

# Practices, Problems and Solution Suggestions Related to Refugee Children in Schools According to the Views of Primary School Administrators <sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Migration is one of the facts that can be considered intertwined with human existence. Some countries take the lead in receiving migrating people due to their location or level of development. Turkey is one of these countries due to its geopolitical placement. In order to harmonize migrants with the society, certain adjustments need to be made in the education system. The situation becomes even more sensitive when it comes to children with a migratory background. The administrative approach followed in schools where refugee children attend can have an impact on their adaptation process and success. In this research, it was aimed to determine the studies conducted, problems experienced and suggestions for solutions in primary schools attended by refugee children in Turkey by consulting the opinions of school administrators. A qualitative approach was followed in the research and was designed with a case study design. In case studies, research and investigations are carried out in order to address the actual situation in depth. The study group of the research consisted of school administrators, and the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to form the group. As a criterion, school administrators working in the most crowded primary schools in terms of the number of refugee children in Nevşehir were selected. A semi-structured interview form was used to collect the data. The research data was analyzed by descriptive and content analysis, categories and codes were created from the participant responses, and the reliability of the findings obtained by including quotations from the participant opinions was tried to be ensured. The results of the research show that the majority of school administrators have taken initiatives to open integration classes and solve the language problem in their schools. It is seen that refugee children are faced with problems such as enrollment, absenteeism, cultural incompatibility, inability to adapt, lack of resources, uncleanliness, lack of parental interest, etc., with the language problem being in the first place. School administrators found the activities carried out to overcome the language problem especially useful for refugee children and suggested their continuity. It is thought that organizing and participating in artistic and cultural activities will be useful in solving the problems, and in-service trainings that are well planned and implemented based on the needs will be more effective.

**Keywords:** Migration, Refugee child, School administration, School administrator, School principal



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## INTRODUCTION

Migration is a population movement that takes place within the borders of a state or by crossing an international border, regardless of its nature, cause and duration (IOM, 2015). People who move to change their place of residence are called immigrants or refugees. In the United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Legal Status of Refugees, the concept of immigrant is defined as a person who voluntarily leaves the country in which he lives in order to reach better living conditions (UN, 1951). The concept of refugee, on the other hand, refers to a person who leaves the country of citizenship to go to another country due to the threat of an individual's own, family or community safety, violence or war (Ehnholt & Yule, 2006).

There are millions of immigrants and refugees around the world who have to migrate due to wars, violence and poverty. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) states in its Global Trends report published on 18 June 2020 that there are 79.5 million people around the world who had to leave their homes for various reasons (UNHCR, 2020). According to the latest report published by the United National Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) affiliated to the UN (18.09.2019), it is stated that the total number of refugees and immigrants in Turkey has reached 5 million 678 thousand 800 people (UN, 2019). More than 90% of refugees in Turkey reside outside of refugee camps. 70% of refugees in Turkey are women and children (UNHCR, 2017).

One of the most important concepts associated with human beings is migration (Karakoç, 2011). Despite the legal borders of countries, societies today can communicate with countries in another part of the world, are affected by developments, political and intellectual movements, or can affect them (Aktaş, 2012). As a result of globalization, time and space restrictions have disappeared, the world has shrunk, and people have come closer to each other. As a result of the convergence of distances, the understanding of the nation state has weakened and international migration has emerged (Osler & Starkey, 2006). The phenomenon of migration, which has a great importance in the globalization process, causes a complete change in the political, social, cultural and economic order in the international arena. The phenomenon of migration does not only express refugee rights by countries. When the power of globalization is combined with the impact of international migration, the approach of countries to migration is not limited to refugee rights. Many states, especially European states, see migration as a threat to public safety, order and health. In mass migration events that can turn into regional crises, although the priority of many states is border security, they may ignore international conventions and international law rules to which they are parties (Czaika & De Haas, 2013).

In the historical process, Turkey has faced many mass migration movements (Ceylan & Uslu, 2019). Migration movements have generally occurred as people prefer Turkey as a transit country in order to migrate to European countries with higher welfare levels due to Turkey's location. However, in recent years, Turkey has become a target country from a transit country position due to its economic development, internal conflicts and wars in the surrounding countries. Migration movements cause cultural and economic conflicts as well as social changes and bring along various problems. With migration, new cultures emerge and different cultures come face to face. As different cultures begin to live together, some social problems arise.

With the existence of life, communities have differentiated due to many reasons (political, geographical, cultural, economic, etc.) and formed multicultural societies. Thus, it has become compulsory for different cultures to live together in a country (Doytcheva, 2009). Developed societies contain various cultures. Formations with different characteristics in a society constitute the main theme of multiculturalism (Parekh, 2002). In multicultural societies, there are two types of approaches to cultural differences. The first approach is assimilation, the second approach is multiculturalism. In assimilation, it is aimed to dissolve and destroy different cultures within the dominant culture. In the multicultural approach, cultural diversity and differences in the society are welcomed, different cultures are tried to be understood, respected, and the culture is given an opportunity to live (Polat, 2012). Multiculturalism refers to the existence of various cultures in a society. While some people see different cultures as richness, others think that their own culture will lose its essence. Migration, which has increased in recent years for various reasons in the world, requires different cultures to live together. This cultural diversity in countries necessitates changes in the education system as in every field.

Learning experiences for different students should be organized in a way that reflects students' cultures and perspectives. This need reflects the fact that learning is more effective when new ideas are linked to previous knowledge (Gay, 2004). School principals and teachers need to be knowledgeable about the social and cultural context of the learning and teaching process and the past lives of their students. Teaching should respond to the needs of students of different races, languages, religions, sects, ethnicities and cultures (Banks, 2008). Multiculturalism, which is closely related to the personal development of the individual, affects not only social life but also school life. The practice of multiculturalism brings equality of opportunity in education. Education, which is one of the areas where different identities are exposed to discrimination, is the right of all individuals (Ergin & Ermeğan, 2011).

Children of refugee families have to adopt the culture of the place they migrated to. With the migrations to Turkey in recent years, many refugee families are included in the living environment. The educational needs of the children of families who had to immigrate to Turkey, along with their other needs, should be met, just like the children living in the country they migrated to. According to Kahya (2017), refugees face all kinds of dangers in cities in their uncertain life processes where even their access to basic human rights is a problem. Refugees are among the disadvantaged groups of Turkey due to their difficult living conditions. Refugee children face great difficulties when they start school in the country they migrated to and have difficulty coping with these problems. The fact that they do not have the language skills of the society they come from, different school backgrounds and cultures make it difficult for refugee children to adapt to school (Gustavsoon & Lundgren, 2016). Refugee children face more obstacles in every sense than other children (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011).

Refugee children and youth are in the group of children at risk in the country they migrate to. Although these children have the same educational rights and responsibilities as other children in the country of origin; they lag significantly behind other children in their cognitive, social and emotional development (Eurydice Commission, 2019). In the states that open their borders to refugees who have to migrate, there is a need to make new regulations on issues such as citizenship, human rights, and education (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). As the migration process got longer, it was seen that longer-term plans needed to be made, and education was at the forefront of these plans (Topaloğlu & Çam Aktaş, 2022). Education is an important tool for immigrants to adapt to new environments and living conditions and to get rid of their past negative life experiences. Even though the measures taken or to be taken are increased to ensure that refugee children benefit from protection and education opportunities at school, there are many obstacles in front of them to benefit from education. Some of the children who came to Turkey through immigration are still not in school. Refugee children's access to education still continues to be a problem. Ensuring access to education and school attendance, reducing drop-outs, and the administration of schools attended by immigrant children are some of the topics.

Regardless of ethnic identity and culture, the educational environment should be prepared in a way that allows the individual to realize himself. The arrangement of the curriculum and learning environment in multicultural education should be such that it includes other cultures (Ergin & Ermeğan, 2011). Since no individual can be deprived of their right to education, adaptation of immigrants to the education system should be carried out as quickly as possible. The fact that many countries in the world are multicultural as a result of globalization requires focusing on providing equality of opportunity in the main objectives of education. This can only be achieved by responding to the wishes and needs of all individuals living within the borders of the country, regardless of their language, religion, race, gender, cultural background and economic level.

