

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies

Volume 5

Issue 1

2022



International Islamic University Malaysia

IUM JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND CIVILISATIONAL STUDIES
(E-ISSN: 2637-112X)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Fauziah Fathil, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

EDITOR

Mohd Helmi Mohd Sobri, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Alwi Alatas, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

BOOK REVIEWS EDITOR

Kaoutar Guediri, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Norliza Saleh, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Adibah Binti Abdul Rahim, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

Arshad Islam, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

Bacem Dziri, *University of Osnabruck, Germany*

Fatmir Shehu, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

Hafiz Zakariya, *University Malaysia Terengganu*

Hakan Gulerce, *Harran University, Turkey*

Osman Yapar, *Dhofar University, Oman*

Rahimah Embong, *UniSZA, Malaysia*

Rohaiza Rokis, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

Sharifah Syahirah Binti Shikh, *Kolej Universiti Poly-Tech MARA, Malaysia*

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Abdullahil Ahsan, *Istanbul Sehir University, Turkey*

Ahmed Alibasic, *University of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina*

Alfiya Yusupova, *Kazan Federal University, Russia*

Alparslan Acikgenç, *Uskudar University, Turkey*

Fadzli Adam, *UniSZA, Malaysia*

Syed Farid Alatas, *Singapore National University, Singapore*

Fatimah Ulfat, *Germany*

Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sudan*

Ednan Aslan, *University of Vienna, Austria*

James Piscatori, *Durham University, United Kingdom*

Jorgen Nielsen, *University of Copenhagen, Denmark*

Mohammed Hashim Kamali, *International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies Malaysia*

Muhammad Abdul Quayum, *International Islamic University Malaysia*

Samim Akgonul, *Strasbourg University, France*

© 2022 IIUM Press, International Islamic University Malaysia. All Rights Reserved

Editorial Correspondence:

Editor, IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS)

Research Management Centre, RMC

International Islamic University Malaysia

53100 Gombak Campus

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: (+603) 6421 5002/5010

Fax: (+603) 6421 4862

Website: <http://journals.iium.edu.my/irkh/index.php/ijrcs>

Comments and suggestions to: alwialatas@iium.edu.my

E-ISSN: 2637-112X

Published by:

IIUM Press, International Islamic University Malaysia

P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Phone (+603) 6421-5018/5014, Fax: (+603) 6421-6298

Website: <https://www.iium.edu.my/office/iiumpress>

Papers published in the Journal present the views of the authors
and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Journal.

CONTENTS

Editorial <i>Fauziah Fathil</i>	1
------------------------------------	---

Articles

Challenges Faced by Turkish Students Adjusting to Multicultural Environment in the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) <i>Togan Nezihat Sena and Iyad Muhammed Eid</i>	5
--	---

Measuring Time: An Islamic Contribution to Time Measurement Techniques <i>Syed Hasan Sardar</i>	27
--	----

Colonial Civilisation: Consolation and Iron Fist within the Dutch Ethical Policy in Aceh <i>Nia Deliana and Arshad Islam</i>	45
---	----

Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje on Makkah as a Centre of Pan-Islamism and Anticolonialism <i>Spahic Omer</i>	66
---	----

Viewpoints

The Intellectual and Cultural Impact of Islam on India during the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) <i>Arshad Islam</i>	98
--	----

Book Review

Inglehart, R., <i>Religion's sudden decline: What's causing it, and what comes next?</i> <i>Makmor Tumin</i>	107
---	-----

Challenges Faced by Turkish Students Adjusting to Multicultural Environment in the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

Togan Nezihat Sena,¹ Iyad Muhammed Eid²

Abstract: Even though studying abroad is a very popular phenomenon among students, international students still face challenges in their host country. These adjustments are primarily related to psychological, sociocultural and academic challenges. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the psychological, sociocultural and academic difficulties encountered by Turkish students as they adjust to the new and multicultural environment of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). This study also aims to examine the relationship between the language and academic achievements of Turkish students. This study relies heavily on the qualitative research method, and data from seven Turkish respondents were gathered through in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted via online platforms and recorded. The interview questions were based on the difficulties they encountered in the host country and the new multicultural environment. Furthermore, the questions were intended to elicit information about the difficulties that Turkish students face at IIUM. The data were analysed with a thematic analysis technique. According to the findings of this study, Turkish students face psychological, sociocultural and academic challenges at IIUM. These challenges are linked to psychological wellbeing, homesickness, loneliness, adapting to a new environment, cuisine, weather and learning a new language. The main themes of this paper are these modifications. The findings of this study will assist future Turkish students

¹ *Togan Nezihat Sena* is a student at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM. Togan can be reached at toganse97@gmail.com.

² *Iyad Muhammed Eid* is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM. He can be reached at iyad@iium.edu.my.

in making admissions decisions as well as guide university administration in assisting and managing current and future Turkish students.

