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The Out of Border Education: The Inclusion of Syrian Refugees in Higher Education*

Research Article

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to delve deeply into the perceptions of the managers on the inclusion of Syrian refugees in higher education. To reach this aim, case study was used in the study, and the participants were determined through criterion sampling. Based on the collected data, the following themes were identified in the study: incongruity, hegemonic integration and leading the experience. The study has put forward that an incongruity prevails in the inclusion of Syrian refugees in higher education, and inclusive education is regarded as a hegemonic integration. Besides, managers have to deal with the inclusion of Syrian refugees by leading the process as they experience, which entails crisis management and being solution-oriented. Accordingly, an integrative approach -counting students, academics, and managers- is required to succeed in the inclusion of Syrian refugees in higher education.

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Keywords:
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Introduction

Throughout human history, movements of people across borders have affected their lives significantly and caused hardships in various areas like education and economy in both international and domestic levels. Among these movements, forced migration, which compels people to move to safer places because of the negative conditions such as wars or natural disasters (Hazan, 2012), has become an important reason for Syrian movements to other countries including Turkey recently. Turkey entered into force the law for Foreigners and International Protection in 2014, giving refugees the right to free access to health, education, and the labor market (Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey, 2019). Under this legislation, Turkey is supposed to integrate 3,6 million refugees (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü [Administration General Directorate], 2020) into the

* In the current study, the concept of "refugee" has been used in a sociological sense, it is not binding legally.

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society in terms of economy, culture, and education. Their adaptation to society and remedy of racism or negative feelings released by refugees can be provided by education. At this point, inclusive education has gained importance at schools including Syrian students, which targets an environment where each student is treated equally (Özcan, 2018).

Inclusive education aims to precede an education considering various needs of students and lessening exclusion by evading the obstacles that students exposed to discrimination, belonging to a minority group, or with a disability can face. Even though inclusion was used to integrate marginalized and disabled students into the school, it has a wider for the integration of minority groups including refugees in the society (Sidhu & Taylor, 2012). It also leads students to keep sound relationships with the host country as well as their ethnicity (Berry, 2006). Therefore, the key point of inclusion is minimizing discrimination among students with differences. In addition to being a basic human right, education of refugees is also important for facilitating their adaptation to social, economic and cultural life since education serves as a bridge for refugees to be able to carry themselves into the future and connect with society (Rousseau & Guzder 2008). In Turkey, there has been a rapid acceleration in schooling rates in a short period. In the statement made by the Ministry of National Education on November 1, 2020, it was stated that the number of Syrian students studying at state universities between 2018-2020 was 73 thousand 570 (Mülteciler Derneği, 2021). According to a study, no matter if they are migrants or locals, many people agree that the idea of a community consisting of differences in terms of ethnicity, religion or culture is not bad (Duru, Hanquinet, & Cesur, 2016). However, in practice, it is likely that especially migrants or refugees have problems in the new society. As for the work of the field paper on the subject, Syrian students who become schooled face problems regarding their adaptation to the education process, which prevents them from going through a qualified education process (Emin, 2016).

Inclusive education for refugee students has been a globally attractive topic due to schools' potential for huge effects on the students with diverse needs. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) sought teachers' thoughts about inclusive education and reached that teachers' training, sources, and abilities were not enough for inclusion. Another study conducted by Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) suggested that managers could not provide inclusive programs owing to a lack of administrative leadership and training. Zembylas (2010) carried out a study to explore the success levels of teachers in implementing inclusion practices towards students with different ethnicity. Florian (2019) studied how special educators could work in inclusive education and the duty of inclusive education addressing the obstacles faced by students from diverse groups. Migliarini, Stinson, and D'Alessio (2019) examined the effect of the Salamanca Statement on the meaning of inclusive education including both ableism and racism at a cross-natural level.

Even though a wide range of studies on inclusive education (Kearney & Kane, 2006; Robinson-Pant, 2020) has been done so far, there is a limited number of studies analyzing the inclusion of Syrian refugees in higher education (Higgins & Misawa, 2019; Turner & Fodzar, 2010). Accordingly, the current study aims to examine the perceptions of managers in higher education on perpetuating inclusive education practices. It is expected that the findings of this study give policymakers, educators, academics, and school managers an idea about what the missing or open to improvement points on designing and applying inclusive education policies for refugees are.

