

Educational Problems of Immigrant Students¹

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 10

Special Issue: 1

Month: August

Year: 2022

E-ISSN: 2582-1334

Received: 03.05.2022

Accepted: 25.07.2022

Published: 18.08.2022

Citation:

Karadaş, Halil.
“Educational Problems
of Immigrant Students.”
*Shanlax International
Journal of Education*,
vol. 10, no. S1, 2022,
pp. 64–78

DOI:

[https://doi.org/10.34293/
education.v10iS1-Aug.5183](https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v10iS1-Aug.5183)



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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the problems that immigrant students experience during their education. Mardin where Syrian immigrants live in intense numbers was chosen as the study group of this study. In this context, the study group of this research consists of immigrant students who receive their education in public schools in Midyat, Mardin and teachers who witness the problems of these students' problems closely. The data related to this study were obtained from 35 participants who participated in this study willingly in 2021-2022 school year. 20 of the participants were students and the other 15 of the participants were teachers. The problems analyzed within this study were put forth by using case study design from qualitative research methodologies. The data of the research were acquired by means of a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. In the interviews carried out with the participants, the data were collected by voice recording, interviewing in person and making notes of participants' dialogues by phone. The findings of the research were put forth by getting themes and categories, which is done by analyzing the data of the research by means of content analysis method. In the light of acquired findings and results, various suggestions were proposed in relation with the academical and social problems that immigrant students experience.

Keywords: Immigrant Students, Educational Problems, Teachers, Academic Problem, Social Problems

Introduction

Throughout history, human beings, willingly or not, have immigrated because of several reasons. When immigrations are studied, it is seen that they occur due to many reasons such as wars, seeking pasture for animals and finding agricultural land. Immigrations, no matter what is the reason behind, bring along a lot of problems as soon as they occur (Kahraman & Bulut, 2018; Sayın, Usanmaz & Aslangiri, 2016). Immigration is an act of translocation that affects people's lives entirely due to environmental, economical, political and many other reasons (Sayın et al., 2016). When the causes of migrations are investigated, it is seen that there are a lot of reasons causing them. These might be socio-cultural, as well as physical and environmental. Inasmuch as immigrations that happen as a result of the changes in these fields may affect people in terms of economy, psychology, sociology, health, education etc. (Gün & Bayraktar, 2008).

1. This article is the extended version of a paper presented at the International Symposium on Education of Migrant Children, organized by Mardin Artuklu University Migration Studies Application and Research Center and CMES (Center for Middle Eastern Studies) on 27-28 May 2021.

Immigrations in Turkey and other places in the world have become a topic for many studies and there are many research on immigrations from different fields. Studies show that immigrations result from a lot of factors. (Eren, 2019; Kahraman & Bulut, 2018; Sakız, 2016; Sayın, Usanmaz & Aslangiri, 2016; Sayın et al., 2016). It is seen that immigrations in Europe started with the end of WW2 and accelerated after some political factors such as Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although the migration wave started to rise very quickly in European countries, there was an important decline that happened toward the end of the 20th century. It can be said that the causes of the decline in these years are the political decisions and the security measures taken in borders in these same years (Canatan, 2013).

Just like European countries, Turkey has been facing immigration for long years. The first immigration movement to Turkey was done by the immigrants that came from the Balkans. When examined, it is seen that these movements continued in small quantities until 1980s and consisted of the ethnicity of the Turks that especially lived neighbouring countries. Within this context, immigrations towards Turkey mostly originated in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Iran and Iraq. It can be said that, for the upcoming years, immigration is caused by the terrorist actions that civil war brought and people's expectations about economy, health and education. (Ulukan-Ciğerci, 2008; Ereş, 2015). Today, because of the ongoing civil war in Syria and the events in Afghanistan, thousands of people still continue to immigrate to Turkey.

The living process of Syrians, who have been hosted in Turkey as refugees since 2011, continues due to the ongoing civil war in their country. According to the data of the General Directorate of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior (March 22, 2018), the number of registered Syrian refugees is 3.561,707. The number of children in the 0-18 age group is 1,627,718." According to the data of the United Nations Children's Fund (2015), it is stated that 54% (1,182,261) of our Syrian guests migrating to Turkey are between the ages of 0-18. According to the 2018 data of the Migration Administration, it has been determined

that this number has increased by approximately 500 thousand. In addition to those who migrated, approximately 340,000 Syrian children were born in Turkey between 2011 and 2016. According to the 2015 data of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the risks seen in Syrian refugee children are "psychological" problems whose rate is 51%. Other problems are respectively 'dropping out of education' at 25%, 'child labor' at 11%, and in the remaining 4% there are 'early age marriages', 'sexual and child abuses', 'domestic violence', 'homelessness' and 'absence of birth records'. (Eren, 2019; 214). When the data of the General Directorate of Migration Management is examined periodically, it is seen that the number of Syrians with temporary protection has increased over the years. According to the current data on the subject (September 30th 2021), it is seen that there are 3,715,913 Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey (General Directorate of Migration Management, 2021).