Keywords: Challenges, Turkish, Students, Adaptation, Multicultural, IUM.

Introduction

International students, by definition, travel abroad to participate in educational activities in foreign countries (UNESCO UIS, 2019). From 2000 to 2010, the number of international students enrolled in higher education increased by approximately 200% (OECD, 2012). It is estimated that there are approximately 5.3 million international students worldwide (UNESCO UIS, 2019). Furthermore, the number of international students is expected to reach approximately eight million by 2025 (Altbach, 2004). Several factors motivate students to study abroad, despite the fact that it can be a difficult experience, such as adjusting to a new culture and environment. There are also social, emotional and academic changes to consider (Kilinc & Granello, 2003; Pedersen, 1991).

Turkey was founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the country was shaped by his vision and innovation. In Turkey, education is governed and funded by the Ministry of National Education, from primary school to university. Nonetheless, despite foreign language classes from fourth grade to university as well as the government's English textbook, it is not particularly successful.

Similarly, many researchers have discovered that Turkey's English proficiency is relatively low, despite the government's efforts and investments in English education (Işık, 2008; Kirkgöz, 2007; Aydemir, 2007; Çelebi, 2006). Turkey was ranked 50th out of 70 countries in the EF English Proficiency Index (EF, 2015) result with a "shallow level of English". There are several reasons for Turkey's low English proficiency, including educational institutions in Turkey that primarily focus on teaching grammar rules rather than practical application, a lack of English-speaking practice in daily life and learning English through the Turkish language (Coskun, 2016).

For Turkish students, studying abroad is not a novel experience. In the 1920s, Mustafa Kemal established a government foundation to assist Turkish students studying in European countries (Şarman, 2005; Yurttadur, 2012). Since then, the Turkish government encourages and supports international study through government scholarships or loans. For example, since 2006, the government has sent approximately 7000 Turkish students abroad through the “5000 Turkish Students Abroad in 5 Years” programme (Güçlü, 2015). Aside from that, Turkish students can study abroad through self-sponsorship or bank loans. According to Deniz Akar, the Manager of the International Education Fair of Turkey (IEFT), 100,000 Turkish students study abroad each year, spending approximately USD1.5 billion (“Turkish students”, 2014).

Malaysia, on the other hand, is a popular study abroad destination. Based on the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education’s Internationalisation Policy for Higher Education, the Ministry of Higher Education decided to establish Malaysia as a centre of education for international students. Around 80,000 students studied in Malaysia in 2010. As a result, the Ministry predicted that 200,000 international students would study in Malaysia by 2020 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011). According to the National Higher Education Research Institute, Ministry of Higher Education (2009), international students choose to study in Malaysia because of the opportunity to study English at reasonable study and living costs, the development of international networks and safety. Apart from these, Malaysian culture and the Islamic way of life are important factors considered when studying abroad in Malaysia. Therefore, Malaysia is very appealing to Turkish students studying abroad who want to share cultural similarities, such as religion and eating halal food. Turkish students, on the other hand, must go through a tentative adaptation process to university life in a different country. These difficulties include language, psychological and sociocultural issues.

As a result, Turkish students who study abroad are likely to face adjustment difficulties. International students are expected to face psychological adjustment in order to overcome homesickness and loneliness, in addition to language challenges. Similarly, students from other countries must adjust to the host country’s different environment, food, weather and culture. As a consequence, the focus of this study

is primarily on Turkish students at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) and their challenges.

Psychological and Sociocultural Adjustments

According to Ward and her colleagues (1996), human cross-cultural adaptation ought to be conceived in two conceptually distinct, but integrally related terms: the psychological and the socio-cultural. The former indicates an individual's emotional state as they transition into a new cultural environment, whereas the latter refers to their ability to establish competent interaction in the said milieu. This categorisation of adjustment is also echoed by Brown and Halloway (2008). Research, such as one conducted by Yan and Berliner (2013), suggests that international students are among those who have to deal with challenges associated with these psycho-socio-cultural adjustments frequently.

Challenges in making psychological adjustment include negative affective experiences, such as anxiety and depression. This is particularly true for those living in an environment foreign to their original dwelling. This is also the case for international students, many of whom were reported to experience various negative emotional states, such as stress (Berry et al., 1987) and mental health problems (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). For instance, Yeoh and Terry (2013) stated that international students at the University of Tasmania have felt homesickness, depression, anxiety, stress and loneliness. Others, such as Kilinc and Granello (2003), found that Turkish students in the United States of America (USA) had to deal with homesickness, which influences their attainment of life satisfaction.

There are several factors that are fundamental in navigating around a student's psychological adjustment processes, namely self-esteem, and social life. For the former factor, studies have demonstrated the correlation between the aforesaid negative affective states and student's self-esteem. Specifically, Rahman (2003), as well as Wei et al. (2008) found that lower self-esteem is directly proportional to clinical levels of depressive symptoms among international students. The other factor, as substantiated by studies, implicates the link between social relationships and psychological adjustment. For example, Poyrazli and Lopez (2007), who investigated the psychosocial, demographic and

stress levels of Turkish international students in USA found that a lack of social support from locals, families, universities and friends can lead to mental health issues, such as stress, depression and anxiety.

