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The Relationship between Depression Interpersonal Communication and Media Using Among International Students

Birol Gülnar and Hacer Aker

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***Abstract*—**Student's movements have been going increasing in last decades. International students can have different psychological and sociological problems in their adaptation process. Depression is one of the most important problems in this procedure. This research purposed to reveal level of foreign students' depression, kinds of interpersonal communication networks (host/ethnic interpersonal communication) and media usage (host/ethnic media usage). Additionally study aimed to display the relationship between depression and communication (host/ethnic interpersonal communication and host/ethnic media usage) among foreign university students. A field research was performed among 283 foreign university students who have been attending 8 different universities in Turkey. A purposeful sampling technique was used in this research cause of data collect facilities. Results indicated that 58.3% of foreign students' depression stage was "intermediate" while 33.2% of foreign students' depression level was "low". Add to this, host interpersonal communication behaviors and Turkish web sites usages were negatively and significantly correlated with depression.

***Keywords*—**International students, depression, interpersonal communication behaviors, media using.

I. Introduction

INTERNATIONAL movements and interesting the other societies and people began before very long ages. Always people want to learn the world except of theirs from ancient times. Surely this situation cannot be explained only a simple interest. Primarily motivation of that interest is economical conditions. Naturally people want to live under the better life conditions which related to economical, health, security and so on. Generally people do not satisfy conditions where they born and seek for the other places for having better life conditions. This search and contact the foreign societies done by war at ancient times. But nowadays these contacts have been done thorough more peaceful and economical channels.

Other international movements which named international students have arisen in last decades. Young people depart their native country purpose of having better educational opportunities. In fact educational motive related to economical concerns because generally better education refers to better economical conditions. More undeveloped country's young's go to U.S.A. or member of E.U Countries for this purpose. U.S.A. and member of E.U Countries officers encourage this kind of movements because they think that when these guest students graduate can provide to build up better international students. It means that to build up international peace.

International students experiment different difficulty which include adaptation on new social environment and psychological conditions. These problems are grouped in two categories which are socio cultural adaptation and psychological adaptation. While socio cultural adaptation is correspond to adaptation of social environment such as cultural conditions, nutritive, transportation and educational concerns psychological adaptation includes different concepts such as loneliness, life satisfaction and depression. In addition researchers have studied culture shock, acculturative stress and likewise within the context of psychological adaptation problems [1]-[3].

Additionally to other social researchers communication scholars have interested in foreigners' adaptation process. Certainly they have approached on the perspective of communication. Point of their views communication is a vital role on foreigners' sociocultural and psychological adaptation. This argument asserts that communication is a social learning source which enables to adaptation. Foreigners can learn new societies' rules, traditions, and foods thorough communication [4]. They have identified two kinds of communication which are interpersonal and mass communication and their impacts' on adaptation. In this manner numerous studies have been performed by different communication scholars, who investigated the relationship between sociocultural adaptation and (host) communication [5], [6] loneliness and television viewing motives [7], [8], acculturation and host television viewing motives [9], [10], life satisfaction and communication patterns [11], [12], acculturation and media using [13]-[15] among international students.

It is purposed that to reveal international students' stage of depression and their communication patterns in means of interpersonal and mass communication usage both of host and ethnic kinds. This studies' problematic can be defined "Is there any relationship between depression, interpersonal communication, and media using among international university students?" Main purpose of this study is to display that communication is a vital role on international students'

B. Gülnar is with the Selçuk University, Faculty of Communication, Department Radio Television and Cinema, Konya, 42151. Turkey (phone: +90-332-241-0186; fax: +90-332-241-0187; e-mail: bgulnar@selcuk.edu.tr).

H. Aker is with the Selçuk University, Faculty of Communication, Department Radio Television and Cinema, Konya, 42151. Turkey (phone: +90-332-241-0186; fax: +90-332-241-0187; e-mail: aizenates@hotmail.com).

Open Science Index, Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Vol:7, No:5, 2013 publications.waset.org/13854/pdf

adaptation process. It can be explained to this studies' significance: (1) the first study which conducted in Turkey, (2) indicating international university students' level of depression, (3) displaying to the relationship between international university students' depression and their communication patterns.

