

## **A Multidimensional Approach to the Problems Experienced by the Classroom Teachers With Syrian Students in Their Classes**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this research is to identify the problems experienced by the classroom teachers who have Syrian students in their classes. This research was designed according to the survey model. The population of the research consisted of classroom teachers working in Nizip district of Gaziantep within 2019-2020 academic year. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the sampling. The sampling of the study consisted of 361 classroom teachers working in Nizip district and having Syrian students enrolled in their classes. The data of the research were collected by a survey with 33 items that was prepared by the researchers and consisted of classroom management, communication, academic achievement, and family dimensions. The data collected within the scope of the research were analyzed using the SPSS program. Percentage, frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation calculations were made in the analysis of the data. In the classroom management dimension, teachers were identified to have problems due to the registering of Syrian students in the middle of the semester, enrolling of Syrian students in classes that did not comply with their development levels, and increase in their class sizes due to Syrian students. In the communication dimension, it was determined that Syrian students had a problem of understanding and being understood due to language differences, which was problem for teachers. In terms of academic success, teachers were found to experience problems due to the inability of Syrian students to internalize subjects as well as because of their absenteeism. In the family dimension, It was determined that teachers were not provided with adequate support due to the education levels of parents of Syrian students. In the light of the findings and results obtained, suggestions were developed for implementers and researchers.

**Keywords:** Syria, Syrian, Student, Classroom Teacher, Immigrant, Problem.

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## INTRODUCTION

Migration, which has become one of the most important problems of today, is defined as “the relocation of individuals or communities from one country to another country, from one settlement to another settlement for economic, social and political reasons; moving; migration; immigration” (Turkish Language Institution [TDK], 2020). According to the glossary prepared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), migration is "the relocation of a person or a group of people crossing an international border or within a state." Regardless of the duration, structure and cause, they are the population movements where people are relocated” (Glossary on Migration, 2020:35-36). Migration is an element that affects all areas of life. Migration, which cannot simply be defined as a movement of relocation, is an important event that can take place both inside and outside the country, affecting societies in terms of social, cultural, economic and political structures (Sayın, Usanmaz and Aslangiri, 2016:2). When we examine the definitions about migration, it is seen that the common point of all is an important event affecting the lives of people.

With the introduction of the concept of immigration on the agenda, concepts such as immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and providing temporary protection have been used interchangeably. There is no universally accepted definition of 'immigrant' on an international scale. The term immigrant is generally understood to cover all cases where the individual decides to immigrate without the interference of coercive external factors and with all his or her own free will due to 'personal suitability' reasons (Glossary on Migration, 2020: 37). According to this definition, everyone participating in the migration movement is considered as a migrant. According to the 1951 Convention on the Legal Status of Refugees, the refugee is defined as “A person who is outside of the country where he / she is a citizen due to the fear of oppression based on his/her race, religion, nationality, membership to a social group and political views, and who does not want to benefit from the protection of the relevant country because of this fear” (Glossary on Migration, 2020:65). There is a legal dimension in the concept of refugee. It is possible to recognize individuals as refugees based on the decision of the country of residence and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Asylum-seeker is the person who seeks security in a country other than his own country in order to be protected from persecution or serious harm and waits for the result of his application for refugee status within the framework of relevant national or international documents. As a result of a negative decision, these people have to leave the country (Glossary on Migration, 2020: 74). Asylum-seekers are people who expect to obtain the refugee rights in their country of residence. The regulation, which was developed to provide temporary protection by the state without being subject to individual status determination process, is called “temporary protection” (Glossary on Migration, 2020:33).

Turkey is the gateway to the Middle East due to its location. Turkey has been affected in various ways by the incidents that occurred in neighboring countries. Finally, with the spread of the Arab Spring, there have been internal conflicts in Syria. In Syria, where the civil war started, people found the cure in leaving their country and lands. The largest share of this migration wave affected Turkey. Turkey has social, historical, cultural and kinship ties with Syria, with which it has the longest land border. With the "open door" policy it has adopted, Turkey has been trying to cure the human tragedy experienced by the immigrants. Turkey has awarded the temporary protection right to the Syrians who have taken refuge in its borders.

According to the data of the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), 256.971 Syrian foreigners were hosted in 26 temporary accommodation centers established in 10 cities. However, due to the lack of the necessary trust and peace environment in the Syrian Arab Republic, the length of stay of Syrians under temporary protection has prolonged and an obligation to ensure social cohesion has emerged. For this reason, Syrians under temporary protection are encouraged to continue their lives outside temporary accommodation centers. As of July 2019, 108,732 foreigners are hosted in 11 temporary accommodation centers in 8 provinces. In addition to the temporary accommodation centers, there are 3,514,016 Syrians living in 81 provinces of Turkey under temporary protection status. The city with the highest Syrian population after Istanbul is Gaziantep with 453.409 people. The table below contains data belonging to the Syrians under temporary protection (Directorate General of Migration Management [DGMM], 2020):

