

# **The Role of Sports in School Belonging of Syrian Refugee Students in Turkey**

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## **Abstract**

*In this study, it is aimed to determine how being in school sports teams with Turkish students affects the sense of school belonging of Syrian students and to analyze the process before and after joining school sports teams. Explanatory sequential design, one of the mixed research methods, was used in the research. In the quantitative aspect of the study, a school belonging scale was applied to a total of 472 Syrian and Turkish students. In the qualitative dimension, interviews were conducted with 7 Syrian students in the school sports teams. Syrian students have a lower level of school belonging compared to Turkish students. When the school belonging levels of the Syrian students who are in the school sports team and the Syrian students who are not in the school sports teams are compared, it has been revealed that there is a significant difference in favor of the Syrian students who are in the school sports teams. Qualitative interviews were also found to support these findings. As a result of the research, it is shown that the participation of Syrian students in sports activities can prevent many psychosocial problems they experience in school. At the same time, it is seen that sports teams can contribute to Syrian students' forming a social circle of friends, socialization, accelerating the adaptation process, cooperation, complying with school rules, and increasing their level of satisfaction with the school.*

**Keywords:** Sport, Integration, Refugee students, Immigrant students, School belonging.



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## INTRODUCTION

Refugees who have to migrate to a different country may take a long time to adapt to the society they migrated to and to be accepted. The fact that the migrant people are not prepared for the traditional value systems of the countries they go to is an important factor in the prolongation of this process (Almutairi, 2015). Refugees struggle with environmental and settlement problems and also try to solve their psychosocial and socioeconomic problems (Almutairi, 2015; Segal & Mayadas, 2005). This process is likely to be more difficult for children, who are the weakest and most vulnerable members of society. Refugee children may have difficulties in adapting to the culture of the society they migrated to, and may experience long-term stress due to the adaptation process and prejudice against the migrating group (Pumariega & Rothe, 2010). The traumas they faced at a young age before the migration; depression, anxiety, and stress disorder may occur (Fazel & Stein, 2002; Heptinstall, Sethna & Taylor, 2004; Hollifield et al., 2002). Studies also reveal that migrant children experience more psychosocial problems than other children (Reijneveld et al., 2005; Kim, Evans, & Hagquist, 2020).

As of 2011, as a result of the civil war that broke out in Syria, more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees had to migrate to Turkey. One third of incoming refugees are school-age children. The number of Syrian children aged 5-17 in education age, which is currently 1 million 197 thousand, is increasing every year (MEB, 2020). Refugee children of school age were initially educated in Temporary Education Centers (TEC). However, with the changes made later, TECs were closed over time and refugee students continued their education in public schools (MEB, 2020). Although there are some advantages for refugee students to study in public schools together with Turkish students, this situation has brought many problems with it. Studies reveal that many refugee students have language problems at schools, are not accepted and excluded by their friends, and are exposed to racism and peer bullying (Bjereld, Daneback, & Petzold, 2015; Bulut, Soysal, & Gülçiçek, 2018; Maynard et al., 2016; Strohmeier & Spiel, 2003). It is known that Syrian students in Turkey also have difficulties in terms of adaptation to Turkish culture, academic success, friendship relations, nutrition, cleanliness, and accommodation (Erdem, Kaya & Yılmaz, 2017; Sarı & Yüce, 2020; Uzun, & Bütün, 2016; Tunga, Engin & Cagiltay, 2020).

While the problems that refugee students encounter in the school environment can negatively affect their perceptions of the school, refugee students may not feel like they belong to the school unless they are resolved. Students spend a significant part of the day at school and have the opportunity to interact a lot. During this period, the characteristics of the school, the relationships between students, teacher-student relationships are important factors that can affect students' sense of belonging to the school (Ahmadi, Hassani, & Ahmadi, 2020; Topaloğlu & Aktaş, 2022; Toprakçı & Yazıcı, 2021). Therefore, the exclusion, victimization and abuse of refugee students within the school will negatively affect their attachment to the school and their sense of school belonging (Payne et al., 2003; Peguero & Jiang, 2014). School affiliation; It can be defined as students' feeling accepted, respected and supported by others in school and classroom (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). A strong sense of belonging and commitment is essential during adolescence. For many adolescents, the school environment is a primary place where they can develop feelings of commitment and membership. Encouraging interactions of peers and teachers can increase a sense of belonging. This is a critical and inevitable necessity for minority students (Booker, 2004). Maslow (1943) states that if the physiological and safety needs of the person are met, the needs of belonging will emerge, and the need for belonging must be met in order to meet the later needs.

Arranging school environments to meet the needs of students and providing environments where students can participate can be an effective factor in students' attendance at school and increasing their sense of belonging (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Uwah, McMahon & Furlow, 2008). In his study, Qinmei (2006) states that teacher-student relationships and peer relationships can significantly predict school belonging. At this point, sports activities can play an important role in increasing the sense of school belonging of refugee students. Because sportive activities not only provide physical competence and improve movement skills, but also contribute to personal enjoyment, social adaptation, personal development and social change. On the other hand, students can feel good psychologically through

sports activities (Bailey et al., 2009; Biddle, Fox, Boutcher, Faulkner, 2001; Sağın & Güllü, 2020; Wankel & Berger, 1990). Participation in sportive activities can have a positive effect, especially in the formation of an easy identity for refugee students in the school, and even refugee students can be placed in a higher social hierarchy than other refugee students at school (Grey 1992). Makarova and Herzog (2014) stated that sports activities will facilitate the adaptation of refugees and states that they can easily communicate with their peers. It can be stated that sports can play an important role in daily life for refugee children. The reason for this is that sports provide an environment where young people can express themselves more easily, form and realize their social identities more easily, and also establish an emotional intimacy with other children (Walseth, & Fasting, 2004; Fusan, 2006). In this way, it is thought that refugee children can make a significant contribution to their feelings about school. In particular, studies reveal that the sense of school belonging increases in students who do active sports, participate in school sports teams, and take part in extracurricular sports activities (Aykora & Uğraş, 2020; Arkan, 2019; Yanık, 2018).

