Academic Hospitality for International Students

in Higher Education:

Building Guidelines for Academic and Non-Academic Staff

IO5 GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC AND NON ACADEMIC STAFF

IO5 GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC AND NON ACADEMIC STAFF, 2021

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PREFACE

The rapid change in the world since the second half of the twentieth century has manifested itself in the field of higher education as in many other fields. The number of international students increases every year. Internationalization opens many possibilities for higher education institutions. On the other hand increasing number of international students brings challenges both academic and non-academic staffs.

This guideline were developed within the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Project 2019-1-TR01-KA203-074673 AcHopInt– Academic Hospitality for International Students in Higher Education: Building Guidelines for Academic and Non-Academic Staff. The aim of the guidelines for academic and non-academic staff is to provide an innovative and practical tool to academic and non-academic staff while supporting international students and dealing with cultural diversity and highlight the significant issues that will be helpful while solving problems of international students.

This guideline consists two main part. In the first part, academic challenges faced by international students and academicians during education were emphasized and advises were given to academic staff to use to create an effective education environment. In the second part of this guideline the interaction between non-academic staff and international students were focused and some advises were given to academic staff for using to solve problems.

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GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

1. Introduction

Internationalization in higher education, which is defined as the process of integrating a global and intercultural dimension to the aims, functions, and delivery of educational services (Knight, 2008), has recently gained momentum and has become one of the priority strategies of higher education institutions (Ghasempoor, Liaghatdar, and Jafari, 2011; Reid et al., 2010). Its contribution to raising qualified manpower, creating economic value, developing a common understanding in a socio-cultural context, creating strategic collaborations, and its contribution to the process of generating scientific knowledge at a universal level through projects and research (Kireçci et al., 2016; Shaydorova, 2014) in higher education are the main reasons that play a role in the increase of internationalization efforts. Based on the stated reasons, it can be said that there is a fierce competition among higher education institutions in order to be preferred by attracting more international students and thus gain an economic input and prestige at the international level (Özoğlu, Gür, and Coşkun, 2012; Teichler, 2009; Yonezawa, 2011).

The rapid change in the world since the second half of the twentieth century has manifested itself in the field of higher education as in many other fields. The rise in the development efforts of the less developed countries, the need for the qualified manpower of developed countries, the ease of travel brought about by increasing globalization, the increase in cooperation and interaction between countries, the change of production relations, the increasing population, the desire of individuals to benefit from a different intellectual accumulation outside their own countries and many other reasons have resulted in the international student mobility reaching an important level today (KAM, 2015:10).

The number of international students increases every year. In 2018, there were over 5.3 million international students. According to UNESCO's 2018 data, the top 25 countries preferred by international students are shown in Table 1. As can be seen from Table 1, according to the data of 2018, the most preferred countries by international students are the United States of America with 987.314 students, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with 452.079 students, Australia with 444.514 students, Germany with 311.738 students and Russian Federation with 262.416 students respectively. According to data from 2018, compared to 2016, the international student ratio largest increase in the top 25 countries; Turkey ranked first with a 42.36% growth rate, Spain ranked second with a growth rate of 42.29%, and the Republic of Korea ranked third with growth rate 36.94%.

Table 1: Top 25 Countries Most Preferred by International Students

RANKING	COUNTRY	INTERNATIONAL STUDENT NUMBERS (BY YEAR)		
		2016	2017	2018
1	United States of America	971.417	984.898	987.314
2	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	432.001	435.734	452.079
3	Australia	335.512	381.202	444.514
4	Germany	244.575	258.873	311.738
5	Russian Federation	243.752	250.658	262.416
6	France	245.349	258.380	229.623
7	Canada	189.478	209.979	224.548
8	Japan	143.457	164.338	182.748
9	China	137.527	157.108	178.271
10	Turkey	87.903	108.076	125.138
11	Italy	92.655	97.563	106.611
12	Netherlands	89.920	96.289	104.015
13	Republic of Korea	61.888	70.796	84.749
14	Austria	70.483	73.964	75.259
15	Saudi Arabia	79.854	78.344	73.977
16	Spain	49.837	64.927	70.912
17	Poland	54.734	63.925	54.354
18	Switzerland	51.911	53.368	54.279
19	Belgium	61.102	44.978	53.896
20	New Zealand	53.854	52.678	52.702
21	Singapore	53.122	53.204	51.756
22	Ukraine	54.144	52.768	49.632
23	India	44.766	46.703	46.077
24	Jordan	47.022	39.577	44.802
25	Czechia	42.812	44.261	44.767

Source: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics, http://data.uis.unesco.org/

Note: *Ranked according to 2018 data.*

According to OECD's 2018 data, 6% of undergraduate and postgraduate degree students were international and foreign students in OECD countries. The percentage of international and foreign students up from 5% in 2013. In OECD countries, 13.3 percent of master's degree students (10.2% in 2013) and 22.4% of Ph.D. students (22.9% in 2013) are international or foreign students in 2018 (OECD, 2018).

Source: https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=RFOREIGN#
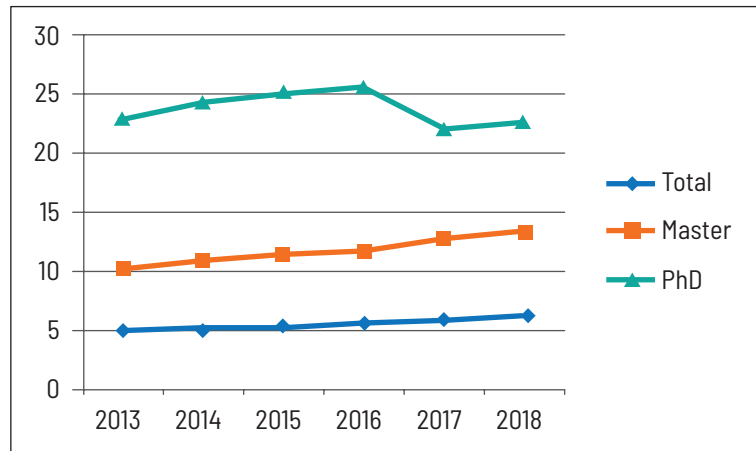
Figure 1. Percentage of the total (graduate and postgraduate), master's level and, Ph.D. level international students in OECD countries from 2013 to 2018.

When the OECD European countries are examined, it is seen that there is an increasing trend in the number of undergraduate and postgraduate degree students. As seen in Figure 2, the percentage of undergraduate and graduate students was 8% in 2013 and increased to 9% in 2018. There is also an increase in the percentage of master and Ph.D. degree students.

Source: https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=RFOREIGN#
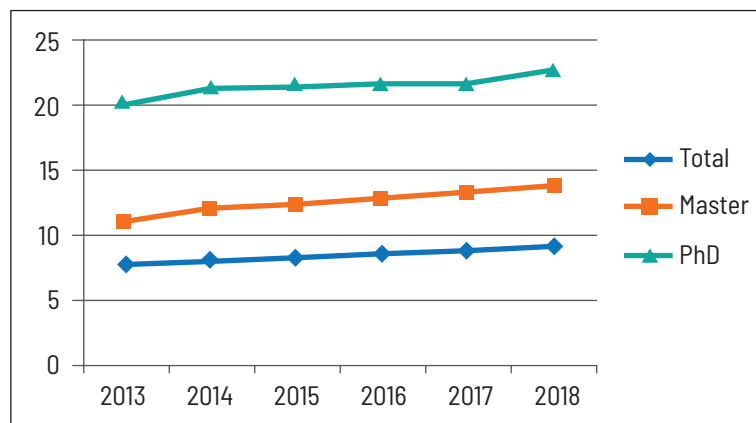
Figure 2. Percentage of the total (graduate and postgraduate), master's level and, Ph.D. level international students in OECD European countries from 2013 to 2018.

Internationalization opens many possibilities (greater cultural, language, and educational diversity) for higher education institutions and, managed well, can yield a range of benefits for the institution and its broader community. For Teekens (2000:19), the international classroom is "a truly intercultural academic community." It prepares all participants for work in an increasingly interconnected world by offering an opportunity to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes for local, national, regional, and global contexts.

Most colleges and universities around the world have experienced an increasing cultural diversification of their student body. The origin of international students in 2018 can be seen in Figure 3.

Source: https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=RFOREIGN#

Figure 3. Enrolment of international students by origin in 2018

Unprecedented student mobility has lead to growing numbers of international students sharing classrooms with domestic students. An outcome of this is "extra demands on academic staffs," which are the result of "a challenging multicultural educational setting." Given the central role of ac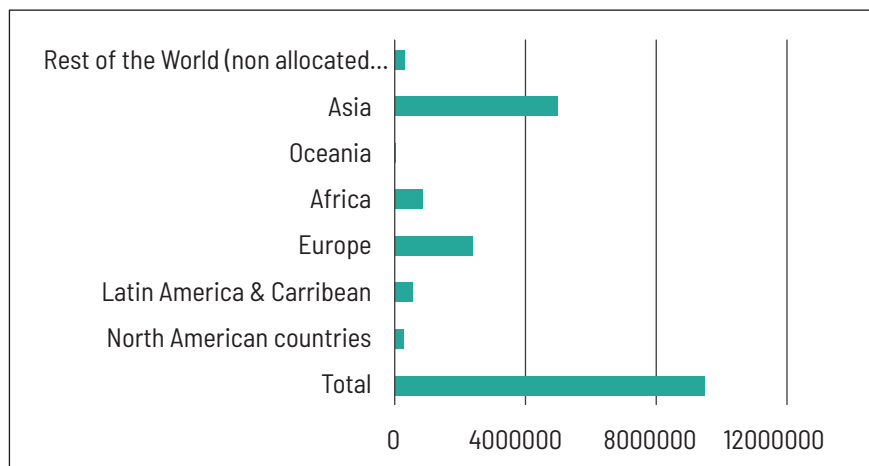ademic staff within the life of the university, and with international strategies now touching on all aspects of a university's activity, academic staffs are important to the further internationalization of higher education. However, international students who prefer to study outside of their country face many academic, socio-cultural, psychological, and economic problems in the country which they come to study. Academic problems such as difficulties in note-taking and comprehension problems, unfamiliarity with the class format and methodology and assessment, unfamiliarity with the academic classroom expectations; lack of second language confidence, cultural problems, psychosocial problems such as anxiety, discrimination problems faced by international students in the classroom negatively affect the academic success of students and make it difficult for them to adapt to social life. With the solution of the problems faced by international students in the classroom, students will increase their self-confidence, their integration with the new culture will increase, their academic success will increase, and their future plans will be shaped more clearly.

International classroom refers to both formal teaching areas and the educational setting in which academic staffs and students come into contact with each other. The international classroom comprises students from diverse cultural, language, and educational backgrounds. The academic staff should develop certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes to maximize teaching and learning outcomes in this environment. Furthermore, activities in the international classroom include both formal and informal interactions between academic staffs and students. Whether a student is familiar with the teaching tradition or not, the obstacles that can create an international classroom and how to overcome these obstacles need to be discussed.

Another problem with teaching in an international classroom is limited participation. International students may have a different perception of course practice and therefore react differently in a more "open" classroom environment, such as a western classroom. Since they see the opinions and perceptions of professors as authoritarian and respectful, they may think that it is not necessary to delay the lesson in order to ask questions. Another reason for limited participation may be students' limited knowledge of the language that may prevent them from expressing themselves publicly. It is especially common when foreign students are a minority in the classroom.

This guideline has been prepared to attract attention to the problematic areas that international students encounter in the classroom and supervision process, and give some tips to academic staffs to overcome the most common problems. In the first section, problems faced by academic staff during teaching and education management in Covid-19 process are discussed and some advise that can help academic staff to overcome these problems are given. In the second section, problems faced by academic staff during supervision are discussed and some advise that can help academic staff to overcome these problems are given.

2. Problems faced by academic staff during teaching

2.1. Specific requirements regarding Curriculum, Methodology, and Sylabullus Design

First of all, it is necessary to define the concepts of the curriculum in order to avoid meaning complexity. While the curriculum includes the content and plan of the course, the curriculum has a broader meaning that includes planning the course, designing the syllabus, determining the materials and methods to be used, and evaluating the course. (Nunan, 1988, p.4–5).