**Table 1. Age and Gender Distribution of Syrians Under Temporary Protection (DGMM, 2020)**

Age	Male	Female	Total
TOTAL	1.927.069	1.658.140	3.585.209
0-4	249.234	232.009	481.243
5-9	267.520	251.610	519.130
10-14	205.002	193.687	398.689
15-18	141.520	119.999	261.519
19-24	286.513	271.515	504.028
25-29	210.570	153.625	364.195
30-34	164.371	119.154	283.525
35-39	121.425	95.759	217.184
40-44	84.361	73.753	158.114
45-49	57.480	55.597	113.077
50-54	46.799	44.852	91.651
55-59	33.514	33.473	66.987
60-64	23.731	24.494	48.225
65-69	15.391	19.546	34.937
70-74	9.386	10.275	19.661
75-79	4.771	5.826	10.597
80-84	2.901	3.725	6.626
85-89	1.542	1.976	3.518
90+	1.031	1.269	2.300

Table 1 shows that there are 519,130 Syrian children who have reached the preschool and primary school age (5-9 years old). There are 1,179,338 children (5-18 years old) at schooling age. Education is a requirement for these children. The presence of 481,243 children in the age group of 0-4 also means that new children will reach the school age every year. Syrian children in numbers greater than the total number of students in some European countries, have enrolled in the Turkish education system. This has brought up certain issues. It is also natural for children who enter the system without knowing the culture, life and language of the country to experience and cause various problems.

The fact that the Syrians under temporary protection will not be leaving Turkey in the short term leads to the problem of how the children at the school age will adapt to the education system. Various methods have been tried to eliminate this problem. With the circular of the Ministry of National Education numbered 2014/21, a decision was taken to establish Temporary Education Centers. The purpose of the education given in these centers, which will be established with the approval of the governorship, is to ensure that the foreign students who have migrated to our country continue their education, and that they would not lose any years when they return to their countries or want to enroll in schools of all types and degrees under the Ministry (Ministry of National Education [MONE], 2014). According to 2017 data, while 223,049 students were enrolled in 318 temporary education centers in 21 provinces (General Directorate of Lifelong Learning [GDLL], 2018a), according to 2018 data, 108,604 students were taught in 215 temporary education centers (GDLL, 2018b). According to these data, the number of students in temporary education centers has decreased gradually and students are enrolled in schools in the cities. In the 2019-2020 academic year, temporary education centers were completely closed and 684,919 Syrian students were included in the education system. The schooling rate is 63.29% (GDLL, 2020). Both the number of students included in the education system increased and the schooling rate of Syrians at school age inclined in years. This shows that a progress has been made to solve the problem of including Syrians at the school age in the education system. However, does the improvement in quantity ensure the same rate of improvement in quality?

The immigrant problem is the problem of the whole world. It is a time-consuming process for immigrants to adapt to the country they migrate to. There are problems encountered in this process. As immigrants experience economic problems, school-age immigrant children are unable to benefit from the education system of the countries sufficiently. First and foremost, the language problem makes it difficult for children to adapt to the education system of the country they live in. According to Ereş

(2015), it is difficult for children to adapt to the host country because of the disadvantages experienced by immigrant families such as low education level, poverty, lack of social security, and cultural difference.

According to the regular PISA results, migrant children experience educational problems due to reasons such as not knowing the language of the host country, receiving education in a language they do not know, adapting to social and cultural life, being unfamiliar with the education system of the host country (European Union [EU], 2012). According to the report prepared by OECD, the academic performances of the first generation students who had migrated were lower than those of the others. Children, who were born in the migrated country, were in a relatively better condition. According to the report, immigrant children usually went to the same school and the rate of participation in pre-school education was 20% lower than others. The number of children at the age of 15, who had to repeat the year, was 3.4 times higher than others (OECD, 2015).

It is observed that the studies in this area in number with the migration of the Syrians to Turkey and inclusion of the school-age population in the Turkish education system. Seydi (2014) analyzed the policies of Turkey about the education of Syrian children; Duruel (2016) analyzed the education problem of Syrian refugees; Sezgin and Yolcu (2016) analyzed the state the social orientation and social acceptance of Syrian university students; Aykırı (2017) analyzed the views of classroom teachers on the educational status of Syrian students; Beyazova-Seçer (2017) analyzed the views of Syrian parents on the education of their children; Erdem (2017) analyzed the educational problems of classroom teachers about Syrian students and their suggestions for solution; Altunay-Yılmaz (2018) analyzed the adaptation experiences of Syrian refugees; Bulut, Kanat-Soysal and Gülçiçek (2018) analyzed the problems faced by the Turkish teachers of Syrian students; Cırt-Karaağaç (2018) analyzed the educational problems of Syrian students in primary education; Demir and Okşar (2018) analyzed the problems faced by Syrian students in religious education; Kiremit, Akpınar and Tüfekci-Akcan (2018) analyzed the adaptation of Syrian students to school; Ozcan (2018) analyzed the education policy of Turkey towards the Syrian students; Alpaslan (2019) analyzed the views of social studies teachers on Syrian students; Çınar (2019) analyzed the education given in temporary education centers according to parents, students and teachers; Demirtaş (2019) analyzed the metaphors of classroom teachers for Syrian students; Ergen and Şahin (2019) analyzed the problems experienced by classroom teachers about the education of Syrian students; Güllüce (2019) compared the social skills and problem behaviors of resident children and Syrian children at pre-schools; Kaya-Değer (2019) analyzed the socio-emotional adaptation skills of Syrian children at preschool age; Özenç and Saat (2019) analyzed the problems experienced by classroom teachers in education of Syrian students; Özgün (2019) analyzed the observations of primary school teachers on Syrian students in terms of adaptation to school and academic achievements; Yapıcı (2019) analyzed the temporary education centers in terms of Syrian teachers and parents; Savaşkan (2019) analyzed the requirements of and problems experienced by teachers in teaching Turkish to Syrian students; Alkalay (2020) analyzed the problems of Syrian students according to classroom teachers and primary school administrators as well as their suggestions for solutions; Kaya (2020) analyzed the problems experienced by classroom teachers, who have Syrian students in their classes, in classroom management.

