

A Qualitative Study of Foreign Nursing Students' Experiences of Educational Process*

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Abstract: Foreign students face difficulties in nursing education, where theoretical and practical education processes are applied simultaneously. As to clinical education processes, which have an important place in nursing education, foreign students' experience communication problems with patients, nurses, and peers, and this brings along adaptation problems. In this study, it was aimed to determine the experiences of foreign nursing students in the undergraduate education process. The research was carried out according to the case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Ten foreign nursing students were included in the study. Data were collected with a socio-demographic information form and a semi-structured focus group interview form. Five main themes were determined in nursing foreign students' experiences with nursing education: (1)being a nursing student, (2)feeling, (3)reason for preference, (4) being a minority in a country, and (5)solution suggestions. In line with the results from our study, it is thought that ensuring the continuity of Turkish courses throughout undergraduate education, a clearer explanation of theoretical courses, enrichment of courses with different teaching methods, and increasing the use of visual materials will be beneficial for their success and adaptation in order to minimize the language barrier of the students.

Keywords: Foreign student, nursing education, case study

About the Article

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Introduction

In recent years, with the effect of globalization and the changing world order, significant effects have been experienced in the field of higher education (Malekisanımaleki & Altay, 2017; Özaslan et al., 2019). With modernization, the number of students who want to receive a university education outside their own country in developed or developing countries is increasing every year (Kumcağız et al., 2016). As of 2020, although the number of foreign students has decreased due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the continuation of face-to-face education in higher education has had a positive effect on student mobility (Roliak, 2022). Foreign students who find themselves in a different education system and culture during this internationalization process experience a number of economic, psychological, or social problems, primarily language barriers (Gökyer, 2017; Kiroğlu et al., 2010). Furthermore, it has been reported that these students have problems adapting to an environment different from their own culture in their schools, are subjected to discrimination at times, and have problems concerning their academic performance and social interactions (Yıldırım & Köksal, 2017).

It is stated that foreign students face various difficulties in nursing education, where theoretical and applied education processes are simultaneously applied. The main reason for these difficulties is cultural differences and the fact that the language spoken in the country is different from the native language. (Özaslan et al., 2019). At the beginning of the academic year, an exam is organised to measure the Turkish language level of the students in order to overcome their language difficulties. Students who fail the exam receive language education for one year and continue their university education if they have sufficient language score (Erdil, 2018). However, it is stated that students have problems in adapting and communicating despite receiving language support (Kol et al., 2021; Yılmaz et al., 2021; Ünsal et al., 2024). In studies conducted with nursing students in different countries, it has been determined that the students experience problems such as communication with patients in clinical practices, discrimination by their peers, adaptation to a new culture, non-acceptance of their professional practices by clinical nurses, and difficulties in understanding theoretical lessons (Iskander Narouz, 2018; Dos Santos, 2021; Jeong et al., 2011).

There are studies in the literature that examine the experiences of students who come to Turkey from different countries to receive nursing education during their educational process (Özaslan et al., 2019; Tuzcu et al., 2020; Yılmaz et al., 2021; Kol et al., 2021; Alan et al., 2022; Ünsal et al., 2024). In the study of Özaslan et al. (2019), it was stated that foreign nursing students had problems with adaptation to a foreign language during the theoretical and clinical practice process, they had difficulty in expressing themselves, and the people they communicated with did not understand them. Similarly, in the study of Tuzcu et al. (2020), it was determined that international students experienced adaptation and communication problems in nursing education mostly due to language barriers and had difficulty in understanding the theoretical courses due to reasons arising from language and teaching method. The results of a few studies conducted in recent years are not different from other studies. In general, it is stated that international nursing

students experience various problems such as language barriers, cultural adaptation problems and lack of social support (Yılmaz et al., 2021; Kol et al., 2021; Ünsal et al., 2024).

The population of international students in Turkish universities is increasing. (Kumcağız et al., 2016). Factors such as economic problems, war and unfavourable living conditions are also important factors in the increase of international students in Turkey (Alan et al., 2022). International students show great interest in the nursing profession, which has an important place in health services. The difficulties experienced by students increase their adaptation problems, cause them to give up education and negatively affect the quality of education. Understanding the specific learning needs of international nursing students and providing significant support to meet these needs is critical to the success of nursing education programmes. And furthermore, this study is considered to be important in determining the problems experienced by foreign nursing students who have come to Turkey for education, both in the theoretical and practical education processes and in presenting suggestions to increase the adaptation of such students. In line with this information, our study was carried out to determine the experiences of foreign nursing students in the undergraduate education process.

