T.C.
Marmara University
Institute of Educational Sciences
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EXAMINING THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKISH MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Šeherzada JUSUFBAŠIĆ
(Master Thesis)

Istanbul – 2019

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Thesis Advisor
Prof. Dr. Seyfi KENAN

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Global displacements that are occurring in modern society and the fact that millions of immigrant and refugee adults and children are on the move motivated me to become more interested in the topic of migration. Social changes, living conditions, post-war syndromes and the impact of forced displacement on a child's development were the subjects that I wanted to explore. My arrival in Istanbul for my MA studies enabled me to come in direct contact with hundreds of children who had immigrated from Syria and other nearby war-affected Middle Eastern countries. Every time I felt tired or hopeless while doing this research, it was these children's perpetual struggle with the difficulties of life and their hope for a better future that inspired me to continue doing my research.

The aim of this study is to explore the level of social inclusion of Syrian children in Turkish public schools. Syrian children residing in Turkey face the hardships of having to adapt not only to a different culture, language, and society, but also to a new education system. The challenges of integrating Syrian children into Turkish public schools are numerous. The lack of language, new peers, a new curriculum, and different customs can lead to these children's identity confusion. Additionally, it may cause several socio-emotional difficulties in their development. Unfortunately, a high number of refugee children do not attend school in Turkey due to various reasons, including child labor and early child marriages. In this context, the value of education for a successful social inclusion becomes even greater. I am very grateful that I had an opportunity to interview refugee children during this research, one carried out with the hope of achieving useful results in the improvement of their education.

First of all, I want to thank the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) and Turkiye Scholarship Program for giving me the opportunity to continue my MA education at Marmara University in Istanbul.

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Last but not least, I want to dedicate this master thesis to all refugee children around the world.

Šeherzada JUSUFBAŠIĆ

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the social inclusion of Syrian refugee children in Turkish public schools. Accordingly, this investigation sought the views of 20 teachers, 9 school counselors, 54 Syrian and 53 Turkish children, in order to answer the following research questions: firstly, what are the experiences of school for students with a refugee background in Turkey, and how do policy and practice intersect to affect these experiences; secondly, what are the "effects" of this new education on the lives of refugee children; thirdly, what are the opinions of teachers and school counselors that are in direct contact with refugee children about their social inclusion; and, lastly, what are the feelings and attitudes of Syrian and Turkish children about this new multicultural environment?

One-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus groups were the methods of data collection. The research was conducted in 10 middle schools in the districts of Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar, and Esenyurt in Istanbul. The findings of the research have revealed that the common hardships of Syrian students in Turkish public schools are: the language barrier, cultural differences, lack of prior education, socio-economic factors, behavioral problems, and parents' indifference. Moreover, the environment's influence has a crucial role in the successful social inclusion of refugee children in both schools and the host society. Supporting a multicultural climate in schools and the training of school staff to ensure a better education of refugee children are some of the major recommendations for improving the social inclusion of refugee-background students in Turkish schools.

Key words: Syrian refugee students, refugee education, social inclusion, İstanbul.

ÖZET

Bu nitel çalışma, Suriyeli mülteci çocukların Türkiye'deki devlet okullarına sosyal uyumunu incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda araştırmamızda aşağıdakileri belirlemek üzere, 20 öğretmen, 9 rehber öğretmen, 54 Süriyeli ve 53 Türk öğrencinin görüşleri alınmıştır: Türkiye'deki mülteci kökenli öğrenciler için okul deneyimleri nelerdir ve politika ile uygulama bu deneyimleri nasıl etkilemektedir; yeni bir eğitimin mülteci çocukların yaşamları üzerindeki "etkileri" nelerdi; mülteci çocuklarla doğrudan temas halinde olan öğretmen ve okul danışmanlarının sosyal uyum hakkındaki görüşleri nelerdir; Suriyeli ve Türk çocukların yeni çok kültürlü çevre konusundaki hisleri ve tutumları nelerdir?

Bire bir yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve odak grupları veri toplama yöntemleri olarak kullanılmıştır. Araştırma, İstanbul'da Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar ve Esenyurt ilçelerinde 10 ortaokulda yürütülmüştür. Araştırma sonucunda, Suriyeli öğrencilerin Türk devlet okullarındaki zorlukları: dil engeli, kültürel farklılıklar, önceki eğitim eksikliği, sosyo-ekonomik faktör, davranış sorunları ve ebeveynlerin ilgisizliği olduğunu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ayrıca, mülteci çocuklar ve çevre arasındaki ilişkilerin okula ve topluma başarılı sosyal katılımda çok önemli bir role sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Okullarda çok kültürlü bir ortamı teşvik etmek ve mülteci eğitimi için okul personelini eğitmek, mülteci kökenli öğrencilerin okullara sosyal olarak dahil edilmesini geliştirmek için önemli önerilerden bazılarıdır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Süriyeli mülteci öğrenciler, mülteci eğitimi, sosyal uyum, İstanbul.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem

Recent international migrant waves have become everyday challenges in the contemporary world. Consequently, millions of international refugees and migrants are in exile in other, more secure countries seeking asylum and better life conditions. According to the Migration Report of 2017, the estimated number of migrants globally is about 258 million. On the other hand, in recent years we have also seen an increase in internal displacements resulted from domestic conflicts in several countries. The general factors that are underpinning migration are numerous, among which the most prevalent are the pursuit of economic prosperity, as well as inequality, demographical fluctuations, violence and conflict, and environmental change (IOM, 2018). In the last decades, conflicts were caused by different political, racial, ethnic and religious prejudices that produced intolerance and hatred between inhabitants in conflict zones, and this is often why the majority was forcibly displaced from their homeland. According to UNHCR's last report, 70,8 million people were forcibly displaced from their home worldwide. Nevertheless, politically, it also resulted in hostility and higher precautions in the western countries receiving new asylum seekers. Both the adaptation of the asylum seekers to a new place and the attitudes of the existing society towards them are important factors for coexistence. However, it is noticeable that the social system in host countries is unwilling to cater to the needs of newcomers of different backgrounds. Thus, international migrations, besides certain benefits, such as safety, a positive wage difference and higher income gains, bring a lot of problematic circumstances for asylum seekers nowadays (Lai, Maclean, 2011). As of yet, social media and the press, due to the appearance of irregular migrations, tend to present migration flows negatively, and that creates repulsion and reinforces stereotypes among the residents of host countries.

Internal disturbances in the Syrian Arab Republic, which were induced by war, began in March 2011. Thousands of civilians lost their life and a huge Syrian refugee crisis started (AFAD, 2017). Consequently, in the last seven years, Turkey, as a bordering

country, has faced the challenge of receiving a large number of Syrian refugees who have escaped from the war situation in Syria and who have found asylum here. Furthermore, Turkey applied an “open-door“ policy for Syrians, whereby they are given the status of “temporary guests“ until the end of the war. This favorable policy caused more refugees to resettle in Turkey. Moreover, some further reasons why Syrians prefer Turkey as an asylum country are accessibility, trust in Turkey, religious similarity and better conditions compared to other countries (AFAD, 2017). The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey has currently reached 3,6 million, and they are settled throughout different cities. Directorate General of Migration Management statistics (2019) show that only 1.71 percent of Syrian refugees (63.013) reside in refugee camps located in southern provinces. Others, about 98,2 percent (approximately 3,613,275) have spread throughout urban centers and try to survive mainly on their own. Aside from these, the majority is located in Istanbul. Yet, 1.721.717 Syrian refugees (under temporary protection) are under 18 years old.

According to the UNHCR's statistics, those under 18 years of age constitute around 51 per cent of the global refugee population. Indeed, between 2003 and 2016, the proportion of children within the population of refugees was quite high, oscillating between 41 and 51 per cent (IOM, 2018).

Therefore, in addition to the importance of providing basic conditions for the lives of refugee children, Turkey, as a host country, must equally reflect on the continuity of their education and adaptation to the Turkish educational system.

Education is the most important instrument for refugee children to remove the traces of their traumatic experiences. To ensure their social inclusion and integration in a new society, a successful educational approach should be provided to refugees (Çelik, İçduygu, 2018). During times of emergency, the Convention on the Rights of the Child requests nations to supply compulsory and free schooling for children. Education encourages children who experienced war and displacement to get back to the normal conditions of daily life and it also gives them a sense of security. Thus, they recognize the worth of education more than others (Sinclair, 2001; Hos, 2016).

According to the official data provided by the Turkish Ministry of National Education on 03 December 2018, out of the total 529.753 schooled Syrian children, only 23.849 of

them (i.e. 4.5%) have been attending public schools located within the borders of the camps. The very low percentage of those attending school out of the camps needs attention (AFAD, 2017). In order to provide a normal childhood for refugee children and to prevent child labour, early marriages and the exploitation of kids, it is necessary to work on the inclusion of refugees in schools. Refugee experiences of trauma and loss that cause several psychological, emotional and social difficulties place refugee students at risk of facing learning problems and behavioral distress (Hamilton, Moore, 2003). However, many education systems nowadays have not developed a system of supporting refugee students, families and schools in their adaptation process.

The Turkish education system provides different educational routes for refugees. The Turkish Ministry of Education and AFAD regulate the children's education in camps. The schools in camps use the Syrian curriculum and teach in the students' native language, Arabic. On the other hand, refugee children living outside the camps and who have residence permits can enroll in Turkish state schools. Those who do not have residence permits are still able to attend schools as guests but are not able to receive a diploma (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

This study will focus on the education of refugee children living outside of camps who are attending Turkish public middle schools. Under these circumastances, the state of being "the other" brings diverse social, emotional, linguistic, and academic challenges for displaced refugees in a new country. Especially the traumatic experiences that refugees are faced with can hinder their ability to learn a new language; consequently, this might lead to alienation from the society (Perkins, et.al., 2018; Demir, Ozgul, 2019).

Enrolling Syrian children in Turkish public schools caused various reactions from Turkish citizens. According to Çiftçi (2018), in general, Turkish citizens have negative perceptions and attitudes towards Syrian refugees although there are some Turks who treat them respectfully and try to extend their help. Overall, the challenge of educating refugee children in Turkish schools is naturally a complicated process, which has to include the cooperation of all parts of the education system.

Moreover, it has also been shown that the short-term displacement of refugees in host countries became longer than planned as the life paths of refugees do not follow established policy categories of return; instead, these are non-linear variations of exile. Correspondingly, access to schooling for refugee children was planned according to their short stay in the new environment, but the lack of a chance to quickly return to their homes creates the need for revising the initial education plans (Dryden-Peterson, 2017).

1.2. Aim

The main aim of this study is to examine the level of social inclusion of Syrian refugee children in the middle-level public schools in Istanbul.

The study searched for answers to the following questions:

- What are the practices and policy of Turkish public schools in educating refugee background children?
- What have been the "effects" of a new education on the lives of refugee children, on their self-efficacy, vocational prospects, further education, feelings of connectedness to communities, and their general health and well-being?
- What are the opinions of teachers that are in direct contact with refugee children about their social inclusion?
- What are the conclusions of school counselors about refugee children and their school integration?
- What do refugee children think about their education in Turkish schools and the relationship with their Turkish peers?
- What are the feelings and attitudes of Turkish children about their Syrian peers in the school?

1.3. Importance of the study

The expansion of migration and the forced displacement of people across the world lead to generations of children who grow up in stressful, unstable environments, outside of

school systems. Furthermore, the marginalization of refugee children in host communities often disrupts their regular development. In order to ensure the equally successful upgrowth of this generation, it is necessary to enable their access to education in host countries.

Turkey has received an unexpectedly large influx of Syrian refugees in recent years. Among 3,6 millions of refugees, one million school-age children appeared to be integrated into society and schools. The inclusion of Syrian children in Turkish public schools saved many of them from losing years without education, but it also equally brought a lot of obstacles to their inclusion. This research is undertaken to better understand the present situation of refugees' integration in public schools and its impact on their social inclusion into Turkish society. Furthermore, this research purposes to improve school practices with an aim to involve and help refugee children to better adapt to the school system.

1.4. Limitations

- This research is limited to opinions of teachers, school counselors, and students in ten middle-level public schools in Bağcılar, Küçükçekmece, and Esenyurt districts of Istanbul; thus, it may not represent the whole picture of refugee students' education and its oscillations in Turkey.
- Interviewing such marginalized groups as refugee communities may result in biased answers because of the interviewees' distrustful attitude or fear toward interviewers.
- The author had a very basic knowledge of Arabic and could not interview Syrian students in their native language, but she overcame this limitation through the help of persons who were efficient in both Arabic and Turkish.

1.5. Assumptions

- Respondents will genuiunely answer the research questions.

- Semi-structured interviews questions will be appropriately adapted to the respondents (refugees).

1.6. Key terms

To fully understand the topic of migration, the reader should first be acquainted with the basic terminology associated with this field. Therefore, the most important definitions of the basic terminology associated with this theme can be found below.

REFUGEE: A person who cannot return to his/her country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order, and who, as a result, require international protection (UNHCR, Emergency handbook, 2015).

SYRIAN REFUGEES: Syrian refugees are a big group of people who have fled Syria since the conflict began and are in refugee status in host countries all over the world (Al Rifai, 2017).

ASYLUM SEEKER: A person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments (IOM, Key Migration Terms, 2011).

IMMIGRANT: Describes any person who moves, usually across an international border, to join family members already abroad, to search for a livelihood, to escape a natural disaster, or for a range of other purposes (UNHCR, Emergency handbook, 2015).

STATELESS PERSON: A person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law. As such, a stateless person lacks those rights attributable to national and diplomatic protection of a State, has no inherent right of sojourn in the State of residence and no right of return in case he or she travels (IOM, Key Migration Terms, 2011).

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON: Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in

particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (IOM, Key Migration Terms, 2011).

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: The country that is the source of migratory flows (regular or irregular) (IOM, Key Migration Terms, 2011).

HOST COUNTRY: Country of destination or a third country. In the case of return or repatriation, also the country of origin. Country that has accepted to receive a certain number of refugees and migrants on a yearly basis by presidential, ministerial or parliamentary decision (IOM, Key Migration Terms, 2011).

SOCIAL INCLUSION: Social inclusion is the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives (UN, 2016).

SOCIAL EXCLUSION: Social exclusion describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political, and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state (UN, 2016).

ACCULTURATION: Acculturation is proposed as a multidimensional process consisting of the confluence among heritage-cultural and receiving-cultural practices, values, and identifications (Schwart et al., 2013).

ENCULTURATION: Enculturation is the process where the culture that is currently established teaches an individual the accepted norms and values of the culture or society in which the individual lives (Kottak, 2007).

ASSIMILATION: Adaptation of one ethnic or social group – usually a minority – to another. Assimilation involves the subsuming of language, traditions, values, mores and behaviour or even fundamental vital interests. Although the traditional cultural practices of the group are unlikely to be completely abandoned, on the whole assimilation will lead one group to be socially indistinguishable from the other members of the society.

Assimilation is the most extreme form of acculturation (IOM, Key Migration Terms, 2011).

DISCRIMINATION: Discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics (Australian Human Rights Commision).

1.7. List of Abbreviations

AFAD- Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency

MoNE- Ministry of National Education

PTSD- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

TEC- Temporary Education Centre

OECD- The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

UN- United Nations

UNHCR- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Toprak vatanım, nev-i beşer milletim...
İnsan insan olur ancak bunu iz'ânla, inandım.[1]
Tevfik Fikret

2.1. Analyzing the terms social inclusion and exclusion

Through examples of immigrants/refugees as a vulnerable group of the society, at risk of being potentially excluded, the terms *social inclusion*, *exclusion*, and *social cohesion* will be identified in this chapter. First of all, in order to discuss social inclusion, it is necessary to look at the factors that have caused the exclusion of certain individuals or groups in society.

> *Social exclusion describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state* (UN, 2016).

Therefore, participation may be disrupted when people lack the essential foundations of well-being such as employment, education, health care, and so on. In addition, social inequality, unprotected human rights and loss of dignity limit their participation. In almost all societies in the world, age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, migrant status, socio-economic status, place of residence, sexual orientation and gender are grounds for social exclusion. Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that the risk of being excluded depends on individual characteristics and many people are associated with more than one disadvantaged group. When it comes to international migrants and refugees who are already at risk of exclusion due to their migrant status, they are mostly discriminated owing to their socio-economic status, nationality, religion and other factors as well.

Social exclusion is a transhistorical phenomenon that has been prevalent throughout human history, depending on context and time. Over the centuries, social exclusion was

[1] The earth is my homeland, my nation all humankind;
A person becomes human, only by realizing this, so do I believe.

tolerated or just ignored by religious or governmental institutions. Racism, slavery, and colonization were some of the legal manifestations of social exclusion. Today, societies have become more sensitive to the manifestation of social exclusion and discrimination against vulnerable groups. In spite of this sensitivity, social exclusion continues to exist and in many countries people are still not legally protected against it.

Unequal access to resources (such as employment and work, education, health, social resources); unequal participation in societal activities, and denial of opportunities (such as access to formal labour markets and discrimination) are mentioned as general symptoms of social exclusion (Labonte, Hadi, Kauffmann, 2011; UN, 2016).

Hence, international migrations created a vulnerable group of people who are at high risk of being unequally treated and who are thereby hindered with regards to engaging in regular participation in society.

> *International migrants are vulnerable to coercion, exploitation and substandard labour conditions and benefits. They often suffer from discrimination and are confined to the margins of the societies in which they live (UN, 2016).*

Countries receiving migrants and refugees have established increasingly rigorous criteria against their arrival. The entry of migrants into the Western European countries nowadays exacerbates the marginalization of refugee groups. The media has an effect of portraying refugees and immigrants as “enemies at the gate“ who are trying to occupy Western communities. Some of these portrayals impose ideas that refugee claimants are often fraudulent, that immigrants spread infectious diseases, and that they may enter the Western countries pretending to be refugees while being terrorists. Thus, the uncertainity of the situation may lead to dehumanization (Esses, Medianu, Lawson, 2013).

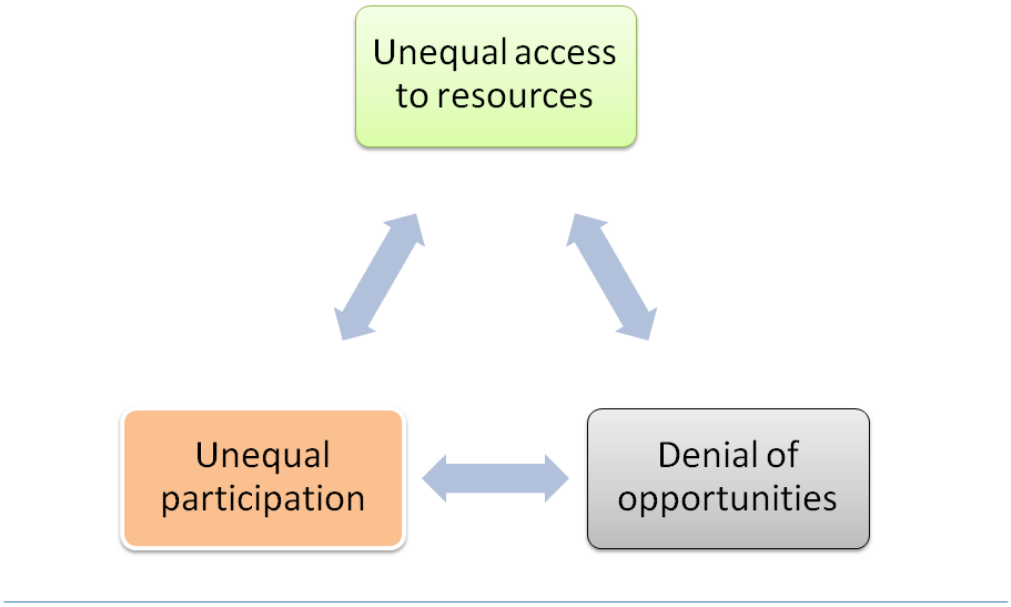


Figure 1. Symptoms of Exclusion (UN, 2016).

With the aim to suppress and reduce the social exclusion of disadvantaged groups of people, the notion of social inclusion emerged as a solution.

> *Social inclusion is the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights (UN, 2016).*

Thus, its aim is to remove the obstacles to people's equal participation in society and to make inclusion possible. Social inclusion is committed to respecting the rights of all human beings equally in all spheres of life.

