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PECULIARITIES OF ADAPTATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN TURKEY

Migration primarily occurs due to social factors like education, healthcare, leisure, and, to a large extent, economic factors aiming to enhance job opportunities. People migrate seeking a better standard of living and improved education, among other reasons.

International students, among university students, are particularly vulnerable. Their adaptation process is shaped not just by educational structures but also by social and cultural factors. Despite the complex and prolonged nature of their adaptation, it's important to note that higher education serves as a vital institution for newcomers, playing a key role in introducing them to the culture of the host community during their initial stages in the new country [1, p. 7].

When international students begin studying in a new country, their adjustment usually goes through several stages. First, they feel excited and enthusiastic about the new experience, called the «honeymoon period». During this time, they are full of optimism and joy. But as they encounter new cultural and social aspects, they move to the next level of adaptation.

The crisis phase, also known as culture shock, describes the state of disorientation and tension that a person experiences when they first encounter a new culture. It can cause feelings of anxiety, irritability, insomnia and depression. This period includes various aspects such as loss of connections and status, feeling rejected or unappreciated, and confusion about social roles and value orientations. When a person experiences culture shock, their familiar attitudes collide with new ones, creating a conflict between the two cultures. John Berry calls this «acculturation stress», when a person's personal resources

are insufficient to cope with new challenges. This can lead to different outcomes, from complete adaptation to maladaptation to the new environment.

During the stage of overcoming cultural disappointment and adapting to new conditions, international students actively integrate into the new environment. They learn the local language and culture in depth, make new acquaintances and find ways to solve difficulties. In the process of finding optimal strategies to adapt to the new life, they gradually get rid of negative emotions and gain confidence and satisfaction. As a result, the manifestations of culture shock become less noticeable, which facilitates the beginning of integration into the new socio-cultural environment.

As the adaptation period draws to a close, the international student becomes more confident, problems are solved as they arise. Optimally, adaptation leads to harmony between the individual and the new environment, which signals the end of the process.

The literature emphasizes the time frame for these stages. It is important to note that international students often have a longer adaptation period than migrants or temporary visitors. This is due to the need to adjust to new academic requirements as well as to the socio-cultural environment.

It is generally believed that a foreign student goes through a number of stages of adaptation in the first years of his/her stay in the country. In the beginning, for about 6-8 months, he/she gets acquainted with the new culture, language, communication in an intercultural environment and learns the peculiarities of the educational system of the university. Further, during the second year, there is a deeper adaptation to the conditions of the educational institution and the specifics of learning. In the third year of study, the student begins to actively explore his/her chosen profession, and at the last stages realizes himself/herself as a future graduate. Upon completion of studies, there is a period of adaptation to professional activity, especially if the student decides to stay in the country after graduation. Thus, adaptation of international students includes not only adjustment to study and new culture, but also preparation for future career.

In general, the characteristics of adaptation stages in all international students can be defined as follows:

Immersion in a new educational and linguistic environment;

Acquisition of basic norms of interaction in an international environment and formation of an individual behavioral style;

Development of a positive attitude to the new socio-cultural environment, overcoming cultural differences and language obstacles, and readiness for a future career [1, p.35].

Factors influencing the success of international students' adaptation include:

Cultural similarities

Turkey was the first country in the world to recognize Kazakhstan after its political independence on December 16, 1991. Since then, more than 80 agreements and protocols have been signed between our states to develop relations in political, economic, educational and cultural spheres.

The cultures of Kazakhstan and Turkey are firmly intertwined by a common millennial history, one Turkic language group and similar traditions and holidays. As is inherent in all representatives of nomadic nationalities, the ancestors of modern Kazakhs and Turks traveled great distances in order to find new pastures and more favorable living conditions. Even today, in the XXI century, representatives of these two peoples actively conduct their professional, academic and cultural activities on all 6 continents, seeing no barriers in distances and borders.

Kazakh and Turkish societies attach fundamental importance to the unwavering value of family and family ties. The family is perceived not only as the basic structure of society for these two ethnic groups, but also as the basis for cultural and spiritual development, upbringing, and the formation of behavior patterns even in adulthood.

General cultural similarities are observed in cuisine, folk music, and literature. But the main connecting element of these cultures is language, which is from the same language group and has a great number of common words and expressions.

Language barrier

Even though Turkish has been converted to the Latin alphabet for easier comprehension by the international community, its syntax is still very difficult to learn for speakers of other languages. Given the fact that the Turkish language is in official circulation only in Turkey and Northern Cyprus, its spread in the mass culture of other countries has not occurred. Even for representatives of Turkic nationalities such as Kazakhs, Azeris, Turkmens and Kyrgyz, learning and applying Turkish in an academic environment is not an easy task. During the existence of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish language has been modified many times under the influence of the languages of its constituent peoples. As a result, Turkish has acquired borrowed words and new speech constructions, local phraseological expressions. For international students coming to Turkey to study, there is a language year during which local teachers teach Turkish from beginner to advanced level.