Immigrants become a minority in the country they come from as a natural consequence of migration and face the social and economic consequences of this situation. These people, who became foreigners in the new country they came, experience economical and health problems. In addition to these problems, immigrant children who have reached the age of education experience various problems in their schools (Özcan, 2018). Detecting the problems experienced by immigrant families has importance in terms of determining the support services to offer to these families and to prevent problems that might occur.

Problems Brought by Immigration

Immigrants faced various reactions in the countries they went to. In the international context, the first reactions against immigration started after the 1970s. In the following years, these reactions continued to increase gradually. The first strong anti-immigration voices in history made themselves heard with the fall of the Berlin Wall. In this process, some actions and physical attacks were carried out against immigrants (Canatan, 2013). The protest events that started about anti-immigrantism reached the point of burning the houses of Turks who stay in Germany and arson in their workplaces in the following years.

Some Turks swallowed this treatment, and some others found the solution in coming back to Turkey.

In studies conducted on immigrants, it has been seen that most of the immigrant children work in various business lines and for very low wages. Furthermore, it is known that these children work for long hours. This is basically due to their families being unemployed. Making children work like this might disrupt their school life. By ensuring that immigrant children are educated at school, they can be prevented from working for low wages by staying out of the education system (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015).

The arrival of immigrants to a new country affects the country in many ways. For example, the arrival of Syrian immigrants in Turkey has directly or indirectly affected factors such as economy, working life, sociological situation, education, health, and housing. This caused Syrian immigrants to experience problems in many areas (Ertaş & Kıraç Çiftçi, 2017). At the beginning of these problems lay educational problems. Because the difficulties immigrant children face in education and the problems of benefiting from education affect the academic success of children. It is thought that the problems experienced in the field of education cause academic failure, and this causes these children to experience social problems.

Educational Problems of Immigrant Children

When the education process of immigrant children in Turkey is examined, it is seen that the education of these children is carried out by prioritizing the children in the camps under the coordination of the Ministry of National Education and the General Directorate of Migration Management. First of all, Turkish teaching and adaptation studies were carried out for children in the camps in Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Mardin where immigrants live in large numbers. After the language adaptation studies, some academic courses were carried out. The studies which were carried out in the first years of immigration were expanded to a regular program later by expanding the education of immigrant children (Aydeniz & Sarıkaya 2021). Following these studies, the children in the camps were ensured that they would go to the schools in the center of cities and counties, and they were able to benefit

from the education opportunities in the same place with their Turkish peers. Despite all the work done on migrant children in Turkey, it has not been possible to completely eliminate the problems in migrant children's education. Despite the implementation of many projects by the relevant state institutions in Turkey, the education of these children is still not at the targeted level.

In studies on the education problems of immigrants in Turkey, it is seen that all immigrant children could not be schooled and immigrant children who attended school were absent from school. In addition to these, it is concluded that the teachers do not have sufficient equipment to train immigrant students who are strangers to the context of language and culture. (Yenen & Ulucan, 2020; Eren, 2019; Uğurlu, 2018; Levent & Cayak, 2017; Emin, 2016; Sakız, 2016; Yılmaz, 2015; Erdoğan, 2014; Seydi, 2014). The situations mentioned above may be the problems that have arisen with the education of immigrant children. However, the only way to get rid of these problems and other problems that may occur is through education. Because these mentioned negative situations can be minimized through education. In addition, education is a social transition channel that provides the transition from one state to another new state (Baker, 2011).

In order for the education provided to immigrant children to reach its goal, students must be successful in increasing their capacities and being aware of their abilities. Additionally, it is very important that their families are involved in the education process of immigrant children throughout their education process. The family has an extremely important role in providing a good educational environment for teachers to guide children to success, and establish a healthy communication with children (Perşembe, 2010). In this context, it is a fact that immigrant families have educational and adaptation needs. A teaching environment is very important especially for the children of families who have become refugees as a result of the war and have immigrated. Because immigrant children receiving good education is effective in shaping the future of these children. That is why, it is important to identify the problems related to the education of immigrant children and to produce solutions.

