

## Inclusive leadership in schools where refugee students study: The evidence from Türkiye

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**ABSTRACT** Since the civil war broke out in Syria, millions of refugees have had to migrate to Türkiye and neighboring countries. Thus, refugee students have become a serious problem for many countries. The current study used a phenomenological approach to explore inclusive leadership behaviors in Turkish schools serving refugee pupils. The descriptive analysis technique was adopted in this study, in which School administrators and teachers participated. Findings have shown that the most common problems faced by school administrations while involving refugee students in educational activities are language difficulties, poor academic achievement, absenteeism, and adaptation problems experienced by refugee students. To involve refugee students in education, the practices carried out by school administrators are guidance and cooperation, employment of Syrian teachers, sports and cultural activities, establishment of integration classes, and translator support. As expected, the research findings showed that there is no exclusion against refugee students in Türkiye due to inclusive leadership practices carried out by school administrators and cultural and religious similarities between refugee students and Turkish students.

**Keywords:** *Exclusion, Inclusive leadership, Refugee, Refugee students, School administrators*

## Mülteci öğrencilerin öğrenim gördükleri okullarda kapsayıcı liderlik: Türkiye örneği

**ÖZ** Suriye'de iç savaşın çıkmasıyla birlikte milyonlarca sığınmacı Türkiye'ye ve çevre ülkelere göç etmek zorunda kaldı. Böylece mülteci öğrenciler birçok ülke için ciddi bir sorun haline aldı. Fenomenolojik desenin benimsendiği bu çalışma ile Türkiye'de mülteci öğrencilerin öğrenim gördüğü okullarda okul yönetimlerinin sergilediği kapsayıcı liderlik uygulamaları araştırılmaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Türkiye'nin Şanlıurfa il merkezinde bulunan okullarda görev yapan öğretmenler ve okul yöneticileri oluşturmaktadır. Betimsel analiz tekniği ile analiz edilen verilerin toplanmasında görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları, mülteci öğrencileri eğitim faaliyetlerine dâhil ederken okul yönetimlerinin en sık karşılaştıkları sorunların mülteci öğrencilerin yaşadığı dil güçlükleri, düşük akademik başarı, devamsızlık ve uyum sorunları olduğunu göstermiştir. Mülteci öğrencilerin eğitime katılımını sağlamak için okul yöneticileri tarafından sergilenen kapsayıcı liderlik uygulamaları ise rehberlik ve işbirliği, Suriyeli öğretmen istihdamı, sportif ve kültürel faaliyetler, kaynaştırma kurslarının düzenlenmesi ve tercüman desteğinin sağlanması olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca araştırma bulguları, Türkiye'de mülteci öğrencilere yönelik bir dışlanma durumunun olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu durumun yaşanmasında kültürel ve dini benzerliklerin yanı sıra, okul yöneticilerinin sergiledikleri kapsayıcı liderlik uygulamalarının etkili olduğunu göstermiştir.

**Anahtar**

**Sözcükler:** *Dışlanma, Kapsayıcı Liderlik, Mülteci, Mülteci Öğrenciler, Okul Yöneticileri*

**Citation:** Culha, A., & Nazlı, K. (2023). Inclusive leadership in schools where refugee students study: The evidence from Türkiye. *Turkish Journal of Education*, 12(4), 165-181. <https://doi.org/10.19128/turje.1247323>

## INTRODUCTION

Refugees are becoming more common due to regional conflicts, civil wars, global warming, and the desire to achieve better living conditions. Nowadays, mass refugee movements are experienced due to conflicts occurring in many parts of the World (Oplatka, 2021). As a result of these conflicts, about 80 million people in different countries around the world became refugees. Approximately 26 million of these refugees are children (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2021). This situation manifests itself as a refugee student problem in terms of host countries. The increasing number of refugee students in schools has led to various problems in the education systems of the host countries. Refugees immigrate to other countries not only physically but also with their cultural backgrounds. Therefore, changes occur in the demographic structures and cultural codes of students in schools (Fagerholm & Verheul, 2016; Kollender & Nimer, 2020; Naslund-Hadley et al., 2020; Pugh et al., 2012; Stasiūnaitienė et al., 2020; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). The problem of refugee students has evolved to a more serious dimension, especially with the migration of millions of refugees to Türkiye and neighboring countries as a result of the civil war in Syria (Fagerholm & Verheul, 2016; Kollender & Nimer, 2020; Uyan-Semerci & Erdogan, 2018). Here, we find it useful to explain the status of Syrians migrating to Türkiye. The status of these people in Türkiye is Temporary Protection that provided to foreigners whose international protection request cannot be evaluated. However, considering the relevant literature and the United Nations definition of refugee (UNHCR, 1967), we preferred to use the concept of "refugee" in this study to ensure conceptual unity. Türkiye hosts approximately four million refugees (UNHCR, 2021), over one million of whom are school-age children (The United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2019). This situation creates a serious problem for Türkiye, which hosts a large number of refugee students (Karsli-Calamak & Kilinc, 2021). An inclusive leadership approach that encourages all school stakeholders to play an active role in educational activities, especially at schools where refugee students study, can be effective (Cerna, 2020; Kamp & Mansouri, 2010) to alleviate the problem of refugee students. Without an inclusive approach towards refugees, it can be said that the problem may become more serious for both refugees and host countries.