Various sources of information can affect students' interest, attitude, and motivation for a course they have started. These factors include the attractiveness of the topic and how closely students are connected to the course enrollment goals, the views and experiences of classmates, the course's online and offline ratings, and instructors (Ludy et al., 2016). The course curriculum is an area where educators can promote their courses, just like commercials where businesses market their products. This area is the only medium where educators can give students the first information about the course and show how the course will continue for a semester. It is very important that this information consists of clear and understandable expressions because the curriculum affects students' participation in the course positively or negatively.
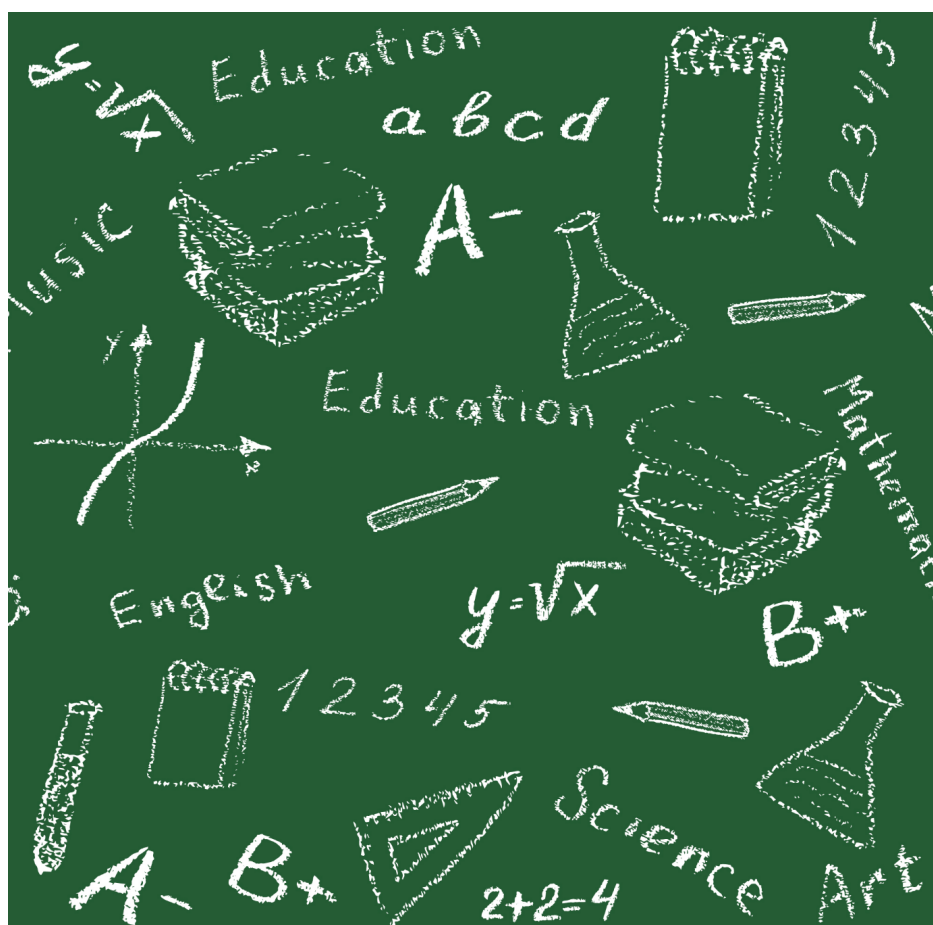
Jones and Killick (2007) see the internationalization of the curriculum as "finding all the experiences that inform you to continue higher education (cognitive, attitudinal and affective)." It incorporates a range of values, including openness, tolerance, and culturally inclusive behavior, and careful planning of what and how to teach, and resources to help graduates achieve the intended result. Internationalization of the curriculum should not be just because of the increasing number of international students. Universities have to aim for their students to become global citizens in a global world where transportation and communication are now very easy. For this reason, the motivation of universities to internationalize their curricula should be at least as much as attracting the attention of international students, as well as ensuring that their local students have the tolerance to respect the cultural richness and differences that they can become world citizens (Leask, 2005).

According to the results of the academic hospitality survey conducted with approximately 600 international students from 5 different countries (Turkey, Spain, Lithuania, Netherlands and Ireland), 26.48% of the students participating in the survey stated that they had problems with the teaching methods of the university.

A revised education agenda is needed to prepare local and international students for the future (Teekens, 2000, p.20). Internationalization of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study (Leask, 2015).

The academic staff must be able to present the curriculum in a context that allows students from different backgrounds to fulfill their learning needs. And also, the academic staff must have knowledge of educational theory, different teaching and learning styles. The academic staff internationalizes the curriculum to integrate the international education perspective into the curriculum in order to train students who can see and respect the advantages of this situation rather than see the differences as a problem.

In this sense, determining the list of courses to be chosen by international students during the preparation of the curriculum is of critical importance. In many universities, the program is designed according to the academician's schedule due to reasons such as the low number of academic staff who can teach international students and the intensive course schedule. This situation causes international students' courses to overlap with each other, thus making the already narrow course pool they can choose even narrower. In the study conducted within the scope of our project, approximately one out of every three international students (32.75%) faced this overlapping problem. While determining the course schedule, the first priority should be to avoid course overlap. Setting the personal calendar of academics as the second priority (not the first) is important in this sense.

The curriculum and syllabus design must have a certain standard at international scales because the excess content in the curriculum on a national basis makes it difficult for international students to understand. Today, with the developing technology, the course materials have diversified. In this sense, students are provided with opportunities such as audio and/or video recordings as well as suggesting books as a course resource. Thus, the students' prior knowledge about the course will be much more. This situation also reduces students' anxiety about the lesson.

While the academic staff design the syllabus, the syllabus should

- be easy to navigate and find information
- be understandable
- be visually striking
- be comprehensive
- motivate students to interest in the class

Tips for the academic staff

The academic staff

- ❖ should know how to involve students from different national traditions in the learning process by using examples and cases from different cultural settings.

- ❖ should take an interest in the cultural backgrounds of the foreign students in the group and support initiatives for extracurricular cultural activities.

- ❖ should be able to treat the subject matter of her discipline in such a way that examples from various cultural and educational settings are used

- ❖ should have a flexible attitude towards various styles of student behavior. (For example, in some countries, students stand when asking a question)

- ❖ should encourage students to copy or borrow notes from peers and discuss the notes with peers.

- ❖ should share with the students how the course will be conducted at the beginning of the term.

- ❖ should share the course syllabus with students at the beginning of the semester. So that students can prepare in advance for their lectures, assignments, and presentations.

- ❖ should schedule meetings for international students on specific days and hours. In this way, academicians will follow the problems of the students closely.

In most universities, lecturers are provided with ready-made curriculums. Instructors create their own curriculum on these templates, whose standards are set. Thus, these curriculums prepare almost all of the basic information that will be given to the students in their lessons. Although this situation provides standardization, it is far from attracting the attention of the student.

2.2. Issues related to language differences

As a communication tool, language is the most important factor in conveying people's thoughts and forming new thoughts through mutual interaction. Therefore, there is an interaction between language, which has an important functionality in human life and thought. The emergence and development of thought are only possible with language. For this reason, insufficient language level is a situation that deters motivation for the student both in socio-cultural and academic terms. During the fulfillment of vital needs and in the academic process, language is a factor that affects a student's success and communication with the dimensions of writing, speaking, understanding, and listening (Ercan, 2012, p.19).

The survey studies we conducted within the scope of our project on the difficulties encountered regarding language differences have also yielded results that support the literature. One out of every four students who participated in our questionnaire stated that they had problems with the teaching and learning of language.

The language barrier is probably the most significant, prevalent problem for most international students (Mori, 2000, p.137). International students with language problems cannot participate actively in the classroom environment due to problems such as speaking, understanding, and writing. This situation negatively affects their academic success, and they have difficulties in communicating effectively with other students. Therefore, underlying many of the problems experienced by international students is a lack of language proficiency and cultural knowledge (Andrade, 2006, p.143).

2.2.1. Using a non-native language of instruction

The most obvious obstacle for cross-cultural communication is language difference. Numerous studies have shown that a language and non-verbal communication differences (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984; Orasanu et al., 1997) can all hinder interaction processes in international classrooms. Second-language speakers are likely to speak with an accent; therefore understanding second-language speakers is usually more difficult. Because of language difficulties, international students are likely to speak less during in-class discussions compared to local students. As a result, they may appear to be less prepared for the class or be perceived as unable to fully comprehend the new material delivered by the teacher.

Tips for the academic staff

The academic staff

- ❖ should have a very good oral and written command of the language of instruction (If the language of the instruction is different from the native language).

- ❖ should speak clearly and slowly,

- ❖ should explain idioms and acronyms.

- ❖ should contextualize information for the international students.

- ❖ should never use two languages at the same time

- ❖ should be aware of the positive impact of body language on the way she is understood and should use it as necessary

- ❖ should use audio-visual aids in support of spoken texts.

- ❖ should choose a more emphatic narrative method that all students in the class can understand.

2.2.2. Using a native language of instruction

Language barriers are natural when they come together in an international classroom with diverse language backgrounds. Language not only affects learning ability but can also lead to a decrease in the confidence taught (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009).

Host students may also encounter language difficulties (Jones, 2010). Host students are reluctant to comment on some of the terminologies of that language to foreign students who have less knowledge of native language. They do not make any additional effort for this. They also avoid interacting with international students for fear that some of their comments might be misinterpreted ethnically or racially (Montgomery, 2010).

Tips for the Academic Staff

The academic staff

❖ should ensure the active participation of international students in the lesson by forming small groups in the classroom instead of whole-class discussion.

❖ should include visuals in the narration.

❖ should engage students with simple questions.

❖ should allow enough time for the student to express themselves.

❖ should get it to work with more experienced international students.

❖ should explain to international students at the beginning of the semester how your verbal communication will be.

❖ should allow enough time for international students to get used to the verbal communication style.

❖ should understand differences in verbal communication style.

2.3. Factors related to dealing with cultural differences

The benefits of diversity for international groups are great and undisputable, but if not managed properly, cultural differences can have adverse effects on classroom management. It is clear that international students will contribute not only to the country or campus life but also to the academic life, the teaching and learning styles, curriculum, assessment and evaluation, material design and classroom management skills. In order to benefit from international students in the classroom, it is very important that the academic staff attach importance to some basic points and their competencies and behaviors related to these basic points and review them.

International students come from a myriad of cultural backgrounds (Sandhu, 1994, p.237). International students also have cultural adaptation problems apart from academic problems and language barriers. Learning different world views in higher education can help their cultural adaptation.

Formal education is one of the most important features of national culture and so to analyze cultural differences on the basis of a theoretical framework is quite important. Cultural diversity is a multidimensional construct. It can be measured in terms of diversity amount and diversity degree (Thomas, 1999). The amount of diversity refers to the number of representatives from different cultural backgrounds. The degree of diversity refers to the degree of dissimilarity between these different cultural backgrounds, also referred to as cultural distance (Kogut and Singh, 1988).

The social dynamics of mixed cultural groups differ from monoculture ones by definition. Different learning and teaching styles of foreign students have the potential to create problems during teaching (Theodoridis, 2015). Therefore, these problems should be discussed, and possible solutions should be evaluated. There are studies in the literature in which the cultural background factor in the education of international students is exaggerated or, on the contrary, underestimated. Also, it should be emphasized that attributing particular characteristics to particular students' ethnic origins mainly serves to create stereotypes and diverts attention from the potential difficulties that may arise in an international classroom and which can only rely on multiculturalism itself.

International students may experience cultural shock due to differences in views and values in their country of residence. As they enter a new culture, they have to deal with different value systems, communication models, social communication signs and symbols, and interpersonal relationship patterns. For example, foreign students face many different norms of behavior towards the concept of "time" in different cultures than in their own countries. This can easily cause confusion and anxiety (Baklashova and Kazakov, 2016).

Cultural differences can be considered problematic when evaluated in terms of another cultural background. For example, Seo and Koro-Ljungberg (2005) stated that "students make informed decisions to deviate from Korean cultural expectations, but are not capable or willing to replace them with US cultural values." Why should it be necessary for a student to "fit" or "change" the cultural heritage of a country where they have been working for a relatively short period of time? Of course, one of the goals of studying abroad is to immerse yourself in another culture and gain experience and knowledge, rather than adopting that culture.

Elements of traditional clothing, such as the hijab worn by Muslim women or the turban worn by Sikh men, can draw excessive and usually unwanted attention, making international students stand out and feel uncomfortable. This may results in a lower level of participation in teamwork and in-class discussions, leading to poorer performance of the team as a whole. Consequently, cooperation and exchange of ideas between the minority and the majority subgroups may be hindered, which can lead to decreased cohesiveness and effectiveness of the student group as a whole.

Additionally, cross-cultural differences in perceptions of justice can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (Murphy-Berman and Berman, 2002). Therefore, effective diversity management in academia is vital and must be addressed at different levels. At the individual level, the academic staff needs to find ways to effectively facilitate in-classroom management.

Tips for the academic staff

The academic staff

- ❖ should respect cultural differences

- ❖ should be able to distinguish cultural differences from personal traits, for example, knowing whether a student is only shy or feels that it is not appropriate to ask a question

- ❖ should try to avoid thinking in stereotypes and to behave and express opinions without resorting to such generalizations

- ❖ should be able to make students aware of the cultural differences within the group and help them to take them into account

- ❖ have knowledge of how gender roles are seen in different cultures

- ❖ have cultural self-awareness,

- ❖ should have the ability to 'negotiate different cultures' by engaging in a meaningful dialogue that overcomes misunderstandings and particularly promotes the construction of collective meaning.

- ❖ should try to make adjustments for cultural differences within the groups

- ❖ should have some basic knowledge of the culture(s) of the students in the group. On the first day of school, she should learn how many IS there are in her classroom from the Students' Affairs department. She should learn the characteristics of the students (Country, age, gender, ethnicity, scholarship, etc.)

- ❖ should assess student performance with due respect for different academic cultures

- ❖ should be aware and reflect on the cultural context of her role as a teacher.

Academic culture embraces the particular academic values, roles, assumptions, attitudes, and patterns of behavior that can operate at various levels in different educational systems. (Mulligan and Kirkpatrick, 2000, p.312). International students who leave their country and go to another country to get a higher quality education may face a different academic culture in the countries they go to. For example, while in some countries academicians and students participate interactively in lessons, in some countries, student participation may be limited. Similarly, while the understanding of education based on rote memorization is common in some countries, education based on critical thinking is dominant in some countries. Such educational system differences between countries make it difficult for international students to adapt to the academic environment.

