

TEHSEEN NAZİR

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT CHALLENGES

Studying as an international student and living in a multicultural environment bring enormous opportunities and learning. A better education, a prestigious life, scholarship options, the option to learn a new language and to know about a different culture undoubtedly make studying abroad an attractive offer. On the other hand, leaving the country where one grew up and getting used to its culture, people, and way of living; is not an easy decision to make. As humans, we need to adjust to the environment that we are part of. When we change our living space, we may realize the new environment has different requirements than what we used to practice or wish to do. To avoid feeling like outsiders, we need to adjust to the new conditions without sacrificing our mental health. In the same way, encountering novel conditions can cause a feeling of disappointment, discouragement, or regret. The truth is, my friends, these are all part of the process, don't worry!

Based on the research conducted in Türkiye, this book aims to explain that the adjustment process takes time. Facing adjustment issues is an expected and essential part of your lifelong journey.

In this book, international students will find similar experiences they encountered during their journey, and others who think of studying abroad will get an idea about how things work. In addition to international students, this book aims to give more understanding to academicians and concerned authorities dealing with international students and aims to help them improve the experience of international students within Türkiye.



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Preface

Studying an international student and living in a multicultural environment bring enormous opportunities and learning. A better education, a prestigious life, scholarship options, and the option to learn a new language and to know about a different culture undoubtedly make studying abroad an attractive offer. On the other hand, leaving the country where one grew up and getting used to its culture, people, and way of living; is not an easy decision to make. As humans, we need to adjust to the environment that we are part of. When we change our living space, we may realize the new environment has different requirements than what we used to practice or wish to do. To avoid feeling like outsiders, we need to adjust to the new conditions without sacrificing our mental health. In the same way, encountering novel conditions can cause a feeling of disappointment, discouragement, or regret. The truth is, my friends, these are all part of the process, don't worry!

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Historical Overview

Globalization is the free movement of people, knowledge, goods, services, and technology across the seamless borders of the world. Globalization has influenced every aspect of human lives, including the education process and the education system. The term “globalization” itself is not a novel concept, and its meaning, nature, and impact remain controversial within the research community. The current wave of globalization has influenced the general population by striking at the economy, trade, political policies, environment, and culture. Strictly speaking, globalization can be defined as “a set of processes by which the world is rapidly being integrated into one economic space via increased international trade, the internationalization of production, and financial markets and the internationalization of a commodity culture promoted by an increasingly

networked global telecommunications system” (Gibson-Graham, quoted in Tatto, 2006, p. 232). The influence of globalization on human life has brought on a new pace and new advancements to it. The process of globalization, in its conception, has brought together various political, social, and cultural factors, thereby revolutionizing the human race. The influences of globalization are visible in every aspect of human existence; and, especially in the field of education.

In the last few decades, the field of education has witnessed a revolution. Education has played (and continues to do so) a significant role in facilitating the process of globalization as it dilutes borders and cultures. Modern technology, like the internet, has opened up new windows to the world and the education system in particular. It has revolutionized the process of education, quality, and drive towards education. Education-based migration has historical roots, but once the internet emerged, it became prevalent even more. With the high-speed internet boom, people have become more aware of the quality of education and the varied fields and areas it is supposed to offer, making it easier for them to find a field or an area of interest away from their homeland. The advent of globalization unlocked the western world for other parts; thereby, interest in westernized education systems also increased.

From a historical standpoint, education and globalization are interconnected with each other. Historically, students sought education from foreign countries, which gave them the best education, and got an extra edge over their peers from their home countries (Hegarty, 2014). However, few students sought foreign education because the source and

means were few. Besides, foreign education was not within reach of ordinary people.

Later, the growth of educational systems was strongly influenced by colonial eras. Thus, the current scenario of education worldwide can be considered the consequence of the preliminary impact of globalization on education. During the colonization era, rulers exercised control over the natives by educating them to ensure their position of power. Therefore, there was a constant effort to educate the top intellectual minds of their colonies. They provide them with various opportunities to lure them under colonial control. The colonial educational missions introduced scholarships during that period, as was the case for Asian countries such as India, Malaysia, etc. which were under the colonial rule of the British Empire. Such scholarships aimed to create an educated elite from within the local community, serving the colonial bureaucracy's purpose. This educated class would then train the local human resource, who will, in turn, serve as workers, further strengthening the colonial power economically and stabilizing its existence. This system of creating the 'educated elite' and their so-called superiority was solely to serve and benefit the colonial rulers. They damaged the age-old standard fabric of the societies by denying the locals their fundamental rights and portraying the local culture and systems as inferior, all for the sake of consolidating power within their own hands (Freire, 1972).

A historical shift brought about the dissolution of colonial rule, whence various superpower countries started losing their power over their colonies. Globalization has sourced a similar shift in educational establishments, whereby they no longer serve the colonial rulers or their purpose. The purpose

of education thus, completely transformed. Educational migration, which earlier was reinforced by colonial aims, also faced a shift in which there was a rapid student movement for education from developing to developed countries. That was partly due to modern technological advancements, which posed a catalyst for such a movement. After the independence of colonies that had lived centuries under slavery, the interest and growth in education witnessed a new turn. Post Second World War saw a considerable movement of students from third world countries to developed countries. Developed countries took it as an opportunity to attract the top intellectual minds from the third world to their countries, which would boost their economies and bring quality human resources. For example, the United States of America started spending its massive budget on scholarships and research. As a result, it attracted a huge number of international students globally to its institutions. To lure quality students, many developed countries launched new programs such as the Colombia Plan by the British government or the Fulbright scholarship by the United States of America (Kell and Vogl, 2007a). The aim and motive of the American Fulbright scholarship for example is to enhance intellectual relations, intercultural competencies, and intercultural relations by providing scholarships and exchange programs. These programs have two-way aims: the first is to help third-world countries develop their capacity and expertise to prosper and progress; on the other hand, another prospect is to have a diplomatic edge to get support from alumni elites. These developed countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, took education as a new way to develop the diplomatic edge to secure the loyalty, support, and favor of educational elite alumni. To some extent, this

kind of financial assistance for the educational migration of students from third world countries by western countries was a helping hand to eradicate poverty and contribute to their development and growth.

Somehow, the student's migration was par below, and it was explicitly a flow from the far east to the west only. It was dominated by only a few countries, which were called the 'big five', including the United Kingdom, United States of America, France, Germany, and Australia. These big five contributed 52% of the global international students' migration during the first decade of the twentieth century (OECD, 2007, p. 304). These countries not only provide quality education, work environment, and scholarships but also provide other lucrative offers such as permanent citizenship after graduation with full opportunities for new beginnings. Such opportunities created a drastic drift in the international education market: Many Asian countries such as China, Malaysia, Singapore, and Japan followed the same paths by allocating a good amount of resources to their quality education. This way, they aimed to create attraction and compete in the international education market.

In the case of Asia, after the First World War, the global scenario had changed in every aspect, and the global economies saw a huge transition. Asian countries started emerging as potential economies, and among these Asian countries, four 'Asian Tigers' emerged and had the potential to transform global economies as well as the education system; these four 'Asian Tigers' consist of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan (Altbach, 2013). These countries invested a considerable amount of time and money in developing the quality and infrastructure of their