In this context, the development of Turkish language skills of Syrian students in school sports teams through sports activities can play an important role in especially strengthening their relations with their peers and teachers in school, accelerating the adaptation process and reducing problem behaviors. In this study, it is aimed to determine how being in school sports teams with Turkish students affects the sense of school belonging of Syrian students and to analyze the process before and after joining school sports teams.

## METHOD

Explanatory sequential design, which is one of the mixed research methods, was used in this research on the school belonging of children who had to migrate to Turkey for compulsory reasons. In the exploratory sequential design, data are collected and analyzed with the appropriate quantitative data set according to the research problem. Then, there is a process that follows the collection and analysis of qualitative data according to the results of quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark 2015). Considering the integration problems experienced by refugee students in Turkey and in the world, it is assumed that the interpretation of this situation with only quantitative data results will be limited. For this reason, it was decided that it would be appropriate to add a qualitative part to the research in order to explain and elaborate the quantitative information (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2015). First of all, the school belonging scale, which constitutes the quantitative part of the research, was applied to the children living in Gaziantep and doing sports in their schools. After the results of the quantitative research, it is aimed to explain why doing sports positively affects the school belonging of children who do sports under license in their schools, their perspectives and what this means for them (Creswell, 2016; Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Students studying in secondary schools affiliated to Gaziantep National Education Directorate were included in the research. The qualifications of the students who participated in the quantitative and qualitative part of the study are shown below. Required legal permission was obtained from Akdeniz University Graduate School for this research (Ethics committee decision no: 2021-73378). In addition, permission was obtained from institutions and organizations for data collection.

Quantitative Research Group:

**Table 1.** *Qualifications of the students participating in the research*

Qualifications		f	%
Gender	Male	250	53.0
	Female	222	47.0
Grade Level	5th Grade	120	25.4
	6th Grade	96	20.3
	7th Grade	156	25.6
	8th Grade	100	33.1
Nationality	Syrian Students	264	52.5
	Turkish Students	208	47.5
License status of Syrian Students	Yes	68	25.8
	No	196	74.2
License status of Turkish Students	Yes	64	30.8
	No	144	69.2

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<b>Total</b>	472	100.0
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While 53% (n=250) of the participants in the study were male students, 47% (n=222) were female students. While 25.8% (n=68) of the 264 Syrian students were licensed students interested in any school sports branch, 74.2% were non-licensed students.

### **Qualitative Research Group**

According to the results of the quantitative research, the Syrian students who play sports as licensed constituted the qualitative sample of the research in order to examine in depth the reasons for the statistical difference between licensed Syrian students and non-licensed students interested in school sports. In this context, criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the selection of qualitative sampling. In criterion sampling, the conditions for inclusion in the study are determined by the researchers and they are included in the research sample depending on whether the selected cases comply with the sampling conditions (Marshall & Rossman 2014). In this study, licensed Syrian students who were in school teams and participated in competitions were determined as the criteria for inclusion in the sample. For this purpose, 7 Syrian students, who were determined and whose family permissions were obtained, formed the qualitative sample of the research. In order to protect the personal information of the students participating in the research, pseudonyms were given and these nicknames were used in the direct quotations shown in the qualitative findings. The qualifications of the students participating in the research are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Qualifications of Syrian Students Who Participated in the Qualitative Part of the Study

<b>Nickname</b>	<b>Branch</b>	<b>Year of Doing Sports</b>	<b>Year lived in Turkey</b>
Student 1	Handball	2	5
Student 2	Handball	2	4
Student 3	Football	3	6
Student 4	Football	1	5
Student 5	Badminton	2	4
Student 6	Athletics	2	6
Student 7	Volleyball	3	8

### **Data Collection Tools**

Quantitative data collection tool: The scale developed by Akar-Vural, Yılmaz- Özelçi, Çengel, and Gömlekçi (2013) to measure students' sense of belonging to school consists of 2 dimensions and 10 items as satisfaction at school and adherence to school rules. While determining the Syrian students in the research group, Turkish reading, writing and comprehension skills were taken into consideration. Since the Syrian students included in the study had different levels of reading, writing and understanding Turkish, help was received from teachers who knew Arabic while filling out the scale items. It was decided to perform confirmatory factor analysis for the construct validity of the measurement tool. CFA analysis results were found to be ( $\chi^2/sd=4.872$ ), (CFI=0.914), (GFI= 0.947), (NFI=0.895), (IFI= 0.915), and (RMSEA=0.084). It was concluded that these results were within acceptable reference ranges (Cokluk, Şekercioğlu & Büyüköztürk, 2016; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016) and that the construct validity was tested. The cronbach alpha value was checked for the internal reliability of the scale dimensions, and it was found that satisfaction at school was 0.753, while it was found to be 0.710 in the dimension of adherence to school rules.

