



Entrance and Persistence in U.S. Academe for Individuals with Multiple Outsider Identities: A Critical Race Theory Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experience of African-American academics with racial microaggressions, racism, and stereotypes. Exploring this subtle racism allows for an understanding of Turkish ethnic students' ability to adapt to doctoral programs at U.S. institutions of higher education. Using critical race theory as a framework, researchers determined that Turkish International students have a challenge for adjustment, access to the U.S. job market, and the transition into a new culture. Five subjects were selected to participate in a self-recorded interview to support this study. The interview questions based Turkish ethnic students' adjustment in U.S higher education institutions on three stages: 1. Before the Ph.D. program, 2. During the Ph.D. program, 3. After the Ph.D. program. The second and third stages also focus on students' entry into an academic job setting and survival in academia.

Keywords: African-American, immigration, microaggressions, racism, stereotypes, adjustment, access to U.S. job market, United States, Turkish National

Matriculation into a doctoral program of study can be more challenging for international students. International students' adjustment to graduate school has been suggested by many researchers as a challenging issue and one that needs support during this adjustment time interval (e.g., Bektas et al., 2009; Hailu et al., 2014; Ku et al., 2008; Mendenhall and Wiley 1994; Poyrazli et al., 2001; Tansel & Gungor ,2002; Ryan et al. 1998; Watkins 1998; Zhai 2002). Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used in this study to determine possible racial implications on individuals with multiple outsider identities, with focus on the adjustment of doctoral students in U.S. higher education institutions. These adjustments were broken into three stages; 1. Before the Ph.D. program, 2. During the Ph.D. program, 3. After the Ph.D. program. The researcher also argues that examining students' entry to academic job settings and survival in academia during the second and third stages is a crucial part of this study. This research utilized prior studies of African-American doctoral students as comparison groups to further study students of Turkish ethnicity. Because there were no known studies on the adjustments of Turkish national doctoral students, the insights from previous African-American ethnic groups allows for a more in-depth study. Using insights from African-American ethnic groups allows for a more in-depth study.

The researcher believes that this study has the potential for future usefulness for adjustment of international students in U.S graduate schools.

Brief History of Turkish National International in U.S Academia

The U.S Census Bureau reports that 206,911 people identified themselves as Turkish American in 2014. This figure is low, according to Mehmet Eze, Turkish Consul to the United States (US). Eze gave a figure of 350,000-500,000 (Kaya, 2009). According to the data from the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), about 450,000 immigrants have carried Ottoman or Turkish passports since 1820. Of those carrying Ottoman passports, a majority identified themselves as Armenians, Greeks, or other ethnicities. According to Kaya, (2004) and Ahmad, (1986), there are three recognizable migration periods of Turkish immigration to the United States.

1. 1800-1900: Turkish national immigrants carried Ottoman passports, and this migration ended by World War I (Kaya, 2004 and Karpat, 1995). Based on INS data, about 300,000 immigrants who carried Ottoman passports came to the United States between 1820 and 1920 (Kaya, 2004). Again, not all these immigrants were ethnic Turks. Roughly 50,000 of those 300,000 immigrants identified themselves as Turks.
2. 1950 -1980 Turkey's membership in NATO and the Truman Doctrine marked the beginning of a new partnership between Turkey and the United States. This partnership resulted in a significant increase in Turkish migration to the U.S. Furthermore, liberal changes made to U.S. immigration laws in 1965 added momentum to Turkish immigration to the U.S during this period. Most of these immigrants were male Turkish professionals such as academics, physicians, engineers, and architects (Kaya, 2003).
3. 1980-1990: Former Turkish Prime Minister, Turgut Ozal's policies and openness encouraged Turks to migrate to the U.S., resulting in the migration of about 40,000 Turks to the U.S. (Kaya,2003).