Access to education is a universal human right that is unrelated to people's legal status. However, access to education alone is not enough. Accessed education will be meaningful if it is a quality education. In other words, children should be given the opportunity to enroll in schools that meet their learning needs and provide them quality education and training (European Commission, 2013). Refugee children have difficulties in both accessing education and enrolling in schools that offer quality education.

While the phenomenon of migration affects all individuals participating in migration, children are the most affected. Leaving their homes in the country they migrated to, separation from their loved ones, and negative situations during migration disrupt the psychology of children. In addition, the

differences and understandings between the education level of the immigrant children in the country they come from and the education level of the host country cause negative effects on children. With the emergence of negative effects, conflict and non-acceptance problems may occur in the school environment between the students who migrated and the students of the country of destination. According to [Kaştan \(2015\)](#), adaptation problems may occur in children and adolescents exposed to migration. This situation is also reflected in the education of children, and they experience various difficulties in schools in the places they migrated.

School principals have a lot of responsibilities in the regular and trouble-free execution of educational activities in schools. Because of the coexistence of students with different characteristics (age, gender, culture, interest, perception, socio-economic status, etc.), principals and teachers may face some problems. One of the problems encountered is the problems caused by immigration to the country. Due to its geographical location, Turkey is a country that has been receiving immigration for many years. In recent years, especially the wars in the Middle East, the high influx of immigrants to western countries, and therefore Turkey being a transit country, the number of people migrating to Turkey has increased considerably ([Sarıtaş et al., 2016](#)).

It is important for educators to be culturally open-minded, open to different cultures, and culturally literate. Cultural literacy can be achieved with a comprehensive knowledge of racial groups, such as their history, social patterns, traditions, habits, family characteristics, and values ([Saklan & Erginer, 2017](#)). Both school principals and teachers of a school with refugee students or students should know very well the culture, values, customs and traditions, and family structures of refugee students. Knowing the characteristics of students can make them feel valued and help establish a positive bond with students. Thus, especially by facilitating the adaptation of refugee students to school, it can be easier to reach their educational goals and achievements.

Schools that meet the education needs of the society are a whole with school principals, teachers, students and other staff. It would be more rational to include the parts of the whole in the administration processes. According to [İşbaşı \(2000\)](#), not including the employees in the administration processes may negatively affect their perception of justice. This is one of the factors that affect the efficiency of the organization and its potential to achieve the goals. The fair and planned operation of administration processes will facilitate the school's achievement of its goals.

When the roles of teachers and school principals are strengthened in the adaptation of refugee students to the school organization, it can contribute to the achievement of schools' goals. When considered in this context, the idea that a relationship can be established between the adaptation of refugee children to the school organization and the approach of human resources at school emerges ([Altıhan, 2019](#)). Sportive activities play an important role in developing Turkish language skills, strengthening relationships with peers and teachers, especially within the school, reducing problem behaviors and accelerating the adaptation process ([Sağın et al., 2022](#)). In addition, the participation of parents in the education system is very important in reaching the educational goals of refugee children ([Trasberg & Kond, 2017](#)). The approaches of school principals in the administration of primary schools attended by refugee children also affect students' adaptation to school culture and academic success.

With this research, the studies conducted, problems experienced and suggestions for solution in primary schools attended by refugee children in Turkey was evaluated from the perspective of the school administrators. For this purpose, answers were sought to the following problems:

1. What are the opinions of school administrators regarding the studies conducted in primary schools attended by refugee children?
2. What are the opinions of school administrators regarding the problems experienced in primary schools attended by refugee children?
3. What are the suggestions for solutions of school administrators regarding the problems experienced in primary schools attended by refugee children?

## METHOD

### 1. Model of the Research

The research was designed with a qualitative approach. In qualitative research, a qualitative process is followed in which data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used, and perceptions and events are revealed in a realistic and holistic way in the natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Due to the nature of the research, it was decided that the qualitative research method was more appropriate, since it was aimed to examine a phenomenon in its entirety in depth. In the conduct of the research, the case study design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Case studies are conducted in order to investigate and examine the situation in real life (Creswell, 2013). The most basic feature of the qualitative case study is the in-depth investigation of one or more cases. In case studies, factors related to a situation (environment, individuals, events, processes, etc.) are investigated with a holistic approach and focused on how they affect the relevant situation and how they are affected by the relevant situation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). A case study is an intensive and detailed description and analysis of one or more cases (Christensen et al., 2015, 416). Based on these explanations, a case study approach was followed in this research. In the research, the general case study type, which focuses on getting an insight into an event or developing some theoretical explanations, improving and changing (Christensen et al., 2015, 417), was used as a case study design.

### 2. Participants of the Research

While determining the research group, the school administrators of the top four primary schools in terms of the number of refugee children in Nevşehir province were determined by using the criterion sampling method from purposive sampling. The data for this study were collected in the Spring Semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. Thus, seven school administrators were interviewed. Personal information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Personal information about school administrations

Code Name	Works As	Sex	Age	Professional seniority		Year of service at school
				Administration	Teaching	
A1	Vice principal	M	33	4	13	4
A2	School principal	M	51	25	2	2
A3	Vice principal	M	54	20	12	6
A4	School principal	M	52	18	14	2
A5	School principal	F	50	7	23	2
A6	Vice principal	M	49	8	18	3
A7	School principal	M	55	22	10	6

300

As can be seen from Table 1, school administrators were coded as A1, A2...A7. A total of seven school administrators were interviewed, four of whom work as school principals and three as vice principals.

In the selection of the research group, the numerical status of the refugee students studying in Nevşehir province central primary schools was determined as the basic criterion. Schools are coded as "A", "B", "C" and "D". Some numerical data of primary schools are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Information on primary schools where refugee children are the majority

School Name	Afghanistan	Syria	Iran	Iraq	Palestine	Total refugees	Total students	Percentage of refugee children
Primary School A	154	89	19	23	0	285	330	86
Primary School B	204	59	2	9	1	275	495	56
Primary School C	56	66	14	40	0	176	404	44
Primary School D	80	65	2	22	0	169	456	37

According to Table 2, almost all of the students in Primary School A, more than half of them in Primary School B, and nearly half of those in other primary schools consists of refugee children. When the refugee children are evaluated according to their nationality, it is understood that the number of Afghan children is higher.

### 3. Data Collection Tools

In the research, semi-structured interview forms developed by the researchers by taking expert opinions and finalized with pilot applications were used as data collection tool. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews. According to Merriam (2015), in the semi-structured interview technique, interviews should include open-ended questions and should consist of predetermined questions to clarify the subject. In this context, the use of semi-structured interview form was preferred in the research. Ethics Committee Approval from Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University and research permission from Nevşehir Provincial Directorate of National Education (MEM) were obtained for the research.

### 4. Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed by descriptive analysis and content analysis. The notes taken during the interview and the audio recordings were compared and the missing points were corrected; then, the answers given by the school administrators to all the questions were computerized. Categories and codes were determined in line with the answers of the school administrators. For the suitability of categories and codes, necessary arrangements were made by seeking expert opinion again. "A" coding was used for school administrators.

### 5. Validity and Reliability

At the stage of discovering the problem of the research, an interview was made with the school principal in a primary school where refugee children are concentrated. Internal validity in qualitative research depends on the fact that the determined situations are consistent with the truth and reflect the truth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In order to ensure the internal validity of the research, in other words, its credibility, long-term interaction, expert review, depth-oriented data collection, variation, and participant confirmation were made. External validity in qualitative research depends on the generalizability of the results obtained (Büyüköztürk et al., 2019). In order to ensure the external validity of the research, the studies are explained in detail. In addition, the steps followed in the research are reported in detail and clearly. In order to ensure the reliability of the research findings, quotations from the participants' opinions are included. Again, confirmation review was conducted to ensure external reliability, and consistency review was conducted to ensure internal reliability.

## FINDINGS

In this part of the research, the findings obtained from the studies conducted, problems experienced and suggestions for solutions in primary schools attended by refugee children from the perspective of school administrator are included.