Qualitative data collection tool: A semi-structured questionnaire was used in the interviews to collect data in the qualitative part of the study. Semi-structured questionnaires have a flexible structure that consists of questions specific to the subject to be examined and new questions can be asked according to the topics that arise during the interview. In this context, an 8-question form was prepared in order to determine how the participation of Syrian students engaged in school sports affects their belonging to the school. Prepared draft questions were sent to 2 faculty members who are experts in qualitative research and corrections were made after their feedback. A pilot interview was conducted with a student and the suitability of the questionnaire was tested. During the pilot interview, it was observed that the student was deficient in expressing some of his feelings. For this reason, it was decided to have a teacher who speaks Arabic in other meetings and to get support when necessary. The

interviews lasted between 22 and 35 minutes. In order to avoid data loss, the interviews were recorded with a voice recorder.

### **Analysis of Data**

**Quantitative Data Analysis:** In order to understand whether the distribution of the quantitative data set shows a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values were examined. It was seen that the skewness and kurtosis values were between + 2 and – 2 reference intervals, and it was decided to use parametric tests according to these values (George & Mallery, 2010). Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test the construct validity of the quantitative data set. In the CFA analysis, the suitability of  $\chi^2/sd$ , CFI, GFI, NFI, IFI and RMSEA values was checked. For the internal reliability of the scale, the cronbach alpha value was checked. The difference between the school belonging of Turkish and Syrian students and Syrian students who do and do not do sports was analyzed with an independent sample t-test. The effect value of the comparisons with a statistically significant difference was examined with Cohen d. While jamovi 1.8.1 was used in the analysis of the data, the AMOS 23 statistical program was used in the CFA analysis.

**Qualitative Data Analysis:** The data obtained from the qualitative part of the study were analyzed according to the thematic analysis procedures of Braun and Clarke (2006). After the written data were read repeatedly by the researchers, 15% of the data were analyzed by the researchers by creating codes independently. The researchers created a codebook by comparing the codes they obtained independently and the remaining data were analyzed. Themes were created by combining the codes obtained by the researchers with those that are close and compatible with each other. The resulting themes are clearly defined and named. Participant statements supporting the themes are given in the form of direct quotations. In the preparation of the semi-structured questionnaire, expert opinion, pilot study, direct quotations of the participants and participant confirmation were used to increase the validity and reliability of the qualitative part.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings of the research are presented both quantitatively and qualitatively. Tables are included in the quantitative findings, and a presentation supported by quotations is included in the qualitative ones.

### **1. Quantitative Findings**

The findings of the analysis of the quantitative data, on the table 3, 4 and 5 were given as scores, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis.

**Table 3.** Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis Values of Students' School Belonging Sub-Dimensions

Dimensions	N	$\bar{X}$	S.S	Skewness	Kurtosis
Satisfaction at school	472	3.64	0.77	-0.01	-0.75
Adherence to school rules	472	3.69	0.78	-0.14	0.41

**Table 4.** Comparison of School Belonging Scores of Turkish and Syrian Students

Sub-Dimensions	Nationality	n	x	ss	t (470)	p	Cohen d
Satisfaction at School	Turkish	208	4.12	0.67	14.50	0.001	1.344
	Syrian	264	3.26	0.63			
Adherence to School Rules	Turkish	208	3.96	0.65	7.13	0.001	0.661
	Syrian	264	3.47	0.79			

When Table 4 is examined, it has been determined that there is a statistically significant difference between the dimensions of satisfaction at school [ $t(470) = 14.50, p = .001$ ] and adherence to school rules [ $t(470) = 7.13, p = .001$ ]. While it was determined that the statistically significant difference between

Turkish and Syrian students in terms of school satisfaction had a large effect size of cohen d value, it was concluded that it had a medium effect on adherence to school rules (Cohen, 1988).

**Table 5.** Comparison of School Belonging Scores of Syrian Students According to their License Status

Sub-Dimensions	License Status	n	x	ss	t (262)	p	Cohen d
Satisfaction at School	Licensed	68	3.91	0.48	12.71	0.001	1.788
	Unlicensed	196	3.03	0.49			
Adherence to School Rules	Licensed	68	3.91	0.58	5.51	0.001	0.776
	Unlicensed	196	3.32	0.80			

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the dimensions of satisfaction at school [ $t(262) = 12.71, p = .001$ ] and adherence to school rules [ $t(262) = 5.51, p = .001$ ] between Syrian students who do and do not do sports as licensed. detected. It was found that the cohen d value of the statistically significant difference determined statistically in the dimension of satisfaction at school according to the sporting status of the students with Syrian origin has a large effect size, while it has been concluded that it has a medium effect in the dimension of adherence to school rules (Cohen, 1988).

## 2. Qualitative Findings

The findings of the analysis of the qualitative data, the themes of "I Feel Special", "The Effect of the Physical Education Teacher", "I love my school" and "I am in my homeland while doing sports" were determined.

**2.1. I Feel Special:** From the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that joining the school team is very important to them, they have always dreamed of joining the team, and they start to feel special when they are selected. **Student 3** used the following statements.

*"I love sports very much. I tried so hard to get my PE teacher to choose me for the team. After I joined the team, my cousins started to treat me better. My relatives always praise me. I am very happy with this situation."*

From the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that among the reasons for joining the team is the thought that their social status will increase in the school, they will feel better and their social environment will improve. **Student 4** used the following statements.