Education is a great opportunity for students to recover from their trauma and be safe. For migrant families, “education” already means that their children are protected in teaching places and protected from the troubles in refugee camps or the dangers on the streets. For example, parents can do their daily work at ease without worrying about their children as long as they are at school. For children, education is brand new activities, leisure time and preparation for the future. On the other hand, education is also a tool to get rid of negative psychological factors such as unhappiness, emotional traumas and stress. In addition, the presence of children in educational environments means that they are protected from illegal situations. Because education ensures that children are protected from addictive substances such as cigarettes, alcohol and drugs and stay away from discussion environments (Sinclair, 2001).

Social Problem Experienced by Migrant Children

Migration has negative effects on individuals in terms of many health, economic and psychological aspects. Immigrant families go through social problems such as the disappearance of traces of their past lives, the change of their current environment and adaptation to a new environment (Tuzcu & Bademli, 2014). The fact that immigrant families experience adaptation problems to the new country, especially in the early days after their migration, causes them to experience social problems. It is very common for families to have problems reuniting with their children, and to have worries about the future in addition to the problems that children experience while studying in the country they have just gone to (Perşembe, 2010). The inability of immigrant children to communicate with their friends due to cultural and linguistic differences also causes them to become lonely. Not being able to communicate with their peers negatively affects the orientation processes of these children.

Immigrant children experience some negative situations with their friends in the school environment where they migrated. In the social environment in new settlements, various adaptation problems may also be experienced in terms of friendship relations and being accepted into friend groups (Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick & Stein, 2012). Some immigrant

children are exposed to discrimination or racism at school and this negatively affects their academic success (Alfaro et al., 2009). However, education is an important opportunity to get rid of the negativities experienced in immigrant children, as in all disadvantaged children (Eren, 2019). Although education is extremely important for migrant children, the fact that these children do not feel well at school, are not accepted in the social environment and even excluded can lead to dropping out of school. In fact, this is a process that immigrant people usually experience. Every immigrant community may experience social problems due to many reasons such as economic, cultural and language differences.

The importance of knowing and using the country’s language of education is an indisputable fact for all children. This is especially important for immigrant children. Knowing a language is very important in terms of being able to fully adapt to the education system, to be successful in academic terms, to be successful in exams on an equal basis with their peers, and to seize the opportunities presented to them (McCarthy, 2010). Because not knowing the language prevents efficient use of all the opportunities offered in terms of academic success. Like other immigrant societies, Turkish people also experienced educational problems in the lands they migrated to. It is known that the reason for the lack of academic success of children who immigrated from Turkey to other countries is related to the language of instruction offered to them (Manço, 2002).

Another problem experienced in the education of immigrant children is that it is difficult for the families who came to the country illegally and unregistered to follow and learn about the educational status of their children. Therefore, schooling rates could not be followed adequately. On one hand, the new-born Syrian children in Turkey are not sufficiently schooled, on the other hand, the attendance of the children who go to school cannot be followed up sufficiently (Eren, 2019).

Forced migration is an event that affects all members of the family. Families who have to migrate may also stay away from their children. This affects children psychologically. Additionally, migration affects children academically and reduces their right to education. This situation affects children

the most, as families that are shaken economically and socially cannot provide adequate support to their children's needs (Karaman & Bulut, 2018). In general, factors such as the place where the children live, the educational status of the family, the health status of the parents, the economic earnings of the family and whether the parents are together or not have a significant effect on the educational life of the children. On the other hand, the ability of children to know the language of education and to have a command of the language are important factors affecting their education life (Wilkinson, 2002).

The aim of this research is to reveal the problems that immigrant students have experienced while studying in Turkey. In this context, it is known that these immigrant students who took refuge in Turkey by escaping from war and death, have various difficulties to study in a different country, in an environment they are not accustomed to, with a different language, and in addition to this, their families experience economic problems. It is also thought that the problems children experience at school negatively affect their academic, emotional and social lives. In this respect, the problems that immigrant students are exposed to and experience are revealed by taking the opinions of immigrant students and their teachers.

Method

In this study, the 'case study design', one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Case study is a study method that thoroughly, systematically and deeply investigates an existing phenomenon in its own living space (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). A case study is a qualitative approach in which the researcher investigates in detail and in depth a real-life, current bounded system, or multiple constrained systems in a given time period (Creswell, 2015). Problems related to the education of migrant children are quite important for the social welfare of Turkey and the whole international community. In this study, the situations related to the educational problems of immigrant children were examined.