Cultural differences in time management may cause cultural incompatibility for some international students. In monochronic cultures, minutes, deadlines, and working hours are very important. As stated in the word "time is money," the fact that time is seen as equivalent to money highlights the importance attached to time in these cultures. When interacting and communicating with people in monochronic cultures, the focus is on one activity at a time. In polychronic cultures, it is more important to complete a particular task in accordance with traditions than to be completed at a certain time and punctuality. Polychronic cultures are the culture in which people engage in many activities at the same time (Novinger, 2001, p.110).

Tips for the Academic Staff

The academic staff

- ❖ should describe your time culture to international students at the beginning of the term.
- ❖ should contact international students one-on-one to make it easier for them to adapt to this culture.
- ❖ should get international students to adapt to your culture with short and easy assignments.

2.4. Specific requirements connected with the academic discipline & diploma recognition

To have a basic knowledge of the main features of education systems in other countries is quite important for the academic staff. The academic staff should know the international context of his or her subject and how the subject has developed in other countries and be familiar with the international literature in the field. Because this knowledge can help the academic staff while designing her syllabus.

Tips for the academic staff

The academic staff

❖ should be capable of consulting with international counterparts and jointly developing a learning agreement through which students can qualify for international credit transfer

❖ should be aware of a subject's status in other traditions. (For example, in Turkey, physiotherapy is a university degree program, whereas, in the Netherlands, this course falls under higher professional education)

2.5. Personal Qualifications of the Academic Staff

An academic staff is a person who researches his/her own field and constantly improves himself/herself. The academic staff should be well prepared for the subject to be told in the lesson and use appropriate teaching methods related to the subject. The academic staff should explain the subject at a level that students can understand and should not make the subject difficult and complex. Thus, it will be easier for students to understand the lesson, and the lesson will not become unbearable.

Power-sharing and participation are fundamental to learning for all students, and power relations can not change unless both parties participate (Bishop and Glynn, 1999, p.132). For this reason, the academic staff should teach the lesson interactively. In other words, the academic staff should ask the students questions during the lesson and give the students the opportunity to ask the subjects they do not understand. In this way, the incomprehensible subjects will be explained again, and the students will be able to understand the subject better.

The academic staff must be equal to all students. Without making any discrimination between students (such as national and international), they should respect the opinions of the students and should not make sentences that degrade the student and damage the student's personality dignity. A dialogue should always be developed within the framework of respect and love between the academic staff and the student.

The academic staff should pay close attention to the problems of the students and help the students to solve the problems. In this way, the student, who feels the support of the academic staff, will not feel alone and helpless; the student who sees that their problems have been solved will increase their interest in their lessons, and accordingly, their academic success will increase.

The academic staff should also provide the student with the necessary information about the assessment methods for the lessons (exam, lesson participation, etc.). While evaluating the students' exams, academic staff should carefully read the answers given by the students to the questions and try to give the same scores to similar answers. The academic staff should conduct an objective assessment process.

The research carried out within the scope of the project, some findings regarding the academic perceptions of international students regarding their education are given in the Figure 4. Accordingly, 77.6% of the international students participating in the study find the academic staff's knowledge about the subject good and very good, only 3.4% find it very poor and poor, and 19% say they are at an average level.
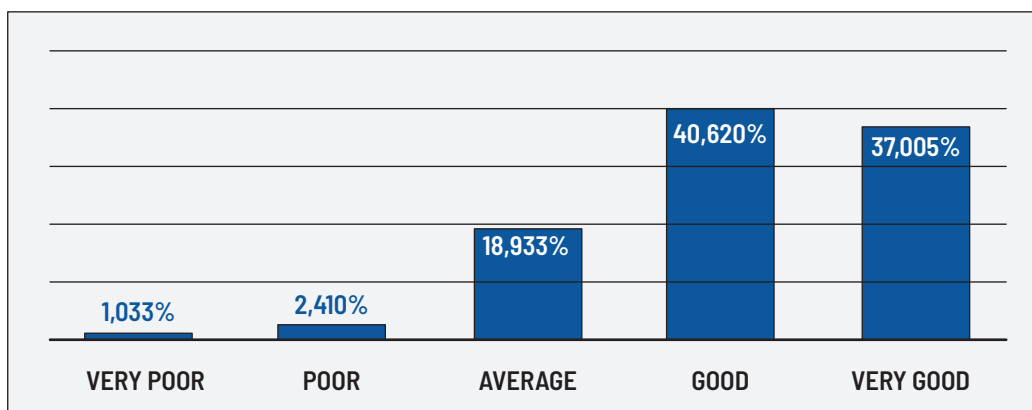
Figure 4. Knowledge of the academic staff about the subjects
(According to the international student's perspective)

The perspectives of international students regarding the availability of academic staff to solve problems can seen in Figure 5. Accordingly, 66.3% of the international students participating in the study find the availability of academic staff to solve problems good and very good, only 11.7% find it very poor and poor, and 22% say they are at an average level.
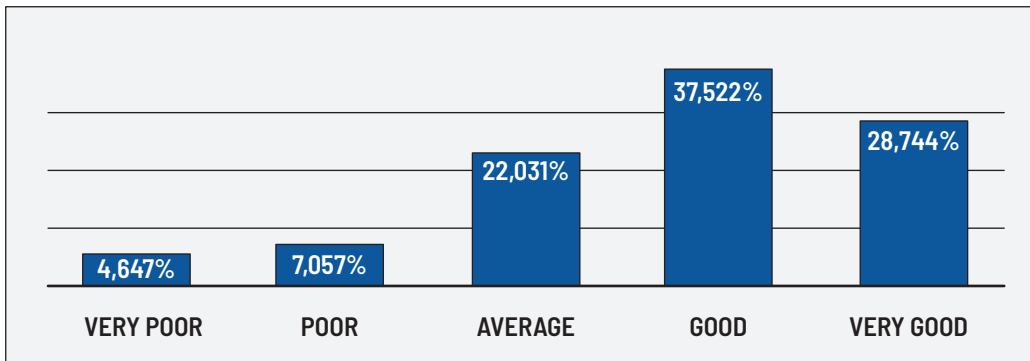
Figure 5. Availability of academic staff to solve problems
(According to the international student's perspective)

The perspectives of international students regarding the consideration of academic staff about international students' circumstances are as in Figure 6. Accordingly, 57.3% of the international students participating in the study find the consideration of academic staff about international students' circumstances good and very good, only 18.6% find it very poor and poor, and 24.1% say they are at an average level.
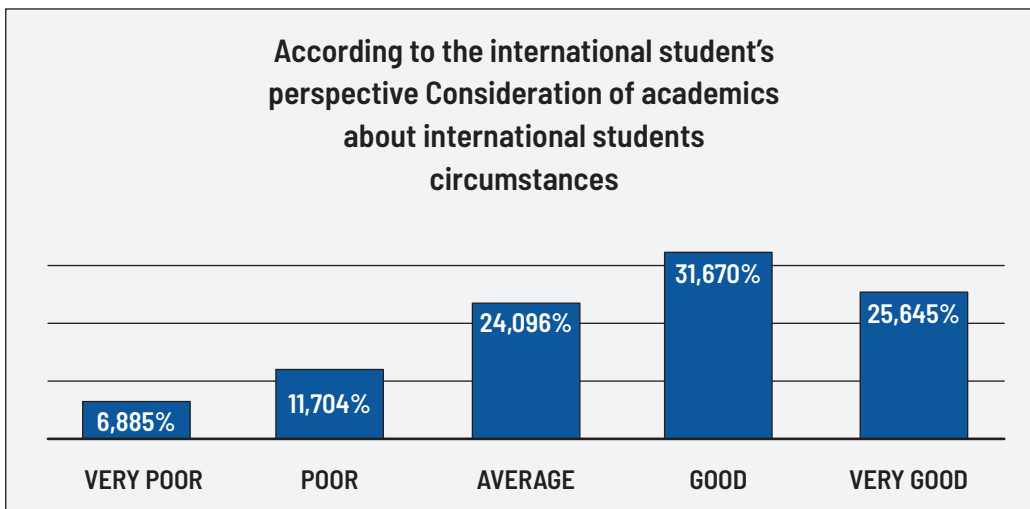
Figure 6. Consideration of academic staff about international students circumstances
(According to the international student's perspective)

In addition to all these, the academic staff should be able to cope with the stress caused by the nature of the work.

Tips for the academic staff

The academic staff

- ❖ should be sensitive on issues of religion

- ❖ should recognize cultural differences regarding attitudes to alcohol

- ❖ should consider the special facilities needed by students from other countries

- ❖ can spend more time with international students

- ❖ should pronounce students' names correctly.

- ❖ Should provide one-to-one support where applicable.

- ❖ Be aware that international students may have different prior educational experiences and expectations.

2.6. Isolation from Classmates and Personal Loneliness

Isolation occurs when trying to get used to a new group and find new friends. New international students find themselves in a "relational deficit" at a time when they need more than normal support. They face a foreign language, learn in a new environment, have to negotiate finance, housing, and everyday life issues, and an unconventional set of corporate rules. They often face the problems of personal autonomy and the recreation of identity in their new environment. They have to deal largely on their own with unforeseen encounters, idiosyncratic communications, and issues of racial discrimination. This situation causes international students to be exposed to both personal loneliness and social isolation. Studies have shown that personal loneliness is both routine and deep, often peculiar to the international student experience (Sawir et al., 2007).

International students are likely to encounter different types of isolation both in the classroom and in their public life (Baklashova and Kazakov, 2016). In this beginning, international students usually take a more passive role but eventually show different strategies for engaging in social activities or classroom discussion.

Tips for the academic staff

The academic staff

❖ should encourage international students to work together to increase individual creativity and self-awareness. This can increase self-esteem and help cope with lonelines

❖ should share stories about the difficulties they faced during their education period. By this way, the academic staff and students can build bridges.

❖ should get international students in your class to join a social network of students (student clubs, social events, etc.). This social network will help them reduce their anxiety.

❖ should create small groups in the classroom where international students and local students will work together.

❖ should direct international students to centers on campus where they can get psychosocial support.

International students have concerns arising from new academic and cultural adaptation problems. Being rejected, excluded, or ignored generally causes intense anxiety, depression, grief, jealousy, and loneliness in international students (Osterman, 2000, p.327). Research has found that international students' counseling services are not sufficiently used because of insufficient funding to support a counseling service that suits the needs of international students, not being aware of the existence of counseling support, or concerns about trust, shame, and loss issues (Baloğlu, 2000; Jacob, 2001). Psychologically, anxiety is a subjective state of apprehension and uneasiness (Bourne, 2010, p.2). Until international students adapt to their new lives, they may face physiological, behavioral, and psychological anxiety disorders.

Tips for University Board

The University Board should;

❖ To increase the number of consultancy services for the needs of international students.

❖ To organize activities to increase the effectiveness of these consultancy services.

❖ Encouraging international students to benefit from these services.

Loneliness is as much a natural and integral part of being human as joy, hunger, and sorrow. People feel lonely from time to time. Although the feeling of loneliness cannot be prevented, it can be managed. (Rokach and Brock, 1998, p.107). It is usual for international students who leave their families, friends, relatives home and come to a different country for education to feel alone at first.

2.7. Using Technology and Media

Today, thanks to technology, human life has become much more comfortable and easy in many areas. Especially thanks to the internet, information, and communication have become a global level. In this context, the education provided in universities is not confined to campuses or buildings and has become accessible anywhere in the world via the internet.

The tools used for distance education among academics are beneficial in terms of reaching students, controlling them, and guiding them. There are many advantages, such as being able to instantly send messages to students who choose the course through the system of the university, being able to give them projects or homework, and being able to control these assignments through the system.

It is much faster and easier for students to adapt and use technology than adults due to their ages. In this way, students can overcome previously difficult problems much easier with the help of technology. For example, it was more difficult for a student going to study in a new country and to find his destination, but now it is much easier thanks to the navigation application on mobile phones. Nowadays, we can say that thanks to the ability of students to use technology in their daily lives, they easily adapt to daily activities more quickly when they moved to a new country. Most of the students (86.2%) who participated in our survey within the scope of the project stated that they did not have any problems with daily living activities (as having a credit card, shopping in the supermarket, etc.).

Tips for the academic staff

The academic staff

❖ should be able to include the use of ICT in such a way that it enhances other forms of teaching and learning

❖ should be able to support students in web-based learning processes

❖ should know how to prepare students for the use of ICT learning and be able to explain its use, purpose, and limitations

❖ should realize that most students will have better ICT skills than he or she does

❖ should realize that the use of media and technologies has a culturally defined meaning and the implicit message that can enhance communication but may hamper contacts for some students

❖ should be able to support students in web-based learning processes

2.8. Education management and COVID-19

The coronavirus crisis has had a significant destabilizing impact on global admissions; it has also adversely affected many internationalization activities of universities, most notably regarding the mobility of students and staff. International students have had to navigate shifting travel restrictions, visa hurdles, and greater technology dependence, among a range of other issues and considerations. The COVID-19 crisis has shaped 2020, from what we can do, to how we interact, how we learn, and how we work. It is clear that online learning has become a pivotal part of the educational experience during COVID-19, and it will be continuous. Universities have also incorporated a wide range of safety measures within the educational experience to limit the spread of the coronavirus on campus. In addition to this, during COVID-19, because of travel restrictions, communicate with international students online is more important than ever. As more and more institutions move to online learning to reduce risk during the crisis, students and academic and non-academic staff are evolving to adapt to new learning environments and tools.

Besides the difficulties derives from the adaptation of online learning, international students have had to deal with racial discrimination and xenophobia. In some countries, COVID-19–related fears have resulted in social and political responses characterized by racial discrimination and xenophobia toward international students. Racial discrimination and xenophobia have been able to harm the mental health and life satisfaction of international students.