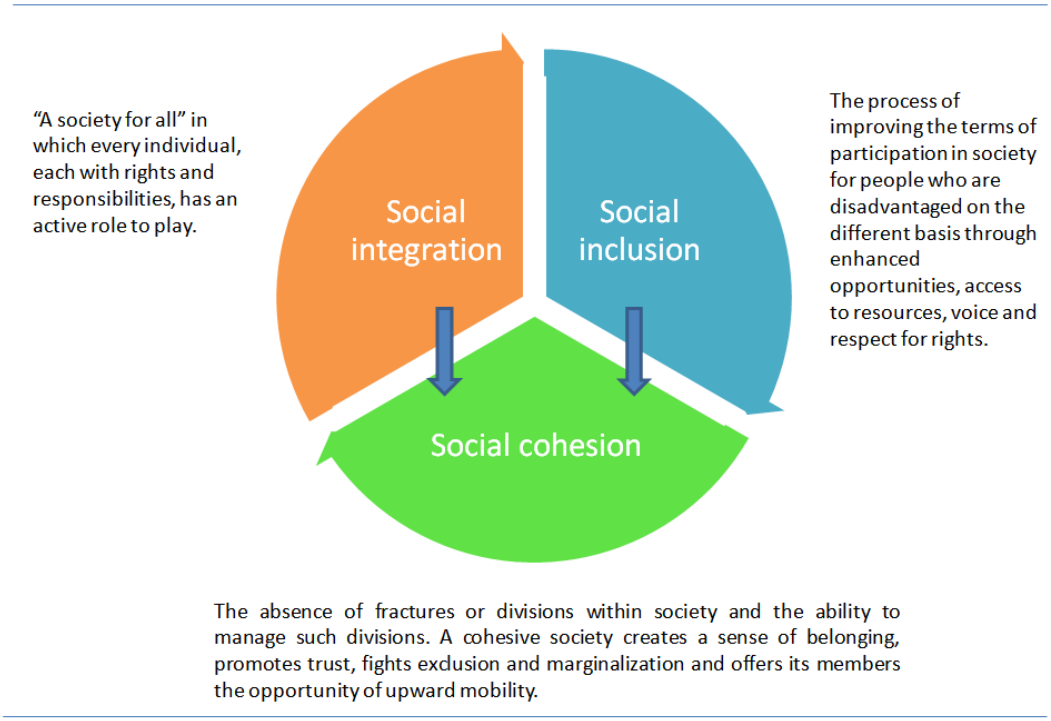


Figure 2. Social Inclusion, Integration and Cohesion (United Nations, 2016).

As illustrated in Figure 1, social integration as a term, which implies all people and their rights, and the term social inclusion, which refers to oppressed groups of people and their full involvement in society, fall under the umbrella term of social cohesion.

2.2. Indicators for social inclusion

The European Union has made a list of social indicators in order to combat poverty and social exclusion. In 2000, the European Commision presented seven indicators for the evaluation of the national performance of its members in the sphere of social inclusion (Atkinson, et.al., 2002):

- distribution of income
- population below the poverty line before and after social transfers
- continuity of poverty
- jobless households
- regional disparities
- low education

- long term unemployment.

Due to these indicators, *financial poverty, education, employment, health, housing and social participation* were suggested as the main indicators for measuring the level of social inclusion.

For instance, the risk of being permanently excluded increases, depending on the time that the person remains in poverty. The longer someone lives under financial pressure and poverty, the more can he/she experience exclusion (Atkinson, et al., 2002).

The Australian government has developed the framework of indicators for social inclusion of Australians under three main terms: *resources, opportunities* and *capabilities.*

Resources include assets and abilities that people possess (human, social and economic capital). In addition, capabilities are the indicators of humans' ability to achieve their goals. The environments which provide the individual the chance to use his/her capabilities and resources in achieving his/her outcomes are called opportunities (Australian Social Inclusion Board, 2012). Social inclusion has become the key policy in receiving refugees and immigrants to the host community and a common topic of global discussion.

Moreover, Ager and Strang (2008) have introduced the framework of integration (inclusion) of refugees and other migrants through ten domains. These domains consist of attainment and connections with diverse sectors of employment, housing, education and health; citizenship and rights; social contact with community groups and obstacles to such communication, notably those arising from language and cultural differences, as well as from fear and uncertainty.

2.3. Education as an indicator of children’s social inclusion

With the aim of understanding the phenomenon of social exclusion and inclusion of children, the Convention on the Rights of the Child should also be considered. The articles of this Convention advocate for children's rights and therefore their main goals are to promote the child's social, spiritual and moral development, to support his/her interests, and to protect his/her right to a dignified life, education, play, and free

expression. Failure to comply with these rights can lead to the child's social exclusion from society (Klasen, 1999).

There are many reasons why respecting children's rights and protecting them from exclusion is crucial for their further development:

- socially excluded children have a much greater chance of becoming socially excluded adults;
- their exclusion may result in a lack of opportunities for a child to be healthy, well-educated, and nourished. It can also lead to other social disorders such as crime, violence, racism, and so on;
- their exclusion poses a risk to the future development of the society as they may become social and economic burdens;
- there are situations in which children with disabilities seem to be well integrated, but their needs are still insufficiently taken care of, thereby leaving them in a state leading to them becoming undeveloped individuals.

According to the European Union's framework, education is one of the general social indicators for social inclusion. From its perspective, low educational attainment influences the children's risk of experiencing poverty and social exclusion later on. Other indicators of educational disadvantages that were highlighted are non-attendence to school, early school leaving and underperformance (repeating years, failure to complete the grade) (Atkinson et al., 2002).

The education of refugee children plays a vital role in including children and parents in a host community (Ager, Strang, 2008). The school a refugee child attends may be the only contact for his/her family with the host society; thus it represents a useful source of information. Education can provide psychosocial support for children that have experienced trauma and, in the long run, encourage social cohesion and peacebuilding (GEM, 2019).

However, minority status has long been seen as related to unequal educational opportunities and to a high level of school failure (Gibson, 1991). In most European countries migrant/refugee students have a lower educational performance than native-born students. Moreover, students whose mother language is different from the

language of instruction experience more bullying at school and have a lower sense of belonging in primary and lower secondary schools (Eurydice, 2019).

OECD (1998b) and OECD (1997) results showed that the low academic achievement of children who are non-native speakers underpins their social exclusion in school systems. Hence, there are many barriers against providing a beneficial integration of refugee children in the education system. Bullying, racism, lack of language, isolation, may be some of the hardships related to their integration. Additionally, many students with a refugee background suffer from the problems of poverty and attend lower-ranking schools than middle-class and majority-group students (Gibson, 1991). Despite these facts, refugee minority families see schooling as a chance for their children to socialize with the native society through language and cultural exchange. Furthermore, they believe that good education will also provide better job opportunities for their children.

Nevertheless, educating refugee-background students separately from native-born children in different school systems can be the root of social exclusion. Concurrently, a school system that integrates all children in the same classroom does not certainly provide inclusion. Undeveloped inclusion without extra support for students with special needs leaves these children probably in worse condition than when they are taught in separate school systems (Klasen, 1999). If the educational and the other policies aim to prevent the social exclusion of children and promote children's rights, they must focus on disadvantaged groups and their success, rather than on averages. As reported by OECD surveys, member states, along with Turkey, and their educational policies are increasingly focused on moving to the top of the educational performance ranking. Therefore, they focus their goals on "output," improving the average success in the education system with the segmentation of below-average performers. However, education is a crucial process that should promote inclusion for children and allow everyone equal participation and respect in society. Nevertheless, if education fails to promote equality among children and does not meet the standards recommended by the Convention, it becomes exclusionary (OECD, 1997, Klasen, 1999).

2.4. Multicultural Education and the inclusion of refugee children

Multiculturalism is a movement that appeared in the 1960s as a reaction to the social, political and cultural inequalities that had become a social reality. This was an impetus for multicultural education that was also a response to the existing hegemonic social categorization (Gibson, 1991).

Gorski (2000) described multicultural education as:

> *a progressive approach for transforming education that holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education. It is grounded in ideals of social justice, education equity, and a dedication to facilitating educational experiences in which all students reach their full potential as learners and as socially aware and active beings, locally, nationally, and globally. Multicultural education acknowledges that schools are essential to laying the foundation for the transformation of society and the elimination of oppression and injustice.*

In the majority of countries in Europe, intercultural education is a subject in the national curriculum, often presented through "Citizenship and development." It may also be either a part of school culture or promoted through special days or projects (Erurydice, 2019). For the schools that cater to students with various cultural, religious, or linguistic backgrounds, it is necessary to rethink the inclusivity of their systems. Especially, in order to retrieve a sense of normality and belonging for refugee children, a school environment has to provide peace, multiculturalism and inclusion (ERG, 2018).

Assimilation pressure on minority students in schools is apparent in almost all societies. For a refugee-background student, assimilation means loss of the bond with his/her own cultural values and identifying with a majority group's culture and norms. School staff may unintentionally insist on cultural assimilation by neglecting the needs of students from minority groups.

The educational policy of assimilation values the success of minority background students through their possibility to integrate into the majority group. However, in some

studies, immigrant students declared how their strong ethnic identity and culture rather than assimilation ensured their success in a new school environment (Gibson, 1991).

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (UNICEF, 1989); Article 30: "... *A child belonging to a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language*."

Schools need to encourage refugee students in maintaining a strong relationship and integration between refugee families and the larger communal-civic life.

An effective way to improve social communication and eliminate discrimination within the school is to create an integrative school culture where peers, school staff and other stakeholders are considered equal. The realization of this aim would be reflected in keeping a high level of students' communication through different pedagogical practices (Vislie, 2003, Sakız, 2018). Intercultural education may create an environment where all students with different backgrounds can equally participate and interact, show respect to one another, and build a peaceful living space.

For an inclusive education, teachers should develop: good teacher-student communication, increased flexibility in applying the curriculum, and a sense of partnership with the family (ERG, 2018). A flexible curriculum should pay attention to the social, emotional, cognitive and creative development of diverse students. Moreover, a further fundamental need is ensuring that their training manages to effectively address the issue of psychosocial support for refugee students with traces of trauma.

Preventive school-based interventions that promote the mental and socio-emotional well-being of refugee and immigrant children can be helpful in regards to their social inclusion. One of the successful programmes used in the USA in many post-traumatic situations is *Skills for Psychological Recovery* (SPR). The SPR model helps children to overcome their traumatic experiences and reduce their negative effects through five core modules: promoting positive skills, identifying emotions and managing reactions, building problem-solving skills, promoting helpful thinking, and building healthy social connections. This program was implemented in the case of Syrian refugee students in

Turkish schools, where the Maya Foundation, supported by Theirworld, helped more than 3500 children and trained nearly 800 teachers on how to approach children affected by traumatic experiences (Maya Vakfi, 2018). Furthermore, Maltepe District Governorship, Maltepe Municipality and UNHCR have developed an exemplary project, entitled "Maltepe community binds up the wound of Syrian refugee children: Diagnosis and treatment of school-age Syrian refugee children's post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD)". They have done the research on PTSD of 354 Syrian children aged between 6-17 years old. The Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy technique was used for the treatment study. As a result, all Syrian refugee children should be professionally treated in order to overcome PTSD. Moreover, it should enhance their well-being and adjustment to the school environment. For the time being, the project accomplished the aim of increasing the schooling rate while the interventions are still ongoing (Maltepe District Governorship Foreign Affairs and European Union Projects, 2017).

Six European countries are currently running a RefugeesWellSchool project in order to promote the well-being of refugee and migrant adolescents in the educational context. Thus, they have included five interventions which will be analyzed through the project. School-mediation intervention, classroom drama therapy, social support groups in refugee classes, support networks on school level, and teachers' training are the implemented modules. They will be used to assess the long-term impact on refugee-background students' well-being (n=2500) (Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, 2018).

Rutter (2006) has distinguished three discourses that are decisive in refugee education: the significance of a welcoming and supporting environment, one that does not tolerate racism and that focuses instead on the psycho-social needs of students, especially if the previous experiences of trauma exist.

In this study, the impact of the environment on a child's growth will be explained through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory. Ecological theory presents the five systems of the environment which shape individual development in different ways.

2.5. Syria and Syrian conflict

The Syrian Arab Republic covers an area in southwestern Asia, bounded by Turkey to the north, by Iraq to the east and southeast, by Jordan to the south, by Lebanon and Israel to the southwest, and by the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Diverse ethnic and religious groups, including Kurds, Arab Sunnis, Alawite Shia, Druze, Christians, and Armenians live in this country. The majority of the population are Muslim. Syria was, like most of the countries of the Middle East, occupied for decades by the Ottoman Empire, under French rule, and it finally gained its independence in 1946. Tensions between ethnic and religious groups in Syria continued to be a political problem until Hafez al-Assad became president in 1971. His main goals were to achieve the national security and domestic stability usurped in that time. Assad's rule and dictatorship lasted until his death, in 2000, when his son Bashar replaced him. He continued to use his father's authoritarian style of leading, using military and violence against protestors. Bashar al-Assad was fighting for control of his country after the protests against his rule turned into civil war.

Antigovernment protests began in Daraa (a town in southwest Syria) on March 15, 2011, as a peaceful uprising against the country's president. Demonstrators were complaining about high unemployment, corruption and lack of political freedom, and soon the rebellion spread across the country. The protest was described as part of the "Arab Spring" anti-government movement, which started in the Middle East and North Africa in December 2010 (Polk, 2013).

Protests escalated into extreme violence when the government used deadly force to crush the dissent. Consequently, the civil war in Syria began between the Syrian government that was supported by Russia and Iran and anti-government rebel groups that were backed with the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Three different operations fuel the Syrian conflict: strong exertion of the coalition to breakdown the Islamic State, intense fights between the Syrian government and opposition forces, and Turkish military operations against Syrian Kurds (Council on foreign relations, 2019).

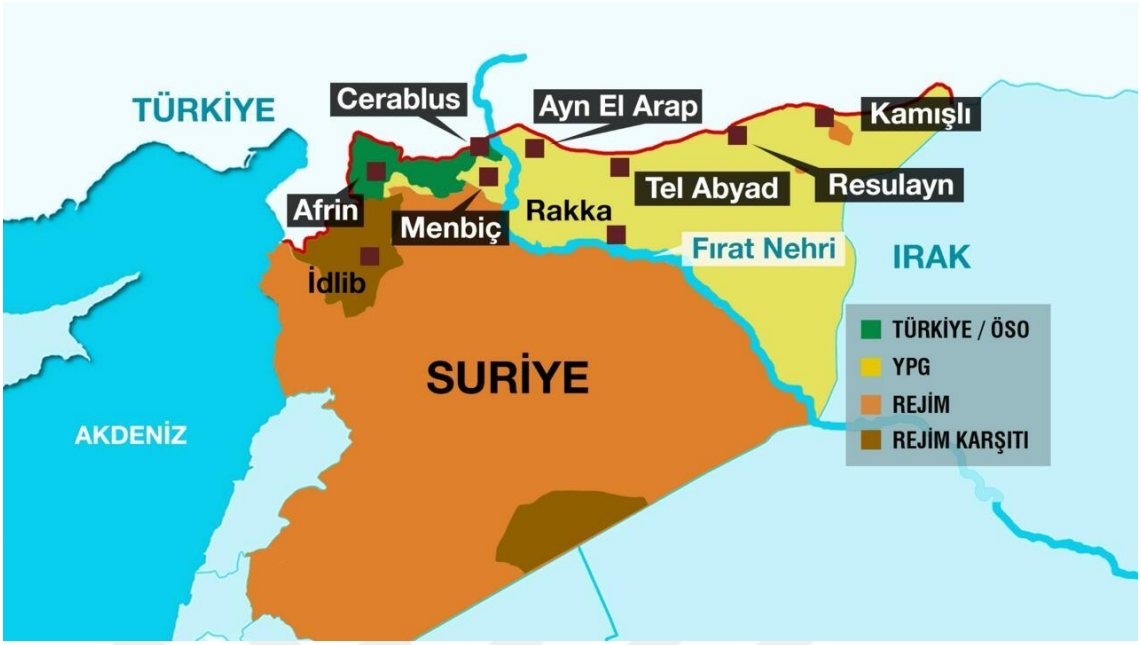


Figure 3. Syria: Who Controls What (CNN Türkiye, 2019).

Despite attempts to establish diplomatic peace in Syria, this objective has not been achieved yet. As a result, Syrian authorities continue to attack insurgents. The former were charged several times for using chemical weapons during the attacks, resulting in numerous casualties (BBC News, 2019).

According to estimates by the United Nations, more than 400,000 people have been killed; 1,5 million people have been left permanently disabled, including 86,000 who have lost limbs; what is more, more than 6,7 million have fled the country and over 6 million people have been internally displaced since the Syrian conflict began. Many refugees have fled to neighbor countries, Jordan and Lebanon, while 3,6 million refugees settled in Turkey and many others sought asylum in European countries (UNHCR, Government of Turkey, 2019).

Total Persons of Concern by Country of Asylum

JSON

Location name	Source	Data date	Population	
Turkey	*UNHCR, Government of Turkey*	16 May 2019	64.1%	3,606,737
Lebanon	*UNHCR*	31 May 2019	16.6%	935,454
Jordan	*UNHCR*	3 Jun 2019	11.8%	664,330
Iraq	*UNHCR*	31 May 2019	4.5%	252,983
Egypt	*UNHCR*	30 Apr 2019	2.4%	132,473
Other (North Africa)	*UNHCR*	30 Nov 2018	0.6%	35,713

Total Registered Syrian Refugees

JSON

5,443,272

Source - UNHCR, Government of Turkey

Figure 4. Number of Registered Syrian Refugees in Host Countries (UNHCR, Government of Turkey, 2019).

Injury, displacement, loss of family and other types of trauma had a huge impact on Syrian children, who suffer the most in this conflict. According to UNICEF's report, issued in April 2019, 5 million children were affected by the war, and while over 2,5 million Syrian refugee children were registered outside of Syria, thousands of children left the country on their own (UNICEF, Syrian Crisis, 2019).

The grave violation of children's rights in Syria increases every year. Therefore, many have been killed or injured, and millions have left their home. Health care, nutrition, and education services are destroyed and out of reach. Children are recruited or used by armed forces and other groups as fighters, messengers or are subjected to sexual exploitation (No lost generation update, 2018).

Meanwhile, the conflict in Syria has been prolonged by external military interventions from Iran, Israel, Qatar, Russia, Saudi, Arabia, US, Turkey, and other indirect participants, who support the conflict by means of the constant provision of arms, military equipment, air strikes, troops, etc (BBC News, 2019).

2.6. Syrian refugees in Turkey

Turkey, as a country bordering Syria and with its favorable policy and open-door approach concerning the status of refugees as temporary “guests,“ has faced the influx

of a large number of Syrian refugees in recent years. Temporary protection for refugees and stateless persons who are fleeing from Syria to Turkey allows them to seek accomodation in this country even if they cross the border illegally. Therefore, they will not be sent back to Syria unless they themselves request to do so (UNHCR Help, 2019). Turkey provides domestic legal status to refugees, granting them the right of legal stay in the country; thus, asylum-seekers are not only offered protection from punishment for illegal entry or presence, but also protection from refoulement.

In 2011, a significant number of Syrian refugees (260) were housed in the Hatay area, in the south-eastern part of Turkey. However, this was only the beginning as millions of refugees moved to Turkey later on, since the Turkish policy toward refugees was welcoming. According to the migration statistics of the Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, the number of Syrians in Turkey was estimated to be 3,608,049 by the 23rd of May, 2019.