Inclusive leadership differs from other leadership styles in terms of the importance it gives to group members that are affected by decision-making processes. Inclusive leadership considers and cares about the views and expectations of its followers in decision-making processes (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Inclusive leadership does not exclude its followers; in contrast, it cares about their participation and needs and establishes strong collaborations and healthy relationships with them (Booyesen, 2014; Carmeli et al., 2010; Echols, 2009; Randel et al., 2018). The inclusive leadership approach rejects the exclusion of certain groups from decision-making processes. Inclusive leaders see it as ethically problematic to marginalize certain groups. They think that such an attitude will harm the potential energy and creativity of the organization (Echols, 2009). Inclusive leaders encourage all members of the group to speak up, especially the voiceless. Inclusive leaders appreciate the contributions all stakeholders make to the organization, regardless of their status or position in the organization (Carmeli et al., 2010; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). An inclusive leadership approach draws attention to the possibility of students exclusion from learning processes and their disadvantageous positions (abilities, age, race, class, gender, etc.) (Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). It aims to ensure all stakeholders' interests at schools by creating suitable conditions for a strong communication process. In such a climate, respect for values, beliefs, and lifestyles is seen as a part of the educational process (Dorczak, 2011; Ryan, 2006a). Therefore, inclusive leadership practices of school administrators are important in creating more inclusive environments for all teachers and students (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007). At schools, an inclusive leadership approach is adopted, the individuals excluded or who have the potential to be excluded are taken into account, dialogue with these individuals is encouraged, and inclusive decision-making and policy-making processes are adopted (Ryan, 2006b).

Schools are of critical importance as they provide safe socialization and education opportunities for refugee students after migration. Educational activities support refugee students' social, cultural, and academic development as well as that of native students. (Hamilton, 2004; Orucu et al., 2021; Suarez-Orozco & Gaytan, 2010). When it comes to refugee students, schools stand out as institutions that shape

the daily lives of students and families and affect their sense of belonging, rather than just places where academic activities are held (Okilwa, 2018). In addition, many studies show that (Alba & Holdaway, 2017; Arzubaiaga et al., 2009; Entorf, 2015; Erisman & Looney, 2007; Kollender & Nimer, 2020) refugee students face some problems such as prejudice, exclusion, and discriminatory practices in schools. These problems have become more evident with the increasing number of refugee students. For this reason, more inclusive policies and practices are needed to create equal and fair opportunities for all students (Cerna, 2020). At schools where refugee students are educated, school administrators play a key role in the implementation of these policies and overcoming various difficulties that may arise (Orucu et al., 2021). Therefore, it is very important for school administrators to create an inclusive school environment that allows refugee students with different backgrounds, cultures, abilities, interests, and beliefs to develop their potential and be successful. (Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2021; The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2015; UNHCR, 2021).

Türkiye not only hosts millions of refugees but also enables refugee children to benefit from educational opportunities. The problem has become even more serious with the arrival of approximately one million refugee students (UNICEF, 2019) in schools in Şanlıurfa Province, which already has a large student population. For this reason, the education of refugees has emerged as a separate problem area for Turkish school administrators and teachers. The idea that an inclusive approach that encourages all school stakeholders to play an active role in educational activities, especially in schools where refugee students are studying, can be effective (Cerna, 2020; Kamp & Mansouri, 2010), forms the main reason for this research. Therefore, it is very important to identify the inclusive leadership behaviors and examples of good practices that school administrators exhibit while including refugee students in educational activities. In addition, it is expected that the suggestions to be developed based on research findings will contribute to the effective benefit of refugee students from education and training activities.

## **Purpose**

This research aims to reveal the inclusive leadership practices exhibited by school administrators in schools where refugee students are educated. In line with the current aim, the following questions have been formulated:

1. What are the difficulties encountered in involving refugee students in educational activities in terms of inclusive leadership?
2. What are the inclusive leadership practices applied in schools to include refugees in educational activities?
3. How are the exclusion situations for refugee students?

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

A phenomenological design was adopted to examine the inclusive leadership practices in schools where refugee students study in Türkiye. Phenomenological studies correspond to the common meaning of the lived experiences of several people about a phenomenon or concept (Creswell, 2016). Phenomenology focuses on investigating how people describe events in their environment and experience them through their senses. This requires a careful and detailed description of how individuals experience certain phenomena (Patton, 2014).

### **Participants**

Qualitative studies are usually conducted with small sample groups. Particular attention is paid to the selection of situations rich in knowledge and experience. Care is taken to ensure that the participants

have rich life experiences related to the phenomenon in question (Patton, 2014). As it is an important criterion for the participants to have rich experiences about the phenomenon that is the subject of the study (Creswell, 2016), the criterion sampling method was adopted in this study. The criteria of having worked at least one year in the schools where refugee students study were sought for the participants of this study. Teachers and school administrators working in primary, secondary, and high schools located in Şanlıurfa central district, where the highest number of refugee students are located in Türkiye, were determined to be the participants of the research. Participants' time spent working with refugee students ranged from three to seven years. This demonstrates that the participants have sufficient experience about the phenomenon that is the subject of the research. Thus, a total of 28 participants—5 school administrators and 23 teachers—who meet the determined criteria and agree to contribute to the research constitute the participants of the research.