### 1. Findings Regarding the Studies Conducted in Primary Schools Attended by Refugee Children According to School Administrators

The findings regarding the studies conducted in primary schools attended by refugee children from the perspective of school administrators are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The studies conducted on refugee children in primary schools

Categories	Codes	Participants	f	%
Works Done	Integration class	A1, A5, A6, A7	4	57,14
	Turkish course	A3, A4, A5	3	42,85
	IYEP	A5	1	14,28
	Stationery aid	A1	1	14,28
	No work done	A2	1	14,28
Class Placement	By age	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6	6	85,7
	According to Turkish proficiency	A7	1	14,3

As it can be seen from Table 3, four of the school administrators stated that an integration class was organized in their schools, and three of them stated that Turkish language courses supported by public education were organized to improve the Turkish language skills of refugee children. A school administrator stated that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported financial resources and stationery aid to refugee children. Another school administrator stated that no studies were conducted

on refugee children in his school. It is stated that the integration class, Turkish language course and the Education Program in Primary Schools (IYEP) opportunities are offered in the school for refugee children and that they are beneficial:

*"Public education-supported Turkish course and literacy course for refugee children were opened in our school. IYEP course was opened for children with weak Turkish and Mathematics skills. Integration classes were opened for refugee children. These studies have been very beneficial in terms of language skills and curriculum" (A5).*

Regarding the placement of refugee children in classes, five school administrators stated that they placed children in classes according to their age, and one according to their proficiency of Turkish language. School administrators also emphasized that they pay attention to equal enrollment by paying attention to the number of refugees in the branches while placing refugee children in classes. A5 and A6 stated that they placed refugee children in classes as follows:

*"We look at the ages of the refugee children who come to school, then we look at how many refugee children we have in our branches according to their nationality, that is, we enroll them equally to prevent children of the same nationality from clustering in one class, to treat our teachers fairly, and to adapt refugee children to society more quickly" (A5), (A6).*

In Table 3, it is seen that most school administrators place refugee children in classes according to their age. When refugee children started to be sent to schools, the Ministry of National Education (MEB) demanded that these children be placed in classes according to their level of Turkish proficiency, then this practice was abandoned due to peer problems and refugee children began to be placed in classes suitable for their age (MEB, 2014). One of the school administrators expressed this situation as follows:

*"When refugee children first started coming to our school, we placed them in 1st grade. Afterwards, the Ministry abandoned this practice, and now we place the incoming children in classes appropriate for their age. While we distribute the refugee children to the branches, we make sure that the number of refugee children in the classrooms is equal" (A6).*

A school administrator, on the other hand, stated that he placed refugee children in classes according to their transfer status from another school and their level of Turkish proficiency:

*"If refugee children come from other schools by transfer, we place them in the same class, if they have never studied, we place them in the class according to their age and Turkish proficiency" (A7).*

## **2. Findings Regarding the Problems Experienced in Primary Schools Attended by Refugee Students According to School Administrators**

Below are the findings related to the problems experienced in primary schools attended by refugee children.

### **2.1. The Effect of High Number of Refugee Children in Classrooms on Education Process**

Table 4 shows the findings regarding the effect of the high number of refugee children in the classrooms on education process.

**Table 4.** *The effect of the high number of refugee children in the classrooms on education process*

Categories	Codes	Participants	f	%
Negative influence	Teaching in a multigrade class atmosphere	A2, A5	2	28,56
	Other student transfers	A1, A2, A3, A4	4	57,14
	Indifference to the lesson	A4, A6, A7	3	42,85
	Discipline issues	A7	1	14,28

As seen in Table 4, all of the school administrators stated that the education process was adversely affected because refugee children were more numerous than other children in the classrooms. Two of the school administrators stated that due to the presence of refugee children in the classrooms, lessons were taught in a combined classroom atmosphere, and four of them stated that they had other students transferred to other schools. In addition, three of the school administrators emphasized the indifference of refugee children to the lesson and one of them emphasized the disciplinary problems. The remarkable

views of some participants regarding the problems experienced due to the large number of refugee children in classrooms are as follows:

*"The predominance of refugee children in the classrooms negatively affects the educational status of our school. We experience this by losing other students because refugee students are in our school. Parents of other students have their children enrolled in non-refugee schools. We give an average of 60 transfers per year, 50 of which are other students. The quality of education and training is very low" (A1).*

*"It is as if the teacher is teaching in a combined classroom, the normal curriculum is advancing in one group, and the other is teaching Turkish and reading and writing. In this case, less time is left for other students. Naturally, education is negatively affected" (A5).*

As can be understood from the statements of the school administrators, due to the difference in education level between refugee children and other children, classes are taught with different programs, similar to the combined class. This situation both wears out the teacher and reduces the level of education. It was determined that other parents, who realized that the education level of the school went backwards, transferred their children to other schools, and that the refugee children's problems such as adapting to school, discipline problems and family apathy negatively affected the education of the school.

## 2.2. The Environment's Perspective on the School Due to the Outnumber of Refugee Children in Classrooms

The findings regarding the school administrators' view of the school environment due to the large number of refugee children in the classrooms are presented in Table 5:

**Table 5.** *The school view of the environment due to the large number of refugee children in the classrooms*

Categories	Codes	Participants	f	%
Negative influence	Refugee school	A1, A2, A4, A5, A6, A7	6	85,7
	Failed school	A3, A6, A7	3	42,8
	Problematic school	A4	1	14,2
	Place to help refugee children	A5	1	14,2

According to Table 5, all of the school administrators stated that the environment's view of the school was adversely affected because the refugee children were more numerous than the other students in the classrooms. The majority of school administrators emphasized that their school is referred to as a refugee school by the people around. In addition, three school administrators stated that their schools were seen by the environment as unsuccessful schools, one school administrator as a troubled school, and one school administrator as a place to help refugee children. One of the participants, A1 expressed his views as follows:

*"The fact that refugee children are predominant in classrooms negatively affects the environment's perspective on school. As soon as the people around hear the name of the school, do you have a lot of refugee students? There are questions like this, which means the school is gaining a reputation in a negative sense. The name of our school has now started to be known as a refugee school" (A1).*

## 2.3. The Problem of Communication with Refugee Children and Their Parents and Solutions

Table 6 shows the findings regarding the communication problems of school administrators with refugee children and their parents.

**Table 6.** *Communication problems of school administrators with refugee children and their parents*

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Communication	Facing language problems	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7	7	100

As can be seen from Table 6, all of the school administrators stated that the biggest problem they had with refugee children and their parents was the language problem.

Table 7 shows the findings regarding the solutions produced by the school administrators for the solution of the language problem.

**Table 7.** Solutions produced by school administrators for language problems

Categories	Codes	Participants	f	%
Solutions	Refugee child translator in own nationality	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7	7	100
	Translation apps on the phone	A1	1	14,28
	Writing meeting or general announcements in different languages	A4	1	14,28
	Seeking help from acquaintances for the translation of refugee parents	A1, A2, A5	3	42,85
	Getting a little understanding of refugees	A3	1	14,28

According to Table 7, all school administrators stated that they use refugee students who understand the language of refugee students and their parents and speak Turkish to communicate with refugee children and their parents. One of the school administrators stated that they agreed with refugee children and their parents through translation applications on the phone, and three of them stated that they could reach an agreement by calling a friend to interpret for refugee parents. In addition, another school administrator emphasized that he solved the language problem by writing meetings and general announcements in different languages in a way that everyone could understand, and another school administrator emphasized that they were able to communicate because they began to understand refugees, a little. The remarkable statements of A1, one of the school administrators, are as follows:

*"We have a language problem with refugee children and their parents. We try to negotiate between refugee children through the translator of the child who can speak both languages, or through the translation applications on the phones or through the Turkish-speaking contacts of the refugee families. Refugee parents who come to the school are now used to it, they are looking for someone they know who speaks Turkish, we talk to that person on the phone, and then we give the phone to the parents. They translate what we say and what the parent says" (A1).*

While the school administrators stated that they tried to solve the language problem with a refugee child who speaks both languages, or when the refugee parent called someone, they know as a translator, they also emphasized that these people did not know how much of what was said and how much they could translate. However, school administrators underlined that these methods, which they found with their own efforts, are not very healthy and that there should be translators working in the schools.