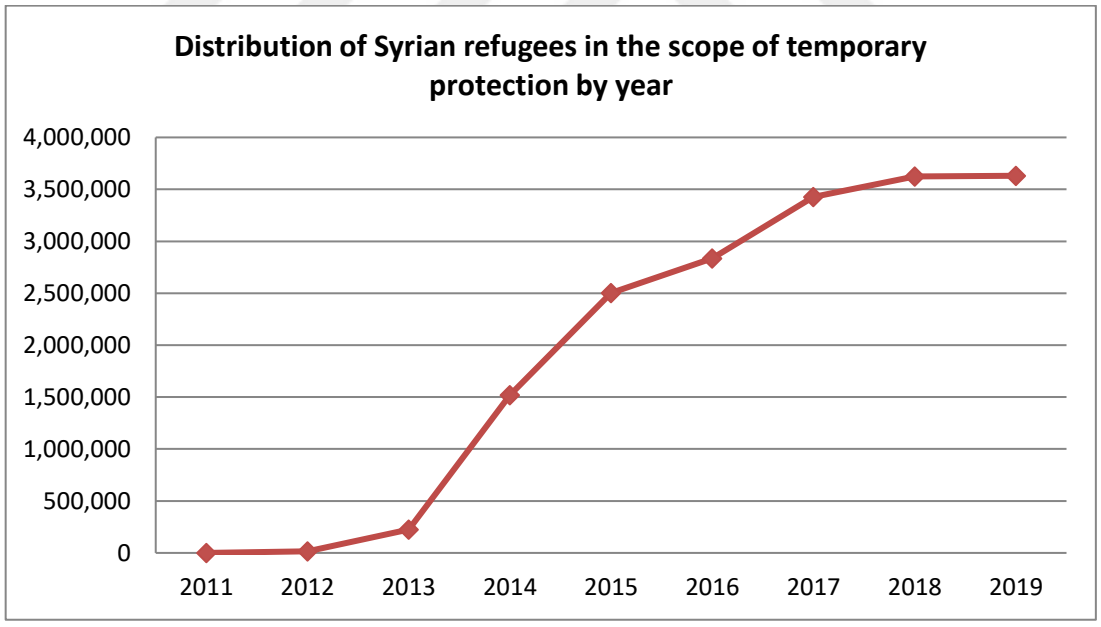


Figure 1. 1 Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Year in Turkey (Directorate General of Migration Management, 23.05.2019).

In addition, the number of refugees who settled in camps was 116,989, while 3,491,060 people were settled outside of camps. More than a half million Syrian refugees reside in Istanbul. After Istanbul, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep and Hatay provinces host the largest number of refugees in Turkey (Directorate General of Migration Management, 2019).

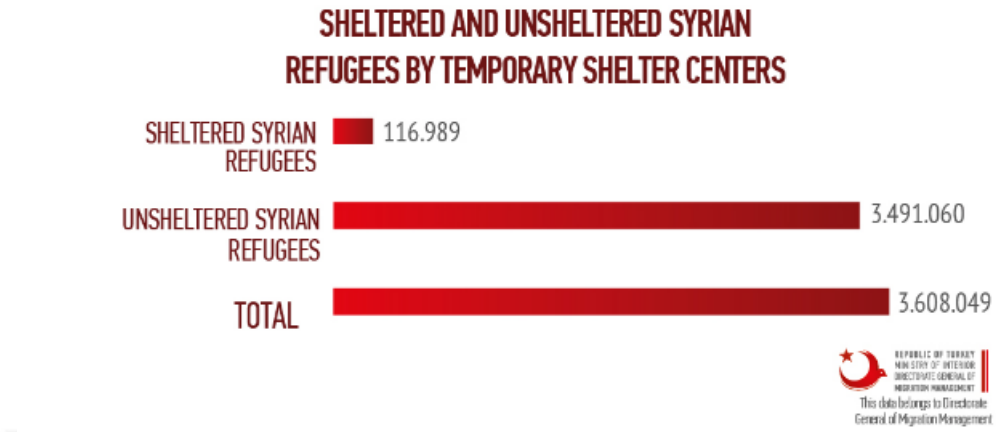


Figure 6. Sheltered and unsheltered Syrian Refugees by temporary shelter centers.

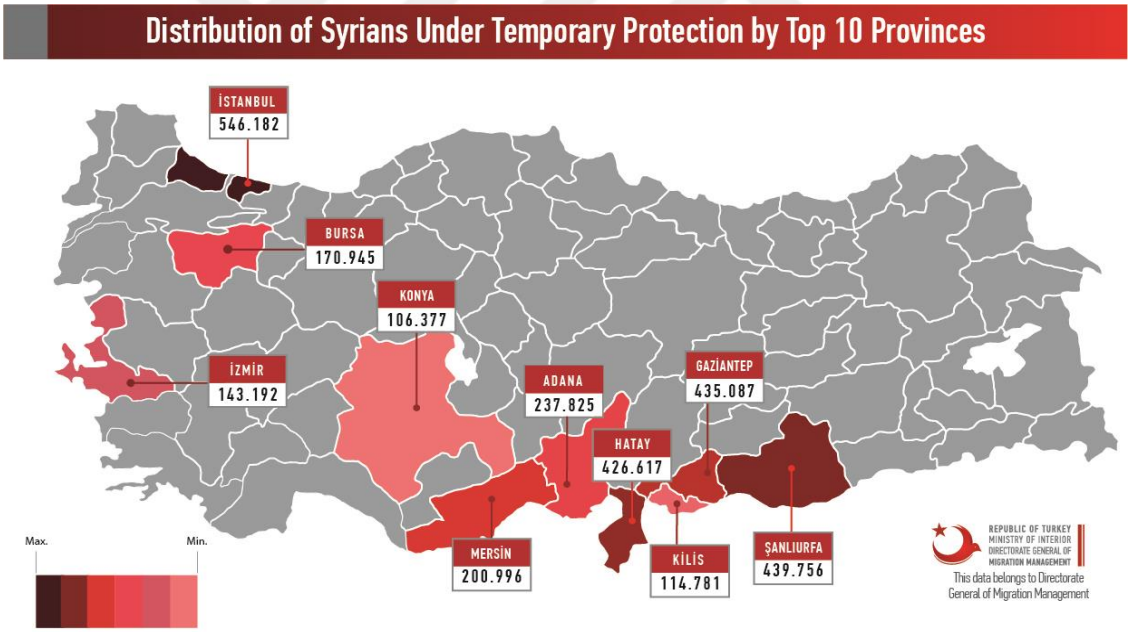


Figure 1. 2 Distribution of Syrians Under Temporary Protection by Top 10 Provinces (Directorate General Of Migration Management, 23.05.2019).

According to the estimates of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) in 2019, Syrian child population aged between 5-17 years was about 1.721.717. Out of the total 529.753 schooled Syrian children, only 23.849 ones (i.e. 4.5%) have been attending public schools located within the border of camps. Naturally,

the very low percentage of those attending schools out of the camps needs attention (AFAD, 2017).

The majority of Syrian refugees stated that they had fled their country due to security reasons. Beside security problems, political reasons, economic and health factors were some of the most influential causes for the refugees to leave Syria (AFAD, 2014).

The reasons why Syrians chose Turkey as their second home are their trust in Turkey, accessibility, Turkey being a next-door neighbor, cultural and religious similarity and better conditions compared to other countries (AFAD 2017).

Syrian refugees are staying in 25 camps in 10 provinces after having been set up by AFAD, which is the "coordinating institution" concerning disasters and emergencies in the country. In these camps, Turkey is accommodating over 220 thousand people. The 16 tent cities and 6 container camps, settled in Adana, Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Malatya, Mardin, Osmaniye, and Şanlıurfa have a supportive environment and advantageous living conditions (AFAD, 2017). Some of the type of support that the camps offered Syrian refugees are religious, social, and educational services, such as mosques, schools, and translators. The education of refugee children in camps was set as a priority for the authorities. Therefore, Syrian children started to attend primary and secondary schools established in camps. However, the security of Syrian refugees remained questionable due to the proximity to the conflict zone in Syria.

Up until early 2013, Syrian refugees preferred to stay in camps where they had been provided with basic necessities. However, after some time, most refugees decide to leave the camp and start living in the towns and cities of Turkey. Due to the strict discipline in the camps and especially because of the unemployment of males, they prefer to move to the urban areas of the country (Erdogan, 2015).

2.6.1. Urban refugees

Unlike camps, where the lives of refugees are safer in terms of opportunities to have free accomodation, health care and education, life in urban areas and mega cities has become a major challenge not only for them, but also for local residents.

Since, after leaving the camp, refugees depend exclusively on themselves or rely on family members, their existence in major cities is at high risk. Many urban refugees face

the problem of getting a work permit. For this reason, they are often illegally employed for low wages and they struggle to find an acceptable place of accommodation. (Içduygu, 2015). Refugees seek illegal work opportunities in different factories, restaurants, agriculture sector, construction works, etc. Illegal employed refugees are at risk of being sent to camps if caught by police (Cagaptay, 2013).

Syrians move to the city seeking safety, cultural familiarity, with the perception that Istanbul or other big cities in Turkey offer the best opportunities for employment and education for their children (Barbelet, Wake, 2017).

However, the large influx of immigrants to Turkey has become impossible to control, and there is also an increasing number of illegal refugees. The problem that arises from unregistered refugees is the exploitation of people, especially of the weaker groups, namely women and children. In the last report of AFAD, it was shown that one-third of urban refugees across Turkey are not registered (AFAD, 2013, Içduygu, 2017). In the absence of basic documents, residence and work permits, refugees in Istanbul and other Turkish cities are exposed to exploitation. Insecure jobs, low salaries, increase in apartment rents, and continuous social discrimination have made the life of refugees a struggle for survival. According to social research, people with a refugee background in Istanbul, are categorized in three groups (Barbelet, Wake, 2017):

1. those who are focused on integration
2. those who are struggling
3. those who are focused on survival

Nevertheless, the major livelihood obstacles for Syrians in Istanbul are: antipathy toward Syrian refugees among the host community, illegal work, low wages, and absence of adequate services, especially for the most vulnerable refugees (Barbelet, Wake, 2017).

Içduygu (2017) considers that, despite the adequate conditions and security of camps, more than 1 million Syrians chose to become urban refugees for several reasons: overcrowded camps; economic security allowed some refugees to settle in better living conditions or with relatives across cities in Turkey; Syrians with the illegal entrance are not able to reside in the camps.

2.6.2. Psycho-social difficulties of Syrian refugees

Refugees who fled to another country due to war are prone to becoming vulnerable groups, often experiencing mental health issues or stress caused by the disturbing events that they had experienced. Researchers have established that there are high rates of psychological disturbance among individuals exposed to trauma through war and disaster. Demoralization, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are some of the mental illnesses that can occur as a result of forced displacement (Laurence, et.al., 2011). PTSD among Syrian refugees in Turkey was detected mostly in females, especially in refugees with several traumatic events and individuals with cases of psychiatric disorder in their families (Alpak, et.al., 2015). Despite the traumas, postdisplacement stress and unfavorable circumstances such as discrimination, socio-economic disadvantages, obstacles in social integration, along with loss of one's own culture, are associated with negative mental health outcomes (Porter, Haslam, 2005). The effect of temporary protection on the mental health of displaced persons appeared to be highly associated with daily stress related to work difficulties and and lack of other basic needs (Steel, et.al., 2006). Furthermore, private, regular accomodation and economic opportunities have a linear relationship with better mental health. Yet, external migrants and unrepatriated individuals had relatively positive mental health outcomes, unlike the repatriated and internally displaced persons, who continue to struggle with the unstable political and economic situation in the country of origin (Porter, Haslam, 2005). Some of the factors that have a huge impact on the psychological well-being of the refugee population are confidence in people, self-esteem and the level of social support (Ceylan and others, 2017).

Celebi, Verkuyten and Baci (2017) investigated the role of identity needs in the relation between social identification and perceived discrimination, on the one hand, and mental and physical health, on the other hand, among a sample of Syrian refugees in Turkey. As a result of this study, a sense of belonging and efficacy were pointed out as two categories of identity needs. Higher perceived ethnic discrimination was found to be related to both poorer mental and physical health but not for the respondents who obtained a sense of efficacy from their Syrian identity. Higher Syrian identification was correlated with lower depression and anxiety, but more strongly for refugees who derived a sense of belonging and continuity from their Syrian identity. Hence, the

results highlight the importance of identity formation and its influence on mental health and on the successful inclusion of refugees to the host society.

In previous studies, it is stated that the psycho-social risks brought about by becoming a refugee and by displacement are more apparent for vulnerable groups of people such as children, the elderly, young people, and women (Aroian, 1990; Ete, 1998; Ceylan, 2017).

In addition to these studies, some of the more recent research on the psychosocial problems of Syrian children has identified some common effects, namely: fears and anxiety; difficulties sleeping; sadness, sorrow and depression (separation from friends and family); aggression (shouting, crying and throwing or breaking things); nervousness, hyperactivity and tension; speech problems or mutism; and somatic symptoms. Furthermore, war-related violent play and behavioural problems have been documented among refugee children (IMC and UNICEF, 2014; Hassan and others, 2016; Özer, Şirin, Oppedal, 2016).

The reports issued in the southeastern refugee camps in Turkey showed that refugee children's level of trauma was indeed very high. Such experiences as death in the family, witnessing violent behaviors, or physical injury were some of the observations that they passed through (Şirin, Rogers, 2016; Özer, Şirin, Oppedal, 2016).

In addition to the traumas and difficulties accompanying Syrian refugee children and youth, the lack of basic needs in this process of displacement, and in particular the loss of education opportunities for school-aged children obstruct their healing process (Syrian Centre for Policy Research, 2015). Consequently, children who drop out from formal education are much more at risk of being socially excluded and feeling hopeless, making them targets of radicalization (Şirin, Rogers, 2016).

2.6.3. Perceptions of the Turkish community towards Syrian refugees

The influx of Syrian refugees to Turkey affected the host community in diverse ways. The public opinion seems to have changed from the time of their first arrival. As the government has not presented concrete solutions for refugees' future movements, the Turkish population reduced the sympathy for Syrians that they had at the beginning of the refugee crisis (Erdogan, 2014, Barbelet, Wake, 2017). Anti-Syrian statements became even more prevalent in 2016, after the loss of Turkish soldiers' lives during the

military interventions in Syria. Furthermore, the announcement of granting citizenship to Syrians also triggered negative sentiments among the host community, even though Turkish government has never guaranted or vowed a citizenship status for Syrian refugees under temporary protection, except for a very limited number of Syrian asylum-seekers with higher educational background (Şimşek, Akçapar, 2018; Karataş, 2018; Çiftçi, 2018). However, as can be witnessed in some European countries, citizenship guarantees neither social integration, nor the elimination of discrimination from the society. Karataş (2018) has done some research on the topic of perceptions of Syrians by Turks, living on the European side of Istanbul. The results revealed how almost all of the Turkish participants were against giving citizenship to Syrians. Especially the Turkish participants who did not have direct contact with Syrians were more prone to believing the news that shaped their negative attitudes toward Syrian people. Furthermore, secular and anti-government Turkish citiziens had a mainly negative opinion on the issue of the Syrians' influx to Turkey, while those who regard themselves as conservative were more tolerant. Nevertheless, Karataş mentioned the importance of religion as a possible "social glue" in terms of a positive perception of Syrians (2018).

In the study presented at the Turkish migration conference (2015), the perceptions and attitudes of the local community toward "temporary guests" were examined. Data was collected from the local governors in the neighborhoods of Istanbul. The predominant theme that was raised among many participants regarding Syrians is anxiety and uneasiness. The reasons for this reaction of anxiety and uneasiness depend basically on the number of refugees, on the socio-economic status of the Syrians who settled in these areas, and on questions concerning the topic of security. Many respondents have the perception of Syrians as ‘beggars’ and complain about their begging activities. Beside this, lack of hygiene, aggressive behaviors, the way they live and the increase in rents were some of the other main complains that they pointed out (Genç, Özdemirkıran, 2015).

Ultimately, employment rates and wage levels, as economic factors, and the presence of an anti-foreigner sentiment affect the host communities' attitudes toward Syrian refugees (Erdogan, 2015; Içduygu, 2017).

CHAPTER III: EDUCATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN IN TURKEY

"No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption."

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed

3.1. The Turkish education system

Compulsory education in Turkey covers 12 years and is free of charge. Students are participating in a 4+4+4 mandatory education in which each four refers to primary, secondary and high school, respectively. The majority of students are taught in public schools. Both public and private schools are following the Turkish National curriculum with some minor modifications, and it is a guide to teaching activities. The lessons are predominantly taught in the Turkish language in state schools, and, in some private schools, foreign languages such as English, German or French are the main medium of instruction.

Turkey has a highly centralised governance structure, with little school autonomy, where education policy is managed by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and, at the tertiary level, by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) (OECD, 2013). Both secondary and tertiary education attainment rates in Turkey are lower than the OECD average, but both have increased significantly across generations and more than in most OECD countries. Forty-three percent of 25-34 year-olds have attained secondary education (compared to the OECD average of 82%) and 19% have attained tertiary education (compared to the OECD average of 39%).

In terms of general education, there are a few facts which reflect a system that needs improvement on various levels. For one thing, Turkey has one of the lowest enrolment rates of 5-14 year-olds in the school system among OECD countries (94,4 %), but, at the same time, it has the highest proportion of population below the age of 15. In addition, the number of students per teacher in primary schools is one of the highest (17,69 ratio), while teachers have the lowest salaries compared with other OECD members. According to the PISA results in 2015, Turkey's 15 year-olds' achievement in

reading, mathematics and science performance was lower than the average of OECD countries (OECD, 2018). Lastly, the influence of the socio-economic background on the academic performance of students is higher than the OECD average. Given this situation, the main priorities in improving the quality of education in Turkey are: reaching a certain standard of equity both between urban and rural areas, while also addressing the needs of disadvantaged students; ensuring high-quality teaching and school leadership; improving access to upper secondary education, vocational education and tertiary education; and also developing links with the labor market and appropriately funding the education system.

Further, the assignment of a school counselor to a certain school depends on student population and not all Turkish schools have a counselor. This is why, the education policy in Turkey aims to improve the guidance and counselling system, as:

> *Guidance and counselling can help students and parents make informed decisions, based on students' interests and educational and labour market opportunities* (OECD, 2013).

3.2. Education opportunities for Syrian children in Turkey

Before the beginning of the crisis, the basic education in Syria had a healthy record. Correspondingly, 97 per cent of primary school children were attending school, as were 67 per cent of secondary-aged children. Literacy among the Syrian population was high, at over 90 per cent for both men and women. The Goverment had started to invest more in education, and so the education budget increased between 2004 and 2009.

However, the war crisis caused the destruction of the schools and of the education system; thus, 2,2 million children in Syria are left without education, while half a million are out of school in other host countries (UNICEF, 2013).

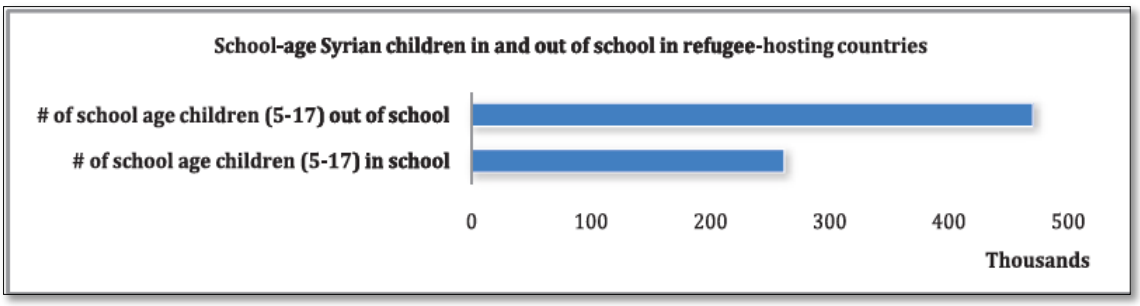


Figure 8. School- Age Syrian Children In and Out of School in Refugee- hosting Countries (UNICEF, 2013).

Turkey matched the profile of a host country for refugees from Syria; however, it has been transformed into a destination country. As a result, the Turkish education system has faced the pressure of having to accomoodate a high percentage of school-age Syrian refugee children in need of education. Turkey currently hosts more than one million school-age Syrian children between the ages of 5-18 and 572,544 Syrians between ages of 0-4 (General Directorate of Migration Management, 2019). The education of refugee children living in camps has a higher enrollment rate than that of those living outside of camps. In fact, more than 90% of the Syrian children living in camps receive education (Taskin Erdemli, 2017). All these camps have education centers offering education from primary school through high school (Dillioglu, 2015).

Outside of the camps, the total number of Syrian students enrolled in formal education in April 2019 was 643,058 (61,39 %). While there have been two main options for the continuation of Syrian students' formal education in Turkey since 2011, currently, Turkey is accepting refugee children only in public schools. In adittion, non-formal education centers exist in some areas. The Turkish government announced the plan to systematically close all Temporary Education Centers in the near future and to integrate all Syrian children in Turkish public schools (MoNE, 2018). Moreover, they declared that both preschools and primary school are compulsory for Syrian children.

