

An “Intellectual” Migration: Educational Backgrounds, Purposes, And Needs

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to determine the educational status, problems, goals, and expectations of an educated Turkish migrant group who had to migrate to Germany after 2016 due to some political pressure. The process of data collection was carried out between the months of January and September 2021. As a qualitative data collection tool, a semi-structured interview form was applied. After the literature review, open-ended questions were prepared in the interview form in order to determine the views of the participants. The target group of the study consists of 25 interviewees who migrated from Turkey to Germany after 2016. All the participants were selected among the ones who wanted to involve voluntarily in the research, and their identities were kept anonymous. For the timing of the interviews, a convenient time was agreed upon with the participants. Due to the pandemic, the participants were interviewed via e-mail, telephone, or digital media platforms, such as Zoom and Skype. In the research, it was found that participants primarily aimed to work on a job suitable for their education level. Thereupon, they have tried to fulfill the conditions such as language learning and diploma equivalency. While some have achieved their goals, it was seen that the majority of them are making an effort for those purposes. It is anticipated that such studies will contribute to the shaping of immigration policies of the hosting countries.

KEYWORDS: Education, migration, Turkish, integration, career target.

Since the 1960s, Turkish people have been migrating, especially to European countries, as “guest workers” or “temporary workers” to provide a labor force (Chin, 2007; Nuruan et al., 2005). This migration has had four different periods (Martin, 1991).

Turks mostly have migrated to Germany, which has brought about some continuing. The major problem is the integration of those people into the new country. In terms of integration, Turkish immigrants have fallen behind other immigrants coming from other non-European countries (Diehl & Granato, 2018; Ross, 2009; Weinar & Schneider, 2015). The youth, especially those coming from the second generation, have been unable to acquire the required benefits from the education system (Başkurt, 2009; Söhn & Özcan, 2006). Moreover, another reason for this failure has been the disadvantageous state of the German school system for Turkish children (Fernandez-Kelly & Güllüpinar, 2012).

International migration policies are often based on the adaptation of immigrants and refugees to the new country. (Fitzgerald, 2000). Doubtlessly, the participation of immigrants in education plays a crucial role in their integration into the host country (Kristen & Granato,

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2007). However, some immigrants come to these countries with a certain level of education. In general, well-educated people leave their homelands for economic, political, and ecological reasons (Ünver, 2012). Also, educational and economic factors play a crucial role in choosing a new country in which to settle (Spörlein & Kristen, 2019). In other words, a strong relationship exists between migration and education. Some immigrants leave their countries to develop their productive skills, and this reflects their educational level. Thus, some migrations occur with the purpose of receiving an education (Tani, 2017).

While past “labor migration” from Turkey to, especially Germany, took place for economic reasons, the political and social pressure and unlawful practices in Turkey have often been the main reasons in some periods. For example, the anti-democratic and militarist approach resulting from the 1980 coup and the ethnic-based discriminative politics, especially against Kurds in the 1990s, may be among the reasons that have led to an acceleration of migration to Germany (Sirkeci et al., 2012). Since the failed coup attempt in 2016, people today experienced a period similar to that after 1980 (Aydin & Avincan, 2021). Using the excuse of that failed coup attempt, 134.000 people were dismissed by Degrees with Force Law (KHK²). Additionally, about 500.000 people have been subjected to judiciary and administrative investigations (Deutsche Welle, 2020). Though many people were acquitted after trials, thousands have not been restored to full citizenship rights. In their own words, they have been left to a social “civil death” (Aydin & Avincan, 2020; Ögreten, 2020).

Tens of thousands of people, some of whom are opponents but most of whom are “Gülen Movement”³ volunteers, who thought that they were subjected to unlawful practices and pressures in Turkey, have migrated to Europe, primarily to Germany (Keten, 2020; Womack, 2020). Considering the data of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), 5742 applied in 2016, 8.483 in 2017, and 10.655 Turks applied in 2018. The average number was 737 monthly during these years, although some decrease occurred in applications in 2019 (Deutsche Welle, 2019b).

Research Subject, Goals, and Research Questions

Against this backdrop, the study focuses on the recent migration of well-educated Turks to Germany and their educational goals and achievements in the host country. Indeed, the anti-democratic and unlawful practices that started after the coup attempt led to a debilitating brain-intellectual drain (Ozdogan, 2020). German has hosted a significant part of that kind of migration, having gradually increased until 2019. According to BAMF data, most recent Turkish applicants to Germany are high school or university graduates (Deutsche Welle, 2020). This group of immigrants have chosen Germany to settle in for many reasons. One reason for this choice might have been the acceptance of their professional and educational certificates/degrees as equivalent by this host country (Anerkennung in Deutschland, 2020). Other reasons might have been the supportive policies in general, accelerating the immigrants’ integration process, such as language learning and the existence of related institutions. For example, 172 institutions in Germany have supported the integration process of immigrants in terms of education in 2016; 135 of them were higher education institutions, and 37 of them were preparatory colleges (Studienkollegs) from all the federal states (DAAD, 2017).

² The aim of Decree with Forced Law is to establish measures that necessarily be taken within the scope of attempted coup and fight against terrorism under the state of emergency declared throughout the country on 20 July 2016.

³ “The Gülen Movement is a worldwide civic initiative rooted in the spiritual and humanistic tradition of Islam and inspired by the ideas and activism of Fethullah Gülen, a Muslim cleric resident in the US. The bases of the movement are diverse service projects that are initiated, funded and conducted by people who are motivated by Gülen’s humanitarian discourse” (Stockholm Center for Freedom, 2022).

