

UNVEILING INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL STUDENTS' SOCIAL ADAPTATION
IN HUNGARY

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Abstract

International students who chose Hungary as their study destination must adapt to Hungary's society. Knowing the social adaptation of international students, especially doctoral students, gave another perspective on social adaptation in higher education. The study aimed to uncover the social adaptation of international students in Hungary. And to understand how international students adapted to society in Hungary. This study method is qualitative research design, and the instrument of the study was the semi-structured interview. The study also presents descriptive statistics on demographic data. In our sample, there were seven international students who were from Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, and Iraq. interview and demographic data. The language of the interview was English. This study identified eleven categories in the students' adaptation. They were personality, the first visited place, the first friend, adaptation types, ways to make acquaintances, time adjustment, challenges in social adaptation, factors in social adaptation, setting social adaptation, self-reflection, and unfamiliar activities or new habits.

Keywords: culture differences, international students, Hungary, social adaptation

Discipline: pedagogy

Absztrakt

DOKTORI KÉPZÉSBEN RÉSZVEVŐ KÜLFÖLDI HALLGATÓK TÁRSADALMI ALKALMAZKODÁSÁNAK FELTÁRÁSA MAGYARORSZÁGON

A Magyarországot választó külföldi hallgatóknak alkalmazkodniuk kell a magyar társadalomhoz. A nemzetközi hallgatók, különösen a doktoranduszok társadalmi adaptációjának ismerete újabb perspektívát adott a felsőoktatási társadalmi adaptációnak. A tanulmány célja a külföldi hallgatók magyarországi társadalmi adaptációjának feltárása volt és az, hogy megértsük, hogyan alkalmazkodtak a nemzetközi hallgatók a magyarországi társadalomhoz. A tanulmány módszere kvalitatív vizsgálat, ahol félig strukturált interjúkat alkalmaztunk. A tanulmány a demográfiai adatok leíró statisztikáit is ismerteti. A mintánkban hét nemzetközi diák került, akik Indonéziából, Malajziából, Mianmarból, Üzbegisztánból és Irakból érkeztek. Az interjúkat angol nyelven készítették. A tanulmány tizenegy kategóriát azonosít a tanulók alkalmazkodásában. Ezek a személyiség, az első meglátogatott hely, az első barát, az adaptációs típusok, az ismerkedés módjai, az időhöz való alkalmazkodás, a társas alkalmazkodás kihívása, a társadalmi alkalmazkodás tényezője, a társadalmi adaptáció beállítása, az önreflexió, valamint egy ismeretlen tevékenység vagy új szokás.

Kulcsszavak: kulturális különbségek, nemzetközi hallgatók, Magyarország, társadalmi adaptáció

Diszciplína: neveléstudomány

Hungary became a famous study destination for international students. There were many international students who wanted to study at the university level in Hungary. Universities in Hungary were increasingly effective at recruiting international students. Over the past few years, the number of international students enrolled in Hungarian higher education has increased steadily (Zemplenyi, 2022). International students who chose Hungary as their study country destination must adapt to the new environment and people in Hungary. In a university environment, the vital aspect to which international students must pay attention is the individual. Whether they have professions as students, teachers, staff, et cetera, international students must know how to adapt within their communities. It was because every society includes a "set of principles or norms, or norms of human nature, governing their relations to one another and the community, to a particular group, to the state, family, etc., and supported by personal conviction, tradition, upbringing, and the power of any society or a specific group thereof." These principles or rules represent the morality of a specific form of society and are exclusive to that society. Moral norms reflected aspects of the social being of the people,

as manifested in their relationships, which were distinct for each type of society, just as their economic and political tenets of existence are distinct (Terziev, 2019a).

Before addressing the issue of social adaptation, it is vital to define what adaptation is. In the etymology of the term "adaptation," which derived from the Latin word "adaptation" and was incorporated into the Russian and German languages as "adaptation". In literary terms, it was interpreted as adaptation and accommodation. In biology, it refers to the adaptation of organisms to their environment in order to survive. In literature, it is referred to as accommodation, which is the modification of text to make it understandable to readers and audiences. Through the lens of social processes, adaptation was understood as the individual's adjustment to the social environment (Terziev, 2019b) The question that emerged was why social adaptation is crucial. Based on previous research on social adaptation, AlZboon (2013) found that the adaptive person got to a point where his or her actions and behaviors fit in with his or her social environment. This gave him or her balanced, positive social relationships with the people around him. This, in turn, had a positive

effect on all parts of his or her life, especially his or her motivation to achieve, since this is one of the most important social needs that a person has. Makeeva et al., (2022) stated in their finding on the adaptation of international students that, raised in a confined community, the majority of Samarans had never understood other cultures or communicated without an imperialistic bias. They did not comprehend how living in a foreign country and being receptive to a different way of life could influence an individual's personality and career in the direction of development, sensitivity, holism, and awareness. Misra & Castillo (2004) stated in their study of American and international students that the students' behavioral, emotional, and physiological responses to stressors were not investigated in this study. Future research should investigate intra-group and inter-group differences, as these may also influence stress perceptions and responses.

