



# Education Problems and Access to Technology of Syrian Refugee Students and Suggestions for Solution: The Case of Konya-Selçuklu

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## Abstract

In this study; it is aimed to identify the educational problems of Syrian refugee students and to develop solutions for them. A questionnaire was created to identify the educational problems of Syrian Refugee students. In addition to demographic evaluations, the questionnaire consisted of a 5-point Likert-type scale. In the application of the questionnaire, the Syrian refugee students studying in the high schools operating in the Selçuklu district of Konya were taken into consideration. In this context, correspondences were made with Selçuklu District National Education Directorate and Konya Provincial National Education Directorate and necessary permissions were obtained for Questionnaire Collection. Information on Syrian refugee students in the region subject to the field study was obtained from Selçuklu District National Education Directorate. According to this, it was found that 199 students were enrolled in 35 high schools in Selçuklu district and 194 of them were attending school. The questionnaires applied to these students were evaluated and 139 of these forms were taken into consideration in the analyzes. SPSS 22.0 version statistical package program was used for the evaluation of the questionnaire forms. Within the scope of the study, Syrian students stated that they can easily reach to educational institutions in Turkey. However, they stated that not knowing Turkish well had a negative effect on education. On the other hand, almost half of the students emphasized that they wanted to return to their countries if the war in Syria ended. 29% of students have demonstrated that they want to stay in Turkey. Indeed, 42% of students stated that they did not want to go to a country other than Turkey.

**Key Words:** Syrian Refugee Students, Education Problems, Konya-Selçuklu Case.

## Suriyeli Mülteci Öğrencilerinin Eğitim Sorunları ve Teknolojisine Erişim ve Çözüm Önerileri: Konya-Selçuklu Örneği

### Öz

Bu çalışmada; Suriyeli mülteci öğrencilerin eğitim sorunlarının belirlenmesi ve bunlara yönelik çözümlerin geliştirilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Suriyeli Mülteci öğrencilerin eğitim sorunlarını belirlemek için bir anket oluşturulmuştur. Anket, demografik değerlendirmelere ek olarak 5'li Likert tipi bir ölçekten oluşmaktadır. Anket uygulamasında Konya'nın Selçuklu ilçesinde faaliyet gösteren liselerde öğrenim gören Suriyeli mülteci öğrenciler dikkate alınmıştır. Bu kapsamda, Selçuklu İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü ve Konya İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü ile yazışmalar yapılmış ve Anket Toplama için gerekli izinler alınmıştır. Saha çalışmasına konu olan bölgedeki Suriyeli mülteci öğrencilerle ilgili bilgiler Selçuklu İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü'nden alınmıştır. Buna göre Selçuklu ilçesindeki 35 lisede 199 öğrencinin kayıtlı olduğu ve bunlardan 194'ünün okula devam ettiği belirlenmiştir. Bu öğrencilere uygulanan anketler değerlendirilmiş ve bu formlardan 139'u analizlerde dikkate alınmıştır. Anket formlarının değerlendirilmesinde SPSS 22.0 sürüm istatistik paket programı kullanılmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında Suriyeli öğrenciler Türkiye'deki eğitim kurumlarına kolaylıkla ulaşabildiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Ancak Türkçeyi iyi bilmemenin eğitimi olumsuz etkilediğini belirtmişlerdir. Öte yandan öğrencilerin neredeyse yarısı Suriye'deki savaşın bitmesi durumunda ülkelerine dönmek istediklerini vurgulamışlardır. Öğrencilerin %29'u Türkiye'de kalmak istediklerini ortaya koymuşlardır. Nitekim öğrencilerin % 42'si Türkiye dışında bir ülkeye gitmek istemediklerini belirtmişlerdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Suriyeli Mülteci Öğrenciler, Eğitim Sorunları, Konya-Selçuklu Örneği

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## 1. Introduction

The civil commotions that started in Tunisia on December 17, 2010 and encountered in other Arab countries such as Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria are generally described as the Arab Spring in the literature (Sağsen, 2011). Marc Lynch used the term talked about for the first time in his article entitled "Is Obama's Arab Spring?" written on January 6, 2011 (Lynch, 2011). The civil commotion, called the "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia, with the resignation of Zeynel Abidin Bin Ali, who has been in power for 23 years, has also mobilized rival groups in other countries. However, the Arab Spring movement, based on basic values such as business, justice and freedom, has exacerbated substantial negations in many countries with the effect of political pressures and socio-economic underdevelopment. As a result of the conflicts between the government and the society, millions of people were sentenced to live in harsh conditions and hundreds of thousands of people died. Thus, progresses in Tunisia are regarded as the only successful example of the Arab Spring (Koçak, 2012: 23).