II. Depression among Foreign Students

Young people go down from their country which in they were born and arise purpose of educational aims. Probably they have to go different countries and have to connect people which they have never seen before. International students can face some problems about adaptation or acculturation which named acculturative stress or culture shock. Depression is one of the most important factors in this process.

International students can experience a culture shock in the beginning of the adaptation process. Adaptation of international students need changes student's interpersonal communication and psychological conditions. It may cause psychological problems and tension. Different studies displayed that acculturative stress positively correlated with depression [3].

As mentioned above adaptation to a new society may cause some psychological problems. Different researchers have investigated the relationship between mental health (psychological well-being) and acculturation/adaptation. These studies' findings grouped in three categories: Some studies concluded that attitude and identification of ethnic group positively related to adaptation difficulties. On the other hand the other studies suggest that separation of the ethnic culture lead to more psychological problems [16]-[18]. Lastly, immigrants who adjust to new culture and having native feelings face less psychological problems. The last group immigrants identified with the concept of integrated people. They tend to their native/ethnic ties at the same time they want to try to adaptation to new culture.

Different studies which investigated relation to depression and acculturation revealed that these variables negatively and significantly correlated to each other. For example reference [19] informed that integrated sojourners experienced less depression. Similarly they also found that co-national identification negatively and significantly predicted to depression. These results reveal that adaptation/integration is negatively correlated to depression. Additionally researchers concluded that assimilated group has stronger correlation between depression and social difficulty. Ward and Kennedy's results of study are consistent with that research [20]. Researchers likely showed that integrated sojourners have less level of depression than assimilated group. Similarly Cemalcılar found that depression level of international students who have attended in U.S. negatively and significantly correlated with their level of socio-culture adaptation [1].

Oh et al. investigated the predictors of Korean immigrants' depression in U.S [21]. Author revealed that predictors of depression were ethnic cultural identity, adherence to Korean traditions and values, greater assimilation of U.S. culture. The study also displayed that host language-association acculturation caused less depression level. This finding also important in terms of communication is an important factor on depression. On the other hand second predictor of depression was immigrants' age. The older immigrants had low stage of depression than the younger.

Gülnar and Balcı conducted a field research among international university students in Turkey [5]. They purposed to investigate predictors of international students' sociocultural adaptation. According to their studies' results while depression negatively correlated with integration attitude, it positively correlated with assimilation and separation attitudes. Additionally depression was negatively correlated with life satisfaction and sociocultural adaptation. These results are consistent with above findings.

These findings revealed that depression negatively correlated with sociocultural and psychological adaptation. On the other hand it positively correlated with acculturation stress, loneliness and cultural shock. At this point the relationship between communication and adaptation is come to order. Communication has a vital role on international students' adaptation process as mentioned above. Therefore international students' communication patterns and depression level have to investigate.

III. Depression and Communication Behaviors among International Students

Related literature revealed that communication is crucial on foreigners' sociocultural and psychological adaptation process. This argument conceptualized and named that theory of cross-cultural adaptation by Kim [22]. According to theory of cross cultural adaptation foreigners can adapt to new society thorough host interpersonal communication. They can learn easily new societies' rules, traditions, language by interpersonal communication. It means that communication is a socialization and social learning source in acculturation and adaptation process. This theory has been demonstrated by numerous communication scholars [13], [1], [5], [6], [22].

Literature has numerous findings about the relation between depression, social support and acculturation stress. For example Zimet al. stated that perceived social support which includes perceived support from family, friends and significant other was negatively and significantly correlated with level of depression [23]. Choi had similar findings that revealed depressive symptomatology negatively correlated with all social support subscales which include emotional support, self-esteem support, tangible support, and belonging support [24]. On the contrary depressive symptomatology positively correlated with stress subscales which contained family stress, immigrant stress, marital stress, occupational stress, and parental stress. At the same time these results implicate that interpersonal communication is vital role on depression.

