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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LONELINESS, MEDIA USAGE AND HOST LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG FOREIGN STUDENTS

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Abstract

Nowadays international and intercultural communication have been going increasing. These communications have economic and touristic characteristics. In addition to these movements, student's movements have been going increasing in recently. Certainly international students have encountered different psychological and cultural problems in their new society. Loneliness is one of the most important psychological problems in international student's adaptation process. Communication scholars claim that mass communications help immigrants and sojourners as a source of information on the new society's rules, norms, language and etc. This research intended to state stage of foreign students' loneliness, types of media usage (host/ethnic media usage) and host language proficiency. Add to this, study purpose to show the relationship between loneliness, media usage (host/ethnic media usage) and language proficiency among foreign university students. A survey was conducted on an international students' population who were attending Selcuk University. The researchers purposed to interview all of the population but they interviewed two hundred and eighty eight (288) foreign students. Data was collected via a questionnaire which included different subscales such as loneliness, host language proficiency and media usage styles. Results showed that 28.8 % of participants felt lonesome. In additionally, host media usage and Turkish language proficiency were negatively and significantly correlated with loneliness. On the other hand there was not significantly correlation between loneliness and ethnic media usage.

Keywords: International students, loneliness, media usage, host language proficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

People have been interesting different places, cities and countries from ancient times. Especially communication and transportation technologies have developed last two centuries. These technologies not only improve trading acts but also to minimize whole world. After that point people notice a huge world which is different from theirs. And they want to meet to each other and to earn more money. Generally they anticipate having better life conditions such as having to better health services, economical conditions and life conditions. Inherently these kind of international movements actualize from undeveloped countries to developed countries such as U.S.A. and member of E.U.

The other name of the international movement is international students. Young people leave to their native country for having a better educational degree and better life conditions. U.S.A. and member of E.U countries encourage movements of international students because they believe that these kinds of movements contribute to world peace. Governmental officers of U.S.A. and member of E.U countries think that foreign students who educated their countries will manage their countries therefore it will provide peaceful relations between these countries. Especially E.U. countries support movements of students by different programs such as Erasmus (Kudo and Simkin, 2003: 91).

International students and this kind of movements cause to appear new concepts related to this process such as acculturation and adaptation. These young people's can leave some adaptation problems related to new societies' culture. Concept of adaptation can be divided in to two groups. The first group adaptation is named socio cultural adaptation which includes adaptation of social environment such as cultural conditions, nutritive, transportation and educational concerns. On the other hand, psychological adaptation includes different concepts such as loneliness, life satisfaction and depression (Cemalcılar, 2003: 25; Snyder, 1990: 442).

This kind of concepts can provide information about students' adaptation and satisfaction related to new country. On the other hand communication scholars have studied in this field based on communication. According to them two kinds of communication which are interpersonal and mass communication help adaptation of international students. Communication scholars assert that foreign people can adapt easily to new society thorough interpersonal and mass communication. They can learn more easy new society's traditions, rules, foods transportations and life conditions thorough communication. Point of this view communication is a source of social learning and adaptation. Foreign people to have difficulty interpersonal communicating at the beginning reason for different psychological problems such as communication apprehension, depression and loneliness. At this point mass communications have a better alternative than interpersonal communication for social learning and adaptation. The person who cannot easily face to face communication can use mass communications having more information about his/her new society (Reece & Palmgreen, 2000: 809; Liu, 1996: 43; Walker, 1993: 1; Yang, 1988: 22).

In this manner numerous studies have been performed by different communication and scholars, who investigated the relationship between adaptation/acculturation and communication - interpersonal and media usage – (Gülnar & Balcı, 2010b; Keshishian, 2000). Some researchers have studied relation to psychological adaptation and communication themes such as relationship between acculturation and life satisfaction (Arauj, 2009), life satisfaction and communication - interpersonal communication and media usage - (Gülnar & Balcı, 2012), depression and communication - interpersonal communication and media usage - (Gülnar & Aker, 2013), loneliness and communication - interpersonal communication and media usage - (Gülnar & Balcı, 2011; Perloff et.al., 1983; Perse & Rubin, 1990), internet usage and adaptation (Wang, 2006).