The second type of adjustment is sociocultural adjustment that has to do with the host country's social environment. According to Searle and Ward (1990), the sociocultural adjustment of international students is achieved when they are able to survive, study and live in a new environment by understanding and implementing cultural knowledge skills. Central to this concept is the idea of cultural distance, which refers to the degree of cultural difference between foreign individuals and their host countries (Babiker et al., 1980). This is demonstrated in Aubrey's (1991) study, where students from European countries, compared to their Asian and African counterparts, adapt more easily to the host country of USA due to their cultural similarities.

Language is a key factor in determining the cultural distance and, therefore, a student's sociocultural adjustment. Learning a foreign language is cited as a significant barrier for students (Mori, 2000; Trice, 2004; Ward et al., 2001). For instance, according to Mahmud et al. (2010), international students in Malaysia can have communication problems with locals due to either misunderstanding jokes or not understanding words due to the different accents in Malaysia's multicultural and multiracial environment. On the contrary, mastery of a certain language associated with the host country, such as English, is proven to be instrumental for the said adjustment (Zimmermann, 1995). Students who can communicate fluently in English or a foreign language may receive higher grades among international students (Poyrazli et al., 2001) and may even experience high self-esteem while socialising with a member of their host country (Brislin, 1981). In other words, those with good English skills are able to adapt more easily than others (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Pedersen, 1991; Poyrazli et al., 2001; Poyrazli et al., 2002; Poyrazli et al., 2004; Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Other factors that bear an impact upon cultural distance include different weather, cuisine, social relationships, educational style, language and religion (Babiker et al., 1980). For instance, Russell et al. (2010) conducted a study of 900 international students in Australia and discovered that 41% of international students face adjustment issues, such as stress from homesickness, cultural shocks, and isolation and

discrimination from locals. In several studies, Turkish international students were reported to experience homesickness as well as low satisfaction level in their social life (Tansel & Gungor, 2002; Kilinc & Granello, 2003). These factors, in turn, are mitigated through time. Ward and Kennedy (1999) have shown that sociocultural adjustment is related to the length of time that international students spend studying in a host country. As a result, according to some researchers, international students' adjustment improves within six months of arriving in a host country (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

Theoretical Framework: The Socio-psychology of Sojourner's Adjustment

This study drew upon the framework proposed by Colleen Ward, Stephen Bochner and Adrian Furnham (2001), which makes up the social psychology of culture shock. Sociologists, such as David Horowitz (1975), have theorised that social interaction between distinct groups will result in a psychological reaction that demands changes upon the way a group identity is perceived. Depending on the finalised perception of identity, the said distinct groups would then either form affiliation with each other or engage in conflict. This is what Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2001) reiterated in their statement: "When culturally disparate groups come into contact with each other, they tend to have an impact on each other's social structures, institutional arrangements, political processes, and value systems" (p. 27).

Ward et al. (2001) further characterised such intercultural contacts as partaking in the phenomenon of acculturation, which is the changes that occur as differing sociocultural groups make consistent interaction with one another. This change is sociocultural in nature, perceived to be unfamiliar to either group and, thus, is aptly described as a shock-inducing life event. At the individual level, therefore, this phenomenon betrays both the psychological and sociocultural domains. Hence, this study on international students' adjustments in the university recognises the distinction in their adjustment experiences by emphasising both the affective and the sociocultural aspects.

They also made an imperative conceptualisation of the student as belonging to the sojourner's group. Sojourner refers to a group

constituting an intercultural contact, predicated by the temporariness of their residency in a foreign area. Their presence in the said area is necessitated by their assignment and, as such, there is always the expectation to return to the place of origin once the necessitating task is completed. International students in a foreign country are classified as long-term sojourner whose purpose is to study. In this study, the international students from Turkey studying in Malaysia constitute the sojourner group of interest.

The Diagram of Adjustments

The purpose of the influence diagram is to graphically represent the difficulties that international students face when adjusting to their new environment. As a result, Figure 1 was created in accordance with previous research and theories on psychological, sociocultural and academic changes.