### **Data Collection**

The research was conducted in Şanlıurfa province due to its location on the Syrian border and its dense refugee population. With a semi-structured interview form, the study data were collected. While developing the interview form, a primary literature review was carried out. Based on the literature review and professional experience, an interview form consisting of three open-ended questions was formed. Prior to the collection of data, ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Bingöl University. The document date and number are 06.05.2021-92342550/020/12914. Then pilot interviews were conducted with three participants, a volunteer school principal, a vice principal, and a teacher, on the first version of the interview form. Subsequently, the interview form was finalized. The following open-ended questions were included in the interview form for teachers and school administrators:

1. What kind of difficulties are encountered while including refugee students and their families in educational activities at the school you work?
2. What kind of activities have been done by school administrators to ensure the involvement of refugee students and their parents in educational activities at the school you work?
3. What are your experiences with the situation of exclusion for refugee students at the school you work?

The interviews were conducted face-to-face. Prior to the interview, the participants were informed about the subject of the study. In this context, it has been stated that the research has the approval of the ethics committee, that the security of personal data regarding the participants will be secured, and that the research findings will not be used other than for scientific purposes. Interviews were held with the participants who voluntarily agreed to contribute to the research.

### **Data Analysis**

We analyzed the data with the descriptive analysis technique. In descriptive analysis, data can be organized according to predetermined themes or a general framework for data analysis can be created based on research interview questions (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). In this study, the interviews were first transcribed, and files were created for each participant. Secondly, the participants were codenamed P1 (participant 1), P2, P3, and so on. These interview files were transferred to the qualitative data analysis program. Based on the research questions, framework themes were created for data analysis. Afterwards, the interview files were read several times, and the codes related to the frame themes were determined. Based on the organized data, the findings and comments are included. Finally, the findings resulting from the data analysis were supported by direct references to participant views. All stages of data analysis were carried out using the qualitative data analysis software program.

### **Trustworthiness**

The most effective way to ensure the trustworthiness in qualitative studies is to ensure data diversity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). One of the key methods of ensuring data variety is through the analysis of

the data by several academics. (Patton, 2014). In addition, frequent use of detailed descriptions and direct quotations in the analysis of data can also contribute to the reliability of qualitative data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Applying to participant confirmations is another crucial step in ensuring the credibility of qualitative research (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). To ensure the trustworthiness, the research data analyzed by two different researchers and direct quotations regarding the confirmation of the findings that emerged as the common pattern of the analyzes of different researchers were included. Furthermore, research findings were confirmed by participant confirmations.

### **Limitations**

This study has some limitations. Firstly, the findings are limited to the views of teachers and school administrators. Refugee students and their parents' views on this issue may yield different results.

## **FINDINGS**

The study findings were presented under the main titles "*Inclusive Leadership Difficulties in The Education of Refugee Students, Inclusive Leadership Practices and The Exclusion Situation Against Refugee Students*".

### **Inclusive Leadership Difficulties in The Education of Refugee Students**

In the research, the participants were asked the question "What kind of difficulties are encountered while including refugee students and their families in educational activities at the school you work?". The responses of the participants regarding this question were analyzed, and the themes reached are "*Language Difficulty, Absenteeism, Poor Academic Achievement, and Adaptation Difficulties*." The findings related to these themes are presented below.

#### **Language difficulty**

When the participant's views are examined while trying to include refugee students in educational activities, serious difficulties are encountered due to the fact that refugee students do not know Turkish, the language of education. For example, participant P1 expresses his views on these difficulties as follows:

*...It is very difficult for them to learn to read and write because they do not know Turkish. Even if he reads, he does not understand what he is reading. The situation is even worse for refugee students studying in upper classes. (P1)*

Similarly, P18, who works as a school principal, draws attention to the language difficulties experienced by refugee students by saying, "*...Our refugee students sometimes behave shyly and hold back because they have difficulties speaking Turkish.*"

#### **Absenteeism and poor academic achievement**

According to the participants, other difficulties experienced are that refugee students attend classes less than non-refugee students and that their academic success is lower. For example, participant P11, who works as a vice principal in a primary school, expresses this situation with the following lines: "*...I think that the participation of refugees in educational activities remains at a very low level.*". Similarly, participant P17, who works as a school principal in a primary school, points out that the low academic achievement of refugee students is a significant challenge by saying, "*...Our refugee students generally perform below their potential level.*"

## Adaptation difficulties

When the participant's views are examined, another difficulty encountered in the schools where refugee students study is the adaptation difficulties that refugee students experience. The fact that refugee students do not know Turkish, which is the language of education, may cause them to experience adaptation problems at school. Participant P13 expresses the integration problems of refugee students as follows: "...Our refugee students have serious difficulties in adapting to school because they do not understand and know how to speak Turkish." As can be understood from the participants' views, the difficulties experienced while involving refugee students in educational activities are mostly due to the fact that refugee students do not know Turkish, which is the language of education. This difficulty, called language difficulty, can also cause refugee students to experience various adaptation problems at school. It is suggested that the language difficulties faced by refugee students cause them not to attend classes adequately, and this situation negatively affects their academic success.

## Inclusive Leadership Practices

In the research, the participants were asked, "What kind of activities have been done by school administrators to ensure the involvement of refugee students and their parents in educational activities at the school you work?". The views of the participants regarding this question were analyzed, and the themes reached are "Guidance and Collaboration, Organizing Sports and Cultural Events, Opening Integration Classes, Employment of Syrian Teachers, and Translator Support". The findings related to these themes are presented below.