Method

Type of Research

In this study, it was tried to explain the educational process experiences of foreign nursing students. The research was carried out according to the case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Case studies are studies that examine a specific situation in depth. In this way, the factors related to a situation are researched with a holistic approach and the result is reached (Subasi & Okumuş, 2017). In this study, it has been tried to present the experiences of foreign students about the nursing education process with a holistic approach.

Sample

Ten foreign nursing students were included in the study. The data on the sociodemographic characteristics of the students are presented in Table 1. The majority of students from different nationalities are female. The inclusion criteria are as follows: Being a student in the Nursing Department of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the university where the research is carried out (1); being enrolled in the department of nursing with international student quota (2); having at least one semester of nursing education (3); having a basic level of understanding and communication in Turkish (4); agreeing to participate in the study (5).

Table 1.

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Students

	Age	Gender	Nationality	Duration of stay in Turkey
Student 1 (S1)	22	Female	Cameroon	5 years
Student 2 (S2)	27	Male	Afghanistan	3 years
Student 3 (S3)	22	Female	Syria	10 years
Student 4 (S4)	23	Male	Iraq	8 years
Student 5 (S5)	19	Female	Somali	1 year
Student 6 (S6)	21	Female	Russia	12 years
Student 7 (S7)	23	Female	Syria	6 years
Student 8 (S8)	19	Female	Somali	1 year
Student 9 (S9)	26	Female	Saudi Arabia	11 years
Student 10 (S10)	19	Female	Nigeria	1 year

Data Collection

The study data were collected with a socio-demographic information form and a semi-structured Focus Group Interview (FGI) form. In the socio-demographic information form, there are six questions in total: age, gender, nationality, grade level, satisfaction with being a student in the nursing department, and the period of time lived in Turkey. The FGI method gives the opportunity to ask in-depth questions on a specific subject, and to make the situation more explanatory by asking again if the answer is incomplete or not clear, and to complete the answers. This method is more advantageous in terms of the participants being foreign students. The FGI form includes three open-ended questions created by the researchers in line with the literature. For the validity of the questions, the questions were submitted to the opinion of three experts. The data in the study were collected in March 2022. The Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Studies (COREQ) checklist was used in the implementation and reporting of the study.

The focus group interview was held face-to-face in the meeting room of the students' school. The interview was conducted by the first and second authors, who participated in seminars on qualitative research methods and had previous qualitative work experience. Considering that students may have difficulties in understanding and speaking Turkish due to the nature of the study, care was taken to ask questions in simple and plain Turkish. A sufficient amount of time was provided to the students to prevent them from answering the questions superficially. The 10 foreign students participating in the study were coded as S1, S2, ... S10 (Table 1).

The students were informed about the location and time of the interview, and the meeting room was suitably arranged for the interview (seating arrangement where all students can see each other, precautions for separation from the group, arrangement of tables and chairs for the participants to sit comfortably, name badges with participants names, etc.). During the interview, a voice recorder was used as the students stated that they

could not express themselves comfortably in case of video recording. The students were informed of the aim of the research, some basic rules about the interviewing process, and the approximate duration of the interview. The interview continued until the saturation point was reached. When the data started to repeat and no new information emerged, the interview ended. FGI lasted for a total of 1.5 hours until a new concept and a different opinion/explanation on the research topic were not produced anymore, and each student was allowed to take the floor.

Data Analysis

In the research, the content analysis method was used to reveal the experiences of foreign nursing students. The first and second authors analysed the data. Both are experienced in qualitative research. During the analysis process, the researchers did not use any software programmes. In the first instance, the researchers analysed the transcribed voice recordings independently of each other. When transcribing the audio recordings, care was taken to write down exactly what the participants said. The researchers formed themes and sub-themes from the participants' statements. In the final stage, the researchers came together to discuss the themes and sub-themes and then to reach consensus. Data analysis consists of seven steps. The steps in the analysis phase of the data are given below.

The steps of the data analysis:

1. The original opinions of the students in the FGIs and the observation notes taken during FGI were transcribed in the computer environment without any changes.
2. The appropriateness of the opinions and notes with the purpose of the research was checked, and it was determined that no opinions other than the purpose of the research were expressed.
3. The opinions were combined in line with their semantical similarity, and the frequency of the opinions combined under each code was specified by creating code names representing these opinions.
4. The codes were grouped according to their semantic integrity and theme names were created to represent these codes.
5. To increase the reliability of the data analysis, the researchers worked independently during the creation of codes and themes. The analyses were then discussed.
6. In order to reduce the effect of positive or negative thoughts that the first and second authors may have about the students during the analysis phase, each student participating in the research was coded by the third and fourth authors with a numbering system (S1, S2, ..., S10).
7. In order to ensure the external reliability of the research, the analysis stages of the data were explained in detail. This detailed explanation reduces the possibility of the

research results being affected by subjective assumptions and prejudices and becomes a guide for those to conduct similar research (Çelik et al., 2020).

