasons are parallel to the literature. As Altbach (2004), mentioned that United States of America attracts a lot of people for education because students think that graduating from an American university was prestigious and better than their local universities. In parallel with these rationales, participants of this study stated that one of the reasons is reputation of IU and prestigious diploma they take after their graduation. In line with the particular findings of this study, Iranian International university students took into consideration of the high ranking of the IU as it is within the band of 600-800 in the World and 159th in Asia (THE, 2019).

A similar pattern of results was obtained regarding the main reasons that Iranian students prefer IU for their education. Kondakci (2011) found that “finding a job”, “having a

relative, family member or a spouse in Turkey” and “having scholarship” “academic quality”, “field of the study, the institution”, “desire of learning/experiencing a different culture” and “Turkish people and Turkish culture” as rationales influence students to come to Turkey. These basic findings were consistent with current research showing that Iranian students decided to study at IU because of; “High quality of education”, “opportunity of applying for a job”, “proximity to home country and cultural similarities”, “outstanding engineering faculty” and “Friends”.

As demonstrated by results related to students’ profile, generally students had advanced level of Turkish language which makes their stay easier in Turkey. Another factor was found as proximity to home country which is aligned with one of the studies in which “geographical proximity” was mentioned as an effect on international students’ selections (Ilhan and his friends, 2012). The factor called “recommendation from others” had an effect on international students’ selections. Iranian students get known about their target university from different sources. The frequency distribution for those students who get known about IU from their friends is the largest number (60%). Some of them get known from internet (30%) and a small minority from social media and other ways (8.6%). In another study Altbach and Knight (2007) stated that people decide upon several important things regarding their area of interest and geographical locations of colleges in which they will pursue their education. According to the results of this study, participants stated that their major just exists in IU and this is another reason was also found by Altbach (2004) that students go to overseas if they do not find the field of study in their home country, particularly at the graduate study level.

Another factor that drove the Iranian students to IU was shown because of low living costs in Turkey. Conforming to results of this study related to students’ profiles, more than half of the students afford their stay in Turkey personally and they choose to stay in an apartment or a house alone (without housemates). Besides, it was found that majority of the students (approximately 2 millions) studying in foreign countries were supported financially by their families or relatives for their educational expenses (Altbach and Knight, 2007).

It was found by Altbach (2004) that vast majority of the students going abroad for having a career in the country. Migration laws have an effect on students' decisions if they will continue their career abroad or return to their home country after graduation. In the line with this factor, participants of the present study found Turkey as a good opportunity of applying for a job and going to another country afterwards. Additionally, there is no need to get a visa to come to Turkey as an Iranian citizen which makes the process easier to apply to come to IU. On the report of survey, 45.2% of the students have applied for education to other countries before coming to Turkey. Otherwise 54.857% of them have not applied for education to other countries.

Apart from that, there have been found further driving factors in this study as followings; nearly half of the students have been planning to apply for a Turkish Citizenship and it is considered as one of their aspirations to come to study at IU. Besides, some of the international students have attended to an exchange program during their educational life at IU which is related to one of their goals to come to IU.

The findings of current study were consistent with a research showing that, subjects indicated the quality of learning were positively affected by internationalization and it also gives a chance to make a contribution by cooperating with worldwide well-known fellows. Moreover, being in communication with international partner and their recognition were seen as a quality criterion (Teichler, 2004). Even though this study did not replicate the previously reported rationales and the results suggested that Iranian students convinced that "Equality and Students Rights" "Having an education in English" "Campus atmosphere and facilities" were strengths of studying as an international student. Otherwise, there were some issues that Iranian students found them as challenges and barriers of studying at IU as "Language problems", "Negative attitudes of Turkish students toward Iranian students", "Difficulties in finding a job", Issues on students and academic staff" are few of the issues to be concluded.

Additionally, feeling empowered emerge as another crucial effect of studying in higher educational institutions abroad. This study found that students felt comfortable and

empowered since the instructors know that they were international student. Moreover, Iranian students know the code of conduct of how to behave on campus. Similar to our study, it was indicated that students had a feeling of connecting with others in order to make individual connections with faculty, staff and their peers. “Efforts must be made to ensure that the commuter student feels welcome and that he or she belongs on campus” (Andreas, 1983). On the other hand, research shows that the internationalization efforts in universities were neither harvestin rich enough experiences for the students as the faculty seem to perceive themselves incompetent to meet their students’ intercultural needs through tailoring their courses (Akar, Gülmez, Yılmaz, 2017).

It was determined that there must be enough time between courses so that the students can communicate and socialize each other in campus (Paulsen & St. John, 2002). In line with previous studies, participants of this study emphasized the importance of being a school club membership at campus since they feel empowered with student clubs and social activities at IU.

5.1.2. Educational and Social Engagement

Similar to present investigation, Murphy (2007) indicated that the majority of the subjects most stated that attending to international tasks helped them. For instance, through international academic congresses / conferences they had an opportunity to create or join networks and collaborating with their colleagues from abroad. Besides, they gained various educational experiences and perspectives by studying overseas. Furthermore, students mentioned that internationalization gave them an advantage for improving their personal development and globally required skills.

In line with our research, it was implied that studying overseas had an impact on students’ lifestyles and social experiences. They also gain information regarding the culture of the different country (socio-cultural benefit) in which they studied (Li and Bray, 2007). According to Knight (1999), both academic staff and students had positively affected by international experiences which helped them to prevent bias and negative opinions related to different cultures. Moreover, one of the most important factors of internationalization

were the embracement of cultural variety among different countries and the arranging students with good communicational intercultural skills.

Here we compared our results with previous studies, it must be pointed out that integration of the university students both educationally and socially are the most significant parameters.

Lundberg (2003), specified that interacting with peers had helped subjects to share their opinions, support each other in and out of the campus. These results go beyond previous reports, showing that Iranian students at IU found “team work” as a crucial component that helps them to work with their classmates in the classes.

Paulsen and St. John (2002) determined that the large part of social relations of the students were taking place on campus during classes and they spend very few time for socializing out of the classroom. Parallel to present study, the participants of this study prefer to work with other international students in the classes which means that they tend to make social interactions even inside the classes with students from other countries. Furthermore, some types of school works foster students’ peer relationship. Working in groups enhances the social relationship in classroom especially for shy students. In addition to that, working in groups let students to cooperate during the outside of the class hours (Lundberg, 2003).

According to findings of study, it was found that students tend to have an interaction with faculty when they feel faculty members are accessible and they pay attention to their students. Participants of this research were communicating both in verbal and electronic ways if their professors were accessible and care about them (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, in line with the ideas of interaction between faculty members and students, we did not find positive attitudes of Iranian students toward staff and they believe that they can not communicate easily because of their English language skills. They admitted that they can communicate with university administrative staff in Turkish.