#### 2.4. Adaptation of Refugee Children to School Culture

Table 8 presents the findings regarding the impact of refugee and other children's education together on the adaptation of refugee children to school culture.

**Table 8.** The effect of refugee and other children's education together on the adaptation of refugee children to school culture

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Influencing adaptation to school culture	Positive	A5	1	14,3
	Negative	A1, A2, A3, A4, A6, A7	6	85,7

As seen in Table 8, while six of the school administrators approached the effect of other children's education together with refugees on the adaptation of refugee children to school culture negatively, only one school administrator stated that it had a positive effect. School administrators attributed the reason why other children's education together with refugees did not have a positive effect on the adaptation of refugee children to school because there were too many refugee children in their schools. One of the school administrators, A1 explained this situation as follows:

*"The fact that other children are educated together with refugees at our school does not positively affect the adaptation of refugee children to the school culture. Because the large number of refugee children prevents them from socializing with other children. Refugee children form groups among themselves, there is not much interaction with other children. Even if there is an interaction, refugee children are superior in numbers, so they negatively affect other children" (A1).*

Only one school administrator stated that the education of refugees and other children together had a positive effect on the adaptation of refugee children to the school culture, and even if the refugee children did not speak Turkish, they gained positive behaviors by observing other children. The majority

of school administrators, on the other hand, underlined that they do not feel the need to mingle with other children due to the large number of refugee children, and that they play separately, group among themselves, and that refugee children affect other children negatively due to cultural differences.

### 2.5. Social Relations of Refugee Children with Other Children

Table 9 shows the findings regarding the social relations of refugee children with other children.

**Table 9.** Social relations of refugee children with other children

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Social relations	Average	A2	1	14,3
	Weak	A1, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7	6	85,7

As seen in Table 9, all but one participant from the school administrators reported that refugee children had poor social relations with other children. They emphasized that since refugee children do not know Turkish well and their cultures are different, their social relations with other children, even with refugee children other than their own, are at a low level, and they socialize among themselves according to their nationality. The opinion of a school administrator on this issue is as follows:

*"In general, among refugee children, children of the same nationality socialize among themselves, and their socialization with children of different nationalities is weak. Very few refugee children, who have been in our country for many years and speak Turkish, develop social relations with other children" (A1).*

Table 10 shows the findings regarding the activities carried out for the integration of refugee children with other children.

**Table 10.** Activities for the integration of refugee children with other children

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Activities for integration	Sports activities	A1, A2	2	28,5
	Unifying conversations	A1	1	14,3
	Cooperation with the school guidance service	A1, A3	2	28,5
	Social activities	A4, A5, A6	3	42,8
	Not doing anything	A7	1	14,3

As can be seen from Table 10, all but one participant from the school administrators reported that they carry out various activities for refugee children to socialize with other children. While some administrators stated that they did only one activity for the integration of these children, some school administrators stated that they did more than one activity. For example, A1 stated that he cooperated with the school guidance service, organized sports activities, done unifying speeches in classes or in public ceremonies, in order to integrate refugee children with other children. Two of the school administrators stated that they cooperated with the school guidance service, and three of them stated that they organized social activities at school. A school administrator expressed the activities they do at school to integrate refugee children with other children as follows:

*"We hold a bazaar at school, we involve all our students and their parents. They do different things because their food culture is different. There was a food that the Afghan people made for the bazaar, when I thought that no one would buy it, it was finished first, Afghan children always bought it. We also give tasks to refugee children at the bazaar, they make sales" (A5).*

School administrators, who said that they organize social activities for the integration of refugee children and other children, stated that they organize bazaars, cinema days, nature trips and give responsibility to all children in these activities. As seen in Table 10, it is noteworthy that only one school administrator stated that he did not do anything to bring refugee children and other children together, and that he practiced normal routine work.

### 2.6. Cultural Problems with Parents

Table 11 presents the findings on whether or not there are cultural problems with parents due to other children's education with refugee children.

**Table 11.** Whether or not they have cultural problems with parents

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Cultural problems	Experienced	A5	1	14,3
	Has not experienced	A1, A2, A3, A4, A6, A7	6	85,7

Other than one of the school administrators, the others stated that they had cultural problems among the parents due to the fact that other children were educated together with refugees. Sometimes, while refugee parents enroll their children in school, they may make requests not to allow their children to be sent to classes where refugee children are the majority. A4 expressed the problems experienced as follows:

*"We have cultural problems with parents because refugees and other children are educated together. Other parents do not want refugee children to be in school. They say that they do not have a culture of cleanliness, that they fight with their children, and that they should not sit next to each other in the classroom" (A4).*

As it can be understood from the statements of the school administrators, other parents, even refugee parents of different nationalities, express problems that will reflect on the school administration due to the different cultures of the children; they stated that they do not want their children to sit next to refugee children in the classroom and that other parents do not approve of refugee children being at school. A school administrator also underlined that he witnessed some families directing their children negatively towards refugee children due to cultural differences. A school administrator, on the other hand, stated that he did not experience a cultural problem and the reason why he did not experience it with the following words:

*"I did not have a cultural problem with the parents because the refugees and other children were educated together. Because at first I talked to all the parents, I brought an interpreter, he translated everything I said. I said "We are not going to throw, we are not going to sell (idiom) to pass this situation. This is now a reality of our country, what would we do if we were in the same situation, how would we feel if they excluded us in another country?" I stated that we should minimize this difference" (A5).*

## 2.7. Registration, Attendance and Other Administrative Procedures of Refugee Children

The findings regarding the situations experienced by school administrators during the registration process of refugee children are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12.** Problems with the registration of refugee children

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Registration	Education region registration problem	A1, A5	2	28,6
	Continuing registration	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7	7	100
	Extra correspondence	A1, A3, A4, A6, A7	5	71,4

As can be seen from Table 12, all school administrators have problems with the registration process of refugee children. Two of the school administrators stated that they had problems due to the education region, all of them had problems because the enrollment continued throughout the year, and five of them stated that after enrolling the students to the school, the family immigrated to another place unannounced, and the sending of the student registration caused extra correspondence. A school administrator expressed the problems they experienced with the student registration process as follows:

*"The families of the refugee children we enroll in the school move to another place from our city without notifying us, and there are many problems in sending the registration transfers of the refugee children because they do not register the address in the place where they move. This causes extra official correspondence and waste of time. In addition, since refugee children come to our school throughout the year, not at certain periods, we have difficulty in planning classrooms" (A6).*

Table 13 shows the findings regarding the problems faced by school administrators in the attendance process of refugee children.

**Table 13.** Problems related to the attendance process of refugee children

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Attendance	Non attendance	A1, A2, A3, A4, A6, A7	6	85,7
	Extra correspondence	A1, A3, A4, A6, A7	5	71,4
	Can't reach parents	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7	7	100

When the attendance problem among the administrative procedures experienced by school administrators is examined in Table 13, it is seen that all but one school administrator have attendance problems. The school administrator stated how he overcame the attendance problem at his school as follows:

*"We were having attendance problems, but if the child does not come to school for a total of five days in a month, the aid they receive with the support of the Red Crescent will be cut off. After we found this out, I said to my teachers that the children who did not attend should be reported as absent from the e-school immediately. We also told this to the parents of refugee children. Parents send their children to school because they fear that their aid will be cut off, and we have no attendance problem at the moment" (A5).*

As can be understood from the statement of the school administrator, children who are absent from school started to attend school when their families learned that their aid would be cut off. If the family wishes, the problem of attendance can be resolved. Due to the economic difficulties experienced by the families of refugee children who are absent, financial gain comes to the fore and they are indifferent to education. In addition, as indicated in Table 13, all of the school administrators emphasized that they had problems in reaching the parents, and five of them emphasized that the attendance problem caused extra correspondence. A school administrator summarized this situation as follows:

*"Refugee children are absent a lot, we constantly send absentee letters to their parents. They constantly change their phone number and address, we are having trouble reaching them. We can't get detailed information from the neighborhood headmen. Because they do not register with the neighborhood headmen. We write an official letter to the Provincial Immigration Administration through the Provincial National Education Directorate (NED), or we go to the Provincial Immigration Administration and sit down with the officer there and try to solve the situation and in this case, the bureaucratic part of the job tires us". (A1).*

Table 14 shows the findings regarding the problems faced by school administrators in other administrative processes of refugee children.