Reliability and Ethics

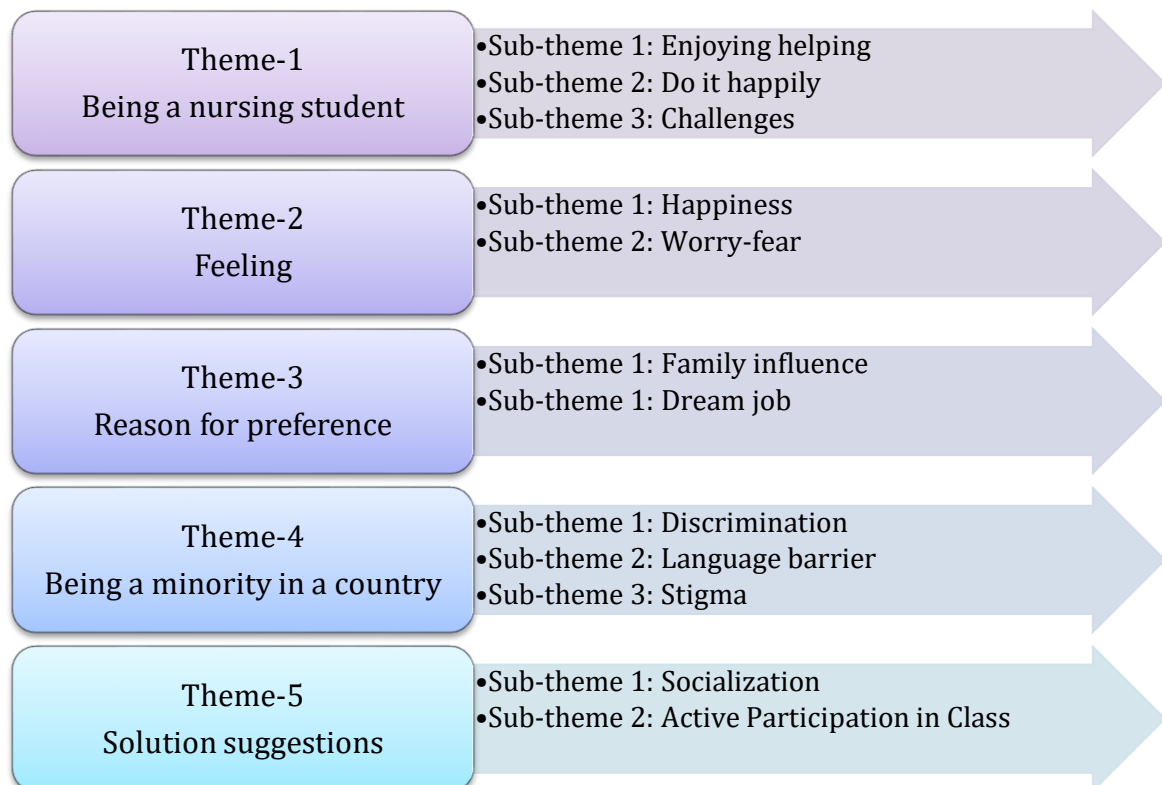
The permit of Sakarya University of Applied Sciences Ethics Committee dated 04.03.2022 and numbered E-26428519-044-41464 was obtained. The students in the sample were informed about the purpose of the study, their roles in the study, and the use of a voice recorder during the focus group interviews, and their verbal consents were obtained. The students participating in the study were also informed by the researchers about their right to participate in the study or to withdraw from the study at any time. The study was conducted in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Results

At the end of the FGIs, five main themes were determined: being a nursing student, feeling, reason for preference, being a minority in a country, and solution suggestions. These themes and sub-themes are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Themes and Sub-Themes



Theme 1: Being a Nursing Student

It was determined that the nursing students in the study define being a student with some expressions under the headings of "Enjoying helping, doing it happily, and the challenges of working conditions". Therefore, three sub-themes were determined under the theme of being a nursing student. These sub-themes and expressions are provided below.

