# The education issues of Syrian students under temporary protection status

## Sevda Dolapcioglu [iD]
Faculty of Education, Mustafa Kemal University, Hatay,
Turkey

## Yeliz Bolat
University of Cukurova, Adana, Turkey

## Abstract
When the civil war broke out in March 2011 in Syria, Syrian citizens fleeing the war began to emigrate from their country to Turkey, which led to several decisions regarding Turkey's educational policy. One such decision was to ensure that these immigrants continued their education in temporary educational centers in areas where they resided or in public or private schools. Another was the "Promoting Integration of Syrian Children into Turkish Education System" project. Despite precautionary measures, these migrations brought along many educational issues. The present study examines these problems and suggests solutions by identifying the immigrants' ongoing educational needs. This study adopted a case study approach to contribute realistic solutions to the educational problems caused by substantial migration. From the data analysis, four main themes emerged: (1) language understanding, (2) adapting to the school culture, (3) support status, and (4) offered solutions.

**Corresponding author:**
Sevda Dolapcioglu, Faculty of Education, Mustafa Kemal University, Hatay, Turkey.
Email: sdolapcioglu@mku.edu.tr

**Keywords**
Promoting Integration of Syrian Children, multicultural education, education problems, adapting to the school culture, immigrant students

## Introduction

Developments in the structures of the countries, economic and political problems, conflicts of interest among countries, civil wars, natural disasters, famine, starvation, epidemics, forced migration, and especially human rights violations have caused millions of people to leave their lands legally and illegally. Turkey has gained a status as an attractive country for migration because of its geographical, political, strategic, and cultural location and economic strength. The Syrian civil war, which began in March 2011, caused people to migrate to Turkey, which then faced one of the largest migrations in history. Due to its geographical position, Turkey is the transit route and target country of primarily Syrian refugees and refugees coming from a number of other countries (GNAT, 2018). Enforcing its "open-door policy," Turkey issued "temporary protection" status to Syrian migrants in line with international refugee and customary laws (GNAT, 2012). Since the 2000s, Turkey has experienced several developments in terms of regulating international protection areas according to EU negotiations, and because of these efforts, the "Foreigners and International Protection Act" (FIPA) was enacted in 2013. In accordance with this law, Syrian immigrants in Turkey were granted temporary protection status, which is issued when the need arises to protect people who have to leave their home countries for reasons beyond their control and whose prospects of returning to their homelands have diminished (FIPA, 2013).

In a sense, Syrians are treated as "guests" in Turkey until their country's conditions return to normal. The most significant factor for the granting of this status is the high number of refugees. In the context of this legal status, people with the same predicament are allowed to enter and exit through borders, their humanitarian needs covered, and their security ensured (GNAT, 2012).

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data for February (2019a), Turkey provides sanctuary to the largest refugee population in the world, with the aforementioned Syrian migration. As of April 2019, Syrians in Turkey have reached nearly 3.6 million (UNHCR, 2019b), and they have adapted to the country's economic environment to sustain their lives, establishing their own businesses in various sectors whether registered or nonregistered. However, social and cultural adaptation is not easy as it necessitates a longer process (Ministry of National Education (MoNE), 2019a).

Overall, 96% of the Syrians in Turkey live outside camps and in urban areas, with 70% comprising women and children (UNHCR, 2018). According to UNHCR's (2017) May 2017 data, 40% of Syrian refugee children do not attend

schools, and records show that the schooling rate in the camps is higher than in urban areas. The "Promoting Integration of Syrian Children into Turkish Education System" (PICTES) project—which aims to enable the integration of students with temporary protected status into the Turkish education system, increase their access to education, and enhance the quality of education they receive—was initiated by the Turkish MoNE in 2016 and is an ongoing project. This project aims to support the activities of MoNE in achieving the integration of Syrian children into the Turkish education system through the contract signed between MoNE and the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey as part of the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey agreement (MoNE, 2019b).

## Educational problems of immigrants

Children experience many traumatic events when their lives are disrupted by migration. Some of these include rape, abduction, child marriage, murders, and loss of contact with some family members (Boyden et al., 2002; McBrien, 2005). These traumatic experiences are at the core of educational problems (Sinclair, 2001). Moreover, problems with education can be worsened by social injustice, a lack of a sense of belonging, alienation, exclusion, differences between past and present life conditions (Gencer, 2017), social acceptance and social adaptation issues (Sezgin and Yolcu, 2016), antisocial behavior, and peer rejection (French and Conrad, 2001; McBrien, 2005). Educational problems entail the response to disrupted schooling, language capabilities at various levels, traumatic experiences, familial loss and destabilization, and cultural displacement, disconnection, and discrimination (Hattam and Every 2010; Matthews, 2008). Cultural misunderstandings may result in prejudice and discrimination and present challenges for students already dealing with an unfamiliar language and confusing cultural changes and who have to struggle to overcome the effects of negative attitudes (Kagnıcı, 2017; Olsen, 2000; Yıldırımalp et al., 2017; Yılmaz, 2015). However, according to McBrien (2005) and Hopkins (1996), the primary concern experienced by immigrant students is cultural adaptation. Another significant and worth prioritizing issue in education is students' inability in language comprehension (Aydın and Kaya, 2017; Miller et al., 2005; Brown, Miller and Mitchel, 2006), and belated cultural adaptation resulting from not being capable of understanding language (Hayward, 2017). Recognition and respect for cultural differences are important for refugee students' pursuit of academic success.

