



A cross-cultural research on the employment of migrants: Social representations of job seekers in Poland and Turkey¹

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Abstract

Aim: The main aim of the study is to reveal the social representations of local job seekers towards employment of migrants who are a part of the labor market in Poland and Turkey. As social representations have been one of the crucial and preferred concepts to find out individuals' perceptions of any subject, determining the direction of social representations of Turkish and Polish job seekers (positive or negative) and comparing the revealed social representations between Turkish and Polish participants are other aims of this study.

Method: 30 participants (15 Turkish and 15 Polish) between 22-30 ages from Turkey and Poland have taken part in this research based on the maximum variation sampling, and the first part of the social representations survey instrument (the part which consists of the free associations form) proposed by Tsoukalas (2006) has been used to reach out to participants' representations. The data has been analyzed and presented in tables for each country through content analysis and the results have been discussed based on the comparisons.

Findings: The results have shown that Turkish and Polish participants created the same number of groups (45 groups each) in total. The similarities between social representations of Turkish and Polish participants are higher than the differences, however, it is possible to assume that Turkish participants tend to provide more negative social representations regarding the employment of migrants.

Conclusions: The social representations of Turkish participants about the employment of migrants refer to situations that related to “*economic, job market, social, emotional, psychological, cultural, different challenges during daily life for locals and migrants, and some positive sides/ contributions to migrants of being a migrant in the country*”. The social representations of Polish participants about the employment of migrants refer to situations that related to “*procedural and formal issues, social and cultural aspects, challenges regarding the economy and job market, emotional reactions, outputs of migrants, and some positive sides/ contributions of migrants to society as being a migrant in the country such as diversity and some other positive effect of migrants*”.

Keywords: Social representations; job seeker; Polish; Turkish; employment; migrant.

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1. Introduction

Social representations are considered as a phenomenon that includes theory, standpoints, knowledge and perceptions derived based on social experiences. Therefore, social representations refer to a collection of concepts, expressions, explanations and justifications that are created and spread within a society or social structure. Because it is claimed that social representations provide a perspective to individuals on what others think about certain experiences while contributing to individuals' understanding or classification of their social reality. Additionally, these representations formed in the social structure are also effective in individuals' understanding of each other and objects, and in shaping their beliefs, ideas and attitudes (Moscovici, 1984). On the basis of social representations is a whole state of thoughts and feelings expressed in verbal and explicit behaviors for a social group (Wagner *et. al.*, 1999). Thus, social representations are related to how people theorize certain issues and what they talk about these issues based on individual experiences. These created theories and emerging discourses lead to the formation of social realities, hence, to the shaping of behaviors and attitudes of individuals. As a result, social representations are based on the communication process, and emerge, spread and are perceived as a reality by people depending on this communication process (Moscovici, 1984).

Job seekers are defined as people who are open to evaluating/considering current job opportunities and who are actively or passively looking for a job (Sarıoğlu, 2011). The perceptions of these people about the process they are subject to before and during the job search are formed similarly to other processes in the society or social structure. Although there is no visible or structured communication channel in the job search process, it is possible to talk about a sharing of knowledge and experience among job seekers, hence the existence of social representations. Because the job search process is considered an information processing and gathering activity in itself (Weber & Mahringer, 2008). Thus, information that affects the job search process, structures current job conditions and/or opportunities, and creates a perception about the employment conditions in society is processed, spread, and turn into a reality in the society where job seekers live. At this point, perceptions and attitudes towards migrants living in a society and taking part in the labor market as a candidate spread and turn into a reality based on a similar social impact. As a result of this social impact, positive or negative effects and attributions about the existence of migrants are taken form and social representations towards migrants emerge. Because in the process of social representations; the development of knowledge in society takes on a different dimension, individuals are affected by all kinds of factors around them, they add their own interpretations to these affections and then they react. The effects and individual reactions that occur in this process also turn into a whole and the formation of new social representations proceeds with continuous communication (Narter, 2003). Therefore, social representations have been one of the crucial and preferred concepts to find out individuals' perceptions of any subject, situation or phenomenon at the social level through, and this concept has been examined in different contexts. For instance, it is possible to reach out to many theoretical studies focusing on the social representation theory (Öner, 2002; Cırhınlıoğlu, Aktaş, & Öner Özkan, 2006; Höijer, 2011; Rateau *et. al.*, 2012; Stocchetti, 2017; Rubira-García, Puebla-Martínez, & Gelado-Marcos, 2018; Wolter, 2018; Hokkanen, 2020; Castorina, 2020). Accordingly, there are some other studies that relate the social representations theory to different concepts such as decision-making (Laroche, 1995), woman managers (Minibaş-Poussard, Erkmén, & Karsak, 2011), creativity (Çiftçi, 2012), happiness (Rodríguez-Araneda, 2013), corporate advertisements (Çetin & Eşiyok Sönmez, 2014), climate change (Moloney *et. al.*, 2014), quality (Menkü, 2006), crisis (Çetin & Asıl, 2018), health (Aim, Decarsin, Bovina, & Dany, 2018), advertising workers and social media (Cluley & Green, 2019), company's social capital and reputation (Gurieva, Pochebut, Chiker, & Yanicheva, 2019), artificial intelligence and robotics (Puaschunder & Gelter, 2020), coronavirus and causal perception of its origin (Rateau, Tavani, & Delouvee, 2021), refugees and caseworkers (Negura, L. Buhay, C., & de Rosa, 2021), intergroup differences and contextual effects (Özkan Demir, 2021). Although the social representations theory has been examined with different concepts