Sub-theme 1: Enjoying helping

Among the sub-themes, the highest number of opinions (n=3) was expressed in the theme of enjoying helping. Opinions such as touching people's lives, contributing, and being happy to make people happy were reported. Participant expression examples are as follows:

"I love helping people. I can even work for free in this profession" / S4

"I really love nursing and want to pursue this profession. Nursing is a good fit for me because I love people and I love helping people. " / S2

Sub-theme 2: Do it happily

Another sub-theme under the theme of being a nursing student was determined as 'doing it with love'. Most participants (n=5) stated that they like this profession as it enables them to help. One participant explained this as follows:

"Nurses stay with patients for a very long time and provide care for them. I wanted to be like them, to help people. I was very happy when I got into the nursing department." / S7

Sub-theme 3: Challenges

The challenges of studying in the nursing department, which is an applied education, in another culture and language for students were discussed in this sub-theme (n=3). One participant explained this as follows:

"... But last semester was very busy for me. We get out of courses and get into internships, so busy. I am very happy that I got into nursing, but internships and exams were very busy... I find internships and exams very busy at the same time." / S4

Theme 2: Feelings

It was observed that the students expressed some feelings during the interviews. While answering the questions asked within the scope of our study, the students were observed to experience intense happiness as well as worry and fear about being nurses in the future.

Sub-theme 1: Happiness

When the theme of feeling was examined, almost all students (n=9) were observed to be happy as they would be nurses. All students got into this department and to Turkey willingly. A student expressed his/her feelings as follows:

"Being a nurse is very good for me. We had an internship last term. It was very nice. We did not have any problems with the patients or the nurses. It was a very good experience".
/ S3

Sub-theme 2: Worry-fear

Participants (n=3) were also observed to experience worry/fear and happiness at the same time. When the source of their worry was examined, there were seen to be worries caused by being a foreigner in a country. For example, a participant expressed his/her feelings with the following sentences:

"As a nursing student, my feelings are a bit complicated, because being a nursing student makes me happy, that's what I want to be, but studying in another country, in another place, in another language... Sometimes I'm afraid if I can do it. Even if I do, will the people (Turks) accept me? I feel such an emotion". / S1

Theme 3: Reason for Preference

The reason for the preference theme was determined after the foreign students in the study stated that they preferred to be a nursing student in Turkey. The sub-themes related to this theme were determined as family influence and dream job.

Sub-theme 1: Family influence

The participant, who stated to have gotten into this department and to the country with the influence of his/her family expressed his/her opinion as follows: *".... I decided to become a healthcare professional because my family wanted this and they thought that they had many children and there was not one healthcare professional among them, and I could not resist this idea"* / S9.

Sub-theme 2: Dream job

Two participants stated that they had wanted to be nurses since childhood and that nursing was their dream job. Participants expressed this as follows:

My father also worked at the hospital.. When I went to work with my father and saw the nurses, I said I wanted to be like them." / S7

"Nursing has been my dream since I was little. I wanted to make this dream come true in my country, but it did not happen because of the war." / P4

Theme 4: Being a Minority in a Country

Almost all students in the study defined being a nursing student in Turkey as being a minority. Three sub-themes were identified for this definition: discrimination, language barrier, and stigma.

Sub-theme 1: Discrimination

The majority of foreign students studying at a university in Turkey stated that they felt excluded and that they thought there was discrimination (n=8). The opinions of some participants in this sub-theme are as follows:

"... or when I'm on the bus and there is an empty seat next to me, people don't want to sit there and I don't know why." / S10

"But my other foreign friends and I think the same: we feel discrimination. I don't feel excluded outside, but I feel excluded especially among my friends at this university." / S9 stated to feel higher discrimination in the university environment.

Sub-theme 2: Language barrier

Students generally reported experiencing problems with the difference between spoken-written language and self-expression under this sub-theme (n=9). They also added that they had difficulty understanding the exams and courses at the university.

"Sometimes I can't explain some stuff and I don't understand some stuff. Especially in exams... because we talk differently when we talk, but sometimes the questions are very difficult for me, especially when the teachers ask questions. I cannot fully understand the question." / S2

The statement of a student having difficulty in expressing himself/herself and feeling non-understood by others is as follows:

"When I go anywhere here, people talk very fast. 'I don't speak this language, calm down and listen to me' (the participant says this in a harsh tone). For example, when I go to get a photocopy, I think about how I will say it. The person in front of me says 'I understand', but no, he does not understand and does not calm down. That person thinks he knows what I am going to say, but no, he does not understand." / S10

Sub-theme 3: Stigma

When the answers under the sub-theme of stigma were examined, it was observed that the students were negatively affected by the looks of other people, they felt like they were diseased, and they felt uncomfortable with this situation (n=5). An example statement of this sub-theme is given below:

"Sometimes I'm walking, people are staring at me. 'Why are you looking at me, is there something wrong with me?' (The participant is looking at his/her own body here.) I know

we are different... Because they have white skin, not black like us, no one notices them... When I first came, they were staring at me so much that I was thinking 'Am I sick, is it something wrong with my color, am I not a normal person?' / S1

Theme 5: Solution Suggestions

As a result of FGI, the students may be identified as mostly having problems regarding language. Therefore, the solution suggestions developed for the experienced difficulties were also solutions regarding the elimination of the language barrier.