Conceptual Framework

A refugee is an individual who is scared of being tortured due to his or her belief, ethnic group, or race, is displaced outside his or her country; and is reluctant to be protected by that country or to turn back there in dread of being persecuted (The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and Its 1967 Protocol, 2011). According to Article 33, in the 1951 Convention, refugees cannot be forced to go back to their countries where they confront perils to their lives and liberty based on the non-refoulment principle, which is binding for all states as it is also accepted as a code of customary international law (The 1951 Convention relating to

the Status of Refugees and Its 1967 Protocol, 2011). Apart from the policies as to refugees' position, there are many theories to make the conditions in which refugees are evident and form the basis for migration including the possible reasons and elements that refugees are supposed to take into consideration before migrating. According to the theory suggested by Lee (1966), whether the migration is in a short or long distance, and whether the migration is difficult, or not do not have a role in the definition of migration; an original country, destination, and impediments make a move migration.

Lee (1966) suggests that refugees take for both positive and negative factors, which may be economic, social, or cultural, in both the original country and the host country in the process of migrating. On the other hand, juridical and social uncertainty about their new status in the host country, the cost that they have to pay, and migration systems referring to national or racial identity can be impediments asylum seekers are likely to deal with in the host country (Çağlayan, 2013). In the context of Syrian refugees, the economic and social conditions in their original country are atrocious enough to compel them to migrate to other countries with better living conditions. The second phase of migration is related to the host countries to a great extent, which determines how difficult or easy the conditions for refugees will be. How migrants and refugees deal with the new culture and the living conditions in the host country gains huge importance at this point as they are immersed in the new socio-cultural atmosphere of the host country. The literature on this demonstrates that schools are the places where acculturation unfolds (Birman & Ryerson-Espino 2007; Birman et al. 2007; Makarova & Birman 2016). Schools and other educational environments are among the main acculturation contexts for migrants as they are a reflection of the society and they introduce the culture of the society to immigrant children (Berry et al. 2011). School environments are significant for minority students' adjustment to society. Minority students are supposed to adjust both to a new academic culture (i.e. academic requirements, assessment practices), and a new school culture (Makarova & Birman 2016).

As for Turkey, refugees and migrants coming because of affairs outside Europe choose Turkey the most. By taking into consideration universal standards, Turkey launched some reforms such as the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in 2014, which designated the milestones of the refugee, asylum, and temporary protection regulation in Turkey. Also, in 2014, Temporary Protection Regulation was accepted to regulate the responsibilities and rights of the ones -especially Syrian refugees- who will be protected temporarily in Turkey (Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey, 2019). Briefly, Turkey is in charge of preparing appropriate conditions and environments for refugees and migrants in many areas such as the work-life, health, and education sectors.

The total number of Syrian refugees registered in Turkey is over 3.6 million in addition to over 365,000 individuals of concern coming from other countries (Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey, 2019). It must be noted that most Syrian people coming to Turkey are accepted under temporary protection status, not international protection. Among those, there are 819,60 Syrian people in the 15-24 age range defined as young population (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü [Administration General Directorate], 2020). It is an undeniable fact that this young population of refugees has to get over adaptation problems as they find themselves in a new environment in terms of social life, work-life, and especially education life to a great extent. Education life is also new for them since they have to continue their education life in a different system from the system of their country of origin. According to a study, schools as cultural agents convey and reproduce the assimilationist approaches, inequalities in society, and hierarchical social and ethnocultural orders (Warikoo & Carter, 2009). Accordingly, in schools in the host country, ethnic minority groups are likely to have to handle monocultural curriculum content, assimilative pressures, and inequality (Makarova & Birman, 2016). Schools, consequently, require to 'implement a comprehensive, inclusive education policy' and 'to effectively respond to the needs of migrant and non-migrant pupils' (Council of Europe 2016, p. 7). Therefore, inclusive practices gain importance in integrating them into the new education system.

Inclusive education depicts a system embracing all dissimilarities by boosting the participation of all learners and minimizing the level of exclusion in education (Booth, 1996). It suggests that education should be in favor of all learners counting the ones who belong to a minority, the ones who are gifted from birth or disabled, the ones who have to work in the streets or other marginalized groups. Also, inclusive education accepts that regular schools are in charge of educating all (UNESCO, 1994). Schools with inclusive education practices can also cope with racial discrimination or ableism, and initiate a society welcoming differences and accomplish education for everybody, which is an environment serving the inclusion of refugees into the society in the host country (The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, Art 3, 1994). Accordingly, inclusive education has the function of connecting minorities and societies.