Kuo and Tsai investigated relation to social networking and immigrant's mental health in U.S [25]. Their findings are consistent with the other research findings which demonstrated the relationship between social support and

Open Science Index, Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Vol:7, No:5, 2013 publications.waset.org/13854/pdf

depression. Authors revealed that immigrant's availability of relatives negatively predicted to depression. Also immigrants' number of friends whom can talk frankly was the negative most important predictor to depression. Additionally size of close circle and density of communication were the other negative predictors to depression. All results of this research revealed that immigrants' social networks and their communication capabilities and activities are very crucial on the process of adaptation and depression.

Ying and Liese performed a field research among Taiwanese students in the US. They concluded that English ability in the manner of host language ability negatively and significantly correlated with depression [26]. This result indicated that interpersonal communication and host language ability are very important factors on psychological adaptation of international students. Also Gülnar and Balcı showed that host interpersonal communication behaviors positively correlated with life satisfaction [11].

The other important communication kind is mass communication in adaptation process. Usage of host mass communication enables to adapt to new society, similarly interpersonal communication. There are numerous studies which indicate this suggesting. For instance Wang found that host internet using negatively correlated with depression [6]. In other words the more international students use host internet the less depression they have. According to this study's results while loneliness positively and significantly correlated depression; English competence and American Internet use negatively correlated with depression. Namely international students who have feel lonely at the same time they have higher depression level. Additionally international students who have better English competence and use more frequently American Internet they have little depression level. It means that host language ability and host internet using negatively predicted to depression. Gülnar and Balcı conducted a field research among international students in Turkey. They found that international students' first motivation of Turkish television viewing was acculturation. Also they revealed that students' degree of loneliness negatively correlated with acculturation. Study revealed that (host) television - as a mass media – is a social learning, socialization, and an acculturation medium especially for immigrants and sojourners [7].

Literature review displayed that host interpersonal communication and host mass communication usage negatively correlated with depression while ethnic communication and ethnic mass communication usage positively correlated with depression. Additionally totally communication both of two kinds positively correlated with adaptation. Fig. 1 explains the relation between communication and depression in international students. According to figure generally communication activities specifically host communication activities cause integration/acculturation, less acculturative stress and less depression.

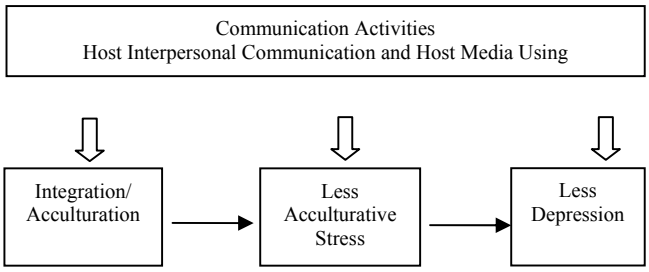


Fig. 1 A model for relation between communication activities and depression

At the end of the literature review following research questions was written:

RQ1: What is the degree of international students' depression?

RQ2: What is the frequency of international students' communication activities?

RQ3: Is there any relationship between depression and international students' communication activities?

IV. Methods

A field research has been performed aim to demonstrate the relationship between international university students' depression and their communication activities. This research was conducted among 283 foreign university students who have been attending 8 different universities in Turkey. Different analysis such as descriptive statistics and correlation analysis have been performed for answer to the research questions.

A. Procedure and Sample

This research has aimed to investigate depression degree of international university students and the relation between depression and their communication activities. Research population included all international university students who have attended Turkish Universities. Purposeful sampling techniques was used which is non-probability sampling techniques in this study. A field research has been conducted in different eight Turkish Universities which included İstanbul, Marmara, Ege, Anadolu, Selçuk, Gazi, Erciyes, and Fırat Universities. These universities were chosen for these reasons (1) that universities have a large population of foreign students and (2) easy of reporting these universities and their students.

The sample consisted of 283 foreign university students who have been attending 8 different universities and 11 faculties. The sample included 165 (59.1%) male participants and 114 (40.9%) females. Respondents' mean of ages is 21.95 and length of stay in Turkey 3.34 years, 15.0% of the participants were from Turkmenistan, 10.9% were from Kazakhstan, 10.6% were from Azerbaijan, 7.3% were from Kyrgyzstan, 6.6% were from Mongolia, 5.8% were from Russia, 5.8% were from Bulgaria, 5.1% were from Nigeria, and 2.9% were from Afghanistan. Also the sample included an Iraqi, Uzbekistan, Greek, Bosnia Herzegovina people with smaller counts.