Sub-Theme 1: Socialization (n=3)

According to the students' opinions, socialization is one of the most effective activities to overcome the language barrier. Emphasizing the importance of socializing with Turkish students and even with their families, the participant (S9) stated to have learned Turkish words during the time spent with his/her roommate and his/her family:

"I have a Turkish roommate. My Turkish is very bad, and we speak Turkish with him at home, he helps me a lot. He even takes me to his house; his grandfather and grandmother speak old Turkish. They explain to me the words one by one." / S9

Another participant suggested, "S2: We should participate in the special days of the Turks, we should be together". One participant suggested that socialization can be achieved with some activities to be done in the classroom.

Sub-theme 2. Active Participation in Class (n=4)

Suggestions for active participation in class were made to solve the language barrier. One participant explained this situation as follows:

"For example, it's like I give a lecture. Frankly, I want to try. Can I lecture? Will I be able to convey what I want to the other person? I think that if I can do that, only this way I can overcome stage fright or fear of being a speaker." / S9

Discussion and Conclusion

Nursing students who receive their education in another country may be at risk of not benefiting from the nursing education they receive sufficiently due to a number of factors, including language, cultural and system differences (Kılıç et al., 2021). This study aimed to understand the experiences of international students studying nursing and to help educators create solutions to existing problems. The study identified five themes: being a nursing student, feeling, reasons for preference, being a minority in a country and solution suggestions. Each theme was discussed separately.

Being a Nursing Student

The international students participating in this study indicated that they were motivated to assist others due to the intrinsic nature of the profession, which they found appealing. However, the students reported experiencing challenges due to cultural and linguistic differences, particularly given the practical nature of the training. Similarly, a study conducted with international students revealed that they encountered challenges during practical training. In particular, it was found that students encountered difficulties in subjects directly related to nursing roles, including caregiving, drug administration, and patient education (Kılıç et al., 2021). The findings of our study indicated that students encountered difficulties due to the concurrent implementation of clinical practices and theoretical courses. It is widely acknowledged that students face significant challenges when pursuing their education in a language other than their mother tongue within the context of nursing education, where theoretical and practical learning are concurrently undertaken (Dos Santos, 2021). In the study conducted by Özaslan et al. (2019), students reported experiencing difficulties in both theoretical and practical education, with greater challenges reported in the latter. It is encouraging to note that the students in our study expressed positive attitudes towards the nursing profession. A review of the literature revealed no studies that corroborated these findings among international students. It is postulated that this result may be attributed to the students' enthusiasm for the nursing profession and the heightened importance of healthcare workers in the context of the ongoing pandemic. It is, however, a matter of concern for those engaged in academic research that the adverse experiences encountered by international students during their period of study may result in their eventual detachment from the profession. In addition to the difficulties experienced due to the content of the education programme, it is recommended that counselling services for international students be increased, especially in the first years of education. Furthermore, the content and duration of orientation programmes for these students should be improved. The concept of intercultural nursing should be emphasised in the courses. Nurses who speak a foreign language should be selected as mentors in clinical practice and Turkish students at the university. The continuity of Turkish courses should be ensured, and the theoretical courses should be explained more clearly. In a recent study, the students in the sample proposed mentoring and orientation programmes as potential solutions to the difficulties they encountered (Ünsal et al., 2024).

Feeling

The study revealed that students held disparate attitudes towards their role as nursing students. The students, all of whom reported that they had elected to pursue their studies in the nursing department, exhibited a range of emotional states, from positive affect to anxiety and fear. The concept of "foreignness" emerges as a significant factor contributing to the negative sentiments expressed by students. In a study, the overwhelming majority of international students enrolled in the nursing department identified the experience of being a foreign student as a significant challenge. The underlying cause of these challenges was identified as the difficulties encountered in

legal processes due to the status of being a foreign national, coupled with the financial and moral challenges faced (Tuzcu et al., 2020). The term "foreigner," in accordance with its denotation, engenders exclusion and marginalization of the individual. Such circumstances may give rise to difficulties in adapting to the new environment. A study conducted in our country revealed that the adaptation of international nursing students to the university environment was at a medium level (Yılmaz et al., 2021). In our country, there has been a shift in discourse towards the use of the term 'international' in reference to individuals from diverse countries pursuing educational opportunities for various reasons (Özaslan et al., 2019). It is recommended that the term 'international' be used in place of 'foreign' when describing students from other countries, and that activities be planned to help these students feel at home in the local culture. Furthermore, it may be beneficial for universities to offer free psychological counseling services to mitigate the negative impact of stress and anxiety on students, as well as to equip those experiencing such emotions with effective coping strategies.