### Guidance and collaboration

When the participant's views were examined, it was determined that, under the leadership of the school administrators, guidance and cooperation studies were planned for the students and their parents in order to ensure the participation of refugee students in educational activities. In this context, orientation studies are carried out for refugee students and their parents. For example, participant P21, who works as a vice principal in a primary school, says the following about this guidance and orientation work:

*Refugee students have serious difficulties adapting to school. In the first place, we try to solve this situation by carrying out orientation studies and making them get used to the school and the environment. Moreover, various seminars and meetings are organized by our guidance services for them and their parents in order to facilitate their integration and adaptation. Through parent-teacher meetings, we communicate with refugee students parents and convey our expectations to them. (P21)*

Similarly, participant P3 expresses his views on this subject as follows:

*...In order to ensure the attendance of refugee students who do not attend the classes adequately, school administrators and teachers are cooperating with the families of these students. Depending on their abilities, they try to be included in various activities. For example, physical education lessons are given priority for students who are successful in sports, and refugee students with strong verbal logic are encouraged to read more books. Additionally, those with artistic intelligence are directed to painting and music classes. (P3)*

As understood from the participants' views, guidance and cooperation services are carried out for refugee students and their parents in order to discover the potential talents of the students and to provide the right guidance.

Thanks to cooperation with the parents of the refugee students, it is possible to ensure that the students attend the classes adequately. By discovering the talents of students in various fields, they can be directed to appropriate programs and areas where they can realize their potential. Thereby, refugee students are tried to be included in various social and cultural activities held at schools. Collaborating

with students' parents in order to include refugee students in social and cultural activities organized at schools can be considered an indicator of acting with an inclusive leadership approach.

### **Integration classes and employment of Syrian teachers**

According to the participants' views, the most important obstacle for refugee students to benefit from education and training activities and to be included in other social and cultural activities at school stems from their ignorance of Turkish. School administrations are opening Integration Classes within the school to ensure that refugee students are more integrated in their education processes. Intensified Turkish lessons are taught for refugee students in integration classes. For example, participant P22 summarizes this situation as follows:

*... Integration classes have been set up in our school for our refugee students who have language problems or are below their current grade level. On this occasion, the majority of integration classes are composed of refugee students. Since refugee students attending integration classes are similar in terms of both their success levels and their ability to use Turkish, they can receive a more efficient language education. Thus, it is tried to support the more active participation of refugee students in education and training activities that are taught in normal classrooms. (P22)*

Moreover, Syrian refugee teachers are employed in integration classes. For example, participant P15 summarizes this situation as follows: “... Syrian volunteer educators are also assisted when necessary in these integration classes, which are created to solve the language problems of refugee students and to prepare them for normal education classes.”

### **Organizing sports and cultural events**

According to participants, school administrators are organizing various activities, such as sporting and cultural activities, to include refugee students in education. For this purpose, both teachers and school administrators work together. For example, participant P12 draws attention to this situation with the following words: “... In order to identify these students, the teacher and the school administration organize various activities outside the classroom. In this context, talented refugee students are identified through observation, interviews, sports activities, painting activities, etc.”

Meetings are held with the families of the students, who are determined as a result of the joint work of the teachers and school administrators. Translators who speak the language of Syrian families are provided in these meetings, in which school counselors are present. Thus, it is tried to ensure the participation of refugee students in sports and cultural activities organized at the school and provincial levels. For example, participant P8 summarizes these studies with the following words:

*...A football tournament is organized in our city, and the students who will participate in this tournament are made up of both refugee and Turkish students. These and various similar events are organized on a provincial and school basis, and our refugee students who are deemed to be talented are definitely able to participate. (P8)*

### **Providing translator support**

When the participant's views were examined, it was determined that in some schools where refugee students continue their education, school administrations provide translator support to facilitate the communication of refugee student parents with the school. Translator support is provided in Arabic, the mother tongue of refugee students' parents. Thanks to the translator support application developed for the parents of refugee students, parents are included in the decision-making processes of the school. For example, parents of refugee students are invited to parents' meetings, which is one of the most important decision-making processes in schools. Translator support is provided for refugee students' parents so that they can understand the topics discussed at these meetings and convey their views to the teachers

and school administrations. For example, participant P14, who works as a school principal, expresses his views on the translator support as follows:

*...We attach great importance to parent-school cooperation. We invite them to school by holding parent meetings on a routine basis. We also take Syrian teachers with us and visit them at home. They are very satisfied. We want parents to be involved in decision-making processes at school. However, most parents either never come to school or come to ask for help when they arrive. (P14)*

As it is seen from the participants perspectives, the translator support provided to the parents of refugee students is not limited to the parent-teacher meetings. Parents of refugee students are also provided with translator support when they contact the school administration and teachers at various times. For example, participant P17 summarizes this situation as follows:

*...Parents of students who come to the school can have a dialogue with school administrators and teachers through Syrian teachers who act as translators. Thanks to the translator teachers provided by the school administrators, the parents of the students have the opportunity to convey their wishes to the relevant staff. (P17)*

Thanks to the translator support application, refugee students and their parents can communicate with teachers and school administrators at the meetings held at schools, and they have the opportunity to convey their wishes and expectations on various issues. It can be said that the translator support provided to refugee students and their parents has made the lives of refugee families a little bit easier. Due to language problem, the only way for immigrant children to benefit from education opportunities is to know the language of the country they live. With this practice, it can be said that care is taken to ensure that refugee students benefit from education, which is the most basic human right in Türkiye.

### **The Exclusion Situation for Refugee Students**

In the research, the participants were asked the question "What are your experiences about the situation of exclusion against refugee students at the school you work?". Based on the views of the participants regarding this question, a "Social Acceptance" theme has been formed.