**Table 14.** Problems with other administrative procedures of refugee children

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Other administrative procedures	Norm planning problems	A1	1	14,3
	Discipline problems	A1, A4	2	28,6
	Communication problems	A1, A2, A4, A6, A7	5	71,4
	Cleanliness problems	A1, A3	2	28,6
	Problems with national education	A2	1	14,3
	Parents indifference	A1, A3, A4, A6	4	57,1

From Table 14, it is understood that all school administrators have problems in other administrative processes of refugee children. While the majority of school administrators stated that they had problems arising from communication problems and parental indifference; two school administrators talking about discipline and cleanliness problems; there is a school administrator who mentioned the problems with national education and the problem of norm planning. The statements of a school administrator on this subject are as follows:

*"Parents of refugee children come to our school frequently to get their children's student certificate in order to get help from various organizations. In addition, they see our school as an organization that will help and ask for help. Since the families of refugee children do not speak Turkish at school-parent union meetings, we have to have the speech translated into Arabic and Persian" (A6).*

School administrators especially drew attention to the communication and cleanliness problems, emphasized that there was more than one foreign refugee child in their school, and stated that they benefited from foreign nationals in order to translate what they said at the meetings into Arabic and Persian. However, it is not known how much of the children who translate can understand and translate what is said. School administrators emphasized that they need translators in their schools. They also stated that they had a lot of problems with the cleanliness of the school, and that refugee children polluted the usage areas of the school more because the cleaning culture was different from other children. For this reason, they underlined that cleaning materials are running out quickly at school, and that refugee children waste a lot napkins in the bathrooms.

## 2.8. Lack of Staff and Resources

Table 15 shows the school administrator' findings regarding the increase in the number of refugee children in their schools and the lack of personnel and resources.

**Table 15.** *Lack of staff and resources*

Categories	Codes	Participants	f	%
Lack of staff	Experienced problems	A1, A2, A3, A4, A6	5	71, 4
	No problems	A5, A7	2	28, 6
Lack of resources	Experienced problems	A1, A2, A3, A6	4	57, 2
	No problems	A4, A5, A7	3	42, 8

As seen in Table 15, five school administrators stated that they had a shortage of personnel due to the increase in the number of refugee children in their schools, while two of them stated that they did not have any problems in this regard. In addition, four of the school administrators stated that they had a problem of lack of resources, and three of them did not have any problems in this regard. From Table 15, it is understood that the majority of school administrators who have problems due to lack of personnel and lack of resources constitute the majority.

School administrators stated that with the increase in the number of refugee children in their schools, they need more personnel and financial resources to purchase cleaning materials due to the lack of cleaning culture of refugee children. A school administrator stated that the benefactors in the neighborhood do not need financial resources because they meet the needs of the school. Other school administrators stated that it would be healthier for the Ministry of National Education to meet the financial needs of these schools without leaving the burden of meeting the school administration. Another school administrator stated that they have problems in providing textbooks to refugee children who have transferred or come to school outside the registration period.

## 2.9. School Administrator' Previous Experience and Training Pasts on Refugee Children

Table 16 presents the findings regarding the school administrators' previous experience or training on refugee children.

**Table 16.** *School administrators' previous experience and training on refugee children*

Categories	Codes	Participants	f	%
Experience	Experienced problems	A1, A2	2	28,6
	No problems	A3, A4, A5, A6, A7	5	71,4
Training	Trained	A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A7	6	85,7
	Has not trained	A4	1	14,3

As can be seen from Table 16, it is seen that the majority of school administrators received training on refugee children before, and only one school administrator did not receive training on this subject. In addition, it is understood that two of the school administrators had an experience with refugee children, and five of them had no experience.

2.9.1. *The benefit of previous education for refugee children:* Table 17 shows whether the school administrators, who stated that they had received training for refugee children before, enabled them to find solutions to the problems they faced or not.

**Table 17.** *The solution finding status of the education received for refugee children before*

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Benefit of Education	Failure to provide solutions in any situation	A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A7	6	100

As can be seen from Table 17, six school a administrators stated that they received training of refugee children. According to Table 17, all of the school administrators who stated that they received training on this subject stated that the education they received did not produce a solution in any situation they encountered. A school administrator expressed his opinion on this subject as follows:

*"I had no experience with refugee children before, but I received an education. This training I received did not enable me to produce a solution for any problem I encountered. Maybe the trainer did not know as much as we do, in order to give these trainings, it is necessary to have experience in the field" (A5).*

School administrators stated that the training provided for refugee children remained theoretical, and emphasized the importance of training providers to be experts and experienced in the field. A school administrator said, "Maybe the person giving the education was not as knowledgeable as we are, he was only telling theoretical information, we told him about our experience and knowledge" and underlined that the people who will give the training should give practical training rather than theoretical information.

2.9.2. *The Need for training of staff in schools with refugee children and the content of this training:* Table 18 presents the findings regarding the need for education of those working in schools with refugee children.

**Table 18.** *The training needs of those working in schools with refugee children*

Category	Codes	Participants	f	%
Training Needs	All staff	A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7	7	100

As seen in Table 18, all school administrators stated that all staff working in schools with refugee children needed training. Some school administrators expressed the content of the training that should be given as follows:

*"Staff in schools with refugee children need training. All personnel should be trained and the content of the training should be related to the experiences and feelings of refugee children" (A5).*

When the statements of the school administrators were carefully examined, it was emphasized that the staff working in the schools where the refugee children were present should be given training on the "pedagogical approach, adaptation to school and Turkish education system, things to be considered in education, teaching Turkish, approach to children and their families, diseases, language education enough to communicate, emotions they experience and feel" subjects.

### **3. Findings Related to the Suggestions for Solutions by School Administrators for the Problems Experienced in Primary Schools Attended by Refugee Children**

School administrators' the suggestions for solutions the problems experienced in primary schools attended by refugee children are listed below:

- Refugee children should be enrolled in all schools, and it should be ensured that they are as few in number as possible.
- When assigning teachers and principals to schools where refugee children attend, special selection criteria should be determined for these schools.
- Schools should have translators in charge.
- Refugee children should be taken to a separate classroom when they first come to school, and should be placed in their regular classrooms after learning Turkish and literacy.
- In cooperation with the Health Directorate, refugee families should be given hygiene training several times.
- If the number of refugee students has reached 50% of the current number of the school, a second vice principal should be given regardless of the total number of students.
- The number of guidance teachers should be increased in schools where refugee children are present.
- Schools with refugee children should be supported financially and in terms of personnel, and direct funds should be allocated by the Ministry of National Education.
- Refugee children should also be transferred to the e-school system, so that they appear in the candidate registry and school administrations should be able to plan accordingly.
- Before starting school, refugee children should be given courses such as teaching Turkish, adapting to society, and adapting to culture in public education and application centers, and it should be mandatory for the families of refugee children to attend these courses. Refugee children should be allowed to start school after the education provided to them.

- Information meetings should be held every two or three months to school principals by Provincial NEDs.
- Affirmative action should be made in schools where refugee children attend, and the needs of schools should be determined every six months and tried to be met.
- The focus should not be solely on school, but the families of refugee children should be provided with economic support by finding a job for them. When the financial problems of refugee children are not resolved, it becomes difficult to achieve educational goals.

## DISCUSSION, RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the first sub-objective of this research, which was conducted to evaluate the studies conducted in primary schools attended by refugee children, the problems experienced and the suggestions for solutions from the point of school administrators, the opinions of school administrators on the studies conducted in primary schools attended by refugee children were examined. While the majority of school administrators stated that integration classes were opened in their schools, some school administrators stated that Turkish courses supported by IYEP and public education were opened. According to the research findings, school administrators find the studies conducted in schools attended by refugee children beneficial. Similarly, [Yılmaz \(2020\)](#) stated in his research that Turkish language courses have a positive effect on refugee children's language skills and school adoption. In addition, according to the research findings, it is seen that financial support is provided from UNICEF for stationery materials for refugee children. Regarding these results, it is seen that similar support provided to refugee children is mentioned in the [UNICEF \(2019\)](#) Turkey report. When the participant findings on the placement of refugee children in classes are examined, it is seen that refugee children are taken into classes according to their age. School administrators stated that after the refugee children were enrolled in school, they placed the children in classes according to their age, in line with the NED Regulation on Pre-School and Primary Education Institutions ([MEB, 2014](#)). Similarly, in [Güngör's \(2015\)](#) research, it was stated that refugee children were placed in a class appropriate for their age without determining their Turkish language level.