Reason for Preference

A review of the reasons why students in our sample selected the nursing department for their undergraduate studies in Turkey revealed two distinct categories: those who opted for the nursing department at the request of their family and those who did so of their own volition. Similarly, the study by Tuzcu et al. (2020) identified that the reasons for students to choose the nursing department were that their families wanted them to do so and that they wanted to do so themselves. A positive correlation was identified between the willingness of students to pursue a career in nursing and their more favourable attitudes towards the profession (Eycan et al., 2024; Zencir & Eşer, 2016). A deliberate selection of a profession has been demonstrated to enhance job satisfaction among nurses and to elevate patient satisfaction levels (Türk et al., 2018). It is imperative that international students who have elected to pursue a career in nursing are provided with the necessary support to overcome the challenges they may encounter during their academic journey. This will ensure that they are able to maintain their motivation and succeed not only in their studies but also in their future professional endeavours. It is possible that these difficulties may have a negative effect on students' willingness to continue with their studies. Students who have been admitted at the request of their families may require support in developing a sense of professional identity and maintaining high levels of motivation throughout their studies. Otherwise, they may experience psychological difficulties as a result of the challenges they will face during their education and in their professional lives.

Being a Minority in a Country

The majority of students surveyed reported experiencing discrimination. The study conducted by Kol et al. (2021), revealed that international students perceived discrimination, encountered prejudice based on their ethnicity and language, and expressed concerns about being rejected by patients in clinical settings. Additionally, they indicated that their lack of fluency in Turkish led to feelings of diminished importance. In

the study conducted by Özaslan et al. (2019), it was established that the experiences of nursing students varied according to their nationality. Those who migrated from certain countries were found to be subjected to greater stigma. In our study, students of African descent from Somalia, Cameroon and Nigeria reported experiencing greater discrimination on the basis of their skin colour than their counterparts from Russia, Syria and Iraq. Such circumstances have the potential to negatively impact the educational experiences of students. A study revealed that the most common cause of stress experienced by nursing students was discrimination. Junious et al. (2010) identified language difficulties, cultural differences and financial constraints as additional sources of stress for students. The majority of students in the study reported experiencing language difficulties, including comprehension issues in the classroom, communication challenges in Turkish, and exam question comprehension problems. The students cited anxiety about being misunderstood in communication with Turkish individuals, difficulties in understanding certain words, and challenges in reading and comprehending the content in the textbook, even when they could speak Turkish, as key reasons for their difficulties. A review of national and international studies on this topic reveals that the challenges faced by international students in Turkey and elsewhere are largely comparable (Johannessen et al., 2022; Tuzcu et al., 2020; Flateland et al., 2019; Kol et al., 2016; Özkan & Güvendir, 2015; Jeong et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2008). The negative experiences of ethnic minority nursing students due to language and cultural differences constitute an obstacle to their success (Johannessen et al., 2022). The number of international students enrolled at universities is increasing as a result of globalisation. Turkey is one of the most preferred countries for international students (Ünsal et al., 2024). It is imperative that international nursing students arriving in our country are able to adapt to the university environment in order to avoid negative experiences. It is recommended that orientation programmes be enhanced with respect to language and cultural aspects, thus facilitating the integration of international students into the university and the department.

Solution Suggestions

It is imperative that the challenges faced by international nursing students, who will ultimately be responsible for the wellbeing of others in their professional careers, are addressed in order to ensure their success. The findings of our study and an analysis of the relevant literature indicate that language is the primary source of difficulties encountered by international students, both in terms of academic performance and communication with their peers. In the study conducted by Dapremont (2011) with Black nursing students in the USA, it was determined that students required peer support and encouragement of group work with other students in order to enhance their academic success. The students participating in our study highlighted the significance of speaking Turkish in facilitating language acquisition and communication, and proposed socialisation and active participation in the course as potential solutions to communication challenges. In this regard, universities may wish to consider encouraging the use of active learning methods that will facilitate interaction between international and Turkish students and encourage international students to utilise the Turkish language

within the course. This may involve organising activities related to the Turkish language and culture, as well as events that introduce different cultures. Additionally, the establishment of student communities, which international students can participate in, may prove beneficial.

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Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Küreselleşmeyle birlikte, lisans eğitimini başka ülkelerde alan öğrenci sayısında yıllar geçtikçe artış görülmektedir (Kumcağız vd., 2016). Ekonomik sorunlar, savaş ve olumsuz yaşam koşulları gibi çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı Türkiye, oldukça tercih edilen ülkelerden biri haline gelmiştir (Ünsal vd., 2024; Alan vd., 2022).