5.2. Implications for Practice

This section provides implications for practice based on the findings of this study. This study provided an in-depth investigation of Iranian international students' profiles, educational experiences, social experiences while studying at IU, Turkey. These implications also reflect the rationale for conducting this study, which was to shed light on the understanding related to international university students' experiences on educational and social activities during their university years, and provide insight about whether current best experiences and practices were applicable to other international students' adjustment.

It was found that the majority of social interactions for students in this study occurred both inside and outside of the classroom. This section identifies different experiences of Iranian students to promote social integration which are divided into three themes; social experiences, Students' cultural experiences, students' needs and social problems.

It was revealed that participants were connected to other international students on campus in multiple classes. It was explicated that students' interaction helped participants connecting with others to share their opinions, support each other, and they easily switch to the academics. Shared facilities, services, activities, and other support systems are a few examples of support mechanisms that should be in place to facilitate and help the international students 'success during university years. Wolf-Wendel (2003), stated that women required to have a feeling of connection to the culture of their institution. In order to enhance the sense of place and social link, a cohort is very popular during courses (Deutsch & Schmertz, 2011). On the other hand, most of the participants do not understand the cultural behavior of local students and they can be misunderstood due to cultural differences in classes. In consequence, they have friends from different nationalities because they are familiar with international students' culture.

Furthermore, this study identified the different educational experiences of Iranian students both inside and outside the classroom which are divided into three themes; students' learning experiences, interaction with academic staff at IU, and education related

international issues at IU. Although students in this study discussed certain challenges associated communicating with university staff and having the difficulty of speaking in Turkish language because some of them were not capable of using English language.

This study revealed a concerted relationship between applying English language skills and students' educational and social engagements at university. Related findings indicated that students can follow the lectures in English easily. Besides, internationally valid course materials/activities made the students feel empowered. Accordingly, whatever they learned in class was internationally valid which means the course goals were aligned with international standards (practices) in the discipline.

Students in this study also benefitted from faculty members as they perceived to be mentors and experts in their field. These findings confirm that institutions must find opportunities to create relationships between faculty members and international students that includes awareness of pedagogy that supports international students' educational and social experiences and their characteristics. In other words, interculturally responsive teaching could be an instructional strategy that the faculty could adopt. Given that the number of international students may increase, there need to be faculty development activities that may empower the instructors to educate and interact with international populations.

In addition to that it was also indicated that students in the present research felt connected to others and especially to the other foreign students. These students need to have details in the syllabus in classes and they organize their learning according to the syllabus since they stated that sometimes they did not understand what was expected from them.

5.3. Suggestions for Future Research

Regarding the findings and limitations of the present research, there were several implications for future research. In order to fulfill the results of this investigation, it is suggested that further study should be carried out with different international student population in the particular areas to understand who the students and why they are in the

particular higher education institution or studying in Turkey might be investigated and compared which may yield important results.

Further research should be done on both educational and social challenges of international students by including more universities in Turkey and more stakeholders in the universities such as administrative personnel and faculty. Moreover, this study revealed a list of educational experiences theoretically divided into three themes of students' learning experiences, interaction with academic staff at IU, and education related international issues at IU that arise in universities which should be analyzed in more detail in order provide opportunities to foster students' successes and adjustments.

Since this study mainly employed a quantitative approach, a qualitative version of the current study might be helpful to deeply investigate the topic to provide more insight of international students' experiences. Moreover, interviews or classroom observations can be carried out to find reasons of educational and social aspirations as well as factors to be found as empowerment. Further research could hold an aim to collect thick descriptions of the international students via phenomenological studies. The present investigation was carried out in a public research university where the language of instruction is English. Similarly, a research might be done in different English medium universities of Turkey in order to determine whether there are differences or not.

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APPENDICIES

A. INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' SURVEY

International University Students' Survey

Directions: The purpose of this survey is to explore the educational and social experiences of Iranian students on METU campus, and offer policy implications. Therefore, your contribution to this study is very valuable and I would appreciate that you fill out all items accordingly to ensure the reliability and the validity of the study. The survey consists of three sections: (I) demographics; (II) academic and social experiences on campus; (III) open-ended questions. The survey takes about 10 minutes to respond. Responding the survey indicates you consent to become a participant of study.

My best wishes, Nasim Korouhi

Part I. Demographics

1. What is your gender?

- a) Male b) Female

2. How old are you?

.....years

3. What is your marital status?

- a) Single b) Married c) Married with children d) Other, please specify.....

4. What faculty are you in?

- a) Architecture
b) Arts and Sciences
c) Economic and Administrative Sciences
d) Education
e) Engineering

5. What academic program are you in?

..... Department

6. What is your current level of study?

- a) Prep School b) Undergraduate c) M.A./M.Sc. d) Ph.D. e) Other, please specify.....

7. Did you attend English Prep-school?

- a) Yes b) No

8. If you are prep or undergraduate student are you planning for a graduate degree?

- a) Yes b) No

9. What is your current CGPA?

.....

10. What year did you come to Turkey?

.....

11. What year did you come to METU?

.....

12. How did you get known about METU?

- a) Friends b) Internet c) Social media d) Other, please specify.....

13. What are the 3 main reasons to prefer METU for your education?

- a)
b)
c)

14. Have you applied for education to other countries before coming to Turkey?

- a) Yes b) No

15. What is your Turkish Language level?

- a) Elementary b) Intermediate c) Upper Intermediate d) Advanced

16. Have/will you attend an exchange program (Erasmus mobility)?

- a) I have b) I will c) I am not interested

17. Do you hold a different citizenship beyond Persian?

- a) Yes b) No If yes, state which one?

18. Are you planning to apply for a Turkish citizenship?

- a) Yes b) No

19. Are you planning to pursue your career in Turkey after graduation?

- a) Yes b) No

20. Where do you accommodate?

- a) Dormitory
b) Apartment/house
c) Rented room
d) Other, please specify

21. If you stay in an apartment or house, who do you live with?

- a) Alone
b) With Iranian student(s)
c) With other international student(s)
d) With local students
e) With own family
f) Other, please specify

22. Are you registered to any school club (öğrenci topluluğu) or extra-curricular activity?

- a) Yes b) No

23. How do you finance your stay in Turkey?

- a) I afford it personally.
- b) I have a part-time job
- c) I have a full-time job
- d) I receive scholarship at METU.
- e) Other, please specify.....

24. What is your Mother's highest educational degree?

- a) Illiterate
- b) No education but literate
- c) Primary school
- d) Middle school
- e) High school
- f) College degree or associate degree (2 or 3 years)
- g) University /undergraduate
- h) Master's degree
- i) Doctoral degree, Ph.D.

25. What is your Father's highest educational degree?

- a) Illiterate
- b) No education but literate
- c) Primary school
- d) Middle school
- e) High school
- f) College degree or associate degree (2 or 3 years)
- g) University /undergraduate
- h) Master's degree
- i) Doctoral degree, Ph.D.

