SOCIAL ADAPTATION PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: THE CASE STUDY OF USAK UNIVERSITY

[1]MURAT GÜNDÜZ, [2]NAIB ALAKBAROV

[1]Usak University, Department of Econometrics, Usak, Turkey
[2]Usak University, Department of Economics, Usak, Turkey
E-mail: [1]murat.gündüz@usak.edu.tr, [2]naib.alakbarov@usak.edu.tr

Abstract - International student mobility is one of the highest important issues for all countries. In 2015, the number of international students worldwide reached 4.6 million. Turkey has attracted international students since 1990s. We observe that this number has increased over the time especially since 2009. This study analyzes the factors affecting the social adaptation of international students studying at Usak University. Questionnaires used in this study are grouped by factor analysis and the factors affecting social adaptation are revealed by applying logistic regression analysis. The study shows that especially in terms of international students for their social adaptation, it is important to feel safe, to communicate with counseling services and university lecturers.

I. INTRODUCTION

International education can be briefly defined as the continuation of education of a student in a country that is not his / her country of citizenship. This definition can have two meanings depending on the level of participation of the students: The first meaning is a narrower sense, which is based on considering inter-country student exchange programs. The second and broader meaning can be summarized as follows: In the world, where students are more connected to each other, active participation in various countries in their own way will constitute the definition of international education (DEİK, 2013).
Over the past four decades, the number of foreign students enrolled in higher education programs worldwide raised from 0.8 million in the late 1970's to 4.6 million in the next 45 years. The increase in foreign registration is due to various internal and external factors, such as push (supporting outward mobility) and pull (supporting inward mobility) factors. While the growing needs of information-based and innovation-focused economies have increased the demand for higher education around the world, local training capacities have not grown fast enough to meet an ever-increasing domestic demand. Growing economies in developing countries has also prompted growing population of middle-class children to seek educational opportunities abroad. Also, economic, technological and cultural factors have promoted getting international student mobility significantly more economical and less irrecoverable than in the past. Initiatives at national, regional, local, supranational or institutional level have also contributed to cross-border mobility (OECD, 2017).

II. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY IN TURKEY

International student mobility in Turkey has been increasing since 1990s'. The reason for the intense increase in the number of international students in the academic year 1992-93 is that the scholarship students who came under the scope of the Grand Student Project which became intensive from this year in Turkey. As of 2015, approximately 72 thousand international students in Turkey are studying at higher educational degrees. This number is quite low compared to the number of international students studying in countries with leading positions in international education such as the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany and Australia. Indeed, the ups and downs in the number of international students in Turkey for the past 30 years indicate that Turkey has not followed a stable policy in this regard (UNESCO, 2017).

III. SOCIAL ADAPTATION PROCESS

The numbers of international students accessing higher education opportunities in Turkey appear to be increasing especially since 2009. At the same time, this increase brought with it problems like social and cultural adjustment of international students.
Once international students leave their regional social environment and as soon as they have reached a new country that they aim to study, they must adapt socially sooner or later. International students must adapt to the new environment, be an independent social member, communicate and cooperate with strangers and cope with new environmental pressures and impressions. International students must adapt to new culture, individual relationship, dating propriety and customs of new country. The success of these adaptations will influence how successfully students can build their social network and thereby adapt to social success (Chen and Chen, 2009).
Students who choose to build relationship with community, friendship outside of their culture usually need to change how they interact socially. As Pruitt (1978) noted, international students who have often get in contact with the students from their home country are happier than those students who have little contact with their fellows from their home

country. According to Pruitt (1978) this choice for student friends from their own country could possibly result from insufficient institutional support. Newsome and Cooper (2016) analyzed cultural and social adaptation process and pointed out that the students that are studying abroad confronted three-stage process. At the beginning, they have high expectations, then they face up with culture shock and at last they have different possible forms of alignment (Newsome and Cooper, 2016).

IV. MODEL AND ECONOMETRIC METHOD

Questionnaires used in the study were grouped by factor analysis and logistic regression analysis was applied to the obtained factors. Factor analysis is a method of analysis that is used to reduce large numbers of variables to fewer and more meaningful variables. Factor analysis aims to reveal hidden dimensions that are known but not directly observable and to reduce the number of variables (Karagöz, 2016). Factor analysis is a method that creates variables called a factor with a new name by grouping together those that are not directly related to one another, but which can be used to describe an event, especially in the social and human sciences.

Logistic regression analysis is developed over the multiple regression analysis technique. There the dependent or output variable is categorical. In real life cases involving categorical output variables are very common. Logit of Y from X is predicted from the logistic model. As mentioned, the logit is the natural logarithm (ln) of odds of Y. Odds are ratios of probabilities (π) of Y happening to probabilities ($1 - \pi$) of Y not happening (Peng et al., 2002).

Factor analysis reveals 10 factors. The 9 of these factors can be named in a meaningful way. Only one is excluded from the analysis as it is made up by unrelated variables. The factors that obtained from factor analysis are shown in Table 2.