In the second sub-objective of the study, the opinions on the problems experienced in primary schools attended by refugee children were examined. It turned out that the biggest problem was the language problem. It is understood that the main reason why refugee children's education with other children negatively affects the education process is the language problem. Similarly, [Başar et al. \(2018\)](#), [Almadani \(2018\)](#), [Cerna \(2019\)](#) and [Bunar \(2019\)](#) also stated that the problems experienced with refugee children stem from language problems. According to school administrators, it is seen that refugee children have problems in adapting to school and class in addition to language problems. Additionally, [Aydın \(2020\)](#) examined refugee education in Turkey and Canada, drawing attention to the adaptation problem of students in Turkey. It has been stated that refugee children exhibit undisciplined behavior because they do not adapt to school and classroom, they isolate themselves from their other friends, and they group among themselves due to the large number of them. Even among refugee children, there are groupings by nationality. It was emphasized that this situation was caused by the fact that the refugee children were not evenly distributed to the schools in the region and that they constituted the majority among the students in certain schools. The problem of harmony between refugees and other children negatively affects success and reduces the level of education. [Başar et al. \(2018\)](#) similarly stated in their research that the lack of adaptation and attitudes of refugee children reduces success. The poor social relations of refugees and other children negatively affect refugee children's school adoption and academic success. Similarly, [Şimşir and Dilmaç \(2018\)](#) state that the poor social relations of refugee children negatively affect success. In their research, [Bajaj and Bartlett \(2017\)](#) and [İşigüzel and Baldık \(2019\)](#) stated that refugee children are unsuccessful according to the curriculum implemented in Turkey and that arrangements should be made. This situation reveals the necessity of revising the education system. According to [Toprakçı and Yazıcı \(2021\)](#) the language of refugee students in Turkey is not at a sufficient level, and this creates difficulties in their adaptation to social life and the education system. They state that in order to contribute to the solution of this problem, language education is given to refugee children in addition to the education curriculum in schools and temporary education centers in Turkey, as is practiced in OECD member countries, but there is still no systematic study on language education for refugees.

School administrators stated that they had problems with the registration process regarding refugee children, that the registration process continued throughout the academic year, not in a certain period, and this situation created disruptions in classroom and teacher planning. [Alkalay et al. \(2021\)](#), reaching similar results, stated that the registration process of refugee children continued throughout the year. In addition, refugee children's school attendance problems, late or no provision of course materials, disruption of classroom order due to disciplinary problems, cultural incompatibility between refugee children and other children, traumatic events experienced before and after migration, their families' perspectives on education and their economic situation can negatively affect the teaching process. In their research, [Naidoo \(2009\)](#) and [Kanu \(2008\)](#), who reached similar results with the research, emphasized that the socio-economic problems experienced by refugee children and the traumatic effects of migration due to war are factors that negatively affect their education-teaching processes.

According to the results obtained in the research, it is understood that school administrators also have problems with parents due to cultural incompatibility. It is seen that other parents have difficulties in accepting refugee children and their families, they do not want their children to receive education with refugee children, and they transfer their children to other schools. [Hek \(2005\)](#) reached similar results in his research and stated that a strong connection between the school and the parents should be established. Refugee children's different life cultures according to the country they come from and the psychological depression they experience during migration cause some problems at school. It is striking that education is secondary for refugee parents, they are not interested in school, they do not go to school very often, and because of some reservations, teachers cannot make home visits. This situation also creates an obstacle for refugee children to continue their education. Refugee children's absenteeism and the problem of not being able to reach their families cause school administrators to make additional correspondence. Similar to these results, [Saracaloğlu \(2014\)](#) found in his research that refugee children tend to be violent, that the appropriate education-teaching environment cannot be created due to the difficulties experienced by the migrating families, and that they experience adaptation problems.

According to the results of the research, the biggest obstacle in communication and cooperation of refugee children with their families is that families do not speak Turkish and constantly change their phone numbers. Similarly, [Dinler and Hacifazlıoğlu \(2020\)](#) emphasized in their research that language difference brings with it many problems for both refugees and country citizens. In addition, the teachers emphasized that since the educational levels of refugee children and other children in their classes are at different levels, they teach the lessons similar to the multigrade class. This result suggests that it would be more appropriate to include refugee children and their families in schools after their language problems are resolved. Similarly, [Wilkinson \(2010\)](#) and [Hek \(2005\)](#) stated in their research that the admission of refugee children to schools without language training causes problems in education.

Another result of the research is that school administrators experience a lack of employees and resources. School administrators, who stated that they had a lack of personnel due to the lack of a cleaning culture of refugee children, underlined the need for additional staff to be given to their schools. School administrators emphasize that schools with refugee children should not be evaluated like other schools, and they want affirmative action in terms of staff and resources.

In the third sub-problem of the research, the solutions for suggestions for the problems experienced in primary schools attended by refugee children according to the opinions of school administrators were examined. As a result of the research, the solution suggestions offered by the school administrators are; to enroll refugee children in all regions and schools, provide education to refugee families, train refugee children before sent to schools, to have a translator in refugee children's schools, to transfer refugee children to the e-school system and ensure that they appear in registration, to increase the number of counselors and give additional resources to schools where refugee children attend. [Alkalay et al. \(2021\)](#) included similar solution suggestions in their studies. All of the school administrators emphasized that they had communication problems with refugee children and their parents, they tried to solve this problem with the translator of a refugee child at school, but they did not know how much of what was said this child could translate. School administrators generally try to establish communication and cooperation with the families of refugee children by calling them. It is seen that the participants overcame the language problem by sending a voice message on WhatsApp and listening and understanding a Turkish-speaking family member, or by listening and responding to a

Turkish-speaking acquaintance of the family. The result of the research that education and psychological support to refugee families should be provided was also emphasized in the study conducted by Hek (2005). In their research, Şimşir and Dilmaç (2018) concluded that refugee children should receive language education in order to solve the communication problem, regarding the suggestion that refugee children should be admitted to schools after they are given language education.

According to the results of the research, it is seen that integration classes, public education supported language courses and İYEP are opened for refugee children in primary schools attended by refugee children. It can be stated that these practices are beneficial for refugee children's language development, adaptation to school and eliminating the deficiencies of the curriculum and should be continued. Necessary measures should be taken to ensure that UNICEF support can continue. Language problem is one of the primary problems faced by school administrators regarding refugee children. In order to solve this problem, refugee children need to receive language training, and it is considered to benefit from integration programs in order to adapt to the culture. According to the results of the research, it has been revealed that the education of refugees and other children together reduces the level of education. In addition, it is seen that the high absenteeism of refugee children, their families' indifference to education, and the fact that other children and refugee children are at different levels in terms of education program negatively affect education. Regarding these results, it can be recommended to take security measures to reduce attendance problems, to make home visits, to organize trainings for refugee families, and to take students with different levels in the curriculum to normal classes after their deficiencies are completed.

In the research, it was concluded that there are cultural problems with refugee children and parents. In this context, it is thought that it would be beneficial to implement multicultural education practices in regions where there is a high number of refugees in order to ensure cultural harmony with refugee children and parents. According to the results of the research, school administrators have problems in the registration and education planning of refugee children. Refugee children should be transferred to the e-school system in order to make a correct planning in their school enrollment, and the enrollments should be made in certain periods. Another result of the research is that refugee children and other children have poor social relations, and children are grouped according to their nationality. Regarding this result, it can be suggested to organize activities, group work, school trips and bazaars that can be done together and provide activities in order to develop social relations of refugees and other children and to prevent groupings.

