

Determining the Problems Syrian Immigrant Students Encounter in their Educational Process and Teachers' Practices to Eliminate these Problems

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the problems faced by Syrian students under temporary protection in the educational process based on teachers' opinions and to provide solutions by examining the applications made by teachers to eliminate these problems. In this study, a phenomenological pattern, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Research data was obtained through face-to-face interviews using semi-structured interview forms. The study group consists of 40 teachers working in kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and high schools, who were reached using the easily accessible case sampling technique, one of the purposeful sampling methods. To achieve the research purpose, answers were sought to the following questions: 1. According to the teachers' opinions, what do Syrian immigrant students face the main problems at school? 2. What are the teachers' practices to solve the problems that Syrian immigrant students face? The obtained data were analyzed using the content analysis method. According to the research findings, the main problems of Syrian immigrant students are classified as socio-cultural, language, family, COVID-19, psychological, structural conditions of schools, and institutional issues. Teachers' practices to solve these problems students face are determined as strengthening the physical and social structure of the school, teaching Turkish as a second language, and the role of family in education. According to the study findings, strengthening the physical structures of the schools and providing the necessary tools and educational materials will make it easier for Syrian immigrant students to learn and succeed in solving the problems they face in schools. In addition, improving the professional qualifications of existing teachers has emerged as an essential need. For this purpose, they must be supported by in-service training on vocational, inclusiveness and multicultural education. School-family-student cooperation has emerged as an effective way to solve problems. It is seen that creating a positive school climate with the school-family-student collaboration created by the efforts of some teachers makes a positive contribution to school commitment and education. This dissemination will facilitate the solution of problems. Since the study results are obtained from the participants' experiences and inferences, this study is expected to contribute to educational practitioners, policymakers, and related literature.

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INTRODUCTION

Individuals migrate mainly because they cannot meet various economic, environmental, educational, and political needs. This movement is also caused by threats to life and property, exile, and, most importantly, wars (Tunç, 2015).

Syria is a neighbouring country with a 911 km border with Turkey. The Syrian migration started with the Syrian refugees leaving their country due to the civil war and entering Turkey intensively from Cilvegözü border Crossing in Hatay province on April 29, 2011 (Erdoğan & Çorabatır, 2019).

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) records, Turkey hosts 4 million people who need international protection (United Nations Refugee Agency [UNHCR], 2021). About two million of the migrants from Syria are children between the ages of 0 and 18.

Children are the most affected by the war. During the war, children are subjected to poverty, harassment and sexual torture and sometimes come under the control of child traffickers who force them to marry and beg. Considering that this phenomenon of migration experienced in our country for more than a decade will not end, it has become an obligation to give the necessary importance to the education of immigrant students to live decently together with these groups that have migrated to our country. This is because the difference between the educational level in the migration destination and the academic level of immigrants affects both the immigrants and the host country (Ereş, 2015).

The elements that make up a society, such as cultural heritage, education, social and human capital, are essential to its development. Education is the most crucial of these elements. Education, whether it is for a resident or an immigrant, has a significant place in the development of children (Gözübüyük, 2017) and allows these children to rebuild their lives (McCarthy, 2016).

According to the Ministry of National Education data, about five per cent of the number of Turkish school-age students between the ages of 0 and 18 consists of Syrian migrant students. (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2021). In addition, considering the number of babies and children born in Turkey and approaching school age, the importance of Syrian migrant students getting an education becomes more essential. Due to the high number of school-age immigrant students, a large number of immigrant students flock to existing schools. This is a situation school administrators are not ready for. However, for the prosperity of Turkey, it is essential that these school-age students are raised as individuals who can earn a living for themselves and their families and that these societies, consisting of different cultures, live in harmony.

This success depends on the performance of educational systems. With this understanding, the Government of the Republic of Turkey has initiated registration of Syrian migrant students to schools to meet their academic needs within the scope of the circular "Foreign Students" dated August 16, 2010, numbered 2010/48, and has granted the right to education to Syrian children with the circular numbered 2014/21. (MEB, September, 2014). However, demographic change, increasing diversity in schools, and the intensive influx of international students can cause difficulties and complexities in educational institutions.