The first protests against the Bashar Assad governing started in the Dera region after the Syrian people, who complained about unemployment, bribery and political pressures, were affected by the events that started in Tunisia. This rebellion of the people who want to live under better conditions has spread throughout the country and prepared a ground for a civil war that will cause serious destruction (Duran, 2011: 507). The civil war and violence environment that started in Syria in 2011 and still ongoing caused millions of people to migrate to the country or to other countries and as of March 2018, a total of 353,900 people, including 106 thousand civilians, died. Moreover, it was reported that 56,900 people are still missing.

It was revealed that 6.1 million Syrians have been displaced within the country and 5.6 million Syrians are refugees, since 2011. According to the official figures announced; Turkey, with a total of 3.8 million people, including about 3.5 million Syrians under the temporary protection in the world and continues to be the largest number of countries hosting refugees (DW, 2018; UNHCR, 2018a). Children are leading of the groups that most affected by the migration mobility. According to estimates made, it is stated that approximately 1.5 million Syrian children face problems such as discrimination, sexual exploitation and not getting education, especially in psychological diseases in various countries of the world. In this context, it is stated that almost half of the refugee children of school age cannot receive education and these children who cannot receive education are considered as a lost generation. There is no doubt that a 'lost generation' with a low income and sense of exclusion, will lead to serious socio-economic problems. In this study; it is aimed to detected the educational problems of Syrian refugee students and to develop the solution suggestions.

## 2. The Term of Immigration and Turkey

A person or a group of people crossing an international border or going elsewhere within the borders of the state is defined as immigration. In this context, regardless of duration, structure and cause factors, displacement movements of people are evaluated as migration. The mobility in question can be based on voluntary or compulsory reasons. It is defined as immigration that people have to leave their places for reasons such as internal conflict or natural disaster. The most important causes of immigration are; loyalty to one of the members of the house, education, job change and job search. (TÜİK, 2011).

Migration mobility substantially affects the countries' economic, social, security, political, religious and economic structures. Moreover, international when a person crosses an international border international migration occurs and this can affect more than one country (GOC, 2017: 6-7; Directorate General of Migration Management, 2018a: 6-7).

The migration case is basically explained by three approaches. These approaches are; the benefit-cost approach, the push-pull force approach and the elite approach. In the benefit-cost approach; it is considered as human capital such as migration mobility, education and health expenditures. When people deciding the immigration, they consider the benefits and costs of immigration. Therefore, the fact that the return of the immigration is higher than its cost causes people to immigrate. The pushing-pulling approach is based on the pushing factors in the migrating region and the pulling factors in the migrant receiving region.

While factors such as rapid population growth, low employment opportunities, low income and security are listed as pushing factors; welfare and education are among the pulling factors. According to the approach being talked about; individuals often migrate to areas with greater economic opportunities. The elite approach is; demographic practices such as education, age, gender and marital status feature. Within the framework of the mentioned approach, it is stated that people who migrate are more elite than others (Bahar and Bingöl, 2010: 46-47).

Unemployment is among the main causes of immigration mobility. The unemployed person is more mobile than those employed in immigration. On the other hand, reasons such as high unemployment rate, population growth, terrorism and natural disasters, insufficient health and education opportunities, mechanization in agriculture are other reasons that increase the probability of migration. (Pissarides and Wadsworth, 1989; Gautam, 2005: 6; Çelik, 2006: 151-153; Markova, 2007: 2-8; Aktaş, 2015: 211; Eğilmez, 2015; Gerşil and Temel, 2015: 413).

Migration mobility from one region to another within intrastate is defined as domestic migration (Sağlam, 2006: 34). Structural transformation in Turkey's economy, led to an increase in domestic migration mobility since the 1950s. Individuals who became unemployed and had difficulties in making a living after the breakdown of the soil-population balance due to the acceleration of capitalism and mechanization in agriculture started to migrate to the cities. On the other side, the increase in security problems in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions after 1980-1990 triggered forced migration; these migrations significantly influenced the socio-cultural structure of the region receiving migration (Tuzcu and Bademli, 2014: 58). External migration is the movement of migration to other countries by crossing a country border (Sağlam, 2006: 34). Due to the it's geographical position Turkey has been hosting mainly Syrian refugees in the border millions of people, including foreigners in recent years.

When the major migratory movements towards Turkey is analyzed, before and after the Republican period is observed that an intensive emigration movement towards Turkey in every period. Especially in the recent period there has been a strong increase in migration mobility as a result of problems in the country which borders with Turkey. Turkey after the civil war in Syria, which started in 2011 and is still ongoing is home to about 3.8 million Syrians. Moreover, it is worried that this number will increase even more if the war in question spreads to the Idlib region, where more than 2.6 million people live. According to the official figures announced; Turkey, with a total of 3.8 million refugees, including the great majority of Syrians received temporary protection coverage continues to be the largest number of refugees to the country that hosted the world (CFR, 2018; UNHCR, 2018b).