Previous studies have examined immigrants coming from Turkey. For instance, Tekin and Yükseler (2017) presented a report comparing the educational problems of the refugees living in Turkey and Germany. Söhn and Özcan (2006) examined the education and integration of Turkish students, whereas Arslan (2019) studied the educational backgrounds of the Turks of the second and third generations. These studies found that students of Turkish origin living in Germany are disadvantaged in terms of their educational backgrounds. This disadvantage has caused them to fail in further education by creating obstacles. In other words, their participation in higher education or qualified education is limited.

The immigration of Turks to Germany since July of 2016 has been different from earlier periods. The current migration includes well-educated intellectual groups. Though unlawful practices and social pressures are among the fundamental reasons for this group to leave their homeland, the provision of educational opportunities and rights for educated immigrants is a primary reason for choosing Germany.

In this research, the educational and professional backgrounds of this current immigrant group were studied. Furthermore, the opportunities the immigrants have and that the host country of Germany provides for their purposes were studied. How and to what extent they have realized their goals is vital to understand. The main goal of this research is to uncover more about the educational purposes of this immigrant group with a certain level of education in Germany and the opportunities or even the chances they have.

Under the framework of this primary purpose, the research focuses on understanding their reasons for choosing Germany, their hopes, goals, struggles, and their progress on the way and the role of their educational status during this process.

Within the framework of these purposes, the educational status of the participants was determined. First, the impact of the education factor in choosing Germany was determined. Second, how much they have realized their expectations for education and their goals during their stay in Germany was observed. Third, the advantages and disadvantages of the participants in education and how well their needs were fulfilled were determined. The research contributed to the literature in terms of examining the relationship between education and migration.

Research Design and Methods

This research applied a qualitative case study method for data collection (Glesne, 2010; Maxwell, 2005). The main emphasis of qualitative case studies is the interpretation and understanding of the perceptions and actions of people within the large semantic systems to which they belong (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Karanja, 2010). By this method, real-life phenomena are understood thoroughly within the context of a limited case study (Creswell, 2003; Vanderjagt, 2013).

Target Group

The target group of the study consists of 25 immigrants with a certain level of education having migrated from Turkey to Germany after 2016. This group included immigrants who have a university or higher education degree or were expelled from the university before graduation. Purposeful sampling was used as the primary method for determining the research sample. Purposeful sampling is not dependent on probability. In this method, researchers specify the samples one by one according to their thoughts and judgments. Thus, they collect samples appropriate for the needs determined in alignment with the research problem (Cohen & Manion, 1998). The researcher utilizes a sample that he or she considers suitable for the purposes of the study and chooses a place, an object, or a group that he or she evaluates as being the strongest representation of the target group (Monette et al., 1990). If necessary, the sample is enhanced through snowball sampling (Babbie, 1995).

The participants were interviewed via e-mail, telephone, or the Internet. A suitable time was agreed upon to interview the participants, who agreed to be voluntary for the interviews, and their identities were kept anonymous. Due to the pandemic, interviews were held via digital media platforms such as Zoom and Skype. Upon the suggestions of the participants interviewed, other participants were contacted as needed.

Data Collection Tool

The process of data collection was carried out between January and September of 2021. A qualitative data collection tool, e.g., a semi-structured interview form was applied. (Glesne, 2010). After a literature review, an open-ended questions form was prepared to determine the views of the participants. The semi-structured technique is ideal because it provides partial flexibility for the participants and enables the questions to be rearranged and discussed more fully (Ekiz, 2009). The semi-structured form also included factual questions involving general demographic information of the participants.

Data Analysis

The content analysis method was used for data analysis. The voice-taped interviews and the notes taken during the interviews were reviewed; the tapes were transcribed verbatim. In this study, the researcher took the field notes during the interviews and analyzed the transcripts from each of the interviews to identify key utterances and emerging themes. These transcriptions were read, and finally, the categories and themes were coded for the analysis (Elder & Miller, 1995).

Findings and Analysis

Personal Characteristics of the Participants

Table-1 depicts the participants' different characteristics. The age range of the participants was determined as 27–49. In terms of gender, mostly male participants were involved in the research. They have been living in Germany for approximately 1.5 to 4.5 years. Graduation degrees were considered to be at least at the bachelor's level for the purposes of the research. A significant number of them have a postgraduate degree. When the departments they graduated from are examined, the differences draw attention. Also, departments, such as teaching, engineering, and medicine were predominantly included. In addition, the fact that most of the participants are married is another distinguishing feature.

Country Preference

Germany: Preference or Obligation?

The participants in our research had to leave their countries mainly for political reasons. Was “education” an important factor in the choice of the country when those highly educated individuals had to leave their countries forcibly? In other words, did they consider the opportunities regarding education or employment while urgently migrating to a new country? In this context, the participants had different perspectives. One of the female participants (P1) stated that “educational opportunities were not effective here at all...we came here because we had to come,” and added that the main factor in coming to Germany was the safety of life. Also, with similar expressions, many participants explained that the main factor in choosing Germany was that it was a safe place for them. For example, P2 said, “Absolutely not... my only thought

was to throw ourselves into a safe country... to a country of justice...”; P9 added, “The fact that Germany was giving an earlier residence was the most important factor... I did not think about it in terms of education at first”; P10 agreed saying, “I didn't have a chance to choose... we looked at the countries (where I could go) while thinking, but we were able to come here”; finally, P13 and P16 said, “Frankly, the reason I wanted to come to Germany is safety first” and “I did not come here for educational purposes... I came here for security matters,” respectively.