All individuals including academics and managers take part in the process of applying an inclusive education in schools. As there are many procedures counting program development, testing, funding, and administration, it is necessary to be arranged so that inclusion can be more effective and applicable. Hence, the fact that managers in different levels of education should be informed about inclusive education is of vital importance as Anderson (1990) emphasizes the role of school managers in constructing an understanding of diversity. Managers can redesign the school curriculum taking into consideration the diversity among students, as well (Ryan, 2003). Among schools, higher education has also a huge effect on refugees' resettlement (McBrien, 2005) because higher education institutions are in a position that can assist the progress of making a bridge between refugee students and their society and ease refugee students' arbitration with the larger society to guarantee inclusion (Turner & Fodzar, 2010; Karakose, Yirci, Uygun & Ozdemir, 2016). Teachers and especially school managers have the authority to preserve diversity which refugees have to cope with in society (Blanchard & Muller, 2015; Cherng & Liu, 2017; Karakose, Kocabas & Yesilyurt, 2014). Now that they have such authority, the needs and experiences of refugees should be known by teachers and managers in higher education, and the necessary practices in higher education should be prepared for helping refugees to get to higher education (Higgins & Misawa, 2019). Briefly, studies on the inclusion of refugees or marginalized groups into education have shed light on the student perspective and mostly focused on the results of this process for students, teachers, or managers in primary or secondary levels (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Karakose & Kocabas, 2009). It displays that perceptions of managers in higher education and how the inclusion mechanism works in higher education have not been paid regard to. Therefore, the current study provides an examination of how managers' approaches towards the inclusion of Syrian refugees into higher education are.

Methodology

Research Design

A qualitative research approach incorporating a case study design was employed in this study to explore the perceptions of managers as to the inclusive education of Syrian students in higher education in Turkey. Case study examines the particularity and complication of a single case, which leads the researcher to figure out what is occurring in significant circumstances (Stake, 1995). Case studies aim to conduct in-depth research and to present the results by considering factors such as environment, individual, event, and process related to a particular situation. How these factors affect the situation and how they are affected are the focus of the case studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Accordingly, the case discussed within the current study is the approaches and experiences of managers pertaining to the inclusion of Syrian refugees into higher education.

Research Participants

Purposeful sampling allows the selection and investigation of information-rich situations depending on the purpose of the study (Büyüköztürk et al., 2015). The criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the determination of the study group of the study. Patton (2002) alleges that

"criterion sampling means to review and study all cases that meet certain predetermined criteria of importance" (p. 238). Thanks to criterion sampling, significant qualitative elements can be contributed to management information systems, as well (Patton, 1990). The reason why criterion sampling was preferred in the current study is that experience with Syrian refugees in higher education is needed to dwell on their inclusion into higher education. Accordingly, participants were selected depending on whether they work in a higher education institution with Syrian students, whether they have experience with Syrian students as a manager, or not and their eagerness to take part in the study. In the study, pseudonyms were used instead of real names for the participants as given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of Participants

Name	Gender	Status	Seniority	Department
Deniz	Male	Head of Department	22	*Modern Languages*
Osman	Mae	Student Coordinator	8	*Modern Languages*
Emel	Female	Student Coordinator	692 2	*Modern Languages*
Jale	Female	Student Coordinator	6	*Psychology*
Orkun	Male	Head of Department	5	*Health Sciences*
Melek	Female	Head of Department	5	*Engineering*
Mahir	Male	Head of Department	4	*Health Sciences*
Ahmed	Male	Head of Department	4	*Engineering*

Participants of the study are working as managers in different departments including Syrian students of the same university in İstanbul. Three of the participants are female, whereas five of them are male. 3 of the participants whose titles are student coordinators are in charge of managing the whole process related to the students in their departments. The fact that the head of these departments suggested that we should interview them because they have experience with the inclusion process of Syrian students is the reason why student coordinators were chosen to interview. Five of them whose titles are head of the department are in charge of managing the whole education process in the department including student affairs in need. As for seniority, the experience of the managers chosen in the study varied from 2 to 22 years. Also, the participants of the study have not got any education about inclusion, nor have they attended conferences on inclusion.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, the interview technique was preferred as it contributes to reaching a detailed and comprehensive description of the case or phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen 2003). Accordingly, a semi-structured interview form was used as the main data collection tool. The interview form was developed by the researchers. Firstly, the literature was reviewed and a semi-structured interview form was prepared to determine the content and flow of the individual interviews. It was presented to the field experts to check the degree, clarity, and applicability. Their opinions on the questions were taken into consideration and necessary changes were made accordingly. Then, experts from the department of educational sciences were interviewed to ensure internal validity. An interview form was prepared in line with the recommendations of the experts. Before the actual implementation, a voluntary participant was interviewed and the intelligibility of the questions was tested, and it was observed that there were no problems. In the end, there were 6 six in-depth questions related to the participants' approaches towards inclusion education to be used both in the individual interviews and the focus group interviews.