According to an annual report from the Institute of International Education, international student enrollment in the U.S. was 1,043,839 for the 2015–2016 academic years (Open Doors 2016). This report also stated that international students contributed approximately \$30.5 billion dollars to the U.S. economy through their expenditures on tuition and living expenses, making higher education the country's fifth largest service sector export. Turkey has been one of the top ten countries to send students to the U.S from 2000-2010, with 12,091 Turkish students enrolled in American post-secondary institutions in 2003, ranking eighth among all countries (Open Doors, 2004). In the 2009–2010 academic years, 12,474 students were enrolled. Turkey experienced the highest growth rate among top providers of international students with an increase of 9% more students (Open Doors Report 2005). From 2010 to 2015, Turkish students declined 3% to 10,691 (Open Doors Report 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recently many studies have been done on the ability of international students' ability to adapt and feel comfortable in graduate schools in the U.S. (e.g., Bektas et al., 2009; Hailu et al., 2014;

Ku et al., 2008; Mendenhall and Wiley 1994; Ryan et al. 1998; Watkins 1998; Zhai 2002). Graduate school experience can be demanding and even confusing for any student, and it can be particularly demanding for international students (Watkins 1998). “Cultural novelty” is a term that reflects the degree to which norms of the host culture differ from those of the international student’s home culture (Mendenhall and Wiley 1994). For most foreign-born students, dealing with language has been challenging along with distance from loved ones, social and cultural adjustment, and academic role conflict (Poyrazli et al., 2001, Tansel &Gungor, 2002; Ryan et al. 1998, Zhai 2002). There are significant increases in Open Door data regarding international students’ enrollment in U.S. educational institutions. The first notable increase happened in 1978 and 1979, and the second in 2014 and 2015. In that academic year, there was a 10% increase in enrollment, bringing the total international student enrollment in U.S. institutions to 1,043,839 (Open Doors Report 2016). Looking deeper in numbers, 3832,935 out of 1,043,839 were studying for graduate degrees (Open Doors Report 2016).

Table 1. Turkish International Students Enrollment in U.S Graduate Schools

Country	2015/2016	2016/2017	% Change
Kazakhstan	464	486	4.70
Kyrgyzstan	72	70	-2.80
Tajikistan	57	50	-12.30
Turkmenistan	52	56	7.70
Uzbekistan	187	159	-15
Azerbaijan	158	149	-5.70
Turkey	5125	4776	-6.80
World Total	383,935	391,124	1.9

Note. Source: Institute of International Education. (2017). "International Students by Academic Level and Place of Origin, 2015/16-2016/17." Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange. Retrieved from <http://www.iie.org/opendoors>

This huge enrollment trend suggests that increasing numbers of international students are pursuing postgraduate employment in the U.S. There is little published research addressing academic and nonacademic support tools for international doctoral students in general, nor for international doctoral students aspiring to employment in the U.S. labor sector. Several researchers have suggested that academic mentoring includes at least three elements: (a) emotional and psychological support, (b) role modeling, and (c) career guidance (Davidson and Foster-Johnson 2001; Kartje 1996). In general, research suggests that mentoring has been beneficial, particularly for doctoral students of color seeking careers in academia (Hillet al. 1999; Lamb 1999). U.S. academia has been the most appealing to international students all around the world (Migration Policy Institute., 2017). U.S. secondary schools accommodated most of the

world's 4.1 million international students, with 19% more students than any other country (Migration Policy Institute., 2017).

Table 2. Historical International Students' Enrollment in U.S. Higher Institutions

School years	Number of international students enrolled
2016/2017	1,078,822
2015/2016	1,043,839
2014/2015	974,926
2013/2014	886,052
2012/2013	819,644
2011/2012	764,495

Note. Source: Institute of International Education (2013)

The United Kingdom accommodated the second-most international students in the world with 10 percent of the total, while Australia accommodated six percent (Migration Policy Institute., 2017). With such a strong international presence, their problems cannot be ignored. Such problems include: (1) their psychological reactions to encountering a new cultural environment; (2) the influence of social interaction on their adjustment; and (3) the culture-learning process in the cross-cultural sojourn (Hammer 1992). Among such studies, Kilinc & Granello 2003; Poyrazli et al., 2001; Tansel & Gungor ,2002) found that younger Turkish students and students who had higher English proficiency reported better adjustment. Turkish students seeking education outside of their country reported less satisfaction with social aspects of their lives than other international students. Turkish students in some degree faced homesickness during their studies abroad.

Another study also examined the life satisfaction of Turkish students in the U.S. (Kilinc, A., & Granello, P. F., 2003). This study found that Turkish students reported a relatively high degree of satisfaction with their lives, but also reported homesickness as an area of difficulty. This raised concerns about stress levels Turkish students experience in new cultures. Another study, Duru and Poyrazli (2007) studied the stress accumulation particularly based on Turkish students' demographics, personality, level of social connectedness, and English language competency. They found that marital status, English language competency, social connectedness, adjustment difficulties, neuroticism, and openness to experience were predictors of acculturative stress (Duru and Poyrazli 2007).