Further, Vershinina & Kocheva (2015) also stated that acceptance of cultural differences was interpreted as the foreign students' adjustment to the new environment, lowering the psychological barrier between their culture and the culture of the recipient country. Also, the problems of racial background and personal standing, which were of equal concern to international students entering a foreign country, should be resolved. Merenkov and Antonova (2015) stated that life in a foreign country often involved talking to people you did not know on the street, in public transportation, in stores, or at the theater. This meant that international students should learn how to act in ways that do not make locals angry. This task was made easier by learning how people talk in public places where you live. The motivation of these pupils to pursue a professional education also influenced the adaptation procedure. Under these conditions, a positive orientation toward active adaptation to studying in such novel conditions may be ineffective. These individuals would view themselves

as victims of circumstance and would be required to reconsider their negative stereotypes. Their limited familiarity with their new country was a factor that made their adaptation period substantially more difficult. They must learn from their mistakes, which are a result of inadequate sociocultural preparation. This invariably leads to conflicts between international students and their groupmates, as well as with locals in public spaces, hospitals, and recreational areas. These students may experience psychological difficulties as they adjust to a new, foreign community's way of life. International students retained the national behavioral patterns they learned in early childhood; these were most evident in their eating practices. Students selected dishes from their respective national cuisines and prepared them using seasonings sent from home. Since they are too expensive, canteens, cafés, and restaurants are not very popular among international students. So that Yan et al. (2022) finding explained that to improve people's social adaptability, the government should actively create conditions, do targeted social adaptation training and active adaptation skills exchange for different social groups, strengthen the social adaptability of different social groups and people of different ages, improve their ability to get resources in social activities, and encourage the accumulation of learning ability and intellectual and physical strength. Zerenkok et al., (2018) findings revealed that participation in recreational activities helped students develop social skills. Participation in leisure activities facilitated socialization, which was essential during the adaptation period.

Therefore, based on the issue of social adaptation in international settings and recommendations from previous research, bringing up the issue of social adaptation was crucial to exposing individual adaptation to different circumstances and evaluating individuals' individuals adaptation to society, mainly international students who studied in Hungary. The objective of the study was to uncover the

social adaptation of international students in Hungary. This study also aimed to contribute to an understanding of how international students adapt to society in Hungary. This study contributed to a broader perspective for international students who want to study in Hungary. It was also viewed as a social adaptation pattern for international students because the institution recognized how international students attempt to adapt in Hungary. Consequently, the current study presents the research question, "How is the social adaptation of international doctoral students in Hungary?"

Method

Study design

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically descriptive research. Sandelowski (2010) stated that qualitative descriptive studies may commence with a theory of the phenomenon under study or a framework for data collection or

analysis. Sandelowski (2000) also stated that qualitative descriptive research stays closer to the data and the surface of words and events.

Participants

It focused on the doctoral students' level in small cases. There were seven international students. The study was conducted in the northern Great Plains of Hungary. The demographical data is shown in Table 1.

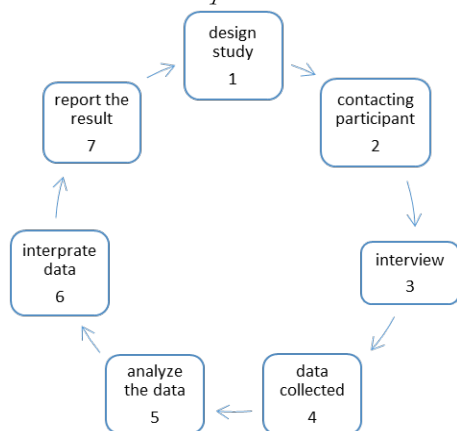
Data collection

To collect the data, instruments would be used. The instrument of the study was a semi-structured interview and demographic data. The language of the interview was English. For interviewing, cell phone recording was used to record all interviews with participants. The data has been collected, and it will be kept confidentially on my personal computer. To collect the data, as shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Demographic data of participant. Source: Authors.

Students	Age	Gender	Country	Year of study	Marital Status	Occupation	Family in Hungary
Participant 1	35	Male	Indonesia	2021	Married	Civil servant	-
Participant 2	34	Male	Iraq	2019	Married	-	-
Participant 3	32	Female	Myanmar	2021	Single	-	-
Participant 4	25	Female	Uzbekistan	2022	Married	-	Husband
Participant 5	47	Female	Iran	2018	Married	Teacher	daughters
Participant 6	35	Female	Malaysia	2022	Single	-	-
Participant 7	42	Female	Indonesia	2021	Single	-	-

Figure 1. Data collection procedure. Source: Authors.