*"I was always watching the school team practices. If the teacher myself chooses me and I play in the team, everybody knows me too. Everyone would know my name. I was very happy when the teacher chose me for the team."*

From the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that they felt alone before joining the school team, that they were accepted by their friends after joining the school team, and that their social circle increased. **Student 5** used the following statements.

*"Before I joined the school team, I was a commuter from school to home. When I got home, I was spending time watching TV. I wasn't friends with anyone. Now I am participating in the training. I can spend time with my friends after school. They love me and I love them too. I feel better now."*

**2.2. Effect of Physical Education Teacher:** From the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that after joining the school team, their relations with their families, teachers and school administrators are better, they are all interested in their lessons and they feel more valuable. The most important effect on their feeling of self-worth is made by physical education teachers according to the participant statement. **Student 6** and **Student 2** used the following expressions, respectively.

*"After joining the school team, our physical education teacher became more interested in us. Thanks to our teacher, other branch teachers and administrators began to be very interested in us. They met our families. They provided us financial and moral support. When our families saw these, they gave us more importance and encouraged us to do sports."*

*"After being selected for the school team, other teachers and administrators became more interested in our lessons thanks to our physical education teacher. They help us with most of our stationery expenses. We try not to embarrass them as much as we can."*

From the expressions of Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that physical education teachers value them a lot, take care of their problems, and try to help them as much as possible after they join the school team. **Student 7** used the following statements.

*"Some of my friends in the school team used to come to training with their bikes. I used to borrow their bike and ride it whenever I had the chance. I love cycling. One day, when my teacher saw that I asked my friend for his bike, he asked to me whether I have a bike or not, I said that I did not have one. He said okay, I would bring you my own bike tomorrow. The next day, my teacher gave me his own bike. I was very happy at that moment. I felt very special."*

From the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that physical education teachers' praise and appreciation for their performance in the school team causes them to feel more special. **Student 4** used the following statements.

*"I wanted to join the school team so much, I was very happy when my teacher chose me. I never miss training so as not to embarrass my teacher. Now I am one of the best players in the team. When I score in the matches, my teacher says to me 'well done, my boy.' When he says that, I want to score more."*

**2.3. I love my school:** It is understood from the statements of the Syrian students who played in the school sports team that they did not like the school very much before they joined the school team, that they came to school mostly enforcedly, and that they came to school with pleasure after being selected for the team. **Student 1** used the following statements:

*"When I started school, I did not like school at all. I was a stranger who did not know anyone. I was very bored at school. But after I joined the school team, I made friends and started to attend training after school. I started to have good times. Now I always want to come to school."*

From the statements of the Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that they were not liked because they came from a foreign country before they joined the school team, no one became friends with them, and therefore they did not like the school. **Student 6** and **Student 5** used the following statements, respectively.

*"When I came to school for the first time, Turkish students did not become friends with me. I only had Syrian friends. I did not like school very much because Turkish students did not like me very much. But now I am friend with all of them. I spend time with them and I love my school very much."*

*"Because I am Syrian, I thought I would be excluded from the team with Turkish students. At first, I felt excluded. Because there were Turks in the team who did not like me at school and always ostracized me. However, they soon became very close friends with me at school."*

It is understood from the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team that they had a lot of trouble with Turkish students before joining the school team, that they did not understand their teachers well, so they did not want to come to school. **Student 2** used the following statements.

*"Before I joined the school team, my Turkish was not very good and I did not fully understand the teachers. I always had Syrian friends, and we spoke Arabic with them. I could not express myself because my Turkish is not very good. That's why I did not like school at all. After joining the school team, my Turkish friends are more than my Syrian friends. Since my Turkish is better by talking to them, I understand and speak everything. Now everything is easier and better."*

It is understood from the statements of Syrian students who play in the school sports team that they do not want to start school because they think that Turkish students will inflict violence on them before they start school. **Student 6** used the following statements.

*"Before I started school, some of my relatives used to say to me that they do not like you at school, the students there will beat you. I did not want to come to school either. Before I got into the school team, I was always scared. Now I know everyone and I am not afraid. I get along very well with my friends."*

**2.4. I am in my homeland while doing sports:** It is understood from the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team that they felt worthless because they came from a foreign country before they entered the school. **Student 1** used the following statements:

*"Before I joined the school team, Turkish students used to make fun of me for being Syrian. They were teasing me and wouldn't share it with me when I asked for something. They treat me like everybody else after I joined the school team. Now I do not feel like a foreigner at all."*

From the statements of the Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that they had difficulty in mingling with the Turkish students when they were first elected to the team, and that they had trouble getting themselves accepted as a part of the team. **Student 1** used the following statements:

*"When I joined the school team, at first the other students excluded me a lot. I cried a lot, they did not let me in. Now I am the team captain and my teacher says I will send you to the national team. Maybe I will go to the national team. Now they do what I say. I see myself as one of the Turkish students."*

It is understood from the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team that they completely forgot that they came from another country after joining the team, and that they felt good while doing sports. **Student 5** used the following statements.

*"We act together with our friends in the school team. We all fight for our team. I do not even think that I am Syrian during matches and training sessions."*

From the statements of the Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that they see themselves as different from other Syrian students after being included in the team, they feel important and do not feel alienated. **Student 4** used the following statements.

*"Our teacher does not allow anyone to enter the school gym room. But we can enter whenever we want. Our teacher trusts us and always stands behind us. Because my success in sports has increased, he got me into a good class and my grades are better now."*

From the statements of Syrian students playing in the school sports team, it is understood that with the advantage of being with the team, it is easier for them to mingle with other students, and they think that the distinction between them has disappeared. **Student 3** used the following statements.