Theoretical Framework-Critical Race Theory

There are many educational researchers who have studied "race" for two decades via "critical race theory" (CRT). Most of the research has been done on schooling and the treatment of racial minorities as "other" and deficient (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Donnor,

2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solo´rzano & Yosso, 2000; Solo´rzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005; Yosso, 2005, 2006; Yosso et al., 2009. CRT scholars Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have brought a different perspective, approaching the treatment of races other than white. Hochschild (2013) argues, “liberal democracy and racism in the United States are historically, even inherently, reinforcing; American society as we know it exists only because of its foundation in racially based slavery, and it thrives only because racial discrimination continues” (p. 5). Instead of Myrdal’s (1984) “anomaly thesis,” Hochschild says that this is a “symbiosis thesis.” The different approach to this thesis is the same as between race theory and critical race theory.

According to CRT scholars’ racism is the normal order of things in U.S. society. The idea of racism is not aberrant in that it also separates CRT scholars from others who investigate race. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), CRT scholars believe that racism “is the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country” (p. 7). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001) the following four concepts are the main approach of CRT:

1. belief that racism is normal or ordinary, not aberrant, in U.S. society;
2. interest convergence or material determinism;
3. race as a social construction;
4. intersectionality and anti-essentialism;
5. voice or counter-narrative

Freire, as quoted in McLaren, 2000; see also Darder, 2002, said that “the progressive educator must always be moving out on his or her own specific cultural and historical context (McLaren, 2000, p.14). CRT scholars promote educators to “reinvent” or not simply try to follow or implement CRT tenets. The educators who are studying CRT tenets should create their own understanding of tenets and “reinvent” practice of their own CRT tenants. Scholars must “translate theory into practice” in pushing for change and “reinvent” their roles and practice in academe (Ladson-Billing & Donnor, 2005, p.292). Du Bois’s (1915) discourse notes, “the people of African descent around the world unite politically to overthrow outside oppression” (p.129). Considering Du Bois, educators and scholars have a very critical mission to work on overcoming such oppression.

Race scholars developed LatCRT (Lationos CRT) as a critical response to the “problem of the color line” first explained by DuBois (Trevino et al. 2008). CRT focused on the Black-White paradigm, but LatCRT has moved to consider other racial groups, mainly Chicana/Chicanos. These groups include Latinos/as, Asians, Indians, and women of color, and people who identify as homosexual. LatCRT, on the other hand, highlights the “needs of marginalized populations, which are often overlooked, as opposed to the agenda served by normative frameworks” (p. 59). Many CRT researchers and studies referred to people of color as a “victim” (Solorzano, D. G. (1998). CRT is giving us new ways to look at people of color and certainly is not called color of people as a “victim”. This study is also aimed at not referring to international students as victims in higher institution because of their ethnicity and race. Through CRT tenets, this study will shed light on the lives of future international students and their graduate school experience in U.S. higher educational institutions.

In the field of all levels of education, the infusion of CRT legal scholarship has been involved in continuously reviewing current educational practices. Such reviews pointed out how

race plays a significant role in educational inequalities. This study takes aim at how a practitioner–scholar utilizes CRT as a lens to analyze and navigate international students’ challenges pre-during- and post-Ph.D. studies. CRT scholars who utilize CRT as a lens to analyze academic challenges of people of color argued that there is no reason why people of color continue to face academic challenges such as being racialized as the “other” (Ladson-Billing&Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997).

As Freire (1994) said, the need to “reinvent” considering CRT, is critical for researchers and educators. This study is also a “subtle” idea of international students LitCRT (ISCRT) based on CRT tenets. CRT cannot be reduced to only the study of people of color, but it also has a strong foundation for studying race, sexism, women, ethnicity, religious, and gender. “Storytelling” is one of the important tenets of CRT. This study is mostly based on international students “storytelling” considering their challenges throughout the pre-during- and post-Ph.D. phases.