Tips for the academic staff

During online learning, the academic staff

- ❖ should adopt new learning environments and tools.
- ❖ should help international students to understand the software interface because the instructions provided by the software developers can be complicated for some students
- ❖ should realize that the use of media and technologies has a culturally defined meaning and the implicit message that can enhance communication, but may hamper contacts for some students
- ❖ should support emotionally to get through COVID-19 affected online learning
- ❖ should consider internet connection speed couldn't be sufficient for multiuser real-time high-definition video. Sharing the course video and/or notes with students can solve this problem.

During face to face learning, the academic staff

- ❖ should try to hold lectures and seminars in larger rooms to minimize close contract.

Adaptation of new learning environment and tools led to an increase in the workload of academic staff. They need more time to prepare course material, have to make more effort to conduct dialogues with students, and need more time to mark homework. As a result of the aforementioned circumstances, the stress level of academic staff increased as well. They should be able to cope with the stress.

3. Problems faced by academic staff during supervision of international students

Supervision is defined as supervising and directing students' research and written presentation. Supervision includes tasks such as providing guidance on research/thesis structure, setting standards for research, directing, and informing students of problems and constraints. Supervisors also contribute to students' socialization (including networking) and options after degree completion by enabling them to attend conferences and give presentations, publish and secure jobs as academics (Mitchell, 2007).

A supervisor is a critical person in students' graduate and postgraduate education and, they have a great responsibility in supervising research students. Supervisors and their research students work together with one on one. Supervisors guide students on the dissertation inquiry's nature,

provide direction and make them aware of problems and constraints. In addition to these, advise on planning the dissertation, setting standards for research. (https://as.exeter.ac.uk/academic-policy-standards/tqa-anual/lts/dissertationsupervision/). They help students increase their academic success through higher completion rates of research and complete research timely. Moreover, supervisors give intellectual advice and emotional support when students challenge the research subject. They try to develop the student's self-confidence and increase their well-being.

Researches on international students focused on students' experience of learning, teaching, and administrative processes. Unfortunately, there is limited research on the supervision of international students. Many of this research focused on academic success, but international students encounter various problems such as adjustment and acculturative stress, lacking family support apart from adopting academically different educational backgrounds. And these problems affect academic success indirectly.

Supervision is a complicated job, and it becomes more problematic when it comes the supervise international students. Strategies conducted with domestic students cannot be successful for international students. Supervisors need new perspectives and strategies to motivate international students. To develop an appropriate strategy, supervisors should understand the difficulties that are encountered by international students. (Mudassir and Hashim, 2019, p.143).

Furthermore, supervisors should revise the strategies by observing the students during the supervision process. Novice international students face different challenges than senior international students. According to Li, Liu and Lee (2018), research students' development can evaluate at three different levels. Level 1 international students are novices. They are highly motivated, lack an understanding of supervising complexities, and rely heavily on their supervisor for guidance. Level 2 international students experience conflict regarding their aspiration for autonomy versus their need for assistance from their supervisor. Motivation begins to fluctuate due to insecurity regarding their skills. Level 3 international students' motivation is again high and stable. Strategies to supervise international students should be designed considering their development level.

Working with international students gives the supervisor a chance to develop an extended worldview and transcultural knowledge. At the same time, supervising international students has many supervisors' challenges (Cornet and Pio, 2017, p.31).

Supervising is a complex form of pedagogy, and it is becoming more and more complicated with the increasing diversity of students (Vos and Armstrong, 2019). According to OECD's statistics share of international students is increasing year by year. However, the ratio of students to academic staff may not be stable in every country, as seen in Figure 7.
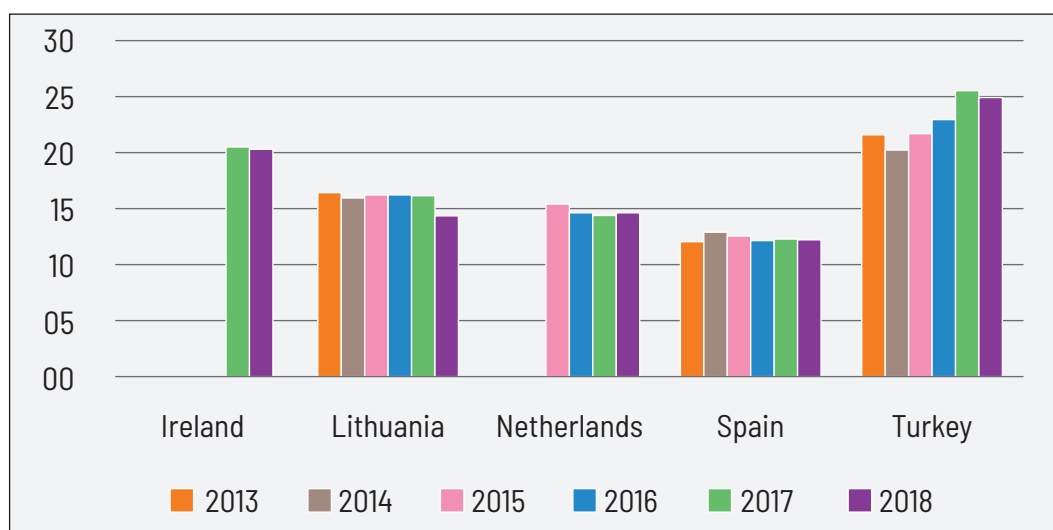
Figure 7. The ratio of students to academic staff percentage in higher education by years

Source: https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=RFOREIGN#)

Academics face difficulties in supervising graduates' research projects and postgraduate dissertations due to the growing student numbers whose cultures and native languages different from host countries and each other.

Supervising international students may require more time and effort than domestic students. This situation can cause tension for supervisors. If a supervisor reflects this tension to the supervision process consciously or unconsciously, students' academic success and social adaptation may be adversely affected (Cornet and Pio, 2017, p.31).

> **Tips for Supervisor**
>
> The supervisor
>
> ❖ should determine the number of international students at the beginning of the semester. When you are planning time, take into account that you may need more time for international students.

Supervisors should consider the following dynamics when supervising international students:

- Cultural differences
- Language deficiencies
- Motivation
- Plagiarism
- Time management
- Homecoming

3.1. Cultural Differences

One of the main problems faced when supervising international students is cultural differences. Cultural differences affect communication patterns. For example, international students from Confucianism-influenced countries have different communication patterns interpersonal relations than international students from western countries.

Supervisors need to understand international students' cultural characteristics to improve supervisor-student relationships and guide them to each research training stage (Chen and Sit, 2017, p.19). Understanding international students' cultural characteristics is crucial for the choice of the research topic. In some countries, supervisors are perceived as "know-it-all/guru" and must give precise instructions to the student in choosing a research topic. In contrast, the research training process is an independent research process under supervision. The student must select their research topic, design the research, and determine the method himself/ herself. The difference between supervisor and student perspectives on supervisors' role in the supervision process can disappoint students when selecting the research topic. Supervisors should understand international students' cultural characteristics to understand what they expect from supervision.

> **Tips for Supervisor**
>
> The supervisor
>
> ❖ should learn supervisees' home country and investigate the cultural characteristics of supervisee home country. If there is a difference between home and host countries' cultural characteristics on the supervisor role in the research process, supervisor shoul explain and clarify supervisor and supervisees' role.

Many international students return to the home country to conduct fieldwork of research. And this is another challenge faced when supervising international students. If an international student conducts the fieldwork in his/her home country, understanding the student's cultural

background becomes much more crucial. Otherwise, the student may choose a research topic that is not suitable for research in his/her own country, and then they have to change the research subject, or worst, he/she may fail in the research project. For instance, in some countries, using quantitative methods may not proper because interviewees can refuse to sign a consensus form or may not honestly speak out due to political reasons. If a student from those countries chooses quantitative methods for your research, he/she may have great difficulties during the data collection phase (Chen and Sit, 2017, p.15-17).

Tips for Supervisor

The supervisor

❖ should talk with the student about whether he/she will conduct the fieldwork in his/her home country or the host country. If the student will conduct the fieldwork in his/her home country, evaluate the research topic and applicability of the research method considering student' home countries' cultural characteristics.

Power distance is one of the dimensions that shape society's cultural characteristics. In high-power distance countries, less powerful people and powerful people are not equal. People from those countries accept this inequality and respect for rank and authority. This cultural dimension affects the attitude of students to supervisors. In high-power distance countries, students respect supervisors deeply. In these countries, the supervisor initiates communication, and it is appropriate to question what the supervisor said and criticize (Hofstede, 2001). These students may found it difficult to communicate with supervisors.

> **Tips for Supervisor**
>
> The supervisor
>
> ❖ should explain the importance of the critical approach and explain that taking a critical approach during the research study will improve the quality of research.
>
> ❖ should describe how crucial effective communication is for the successful completion of the research study.
>
> ❖ should encourage them to express their opinion.
>
> ❖ should effort to establish a robust supervisory working alliance (agree upon research-related tasks and goals) (Nilsson and Anderson (2004).

The way to overcome all these difficulties caused by cultural differences is to talk. Discussion of cultural differences by supervisors and international students enhances supervision satisfaction and academic success (Gatmon, 2001; Lau, 2019)). If students trust the supervisor and feel close and comfortable with the supervisor, discussion on cultural differences during supervision may increase (Nilsson, 2007, p.41).

> **Tips for Supervisor**
>
> The supervisor
>
> ❖ should be open to bilateral communication and encourage the student to communicate
>
> ❖ should try to establish a positive, productive, and respectful relationship with the supervisee.
>
> ❖ can meet students outside of the office too. So they may feel more comfortable and may more open to discussing cultural differences.
>
> ❖ should listen actively and empathically to international students' personal issues and guide and advise them or, if necessary, guided students to experts.

The easiest way to adapt to a culture is to communicate with people from that culture.

> **Tips for Supervisor**
>
> The supervisor
>
> ❖ can form mixed working groups, which consist of four-five domestic and international research students.
>
> ❖ should organize meetings that students can discuss the challenges encountered by students regarding research activities.
>
> ❖ can observe how host countries people percept the problems and behave to solve them.

Besides all of these, it should not be forgotten; adaptation to a new culture is a complicated process. International students may need time to change and adapt to an independent learning style in a new environment (Yeo and Terry, 2003).

3.2. Language Deficiencies

Another main problem encountered with supervising international students is language deficiency. International students are admitted to higher education institutions bypassing some language exams. But these exams are a flawed measure of language competency. There are significant differences in speaking coherently, understanding written materials, and writing clearly in another language. International students can have trouble expressing opinions, giving oral presentations, and with written assessments comprehension, although they got good grades from language exams (Vos and Armstrong, 2019, p.54).

International students may be unaware of poor language communication skills because they pass language exams. Language deficiency can be a barrier to clearly expressing their opinion, writing a research proposal, scientific papers, and dissertation (Wang and Li, 2008). And it causes frustration for students and supervisors while students try to write a dissertation or thesis (Strauss, 2012). Moreover, the language barrier affects students' social interaction with supervisors and other people negatively.

Tip for Supervisor

The supervisor

❖ must evaluate international student's language skills at the beginning of supervision. So they can intervene without getting stressed due to poor language skills.

❖ can suggest an article that is written in the language of the home country to evaluate language skills. They can request from the student to read and summarize this article. After reading their summary, the supervisor can organize a meeting to discuss this article. So you can assess both the speaking and writing skills.

❖ can read master's research documents of international Ph.D. students to understand linguistic and academic skills (Corner and Pio, 2017). If the master's research document is written in another language, you can demand an abstract covering the research hypothesis, methods, and results.

❖ should tell kindly the negative effects of language inadequacy on the research process in case a student's linguistic skills are not sufficient, and they should advise the student on ways to improve linguistic skills, such as language programs in institutions, language schools, online language courses, etc.

3.3. Motivation

Motivation is an essential factor in academic success. Both domestic and international students may lose their motivation during the supervision process. International students face many additional challenges in this process comparing domestic students because of adaptation problems and lack of family support.

The empowerment of international students in research activities can enhance their interest. Thus, empowerment can be a useful strategy to motivate international students (Mudassir and Hashim, 2019, p.151).

Motivation is a complex concept studied through many theories. There are many theories that broaden readers' knowledge about motivation, especially for teachers to motivate their students in the classroom. These theories explain motivation, human needs, and their interrelationships.

The supervisors should use effective strategies to motivate international students to enhance academic outcomes. At the beginning of the supervisory relationship, supervisors can understand students' motivation to study abroad. Conducting academic research is a long and challenging process. In this process usefulness of the research area is an essential factor that increases students' motivation. (Mudassir and Hashim, 2019, p.151).

> **Tip for Supervisor**
>
> The supervisor
>
> ❖ can talk to international students about their career plans. Understand whether he/she plans to return to home country after the research study is completed.
>
> ❖ should find out how they expect to benefit from their education.
>
> ❖ should make them feel that the research study process will focus on the result they expect to achieve.
>
> ❖ should encourage international students to involve actively in research activities such as choosing a research area, choosing a research method, and scheduling research activities.
>
> ❖ should raise awareness of students about the usefulness of research activities to student's publications, career, and society
>
> ❖ should raise awareness about the usefulness of research activities to society, the environment, humanity, etc.

Another factor motivating students is seeing and feeling that they can succeed (Mudassir and Hashim, 2019, p.151). If they think that they can't succeed, their motivation may affect negatively.