Looking at the past research, it is observed that various topics have been studied about Syrian students. However, the studies conducted generally focused on the problems and adaptations of the students and teachers. With the gradual closure of camps and temporary education centers, Syrian students spread across the country and enrolled in the schools. For this reason, the number of teachers with Syrian students in their classes has increased gradually. Classroom teachers constitute the group of teachers who spend the most time with Syrian students as they teach all subjects on a class basis. It is the classroom teachers who first teach them how to read and write in Turkish, mathematics and other subjects. Looking at the studies in the literature, it is observed that a small number of studies have been made on the problems experienced by the classroom teachers. Among these studies, the study of Özenç and Saat (2019) was carried out by the interview method with 20 classroom teachers. Erdem (2017) also conducted his study through interview and observation with 5 classroom teachers. Aykırı (2017) also interviewed 18 classroom teachers in his study. Ergen and Şahin (2019) conducted

a survey by administering a questionnaire to 160 classroom teachers. Kaya (2020), on the other hand, examined the problems experienced by classroom teachers only in terms of classroom management. In this context, in order to determine the problems experienced by the classroom teachers who have Syrian students in their class, it is necessary to reach a greater number of classroom teachers and to examine the problems experienced in many dimensions. The aim of this study is to identify the problems experienced by classroom teachers with Syrian students in their classes. To achieve this goal, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the problems that classroom teachers experience in the classroom management dimension?
2. What are the problems that classroom teachers experience in the communication dimension?
3. What are the problems that classroom teachers experience in academic achievement dimension?
4. What are the problems that classroom teachers experience in the family dimension?

It is believed that an important gap in the literature would be filled with the identification of the problems experienced by classroom teachers in four different dimensions. Moreover, the part of this study on developing the data collection tool is also different from other studies. In the research, a survey was developed with the aim of identifying the problems experienced by classroom teachers and reaching a lot of teachers. The survey items were created in line with the opinions of the classroom teachers. Three questions were asked to 20 class teachers to be responded in writing. As a result of the analysis of the data obtained, the most frequently mentioned problems were selected as the survey items.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology part provides information about the model, population, and sampling of the study as well as the data collection tools, their applications and analysis of the data.

### **Research Model**

This study, which aims to identify the problems experienced by classroom teachers with Syrian students in their classes, is designed according to the survey model. According to Karasar (2003: 77), "survey models are research approaches that aim to describe a past or existing situation in the way that they are". The event, individual or object, which is the subject of the research, is tried to be defined in the way that it is within its own conditions. There is no attempt to change or affect them in any way". In this study, the problems experienced by the classroom teachers, who have Syrian students in their classes, were tried to be defined within their own conditions and in the way they were.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of the research consisted of classroom teachers working in Nizip district of Gaziantep within 2019-2020 academic year. This district was chosen due to the high number of Syrian students. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the sampling. In this study, the criterion of "having Syrian students in the class" was used to determine the people to be included in the sampling. Hence, the primary schools, where Syrian students were intensively enrolled, were identified. In these schools, the classes, in which Syrian students were enrolled, were determined and the classroom teachers teaching these classes were included in the sampling. The sampling group, from which the data of the research was collected, consisted of 361 classroom teachers who worked in Nizip district and had Syrian students in their classes.

**Table 2. Personal Information of the Sampling Group (N=361)**

Personal Information		f	%	Personal Information		f	%
Gender	Female	198	54,8	Graduation	Undergraduate	352	97,5
	Male	163	45,2		Graduate	9	2,5
Age	Between 22-30	134	37,1	Seniority	1-10 yeras	175	48,5
	Between 31-40	150	41,6		11-20 years	136	37,7
	41 and above	77	21,3		21 years and above	50	13,9
Grade taught	1st grade	86	23,8	Syrian students	Between 1-5	130	36
	2nd grade	89	24,7		Between 6-10	114	31,6
	3rd grade	107	29,6		Between 11-15	51	14,1
	4th grade	79	21,9		16 and above	66	18,3
Classroom size	Between 20-30	170	47,1				
	Between 31- 40	149	41,3				
	41 and above	42	11,6				