and samples, this concept has not been discussed much in organizational studies. Therefore, while the focus of this study on the recruitment process will contribute to organizational studies and social representation theory, at the same time, local job seekers' perceptions of migrants – *migrants who are seen as a competitor in the labor market* - will be revealed and it will be discussed whether job seekers from Poland and Turkey consider migrants as a risk or as part of diversity with positive effects. In this regard, the main aim of the study is to reveal the social representations of local job seekers towards employment of migrants who are a part of the labor market in Poland and Turkey, determine the direction of their social representations (positive or negative) and compare them between Turkish and Polish participants.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Representations Theory

Social representations theory contributes to explaining how people, groups, and communities make sense of issues, opinions, and practices in a collective way (Markova, 2008). Accordingly, this theory aims to clarify the processes by which information/knowledge is generated, shared, and disseminated in the social environment (Duveen, 2000). Therefore, the social representations theory is based on the evaluation of social phenomena that are thematized by people in society and are involved in the communication processes of these people (Bayram, 2020).

Moscovici (1988) identifies representations as images/imagination or signification, hence, social representations are considered a way of drawing the big picture by creating connections between perceptions, values, knowledge, opinions, norms, and reactions/actions (Sakki, Kassea, Vauhkonen, & Pirttila-Backman, 2010). In this regard, Moscovici (2000) claims that social representations are specific forms of knowledge that aim to elaborate the behaviors and communication between individuals. Thus, social representations are identified as a set of values, opinions, and/or practices that are used by different groups to understand a phenomenon. Accordingly, it is possible to clarify social representations as explanations of the thought systems, collective cognition, and common sense adopted by societies or groups. Because the social representations are linked to social, cultural, and some symbolic components that have a meaning to be represented in the society (Höijer, 2011), conceptualize the practical knowledge or folk knowledge in the society (Moscovici 1984), and underline a system of opinions, knowledge, and beliefs that particular to a specific culture (Rateau *et. al*, 2012).

Social representations are a collective phenomenon that belongs to a community that originated by people through their daily conversations and actions (Wagner *et. al* 1999). Therefore, social representations refer to the theories, opinions, and knowledge that individuals generate based on their experiences after the communication process that they initiate and maintain for their need to understand the world. From this perspective, it is possible to assume that social representations are an approach to finding out how individuals theorize and talk in the light of their own experiences. Because these theories turn into a reality and become effective in behaviors, and they are transformed and spread in the communication process (Moscovici, 1984).

Social representations are derived to make clear what is unfamiliar and incomprehensible or disturbing (Höijer, 2011). Thus, due to the continuous communication process between individuals in order to make sense of the phenomenon or case that they would like to clarify, a common idea is reached in society against this phenomenon or case. In this sense, "**anchoring and objectification**" mechanisms formulate a process in which people remember/associate something with the information they have before, categorize and name them, and place them in their minds (Çetin & Eşiyok Sönmez, 2014). Anchoring is basically naming an object by categorizing it. In order to complete the anchoring process, the **classification and naming** stages have to be performed. **Objectification** means to make unfamiliar cases or facts symbolic, and an icon, metaphor, or figurative meaning is created to represent a new idea, event, or phenomenon. Thus, the features of

the object that gain certainty are revealed and this is translated into a concept, and this object, which was previously anchored in the minds of individuals, can be expressed with an image (Moscovici 1984).

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design and Area

The free associations form of social representations and demographic form would be administered to participants in this study. Thus, the social representations of Turkish and Polish job seekers towards employment of migrants would be revealed, and the direction (positive or negative) of these social representations and similarities/differences between them would be discussed accordingly.