Mass communication can be a socialization and information source which could be used by newcomers who feel lonely during the acculturation process. Media with these characteristics can help adapting people who come into a new society as an immigrant, refugee or international student. In addition to television, new communication technologies - especially internet - accelerate the acculturation and adaptation process (Lee, 1993: 382).

This study aimed that to show foreign students' stage of loneliness and their communication patterns in means of interpersonal and mass communication usage both of host and ethnic kinds

and their Turkish language proficiency. This studies' problematic can be defined "Is there any relationship between loneliness, interpersonal communication, media using and Turkish language proficiency among foregin university students?" It can be explained to this studies' significance: (1) it is the first study which performed in Turkey, (2) indicating foreign university students' level of loneliness, (3) displaying to the relationship between international university students' loneliness and their communication patterns.

II.   LONELINESS AMONG FOREIGN STUDENTS

Young people go down from native country which in they were born and arise purpose of educational aims. Probably they have to go different countries and have to connect people which they have never seen before. Foreign students can live some problems related to adaptation or acculturation which named acculturative stress or culture shock. Loneliness is one of the most important factors in this process (Gülnar & Aker, 2013: 1004). Foreign students can live a culture shock in the beginning of their immigration. Adaptation of foreign students need changes student's interpersonal communication and psychological conditions. It may cause psychological problems and tension (Snyder, 1990: 443).

Feeling of loneliness is the most important social and psychological problem that newcomers may experience when they start to live in a foreign society. In the immigration related literature, loneliness is a most explored topic among psychological conditions. As modern people who live in their home society feel lonely, newcomers (immigrants) who are far from their family, culture live this psychological problem strongly. Culturally isolated immigrants' health is under important risk (Kim, 1999: 1083).

Loneliness is a subjective experience which a person's relationships are fewer satisfying than desired. In another words it is the absence of satisfying social realtionships. Loneliness is more related to meaningful a person's relations than amount of that relations. Therefore quality of interactions is more important than quantity of interactions (Hu, 2007: 27).

Weiss (1989) defined the loneliness in to two groupes which were emotional and social loneliness. When a person do not have psychological attechment to intimate other persons such as parents, spouses, and children emotional loneliness appear. For example they can leave emotional loneliness who a teenager just leaving his parents and going to college, a woman who recently lost her husband, or a elderly person whose children live far away. On the contrary social loneliness is caused by deficit of perceived belongingness to a general social community. A child can feel excluded by other children, a housewife just moving into a new city experience this kind of loneliness.

Two factors are idenfified which determine the loneliness. The first one is internal factors that is personality characteristics such as introversion, shyness, low self-esteem, (John, Freeman, Goswick 1981); lack of social skills (Page, et.al, 1992); negative evaluation of interpersonal relationships (Jones, et.al., 1983); feelings of emptiness, awkwardness, and boredom (Russell, et.al., 1978). Second factor which determine the loneliness is external factors such as divorce, loss of a spouse, newly enrolled college students (Hu, 2007: 32).

Loneliness is related to negatively to other psychological situations such as life satisfactions. Literature indicated that internatinal students' loneliness is negatively correlated with their life

satisfaction. Wang's (2006: 102) findings were consistent of this assert. On the other hand loneliness is related to positively to other psychological situations such as depression. For example Wang (2006) found that loneliness was the strongest positive predictor of depression.

III.   LONELINESS AND COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS AMONG FOREIGN STUDENTS

Different researchers assert that social interaction is negatively related to loneliness. In other words a person who has more social interaction he/she has less lonely (Hu, 2007: 27). Clinton and Anderson (1999: 71) have findings consistent with this assert. They found that social loneliness inversely related to number of close friends. In addition emotional loneliness inversely related to reciprocal best friend.

Kraut and colleagues (1998) performed a longitudinal research which related to internet and psychological well-being. This study' results revealed that greater internet use caused a small but significant decline in social involvement (family communication, local social network, and social support) and an increase in loneliness and depression. Morahan- Martin (1999) conducted a similar research which investigated loneliness, internet use and abuse. The researcher found that loneliness is correlated with both increased internet use and internet abuse.