Table 2 shows that, among the teachers that constituted the sampling, 54.8% (198) were female and 45.2% (163) were male; 97.5% (352) had undergraduate degrees and 2.5% (9) had graduate degrees; 37.1% (134) were aged between 22-30, 41.6% (150) were aged between 31-40, 21.3% (77) were aged 41 and over; 48.5% (175) had an experience of 1-10 years, 37.7% (136) had an experience of 11-20 years and 13.9% (50) had over 21 years of experience; 23.8% (86) was teaching 1st grade, 24.7% (89) was teaching 2nd grade, 29.6% (107) was teaching 3rd grade and 21.9% (79) was teaching 4th grade; 47.1% (170) had classroom sizes between 20-30 students, 41.3% (149) had classroom sizes between 31-40 students and 11.6% (42) had classroom sizes of 41 or more students; 36% (130) had 1-5 Syrian students, 31.6% (114) had 6-10 Syrian students, 14.1% (51) had 11-15 Syrian students and 18.3% (66) had 16 or more Syrian students in their classes.

### Data Collection Tools

The survey, which was developed by researchers, was used to identify the problems experienced by classroom teachers with Syrian students in their classes. The survey was developed in two stages. This method was used to increase the validity and reliability of the survey form. As a result of application of the final survey form and data analysis, it was observed that using this method in developing the survey provided quite efficient results. High level of participation was observed in almost all of the survey items. In the first stage, following the literature scan, three main problems that were frequently experienced by the teachers were identified. These problems were turned into open-ended questions and 20 classroom teachers, who were identified through the purposeful sampling method and had Syrian students in their classes, were asked to respond to them in writing. The questions were as follows:

1. What kind of problems do you encounter in classroom management? Please explain.
2. What kind of problems do you encounter in terms of communication with Syrian students? Please explain.
3. What kind of academic problems do you encounter with Syrian students? Please explain.

The personal information of the 20 classroom teachers who answered the questions were presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Personal Information of Teachers Who Answered the Open-ended Questions**

Personal Information		f	%	Personal Information		f	%
Gender	Female	8	40	Graduation	Undergraduate	20	100
	Male	12	60		Graduate	0	0
Age	Between 22-30	7	35	Seniority	1-10 yeras	8	40
	Between 31-40	8	40		11-20 years	8	40
	41 and above	5	25		21 years and above	4	20
Grade taught	1st grade	6	30	Syrian students	Between 1-5	9	45
	2nd grade	1	5		Between 6-10	4	20
	3rd grade	5	25		Between 11-15	2	10
	4th grade	8	40		16 and above	5	25
Classroom size	Between 20-30	13	65				
	Between 31- 40	3	15				
	41 and above	4	20				

According to Table 3, among the teachers who responded to the open-ended questions; 40% (8) were female and 60% (12) were male; 100% (20) had undergraduate degrees; 35% (7) were aged between 22-30, 40% (8) were aged between 31-40, 25% (5) were aged 41 and over; 40% (8) had an experience of 1-10 years, 40% (8) had an experiences of 11-20 years and 20% (4) had an experience of 21 years or more; 30% (6) was teaching 1st grade, 5% (1) was teaching 2nd grade, 25% (5) was teaching 3rd grade, and 40% (8) was teaching 4t grade; 65% (13) had a classroom size of 20-30 students, 15% (3) had a classroom size of 31-40 students and 20% (4) had a classroom size of 41 students or more; 45% (9) had 1-5 Syrian students, 20% (4) had 6-10 Syrian students, 10% (2) had 11-15 Syrian students and 25% (5) had 16 or more Syrian students in their classes.

In the second stage, content analysis was performed on the answers given to the questions. The item pool was created for the survey by determining the most frequently expressed opinions. The pool of 40 items was submitted to three academicians, one being an associate professor and the other two being doctor lecturers, who were employed in education faculties and had participated in survey development studies before. After making necessary arrangements for 7 items to be removed from the survey and 5 items to be corrected, a survey form consisting of 33 items and 4 sub-dimensions was created. While determining the sub-dimensions, the answers given to the open-ended questions, the relevant literature and the opinions of the academicians whose opinions were consulted for the survey items were taken into consideration. The sub-dimensions of the survey were as follows:

1. Classroom Management
2. Communication
3. Academic Achievement
4. Family

#### **Data Collection Process**

In the first semester of the 2019-2020 academic year, three open-ended questions were asked to volunteering 20 classroom teachers. After the survey form took its final form, the schools that had been identified were visited and the purpose of the study was explained to the teachers. Teachers were informed that the data obtained from the survey would not be used in any study other than this research and that no personal data would be shared. During the implementation of the survey, many teaches expressed that this study was highly required. All teachers agreed to respond to the questions of the survey, where participation was voluntary. This experience during the application showed us that the teachers had various problems in this are and that they wanted solutions to be created by recognizing these problems.