The study area involves Turkey and Poland. Hence, the current research is limited to participants who have been actively looking for a job in these countries. There is no specific city or location has been taken into account in the selection of these participants, however, these participants have been selected according to a certain sampling method and selection criteria.

3.2. Sampling Techniques and Profile of Participants

30 participants between 22-30 ages from Turkey and Poland (those who consider themselves Turkish or Polish) have taken part in this research. Maximum variation sampling has been used to determine participants. The main aim of this sampling type is to consider the highest level of variation observed in the characteristics of individuals who can represent the research problem (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Therefore, the criteria representing the research aims have been taken into consideration (McNabb, 2015), and the variation criteria required for the research (Baltacı, 2018; Creswell & Clark, 2016) have been determined. Hence, 3 criteria have been clarified for this determination. The first of them has been the age of the participants. Because it has been assumed that an individual who starts university education after high school begins the professional job search period by the age of 22 on average, and gains certain experiences and directs their career plan to a great extent at the beginning of their 30s. Accordingly, it would be more possible to have better opinions/clear picture of the job market and competitors from people of this age who are searching for a job actively. For the second criterion, it has been taken into account that the participants should have at least two different professional work experiences and have been actively looking for a job in the last 6 months. In this way, it has been considered that these participants could have more knowledge and experience in job searching or have better observations about the current situation in each country regarding the job market and other competitors. Finally, the gender of the participants and their self-identification as Turkish or Polish have been taken into account. Thus, it has been aimed to maintain a balance between the genders according to the number of participants and assumed that the extent to which participants feel local or identify themselves with their identities is important for the research aims. As a result, the sample of this study has consisted of 30 participants (15 Turkish and 15 Polish) based on variation criteria to be able to reach out to social representations towards the employment of migrants and make a cross-cultural comparison between countries.

The demographic data has shown that seventeen of the participants are men (nine participants from Turkey and eight participants from Poland) while thirteen of them are women (six participants from Turkey and seven participants from Poland). The age range of the participants differs from 23 to 29 years and the average is 25.9. As for the educational background, eighteen of the participants hold bachelor's while twelve of them hold master's degrees. The professions of participants are "Software Developer, UX Designer, Hardware Specialist, Computer Engineer, Mechanical Engineer, Civil Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Network Specialist, SAP Expert, Scram Master, Business Analyst, Accounting Specialist, Finance Specialist, QA Analyst, Financial Crime Analyst and different teaching fields". The sectors in which participants are looking for a job are IT,

finance, different fields in engineering and teaching. When the jobs related to different engineering such as civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering rank first for Turkish participants, the IT-related jobs rank first for Polish participants. While the average job search time of all participants is 6.5 months, this average differs between Turkish and Polish participants. The average for Turkish participants is 9.2 months while this average is 3.8 months for Polish participants.

3.3. Instrument for Data Collection

3.3.1. The Free Associations Form of Social Representations

Data has been collected via a free association form from 30 participants based in Turkey and Poland between September and November 2022, and this free association form included demographic questions (age, gender, education, nationality, profession, the sector in that they are looking for a job, and total active job search time that they spent). In order to reach out to the social representations of the participants about the employment of migrants, the first part of the survey instrument proposed by Tsoukalas (2006), which is basically based on free association, has been used. According to free association part of this survey instrument, first of all, participants have been asked to generate 15 words or short sentences that come to their minds when they consider the **"Employment of Migrants"**. In the next step, they have been asked to choose 3 words that best represent the employment of migrants from the 15 words they have written, and then to create 3 new word pairs with the words they chose. For example, if the first of these chosen 3 words is **"Hardworking"**, the first word pair should be created as **"Employment of Migrant - Hardworking"**. At this stage, they have been asked to consider each word pair they have created (3-word pairs in total) and to write down the first 3 words or short sentences that come to their mind for each pair. Thus, they have been asked to derive 9 new words or short sentences. In the next step, they have been asked to form triplets from the words or short sentences written with a similar method, and they have been asked to write the first 3 words or short sentences that come to mind about each triplet. Remember the first word pair created in the previous example (*Employment of Migrant - Hardworking*) and assume that the first word or short sentence that has been written under the first word pair is **"Brave"**. In this case, the name of the first triplet should be created as **"Employment of Migrant - Hardworking - Brave"**. In this way, the participants have been asked to form 9 triplets and to derive a total of 27 words or short sentences, 3 new words for each triplet. As a result, participants have been expected to derive a total of 39 words or short sentences after the second, third, and fourth steps. Through the final step, the participants have been asked to create new groups by considering the 39 words or short sentences they have written (using the words or short sentences they feel close to each other in meaning - they could use as many words as they would like and create as many groups as they would like) and to give a name to these new groups they have created.