Table1

Distribution of Participants' Demographic Information

Participant	Age	Gender	How long has s/he been in Germany?	Graduation	Department	Participant	Age	Gender	How long has s/he been in Germany?	Graduation	Department
1.	34	F	3+	Bachelor	Elementary School Teaching	14.	27	M	3	Bachelor	Law
2.	34	M	3+	Incomplete Master	Elementary School Teaching	15.	48	M	4	Bachelor	Computer Engineering
3.	39	F	3+	Bachelor	Nursing	16.	31	M	4.5	Ongoing Master	Arabic Language Teaching
4.	41	M	2.5	Bachelor	Elementary School Teaching	17.	33	M	3.5	Bachelor	Electronic Engineering
5.	40	M	2+	Specialist Doctor	Internal Diseases	18.	42	M	2.5	Bachelor	Biology Teaching
6.	35	M	2	Master (Ongoing)	Chemistry	19.	41	M	2	Ph.D. (Ongoing)	Psychological Counselling & Guidance
7.	41	M	2+	Master	International Relations	20.	42	M	2	Ph.D.	Sociology
8.	34	F	2	Specialist Doctor	Faculty of Medicine	21.	37	M	4	Bachelor	Mathematics Teaching
9.	30	M	3+	Ph.D. (Ongoing)	Computer Engineering	22.	47	M	3+	Specialist Doctor	Radiology
10.	27	F	1.5	Bachelor	Pre-school Teaching	23.	33	M	2+	Ph.D. (Ongoing)	Chemistry
11.	30	M	2+	Bachelor	Physiotherapy	24.	40	M	2+	Master (Ongoing)	Mechanical Engineering
12.	49	M	1.5	Bachelor	Turkish Language Teaching	25.	47	M	2+	Specialist Doctor	Anesthesia
13.	27	M	2+	Bachelor	Electrical Engineering						

Participants stated that the factor of education is also of great importance to them; however, they stated that they started to think about education-related issues after they moved to Germany (a safe place). For example, P3 explained that “We came up with the ideas like education, etc. later... in brief when we arrived here.” He emphasized that education began to be included on their agenda after a certain stage. Likewise, P13 and P17 stated, respectively, that: “Also, the fact that Germany is leading in terms of engineering has been effective... it’s standing out among other countries” (P13) and “After coming here, I saw that this place could offer a suitable job for my education” (P17).

For many participants, the possibility of education and, accordingly, finding a job after security was effective in choosing Germany. Some participants stated that from the very beginning when deciding on the country they would go to, they made their choice by considering the educational opportunities of Germany or the opportunities it would offer for them. P(4) explained this situation: “The fact that there are more job opportunities... I heard that Germany needs personnel, especially educated people... Of course, this was also an attractive factor for us.” Other participants agreed with P4 saying: “especially the fact that Master Degree is free of charge was effective” (P14); “I had heard before I came here that I can practice my own profession was effective” (P18); and “My job was effective, of course... my friends who came here before said that I could do my job here (in Germany) ... it was effective” (P22). Another participant emphasized the value of earning a degree in Germany:

I chose (Germany) because I thought of completing my doctorate here, which I started before... It is a developed country, naturally a developed country in the field of chemistry, I am here because I think I can continue my profession and education again. (P23)

When these explanations are examined, it was noted that a certain part of the participants considered the opportunities of employment and education offered by the country as well as arriving at a safe place. While some of them preferred Germany because of the employment opportunities in their professions, others preferred this place to benefit from the educational opportunities.

Other Countries for Educational Opportunities

Some of the participants have thought of a country that was suitable for their educational goals from the very beginning. In other words, they thought of going to other countries suitable for their educational background. However, for some reasons, and especially because they had to leave their country urgently, they could not achieve this goal. P1 explained her primary goal as follows: “We thought of going to the USA and Sweden, but we could not go because of the visa problem... We came here because Germany issued a visa.” Other participants expressed similar goals before leaving the country: “We wanted to go to the USA... it was for the language education, because (this country’s) language was English... we couldn't get a visa... even though we enrolled in a school there, we couldn't get a visa” (P2); “We wanted to go to England... I thought it would be easier since I speak English” (P3); “I thought of other European countries because of the language... I also thought of countries such as Norway, Switzerland, Finland” (P4); “Actually, Finland is a very developed country in terms of my profession... their education is provided well ... we thought it primarily, but it did not happen” (P10); and “I would like to go to England, but since I know its language rather than other factors, I wanted to go to England for the language advantage” (P19).

Participants stated that they preferred Germany primarily for security issues. However, they would prefer to go to other countries when leaving Turkey if they could manage. European countries such as England, Finland, and the United States were among the more preferred ones.

The main reason why they preferred those countries was explained by the fact that the English language is accepted in those countries in the field of education and employment. In other words, participants thought of going to those countries where they could benefit from their English language proficiency. However, the difficulty of obtaining a visa to those countries or the fact that participants had to leave the country in a short time occurred as the biggest hindrance for them to realize those ideas.

The participants generally left Turkey primarily due to safety reasons. In addition, opportunities regarding employment and education in Germany were taken into consideration by some participants either while leaving Turkey or after their arrival in Germany. Particularly, Germany's need for labor in certain fields, as well as the participants' desire to find a job suitable for their educational background, has been a source of motivation. Thus, even those who did not have any educational and occupational goals while coming to Germany started to take advantage of opportunities and facilities in this direction.

Expectations/Hopes Regarding the Education and Occupation

As can be seen above, although some people's thoughts in this direction were formed after they arrived in Germany, most participants had goals parallel to the education they received in Turkey. Some of the participants thought they could find a job suitable for their profession, similar to what they used to do in Turkey, in other words, suitable for their level of education.

For example, a 40-year-old Doctor P(5) stated that he could start his profession fully after learning the language:

Yes, I think... I am working partially now, I can't take care of the patient anyway, but I provide laboratory services... I help with patient data... I will be able to start my job fully when I have mastered the language...

