

Safety Feeling and Satisfaction Rates of Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Turkey's Eastern Province

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to determine safety feeling and satisfaction rates of Syrians under temporary protection in an eastern province of Turkey.

Methods: This study is a cross-sectional study. The study was conducted among Syrians under temporary protection over the age of 18 living in a province in the eastern Anatolian region of Turkey.

Results: The average time of living of the Syrians in Turkey was 24.36 ± 15.46 . 53.9% of the participants were women, and 46.1% were men. The average age of women was 37.18 ± 11.59 , while the average age of men was 37.59 ± 11.10 . The average number of people staying at home was 6.95 ± 3.05 . 69.6% of the participants in the study had a nuclear family structure. The ratio of disabled family members was 13.1%. 70.8% of those included in the study considers returning to Syria again. There was a positive correlation between the increase in family income and age and the average feeling of being safe. The average score of feeling safe was significantly higher in those who did not have the idea of returning to Syria.

Conclusion: It has been observed that people do not have problems in accessing health services and the education of their children, but they have problems mostly due to language and economic difficulties.

Key words: Refugee, Migration, Syrians.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, individuals or groups have continually migrated for economic and social reasons, to work or achieve a better life. As another factor, they were forced to migrate due to some reasons such as war or epidemic (1). Migration, signifying people's movement to achieve the better, has sometimes resulted from the change and sometimes the cause (2).

Immigrants bring their value judgments, cultural structures, and identities with them (1). Migration forces both individuals and society to a new cultural form in addition to the economic, social, and cultural changes it brings. Situated on a major migration route, Turkey experienced many masses immigration. The Syrians under the temporary protection are the last ring of this immigration (2,3). The refugee problem is a severe problem that has existed worldwide for multiple years and is getting bigger with each passing day. The Syrian war, which caused the worst refugee crisis since World War II, left 12 million people desperate in need of help (4). The number of Syrians who came to Turkey under temporary protection is increasing every day, and the number of Syrians under temporary protection exceeded 4 million people (5).

The society, religious beliefs, and homeland perception of the individual are influential in the formation of individual identity. While these elements reveal where and how a person belongs, they are also the answer to who they are. Immigration creates identity crises, traumas, and uncertainties due to the deprivation of belonging of people who are displaced (6). Those who apply for immigration status may have to live in the country they migrated to for a long time with or without a temporary visa (7).

In a study performed among asylum seekers in developed countries, they may be exposed to communication challenges, poverty, discrimination, general health problems, infectious diseases, nutritional deficiencies, particularly vitamin D deficiency, diabetes, and reproductive health (7). Screening of the health status of immigrants is widespread. Nevertheless, there is little information to verify these screenings' effectiveness, as immigrants have limited communication with service lines and are lost for screening purposes (7).

The need for security is defined in the literature as "the requirement to have a safe, stable, attachment, resistance, protection needs, fearless, free from anxiety and confusion, structured, orderly, regulated, principled, lawful, with definite borders and powerful protectors." Security need is also included in the basic needs category in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (2).

Social relationships and attachment experiences are also essential for the individual to feel socially secure and, accordingly, in emotional states' regulation. Individuals' positive emotions experienced in their social relationships are essential to have a positive mood and comprehend their social rank. Studies reveal that attachment experiences strengthen the individual's feelings of trust and social connectedness. In this case, they are essential for mood and brain maturation (8).

In a study performed in the Netherlands, the proportion of Dutch people who sometimes feel unsafe was found to be 36%, while this rate was found to be 40% for those of immigrant origin who are not from Western countries (9). A study conducted among Syrians living in Lebanon discovered that 27% of Syrians do not feel safe (10). When Kaya asked about how safe they feel in Istanbul to Syrians

under temporary protection, the majority expressed a sense of security (91.8%), while 6.8% mentioned the uneasiness in security in the city (4).

Turkey, which hosts the largest number of Syrians globally, is a country under heavy responsibility for providing protection, security, residence, and access to essential services to all the Syrians (4). Hence, they feel insecure, and the satisfaction levels of Syrians living in Turkey are significant. Since the number of Syrians who took refuge in Turkey is significant, and they are included in the social and economic lives in various provinces of Turkey other than the asylum centers, they culturally interact with the local community, the significance of the subject increases for the Turkish people and Syrians.

This study was carried out to determine the demographic characteristics of Syrians under temporary protection, their feeling of safety and satisfaction, and the measures that the relevant institutions can take in the light of the findings.