Tip for Supervisor

The supervisor

- ❖ should consider students' educational background and academic ability when determining the research topic and method.
- ❖ can help international students to the literature review and to reach resources.
- ❖ When they feel pessimistic that they won't succeed, you can boost morale by reminding them of their skills and goals, and encourage them to explore more about the research subject.

Besides all the factors mentioned above, supervisors' attitudes towards international students affect motivation. If the supervisor cares about the international students and the researches-related developments, it increases the supervisee's motivation (Fan, 2013).

Tip for Supervisor

The supervisor

- ❖ must be accessible for supervising. Determine office hours and notify international students. Thus make an appointment will be easier for international students.
- ❖ must reply to e-mails promptly. So international students can give timely answers to their research-related questions.
- ❖ must feedback thoroughly and in a timely fashion with constructive suggestions for improvement to submitted written work. The longer the feedback period causes time loss.

Sometimes, international students' low motivation may be derived from cognitive factors such as lack of knowledge or skills, emotional factors such as anxiety, illness, and/or social factors such as social isolation. Supervisors should consider both their knowledge infrastructure and emotional situation.

Tip for Supervisor

The supervisor

- ❖ should assess the language and academic skill level of international students. If the knowledge level is low, advise him/her on ways to increase.

- ❖ If you realize that international students have anxiety and socially isolated, you can support students emotionally. If necessary, you should advise them to seek psychological help.

3.4. Plagiarism

Plagiarism (in another term, academic dishonesty) is another challenge encountered by supervisors during international students' supervision. Plagiarism is not only encountered when supervising international students; local students can also plagiarize. Supervisors need to rethink traditional approaches for all students and develop strategies beneficial to international students (Adhikari, 2018).

The importance of the subject for international students stems from the cultural perspective differences in plagiarism. For example, in some cultures in Asia and the Middle East, the supervisor expects students to quote or paraphrase the best-known authorities without attribution to know what texts are circulated (https://libraries.wsu.edu/library-instruction/plagiarism/cultural-perspectives). Some cultures say quoting scholars verbatim without acknowledgment is honoring them (Park, 2003; Strauss, 2012). And in some Asian countries, copying words directly instead of paraphrasing is a way to show respect for the original author (Chen and Ullen, 2011). These examples are unacceptable according to western countries' understanding of plagiarism.

Carol Olausen, the director of Miami's American Culture and English (ACE) Program, states that (https://www.turnitin.com):

"In academic integrity policy is completely based on our culture. It's not universal. We do doesn't exist in other countries, and how we interpret it is completely based on our own culture. Coming into a new place and having to catch up quickly on something. That's is definitely a challenge."

So international students can make academic mistakes due to their unfamiliarity with the host country's rules on academic integrity. The supervisor should understand students' educational

backgrounds and the home county's cultural perspective on plagiarism to help international students.

Tip for Supervisor

The supervisor

- ❖ should learn international students' home counties' perspectives on academic integrity and determine the differences between the two cultures.
- ❖ must talk with international students about academic honesty.
- ❖ should encourage international students to develop scholarly attitudes instead of emphasizing "punishable" aspects of failing to attribute sources (Vos and Armstrong, 2019).
- ❖ should move beyond traditional understanding and orient themselves towards academic skills sensitive to cultural differences rather than academic "police". (Howard, 2001)

One of the reasons for plagiarism considering international students may be that they don't know how to cite sources. Students can plagiarise unconsciously due to a lack of information on the citation.

Tip for Supervisor

The supervisor

- ❖ can give a research topic and request a short report about this topic to evaluate citation skills.
- ❖ can advise international students to examine written plagiarism policies of the institution and should guide them to understand the plagiarism policy.
- ❖ can provide reference materials to help sufficient and correct citations.
- ❖ can share previously written good practices with international students and request them to review (Huff, 1999).

Besides all these reasons, having difficulties in developing original ideas and insufficient time management can also lead international students to plagiarism (Adhikari, 2018, p.376).

3.5. Time Management

Time management affects academic success. Whether a research student accomplished his/ her research study on time or not is closely dependent on effective time management during the research process. International students face various challenges than domestic students in the research process, such as adaptation to a new culture, language inadequacy, coming from a different educational background, etc. Due to these challenges, time management can be more crucial for international students. Supervisors have significant responsibilities to guide international students in proper time management.
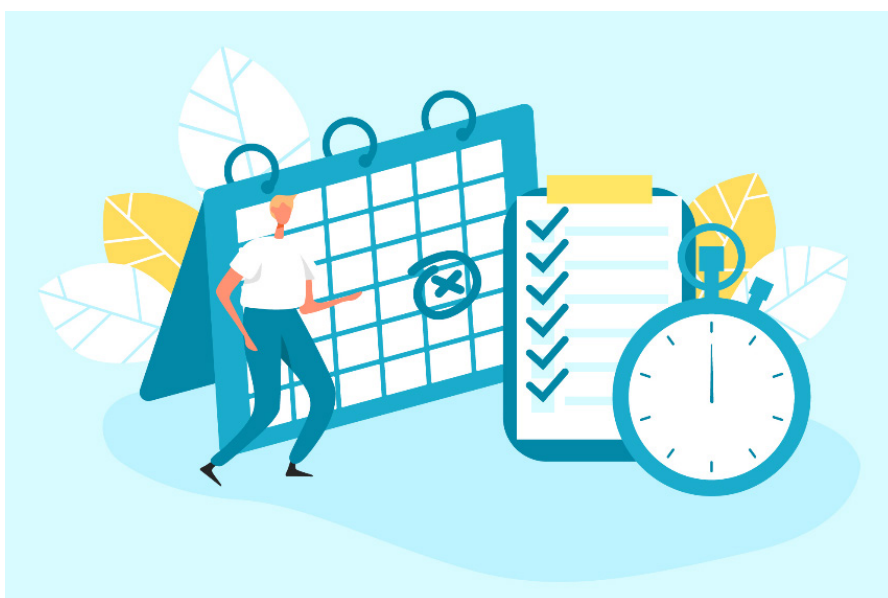
Tip for Supervisor

The supervisor

❖ should assess international students' language skills at the beginning of the supervision process. Thus they can advise international students to take immediate action to improve their language level if necessary.

❖ should talk to international students about academic integrity, inform them about how to cite, and avoid plagiarism at the beginning of the supervision process. If you postpone this to the later stage of supervision, students may write their research inappropriately during this time. The time taken to correct the mistakes may cause the research not to be completed on time.

It is not easy for the novice student to manage and plan their time. They need supervisors' guidance to plan the research process and set a time frame.

> **Tip for Supervisor**
>
> The supervisor
>
> ❖ should plan meeting deadlines by taking into account the student's opinions and thoughts. The empowerment of students in meeting plans may increase their motivation. On the other hand, meeting deadlines increases the motivation and study discipline of international students.
>
> ❖ should express your expectations such as coming to meetings on time, submitting various components on time, having a work plan, and sticking to it.

3.6. Homecoming

Some international students can return to their home countries to conduct research and write their dissertations. This is another challenge faced by supervising international students. When they return to their home country, they may not attend the scheduled meeting, and supervisors may face challenges to guide, control, and advise them. On the other hand, international students may lose their focus and motivation due to being away from the research institution and supervisor. Supervisors should find alternative ways to motivate and interact with them (Vos and Amstrong, 2019).

> **Tip for Supervisor**
>
> The supervisor
>
> ❖ can form online discussion groups, must emphasize the importance of participation. Thus, international students can communicate with research students of similar concerns.
>
> ❖ can plan regular online meetings.

3.7. Supervision and COVID-19

As stated in section 3.6, some international students can prefer to conduct fieldwork in their home country. And this circumstance is a challenge for supervisors to supervise international students. To overcome this challenge, the supervisor-supervisee relationship is maintained online. In COVID-19 period, the supervision process can be maintained online as well. However, international students can face various challenges because of the pandemic. These challenges can be listed as academic challenges, mental health issues, and financial hardship.

The aim of the supervisors should be support to students, both academically and emotionally. In this process supervisor should not forget to maintain effective communication is the responsibility of the supervisor (https://www.grad.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/doc/page/ supervisor_workshop_may_26_2020_final.pdf). The supervisor cannot resolve all issues. As stated above, international students can face academic difficulties, mental health problems, and financial hardship. Supervisors should behave empathetic and helpful, but in some cases, students need to be redirected to the universities' counseling services to take health support or centers that can support them financially.

During COVID-19, supervisors should focus on maintaining a working relationship with international students and maintaining academic progress. In this regard, supervisors should find new ways to adapt to current circumstances. Another point that should be considered by supervisors in this period is to restate mutual expectations and revise expectations by considering pandemics.

Lastly, supervisors should not forget working in isolation can be dispiriting and international students can need more emotional support.

Tip for Supervisor

The supervisor

- ❖ should discuss strategies for continued research and academic progress

- ❖ should discuss what adjustments need to be made in terms of research timelines, general approaches to proposed studies, ethics concerns and applications, methods of gathering data, etc.

- ❖ should decide on mutually workable timelines for structured one-to-one and check-in schedules and meetings, committee meetings as needed.

- ❖ should be more the flexible in timeline because existing health crises can make it impossible to adhere to the timeline

- ❖ should guide international students to revise the research plan by considering movement restriction, quarantine, and social distancing

- ❖ should set realistic milestones taking into account the COVID-19 crisis

- ❖ should be careful to sense the periods of time where students require more assistance; otherwise, students may get lost or feel abandoned.

- ❖ can create online office hours to give students the opportunity to consult you complex issue

- ❖ should take into account time zones when organizing online meetings

- ❖ should modify methodologies to include remote/virtual methods, for example online surveys, phone/Zoom/Skype interviews

GUIDELINES FOR NON-ACADEMIC STAFF

International students and the internationalization process add value to institutions in many ways. Their impacts can be seen in the community, in the university, in the classroom, and even in society. International students make great contributions to countries and universities. It can be said that the most important of these contributions is the increase in the recognition of the university and the country. For this reason, universities want to increase the number of international students who will come to them. However, this production process also comes with its obstacles.

Although the non-academic staff has not caught the eye of the academic literature as the main driver, the problems they face and possible solutions can improve the overall quality of the process, increase the well-being of the international students and help the academic staff increase their efficiency along the way.

Before starting with the guidelines, it may be beneficial to examine the results of the questionnaire applied to the non-academic staff as part of this project. To determine different factors affecting the internationalization process regarding the non-academic staff, surveys were conducted in Lithuania and Turkey by KTU, BUU, and MSKU. A total of 93 participants from non-academic staff took part in this survey which consisted of different questions regarding demographic factors and their perspective on different subjects regarding internationalization in their institutions were measured using a Likert scale. The results offer a perspective regarding non-academic staff and their role in the internationalization process along with possible setbacks and their attitudes to the process and possible areas to focus on.

When asked about the frequency of their contact with international students, the majority of the respondents pointed out they interact with them regularly, with most of them interacting with international students daily. This input can be considered very valuable since it highlights the importance of improving the process of internationalization which occurs constantly and frequently throughout the institutions.
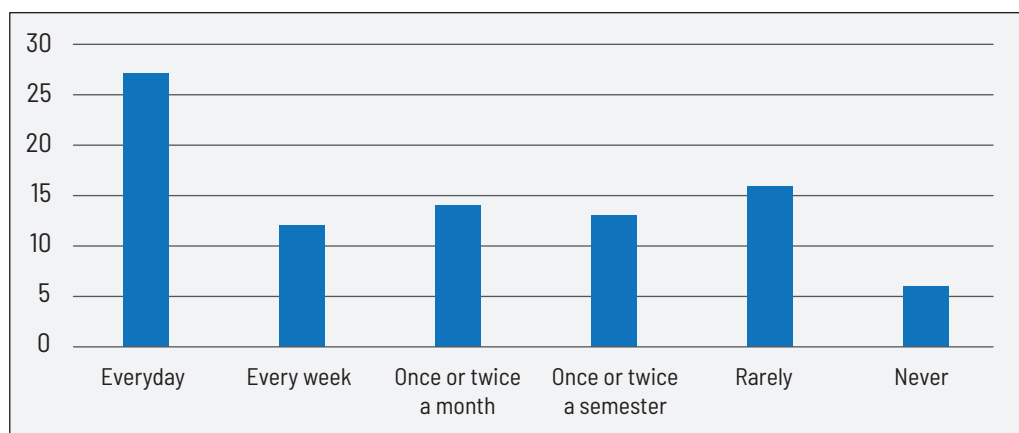
Figure 8. The frequency of contact with international students by the non-academic staff.