Likewise, P(7), a graduate of International Relations, stated that he was considering a job suitable for his educational background: "I think... there are jobs at municipal and provincial levels, and there are examples in other states...that is, I can work." When we take a look at the opinions of other participants who are considering a profession suitable for the education they received in Turkey, it was clear that different participants from different majors predicted that they could find a profession in Germany suitable for their educational backgrounds: P8, a doctor, said "There is a medical German (fachsprachprüfung) exam in order to work in my field. I have to pass it... a course for it, after passing it, it is possible for me to work as a doctor"; P9 and P15, engineers, added, "Yes I think... I think if I get C1 (language certificate) ... My ultimate goal is to become an academic... to work at any institution or university" and "I am currently working in a company, doing my own job"; and P21, a mathematics teacher mentioned that, "While coming I intended to be a teacher... I think now it is like that I have already reached my goal...ultimately, I am working as a mathematics teacher." Another engineer added an important aspect of his profession in Germany:

My major is suitable for finding a job in Germany...an occupation that is always needed here...there are many opportunities in this major...I see many job advertisements in my field...so I think I can find a job...by the way I have colleagues from my major, who started their careers.
(P17)

Some participants even started their own profession like P15 and P21, and those who started their own profession partially like P5. The most important point to be noted here is that professionals, such as Doctors and Engineers, were more hopeful in this regard. To explain in their own words, the overlap between their profession and the workforce needed in Germany raises the hopes of the participants.

Some of the respondents stated that the education they received in Turkey was insufficient to find a job in Germany, and that this situation required them to have additional training. They wanted to receive additional education or further education in order to get better job opportunities in Germany. For example, P14, a graduate of Law, said:

I definitely don't think that I will find a job directly after I pass the language exam... both the department is difficult in terms of recognition and I have little experience in this profession... I only have a little experience as a lawyer... I think I can find a job as a legal consultant in some firms if I finish the master's degree.

And he also emphasized that it was not possible for his department (graduation) to be recognized directly. Therefore, he targeted to find a job related to his profession by doing a master's degree. A psychological counselor, P19, who could not complete his Ph.D. since he had to leave Turkey explained his motivation as follows: "My guess and hope about my profession is that I can find a job here (Germany)... but firstly I want to complete my Ph.D.... In this sense my goal is that I want to work as a psychologist."

Some participants also stated that it was very difficult to practice their profession in Germany, so they headed towards other professions. Participants spoke of different reasons for that, like P1, an elementary school teacher:

Even if I can overcome the language problem now, elementary school teaching is a bit difficult in Germany because a certain branch has to be chosen...we started the procedures for the equivalency of diploma ...it finally came...but it was said that we cannot work as an elementary school teacher.

Owing to this reason, she added that "I want to work in kindergartens... In some places, B2 is valid (sufficient) for this, but in some places C1 is required, so if I have a C1 certificate, I think I will have a wider job opportunity." In brief, she wanted to choose a profession close to her field since she cannot work as an elementary school teacher. For a similar reason, P2, another elementary school teacher, explained his goals: "so I started to think that I would be a math teacher...but even though I can't, I'm thinking of working as a teacher at Kindergarten."

Some participants thought they could not practice their job in Germany. Therefore, they had to set goals completely different from the education they had received in Turkey. Among them, P12, a Turkish teacher, was in search of a different profession: "I don't want to do a job close to my profession, and I don't think about it, either ... I think of a profession other than teaching." The reason for this decision was explained in this way:

Difficulty of the conditions led me to look for a job in another field. For example, the C1 language requirement is difficult for me. Also, it is required to do double majors in branches like ours, which is another challenge here. Also, the factor of age is effective in this issue.

Likewise, P16, an Arabic teacher, said, “I started working as a translator in parallel with my profession...I worked as a translator for a while...but the future of this didn't seem very promising to me...that's why I quit interpreting and started Ausbildung (Fahrlehrer).” In conclusion, he started to receive vocational training in a field different from the profession he used to practice in Turkey. He explained the factors that played a role in this decision as follows: “Because it was a little difficult for me to continue as a teacher here again... I would have to go to a university (study) again... the process seemed too long to me.” Therefore, some participants considered getting vocational training in a field different from the profession they had or the education they had received in Turkey for specific reasons. In fact, some embodied their goal and started their vocational training like P16 did.

In general terms, the participants had different professional goals. While some had the opportunity and desire to practice their profession in Germany as they did in Turkey, others wanted to acquire a profession in a field close to their original educational background. Therefore, the situation and decisions developed and happened differently for each participant.

Success on the Way to the Goal

Nearly all participants who took refuge in Germany after 2016 have set a professional goal for themselves. Most of these goals were set after arriving in Germany, as a safe “place.” In order to reach their goals, most of them must first overcome the language barriers by learning German and getting the equivalence of their diplomas. In addition, a certain group of participants preferred vocational training, such as Ausbildung, as they preferred to turn to a field other than the professions they used to practice in Turkey.

Language Learning

Individuals who migrate to a different country naturally face the obligation to overcome a language barrier. As mentioned above, although most participants acquired the English language at a certain level before coming to Germany, they did not were not proficient in the German language. In addition, a large part of the group wanted to practice their professions or Ausbildung in a suitable field. This is more of a skill required by public or private institutions.

Most participants have started learning German in order to achieve their goals upon their arrival, and those who set their goals more clearly were more successful in this aspect. For instance, P3, a nurse, explained that

I am continuing the B2 course... I got the B1 certificate... I am currently continuing the B2 course... I intend to continue until I get the C1 level I target... I think I can do my job after receiving the necessary language training.

Here, the participant explained that she had successfully progressed in the language learning process in parallel with her focus on her goal. Another example is P5, a specialist doctor who successfully kept on his language learning process in a similar way: “I am at B2 level... My ultimate goal is C1 Hoch (Plus).” Other participants shared similar experiences of successful language learning processes: P7, a graduate of international relations said, “I have received the B1 certificate, so I have completed the orientation course...now I have registered for the B2 course, and I will start...I will get the C1 certificate”; P8, a doctor, added, “I can say that I am at B2 level... I went to C1 course, but I was not very successful at it... My ultimate goal is to get the C1”; and P13, an engineer, agreed that “I am currently at A2-B1 level, and I certainly want to continue my language learning process with great determination... My final goal is B2 or C1... depending on the situation, whatever my own profession requires.”