26. What is your Mother's employment?

- a) Employed
- b) Unemployed
- c) Retired
- d) Housemaker

27. What is your Father's employment?

- a) Employed
- b) Unemployed
- c) Retired
- d) Other, please specify.....

Part II: Academic and Social Experiences

Please choose the number that best describes how you feel about each statement based on the following scale;

- 1= Strongly Disagree
 2= Disagree
 3= Undecided
 4= Agree
 5= Strongly Agree

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I work in groups with native students	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am familiar with the way we are taught (teaching strategies/methods)	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am friends with students from different nationalities	1	2	3	4	5
4	I have the opportunity to learn from the experts in my area.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I can speak out for my rights as an international student	1	2	3	4	5
6	What I learn in class is internationally valid	1	2	3	4	5
7	I can be misunderstood due to my cultural differences in classes	1	2	3	4	5
8	I work in teams with international students in projects /home assignments	1	2	3	4	5
9	My prior knowledge is sufficient to adapt to education at METU	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am confident with my academic skills (note taking, writing, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
11	I am confused with the way we are taught	1	2	3	4	5
12	I organize my learning according to the syllabus	1	2	3	4	5
13	I can communicate with students when they speak in Turkish	1	2	3	4	5
14	I have the opportunity to network with international academicians beyond METU	1	2	3	4	5
15	I like the way we are evaluated	1	2	3	4	5

16	I know the code of conduct of how to behave on campus	1	2	3	4	5
17	I share my own views in classes without reservations	1	2	3	4	5
18	In classes I work with international students	1	2	3	4	5
19	The courses I attend contain a global content	1	2	3	4	5
20	I have access to innovative learning materials	1	2	3	4	5
21	I can reach my lecturers when I need to consult them	1	2	3	4	5
22	I can follow the course in the way we are taught	1	2	3	4	5
23	The syllabus helps me to follow the course easily	1	2	3	4	5
24	I compete with local students for high grades	1	2	3	4	5
25	I can be misunderstood due to my language skills in classes	1	2	3	4	5
26	I have the opportunity to improve myself academically through academic events offered on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
27	In classes I work with native students	1	2	3	4	5
28	I know who to consult when I come across a social problem	1	2	3	4	5
29	I do not understand the cultural behavior of local students	1	2	3	4	5
30	In class the course goals are aligned with international standards (practices) in the discipline	1	2	3	4	5
31	Facilities available on campus fit with international student needs	1	2	3	4	5
32	I can communicate with university staff in Turkish	1	2	3	4	5
33	What I learn is transferable to the Iranian context	1	2	3	4	5
34	I can follow the lessons the way they are taught	1	2	3	4	5
35	I attend cultural events (e.g., theatre, cinema, concerts) on campus	1	2	3	4	5
36	I feel I am in a rigorous (perfectionist) academic program	1	2	3	4	5
37	My close friends are native students	1	2	3	4	5
38	Instructors know that I am an international student	1	2	3	4	5
39	Course materials/activities have an international focus	1	2	3	4	5
40	I can follow the lectures in English easily	1	2	3	4	5
41	The lecturers are very strict to approach	1	2	3	4	5
42	My learning provides me with high academic standards at an international level	1	2	3	4	5

43	I consult research assistants when I need academic help	1	2	3	4	5
44	I regulate my own learning for classes	1	2	3	4	5
45	I feel isolated during classes	1	2	3	4	5
46	I can solve the problems I encounter as an international student by myself	1	2	3	4	5
47	I have the opportunity to contact with students in other countries through academic activities on campus	1	2	3	4	5
48	In classes I do not understand what is expected from me.	1	2	3	4	5
49	I know the code of conduct of how to act in classes	1	2	3	4	5
50	I understand the cultural behavior of international students	1	2	3	4	5
51	I feel empowered as an international student	1	2	3	4	5

Part III: Open-ended Questions

You can help us improve our efforts by answering questions such as the following:

1. What are the components that make you feel empowered as an international student at METU?
2. What are the components that you would like to be empowered with as an international student at METU?
3. Please, write additional comments or expectations that you would like to share as an international student on campus.

Thank you for your contributions and time.

B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

International Iranian Students' educational and social experiences at an English medium university in a Non-Anglophone country

Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Sciences, Middle East Technical University. As part of my master studies, I am investigating international Iranian Students' educational and social experiences at an English medium university in a Non-Anglophone country. Findings of this study may result in exploring the educational and social issues and needs of international students, and suggest educational and social policies for international students on campus.

Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time if you wish so. The anonymity of your responses is guaranteed. The responses will be only used for research purposes, and I will be the only person to reach them as the principal investigator.

It is highly important that you respond to all items. The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes.

Return of the questionnaire will be considered your consent to participate. Thank you very much for your time and effort. It is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, send an e-mail to;
nasim.korouhi@gmail.com or nasim.korouhi@metu.edu.tr

Sincerely yours,
Nasim Korouhi

M.S. Candidate
Department of Educational Sciences,
Curriculum and Instruction
E-mail: nasim.korouhi@gmail.com

C. METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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08 ŞUBAT 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç. Dr. Hanife AKAR ;

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Nasim KOROUHI' nin *"International Iranian Students' educational and social experiences at an English medium university in a Non-Anglophone country"* başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2018-EGT-004 protokol numarası ile 08.02.2018 - 30.09.2018 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

Başkan V

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI

Üye

Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK

Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

D. INVITATION MESSAGE FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Iranian students,

One of your Iranian friends in ODTÜ needs your help to collect data for her thesis. Here is a short description about the survey she asks you to fill in:

“The purpose of this survey is to explore the educational and social experiences of Iranian students on METU campus, and offer policy implications. Therefore, your contribution to this study is very valuable and I would appreciate that you fill out all items accordingly to ensure the reliability and the validity of the study. The survey consists of three sections: (I) demographics; (II) academic and social experiences on campus; (III) open-ended questions. The survey takes about 10 minutes to respond. Responding the survey indicates you consent to become a participant of study.”

Below you may find the Google Forms link of the survey, where you can fill it anonymously.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScN-zfKyE6Q6Xp8yGnAE7iesWcREggIxcW5M6RHYjup3U0HQg/viewform>

Participation in the survey is voluntary but we hope that you will be cooperative on this issue.