*"When I am with the team, I forget that I am Syrian because our friends do not see us that way. I spend a lot of time with my friends. When we play with them, there is no difference between us."*

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the research findings, the school belonging of Syrian students is lower than that of Turkish students. This is an expected finding and there are similar results in the literature (Gökmen, 2020; Payne et al., 2003; Peguero & Jiang, 2014; Yüce, 2018). The benefits of belonging and feeling connected to school are known for adolescent mental health and well-being (Allen, Vella-Brodrick & Waters, 2016), and of course, a high level of school belonging is associated with lower depression and higher self-efficacy (Keating & Ellis, 2007). Feeling belonging to the school is more important for refugee students than other students. Because the sense of belonging to the school can help students gain control over their lives by supporting the sense of belonging to their new country (Picton & Banfield, 2020).

On the other hand, it is known that Syrian students have difficulties in adapting to school, their academic success is not at the desired level, and they encounter nutrition and cleaning problems (Bulut, Soysal & Gülççek 2018; Erdem, Kaya & Yılmaz, 2017; Kiremit, Akpınar & Akcan 2018; Uzun & Bütün, 2016). It is of course possible that these problems experienced by refugee students also affect their level of school belonging.

Similar to the results of other studies, it was determined that Syrian students did not know enough Turkish. Language proficiency is important for belonging to the school, but it is not sufficient on its own. Because for refugee students, school belonging will be facilitated only if access to a socially equitable education and full and real inclusion of their families are encouraged (Picton & Banfield, 2020). Therefore, it is known that schools are one of the first and most effective service systems for young

refugees (Keating & Ellis, 2007) and sports and music are the two areas where it is most possible to include them in school culture (Atencio, 2006; Uptin, Wright & Harwood, 2013). According to the research findings, when the school belonging levels of the Syrian students who are in the school sports team and the Syrian students who are not in the school sports teams are compared, it has been determined that there is a significant difference in favor of the Syrian students who are in the school sports teams. At the same time, it was seen that the qualitative findings also support the quantitative findings.

Interviewed students stated that when they joined the school sports team, they were excluded by other students at first. Selim: "When I first joined the school team, other students excluded me. I cried a lot, they did not take me in." Because it is very easy to include or exclude refugee students through sports. The approach of the school administration and physical education teacher is important in reinforcing the sense of "we" or "they" among all students (Walseth, 2008; Thorjussen & Sisjord, 2018). Syrian students stated that this exclusion continued for a while after they joined the school team, but over time they became a team and their school belonging increased and they became a part of the school. Student 5 used the following statements: "We act together with our friends in the school team. We all fight for our team. I do not even think that I am Syrian during matches and training sessions." They emphasized that this situation also increased their success in other courses. Student 4: "Because my success in sports has increased, our teacher got me into a good class and my grades are better now." Because, as Rizkallah (2020) emphasizes, being a member of a sports team eliminates differences and creates a unified group feeling.

The participation of Syrian students in school sports teams with Turkish students may have provided an important opportunity, especially for Syrian students. Therefore, we can say that this situation increases the school belonging of the Syrian students who are in the school sports team. As a matter of fact, increasing the welfare levels of refugees (socialization, health, wellness, etc.) through sportive activities is used as a common tool all over the world (Amara et al., 2005; Dowling, 2020; Park, Ok, 2017). Many countries in North America, Australia, and the European Union have invested heavily in sports-based intervention programs aimed at involving refugees in sports activities (Spaaij, 2019). Studies show that participation in sports plays an important role in solving social problems, gets refugee students communicate more easily with their peers and facilitates social cohesion (Jeanes, O'Connor & Alfrey, 2015; Makarova & Herzog, 2014).

Sakiz (2016) states that the fact that refugee students are seen and accepted as equal members of the school, not as needy and incapable people in schools, can be effective in school belonging. In order to achieve this, different areas should be created for refugee students to display their knowledge, values and skills at school, and individual experiences should be taken into account in order to encourage belonging to the school (Due, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2016). Physical education activities in schools can be used to promote intercultural interaction, cooperation and mutual respect (Tolgfors, 2020). Grimminger-Seidensticker and Mõhwald (2017) argue that schools have a responsibility to prepare children for peaceful life in a heterogeneous society by promoting intercultural competence. When considered in terms of Turkish students, fighting with Syrian students in the school team creates a different experience.

The research was conducted with Syrian male students, not with Syrian female students. However, the field impression of the researchers is that the participation of Syrian refugee girls in physical education and sports is low. There are no school teams for Syrian girls in the schools where the research was conducted. Lleixà and Nieva (2020) emphasize that refugee girls have a high level of participation in physical education activities at the beginning but the participation decreases as they get older, that mixed-gender groups should be formed in sports activities and that teachers should develop various strategies in order to include immigrant girls in physical education activities.

As a result, it has been determined that the school teams are effective in ensuring the belonging of the Syrian students who are included in the school sports teams, and that this effect is not only limited to the sports field, but also an important tool in achieving academic success and social cohesion. Hints

have been obtained that this effect contributes to belonging to the school, belonging to the society and belonging to the country in which one lives.

## SUGGESTIONS

In the light of the results obtained in this study; The Syrian students take part in school sports teams reveals that they increase their sense of school belonging. As a result of the qualitative interviews, it is seen that not only the sense of school belonging but also the participation of Syrian students in sports activities can prevent many psychosocial problems they experience in school. It is seen that it can contribute to creating a social circle of friends, socializing, accelerating the adaptation process, cooperation, obeying the school rules, and increasing the level of satisfaction with the school. For this reason, it is important to create sports-based environments where Syrian students in and out of school can participate together with Turkish students.