METHODS

This study is a cross-sectional study. In this study conducted among Syrians aged 18 and over; 3,946 Syrians under temporary protection aged 18 and over in a province in the eastern Anatolian region of Turkey constituted the study's universe, according to the records dated 1 March 2018 of Elazığ Governorship Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation Provincial Directorate (SYDV). In determining the number of individuals to be included, the following formula was used: $n = \frac{Nt^2pq}{d^2(N-1)} + t^2$. With a 95% confidence interval, 40% prevalence, and 2% deviation, the number of people included in the sample was calculated as the sample group of 337 people. From the list of names and addresses of Syrians living in Elazığ, taken from the

Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (SYDV), the people's names and addresses in the sample were determined using a randomized scale of numbers. 336 of the 337 people through repeated visits were reached. The temporary protection status and being Syrian over 18 years old constitute the criteria for inclusion in the study.

The questionnaire form prepared in light of the significant literature consists of 3 parts. The first part comprises the questions about the people's socio-demographic characteristics, while the second part includes the questions about their attitudes and behaviors in addition to some habits, and the third part covers Social Security and Satisfaction Scale questions.

Feeling in social security can be described as the degree of perceiving the social world in which an individual lives as safe, peaceful, and relaxing. It includes feelings of attachment, belonging, and satisfaction they encounter in social situations towards other people around the individual. Gilbert et al. developed social Safeness and Pleasure Scale (8). It was adapted to Turkish by Akın et al. (Akın 2015: 439-440). The answers have the following meanings: (0) Never, (1) Rarely, (2) Occasionally, (3) Usually, and (4) Always (11).

After applying the pre-test to 15 Syrians, and the questions were determined to be understandable, the questionnaires were administered by interviewers who knew Arabic using a face-to-face interview technique. Participation in the questionnaire was voluntary, and the questionnaires were directed after the participants were informed and signed the consent form.

The study's field application was performed between 15.04.2018 and 15.05.2018.

The study's administrative permission was received from the SYDV, and ethical permission was obtained from Firat University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board.

Statistical Analysis

The obtained data were recorded in the SPSS 22 program, and error checks, tables, and statistical analyzes were performed through this software. Kolmogorov Smirnov test was applied for normality distribution. The means are presented with standard deviations. X^2 , t-test, and variance analysis were used

as statistical analysis methods. The significance limit was defined as $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

34.8% of the participants live for 0 to 12 months in Turkey, while 20.8% live for 13 to 24 months. 27.7% live for 25 to 36 months, and 16.7% live for more than 37 months in Turkey. The average time of living of the Syrians in Turkey was 24.36 ± 15.46 . 53.9% of the participants were women, and 46.1% were men. The average age of women was 37.18 ± 11.59 , while the average age of men was 37.59 ± 11.10 (37.37 ± 11.11 in total) (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of some demographic characteristics of Syrians by gender.

Variables	Male n(%)	Female n(%)	X^2	p
Age				
35 years and under	74 (46.5)	85(53.5)		
36-55 years	67(45.3)	81(54.7)	0.109	p=0.947
56 years and over	14(48.3)	15(51.7)		
Married				
Single/Divorced	12(80.0)	6(20.0)	41.770	p=0.000
Spouse Dead	1(2.0)	44(98.0)		
Educational Level				
Illiterate	10(20.4)	39(79.6)		
Literate	29(35.8)	52(64.2)		
Primary School Graduate	40(51.9)	37(48.1)	27.196	p=0.000
Secondary School Graduate	36(58.1)	26(41.9)		
High school and equivalent school graduate	23(54.8)	19(45.2)		
Post-graduate graduate	17(68.0)	8(32.0)		
Education Status of Spouse				
Illiterate	16(57.1)	12(42.9)		
Literate	47(44.8)	58(55.2)		
Primary School Graduate	42(51.2)	40(48.8)		
Secondary School Graduate	17(39.5)	26(60.5)	7.084	p=0.214
High school and equivalent school graduate	14(34.1)	27(65.9)		
Post-graduate	5(29.4)	12(70.6)		
How does this person earn a living?				
Working	129 (90.8)	13(9.2)	197,872	P=0.000
Spouse is working	1(1.2)	84(98.8)	92.533	P=0.000
Spends the savings	64(44.4)	80(55.6)	0.284	P=0.591
With Social Aids	71(41.0)	102(59.0)	3,719	p=0.054
With the help of neighbors	13(34.2)	25(65.8)	2,450	P=0.118
Help of Relatives	37(36.3)	65(63.7)	5,726	P=0.017
Over 18, working	27(36.0)	48(64.0)	3,988	P=0.046
Under 18 years old, working	32(47.1)	36(52.9)	0.030	P=0.864

47.3% of the participants were aged 35 and below, 48% were married, 38.6% have not completed any school, 48.5% receive social assistance, 97.6% have an income below the minimum wage (Table 1). 51.8% of the participants were housewives, 19%

workers, 14.9% self-employed, 7.1% artisans, and 7.1% do not work. The average per capita income in Turkey was estimated as $\$ 127.78 \pm 75.38$. The average number of people staying at home (min 2, max 30) was equal to 6.95 ± 3.05 .