Factor 1: Psychological adaptation;
Factor 2: Counseling service
Factor 3: To have friends
Factor 4: To get used to university
Factor 5: To feel safe (province and university)
Factor 6: Communication skill with Lecturer
Factor 7: Skills to build friendship
Factor 8: Social Activities
Factor 9: To feel discrimination(province and university)

Table 2: Factors

V. RESULTS

The social adaptations of international students in Usak have been studied in terms of Usak province. The results are shown below. Table 3 shows the factors affecting the provincial social adaptation of the students studying at Usak University. As a dependent variable, "Usak Province generally meets expectations" was used.

	B	Standard Error.	Wald Statistics	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level.	Exp(B)
FACTOR1	.182	.194	.878	1	.349	1.200
FACTOR2	.838	.206	16.618	1	.000	2.312
FACTOR3	.315	.197	2.552	1	.110	1.370
FACTOR4	.142	.179	.630	1	.427	1.153
FACTOR5	1.158	.203	32.628	1	.000	3.182
FACTOR6	.736	.182	16.399	1	.000	2.087
FACTOR7	.404	.174	5.366	1	.021	1.498
FACTOR8	.999	.208	23.119	1	.000	2.717
FACTOR9	.499	.198	6.332	1	.012	1.647
Constant	.908	.190	22.963	1	.000	2.480

Table 3: Dependent Variable: The Province of Usak Answers General to My Expectations

In the model, the reference category refers to the expression that Usak province does not meet general of their expectations. In other words, the reference category in the model is the students who stated that they did not socialize. Omnibus test results show that the model is significant at 5% level according to the Chi Square statistical results. The degree of disclosure of the dependent variable of the Nagelkerke R^2 =0.51. The correct estimation of the model is 80.8%. It is seen that all variables have positive values in the model. This situation seems to have improved the provincial social cohesion of the international students because of the change in the relevant variables. The Factor 5, Factor 8, Factor 2 and Factor 6 variables are respectively the greatest variables of impact level. The most important thing to focus on here is that the variable of 'To Feel Safe'is the most important variable affecting social cohesion. The variable to express discrimination is seen to increase social cohesion, but this result is not expected. The provincial social adjustment variable is more affected by institutional factors. Regulation of institutional factors to increase social cohesion also increases the social cohesion of those expressing discrimination. This result shows how important institutional arrangements are in terms of countries desire to attract international students. International students improve their social cohesion when international students are in contact with social activities, counseling, and positive communication with university lecturers, even when they think they are discriminated.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the factors affecting the social adaptation of international students in the Usak University in Turkey are analyzed. Turkey has attracted international students since the early 1990s. However, the number of international students was not stable during these years. Although international students studying in Turkey are predominantly from

countries that are culturally similar with Turkey, the issue of social cohesion does still remain important.
As a result of the analysis, it is seen that the most important factor in terms of university, province and friendship / environmental social harmony for international student in Turkey is to feel safe both in college and province. In addition, counseling, communication with lecturers and social activities are seen to boost social cohesion among international students.

These results show that measures to increase the institutionalization of international student mobility in Turkey will positively affect social adaptations of international students. That is, institutionalization is known to be important if we consider the examples of successful international students.

REFERENCES

[1] Chen, Y. and Chen H. (2009), A Study on International Student Adjustment from Academic, Social and Cultural Viewpoints in Taiwan, International Conference on Business Management and Information Technology Application, http://www.kyu.edu.tw/ teacpage/teacpage98/98%E5%B9%B4%E5%BA%A6%E8%AB%96%E6%96%87%E6%88%90%E6%9E%9C%E9%9B%BB%E5%AD%90%E6%AA%94%5C98-233.pdf (15.11.2015).

[2] DEİK (2013), Uluslararası Yüksek Öğretim ve Türkiye'nin Konumu, https://www.deik.org.tr/ uploads/uluslararasi-yuksekogretim-hareketliligi-ve-turkiye-nin-konumu-raporu-2.pdf (13.11.2017).

[3] Karagöz, Y. (2016), SPSS ve Amos 23 Uygulamalı İstatistiksel Analizler, Nobel AkademikYayıncılık, Ankara.

[4] Newsome, L. K. and Cooper, P. (2016), International Students' Cultural and Social Experiences in a British University: "Such a hard life [it] is here",Journal of International Students, Volume 6, Issue 1, 195-215 (15.11.2015).

[5] OECD (2017), Education at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators, http://www.oecd.org/ education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm (19.11.2017).

[6] Peng, C-Y. J., Lee, K. L. and Ingersoll, G. M. (2002), An introduction to logistic regression analysis and reporting. Journal of Educational Research 96(1): 3-13.

[7] Pruitt, F.J. (1978), The adaptation of African students to American society, International Journal of Intercultural Relations vol. 2, pp.90-118.

[8] UNESCO (2017). Institute for Statistics, http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=172 (16.11.2017).