The related field article states that Syrian immigrant students experience some difficulties in the educational process starting from admission. According to Brown, Miller, and Mitchell (2006), students whose education has been interrupted lack subject-specific dictionaries of academic subjects, register and genre understandings, cultural backgrounds to reinforce their knowledge, social understandings of how to "be" in the classroom, and learning strategies for processing content. Terhart and Dewitz (2018) stated that refugee students require additional professional support beyond language learning. This concerns their previous and current experiences of insecurity and the effects of social inclusion or exclusion at school, which may affect their future opportunities or disadvantages.

From this perspective, these students receive high-quality education in schools. They must acquire the necessary skills to live and take responsibility in the societies in which they are located.

This study, conducted with the idea that integrating immigrant children into society will begin at school to ensure peace and social tranquillity, suggests that an understanding of a society that values people and respects differences can be achieved through education. Undoubtedly, each school's social environment, the school's internal dynamics, the profile of administrators and teachers, the parents' profile, parents' expectations, and the needs of students may differ. Therefore, in this research, the opinions of Syrian immigrant students were taken to determine the problems they face in the educational process from a holistic perspective based on classroom teachers' views. Teachers need to understand Syrian immigrant students first, identify the issues they face at school carefully, and develop strategies to solve these problems. It is envisaged that the research findings will provide an essential perspective regarding Syrian immigrant students adapting to the school and the society in which they live, achieving academic success by continuing their training and educational processes without interruption, managing the educational process effectively, and shedding light on the decisions that will be taken by the actors determining educational policies. To achieve the research purpose, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. According to the teachers' opinions, what main problems do Syrian immigrant students face at school?
2. What are the teachers' practices to solve these problems that Syrian immigrant students face?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to Creswell, the literature can give very little information about the study phenomenon, and it is possible to learn more from the participants through qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). In the study, the phenomenology pattern, one of the qualitative research patterns that allow the selection of information-rich situations and investigation of them in depth, discovering and explaining facts and events in line with the purpose of the research, was used. In phenomenological research, interviews are conducted to expose the experiences and meanings related to the phenomena (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

Research Respondents

The study group comprises 40 kindergarten, elementary, secondary and high school teachers. The participants in the research were included in an information-rich and quickly accessible group of research by purposefully using the situation sampling technique (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). For this reason, schools with a high concentration of Syrian students under temporary protection and their teachers have been preferred. Teachers work in the Avcılar, Bahçelievler, Başakşehir, Esenyurt, and Zeytinburnu districts, where Syrian students are concentrated in Istanbul. Demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

Variables	Category	f
Gender	Female	28
	Male	12
Age	20-30	9
	29-40	17
	39-50	10
	Do Not Specify	4
Marital Status	Married	22
	Single	17
	Do Not Specify	1
Service Time	0-9	26

	10-17	7
	20-28	6
	Do Not Specify	1
Current School Year	0-6	36
	7-10	4
Educational Level	Bachelor	35
	master's degree.	4
	Do Not Specify	1

As shown in Table 1, 28 participants are women, 12 of them are male teachers. The teachers' ages range from 20 to 50 years. The working experience is in the range of 0-29 years. The service period of the teachers in the current school is 0-11 years. Twenty-two teachers are married, and 17 are single. Four teachers have master's degrees, and 36 are undergraduates. To keep the identities of the study participants secret, coded names consisting of numbers and letters were used as follows: kindergarten teacher (KT1, KT2...), elementary school teacher (ET1, ET2,..), secondary school teacher (ST1, ST5...), and high school teacher (HST1, HST2).

Research Instrument

The research was conducted face-to-face with the participants in their environment through semi-structured forms. While preparing the interview form, a detailed literature review was performed first. According to the data collected, three professors are experts in qualitative research, and two Assoc. Dr., three Dr. a faculty member, a doctoral student-teacher, a guidance counsellor and two classroom teachers, as well as the opinions of the general manager and the responsible person from the Lifelong Learning Directorate, participants were asked the following questions: 1- What are the main problems faced by Syrian immigrants' students at school, according to you? 2. What are the practices you used as solutions to these problems? Two semi-structured questions have been created in its format. Based on these two questions and the interview form, 12 more open-ended questions were designed to obtain more detailed information from the participants. Therefore, 14 questions were ready for application due to 3 pilot applications. Audio recordings were taken during the interviews with the participant's approval. The interviews were completed in 35-55 minutes.