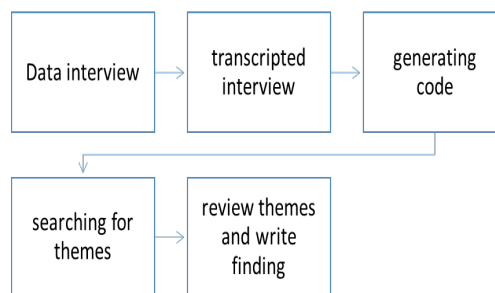


On figure 1, the procedure of the process was that first this study was designed and contacted the doctoral students at the university. After obtaining their permission, we interviewed the participant and gathered the data for the study. The data has been collected, analyzed, and interpreted based on the data. Finally, the data findings reported in this study.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, this study used thematic analysis. The interview result that had been recorded would be the transcript. The transcript of the interview would be given based on the code. The code has been set and categories created. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that a theme encapsulated an essential aspect of the data in relation to the research question and represented a pattern of response or meaning within the data set. In this instance, the themes the researcher identified, coded, and analyzed must accurately reflect the entire data set's content. Some depth and complexity must be sacrificed in such an analysis (especially if you are writing a brief dissertation or article with stringent word limits), but a rich overall description is maintained. The theme would be reviewed and defined. After that, the findings of the data presented in the study. In addition, the final finding would be triangulated with the previous study (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Data analysis process. Source: Authors.



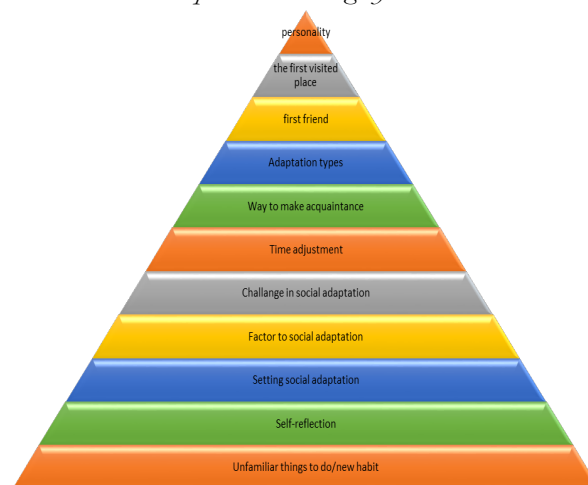
Ethical consideration

To collect data for the study, we gave participants informed consent to obtain their consent to participate in the study. To ensure their information was kept confidential, the names of participants were changed to participant one (P1), two (P2), three (P3), et cetera. It meant that the information will be kept anonymous.

Finding

According to the data, there were eleven categories from the interviews. It is illustrated in figure 3.

Figure 3. Result of interview of international doctoral students' social adaptation in Hungary. Source: Authors.



Personality

According to the findings, most of the participants had an extrovert personality. As participant p4 said: "I am a very cheerful and responsive person. I like to be in the spotlight and make the atmosphere fun with friends (P4, March 20, 2023)". Participant P4 said that she was a cheerful person in her social life; she liked when she was in the spotlight of her friendship and had a fun atmosphere. Similarly, P6 said "I consider myself a socialized extrovert, and I love talking" (P6, March 13, 2023)". There are only two people who define themselves as introverts: P2 and P7. However, all of the participants stated that they were open-minded and easy to adapt to a new environment. P5 said: "Yes, I do, because I think we are living in a world like that. Not being open-minded is not an option, so we need to accept people with all their differences (P5, March 17, 2023)". P6 also said it in a similar way that she said: "Yes, I consider myself an open-minded person because, as I mentioned earlier, I love talking. So when you talk, you meet the New people you love. You love to share your ideas and your mind. So that's why I consider myself open-minded. And I also have so many friends. From many countries, so I can share everything with them (P6, March 13, 2023)". According to the result, it meant that of the international doctoral students who came to study in Hungary, most of them were open-minded and easy to adapt to in a new environment, especially in Hungary.

The First Visited Place

As international doctoral students came to Hungary, there were several places that they visited. They were cities, specifically markets, places of worship, campuses or universities, classrooms, libraries, banks, and departments. The place that they visited because they were interested in learning about the local life and had a tour of the city in Hungary. It aimed to learn how everything worked in Hungary.