Participants

In this study, the education problems of immigrant children were carried out with immigrant

students and teachers in Midyat in the city of Mardin. Participants include 20 immigrant students and 15 educators. In the study, participants were given nicknames different from their real names. 9 of the educators are female and the other 6 are male. 12 of the students are girls and 8 of them are boys. The data of the study were collected by choosing the time periods when the participants were convenient and available. The data of the research were collected using a semi-structured interview form. Interviews with the participants were conducted in a chat environment, using a voice recorder or by noting the answers received.

Data Collection Process

The data of the research were collected using a semi-structured interview form. While creating the interview form, a valid measurement tool was tried to be obtained by taking the opinion of a Turkish teacher and ensuring that the form reflects the problems of the research within the framework of grammatical rules. On the other hand, before the interview form was applied, it was applied to a few teachers and students and tested whether the form was understandable. The items in the interview form are listed below.

1. What are the problems that immigrant students have experienced in education? For example, what are the academic problems? Can you provide examples?
2. What are the social problems that immigrant students have experienced at school? Can you explain with examples?
3. What kind of problems do you think immigrant students experience other than academic and social problems?

Before the interviews with the participants, the participants were informed about the purpose, scope and content of the research. Participants were told that participating in the study was voluntary, they were not under any pressure, and they could leave the interview at any time during the interview. It was stated that their real names will be hidden in the data reporting process and nicknames will be used instead.

Analysis of Data

There are several approaches to analyzing qualitative data. However, in all the approaches, it is aimed to describe the data in detail and to reveal the themes and categories. The analysis technique that guides the data analysis process in this research is content analysis. Content analysis is the process of summarizing and specifying the main contents of the written information and the messages they contain. The goal in content analysis is to reach concepts and relationships by explaining the data obtained (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Content analysis, which is frequently used in the field of social sciences, can be defined as a systematic technique in which some words of a text such as books, book chapters, letters, historical documents, newspaper headlines and articles are summarized with smaller content categories within the framework of certain rules. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In this context, the following steps were followed in the data analysis process of the research:

Interviews were conducted at schools or wherever the participants deemed appropriate. The interviews were recorded by taking notes in the chat environment. The obtained data were computerized. (During this process, the expressions were written as they were, except for the language mistakes.) Frequencies were tried to be determined by coding the data according to concepts and themes. Based on the findings obtained from the data, the research results were interpreted.

Validity and Reliability

In the study, the interview form consisting of open-ended questions was presented to Turkish grammar experts and experts on qualitative research before the application and their help was received. Thus, the validity problems of the interview form were tried to be resolved. In qualitative studies, “validity” is related to the accuracy of scientific findings, and “reliability” is related to the reproducibility of scientific findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Some studies can be done to solve the validity and reliability problems. These consist of adequate and appropriate participation in the data collection processes, participant validation, expert review, diversification technique, detailed explanation of the

path followed in the research process, explanation of the researcher’s stance (reflectivity) and detailed description (Creswell, 2015). In this direction, the following applications were carried out so as to increase the validity and reliability of the research:

- a) A number of measures were taken to increase the validity of the study. For this, first of all, it was tried to increase the diversity of the participants. Later, by not being biased during the interviews, it was tried to prevent the mixing of subjective judgments into the research process.
- b) Within the scope of increasing the reliability of the research, before the questions in the semi-structured interview form were prepared, the relevant literature was scanned in detail in order that the conceptual framework was ensured to be more scientific. In addition, before interviews with immigrant students and teachers in schools, official support and permission were obtained from the relevant District Directorate of National Education and it was stated that the information obtained from the participants was intended to be used only for scientific purposes, and it was aimed to provide confidence to the participants. In this way, it has been tried to ensure that the data obtained from the interviews reflect the real problem situation.
- c) In order to increase the external validity of the research, the steps taken in the research process are explained in detail and clearly. In order to increase the reliability of the study, the research findings are given directly without comment.