### **3. Data Set and Method**

In this study, a questionnaire form was created in order to identify the Education Problems of Syrian Refugee Students. The questionnaire form consists of a 5-point Likert-type scale in addition to demographic evaluations. Syrian Refugee students studying in High Schools Operating in Selçuklu District of Konya Province were taken into consideration in the implementation of the Survey Form. Accordingly, it was found out that 199 students were enrolled in a total of 35 high schools in Selçuklu District and 194 of them attend school. The questionnaire forms applied to these students were evaluated and 139 of these forms were taken into consideration in the analysis. The statistical package program in SPSS 22.0 version was used to evaluate the questionnaire forms.

### **4. Analysis Results**

In the Questionnaire Form, 6 items were taken into consideration for demographic evaluations and 20 items were used to determine the Education Problems. Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0,705 as a result of Reliability Analysis. In the literature, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is between  $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$  in the 95% confidence interval and bilateral evaluations at the significance level of  $p < 0.05$ , it is expressed as an acceptable / moderately reliable value (Özdamar, 1999).

The identification of the educational problems of Syrian Refugee students has been addressed under three headings: "Problems Arising During the Migration Process", "Problems After Migration" and "Expectations Regarding the Future". In evaluating the results of the analysis, the highest valid percentages were taken into consideration.

"Problems Arising in the Immigration Process" are addressed under two headings: problems in terms of access to education and problems arising from psychological effects. 38% of the students who responded to the questionnaire stated that they could not continue their education in Syria due to the war and they definitely agree with the question that their education was interrupted. In this context, 19% of the respondents stated that they absolutely did not participate in this question. 30% of the respondents stated that they definitely agree with the question that their education was interrupted due to the developments in the migration process, while 26% stated that they did not agree. When the importance of migration on the education of my family members is examined, 28% of the students stated that they definitely agree with the question that migration has negative effects on the education of their family members. However, 26% of the students declared that they absolutely did not agree with it. According to the results related to the level of emotional impact on the Syrian students' failure to continue education, 31.6% of the participants stated that my inability to continue education definitely affects them emotionally; 8.8% responded that they disagreed. According to the results regarding the importance of the hope of continuing education, 33% of the Syrian students have stated that they are definitely very upset when their hopes of continuing their education decrease. On the other hand, 28.8% of the respondents stated that they were never exposed to the emotional effect in question.

"Problems After Migration" are discussed under the headings of economic insufficiency, problems arising from bureaucratic processes, problems arising from not speaking a language, problems arising from social cohesion, lack of physical infrastructure and access to education. Economic insufficiency is one of the most important situations that prevent the education of Syrian students. 35% of the students stated that they did not agree with the question that the necessary expenditures for their education could not be made because of the economic opportunities. 11.9% of them stated that they could not make the necessary expenses for their education. 42% of the students stated that I had to work because my family's economic situation was not good and therefore I had difficulties in continuing education and they did not agree with the problem in a similar way. On the other hand, 10.2% of the students answered that they absolutely agree. 25% of the students on the other hand, it's not reach their educational institutions for effective implementation of a process of adaptation was very difficult when we came to Turkey stated that they would definitely participate in the question. On the other hand, 16.2% of the participants stated that they absolutely agree with the question in question. According to the results for the cardinality of the lack of official documents, 44% of students, I could not continue my education in Turkey could not remain where I get my official document stated that they would definitely participate in the question. On the other hand, 13.2% of the participants think that this situation definitely affects them. When the findings of the importance level of the diversity of undergraduate programs, 23% of the participants to study in universities in Turkey, I need to retake the test, but my being successful in this exam because I trained in different programs have responded strongly disagree on the question, I think it would be very difficult. However, 22% of the respondents think that they will definitely encounter this type of obstacle. The fact that students do not know the language of their country can create a significant problem in terms of education. In this context, 29% of the students answered that I absolutely agree with the question that not knowing Turkish causes problems in terms of education and social life. On the other hand, 17% of the respondents stated that they did not agree with the situation. According to the results of the analysis of the importance of language insufficiency, 39% of the students stated that they had difficulty in the courses and exams because I do not know Turkish well; 14.7% of them stated that they absolutely disagree. Social exclusion can lead to a psychological effect and push Syrian students out of the field of education. 25% of students, social exclusion in Turkey were times I disagree neither agree nor to answer questions by giving expressed their indecision. At the same time, 24.1% of students argued that they were strictly excluded by society. Although the border of Turkey and Syria are neighbors to differ from each other in both cultures. The difference in question makes students' social cohesion difficult. When the level of importance of cultural diversity analyzed, 27% of students are involved in Turkey and I've had very little information due to adjustment problems because my question about Turkish culture. On the other hand, the rate of those who answered the question about social exclusion status