First Friend

International doctoral students had an interesting experience when they met their first friend in Hungary. Each of them had a different story when they met their friend; their first friend also came from their own country or Hungary. One of the unique stories from P4 was when she uttered. My first experience making new friends was a meeting in a hostel with students of my course. Everyone brought something to eat for breakfast, and we had a warm conversation around the table, talking about our interests, thereby becoming close (P4, March 20, 2023)". Differently, P7 found that her first friend went to an academic college. She said: „My first friend I got before I arrived, I was looking for someone who had the same supervisor as me, and I found one; she came from Myanmar, and she helped me a lot in my study (P7, March 17, 2023)". Moreover, some of the participants also met their first friend through an arrangement with their colleague, meeting their roommate, or meeting a friend from their own country. From here, they knew the essential places and how to use public transport. We could see that the international students found their way to get friends with different ways. Since they had an extrovert personality, it also indirectly helped them know how to make friends in a new country.

Adaptation Type

Another issue that appears in the categories is adaptation type. Since then, they have come from different countries, which have different cultures, foods, and weather. All of them tried to adapt to life in Hungary. P1 said: "using toilets in Hungary, especially using toilet paper to clean myself. I also needed to get used to not taking a shower every day, especially when the weather was cold (P1, March 31, 2023)". As P1 stated about the toilet in Hungary, all people used toilet paper. In contrast, in his country, people used water. So, he had to adapt his habit of using toilet paper instead.

Moreover, he also said that he needed to adapt to not taking a shower every day. Since then, he has come from a tropical country, Indonesia. The weather was hot, and he took a shower every day. Meanwhile, living in Hungary, where it has four seasons, especially winter, he must adapt to the fact that he does not take a shower every day. Because it was cold. On the one hand, P2 also mentioned the winter season in Hungary. "The winter was long for me; I got used to having winter for less than three months. Staying at home for a long time was difficult. Less meetings with friends and having fewer friends, learning and raising more cultural awareness as I needed to create a wider social network with different backgrounds (P2, March 17, 2023). P2 also stated a similar adaptation type in Hungary. since they were from Asia, so that winter affected him, especially P2. As he stated that he needed to stay at home because the weather was cold, his interaction with his friends was reduced. This situation contrasted with his intention to create a wider social network in Hungary. In addition, the other participant said that another type of adaptation in Hungary was food. P3 said: "Weather and food. This is totally different because I come from an Asian country and the food is really different (P3, March 12, 2023)."

In addition, P5 also made a similar adaptation about food; she uttered: "That's the issue. So yeah, I had to find a way to have the foods that I used to have back home here, and then the weather was very cold for us. Adapting to that was also a challenge. Okay, we use halal food. We do not eat pork, and we have a lot of fruits and vegetables, which are very expensive here (P5, March 17, 2023)". Based on the interview result, for adaptation type, the majority answer from the participant was that they attempted to adapt themselves to Hungary through weather and food.

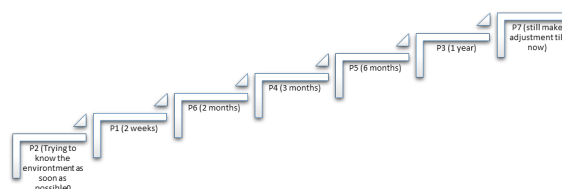
Way to Make Acquaintances

The way participants made new acquaintances

had the same pattern. P1 said that he met new friends through academic activities such as conferences and also through friends from his own country that he met regularly. Interestingly, P2 illustrated that the way to make acquaintances is like the snowballing method. He started to know his friend from his first friend, and he also met new friends at some events. For P3, her friends, whom she mostly met online first and then met in person, P4, P6, and P1 had the same pattern as P1, who met through academic activities. She mentioned that she met him during the lesson. P5 did not have any trouble making new friends in Hungary since she was a social person who liked to talk to people, introduce them, and ask what they were doing. Lastly, P7 met her friend through the Indonesian Students' Association, roommate, school, friend-to-friend, church, and conference. It showed that most of the participants had the same pattern of making acquaintances in Hungary. most of them to make friends through the university's activities. This was normal since they were students who studied at a university in Hungary. It also revealed that they tend to meet new acquaintances from their own country.

Time Adjustment

Figure 4. Time adjustment for international doctoral students in Hungary. Source: Authors.