Findings

Findings Concerning the Academic Problems of Migrant Children

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained as a result of the interviews with the participants, it was seen that the theme of Academic Problems Experienced by Migrant Children was concentrated in two different categories. These are language-related problems and problems related to course success. Findings related to the problems experienced in these categories are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Academic Problems of Migrant Children

Categories	Student	Educator	Total
Problem Related to Language			
Having problems because they cannot understand Turkish properly	17	15	32
Inability to understand the question asked	13	6	19
Inability to communicate with teachers and friends	9	5	14
Friends laughing because they can't pronounce words	7	4	13
Afraid of taking the floor and saying the wrong thing in the lesson	6	4	10
Lack of academic support due to the family not knowing the language	3	3	6
Lack of support from friends due to language barrier	3	2	5
Not wanting to take a lesson they can't understand	2	2	4
Not wanting to go to school because of not knowing Turkish	3	0	3
Problems Related to Course Success			
Inability to ask questions that are not understood because of being afraid	17	10	27
Inability to express oneself	14	4	18
Having time problems in the questions asked	6	4	10
Having trouble reading and writing	4	5	9
Being evaluated under the same conditions as other students	5	3	8
Teachers not paying enough attention	5	1	6
Being alienated from school due to poor performance	3	2	5
Home environment being distant from school culture	0	3	3
Not having a target and ideal	0	2	2
Learning slowly relative to the class	0	2	2
Not able to find an empty seat in the school bus due to being immigrants	1	0	1

*n student = 20, n educator = 15

When the findings in Table 1 are examined, it is seen that a significant part of the participants in the category of Language-Related Problems Experienced by Immigrant Children presented and opinion in “Having problems because they cannot understand Turkish properly, inability to understand the question asked, Inability to communicate with teachers and friends, friends laughing because they can’t pronounce words”. Additionally “Afraid of taking the floor and saying the wrong thing in the lesson and lack of academic support due to the family not knowing the language” are the topics that participants shared an opinion on.

Some of the participants’ views on the category of Language-Related Problems Experienced by Migrant Children are as follows:

“I don’t understand much because our lessons are online. The most common problem I encounter is that when the teacher asks a question, I cannot keep up with answering because I am not used to

Turkish. Since this situation happens too much, I was hesitant to ask.” Student Hasan

“The majority of our students have difficulties in understanding Turkish and comprehending what we say. Since they do not have a good control of the language, they have problems in understanding metaphorical concepts or idioms and proverbs.” Ali Teacher

“Because of the language problem, I couldn’t understand anything in the lessons, I just sat in the classroom and looked at the teacher. Some of my teachers were not interested at all, while others were very interested. I had a Turkish teacher. He taught me letters, numbers, how to create sentences. Thanks to him, I started to speak Turkish. But I was still alienated by my friends. They didn’t give me a report card that year, but my father had completed my paperwork” Student Ali

“Although most of them learn Turkish enough, it is not enough to comprehend the achievements in the classroom. If we speak very slowly, it becomes easier for them to understand, but this time it becomes difficult for other children. Especially in verbal lessons, this problem happens a lot. English and numerical lessons seem more comfortable for them.” **Çağdaş Teacher**

When the findings in the category of Problems Related to Course Success are examined, it is seen that most participants focused on “Inability to ask questions that are not understood because of being afraid, inability to express oneself, having time problems in the questions asked and having trouble reading and writing”

Some of the participant’s views on the category of Problems Related to Course Success Experienced by Migrant Children are as follows:

“Failure of an immigrant student at school is a major problem. Immigrant students do not match well with Turkish students. If a teacher takes good care of the student and sympathizes with him, the student overcomes many of his academic problems. For example, when my brother was in the fourth grade, he had a good teacher who took good care of him emotionally and academically. That’s why he loved school so much. However, when his teacher left school, his academic level dropped and he started hating school again.” **Student Meryem**

“An average of 80% of our students have difficulties in reading and writing, which causes

them not to understand the lesson and not be able to focus on the lesson. In short, giving the same education to students who cannot fully master the lesson, understand the lesson, have trouble in writing and reading and the other students is cruelty to both them and the teacher who gives the lesson. I believe that these students should integrate the lesson until they reach a fluent level in terms of writing and reading, enough to understand the lesson seriously.” **Leyla Teacher**

“When we first came to Turkey, I was in the 2nd grade. My friends didn’t like us, they didn’t play with us, they made fun of us. In that class, the teacher put me and my two Syrian friends in the back row, I did not understand anything from the lessons. Then my mother took me to a teacher to help me with my lessons, I love that teacher so far. He taught me Turkish and made me work hard. Now I am in 5th grade and I was 1st in the exam. I love my teachers very much” **Student Ahmet**

Findings Concerning the Social Problems of Migrant Children

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained as a result of the interviews with the participants, it was seen that the theme of Social Problems Experienced by Migrant Children was concentrated in two different categories: Exclusion and Psychological Problems. Findings related to the problems experienced in these categories are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Social Problems of Migrant Children