3.4. Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The free associations form of social representations and demographic form would be presented to selected participants from Turkey and Poland. All responses collected from participants would be analyzed according to content analysis to present tables for research questions.

The content analysis method has been used to analyze the data. This is an analysis type that aims to gather specific contents from the collected data and organize them in the form of codes, themes, groups or labels (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this regard, the 5th and 6th questions of the free association form have been taken into consideration for the content analysis of the data obtained in the current study. Because the participants have groped some words or short sentences that they think these words or short sentences refer to a similar meaning or representation through the 5th question. Also, they have provided a name to each created group that they think best represents them via the 6th question.

The groups of words or short sentences and group names have been presented in tables, and these tables have been created separately for each country based on the research questions. Each participant has been given a number in these tables and columns have been created by considering the number of groups formed by that participant. In addition, the names given by the participants to each group have been stated under the relevant group and the social representations that the participants associated with these group names have been listed in the same column. For example; the Turkish participant with the number 1 (Participant 1) created 2 groups at the end of the free association form. While this participant created the first group with "*Adaptation problem, Safety problem, Violence, Cultural erosion, Reduction in sources, Unemployment and Social change*" words or short sentences, the same participant created the second group with "*Low-cost labor, Skilled or qualified employee issue, Unregistered workforce, Economic chaos, Increase in crime rate, Job loss and Suicide*" words or short sentences. Participant 1 has given the name "**Population increase**" to the first group and "**Employment problems**" to the second group as the names that best represent these groups.

4. Results

The representations obtained from Turkish and Polish participants are classified and presented in separate tables based on the procedure followed. The current results have been evaluated separately for each participant group in light of the research questions, and comments on the findings are given after the relevant table.

4.1. Social Representations of Turkish Participants about Employment of Migrants

Table 1 shows the data on the groups that have been created by Turkish participants and the names they have given to these groups.

Table 1. Social Representations of Turkish Participants about Employment of Migrants

| | Group 1 | Group 2 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | | Group 1 | Group 2 |
|----------------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| Participant 1 | Population increase | Employment problems | Participant 2 | Exploitation | Social polarization | Participant 3 | Hope for a better life | Negative emotions | Participant 4 | Job Market | Current situation and issues in the country |
| | -Adaptation problems -Safety problems -Violence -Cultural erosion -Reduction in sources -Unemployment -Social change | -Low-cost labor -Skilled and qualified employee issue -Unregistered workforce -Economic chaos -Increase in crime rate -Job loss -Suicide | | -Cheap labor -Precarious work -Low salary -Work permit -Child labor -Instability -Exclusion | -Hate speech -Intolerance -Openness to violence -Nationalism -Cultural alienation -Social segregation | | -Better healthcare system -Better education -A better future -A better salary -Taking risks | -Difficulty and challenges -Anger -Regret -Burning out -Disappointment -Sadness | | -Being in search of a job -Meeting the needs -Increasing the owned resources in the market -Competition -More candidates | -Multicultural structure -Bad economy -Lack of control -Profit-making attempts -Businesses that reduce costs -People who are forced to work harder |
| | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | |
| Participant 5 | Employment | Family | Country | Participant 6 | Yearning | Anxiety | Participant 7 | Exclusion | Problems of belonging | Disrupting the structure of the labor market | |
| | -Inflation -Expensiveness -Unemployment -Money -Hunger -Employment issues -Inability to find a job -Depression | -Need for school/education -Children -Nutrition -Health problems -Anxiety -Low resistance | -Law -War -Being a foreigner -Problems -Chaos -Hate -Turkishness -being Turkish -An excess number of people -Election -Right to vote | | - A sense of longing for their own culture -Neighborhood relationships -Sense and need of belonging -Relatives | -Failure -Loneliness -Disease -Economic problems -Problems with not being able to return to their home countries -Death | | -Excitement -Fear -Hope -Expectation -Dream -Nightmare | -Rude and unlovable people -The perception that most foreigners are Arabs -Unwelcome people -Expectations of returning to their home countries | -Lack of adaptation -Reluctance to adapt -Limited communication with local people -Language barrier | -Accepting to work informally and illegally -Relatively high level of labor supply -Being open to working more hours than required -Cheap labor |