Problems with education increase when teachers fail to acquire information about students' difficulties and how these affect academic success. Education and training may reinforce a holistic participation strategy required for the socioeconomic and political integration of refugees and migrants in their host countries. The UNHCR (2019c) reported that education is an investment into the future for refugee children and youngsters as well as providing a safe place for them to fight against various uncertainties and the risk of being protected. It is a critical factor in re-establishing normality for displaced children. In emergency situations that occur

after conflicts, education is a necessary element to reconstruct societies and for socioeconomic development (Peterson, 2011; Talbot, 2015). Education is a key factor for all children and young people, including those affected by conflicts, all of whom have the right to be educated. In schools, principals, teachers, parents, and students can highlight the importance of empowering community-based local providers to forge partnerships and combine resources, forming an integrated service for immigrant families. Therefore, it is obvious for each school to partner with a minimum of one community, with the basic aim of dealing with academic, social, or family needs (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001: 11). Government and social policies that either encourage or discourage the influx of refugees from several countries have prominent roles in these people's academic achievements. All these factors influence children's access to education and opportunities (McBrien, 2005). However, Mulvey (2010), aiming to point out the effect of government policies, claimed that the symbols, discourses, and rhetorical issues accompanying policies for asylum seekers sometimes posed a threat. Such issues may cause hostile attitudes within society, and such a political environment raises important concerns in the integration of migrant groups, especially asylum seekers and refugees. Several suggestions in the literature that aim to support the academic success of refugee students include delivering social services to facilitate their adjustment; providing language instruction for them and their parents; combating discrimination; ensuring that they understand and respect cultures other than their own (Olsen, 1988); teaching them how to develop empathy and to organize social, cultural, and sporting events (Sezgin and Yolcu, 2016); and enhancing their overall growth, both socially and culturally (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006).

All educators are responsible for their awareness of certain stereotypes that young immigrants may face during and after school hours. They must develop and use evaluation scales to reflect the high expectations of these individuals and assess their improvement. These educators must also foster certain abilities in a cross-cultural manner and establish communication to create effective and nurturing learning environments. If young students want to achieve success, such environments must cover their needs together with those who experience difficulty in acquiring unfamiliar cultural aspects. All educators should also enhance students' strengths, knowledge, and cultural identities (Olsen, 1988). Education develops the skills of cultural adaptation that could help them live in peace in the future (Sinclair, 2001). These skills involve speaking the same language, language comprehension, and engaging in communication.

Education plays a critical role in restoring normality for displaced children; it is also necessary for social restructuring and socioeconomic development during emergencies that occur after conflicts (Peterson, 2011; Talbot, 2015). Education not only saves lives during emergencies but also mitigates the psychosocial effects of violence on children. Furthermore, education also provides a sense of normality, which is required to reduce the effect of displacement to individuals and all communities; it also provides a much clearer outlook for the future (Talbot, 2015). In this context, the present study aims to determine the needs of Syrian students

under temporary protection status in their schools as well as offer solutions to address their needs.

## Method

The study adopted the case study method based on the objective to thoroughly understand and analyze social phenomena. One of the most important aims of the present study is to reveal the respondents' perceptions and experiences in detail through interviews (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016: 73; Yin, 2009: 18). Throughout one academic year, the researcher conducted lengthy interviews with teachers who had Syrian students in their classes. The official permission was received from the regional institution (Provincial Directorate of National Education) so as to conduct the interviews. Additionally, the study was conducted with 10 voluntary teachers.

### Study group

In line with its research purpose, this study chose a public school and class teachers that showed the typical features of an educational setting. The participants taught one to five students who were under temporary protection status. In the academic classes, the number of students under temporary protection is given in Table 1.

All participants had professional experiences varying from 11 to 22 years. Half of them were female and the other half were male, and all were education faculty graduates. All the teachers have been trained by the school counselor to deal with students with temporary protection status. Two of the participants (K5 and K8) worked in language training courses provided by PICTES.

### Data collection tools and data gathering

Semi-structured interview forms were used as data collection tools in the present study. The interview questions were prepared by two specialists, and the content and phrasing of some questions were modified after a pilot run-through. Both experts had PhD degrees in the field of curriculum and instruction and conducted research in needs analysis and curriculum development.