Microaggressions Still alive in Academia

Despite the laws and protection from the Civil Rights Act, people who are classified as “other” than white, continue to experience inequality and some degree of microaggressions in academia. For example, as a Turkish international myself, I am seen as either a “foreigner” or representative of the “other” race. To be a non-native speaker equates to the view that you are not smart enough or that your intelligence is undermined, ultimately creating a barrier for mutual friendship and acceptance by your surroundings. This experience has been very typical through my past 16 years in educational and work experiences. In reflecting on her career as a black woman in academia, Tate (2014) used the term “bodies out of place” to describe the racist and gender-based microaggressions she experienced. The symptom of “bodies out of place” is linked to the history of normative whiteness, such as an anxiety, desire, fear and fantasy (Yaney, 2008). CRT scholars and researchers clearly point out that whiteness as an ideology is not a single event; rather, it is a systemic issue in U.S. academia. The whiteness ideology is alive and spreads to affect “other” races, genders, and ethnicities.

African-American academics perceptually find themselves fighting through marginalization once they are within academia (Tate, 2014). Footprints of microaggressions have been found during the hiring process, resulting in a feeling of inferiority for black academics (Fanon 1967). Likewise, international students are struggling against “acculturation” and acceptance within academia. The hiring process for international individuals is very challenging and further complicated by the fact that there are no clear laws or protections for such individuals.

Using CRT as a framework for understanding that Turkish international students have a challenge for adjustment, access to the U.S. job market, and the transition into a new culture, this study asks the question, “What are Turkish international students’ challenges before, during, and after Ph.D. studies?”

METHOD

This study uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Mixed methods are commonly used together in social science research as they both support and provide strong evidence that can potentially contribute to the advancement of educational research. It is suggested that mixed methods, which include collecting and analyzing data using multiple

sources in social sciences have the potential to contribute to the advancement of educational research. This method is quite effective when the theoretical structure of the topic under investigation is not well defined. Within the same study, this method enables researchers to confirm the theory, and at the same time, it allows the researcher to extend the theory to a new level as well. In addition, conducting separate explanatory research for the social phenomenon which is in multiple empirical natures might result in redundant consumption of research models in each investigation (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). There are two parts of this study:

Part One: Interview

A six-question interview, which took approximately 30 minutes, was conducted. Five subjects were selected to participate in a self-recorded interview to support this study. All five interview participants earned their Ph.D degrees in U.S higher education institutions. The subjects were selected from the personal contact list of the researcher. After IRBN approval, the researcher distributed the participant consent forms to interview participants and gave brief information about the study via email. The researcher sent interview questions via email, and each participant audio recorded their interview and then sent the recording to the researcher. During the interview process, the researcher communicated via email and phone to clarify any potential questions the subjects might have. The interview questions are based on Turkish students' ability to adapt to U.S. higher education institutions in three stages: entry into the Ph.D. program, during the Ph.D. program, and post-Ph.D. program.

Part Two: Survey

The participants were recruited through the researcher's personal contacts. Approximately 100 subjects were asked to fill out a questionnaire. The survey took approximately 20 minutes. The role of subjects during the questionnaire was to share their experiences. The research was conducted online. All the survey participants had earned their Ph.D degrees in U.S. higher education institutions. After IRBN approval, the researcher distributed the participant-consent forms to survey participants and gave some information about the study via email. The researcher used Google Forms to send the online survey via email.

To maintain confidentiality, the researcher was the only individual with access to interview and survey responses. Participants' responses were identified by interview numbers (i.e. Interview #1, Interview #2) and subject names associated with the interview number remained in a separate, passcode-protected file. All survey responses were anonymous.

Qualitative Findings

Four key themes emerged. All five participants interviewed had common points on:

1. challenges during the Ph.D application and graduate school
2. cultural issues
3. adjustment issues
4. securing employment after Ph.D

The results highlight potential resource adjustment and culturally dislocated concern for international students in U.S. graduate schools, beginning with challenges during the application

process. This challenge was not only limited to language barriers, but also to the highly selective process for graduate students. During the interview process, all participants indicated that “language barriers” and “communication issues” were their biggest challenge. According to Gautam et al., 2016, “language and academic challenges” occur and appear as real issues of difficulty for international students. Interviewed participants placed clear emphasis on writing issues during the application process and throughout their Ph.D studies. Maringe, F., & Jenkins, J. (2015) noted that international students experience difficulty with stringent academic writing procedures. Participant Meryem underscored that her challenge with academic writing began with the application process and throughout her Ph.D studies. She said demanding writing standards and being new to academic writing was her biggest challenge. Maringe, F., & Jenkins, J. (2015) noted along those lines, international students’ academic challenges are further escalated due to the volume and breadth of reading. Participant Mehmet said that language barriers and communication was his biggest challenge at the beginning of his Ph.D studies. Gautam et al., (2016), emphasized that international students’ initial challenge is simply language and communication.