Data Analysis

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2013) express the data analysis process as "data reduction consisting of three simultaneous activity processes, data visualisation and inference/verification. With this understanding, the data collected from the study were analysed using the content analysis method. The obtained data were examined and converted into written text on a computer. To ensure that the resulting text forms a meaningful whole, the text from the manuscript is divided into meaningful sections with determined main themes, sub-themes and codes. Attention has been paid to the fact that all emerging themes meaningfully explain the data revealed in the research. At this stage, experienced researchers received expert support in data analysis. After detailed and thematic coding, the data obtained were explained, defined and organised into a system. At this stage, the researcher has avoided including his opinions and interpretations. The researcher interpreted the findings after describing and presenting their experiences in detail. By deciphering the collected data, the correlation between the findings is explained. Cause-effect relationships have been established.

Conclusions have been drawn from the findings. The processed version of the collected information has been prepared for the reader. The opinions quoted from the striking statements of the participants are presented to the reader precisely in italic font along with the participant's code. According to the results, the findings were made into a detailed report and shared verbally and in writing with the

participants to confirm them. Participants gave oral and written feedback by assessing whether the analyses reflected their facts and using their right to read and listen to their interview narratives. The data obtained as a result of the confirmation have been carefully evaluated. Although the value of scientific research is assessed based on its contributions to the scientific field and the solutions it provides to the problems encountered in human life, the scientific acceptance of the study requires that the research process and results be clear, consistent, and credible by other researchers (Yildirim & Simsek, 2018).

All the data collection tools, raw data and coding used by the researcher during the analysis phase, as well as the perceptions, notes, articles and inferences that form the basis of the report, have been examined and verified by other experts. All documents have been kept in a safe place.

Due to the nature of Qualitative Research, it may be possible for the researcher's personal experience and judgments to be reflected in the interviews. The researcher has taken precautions to prevent these contradictions during the data collection and analysis process and has taken care not to be a guide during the interviews. Additionally, in qualitative research, researchers may misunderstand what they listen to in interviews. To prevent this situation, which is considered a problem, the researcher transferred the interviews to a one-to-one article, shared them with the participants verbally and via e-mail, received confirmation from them, and evaluated them by considering their opinions and suggestions. The interviews were conducted at the participants' venues.

Ethical Approval of Research

This research was approved by the ethics committee of Okan University, decision 126, dated 07/10/2024. It was produced from the first author's doctoral thesis. Thesis Advisor: Prof.Dr. Ali İlker is from Gümüşeli.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from the teachers who made up the working group are categorised as follows: "What are the problems that Syrian immigrant students face in schools according to the views of teachers?" and "What are the applications used to solve these problems?"

“According to the Opinions of Teachers, Findings on the Problems Faced by Syrian Migrant Students in Schools”

According to the teachers' opinions, Table 2 below presents the themes and sub-themes of the findings related to the problems faced by Syrian immigrant students in schools.

Table 2. According to the Teachers, the Problems Faced by Syrian Migrant Students in Schools

Themes	Sub-Themes
Theme 1. Socio-Cultural Problems	Sub-Theme 1.1. Discrimination Sub-Theme 1.2. Adaptation/Harmony Sub-Theme 1.3. Cultural Differences Sub-Theme 1.4. Families Do not Know Turkish
Theme 2. Problems Caused by Language	Sub-Theme 2.1. Not Knowing Turkish Sub-Theme 2.2. Lack of Communication Skills Sub-Theme 2.3. Academic Problems
Theme 3. Family-Related Problems	Sub-Theme 3.1. Family Apathy Sub-Theme 3.2. Economic Difficulties
Theme 4. Problems Caused by Psychology	Sub-Theme 4.1. Negative Psychological State
Theme 5. Problems Encountered in Education during the COVID-19 process	Sub-Theme 5.1. Inequality of Opportunity in Education Sub-Theme 5.2. Lack of Communication in the Classroom

Theme 6. Problems Related to the Structural Conditions of Schools	Sub-Theme 6.1. Lack of Physical Equipment Sub-Theme 6.2. The Shortcomings of Multicultural Education
Theme7. Institutional Problems	Sub-Theme 7.1. Registration Problems

As shown in Table 2, according to the teachers, the main problems of Syrian immigrant students have emerged as socio-cultural, language, family, COVID-19, psychological, structural conditions of schools, and institutional issues. The themes and sub-themes that emerged as the problems of Syrian immigrant students are explained under separate headings below and direct quotes from some teachers' opinions are given.