### Analysis of the Data

Firstly, the survey forms were collected and reviewed. They were reviewed in terms of cases such as giving the same response to all the items. After determining that all survey forms were appropriate to be included in the analysis, each form was given sequence number. Before analyzing the data, the entire Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was calculated and found to be 0.94. If Cronbach Alpha value is  $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$ , the survey is considered to be highly reliable (Kalaycı, 2008). Following the the process of entering the surveys into the SPSS program, percentage, frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation analyzes were performed. The evaluation of the survey items was classified according to the values given in the table below:

**Table 4. Values Used in Classification of Survey Items**

Range	Opinion
Between 1.00- 1.80	I strongly disagree
Between 1.81- 2.60	I disagree
Between 2.61- 3.40	Undecided
Between 3.41- 4.20	I agree
Between 4.21- 5.00	I strongly agree

### FINDINGS

This part of the study involves findings regarding the problems experienced in classroom management, communication, academic achievement and family dimensions according to the opinions of the classroom teachers who had Syrian students in their classes. Findings regarding the problems experienced by teachers in classroom management are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Problems Experienced by Classroom Teachers in Classroom Management Dimension**

Opinions (N=361)	$\bar{X}$	Sd
I think that constant enrollment of Syrian students by registering in the middle of the term makes it difficult to ensure class discipline.	4,44	0,89
I think that the fact that Syrian students are not enrolled in classes that are appropriate to their development levels makes it difficult to ensure class discipline.	4,29	0,96
I think that the increase in class sizes due to Syrian students makes it difficult to ensure class discipline.	4,21	1,00
I think Syrian students have difficulty in adapting to the class.	4,12	0,96
I think that Syrian students have problems in obeying classroom rules.	4,06	1,01
I think that Syrian students talk very often among themselves.	4,01	1,13
I think the motivations of the Syrian students are low during the lesson.	3,96	1,06
I think I have problems with time management in lessons because of Syrian students.	3,88	1,10
I think the noise level in the classroom has increased because of Syrian students.	3,88	1,17
I think that the streaming of the lesson is disrupted because of Syrian students.	3,71	1,15
I think that Syrian students affect the behaviors of other students negatively.	3,56	1,22
I think I do not have sufficient information about Syrian students.	3,40	1,15

Looking at Table 5, it was observed that the classroom teachers who had Syrian students in their classes experienced many problems in the classroom management dimension. In terms of classroom management, "I think I do not have sufficient information about Syrian students " was the only opinion that remained within the value range of "neutral" (2.61-3.40). All other items were in the value range of "I agree (3.41-4.20)" and "I strongly agree (4.21-5.00)". Teachers strongly agreed with the views that constant enrollment of Syrian students in the class by registering in the middle of the term, allocation of Syrian students in classes that are not appropriate for their development levels and the increase in the class sizes because of the Syrian students made it difficult to ensure classroom discipline. The findings regarding the problems experienced by the classroom teachers who had Syrian students in their classes are displayed in Table 6.

**Table 6. The Problems Experienced by Classroom Teachers in the Communication Dimension**

Opinions (N=361)	$\bar{X}$	Sd
I think that Syrian students have a problem of understanding due to language differences.	4,55	0,77
I think that Syrian students have a problem of being understood due to language differences.	4,47	0,82
I think that Syrian students have communication problems with their families.	4,06	1,08
I think there are groupings among Syrian students.	3,89	1,10
I think Syrian students cannot adapt to the cultural structure of the society.	3,84	1,05
I think Syrian students are trying to solve their problems through violence.	3,69	1,14
I think Syrian students are excluded by other students.	3,06	1,17
I think Syrian students are introverted.	2,81	1,10

Looking at Table 6, it was observed that the classroom teachers who had Syrian students in their classes experienced many problems in the communication dimension. In communication dimension, “I think Syrian students are introvert ” was the only opinion that remained within the “neutral” (2.61-3.40) value range. All other items were in the value range of "I agree (3.41-4.20)" and "I strongly agree (4.21-5.00)". Teachers fully agreed with the views that Syrian students had problems of understanding and being understood due to language differences. The findings regarding the problems experienced in academic achievement dimension by the classroom teachers, who had Syrian students in their classes, are displayed in Table 7.

**Table 7. Problems Experienced by Classroom teachers in Academic Achievement Dimension**

Opinions (N=361)	$\bar{X}$	Sd
I think that Syrian students have problems in meaningful learning (internalizing the subjects).	4,39	0,80
I think that absenteeism affects the academic achievement of Syrian students negatively.	4,28	0,96
I think the textbooks are not suitable for Syrian students.	4,12	1,00
I think that Syrian students fall behind their peers in terms of academic achievement.	4,05	1,01
I think Syrian students have problems in reading and writing.	3,86	1,20
I think that Syrian students have problems in terms of participating in the lessons.	3,80	1,06
I think Syrian students do not fulfill their duties and responsibilities (homework etc.).	3,53	1,21
I think that education is not among the primary needs for Syrian students.	3,26	1,35

Looking at Table 7, it was observed that the classroom teachers who had Syrian students in their classes experienced many problems in the academic achievement dimension. In academic achievement dimension, “I think that education is not among the primary needs for Syrian students” was the only opinion that remained within the “neutral” (2.61-3.40) value range. All other items were in the value range of "I agree (3.41-4.20)" and "I strongly agree (4.21-5.00)". Teachers fully agreed with the views that Syrian students had problems in meaningful learning and absenteeism affected their academic achievement negatively. Finally, the findings regarding the problems experienced in the family dimension by the classroom teachers, who had Syrian students in their classes, are given in Table 8.