Notably, these participants have achieved a certain success in the language learning process, which is necessary/essential for practicing their professions in Germany. These participants also expressed their plans to continue learning German until they reach their target language levels. In addition, some participants explained that they have already obtained the language certificate they had originally targeted, fulfilling the requirement to work in their professional field: P21, a mathematics teacher explained that, “My level is C1 right now... Learning German requires a long process... so I will continue to learn... Even though this document (C1) is professionally sufficient, I’ll keep on learning”; P15, an engineer, said, “I have a knowledge of language between B2-C1... It is sufficient for me to do my job but I want to learn at a more advanced level”; and, finally, P22, a doctor, recognized that, “Now I took C1 and started to work I have reached the language level I had targeted... but I still have some problems with speaking (fluency)... but I have a C1 document which is necessary for me to work.”

As seen in the statements above, these participants overcame the language barrier with the motivation of finding employment in their professional fields. However, although other participants were successful in language learning, they turned to other professions. One example was P16, an Arabic teacher, who stated that “My language level is B2-C1 at the moment... B2 in Reading and Writing and C1 in Speaking.”

Most participants set a goal focused on practicing their professions in Germany like they used to in Turkey. Among those who set their goals with this motivation, some participants stated that they made a great effort to reach and achieve their goals. On the other hand, other participants aimed to learn the language but did not consider finding employment in Germany in their original professions in Turkey. Only one participant had succeeded in this direction. However, most participants made efforts to learn the language. Because the professions they were directed to or the new fields they targeted, such as Ausbildung and Praktikum, also required specific language proficiency at different levels.

Professional-Job Success

Notably, the participants of this study consisted of people who received a university education in Turkey and then had to migrate to Germany for political reasons. Therefore, most of them intended to work in the fields they graduated from; others were temporarily considering a new profession after doing Ausbildung or Praktikum in other fields. In other words, there were two groups of participants: (1) those who wanted to work in the fields they graduated from; and (2) those who wanted to take advantage of the opportunities available in other professions. As it was discussed before concerning participants’ language learning processes, some participants were generally well motivated to learn German with the goal of finding a job. For example, P5, a doctor, expressed his employment situation as follows: “Actually, I am currently working partially... I cannot take care of patients, but I provide laboratory services... I help with patient data.” Even if it is not full-time, he expected to work as a specialist doctor in his profession after fulfilling some certain procedures. Another doctor, P22, explained his professional situation as follows: “It is not exactly my field of specialization, but I am doing my job as a doctor in another department right now... I am considering moving into my own department (Radiology) after I get my equivalency certificate.” Even if he was not in the same department he used to work in Turkey, P22 regarded starting his profession as a success in terms of his goals. In addition to fact that P5 and P22 had successful experiences with learning German, the fact that their profession is in high demand in Germany was also effective when finding a job.

In addition, those who had an Engineering degree had the chance to practice their professions when they meet the necessary requirements of language proficiency and degree equivalency, like the experiences of the doctors mentioned before. As an example, P15, an

Engineer, explained his experiences as follows: “I am currently working in a company, and I am doing my own profession.” Similarly, P21, a math teacher, a profession in high demand in Germany, explained how he attained his professional success: “I am currently working at a job related to my graduation...as a math teacher in a school.”

The participants, who expressed their thoughts above, started their own professions full- or part-time after learning the language and fulfilling the requirements of the institutions they wanted to work for. Unlike these participants, those who thought that they could not work in Germany in the fields they graduated from turned to other fields/professions, and some of these participants seemed to have achieved their goals. An example of this was P16, who graduated as an Arabic language teacher and did Ausbildung to be a Fahrlehrer in Germany. He stated that: “I am currently doing a training (Ausbildung) to be a driving instructor (Fahrlehrer)...that is, I have turned to another profession.” P16 stated that he worked as an Arabic translator for a certain period but that he did not consider himself competent in this field; so, he decided to take up a profession completely different from the field he graduated from. For this reason, he has been doing Ausbildung for a while and said that he could start his new job in a few weeks.

For a general evaluation, 20 % of the participants started in certain professions in parallel with their language acquisition. All but one participant was able to find jobs in the fields they graduated from, particularly when the fields they graduated from were needed professions in Germany and they have attained their German language acquisition ensured an effective effort in finding a job. Other participants, who had not started (and could not) to work yet, stated that the most important problem or obstacle as a barrier to employment was the language acquisition. Many of them stated that, although they were at a certain level, it was not enough to work in their field of expertise or to move on to another profession (for example, an Ausbildung). In other words, they emphasized that they would start looking for a job after the language-learning process was over.

Factors Affecting the Process

Participants who started to migrate from Turkey after 2016 generally did not have a serious knowledge of the German language and culture. When they came to Germany, they started language learning, which was the most important step of the integration process. Because in the camps, where asylum procedures begin, refugees are taught basic German. Parallel to this, the participants, who felt safe after a while, started to see language learning as important for their own goals. In other words, on the one hand, the participants continued their asylum processes, on the other hand, they wanted to achieve their integration processes as quickly as possible. Accordingly, most of the participants wanted to acquire professions that were suitable for the qualifications they gained in Turkey by successfully passing the stages of language learning and diploma equivalency application.

The opportunities and environmental conditions provided to the participants (by the institutions), as much as the effort made by them to achieve their goals, were also effective in the success. When participants' places of asylum are different, naturally, the opportunities provided and the environmental conditions (i.e., places where they stay, eat and sleep) also vary. For example, while some of the participants started to receive language training at the camp stage, some got this opportunity after moving to Heim or a house of their own.