Theme 1. Socio-Cultural Problems

All of the participating teachers stated that Syrian immigrant students are experiencing socio-cultural problems. According to the teachers, Turkey and Syria have the same geography but cultural differences. The theme of socio-cultural problems has four sub-themes: "Discrimination," "Adaptation," "Cultural differences," and "Families Do Not Know Turkish."

Syrian students address teachers by their first names, shout and talk loudly as if fighting, lack hygiene, conveniently throw garbage in the environment they are in, have different food cultures and eating habits, bring overly spicy food to class, get girls over the age of 14 taken out of school and married, and having violent behaviour are not considered standard in schools in Turkey. Teachers have stated that these habits reflect negatively on students. In the research, it has been noted that Syrian immigrant students cannot adapt to new living spaces due to their sociocultural differences.

According to teachers, native students and their families are biased against Syrian immigrants. They do not want immigrant students in their schools. Financial aid provided to Syrian students creates discrimination among students. Quotes from the opinions of some teachers are as follows:

Students feel excluded from time to time. There can be fights during recess. They react because they are excluded due to communication. When I ask why they are fighting because they do not understand what they are saying, 'it is not clear if it is swearing or what', they perceive it as an insult and fight. (ET3).

There is a double standard among students. Turkish students are also rebelling. Are we not citizens? Why are they being given scholarships and educational materials? (ST1).

The boy tries to make room for himself by hitting his friends because he does not understand what I am saying and cannot communicate. (KT5).

They are constantly changing places, and adaptation is a problem. They also isolate themselves, and Turkish students are not included among them. (ET7).

The biggest problem my students have in my class is compliance. They do not understand Turkish and cannot communicate healthily. They are very attached to their essence. (ST7).

The lives of Syrians are very different. Their culture is very different; they are relaxed, carefree, and shout and talk. The cultures of city life are different. They do not follow the rules of the school. Everything is very different between us. They get support from the state, give birth to many children, and do not worry about what will happen. (KT1). According to the information I received from Syrian teachers, violence in schools is commonplace in Syria. When we complained to the family about the child, they said, "If my teacher is not behaving well, you can beat him as you want." they say. (ET11).

They are very comfortable. For example, school clothes do not comply with the dress code; students come dressed according to their wishes. Some students come painted exaggeratedly (ST1).

The families do not speak Turkish. What is learned at school is not repeated at home, and students forget what they have learned. (KT1).

Parents' language problems are essential. I have a parent who is a doctor but has not learned a word of Turkish. (ST10).

Similar to the study findings, the literature (Başar et al., 2018; Atakan et al., 2021; Dinler & Hacifazlıoğlu, 2020) stated that immigrants have difficulty showing behaviours to school rules due to cultural differences and that they cannot adapt and have good relationships with their peers.

Theme 2. Problems Caused by Language

Teachers say language is essential for social, cognitive/academic, and affective development. Arabic is the primary language of Syrian children, and Turkish is the language of education in Turkey. Syrian migrant students are starting their education in a completely foreign language environment. They cannot communicate and do not understand their teachers and friends. They cannot fully express themselves.

The fact that the spoken language is different affects communication and prevents social and cultural integration. According to teachers, as a result of the inability to express themselves, students remain timid, cannot socialise, prefer to sit with students of Arab origin in the back rows of the classroom, play with them during recess, and cannot have healthy communication with their peers. According to teachers, the academic achievements of Syrian migrant students are low due to the language barrier and the difference in the education system they are used to in their country. Language-related issues are classified into three sub-themes: “not knowing the Turkish language,” “lack of communication skills,” and “academic problems.”

Children have minimal experience, so language cannot develop. There are no friends around whom he will be affected. He turns to living spaces within his own crowded family. (ET10).

Those who have language problems close themselves off. He goes completely silent. We do not have the chance to take care of them all as an interest because he has a Turkish disability he does not know. (ST3).