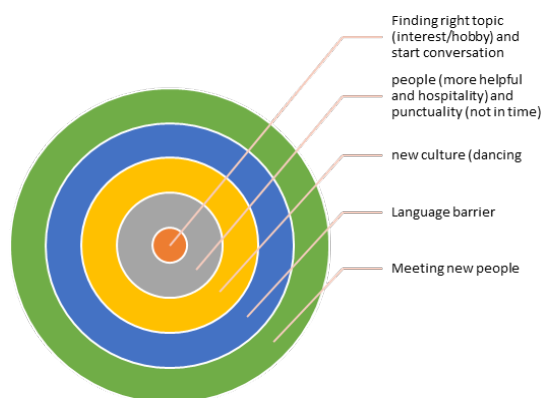


Based on the result, the time adjustment for each participant was different. P2 had a short time to adjust himself in Hungary, as he said that he tried

to adjust himself as soon as possible while arriving in Hungary. As for P1, it took about two weeks. P6 took a little bit longer than two months for her to adjust to life in Hungary. It continued with P4, where she took three months, and P5, who took longer than P4, took about six months to adjust herself. However, for P3, it took about one year, as she answered that it was because of the Corona Virus in 2019 that everyone was not permitted to go out without reason besides their residents. So it took a little longer for her to adjust to Hungary's environment. Unfortunately, for participant P7, it took the longest adjustment compared to the other six participants, as she uttered that since she came to Hungary, she still attempted to make the adjustment to living in Hungary. Obviously, they answered that because Hungary had a different culture, weather, and food. So that she still struggled to adapt herself to living in Hungary.

Challenge Social Adaptation

Figure 5. challenge social adaptation. Source: Authors.



From the data, it revealed that there were some challenges for international doctoral students to adapt to Hungary, as illustrated in figure 5. As statements from P1 and P7 said, finding the right topic for the conversation was a challenge, for example, finding common interests or hobbies to start the conversation. In contrast, P2 said

"Expectations from friends were punctuality. In my culture, there are more expectations from friends when it comes to getting help, for example, and hospitality. On a personal level, punctuality is also very important. But I learned that in some cultures, it is normal if you have an appointment at 2 p.m. and get there at 2:30 or 3 p.m. (P2, March 17, 2023)".

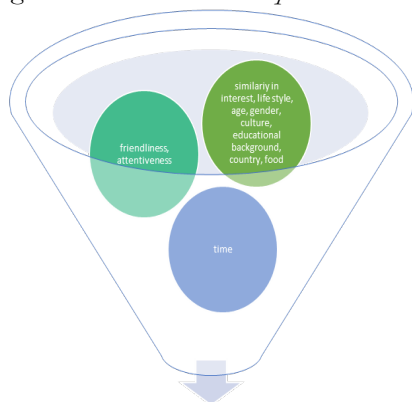
It meant that while studying in Hungary, he met friends who had different cultures from his own. He expected that he would meet people who were helpful and showed hospitality. In addition, he also met people who had different cultures about timing. For example, people who did not come on time in Hungary were a new experience for him, and he needed to adapt to those kinds of people. Moreover, in terms of culture in Hungary, participant 3 found that it was a challenge for her. She said: "I have never danced before, so it's like they are dancing, singing, and drinking. I don't want to drink. I don't want to dance, and I don't. "I don't know how to sing (P3, March 12, 2023)". She had not experienced this in her country. She did not go to a place that made her dance and sing. In Hungary, she came to a place where she needed to sing, drink, and dance. It was a challenge for her because she had not had this experience before in her country. Besides, P5 and P6 face language barriers when they meet new people. P5 stated: "In Hungary, the language barrier is the worst challenge I have ever faced (P5, March 17, 2023)". Since that Hungarian spoke Hungarian and international students spoke English for communicating with each other, language became her challenge while studying in Hungary. This also happened to P6, who said: "The challenge I have as Putin with meeting new people here in Hungary, I'm just scared. First when I meet people, especially the Hungarian people. I am just trying to get closer to them because maybe they do not speak English. And then when I get to know someone close, I love talking, and then I'm afraid that people will get annoyed

with me (P6, March 13, 2023)."

Generally, the challenge for P5 and P6 was the language barrier since they could not speak Hungarian in Hungary. It made them doubt their ability to interact with local people in Hungary. Hence, they could not make their network with local people wider.

Factor to Social Adaptation

Figure 6. Factor to social adaptation. Source: Authors.



It was discovered that for all participants, similarity in interest, lifestyle, age, gender, culture, education background, country, and food became vital to their social adaptation. Finding the similarity could connect international students with people in Hungary. With this similarity, they could build the communication pattern smoothly. Yes, of course. There should be at least. With the same range of okay, age is not important, but I think there should be some something that connects US education interest (P5, March 17, 2023)".

In addition, the friendliness and attentiveness of individuals also became factors in adapting to international students. Since then, they have come alone to Hungary, and it has been foreign for them. They needed to meet an individual who was friendly and attentive toward them to fasten the relationship with them. However, it also found that for P7, the factor contributing to adaptation based

on her view was time. She said: "I don't have any specific consideration when making friends, time will help me to see whether this person can be just an acquaintance, a friend, or my best friend, accepting people as they are (P7, March 17, 2023)". In P7's perspective, she did not have any criteria to decide what factors affected her social adaptation.