At the moment, the number of registered Syrian students in public schools is 478,221, while in Temporary Education Centers, there are 90,512 enrolled Syrian students (MoNE, 2019).

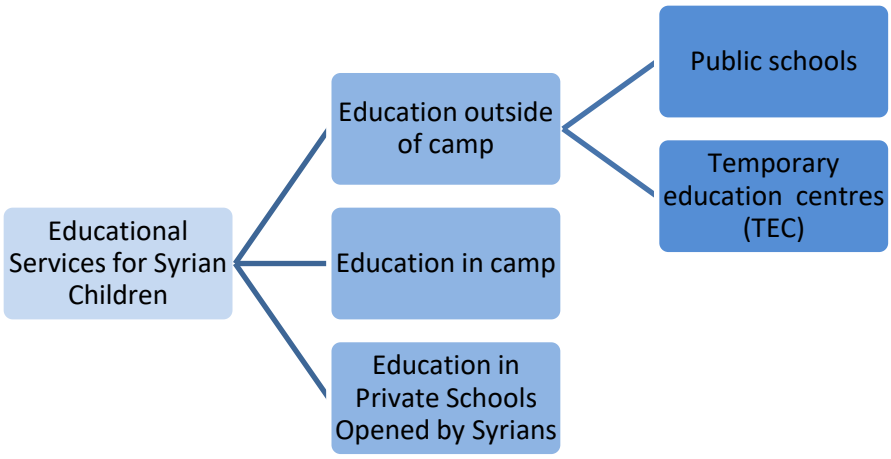


Figure 9. Educational services for Syrian children in Turkey (Emin, 2016).

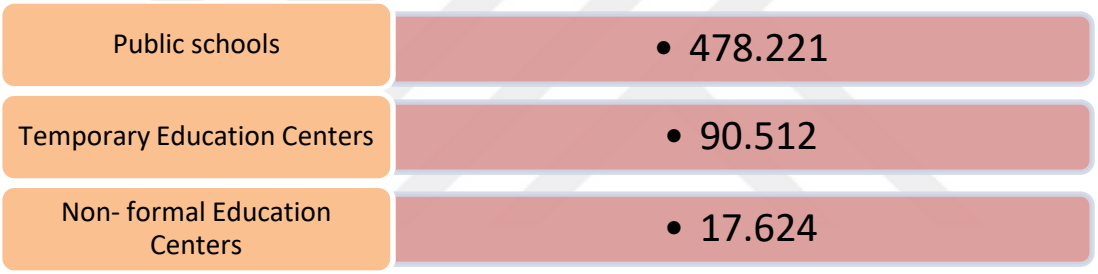


Figure 3. Number of Syrian Students Accessed to Education in Turkey at 2018-2019 (Ministry of National Education, 2019).

In the graph below, the enrollment rates of the Syrian refugee students attending public schools and Turkish Education Centers (TECs) are presented according to their educational levels; these are: 33.86% in preschools, 96.50% in primary schools, 57.76% in middle schools, and 26.77% in secondary schools, respectively. The primary schools in Turkey host the highest number of refugee children, while secondary schools have the lowest number.

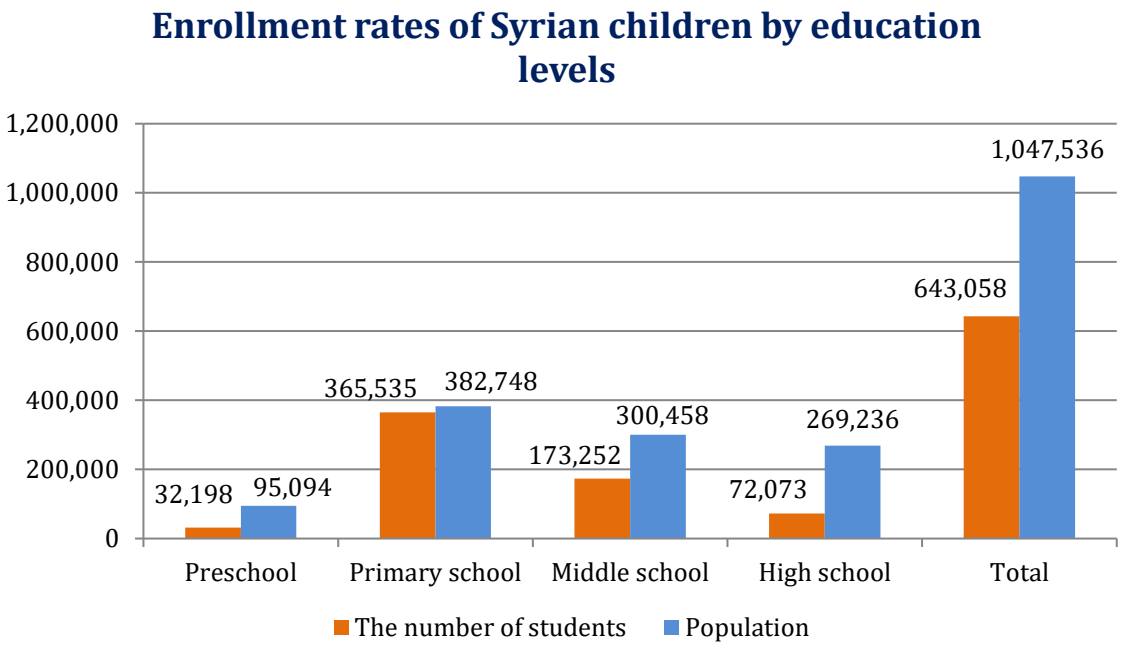


Figure 4. Enrollment Rates of Syrian Children by Education Levels (Ministry of National Education, April 2019).

3.2.1. Temporary Education Centers (TEC)

"TECs are primary and secondary education centers that provide educational opportunities for school-age Syrian children in Turkey" (MoNE, 2014). The medium of instruction in these schools is Arabic. The curriculum is created by the Ministry of Education of the Syrian Interim Government and revised by the Turkish Ministry of Education. The statements supporting Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian regime are removed form the curricula (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The Islamic Sham Organization, a Syrian NGO registered in Turkey, firstly modified the Syrian textbooks by excluding photos relating to the celebration of the current Syrian Government and edited several geographical maps. The modified textbooks were then delivered in Turkey. Later on, few other revisions have been added to the Syrian curriculum by the Syrian Education Commission and the Higher Commission for Education (UNICEF, Regional Study, 2015).

Currently, approximately 90,512 Syrian refugee students are attending TECs, while others are attending other schooling institutions, consisting of mainly Turkish public institutions. Through a governmental mandate, Syrian students in the first grade and at preschool level attend only Turkish schools (Sabanci, 2016; MoNE, 2019).

Temporary Education Centers are located in all camps in Turkey, as opposed to the situation outside the camp, where they can be found only in some provinces where the Syrian population is large. TECs are generally located in office blocks, NGO buildings and Turkish public school buildings (Aras, Yasun, 2016). Teaching is scheduled to take place from morning until afternoon if the TECs are located in office blocks or NGO buildings. Classes delivered in Turkish public school buildings are conducted in the evenings, after the Turkish children leave (Aras, Yasun, 2016). Turkish National Education directorates, teachers and the commissions formed by the administrators prepare tests and application forms for newly arrived students in TECs (Emin, 2016).

As per the 2016 data of the Turkish Ministry of National Education, 73 Temporary Education Centers for Syrian refugee children existed in Istanbul city. Most of them were located in the Fatih (15) and Başakşehir (10) provinces, while 15 provinces did not have any (Taştan, Çelik, 2017). However, those were closed in 2019.

Thirty (30) of them were supported by MoNE and 43 of them were under municipal associations', foundations' and NGOs' responsibility (Taştan, Çelik, 2017).

According to the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Education (2016), the district in Istanbul with the highest number of Syrian refugees was Küçükçekmece (30,919), while the district with the lowest number of refugees was Kadıköy (92). After Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar, Esenyurt, and Fatih provinces were hosting the most refugee population. The participation rate of Syrian children who attended school in Istanbul was nearly 35% (Taştan, Çelik, 2017).

The Ministry of Education and other private sectors support TECs' work through scholarships for students, payments for teachers, meals, transportation, etc. (Aras, Yasun, 2016). According to UNICEF's report of 2017, the Temporary Education Centres in the camps have better conditions for learning in terms of libraries, labs, and workshops, than the TECs in private schools led by NGOs. One of the biggest obstacles that temporary centers face is overcrowded classrooms. One class in a temporary center has aproximately 90-100 students (UNICEF, Regional Study, 2015). In such a situation, it is very difficult for one teacher to manage a successful teaching process. Some of the other challenges are administrative problems, problems related to educators, and problems related to the curriculum (Dallal, 2016). Administrative problems include the lack of centralization and inspection, and the certification of education that children

receive there. These certificates must be accredited by MoNE. Obstacles related to the educators in TECs are generally their lack of experience and skills. As some cases have already revealed, some of them work under false documents and diplomas. Moreover, the low wages that these teachers receive are not satisfactory. Overall, teachers in TECs are not motivated enough to make an effort in improving education. When it comes to the curriculum, history and Arabic are seen as subjects with an unreliable content (Dallal, 2016).

However, according to the announcement of MoNE, all Temporary Education Centers will be closed, due to criticism about creating a linguistic and cultural separation between refugee and native children. Thus, their number is gradually reducing.

Table 1. Distribution of Syrian population in İstanbul provinces and ratio of children involved in education

N	Provinces	Syrian population	Children's Population	Total Number of students	Children involved in education %	TEC Student's number	Total number of TECs
1	Küçükçekmece	30919	9294	1860	20	912	4
2	Bağcılar	29889	9053	3619	39.9	2649	3
3	Esenyurt	28871	7908	3129	39.5	1896	4
4	Fatih	26246	6941	3502	50.4	2706	15
5	Sultangazi	24749	7548	4129	54.7	3310	5
6	Başakşehir	20477	6119	4928	80.5	2050	10
7	Sultanbeyli	18391	5595	1042	18.6	621	1
8	Zeytinburnu	17398	4693	2206	47	1333	4
9	Esenler	16961	5049	3091	61	1864	4
10	Arnavütköy	14697	4613	839	18	727	2
11	Avcılar	14478	4180	1620	38.75	940	3
12	Gaziosmanpaşa	14342	4501	868	19	410	1
13	Ümraniye	13369	3828	1963	51	839	1
14	Bahçelievler	13325	4081	2109	51.67	1454	2
15	Kağıthane	12198	3502	1433	40.9	564	1
16	Güngören	10572	3037	1007	33	260	1

17	Beyoğlu	10305	3087	903	29	0	1
18	Sancaktepe	9887	2827	514	18	0	
19	Şişli	8538	1960	283	14	150	1
20	Bayrampaşa	8440	2282	436	19	400	2
21	Eyüp	8106	2482	1858	74.85	1296	3
22	Pendik	4676	1086	585	53.86	191	1
23	Bakırköy	2778	243	25	10	0	
24	Büyükçekmece	2421	671	370	55	240	1
25	Beylikdüzü	2273	664	350	52.71	86	1
26	Tuzla	2126	611	168	27	0	
27	Maltepe	1906	480	48	10	0	
28	Üsküdar	1877	544	116	21	5	1
29	Çekmeköy	1855	514	101	19.64	0	
30	Beykoz	1647	437	261	59.72		
31	Silivri	1643	377	70	18.56	0	
32	Kartal	1601	379	101	26.64	0	
33	Sariyer	1442	416	90	21.63	0	
34	Ataşehir	1237	341	53	15.54	0	
35	Çatalca	293	71	28	39	0	
36	Şile	219	42	4	9.52	0	
37	Adalar	155	21	2	9.52	0	
38	Beşiktaş	117	26	14	53.84	0	
39	Kadıköy	92	29	9	31	0	
	Toplam	380.516	109.532	43.734	34.69	24.903	72

Source: İstanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education, 2016.

3.2.2. Turkish public schools

With the announcement of closing the Temporary Education Centers, Turkish public schools faced an even greater influx of Syrian students into classrooms.

All Syrian children who have a foreigner ID card may register in any Turkish public school (MEB, 2014; 31 MONE Circular 2014/21, Article 4.). Children who are yet not registered can be temporarily included as “guest students,“ which means that they can

attend classes but will not get a diploma or any documentation. The registration in schools is free of charge. Upon accepting a refugee child to school, the Provincial Directorate of National Education becomes responsible for examining his/her educational background and deciding in which grade the child should be registered (AIDA, 2019). Many refugee children have missed years of education while migrating, which caused the struggle to place those students in a certain grade, according to their age rather than to their real knowledge.

However, until recently, Syrian children prefered attending TECs over Turkish public schools. The main reasons for this were Arabic language and the Syrian curriculum that was used in TECs. It has also been shown that the prejudices and approaches of both students and teachers in public schools influence their preference (İstanbul Bilgi University, 2015; HRW, 2015, Emin, 2016). Due to these facts, the possibility of an increase in the refugee children's dropouts became the actual problem.

The Turkish education system has already been in a disadvantaged position in terms of the quality of education (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Prior to the arrival of a large number of refugees in Turkey, the Turkish education system did not meet the basic criteria as regards the number of students in the classroom and the number of teachers. Thus, the influx of Syrian children into public schools became another strain for teachers and school staff in Turkish public schools.

With the help of EU funding, the Ministry of National Education is planning to build 220 new schools in 19 provinces in order to increase the enrolment rate (Hürriyet, 2019). In addition, The World Bank will enable the Turkish Ministry of National Education to construct 57 schools, ensuring formal education for Syrian and native students (Ijjasz- Vasquez, Ayhan, 2018).

After including Syrian children, the Turkish government, in cooperation with UNICEF, trained more than 19,000 teachers to work with refugee children (Kamal, 2017). Moreover, they opened comprehensive Turkish language courses in many schools to help students to adapt to the Turkish curriculum. “Promoting Integration of Syrian Children into the Turkish Education System” (PICTES), a two-year project from Ministry of National Education developed with the support of the European Union, supplied schools with Turkish language courses and psychosocial provisions, such as extracurricular courses in music and art. Around 6,000 Turkish teachers and counselors

have been a part to these learning centers to support Syrian students (Qaddour, 2017). However, the lack of language and understanding prevents the successful implementation of this planned support. Furthermore, the Conditional Cash Transfer For Education initiative (CCTE) represents an economic encouragement for refugee children's access to the education system. By means of this intitiative, vulnerable refugee families are supplied with a monthly stiped to send and keep their children in school (AIDA, 2019).

3.3. Barriers in the education of refugee students

Even though the Turkish government supported the legal entrance of refugee students to public schools through some of the aforementioned measures, it was only the first obstacle that was removed. When it comes to practice, refugee students face many other difficulties that disrupt their education process and even lead to dropouts. According to the academic literature, three types of barriers can be examined:

a) those related to the migration process (displacement hurdles and the process of adapting to a new environment)
b) those related to the general socio-economic and political context (policies affecting the entrance to the education system and schools for promoting inclusion)
c) those related to student participation in education (language barriers, inappropriate grade placement, insufficient social and emotional support, unprepared teachers, lack of parents-school communication) (Eurydice, 2019).

The factors that have dissuaded the majority of refugee children from enrolling in public schools in Turkey were the lack of necessary documents (residence permit), the language obstacle (Turkish as the medium of instruction in public schools), the lack of information on registration to schools, and economic hardships (UNICEF, Regional study, 2015).

Istanbul Bilgi University explored the current position of Syrian refugee children in Turkish public schools in Istanbul and found various problems that refugee children are facing during the education process. An insufficiency of information about the rights to education and lack of access to optimal conditions in the education system in Turkey

seem to be an initial obstacle. Next, it has been observed that the registration of children to schools may have a lot of complications as well (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2015). Moreover, the lack of official documents that prove the current education level of a student caused Syrian students to be sent to the first-grade classes, regardless of their age (Toker Gokce & Acar 2018).

Children with a refugee background often face the challenge of having to access education through a new, foreign language in school. Approximately 40 percent of people in the world do not have access to education in their mother tongue or in one that they understand (UNESCO, 2016). Syrian children enrolled in schools in Turkey also face this enormous hurdle – the language barrier. However, the opportunities to receive education in their mother tongue are very limited. Temporary Education Centers are providing education in Arabic, but the fact that some of these centers are not free of charge has restricted students' access to them. Children whose mother tongue is Kurdish do not have schools where they can study in their mother tongue, except for camps that are connected to municipalities. It is noteworthy that children of a younger age learn a new language faster and are easier to socialize, which is not the case with older children (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2015). According to Toker Gokce and Acar, (2018), some of the main obstacles faced by teachers and school principals regarding the education of refugee children are communication and adaptation problems of Syrian students, mostly caused by the lack of language. There are many examples where Syrian students have been involved in public schools in accordance with their age, without any knowledge of Turkish language. Thus, it resulted in refugee students' social exclusion and frequent failures (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Due to language barriers and lack of knowledge, refugee students were expressing sourness and started to be bored in school (İmamoğlu & Çalışkan, 2017). A need for systematic language learning programmes for refugees is extremely important in such situations. At the beginning of the displacement waves, Turkey was still in a developing stage of planning the language centers for asylum seekers.

Teachers have a vital role in providing a high-quality education for all. If they lack in fundamental knowlege of multicultural education, intercultural understanding and in dealing with cultural diversity, it may result in misunderstanding refugee children's behaviour and their efforts to succeed as culturally inappropriate (OECD, 2010). The

teachers' unpreparedness in dealing with the situation and in establishing an adequate teaching approach to refugee children was seen as a significant problem. Teachers explained that they were not trained and prepared enough for the abrupt influx of refugees to their classrooms (İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2015). Teachers may feel less capable of providing the adequate level of content to the newcomer children and optimize their learning (Education in OECD, 2010). The institutional deficiency in devising an appropriate curriculum for Syrian students caused teachers' confusion in daily lessons as to how to best proceed with these children in class (Toker Gokce & Acar, 2018). Consequently, proper training and education for teachers who are in direct contact with refugee children is essential in order to achieve an inclusive and high-quality education for all.

The exigency of psychological support for refugee children is indisputable, yet schools in Turkey were found to be lacking in this regard. Children who carry the traumas of war and violence with themselves should promptly receive the support of psychologists in order to continue their education normally (İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2015). In the counseling support to children, the gender of the counselor appeared to be crucial to reach all, male and female students respectively. The research has shown that male students feel more comfortable consulting with a male counselor, and female students with a female one (Aras, Yasun, 2016).

It has been observed that Syrian families establish very weak relations with the school staff. The relationship between Syrian families and teachers or administrators is limited due to the language barrier. Therefore, Turkish language courses for Syrian parents and families may also be important in this context. The fact that the family can communicate with the teachers may facilitate the acceptance of the new students within the classroom (Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2015).

Refugee students may experience social obstacles in their education. Syrian refugee students can witness these obstacles not only in the host but also in Syrian communities. For example, Syrian societies still have prejudices about women's education, and thus, some Syrian families prevent girls from attending school. When it comes to the Turkish society, Turkish teaching staff may refuse to actively include Syrian students in the class because they require more attention and guidance to understand the lectures and succeed. Besides, the overall exclusion of Syrians among Turkish citizens affects the

adaptation process of Syrian children to public schools. Consequently, during the failed inclusion of Syrian students to public schools, drop-outs were frequent (Aras, Yasun, 2016).

In addition, relations between Syrian and Turkish peers in school were observed to be negative. Mocking of refugee students for language errors or just for being Syrian are a daily struggle in public schools. In some cases, facing peer violence (bullying) in school, perpetrated by Turkish peers, was one of the reasons for dropping out of school as well. Teachers often do not respond to verbal or another kind of violence, or they simply do not witness it, and thus, without the proper reaction, they create the possibility for it to continue (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The most important factor in the adaptation of refugee students to the education system is their relation with Turkish students. Thus, teachers should encourage Turkish students to become friends with the refugee students, in the sense that they can play the role of the host (Mert, Ciplak, 2017).

Other determinants that could either ease or obstruct student's performance in learning are related to pedagogy, curriculum, management of schools, expectations of teachers and personal relationships (OECD, 2010).

Despite exceeding formal barriers to access and providing special treatment for deprived groups, certain factors such as policy, environment, relations between school staff, students, and parents may indirectly contribute to the exclusion of students.