as strictly disagree was 24.3%. According to the results regarding the importance of the lack of a Turkish friend circle, 24% of the students neither agree nor disagree with the question of the absence of a Turkish friend. On the other hand, 23.1% of students think that the absence of a Turkish circle of friends definitely had no effect on social cohesion. One of the factors affecting the participation rates of Syrian students in education is Physical Infrastructure Deficiency and Problems Related to Access to Education. According to the results regarding the importance level of gender discrimination in the family structure, 54% of the students stated that there is absolutely no discrimination between girls and boys regarding their education in their families. The rate of those who claim that discrimination was definitely made in the said area was 14.4%. Class, etc. According to the findings regarding the significance level of the lack of physical infrastructure, 43.7% of the students stated that they did not have any difficulties in accessing education due to the lack of physical infrastructure such as class deficiency. On the other hand, 11.1% of the respondents think that the lack of physical infrastructure poses an obstacle to their education.

Technological developments have significantly changed the lifestyles of societies. In this context, the rapid spread of technology has also affected the structure of the education process, and a different perspective has been brought to the traditional education approach. Integration of educational activities with technology, especially computers, may increase the quality of education. Thus, the increasing quality of education will pave the way for the development of technology, increase in production and development of countries. It was investigated whether the educational activities of Syrian refugee students are supported by technological devices such as computers. When the answers received from the participants of the questionnaire were evaluated, the students stated that they received computer-aided education.

Today, whether Syrian refugees will return to their country is one of the most discussed topics. When "Future Expectations" were analyzed, 41% of the students stated that they definitely want to return to Syria if the war is over. In contrast, the proportion of students who stay in Turkey was realized as 8.3%. If the facility is found in the study to investigate the significance of the desire to remain in Turkey, 29% of students stated that they want to stay in Turkey. When the desire to go to another country is analyzed, the rate of those who definitely want to go to another country is 11.8%.

#### 4. Conclusion and Evaluation

Structural transformation in Turkey's economy since the 1950s has led to an increase in internal migration mobility. The acceleration of capitalism and the deterioration of the soil-population balance with the effect of mechanization in agriculture are among the main factors that trigger internal migration mobility. In addition, the increase in security problems in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolian regions after the 1980-1990 brought the phenomenon of forced migration to the agenda. On the other hand because of its geographical location has been found in Turkey in recent years it has been faced with a serious emigration process. In this context, approximately 5.6 million Syrians had to migrate to other countries by fleeing the civil war environment in their countries. According to the official figures announced; Turkey, with a total of 3.8 million Syrian refugees, including about 3.5 million temporary protection under the maximum number of refugees continues to be the country which hosts the world.

The solution suggestions developed in line with the findings obtained within the scope of the study will create beneficial results for the education of all refugee students, especially Syrian in general:

- Ending internal conflicts in the Middle East region and ensuring that refugees are returning to their own countries.
- Providing psychological support for people affected by forced migration, especially children.
- Determining the problems between refugees and local people and making effective decisions to solve these problems.
- Establish a school enrollment system for refugee students in countries with a refugee population.
- Providing social, social and cultural interaction among students who grew up in different cultures by organizing various activities.

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## Annex

### Annex- 1: Classification of Statistical Region Units (Level 2)

1. region/TR10	İstanbul	14.region/TR71	Kırıkkale, Aksaray, Niğde, Nevşehir, Kırşehir
2.region/TR21	Tekirdağ, Edirne, Kırklareli	15. region/TR72	Kayseri, Sivas, Yozgat
3. region/TR22	Balıkesir, Çanakkale	16. region/TR81	Zonguldak, Karabük, Bartın
4. region/TR31	İzmir	17. region/TR82	Kastamonu, Çankırı, Sinop
5. region/TR32	Aydın, Denizli, Muğla	18. region/TR83	Samsun, Tokat, Çorum, Amasya
6. region/TR33	Manisa, Afyonkarahisar, Kütahya, Uşak	19. region/TR90	Trabzon, Ordu, Giresun, Rize, Artvin, Gümüşhane
7. region/TR41	Bursa, Eskişehir, Bilecik	20. region/TRA1	Erzurum, Erzincan, Bayburt
8. region/TR42	Kocaeli, Sakarya, Düzce, Bolu, Yalova	21. region/TRA2	Ağrı, Kars, Iğdır, Ardahan
9. region/TR51	Ankara	22. region/TRB1	Malatya, Elazığ, Bingöl, Tunceli
10. region/TR52	Konya, Karaman	23. region/TRB2	Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkari
11. region/TR61	Antalya, Isparta, Burdur	24. region/TRC1	Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Kilis
12. region/TR62	Adana, Mersin	25. region/TRC2	Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır
13. region/TR63	Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye	26.region/TRC3	Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, Siirt

Source: TÜİK, 2017c.