Setting Social Adaptation

From the seven participants who voluntarily participated in this study, there were three doctoral students who spent most of their time in the university, two participants spent most of their time in social settings, and two participants said that they balanced their time between the university and social settings. As a statement from P6: "Most of the time I spend my life here in Hungary with my classmate (P6, March 13, 2023)". The reason is that since she came to Hungary to study, she spent most of her time at the university with her classmates. For students who spent most of their time outside of university, they said: "There is a food festival every year; it is a good opportunity to know other cuisines in different parts of the world. Dance and music festivals are regularly held in the city. And in summer there is a big, nice flower carnival in Debrecen (P2, March 17, 2023).

In addition, P4 also said that "Most of my social activities take place in a public environment rather than at the university (P4, March 20, 2023)". Since then, they came to Hungary as international students. Two of the students liked to spend their time in Hungary and attempted to know Hungary's culture more. Moreover, there were two students who managed their time well in university or social settings.

Self -reflection

Since studying in Hungary, there have been different points of view from the participants about their lives as international students. P1 said

that when he first came to Hungary, he thought that it was a foreign country; however, as he lived there for about two years, he considered it his second home. Moreover, P2, P3, and P5 told me that they learned many things from Hungary: they became more patient, flexible, and aware of the diversity of people. In another perspective, P4 and P6 improved themselves a lot in Hungary. P4 said "Comparing myself now to that time when I first came to Hungary, I can say that I have become more confident in communication; I know all the necessary routes and can plan the time for my way correctly (P4, March 20, 2023)". As she said, she became confident in communication and had improved time management during her time in Hungary. Besides, P6 also had differences about her living in Hungary. she uttered: "I considered myself. I'm getting there in terms of physical. I'm getting more fat because here I just eat every day like it's getting colder and colder day by day. So you have to, you know, warm yourself up, so you need to eat. And then, emotionally, I can say that. And I will become stronger because you have to set your mind to the fact that you are alone here. If you're weak, nobody's going to help you. So you have to be strong for yourself (P6, March 13, 2023)". P6 explained that she had made two improvements within herself: physically and emotionally. This changed perspective cannot be found in P7 because she felt the differences within herself while living in Hungary.

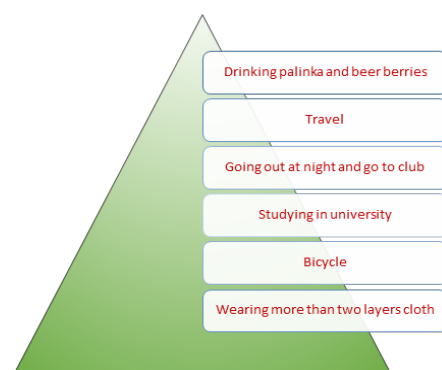
New Habit/Unfamiliar Things

It was interesting to find many unfamiliar and new habits among the international doctoral students in Hungary. Each of them had different responses toward their adaptation in Hungary. The new habits and familiar things to do in Hungary are shown in Figure 7.

As a student who came from Asian countries, P2 mentioned that he liked to travel. Since he was living in Hungary, he used to travel to other

countries because Hungary was a Schengen member, so he did not need a visa to visit another country within Europe, and he took this chance to travel more. As he said: "I used to travel more between cities. In Hungary, I try to travel to other countries as I have a better chance to travel without visa issues (P2, March 17, 2023)".

Figure 7. New Habit and Unfamiliar things in Hungary. Source: Authors.



Moreover, P3 felt unfamiliar with the culture in Hungary. If she compared it with her home country, it was not safe for a woman to go outside in the night. So she did not prefer to go out at night, and in terms of clubs, she also never went to a club in her home country. Nevertheless, in Hungary, it was safe, and she could go to the club. She uttered: "

Going out at night, I never go to clubs. We have clubs. And here we have clubs, but I never go to clubs. Uh, what I mean is, it's not safe. It's not favorable. It's not good to go outside at night after 5:00 PM; I don't go outside. (P3, March 12, 2023)".