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research model

Qualitative research was selected as the framework for this study. Qualitative research pertains to understanding people from their own set of criteria and values and experiencing actuallity as they experience it (Corbin, Strauss, 2008; Taylor and others, 2015). Thus, for this type of research a qualitative approach will enable this study to reach the essence of the problem by examining the individual attitudes of children, teachers, and school counselors. The personal experiences of refugee children will help us to reflect on their adaptation process, accepting the new criteria of society, and to observe the most difficult obstacles they have been faced with. Moreover, the responses of teachers and counselors will provide an overview of refugee-background students' adaptation process.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews and focus group interviews were the research methods used for collecting the data.

A semi-structured interview is the interview where the exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order. The questions are worded in a completely open-ended format (Patton, 2015). It is a written list of questions and topics that need to be covered in a particular order, based on the use of an interview guide (Bernard, 2013).

A focus group interview is an interview with a small group of people on a specific topic. Groups typically consist of 6-8 people, who participate in the interview for one-half to 2 hours (Patton, 2015).

4.2. Participants

The group of participants to this research consisted of teachers and counselors working at middle-level public schools in Istanbul, refugee children attending state middle schools and their Turkish peers. Middle school students were included in the research because they may be more able to express themselves due to language proficiency,

understanding, and analyzing abstract concepts such as social inclusion and exclusion. A sample for this study was selected by means of the purposeful sample method. In this type of sampling, participants are selected or sought after according to pre-selected criteria based on the research question. Thus, individuals are selected intentionally to learn and understand a certain phenomenon (Marshall, 1996). The most important criterion was the number of Syrian refugees in schools. According to the numerosity of the refugee population, Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar, and Esenyurt districts in Istanbul were selected for the research as the districts hosting the largest number of refugees. A permission for entering the schools in certain areas was received from the Ministry of National Education. From the website of the District Education Directorates' (İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü), 10 middle schools were selected by recommendation. Some of the schools were selected because of the large number of Syrian children involved in the school. Five of them were in Küçükçekmece (Apple Middle School, Orange Middle School, Pear Middle School, Grape Middle School and Mango Middle School), three of them in Bağcılar district (Cherry Middle School, Strawberry Middle School and Raspberry Middle School) and two of them in Esenyurt district (Peach Middle School and Watermelon Middle School). In each school, a counselor, two teachers, five Turkish and five Syrian children were selected by the director of the school.

It was planned to interview a hundred (100) students (50 Syrian and 50 Turkish children), 20 teachers and 10 school counselors. In the end, 107 children (54 Syrian and 53 Turkish children), 20 teachers and 9 school counselors were interviewed. The interviews were conducted from the 26th of February until the 21st of March 2019 in these schools.

Table 2. Demographics of Participating Schools (The names of the schools are fictive)

Middle school	*Municipality*	*Total*	*Foreign stud.*	*About*
Apple	Küçükçekmece	760	15	Staff all Turkish
Orange	Küçükçekmece	998	23	Staff all Turkish
Pear	Küçükçekmece	3314	600	Turkish counselor for Syrians
Grape	Küçükçekmece	1467	80	Syrian counselor
Mango	Küçükçekmece	1495	23	Staff all Turkish
Cherry	Bağcılar	1125		Syrian counselor

Strawberry	Bağcılar	1680	73	Staff all Turkish
Raspberry	Bağcılar	1718	29	Staff all Turkish
Peach	Esenyurt	2197	54	three school counselors
Watermelon	Esenyurt	1535	90	Staff all Turkish

- Every participating school had open a Turkish language course for refugee and immigrant students where teachers are Turkish. Foreign students attend the course after or during the classes.

The demographic information of the participants in the sample group are presented below:

Table 3. Frequency Values for Branch and Gender Variables of Teachers

Characteristic	Level	f
Branch	Turkish language and literature	4
	English language	3
	Mathematics	3
	Science	2
	Social science	5
	Arts	1
	Turkish language course	2
	Total	**20**
Gender	Female	11
	Male	9
	Total	**20**

According to Table 1, from the total number of teachers (20), five (5) of them are in the Social sciences branch, four (4) of them are teachers of Turkish language, three (3) of them of Mathematics, three (3) teachers of English language, two (2) of them of Science, two (2) teachers of Turkish language course and one teacher of Arts. Eleven teachers were female and nine of them male.

Table 4. Frequency Values for Gender Variable of School Counselors

Characteristic	Level	f
Gender	Female	8
	Male	1
	Total	9

As stated in Table 2, eight (8) of total number of interviewed school counselors were female and one school counselor was male.

Table 5. Frequency Values for Age, Class, Gender, Time of Residence and Time spent in Turkish schools variables for Syrian Children

Characteristic	Level	f
Age	10- 11 age	4
	12	13
	13	11
	14	20
	15	6
Class	5. class	10
	6. class	11
	7. class	16
	8. class	17
Gender	Female	28
	Male	26
Time of residence in Turkey	1 year and less	3
	2-4 years	14
	5-7 years	36
	8 years and more	1
	Total	**54**
Time spent in Turkish schools	1 year and less	12
	2- 4 years	40
	5-7	2
	8 years and more	-
	Total	**54**

In Table 3, it can be seen that of the total number (54) of interviewed Syrian refugee children, 20 of them were at the age of 14, followed by thirteen of them, who were 12 years old and eleven of them, who were 13 years old. A lower number was at the age of 10-11 and above 14. A similar percentage of the interviewed children came from different classes in middle schools. Gender equality was considered in the number of respondents. The biggest number of respondents who reside in Turkey was around 5-7 years. Mostly, refugee children attend school for 2-4 years.

Table 6. Frequency Values for Class and Gender of Turkish students

Characteristic	Level	f
Class	5. class	7
	6. class	9
	7. class	22
	8. class	15
	Total	**53**
Gender	Female	31
	Male	22
	Total	**53**

According to Table 4, the interviewed Turkish children were mostly in the 7th grade (age 13). Concerning the importance of gender equality, 31 female and 22 male respondents were interviewed.

4.3. Data collection

In this research, both semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were applied to the respondents. In each school, two of the teachers were interviewed at the same time or individually, depending on their free time. Each interview with school counselors was done individually. Turkish children were interviewed in focus groups of 5 people. Interview protocols with refugee children were handled in both ways, individually and in focus groups, depending on the level of knowledge of the Turkish language. If some children could not fully understand the question or express themselves, a separate interview was conducted in a focus group of 3-6 children, where

children who knew the Turkish language better were translating into Arabic for the other pupils. Interviews with teachers and counselors lasted for an hour to two hours, while interviews with pupils lasted for one hour. During every interview, the researcher took field notes in order to capture all important movements, gestures, body language and information that the interviewee expressed.

In order to make the questions appropriate for respondents, especially for refugee children, the opinions of three experts were obtained, which was most beneficial to the process. Therefore, two professors from Marmara University, from the Departments of Sociology and Education, and a PhD student in the field of Education reviewed the interview questions and influenced their construction. Besides, the commission of the Ministry of National Education in Istanbul reviewed the quality of interview schedules and allowed their implementation.

The questions arose from a review of relevant literature, previous observations and immediate experience with refugee children in different organizations.

The researcher's experience in working with disadvantaged children and previous connection with Syrian refugee children in Istanbul has contributed to the trustworthiness of the research. Besides, during the previous interviews with personnel who have been in direct contact with refugees in Turkey, the problem of the study and its framework were constructed.

As a result, four types of interview schedules were developed. Teachers, school counselors, Syrian children, and Turkish children had different types of questions.

The interview guide for teachers included 17 questions that fall under four topic: a) factors that affect the adaptation of new refugees; b) teachers' experiences of working with refugee children; c) challenges and barriers in socio-emotionally supporting new refugees, and d) expectations for policy (suggestions to the local municipalities and the state).

The interview guide for school counselors was structured to comprise 14 questions that fall under three topics: a) challenges in the process of inclusion of refugee children in the Turkish education system; b) relation between a school counselor and refugee children; c) recommendations for the further work of guidance services in the schools.

The interview schedule for Syrian children included 30 questions that fall under three topics: a) general questions; b) feelings and impressions about the new school

environment; c) thoughts and feelings about Turkish peers, and d) thoughts and feelings about Turkish teachers.

The interview schedule for Turkish children was made of 13 questions that fall under three topics: a) Impressions about new Syrian friends in the school; b) relation with Syrian children in the school; c) general views of class cohesion before and after the arrival of refugee children in the class. The interview schedules that were used as part of this study can be found in APENDIX.

4.4. Data analysis

Research data were analyzed through descriptive and content analysis. Content analysis can reveal concepts and relationships that are important in dealing with the solution to a social problem. In the descriptive analysis, more superficially analyzed data is evaluated in a detailed process through content analysis. The basis of content analysis lies in the collection, organization and interpretation of collected data under common specific themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). In the research, all written materials have been converted into written texts in the electronic environment. As a result of the studies on the text, the answers of the teachers and students are classified according to the themes that were determined within the framework of the research questions. Codes have been generated from themes. Some of teachers' and students' opinions were reported directly as quotes in order for the level of validity to be high.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS

This research was based on the qualitative content analysis of the responses of teachers, school counselors, Syrian and Turkish students with whom the research topic was discussed. The participants were interviewed in ten different schools located in Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar and Esenyurt districts of Istanbul. The schools were mostly located in disadvantaged regions, with large numbers of students. The most important themes were derived from the interview answers, and then they were coded.

According to our survey, the number of students in the classrooms is approximate to forty. In each class, there are around two foreign students. While some classes do not include refugee students, in others their number reaches up to 5. A certain number of refugee students enrolled in Turkish state schools are absent from classes. Teachers state that child labor is a problem that affects their regular attendance. Additionally, a big number of siblings at home obliges school age children to take care of them while parents are at work.

Table 7. The Number of Foreign Students in Class

The number of foreign students in class	N
0	1
1	7
2	7
3	4
4 and more	1

The main topics that arose from the analysis of respondents' answers were:

- obstacles in including Syrian children in the Turkish education system
- refugee child-teacher-school counselor-refugee parents-peers relationships.

The relations between the refugee child and his/her environment will be presented through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory, which explains the impact of a child's environment on his/her development.

5.1. Obstacles in the inclusion of Syrian refugee children in Turkish public schools

In 10 middle schools in Istanbul, 20 teachers were interviewed. According to the teachers, the main problems encountered by Syrian refugee children in Turkish public schools are the language barrier, cultural differences, lack of prior education, the socio-economic factor and behavioral problems.

Table 8. Obstacles in the inclusion of Syrian children in Turkish public schools observed by teachers

Obstacles	N
Language barrier	17
Cultural differences	7
Behavioral problems	5
Socio-economic factor	2
Lack of prior education	1

In ten schools where the research was conducted, nine school counselors were interviewed. One of the counselors supported by the UN and MoNE's project was employed as a special counselor for Syrian children. The school, which included a counselor for Syrian children, has 4,000 pupils, out of which 600 are refugees from Syria. In addition to a counselor for Syrian children, the school has a counselor for other children as well.

Furthermore, in one of the schools in the Bağcılar District, a Syrian counselor was involved in supporting Syrian students. However, the interview with the Syrian counselor could not be successfully implemented because of the language barrier.

According to the statements of school counselors, the language barrier, cultural differences, lack of prior education, community prejudices and discrimination, parents' indifference, and behavioral problems are the main hurdles that refugee-background students are faced with.

Table 9. Obstacles in the inclusion of Syrian children in Turkish public schools observed by school counselors

The obstacles in in including refugee students to school	N
Language barrier	7
Cultural differences	3
Lack of prior education	2
Comunity prejudices	2
Behavioral problems	2
Parents' indifference	1

5.1.1. Lack of language

A major problem that teachers and school counselors have highlighted in the inclusion of refugee children is *the lack of language.* Refugee children attend classes in Turkish schools without any preparation and with street knowledge of the Turkish language. Such a situation leads to many other problems that come out of it. For one thing, children do not show interest in lectures that they don't understand and usually do not engage in class activities. As a result, these children are mainly introverts sitting at the back of the classroom. For another thing, teachers also cannot communicate with them and often give up their engagement. According to personal observations, Syrian children who spend their free time on the street with Turkish peers have a developed language speaking ability. However, writing and reading are a stumbling-block. The participation of refugee children in schools is based on their physical presence without bigger expectations regarding their achievements.

"I cannot communicate with them, no way. He just comes to class to sit and go home. He does not know how to write and read. We're dealing with laughing, nothing else." T9

"Since they do not have the basic literacy, they do not participate. If there are three and more Syrian student in the classroom, they have dialogues with each other. I think they cannot fuse with others because they have different structures (...) Some of our Syrian students speak Turkish very well, so I ask myself is this student Syrian really? But there is an incompatibility." T12

In order to solve the problem of language in the most effective way, Turkish language courses were opened in the schools specially prepared for Syrian children. Courses are held after classes or during classes, and the language is taught by Turkish teachers. Two interviews were conducted with Turkish language course teachers. They said that in addition to the fifteen-day seminar that was organized by MoNE, they had no other preparations for working with refugee children.

Furthermore, it has been observed that children often avoid attending this course because they do not want to stay longer in school, or their families do not allow them to attend.

"We had one teacher last year, she opened a literacy course for Syrians on her own, after school. But they do not want it. They have no interest in learning. One student told me; let it finish so we can go back to our country. Some of them really love Turkey, but when I ask them about preference their answer is their homeland. Think they are right. But our hand is stretched and they don't hold that hand."T12

In some schools, when talking to students, it became evident that the teacher of the Turkish language course plays an important role in helping children adapt to schools. Many students have declared that he/she is their favourite teacher, who helps in many things.

Teachers declared that children who have mastered the Turkish language and whose parents attach great importance to education and are therefore concerned about their success, show far better results in both academic success and social adjustment.

School counselors, as well as teachers, have confirmed the fact that the language is a fundamental barrier in the social inclusion of Syrian refugees in schools.

In their relationship and interaction with refugee-background students, the problem of language is especially evident. The inability to communicate does not allow children to express themselves, their problems, demands, and experiences. Furthermore, it does not allow counselors to provide the child with proper psycho-social support.

During school visits, it was noted that counselors were significantly isolated from contact with students and closed in their offices while doing administrative work. Most of them declared that they had little or no face-to-face dialogues with Turkish children nor with Syrian refugee students.

"I do not have individual interviews with Syrian students on a regular basis. The guidance service in the school proceeds as problem-oriented, not development-oriented. We have 1300 students in the school, so I can not really have a weekly interview with each student. Only if they have a problem we talk. There are about 50 Syrian students in the school, especially in the 5th grades. We try to solve their problems of school achievements and absenteeism. It would be a lie to say that I follow it weekly." C6

In order to establish any contact at the beginning, counselors usually asked for the help of those Syrian students who mastered Turkish language to translate for other children. Counselors said that it created a restriction of the child's freedom to express himself/herself fully while the third child was present. Therefore, the communication between the refugee student and the counselor remained at the basic level.

"There's a language barrier. I often use sign language, I draw pictures. Something with a paper and pen. Or if it is not a private topic, I call one foreign student who speaks Turkish and Arabic well, and we try to translate it and make a dialogue." C2

5.1.2. Cultural differences

For the successful inclusion of students with minority and immigrant backgrounds it is necessary to imbue the school climate with multicultural values. Multiculturalism is a policy which every school that includes children of diverse backgrounds has to nurture. In other words,

> *Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning, based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism; in its most comprehensive form, it is a commitment to achieving educational equality, developing curricula that builds understanding about ethnic groups, and combating oppressive practices (Bennett, 1990).*

Ignoring other cultures, religions, and origins can lead to the alienation of immigrant children from school and it may be reflected in their poor school achievements. Culture plays a vital role in children's process of learning, and when culturally diverse children have to set aside their cultural habits in order to succeed in school, then the cultural socialization becomes problematic (Çiftçi Acar, Gürol, 2015).

In the conversations with teachers, it was noted that they see cultural differences as a major obstacle to the social integration of refugee children in Turkish schools. Various types of dressing, food tradition, language, ways of communication and all other distinctions were seen by teachers as inappropriate behavior. Therefore, cultural difference is experienced as one of the hurdles to positive inclusion, revealing that local students and society are not accustomed to other traditions and differences.

One of the teachers mentioned: *"People no longer have a sense of curiosity and respect for other international cultures. Everyone is impatient. For example, we are muslims in Turkey, it is same in Syria, but we do not respect it. Nobody likes anyone anymore." T11*

Another teacher added: *"In Syrian society there are Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen. In our school, Turkmen and Kurds are a little more fused. But the Arabs are holding back a little. Their conversation and the way of talking is different. The others are already saying that they are Turks." T5*

As we can notice from this sentence, the teacher expressed a positive image of those children who manage to integrate themselves into Turkish society without imposing their own identity and culture. During the interviews with teachers, it was asked as a probe, what they think about the introduction of either Arabic as a foreign language in schools or organizing the days of Arab culture where refugee children could show their way of life and feel accepted in society. Unfortunately, a small number of teachers (2 of them) regarded this probe as a positive way of communication. Most considered that highlighting other minorities and their cultures could lead to various problems later.

One teacher said: *"This year is my third year here and I still have no adapted students in the class. I haven't seen a student who's 100% adapted. Because the child feels bad, having a lot of difficulties. "Why are you trying to make me Turkish," they say. She/He wants to learn Arabic too, but it is not included in the curriculum."T5*

In fact, this teacher speaks about the problem of "assimilation to the Turkish society" that appeared in the integration of refugee children into Turkish schools. Refugee children who enter the education system for the first time in Turkey, learning the Turkish language, Turkish history and all other values of this country, are at risk of neglecting the values and characteristics of their own culture and origin. The

enculturation process is visible in the years ahead of this integration. Syrian children who started their formal education in Turkey explained in an interview how very little Arabic they knew.

5.1.3. Lack of prior education

One issue which was identified as being a particularly significant obstacle in all the schools we visited was the lack of prior education of the refugee children. A large number of refugee children lacked proper education and lagged several years behind, since they had traveled and moved to different places. The Turkish school system decided to place them in classes based on their age at the time of registration. Such a decision influenced the fact that, for example, children who completed the 1st grade in Syria are included in the 6th grade in Turkey based on their ages, without any preparation for it. In addition to linguistic problems, the lack of knowledge and irregular education are also some of the obstacles in their adaptation to Turkish schools.

"No basic education. They have not received a good education before or they have been trained for some time. That is why the 5th, 6th or 7th grade students are actually at the 2nd or 3rd grade level. Most of them started school here and they are included in 7th class." T2

5.1.4. Socio-economic factor

The socio-economic factor plays a very important role in the social inclusion of children of migrant origin. The relation between social class and educational inequalities was discussed through many types of research (Gillborn, Mirza, 2000; Marks, 2005; Hobbs, 2016). It has shown the fact that children from working-class families often fail in education and leave school earlier (Çelik, 2016). Severe material conditions caused harsh living circumstances for refugee families. According to many surveys, it was shown that Turkish people who work in or deal with real estate have increased the cost of the rents for Syrians. Consequently, refugees mostly live in disadvantaged areas in old apartments and basements. Lack of material goods leads to child labor, child malnutrition, hygiene negligence, and so on.

One teacher explained: *"The families' educational status is generally in bad condition, a financial situation also, cultural differences, a big number of siblings. We always have the same kind of refugee students, many siblings, unemployed families, uneducated parents, social differences." T4*

Some students declared they did not have enough money to buy school uniforms or meet other school needs.

One teacher added: *"Because of their socio-economic situation, some students are filthy and they do not care about external appereance." T3*

During the conversation with Turkish children, many of them complained about the bad smell of Syrian students since they lacked proper facilities in the places where they stayed. This put even greater social pressure on them.

It has been noted that refugee children are truly aware of the situation and the conditions in which they live; thus, one of the better motives for their academic achievement is precisely the escape from the uncertain and difficult situation in which they are currently located. Moreover, low parental education strongly influences their educational performance as well.

5.1.5. Behavioral problems

Excessively violent behavior, violent type of games with peers, and curses are the problematic behaviors that teachers have complained about in regards to refugee students. They consider such behavior to be induced by war events and the testimonies of everyday violence during the period spent in Syria. In addition to these causes, children's behaviors seem to have been influenced by the inappropriate programs in the media. One teacher said there were two types of refugee children's behavior:

"They can't adapt, either they are too aggressive, probably because they are far from their country and it has a negative effect on them, or they are asocial. There are no moderate behaviors. Either they do not talk with anyone or they damage the environment." T4

"In the beginning, they felt like strangers, but now their relations with our students are better. Now they see themselves ahead of the others. At first, a shy student, doesn't talk

much, but now it is not like that. As they grouped among themselves, alienation is broken.“ T6

Contrary to the noticed aggressive behavior of certain students, teachers considered that a significant number of Syrian children are asocial and hardly communicate with other children. Due to the lack of language and the new environment, they are mostly isolated and mocked by Turkish children.