**Table 8. The Problems Experienced by Classroom Teachers in the Family Dimension**

Opinions (N=361)	$\bar{X}$	Sd
I think that Syrian students cannot get enough support due to education levels of their families.	4,25	0,89
I think the families of Syrian students do not give the necessary importance to the children.	3,90	1,10
I think the living conditions of the families of Syrian students are not good.	3,82	1,06
I think that Syrian children have problems because at least one of their parents is missing.	3,71	1,05
I think the families of other children are uncomfortable because of Syrian students.	3,53	1,19

Looking at Table 8, it was observed that the classroom teachers who had Syrian students in their classes experienced many problems in the family dimension. All items in the family dimension were in the value range of "I agree (3.41-4.20)" and "I strongly agree (4.21-5.00)". Teachers fully agreed with the view that Syrian students did not receive adequate support due to the education levels of their families.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, it was aimed to identify the problems experienced by classroom teachers who had Syrian students in their classes. The problems experienced by teachers were examined in four dimensions, which were classroom management, communication, academic achievement and family. In this part of the study, the conclusions reached regarding the problems experienced by the teachers who had Syrian students in their classes are explained; the results obtained are interpreted in comparison with similar studies and relevant literature, and certain suggestions are made.

The findings of the research show that classroom teachers, who had Syrian students in their classes, encountered many problems related to classroom management. In this part of the discussion section, three items within the range of “I strongly agree” among these problems have been taken into consideration. In terms of classroom management dimension, it was observed that the item with the highest average ( $\bar{X} = 4.44$ ) among the opinions of the teachers was “I think that constant enrollment of Syrian students by registering in the middle of the term makes it difficult to ensure class discipline”. With the circular on "Education Services for Foreigners" that was published in 2014, Syrian children in Turkey were given the opportunity to enroll in the government schools (MONE, 2014). According to this circular, the only requirement for the Syrian students to register in a school affiliated to the Ministry of National Education was to hold the “foreign identification document”. With this circular, Syrian students started to enroll in government schools and the number of Syrian students in schools increased considerably with the closure of temporary education centers at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year. However, in this process, Syrian students were identified to have problems regarding enrollment to schools in various studies (Levent and Çayak, 2017; Çakmak, 2018). However, since there were no "enrollment areas" identified for the Syrian students, they were able to enroll in any school they wanted to; and, this led to the concentration in various schools as well as transferring to other schools frequently. At the same time, due to the ongoing civil war in Syria, certain factors such as continuation of the migration to Turkey, relocation of Syrian families in and between the cities because of social and economic reasons, and the desire of these families to live in the same neighborhood for various reasons have caused enrollment in schools in the middle of the term. The findings show that the Syrian students enrolling in the classes without any plans is a factor that prevents teachers from establishing a regular and stable structure in classroom management. Another item with a high average in classroom management dimension ( $\bar{X} = 4.29$ ) was "I think that the fact that Syrian students are not enrolled in classes that are appropriate to their development levels makes it difficult to ensure class discipline". Students experience the problem of being placed in classes that are not appropriate to their development levels due to the fact that they had to discontinue their education during the civil war in Syria or due to the mistakes made during the official registering process in Turkey. As a result, they experienced the problem of being placed in classes that were not appropriate to their development levels. This has caused many problems. In the study conducted by Sarıtaş, Şahin and Çatalbaş (2016), it was found that Syrian students experienced behavioral problems and could not adapt to other students due to the fact that they were placed in classes where younger students were enrolled. It is normal that the behavioral problems experienced by Syrian students who were placed in classes that were not appropriate to their development levels caused discipline problems in the classroom. This has various effects and consequences also for Turkish students. For example, in a study conducted by Jafari, Tonga and Kışla (2018), it was found that Turkish students were negatively affected by the presence of older Syrian students in the classroom and this caused fear in Turkish students. It can be said that classroom teachers experience difficulties in ensuring classroom discipline due to the negative impact of older Syrian students on Turkish students as well as the behavioral problems of Syrian students. Considering the other findings regarding the classroom management dimension, "I think that the increase in class size due to Syrian students makes it difficult to ensure class discipline" was an item that had an interesting average ( $\bar{X} = 4.21$ ). The teachers, who were consulted in the study conducted by Kaya (2020), stated that the number of students in the classes increased after the arrival of Syrian students and this posed a problem in terms of the physical organization dimension of classroom management. The number of students in the classroom is a factor that affects the nature of teaching as well as teacher-student interaction directly (Martin, Yin & Baldwin, 1998). Concentration of Syrian students in certain schools has led to an increase in class sizes in these schools. It can be said that the increasing class sizes in these schools caused various