| Participant 8 | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Participant 9 | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Participant 10 | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | |
|----------------|---|--|--|----------------|---|--|---|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| | Low salary | Unqualified competitors | Increase in unemployment | | Negative effects on the economy | Influencing the rights of labor and salary policies | Negative effects on the employee profile | | The future | Effort / Struggle | Difficulties | |
| | -Cheap labor -Unskilled labor -Lowering the average wage -Negative effect on salaries | -Uneducated -Competitive -Ambitious -Aggressive (in terms of getting the job) | -Affecting the number of potential jobs -Fewer options for locals -Inability of locals to find a job | | -Economic disruption -High rental fees -Economic invasion | -Increase in the number of job seekers -Accepting any salary offers -Working without insurance -Working more than 8 hours | -Directing employers to cheap labor -Affecting the employer's perception about qualified employees -Disrupting the work culture | | -New beginnings -Life -Welfare -Peace | -Difficulty -Long processes -Interviews -Time | -Racism -Being a foreigner -Culture -Language barrier | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Participant 11 | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Participant 12 | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Participant 13 | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 |
| | Expensiveness / Increases in prices | Difficulties in finding a job | Social problems | | Challenges | Negative side effects | The challenges of living in the same society | | Cling to life | Hate speech | Inequality | To be ignored |
| | -Decrease in incomes -Increases in rental prices -Poverty -Hunger -Economic problems -Tax increase | -High number of candidates -Fewer job opportunities -Economic crisis -Low salary -Cheap labor -Creating barriers for locals to find a job | -Unsafe social environment -Infectious diseases -Disruptions in the social order -Increases in crime rate -Depletion of energy sources -The increasing amount of consumption -Robbery -Femicide -Suicide | | -Bureaucracy -Paperwork -Legal processes - Long time | -Leading to low wages -Reduction in the number of jobs -Working without registration -Working without insurance -Causing chaos | -Social problems -Conflicts -Reluctance to adapt -Not having communication skills -Being closed to communication -Tendency to violence | | -Difficulty -Poverty -Help -Efforts -Hopes -Struggling -Sense of belonging | -Negative statements -Hate -Being targeted -Stigmas | -Too much workload, low salary -Economic inequality -Injustice | -Challenging process in finding a job -Residence and work permit issues -Mistreatment -To be bullied |

According to Table 1 which contains the representations developed by the Turkish participants, the Turkish participants have grouped the words/short sentences that they think to represent the employment of migrants under 45 different names. The representations in these groups refer to situations that related to economic, job market, social, emotional, psychological, cultural, different challenges during daily life for both parties, and some positive sides/contributions to migrants of being a migrant in the country.

Considering the representations developed by Turkish participants, it is possible to say that the majority have negative representations about the employment of migrants. Similarly, Turkish participants believe that the employment of migrants has a negative effect on their lives and emphasize that the main effect is related to the economy and the job market in the country. For example, they have grouped their social representations related to the economy and the job market with the following group names:

“Employment problems, Exploitation, Disrupting the structure of the labor market, Low salary, Unqualified competition/competitors, Increase in unemployment, Negative effect on the economy, Influencing the rights of labor and salary policies, Negative effects on the employee profile, Expensiveness / Increases in prices, Difficulties in finding a job, Negative side effects, Job Market, Current situation and issues in the country”.

It is possible to assume that the second rank and mostly negative representations refer to cultural, social, and psychological based representations. While some of these representations refer to the situations and concerns experienced by Turkish participants, some of them represent the situations that migrants have experienced and been exposed to. Thus, Turkish participants have grouped their social representations related to cultural, social, and psychological based situations with the following group names:

“Population increase, Family, Country, Social polarization, Exclusion, Problems of belonging, Cling to life, Hate speech, Inequality, To be ignored, The future, Difficulties, Issues/Problems, Xenophobia, Social problems, Truths, The challenges of living in the same society”.

Additionally, Turkish participants have attributed the employment of migrants to representations associated with certain emotional moods. While some of these moods are their own feelings, some of them refer to the feelings that migrants can experience in Turkey. They have grouped their social representations related to different emotions with the following group names:

“Negative emotions, Yearning, Anxiety, New beginning”.

Finally, Turkish participants have referred to the challenges that migrants face in terms of employment of migrants and some of the positive outcomes that these migrants can achieve since they are in Turkey. Turkish participants have grouped their social representations related to some challenges and positive outputs with the following group names:

“Effort / Struggle, Challenges, Development, Solution, Hope for a better life, Benefits from education, Progress”.

4.2. Social Representations of Polish Participants about Employment of Migrants

Table 2 shows the data on the groups that have been created by Polish participants and the names they have given to these groups.