Cognitive Skills

Cognitive skills are the skills of the brain to assimilate and process information about the world around us. They include memory, attention, cognitive flexibility, imagination, speech, reasoning, and sensory perception. Cognitive abilities distinguish humans from animals, they are necessary for survival and development. They allow us to memorize simple everyday things and not to think about them additionally in the future.

The phenomenon of cognitive approach has become one of the main methodological principles of foreign language education. The notion of «cognitive skills» is defined as a cognitive process, during which perception, awareness of the received information, its further assimilation and transformation into solid knowledge is carried out. The acquired knowledge and skills are used for the purposes of interpersonal and professional communication. **At all levels, increased requirements are imposed on students in order to master speech and language skills:** development of lexical, grammatical and stylistic skills as basic knowledge; improvement of creative activity, intensification of cognitive abilities and self-actualization at the next stage of foreign language learning aimed at the formation of linguistic, communicative and intercultural competences and career guidance. Flexibility of mind allows adapting to new conditions, quickly changing strategies and searching for alternative solutions to a task. Cognitive flexibility comes in handy when it is necessary to think of a non-standard way out of a situation, move from one type of activity to another, endure failure and work through mistakes. If a person has a hard time adapting to new conditions and cannot move away from the way he is used to, it can be said about his cognitive rigidity. Cognitive rehydration is characteristic of all of us because the human brain seeks stability, certainty, and security. It is easier for us to stick to a familiar pattern of behavior than to rearrange our strategy and step into the unknown. But trying to avoid any changes and innovations threatens us with inefficiency in our studies, frequent stress and low standard of living. According to my observations, international students who lead an active lifestyle in their home country adapt more easily and quickly. They are not frightened by the possibility of acquiring new knowledge, its active use and public demonstration. Becoming a foreign student, it became clear why it was necessary to participate in conferences at the university, publicly defend term papers and diploma theses. In addition to research skills, it is also a training of cognitive skills. The skills of quick search for answers to questions, skills of cooperation with other students and teachers are formed. And if all these skills are available adaptation is much easier and faster.

Psycho-emotional state.

During the period of study, students experience the same changes in their emotional state as when moving to any other country to study. At first, the feeling of longing for the familiar environment and people becomes more acute, then the gradual process of adaptation to new conditions begins. Tutors, who are appointed at the very beginning and assigned to help with academic and everyday issues, provide significant assistance in overcoming psycho-emotional barriers in the process of adaptation. In general, the practice of mentoring is developed at a sufficiently high level, tutors help to organize

leisure time, periodically hold cultural events and monitor the external state of students in dynamics.

Inclusion in the educational and professional process.

Examinations and intermediate control assess students' progress, but during lectures and seminars lecturers try to involve students as much as possible for a more accurate preliminary assessment of their knowledge. This approach has a favorable effect on the degree of learning, because in this way even students with low self-organization are under control and they have additional incentives to learn the material in time. In addition to educational standards, each instructor also implements his or her own creative and innovative techniques for engaging learning. As a result of the work carried out by the teacher, students have opportunities to demonstrate their dynamics of mastering the subject on a regular basis, which ultimately leads to a better organization of the teaching approach for individual students.

There are 30 thousand students from Kazakhstan studying abroad. Half of them, i.e. 15 thousand people, choose the Russian Federation for education. China takes the second place, accepting 10 thousand Kazakh students. The remaining 5 thousand students go to the countries of Europe and the United States. There are 8, 219 students from Kazakhstan studying in Turkey [2].

The increase in the number of international students is due in particular to the interest in the Türkiye Bursları scholarship program developed by the Office for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). This initiative aims to support young talent and covers funding for education (including undergraduate, graduate, research and language courses), dormitory accommodation, health insurance, a monthly stipend and even round-trip flights.

After successfully passing the entrance exams, participants take a one-year Turkish language course, after which they are given the opportunity to choose a university to continue their education. Applications for this program have increased from 42, 174 in 2012 to 165, 918 in 2022 [3].