Figure 9 offers insight on levels of satisfaction of non-academic staff with their interaction with international students. Although the overall response is positive, it can be seen that there is still room for improvement.
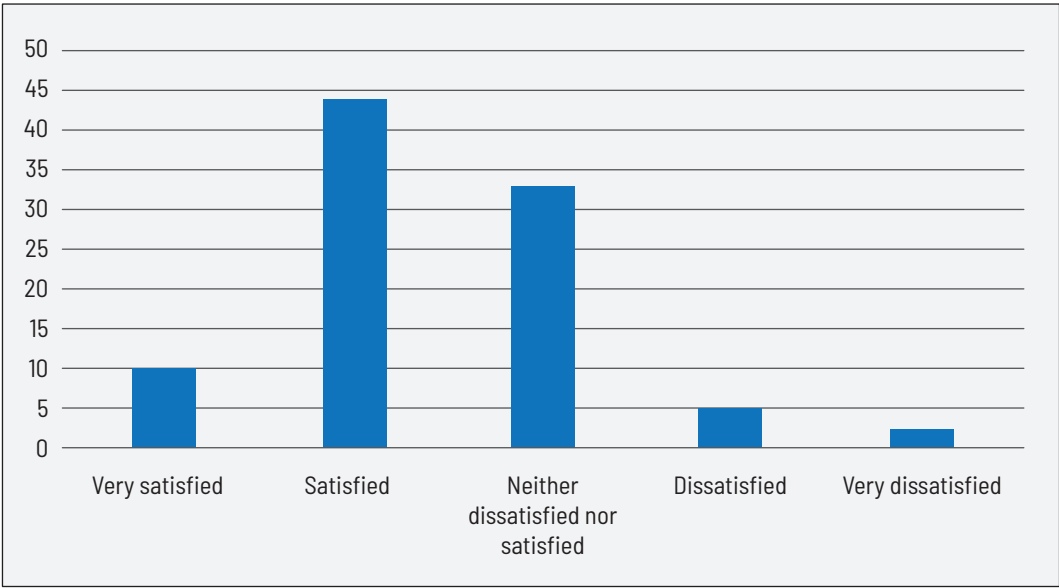
Figure 9. Degree of satisfaction regarding the engagement with international students.
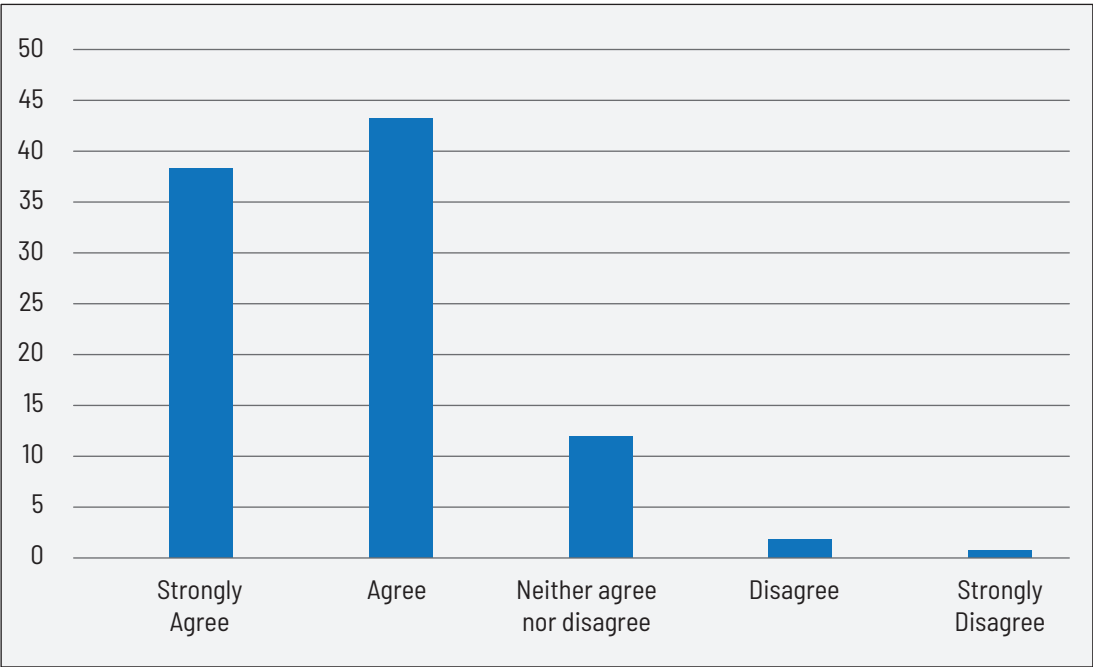
Figure 10. Non-academic staff should receive training regarding the challenges of internationalization.

Some results stood out with the first being the need for training of the non-academic staff regarding international students. The majority of the participants believed non-academic staff should be trained regarding the challenges of the internationalization process, proving a roadmap can be treated as an essential tool for their interactions with international students and the research done in this area can provide practical solutions which can improve the whole process.

Similarly, many believed internationalization is not an unaffordable luxury demonstrating the need for this process albeit the positive responses were lower as can be seen from Figure 10. The majority of them believed experiences abroad should be encouraged, and this results in a deeper understanding of the outside world.
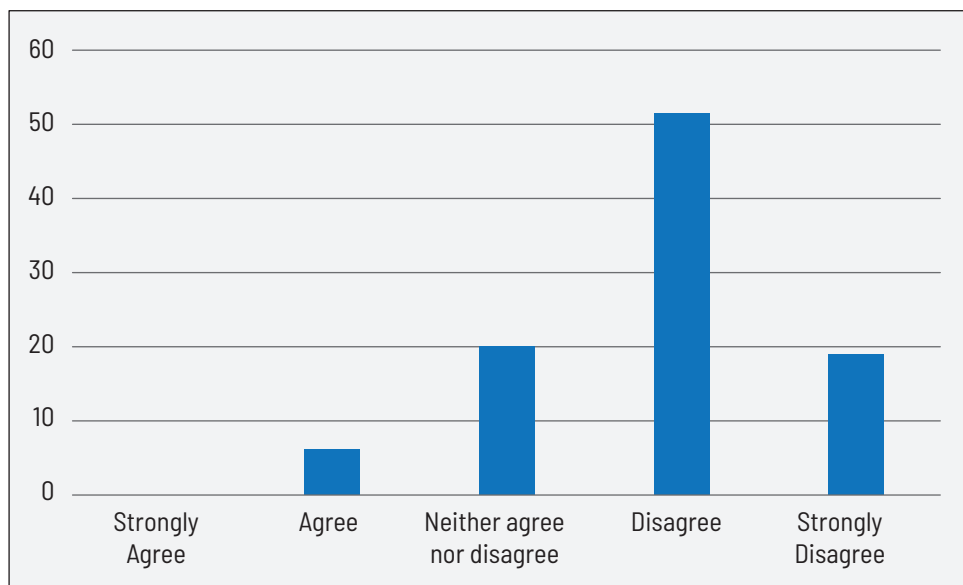

Figure 11. The internationalization process of education is a luxury that universities cannot afford.

Most of the staff in Lithuania believed they are well prepared and supported to ensure the success of international students, but this positive sentiment was lower on the participants from Turkey. Nevertheless, another statement that nearly all participants agreed on was that it was a priority for universities to become more international.

The satisfaction levels of the non-academic staff regarding the internationalization process can be considered positive overall but there is still room for improvement.
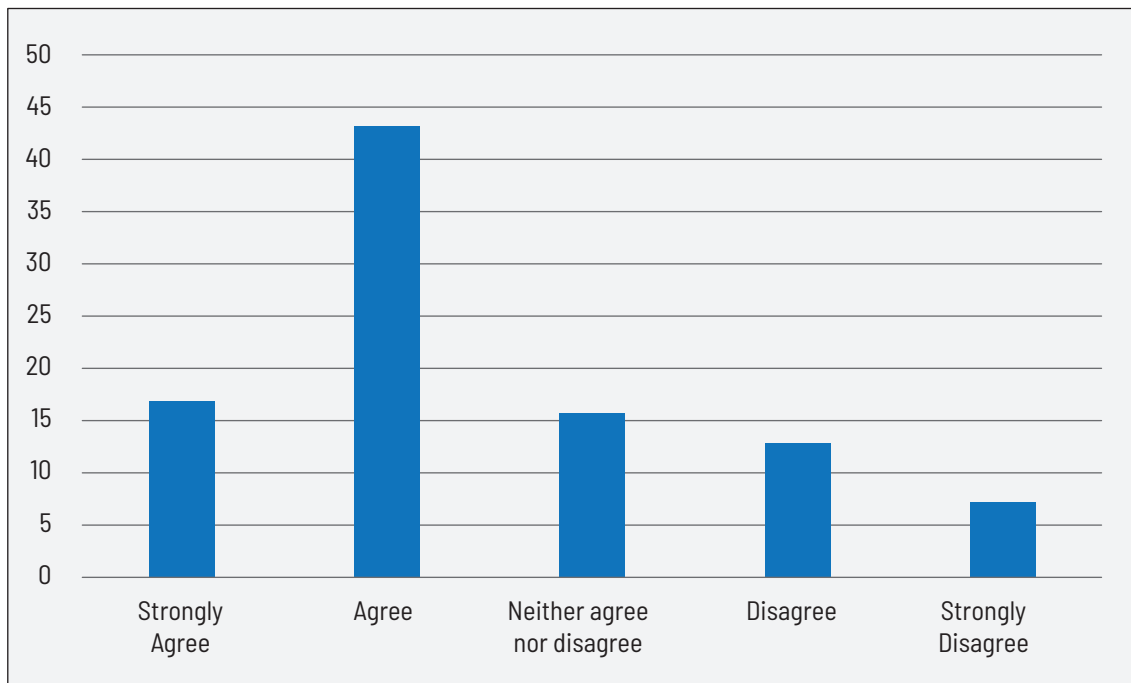
Figure 12. Managing international students is harder than managing local students.

Figure 12 demonstrates the participants' responses regarding the management process of international students. From this perspective, a clear focus must be given on how to interact with international students, how to manage them, and act proactively to solve possible problems along the way. The majority of the participants believe that managing an international student is harder than managing a local one. As internationalization gains more attention and more importance every day with universities focusing on the process, proper training based on past experiences and scientific perspectives is essential to achieve a fruitful environment for both the non-academic staff and the student.
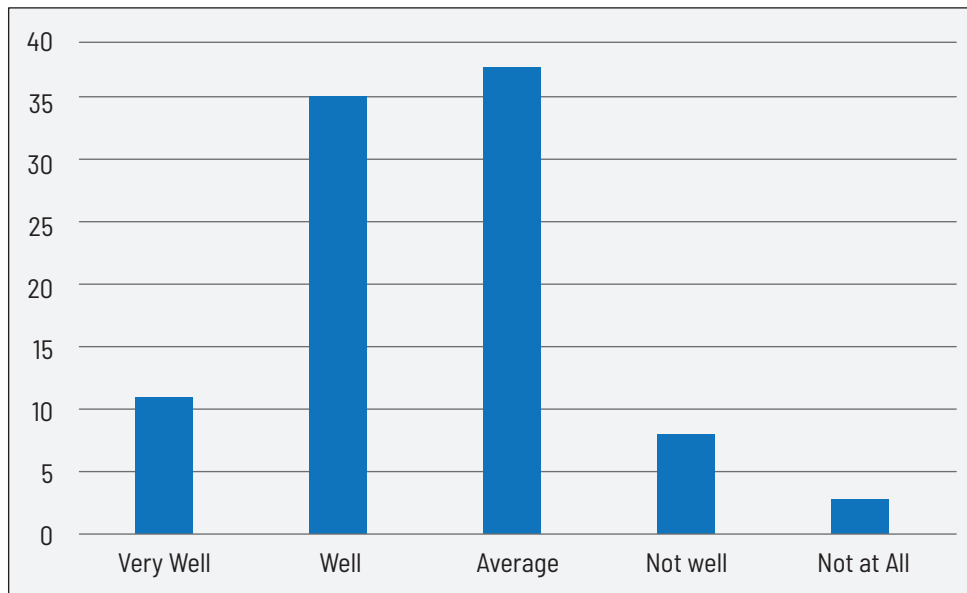
Figure 13. Level of preparedness to ensure the success of international students

On another question, respondents were asked to rate their preparedness to ensure the success of international students. The results indicate there can be steps taken to enhance this preparedness as most of them believed their level is average. Proper training and guidance can prove to be essential to achieve this which is also the common aim of this guideline.
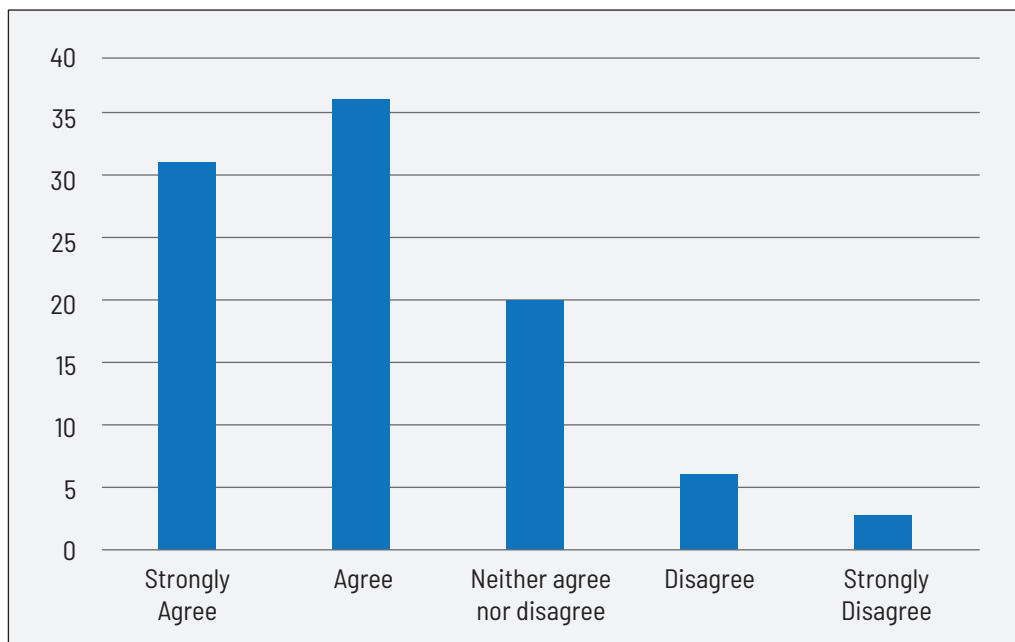
Figure 14. Universities should accept more international students.