69.6% (234 people) of the participants in the study had a nuclear family structure. While 76.8% (258 people) of the houses where the participants were visited were staying in a single-family, 17.0% (57 people) had two families, and 6.2% (21 people) had three or more families.

81.0% (258) of the study participants have a relative who stayed in Syria and could not come together. When the proximity of the relative who stayed in Syria is considered; 8.8% (24 people) asserted that they left their spouse, 32.4% (88 people) their mother or father, 15.8% (43 people) their

siblings, 43.0% (117 people) any first-degree relatives in Syria.

55.1% of the participants (185 people) stated that any of their relatives died in the civil war. The ratio of disabled family members was 13.1% (44 people). 9.9% of the Syrian women stated that they were pregnant at the time of the survey. The number of pregnancies of women on average was 4.41 ± 2.43 (min; 0 max; 12), the number of live births was 4.25 ± 2.42 (min: 0, Max: 12), while the average number of living children was 3.65 ± 1.94 (min: 0, max: 10).

Table 2. Distribution of problems experienced by Syrians in Elazığ by gender.

Problems Experienced	Male n (%)	Female n (%)	X ²	p
About health	8 (5.2)	4 (2.2)	X ² =2.112	p=146
About Social Life	17 (11.0)	24 (13.3)	X ² =0.409	p=0.474
Regarding the Economic Situation	132 (85.2)	159 (87.8)	X ² =0.519	p=0.471
Language problem	135 (87.1)	168 (92.8)	X ² =3.085	p=0.079
Children's Education Problem	2 (1.3)	2 (1.1%)	X ² =0.024	p=0.876

Table 3. Distribution of the participants' average social safeness and pleasure scale score, according to some factors.

Variables	Mean±SD		p
Gender			
Male	24.28 ± 6.93	t:18.255	p=0.211
Female	25.10±5.04		
Marital status			
Married	24.70 ± 6.26		
Divorced/Single	25.78±6.03	f: 0.314	p=730
Spouse Dead	24.49 ± 4.06		
Education status (n = 336)			
Illiterate	24.29 ± 5.68		
Literate	25.30 ± 5.82		
Primary education	23.26 ± 6.25	f:2.016	
Secondary School Graduate	24.98 ± 5.50		p=0.076
High school and equivalent school graduate	25.00 ± 6.71		
College or university graduate	27.16 ± 5.35		
Education status of spouse n = 316			
Illiterate	23.57±5.21		
Literate	25.20 ± 6.35		
Primary education	23.63 ± 5.78	f: 1.663	
Secondary School Graduate	25.23 ± 5.53		p=0.143
High school and equivalent school graduate	24.76 ± 5.90		
College or university graduate	27.35±4.88		
Family type			
Nuclear family	24.72±5.79	t: 0.273	p=0.785
Extended family	24.91±6.27		

f= One-Way Anova, t= Independent simple t test

The most frequently mentioned problem stems from language and economic situation (Table 2). There was no significant difference between the

participants in terms of gender, marital status, education level, family type and safety feeling and satisfaction ($p>0.05$), (Table 3). The mean score of

Safety feeling and satisfaction was significantly higher in those who did not plan to return to Syria and did not work in any job ($p<0.05$), (Table 4).

While there was a significant relationship between safeness and income status and age ($p<0.05$), no relationship was found with the length of stay in Turkey ($p>0.05$), (Table 5).

70.8% of the participants (238 people) thought of returning to Syria again; 29.2% (98 people) declared

that they do not intend to return. 83.7% (82 people) of those who do not intend to return to Syria declared that they do not intend to return due to reasons such as lack of life security, 16.3% (16 people), the possibility of having financial difficulty in Syria, and since the people lost all the belongings in Syria. 13.9% of Syrians living in Elazığ (45 people) had received compliance training in Turkey, 86.1% (278 people) affirmed any adjustment training.