### **Social acceptance**

When participant views were examined, it was determined that refugee students were not exposed to serious exclusion as a result of some endeavors conducted under the leadership of school administrations. According to the participants, the understanding of "Social Acceptance" towards refugee students is dominant among school stakeholders. Various activities organized in schools have a great impact on the social acceptance of refugee students and their parents. First of all, in schools, students are placed in classes in a heterogeneous way without being subjected to discrimination as native or refugee students. Additionally, refugee students are included in many activities held in the classroom, at school, and at the provincial level. For example, participant P2 summarizes this situation as follows:

*...We evaluate our students without distinguishing them as Turkish or refugees." In order to make refugee students not feel the psychology of exclusion, their participation is also encouraged in activities held at school or in the classroom. It is ensured that students play together in a homogeneous manner in the classroom or in the school garden. (P2)*

In addition, it is understood from the opinions of the participants that the education organized in schools for students and their parents, values education, and cultural similarities with refugees are also effective in the widespread perception of social acceptance towards refugees. For example, participant P21, who works as a secondary school principal, draws attention to this situation with the following statements:

*...At the beginning, when they came to Türkiye, there had been an understanding that they would disturb the peace of the school. However, due to the cultural and religious similarities with the*



*refugee students, these problems were overcome in a short time. Refugee students mingled with their Turkish friends. In-class and extra-class activities, excursions, tournaments, and courses organized by the school administration enabled refugee students to establish friendly relations with our native students. With such activities, we make them nurture love and respect for each other. (P21)*

Similarly, with the following statements, participant P19 confirms that various educational activities are organized for parents of the students in order to avoid discrimination against refugee students and their parents: “...*Integration seminars were organized in order to avoid exclusion against foreign students. In particular, training on this subject was organized for parents.*” From this point of view, it can be said that the values education and parent education organized in schools played an important role in helping teachers and native students act with a sense of social acceptance towards refugee students.

As can be understood from the participant's views, refugee families and students do not face any racial and cultural discrimination in their educational environment in Türkiye. On the contrary, school staff and native students act with an understanding of social acceptance towards refugee students. Various factors, such as placing students in classes in a heterogeneous way without discriminating between refugees and natives, organizing values education for students and parents in schools, including refugee students in social and cultural activities, and supporting refugee students and their families, have played an important role in the formation of an understanding of social acceptance towards refugee students and their families. In addition, it is confirmed by the statements of the participants that the cultural and religious similarities with refugee students have a significant impact on the development of their understanding of social acceptance. Although it is uncommon, it has been determined that some refugee students tend to form cliques and sometimes resort to violence.

## DISCUSSION

In this study, inclusive leadership practices were investigated in schools where refugee students study. In the research, it has been determined that there are various difficulties in including refugee students in educational activities. These difficulties include language difficulties, absenteeism, low academic achievement, and adaptation difficulties. It is thought that these difficulties are not independent of each other and that the presence of one may affect the other. Language problems experienced by refugee students negatively affect their academic performance (Bruckauf, 2016; Edmonds & Flahault, 2021; Orozco et al., 2009). It has also been revealed in many studies that refugee students experience language problems, absenteeism problems, poor academic performance, and adjustment problems at schools (Arzubiaga et al., 2009; Entorf, 2015; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Orozco et al., 2009). Inclusive leadership practices require school administrators and teachers to have the skills to manage differences. These skills are important in creating a more inclusive school climate for teachers and students (Garrison-Wade et al., 2007). Because, in the inclusive leadership approach, it is necessary to create the environments needed for the development of everyone (Dorczak, 2011), to support the learning of all students, and to take into account their needs (Ryan, 2006b), Therefore, it can be said that inclusive leadership practices can make a difference in attempts to solve the problems experienced in the schools where refugee students attend.

Research findings showed that school administrators working in schools where refugee students are educated in Türkiye exhibit inclusive leadership behaviors towards refugee students. In this context, guidance and cooperation, heterogeneous distribution of students to classes, employment of refugee teachers, opening of adaptation classes, organizing sportive and cultural activities, and providing translator support are at the forefront of the inclusive leadership behaviors displayed by school administrators towards refugee students and their families. It is crucial to provide refugees with guidance and cooperation (Kollender & Nimer, 2020; Popyk, 2021; Primdahl et al., 2021; You, vd., 2020) because they are desperately in need of support and help. Regarding the heterogeneous student distribution in classes, it can be said that the acceptance of refugee students as equal members of the school like native

students will positively affect their motivation and performance (Sakız, 2016). Heterogeneous student distribution in classrooms and a mixed layout within the classroom are effective in terms of language and cultural interaction (Culha & Demirtas, 2020). Applications such as heterogeneous distribution of students to classes, opening integration courses, and providing interpreter support can facilitate adaptation problems faced by refugee students. All these practices are considered inclusive leadership practices because taking into account the views and expectations of stakeholders is the basic characteristic of inclusive leadership (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006).

Another application developed to solve the problems encountered in the education of refugee students in Türkiye is to receive support from foreign teachers who speak Arabic as well as Turkish. Receiving support from refugee teachers on issues such as adaptation and communication in the schools where refugee students study (Culha & Demirtas, 2020; Entorf, 2015) is a key element that makes the adaptation process easier and more efficient for refugee students and their families. In Türkiye, integration classes can be opened in schools where refugee students study in order to eliminate language deficiencies. It is a widely adopted approach to include refugee students in regular classes after teaching them the basics of the host country's language (Koehler & Schneider, 2019). This application is common in countries such as the USA, England, Spain, Sweden, and Australia (Aydın & Kaya, 2017). Intensive Turkish language courses have been provided for refugee students in integration classes opened in Türkiye since 2019.