problems for teachers and thus decreased the quality of education. It is observed that one of these problems is about classroom management. Tösten (2019) stated that one of the most important factors that could be encountered in crowded classes was that the teacher could not manage the classroom effectively. The majority of teachers (84.9%), who were consulted in the study conducted by Koçak (2017), stated that crowded classes affected classroom management negatively. At the same time, teachers, who were consulted in the study conducted by Özdemir (2016), stated that teachers had to spend more effort on classroom management due to foreign students. Therefore, starting from these studies that support the current finding of the research, it is likely that the increasing class sizes due to Syrian students would affect the classroom management of teachers negatively. On the other hand, difficulties experienced by Syrian students in adapting to the class and in complying with the class rules come to the fore as other problems experienced by teachers in the classroom management dimension.

Another issue that teachers, who had Syrian students in their classes, had problems is communication. Since education is a communication-oriented action, failing to ensure sound communication and interaction between teacher-student and student-student would affect the education process negatively (Bulut, Kanat-Soysal and Gülçiçek, 2018). In various studies about Syrian students (Ciğerci and Güngör, 2016; Sahin and Sümer, 2018; Toker Gokce and Acar, 2018; Çelik, 2019), findings indicating that these students had communication problems were obtained. These studies show that the communication problems experienced by the Syrian students are generally caused by the language. When the findings obtained in the communication dimension of the current research were analyzed, it was seen that there were two items in the "I strongly agree" range. From these items, the highest average ( $\bar{X} = 4.55$ ) belonged to "I think that Syrian students have a problem of understanding due to language differences. ". In their study, Şimşir and Dilmaç (2018) found that students experienced the problem of understanding in the schools they were enrolled in because they spoke Arabic in the family and neighborhood and they were not exposed to Turkish frequently outside the school. In the study of Başar, Akan and Çiftçi (2018), the teachers, who were consulted for their opinions, stated that Syrian students could not understand what was said or the concepts due to the language barrier and that this caused the students to get bored quickly with the teaching and learning process as well as leading them to display undesired student behaviors. The teachers, who were consulted in the study conducted by Aykırı (2017), also stated that Syrian students had problems understanding what they read due to the language problem. Similarly, in a study by Börü and Boyacı (2016), immigrant students stated that they could not participate in lessons because they did not understand Turkish and that they could not communicate properly with their friends. These findings obtained in different studies support the findings of the current research. It can be stated that the problem of understanding experienced by Syrian students due to language differences negatively affected their learning process as well as the communication and interaction process with their peers and teachers, and that this caused the undesired student behaviors. Another item with a high average in communication dimension ( $\bar{X} = 4.47$ ) was "I think that Syrian students have a problem of being understood due to language differences." The teachers whose opinions were consulted in the study conducted by Mercan Uzun and Bütün (2016) stated that the students had limited communication with their peers because they could not express themselves, they were left alone in the classroom, they did not have the opportunity to convey their problems to their teachers, and therefore they had to struggle alone with the problems they experienced. Bulut, Kanat-Soysal and Gülçiçek (2018), on the other hand, found that Syrian students, who could not express themselves, became introverted and aggressive in time. On the other hand, in the study carried out by Özenç and Saat (2019), findings were obtained showing that Syrian students had agreement problems with other students due to the language problem they experienced and this led to groupings within the classroom. Considering these studies that support current research findings, it can be said that Syrian students who have problems understanding due to language differences are isolated, introverted, experienced adoption issues and formed groups among themselves. Considering the other findings obtained in the communication dimension within the scope of the research; it was concluded that problems such as communication problems with the families of Syrian students, groupings among Syrian students, the inability of Syrian students to adapt to the cultural structure of the society and the tendency of Syrian students to solve their problems through violence were also encountered.