Categories	Student	Educator	Total
Exclusion Problems			
Exclusion because of being immigrants	14	4	18
Being made fun of by others	11	5	16
Exposure to racism	9	3	12
Friends not wanting to communicate with them	9	2	11
Exposure to insults and violence by their friends	7	2	9
Low motivation for the lesson due to being excluded	5	1	5
Making generalizations about immigrants	3	1	4
Psychological Problems			
The negative effects of the media's negative news	9	4	13
Being treated with the perception that they are immigrants	8	1	9

Feeling all alone	7	1	8
Being emotionally withdrawn because of the war	1	3	4
The violent content of the games they play because of the war	0	2	2

*n student = 20, n educator = 12

When the findings in Table 2 are examined, it is seen that a significant part of the participants in the category of Exclusion Problems presented and opinion in “Exclusion because of being immigrants, being made fun of by others, exposure to racism,”. Additionally “Friends not wanting to communicate with them and exposure to insults and violence by their friends” are the topics that participants shared a significant amount of opinion on.

Some of the participants’ views on the Exclusion Problems of Migrant Children are given below:

“Some families tell their children “Stay away from Syrian children, do not sit next to them”. Some of the parents came to me and demanded, “Don’t sit our children next to Syrian students.” Syrian children feel and understand this situation very clearly. This kind of approach, the psychology of exclusion and oppression, will cause more distress when these children grow up.” **Elif Teacher**

“When I first came to Turkey, I had a hard time finding friends because I was Syrian. Nobody liked me because I was a refugee. I was having trouble learning the language and I didn’t understand Turkish because I was Syrian, so they made fun of me.” **Student Muhammed**

“Since I am Syrian, I had a hard time adjusting to the new country and different language and making friends. I couldn’t afford to buy new clothes, so I was ridiculed. I studied at a Syrian school in the ninth grade. Then the school moved to the camps. Due to financial situation, I could not go to the camps and continue my education.”

Student Sara

“In the first days when we immigrated to Turkey, I felt alienated and excluded. When I started school, I didn’t understand anything, my friends were looking at me badly. From time to time I was insulted, sometimes even subjected to violence by my friends. These were just my experiences at school, I faced many difficulties outside of school as well. As time passed, I got

better in terms of understanding, grasping, speaking and studying. My classes were getting better. I received a certificate of appreciation for the first time in 7th grade and I was very happy. I succeeded because of some of my teachers who took care of me. Later, I went to high school and I did not encounter such problems there. Maybe it was because I learned Turkish completely and succeeded in the lessons.” **Student Arif**

“While I was going to school by school bus, I had problems with Turkish students. Students were sitting on the seats and we were standing because we were Syrians.” **Student Mahmut**

Considering the category of Psychological Problems Experienced by Immigrant Children, it is seen that a significant number of participants have expressed their opinions on “The negative effects of the media’s negative news, being treated with the perception that they are immigrants and feeling all alone”. Some participant opinions regarding this category are given below..

“The most important problem is that you are a foreigner. Of course, the main reason behind this and the biggest reason affecting our children is that Syria is a war zone and the attitude of the media while reflecting the events and the negative news. Children encounter many negative news on television and the internet and of course, our parents also have a negative point of view. This is one of the factors affecting the child in the family environment. When all of these are combined, stereotypes are formed in students, their perspectives on immigrant students become negative.” **Metin Teacher**

“When my friends and teachers sometimes ask me where I am from, I feel very embarrassed to say I am Syrian. I am afraid to say it, because when I say I am Syrian, I am afraid that they will not love me” **Student Yusuf**

“Since immigrant children leave their countries with the psychology of war, all the games they play contain shooting and violence because a

*significant part of their life was spent watching the war and its side effects. Also, our Turkish students call Syrians Suri Suri. Immigrant children are very uncomfortable because of this situation.”***Emine Teacher**

*“Some of the parents come to us with requests that their children should not play with Syrian students or sit in the same desk with them. Unfortunately, this desire of parents is noticed by Syrian immigrant students. This affects them psychologically.”***Aysegül Teacher**

Other Problems Immigrant Children Experience

Table 3 Other Problems Immigrant Children Experience

Codes	Student	Educator	Total
Other Problems			
Adapting to the new country and different language	13	9	22
Spending more time with refugee children like themselves	9	10	19
Experiencing economic problems	9	3	12
Family's health problems	5	2	7
Their Turkish not improving because they speak Arabic among themselves	0	6	6
School dropouts due to teachers' indifference	3	0	3
Lack of social consciousness because there is no common historical consciousness	0	1	1