Table 4. Distribution of the Average Score of Safeness and Pleasure According to Some Factors.

Variables	Mean \pm SD		p
Work carried out in Turkey			
Housewife	25.04 \pm 5.06		
Worker	25.36 \pm 7.09		
Freelancer	23.42 \pm 6.20	f: 2.869	
Non-working	26.42 \pm 6.75		p=0.023
Total	21.79 \pm 6.92		
*Receiving any aid			
Receiving aid	25.07 \pm 5.61	t: 2.941	p=0.473
Not receiving aid	24.94 \pm 6.73		
Status of experiencing economic, education, language etc. problems			
Not experienced	27.50 \pm 7.78	f:0.720	p=0.541
Experiencing one of these problems	24.81 \pm 7.15		
Experiencing two of these problems	24.47 \pm 5.46		
Experiencing three of these problems	24.78 \pm 5.97		
Anybody was lost in your family during war?			
Yes	25.95 \pm 5.45	t:1.608	p=0.183
No	24.57 \pm 6.05		
Relative who stayed in Syria			
Yes	25.05 \pm 5.94	t:0.993	p=0.042
No	23.36 \pm 6.05		
Having a disabled member in the family			
Yes	24.36 \pm 5.35	t: 0.581	p=0.668
No	24.78 \pm 6.09		
Having a family member died during the war			
Yes	24.75 \pm 5.41	t: 0.581	p=0.932
No	24.70 \pm 6.65		
Thought of returning to Syria			
Yes	24.29 \pm 5.98	t: 4.281	p=0.039
No	25.78 \pm 5.91		
Status of receiving cohesion training			
Yes	24.40 \pm 5.96	t: 204	p=0.652
No	24.83 \pm 5.94		

* Social assistance, help of neighbors and relatives
f= One-Way Anova, t= Independent simple t test

Table 5. Examining the relationship between safeness and age and income status.

Variables	Correlation Coefficient		
Feeling safe and age relationship	r=0.176	p=0.001	R ² =3%
Feeling safe and family income status	r=0.149	p=0.006	R ² =2%
Feeling safe and time spent in Turkey	r=0.093	p=0.090	R ² =0%

DISCUSSION

When the problems encountered by the participants regarding social life are explored in our study, the most common problems were determined

to be related to language (90.2%) and economic challenges (86.6%). The rate of those who reported problems with health services (3.6%) and children's access to educational institutions (1.2%) was

determined to be relatively low. There was no significant difference between the difficulties encountered and gender ($p > 0.05$).

The language problem is a factor that leads to social reactions and differences in culture and life (12). Immigrants are experiencing integration problems and the language barrier makes their integration into Turkish society even more difficult (4). In the report written by Celik, it was declared that Syrians mostly faced language and unemployment problems (13). It was ascertained that 23.2% of them had problems in social cohesion (14). "The fact that problems arising from differences in language, culture, and lifestyle have a significant place among Syrians and locals creates a problem in cohesion (13). 66.9% of Turkish people believe that they will not be able to adapt to Syrians. It was ascertained that approximately 50% of the Turkish people participating in the study do not want to be neighbors with Syrians, and 70.3% do not regard themselves as close culturally (15). It seems that there are challenges in terms of social acceptance. It may be advantageous to take the essential precautions and work on cohesion and provide language learning support.

The second most common problem identified among the participants is economic challenges. Studies performed in Istanbul discovered that the proportion of Syrians encountering unemployment ranged from 30.4% to 33.4% (4,15). It was ascertained in the AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) 2017 report that 33.4% of Syrian respondents perceive the job lines that they can work sufficiently or rather sufficient (14). Finding a job opportunity is one of the reasons why Syrians come into urban areas (4). The study of

Balkan et al. reveals that Syrians work for low wages (16). In the 2013 International Labor Organization's evaluation of the employment types of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, it was declared that the majority of the refugees were unskilled or semi-skilled, often working in informal or temporary/seasonal jobs and often failed to secure job security and regular income (17). Concerning unemployment, social exclusion, gender discrimination, language problem, lack of childcare, and abuse by the employer are asserted as other unemployment problems. Most Syrians are unskilled workers, unfamiliar with the industrial concept, and language problems cause unemployment. Although granting a work permit to Syrians is not sufficient, it is stated in the sources that vocational training and language training can decrease the unemployment problem (18).