Open Science Index, Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Vol:7, No:5, 2013 publications.waset.org/13854/pdf

B. Measurement

A questionnaire which contained three parts was designed to measure international students' depression and their communication activities. First part of the questionnaire included depression scale which contained five items and it has one-to-five point scale which ranged between "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree". "General Contentment Scale" was used for measuring the depression level of international students [6]. That scale contains 25 items which measures affective, psychological and cognitive dimensions of depression.

Alpha .83 was calculated for depression scale in this study. Wang indicated that depression scale has construction validity [6]. Researcher reported that depression scale negatively correlated with life satisfaction. Similarly Gülnar and Balcı showed that depression scale negatively correlated with life satisfaction [5]. Therefore these results confirm that scale has construction validity.

The other section of the questionnaire has two sub scales. First scale was developed to measure interpersonal communication activities. The scale has four items which included language and participation of cultural activities based on host and ethnic culture. Safder reported that scale's Cronbach's alpha is .70 [27]. Also Cronbach's alpha is calculated .50 for this study. Gülnar and Balcı proved the scale's validity by two different correlations: Researchers found that while separation attitude positively correlated with in-group relations, assimilation attitude positively correlated with out-group relations [28].

The second sub-scale of the media usage scale was used to measure foreign university students' frequency and type of mass media usage. It has one-to-five point scale which ranged between "never" and "daily". Also scale of media usage has construction validity. Because host interpersonal communication behaviors positively correlated host media usage ($r = .231$, $p < .001$). Similarly ethnic interpersonal communication behaviors positively correlated with ethnic media usage ($r = .198$, $p < .001$). This scale was used successfully by different researchers such as Ye [28], Papacharissi and Rubin [29]. Lastly, demographic questions were used for individual differences.

C. Analysis and Statistical Tests

The field research was performed bilingual (Turkish and English) in 15-30 May 2010. Firstly, a pilot study was applied at the beginning of the survey and the questionnaire was reviewed according the results of this study. Analysis was performed by SPSS 17 statistical Program. Descriptive analysis was used to introduce demographic characteristics of participants. Central tendency statistics and computed items were performed for assessing participants' degree of depression, interpersonal communication and media usage. Also paired samples t test was used for patterns of interpersonal communication and media usage. Correlation analysis was used to investigate the relations between depression, and interpersonal communication and media usage.

V. Findings

Section of finding contains three different subjects which try to answer research questions. These subjects are (1) depression level of participants, (2) frequently and type of interpersonal communication and mass communication, (3) lastly the relationship between depression and communication.

A. Depression Level of International Students

Depression Scale which has twenty five items was conducted to explore participants' level of depression. As mentioned above these items measure affective, psychological and cognitive dimensions of depression.

Central tendency statistics were performed for total depression. As seen on Table II, mean score of participants' depression is 2.56. It can be explained that international students' depression level is low but near the midpoint level. (a five point scale was used to measure depression level. Answers ranged one to five therefore 0.80 (4/5=0.80) range was used in staging; 1,00-1,80: very low, 1,81-2,60: low, 2,61-3,40: midpoint, 3,41-4,20: high, 4,21-5,00: very high).

TABLE I
CENTRAL TENDENCY STATISTICS FOR PARTICIPANTS' TOTAL DEPRESSION LEVEL

	N	Minim.	Maxim.	Mean	SD
Depress.	283	1.42	3.58	2.56	0.43

Also international students' depression level was examined thorough frequency analysis as a categorical variable (Depression index was categorized based on categorical level). As have been seen on Table II, 4.6% of international students have very low depression level, 33.5% of international students' low depression level, 58.7% of international student's midpoint depression level, and 3.2% of participants high life satisfaction level.