The data collection process was then started, conducting face-to-face interviews and reporting data in batches throughout the semester to gather data about the respondents' processes. The data were grouped according to themes and

**Table 1.** Number and grade levels of students under temporary protection taught by participants.

| Participants (P) | P1 | P2 | P3 | P4 | P5 | P6 | P7 | P8 | P9 | P10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic class | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Number of Syrian immigrant students | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 |

underwent content analysis, a method to examine interview data; in this analysis, themes were created based on concepts (Miles and Huberman, 2015; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016).

## Findings

Study findings were reported under two main categories: educational needs and solution suggestions. Students' educational needs were grouped under three main themes—*language understanding*, *adaptation to the school culture*, and *support needs*—and under three subthemes—*academic success*, *communication*, and *negative attitudes*. The educational needs of students under temporary protection are shown in Figure 1.

### Theme: The need to understand the language

All participants considered the need to understand the language as the most important educational prerequisite of students under temporary protection (f: 10). Failure to address this need emerged as the cause of academic problems, which
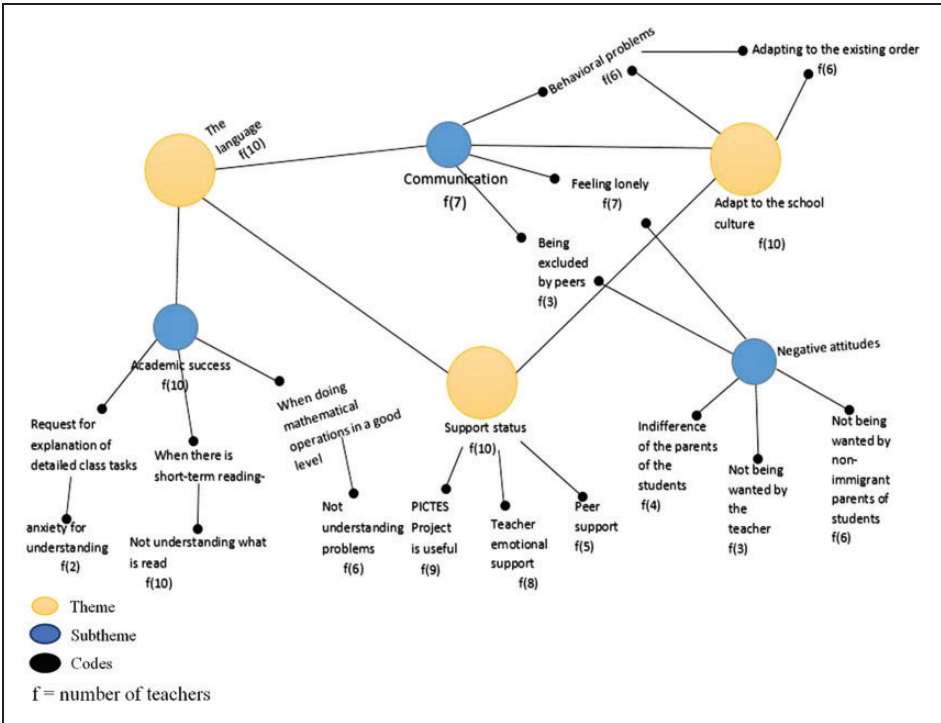


**Figure 1.** Findings on the educational needs of Syrian students under temporary protection.
f: number of teachers.

had two subthemes: academic success and establishing communication. Because understanding the language is considered the basis of expressing oneself and understanding others, it may bring along many problems involving both students under temporary protection and stakeholders in the school setting.

*Academic success.* Although students who are under temporary protection status learned reading and writing quickly (f: 10) and performed mathematical operations at a high level (f: 6), they were unable to understand what they read and what was told (f: 10) and required that intraclass tasks be explained to them in detail (f: 2). The participants stated their viewpoints on this factor as follows:

> *I face problems in understanding Turkish much. There appear inconsistencies; mostly you say, "Sit down," s/he does not sit down and wanders around because s/he does not understand you . . .. They read and write, and do four operations in mathematics but have difficulties in problem-solving or performing class tasks . . .. You have to say each task at least three times in classes.* (K3: Third-grade teacher with five students under temporary protection status)

> *The mathematics of the children is very strong. This may be because they always do the shopping outside their house . . .. They do good mathematics, but weak vocabulary gives rise to the weakness in understanding the language skills.* (K10: First-grade teacher with four students under temporary protection status)

*Establishing communication.* Another problem due to lack of understanding the language is establishing communication. The failure to understand and use the language at school results in students being isolated (f: 7), having behavior problems (f: 6), being ostracized by peers (f: 3), and being unable to address game needs (f: 4). The teachers' viewpoints on this field are as follows:

> *There is a very big behavior problem. The children cannot express themselves, and therefore, they cannot understand each other because of the language problem, and they become aggressive . . .. I think that especially when they prefer to play with Syrian students who are under the temporary protection status, this is because they can communicate in their common language.* (K7: Second-grade teacher with two students under temporary protection status)