Table 2. Social Representations of Polish Participants about Employment of Migrants

| | Group 1 | | Group 1 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 |
|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|----------------------|--|--|----------------------|---|---|----------------------|--|--|---|
| | Negative consequences | | Different aspects of human resources | | Diversity | Formal / Procedural Challenges | | Luck | Concerns | | Inequality | Paperwork | Prejudice |
| Participant 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Competitive people -Fewer job opportunities -Finding a job for a longer time -Unqualified employees -The candidates who have graduated from not good universities -People who are not familiar with our culture -Working without registration -Causing low wages | Participant 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Equality of opportunity -Lower cost for employers -Increasing population growth -Qualified people -Unqualified people -Struggling -Different skills -People who can contribute to the development of the country -More people who need support -The expectation to increase positive attitudes -Diversity | Participant 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Melting pot -Multicultural society -International environment -Fun -Differences -Learning together -Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Difficult processes -Fresh starts -Paperwork -Bureaucracy -Competition -Negative reactions of local people -Language barriers -Old-school application processes and the need for improvement of formal aspects | Participant 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Having new opportunities -Social rights -Innovation -Chance for employment -Regular salary -Environment that drives development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Marriage of locals with people from different cultures -Sharing limited sources -Limited number of flats to live -Changing cultural climate | Participant 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lower salaries for foreigners -Higher rental prices for foreigners -Basic jobs -Challenges of finding a job -Unclear and long legal process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work permit -Many rejections for residence permit -Time pressure -Unfriendly process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Nationalist attitudes -Hate speech -Giving priority to locals -Xenophobia |

| | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 |
|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|---|--|--|----------------------|---|---|--|
| | Harder and challenging life | Job market | Adaptation problems | | Cultural richness | Challenging | Opportunities | | Discrimination | Economy | Minority |
| Participant 6 | -Continuous price increases -Expensiveness | -High number of foreign candidates -Being open to accepting lower salaries -Willing to do any job even though not suitable for their background | -Different lifestyles and continents and cultures -Low level of adaptation -Language barriers (talking in Polish) -More crowded streets -Rudeness | Participant 7 | -Opportunity of learning new traditions for locals -Chance to have different experiences -Better customer service for clients from different cultural backgrounds | -Language barriers -Legal problems -Different work experiences | -Wider talent pool -Opportunity to learn from each other -Opportunity to gain new international experience | Participant 8 | -Language accents and barriers -Negative perception about being a foreigner -Being excluded -Unfriendly approaches | -New opportunities and hopes and expectations -Western union -Wealth -Gaining residence rights -Personal developments | -Interracial -Identity -Color -Inequality -Frustration -Negative experience |

| | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|----------------|--|--|--|---|
| | Uncertainty | Unemployment | The need for earning more money | Decreased quality of daily life | | Positive outcomes | Negative social consequences | Economic indicators | Problems |
| Participant 12 | -Increasing number of foreigners | -Unpredictable fluctuations in the job market | -Increased rental fees | -Increase in crime rates | Participant 13 | -Increasing emphasis on education | -Lack of trust | -Additional income from taxes (from foreigners) | -Unstable employment |
| | -Partial anxiety/concern | -Pandemic | -Expensive food | -Feeling less safe in daily life | | -New restaurants | -Frustration | -More need/support for a work permit and legal stay to employ foreigners | -Complicated rules and regulations |
| | -Wars | -Fewer job opportunities | -Low wages | -Increased need to be selective and careful in daily life and relationships | | -Varying tolerance levels | -Generalization of the country | -Accidents | -Danger |
| | -Politics | -EU policies | -Less chance/limited options for social activity | -Tend to prefer less communication | | -New workplaces | -Changes in the general vision of the country | -Working without paying tax/working illegally | -Legal issues with the renting contract |
| | -Change in the perception of borders | | | -The problems caused due to languages barriers | | -Cultural enrichment | -Increase in rental prices for flats | -Misunderstandings | -Lack of civil contract |
| | | | | | | -New opportunities for all people in society | -Separated city areas | -Lack of medical insurance | -Lack of legal issues |
| | | | | | | -Contribution of taxes from foreigners | -Overusing someone's bad situation/disadvantageous | | |
| | | | | | | -Different language schools | -More problems in finding a job | | |
| | | | | | | | -Increased unemployment | | |
| | | | | | | | -Changes in employment aspects | | |
| | | | | | | | -Accommodation issues | | |
| | | | | | | | -Difficulties in communication | | |

| | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 | Group 4 | Group 5 |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|--|---|---|---|
| | Empathy | Changing dynamics | Giving a hug | Unstable emotions | | Economic growth | Positivity | Negativity | Cultural interaction | Journey |
| Participant 14 | -Positive or negative results based on time and conditions | -Unexpected results -War -Struggle for life -Basic needs | -The necessity of changing the understanding of borders -Focusing on recognizing the positivity | -To be angry -To show more tolerance -To show understanding -To be happy -To be unhappy -To be impatient -To be patient -To let something flow -To be undecided | Participant 15 | -Economic boom -Prosperity -Development -IT -Progress -Cooperation -Learning together | -Happiness -Family -Openness -Beauty -To be unique -Peace | -Racism -Fight -Persecution -Strikes -Violence -Protests | -Melting pot -Diversity -Adaptation | -New perspectives -Friendships -New talents -Opportunities |
| | -Enhanced awareness of showing more understanding -Communicating by ignoring identities -Need for considering people just as human beings when judging them. -Considering being a foreign as an experience that everyone might experience one day -The need to be free from prejudices | -Solidarity -Avoiding blaming someone -Accepting the situation as it is -New life and new expectations | -Need for easy and supportive legal processes -People who need to be made more visible in the society -People who need to communicate more with local people -Cultural exchange -Positive changes and interactions -Sectoral diversity | | | | | | | |

According to Table 2 which contains the representations developed by the Polish participants, the Polish participants have grouped the words/short sentences that they think to represent the employment of migrants under 45 different names. The representations in these groups mainly refer to situations that related to procedural and formal issues, social and cultural aspects, challenges regarding the economy and job market, emotional reactions, outputs of migrants, and some positive sides/contributions of migrants to society as being a migrant in the country such as diversity and some other positive effect of migrants.

Considering the representations developed by Polish participants, it is possible to say that positive and negative representations are relatively close to each other. Polish participants believe that the main effect is related to social and cultural contents or issues. For example, they have grouped their social representations related to social and cultural contents or issues with the following group names:

“Prejudice, Inequality, Adaptation problems, Discrimination, Uncertainty, Decreased quality of daily life, Positive outcomes, Negative social consequences, Negativity, Challenging, Minority, Changing dynamics, Insufficient adaptation, Concerns”.

The second-ranked and mostly positive representations refer to the existence of some positive effects and diversity. Therefore, Polish participants have grouped their social representations related to diversity and the positive effect of migrants with the following group names:

“The diversity that needs to be noticed, Economic growth, Positivity, Cultural interaction, Journey, Cultural richness, Opportunities, Diversity, Different aspects of human resources, Meeting some needs”.

The above-mentioned representations are followed by representations related to the economy and the job market and mostly negatively oriented. Therefore, Polish participants have grouped their social representations related to the economic and job market with the following group names:

“Harder and challenging life, The need for earning more money, Side effects, Economic indicators, Job market, Difficulties in finding a job, Unemployment, Negative side effects”.

Polish participants have intended to draw attention to some difficulties experienced by migrants at one point. Therefore, they have underlined the representations related to procedural and formal issues and have grouped their social representations with the following group names:

“Long and unfriendly journey, Problems, Disadvantages, Paperwork, Formal / Procedural Challenges, Bureaucracy”.

Finally, Polish participants have referred to some positive outcomes that migrants can achieve since they are in Poland and some emotions that are both positive and negative and experienced by both sides. Therefore, Polish participants have grouped their social representations related to emotions and positive outputs with the following group names:

“Feelings, Empathy, Giving a hug, Unstable emotions, Economy, Luck”.

When the social representations obtained in this study are considered, it is possible to assume that a general framework of perceptions of Turkish and Polish participants towards the employment of migrants has been revealed. In this regard, based on the research aims, it has been possible to evaluate whether the direction of the social representations of the participants towards migrant employment in the study has been positive or negative. This evaluation has also supported the comparison of the social representations of the Turkish and Polish participants and the discussion of the similarities and differences between these participants. Accordingly, the obtained results in the current research have been discussed within the scope of the research aims and questions and in the light of the relevant literature through the conclusions part.

5. Conclusions

The social representations of Turkish and Polish participants towards employment of migrants will be discussed in order. In this regards, social representations of Turkish can be summarized with these groups: *“economy, job market in the country, cultural, social, and psychological based situations, emotional moods can be experienced by locals and migrant, some challenges that migrants face in terms of employment of migrants and some of the positive outcomes that these migrants can achieve since they are in Turkey”*. When the social representations developed by Turkish participants are considered, it is possible to say that the majority have negative representations about the employment of migrants. Therefore, it can be assumed that Turkish participants believe that the employment of migrants mostly has a negative effect on their lives. In this regard, it can be assumed that these results are consistent with some studies that examine a negative perception of the presence of migrants (Özdemir & Öner-Özkan, 2016; Gözler Çamur, 2017; Yılmaz, 2017; Artar, 2019; Ekici, 2019; Konukoğlu, Üsten, & Güngör, 2020; Doğan & Ünal, 2021; Arslantürk, 2021; Çoksın, Erdugan, & Öner-Özkan, 2022). On the other hand, as in this study, there are also some other studies that highlight some positive emphasis and moods about migrants (Özdemir & Öner-Özkan, 2016; Artar, 2019; Pandır, 2021; Zor, 2021).