Participants’ culturally related experiences were also limited during instructional deliveries in the classroom. Participant Ali said that it was very different for him to distinguish between demonstrating respect to professors and demonstrating disagreement. Poyrazli et al., 2001; Tansel & Gungor, 2002; Ryan et al. 1998; Zhai 2002; Maringe, F., & Jenkins, J. (2015) noted, international students’ challenges are not just limited with cultural and social issues, but also such challenges persist in classroom interactions with professors and classmates during the graduate school experience. International students often faced language barriers, cultural shock, social adjustment, homesickness, and loneliness (Mori, 2000). Participant Meryem said, “In the first years, homesickness was [a] really big challenge.” Homesickness is the most common challenge for Turkish international students. Kilinc, A., & Granello, P. F. (2003), found that in the U.S., Turkish international students indicate that “homesickness” is the most challenging obstacle for their adjustment to U.S. campuses. Zhou et al., 2008, showed that culture shock can either reduce or delay the adjustment process of international students in their new cultural environment. Gautam et al., (2016) found international students had cultural shock after dealing with language and communication issues.

International students deal with many adjustment issues in U.S. campuses (Bektas et al., 2009, Hailu, T. E., & Ku, H. 2014, Mori, S. C. 2000, Poyrazli et al., 2001). Turkish international students are more sensitive to new cultures. Participant Mehmet said, “My home culture is very collectivist, and people who have collectivist cultural values do not like to be alone, like to share with others, and have loyalty to the communities which they are from. Individualist side of the U.S. influenced me in negative ways.” Participant Ali said, “U.S. culture is more individualized, but Turkish culture is more collective. In the U.S., you have your own idea beliefs to express but Turkey is not. In Turkish culture you respect your elders and professors, but not in U.S. Cultural realities had a big impact [on] my adjustment in U.S.” Bektas et al., (2009) found that Turkish students receive social support from Turkish friends as they undergo the adjustment process to U.S. campuses. According to Tanyildiz, Z. E. (2015), international students who studied in science and engineering fields intentionally choose to work in the same lab with students from their same country. International students felt more comfortable and adapt faster to U.S. laboratories (campuses) when they are surrounded with students with whom they may better relate. Brisset et al., 2010, found that adjustment of Vietnamese students to campuses in France was similar with any other international students group. When students from the same country

have a social support group, they can speed up the process of adjustment. Participant Mehmet said, “I liked my school, and there was a substantial Turkish student population in the city which helped me during my studies. Maybe, if there had not been any Turkish population where I had lived in an only-American community, I would have had difficulties, but this was not the case. There was a Turkish cultural center, a Turkish student club etc. in the city. We got together to watch soccer games.” Higher education institutes need to consider creating social groups to support their international students to assist in the adjustment process.

International students faced more challenging issues in the post-Ph.D era of their journeys. Scholars pointed to culturally centered barriers to employment, such as accent or dialect (Carlson & McHenry, 2006). The most common and initial question faced is whether one is authorized to work in the U.S. Knowing that such a question looms makes it perceptually difficult to even begin a job search. Some students reflected that once they pass the visa step of demonstrating their authorization to work in the U.S., the next barrier is language and job-related cultural issues. Participant Mehmet reflected on his own journey of his job search in U.S. He said, “It was not until recently I started looking for a job in the U.S. I cannot say I have encountered discrimination due to my ethnic background; however, it is obviously challenged [sic] to get sponsorship from higher education institutions in the U.S. unless you have a work visa or green card.’ Sangganjanavanich et. al., (2011), noted that international students struggle with discovering personal uniqueness, coping with acculturation, and dealing with a lack of resources during their job search in U.S. market. Participant Meryem indicated, “Recently, I lost my job, and I started looking for a job in U.S. higher [ed] institutions again. I cannot say for sure if ethnic considerations play a role in the recruiting process. I think smaller and more rural colleges still look for common faces. But big universities where academic qualifications are more important, ethnicity plays a smaller role.”