> *We tell the other students that these are our brothers and sisters and guests . . .. Despite this, Syrian students find each other in breaks and play with each other. I mean there is an integration problem. They pull, push, and hit another friend without any reason and pull out the ornaments of the school.* (K9: First-grade teacher with one student under temporary protection status)

> *They have adaptation problems with our students. Since they are called under the name*
> *"Syrian" in public, children are affected willingly or not. Although we tell our class that*
> *they are refugees in our country because they need help, they do not play with each other.*
> (K1: Second-grade teacher with three Syrian students under temporary protection
> status)

## Theme: The need for cultural adaptation

Analyzing the needs of students under temporary protection status, another main theme that emerges is the need to adapt to the school culture. The term school culture refers to the cultural order in a school which relates to students' being able to establish good communication with their peers, supporting one another, attending their classes on a regular basis, and participating in decision-making processes in class. This may be seen as the cause of many other problems, especially in communication. In their cultural adaptation process, students were found to face problems adjusting to the existing order (f: 6); as a result, they are not wanted by the families of their peers (f: 5) and they are not wanted by their teachers (f: 3). In the status quo, half the teachers (f: 5) emphasized the lack of good manners such as proper hygiene and asking for permission (f: 4). Furthermore, they also stated that they have not received adequate support from the parents of their own students (f: 4). The teachers stated their viewpoints on this topic as follows:

> *Since they come from a different culture, their habits in terms of sitting, standing,*
> *hygiene, and playing games are completely different from ours…. [I]n fact, most of*
> *them have been living here for 4–5 years; however, they tend to play games that involve*
> *violence, and they have a continuous denial position.* (K7: Second-grade teacher with
> two students under temporary protection status)

> *The students who are under the temporary protection status must be given to the teachers*
> *who are enthusiastic for it…. They must not be given to the teachers who are unwilling*
> *and who see it as forced labor.* (K2: Fourth-grade teacher with two students under
> temporary protection status)

## Theme: Support status

As it had been anticipated that the people who come to the country and are placed under temporary protection status would bring about many problems both for themselves and for the host country's citizens, several programs have been implemented in the educational field as well as in other service systems. One such program is the PICTES project. Nearly all the teachers (f: 9) stated that they found this project useful, adding that it should be continued. One of the teachers (K10) stated that not only third and fourth graders but also first and second graders

should be included in the project. Again, teachers also stated that they received local- and national-level in-service training on "teacher emotional support" (f: 8) and that they provided "peer support" (f: 5) by informing their students. Teacher viewpoints on support status are as follows:

*We received training on how to approach the students who are under the temporary protection status in the PICTES project . . .. I think this is very useful . . .. [T]he duration of the project will be over after this period, and it should be extended.* (K3: Third-grade teacher with five students under temporary protection status)

*Their friends support them . . .. The children generally do not discriminate since they are small, if they were big, perhaps they would . . .. However, when they cannot tell what they want to their friends, then problems emerge.* (K7: Second-grade teacher with two students under temporary protection status)

*I do not discriminate between immigrant students and other students. Because these children do not have any guilt, they did not want the war . . .. Even when one forgets his/her bag somewhere, s/he becomes sad, and these people do not have any countries or belongings . . .. They do not have anything . . .. We must consider the situation in the eye of them.* (K2: Fourth-grade teacher with two students under temporary protection status)

The second group of study findings focuses on recommended solutions. Figure 2 shows the conceptual network of potential solutions.

The offered solutions are divided into two main themes: solutions intended for students under temporary protection status and solutions intended for the families. All the teachers (f: 10) agreed that Syrian students should learn Turkish as a foreign language. Some participants (f: 5) proposed that Turkish should be taught to children during preschool as a part of school adaptation training. They emphasized that students should learn to understand and speak to deal with educational content. More than half of the participants (f: 6) recommended that Turkish as a foreign language should be taught to Syrian parents as well. Nearly half of the participants (f: 4) believe that students under temporary protection status should be educated about social rules such as good hygiene, asking for permission, and others. Half the participants asserted that students under temporary protection status should be given psychological support as well (f: 5); some respondents (f: 3) recommended that they be included in social activities. More than half of the participants (f: 6) also suggested educating parents who are not refugees. All the respondents claimed that these recommendations would address the needs of those under temporary protection. Two participants highlighted the need for materials to conduct these educational activities. The teachers' viewpoints on this are as follows:

*My suggestion is to provide refugees with Turkish education as a foreign language . . . because if our purpose is to make that they are adapted to our country, firstly, education*
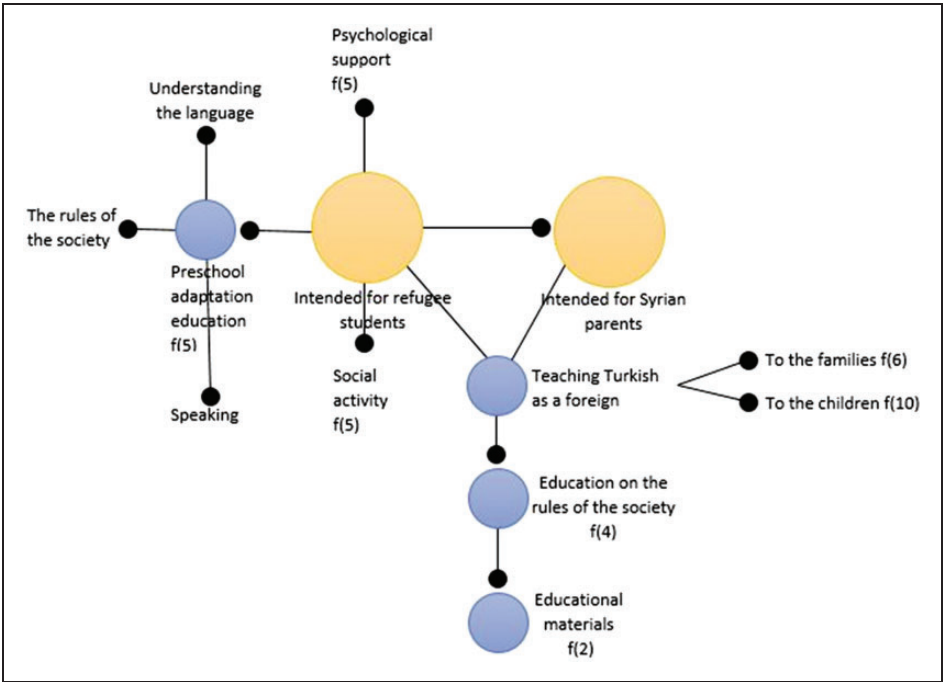
**Figure 2.** Findings on suggested solutions.
f: number of teachers.

*must be provided to families*. (K5: Third-grade teacher with four students under temporary protection status)

*Families should be provided with trainings on teaching Turkish as a foreign language and the rules of the society .... Families say that the child learns at school but speaks Arabic at home .... Children speak Arabic among themselves*. (K2: Fourth-grade teacher with two students under temporary protection status)

*The parents of the students who are not refugees must be informed. These people must understand that they are under difficult conditions, and they are in this country for this reason*. (K4: Fourth-grade teacher with two students under temporary protection status)

## Results and discussion

Both students and teachers experience many problems in education services provided to Syrian students who have migrated to our country (Turkey) and who have

been given temporary protected status because of the civil war that broke out in Syria. Schools are important places for refugee and immigrant students' security and integration (Block et al., 2014; Matthews, 2008), and those problems result in a number of necessities for the Syrian students with temporary protected status in the schools that they receive tuition. According to the results of the present study, the teachers considered the need to comprehend the language to be the source of most educational problems that the Syrian students experienced. Similarly, the principals also shared the view that the Syrian students' need to speak and comprehend Turkish should, first, be met to fully ensure those students' integration into the Turkish culture (Aydın and Kaya, 2017; Levent and Cayak, 2017). Brown et al. (2006) investigated this issue through the perspectives of Sudanese students. Based on student perceptions, the researchers found that not being able to comprehend the language does not only cause behavioral problems, such as anxiety and not being able make plans for the future but also impacts students' use of learning materials and cultural adaptation. In another study that also investigated Sudanese students' views, the students expressed that not comprehending the language negatively affected their adaptation to school, society, and the Australian culture (Miller et al., 2005). Miller (2009) interviewed eighth grade immigrant students and found that immigrant students did not understand the meaning of words and that this situation was one of the main obstacles of academic success and learning. Concerning the education problems of immigrant students, organizations, such as the Human Rights Watch (2015) and UNHCR (2019c), also underline that being able to comprehend language is a necessity for migrant students.

Language barriers can cause children to be excluded from other children and alienated in the school environment, and it can also cause children to turn in on themselves or behave aggressively since they are not able to express themselves (Yohani, 2010). Similarly, we found that the teachers believed that the problems relating to not comprehending the language led to language and behavioral problems and decreased academic performance. Different studies reported that principals shared the view that refugee students were unsuccessful in schools due to not being proficient in language (Özer et al., 2017) and those students' communication with their peers was negatively affected by that (Aydın and Kaya, 2017). Gün and Baldık (2017) interviewed Syrian students studying in public schools and found that those students had problems with Turkish students in the school and that they were made fun of due to their poor academic performance.

Another need which was identified in this study was "adaptation to school culture." It was concluded that the students experienced difficulties in adapting to the existing culture during the process of cultural adaptation. Not being able to follow orders resulted in behavioral problems. It was found that incidents, such as not being wanted by peers' families and teachers, took place because of such behaviors. In the current order, half of the teachers specifically highlighted the lack of hygiene and etiquette, such as not asking for permission. Moreover, the students expressed that they were not supported enough by their parents.