In the research, it was concluded that school administrators had a shortage of staff and financial resources. Affirmative action should be taken to schools where refugee children attend, additional auxiliary personnel should be given by Provincial NEDs and additional resources should be transferred by the Ministry of National Education. Another result of the research is that although the majority of the participants received education for refugee children, the education they received did not work to find solutions to the problems they faced. It is thought that the in-service training for refugee students is given by inadequate, unequipped and distant people, the problems and events cannot be concretized, and the inability to produce solutions renders the studies ineffective. The trainings to be given for this result of the research should be better planned, cooperation with universities should be made, and focused on problem solving, motivation and increasing efficiency. In addition, for researchers, it can be suggested that a similar study be conducted with different methods, with school administrators in different provinces and education levels. In order to obtain more detailed information, the opinions of other stakeholders in schools can also be consulted.

## İlkokul Yöneticilerinin Görüşlerine Göre Okullarda Mülteci Çocuklarla İlgili Uygulamalar, Sorunlar ve Çözüm Önerileri<sup>2</sup>

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### Özet

Göç, insanın var oluşuyla birlikte ele alınabilecek gerçeklerden biridir. Konumu ya da gelişmişlik düzeyi gibi nedenlerle bazı ülkeler göç alma konusunda başı çekmektedirler. Türkiye de jeopolitik konumu nedeniyle bu ülkelerden biridir. Göçle gelen insanları toplumla uyumlu hale getirebilmek için eğitim sisteminde belirli düzenlemelere gidilmesi gerekmektedir. Konu, göçle gelen çocuklar olduğunda ise durum daha da hassaslaşmaktadır. Mülteci çocukların devam ettikleri okullarda izlenen yönetsel anlayış, çocukların uyum süreci ve başarıları üzerinde etkili olabilmektedir. Bu araştırmada, okul yöneticilerinin görüşlerine başvurularak Türkiye'deki mülteci çocukların devam ettiği ilkokullarda yapılan çalışmaların, yaşanan sorunların ve çözüm önerilerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada nitel yaklaşım izlenmiş ve durum çalışması deseni ile kurgulanmıştır. Durum çalışmalarında; gerçekte var olan durumu derinlikli bir şekilde ele almak için, araştırma ve incelemeler yapılmaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu okul yöneticileri oluşturmuş, grubun oluşturulmasında amaçlı örneklem yollarından biri olan ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Ölçüt olarak Nevşehir'deki mülteci çocuk sayısı bakımından en kalabalık ilkokullarda görevli okul yöneticileri seçilmiştir. Verilerin toplanmasında yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Araştırma verileri betimsel ve içerik analizi ile çözümlenmiş, katılımcı yanıtlarından kategori ve kodlar oluşturulmuş, katılımcı görüşlerinden alıntılara yer verilerek elde edilen bulguların güvenilirliği sağlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, okul yöneticilerinin büyük çoğunluğunun okullarında uyum sınıfları açma ve dil sorununu çözmeye yönelik girişimlerde bulduklarını göstermektedir. Mülteci çocuklarla ilgili okullarda ilk sırada dil sorunu olmak üzere; kayıt, devamsızlık, kültürel uyumsuzluk, uyum sağlayamama, kaynak eksikliği, temiz olmama, veli ilgisizliği vb. sorunlarla karşılaşıldığı görülmektedir. Okul yöneticileri mülteci çocukların özellikle dil sorununu aşabilmek için yapılan çalışmaları yararlı bularak, devamlılığını önermişlerdir. Sorunların çözümünde sanatsal ve kültürel etkinlikler düzenleme ve bu etkinliklere katılım sağlamanın yararlı olacağı, iyi planlanan ve ihtiyaçtan hareketle uygulanacak hizmet içi eğitimlerin de daha etkili olacağı düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göç, Mülteci çocuk, Okul yönetimi, Okul yöneticisi, Okul müdürü

### Önerilen Atıf

Bucak, M ve Erginer, A. (2023). İlkokul yöneticilerinin görüşlerine göre okullarda mülteci çocuklarla ilgili uygulamalar, sorunlar ve çözüm önerileri, *E-Uluslararası Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 14 (5), 296-318. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19160/e-ijer.1349045>

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## GİRİŞ

**Problem:** Göçmen, Birleşmiş Milletler Mültecilerin Hukuki Durumuna İlişkin Sözleşme’de, yaşam koşullarını iyileştirmek için kendi bağımsız iradesiyle ülkesinden ayrılan kişi olarak tanımlanmaktadır (BM, 1951). Mülteci ise bir bireyin kendisinin, ailesinin veya toplumun güvenliğinin olmaması durumunda, şiddet ya da savaş vb. nedenlerle vatandaşı olduğu ülkeden ayrılarak başka ülkelere göç eden kişiyi ifade etmektedir (Ehnholt & Yule, 2006). Göç, neredeyse insanın var oluşuyla birlikte ele alınan ve insanların yaşam ve ölüm döngüleri arasında önemli bir yere sahip olmuş bir kavramdır (Karakoç, 2011). Küreselleşen dünyanın zaman ve mekân kısıtlamalarını ortadan kaldırması, göç olgusundan muzdarip kültürler ve toplumlar için, nedeni her ne olursa olsun, nüfus hareketliliğini hızlandırmaktadır (Osler & Starkey, 2006). Bu hareketliliğin sonuçları ise politik, toplumsal, kültürel ve ekonomik değişimleri beraberinde getirmekte, göçe maruz kalan ülkeler yeni ve çözüm üreten politikalar geliştirmek durumunda kalmaktadırlar (Aktaş, 2012). Mesafelerin yaklaşması göç hareketliliğini hızlandırırken, ulus devlet anlayışını zayıflatmaktadır (Osler & Starkey, 2006).

Türkiye jeopolitik ve stratejik konumu nedeniyle tarih boyunca kitlesel göç hareketleri ile karşı karşıya kalmıştır (Ceylan & Uslu, 2019). Refah seviyesi yüksek Avrupa ülkelerine yakınlığı ve geçiş noktasında olması, Türkiye’nin tercih edilen bir ülke olmasına neden olmaktadır. Bununla birlikte sınır komşuları içindeki iç çatışmalar, gelişmişlik düzeyinin göç etme pozisyonunda olan ülkelere daha iyi olması ve diğer kültürel yakınlıklar da düşünüldüğünde Türkiye ilgi odağı bir ülke haline gelmektedir. Fakat bir araya gelen kültürel farklara sahip insanların birlikte yaşamak zorunda olmaları, bazı eğitim sorunlarının yaşanmasına neden olmaktadır. Risk altındaki çocuk grubu olarak tanımlanabilecek mülteci çocuklar ve gençler, gittikleri ülkelerde diğer çocuklarla eğitime ilişkin aynı haklara ve sorumluluklara sahip olsalar da; bilişsel, sosyal ve duygusal gelişim düzeyleri diğer çocukların gerisinde kalmaktadır (Eurydice Commission, 2019).

Mülteci öğrencilerin eğitimle ilgili karşılaştıkları sorunlar, öğretmen ve okul yöneticilerinin rollerinin güçlendirilmesi ile desteklenirse sorunların çözümü kolaylaştırılabilir (Altıhan, 2019). Mülteci çocukların eğitim hedeflerine ulaşabilmesinde ebeveynlerin eğitim sistemine katılımı, öğretmenler ve yöneticilerle yakın ilişki içinde olmaları önemli bulunmaktadır (Trasberg & Kond, 2017). Mülteci çocukların devam ettikleri ilkokulların yönetiminde okul yöneticilerinin yaklaşımları, öğrencilerin okul kültürüne uyumları ve akademik başarılarını da etkilemektedir.

**Yöntem:** Araştırmanın doğasından hareketle bir olguyu kendi bütünlüğü içinde derinlemesine inceleyebilmek için bu araştırmada nitel yaklaşım izlenmiş (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018) ve çalışma durum çalışması deseni ile kurgulanmıştır. Durum çalışmalarında; gerçekte var olan durumu derinlikli bir şekilde ele almak için, araştırma ve incelemeler yapılır (Creswell, 2013). Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu okul yöneticileri oluşturmuş, grubun oluşturulmasında amaçlı örneklem yollarından biri olan ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Ölçüt olarak Nevşehir ilinde yer alan mülteci çocuk sayısı bakımından en kalabalık ilkokullarda görevli okul yöneticileri belirlenmiştir.