Based on this research's results the social representations of Polish participants towards employment of migrants can be summarized with these groups: *“social and cultural contents or issues, diversity and the positive effect of migrants to country, economy and the job market in the country, procedural and formal issues for migrants, some positive outcomes that migrants can achieve since they are in Poland and some emotions that are both positive and negative and experienced by both sides”*. When the social representations developed by Polish participants are considered, it is possible to claim that positive and negative representations are relatively close to each other. In this regard, even though they think that employment of migrant creates different negative effects, it is hard to assume that negative perception has major effect. These findings can be assumed to be consistent with studies that address some positive and negative perceptions or situations regarding the existence of migrants in Poland (Grzymala-Kazłowska & Okolski, 2003; Laciak & Frelak, 2018; Narkowicz, 2018; Thevenin, 2019; Domalewska & Zakowska, 2019; Jaskulowski & Pawlak, 2020; Horolets, Mica, Pawlak, & Kubicki, 2020; Rozalska, 2020; Troszynski & El-Ghamari, 2022).

When the social representations developed by Turkish and Polish participants are compared, it is possible to assume that the similarities between these social representations are higher than the differences. For example, the social representations related to *“economy, current situations of job market in the country, cultural and social contents or issues, some certain emotional moods that can be experienced by locals and migrants, some challenges that migrants face in terms of employment of migrants in the country due to regulations, rules and attitudes and some positive outcomes that migrants can achieve since they are in Turkey or Poland”* are in common for both participant groups. Although it can be assumed that the similarities are common, the support of these social representations with words/short sentences with positive or negative content differs among the participant groups. Thus, while the employment of migrants often associates with negative social representations for Turkish participants, it is difficult to assume the same situation for Polish participants. Because the prominent representations for both groups and the order of these representations according to their relative innumerous are different.

There are some positive social representations which have been formed by the Polish participants unlike Turkish participants. These social representations refer and support that the idea of employment of migrants associated with diversity, and this diversity is a contribution for Poland. In this regards, Polish participants differ from Turkish participants on these social representations. Because the representations derived by Turkish participants and emphasizing diversity relatively are not enough to form a separate group, even though some of the Turkish participants have stated some representations related to diversity. However, for the Polish participants, the social representations related to diversity and contribution of migrants in the context of diversity have been ranked as second order. Therefore, Polish participants mainly have been shown difference from the Turkish participants based on this perspective.

6. Recommendations

The current study has shown that social representations theory is rather applicable to research in organizational contexts. It has also revealed that it is a supportive theory to reach out to a general description of perception in people's minds about certain topics. Therefore, it is possible to make a few recommendations for researchers who would like to examine social representations theory in the organizational context and professionals in organizational life.

- Participants from 2 different countries have taken part in the current study and the generalization of the findings obtained in the study has been limited to these cultures. Therefore, involving participants from more countries in future studies and increasing the number of participants might positively affect the results of the research. Because making more comparisons between countries/participants will be possible and the findings can be generalized for similar cultures.
- Participants in the current study have been selected from a sample of active job seekers. Therefore, it is not possible to assume that other individuals in society have similar social representations about the employment of migrants. In future research, the participant groups can be diversified and more inclusive results can be revealed by involving some different groups within the same society.
- In future research, a few open-ended questions can be added to free association forms to understand the rationale for the social representations that participants derive. Thus, the reasons why participants have more positive or negative social representations may become clearer.
- It will be useful to add a short description of "migrant" to the introduction of the free association form in future studies. Thus, it can be prevented the participants from often referring to foreigners who are the majority in their countries while expressing their social representations. For instance, it is thought that although there are foreigners from many different cultures living in Turkey, the participants from Turkey mostly have taken into account the Syrians who settled in Turkey after the Syrian war (relatively higher numbers of foreigners).
- In organizational life, professional managers can conduct free association forms at their organizations and reveal different social representations of their employees. Thus, they can have a better picture of organizational culture, organizational climate, and many different managerial attitudes in their organizations to be able to make organizational improvements.

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