According to Aydın and Kaya (2017), who, similarly, analyzed problems relating to the process of cultural adaptation, Syria and Turkey are two very different countries with many important cultural, societal, and historical differences which are inevitably reflected in their education systems and curricula. For example, older boys and girls study in separate, gender-differentiated schools in Syria, while both genders can attend the same school in Turkey. These differences further decrease the likelihood that the children who have previously received education based on the Syrian curriculum can adapt to and function in the Turkish society. In another study that consulted pre-service teachers' opinions, it was found that Syrian refuge children's integration to the national education system was important; however, the education system's philosophy lacked in terms of multiculturalism and integration goals (Aydın et al., 2019). In contrast, Hayward (2017) noted that the refugees who had lost their rights, such as human rights, respect, security, and status, experienced psychological traumas due to cultural adaptation problems. Moreover, according to Hayward (2017), it should be expected that recent refugees—who abruptly join cultures very different to their own culture without any adaptation training—will experience more problems in understanding the new society's culture and language. According to McBrien (2005) and Hopkins (1996), the cultural adaptation process is the most significant problem among the problems experienced by refugee children. Clearly, recognizing and respecting cultural differences is important to refugee students' academic success. Structural and individual efforts at welcoming refugee students are needed to prevent them from becoming isolated (McBrien, 2005; Zhou and Bankston, 2000). It should be noted that supporting immigrants' cultural activities can help them feel at home in a new country (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006).

Another finding of the present study was the existence of **the need for support**. There are three types of support necessary: the continuation of the PICTES project, teachers' emotional support, and peer support. The teachers who participated in this study explained that they found the PICTES project beneficial and added that it should be continued. Moreover, they also expressed that there was a need for teacher training on this issue through local and general in-service training activities. There is a need for further educational reforms and projects in addition to the PICTES project, which has been developed to find solutions to the problems of the students with temporary protected status in Turkey. Providing help and support to teachers will contribute to solving the problems Syrian students with temporary protected status face at school. Since the existence of Syrian immigrants in Turkey requires long-term economic, social, and political support, urgent support should be provided through an embracing government policy, especially in terms of education, health, and shelter needs (Icduygu and Şimşek, 2016). There is also a need to improve the support that is readily offered. For example, the official procedures of enrolling children of Syrian refugees in the public school regulation system are not clear (Icduygu and Şimşek, 2016). The fear of being marginalized because of problems relating to not being able to comprehend the language decreases the rates of university enrolment (Hayward, 2017). Similarly, another

study, which consulted principals' and teachers' opinions, found that crowded classes, economic situation of schools, and lack of materials for teaching Turkish (Bozkırlı et al., 2018) were barriers limiting the rates of benefiting from governmental support.

In terms of psychological–sociological support issue relating to behavioral problems in this study, the teachers stated that **parents who are not refugees should receive training** with regard to social exclusion. Similar to the findings of the present study, Hek (2005) interviewed refugee children and identified that children need three things to be successful in schools and adapt to school environments. The first need is that children should have expert teachers who can speak the language that those children speak; the second need is that those children should receive support from their friends and peers; and the third need is that schools should have an attitude that would enable refugee children to feel secure. According to Aydın and Kaya (2017), principals and teachers should receive training to provide psychological support to students who have experienced traumas and/or depression because of war or immigration. According to the authors, in spite of positive national regulations and practices, priority should be given to participation in official and higher education programs, lack of knowledge with regard to educational options available, and making necessary spending for education. In addition, if experts responsible for educating those individuals do not develop awareness of what triggers and causes traumas, then, this situation can cause extra stress (Hayward, 2017). This situation can cause those children to be excluded, and such exclusion can result in behavioral problems, and further, such behavioral problems can result in students' not adopting the norms of the school culture. One of the reasons for experiencing problems adapting to the school culture is the fact that the previous school culture they adopted is different from the current one. There are Syrian principals and teachers at the preparation camps attended by some students. In such camps, the attitudes of Syrian teachers are stricter than Turkish ones. Moreover, the Syrian school staff also does not obey the rules of hygiene themselves (Bozkırlı et al., 2018). Those rules are the main components of the school culture.