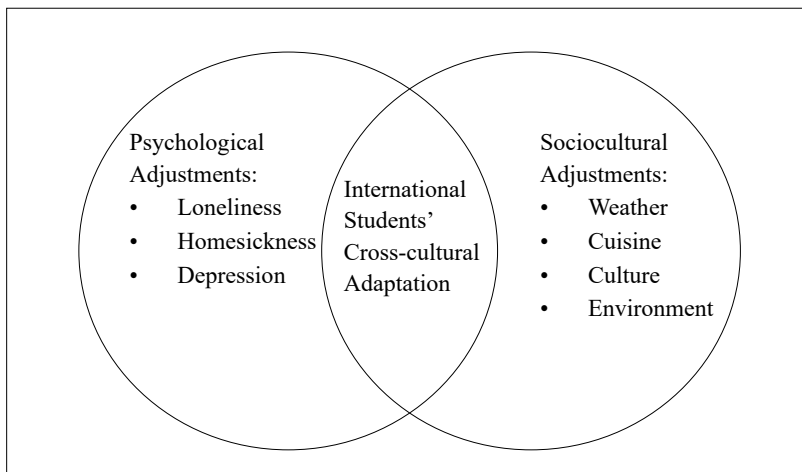


Figure 1: Diagram of adjustments faced by international students

Methodology

This study employed qualitative in-depth interviews, which were conducted on seven Turkish respondents. The focus of this study is primarily on current and prospective Turkish students at IIUM. There

are currently about 60 Turkish students at IIUM, and seven were chosen as interviewees. Four of the seven participants in this study were female, while three were male. This study employed in-depth interviews as the data collection tool, which is the most appropriate qualitative research method to utilise when the sample size is limited and small. Moreover, the qualitative approach method is best suited for this study because it focuses on discovering the participants' experiences, thoughts and behaviours; as Merriam (1998) stated, "Qualitative analysis accepts". However, there is a distinct sense of interaction. Therefore, it is a subjective concept that requires interpretation rather than measurement. Perception is based on beliefs rather than evidence. As a result, the research instructor did not place her/his ideas or control the participants.

Another significant issue is the design of the interview. Since this study focuses on Turkish students' experiences and adjustments at IIUM, it is critical that they express themselves freely during the interview. To conclude, qualitative researchers are more concerned with the process, findings and interview results. As such, in-depth interviews are the most important method of data collection for qualitative research.

Results and Findings

Psychological adjustment:

This section focuses on identifying the difficulties that Turkish students at IIUM face with their mental health, based on their responses and perspectives. The majority of participants stated that the adaptation process had a negative impact on their mental health. Aside from that, they frequently mentioned feeling homesick because they were separated from their families and face problems with the Visa Unit at IIUM.

Fatma stated that having little or no interaction with locals makes her sad since she feels so isolated:

I was saddened by Malaysians' attitudes toward foreigners. It makes me sad and makes me feel bad. I mean, I have been rejected by locals when I have tried to communicate with them. I felt alone and unwelcomed. It made me very sad and made me miss home even more.

Moreover, Fatma stated that dealing with offices at IIUM causes stress.

I have been a long-time IIUM student. Even so, I am nervous and stressed whenever I am in an office setting. My visa must be renewed once a year. That is why I am collecting documents from various offices at IIUM. I was already much stressed before I started the process of renewing my visa. Even so, I am unable to handle the pressure.

Similarly, Mehmet only studied at IIUM for one semester, but he experienced anxiety and loneliness as a result of the following issues:

I only stayed for a short time, and during that time, I was mostly anxious. There are a number of other reasons as well. I experienced anxiety primarily when dealing with office tasks. I had to stay outside because the office was closed, as I mentioned in my previous response. As a result, I was very concerned because I had no idea where I would be able to stay. That night, I experienced a variety of negative emotions, including loneliness, sadness, stress, and depression. Moreover, because of this problem, I began to miss my family and feel homesick on my first night in Malaysia.

Although Ayla did not experience a high level of stress or anxiety as long as she did not visit the Visa Unit, she did express homesickness:

I did not experience any anxiety or stress, but I do experience fear and stress when dealing with the Visa Unit or IIUM offices. Naturally, I become homesick when I miss my family.

Sociocultural Adjustment

This section/subsection focuses on identifying the sociocultural adjustment experiences of Turkish students, based on their responses and perspectives. Due to living in a vastly different sociocultural environment and being far away from home, Turkish students found it difficult to adjust to Malaysia. In addition, sociocultural adjustment is influenced by the host country's cuisine, culture and weather.

Language. IIUM offers English classes to its enrolled students. Turkish people, on the other hand, speak Turkish and have a low English proficiency (Oktay, 2015). Therefore, it is expected that Turkish students at IIUM will experience language and academic difficulties as a result of studying in English rather than in their mother tongue. Due to the lack of English education in Turkey and the importance of English in their IIUM academic performance, the majority of the participants share the same perspective on language adjustment. As a result, they honed their language skills and enrolled in English classes at the IIUM Center for Languages and Pre-University Development (CELPAD).