Other opportunities provided for refugee students in schools in Türkiye include their inclusion in sporting and cultural activities and providing translator support for them and their families. In studies conducted by different researchers (Culha & Demirtas, 2020), it has been determined that refugee students studying in Türkiye are included in sports and cultural activities. Therefore, it is possible to say that there is an understanding that supports the participation of refugee students in sports, arts, and other cultural activities without any discrimination in Türkiye. Providing translator support for refugee students and their families in schools in Türkiye enables them to communicate better with schools and teachers. Since refugee students and their families have communication difficulties due to language differences, their relationship with the school is weak (Entorf, 2015). So that having a translator in schools can be beneficial in communicating with the parents of refugee students (Alba & Holdaway, 2017). Thanks to this communication established between refugee students' parents and the school, collaboration between teachers' and parents of refugee students' can be possible. This collaboration not only increases students' adaptation to the school environment but also positively affects their success. As proven in many studies (Jeynes, 2017; Nazli et al., 2022), collaboration between teachers and students' parents has a key effect on students' achievement. It can be said that the research findings overlap with the basic characteristics of inclusive leadership, such as considering the needs of the followers (Carmeli et al., 2010), creating a suitable climate for the development of their potential, and ensuring the stakeholders' participation in the organizational activities (Choi et al., 2017; Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Randel et al., 2018). Inclusive leadership can be effective in guiding followers and creating a school climate in which all school members cooperate with each other (Fournier et al., 2020; Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). Because it is possible to say that this cooperation is the basis of inclusive leadership (Echols, 2009; Randel et al., 2018), For this reason, it can make a difference for schools to establish more communication and cooperation with refugee students and parents (Daniel, 2020; Peterson & Ladky, 2007). An egalitarian approach is essential to inclusive leadership practices (Ryan, 2006a). Inclusive leaders show fair and equal attitudes without being a part of a group (Hannum et al., 2010; Ruderman et al., 2010). The fact that refugee students receive support from refugee teachers who speak the same language in schools can be considered one of the elements of a school climate dominated by an inclusive leadership approach. The inclusion of refugee students in sports and cultural activities, like other students, to the extent of their wishes, abilities, and skills can also be seen as a reflection of inclusive leadership. Additionally, translator support provided for refugees can be seen as a valuable support within the framework of taking into account the needs of followers in inclusive leadership.

Finally, the exclusion situation of refugee students in schools was investigated. Research findings show that there is no exclusion for refugee students in educational settings in Türkiye. On the contrary, it has

been determined that the understanding of social acceptance is dominant among refugee students. Within the scope of the social acceptance theme, values education, cultural similarity, parent education, and cliques came to the fore. It is predicted that these findings are cases that affect each other and are antidotes to each other. It can be said that the growth of students in schools with universal values, highlighting similarities rather than cultural differences, will set a barrier to exclusion and cliques, and the education and perspectives of parents will be effective in the formation of this situation. In general, studying at the same schools as refugee students positively affects the development of values such as harmony, cooperation, hospitality, and respect for differences in native students (Culha & Demirtas, 2020; Gay, 2010). However, there are also studies (Alba & Holdaway, 2017; Culha & Demirtas, 2020) revealing that there are sometimes cliques between refugee students and local students. At this point, respecting cultural differences and emphasizing cultural similarities can provide more valuable results (Allmen, 2011; Entorf, 2015; Hirsch, 2007). Parental education also has a great impact on obtaining these positive results. Trainings organized for parents in schools and parents' attitudes toward respecting differences can be effective in this context (Dicks & Lancee, 2018; Oropesa & Landale, 1997). All these findings can be considered reflections of inclusive leadership. Because inclusive leaders see individuals as equal members of the organization from the perspective of mutual respect and human rights (Booyesen, 2014), Regardless of the social, cultural, or physical background of their followers, Inclusive leaders are sensitive to their followers needs and take preventive measures against potentially risky situations (Echols, 2009; Jin et al., 2017). Inclusive leadership values unity rather than individuality and cliques and protects individuals at risk of exclusion (Cerna, 2020). Therefore, the fact that schools are sensitive to cultural values and emphasize similarities rather than differences might be effective in the formation of an inclusive climate (Ryan, 2006a).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, it can be said that school administrators exhibit inclusive leadership behaviors towards refugee students at schools in Türkiye. However, it has been revealed that school administrators face difficulties such as "language difficulties, absentee behaviors exhibited by students in lessons, low academic achievement, and adaptation difficulties" while involving refugee students in activities at schools. The main inclusive leadership practices exhibited by school administrators are "guidance and cooperation activities, inclusion of refugee students and their families in sports and cultural activities, opening of integration classes and receiving support from Syrian teachers in these classes, and translator support provided for refugee students and their parents. In addition, it has been determined that the understanding of "social acceptance" is prevalent instead of the discrimination and exclusion behaviors towards refugee students and their families in Türkiye. According to the participants' views, it is understood that various activities organized in schools have a key role in the development of the understanding of social acceptance that prevails in the school climate. First of all, in schools, students are placed in classes in a heterogeneous way without being subjected to discrimination as native or refugee students. Secondly, educational activities organized in schools for students and their parents, values education, and cultural similarities with refugees are also effective in spreading the perception of social acceptance towards refugee students and their parents. Moreover, refugee students are included in many activities held at the classroom, school, and provincial levels. It can be said that all these activities carried out in schools under the leadership of school administrators contribute to the development and settlement of an understanding of social acceptance towards refugee students and their families in the school community.

