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RETURNING TO TURKEY AFTER INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE STUDY AND TRANSITIONING AS A SCHOLAR: AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGY

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This study aimed to reveal the experiences of Turkish academics who returned to the country after completing their postgraduate education abroad through the scholarships provided by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposively sampled group of eight participants working at different universities in Turkey, which was conducted using the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Individual interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes revealed two main themes. The first theme highlighted the difficulties experienced while adapting to the academia, which include 'increased expectations for academic success', 'difficulty adapting to the functioning of the academic structure', 'difficulty finding colleagues with aligning visions', and 'difficulty in adapting to differences in study habits.' The second theme highlighted the advantages of having studied abroad, which include 'competency in another language' and 'development of a broader vision.' The findings include several recommendations for both aspiring academics and policy makers.

Keywords: returning scholars, readjustment, study abroad

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