Kubey and colleagues (2001) conducted a research at a large public university that sample consisted 572 students. They investigated the relationship between heavier use of internet and academic performance. Researchers found that heavier recreational internet use correlated highly with impaired academic performance. Loneliness, staying up late, tiredness, and missing class were also intercorrelated with self-reports of Internet-caused impairment. Similarly Matanda and colleagues (2004) investigated relation to internet use and loneliness, computer anxiety and education among 158 adults. They found that lonely and younger men used to internet more for entertainment.

There are numerous studies which indicate that internet use could alleviate negative psychological well-being - loneliness and depression – (Shaw & Gant, 2002; White et al., 1999). Moreover some researcher found that internet use related to better psychological well-being (Cheng, Wigand, & Nilan, 2000). Weiser (2001) performed a similar study who investigated psychological well-being and internet use. Psychological well-being was consisted three elements which were loneliness, depression and life satisfaction. Weiser (2001: 733) indicated that psychological well-being negatively correlated with internet use for social purposes and hours of personal internet use while it was positively correlated with social integration.

Moody (2001) conducted a research among 166 university students. The researcher purposed to show that relation to internet use and loneliness. Moddy (2001: 395) found that participants' face to face network of friends negatively correlated to social and emotional loneliness. In addition to social loneliness negatively correlated to internet activity. In another words high internet use associated to lower social loneliness. On the other hand emotional loneliness positively correlated to internet network of friends while it was negatively correlated to face to face network of friends.

In consistent with related literature revealed that interpersonal communication and mass communication provide to satisfy international students' psychological and social needs.

Especially traditional media and internet is a social learning and adaptation tool for international students. For example Gülnar and Balcı (2010b: 200) concluded that host mass media has a social learning functionality on foreign students' socio-cultural adaptation to Turkey. Especially first three Turkish internet using motives which were searching information, acculturation/reflection on values, and social interaction confirm this idea. Also Gülnar (2011: 65) found that foreign students used to host mass media more frequently than ethnic media.

In consistent with the related findings; television is the other important medium which is used by foreigners in the acculturation process. For example Gülnar and Balcı (2010a) found that first motivation of foreign university students Turkish Television motive was acculturation and reflection on values. Foreign university students used to Turkish Televisions as a host media purpose of acculturation and reflection on values. In additionally Gülnar and Balcı (2011) revealed that while loneliness is positively and significantly correlated with spare time and escape of viewing Turkish TV, on the other hand it is negatively and significantly correlated with acculturation and entertainment and relaxation as TV viewing motives.

It is concluded that international students' host interpersonal communication activities and host media usage are positively correlated with their acculturation and adaptation. Alternatively ethnic media usage is positively correlated to separation attitude. Also these kinds of communication activities are related to their psychological well-being. In another words host interpersonal communication and host media usage are inherently associated to loneliness and depression while it is positively correlated to life satisfaction.

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

RQ1: What is the degree of foreign students' loneliness?

RQ2: What is the frequency and kinds of foreign students' communication activities?

RQ3: Is there any relationship between loneliness and foreigners' communication activities?

RQ4: Is there any relationship between loneliness and foreigners' host (Turkish) language proficiency?

IV.   METHODS

A survey was conducted pupose to demonstrate the relationship between international university students' loneliness and their communication activities. This survey was performed at Selcuk University among 288 foreign students because it has many foreign students (1091) from different continents. These two hundred and eighty eight (288) foreign students came from twenty four (24) different countries and they have been attending eighteen (18) different programs in Selcuk University. Different analysis such as descriptive statistics and correlation analysis have been performed for answer to the research questions.

A. Procedure and Sample
This research has purposed to investigate loneliness degree of international university students and the relation between loneliness and their communication activities. Although the researchers aimed to interview all of the population but they were able to interview two hundred and eighty

eight (288) foreign students that they came from twenty four (24) different countries and have been attending eighteen (18) different programs in Selcuk University.