While a teacher, P1 stated that, “After I got the residency permit, I had a chance to go to a course... I enrolled in a course when I came to Schwerin officially (going to a regular course) (after moving to a house of her own)”, an engineer, P13 said, “I've started studying the language since the day I applied for asylum when I was in the camp... I attended the online course in the camp.” Therefore, he took advantage of this opportunity at an earlier period.

Although there is a basic (A1) language course in the camps, most participants stated that they could not attend the courses for different reasons. For example, P5, a doctor, justified

this by saying, “The camp and Heim stages took short time... so I was able to start the course after moving to (his own) house.” For similar reasons, P3, P9, P10, P11, P12, P15, P16, P18, P20, P21, and P23 stated that they tried to learn the language without attending a course during their stays in camps.

The second factor affecting the integration processes of the participants, especially their language learning, was the environmental conditions. In this respect, the process in which the participants had faced most of the problems was during the camp stage. For instance, P23, a chemist, stated the problem of “no internet at the camp stage” as the most important factor as a barrier to language learning in the camp. On the other hand, P4, a classroom teacher, stated that the lack or unsuitability of some basic needs, such as “the camp's meals, common areas” caused a lack of concentration and negatively affected language learning process. Similarly, P8, a doctor, stated that, “Of course, you try to learn a little during the camp stage, but you only try to be well physically and spiritually, so language becomes secondary (in the camp).” This sentence summarizes the general experiences of the participants during the camp. The participants also listed other factors that affected their experience learning the German language in the camps, such as “food,” “living space,” “internet,” and “location.”

The opportunities of language course for the participants were better after they moved to Heim compared to the conditions in the camp stage, because most of them stated that they had the chance to learn a language up to B-1 level at the Heim stage. While P4 said that “the municipality here gave us a course permit,” P7 said, “We were told that we could go to a formal course after moving to Heim.” Thus, he emphasized that they had the opportunity to learn the German language during the Heim stage. Although in a small number, some participants were not given a chance (right) to attend a language course in the Heim stage. While a teacher, P18 expressed this problem, saying: “I made a request to attend the course after moving to Heim ... I told the management many times... I stayed in Heim for 9 months, but I just could not attend in any case.” Similarly, P22, a doctor, explained why he was not allowed to attend a language course: “The social municipality did not provide me with a course chance...we stayed in Heim for a long time, but they did not provide the chance to take a course.”

In the Heim stage, as it was in the camp, many participants could not attend the courses although they were entitled to attend. An engineer, P9, explained the reason why he could not attend the course as follows: “I was in a small town during the Heim stage, so I did not have a chance to attend.” Also, a physiotherapist, P11, explained his reasons for not attending the course: “In the Heim stage, I did not have much time to attend the course because I was generally busy with procedures, such as residence permit, family reunification, etc.” Another law graduate’s excuse, P14 was the location. He said: “Heim's location and physical conditions were very, very bad... so I had to catch the bus at 6:40 to get to classroom in time, at 9 o'clock.”

Participants stated that they were provided with more opportunities within the context of rights in the Heim stage compared to the camp. However, as stated by P14, some environmental problems partially continued in the Heim. P4 also stated the problem he had in Heim with the statement: “We had similar problems in Heim...Here, also they gave us only one room... a single room was a disadvantage in terms of education.”

Although not everyone had the opportunity to attend the course, there were other opportunities for the participants in the Heim environment. In this stage, the participants also stated that they used the internet effectively for language learning and that they could attend the courses of some voluntary organizations, especially churches. Along with the positive and negative conditions, the participants stated that they kept on their language learning in the Heim stage by means of attending the courses or using the internet or thanks to voluntary organizations.

After getting a residency permit, participants gained new rights in many contexts, including the rights to rent a house, attend a course, work, and travel. As stated before, language education was interrupted from time to time due to the lack of certain rights or limited

opportunities during the camp and Heim stages. However, participants stated that their language learning processes went better after they settled in a house of their own and had the opportunity to start a course.

As mentioned by P1 in the previous lines, P2 also said, “We started the real language training when I got home... I started the language course when I got home... That is, when I got home, there was serious training.” Thus, he emphasized that effective language learning was possible thanks to a language course. A doctor, P8, expressed the advantage of being given the right to live in a house of her own as follows: “After getting a residence permit, there are more opportunities for language learning, course can be provided quicker...or moving to your own house has a more positive effect.” In other words, P8 stated that, at this stage, they got the opportunity to attend a language course, as well as the improvement of their living conditions gives them extra motivation. This factor has also contributed participant’s language learning process.

As can be seen, two main factors affect the success of the participants in their goals, especially in language learning: the opportunities provided by the institutions that carry out asylum procedures and the environmental conditions that occurred in connection with these opportunities provided by institutions. Variables such as the opportunity of the participants to attend the course, the physical conditions and location of the places they lived, and internet access were important for language learning and achieving their goals.

Some participants were positively affected by those mentioned factors, while others were negatively affected. It was stated that those factors cause a lack of motivation in language learning and adaptation to life, especially in the camp and Heim stages. Participants emphasized that living conditions had greatly improved after getting the residency permit, and it has turned into a positive effect on success. Because the participants gained certain fundamental rights, such as renting a house, working and traveling, and social support. Participants who gained certain basic rights in their hosting country clearly stated that they were seriously motivated, and they could focus better on their goals.