Best wishes from International Students Office,

Middle East Technical University

E. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

TRKİYE'DE EĖİTİM DİLİ İNGİLİZCE OLAN BİR NİVERSİTEDE ULUSLARARASI İRANLI ĖRENCİLERİN PROFİLLERİ, EĖİTİM VE SOSYAL DENEYİMLERİ

Giriş

Araştırmanın Amacı ve nemi

Uluslararasılaşmayı yksekĖretimin en nemli konularından biri olarak ele alan, organizasyon, politika belirleyiciler, uygulayıcılar, hem yerli hem de yabancı Ėrencilerle ilgili eşitli alışmalar bulunmaktadır. Bunlara ek olarak, bu alışma İranlı Ėrencilerin profillerini ve eĖitim ve sosyal baĖlamlardaki deneyimlerini araştırmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın temelinde uluslararasılaşmayı yksekĖretimin en nemli konularından biri olarak deĖerlendirmek ve son yıllarda devlet niversitelerinde ve zel niversitelerde okumak iin Trkiye'ye seyahat eden ok sayıda İranlı Ėrenci yer almaktadır. Gzlemlere gre, Ėrencilerin biroĖu U gibi yksek sıralamaya sahip eĖitim dili İngilizce olan niversiteleri tercih etmektedir. U'de Uluslararasılaşma kavramı stratejik planlardan biri olarak dahil edildiĖinde, bu alışmanın daha fazla ilerleme kaydetmek adına İranlı ve diĖer uluslararası Ėrencilerin deneyimleri hakkında farkındalıĖı artırdıĖı varsayılmaktadır.

Uluslararası İranlı Ėrenciler, kendi lkelerindeki eĖitim sistemi ile ana dili İngilizce olmayan bir lkede eĖitim dili İngilizce olan niversitedeki eĖitim sistemi arasındaki farklılıklar nedeniyle yoğun eĖitimsel deneyim ve ok fazla zorlukla karşı karşıyadır. EĖitim zorluklarının yanı sıra, Ėrenciler uluslararası bireyler olarak sosyal karmaşalarla meşgul olabilmektedirler. Buna ek olarak, glendirilmiş hissetmek yurtdışındaki yksekĖretim kurumlarında eĖitim almanın bir diĖer nemli etkisi olarak ortaya ıkmaktadır.

Uluslararasılaşma, ulusal, kurumsal ve bireysel zeminlerin üç seviyesi üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğundan, bu çalışmanın temel amacı eğitim dili İngilizce olan devlet üniversitesinde İranlı öğrencilerin profillerini, sınıf içi eğitim deneyimlerini, sınıf dışı sosyal zorluklarını anket planlaması yöntemiyle tanımlamaktır.

Araştırma Soruları

1. Türkiye’de eğitim dili İngilizce olan devlet üniversitesinde eğitim alan İranlı öğrencilerin profilleri nelerdir?
2. Türkiye’de eğitim dili İngilizce olan devlet üniversitesinde eğitim alan İranlı öğrencilerin eğitim deneyimleri nelerdir?
3. Türkiye’de eğitim dili İngilizce olan devlet üniversitesinde eğitim alan İranlı öğrencilerin sosyal deneyimleri nelerdir?

Alanyazın İncelemesi

Uluslararası eğitim kavramı ilk olarak New York, ABD’de Uluslararası Eğitim Enstitüsü’nün (IIE) ortaya çıkmasını takip eden 20. yüzyılda ortaya çıkmıştır. Uluslararası eğitim terimi 60 yılı aşkın bir süredir tartışılmaktadır ve olgunlaşma dönemindedir. Uluslararası eğitim, eğitim sürecinin önemli bir parçasıdır ve üstünlüğü giderek artmaktadır. Uluslararası eğitimin anlamı kişiden kişiye değişmektedir.

Yükseköğretim kurumlarının uluslararasılaşmasının altında yatan birçok eğitimsel neden vardır. Özellikle eğitim kurumları, küresel akademik normları karşılayarak uluslararası alanda tanınmaya çalışmaktadır (De Wit, 2002; Knight, 1999). Yani, uluslararasılaşma, eğitim kurumları için akademik kalite gelişimi açısından bir şanstır. Ayrıca, uluslararasılaşma müfredatı eğitim kurumları tarafından akademik bir gerekçe olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Şahin, 2017). Çalışmalardan birinde, Altbach (1989) uluslararasılaşma ve sonuçlarının hem Üçüncü dünya ülkelerinde hem de Batı akademik sistemdeki üzerindeki farklı etkilerini göz önünde bulundurmuştur. Yurtdışı eğitimini, en önemli unsurlarından birinin bilgiyi aktarmak olduğu bir olgu olarak adlandırdı. Eğitim

yaşamının kilit kaynaklarının, uzmanlık ve kültürlerarası fikirler sağlayan öğrenciler ve akademisyenler olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Yükseköğretimde uluslararası akademik hareketlilik, uluslararasılaşma ve kültürlerarasılık ile ilgili tanımlamalar yapılmış ve ilişkileri de dikkate alınmıştır (Kim, 2009). Yükseköğretimdeki uluslararası akademik hareketlilik, akademik personelin ve öğrencilerin ulusal sınırlar içinde veya dışında hareket etmesi olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Kim, 2009). İktisadi İşbirliği ve Gelişme Teşkilatı (OECD)'na göre (1999), yükseköğretimin uluslararasılaşması terimi üniversitelerin tüm yönleriyle uluslararası bir kanalda kültürel ve ulusal boyutlarının bir araya getirilmesidir. Uluslararası yükseköğretimin kültürlerarasılığı fikri, çok yönlü kültürler arasındaki ortak anlayış ve etkileşimli ilişki olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Gilroy, 2004; Kim, 2009).

Uluslararasılaşma ile ilgili sonuçlar, Birleşik Krallık'ta küreselleşme uygulamalarının temel nedeninin ekonomik kaygılar olduğunu belirtti, çünkü ülkeler arasında bilgi ekonomisi konusunda büyük bir rekabet yaşanmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, yabancı öğrenciler eğitimlerini uluslararası akademisyenlerden alırlar ve bu da yerel fakülte öğretmenleri için kültürler arası çeşitliliğe yardımcı olur (Kim, 2009). Her ülkenin, daha fazla bilimsel veri üretmek ve deniz aşırı ülkelere daha fazla öğrenci çekmek için uluslararası akademik normlara ulaşma hedefleri vardır. Buna ek olarak, ülkenin ekonomik ve teknolojik gelişme düzeyi ile yükseköğretimin uluslararasılaşması arasında güçlü bir ilişki vardır (Knight, 1999). 2025 yılına kadar uluslararası yükseköğretim pazarını yönetecek olan Asya ülkelerinden (kümülatif küresel talebin %70'i) muazzam bir talep vardır, bu da 2000'den itibaren yaklaşık %27 artış anlamına gelmektedir (Bohm et al., 2002).

İran genellikle lisans ve lisansüstü eğitim için yurtdışına öğrenci gönderen bir ülke konumundadır. Özellikle 1974'ten 1983'e kadar İran, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ne en çok öğrenci gönderen başlıca ülkedir. En yüksek oran 1979-1980 öğretim yılında ABD'de akademik eğitim gören 51.310 İranlı öğrenci ile görülmüştür. Ancak İran'da gerçekleşen devrimi takiben, İranlı öğrencilerin ABD'ye gitme oranı 1980'lerden 1990'lara önemli ölçüde düştü. 1998 yılında sadece 1700 öğrenci vardı. Ancak bu sayı 2015-2106 akademik

yılında, ülkede devrimden sonra arttı ve 12.269 öğrenciye çıktı vardı (Open Doors, 2016).