They have been here for ten years but have problems socialising, making friends, and sharing their concerns with their teachers and classmates. (ET2).

There is academic failure and a lot of class repetition. He does not understand because he does not speak Turkish himself, and he does not speak the language at home, so he cannot get support. He tries to do as much as he knows, which is not enough anyway (ET2).

They can handle everyday colloquial language well and poorly, but the subjects have technical terms. We are a technical vocational high school. They need help understanding the technical terms. When we tell them to grasp the technical terms, the lesson ends, and they cannot understand anyway. (HST1).

Similarly, according to Yohani et al. (2019), In Canada, immigrants with a mother tongue other than English need help adapting to social life due to the language barrier. Immigrant families are not included 100% in school. According to teachers, Syrian immigrant students need to catch up to their peers academically due to the Turkish language problem. Research conducted in the literature (Şimşir & Dilmaç, 2018; Eren, 2019) has proven that language problems cause academic failure.

Theme 3. Family-Related Problems

According to teachers, the socio-economic position of Syrian migrant families affects their children. The theme of family-related problems is classified into two sub-themes: "family apathy" and "economic difficulties". Syrian parents must be more interested in their children's social and school life. The indifference of families is reflected in the classroom environment. Students need support from their parents on issues such as compliance with classroom rules, regular school attendance, fulfilling the assignments given by the teacher, taking responsibility, getting along with friends, and adapting to the environment. According to teachers, most families are poor. For this reason, the priority of families is their livelihood. Children of families with insufficient financial means have difficulty accessing educational services. In particular, it has been stated that a large part of middle school and high school students work as workers.

The parents are not interested, and there needs to be cooperation with the teacher. The family's point of view is the child's point of view. The child says what he sees from the family, and he does. (ET4).

I have 70 students, and I am having a meeting. Only 15 people can come. (ET8).

Parents can only be considered somewhat interested. It is not easy to get him to school. Unfortunately, their phones and addresses are irregular. We wanted to contact the guardian but could not get through. I can say that we have never seen some of our students and parents. Parents do not come with notebooks, books, etc. They do not send needs and are not interested in their children. (ET10).

They live in a room with five children, for example. The living conditions are bad. They live in crowded houses with low incomes. They have a clique life, the same apartment, gather in the same neighbourhood and live isolated. (ET2).

They have financial difficulties. For example, they can only attend online classes with tablets, phones, or internet access. The children take care of the grandparents and older people at home. For example, two of my students overlap classes in the online system because of their sister's class time; she cannot attend online courses. (ET3).

Their financial situation could be better. Our students work in textile workshops. (ET11).

Teachers have stated they need help contacting student parents and ensuring school-family cooperation. In support of this study, Tanrikulu (2018) found that families remain indifferent towards their children. Similarly, Karasu (2018) and Kanu (2008) stated that many Syrians are unemployed, working with low wages, forcing their children to work to contribute to the home expenses. In the research, teachers in schools with better socio-economic conditions did not mention economic problems. The financial situation impacts school life.

Theme 4. Psychological Problems

According to teachers, the war and migration process experienced by students negatively affects their psychology. It has been stated that the students bear the traces of the trauma they have experienced in the pictures they have made or the songs they have sung. In addition, their inability to express themselves well, falling behind their peers academically, difficulties in adapting to their peers, and economic constraints negatively affect their mental health. In the study, it was stated that Syrian students are prone to violence.

For example, a plane was passing by. They were 13 - and 14-year-olds. The children screamed, cried, or went under the queue when they heard the sound. They think the

plane is going to hit them. They express themselves with violence. They are bastinadoed in schools in Syria. They see the language of authority as violence. Violence at home is normalised. (ET2).

Someone hit his friend's head on the line repeatedly. I intervene, he laughs. He says I was joking. His jokes are full of violence. (ET7).

The anxiety levels of the students are very high because of the family members who were martyred and those who are still at war. There are children of broken families. They reject the rule. They do not want to sit down. (ST5).

Similar to the findings, Alsayed and Wildes (2018) stated that Syrian students experience intense emotional and behavioural problems due to the impact of migration and issues in new settlements and become more prone to crime due to poverty and lack of social control.