The sample was consisted 183 (63.5 %) male participants and 105 (36.5 %) females. Participants' ages were varying between 17 and 27 and mean of ages is 21.95. 27.4 % of the parcipants were from Azerbaijan, 19.8 % were from Mongolia, 11.8 % were from Turkmenistan, 7.6 % were from Kyrgyzstan, 7.3 % were from Kazakhstan, 6.3 % were from Poland, 4.9 % were from Afghanistan, 3.1 % were from Sweden. Also the sample included Iranian, Russian, Kenyan, Macedonian, Bosnia Herzegovina people with smaller counts.

B. Measurement

A questionnaire which contained three parts was designed to measure foreign students' loneliness degree and the relationship between loneliness degree, communication activities and host language proficiency. First part of the questionnaire included UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) and is constituted of twenty items. Participants reported situations which indicated on the scale by using one-to-five point scale (1= never, 5= always). Russell (1996:26) reported that its test-retest reliability is .73 and cronbach alpha ranged from .89 to .94. Also Russell (1996: 26) proved the construction validity of the scale. In addition Wang (2006: 69) reported that this scale's cronbach alpha is .91. The researchers computed .91 for cronbach alpha which is consistent with the findings of other researchers. Also they proved that the scale had constant validity.

Second part of the questionnaire which named media usage scale was used to measure foreign university students' frequency and type of mass media usage. It has one-to-five point scale which ranged between "never" and "daily". Gülnar and Aker (2013) reported that scale of media usage has construction validity. Because host interpersonal communication behaviors positively correlated host media usage (r = .231, p< .001). Similarly ethnic interpersonal communication behaviors positively correlated with ethnic media usage (r = .198, p< .001).

Lastly host language proficiency scale which was developed Ying and Liese (1990) used for this study. It consisted items which measure profiency of Turkish reading, writing, understanding, speaking and general Turkish efficiency. It has one-to-five point scale which ranged between "very weak" and "very strong". Ying and Liese reported .71 cronbach alpha for reliability. Also they proved the scales' construct validity by negative relationship between host language proficiency and depression. Similarly that Gülnar and Balcı (2010b) proved the scales' construct validity by negative relationship between host language proficiency and depression. In addition that Wang (2006) also calculated .88 alpha for reliability. Scale's reliability was proved by cronbach alpha .92 for this study. Also construct validity was proved by negative relationship between host language proficiency and loneliness in this study.

C. Analysis and Statistical Tests

Firstly, a pilot study was applied at the beginning of the survey and the questionnaire was reviewed according the results of this study. Analysis was performed by SPSS 17 statistical Program. Descriptive analysis was used to introduce demographic characteristics of participants. Central tendency statistics and computed items were performed for assessing participants' degree of loneliness, and media usage. Also paired samples t test was used for media usage. Correlation analysis was used to investigate the relations between loneliness, media usage and Turkish language proficiency.

V. FINDINGS

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

A. Loneliness Level of International Students

Firstly loneliness degree of participants is descriptively explored in this section. As seen on Table 1, mean score of participants' loneliness is $\overline{X}$ = 2.29. This value indicates that participants' loneliness degree is low (As mentioned before, a five point scale was used to assess loneliness. Answers ranged one to five therefore 0.80 (4/5= 0.80) range was used in staging: 1,00-1,80 = very low; 1,81-2,60 = low; 2,61-3,40 = midpoint; 3,41-4,20 = high; 4,21-5,00 = very high).

Table 1. Central Tendency Statistics for Participants' Total Loneliness Degree

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Loneliness	288	1.10	4.30	2.29	.623

Also participants' loneliness degree investigated thorough frequency analysis as a categorical variable (Loneliness index was categorized based on categorical degree as it was mentioned). As have been seen on Table 2, 24.0 % of participants have very low loneliness, 47.2 % of participant's low loneliness, 22.9 % of participants midpoint loneliness, 5.2 % of participants high loneliness, and 0.7 % of participants very high loneliness degree. In another words 28.8 % of participants feel lonely.