Tahminlere göre 2000'den (21.701 öğrenci) 2013'e (50.053 öğrenci) keskin bir artış oldu, bu 14 yılda %130 oranında artış anlamına gelir. Öğrencilerin sadece kaliteli eğitime sahip olmakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda mezun olduktan sonra uluslararası arenada yaşama hazır olmaları için küresel bir bakış açısına sahip olmaları önemli bir gerekliliktir. Öğrenciler için bir başka akademik gerekçe, üniversiteden mezun olduktan sonra denizaşırı ülkelerde hayata hazırlanmaktır ve akademik beceriler bunu başarma yükümlülüğü olarak kabul edildi. Diğer bir deyişle, uluslararası eğitime sahip olmak ve uluslararasılaşma deneyimleri yoluyla başka bir dil öğrenmek bireyler tarafından faydalı olarak algılanmaktadır (Murphy, 2007). Öğrenciler cinsiyetleri, yaşları, medeni durumları, yaşam düzenlemeleri, istihdam, dil becerileri, eğitim durumu vb. ile ilgili farklı profillere ve demografik bilgilere sahip diğer ülkelere eğitim almaya gitmektedir. Ülkelerin çoğunda öğrenci değişim programları ve uluslararası öğrenciler bulunmaktadır. Ancak, öğrenciler kendi ülkelerinden süregelen çeşitli motivasyonlar tarafından yönlendirilirler. Bazı öğrenciler zorlayıcı giriş sınavları ve yetersiz kontenjan nedeniyle üniversiteye girememektedir. Ayrıca, öğrenciler kendi ülkelerinde özellikle lisansüstü eğitim düzeyinde çalışma alanı bulamazlarsa yurtdışına giderler. Ayrıca, öğrenciler siyasi ve sosyal sorunlar nedeniyle ülkelerinden kaçmaktadır. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin eğitim için çok sayıda insan çekmesinin birçok nedeni vardır. Öğrenciler bir Amerikan üniversitesinden mezun olmanın yerel üniversitelerden daha prestijli ve daha iyi olduğunu düşünürler. Öğrencilerin büyük bir çoğunluğu ülkede kariyer yapmak için yurt dışına gidiyor (Altbach, 2004).

Tekeli (2010) Türkiye'deki üniversitelerin uluslararası alanda tanınan kurumlardan akreditasyon almak istediğini ifade etmiştir. Türkiye 2015 yılına kadar gönderme pozisyonundaydı. Başka bir deyişle, Türkiye'ye gelen öğrenciden daha fazla yurtdışına giden öğrenci vardı. Daha sonra, UNESCO 2015 yılında gelen ve giden öğrenci sayısını yayınladı ve Türkiye'ye gelen öğrenci sayısının (48.183) giden öğrenci sayısından (44.652) daha fazla olduğu belirtilmiştir. Diğer taraftan, Türkiye'ye yurt dışından gelen öğrenciler için ilk beş ülke şöyledir; Türkmenistan, Azerbaycan, İran, Afganistan ve

Suriye. Türkiye'ye gelen uluslararası öğrenci sayısında artış oldu, ancak bu artıştaki ana itici güç Türkiye'ye göç eden mültecilerdir.

Yükseköğretim Kurulu istatistiklerine göre (YÖK, 2019) Türkiye'deki toplam İranlı üniversite öğrencisi sayısı 2018-2019 akademik yılında 7154'tür. Aynı akademik yılda Ankara'daki farklı üniversitelerde 1267 İranlı öğrenci okuyordu. 2018-2019 öğretim yılında Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi'nde İngilizce hazırlık okulunun farklı seviyelerinde eğitim gören ve lisans ve de lisansüstü okuyan toplam İranlı öğrenci sayısı 265'tir.

Bir çalışmada öğrencilerin Türkiye'yi tercih etme veya etmeme faktörlerinin belirlenmesi, yurtdışında eğitim görmek için ülke seçilmesi iki boyutlu bir olgu olarak tanımlanmıştır. Benzer şekilde, bu faktörler aleni veya özel olabilir. Özel faktörler öğrencilerin eğilimleri, yaşları, motivasyonları, akademik yetenekleri, istekleri ve seçimleri ile ilişkilidir. Aleni olanlar ise ev sahibi ya da yaşanan ülkedeki hayata dair bakış açılarıyla öğrencilerin seçimlerini etkileyebilecek faktörlerle ilgilidir. Bu çalışmadaki sonuçlar, “iş bulmanın”, “Türkiye'de akraba, aile üyesi veya eş olmasının” ve “burs almanın” aleni gerekçeler olarak öğrencilerin Türkiye'ye gelmesini etkilediğini göstermektedir. Öte yandan öğrencilerin Türkiye'ye gelmesine neden olan özel gerekçeler “akademik kalite”, “çalışma alanı, kurum”, “farklı bir kültür öğrenme/deneyimleme arzusu” ve “Türk halkı ve Türk kültürü” dür (Kondakci, 2011).

Güçlendirme, uluslararası öğrencilerin diğer ülkelerdeki eğitimleri sırasında karşılaştıkları sonuçlardan biri olarak kabul edilir. Güç; makro düzeyde üniversiteleri, mikro düzeyde sembolik materyallere çeşitli erişime sahip bireyler arasındaki etkileşimleri yönetir.

Raymond ve Parks (2004), Çinli öğrencilerin Kanadalı bir üniversitede İşletme Yüksek Lisansı (MBA) eğitimi deneyimleriyle ilgili güçlendirmeyi ele almıştır. Güçlendirme ile ilgili üç konuda bildirilen bulgular şöyledir: okuryazarlık talepleri ve eğitim kurumu içinde yürürlüğe konan sosyalleşme süreçleri, direniş ve Çinli öğrencilerin programlarının belirli yönleriyle ilgili endişelerini dile getirme biçimleri ve meta olarak eğitim.

Güçlendirme, bir kişinin uygun yetenekleri kullanmayı öğrenmesinin anlık sonuçları olarak tanımlanır (Zimmerman, 1990). Frymier ve Houser'e (1999) göre, güçlendirilmiş bireyler öğrenme görevlerini bitirmek için nitelikli hissetmektedirler. Bu nedenle, güçlendirilmiş hisseden uluslararası öğrencilerin kendilerini çevreye adapte etme ve ev sahibi ülkeye güvenmelerini sağlayan yeterlilik oluşturma olasılıkları daha yüksektir. Diğer bir deyişle, üniversiteler öğrencilerin güçlendirmeyi öğrenme duygularını artırarak yurtdışından gelen kültürel ve eğitimsel deneyimlerini teşvik etmelidir. Bununla birlikte, güçlendirme üzerindeki etkililiği net bir şekilde anlaşılmalıdır.