Theme 5. Problems Encountered in Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Teachers have stated that the COVID-19 pandemic reduces access to education, eliminates peer interaction for in-school social learning and classroom communication, restricts concrete learning experiences, and negatively affects friendship and peer interaction and communication between teachers and families. This process has caused immigrant students to become lonely, and their interest in school has decreased.

According to the research findings, there are a large number of school-age children in the families of Syrian students. Syrian students do not have enough tablets at home, and there is a lack of Internet; students have experienced problems in following classes that coincide with the same hours as their siblings. The difficulties encountered during the pandemic have been classified into two sub-themes: "inequality of opportunity in education" and "lack of interaction for in-class communication." According to teachers, the transition of schools to distance education has created inequality of opportunity in education. The process negatively affects low-income Students due to the need for inadequate technological tools such as tablets, smartphones, computers, and the Internet.

Students with tablet and internet problems only have a 50% participation rate. The state's assistance could not be equal to everyone. Some students were given tablets and smartphones. Some have yet to receive them. (ET11).

Some families have 11-12 children. They are very brotherly. When this happens, they have severe problems with the EBA. Only one can enter the class, and the others cannot (HST10).

Typically, home visits were made. We could not do it in the pandemic. (KT1).

I take classes online, but they are not as helpful as formal education (KT7).

On certain days of the week, they received three hours of reinforcement in Turkish language lessons and other subjects. Although this was cancelled during the pandemic, it was helpful (ET5).

Similarly, in research conducted in the field, the issues of access to education already experienced in Turkey have increased significantly with the COVID-19 pandemic (Eğitim Reformu Girişimi [ERG], 2020). Syrian immigrant students are not successful in communicating with their teachers, the high number of children of immigrant families, lack of suitable study environment, lack of technological equipment such as television, Internet, smartphone, computer and tablet (Akgül & Oran, 2020)

Theme 6. Problems Related to the Structural Conditions of Schools

According to teachers, the school's physical structure, the lack of equipment in the existing classrooms, the limitation of materials, tools, and equipment used in the lessons, and the increased number of students per teacher negatively affect the learning process.

I see educational materials in classrooms as a lack. The number of foreigners in the classes should be smaller so there is more interest. For example, there are 30 international students in my class. The bell rings until someone reads. There is not enough time. Syllabic books are needed in my class. I could not afford expensive Jul. There are no materials, no books. How can we teach? The fact that the classrooms are livelier may attract the interest of children. (KT1).

Support for Inclusive Programs (PICTES) should be improved. The office needs to get feedback from teachers or practitioners. There are 40 students in my class. When the number of students is high, teachers do not want to work. I do not even have a classroom in the school. I was given a classroom in the basement with no desks or blackboards. I need some materials. I tried to succeed with the help of my friends. (ET10).

According to teachers, in an environment with differences in language, socio-economic status, and sensitivity to cultural values, the lack of practice in multicultural education negatively affects students' learning.

I did not receive training or seminars in the context of multiculturalism and special education. (KT7).

I am a contracted project teacher, but I encountered a situation I never expected. Before starting my job, I took 15 days of training practice in teaching Turkish to international students. However, I was not trained to teach them to read and write. Since I am a branch teacher, I did not know how to teach this to a young student. That is why I had such a hard time. It was an education; it remained in theory with no practice. Even when we talked about our problems, they were surprised; they said, "Your job is challenging; we do not know." I have 30 international students. (ET1).

The project and the system are irregular and constantly changing. (ET3).

In support of the findings, Gurel and Buyukshahin (2020), found that teachers received theoretical knowledge at universities. Still, they cannot be considered sufficient to teach Syrian students because they did not take practical courses. The Global Education Monitoring Report (2021), published in the book on inclusivity and education, touches on the importance of quality and inclusivity with continuous in-service training; he proposes increasing teacher quality and professional development, updating the curriculum to include transferable skills as the main priorities for Turkey.

Theme 7. Institutional Problems

According to teachers, many immigrant students need documents such as ID and transcript, which are required for official registration. Therefore, equivalence problems are observed, such as peer bullying, academic failure, and school dropout, which are common due to taking part in classes that do not correspond to the student's level since physical appearance decisions make class selection.

One of the problems experienced is the equivalence problem. For example, the provincial national education commission sends a nine-year-old immigrant to the

third grade in elementary school, saying that the age of nine corresponds to the third grade. However, some children may be nine years old but have never been to school (ET2).