Teorik ve uygulamalı eğitim süreçlerinin eş zamanlı olarak uygulandığı hemşirelik eğitiminde uluslararası öğrencilerin çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaştığı belirtilmektedir. Bu zorlukların temel nedeni kültürel farklılıklar ve ülkede konuşulan dilin anadilden farklı olmasıdır. (Özaslan ve ark., 2019). Ülkemizde her akademik yılın başında, öğrencilerin dil zorluklarını aşmak amacıyla Türkçe dil seviyelerini ölçmek için bir sınav düzenlenmekte ve sınavda başarısız olan öğrenciler, bir yıl boyunca dil eğitimi almaktadırlar. Yeterli dil puanına sahip olmaları halinde üniversite eğitimlerine devam etmektedirler (Erdil, 2018). Ancak, öğrencilerin dil desteği almalarına rağmen uyum ve iletişim kurmada sorun yaşadıkları bilinmektedir (Kol vd., 2021; Yılmaz vd., 2021; Ünsal vd., 2024). Farklı ülkelerde hemşirelik öğrencileri ile yapılan çalışmalarda öğrencilerin klinik uygulamalarda hastalarla iletişim, akranları tarafından ayrımcılık, yeni bir kültüre uyum, mesleki uygulamalarının klinik hemşireleri tarafından kabul edilmemesi, teorik dersleri anlamada güçlükler gibi sorunlar yaşadıkları belirlenmiştir (Iskander Narouz, 2018; Dos Santos, 2021; Jeong ve ark., 2011).

Uluslararası öğrenciler, sağlık hizmetlerinde önemli bir yere sahip olan hemşirelik mesleğine yoğun ilgi göstermektedir. Öğrencilerin yaşadıkları zorluklar uyum sorunlarını artırmakta, eğitimden vazgeçmelerine neden olmakta ve eğitim kalitesini olumsuz etkilemektedir. Uluslararası hemşirelik öğrencilerinin özel öğrenme ihtiyaçlarını anlamak ve bu ihtiyaçları karşılamak için destek sağlamak, hemşirelik eğitim programlarının başarısı için kritik öneme sahiptir. Bu bilgiler doğrultusunda çalışmamız, uluslararası hemşirelik öğrencilerinin lisans eğitim sürecindeki deneyimlerini belirlemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın, Türkiye'ye eğitim için gelen uluslararası hemşirelik öğrencilerinin hem teorik hem de pratik eğitim süreçlerinde yaşadıkları sorunların belirlenmesi ve bu öğrencilerin uyumlarının artırılmasına yönelik öneriler sunulması açısından önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir.

Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan tanımlayıcı türde yürütülen bu çalışmanın örneklemini, farklı milletlerden gelen 10 yabancı uyruklu hemşirelik öğrencisi oluşturmuştur. Araştırmanın verileri, Sosyo-Demografik Bilgi Formu ve Yarı Yapılandırılmış Odak Grup Görüşmesi Formu ile toplanmıştır. Odak Grup Görüşmesi Formu, araştırmacılar tarafından literatür doğrultusunda oluşturulan üç açık uçlu soru içermektedir. Soruların geçerliliği için sorular, üç uzmanın görüşüne sunulmuştur. Odak grup görüşmesi, Mart 2022'de araştırmanın yapıldığı üniversitenin toplantı salonunda yüz yüze gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşme nitel araştırma yöntemleri üzerine seminerlere katılmış ve daha önce nitel çalışma deneyimi olan birinci ve ikinci yazarlar tarafından yapılmıştır. Görüşme araştırma konusuyla ilgili yeni bir kavram, farklı bir görüş/açıklama üretilmeyinceye kadar toplam 1,5 saat sürmüştür ve her öğrenciye söz hakkı verilmiştir.

Araştırma verilerinin analizi için içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Birinci ve ikinci yazarlar verileri analiz etmiştir. Analiz sürecinde araştırmacılar herhangi bir yazılım programı kullanmamıştır. İlk etapta, araştırmacılar yazıya dökülen ses kayıtlarını birbirlerinden bağımsız olarak analiz etmişlerdir. Ses kayıtları yazıya dökülürken katılımcıların söylediklerini tam olarak yazmaya özen gösterilmiştir. Araştırmacılar, katılımcıların ifadelerinden temalar ve alt temalar oluşturmuştur. Son aşamada araştırmacılar, bir araya gelerek tema ve alt temaları tartışmış ve uzlaşmaya varmışlardır. Çalışmanın uygulanmasında ve raporlanmasında Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) kontrol listesi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın yapılabilmesi için kurum ve etik izinler alınmış olup çalışma Helsinki Deklarasyonu ilkeleri doğrultusunda yürütülmüştür.