Fatma stated that she initially did not speak English well. So, after enrolling at IIUM, she began studying English at CELPAD. Soon after, she was able to improve her English skills. However, despite having passed the English exam before beginning her programme at the department, she encountered language difficulties during her studies:

Academic achievement is linked to one's command of the English language. My English level was insufficient for academic life during my first year in the department. I had no idea how to write or read academic articles that were intellectually stimulating. As I only learned to write essays in CELPAD, an essay differs from academic papers. In addition, I did not have a strong English background in high school. Hence, my first and second years at university were challenging. My classmates, friends, and group mates were assisting me and teaching me how to write academically. I can honestly say that by my third year, I had learned how to write an article or prepare a slide without the assistance of others. I learned English late in life and had a difficult journey. It was difficult to adjust to a new environment when you could not communicate with others.

Aside from that, Fatma stated that living and studying in an environment that is different from Turkey had some differences. This change in her personality is due to her English proficiency:

I believe my self-esteem has plummeted. Since we can speak honestly if the majority of the class remains silent, and we may receive negative feedback from the lecturer if we talk.

So, on the next level, I maintain my silence. If I am unable to freely express and share my ideas, my self-esteem suffers because I am afraid of receiving negative feedback or strange stares from others and being judged by others.

Similarly, Ayse described a similar experience with Participant 1 (Fatma). Despite knowing Basic English, she studied at CELPAD. However, it was insufficient for her.

I only knew Basic English; I mean, I only know grammar. But I could not communicate in English. For one semester, I attended CELPAD. Despite the fact that it was insufficient to help me improve my English. However, because of the university's multiracial environment, we, as students, are surrounded by students from other countries. Therefore, it provides an opportunity to improve our communication skills. As a matter of fact, I can confidently assert that my speaking English is superior to my academic English. I also need to work on my academic English for my thesis. Despite being in a multiracial and English environment, I still feel as if I am not fully adapting and learning academic English.

Mehmet, an exchange student, was also not fluent in English. In Malaysia, he improved his English skills, according to his experience. Furthermore, he stated that he encountered difficulties while studying due to his limited command of the language:

There is a link between English proficiency and academic achievement. You will understand lectures and write better assignments if you have a good command of the English language. In any case, my first semester at IIUM was challenging due to language barriers with English, and adapting to different accents was another challenge for my academic life there. If I had a higher level of English and more experience, I could have easily adapted to a new environment in a shorter period of time. However, my exchange study period is over until I improve my English.

Aside from language adjustment, Mehmet pointed out that due to the multicultural environment at IIUM, there are many different English accents. Therefore, he was not be able to understand until he adapted:

Rather than office work, trying to understand the accents of different people from various countries increased my anxiety as I adjusted to a multicultural environment, interacted with others, and spoke English. For the first few months, I was lonely and homesick because I did not have many friends with whom to share my problems.

Tarik is a participant who consistently stated that his English skills had worsened while he was in Turkey. At IIUM, he improved his English:

At the time I came to Malaysia, my English was awful. Even in the Basic English, I could not communicate. It is impossible to get good grades and survive in a multiracial environment unless one is fluent in English. I think that my life was completely dominated by English while studying in Malaysia. As a result, I can say with confidence that I learned English in Malaysia.

Although Safiye had a good background in English as a result of her high school education, when she started studying at the Faculty, she faced language adjustment, particularly in academic English:

I believe the multicultural environment at IIUM helped me improve my English-speaking skills by conversing with friends from other countries. However, academic English is more complicated than speaking English. I struggled with academic English. Assignments and classes were difficult for me to complete when I first began studying, since it deviates from everyday English. Besides, I needed to learn academic terms and comprehend lectures. Another challenge was the accent. However, after a semester, I grew accustomed to it.

Food. Food is essential when adjusting to a new environment. Malaysian and Turkish cuisines and food cultures are very different.

Therefore, many students explained that adapting to food is difficult for them. Fatma, for example, indicated how Turkish students in Malaysia were affected by the adaptation of different cuisines:

Malaysian cuisine is distinct from ours. I can say that I was always hungry during my first few months in Malaysia because I could not eat Malaysian foods. My friends occasionally suggest what I could eat on campus. So I gradually adapted to Malaysian cuisine. However, I was unable to fully adapt due to my inability to consume spicy foods.

Similarly, Ayse reported that adjusting to Malaysia was difficult for her for the first few months, and that she stayed hungry for a long time and ate fruits that suited her taste:

For me, the main issue was food. Because I did not know many people or the environment, I could not eat food for a long time and had to rely on fruit to survive. Therefore, I lost a lot of weight, which had a negative impact on my health. However, as I met new people, my adaptation progress became more accessible than before. I still believe that if I cannot adapt to Malaysian cuisine, I should leave the country. Food is necessary.

Mehmet mentioned another important aspect of cuisine, which is halal food. For Muslims, finding halal food is critical. He stated that he would not be able to live in Malaysia if he could not find halal food:

As Muslims, we must exercise control over our food. Our foods must be halal and free of contaminants. Hence, eating halal food is a religious requirement. At IIUM, I discovered that all of the foods were halal. When I go out, however, I must check the restaurant and their menu to see if it is halal or not.