Our study concluded that 3.6% of the participants had problems in getting health services. It is stated in the AFAD report that 8.20% of the Syrians under temporary protection living outside the camps are not satisfied with the health services, and 13.6% of them have problems in terms of health care due to financial problems (14). In a study conducted among Syrians in Lebanon, only 22% of the participants asserted that they could reach the services at all times (10). A study conducted in Istanbul discovered that 7.8% people had problems in accessing social services (4).

In our study, 1.2% of the participants stated that they had problems with their children's education. A published report stated that there are difficulties in education due to local reasons and language (12). In a report published in 2013, it was stated that Syrians living outside the camps who can access Turkish schools are limited to those who have a passport, are registered with the police and have a residence

permit, and only 10% of the children of Syrians have access to education (19). The problem in reaching school stems from child labor, curriculum and language problems, early marriage, and trouble for reaching school (20). It has been recorded that most Turkish people support the education of the children of Syrian families (13). In our study, it was observed that there are very rare problems in accessing education, unlike other studies.

Our study ascertained that 70.8% of the participants are planning to return to Syria. It was concluded that 83.7% of the participants who did not have the idea of returning did not want to return due to life safety concerns. In a study conducted by UNHRC in Jordan in 2019, it was discovered that Syrians did not want to return due to comparable reservations (UNHRC 2020) (21). It was resolved in the AFAD report that 76.7% of the participants had the idea of returning to Syria (14). The studies conducted by UNHRC between 2016-2019 reveal that some Syrians returned to Syria (230,000 people from Turkey) (UNHRC 2020) (22). Again, in a report published by the UNHC, it was discovered that 5.9% of the Syrian refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan are considering returning to Syria within one year, and 75% have the hope of returning to Syria one day (23). It was concluded that Syrians under temporary protection did not fulfill the minimum return conditions for return due to the lack of security, essential services, and Syria's economic opportunities. They could not return due to the compulsory military service for men (24). Ensuring humanitarian conditions in Syria can undoubtedly accelerate returns.

It has been determined that Syrians under temporary protection living in camps have no

difficulty in accessing basic services such as health and education (12). Hence, camp lives can be more active. In the ORSAM report published in 2015, it was asserted that Syrians could stay longer than expected (12).

Although no significant difference was detected in our study, it was observed that female participants felt more secure compared to male participants. Similar results were obtained in a comparable study conducted among Syrians in Lebanon (10). A study conducted in Istanbul determined that female participants were more extreme in feeling safe and not than men.⁴ Although there was no significant difference, a study conducted in Malatya discovered that women felt less safe (25). Studies are proving that men feel more secure than women (26). Studies are confirming that gender does not affect the state of feeling safe (27). Another study detected that 91% of male participants felt safe, while 76% of female participants felt safe (28). These differences may arise from the differences of the study groups. Also, immigrant women stay more at home while men have to meet the requirements outside of the home to reduce the safeness in men (28).

Our study concluded that the average score of safeness in the non-working group was significantly lower than the working group. Studies are proving that there is a relationship between income status and safeness (26). The average score of safeness was found in our study to be higher, although not significant, among those who declared that they did not experience any problems and did not have the idea of returning to Syria, and those who stated that they had a problem and had the idea of returning to Syria. This is an expected result. There was no difference between the group that received cohesion training and

the group who did not in terms of the average score of safeness. Only 13.9% of the participants declared that they received cohesion training and 91.1% of those who received cohesion training stated that they received 1-hour cohesion training.

When the relationship between age and safeness was investigated in our study, no relationship was observed (25, 26). When the relationship between income status and safeness was considered in our study, it was observed that the average score of safeness increased significantly as income increased. In the study conducted by Konak and Kork in Malatya, no stable relationship was detected between increased income and safeness, and no relationship was discovered between age and safeness (25). A study conducted by Wood et al. concluded that the income level in the slums affects the feeling of self-safety, and it is higher in people having a high income (26).

No relationship could be detected between the safeness and time spent in Turkey. In the study conducted by Wood et al., no relationship was observed between settlement duration and self-confidence (26). In the study conducted in Lebanon, it was discovered that Syrians living at home feel more relaxed than those living in other settlements (10).

CONCLUSIONS

It is seen that the majority of the participants in the study are under the age of 55. Working areas should be increased and social support activities should be carried out for the young population. It may be appropriate to provide support to reach older people in education.

It has been observed that people do not have problems in accessing health services and the

education of their children, but mostly due to language and economic difficulties. Language education should be supported.

Ethics Committee Approval: This study was performed after approval by the local ethics committee (approval number: KSU-08.01.2020/02).

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