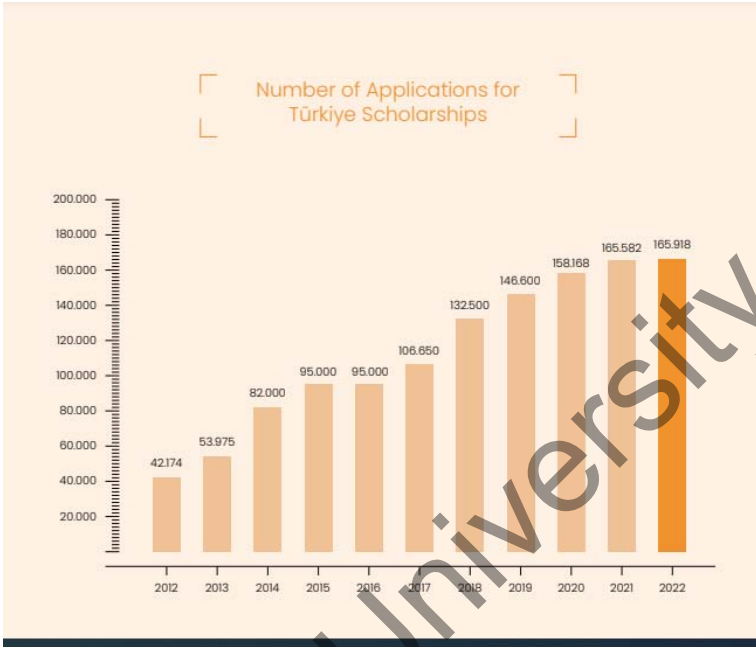


Figure 1. Number of applications for the program

There are 207 universities in Turkey, mainly located in the cities of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. The Turkish educational system, similar to Kazakhstan, follows the principles of the Bologna Process, offering both bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies. The duration of studies is 4 years for Bachelor's degree, 2 years for Master's degree and 3-5 years for Doctoral degree.

Turkey is part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and Turkish university diplomas are recognized in all European countries. The application of the transferable credit system (ECTS) allows students to continue their studies abroad without any problems.

Although knowledge of Turkish is necessary for Turkish-language programs, it is not required for admission. Students who are not proficient in the language can take preparatory courses before beginning their studies.

International students on undergraduate programs are not eligible for employment in Turkey, but may receive job offers from the university. For master's and doctoral students, employment is permitted. Often students combine study with work, which is considered illegal. A special permit is required for legal work, as the legislation of the Republic of Turkey does not provide employment for foreign students [3].

Staying in a dormitory can help you quickly settle into your new life in Turkey by providing opportunities to meet new people and adjust to the environment. Dorms are separated by gender and come equipped with basic furnishings like beds, desks, and closets, as well as shared spaces for recreation and studying. The monthly rent for dormitory accommodation starts at 180 USD, covering utilities and depending on the amenities offered.

Admission

My preparation for the admission process began six months before the application deadline. One of the criteria for the scholarship is participation in various conferences, volunteer activities, and student organizations.

The application process for the Türkiye Bursları program begins in January and ends one month after the start date. Specialized companies can help in the preparatory process, they guide on all the necessary documents, help to fill out the application form correctly on the website, adding all the achievements and letters.

According to the results of the first stage, which consists in screening applications of all comers, the candidate receives a notification of successful passage to the second stage in the form of an interview, which is traditionally held in large cities. Its approximate duration is 10 minutes. The results of the face-to-face interview and the answer about the admission itself come by e-mail 3-4 months after the interview. In 2022, 165918 applications were received and 4316 of them were accepted. The main criterion for decision making is the presence of high GPA, extracurricular activities at the university, argumentation of high interest in learning during the interview.

Türkiye Bursları provides free tuition, accommodation with two meals a day, monthly stipend, health insurance, airfare and Turkish language courses. A distinctive feature of this program is that students are required to take a one-year free Turkish language course before starting their studies at the university. This helps foreign students to better adapt to life in Turkey and is a mandatory requirement regardless of the language the student will study at university [4, 60].

In addition to university education, the compulsory study of Turkish is implemented to provide students with the opportunity to benefit from social, cultural and academic extracurricular programs and activities during their stay in Turkey.

All scholarship students receive a place in a dormitory where they live in rooms of three. Each student has their own work area, bed, and closet for their use. Also, meals are provided 2 times a day on the basis of breakfast and dinner. Lunch is provided in the academic building of the university. There is a curfew in the dormitory, according to which all residents must return no later than 22.00. The hostel also offers various courses such as sewing, English, and

sign language. All students are required to choose one course and attend it according to the schedule.

The compulsory one-year Turkish language course, aka TÖMER, is designed for international students. Classes take place five days a week, six hours a day, where instruction is with a native speaker. In addition to studying in study groups, joint activities are organized, cultural and leisure activities are celebrated. Classes are organized in study groups with an average of 15 students. In my group there are students from different countries, such as Indonesia, New Zealand, Ukraine, Russia, Nigeria, Macedonia, Mauritania, Uzbekistan and others.

Turkey is famous for its hospitality and this trait is also characteristic of the teachers. They try to create a friendly and supportive environment in order to create trust in the group, they show patience, friendliness and willingness to help students adapt to a new culture and language environment.

Among the positive aspects of educational migration is the fact that students improve their professional and scientific qualifications, broaden their horizons, study foreign languages, exchange social, historical and cultural information, and establish ties with foreign colleagues. The negative aspects include the decision of young people to change their place of residence, which will certainly have a negative impact on the socio-economic development of Kazakhstan. In case graduates do not return home, study abroad of the most gifted young people may turn into a «brain drain» for Kazakhstan. Many foreign students voice their desire to extend their stay abroad or stay there forever.

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