However, inclusion of Syrian students in activities within the school is likely to bring a certain number of difficulties. Especially, at the head of the known problems; communication problems, problems between Turkish and Syrian students, teachers' unwillingness to include Syrian students in activities, etc. are coming. Especially in schools where the number of Syrian students is very much, the probability of experiencing these and similar problems may be high. For this reason, providing schools and teachers with encouraging environments (award, supply of materials, etc.) of institutions (Ministry of National Education, Municipalities, etc.) can facilitate the process.

In future studies, the effects of participation in sports activities on the social integration of Syrian children can be examined from a broader perspective. During the data collection process of the study, it was observed that Syrian female students participated in school sports teams less. In a study to be conducted, the obstacles to the participation of Syrian students in sports activities can be determined. On the other hand, Syrian students can be viewed through the eyes of Turkish students in the school sports team. In this context, it can be investigated how being in the same sports environment with Turkish students, especially with Syrian students, causes a change in their feelings and thoughts.

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## Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Mülteci Öğrencilerin Okula Aidiyetlerinde Sporun Rolü

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### Özet

Bu çalışmada okul spor takımlarında Türk öğrencilerle birlikte yer alan Suriyeli öğrencilerin okul aidiyet duygularına nasıl etki ettiğinin belirlenmesi ile okul spor takımlarına katılmadan ve katıldıktan sonraki sürecin analiz edilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada karma araştırma yöntemlerinden açumlayıcı sıralı desen kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın nicel boyutunda toplam 472 Suriyeli ve Türk öğrenciye okul aidiyet ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Nicel veri setinin yapı geçerliliğinin sınanması için doğrulayıcı faktör analizi yapılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde jamovi 1.8.1 kullanılırken DFA analizinde ise AMOS 23 istatistik programı kullanılmıştır. Nitel boyutunda ise okul spor takımlarında yer alan 7 Suriyeli öğrenci ile görüşme yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın nitel bölümünden elde edilen veriler Braun ve Clarke'ın tematik analiz prosedürlerine göre analiz edilmiştir. Suriyeli öğrencilerin Türk öğrencilere kıyasla okul aidiyetleri daha düşük düzeyde çıkarken, okul spor takımında yer alan Suriyeli öğrencilerle okul spor takımlarında yer almayan Suriyeli öğrencilerin okul aidiyet düzeyleri karşılaştırıldığında ise okul spor takımlarında yer alan Suriyeli öğrenciler lehine anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Nitel görüşmelerin de bu bulguları destekler nitelikte olduğu belirlenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda Suriyeli öğrencilerin sportif faaliyetlerde yer almasının okul içerisinde yaşadıkları birçok psikososyal sorunların önüne geçebileceğini göstermektedir. Aynı zamanda spor takımları aracılığıyla Suriyeli öğrencilerin sosyal arkadaş çevresi oluşmasına, sosyalleşmesine, uyum sürecinin hızlanmasına, işbirliğine, okul kurallarına uymasına, okuldan memnuniyet düzeylerinin de artmasına katkı sağlayabileceği görülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Spor, Entegrasyon, Mülteci öğrenciler, Göçmen öğrenciler, Okul aidiyeti.



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### Önerilen Atıf

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## Extended Abstract

**Problem:** Farklı bir ülkeye göç etmek zorunda kalan mülteciler göç ettikleri topluma uyum sağlamaları ve kabul edilmeleri uzun bir zaman alabilmektedir. Bu sürecin uzamasında, göç eden insanların gittikleri ülkelerin geleneksel değer sistemlerine yönelik olarak çok az hazırlıklı veya hiç hazırlıklı olmamaları önemli bir etken olmaktadır (Almutairi, 2015). Mülteciler, çevresel ve yerleşim problemleri ile boğuşup aynı zamanda psikososyal ve sosyoekonomik problem durumlarını da çözmeye çalışırlar (Almutairi, 2015; Segal & Mayadas, 2005). Bu sürecin toplumun en zayıf ve en kırılgan üyeleri olan çocuklar için daha zorlu geçmesi ise muhtemeldir. Mülteci çocuklar göç ettikleri toplumun kültürüne uyum sağlamada zorlanabilmekte, alışma sürecinden ve göç eden gruba yönelik önyargıdan kaynaklı uzun süreli stres yaşayabilmektedir (Pumariega & Rothe, 2010).

2011 yılı itibariyle Suriye’de ortaya çıkan iç savaş neticesinde Türkiye’ye 3.5 milyonu aşkın Suriyeli mülteci göç etmek zorunda kalmıştır. Gelen mültecilerin üçte birini okul çağındaki çocuklar oluşturmaktadır. Okul çağındaki mülteci çocuklar ilk zamanlar Geçici Eğitim Merkezlerinde (GEM) eğitim almaktaydı. Ancak daha sonra yapılan değişikliklerle zaman içerisinde GEM’ler kapatılarak mülteci öğrenciler devlet okullarında eğitim-öğretimlerine devam etmişlerdir. Yapılan çalışmalar; mülteci öğrencilerin birçoğunun okullarda dil problemi yaşadığını, arkadaşları tarafından kabul görmediğini ve dışlandığını, ırkçılığa ve akran zorbalığına maruz kaldığını ortaya koymaktadır (Bjereld, Daneback & Petzold, 2015; Bulut, Soysal & Gülççek, 2018; Maynard vd., 2016; Strohmeier & Spiel, 2003, Ziaian vd., 2018).