Veri analizi sonucunda; hemşirelik öğrencisi olmak, duygu, tercih nedeni, bir ülkede azınlık olmak ve çözüm önerileri olmak üzere beş ana tema bulunmuştur. Araştırmaya katılan hemşirelik öğrencilerinin öğrenciliği "Yardım etmekten zevk almak, seyerek yapmak ve çalışma koşullarının zorlukları" başlıkları altında bazı ifadelerle tanımladıkları belirlenmiştir. Bu nedenle hemşirelik öğrencisi olmak teması altında üç alt tema belirlenmiştir. Görüşmeler sırasında öğrencilerin bazı duyguları ifade ettikleri gözlemlenmiş ve duygu ana teması oluşmuştur. Çalışmamız kapsamında sorulan soruları yanıtlarken öğrencilerin yoğun bir mutluluğun yanı sıra gelecekte hemşire olacaklarına dair endişe ve korku yaşadıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Çalışmada yer alan yabancı uyruklu öğrencilerin Türkiye'de hemşirelik öğrencisi olmayı tercih ettiklerini belirtmeleri üzerine tercih nedeni teması belirlenmiştir. Bu temaya ilişkin alt temalar ise aile etkisi ve hayalindeki meslek olarak belirlenmiştir. Çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin neredeyse tamamı, Türkiye'de hemşirelik öğrencisi olmayı azınlık olmak olarak tanımlamıştır. Azınlık teması için ayrımcılık, dil engeli ve damgalanma olmak üzere üç alt tema belirlenmiştir. Yapılan görüşme sonucunda öğrencilerin, yaşanan zorluklara yönelik geliştirilen çözüm önerileri, sosyalleşme ve derse etkin katılım şeklinde olmuştur.

Çalışmamızda öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun, hemşirelik mesleğini yardım etme güdüsüyle yapmak istedikleri ve mesleği sevdikleri belirlenmiştir. Literatürde konuya ilişkin araştırmalar incelendiğinde; uluslararası öğrencilerin bu ifadelerini destekleyen çalışma sonucuna rastlanmamıştır. Araştırmamızdan elde edilen bu sonucun, öğrencilerin hemşirelik mesleğine olan ilgisinden, son yıllarda COVID-19 pandemisi ile birlikte sağlık çalışanlarının öneminin ön plana çıkmasından kaynaklandığı düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmada öğrencilerin çoğu ayrımcılığa maruz kaldıklarını bildirmişlerdir. Somali, Kamerun ve Nijerya'dan gelen siyahi öğrenciler; Rusya, Suriye ve Irak'tan gelen hemşirelik öğrencilerine göre ten renkleri farklı olduğu için daha fazla ayrımcılığa maruz kaldıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca çalışmamızdaki öğrencilerin çoğu dil problemi yaşadıklarını, dersleri anlamakta zorluk çektiklerini, Türkçe dilinde kendilerini ifade etmede güçlük çektiklerini, sınavlarda soruları anlamakta zorlandıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bunun nedenleri arasında Türk bireyler ile iletişim kurmada anlaşılama kaygısı yaşamalarını, bazı kelimeleri anlamakta güçlük çekmelerini, Türkçe konuşmakta zorlanmalar bile kitaptaki kelimeleri okuyup anlama konusunda sıkıntı yaşadıklarını söylemişlerdir. Görüldüğü üzere çalışmamızdaki

uluslararası öğrenciler en çok dil problemlerini ve bir ülkede azınlık olmaya bağlı ayrımcılık yaşamalarını olumsuz deneyimleri olarak ifade etmiştir. Konu ile ilgili yapılan ulusal ve uluslararası çalışmalar çalışma bulgularımızı destekler niteliktedir (Johannessen et al., 2022; Tuzcu et al., 2020; Kol et al., 2016; Özkan & Acar-Güvendir, 2015; Jeong et al., 2011; Johnson & Mohide, 2008; Wang et al., 2008). Çalışmamızdan elde edilen sonuçlar doğrultusunda öğrencilerin dil problemlerini minimuma indirmeye yönelik lisans eğitimleri boyunca Türkçe kurslarının devamlılığının sağlanması, teorik derslerin daha açık anlatılması, farklı öğretim yöntemleri ile derslerin zenginleştirilmesi, görsel materyallerin kullanımının artırılmasının başarı ve uyumları açısından yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca üniversitede uluslararası öğrencilerin sosyal ilişkilerini güçlendirmeye yönelik danışmanlık verilmesi, öğrenci topluluklarına katılımlarının sağlanması, uluslararası ve Türk öğrencilerin etkileşim içinde olmalarını sağlayacak etkinliklerin düzenlenmesi sosyokültürel uyumlarını artırabilir. Bununla birlikte öğrencilerin sosyalleşme sürecinin eğiticiler tarafından yakından takip edilerek, diğer öğrenciler ile iletişimlerinin desteklenmesinin faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

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