Weather. Living in a country other than one's motherland can be difficult, especially when it comes to adjusting to new weather. Fatma mentioned that some Turkish students had health issues as a result of the changing weather:

The weather is also a challenge for us. Although Turkey has four seasons, Malaysia only has one summer; despite the fact that some Turkish friends experienced allergic reactions as a consequence of the weather.

Similarly, Safiye stated that the following weather differences exist between Malaysia and Turkey:

Turkey has four distinct seasons: winter, spring, summer, and autumn. Malaysia, on the other hand, has an endless summer. Although there is a rainy season, it is still very hot. To be honest, adjusting to the weather in Malaysia is extremely difficult.

Tarik was also disturbed by the weather in Malaysia:

The weather is crucial. When I first arrived in Malaysia, I felt as if I could not take a breath. It was scorching. I cannot walk, especially during the day. Malaysia's never-ending summer is hotter than Turkey's. Still, I could not get used to Malaysia's weather.

Islamic Lifestyle. Mehmet stated that Malaysia's sociocultural environment, primarily living an Islamic lifestyle without difficulty, was very helpful for him in adjusting to the different environment:

Of course, the social structure enabled me to successfully adapt to IIUM as an exchange student. Malaysian Islamic lifestyle, in particular.

Similarly, Ayla expressed that she would have no problems living in Malaysia because of its Islamic environment and social lifestyle:

As a Muslim, I am also responsible for maintaining an Islamic lifestyle and adhering to the rules of my religion. As a result, I discovered that I would be at ease and healthy as a Muslim woman in Malaysia. Malaysia's social life, in my opinion, is more suitable for a woman than that of any Arab country. Furthermore, I believe Asia's culture is similar to

ours. In a nutshell, I explored Malaysia's social scene and discovered that it is suitable for me.

Discussion and Conclusion

Psychological Adjustment

Many international students experience mental health issues as a result of living in different countries and facing university issues. Besides that, coming from different cultures may increase their psychological adjustment (Poyrazli et al., 2002). For example, Mehmet and Ayla from this study stated that they are nervous and stressed when dealing with IIUM offices due to previous experiences.

International students may also feel isolated and lonely as a result of studying in a multicultural environment (Rice et al., 2009). Fatma stated that she was saddened by the attitude of local students. Mehmet had a similar experience with other students in his first few months. As a consequence, he felt lonely trying to survive in a new environment without any friends. Aside from friendship, he found it difficult to understand other students due to their English accents.

Furthermore, studying abroad has a negative impact on students' personal development. As Fatma perceived, she was afraid to speak for fear of being judged and receiving negative feedback from her classmates. Moreover, most participants stated that going to the university's offices makes them anxious and stressed due to homesickness. Therefore, Turkish students' psychological wellbeing was primarily influenced by their studies abroad.

Sociocultural Adjustments

International students face difficulties when living in a host country with a different environment and culture. According to Bentley (2008), they must make significant adjustments in their new social life, culture, weather and language. Culture influences sociocultural adjustment. Therefore, the current study has discovered that while studying at IIUM, Turkish students must adjust to the new sociocultural environment.

According to Searle and Ward's (1990) Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS), food culture is a sociocultural adjustment for international

students. Many participants of the current study stated that they were unable to adjust to local food during their first few months. Even Ayse admitted to eating only fruits for a long time. Despite the fact that Fatma became adapted to Malaysian cuisine after living there for a long time, she was unable to eat certain foods.

Another sociocultural adjustment for Turkish students is the weather in Malaysia. Babiker et al. (1980) stated that living in a different climate is another adjustment for international students. Hence, Fatma stated that some Turkish students left IIUM because they were unable to adjust to the new environment.

Although international students must adjust to a new sociocultural environment, interacting with locals and others may assist them in doing so more quickly. Trice (2004) found that when international students spend time with other students in USA, they are able to overcome cultural barriers. Participants in this study also stated that their friendships with locals and other experienced international students helped them to adjust to a multicultural environment.

The progress of international students' adaptation and adjustment to their new environment has an impact on their English proficiency level (Poyrazli et al., 2001; Swami et al., 2009). Academic achievement is also linked to English proficiency level. As a matter of fact, international students whose first language is not English face greater academic challenges than others. According to Malaklolunthu and Selan (2011), one of the most common challenges faced by international students is English adjustment. Turkey is a country where English is not widely spoken. Despite the fact that students in Turkey take English classes from fourth grade until the end of high school, they lack the English proficiency required for academic studies in higher education. It is significant to note that even though there are universities in Turkey where English is the medium of instruction, they are few in number.

All the participants of this study enrolled in CELPAD to learn or improve their English. Fatma and Ali stated unequivocally that they did not speak English. Other participants had some English background, but it was insufficient to speak academic English, despite having learned how to write an essay in CELPAD. Fatma, for example, discovered that she could not write her assignment by herself until her third year at the department. According to Ayse and Yusuf, they

felt inadequate when writing their theses in academic English. In addition, other participants stated that it took them several months to understand academic vocabulary and lecturers' instructions. Similarly, another study discovered that first-year international students at one of Australia's universities struggled to understand classes (Ramsay et al., 1999).