“They are introverts, passive. And the children of this age are a bit brutal, they make fun of language mistakes. Turkish is not their mother tongue; that is why they can not speak correctly. They sit in the back of the classroom and wait for the end of the lesson.” T15

“Being an Introvert and feeling lonely may affect their school success, they may feel unpleasantly in the school environment, because think about it, if he is unwanted in the friends' group, if they continuously exclude him, he will exclude himself also.”T12

While teachers' attitudes towards the refugee crisis in Turkey are predominantly negative, only one teacher pointed out a positive and encouraging commentary describing the Syrian children: “*I'm overly satisfied with all of them. I saw the respect that I didn't see in the Turkish children. They keep the environment clean. For example, some Syrian students switch off the light when they leave the class last, a Turkish student does not do such a thing. Some of them arrange the desks, close the window and leave the classroom.” T14*

When talking about the behavioral problems of refugee students, school counselors have mentioned violent behavior, burnout, and a sense of revenge.

“While there is no one else in the classroom who can understand them, they are showing themselves with other reactions. They can be furious, very stressed, anxious. In general, foreign students communicate better with other foreign students.“ C2

“They use violence because they don't understand the language. Swearing, hand signs, slang things. They try to solve the problem of conflict with violence. Or touching, they don't know how to touch each other. There are violent physical reactions because there is no verbal communication. We had difficulties in their compliance with the rules.“ C4

"Burnout in the Syrian children, displacement, forced migration, they have not been healed yet. Thus, they will look at the other children as: Why did we go from our country, why not you? A sense of revenge." C9

5.1.6. Community pressure

The marginalization of Syrian refugees in Turkey can be heard every day on the street. Media reports and political moves create a negative picture of the influx of Syrian people into Turkey. Theft, rapes, pay cuts, rent increases, and other negative situations have been considered to be directly related to refugees nowadays. Thus, Syrians in Turkey have become a victim of all undesirable events in society. And hence, this affected the behaviors of both teachers and Turkish students toward them in the school.

"Neighborhood pressure exists and the environment doesn't accept them. No one wants Syrians as their neighbors. At school, in the classroom, they don't want their children to have a Syrian friend. The perspective is a bit distressed because we're still not accepting them. If you do a survey now in Turkey, 95% of Turkish people will say that they want Syrians to go from here." T5

"The biggest obstacle is the point of view. Teachers', administration's, everyone's perspective towards Syrians is a little bit problematic." T5

Some of the most common prejudices among children that teachers have noticed are:

"All places are full of Syrians! There are too many Syrian grocers here! Arabic language is everywhere! He is Syrian, let's not take him in the group! You should stay in your country and fight for it, what do you do here? If there was a war in Turkey they would not accept us! Our soldiers die in Syria and they are here doing nothing! You live for free here! They are dirty! The country is helping them but not helping us! They are poor, bad, have all negative behaviors!"

Nevertheless, Syrian children have certain prejudices too, such as: "*We came from another country, they do not want us here! They do not accept us! They hate me, nobody in this country loves us!"*

From the above examples, it can be concluded that the views of children are created by their parents' influence, the environment and the media.

5.1.7. Parents' indifference

Beside the essential role of the local parents, the role of refugee parents is also a crucial factor for a successful inclusion of refugee children. Most school counselors and teachers claimed that interaction with refugee parents is very critical, especially due to the lack of language. Most of them don't come to school and show the indifference to children's success. In such an environment, a child who doesn't attach importance to education also begins to lose the will to attend school. Parents who are more active and want their children to successfully complete their education in Turkey motivate them to learn Turkish better and contribute to their adaptation to Turkish society. Unfortunately, a small number of parents is really progressive in relation to school.

"There is a language problem with them too. The children are translating for them. They don't come easily to school, of course. Neither success nor failure is a part of their interest. We have to call all the time." C6

5.2. A refugee child in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory

5.2.1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological system theory of child's development

The Ecological System theory was defined by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), an American psychologist who explained the influence of the environmental settings on a child's growth and development. This theory actually shows the importance of the multiple environments in which a child resides and the interaction between them when studying the child's individual progress. Bronfenbrenner's system is organised in five levels of external influence, starting from the closest zone to the widest. These levels are the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem.

Through the levels of the Ecological theory, one will try to understand and explain a refugee child's development, whose place of residence, society, and environment changed due to forced migration. An immigrant/refugee child passes through particular life experiences and has distinctive social needs that makes his/her social development significantly complex. Growing up in two diverse social contexts: the social norms of the new society and the traditional habits of their parents' home country, which affects

both the adaptation process and the social inclusion of a refugee child (Smokowski, et.al., 2009; Zhou, 2001, Paat, 2013).

This person-process-context-time model, which includes the interactions of diverse environmental settings, can be used as a framework of knowledge to determine the ecological hazards facing refugee/immigrant families (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, Paat, 2013).

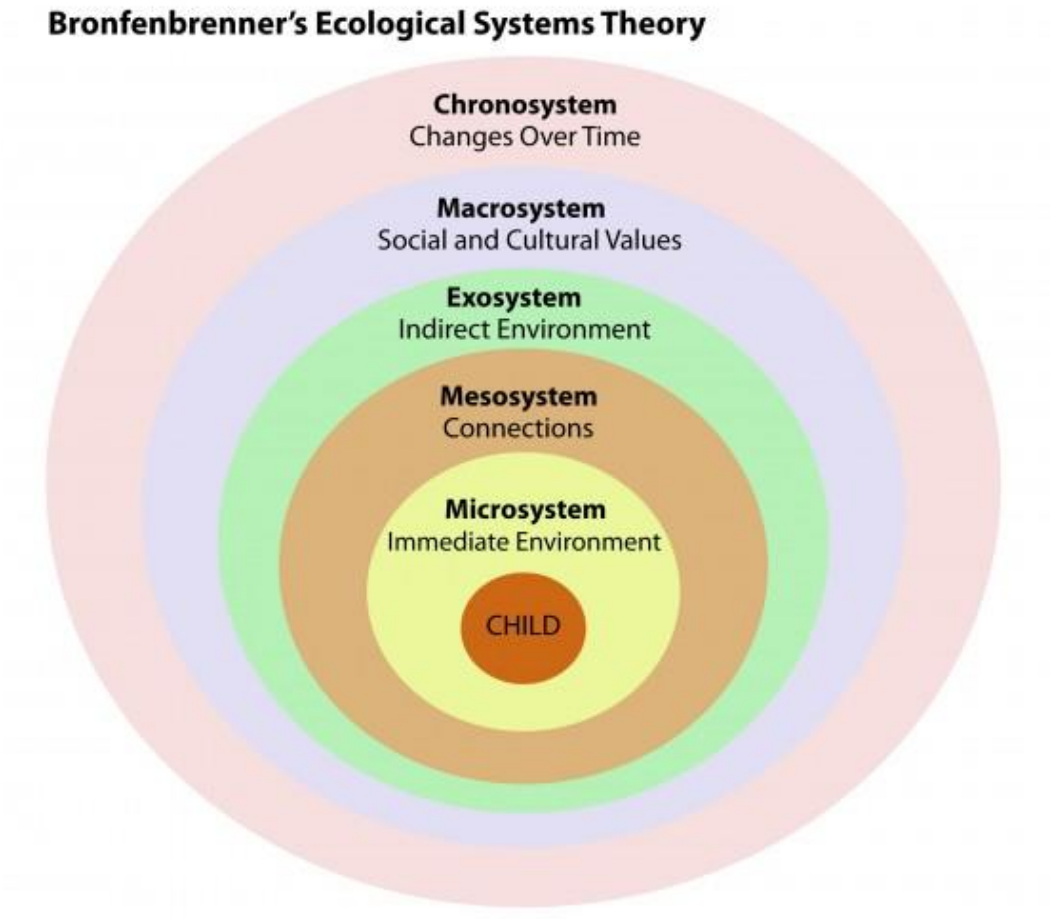


Figure 12. Bronfenbrenners ecological systems theory.

After a brief introduction to Bronfenbrenner's theory, one will try to describe the refugee children's development through the systems of the Ecological theory and to analyze the relationships between the refugee child and the school environment based on the present research.

5.2.2. Microsystem (Immediate environment)

The microsystem is the smallest and the closest environment in which, in this case, a refugee child resides. Thus, the microsystem contains environments of the daily home, school or peer group of the refugee child. Family members, teachers, and classmates are in direct interaction with a child in this system. Nevertheless, not every microsystem's influence is identical as it varies, depending on different ages and situations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

5.2.2.1. Teacher-refugee student relation

According to the teachers, the process of including refugee students in schools was very difficult and challenging. Involving Syrian children without them having sufficient knowledge of the Turkish language and any preparation for the Turkish education system affected teachers the most. The teacher, as the first person in communication with students, faces the most difficult obstacles when involving new children from different socio-cultural backgrounds in the class. His/her behavior and prioritising of inclusivity among students and staff, influence the general school climate, as well as the behavior of local students towards newcomers (Olagookun, White, 2017; Miller, Ziaian, Esterman, 2018). One of the important issues in the educational approach towards refugee students is to not set low expectations in terms of their academic success and future goals. Teachers will succeed in this aim by gaining knowledge of the various cultures, values, and beliefs of their students. In this regard, the cross-cultural competence of teachers becomes a fundamental key for a successful interaction with refugee-background students (Hamilton, Moore, 2003). Therefore, not only the refugee child needs to adapt, but also the school, the school staff, and its students have to adapt to a new situation too.

Teachers in Turkish public schools were not prepared for the abrupt arrival of a large number of foreign students in the school. Without any education and pre-training on how to approach refugee children and how to understand their development and psychological status, teachers found themselves in a hopeless situation. The Turkish education system did not immediately design a special curriculum for refugee children. Despite this, they included them in an existing protocol. As one teacher affirmed:

"*We didn't have a special program for refugee students, so we continue with the same curriculum in class." T20*

Teachers following the formal curriculum do not have more time to devote to the refugees. Most often, their communication is reduced to evaluation, and in addition, they do not enter into other discussions. As a result, poor contact among them leads to the alienation of refugee students from the class.

"The system is wrong. And I wish we could have more time for them. Unfortunately, we're already too crowded." T13

"I don't think they can connect with us because they are minorities. For example, 39 students are in the class and he is one student, so he is left behind. He falls into minority status. Foreign students do not socialize with ours during the break either. They meet directly with their friends from other classes." T10

"If there are few foreign students in the class we do not have any problems, but if there are 4-5 refugee students in the same class, they make their own groups and we have a problem with communication." T7

Some of the refugee children who could not quickly adapt to the Turkish education system left school. Therefore, the number of dropouts raised when they were involved in Turkish public schools after the closing of TECs.

"At first 64 Syrian students arrived but we lost 34 because we did not have communication and they were forced to go." T6

With the arrival of Syrian refugees to the Turkish schools, the Ministry of National Education introduced a Turkish language course in almost every school where foreign students were included. Teachers who were selected for the program had 15 days of training, which was based on pedagogial instruction and didactics, but no access to vulnerable children (refugees) was provided. The Turkish language teachers who took these courses stated that this education was insufficient for their work.

"We weren't ready. A 15-day seminar was given before starting this work. The seminar was not intended for teaching refugees, but the training course we received was a regular pedagogical guidance. It's not enough." T5

"At first, communication was very difficult. They only told us a few things at the seminar: Do not interfere with Arabic speaking, so that they should try to speak among themselves. There is a need for an interpreter. Syrian Turkmen students in the classrooms help here." T6

In order to reach an interaction, teachers benefited from the assistance of Syrian students with Turkmen background, who speak both Arabic or Kurdish and the Turkish language. Thus, they are mostly translators in the first communication between teachers and other foreign students.

When asked what activities they are taking to remove prejudices between local and foreign students, teachers mentioned the importance of cultivating emphaty in children by talking about equality, friendship, helping and the value of differences. Moreover, with the help of group activities, they try to make relations between children stronger and to put them in direct contact to meet each other through the work. Some teachers claimed that they were talking privately to refugee children in order to find out their situation and help, while others said they did not do anything specific on this issue.

"I speak with them privately; where do you live, do you have a father, how is your financial situation? First of all, I am trying to introduce myself. I believe that I can do something after they start to trust me. 6-7 girls come to me constantly, we talk, they are happy to speak Arabic. I am trying to break prejudices in class." T11

"I gave a lot of talks in the classes where they are guests and everyone should respect them. If there is a problem, I try to have the same approach and not to discriminate on this issue. And these kids will not go from here. It's a huge thing to live here for five years. The more we try to normalize the situation the better it becomes." T12

Teachers also claimed that a serene behavior in class, without traumatizing refugee children by mentioning the war situation and asking about the life in Syria, is the most equitable.

“I feel like I need to talk extra, trying to behave in such a way that those students cannot be injured.“ T4

One of the teachers said that the Syrian children should go to separate schools because he believes that they will not remain in Turkey after the end of the war in Syria. This topic is still very current among the Turkish population and it creates tensions. Teachers are confused and do not know whether to set short-term or long-term goals in interacting with refugee children.

“Local and refugee children should not be in the same class, they must be in separate classes and they need to be educated in their mother tongue because many students just come to school to sit. He doesn't do anything because he's having language problems. These children are not staying permanently here as I know, they will go tomorrow or the next day. They will go back to Syria after the war. I am not for multi-education, Turkish and Syrian children together.“ T7

“As Turkish students receive education, Syrian students receive the same. They are receiving even more. The child comes to me and learns Turkish, the state's support course is for Syrians only. The kid already goes to 3 courses. The Ministry shows enough interest.“ T5

5.2.2.2. School counselor-refugee student relation

School counselors may play a vital role in preventing mental problems in refugee school children (Esquivel, Keitel, 1990). This research, conducted by Esquivel and Keitel, argued that intercultural counseling would help children to overcome the stress of acculturation and succeed in socializing among their peers. Furthermore, in their research, the importance of prevention and intervention programs for themes, such as acculturation, ethnic identity confusion and behavioral difficulties, is highlighted as key to their optimal development.

To competently approach immigrant children with mental health issues or to access other culturally different students, multicultural training on academic level may be helpful for the professional development of school counselors in this segment.

The research indicates that school counselors who have prejudices and show intolerance against other nations and cultures may fail to adequately understand cultural issues and the performance of refugee children. Consequently, their attitudes can affect the psycho-social development of these students (Constantine, Gushue, 2003).

During the present research process, it was noted that school counselors working in the visited schools are significantly outside of personal interaction with students. Mostly, there were two advisers per school. For example, one counselor works two days per week, and another one three days. The efficiency of the ongoing change of school counselors for students who need to establish a secure and confidential relationship with the school staff is uncertain. Most counselors had their own office in the school, while a guide working with Syrian children stayed in front of the deputy director's office and did not have his own room. A large number of students in schools certainly pose a great challenge for a counselor who has to address their social and emotional needs.

The failure in providing the necessary guidance service to all students has become much more perceivable when refugee-background pupils arrived in schools. While answering the questions, students in schools declared that they did not know who the school counselor is/was or what his duty in the school was. From the 54 interviewed Syrian students, 48 did not know who was the school counselor in the school, while 5 of them had had some communication with him/her. Children who had visited the counselor said that it was for translating or receiving help. This indicates that the importance and requirement for counseling in schools are quite disregarded in the Turkish education system.

Only one of the visited schools had three counselors who, according to personal observation, successfully performed their work. They actively participated in the expected cooperation with children, organizing psychodrama, group activities and the like. However, it must be mentioned that this school was in a slightly better economic situation and the number of refugee children was considerably lower, namely fifteen (15).

While observing the relationship between a counselor and students in schools, poor communication, and problem-solving talks were noticeable. Pupils' visits to the school counselor are exclusively focused on problem-solving, rather than building up the

child's identity through counseling and dialogs. All interviewed counselors stated that they have a dialog with the student only if the class teacher sends him/her to counselling because of his inappropriate behavior or problem. The high number of pupils in schools per counselor and other administrative work that they deal with are listed as reasons why counselors do not have time to regularly follow students' individual development.

However, with such a disorganized policy of education system, children of diverse backgrounds who migrated or escaped to Turkey for various reasons and are included in the schooling process found themselves in a difficult position. Particularly refugee children whose traumas and circumstances of life require psychosocial care do not find sufficient psychosocial support in Turkish schools.

One of school counselors declared:

"This school is really like a live trauma station. There are so many cases, fathers in prison, some of the children do not know their parents. I have a student who just found out that he has a 10 year-old brother. These cases are also traumatic. So I can't do anything extra for the Syrian students. We are already doing good things now, the projects have never been planned so great for our Turkish children. I don't know if we need more." C2

According to the statement of this counselor, it can be understood that even before the arrival of foreign students, these schools were unable to solve certain deficiencies in the system. Teachers who have already been feeling frustrated by the demanding situation for years are not motivated to make extra efforts in dealing with refugee children.

5.2.2.3. Parental involvement at school

Research found that parental involvement in children's education is connected to academic success or competent behavioral adaptation in primary school (Domina, 2005; Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004) and adolescence (Falbo, Lein, & Amador, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Sui-Chi & Willms, 1996).

Firstly, children whose parents are interested in their education and participate in school activities confirm the importance of education, and thus these children are more likely to value it themselves. Second, involved parents get to know school staff, other parents, and administrators with whom they may analyze their children's performance. Last, these active parents have information about their children's behavior, and if there are

some problems, they can intervene immediately with the support of teachers (Turney, Kao, 2009). However, some studies explained that minority immigrant parents show less interest than native parents in participating in activities at their children's schools (Turney, Kao, 2009). Each interviewed counselor stated that the relationship with the family of refugee children is at a significantly poor level. Families that have lived in a different culture for decades now have to accept the values of another's tradition. School counselors declared that refugee families avoid the process of acculturation by living isolated from Turkish society and socializing only in family circles. Consequently, their visits to Turkish schools in which they send their children are rare.

"We cannot have a very good dialogue with refugee families. The families we reach are already those who want to add something good to their children, but some families can not even be reached by phone. Some things are acceptable in their culture and unacceptable in ours and it is very difficult to explain it to the family. They do not want to change the values of their culture. Those families do not want to be Turkish and we want to involve them. There we have a conflict." C2

With the beginning of the large migration to Turkey, Arab schools were opened for Syrian children. They were a priority for refugee parents because of the Arabic language, easier understanding, and security.

However, in the last years, Arab schools have begun to close and Syrian students often go to Turkish public schools. Parents, in this case, are forced to establish contact with the new administration and school staff. However, this process proves to be extremely difficult. Parents, in contrast to children, are significantly less motivated to learn Turkish and adjust to Turkish society.

According to respondents, most refugee parents had never visited the school or talked to a counselor. Those who came sometimes could not express opinions and establish effective communication because of their lack of language. Counselors seek help from an interpreter or from the children themselves who translate for their parents. They are helpless in communicating with refugee parents and complain about their lack of interest in the success or failure of their children at school. Often the refugee parents' demands are economic aid, rather than advice and discussions about their children's development and their future. They also find that parents do not make any effort to learn

the basics of the Turkish language or in attempting to support their children for better results in school. Most of them do not even answer phone calls from school.

"Their expectations from us are generally focused on economic aid. Always material help." C4

"Since they live in a closed environment and only talk to their relatives, body language is also unclear. If there is no one to translate, we certainly cannot understand each other." C5

The indifference of refugee parents significantly influences refugee children's perception about both school and their own priorities. Apart from the lack of language, the existence of a big number of siblings at home is also one of the difficulties for refugee families in Turkey. Social and economic disorders force parents to employ their children to survive. Due to child labor, many children are absent from school. Work, raising a big number of children, stress and other conditions that refugee parents face lead to their indifference. Thus, it prevents them from devoting enough time to each child.

"I can't see them at meetings, no contact number. There are still refugee students who stay at home. There may be parents who don't send the child to school, and I don't know what the reason is because I can't understand them on the phone." C6

However, the role of school in involving refugee parents in both parent-school and parent-student interaction, one centered around the topic of education and academic performance, should not be neglected. Parental education programs and other activities for developing several skills, such as the second language could be an important component in school efforts for motivating parents (Hamilton, Moore, 2003).