Yükseköğretimde uluslararasılaşma ile ilgili literatür, uluslararası öğrencilerin ev sahibi ülkelerinde yaşadığı bazı önemli eğitimsel ve sosyal sorunların olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Örneğin, Indiana Üniversitesi'ndeki İranlı öğrencilerle yapılan çalışmalardan birinde, çok sayıda öğrencinin sınıfta okuma veya konuşma, sözlü raporlar verme ve yazı yazma gibi becerili kişisel performans gerektiren alanlarda sorun yaşadıkları tespit edildi, bunlar katılımcılar için en sorunlu konular arasındaydı (Moshfegh, 1989).

Tinto'nun etkileşim modeline paralel olarak Baker ve Siryk (1999) sosyal ve akademik entegrasyonun çalışma performansı üzerinde etkili olabileceğini belirtmiştir. Baker ve Siryk'a (1999) göre, akademik entegrasyon için 4 farklı uyum vardır; sosyal, akademik, kişisel, duygusal uyum ve bağlılık. Sosyal uyum, öğrencilerin sosyal etkinliklere katılmayı veya gruplar halinde çalışma ve arkadaş edinmeyi içeren sosyal sorunlarla nasıl başa çıktıklarını gösterir. Öte yandan, akademik uyum öğrencinin performans, motivasyon, eğitimsel memnuniyet ve uygulama dahil olmak üzere farklı eğitim ihtiyaçlarını karşılama yeteneğini temsil etmektedir.

Hollanda'daki üniversitelerin zengin ve çekici bir ortamı olmasına rağmen, yurtdışından gelen öğrencilerin orada akademik ve sosyal entegrasyonu ile ilgili bazı sorunlar vardır (Eringa ve Huei-Ling, 2009; Van der Wende, 2003). Akademisyenlerin ortak fikrine göre, yurtdışından gelen öğrenciler hem sosyal hem de akademik olarak kendilerini alıştırmakta bazı zorluklar yaşıyorlar. Uluslararası öğrencileri yeni bir akademik ve sosyal ortama

uyarlamaya akademik entegrasyon denir (Tinto, 1975). Bununla birlikte, uluslararası öğrenciler daha yüksek eğitimsel sezilerinin ihtiyaçları ile uyumlu değildirler (Asmar, 2005; Barrie, 2007; Jochems, 1996; Morrison ve ark., 2005; Russell ve ark., 2010).

Bir çalışmada Zhao, Kuh ve Carini (2005), denizaşırı ülkelerden öğrenciler ve ABD'den öğrenciler arasında akademik faaliyetlere katılımı ilgili bir karşılaştırma yaptı. Bulgular, denizaşırı ülkelerden gelen öğrencilerin öğrenci-öğretim üyesi etkileşimi, eğitimsel zorluklar ve sınıfta teknoloji kullanımı açısından daha motive olduklarını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, denizaşırı ülkelerden gelen öğrencilerin sosyal ve kişisel gelişim ve temel eğitimsel sonuçları konusunda daha fazla kazanımı olmuştur. Ancak, ABD'li öğrenciler ise sosyalleşme ve toplum hizmeti konusunda motive olmuşlardı. Başka bir araştırmanın bulguları, ABD'li öğrencilerin denizaşırı ülkelerden gelen öğrencilere kıyasla eğitim faaliyetleri ve destekleyici kampüs ortamı hakkında daha az deneyime sahip olduklarını ortaya koymuştur (Korobova, 2012).

Yükseköğrenimle ilgili araştırmanın büyük bir kısmı, bir tutulma veya kararlılık olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Tinto tarafından geliştirilen etkileşim öğrenci yıpranma modeline göre (1975, 1998) her öğrencinin yükseköğretime devam etmeden öncesinde eğitim, beceri, toplum geçmişi, değerler ve aile geçmişi hakkında farklı deneyimleri vardır.

Yöntem

Araştırma Deseni

İranlı öğrencilerin profillerini, eğitim ve sosyal deneyimlerini ve eğitim dili İngilizce olan bir üniversitede karşılaştığı zorlukları tanımlamak için tarama deseni araştırması uygulandı. Veriler aynı örnekle tek seferde toplandığından, bu çalışmanın deseni kesitsel bir anket deseni belirlenmiştir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma betimsel niteliktedir ve temel olarak nicel öğeleri içermektedir ve katılımcılardan daha fazla bilgi almak için nitel açık uçlu öğelerle desteklenmiştir.

Örneklem

Hedef kitle, UÜ'de okuyan tüm İranlı öğrencilerdir. UÜ'de okuyan tüm İranlı öğrenciler çalışmaya katılmaya davet edilmiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, UÜ'de okuyan okuyan tüm İranlı öğrenciler ($N=277$) bu çalışmanın evrenini oluşturmaktadır. Anket çevrimiçi olarak topluluğa (IUSQ) uygulandı ve %41,5'lik bir geri dönüş oranını ile 115 yanıt ulaşıldı. Katılımcılar; hazırlık, lisans, yüksek lisans ve doktora gibi farklı eğitim seviyelerinden olan kadın ve erkek öğrencilerden oluşmaktadır. Mühendislik, Mimarlık, Sosyal Bilimler, Fen, Eğitim vb. Gibi farklı fakültelerden çok sayıda öğrenci katıldı. İranlı öğrenciler UÜ'nün çeşitli bölümlerinde eğitim görmekteydiler.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Hem açık uçlu hem de kapalı uçlu öğeleri içeren Uluslararası Üniversite Öğrencileri Anketi (IUSQ) çalışma için üç aşamada geliştirilmiştir. İlk aşamada, 14 İranlı öğrenci ile eğitim dili İngilizce olan devlet üniversitesinde öğrencilerin eğitim ve sosyal deneyimlerini keşfetmek için bir SWOT tablosu yardımıyla yapılandırılmış bir bilişsel görüşme gerçekleştirildi. SWOT, bir sonraki bölümde açıklanan anket için iki boyutta ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu boyutlar eğitim ve sosyal deneyimler olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. Son uygulamadan önce ölçme aracının tutarlı olmasını sağlamak için, UÜ'de okuyan İranlılar hariç bir grup yabancı öğrenci ($n=23$) üzerinde test edildi ve veriler tanımlayıcı istatistikler için analiz edilmeden önce anketin güvenilirliği kontrol edildi. Toplam içsel tutarlılığın 0.82 olduğu tahmin edilmektedir ve bu da aracın öğrencilerin deneyimlerini ölçmede neredeyse mükemmel derecede güvenilir olduğunu vurgulamaktadır.