Mülteci öğrencilerin okul ortamında karşılaştığı sorunlar özellikle onların okula yönelik algılarını olumsuz olarak etkileyebilirken, çözümlenmediği sürece mülteci öğrenciler, kendilerini okula ait hissetmeyebilirler. Öğrenciler günün önemli bir bölümünü okulda geçirmekte, çok fazla etkileşime girme fırsatı bulmaktadır. Bu süre zarfında okulun özellikleri, öğrencilerin kendi aralarındaki ilişkileri, öğretmen öğrenci ilişkileri, öğrencilerin okula ait olma duygularını etkileyebilecek önemli faktörlerdir (Ahmadi, Hassani & Ahmadi, 2020). Dolayısıyla okul içerisinde mülteci öğrencilerin dışlanmaları, mağduriyet yaşamaları, suistimal edilmeleri onların okula bağlanmalarını ve okul aidiyet duygularını olumsuz bir şekilde etkileyecektir (Payne vd., 2003; Peguero & Jiang, 2014). Okul aidiyeti; okul ve sınıf içerisinde öğrencilerin başkaları tarafından kabul görmeleri, saygı duyulmaları ve desteklendiklerini hissetmeleri şeklinde tanımlanabilir (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). Ergenlik döneminde güçlü bir aidiyet ve bağlılık duygusu büyük önem taşır. Pek çok ergen için okul ortamı, bağlılık ve üyelik duygularını geliştirebileceği birincil yerlerdir.

Okul ortamlarının öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilecek şekilde düzenlenmesi öğrencilerin katılım gösterebilecekleri ortamların sağlanması, akademik yeterlikleri yüksek düzeyde etkilemese de öğrencilerin okula devam etmelerinde ve aidiyet duygularını artırmada etkili bir faktör olabilmektedir (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Uwah, McMahon & Furlow, 2008). Qinmei, (2006) çalışmasında öğretmen-öğrenci ilişkileri ve akran ilişkileri, okula aidiyetini anlamlı olarak yordayabileceğini ifade etmektedir. Bu noktada özellikle mülteci öğrencilerin okul aidiyet duygularını artırmada sportif etkinlikler önemli bir rol oynayabilir. Çünkü sportif etkinlikler fiziksel yeterlilik kazandırması ve hareket becerilerinin geliştirilmesinin yanında aynı zamanda kişisel keyif, sosyal uyum, kişisel gelişim ile sosyal değişimde katkı sağlamaktadır. Diğer taraftan sportif faaliyetler yoluyla öğrencilerin psikolojik olarak da iyi hissetmeleri sağlanabilir (Bailey vd.,2009; Biddle, Fox, Boutcher & Faulkner, 2001; Wankel ve Berger, 1990). Özellikle mülteci öğrencilerin okul içerisinde kolay bir kimlik oluşturabilmesinde, sportif etkinliklere katılım olumlu etki edebilir, hatta mülteci öğrenciler okuldaki diğer mülteci öğrencilere göre daha yüksek bir sosyal hiyerarşide yer alabilir (Grey, 1992)

Bu bağlamda okul spor takımlarında yer alan Suriyeli öğrencilerin sportif faaliyetler yoluyla okul içerisinde Türkçe dil becerilerinin gelişmesi, özellikle okul içerisinde akranlarıyla, öğretmenleriyle ilişkilerinin güçlenmesi, uyum sürecinin hızlanması ve problem davranışların azalmasında önemli bir rol oynayabilir. Bu çalışmada da okul spor takımlarında Türk öğrencilerle birlikte yer alan Suriyeli öğrencilerin okul aidiyet duygularına nasıl etki ettiğinin belirlenmesi ile okul spor takımlarına katılmadan ve katıldıktan sonraki sürecin analiz edilmesi amaçlanmıştır.