Conclusion

When deciding to study abroad or in a multicultural environment, international students face significant challenges. Previous research have found that international students face psychological, sociocultural and academic adjustment challenges while adjusting to their host country, according to a review of the literature. Therefore, the focus of this paper was on the challenges faced by Turkish students in IIUM's multicultural environment.

The research team conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with seven Turkish students. To protect their identities, the researcher gave each participant a different surname. The findings showed Turkish students face a variety of challenges, including psychological, sociological and linguistic adjustments. Furthermore, it was discovered that language adjustment, particularly with regard to proficiency in academic English, has a significant impact on Turkish students' academic achievements. Homesickness, loneliness and local isolation all have an impact on the psychological adjustment of Turkish students. They face similar sociocultural challenges, such as adjusting to a new environment, cuisine and weather. These obstacles hamper their self-improvement. It is hoped that these findings will aid us in better understanding the challenges that Turkish students face in the multicultural environment of IIUM.

References

- Altbach, P. G. (2004). Higher education crosses borders: Can the United States remain the top destination for foreign students? *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 36(2): 18-25. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00091380409604964>

- Aubrey, R. (1991). International students on campus: A challenge for counselors, medical providers, and clinicians. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 62(1): 20-33. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00377319109516697>
- Aydemir, Ö. (2007). *İlköğretim II. kademe öğrencilerinin İngilizce dersinde kullandıkları öğrenme stratejileri ve başarı başarısızlık yüklemeleri* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Trakya Üniversitesi, Edirne.
- Babiker, I. E., Cox, J. L., & Miller, P. M. (1980). The measurement of cultural distance and its relationship to medical consultations, symptomatology and examination performance of overseas students at Edinburgh University. *Social Psychiatry*, 15(3): 109-116. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00578141>
- Bentley, J. M. (2008). Supporting International Student Adjustment in Central Michigan University. Retrieved May, 27, 2014.
- Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). Comparative studies of acculturative stress. *The International Migration Review*, 21(3): 491-511. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2546607?seq=1>
- Brislin, R. W. (1981). *Cross-cultural encounters*. Pergamon Press.
- Brown, L. & Holloway, I. (2008). The adjustment journey of international postgraduate students at an English university: An ethnographic study. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 7(2): 232-249. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1475240908091306>
- Çelebi, M. D. (2006). Türkiye’de anadili eğitimi ve yabancı dil öğretimi. *Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 1(21): 285-307. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/219375>
- Coskun, A. (2016). Causes of the “I can understand English but I can’t speak” syndrome in Turkey. *Journal on English Language Teaching*, 6(3): 1-12. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1131404>
- Turkish students spend \$1.5 billion for education abroad. (2014, November 5). *Daily Sabah*. <https://www.dailysabah.com/education/2014/11/05/turkish-students-spend-15-billion-for-education-abroad>
- EF. (2015). *EF English Proficiency Index*. <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2015/ef-epi-2015-english.pdf>
- Güçlü, A. (2015, January 27). *Beş Yılda Beş Bin Hayal Kırıklığı!..* Milliyet. <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/abbas-guclu/bes-yilda-bes-bin-hayal-kirikligi-2004414>.

- Hayes, R. L., & Lin, H. R. (1994). Coming to America: Developing social support systems for international students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 22(1): 7-16. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/j.2161-1912.1994.tb00238.x>
- Hechanova-Alampay, R., Beehr, T. A., Christiansen, N. D., & Van Horn, R. K. (2002). Adjustment and strain among domestic and international student sojourners: A longitudinal study. *School Psychology International*, 23(4): 458-474. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0143034302234007>
- Horowitz, D. (1975). Ethnic identity. In N. Glazer & D. P. Moynihan (Eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (pp.113-140). Harvard University Press.
- Işık, A. (2008). Yabancı dil eğitimimizdeki yanlışlıklar nereden kaynaklanıyor? *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 4(2): 15-26. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/jlls/issue/9929/122850>
- Kendall, D. E. (2014). *Sociology in our times: The essentials*. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Kilinc, A., & Granello, P. F. (2003). Overall life satisfaction and help-seeking attitudes of Turkish college students in the United States: Implications for college counselors. *Journal of College Counseling*, 6(1): 56-68. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.2161-1882.2003.tb00227.x>
- Kirkgöz, Y. (2007). Language planning and implementation in Turkish primary schools. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 8(2): 174-191. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2167/cilp114.0?journalCode=rclp20>
- Malaklolunthu, S., & Selan, P. S. (2011). Adjustment problems among international students in Malaysian private higher education institutions. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15: 833-837. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042811003739>
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from case study research in Education*. Jossey-Bass Publishers
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2009). Malaysian Education: Malaysia Centre of Educational Excellence.
- Ministry of Higher Education. (2011). Internationalisation Policy for Higher Education Malaysia, 2011.
- Mori, S. C. (2000). Addressing the mental health concerns of international students. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 78(2), 137-144. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2000.tb02571.x>