5.2.2.4. Peer relationships

Peer relationships play a vital role in cultural reproduction and in the process of exchanging cultural values (James et al., 1998). Furthermore, experiences with peers may influence the creation of positive or negative attitudes in students about their school environment (Degaan, 1996; Closs et al., 2001). Thus, the importance of this microsystem of the refugee child's development should be also considered.

5.2.2.4.1. Turkish children's view

When visiting Turkish public schools, the first impression from Turkish children about their new peers was related to the "*Syrian*" stigma. Under the influence of the media, Turkish children, parents and the environment have a lot of prejudices against refugee children who arrive in the classroom. Besides all the problems they face in a new environment, refugee children, have to deal with the stigma of a new society that excludes them. A persistent vulnerability to discrimination can cause stigma in the form of shame, low self-esteem, stress, and poor mental health. Furthermore, it may lead to failures in achievement and behaving in ways that society identifies them (UNESCO, 2016). Charles Taylor (1994) also mentioned the importance of “equal recognition“ in society. He argued that, on an intimate level, it affects self-discovery and self-affirmation. Refusal of equal recognition and creating an inferior image of other people oppresses them and in the end this image is internalized.

It is perceived that the attitude of children towards refugees largely depends on both the individuals involved in class and on their process of adaptation. It has also been noted that children whose classes do not include foreign students have more negative perceptions about foreigners than those with foreigners in the classroom. In this case, Gordon Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory may be considered. Allport's theory states that interpersonal communication is the best way to diminish intolerance between groups. The equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, support of authorities, and personal interaction seem to be key conditions for successful intergroup communication. Thus, the finding that Turkish children who are in the same class with refugee children have less prejudice and negative comments about them is affirmative. During everyday interaction, children start to feel comfortable with each other and anxiety decreases. However, the quality of their interaction in the class has an essential role (Pettigrew, Tropp, 2005).

During the interviews with Turkish children about their new peers, more positive answers and more interest in this theme was noticed than from discussions with teaching staff. Turkish children showed a great desire to learn more about their possible new friends and their culture, language, food, games and the like. From all the respondents in this group, nobody said that he/she would not like to learn something

new about the culture of their refugee friends, unlike most teachers who believe that "imposing" a new culture poses a danger.

“I was happy because it's more fun when I have friends from other countries. The games they know, the games we know, we share it together.“ TS 6

“Here they do not give any information about their country or city. But I would like to learn their language because you can communicate later.“ TS 8

When describing the newcomers in class, Turkish children most often used the words: *shy, unsocial* and *reserved*, believing that Syrian children came up with prejudices that they would not be accepted and they were afraid of being isolated by Turkish children. Besides, they emphasized their differences in language, games, and behavior, citing both positive and negative things.

In some schools, the emphasis was on the *naughty* and *quarrelsome* epithet, and Turkish children declared that foreigners do not like to listen to teachers and constantly make problems in class because they don't understand the language. Many have said that they look at the new peers just as much as Turkish children because they see them equally.

“I didn't have bad thoughts about them. First I talked to get to know them better. Actually, I feel sorry for them because there's war in their country.“T 8

“They don't socialize because they're so naughty, I'd like them to go to an Arab school, only for Arabs.“ T 22

“They damage the classrooms, one in this corner and the other in that corner, talking constantly. They are constantly knocking on the door and disturbing.“ TS 30

“There's one student in our class, who is doing her homework, and who is listening to the lesson. The other students don't make much effort. One never comes to school; his mother is always in the hospital; he has to take care of his siblings. Hamide also does not come to school.“ TS 15

Most Turkish children see new peers as unsuccessful because they do not get good grades and their Turkish language is not fluent. They stated that some of their peers do

not come regularly to school. However, several of them said that some foreign students achieve even more success than Turkish, receive praise and are welcomed in society.

5.2.2.4.2. Syrian children's view

According to refugee children's statements, relations between Syrian and Turkish children can be classified into two opposing opinions, namely *acceptable and discriminatory*.

A group of children who showed positive attitudes about their Turkish peers usually had best friends of Turkish nationality and had mastered the Turkish language.

Syrian boys were explaining that the play and socializing after school helped them in establishing contact with Turkish children. In addition, girls who had better grades and success in school expressed positive opinions about their Turkish peers because they were accepted and were helping other students.

The girls who had negative attitudes towards Turkish peers were complaining about the discriminatory behavior of children in the class, especially of the Turkish boys. Making fun of mistakes in language, poor grades or old age were some of the complaints. Five girls said that they felt embarrassed because they were placed in younger classes and were the oldest and tallest in the classroom.

"You're Syrians, go from here, they say. They come and take my pen and I told them: Did you get permission for it? Their answer is: Did you get permission from us when you came to Turkey? They're exaggerating." SS 38

"I felt so lonely and had a terrible time. I was afraid of the new country. The students behave badly. I was older and taller than them, they were teasing me." SS 37

"I was excited, and I was afraid that new friends would not accept us. First, they were very ostracized: You came from the war, you came from Syria, there are bombs or something, they were making bomb sounds. I could constantly hear the words: You are Syrian, you can not understand anything." SS 17

"Everything is good but sometimes they ask 'Do you have chairs in Syria, do you have water there, etc'. Like we don't have anything and we do not know anything." SS 33

5.2.3. Mesosystem

The mesosystem in ecological theory represents the interaction between different microsystems in the refugee child's life. Basically, it includes connestions between home and school, peer group and family, or family and church (mosque) or another religions institution (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The relationship between refugee parents and the school may be essential in the refugee children's social inclusion as we mentioned in the previous chapter. As refugee parents are less motivated to participate in a new school environment, a refugee child's social outcomes may be influenced. Further, if refugee parents are protective and rigorous about the child's environment, it may limit the interaction with mainstream society. Thus, refugee children may reach out to refugee friends who share similar family values (Paat, 2013). On the other hand, refugee parents may encourage their children to associate with other peers as well. In our research, it has been noted that refugee children mostly make friendships with other refugee children. They have explained that their common past, origin, and suffering makes them closer and they can understand each other better.

One Syrian student said: "*I do not talk with Turkish children. I have my Syrian friends*". SS12

Some parents may influence children's activities in school. Thus one Syrian student mentioned: "*My family does not allow me to participate in activities in school. Only if they are instructive and good for grades*." SS4

5.2.4. Exosystem

The exosystem has indirect effects on the refugee child and it occurs between different parts of the system. People or places that do not have a direct relation with the child, but indirectly influence children's development are the part of exosystem. Those can be parents' workplaces, large neighborhoods or extended family members.

Neighborhoods can play an important role in the social adaptation of refugees into mainstream society. If the host community accept cultural diversity as positive, the adaptation process becomes better. However, refugee families often prefer to live in ethnic enclaves that may be segregative and keep them in social isolation with less information about the job market and network systems (Paat, 2013, Bygren & Szulkin, 2010; Massey & Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1987). School counselors in the research

claimed that refugee parents prefer to stay in their family circle rather than communicating with a new environment. Further, their illegal work and low wage impact the refugee children's quality of life and education.

5.2.5. Macrosystem

The macrosystem includes the widest circle of people and places the refugee child encounters, but which significantly affect his/her development. It is made up of a child's culture and traditions, beliefs, politics, and economy in the place of growing up.

The macrosystem has an impact on lower systems and provides refugee families with a social context where parenting occurs. Due to diverse social norms and values in the host society, refugee families are often socially disadvantaged. Consequently, refugee children who are raised in their parents' culture, are often torn between family identity and accepting new values from the host community (Zhou, 2001, Paat, 2013). One of the Syrian students mentioned: "*My mother asked me why I speak Arabic like a 'girl' (he is a boy). Also, she tells me that it is because I learned Turkish language. I am a bit confused about languages.*" SS6

5.2.6. Chronosystem

The chronosystem explains the importance of time which shows how change and constancy impact the environment of a refugee child. Societal changes, economic cycles, war, changes in the family structure, adress and parents' employment constitute this level of ecological system. Interviewed refugee children experienced the war, forced displacement, new culture, new school environment during the transition period to adolescence. All these circumstances highly affect their development and relations in lower subsystems.

While refugee-background students have immediate relations with the first two subsystems, they are often not very involved in the higher level of Ecological theory. However, all systems in Ecological theory have a specific impact on the social inclusion of Syrian refugee students to Turkish public schools.

CHAPTER VI : CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the conclusion and discussion of the study are presented according to the findings. Recommendations for further research are given at the end of the chapter.

6.1. Conclusion and Discussion

The main aim of this study was to examine the social inclusion of Syrian refugee children in the middle-level public schools in Istanbul. As Turkey became a host country for millions of Syrian refugees during the last seven years, the education system had to improve its standards and environment for the newcomers. The process of adapting Syrian children to the Turkish education system and schools' efforts towards their social inclusion were quite challenging. Thus, in this study, the author tried to research the way in which Turkish public schools responded to the challenge of refugee education. The conclusion of this study will be presented under two main headings:

- School experiences in including Syrian refugee children in the Turkish education system
- Refugee background children's relationship with the school environment (teachers, school counselor, peers, parents)

6.2. School Experiences in Including Syrian Refugee Children in the Turkish Education System

Visits to Turkish public schools and semi-structured interviews with teachers, school counselors and children provided a wider picture of migration's impact on education in Turkey. Turkey has taken several positive steps to make refugee children able to attend public schools. Firstly, the government has allowed the refugee children to enter Turkish public schools if they have Turkish ID cards, or if not, to enter as guests. Secondly, they have opened Turkish language courses for refugee-background children in public schools. Lastly, in cooperation with the UN and MoNE, they have organized psycho-social support for refugee students by arranging trained school counselors, and

giving social support through social activities in schools. However, there are still several problems that have not been solved and these constitute a barrier to the social inclusion of refugee students.

During semi-structured interviews with teachers and school counselors, it has been noted that the main difficulties of Syrian refugee children in Turkish public schools are: *the language barrier, cultural differences, lack of prior education, the socio-economic factor, behavioral problems, and parents' indifference*.

According to the Humans Right Watch survey in 2015, economic hardships, the Turkish language barrier, and difficulties with social integration were observed as barriers that prevent Syrian children from attending schools. Similarly, in the studies of Levent and Çayak (2017) and Kardeş and Akman (2018), findings have shown that Syrian refugees face not only language, but also adaptation problems. Furthermore, gaps in the registration system, lack of identification documents and lack of prior education in terms of class leveling were mentioned as some of the problems in the integration of Syrian children to school (Levent, Çayak, 2017).

Many refugee-background students enter schools in host communities with limited mother-tongue literacy and poor skills in the language of instruction. Lack of language is one of the biggest hurdles in the social inclusion of Syrian refugees in Turkish schools, except for Syrian Turkmen whose mother tongue is Turkish. In other studies in Turkey, many teachers who were in direct contact with refugee students expressed that those who were not given any formal training on the acquisition of Turkish language struggle in Turkish schools even though they do not seemingly comprehend most of the content given in class, and have serious problems in expressing themselves as well (Şeker and Sirkeci, 2015; Tösten, Toprak, Kayan, 2017; Aydın, Kaya, 2017; Kardeş, Akman, 2018). At the beginning of the huge refugee influx to the country, the long-term solution for refugee children's education in Turkey was not planned. Thus, refugee children were educated in TEC's and a low number of them were temporarily included in public schools until their return to Syria. However, since the political situation in Syria has become even worse over the years, many refugee families chose to settle in Turkey. Consequently, the Turkish education system had to work on improving both the curriculum and the school environment for newcomers. One of the first steps was to introduce Turkish language courses in public schools where Syrian children were

enrolled. Refugee-background children have continued to attend regular lessons, and therefore, after school or during certain classes, they started to take the Turkish language course. 15 hours per week out of a total 30 and 35 hours are devoted to Turkish language courses at primary school and high school levels, respectively (Taştan, Çelik, 2017). Although the language course has helped refugee children in terms of literacy skills, their poor academic achievement was still noticeable. In addition, it was also identified that Syrian students had lower academic success compared to that of their peers, primarly due to their lack of language (Aydin, Kaya 2017).

Certain researches in the USA have found out that even the most improved students need 4-12 years of developing the second language to have native-speaker academic skills (Collier, 1995). Besides the importance of students' success in the second language, the socio-cultural context in which students are schooled is essential in the same manner (Collier, 1995).

In addition to the lack of a second language, cultural differences have been highlighted as one of the decelerating factors in the successful inclusion of Syrian children in Turkish public schools. With the arrival of students from another country with diverse cultural values and habits, Turkish teachers and students faced the challenge of a sudden multicultural environment. An important component of multicultural education is a positive attitude toward multiculturalism (Chou, 2007). Certain studies in Turkey investigated teachers' opinions about multicultural education. Findings have shown that teachers often have postive attitudes towards multiculturalism (Demirsoy, 2013; Demirciolu, Ozdemir, 2014). In the study of Unlu and Orten (2013), 22 of 33 interviewed teachers explained that cultural differences represent an individual’s strenghts, but 11 of them belived that multiculturalism is a project that was planned to divide their country based on ethnic differences.

In our survey, teachers and school counselors have mostly expressed the fear of imposing new cultural values in Turkish society and had negative views on the particular emphasis of the new culture in schools. Only two (from 29) of them expressed a positive attitude toward multicultural education. Moreover, they mostly believe that newcomers must embrace the values of the indigenous population. However, Turkish students had completely different views, expressing curiosity about

new cultures, languages, and a desire to learn something new from their new peers. The process of cultural exchange in schools is challenging, but schools are one of the most significant bases for a healthy and positive acculturation.

Lack of prior education was a major problem for students who lost years of education due to war, escape, and travel. If refugee students were not able show proof of their previous education level, they were tested through interviews and written assessments before entering the class. Most commonly, they were placed by their age at a certain level. This, however, produced anxiety and frustration for the newcomers who were usually far behind their peers in academic achievements. Furthermore, it caused some difficulty for teachers because they were not ready for such a new situation. In spite of these circumstances, some foreign students had better achievements than their native-speaker peers. Teachers claimed that the success of some refugee students in class is mostly related to their parents' support and interest in their academic achievement.

On the other hand, the socio-economic factor causes some difficulties when it comes to the inclusion of refugee children in society. Economic difficulties after displacement may affect the mental health of refugee children. To exemplify, the low socio-economic status of Bosnian refugee adolescents was related to more depressive symptoms and poor self-esteem (Sujoldzic, et. al., 2006). What is more, a certain number of refugee students enrolled in Turkish state schools are absent from classes. Teachers state that child labor is a problem that affects their regular attendance. Additionally, a big number of siblings at home obliges school age children to take care of them while parents are at work. Besides these issues, malnutrition and poor personal hygiene have been observed as a common appearance among refugee students.

Students who experienced the war may manifest diverse symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as depression, withdrawal, hyperactivity, aggression, and intense anxiety when they are exposed to similar traumatic situations they have witnessed before (Genesee, Richards, 1994). School counselors have mentioned violent behavior, burnout, and a sense of revenge as some of the observed behavioral problems in refugee-background students. While some refugee students are asocial and hardly connect with the environment, some show aggression in communication with students and teachers. Teachers considered that the appearance of violent behavior may be the

result of witnessing violence in war and the media. Besides, they have explained that it is also their way of attracting attention.

Media reporting and political moves created a negative picture of the influx of Syrian people into Turkey. In some studies, it was reported how Turkish citizens have mostly negative attitudes toward Syrians in Turkey. Hence, it affected the behaviors of teachers and Turkish students toward them in school. Sakiz's (2016) research findings showed that school administrators supported segregated environments instead of public schools for refugee children. In our survey, teachers said that media has a mostly negative influence on Turkish population about Syrians in Turkey.

International studies have shown that students' achievement and development are strongly connected with parental engagement. Some of the positive influences that parental engagement has on students' education are their higher grades, lower drop-out rates, a greater tendency to continue with higher education, etc. (Emerson, et al., 2012). Most school counselors and teachers claimed that parental involvement plays a crucial role in refugee students' development and education. However, the partnership between school and refugee families seems to be limited and is one of the barriers to the successful social inclusion of refugee children. Refugee-background families often lack the language proficiency, knowledge and courage to take an active role in a new school environment and culture (Emerson, et.al., 2012). Refugee parents in the visited schools were mostly isolated from the school due to jobs, occupations and the lack of language. Interaction between school and refugee parents is considered to be poor and insufficient. They usually do not attend parents' meetings and rarely come to school. Additionally, uncertainty about the future and the possibility of moving to European countries negatively affect children and their attachment to school.

6.3. Refugee-background Children's Microsystem

The demographic diversity of the student population in schools have increased the need for ensuring all children's access to a high-quality education that includes respecting differences and eliminating social exclusion. In these circumstances, the entire community plays a critical role in contributing to the successful social inclusion of all

children in education. Naturally, social support in the host community and from peers has a positive influence on a child's psychological well-being (Fazel, et al., 2012; Correa-Velez, et. al., 2010).

As Bronfenbrenner explained in his Ecological theory, a child's development depends on five levels of the environment, which involve micro-relationships between home, parents, school, and peers until the macro level, which includes community and culture. Thus, the social inclusion of refugee children strongly depends on the child's environment and relationships among different parts of the system. Moreover, the processes of migration and enculturation that a refugee child experiences in his/her young age affect the psychological outcomes because immigrant/refugee families often arrive to the host country experiencing different environmental changes, traumatic migratory transition, and stress caused by cultural differences between native and host community (Jensen, 2007).

In this study, the relations between the students with refugee-background and their teachers, school counselors, Turkish peers, Syrian peers, and parents were examined. The home and school environments that have been analyzed in this study present only a microsystem of the entire Ecological theory. The microsystem of the environment has a direct and also the closest contact with the child, and, at different ages, it has various effects on his/her development.

In the social inclusion of refugee children in Turkish schools, the teachers have the primary role. They have to recognize all hardships that refugee-background students face and find adequate responses for their integration. The need for all students with different backgrounds is to see their own linguistic, cultural, and social resources in getting new knowledge through the curriculum and school environment. Thus, improving multicultural sensitivity and intercultural competencies of teachers will enable them to properly understand the behaviors and efforts of refugee students (Adams, Kirova, 2006). Without any education and pre-training on how to approach war-affected children and how to understand their development and psychological status, teachers in Turkey have had to face the refugee education. Kardes's and Akman's (2018) study showed that teachers feel deficient in organizing lessons for refugee children and that they need more personal motivation and support by MoNE. In addition, communication between Syrian children and Turkish teachers was usually

explained as insufficient, relying only on evaluation of academic achievement. Teachers have explained that they had to continue with the standard curriculum after the arriving of the newcomers. Due to the large number of students in their classes, they do not have time to devote special attention to the refugee children in their classroom. In addition, many teachers are still not sure about what goals they should set for Syrian students because of the uncertainty regarding their residence.

According to the research findings, the relations between Syrian students and school counselors in public schools are weak and need to be considered. From the 54 interviewed Syrian students, 48 did not know who was the school counselor in the school, while 5 of them had had some communication with him/her. Refugee children visit the counselor for translating or receiving help. This indicates that the importance and requirement for counseling in schools are quite disregarded in the Turkish education system. Students' visits to school counselors are exclusively focused on problem-solving, rather than on building up the child's identity through counseling and dialogs. All interviewed counselors have stated that they have a dialog with the student only if the class teacher sends him/her because of his/her inappropriate behavior or problem. As the Turkish education system did not solve the problems of overcrowded classrooms and the high number of students per counselor, already frustrated counselors are not motivated to make extra efforts to dealing with refugee children.

Refugee-background families and their home support influence the school adaptation of children and their achievements in school. However, not all parents are equally equipped to take an active role at school. Minority refugee families often face several hardships in cooperation with children's school at the same level as native families (Turney, Kao, 2009). The three common problems among refugee parents were the lack of language proficiency, the lack of prior education, and the lack of the knowledge of the educational system in the new country (Brenner, Kia-Keating, 2016).

Newcomer families with limited exposure to Turkish education system and confronted with cultural and language differences, need to be included in children's microsystem relationships in order to positively contribute to their children's development. Our findings showed that refugee parents, in contrast to their children, are significantly less motivated to learn Turkish and adjust to the Turkish society. According to respondents, most refugee parents have never visited the school or talked to a counselor. The

indifference of refugee parents significantly influences their children's perception of school and of their priorities.