Final Steps Towards the Goal

Nearly all participants established professional goals after they arrived in Germany. In this context, some were trying to practice the professions they used to have when they were in Turkey, while others were trying to find a new profession. While a small number of the participants have succeeded in reaching their goals, most of them were still struggling at the time of the interview. For this reason, in order to reach the goal, the participants stated that there were some requirements to be fulfilled, especially in language learning. For example, a nurse, P3 said, “Currently, my language level is C1, that is, if I am going to be a nurse, I need to take an extra course. I will also need Praktikum. Nothing else is needed.” In her words, she regarded Language and Praktikum as a necessity for the profession. Similarly, a doctor, P8, emphasized the importance of getting the diploma equivalency certificate as well as the language certificate with the following sentences: “The equivalency of my diploma should be recognized...we sent our documents...that equivalency process is an important stage.”

As two participants stated above, participants who wanted to practice their professions in Germany established language, diploma, diploma equivalency, and practicum as their priorities. However, participants who would change to a field other than their original professions had different needs besides language learning. For example, P6, a chemist, said that he continued language learning, and in parallel with this, “I may need to do Ausbildung for vocational education.” Participants who wanted to acquire a new profession stated that they needed to do vocational courses (Ausbildung) along with the language necessity. Likewise, P12, a teacher, who was trying to acquire a new profession, expressed his goal as follows: “My

primary goal is to acquire a B1 language certificate... secondly, I intend to attend vocational courses (Ausbildung) related to the job I will do.”

Some participants stated that they aimed to have a career. Therefore, they planned to apply to masters or doctoral programs after overcoming the language barrier. A computer engineer, P9, who had to discontinue his Ph.D. education in Turkey, explained his future career goals as follows: “I have two main goals right now, the first is to complete my master's degree and then Ph.D.... the second is to get C1 language certificate.” Since P9 needed to start from the basic level, he decided to be enrolled in a master’s program (in English) and believed that he would be able to complete his language learning along with his career. Another Law graduate, P14, who was planning a career, said “Learning the language at least at C1 level... doing a master's are important goals as my future plans.” Participants also stated that they would need scholarships to materialize these plans. A chemist, P23, said they may need a scholarship to materialize their plans and he added that “If we think in terms of doing a doctorate, I will need to find a suitable supervisor (professor).”

Considering the expressions of participants having different needs, language was of vital importance in terms of reaching their goals. While diploma equivalency was a necessity required by the participants who wanted to work in the field they graduated from, making vocational courses (Ausbildung) was among the needs of participants who wanted to pursue a new profession. Those who left their postgraduate education incomplete in Turkey were in pursuit of a new career in Germany. For this purpose, they considered doing a master’s and a doctorate as their most important needs.

In summary, the participants who had to take refuge in Germany from Turkey after 2016 had at least a bachelor’s degree. Being a democratic and social state that also protects human rights is the primary reasons influencing the participants’ preference for Germany as their destination. While the participants immigrated to Germany due to their life safety, they did not have the chance to set any educational and professional goals, mainly because their first goal was to seek asylum in a safe country. After arriving in Germany, one group of participants, who felt confident, set goals to practice their job again, while the other group aimed to pursue a new job. Language learning was seen as the fundamental need for the participants in both groups to achieve their goals. In addition, while there were requirements, such as diploma equivalency and Praktikum for those in the first group, doing 'Ausbildung' for the second group was seen as a requirement after language.

It can be said that while 20% of the participants achieved their goals, the rest made a serious effort in this direction. In addition, it was stated that the opportunities and environmental conditions directly affected the success of the participants on the way to achieving their goals. Participants who were still trying to reach their goals have certain needs. In addition to the language certificate, diploma equivalency, and Praktikum were determined as fundamental needs for the participants targeting getting a job in their own profession. On the other hand, except for the language' certificate, vocational courses (Ausbildung) were still seen as a fundamental need for the participants preparing themselves for a new profession.

Discussion and Conclusions

After the need for food and shelter, another important need of human beings comes “the need to live in a sense of security” (Maslow, 1943, 373). For this reason, people have always been in search of security where they do not feel safe. Those who had to migrate to other countries after 2016 due to the unlawful practices and human rights violations in Turkey have also been an example of security motivated immigration (Ogurlu & Avincan, 2020). Since this date, there has been a serious brain drain to many countries, especially to Germany (Efe, 2018). According to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), one out of every two

Turks who migrated to Germany after 2016 was a university graduate (Deutsche Welle Türkce, 2019a).

Unlike the Turks who migrated to Germany before, the fact that a significant number of them were educated makes those who came after 2016 different. This educated migrant group, which was the subject of our research, different from the others in terms of its qualifications. In other words, since they were skilled, highly educated, and highly qualified individuals (Zhang, 1992), their migration has been considered as a brain drain.

While the participants explained the main reason for migration as unlawful and unfair practices against them in their country of origin, they cited Germany's democracy and respect for human rights as their main reason for their preference of destination. In other words, political pressure and insecurity were the pushing factors in the migration of the participants from Turkey (Aydin & Avincan, 2020, 2021). On the other hand, Germany's being a developed country in terms of democracy and human rights has been a pulling factor for them. In another research, one of the most important reasons why Turks working abroad did not return to Turkey was seen as political instability (Tansel & Güngör, 2004). Eventually, the absence of political stability, damage to the democratic structure, and decrease in the security of life and property (Erkal, 1980) caused brain drain in this case, as well.

The participants, whose priority was life safety when choosing Germany, started to set some goals after coming to Germany. As Maslow (1949) and Sirgy (1986) determined, one of the pursuits of individuals after the need for security is to gain prestige and success. In other words, the participants, who felt themselves in a safe place, started to build goals for the future, especially in the fields of their original professions, education, and jobs in Turkey. Firstly, the participants set targets in line with the workforce needs in Germany. Because one of the biggest challenges for many refugees on their way to integration into the labor market is the extent to which their qualifications and professional experience match the demands of the German labor market (Stoewe, 2017).