- OECD. (2012). Indicator C4: Who studies abroad and where?" *Education at a glance 2012: OECD Indicators* (pp. 360-381). doi: 10.1787/eag-2012-en
- Oktaç, A. (2015). Foreign language teaching: A problem in Turkish education. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174: 584-593. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815006382>
- Pedersen, P. B. (1991). Counselling international students. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 19(1): 10-58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000091191002>
- Poyrazlı, S., Arbona, C., Bullington, R. & Pisecco, S. (2001). Adjustment issues of Turkish students studying in the United States. *College Student Journal*, 35(1): 52-63.
- Poyrazlı, S., Arbona, C., Nora, A., McPherson, R., & Pisecco, S. (2002). Relation between assertiveness, academic self-efficacy, and psychosocial adjustment among international graduate students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 43(5): 632-642.
- Poyrazlı, S., Kavanaugh, P. R., Baker, A., & Al-Timimi, N. (2004). Social support and demographic correlates of acculturative stress in international students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 7(1): 73-82. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1882.2004.tb00261.x>
- Poyrazlı, S., & Lopez, M. D. (2007). An exploratory study of perceived discrimination and homesickness: A comparison of international students and American students. *The Journal of Psychology*, 141(3): 263-280. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JRLP.141.3.263-280>
- Rahman, O. (2003). Predictors of depression in South Asian international students. APA Conference
- Rice, K. G., Choi, C., Zhang, Y., Villegas, J., Ye, H. J., Anderson, D., Nestic, A., & Bigler, M. (2009). International student perspectives on graduate advising relations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 56(3): 376-391. doi: 10.1037/a0015905
- Russell, J., Rosenthal, D., & Thomson, G. (2010). The international student experience: Three styles of adaptation. *Higher education*, 60(2), 235-249. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-009-9297-7>
- Şarman, K. (2005). *Türk Promethe'ler: Cumhuriyet'in öğrencileri Avrupa'da* (1925-1945). Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Searle, W. & Ward, C. (1990). The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14(4), 449-464. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(90\)90030-Z](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(90)90030-Z)

- Smith, R. A. & Khawaja, N. G. (2011). A review of the acculturation experiences of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(6): 699–713. doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.08.004
- Swami, V., Arteche, A., Chamorro-Premuzic, T. & Furnham, A. (2010). Sociocultural adjustment among sojourning Malaysian students in Britain: A replication and path analytic extension. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 45(1): 57-65. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19337675/>
- Tansel, A. & Gungor, N. D. (2003). “Brain drain” from Turkey: Survey evidence of student non-return. *Career Development International*, 8(2): 52–69. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430310465453>
- Trice, A. G. (2004). Mixing it up: International graduate students’ social interactions with American students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(6): 671-687. doi: 10.1353/csd.2004.0074
- UNESCO UIS. (2019). International (or internationally mobile) students. <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/international-or-internationally-mobile-students>
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1996). Crossing cultures: The relationship between psychological and socio-cultural dimensions of cross-cultural adjustment. In J. Pandey, D. Sinha & D. P. S. Bhawuk (Eds.), *Asian contributions to cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 289-306). Sage Publications.
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1999). The measurement of sociocultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(4), 659-677. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(99\)00014-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(99)00014-0)
- Ward, C. A., Bochner, S. & Furnham, A. (2001). *The psychology of culture shock*. Routledge.
- Wei, M., Ku, T.-Y., Russell, D. W., Mallinckrodt, B. & Liao, K. Y.-H. (2008). Moderating effects of three coping strategies and self-esteem on perceived discrimination and depressive symptoms: A minority stress model for Asian international students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 55(4): 451-462. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012511>
- Yan, K., & Berliner, D. C. (2013). Chinese international students’ personal and sociocultural stressors in the United States. *Journal of College Student Development*, 54(1): 62-84. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/497044>
- Yeh, C. J. & Inose, M. (2003). International students’ reported English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 16(1): 15-28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0951507031000114058>

- Yeoh, J. S. W. & Terry, D. R. (2013). International research students' experiences in academic success. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 1(3): 275-280. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1053914.pdf>
- Yurttadur, O. (2012). CUMHURİYETİN İLK YILLARINDA YURTDIŞINA GÖNDERİLEN RESSAMLARIN TÜRK RESİM EĞİTİMİNE ETKİLER. *İdil Sanat ve Dil Dergisi*, 1(05): 361-378.
- Zimmermann, S. (1995). Perceptions of intercultural communication competence and international student adaptation to an American campus. *Communication Education*, 44(4): 321-335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634529509379022>