IUSQ üç farklı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölüm demografi ve öğrenci profilleri hakkındadır, ikinci bölüm öğrencilerin eğitim ve sosyal deneyimleri hakkında sorular içerir (beş maddelik Likert ölçeği) ve son olarak üçüncü bölüm, uluslararası öğrenciler olarak beklentilerinin yanı sıra güçlenmiş hissedilen İranlı öğrenciler hakkında açık uçlu sorulara sahiptir. Anketin ardından, 2018 yaz ve güz döneminde UÜ'deki farklı fakültelerde eğitimlerine devam eden İranlı Hazırlık Okulu, Lisans, Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora öğrencilerine e-posta olarak anket gönderilmiştir.

Veri Toplama Süreci

Veri toplama sürecinde veri kaynağı anket formunda kapalı uçlu ve açık uçlu veri olarak kullanılmıştır. IUSQ doğrulandıktan sonra, çalışmaya davet için bir e-posta planı hazırlandı ve bir onay formu, bir davet mesajı ve bir anket bağlantısı hazırlanmıştır. Çevrimiçi araştırma anketi, tüm İranlı öğrencilerin e-posta adreslerine Uluslararası Öğrenci Ofisi tarafından gönderildi. Mayıs 2018 ve Kasım 2018 tarihleri arasında 115 toplam veri sayısına ulaşılmıştır.

Veri Analizleri

İranlı öğrencilerin eğitim ve sosyal deneyimlerini ayrı ayrı kontrol etmek amacıyla çalışmadaki ikinci ve üçüncü araştırma sorularına cevap vermek için ortalama ve standart sapma puanlarını içeren tanımlayıcı istatistikler hesaplanmıştır. Ayrıca Windows için IBM SPSS (Sosyal Bilimler İçin İstatistik Programı) ODTÜ Sürüm 20'yi kullanarak örneklerin demografik özelliklerini ve profillerini ayrı ayrı bulmak için tanımlayıcı istatistikler kullanılmıştır.

İkinci olarak, ankette nitel okuma gerektiren 3 açık uçlu soru vardı. Bunu takiben, QSR International'ın NVivo 12 nitel veri analizi yazılımının öğrenci deneme sürümü tarafından bir tümevarımsal içerik çözümlemesi yapılmıştır ve belirlenen temalar bu araştırmanın sonuçlar bölümünde paylaşılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Sınırlılıkları

İlk sınırlılık öz bildirim tabanlı anketlerin yapısından kaynaklanmaktadır. Katılımcıların gerçek deneyimlerini gizleyebilecekleri ve sosyal olarak kabul edilebilir cevaplar verebilecekleri varsayılmaktadır (Baker, 1985).

İkinci sınırlama, aracı e-posta yoluyla yöneterek veri toplanması oldu; bu katılımcıların işbirliğini teşvik etme veya katılımcıların sorularını cevaplama veya talimatları açıklama konusunda yardım sağlama fırsatını sınırladı. Ayrıca e-posta anketlerinde veri toplanması uzun zaman almaktadır.

Bulgular

UÜ'de Öğrenci Profilleri

Bulgular, İranlı öğrenci popülasyonunun, ebeveynlerinin eğitim ve mesleki geçmişleri ile ilgili olarak yüksek veya orta sosyo-ekonomik bir durumdan geldiğini göstermektedir. Çoğu akademik başarısı yüksek olan ve 3.50 ile 4.00 arasında not ortalamasına sahip öğrencilerdir. İngilizce dil becerilerinin yanı sıra iyi düzeyde Türkçe dil becerilerine de sahiptirler. Bulgular ayrıca, İranlı öğrencilerin, eğitim dili İngilizce olan uluslararası bir üniversitede olma fırsatını onlara veren yüksek dereceli bir Uluslararası Üniversiteye geldiğini göstermektedir.

Öğrencilerin Eğitim Deneyimleri

İranlı öğrenciler, önceki bilgilerinin UÜ'deki eğitimlerine uyum sağlamak için yeterli olduğuna ve akademik becerilerinden (not alma, yazma vb.) emin olduklarına inanmaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrenciler onlara eğitim verilen yönteme aşina olduklarını (öğretim stratejileri / yöntemleri) ve ders programının dersleri kolayca takip etmelerine yardımcı olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Ders materyallerinin / faaliyetlerinin uluslararası bir odak noktasına sahip olduğu ve ders hedeflerinin eğitimdeki uluslararası standartlarla (uygulamalarla) uyumlu olduğu bulunmuştur. İranlı uluslararası öğrenciler akademik yardıma ihtiyaç duyduklarında öğretim görevlilerine ve araştırma görevlilerine ulaşabildiklerini ve öğretim görevlilerinin onların uluslararası öğrenci olduklarını bildiklerini rapor etmişlerdir. Öte yandan, katılımcılar öğretim görevlilerinin yaklaşımlarının bazen çok katı olduğuna inanmaktadır.

Öğrencilerin Sosyal Deneyimleri

İranlı öğrenciler farklı milletlerden arkadaşlar bulmayı tercih ediyorlar ve onlarla birlikte takım halinde çalışıyorlar. Hem uluslararası hem de yerel öğrencilerin kültürel davranışlarını anlıyorlar. Kampüste nasıl davranacaklarını bilirler, ancak sınıfta nasıl davranacaklarını bilmemektedirler. İranlı öğrencilerin uluslararası bir öğrenci olarak

karşılaştıkları sosyal sorunlarını çözebildikleri anlaşılmıştır ve sosyal bir sorunla karşılaştıklarında kime danışacaklarını bilirler.

İranlı Öğrenciler UÜ'de Güçlenmiş Hissediyor

Ayrıca İranlı öğrenciler UÜ'nün çok kültürlü ve çok dilli ortamı nedeniyle güçlenmiş hissediyorlar ve öğretim görevlileri onların uluslararası öğrenci olduklarını bildikleri için kendilerini rahat hissederler. Buna ek olarak, İngilizce dil becerilerine güvendikleri ve ihtiyaçlarını üniversitedeki idari personele Türkçe etkili bir şekilde iletebildikleri için kendilerini güçlenmiş hissederler.

Tartışma

İranlı öğrencilerin eğitimleri için UÜ'yü tercih etmelerinin temel nedenleri konusunda da benzer sonuçlar elde edildi. Kondakci (2011) “iş bulmak”, “Türkiye'de akraba, aile üyesi veya eş sahibi olmak”, “burs almak”, “akademik kalite”, “çalışma alanı, kurum”, “öğrenme arzusu/farklı bir kültür yaşamak” ve “Türk halkı ve Türk kültürü” sebepleri öğrencileri Türkiye'ye gelmek için etkilemektedir. Bu temel bulgular, İranlı öğrencilerin “yüksek eğitim kalitesi”, “bir işe başvurma fırsatı”, “ülkesine yakınlık ve kültürel benzerlikler”, “seçkin mühendislik fakültesi” ve “arkadaşlar” nedeniyle UÜ'de okumaya karar verdiklerini gösteren mevcut araştırmalarla tutarlıdır.