*n student = 20, n educator = 12

Some of the participants’ views on the category of “Other Problems Experienced by Migrant Children” are given below.:

*“Our biggest mistake here is not being able to empathize enough and seeing immigrant students in the classroom at an equal level with Turkish students in terms of academic success. Let me give an example: There was an immigrant student from Shengal, Iraq. He didn’t know any Turkish and I noticed that he didn’t understand at all while I was teaching in the class. This took him further back academically. It is very difficult to expect an immigrant student to be successful in a country he never knew, in a school he never knew, with teachers and students he never knew. If we deal with all the details within the framework of inclusive education and provide the necessary infrastructure, then the adaptation process will be much easier.”***Metin Teacher**

*“Since we were immigrants and our financial situation was not good, it was clear that I could not achieve what I dreamed of. I always dreamed of studying architecture. But I couldn’t prove my skills because our financial situation was not good.”***Student Nesrin**

“Immigrant students generally do not have a common historical consciousness with us. For this reason, they cannot show understanding to our social issues like our national values. They don’t show enough interest in national values”

Tahir Teacher

*“Before I knew how to speak Turkish, I had a hard time. I couldn’t convey to people what I was thinking and feeling. That’s why I feel so sorry for people who can’t express themselves. I hope there is no one left in this world who cannot express himself. I also want to add this. Most people generalize when talking about their Syrians. They say that all Syrian immigrants are like this, like this. I do not find it appropriate to generalize about us. Because not everyone is the same.”***Student Ayşe**

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results obtained from this study, immigrant children experience various educational problems. In addition to these, it is seen that children experience various social and psychological problems. Immigrant children are affected by the different lifestyles, cultural characteristics, education systems and language used in the new country they go

to. They have academic difficulties for these reasons. When the literature is examined, this research gives similar results with the results of the studies conducted by Börü and Boyacı (2016), Topsakal et al. (2013), Perşembe (2010), Obiakor (2007) and Sleeter and Grant (2003). In the mentioned studies, it is stated that the reason for the education problems of immigrant children may be due to the inability to adapt to the new country and cultural differences. As a natural consequence of these, it is stated that it is possible for immigrant children to have difficulties in academic and social life.

When the academic problems experienced by immigrant children are examined in the research; it is seen that they have problems because they do not understand Turkish and they are not able to ask the subjects they do not understand because they are afraid. The inability of immigrant students to master the language of the country they live in causes them to hesitate to ask questions. In order for students to express their feelings and thoughts, they should use the common language with the individuals in the environment. Because it is not possible to communicate without language. Considering these results, it is very difficult to expect immigrant students to master the new language, let alone adapt to the new language in the new country they go to. This situation increases the risk for children to fail academically. Another result obtained is that the students “do not understand the question asked to them and cannot communicate with teachers and friends”. This is also related to the language problem. This result coincides with the research results of Yenilmez and Çöplü (2019), Börü and Boyacı (2016), Sarıkaya (2013) and Gelekçi (2010). In the aforementioned studies, it was concluded that language difference or inability to master the language led to failure. It can be said that giving responsibilities to immigrant students on equal terms with other students in the same class without knowing the language fully is a burden that students cannot bear. Another result reached within the scope of academic problems is that their friends laugh because they cannot pronounce the words, they cannot express themselves, and they are afraid of taking the right to speak in the lesson and saying something wrong. This can lead to alienation from school, reduced academic achievement and even

dropout. Because, in adolescence, students’ friends laughing at them or being ridiculed by their friends can cause many unwanted problems.

Considering the results of the social problems experienced by immigrant children, it can be concluded that the inability of immigrant students to establish healthy relationships with their peers may lead to various problems according to the findings about the students that say they are excluded because they are immigrants, they are made fun of and they are treated with the perception that they are immigrants. Failure to meet the social needs of disadvantaged or normal children may be an obstacle to their integration into society. Being excluded because of being an immigrant can cause a lot of damage to the student not only socially and psychologically, but also academically. Another important social problem experienced by immigrant students is that “other friends do not want to communicate with them”. As a result, it becomes difficult to establish a healthy communication and friendship. Looking at the results obtained in the research, it can be said that immigrant students cannot get along with some of their Turkish classmates and cannot establish a healthy communication. It can be said that these results are similar to the studies in the literature. In their study, Börü and Boyacı (2016) reached the conclusion that some of the immigrant students actually got along well with Turkish students while others could not communicate well with Turkish students and teachers and had problems. On the other hand, Topsakal et al. (2013) determined in their study that the reason why immigrant students have problems in friendship with students in Turkey is language difference. In his study, Perşembe (2010) states that Turkish immigrant children who go to Europe have difficulty in establishing friendships due to language differences and this situation brings about being excluded. Perşembe (2010) also stated that unemployment, economic weakness and cultural differences may also be effective in this regard. Based on the results of the research, “their unwillingness to communicate with or sit in the same row with their peers” can lead to unavoidable problems. Because such a situation brings the problems of exclusion and non-acceptance mentioned above. Such situations will be a major obstacle for the student who comes