Araştırmada veri toplayabilmek için, araştırmacılar tarafından yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu hazırlanarak uzman görüşü aracılığıyla geçirilmiştir. Yapılan görüşmeler yüz yüze uygulanmıştır (Merriam, 2015). Araştırmanın etik prosedürü, Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli Üniversitesi’nden Etik Kurul onayı ve Nevşehir İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü araştırma izni ile sağlanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde betimsel ve içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Görüşme sırasında tutulan notlar ses kayıtları ile eşleştirilerek, veri geçerliliği sağlanması tekrarlanmıştır. Tüm veriler işlenmek üzere bilgisayarda kayıt altına alınmıştır. Okul yöneticilerinin verdikleri yanıtlardan kategori ve kodlar oluşturulmuş, kategori ve kodların uygunluğu uzman kanısıyla geçerlendikten sonra gerçek uygulamaya geçilmiştir. Okul yöneticileri için “A” kodlaması kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın problemini keşfetme sürecinde, en çok mülteci çocuğun bulunduğu bir ilkokuldaki okul yöneticisi ile ayrıntılı bir görüşme yapılmıştır. Nitel araştırmada iç geçerliliğin sağlanabilmesi adına, belirlenen durumlar gerçekleşen doğrularla tutarlı olmalı ve gerçeği yansıtmalıdır (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Araştırmanın iç geçerliliğini sağlayabilmek için uzun süreli etkileşim, uzman incelemesi, derinlik odaklı veri toplama, çeşitleme, katılımcı teyidi yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın dış geçerliliğini sağlayabilmek için yapılmış olan çalışmalar ayrıntılı olarak incelenmiştir. Ayrıca araştırmada sürecinin tüm değişkenleri, veri toplama ve analiz etmede izlenen yollar açık bir biçimde sunulmuştur. Araştırma bulgularının güvenilirliğini sağlamak amacıyla katılımcı görüşlerinden

yararlanılmış ve görüşlerden alıntılar seçilmiştir. Yine dış güvenilirliği sağlamak için teyit incelemesi, iç güvenilirliği sağlamak içinse tutarlık incelemesi yapılmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Araştırmanın ilk alt probleminde, okul yöneticilerinin mülteci çocukların bulunduğu okullarda ne tip çalışmalar yapıldığı hakkındaki görüşleri alınmıştır. Okul yöneticilerinin büyük çoğunluğu, okullarında uyum sınıfları oluşturmayı ilk çözüm olarak görmüşlerdir. Bazıları, ilkokullarda yetiştirme ve halk eğitimi destekli Türkçe öğrenme kursları açtıklarını ifade etmişler ve bu tip eğitimlerin yarar sağladığını belirtmişlerdir. Araştırmanın ikinci alt probleminde, okul yöneticileri görüşleri doğrultusunda, mülteci çocukların bulunduğu okullarda yaşanan sorunlar incelenmiş, en büyük sorunun ikinci dil ediminin güçlüğü olduğunun altı çizilmiştir. Yöneticilere göre, yabancı bir dili dinleyip konuşamama, okuyup yazamama ve anlayamama çocukların öğrenme sürecini en olumsuz etkileyen faktörlerdir. Dil ve diğer faktörlerden dolayı okula uyum sağlayamayan mülteci çocukların, istenmeyen davranışlar sergiledikleri, çatıştıkları, sınıfın doğal öğrenme atmosferinden uzaklaştıkları ve kendi kültürleri içinde dışa kapalı izole gruplar oluşturdukları görülmektedir. Bu gruplaşmalar farklı uyruklar arasında içe kapanık özellikler göstermektedir. Bu sorunun mülteci çocukların okullara dengeli bir şekilde dağıtılmamasıyla ilgili olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Çocuklar arasındaki iletişimsel uyum problemleri akademik başarıları üzerinde olumsuz bir etki yaratmaktadır. Mülteci çocukların okula kayıt edilme işlemleri öğretim yılının tümünü kapsadığından, oluşturulan sınıflar yöneticilere ve öğretmenlere okula devam etmeme, kültür uyumsuzluğa dayalı veli iletişimsizliği gibi ek sorunlar yaratmaktadır. Türk veliler de çocuklarının mülteci çocuklarla birlikte eğitim görmelerini istememektedirler. Bu durum nakil işlemleri açısından yeni bir sorunsal trafik oluşturmaktadır. Bunun yanında okul yönetiminde karşılaşılan en büyük engel, mülteci ailelerin Türkçe iletişimde sorun yaşamaları ve iletişim numaralarını sürekli değiştirmeleridir. Okul yöneticileri mülteci çocuklarda temizlik kültürünün gelişmemesi nedeniyle yardımcı personele ihtiyaç duyulduğunu da bir sorun olarak ifade etmişlerdir. Araştırmanın üçüncü alt probleminde, okul yöneticilerinin sorunlara karşılık ürettikleri çözümler ele alınmıştır. Okul yöneticileri çözüm olarak, mülteci çocukların bölgelere ve okullara eşit dağıtılmalarını ve mülteci ailelere eğitim verilmesini işaret etmişlerdir. Ayrıca ailelerin ve mülteci çocukların okullara gönderilmeden önce dil eğitimi almaları, mülteci çocukların kayıtlı oldukları okullara çevirmen görevlendirilmesi, mülteci çocukların kayıtlarının e-okul sistemine aktarılabilmesi, psikolojik danışman ve rehber öğretmen sayısının artırılması ve mülteci çocukların devam ettiği okullara ek kaynak verilmesi sunulan diğer önerilerdendir. Araştırmanın önemli bulgularından birisi, okul yöneticilerinin mülteci çocuklara yönelik eğitim almalarına karşın, aldıkları eğitimin karşılaştıkları sorunlara çözüm üretmede işlevsel olamamasıdır. Okul yöneticileri mülteci öğrencilere yönelik olarak düzenlenen hizmet içi eğitimlerin yetersiz, donanımsız ve alana uzak kişilerce verildiğini ve bu nedenle sorunlara çözüm bulunamadığını düşünmektedirler.

**Öneriler:** Hali hazırdaki uygulamaların -İlkokullarda Yetiştirme Programı, uyum sınıfları, dil kursları gibi- dil gelişimi, okula uyum ve öğretim programı eksikliklerinin giderilmesi açısından yararlı olduğu anlaşılmıştır ve devamlılık içermesi önemlidir. Birleşmiş Milletler Çocuklara Yardım Fonu desteğinin sürdürülebilmesi sağlanmalıdır. Mülteci çocukların devam sorunlarının en aza indirilmesi için güvenlik önlemleri alınarak ev ziyaretlerinin yapılması, mülteci ailelere yönelik eğitimler verilmesi, öğretim programı açıdan farklı seviyede olan öğrencilerin kazanım eksiklikleri tamamlandıktan sonra normal sınıflarda öğrenim görebilmeleri önerilebilir. Mülteci çocuklarla ve velileriyle kültürel uyumun sağlanması için, çok kültürlü eğitim uygulamalarının hayata geçirilmesi yarar sağlayabilir. Mülteci çocukların okula kayıtlarında etkili bir planlama yapılabilmesi için e-okul sistemine aktarılmaları sağlanmalı ve kayıtların yapılacağı dönemler esnek olarak yürütülmemelidir. Mülteci çocuklarla diğer çocukların sosyal ilişkilerinin geliştirilmesi ve gruplaşmaların önüne geçilebilmesi için birlikte yapılabilecek ve kaynaşmayı sağlayıcı etkinlikler, grup çalışmaları, okul gezileri, kermesler ve diğer sanatsal ve kültürel etkinlikler düzenlenerek uyum sürecinin kolaylaştırılmasına çalışılmalıdır. Mülteci çocukların yoğun olarak buldukları okullara yardımcı personel sağlama ve kaynak artırma yoluna gidilmelidir. Okul yöneticilerine verilen eğitimler ihtiyaçlara dönük ve daha etkili tasarlanmalı ve uygulanmalıdır.

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