In today's changing world, schools are expected to exhibit an inclusive approach (Kamp & Mansouri, 2010). Due to regional conflicts, civil wars, global warming, and the desire to achieve better living conditions, refugees are becoming more common. This situation makes meeting the educational needs of refugee students a global problem that needs to be dealt with. In this context, it is important to embed values such as cultural diversity, empathy, respect for differences, and cooperation in the culture of the school. It is clear that there is a need for such a culture in schools that include refugee students. In this

context, inclusive leadership is seen as a leadership style that can make a difference. An inclusive leadership approach can come to the fore in solving the problems experienced in schools where refugee students are present, improving the specific situations that arise, and ensuring the unity of all students. With an inclusive approach, school administrators can provide translator support, open language, and integration courses for refugee students and their parents. Providing translator support might enable refugees to benefit from education and learning activities more effectively. In addition, the inclusion of refugee students in social and sporting activities organized inside and outside the school will positively affect refugees' adaptation to their country of origin and their academic and social success. In addition, activities can be organized to create a climate that fosters respect for different cultures and beliefs within the scope of values education at school.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all school administrators and teachers who contributed to the development of this study.

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## TÜRKÇE GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Günümüzde dünyanın birçok bölgesinde savaşlar meydana gelmekte, bu savaşlara bağlı olarak kitlesel mülteci hareketleri yaşanmaktadır (Oplatka, 2021). Dünya genelinde yaklaşık 80 milyon insan yaşanan çatışmalar nedeniyle mülteci konumuna düşmüştür. Suriye’deki çatışmalar nedeniyle Türkiye yaklaşık 4 milyon Suriyeli mülteciyi misafir ederek en fazla mültecinin yaşadığı ülke konumuna gelmiştir (UNHCR, 2021). Bunların yaklaşık 1 milyonunu okul çağındaki çocuklar oluşturmaktadır. Bu çocukların da yaklaşık 700 bini okullara kayıtlıdır (UNICEF, 2019). Bu durum, dünyada en fazla mülteci nüfusuna ve en fazla çocuk mülteciye ev sahipliği yapan Türkiye için özel bir sorun alanı oluşturmaktadır (Karsli-Calamak ve Kilinc, 2021). Bu sorunla baş etmede okul paydaşlarının tamamının eğitim-öğretim faaliyetlerinde aktif rol oynamalarını teşvik eden ve destekleyen kapsayıcı bir okul yönetimi anlayışı etkili olabilir (Cerna, 2020; Kamp ve Mansouri 2010). Kapsayıcı liderlik yaklaşımı, öğrencilerin yetenek, yaş, ırk, sınıf ve cinsiyet nedeniyle öğrenme süreçlerinden ve etkinliklerinden dışlanabilme ve dezavantajlı konumda olma olasılıklarına dikkat çeker (Kugelmass ve Ainscow, 2004; Ryan, 2006; Ryan,1999). Kapsayıcı liderlik, okulda yalnızca baskın grupların çıkarlarını değil, herkesin çıkarlarını gözetmeyi, güçlü bir iletişim süreci için uygun koşullar yaratarak herkesin sesinin duyulmasını sağlamayı hedefler. Böyle bir iklimde değerler, inançlar ve yaşam tarzlarına saygı, eğitim sürecinin bir parçası olarak görülür (Dorczak, 2011; Ryan, 2006). Bu nedenle okul yöneticilerinin kapsayıcı liderlik uygulamaları, tüm öğretmenler ve öğrenciler için daha kapsayıcı ortamlar oluşmasını sağlanmasında önemlidir (Garrison-Wade vd., 2007; Ryan,1999). Kapsayıcı liderlik, mültecilerin eğitiminde fark yaratabilecek yaklaşımlardan biri olarak kabul edilmektedir (Arnot ve Pinson 2005; Christie ve Sidhu 2002). Bu perspektiften yola çıkarak bu çalışmada mülteci öğrencilerin öğrenim gördükleri okullarda, okul yöneticilerinin sergilediği kapsayıcı liderlik uygulamalarının ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmıştır.

Bu araştırma, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenolojik desende gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmada ölçüt örnekleme yönteminin kullanılması benimsenmiştir. Bu araştırmanın katılımcılarında, 2020-2021 eğitim öğretim yılında mülteci öğrencilerin öğrenim gördükleri okullarda en az bir yıl çalışmış olmak ölçütü aranmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri, çalışmayı gerçekleştiren araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Araştırma verilerinin analizinde, betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada verilerin geçerlik ve güvenilirliğini sağlamaya yönelik olarak, araştırma verileri hem farklı araştırmacılar tarafından analiz edilmiş (2 araştırmacı) hem de farklı araştırmacıların analizlerinin ortak örüntüsü olarak beliren bulguların teyidinde ilişkin doğrudan alıntılara yer verilmiştir. Ayrıca araştırma bulguları katılımcı teyitleri ile de doğrulanmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan üç katılımcı ile tekrar görüşülmüş, bulguların görüşlerini yansıtıp yansıtmadığı değerlendirilmiştir. Her üç katılımcı da bulguların görüşlerine paralel olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Bu çalışmanın bazı sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır. Birincisi araştırma Türkiye bağlamı ve Türkiye’de de en fazla mülteci çocuk barındıran Şanlıurfa ili ile sınırlıdır. İkincisi ise araştırma görüşme yöntemiyle elde edilen verilerle sınırlıdır. Üçüncüsü bu araştırmanın verileri okul yöneticileri ve öğretmenlerin görüşleriyle sınırlıdır.