Quantitative Findings

In this present study, four different fit indices were used for assessing the model fit: the chi-square statistic, CFI, TLI, NFI, and RMSEA.

Table 3. Fit Index

Chi-square statistic	Value
CFI	.92
TLI	.91
NFI	.95
RMSEA	.021

To provide construct validity of Turkish Ethnic Acculturation Measure Items (TEAMI) a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model was tested similar to Berry (2001). The CFA model fit indexes was within acceptable range CFI (.92), TLI (.91), NFI (.95) and RMSEA (.021). The Chi square ($\chi^2[201df, N=1000] = 451.67, p < .05$). The Chi square did not indicate adequate fit to given data, due to its sensitivity in sample size. All indicators in the model had statistically significant unstandardized factor loading to their latent factor, suggesting the existence of significant association among measured indicators and latent factors.

Table 2. Means: (Group Number 1: Default model)

	Estimate	SE	C.R.	Beta
SA1	31.835	.217	146.956	-.178
SM1	34.740	.235	147.748	.153
SI1	26.962	.114	236.216	-.137
SS1	31.535	.190	166.137	.229

The researchers measured the relation between life satisfaction (LS) and Turkish Ethnic Acculturation Measure Items (TEAMI). The relation between LS and Assimilation (SA) is .23 ($p < .05$). The relation between LS and Marginalization (SM) is $-.14$ ($p < .05$). The relation between LS and Integration (SI) is $.15$ ($p < .05$). The relation between LS and Separation (SS) is $-.18$ ($p < .05$).

The pictorial representation of the model is below,

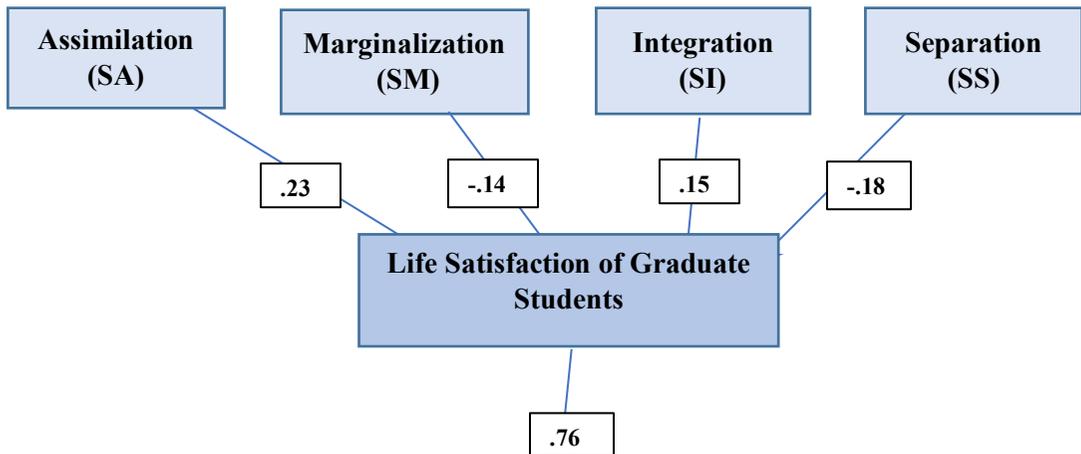


Figure 1. Path analysis between life satisfaction and Turkish Ethnic Acculturation Measure Items (TEAMI)

Turkish Ethnic Acculturation Measure Items (TEAMI) were generated from The East Asian acculturation measure (EAAM) (Barry, D. T., 2001) and interviews were conducted by the researcher. The TEAMI is 27-items, which measure four areas of acculturation used by Berry (2001): assimilation (eight items), separation (seven items), integration (five items), and marginalization (seven items). The researcher modified acculturation measures used for Asians to create a Turkish Ethnic Acculturation Measure Items (TEAMI). A “satisfaction with life” inventory was used to measure Turkish international Ph.D students based on Turkish Ethnic Acculturation Measure Items (TEAMI) (Diener, et al. 1985).