In addition, peer relationships have a considerable impact on a child's development, and thus on refugee children's development as well. Interviewed Turkish children have shown a great desire to learn more about new Syrian friends and their culture, language, food, games and the like. However, only few said that school and teachers do not give adequate information about Syrians and their culture. From all the respondents in this group, nobody said that he/she would avoid learning something new about the culture of their refugee friends, unlike most teachers who believe that "imposing" a new culture poses a danger. Furthermore, it was perceived that the attitudes of children toward refugees largely depend on the individual(s) involved in their class and on their process of adaptation. It has also been noted that children whose classes do not include foreign students have more negative perceptions about foreigners than those with foreigners in the classroom. Consequently, the “Syrian“ stigma was commonly used among Turkish children. Environment, media, and Turkish parents have a significant role in producing negative stereotypes among native-born children about Syrian newcomers.

Discrimination influences the social connections, academic achievements, and psychological well-being of immigrant children (Brown, 2015). Schools are the context where refugee children most frequently experience discrimination, so they must prevent it (Brown, 2015). Moreover, families have a crucial impact in helping refugee children to handle with the discrimination they experience (Brown, 2015).

Syrian children's perceptions of their Turkish peers were divided into acceptable and discriminatory. Positive responses were given by students who mastered the Turkish language, had better academic achievement and spent their free time with Turkish children after school.

In the study of Madziva and Thondhlana (2017), it has been shown that the community has a major role in creating an inclusive environment for Syrian refugees in the UK. Initiatives in supporting their integration in society by helping with language and children's homework improved the home-school partnership. In addition, the essential determinants in the school support to refugee youth are curriculum and pedagogy. However, they have been often described as a stumbling block to the efficient inclusion of culturally diverse students.

As it can be concluded, there are numerous factors that directly or indirectly influence refugee students' development, academic achievement, and psychosocial well-being in host communities. Ecological theory represents a picture of relationships between the refugee student, as an individual, and his/her family context, school environmet, peer relationships, and individual factors.

The survey findings show how Syrian children experience behavioral problems as feeling of loss and violent reactions in class. Their healing process is still ongoing and needs environmental support. Turkish public schools offer the opportunity for refugee children to continue their normal lives and routines through education. The risk of exclusion of young people from society firstly may begin with their exclusion from educational institutions (Kaya 2005; Miller 2005). Thus, the inclusion in the education system contributes to the faster adaptation of refugee-background children in society through interaction with peers and school staff. Self-reported positive school experience is a protective factor for the mental health of children affected by war environments and displacements (Fazel, et. al., 2012).

However, teachers' lack of knowledge about refugee approaches and negative attitudes towards newcomers in Turkey have a negative impact on the possible successful socialization. Turkish peers, as an important factor influencing the integration of refugee children, have differing attitudes toward Syrians. The negative views are mostly created by Turkish parents, who are also prejudiced against refugees due to the political situation and media's influence. Syrian refugee students in Turkey, carrying their own traces of war experience and loss of family members, face numerous hardships during the adaptation process to Turkish schools. In order to enable their normal development and continuation of schooling, it is necessary to improve the lack of the teachers' proper refugee education, curriculum, and school staff. Moreover, cooperation between microsystems (school context, parents, peers) in a refugee child's environment would be very important in his/her positive inclusion in school and society.

6.4. Recommendations

The inclusion of Syrian refugee children in Turkish public schools poses a great challenge for all school staff and the community. According to the present research, many obstacles hinder the social inclusion of refugee children in Turkish public schools. Accordingly, we will present some recommendations for the further work of schools to improve practice in refugee education.

Recommendations for practitioners

- Improving the Turkish language courses for refugee students. Teachers in Turkish language courses should have trainings on how to approach the children who suffer from war traumas and post-displacement depression.
- Staffing clinical psychologists in Turkish schools to cope with PTSD cases, which are prevalent among Syrian refugee children.
- Nurturing a multicultural environment in schools, where each child's culture, tradition, and language will be accepted as wealth, not a threat to society. For this purpose, organizing "cultural days" at the school, where refugee-background children could also present their culture and customs and feel accepted can help in this context. It would be a chance to introduce Turkish children to the new culture and break their stereotypes about the Syrian population in Turkey.
- Teachers who are in direct contact with refugee children should receive training on intercultural pedagogy, refugee education, access to children with war traumas and the like.
- Work on strengthening the problem-solving capacity of teachers to cope with new situations and challenges with more confidence.
- Schools that participated in the research were placed in disadvantaged areas where teachers were mostly young and inexperienced. For this reason, involving experienced teachers in schools with a large number of refugee students where their previous work and knowledge can help to successfully approach refugee children should be considered.
- In order to prevent child labor and the absence of Syrian children in school because of work, the school administration should find out the economic

situation of refugee students and try to connect the refugee families with organizations for economic aid.

- Designing trainings for school counselors in order to meet the needs of refugee children and help them overcome the difficulties of adjustment and psychosocial development.
- Arranging specialized Syrian counselors to support Turkish counselors in school by following the refugee children's adaptation process and communicating with refugee families in Arabic.
- Introducing appropriate pedagogical methods, through a curriculum that respects cultural differences, and the evaluation system should be improved in order to encourage refugee students to learn.
- Eradicating discriminatory views about Syrian students in schools, existing among native children and school staff by organizing social activities that will connect students in team work. (theatre, sport, art activities, etc.)
- Organizing school trips, picnics, and other extra-curricular activities where Syrian and Turkish children can meet and socialize with each other.
- Reaching out to refugee parents to raise their attendance to school though diverse programs, such as language courses; trainings on the subjects as parenting styles, approaches to the war-affected children; meeting with Turkish parents, etc.
- Opening welcome centers in schools to provide social support and information to refugee families. The centers can include social workers who will organize events and courses for parents and try to engage them in their children's education.
- Setting a peer mentoring program where Turkish student will be paired up with one Syrian student and help him/her with the language, homework, norms in school, and protect him/her from bullying.
- The key stakeholders (school, refugee parents, community) have to work together and effectively interact to promote the social inclusion of refugee children to society. Thus, educational policy makers have to think about setting intercultural activities inside and outside schools that can connect stakeholders around one main task- refugee children's successful social inclusion.

- This research did not focus on the psycho-social problems of Syrian children and the consequences it has on their academic success and adaptation; further, in-depth insight into the relationship between Syrian and Turkish children, peer bullying and prevention programs could be some of the tasks for future research.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Interview schedules

ÖĞRETMEN GÖRÜŞME FORMU

Araştırmacı: Şeherzada Jusufbaşiç; Marmara Üniversitesi/ Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü/ Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim (Yüksek lisans tezi)

Okul: Tarih ve saat: Görüşmeci:

Merhaba Sayın hocam,

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Suriyeli mülteci çocukların Türk devlet okullarındaki mevcut durumu anlamak ve uygulamayı geliştirmek için Türk ilköğretim okullarına sosyal uyum sürecini değerlendirmektir. Yerel ve mülteci çocuklarla doğrudan temas halinde olan bir öğretmen olarak deneyimleriniz bu süreci anlamada çok yardımcı olacaktır. Yanıtlarınız ne kadar içten ve samimi olursa, araştırma o kadar başarılı olacaktır. Katıldığınız için teşekkürler.

Sorular:

1. Sınıfınızda kaç öğrenci var?
2. Sınıfınızda kaç yabancı öğrenci var?
3. Suriyeli mülteci öğrencilerin Türk eğitim sisteminde yer almasının zorlukları nelerdir?
4. Suriyeli öğrenciler sınıfınıza gelmeden önce Suriye, Suriyeliler ve mülteci krizi hakkında bilgi sahibi oldunuz mu? Nasıldı?
5. Mülteci öğrenciler geldiğinde ilk izleniminiz neydi?
6. Mülteci çocuklara ders vermeye hazır mıydınız? Mülteci çocuklarla çalışmadan önce belirli aktiviteleriniz veya eğitiminiz var mıydı? Onu nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

7. Mülteci öğrencilerle nasıl iletişim kurdunuz? (Türkçe konuşabiliyorlar mıydı?)
8. Suriyeli çocukları sınıftaki öğrencilere nasıl tanıttınız?
9. Mülteci çocukları dahil ettikten sonra sınıfınızda neler değişti ve bunu nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

- Gözlemlerinize göre, Suriyeli çocuklar Türk eğitim sistemini nasıl kabul etmekte ve en büyük engelleri nelerdir?
- Suriyeli öğrenciler derslerde grup etkinliklerine katılır mı?
- Gözlemlerinize göre, sınıftaki Türk ve Suriyeli çocuklar arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl tanımlarsınız?
- Öğrenciler birbirleriyle etkileşim kurduğunda hiç olumsuz bir şey gördünüz mü?
- Yerel ve mülteci öğrenciler arasındaki genel kalıplar (önyargılar) nelerdir?
- Mülteci öğrencilerin sosyal olarak dışlanmasına neden olabilecek faktörler nelerdir?
- Yerel öğrenciler ve mülteci öğrenciler arasındaki sorunları ortadan kaldırmak için neler yapıyorsunuz?
- Daha iyi ve kaliteli eğitim sunmak için ne tür stratejiler geliştirdiniz?

10. Mülteci çocukların Türk eğitim sistemine daha iyi dahil edilmeleri için önerileriniz nelerdir?

REHBER ÖĞRETMEN GÖRÜŞME FORMU

Araştırmacı: Şeherzada Jusufbaşiç; Marmara Üniversitesi/ Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü/ Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim (Yüksek lisans tezi)

Okul: Tarih ve saat: Görüşmeci:

Merhaba Sayın ... hocam,

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Suriyeli mülteci çocukların Türk devlet okullarındaki mevcut durumu anlamak ve uygulamayı geliştirmek için Türk ilköğretim okullarına sosyal uyum sürecini değerlendirmektir. Mülteci çocuklarla doğrudan temas halinde olan bir okul danışmanı olarak deneyimleriniz bu süreci anlamada çok yardımcı olacaktır. Yanıtlarınız ne kadar objektif ve doğru olursa, araştırma o kadar başarılı olacaktır.Katıldığınız için teşekkürler.

Sorular:

1. Suriyeli mülteci öğrencilerin Türk eğitim sistemine dahil edilmesinin zorlukları nelerdir?

2. Suriyeli çocuklar ile ilişkinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?

- Suriyeli çocuklarla ne sıklıkla bireysel bir görüşme yapıyorsunuz?
- Mülteci çocuklarla nasıl iletişim kuruyorsunuz? (Dil engeli var mı?)
- Onlarla iletişim kurarken nasıl hissediyorsunuz?
- Suriyeli öğrenciler sorun yaşadıkları veya bir şeyleri paylaşmak istedikleri zaman size rahatlıkla başvurabilirler mi? Siz onların gelmelerini nasıl teşvik ediyorsunuz?
- Mültecilerin sosyal uyum sürecinde okuldaki en büyük engelleri nelerdir?
- Sizce, ne tür okul etkinlikleri kendilerini daha rahat ifade etmelerinde ve kabul görmelerinde yardımcı olabilir?

3. Mülteci çocukların aileleriyle iletişiminizi nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

4. Gözlemlerinize göre, Türk ve Suriyeli çocuklar arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl tanımlarsınız?

5. Suriyeli çocuklar arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl tanımlarsınız?

6. Rehberlik hizmetlerinin Suriyeli çocukların sorunları bağlamında geliştirilebilmesi için önerileriniz nelerdir?

7. Suriyeli çocuklara rehberlik hizmeti verirken kendinizi yeterli görüyor musunuz? Yeterli görmediğiniz geliştirilmesinin gerekli olduğunu düşündüğünüz yeterlik alanları/nitelikler var mı?

8. Mülteci çocukların Türk eğitim sistemine daha iyi dahil edilmesine yönelik önerileriniz nelerdir?

SÜRİYELİ MÜLTECİ ÖĞRENCİ GÖRÜŞME FORMU

Merhaba (Öğrenci adı),

Bugün seninle İstanbul'da okula nasıl başladığın, deneyimlerin, sınıf arkadaşların ve öğretmenlerin hakkında konuşmak istiyorum. Hikayeni benimle paylaşmak istediğin için teşekkür ediyorum. Konuşmamız/sohbetimiz sırasında ihtiyaç duyarsan ara verebiliriz. Ayrıca herhangi bir soruya cevap vermek istemezsen bunu rahatlıkla söyleyebilirsin. Katıldığın için teşekkürler.

Genel Sorular

- Kaç yaşındasın?
- Türkiye'de ne kadar süre yaşıyorsun?
- Türkiye'de kiminle yaşıyorsun?
- Ne kadar zamandır Türkiye'de okula devam ediyorsun?
- Türkçeyi nerede öğrendin ve o eğitim ne kadar sürdü?
- Aldığınız Türkçe derslerinin yeterli olduğunu düşünüyor musun?
- Türkiye'de hayat nasıl gidiyor, bana bir gününde neler yaptığını anlatır mısın?
- Okula ilk başladığın günleri hatırlıyor musun? Neler hissediyordun?
- Yabancı gibi hissettiğin zamanlar oluyor mu?
- Sence okuldaki diğer öğrencilerin Suriyeli öğrencilere bakış açısı nasıl?
- Suriyeli öğrencilerin kendi aralarında da birbirlerine karşı farklı bakış açıları/önyargılar/sorunlar var mı?

Yeni okul ortamı hakkında duygu ve düşüncelerle ilgili sorular:

1. Yeni okuldaki ilk günün nasıldı?
2. Yeni okulunda en çok neyi sevdin (belirli bir etkinlik, insanlar ..)?
3. Yeni okulunda değişmesini istediğin bir şey var mı?
4. Okul ortamınızı üç kelimeyle tanımlayın!
5. Sınıfta bir şey anlamadığında, kimden yardım istersin?

6. Okulda paylaşmak istediğin bir sorunun olursa, kiminle konuşursun?

Türk akranlarıyla ilişkileri ile ilgili sorular:

1. Sınıfta kiminle oturuyorsun?
2. Okulda ve okul dışındaki boş zamanlarında kimlerle vakit geçirirsin?
3. Okuldaki Türk arkadaşlarınla okul dışında görüşüyör musun?
4. Okulda veya okul dışında farklı etkinliklere katılır mısın?
5. Okuldaki en iyi arkadaşın kim? En iyi arkadaşını nasıl seçiyorsun?
6. Sınıfta bir şey anlamadığın zaman, Türk arkadaşların sana yardımcı oluyor mu?

Öğretmenlerle ilişkileri ile ilgili sorular

1. Türk dilinde dersleri anlıyor musun? Yoksa, öğretmenler diğer öğrencilerden ayrı olarak size yardımcı oluyor mu?
2. Okulda öğretmenlerle ilişkini nasıl tanımlarsın?
3. Öğretmenlerin kültürün ve önceki eğitim sistemin ile ilgili bilgi edinmek istiyorlar mı?
4. Sınıfa ilk geldiğinde seni nasıl tanıttılar?
5. Öğretmenlerin özelliklerden hangisi en çok seversin?
6. Okuldaki rehber öğretmenle ilişkin nasıldır ve ona istediğin zaman gidebiliyor musunuz?
7. Kaç kez gittin? Neden gittin? Sorunun çözümlendi mi?
8. Okuldaki sorununun rehberlik öğretmeninle çözümlenebileceğine inanıyor musun?

YEREL ÖĞRENCİ GÖRÜŞME FORMU

Merhaba (Öğrenci adı),

Bugün seninle farklı bir ülkeden gelen sınıf arkadaşların hakkında konuşmak istiyorum. Mülteci öğrenciler hakkındaki deneyimlerini ve görüşlerini paylaşmak istediğin için teşekkür ederim. Bir molaya ihtiyacın olduğunda ya da soruya cevap vermek istemezsen, söyleyebilirsin. Katıldığın için teşekkürler.

Sorular:

1. Kaç yaşındasın?
2. Sınıfında kaç yabancı öğrenci var?
3. Yabancı öğrencilerle zaman geçirmeyi seviyor musun ve onlardan yeni bir şey öğreniyor musun?
4. Mülteci öğrenciler sınıf arkadaşların olduğunda ilk düşüncen neydi?
5. Yabancı öğrencileri nasıl tanımlarsın?
6. Mülteci öğrencilerle birlikte oyun oynamayı, ders çalışmayı, ya da sohbet etmeyi tercih eder misin?
7. Mülteci çocuklarının ülkesi, kültürü veya dili hakkında bir şey biliyor musun? Bunlar hakkında daha fazla bilgi öğrenmek ister misin?
8. Onların şu an neden Türkiye'de olduklarını biliyor musun?
9. Mülteci öğrencilerin sınıfa uyumları hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
10. Diğer öğrencilerin mülteci öğrencilere bakış açısı sence nasıl?
11. Mülteci öğrencilerin öğretmenlerle ilişkileri nasıldır?
12. Ders sırasında grup etkinliklerinde, yerel ve yabancı öğrenciler birlikte çalışır mı?
13. Mülteci öğrencilerin kendi aralarındaki ilişkileri nasıl?

T.C.
İSTANBUL VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 59090411-44-E.2156207 31.01.2019
Konu : Anket ve Araştırma İzni

Sayın: Seherzada JUSUFBASİC

ilgi: a) 27.12.2018 tarihli ve 25083680 Gelen Evrak No'lu dilekçeniz.
b) Valilik Makamının 29.01.2019 tarih ve 1988542 sayılı oluru.

"Suriyeli Mültecilerin Türk İlköğretim Okullarına Sosyal Uyumunda Eğitim Rolünün İncelenmesi" konulu araştırma çalışmanız hakkındaki ilgi (a) dilekçe ve ekleri ilgi (b) valilik onayı ile uygun görülmüştür.

Bilgilerinizi ve söz konusu talebiniz; bilimsel amaç dışında kullanmaması, **uygulama sırasında bir örneği müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen mühürlü ve imzalı veri toplama araçlarının kurumlarımıza araştırmacı tarafından ulaştırılarak uygulanılması,** katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına göre seçilmesi, araştırma sonuç raporunun müdürlüğümüzden izin alınmadan kamuoyuyla paylaşılmaması koşuluyla, gerekli duyurunun araştırmacı tarafından yapılması, okul idarecilerinin denetim, gözetim ve sorumluluğunda, eğitim-öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde ilgi (b) Valilik Onayı doğrultusunda uygulanması ve işlem bittikten sonra 2 (iki) hafta içinde sonuçtan Müdürlüğümüz Strateji Geliştirme Bölümüne rapor halinde bilgi verilmesini rica ederim.

Abdurrahman ENSARİ
Müdür a.
Şube Müdürü

EK:
1- Valilik Onayı
2- Ölçekler

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T.C.
İSTANBUL VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 59090411-20-E.1988542 29/01/2019
Konu : Anket ve Araştırma İzin Talebi

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlgi: a) 27.12.2018 tarihli ve 25083680 Gelen Evrak No'lu dilekçe.
b) MEB. Yen. ve Eğ. Tk. Gn. Md. 22.08.2017 tarih ve 12607291/ 2017/25 No'lu Gen.
c) Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü Araştırma ve Anket Komisyonunun 22.01.2019 tarihli tutanağı.

Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü yüksek lisans öğrencisi Seherzada JUSUFBASİC'in **"Suriyeli Mültecilerin Türk İlköğretim Okullarına Sosyal Uyumunda Eğitim Rolünün İncelenmesi"** konulu tezi kapsamında, ilimiz Esenyurt, Bağcılar ve Küçükçekmece ilçelerinde bulunan ortaokullarda; anket uygulama istemi hakkındaki ilgi (a) dilekçe ve ekleri Müdürlüğümüzce incelenmiştir.

Araştırmacının söz konusu talebi; bilimsel amaç dışında kullanılmaması, **uygulama sırasında bir örneği müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen mühürlü ve imzalı veri toplama araçlarının kurumlarımıza araştırmacı tarafından ulaştırılarak uygulanılması, katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına göre seçilmesi, araştırma sonuç raporunun müdürlüğümüzden izin alınmadan kamuoyuyla paylaşılmaması koşuluyla, okul idarelerinin denetim, gözetim ve sorumluluğunda, eğitim-öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde ilgi (b) Bakanlık emri esasları dâhilinde uygulanması, sonuçtan Müdürlüğümüze rapor halinde (CD formatında) bilgi verilmesi kaydıyla** Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

Makamlarınızca da uygun görülmesi halinde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Levent YAZICI
İl Milli Eğitim Müdürü

Ek:
1- Genelge.
2- Komisyon Tutanağı

OLUR
29/01/2019

Ahmet Hamdi USTA
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

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