The teachers in the present study suggested offering Syrian students and their parents Turkish as a foreign language classes and training on social norms as a solution. Moreover, the need to support the students with temporary protected status through social activities and psychological help is another finding of this study. Half of the participants suggested that adaptation training should be provided to those students before they start their school education. The teachers underlined that learning outcomes such as comprehension, speaking, and social norms should be sought as part of such adaptation training. The need for teaching materials in providing quality education is another finding that emerged in this study. The suggestions offered in studies conducted in Turkey and other international contexts are similar to the ones offered in the present study. According to Hayward (2017), one of the strategies that would facilitate language comprehension is to support the refugees who have lost their power and self-confidence by

creating a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom. If the teacher ensures a classroom culture that can respond to those students' individual needs, then their language learning will take place faster. Language problems are significant barriers for most refugee children attending schools (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006). Additionally, members of society have made similar suggestions with regards to this issue. Through a survey with 3500 Australian refugees coming from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somali, Van Tubergen (2010) highlighted that those who wanted to stay in the country the most and who had received adaptation training were able to better understand the language. Dorman (2014) stated that non-governmental organizations should work with the Public Education Centers to provide Syrian children and adults with certified Turkish language courses and that social activities should be organized in streets and public areas to facilitate the communication and interaction between Syrians and Turks. Özer et al. (2017), conversely, remarked the need to provide refugee students with Turkish language support and proposed a flexible preparation year prior to their placement in schools to support their language skills.

To conclude, stakeholders must prioritize addressing Syrian students' requirement to understand the Turkish language. This would help with the students adapting to school culture, solving their problems with establishing communication, and directly affecting their academic success. To enable teachers to help these students, ongoing projects must be made sustainable, new projects must be implemented, and in-service trainings should be conducted.

## ORCID iD

Sevda Dolapcioglu ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2707-1744

## References

Aydin H and Kaya Y (2017) Educational needs and barriers for Syrian refugee students in Turkey: A qualitative case study. *Intercultural Education* 28(5): 456–473.

Aydin H, Gundogdu M and Akgul A (2019) Integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Understanding the educators' perception. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 19(1): 1–12.

Block K, Cross S, Riggs E, et al. (2014) Supporting schools to create an inclusive environment for refugee students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 18(12): 1337–1355.

Bosswick W and Heckmann F (2006) *Integration of Migrants: Contribution of Local and Regional Authorities*. Dublin, Ireland: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Boyden J, de Berry J, Feeny T, et al. (2002) *Children affected by conflict in South Asia: A review of trends and issues identified through secondary research*. Refugee Studies Centre, RSC Working Paper No. 7, University of Oxford. Available at: www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/PDFs/workingpaper7.pdf (accessed 15 September 2018).

Bozkırlı KC, Er O and Alyilmaz S (2018) Teacher opinions based evaluation of problems in Turkish instruction to Syrians. *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 3(2): 130–147.

Brown J, Miller J and Mitchell J (2006) Interrupted schooling and the acquisition of literacy: Experiences of Sudanese refugees in Victorian secondary schools. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 29(2): 150.

Dorman S (2014) Educational needs assessment for urban Syrian Refugees in Turkey. Available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/42946 (accessed 31 March 2018).

FIPA (2013) *Law for Foreigners and International Protection*. Ankara, Turkey: Ministry of Interior. General Directorate of Immigration Publications, Publication No: 3.

French DC and Conrad J (2001) School dropout as predicted by peer rejection and anti-social behavior. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 11: 225–244.

Gencer TE (2017) An assessment of the relationship between migration and education: The educational needs of the Syrian children and the difficulties they faced during the schooling process. *International Social Research Journal* 10(54): 838–851.

GNAT (2012) Review report on the tent cities of the native residents of Syrian citizens. Available at: www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/insanhaklari/docs/2012 (accessed 20 February 2018).

GNAT (2018) Migration and adaption report. Available at: www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/insanhaklari/docs/2018/goc_ve_uyum_raporu.pdf (accessed 7 May 2019).

Gün M and Baldik Y (2017) Training services for Syrian refugee entertained out of the camp in Turkey (Kayseri sample). *Route Educational and Social Science Journal* 4(2): 287–299.

Hattam R and Every D (2010) Teaching in fractured classrooms: Refugee education, public culture, community and ethics. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 13(4): 409–424.

Hayward M (2017) Teaching as a primary therapeutic intervention for learners from refugee backgrounds. *Intercultural Education* 28(2): 165–181.

Hek R (2005) The role of education in the settlement of young refugees in the UK: The experiences of young refugees. *Practice* 17(3): 157–171.

Hopkins MC (1996) *Braving a New World: Cambodian (Khmer) Refugees in an American City*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.

Human Rights Watch (2015) When I picture my future, I see nothing – Barriers to education for Syrian refugee children in Turkey. Available at: www.madde14.org/images/a/a1/HRWSuriyeMulteciCocukEgitim2015.pdf (accessed 17 February 2018).

Icduygu A and Simsek D (2016) Syrian refugees in Turkey: Towards integration policies. *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 15(3): 59–69.

Kagnıcı DY (2017) School counselors' roles and responsibilities in cultural adaptation process of Syrian refugee children. *Elementary Education Online* 16(4): 1768–1776.

Levent F and Cayak S (2017) School administrators' views on Syrian students' education in Turkey. *Hasan Ali Yücel Journal of Education* 14(1): 21–46.