It was also an interesting experience for P5. She mentioned that she never went to higher education in her home country, Iran. Living in Hungary, she grabbed her chance to study. She informed: "I didn't go to a university there (in my home country) (P5, March 17, 2023)". A unique experience for P6 since she studied in Hungary. P6

explained: "In my country. Using a bicycle to travel from one location to another was not a common occurrence in Malaysia, my home country, but it did occur here. Wherever you wanted to go, you needed to use a bicycle. Or you can just walk in or take the tram. So, a bicycle is something that I did not really use in Malaysia, except if I wanted to, you know, have some free time to exercise. When I had free time, the people went to work with the bike seeker, and then they wanted to go anywhere with the bicycle. But it's not normal. It's not something that's normal in Malaysia. (P6, March 13, 2023)

As a Malaysian, bicycles were not common in her country. She found out that there were many bicycles in Hungary. People liked to use it, and she also decided to use a bicycle like people in Hungary. As a country located in Europe, Hungary has four seasons. For an Asian who lived in two seasons, only P7 felt unfamiliar that she had to wear more than two layers of clothes and a thick jacket. In addition, she also started to wear short skirts. She mentioned: "When wearing more than two clothes at once, take a very thick jacket and wear a short skirt (P7, March 17, 2023)".

However, for P4, she did not see any difference from what she encountered when she lived in Hungary. It was because she came from central Asia that it had differences from other Asian countries such as Malaysia and Myanmar. If P7 from Indonesia and P4 who came from Uzbekistan compared seasons, P4 had no difference in experience since Uzbekistan had a winter season, so she used to wear thick jackets and layers of clothes.

Discussion

This research on social adaptation aimed to reveal how doctoral international students adapt to their social lives in Hungary. It showed that there were many aspects that they had to learn when they first arrived in Hungary. As the study findings revealed, all of the participants were open-minded

and ready to socialize with people in Hungary. Nevertheless, there were some challenges and unfamiliar activities that they had to do because they had never existed in their home country. Time adjustment and factors that helped international doctoral students improve their socialization in Hungary showed a different pattern, except for finding the first friend and acquaintances. Since they were international students who aimed to study in Hungary, they mostly encountered colleagues in university activities such as classrooms, conferences, or roommates in the dormitory. This pattern was commonly observed among international students, as they gained access to resources that were previously unavailable to them. It was found that, based on their personalities, all of the participants were open-minded and easy to adapt to in Hungary.

For international students who study in Hungary, it is pivotal for them to find a place that will help them adjust rapidly. They could learn how to fulfill their daily necessities, such as a market for buying daily groceries, a place of worship for their religious activity, a bank for saving their money, and a university for classes, departments, and libraries. This finding is in agreement with Alasmari's (2023) finding that numerous international students had favorable impressions of the facilities and services provided to meet their daily requirements. Besides, they also needed to find new acquaintances; all of the participants had different stories. Even so, most of them met their first friend and followed the same pattern to make acquaintances, such as arranging a meeting with their colleague, meeting their roommate, or meeting a friend from their own country. Since they were all students, most of their acquaintances came from university and home country friends.

Due to cultural and geographical differences, all of the participants had to overcome Hungary's differences in weather, food, and culture. The findings showed that the food in Hungary was

different from that in their home country in terms of culture and weather. For example, for P1, it was difficult to adjust because in P1's home country, toilets used water, whereas in Hungary, they used toilet paper. During the winter, also because the weather was cold, P1 needed to adjust his shower time. As food was different in their home country, international students needed to adapt to food and taste. In addition, the vegetables in Hungary were also expensive for the participants, and for Muslim students, it was difficult to find halal food. This finding was in accordance with Wu et al. (2015), who found that the participants encountered culture shock due to different types of beliefs and value systems. They had to adapt to various value systems, communication patterns, signs and symbols of social contact, and interpersonal relationship patterns upon entering a new culture. From international doctoral students who experience differences compared to their home country. As a result, they needed to adjust their habitual activities while living in Hungary.

Based on the findings, the adjustment times of the international students were different. These differences could be explained by students' stress during their social adaptation. Paudel (2021) reported that culture shock-related obstacles may contribute to stress, and these factors may ultimately result in a lower level of college adjustment for these students. Coping with their stress during the adaptation period takes different times for each individual. According to the findings, one of the challenges for social adaptation was the language barrier. This finding is in line with Pustarnakova's et al.'s (2020) statement that the major problem for international students was the language barrier; 58% of students mentioned this problem. From the result, it showed that international students' doctoral students did not expect these challenges; in contrast, they acknowledged that they were not ready before coming to Hungary, but they had to encounter them. Hussain and Shen (2019) revealed

that readiness plays a significant role in international students' ability to balance challenges and support. International students in a new culture and academic environment are frequently confronted with a variety of strange and unfavorable situations. In other words, when international doctoral students are ready to prepare themselves to encounter many challenges and problems in their social adaptation in Hungary, it has a chance to decrease students' culture shock and increase students' adaptation rapidly. The factor of social adaptation is also found in this study. In order to increase social adaptation, friendliness and attentiveness were important in many aspects and over time. This finding also meant that when someone was friendly toward international students, it was easy to make friends and build a network, and when the similarity in aspects of gender, age, and culture became the factor that would enhance the adaptation, it would increase international students' comfort with their friends. During this time, they would adapt their social lives completely.