Students come to Turkey without documents. Most of the time, there is no appropriate distribution. (HST1).

Similarly, in the research, refugee students could not be placed in classes according to their age groups (Arslan & Ergul, 2022; Levent & Çayak, 2017). For this reason, it is stated that school dropout, bullying, and academic failure are very common.

Findings Related to the Practices of Teachers Regarding the Solution of the Problems Faced by Syrian Immigrant Students in Schools

The applications made by the participating teachers regarding solving the problems faced by Syrian students in schools are presented in Table 3 below as themes and sub-themes.

Table 3. The Applications Made by Teachers Regarding the Solution of the Problems Faced by Syrian Students in Schools

Themes	Sub-Themes
Theme 1. Strengthening of School Culture and Physical/Social Structure	Sub-Theme 1.1. Differentiated Teaching Sub-Theme 1.2. Experience in Immigrant Student Education
Theme 2. Applications for Teaching Turkish as a Second Language	Sub-Theme 2.1. Language Teaching Based on Communication Sub-Theme 2.2. Collaborative Language Teaching
Theme 3. The Role of the Family in Education	Sub-Theme 3.1. Inclusion of Families in Education

As shown in Table 3, teachers' practices regarding the solution of the problems faced by Syrian students in schools have emerged as three themes: "strengthening school culture and physical/social structure," "Practices for teaching Turkish as a second language," and "the role of family in education." The emerging themes and sub-themes are explained under separate headings below, and direct quotes from some teachers' opinions are given.

Theme 1. Strengthening the School Culture and Physical/Social Structure

According to teachers, the physical structure and equipment of the school are essential for the quality of learning. Harmonising the school structure and the social environment by considering the changing student profiles is necessary. According to teachers, even if the students are in the same class and age, each has different developmental characteristics and learning styles. Considering this, some teachers have made various applications to solve Syrian students' problems. Turkish Arabic books, Quran reading competitions, and artistic, digital, and environmental projects have been organised in particular areas such as the fairy tale room, reading room, and book club, which allows students to express themselves comfortably and to read subjects together from Arabic and Turkish books.

Some teachers have tried to prevent school dropout by making students feel good and improving their achievements by applying performance-oriented measurement and evaluation and a lightened curriculum instead of a standard curriculum.

I explained using a smart board, visuals, and a flash card. (KT7).

I am giving homework on audio recording. I send videos of how I read and record. I say, "Do the same." It works because they do not understand what I am saying. I do not follow the curriculum much, but I am still progressing with reading and writing. Because they do not understand, some children feel withdrawn and excluded; I

immediately make them friends with other children. I match the children as Turkish-Syrian (ET12).

I do performance-oriented measurement and evaluation and project-based training based on visuals. The aim is to make all our students feel that they are equal. (ST4).

The exam should be different, and we cannot compare it with our local students. Separate questions can be prepared according to their level. A separate question is required to pass the class. I give books according to the level, and at the end, we talk about the book for a while, and they interpret it much better (ST5).

I am more tolerant of them in my classes. I am trying to be more deciphering so that he can understand and there is not too much difference (HST1).

I take philosophy classes. When students struggle to understand philosophical terms, I suggest reading the books of Syrian thinkers and philosophers. It works. They read and understand their language (HST10).

Similarly, Guild (2001) and Gay (2013) emphasised the importance of appropriate learning and teaching approaches for students in the same class but with different skills by recognising the characteristics of teachers, students' language, learning interests, knowledge, concepts, and reading priorities and teachers could contribute to students' development of their interests and abilities by creating teaching and learning environments for their students, considering their interests and skills.

Theme 2. Applications for Teaching Turkish as a Second Language

According to teachers, students must learn Turkish as soon as possible to feel good about themselves socially, psychologically and academically. The theme of applications for teaching Turkish as a second language has been classified as two sub-themes: "communication-based language teaching" and "cooperation-based language teaching." Turkish Arabic teachers evaluate other Arabic-Turkish-speaking students; they also use siblings of students or volunteer guidance counsellors as a means of communication to establish proper communication with Syrian students.