TABLE II
RESULTS OF FREQUENCY ANALYSIS FOR DEPRESSION LEVEL CATEGORIES

	Frequency	Rate	Valid Rate
Very Low	13	4.6	4.6
Low	94	33.2	33.5
Mid Point	165	58.3	58.7
High	9	3.2	3.2
Total	281	99.3	100.0
Missing	2	0.7	
General Total	283	100.0	

B. International Students' Interpersonal Communication and Mass Communication Usage

International students' interpersonal communication behaviors were measured thorough items of speaking Turkish/Ethnic language and participating to Turkish/Ethnic cultural activities. As seen on Table III, results of paired samples t test revealed that international students more frequently and significantly speak Turkish ($\overline{X}=3.87$) than their native language ($\overline{X}=3.46$; $t=5.422$; $p<.001$). In additionally international university students generally more frequently and significantly contacted host interpersonal communication behaviors ($\overline{X}=3.53$) than native interpersonal communication behaviors ($\overline{X}=3.27$; $t=4.061$; $p<.001$).

TABLE III
RESULTS OF PAIRED SAMPLES T TEST FOR HOST/ETHNIC INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

Host/ethnic interpersonal Communication behaviors	N	$\overline{X}$	t-value	p
Speaking Turkish	276	3.87	5.422	.000
Speaking native language	273	3.46		
Participation to Turkish cultural activities	275	3.17	.752	.453
Participation to Ethnic cultural activities	276	3.12		
General Host (Turkish) interpersonal communication	276	3.53	4.061	.000
General Ethnic interpersonal communication	276	3.27		

International students' usage of mass media frequency and type is also examined in this section. Table IV included descriptive statistics of usage mass media frequency and results of paired samples t test. According to results of paired samples t test international students more frequently and significantly use Turkish televisions ($\overline{X}$ =3.63), than ethnic televisions ($\overline{X}$ =2.07; t=15.208, p<.001). On the contrary they more frequently and significantly listen Ethnic radios ($\overline{X}$ =2.51), than Turkish radios ($\overline{X}$ =2.13; t=-3.675; p<.001). They also more frequently and significantly use Turkish Internet ($\overline{X}$ =3.72), than ethnic internet (t=3.463; p<.005). When examined the overall estimation; it is clearly seen that general Turkish Media ($\overline{X}$ =3.08) is more frequently and significantly used than ethnic media ($\overline{X}$ =2.67; t=7.371; p<.001) by international students. These results showed that international university students more frequently use Turkish (host) media than ethnic media.

TABLE IV
RESULTS OF PAIRED SAMPLES T TEST FOR HOST/ETHNIC MEDIA USAGE

Host/Ethnic Media Usage	N	$\overline{X}$	*T- value*	*P*
Turkish television	283	3.63	15.208	.000
Ethnic television	283	2.07		
Turkish newspaper	281	2.85	1.612	.108
Ethnic newspaper	281	2.68		
Turkish radio	281	2.13	-3.675	.000
Ethnic radio	281	2.51		
Turkish internet	282	3.72	3.463	.001
Ethnic internet	282	3.43		
General Turkish Media	283	3.08	7.371	.000
General Ethnic Media	283	2.67		

C. Relationship between Interpersonal Communication, Mass Communication Usage and Depression

The relation between international students' interpersonal communication, mass communication usage and degree of depression was investigated in this section. Firstly a correlation analysis was performed depression and host/ethnic interpersonal communication behaviors. Interpersonal communication behaviors contained speaking host/ethnic language and participation to host/ethnic cultural activities as above mentioned. Correlation analysis revealed that speaking Turkish (r=-.262, p<.01) and participation to Turkish cultural activities (r=-.182, p<.01) negatively correlated with depression. In additionally depression negatively and significantly correlated with total (general) host interpersonal communication behaviors (r=-.260, p<.05), no correlation was found ethnic interpersonal communication behaviors. In other words, they who more have host interpersonal communication behaviors and they less have depression.