Assimilation: TEAMI and assimilation background were measured with eight items that asked participants to determine their experiences according to a seven-point Likert –type scale (1 - strongly disagree; 2 - disagree; 3 - slightly disagree; 4 - neither agree nor disagree; 5 - slightly

agree; 6 - agree; 7 - strongly agree). The results indicated relations between assimilation and life satisfaction is 23 units. When assimilation to culture increases 1 unit, then 23 units of life satisfaction of Turkish international students increase. The life satisfaction relation and TEAMI for separation from family (including home country) were measured with seven items that asked participants to determine their experience with same scale of assimilation. The results show when separation from family increases one unit, then 18 units of life satisfaction of Turkish international students decrease. The life satisfaction and integration with new culture of TEAMI were measured with five items that asked participants to determine their experience with the same scale of assimilation. The results show when integration with new culture increases one unit, then there is a 15-unit increase in life satisfaction of the Turkish international students. The life satisfaction relation and marginalization of TEAMI from their new culture was measured with seven items that asked participants to determine their experience with the same scale of assimilation. The results show when integration from new culture increases one unit then there is a 14-unit decrease in the life satisfaction of Turkish international students.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to study adjustment and race related issues of Turkish international students in pre-Ph.D, during-Ph.D and post-Ph.D. The researcher utilized CRT as a theoretical framework and literature review as a basis for Turkish international Ph.D students. No studies on this precise topic existed. In this study, the researcher found several themes that emerged based upon interview and survey data: a) experiences challenges before and during Ph.D application process; b) coping with adjustments to new culture; c) finding jobs in U.S. market.

The initial challenge of Turkish international Ph. D students begins during the application process and the first year because of language barriers and culture-related issues. The “language barrier” and “academic writing” were initial challenges (Gautam et al., 2016, Maringe, F., & Jenkins, J., 2015). This research points out the need for support of international graduates students beginning in the application process and continuing. Especially is this true into the first year is support crucial to their future success. The language barrier is more than just a linguistic issue; it also carries into the culture of their home language. This study’s qualitative findings demonstrate language and academic-writing support are needed for Turkish international Ph. D students. The survey results also show Turkish international Ph. D students have a more sensitive language concern as they integrate into their new culture, and once that need is addressed, life satisfaction increases.

This research demonstrates the complexity of cultural adjustment for Turkish international Ph. D students, and that it is the most influential factor for academic success. This cultural-related issue is not only limited with outside campus life, but also on campus such as classroom interaction with classmates and professors as well (Poyrazli et al., 2001; Tansel & Gungor, 2002; Ryan et al. 1998; Zhai 2002; Maringe, F., & Jenkins, J.,2015). The interview data shows Turkish international Ph. D students mentioned “homesickness” and that they rely on social support from Turkish friends to quicken the adjustment process to U.S. campuses (Bektas, 2009). The survey results show Turkish international Ph. D students’ life satisfaction increases once they have integrated and assimilated to their new culture, but until that occurs, facing separation and marginalization from the dominant and new culture negatively impact their life satisfaction. The unique situation such as homesickness and sensitivity to Turkish culture needs to be considered in order to improve Turkish international Ph. D students’ life satisfaction on U.S. campuses.

The challenge of job opportunities post- Ph.D, as indicated by interview and survey results, demonstrate international graduate students face racial and ethnic discrimination during the job search interval. The most common reason was not hiring international graduate students' as a result of accent or dialect of the international graduate students (Carlson & McHenry, 2006). The additional challenge for international students is to get sponsorship from higher education institutions in the U.S., unless you have a work visa or green card (Sangganjanavanich et. al., 2011). It is also mentioned that small and rural colleges are looking to hire more native people.

To achieve such an ideal global world, all international students, regardless of their background, should be treated fairly by higher education. To assure prosperity for graduate education, all students must have equal opportunities in graduate schools, placing emphasis on a cultural welcoming to all international students. The researcher highly recommends U.S. graduate schools focus more attention on current and previous data to support international student enrollment. The U.S. is still leading the world in international student enrollment in college and universities, but for this trend to continue, U.S. campuses must become more culturally welcoming.

This research used CRT as a lens to view Turkish international Ph. D students' life experiences before, during and after Ph.D. studies. Both survey and interview data support the notion that students' life satisfaction depends on cultural integration and assimilation to U.S. campus life. The findings recommend U.S. higher education institutions embed more cultural sensitivity and support to assist international students' adjustment to their new culture. There is no significant finding related to specific racial/ethnicity issues for Turkish international Ph. D students.

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