Mevcut araştırmaya benzer şekilde Murphy (2007) katılımcıların çoğunun uluslararası görevlere katılmanın onlara yardımcı olduğunu belirtmiştir. Örneğin, öğrenciler uluslararası akademik kongreler/konferanslar aracılığıyla ağ oluşturma ya da katılma ve yurt dışından meslektaşlarıyla işbirliği yapma fırsatı buldular. Ayrıca yurtdışında eğitim alarak çeşitli eğitimsel deneyimler ve bakış açıları kazanmışlardır. Ayrıca, öğrenciler uluslararasılaşmanın onlara kişisel gelişimlerini ve küresel olarak gerekli becerileri geliştirmeleri için bir avantaj sağladığını belirtti.

Araştırmamız doğrultusunda, yurtdışında eğitimin öğrencilerin yaşam tarzları ve sosyal deneyimleri üzerinde bir etkisi olduğundan bahsedildi. Ayrıca okudukları farklı ülkenin kültürü (sosyo-kültürel fayda) hakkında bilgi edinirler (Li ve Bray, 2007). Knight'a (1999)

göre, hem akademik personel hem de öğrenciler, farklı kültürlerle ilgili önyargılarını ve olumsuz düşüncelerini önlemelerine yardımcı olan uluslararası deneyimlerden olumlu etkilendiler. Ayrıca, uluslararasılaşmanın en önemli faktörlerinden biri, farklı ülkeler arasında kültürel çeşitliliğin benimsenmesi ve iyi iletişimsel kültürlerarası becerilere sahip öğrencileriydi.

Uygulamaya Etkileri

Bu çıkarımlar, aynı zamanda, uluslararası üniversite öğrencilerinin üniversite yıllarında eğitim ve sosyal etkinlikler konusundaki deneyimlerine ilişkin anlayışa ışık tutacak olan bu çalışmanın yürütülmesinin mantığını yansıtmaktadır ve mevcut en iyi deneyimlerin ve uygulamaların diğer uluslararası öğrencilerin düzenlemeleri için geçerli olup olmadığı konusunda fikir vermektedir.

Bu çalışmada öğrenciler için sosyal etkileşimlerin çoğunun hem sınıf içinde hem de sınıf dışında gerçekleştiği bulunmuştur. Katılımcıların kampüsteki diğer uluslararası öğrencilerle birden fazla sınıfta bağlantıda oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır. Öğrencilerin etkileşiminin, başkalarıyla bağlantı kuran katılımcıların fikirlerini paylaşmalarına, birbirlerini desteklemelerine ve akademisyenlere kolayca aktarmalarına yardımcı olduğu açıklanmıştır. Paylaşılan fırsatlar, hizmetler, faaliyetler ve diğer destek sistemleri uluslararası öğrencilerin üniversite yıllarında başarısını kolaylaştırmak ve yardımcı olmak için mevcut olması gereken destek mekanizmalarına birkaç örnektir. Wolf-Wendel (2003), kadınların kurumlarının kültürüyle bağlantı kurma duygusuna sahip olma gereksinimlerini belirtmiştir. Yer ve sosyal bağlantı hissini arttırmak için, dersler sırasında bir arkadaş grubu çok popülerdir (Deutsch ve Schmertz, 2011). Diğer yandan, katılımcıların çoğu yerel öğrencilerin kültürel davranışlarını anlamamaktadır ve sınıflardaki kültürel farklılıklar nedeniyle yanlış anlaşılabilir. Sonuç olarak, uluslararası öğrencilerin kültürüne aşina oldukları için farklı milletlerden arkadaşlar edinmişlerdir.

Bu çalışmadaki öğrenciler, üniversite personeli ile iletişim kurma ve Türkçe konuşma güçlüğü ile ilgili bazı zorluklardan bahsettiler, çünkü bazıları İngilizce konuşamıyordu.

Bu çalışma, İngilizce dil becerilerini kullanma ve öğrencilerin üniversitedeki eğitim ve sosyal meşguliyetleri arasında uyumlu bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. İlgili bulgular, öğrencilerin dersleri İngilizce olduğu zaman kolayca takip edebildiğini göstermiştir. Ayrıca, uluslararası geçerliliği olan ders materyalleri/aktiviteleri öğrencilerin kendilerini güçlenmiş hissetmelerini sağlamıştır. Bu doğrultuda, sınıfta öğrendikleri her şey uluslararası geçerliliğe sahipti, bu da ders hedeflerinin bu alanda uluslararası standartlarla (uygulamalar) uyumlu olduğu anlamına gelmektedir.

Bu çalışmada yer alan öğrenciler, kendi alanlarında mentor ve uzman olarak gördükleri öğretim üyelerinden de yararlanmışlardır. Bu bulgular, kurumların öğretim üyeleri ile uluslararası öğrenciler arasında, uluslararası öğrencilerin eğitim ve sosyal deneyimlerini ve karakterlerini destekleyen pedagoji bilincini içeren ilişkiler yaratmak için fırsatlar bulması gerektiğini doğrulamaktadır.

Buna ek olarak, mevcut araştırmadaki öğrencilerin diğer öğrencilere ve özellikle de yabancı öğrencilere kendileri bağlı hissettikleri belirtilmiştir. Bu öğrencilerin derslerde bir müfredata ihtiyacı vardır ve öğrenim süreçlerini ders programına göre düzenlerler çünkü bazen kendilerinden ne beklendiğini anlamadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir.

Gelecekte Yapılacak Araştırmalar İçin Öneriler

Mevcut araştırmanın bulguları ve sınırlılıkları ile ilgili olarak, gelecekteki araştırmalar için bazı çıkarımlar mevcuttur. Bu araştırmanın sonuçlarını yerine getirmek için, söz konusu alanlarda daha fazla çalışmanın yapılması önerilmektedir.

Üniversitelere Türkiye'de daha fazla üniversite, idari personel, öğrenci, veli gibi daha fazla paydaş dâhil ederek uluslararası öğrencilerin hem eğitim hem de sosyal zorlukları üzerine daha fazla araştırma yapılmalıdır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, öğrencilerin başarılarını ve ayarlamalarını teşvik etmek için fırsatlar sağlamak amacıyla daha ayrıntılı olarak analiz edilmesi gereken üniversitelerde ortaya çıkmış olan bu deneyimlerin bir listesini ortaya koymuştur.

Ayrıca, bu araştırma sadece bir grup katılımcı ile sınırlı kalmıştır. Bu nedenle, çalışmanın örneklem grubu daha geniş olabilir ve sadece İranlı öğrenciler değil, aynı zamanda Türkiye'de eğitim gören diğer yabancı öğrenciler de araştırılabilir ve karşılaştırılabilir ve bu da önemli sonuçlar verebilir.



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