Figure 14 demonstrates the positive sentiment towards the process of internationalization by the non-academic staff. When offered applicable and fruitful guidance, this can also mean a transformation to an even more positive perspective about the whole process.

Figure 15 sums up the levels of satisfaction of non-academic staff with working with international students on different topics. The overall levels of satisfaction are usually above average for all aspects but they can still be improved.
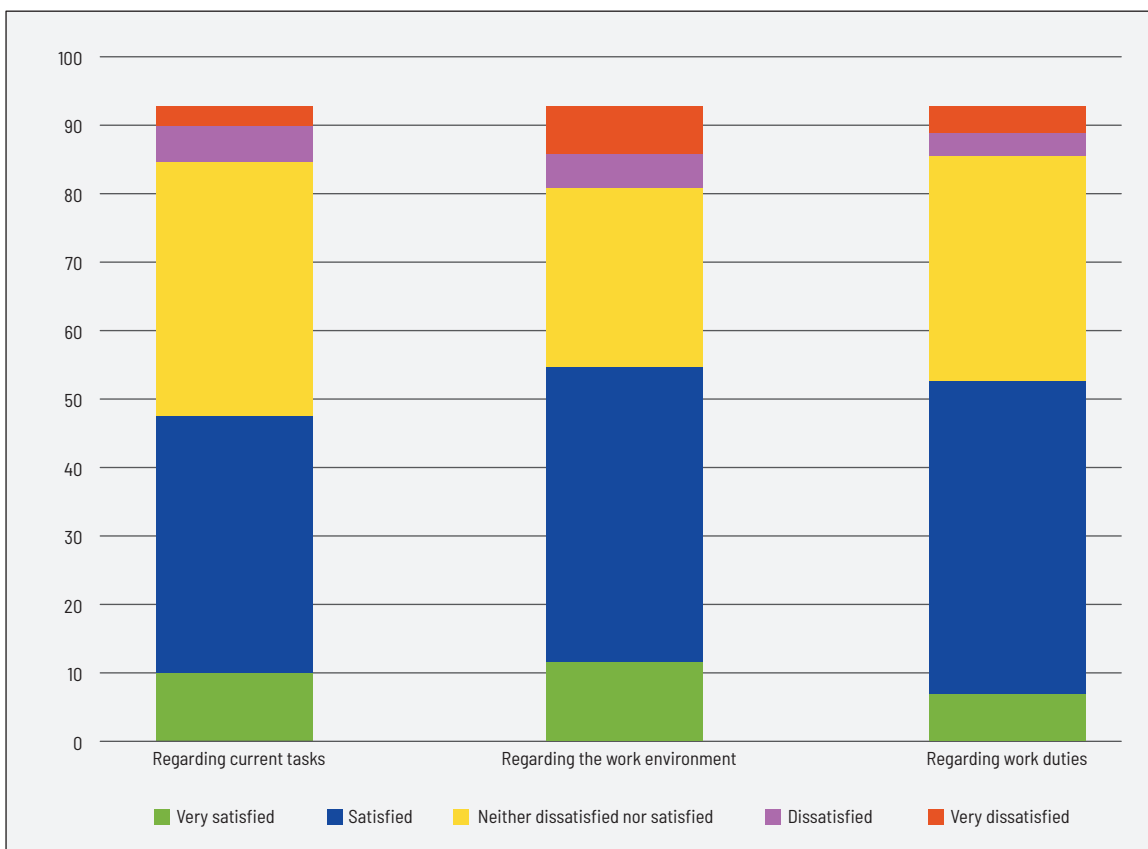
Figure 15. Degrees of satisfaction with working with international students

The content of the study was created by taking the survey results highlighted above into consideration. In this perspective, this study regarding non-academic staff consists of four sections. The first two parts of the study are created with the idea that the phases of international students' education can be determined to create a road map for the needs and that non-academic staff can act according to the special needs of these different periods. In the first and second sections, we suggest tips to non-academic staff in terms of guiding international students' problems. In the first section, problems faced by international students before starting their education at the university are discussed. According to these problems, some tips are advised for non-academic staff. In the second section, problems faced by international

students during their education at the university are examined, and once again some tips for non-academic staff are given. Problems faced by the non-academic staff in communicating with international students and solution recommendations are discussed in the third section of the study. In the last section of the study, the problems experienced by the non-academic staff due to the Covid-19 pandemic are examined.

1. Problems faced by international students before starting their education at the university

There are lots of things that international students must do and prepare before starting their education at the university they have chosen. Especially, the fact that they will be educated in a country different from the country they live in causes the international students to take care of much more things. International students may not know much about the country they will study in. In addition to all these, there may be cultural differences and language barriers. Therefore, they need to collect information about the country in question first. It is necessary to have information about the culture of the country to be educated, the way of life there, food and beverages, health conditions, accommodation, transportation, the location of the university, and so on. It is of great benefit to obtain all this information before starting the semester.

1.1. Issues that international students should consider before coming to the country where they will study and tips for the non-academic staff

There are issues that students need to deal with before traveling to the country of study. The most important of these are listed below.

Before arrival to the country where international students will be educated, they may be required to obtain a visa. Especially in some foreign countries, the process of obtaining a visa for educational purposes may require a relatively detailed procedure. It will be useful for students to prepare a checklist for the documents required for the visa. In this way, students can complete the visa process without a possible refusal and do not waste time.

 Also, it is useful to determine the monthly expenditures to be made in the country to be educated and to open a bank account in that country. While it is easy to open a bank account in some countries, banks in some countries require very strict approval processes. Students should research the possibilities of transferring money from abroad and the possible costs, especially in countries where it is difficult to open a bank account. Also, if the exchange rate between the currency of the student's country of residence and the currency of the foreign country varies

widely, students should be prepared for exchange rate risk. Buying foreign currency in advance may be a good method in such situations.

It is beneficial for the international student to determine the place of accommodation in advance. The student can stay in a dormitory or stay at home. Whether prefer to stay in a dormitory or rent a house, students should consider the proximity of their accommodation to the educational institution, public transportation facilities, and proximity to social facilities. If the educational institution has a dormitory within the campus; it may be a good choice for students to stay in that dormitory until they adapt to the foreign country.

International students are required to be informed about when the semester will start and accordingly, they must purchase their transportation tickets. Undoubtedly, the early purchase of transportation tickets creates a cost advantage for students. Therefore, planning the trip for the longest possible term is important for students' budgets. So, students should carefully review the calendar of the training program in advance and make their travel plans.

Besides, university enrollment must be completed beforehand and all required documents must be prepared. Also, an international student may take out health insurance. It is useful to have information about the weather conditions of the country. Depending on the weather conditions, the student should bring clothes with her/him.

Also, the information should be obtained about how to reach the accommodation place from the airport. Among the different options, the most suitable one should be determined. The international student should travel to the country where he/she will be studying with a picture ID and acceptance letter from the university ready.

It is stated above what international students should do before traveling to the country where they will study. They may experience various problems in fulfilling these elements. One of the main reasons for these problems is that international students do not know the country where they will study and do not know the practices there. For this reason, they will need someone who knows the country and who can find solutions to their problems by supporting them. The best person to do this is the non-academic staff. The non-academic staff of the university should provide support to international students for all the above-mentioned elements.

Tips for the Non-Academic Staff

- International students can be given a letter by the non-academic staff stating that they will study in the country they will go to for a visa. Thus, the problems to be experienced in obtaining a visa can be minimized.

- The non-academic staff can inform international students about the approximate monthly average expenditures to the extent they experience from previous students.

- If students want to stay in the university dormitory, the non-academic staff should assist and guide them.

- International students should be informed about when the semester will start. Thus, there will be no time shortage in determining a place to stay and purchasing tickets for transportation.

- Documents that will be required during registration can be notified to international students in advance by the non-academic staff.

- Writing can be prepared by the non-academic staff on issues such as the health system in the country, weather, how to provide transportation, and so on. This writing can be sent by e-mail to international students. In this way, they will come to the university with the documents they need to register.

- It should not be forgotten that besides education, international students experience cultural and social interaction. In this direction, international students can be informed about the social and cultural activities and places.

1.2. Issues that international students should consider when they arrive in the country where they will study and tips for the non-academic staff

It is beneficial for international students to have information about the university environment and campus. Knowing where the student's faculty, the university library, canteen, gym, student affairs, and so on are located will make things easier. International students should also learn the username and password of the internet network that they can use within the university.

Students perform their operations at universities (such as accessing library resources or selecting courses over the student information system) via the number or e-mail address assigned to them over the information system. Therefore, it is extremely important to learn how these procedures are performed. Many issues such as how to enter the information system, how to select the courses, how to communicate with the advisor-academician through the system should be learned by students.

Before the beginning of the semester, the student is responsible for obtaining a catalog of the courses to be taken during the education period. The international student needs to have information about the academic calendar, elective and compulsory courses, ECTS credits, grading system, and exams. Especially today, there has been an increase in the quality and quantity of elective courses. Therefore, students are faced with a large number of elective courses. While some of these courses are international-oriented, some are designed according to the specific conditions of that country. If the students do not aim to work in the country where they study, it may be a better choice to turn to international-oriented elective courses. Therefore, the designs of the courses must be carefully analyzed by the students.

After the international students have information about their university, they also may be informed about the city where they will live. They should get information about how to provide transportation. Knowing the approximate costs of taxi, bus, minibus and metro options will help them about which one they prefer for transportation. Having a general knowledge about the places to shop, restaurants, and markets will make life easier.

Students should also learn about the traditional and public holidays of the country they will study. Since certain places may be closed on holidays, knowing these days in advance will prevent problems to be experienced.

The international students should know the currency of the country of education and the exchange rate difference between their own country's currency. In this way, they will have the opportunity to compare the prices of the products they will buy and spend accordingly. Knowing the phone numbers of health and emergency services will help them in the face of possible problems.

It is stated above what international students should do after arriving in the country where they will study. They may experience various problems in fulfilling these elements. One of the main reasons for these problems is that international students do not know the country and its culture. For this reason, they will need someone who knows the country and who can find solutions to their problems by supporting them. The best person to do this is again the non-academic staff.

Tips for the Non-Academic Staff

- Orientation should be provided to the international students by the non-academic staff. Information about the university campus should be provided. Also, students should be informed about the opportunities provided to them. Before the semester starts, the information should be given about where to eat at the university, where to study, where the classes are held, and the internet network.

- The non-academic staff must give information about the academic calendar, elective and compulsory courses, ECTS credits, grading system, and exams.

- The non-academic staff should inform international students about the use of the academic portal and define their university e-mail addresses.

- International students may have a city tour. In this way, they will be able to get information about the city. During this city tour, it is useful to give international students information about the places they can visit, as well as places where they can shop and eat.

- International students should be told which means of transportation can be used. Also, the information should be given about the university's transportation services.

- International students should be informed about the traditional and public holidays of the country.

- International students should be informed about the currency of the country of study.

- Phone numbers of health and emergency services should be given to international students.

2. Problems faced by international students during their education at the university

According to different studies in the field, international students face many different problems caused by different factors throughout their studies. According to a study which focuses on a set of universities in the US by Galloway and Jenkins (2009), the language barrier is a significant driver of many problems, although other determinants like marital status, country of origin, and gender can also be the reason behind many problems faced by international students in their studies abroad. A similar study based on international students in Malaysia puts similar issues forward like the importance of language but also advises possible improvements regarding the curriculum and social activities to be offered for students (Alavi and Mansor, 2011). From a different but equally important perspective, Bektas (2008) points out the significance of counseling services in universities and students to maintain adequate mental, physical and social relationships for a fruitful learning experience with a dataset focusing on international students studying in Turkey. Another study carried by Mehdizadeh and Scott (2005) in Ireland emphasizes the critical role of pre-arrival information, accommodation offers and improved support regarding the possible barriers to be faced by international students during their time abroad.

Foreign students and the internalization process provide different benefits in many aspects.

- **Strategic Importance:** since internalization is an inevitable trend; it increases cooperation, academic quality, and coordination between staff; provides a new experience in both academic and administrative sense; forces institutions to form long run and feasible plans regarding their activities.

- **Internal Planning:** enables institutions to address problems in their internal structure, adapting their approaches to other cultures where supporting administrative framework is important.

- **Shared Experience:** Not only the international students add value to their department but also to the academic and administrative staff who work together on possible issues, resulting in a permanent and long-term improvement.

Apart from their contributions to the system at both institutional and academic levels, international students offer financial benefits to the university while increasing the exposure of local students to different cultures, delivering useful examples from a different cultural perspective. Although the process means an increased workload for both the academic and non-academic staff, the positives outweigh the negatives in an efficient and carefully planned process.

2.1. Issues faced by international students regarding the interaction between non-academic and academic staff and possible solutions

There are many different problems faced by international students during their studies abroad and proper collaboration between academic and non-academic staff can positively influence the speed and efficiency of the process by which these issues are taken care of.

According to a study conducted by Lin and Yi (1997) on Asian students coming to the US, the ones experiencing problems in academic areas were not able to adjust to new conditions easily. Proactive intervention programs can help them adapt to the new culture and surroundings. From this perspective, the importance of coordination between academic and non-academic staff becomes clear.

To provide the most creative and beneficial work environment, administrative and other non-academic staff should be treated as equal partners to the academic staff and encouraged to work in harmony.