to school with the perception of being an immigrant to adapt to the school. In fact, this may cause the immigrant student who has been exposed to this situation to exhibit negative attitudes and behaviors towards the members of the society in which he lives. It can be preventive for immigrant families to meet and communicate with the families of children with these attitudes in such cases of racism and discrimination. School administrations can also carry out activities that will enable other children to empathize in order for them to accept immigrant children. This will work in terms of other children accepting and understanding immigrant children and socially accepting them (Alfaro et al., 2009).

Based on the findings of other problems experienced by immigrant children that are the problem of not being able to adapt to a new country and a different language and they mostly want to spend time with refugees like themselves, it can be concluded that these situations will further isolate the children and prevent their integration into society. Children who are not accepted by their peers may become lonely and seek friendships only with people who are in their own situation. Such situations may have consequences against the student in terms of academic, social and psychological aspects. Similar results were obtained in Kaştan's (2015) research titled "Problems faced during the education process by children who have migrated in Turkey". Similar results were obtained in Gelekçi's (2010) research on the education of Turkish students in Belgium. Based on these results, it can be said that sending immigrant students to schools in Turkey without being included in a certain orientation service and before their adaptation behavior has developed sufficiently will reduce the motivation of the students.. It can be concluded that a student whose motivation is low will not develop their adaptation skills related to school and friends.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In the light of the results obtained within the scope of the research, some suggestions were made below.

- As a result of the research, it has been stated that immigrant students have intense language problems. That's why, if the students pass

through a language education program together with their peers before starting school, it will contribute to the solution of many problems they experience.

- Considering the fact that immigrant students are victims of war and they have the problem of adapting to the culture and language they live in, it can be said that these students should not be evaluated under the same conditions as their normal classmates. Therefore, flexible evaluation for immigrant students, who are seen as a disadvantaged group, may provide healthier results.
- It may be beneficial for the teacher to be in an encouraging position for other students in the class to accept immigrant students, interact with them both inside and outside the classroom, and include them in their games.
- It would be beneficial for the teacher to hold meetings with the parents of the students and to meet face-to-face with the parents who do not accept the immigrant students in order to advise and educate the families that their children should accept immigrant students.
- Even if the families of immigrant children come from their country academically equipped or in other words, the education level of the family is high, they cannot support their children enough because they do not know the Turkish language. In this context, it can be said that it would be beneficial to provide Turkish language courses to immigrant students and their families within the school.
- The fact that immigrant students spend time at school with students who only speak their own language slows down the learning process of Turkish. Therefore, it is important to advise these children to speak Turkish instead of speaking languages such as Arabic among themselves. Turkish speaking can be encouraged to accelerate language development.
- The research was carried out in Midyat district of Mardin province. Conducting the research with larger samples may contribute to the determination of the educational problems of immigrant students.
- The research can be further enriched by taking

the opinions of parents and other stakeholders on the subject.

Immigrant countries should include various arrangements for the educational needs of immigrant children in their education policies for the immigrants they host (Börü and Boyacı, 2016). Because, when we look at the profile of people who migrate, it is observed that a significant part of them consists of children. That is why, children's education rights and their current educational status should be taken into consideration while conducting studies on immigrants (Bulut, 2015).

It is important to investigate the educational problems that immigrant children experience. Because children's education has been expressed with international norms as a result of many political, economic and cultural social events (Topsakal, Merye & Keçe, 2013). Eliminating the education problems of immigrant children may contribute to their easier integration into society. Children whose educational problems have been resolved and brought to school will live next to their teachers instead of staying on the streets. This may mean that migrant children are protected from the negativities that may occur on the streets.

Thanks

I would like to thank the teachers who work in schools affiliated to the Midyat district national education directorate, teach Syrian immigrant students and voluntarily support the research. I would also like to thank the Syrian migrant students who voluntarily participated in the research.

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