Academic achievement at school is an important factor for refugee students in terms of not feeling alone and attending school (Palladino, 2008). In a study conducted by Ishida, Nakamuro and Takenaka (2016), it was determined that immigrant students had the most problems in terms of academic achievement. In this study, in the academic achievement dimension, "I think Syrian students have problems in meaningful learning (internalizing issues)." had the highest average ( $\bar{X} = 4.39$ ). Based on the findings they obtained in their study, Ciğerci and Güngör (2016) stated that foreign students were not able to acquire academic achievement largely due to the language problem. In terms of teachers, in addition to the language problem, it is a pedagogical dilemma to deal with students whose school education has been interrupted, literacy in the mother tongue was low and who had to learn complex content in a new language (Miller, 2009). From the perspective of Syrian students, understanding and internalizing the topics taught in a new language is not seen as an issue that could be handled easily. Hence, in the education and teaching process, Syrian students experience problems such as failing to understanding what they read (Aykırı, 2017; Erdem, 2017), failing to understanding what they listen to (Ergen and Şahin, 2019) and failing to express themselves or failing to speak (Taskin and Erdemli, 2018). It is believed that these problems experienced by Syrian students during the education process prevent them from attaining meanings to the topics they have to learn at school and this affected the academic achievement of the Syrian students negatively. When the current research findings were examined, another item in the "I strongly agree" range ( $\bar{X} = 4.28$ ) in academic achievement dimension was "I think that absenteeism affects the academic achievement of Syrian students negatively." Altinkurt (2008) defined absenteeism as an undesirable student behavior that could result from many physical, psychological and social factors and was believed to affect the academic achievement of the student negatively. In various studies conducted on Syrian students, findings related to the absenteeism problem were also obtained. For example, the teachers, who were consulted in the studies conducted by Kardeş and Akman (2018) and Zayimoğlu Öztürk (2018), stated that the problem of absenteeism was an obstacle in the education process of refugee students. In the study conducted by Atlıhan (2019), it was determined that the problem of absenteeism in refugee students was caused by the lack of legislation. At the same time, due to this problem, it was found that the planned activities could not be implemented in a timely manner and therefore the targeted gains could not be achieved. In the study conducted by Başar, Akan and Çiftçi (2018), it was determined that refugee students had been absent for a long time due to the lack of legislation for them. It is seen that the findings obtained in these studies coincide with the current research finding. In the studies conducted by Atlıhan (2019) and Başar, Akan and Çiftçi (2018), it was stated that absenteeism of the students was caused by the lack of legal regulations for refugee students. In addition, it can be assumed that education is not seen as a priority for children by the families of the Syrian students because their physiological and economic needs are not met sufficiently and this leads students to absenteeism. Being absent from school also has various adverse effects for students. Ford and Sutphen (1996) stated that students, who did not attend school regularly, fell behind their peers in terms of academic achievement and social competence. Similarly, Elis (2016) mentioned that absenteeism was one of many factors that affected student performance in academic fields. The teachers who were consulted in the current research also stated that the absenteeism problem experienced by Syrian students was an important factor affecting academic achievement. Considering that the time spent at school is an important factor in reaching the program goals, it can be said that the absence of Syrian students poses a great obstacle to reaching these goals and thus affects their academic achievement negatively. On the other hand, it is understood from the research findings that Syrian students have difficulties in terms of academic achievement because of the difficulties in reading-writing in Turkish and participating in the lessons, falling behind their peers academically and the unsuitability of the textbooks for the needs of these students.

Family support in various terms (academic, psychological, etc.) has a great importance in ensuring the achievement of Syrian students in education. For many Syrian students, who start school and continue their education in disadvantageous conditions in many respects, family support and the cooperation of school with families are important requirements. In the family dimension of this study, the only item in the family dimension in the "I strongly agree" range ( $\bar{X} = 4.25$ ) was "I think that Syrian students cannot get enough support due to their education levels of their families." Aslanargun et al. (2004), in the study where they investigated the reasons for the lack of interest in parents towards the school, the families stated that their education level was insufficient and they required information

in the first place as one of the reasons for not paying enough attention to the school (as cited in Aslanargun, 2007). In this respect, it is seen that it is important for families to have sufficient knowledge in order to support the students. The fact that the teachers whose opinions were consulted within the scope of the research could not communicate adequately and soundly with the parents of the Syrian students may have made them think in this way. Due to the weak communication culture of parents in the family and with official institutions, immigrant students, who are not able to get educational support from their families, fail to adapt to education (Özgüzel, 2019). In other words, the insufficient levels of the parents of Syrian students in terms of reading, understanding and speaking Turkish could be one of the reasons for the perception of teachers in this direction. In the study conducted by Tamer (2017), it was found that the students did not receive any support from the family because there was nobody speaking Turkish at home in general. This finding supports the findings obtained in the current research. On the other hand, in the family dimension of the research, teachers whose opinions are consulted, strongly agreed with the views that families did not pay sufficient attention to their children, their living conditions were not good and at least one of the parents of the students was missing.

In the light of the findings, results and discussions, the following suggestions have been developed.

- Arrangements should be made to prevent Syrian students from enrolling in classes with interim enrollments, and practices that would increase the adaptation of these students to schools should be included.
- Supportive practices and compensatory programs such as the Placement program in Primary Schools (PPPS) can be implemented in order for students attending primary school to be placed in classes suitable for their development levels and to reach the same academic level with their peers.
- The distribution of Syrian students to schools and classes should be done fairly and these students should not be concentrated in certain schools.
- Syrian students should be implemented language-oriented programs starting from preschool period in order to improve their language skills, to ensure their sound communication with their friends and teachers, and to increase their academic performances.
- In order to ensure regular attendance of Syrian students to school, legal arrangements must be made for these students.
- It is very important for parents to learn Turkish in order to provide family support to Syrian students. In this regard, literacy and speaking courses could be started for Syrian parents in schools and public education centers.
- Qualitative studies can be conducted to investigate the reasons for the absenteeism of Syrian students.
- This study was carried out on classroom teachers considering the Syrian students at primary school level. Similar studies can be carried out on teachers teaching at pre-school, secondary and high school levels.
- In this study, the problems experienced by classroom teachers are analyzed in four dimensions, which were classroom management, communication, academic achievement and family. Studies can be conducted to address these dimensions separately and in more detail.

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