Some think that they will do a job in Germany that is suitable for the education they received in Turkey, as well as those who think about acquiring a new profession (e.g., Ausbildung). Those who thought that it was possible to practice their professions in Germany were mostly doctors, graduates of engineering and teaching departments. Those who graduated from fields such as Arabic and Turkish teaching, were considering taking other professions, owing to the fact that their professions were not fully defined in Germany. And they perceived working in their professions as a distant possibility. Other participants aimed at obtaining their profession by doing postgraduate education or Weiterbildung, particularly those graduates from fields such as Chemistry, Elementary School Teaching, and Law.

Participants wanted to benefit from the economy, education, or other fields of the country they migrated to (Guellec & Cervantes, 2002). At this stage, they needed to fulfill some basic conditions. Language skills were shown as the most important of these requirements. Acquiring the necessary language skills for integration into the labor market (Stoewe, 2017) was the goal of all participants. Based on this idea, some participants, who have set learning German as their main goal from the first time they came to Germany, have gained the necessary language skills for their goals, while the rest were still making a serious effort in this sense.

As Gardner and Lambert (1972) stated, with a more instrumental motivation, some participants, who regarded language learning as getting a chance to find a job or earn money, achieved their goals. Some participants started working in their own professions, such as doctors, engineers, and teachers, as well as those who acquired a new profession. For example, a participant who was a graduate of Arabic language teaching started his new profession by doing vocational courses (Ausbildung) in the field of driver instructor. This result overlaps with the result of research carried out on a similar subject; Yörükoğlu and Kara (2017) also determined that approximately 80% of highly qualified Turks were able to work in the professions they graduated from in Turkey. It was seen that the main characteristic of the

participants, who could start working in their original professions or in a new profession, was that they were successful in language learning. In addition, the recognition of the diploma equivalency of the participants who could start in their original professions could be considered the most critical step in this direction.

Yet, most participants have not yet fulfilled the necessary conditions, especially the language requirement, despite the fact that these participants spent a lot of time and effort in language learning. Likewise, highly qualified Turks who migrated to Germany before spent a lot of effort in overcoming the language (German) barrier (Yörükoğlu & Kara, 2017). In addition to language learning, participants must also meet certain conditions in order to achieve their goals. While diploma equivalency was one of the most important requirements for those who wanted to work in the fields they graduated from, 'Ausbildung' was one of the primary needs of those who wanted to start a new profession. Others thought that they needed to make *weiterbildung* or receive postgraduate education in order to work in the fields they graduated from.

Participants were positively or negatively affected by the opportunities and environmental conditions provided to them to achieve their goals. Germany stands out with its policy formulation at various levels (in federal, regional, and higher education institutions), implementation through responsible institutions, and monitoring with comprehensive measures for the integration of asylum seekers and refugees (Crosier & Kocanova, 2019). However, it was also stated that these policies vary from region to region, and this reflected positively or negatively on the success of the participants.

Although some participants stated that they were lucky in favor of the opportunities provided and the environmental conditions in parallel, there were also those who experienced a disadvantage in this regard. For example, while there were German language courses available from the first day in some camps, this opportunity could not be provided in other camps. Likewise, in the Heim stage, some municipalities (since they are the authorized institution) provided the opportunity to attend the course, while others either could not provide them or allowed them in a later period. It was stated that the physical conditions in the camps and Heims were also an important factor affecting the success of the participants. On the other hand, the participants stated that they started to benefit from certain rights, such as a suitable language course, living in their own home, getting enough financial support to live on, and other benefits, especially after receiving the residency permit. It was seen that as the quality and quantity of the opportunities provided increased, the participants came closer to realizing their goals, especially in language learning. This also means that, as was seen in other studies, environmental factors affected success in language learning (Özer & Korkmaz, 2016; Türkoğlu, 2004).

Voluntary organizations (e.g., churches) and universities also contributed significantly to the language learning of the participants. It was a fact that charities like churches and institutions like German universities provided education, language training, and financial aid to help refugees (Grove, 2020), and the participants also made good use of these opportunities.

In conclusion, Germany was one of the important countries preferred by refugees. Especially after 2016 (mainly 2017-2018), Turks have constituted a significant number among those who migrated to Germany with humanitarian asylum requests (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). One of every two of these migrant Turks was a university graduate. This forced migration of highly educated people is also considered as brain drain. After this highly educated group took refuge in Germany, they started to set goals in the field of profession and education within the context of existing opportunities. While many participants who could or believed they could get a diploma equivalency were considering working in the fields they graduated from, those who did not have the chance to get a diploma equivalency wanted to do *Ausbildung* for a new profession. Some participants,

on the other hand, planned to work in the fields they graduated from only after receiving *weiterbildung* or postgraduate education.

Language skills have been the main barrier for all participants. Because language is one of the fundamental conditions for integrating into the dominant society (e.g., at work, in social life), accessing educational opportunities (e.g., *Ausbildung*, *Weiterbildung*) and in many other stages (Aydin & Kaya, 2019; Dereli, 2018; Szente et al., 2006). An example of this was that some of the participants who overcame the language barrier started working in the fields that most of them graduated from. For such achievements, the importance of the rights gained, and the opportunities provided in the process after obtaining a residence permit were emphasized. A large part of the participants was required to fulfill different assignments/conditions, such as language learning, diploma equivalency, *Ausbildung*, *Weiterbildung*, and graduate education, in order to reach their goals. It was expected that each participant who met these requirements would not only reach their goals, but also contribute significantly to the qualified workforce needed by the hosting country they came to.

Limitations and Recommendations

This research was limited to the refugees who migrated to Germany. It also included an educated group that migrated after 2016. Comparative studies that include other European Union countries can be done prospectively. In addition, research can be conducted on the achievements of those immigrants in the context of employment and integration.

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