Based on the findings, we also discovered that most international doctoral students spend most of their time at the university. Two of them attempt to balance their time, whether in university or social life. Studying in Hungary, international students obtain positive benefits such as becoming more patient, flexible, and aware of the diversity of people. They also improved themselves a lot in Hungary. This finding is the same as that of Stebleton et al. (2013), who found that participation in all study abroad opportunities correlate positively with the development of linguistic and cultural competence in a second language among students. Asian students reported greater gains in comprehension of the complexities of global issues, application of disciplinary knowledge in a global context, and linguistic and cultural competence in another language, but fewer gains in confidence working with individuals of other cultures. International doctoral students could broaden their point

of view about culture because they would meet another international student from many countries and local people from Hungary, so that they would be more aware of multiculturalism.

Furthermore, the findings showed that there were some unfamiliar things to do for international students who study in Hungary. They were palinka and beer barriers; this was not one of them because this product was only produced in Hungary, so international students did not have any access to consume this product. However, this product still became a new item for international students. For travel, it was difficult for Asian students because if an individual came from a certain country and the country that an individual wanted to visit required a visa to enter the country, Asian students who studied in Hungary knew that as members of Schengen countries, it was a privilege to visit a country in Europe without any visa. The participant's home country also has a national stereotype that they do not allow women to go out at night and go to the club. Since they study in Hungary, there is no such rule as in their home country. Moreover, due to transportation and weather, international doctoral students also found out that cycling was normal and that wearing more than one coat was necessary during the winter to prevent cold weather. For Asian students, who tend to be dependent on public or private transport in their home country, going out with a bicycle was rare, and wearing more than one cloth was hot for them, who always had two seasons, rainy and dry. This report, in accordance with Sobkowiak (2019), revealed that the students' perspectives on life in a particular foreign culture were relatively conciliatory and rational. Moreover, their accounts were dominated by favorable attitudes toward foreign cultures. Several countries, such as Belgium, France, Portugal, and Italy, have a completely different meal schedule, with dinner being the primary meal served in the evening. Coffee drinking has also become a ritual in Italy. This may have been due to

the fact that their access to the lives of locals was restricted to casual encounters in public locations, allowing for only superficial observations. In addition, the majority of students studied in cities with a substantial tourist influx, which also influenced, blurred, and distorted the landscape. Individuals believed that everyone was fundamentally the same, and differences were acknowledged but minimized and deemed insignificant in comparison to cultural similarities. However, their reports were filled with culture-specific generalizations and stereotypes. Contact with international students increased the study participants' awareness of diversity, which should facilitate their future cultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

Social adaptation is an issue that is essential in the higher education sector, especially for international students. Based on the findings, international students were aware of how to adapt to a new environment. Hence, they had different patterns to develop their adaptation. It was found that international doctoral students had distinctive ways to accept a new friend, place, and time. Nevertheless, challenge and the factor of adapting were general factors that people would encounter, not only students but also people they were not. The remarkable finding that could be found in this study was that it was a new habit and an unfamiliar activity for international students. This was an unfamiliar activity that they never did in their home country, but they did it in Hungary. The reason was because Hungary was located in Europe, which had four seasons and a different system and value. For international doctoral students, all of whom were from Asian countries, there were huge differences. In short, international doctoral students' social adaptation in Hungary was something they knew how to handle when they arrived in Hungary. Even though it took different times for them to

adjust to living in Hungary, they knew how to adapt to their new environment. This insight was essential for international students who wanted to pursue their studies abroad, especially in Hungary. It was also a good solution for the institution to know the pattern of students' social adaptation in order to help international students adapt during their study in Hungary, with expectations that this would help students performance in the classroom.

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Appendix

Unveiling international doctoral students' social adaptation in Hungary

Based on the literature review, the investigator creates interview guidelines that are not limited to the following questions.

A. Reflection before coming to Hungary

- Tell me about your personality
- Are you consider yourself an open-minded person? Why?
- Are you someone who can adapt to a new environment?

B. Social community in Hungary

- What did you do when the first time you came to Hungary?
- Give me an example of your experience with your first friends in Hungary.
- Tell me about what things you attempt to adapt when arriving in Hungary.
- How did you make new friends during your study in Hungary?
- What element are you considering for your social adaptation?
- How long can you adjust yourself to a new environment?
- What is a challenge you have experienced when meeting new people?
- What is the factor that makes it easier to socialize?
- Tell me about most of your social activities in which environment, university or social?

C. Self-reflection

- How do you compare yourself to the first time you came to Hungary and now?
- Tell me about something you did in your home country, which you did in Hungary.