TABLE V
RESULTS OF CORRELATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN DEPRESSION AND HOST/ETHNIC INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

Depress	Host Interpersonal Communication		Ethnic Interpersonal Communication	
	Speaking Turkish	-.262**	Speaking Ethnic	-.018
	Participation to Turkish Cult.Act.	-.182**	Participation to Ethnic Cul.Act	- .059
	-.260**		-.062	

Note: **p< .01, *p< .05

Secondly one more correlation analysis was performed between depression and host/ethnic media usage. Table VI contained results of this analysis. Results indicated that depression negatively and significantly correlated with Turkish Internet use (r=-.145, p<.05). On the other hand depression neither correlated with general host mass communication usage, nor general ethnic mass communication usage. These results displayed that host interpersonal communication behaviors has a vital role on foreign university students' life satisfaction. Also results indicated that host internet use is very important on foreigners' psychological adaptation.

TABLE VI
RESULTS OF CORRELATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN DEPRESSION AND HOST/ETHNIC MEDIA USAGE

D	Turkish Mass Commun.				Ethnic Mass Commun.			
e	TV	News.	Rad.	Int.	TV	News.	Rad.	Int.
p	-.046	.062	.079	-.145*	-.021	.084	.042	.049
r	Total Turkish Mass Commun.				Total Ethnic Mass Commun.			
e	-.019				.069			
s								
s								

VI. CONCLUSION

Study aimed to investigate relation to foreign university students' depression level and their communication behaviors. Those behaviors included their interpersonal communication behaviors and mass communication usage. Results indicated that foreign university students' level of depression is low. On the other hand an important part of the sample has mid-point stage of depression. International students have low degree of depression but this level near the mid-point level. These results can be comment as anxious because these students are voluntary for coming to Turkey. They are not immigrants therefore they should want to adapt to new society. In fact it was expected that they have lower depression level than this stage.

Findings of study revealed that international university students more frequently and significantly contacted host interpersonal communication behaviors than native interpersonal communication behaviors. They speak more frequently and significantly Turkish language then native language. Also they more frequently participate to Turkish cultural activities than native cultural activities. These results

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Open Science Index, Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Vol:7, No:5, 2013 publications.waset.org/13854/pdf

mean that international students want to adapt to Turkish society and culture. There are numerous studies which indicate the relationship between interpersonal communication – especially host interpersonal communication – and the adaptation/acculturation among foreigners [5], [6].

At the same time these findings can interpret to confirm multicultural adaptation theory which was developed by Kim [22]. Theory asserted that a new coming person need to communicate with host person for learning new societies' rules, meals, transportations and etc. In this manner these results consistent with this theory. International students want to learn Turkish cultural rules, meals and etc. Thus they more frequently and significantly speak Turkish language than their native language.

The study also revealed that international university students more frequently used the host mass communication then ethnic mass communication. Most frequently used mass communication media was Turkish web sites. This finding supported to Gülnar and Balcı's findings which included that host internet were a medium of socialization and adaptation to new culture [5]. Also international university students more frequently and significantly use the Turkish televisions and read Turkish newspapers then ethnics. These results means that international students want to learn and adapt to Turkish society consistent with relation to host interpersonal communication and adaptation. Relation to host mass communication usage and adaptation was revealed different communication scholars [6], [9], [10], [13]-[15].

Outgrowth of these results depression level of international students' is negatively and significantly correlated with host interpersonal communication behaviors. This result is rather meaningful in terms of related literature and theoretical framework. As is known interpersonal communication is a vital role on social and psychological adaptation. Depression is an important component of psychological adaptation. Therefore this negative correlation between depression and host interpersonal communication is very important as psychological adaptation. These results are consistent with related research findings which include the negative correlation between perceived social support and depression. The negative correlation between depression and perceived social support was revealed by different researchers [23]-[25]. This negative correlation indicates the importance of host interpersonal communication in the process of psychological adaptation. On the other hand there is no correlation depression and ethnic interpersonal communication.

The relation between depression and mass media usage was also investigated in this study. According to results, usage of Turkish (host) web sites negatively and significantly correlated with depression. This result means that usage of host web sites cause the international students' depression level. Thus it enables international students' adaptation to Turkish society. This finding is also consistent with the other findings which include the relation between host media usage and acculturation [9], [10], [13]-[15]. Additionally this finding is the full consistent with Wang's findings which contained that the negative relation between depression and (host) American internet using [6]. Turkish internet using enables to international students' psychological adaptation to Turkish society similarly and consistently with Turkish (host) interpersonal communication behaviors.

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