Araştırma bulguları, mülteci öğrencilerin eğitim faaliyetlerine dahil edilmesinde “Karşılaşılan Zorluklar”, mülteci öğrencilerin eğitim faaliyetlerine dahil edilmesine yönelik “İyi Uygulama Örnekleri” ve “Sosyal Kabul” ana başlıkları altında sunulmuştur. Araştırma bulguları, okul yönetimlerinin mülteci öğrencileri eğitim öğretim faaliyetlerine dahil ederken çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaştıklarını göstermektedir. Okul yönetimlerinin kapsayıcı liderlik davranışları gereği, mülteci öğrencileri eğitim faaliyetlerine dâhil ederken en sık karşılaştıkları sorunların mülteci öğrencilerin yaşadığı dil güçlükleri, düşük akademik başarı, devamsızlık ve uyum sorunları olduğu belirlenmiştir. Mülteci öğrencilerin eğitim faaliyetlerine dâhil edilmesine yönelik iyi uygulama örneklerinin ise Mülteci öğrencilerin eğitime katılımını sağlamak için okul yöneticileri tarafından sergilenen kapsayıcı liderlik uygulamaları ise rehberlik ve işbirliği, Suriyeli öğretmen istihdamı, sportif ve kültürel faaliyetler, kaynaştırma kurslarının düzenlenmesi ve tercüman desteğinin sağlanması olduğu belirlenmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında okul yöneticileri ve öğretmenlerden yaşantıları ve gözlemlerine dayanarak, görev yaptıkları okullarda mülteci öğrencilere yönelik ayrımcılık veya dışlanma durumu hakkındaki



görüşlerini paylaşmaları istenmiştir. Katılımcı görüşleri, Türkiye’de öğrenim gören Suriyeli mülteci öğrencilere yönelik dışlanma yerine sosyal kabul anlayışının geliştiği tespit edilmiştir. Bu durumun olmasında, okul yöneticilerinin öğrencileri yerli mülteci ayırımı yapmadan sınıflara heterojen öğrenci dağılımı yapmaları, kültürel ve dini benzerlikler, okullarda yürütülen değerler eğitimi faaliyetleri ve veli eğitimlerinin etkili olduğu belirlenmiştir. Az da olsa bazı Suriyeli öğrencilerin kendi aralarında klikler oluşturdukları ve zaman zaman yerli öğrencilere çeşitli zorbalıklarda buldukları tespit edilmiştir.

Araştırma bulgularına göre, okul yöneticileri okullarda mülteci öğrencilere yönelik kapsayıcı liderlik davranışları sergiledikleri söylenebilir. Ancak, okul yöneticilerinin mülteci öğrencileri okullardaki etkinliklere dahil ederken, “dil güçlüğü, öğrencilerin derslerde sergiledikleri devamsızlık davranışları, akademik başarı düşüklüğü ve uyum zorlukları” gibi güçlüklerle karşı karşıya oldukları ortaya çıkmıştır. Okul yöneticilerinin sergiledikleri kapsayıcı liderlik uygulamalarının başında mülteci öğrenci ve velilerine yönelik gerçekleştirilen “rehberlik ve iş birliği çalışmaları, sportif ve kültürel etkinliklere mülteci öğrenci ve ailelerinin dahil edilmesi, uyum sınıflarının açılması ve bu sınıflarda Suriyeli öğretmenlerden destek alınması, mülteci öğrenci velilerine sağlan tercüman destekleri” gelmektedir. Ayrıca katılımcı görüşlerine göre, Türkiye’deki okullarda öğrenim görmekte olan mülteci öğrenci ve ailelerine yönelik ayrımcılık ve dışlama davranışlarının yerine «sosyal kabul» anlayışının hâkim olduğu görülmüştür. Katılımcılara göre mülteci öğrenci ve velilerine karşı hâkim olan sosyal kabul anlayışının gelişmesinde, okullarda düzenlenen çeşitli etkinliklerin rolünün olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Öncelikle okullarda öğrenciler yerli ve mülteci öğrenciler şeklinde bir ayrımcılığa tabi tutulmayarak, heterojen bir şekilde sınıflara yerleştirilmektedir. Öğrenci ve velilerine yönelik olarak okullarda düzenlenen eğitimler, değerler eğitimi ve mültecilerle olan kültürel benzerliklerin de mültecilere yönelik sosyal kabul anlayışının yaygın olarak görülmesinde etkili olduğu, katılımcı görüşlerinden anlaşılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, sınıf içi, okulda ve il düzeyinde gerçekleştirilen birçok etkinliğe mülteci öğrenciler dahil edilmektedir. Okul yöneticilerinin öncülüğünde okullarda gerçekleştirilen bütün bu etkinliklerin, okul toplumunda mülteci öğrenci ve ailelerine yönelik sosyal kabul anlayışının gelişmesine ve yerleşmesine katkı sağladığı söylenebilir.