I communicated with the children's brothers and sisters, gave them books to read, took and sent videos, and improved their Turkish with such applications (KT3).

For example, I started a book club with the Turkish and Syrian children. The Turkish-foreign children I paired with read the same book, interpreted it together, and told me about it. We prepared a fairy tale room, and Turkish and foreign parents told fairy tales from their cultures (ET2).

By announcing the cooperation with the institutions to their parents, I encouraged parents to learn Turkish by directing them to centres such as Public Education Institutes. (ET10).

They are very talented in sports and similar fields. They can be used for socialisation. There are projects "on the recruitment of foreign students to Turkey and the communication of foreign students with Turkish students. (ST6).

We apply for support, such as financial support, tablets, and internet access, from non-governmental organisations and collect help. As teachers, we raised money and bought 30 tablets (ST10).

Two teachers provided private Turkish reading and writing courses to their students and parents, and some provided peer support. Similarly, studies in the literature have emphasised the need for a strong connection between teacher and student (Shahbazi et al., 2020; Civitillo et al., 2021) and the need for

training on multiculturalism (Pinson & Arnot, 2007; Banks, 2014) as the basis for immigrant students' adaptation to school and academic success.

Theme 3. The Role of Family in Education

The study revealed the importance of school-family cooperation. All teachers (100%) stated that they tried to establish cooperation with families. They tried to attract families to the school through activities such as home visits, family participation festivals, and cultural days. According to teachers, students come to school with the habits, behaviours, ways of perceiving, feeling, and thinking they acquire from their families and social environments. Some teachers tried to ensure school-family cooperation by using various methods, such as home visits, cultural events, and seminars, to communicate with their parents.

Parents and children could not speak Turkish. However, I have established cooperation with the parents. I communicated with the children's brothers and sisters. I gave them books, videos to watch, etc. These things have improved their Turkish. Cooperation with parents is vital for these children to be more integrated; it is necessary to include parents in everything (KT3).

I conducted an extracurricular course for parents. The participants learned to read and write in Turkish and became helpful to their children (ET1).

Friendship with Turks, meetings with families and neighbours, parent-teacher trips, and "dinner meetings" should be given importance (HST9).

Leseman (2007) emphasised that family support systems positively affect children's cognitive and language development, protect children against negativity, and prevent child abuse and dysfunctional social-emotional development. According to Koyama & Kasper (2021), as a result of home visits made by educational leaders, mentors and guides, refugee families can be integrated into schools and by utilising their potential, students' needs and abilities can be developed by creating a collaborative, communicative and equality-oriented team. Some teachers stated that they meet the needs of families experiencing economic difficulties by creating aid funds, such as tablets, tools and equipment, clothing, household goods, and food aid.

CONCLUSION

As a result, Turkey has been a country that has received intense immigration from its neighbouring country, Syria, since 2011, and a large portion of this immigrant population are school-age students. According to the research findings, the main problems of Syrian immigrant students are classified as socio-cultural, language, family, COVID-19, psychological, structural conditions of schools, and institutional issues. It is the responsibility of schools, and therefore teachers, to minimise the problems faced by Syrian students and educate them most appropriately so that they can live as conscious citizens in their new country, Turkey, and build their future healthily.

To solve the problems faced by Syrian students, it is essential to plan for the future by considering how these problems affect the children and how they will affect Turkey's future. Considering that Syrian immigrant students will stay in our country for many years, the spread of these experiences aimed at solving problems can contribute to making students and society happier. According to the study findings, professional support and development of teachers with Syrian immigrant students, strengthening the physical structures of schools, providing the necessary tools and equipment, and creating a positive school climate through school-family-student cooperation are essential for solving problems.

Extracurricular activities can be planned for students to ensure that they adapt to school, develop their skills and learn Turkish. Parent communication can train parents on the purpose and importance of

education, school processes, and practices. Teachers can receive inclusive education to have sufficient knowledge and skills. Course content can be enriched by cultural diversity. Areas such as hobby areas, reading areas and sports areas can be created in the school to ensure students' school loyalty and motivation. A sharing network can be established among teachers with immigrant students, and discussions of problems and solutions in these environments can improve teachers. Existing deficiencies can be eliminated with in-service training. Experienced teachers can be assigned to these schools, and inexperienced teachers can gain morale and experience.

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