Table 2. Results of Frequency Analysis for Loneliness Categories

	Frequency	Rate	Valid Rate
Very Low	69	24.0	24.0
Low	136	47.2	47.2
Mid Point	66	22.9	22.9
High	15	5.2	5.2
Very High	2	0.7	0.7
Total	**288**	**100.0**	**100.0**

B. International Students' Host Language Proficiency and Mass Communication Usage

Scale of Host Language Proficiency developed by Ying and Liese (1990) which has five items was performed to investigate participants' degree of Turkish Language Proficiency. Descriptive analysis was performed to items of Turkish Language Proficiency at the beginning of this section. As seen on Table 3, host (Turkish) language proficiency items were listed by mean scores. Items which have highest means were "In your opinion how well can you understand spoken Turkish?", "In your opinion how well can you read in Turkish?", and "Overall how confident in your Turkish?". On the contrary items which have lowest means were "In your opinion how well can you write in Turkish?", "In your opinion how well can you speak in Turkish?"

Table 3. Central Tendency Statistics for Host (Turkish) Language Proficiency Items

SCALE FOR HOST (TURKISH) LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY	N	Minimum	Maximum	$\overline{X}$	*SD*
In your opinion how well can you understand spoken Turkish?	287	1	5	3.91	0.87
In your opinion how well can you read in Turkish?	287	2	5	3.78	0.90
Overall how confident in your Turkish?	287	2	5	3.75	0.85
In your opinion how well can you speak in Turkish?	279	1	5	3.69	0.91
In your opinion how well can you write in Turkish?	287	1	5	3.65	0.93

After the central tendency statistics for host language proficiency items, this time again the same statistics were performed for host language proficiency. As seen on Table 4, mean score of participants' host language proficiency is $\overline{X}$ = 3.76. This means that participants' host language proficiency degree is high (As mentioned before, a five point scale was used to measure host language proficiency. Answers ranged one to five therefore 0.80 (4/5= 0.80) range was used in staging: 1,00-1,80 = very low; 1,81-2,60 = low; 2,61-3,40 = midpoint; 3,41-4,20 = high; 4,21-5,00 = very high).

Table 4. Central Tendency Statistics for Participants' Total Host (Turkish) Language Degree

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Host Language Proficiency	287	1.60	5.00	3.76	0.78

International students' usage of mass media frequency and type is also examined in this section. Table 5 included descriptive statistics of usage mass media frequency and results of paired samples t test. According to results of paired samples t test international students more frequently and significantly use Turkish televisions ($\overline{X}$ = 3,31), than ethnic televisions ($\overline{X}$ = 2,45; t= 7.788, p < .001). Similarly, international students more frequently and significantly read Turkish newspapers ($\overline{X}$ = 2,76), than ethnic newspapers ($\overline{X}$ = 2,28; t= 5.648, p < .001). On the contrary they more frequently but not significantly listen Ethnic radios ($\overline{X}$ = 2,15), than Turkish radios ($\overline{X}$ = 2,05; t= -1.219; p > .05). They also more frequently and significantly use Turkish Internet ($\overline{X}$ = 3,94), than ethnic internet (t= 3.41; p < .001). When examined the overall estimation; it is clearly seen that general Turkish Media ($\overline{X}$ = 3,01) more frequently and significantly used than ethnic media ($\overline{X}$ = 2,57; t= 7.077; p < .001) by international students. These results showed that international university students more frequently use Turkish (host) media than ethnic media.

Table 5. Results of Paired Sample *t* Test for Host/Ethnic Media Usage

HOST/ETHNIC MEDIA USAGE	N	$\overline{X}$	t- value	p
Turkish television	288	3.31	7.788	**.000**
Ethnic television	288	2.45		
Turkish newspaper	288	2.76	5.648	**.000**
Ethnic newspaper	288	2.28		
Turkish radio	288	2.05	-1.219	.224
Ethnic radio	288	2.15		
Turkish internet	288	3.94	7.077	**.000**
Ethnic internet	288	3.41		
General Turkish Media	288	3.01	8.405	**.000**
General Ethnic Media	288	2.57		