**Yöntem:** Türkiye'ye zorunlu nedenler ile göç etmek zorunda kalmış çocukların okula aidiyetleri üzerine yapılan bu araştırmada karma araştırma yöntemlerinden açılımlı sıralı desen kullanılmıştır. Açılımlı sıralı desende araştırma problemine göre uygun nicel veri seti ile veriler toplanır ve analiz edilir. Daha sonra nicel araştırma sonuçlarına göre nitel verilerin toplanması ve çözümlenmesini takip eden bir süreç vardır (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2015). Araştırmanın nicel boyutunda toplam 472 Suriyeli ve Türk öğrenciye okul aidiyet ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Nitel boyutunda ise okul spor takımlarında yer alan 7 Suriyeli öğrenci ile görüşme yapılmıştır. Nicel veri setinin dağılımının normal dağılım gösterip göstermediğinin anlaşılması için çarpıklık ve basıklık değerlerine bakılmıştır. Çarpıklık ve basıklık değerlerinin + 2 ile - 2 referans aralıklarında olduğu ve bu değerlere göre parametrik testlerin kullanılmasına karar verilmiştir (George & Mallery, 2010). Nicel veri setinin yapı geçerliliğinin sınanması için doğrulayıcı faktör analizi yapılmıştır. DFA analizinde  $\chi^2/sd$ , CFI, GFI, NFI, IFI ve RMSEA değerlerin uygunluğuna bakılmıştır. Ölçeğin iç güvenilirliği için cronbach alpha değerine bakılmıştır. Türk ve Suriyeli öğrenciler ile spor yapan ve yapmayan Suriyeli öğrencilerin okul aidiyetleri arasındaki fark bağımsız örneklem t testi ile analiz edilmiştir. İstatistiki olarak anlamlı fark olan karşılaştırmaların etki değeri Cohen d ile incelenmiştir. Verilerin analizinde jamovi 1.8.1 kullanılırken DFA analizinde ise AMOS 23 istatistik programı kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın nitel bölümünden elde edilen veriler Braun & Clarke'ın (2006) tematik analiz prosedürlerine göre analiz edilmiştir. Yazılı doküman haline getirilmiş veriler araştırmacılar tarafından tekrar tekrar okunduktan sonra verilerin % 15'i araştırmacılar tarafından bağımsız bir şekilde kodlar oluşturularak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmacılar bağımsız olarak elde ettikleri kodları karşılaştırarak bir kod kitabı oluşturularak geri kalan verilerin analizi yapılmıştır. Araştırmacılar elde edilen kodları birbiriyle yakın ve uyumlu olanları birleştirerek temalar oluşturulmuştur. Elde edilen temalar açık bir şekilde tanımlanmış ve isimlendirilmiştir. Temaları destekleyici katılımcı ifadeleri doğrudan alıntılar şeklinde verilmiştir. Yarı yapılandırılmış soru formunun hazırlanmasında uzman görüşü, pilot çalışma, katılımcıların doğrudan alıntıları ve katılımcı teyidi işlemleri yapılarak nitel bölümün geçerlilik ve güvenilirliği artırılmaya çalışılmıştır

**Bulgular:** Suriyeli öğrencilerin Türk öğrencilere kıyasla okul aidiyetleri daha düşük düzeyde çıkarken, okul spor takımında yer alan Suriyeli öğrencilerle okul spor takımlarında yer almayan Suriyeli öğrencilerin okul aidiyet düzeyleri karşılaştırıldığında ise okul spor takımlarında yer alan Suriyeli öğrenciler lehine anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Nitel görüşmelerin de bu bulguları destekler nitelikte olduğu belirlenmiştir. Nitel verilerin analizi sonucunda "Kendimi Özel Hissediyorum", "Beden eğitimi Öğretmeninin Etkisi", "Okulumu seviyorum" ve "Spor Yaparken Yurdumdayım" temaları tespit edilmiştir.

**Sonuç ve Öneriler:** Sonuç olarak okul spor takımlarına dâhil olan Suriyeli öğrencilerin okula aidiyetlerinin sağlanmasında okul takımlarının etkili olduğu, bu etkinin sadece sportif alan ile sınırlı olmayıp akademik başarı ve sosyal uyum sağlamada da önemli bir araç olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu etkinin okula aidiyet, topluma aidiyet ve yaşadığı ülkeye aidiyet içerecek şekilde katkılarının olduğuna dair ipuçları elde edilmiştir.

Yapılan bu çalışmada elde edilen sonuçlar ışığında; Suriyeli öğrencilerin okul spor takımlarında yer almaları onların okul aidiyet duygularını arttırdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Yapılan nitel görüşmeler neticesinde sadece okul aidiyet duygusu değil aynı zamanda Suriyeli öğrencilerin sportif faaliyetlerde yer almasının okul içerisinde yaşadıkları birçok psikososyal sorunların önüne geçebileceğini göstermektedir. sosyal arkadaş çevresi oluşturmasına, sosyalleşmesine, uyum sürecinin hızlanmasına, işbirliğine, okul kurallarına uymasına, okuldan memnuniyet düzeylerinin de artmasına katkı sağlayabileceği görülmektedir. Bu nedenle okul içi ve okul dışı Suriyeli öğrencilerin Türk öğrencilerle birlikte katılabilecekleri spor temelli ortamların oluşturulması önemlidir.

Ancak okul içerisinde Suriyeli öğrencilerin yapılacak etkinliklere dahil edilmesi birtakım zorlukları da beraberinde getirmesi muhtemeldir. Özellikle bilinen sorunların başında iletişim problemleri, Türk ve Suriyeli öğrenciler arasında yaşanan sorunlar, öğretmenlerin Suriyeli öğrencileri etkinliklere dahil etmedeki isteksizliği vb. gelmektedir. Özellikle Suriyeli öğrenci sayısının fazla olduğu okullarda bu ve benzeri sorunların yaşanma ihtimali fazla olabilir. Bu nedenle okullara ve öğretmenlere kurumların (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Belediyeler vb.) teşvik edici ortamların sunulması (ödül, malzeme – materyal temini vb.) sürecin kolaylaştırılmasını sağlayabilir.

İleride yapılacak olan alıřmalarda daha geniř perspektiften bakılarak sportif etkinliklere katılımın Suriyeli ocukların toplumsal entegrasyonuna olan etkilerine bakılabilir. alıřmanın veri toplama sürecinde özellikle Suriyeli kız ğrencilerin daha az okul spor takımlarına katıldıkları grlmřtr. Yapılacak bir alıřmada Suriyeli ğrencilerin spor etkinliklerine katılımının nndeki engeller belirlenebilir. Dięer taraftan okul spor takımında yer alan Trk ğrenciler gznden Suriyeli ğrencilere bakılabilir, bu kapsamda Trk ğrencilerle zellikle aynı spor ortamında Suriyeli ğrencilerle bulunmalarının duygu ve dřncelerinde nasıl bir deęiřime yol atıęı arařtırılabilir.