Matthews J (2008) Schooling and settlement: Refugee education in Australia. *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 18(1): 31–45.

McBrien JL (2005) Educational needs and barriers for refugee students in the United States: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research* 75(3): 329–336.

Miles MB and Huberman AM (2015) *Genisletilmis bir kaynak kitap: Nitel veri analizi* (Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook). Translated by Altun SA and Ersoy A. Ankara, Turkey: Pegem Akademi Publishing.

Miller J (2009) Teaching refugee learners with interrupted education in science: Vocabulary, literacy and pedagogy. *International Journal of Science Education* 31(4): 571–592.

Miller J, Mitchell J and Brown J (2005) African refugees with interrupted schooling in the high school mainstream: Dilemmas for teachers. *Prospect: An Australian Journal of TESOL* 20(2): 19–33.

MoNE (2019a) Guide book for guidance services for individuals under temporary protection status. General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services. Ankara. Available at: www.orgm.meb.gov.tr/www/gecici-koruma-statusundeki-bireylere-yonelik-hazirlanan-rehberlik-hizmetleri-ve-ozel-egitim-hizmetleri-kilavuz-kitaplarinin-arapca-basimlari-yapildi/icerik/1013 (accessed 20 April 2019).

MoNE (2019b) Suriyeli Çocukların Türk Eğitim Sistemine Entegrasyonunun Desteklenmesi [Supporting the integration of Syrian children into the Turkish educational system]. Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Genel Müdürlüğü [Lifelong Learning Directorate]. Ankara. Available at: www.pictes.meb.gov.tr/www/projemiz/icerik/36 (accessed 25 April 2019).

Mulvey G (2010) When policy creates politics: The problematizing of immigration and the consequences for refugee integration in the UK. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23(4): 437–462.

Olsen L (1988) Crossing the schoolhouse border: Immigrant children in California. *Phi Delta Kappan* 70: 211–218.

Olsen L (2000) Learning English and learning America: Immigrants in the eye of a storm. *Theory into Practice* 39: 196–202.

Özer YY, Komsuoglu A and Atesok ZO (2017) One common future, two education systems: The case of Syrian children of Istanbul. *European Education* 49: 114–132.

Peterson SD (2011) Conflict, education and displacement. *Conflict and Education: An Intedisciplinary Journal* 1(1): 1–5.

Sezgin AA and Yolcu T (2016) Social cohesion and social acceptance process of incoming internatıonal students. *Humanitas* 4(7): 417–436.

Sinclair M (2001) *Education in emergencies*. In: Crisp J, Talbot C and Cipollone DB (eds) *Learning for a future: Refugee education in developing countries*. Lausanne, Switzerland: United Nations Publications, pp.1–84.

Suárez-Orozco C and Suárez-Orozco MM (2001) *Children of Immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Talbot C (2015) Education in conflict emergencies in light of the post-2015 MDGs and EFA agendas. Available at: www.norrag.org/fileadmin/Working_Papers/Education_in_con flict_emergencies_Talbot.pdf (accessed 15 February 2018).

UNHCR (2017) Refugees' Right to Education. Available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/57330 (accessed 05 February 2018).

UNHCR (2018) Turkey operational final report. Available at: www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-con tent/uploads/sites/14/2019/02/UNHCR-Turkey-Operational-Update-November-2018-Final.pdf (accessed 18 April 2019).

UNHCR (2019a) UNHCR statistics Turkey. Available at: www.unhcr.org/tr/unhcr-turkiye-istatistikleri (accessed 20 April 2019).

UNHCR (2019b) *Syria regional refugee response Turkey*. Available at: www.unhcr.org/tr/unhcr-turkiye-istatistikleri (accessed 12 April 2019).

UNHCR (2019c) UNHCR global appeal 2018–2019. Available at: www.unhcr.org/publica tions/fundraising/5a0c05027/unhcr-global-appeal-2018-2019-full-report.html (accessed 15 April 2019).

Van Tubergen F (2010) Determinants of second language proficiency among refugees in the Netherlands. *Social Forces* 89(2): 515–534.

Yıldırım A and Şimşek H (2016) *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri [Qualitative Research Methods in Social Sciences]*. Ankara, Turkey: Seçkin Publications.

Yıldırımalp S, İslamoğlu E and Iyem C (2017) A study on the social acceptance and compliance process of Syrian refugees. *Bilgi* 35: 107–126.

Yılmaz A (2015) International migration and Turkey: The rights of the child migrants and asylum-seeking families in Turkey and suggestıons or better practices. *Journal of the Academic Perspective* 49: 475–493.

Yin RK (2009) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Applied Social Research Methods)*. London, UK and Singapore: Sage.

Yohani S (2010) Nurturing hope in refugee children during early years of post-war adjustment. *Children and Youth Services Review* 32(6): 865–873.

Zhou M and Bankston CL III (2000) The biculturation of the Vietnamese student. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education* 152: 1–7.