C. Relationship between Host (Turkish) Language Proficiency, Mass Communication Usage and Loneliness

The relation between international students' Turkish language proficiency, mass communication usage and degree of loneliness was investigated in this section. Firstly a correlation analysis was performed loneliness and Turkish language proficiency. Correlation analysis revealed that reading Turkish (r= -.200, p< .01), writing Turkish (r= -.272, p< .01), understanding to spoke Turkish (r= -.214, p< .01), speaking Turkish (r= -.167, p< .01), general confidence of Turkish (r= -.241, p< .01), and total Turkish language proficiency (r= -.251, p < .01) negatively correlated with loneliness.

Table 6. Results of Correlation Analysis between Turkish Language Dimensions and Loneliness Degree (Pearson *r)*

	Reading Turkish	Writing	Understan.	Speaking	Gen.Confide	Total
Loneliness (General)	-.200**	-.272**	-.214**	-.167**	-.241**	-.251**
N	287	287	287	287	287	287

Secondly one more correlation analysis was performed between loneliness and host/ethnic media usage. Table 7 contained results of this analysis. Results indicated that loneliness negatively and significantly correlated with Turkish Internet use (r= -.132, p < .05). In addition, loneliness negatively and significantly correlated with total Turkish mass communication (r= -.119, p < .05). On the other hand loneliness is not correlated ethnic mass communication usage. These results displayed that host Turkish mass communication has a vital role on foreign university students' loneliness. Also results indicated that host internet use is very important on foreigners' psychological adaptation.

Table 7. Results of Correlation Analysis between Loneliness and Host/Ethnic Media Usage

Loneliness	Turkish Mass Communication				Ethnic Mass Communication			
	Television	Newspaper	Radio	Internet	Television	Newspaper	Radio	Internet
	-.082	-.013	-.054	-.132*	.064	.066	.071	-.050
	Total Turkish Mass Communication				Total Ethnic Mass Communication			
	-.119*				.060			

VI.   CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Study purposed to investigate relation to foreign university students' loneliness level, media usage patterns and their Turkish language proficiency. Those media usage patterns included host and ethnic media. Results indicated that foreign university students' level of loneliness is low. On the other hand an important part of the sample has mid-point stage of depression. International students have low degree of depression but this level near the mid-point level. In another words 28.8 % of foreign university students who attend to Seljuk University felt lonely. This percentage is fairly noteworthy. These results can be comment as anxious because these students are voluntary for coming to Turkey. They are not immigrants therefore they should want to adapt to new society. In fact it was expected that they have lower depression level than this stage.

Research showed that foreign university students Turkish language proficiency level is high. This finding is important in manner of host mass communication usage and adaptation to new country. The study also revealed that international university students more frequently used the host mass communication then ethnic mass communication. Most frequently used mass communication media was Turkish web sites. This finding supported to Gülnar and Balcı's (2010b) findings which included that host internet were a medium of socialization and adaptation to new culture. Also international university students more frequently and significantly use the Turkish televisions and read Turkish newspapers then ethnics. These results means that international students want to learn and adapt to Turkish society consistent with relation to host interpersonal communication and adaptation. Relation to host mass communication usage and adaptation was revealed different communication scholars (Wang, 2006; Gülnar and Balcı, 2011).

The correlation between loneliness and mass media usage was also investigated in this study. According to results, usage of Turkish (host) web sites negatively and significantly correlated with loneliness. In additionally total Turkish mass communication usage negatively and significantly correlated with loneliness. This result means that usage of host web sites and host mass communication causes the international students' loneliness level. Thus it enables international students' adaptation to Turkish society. This finding is also consistent with the other findings which include the relation between host media usage and acculturation (Gülnar and Balcı 2010a; Perse and Rubin, 1990; Gülnar, 2011; Lee and Tse, 1994). Additionally this finding is consistent with Wang's (2006) findings which contained that the negative relation between depression and (host) American internet using. Turkish internet using enables to international students' psychological adaptation to Turkish society similarly and consistently with Turkish (host) interpersonal communication behaviors.

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