Like this perspective, administrative roles should be more proactive than reactive. Academic staff and non-academic staff should be working together while preserving their specific roles to achieve their maximum potential.

To prevent the potential of non-academic staff from being hindered, universities should keep an eye on their staff regarding their workload and its intensity, the relationships among staff at personal and impersonal levels, and the feeling of community and values like trust and fairness between them.

Tips for the Non-Academic Staff

- A proactively designed roadmap regarding academic success should be planned with faculty members to support international students during their stay and it should be updated regularly depending on the evolving needs of the education system.

- Students' academic success can be monitored regularly as a whole by non-academic staff in this perspective to figure out solutions for expected problems or act before it happens.

- Academic staff should be informed about international students and if there are any special conditions regarding specific students that must be taken into consideration.

- Orientations should be carried out with help and input from both academic and non-academic staff for an inclusionary experience.

- Both academic and non-academic staff should be encouraged to communicate and discuss issues regarding international students.

- Long-term plans regarding the internalization process should be decided and be followed.

- Both academic and non-academic staff should stay on top of the workload on each other and work in coordination whenever possible. The workload should be distributed considering many factors like the current workload, experience, cultural skills, etc.

As Biggs put it;

"Teaching and learning take place in a whole system, which embraces classroom, departmental and institutional levels. A 'poor' system is one which the components are not integrated and are not tuned to support high-level learning. In such system, only the 'academic' students use higher-order learning processes. In a 'good' system, all aspects of teaching and assessment are tuned to support high-level learning, so that all students are encouraged to use higher-order learning processes." (Biggs, 2003)

2.2. Issues faced by international students regarding their academic life/classes and possible solutions which can be offered by the non-academic staff

Even though most of the issues faced in the classroom should be treated with a constructive approach by the academic staff, non-academic staff can offer help some along the way.

As pointed out by Galloway and Jenkins (2009), Sherry et al. (2010), and many others throughout the relevant literature, students must not face any language barriers and should be able to understand the teaching language effectively for both their academic and social life. Necessary steps must be taken by both the academic and non-academic staff to ensure this is this case as it will hamper the learning process if not taken care of. Proper and strong collaboration between the staff is again important to achieve this goal.

Non-academic staff members should also be proficient in English as it plays a crucial role while communicating with the student.

Tips for the Non-Academic Staff

- Efficient collaboration with the academic staff should be established to pinpoint the issues students can be facing during their education with the language barrier and possible ways to solve it being the focus of the approach.

- Counseling services should be offered to understand the students' needs and problems they may be facing during their stay. From this perspective, having multicultural counseling skills can be considered an advantage. If there is another department offering these services, a close relationship with those staff plays an even more important role.

- Being aware of past issues and acting proactively to solve them can improve the performance of the adaptation process of the students.

- Orientations regarding the classes and the system in a general sense can help international students prepare for what to come and adapt their expectations. An active role for the non-academic staff in those can provide fruitful results as they are familiar with problems faced by those students outside the classes.

- Assessing the needs and problems of international students in classes at an individual level can be rewarding with improved academic success and should be tried whenever possible depending on the current workload in sync with the academic instructors.

- Regular meetings with international students and constant monitoring can prevent potential problems.

- Students should be encouraged to form direct communication with their peers whenever possible.

2.3. Issues faced by international students regarding the interactions with local students and possible solutions

As one could expect, international and local students usually experience different feelings and perform differently in the same academic environments or react differently to the same stimuli. Parallel to this, according to a study by Ramsay et al. (1999), factors like peer support is more beneficial for local students whereas international students suffered from problems like anxiety during their first year of studies. Although they shared a common goal like critical thinking, some differences between these groups were evident and the importance of a supportive and relevant learning environment was emphasized by the authors. To add more, studies by Fincher and Shaw (2011), Robertson et al. (2000), and Rienties et al. (2011) also prove international and local students may perform on different levels due to a variety of reasons.

Non-academic staff can help international students form connections, efficiently adapt to their environment via a variety of methods, and can provide valuable inputs along the process. As cultural differences can hinder international students from achieving their full potential, these inputs become even more important.

According to a study carried out by Aydin (2020), the presence of a language barrier is the main driver of problems between international and local students. Some personality traits like shyness and introversion were also factors harming the relationships. Lastly, lack of student clubs and other social activities were considered a setback while forming relationships, which can be improved with the help of non-academic staff.

Tips for the Non-Academic Staff

- Since there may be many underlying reasons for international students to perform differently in classes, attention should be given at an individual level to pinpoint the possible reasons.

- Orientations can help international students adapt better to their surroundings and classmates and mixing the students in groups whenever possible can be a good approach.

- Forming smaller classes or enabling specific learning environments with input from the academic staff can both improve academic success and social relationships with local students.

- Lessening the use of the practice of "local" and "international" can help for adaptation (Fincher and Shaw, 2011).

- Promoting social and extracurricular activities in coordination with the academic staff can be beneficial.

- Forming and encouraging a clear style of communication with and between students is essential for a good dialogue.

- Being respectful of diversity and encouraging it among students carries importance.

- Avoiding specific words and gestures belonging to a culture and informing local students beforehand should be considered.

- International students should be informed about the local culture. Another possible approach can be notifying the local students about the cultures where the international students come from along with the differences between their cultural backgrounds and how they may behave, preventing potential future cultural conflicts and increasing harmony in class.

3. Problems faced by the non-academic staff in communicating with international students and solution recommendations

Although international students have many benefits for the universities, such as strengthening the international ties they provide to universities, the difficulties they cause are undeniable. Cultural differences and language barriers make the job of the non-academic staff more difficult and cause much more time and effort to solve the problems of international students (Harryba et al., 2012).

Sometimes, international students' expectations from the non-academic staff may not be met. There may be an expectation gap between them (Kingston and Forland, 2008). Cultural differences and language barriers are among the main reasons for this. Since both parties cannot fully understand each other's wishes, they may not be able to meet each other's requests.

While there is an increase in the number of international students in many universities, it is observed that the number of non-academic staff is not increased at the same rate. This situation increases the workload of the non-academic staff and causes them to experience burnout syndrome. In such a case, naturally, the desired efficiency cannot be obtained from the non-academic staff. To overcome all these problems, it is seen that university administrations need to allocate more budget for these situations. In this respect, perhaps it can be ensured that the non-academic staff dealing with international students are segregated and not assigned other administrative duties so they can also focus more on the problems of international students. In this way, international students can reach non-academic staff much easily during working hours.

To prevent this burnout syndrome experienced by the non-academic staff, a rewarding method can be developed by the university administration to encourage and motivate them.

Another problem experienced by the non-academic staff is that their English level is insufficient. To prevent potential problems, non-academic staff can be sent abroad within the scope of Erasmus to improve their English. Another method may be to train non-academic staff to improve their knowledge of English. Various training can be given to non-academic staff at certain intervals by people assigned by the university administration.

To avoid misunderstandings due to cultural and language differences between international students and non-academic staff, it would be beneficial to have an employee who graduated from the psychology department among the non-academic staff. Often the discourses made by the non-academic staff can be misunderstood by international students due to cultural and language

differences. These misunderstandings may disrupt international students' communication with non-academic staff. In the light of experiences, it may be helpful to list frequently asked questions and post their answers in different languages on the boards in eliminating the communication problems between non-academic staff and international students. Besides, non-academic staff should be advised and motivated to use technology to minimize communication disruptions. Internet-based translation applications can be used for basic communication when there is an urgent need.

> **Tips for the Non-Academic Staff**
>
> ■ Proper allocation of resources and workload must be established in the institution regarding the internationalization process.
>
> ■ Different methods of rewarding can result in increased motivation between non-academic staff.
>
> ■ Similar to the interactions among students, cultural differences must be taken into account by the non-academic staff as well.
>
> ■ Proper training and regular monitoring of English sufficiency among staff can prevent potential problems during their interaction with international students.
>
> ■ Getting support from professionals like psychologists whenever needed can improve the interaction process.
>
> ■ The use of technological resources like the university or department website can smoothen the communication process.

4. Problems faced by the non-academic staff during the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the whole world and differentiated people's lifestyles. All students are affected by this process. University students are among them. It would not be wrong to say that international students are among the most adversely affected university students. In this process, students should be supported by both academic and non-academic staff. This difficult process will be easier to overcome with mutual sacrifices and supports.

Covid-19 pandemic developed rapidly around the world and affected nearly all countries and their economic, social, and education systems. Although this unfortunate turn of events has hurt these systems, it also proves the importance of crisis management in times like this. According to a survey carried out by IEI, classroom teaching has been replaced by distance learning at different levels for different continents. This emphasizes the need for attention to technological infrastructure and training of all staff for unexpected events. Most HEIs have terminated all their on-campus activities.

Similarly, 89% of the HEIs to the same survey indicated international student mobility has been affected by the pandemic. Many international students were either grounded at their current place or the exchange programmed was canceled partially or totally. 73% of HEIs surveyed indicated they have contingency plans and 60% of them offer alternatives to physical student mobility (Marionni et al., 2020).

Although the pandemic has caused issues to the education systems at many different levels, international students are among those who suffer the most. As planning during uncertain times is hard, many students had to either postpone or give up their studies abroad. Although most universities provide online education, the Covid-19 pandemic has created great uncertainties and problems for international students.

During these hard times, it is important to keep students who study online motivated and international students are no different. Scheduling online classes, forming online discussion groups, offering online library services, etc. can be vital for students to keep up with the pace of learning. During this period, international students may not be able to meet face-to-face with non-academic staff. The best way for international students to communicate with non-academic staff during the pandemic process is most likely be via e-mail. Accordingly, it is of great importance that non-academic staff regularly check and reply to the e-mails they receive.

It must also be noted that non-academic staff and their wellbeing should be monitored if possible. Their workload must be balanced according to the needs of the current disruptions and

their mental and physical health should be checked regularly. The expectations must be adjusted logically while technical and financial opportunities to reach students online must be offered for both the academic and non-academic staff whenever possible by their universities.

Past procedures and experience must be reevaluated and possible solutions to improve the current situation should be implemented. In a digitalizing world, these can offer even more efficiency in the internalization process and how students are taught and treated.

The health status of international students and Covid-19 transmission should be monitored. Support should be provided for students to access the health system in case of possible contamination. Especially universities with medical schools and affiliated hospitals can appoint contact persons for international students. Undoubtedly, access to the healthcare system for international students will come to the fore as an extremely important factor in the future.

While some of the international students attend the education online from their own countries, it is seen that some of them continue to stay in the country where they study. Necessary health support should be given to students found in a country other than their own. They should also be helped to meet their needs. In this respect, non-academic staff should be in constant contact with international students. International students should be given important telephone numbers that they can contact in case of emergency. Necessary institutions and organizations should also be informed about these students' names, phone numbers, residential addresses, country of origin, etc.

Since students residing in the country where their university is located cannot be vaccinated in their own country, it is beneficial to include them in the vaccination program of the country they are in. So, vaccination processes must be managed for international students. University administrations should coordinate and manage the possible vaccination processes of international students. Problems that international students may encounter in accessing vaccines may directly disrupt their education life in foreign countries. It is important to ensure that international students are vaccinated within the time frame when their age group will be vaccinated.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused the emergence of several measures restricting international transportation, especially the airline. It is of great importance for international students that university administrations are aware of their travel plans and guide them. When necessary, non-academic staff should contact the academic staff of international students and provide the necessary information on the subject. In this way, misunderstandings are prevented.

Tips for the Non-Academic Staff

- Since there are regular disruptions during these crisis times, alternative methods to reach and engage students should be established.

- Possible planning regarding the post-COVID-19 phase should be carried out to make up for problems faced during the pandemic to prevent them in the future.

- Research and education opportunities should be enhanced university-wide by the support of both academic and non-academic staff as the gap between HEIs can even widen after this pandemic.

- Non-academic staff should monitor international students whenever possible to make sure the process is going as smoothly as possible and offer solutions to problems faced.

- The staff should also check up on each other whenever possible to establish a healthy and effective work environment.

Conclusion

All in all, a proactive, efficient collaboration between academic and non-academic staff significantly improves the experience of the international students, along with the benefits they gain from their experience abroad.

"This philosophy is not about perceived status or lack of recognition of professional support staff or any diminution of the role of teaching colleagues. Both are valuable to students in different but interconnected ways. It is the strengthening of this interconnectivity that should be encouraged. To provide students with an educational journey in which they can perceive no 'joins' but one that is a smooth, coherent and uninterrupted experience, allowing them to flourish as individuals with guidance and support from a committed and collaborative staff." (Sargeant, 2016).

As mentioned throughout, the main problems regarding the non-academic staff are within the scope of communication barriers and can be solved with close cooperation with other staff members. Harmony in the workplace and distribution of roles depending on the members' specialization must be established to provide better services to international students. Many factors like the number of personnel, their work experience regarding student services and their exposure to other cultures, and their communication skills must be considered while deciding on this division of workload.

To conduct a better internationalization process and achieve positive results, both academic and non-academic staff should provide inputs depending on their experience and expertise, forming a feasible and rewarding long-term plan.

Although academics have an important and prominent role during the internationalization process, proper training of non-academic staff and preparing them to provide a positive experience for international students also has an important role in a student's success abroad. A strategic approach must be adopted to achieve maximum potential and harmony among the staff.

This long-term approach treating all partners in the process as equals can help bring more professionalism towards internationalization in the educational system. This harmony will probably bring even more coordination, competence, and confidence along the way.

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