Settings and Procedures

In January 2020, ten managers in a higher education institution in Istanbul were sent an e-mail to be invited to participate in the current study. Eight managers accepted to be a participant in the current study. Personal information about the participants was gained in the pre-interview. Meanwhile, the managers' questions as to the process were answered and the points that they wanted to learn more about were explained in detail. Necessary information to contact and agendas of availability of the participants were learned from them so as to arrange the appropriate time and place for the first interview. The managers provided their home and school contact information. Between January 07 and 15, 2020 the researchers met higher education managers to conduct individual interviews. The researchers audio-taped all the interviews and transcribed each meeting.

Data Collection

Before starting the study, the consent form prepared before the interview was asked to be signed by the participants, and also the participants were given the information that the participation was voluntary, so they had a chance to give up the study whenever they wanted. They were also informed that their responses would be secret and would be used only by the researchers for the current study. At this point, pseudonyms were preferred to hide the identities of the participants. Interviews were done in the offices of the participants.

As for the data collection process, the data triangulation method was used to increase the accuracy of the results. The data were triangulated through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and meeting minutes. Thanks to data triangulation, the researcher can reach much data and examine many aspects of the topic or the case (Neuman, 2013). The interviews with the managers took nearly 40-50 minutes. Meanwhile, each interview was recorded with the permission of the participants. In the research, credibility was tried to be obtained through long-term interaction by keeping expert review, participant confirmation, and interviews with managers long. Besides, the consistency of the findings obtained from the collected data was checked to increase the credibility of the data. In this respect, the consistency of the findings with the conceptual framework used in the development of the interview form has been continuously checked. Also, direct quotations from the interviewed participants were tried to increase the credibility of the research. In order to increase the transferability of the research, the research process and the actions taken in this process were described in detail. In this context, the research model, working group, data collection tool, data collection process, data analysis, and interpretation processes were explained in detail. Besides, external reliability was tried to be stored by requesting other researchers or making comparisons in another study in the future.

Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data, the recordings and field notes were transcribed by the researchers. After transcribing the data, the researchers read transcriptions more than once and categorized the output into different themes. Three steps were applied by the researchers manually as exploring the general sense, (en)coding the data (Saldaña, 2009), and specifying the themes (Creswell, 2012). The list of themes and categories was sent to other experts to be examined by them, as well. These multiple revisions contributed to the reliability as it was stated that credibility, confirmability, and reliability can be set through the member check process (Maxwell, 2009). At the end of this process, the researchers came up with the following themes: incongruity, hegemonic integration, and leading the experience.

To provide consistency and credibility, investigator triangulation was applied by discussing the alternative interpretations of the collected data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1980). Therefore, multi triangulation was applied in the current study.

Findings

Analysis of the findings put forward that managers associate inclusion of Syrian refugees into higher education with negativity because of their various experiences with those students. That's why the first theme was determined as incongruity led by language, behaviors, culture, and academic life. The second theme was determined as hegemonic integration because analysis of the findings revealed that most of the managers tend to get Syrian refugees to adapt to the Turkish education system and Turkish culture rather than adapting education to Syrian students. Even though they appreciate differences in classes in a way, in the end, they are not much inclined to bend the system depending on others. The last theme was decided as leading the experience in that the participants clarified that they had not got any education on inclusive education. Also, they emphasize the significance of crisis management and being solution-oriented, which shows that the managers in the selected higher education institution feel themselves managing a crisis in the process of inclusion.

Theme One: Incongruity

The findings exhibit that almost all the participants experience incongruity as to the inclusion process of Syrian refugees into higher education. Most of the participants state that they have to deal with the clash of languages, behaviors, cultures, and education systems in higher education institutions. The findings reached through the focus group meetings supported this with the true experiences of academics and the refugee students in the same university. Incongruity which is one of the themes of the study consists of 4 categories as *problems caused by language background*, *problems arising from the behavioral background*, *problems led by cultural background,* and *problems originating from an academic background*.

Language is an essential component of the education environment as it is the sole means of conveying meaning. In the context of Syrian refugees, there might be some students who do not know both Turkish and English in higher education. This makes the educators and the managers apply to second or third sources so that they can understand the students with a problem. According to the findings, six participants highlighted the problems in teaching and management caused by the different language backgrounds of Syrian students. For example, two of the participants expressed their thoughts as follows:

> *"First of all, the language was one of the biggest problems we had because there are students who do not have both English and Turkish. Particularly, lecturers had difficulty teaching in class. Also, there are times when a lot of patience is required in management processes. Second or third parties may be needed. We have a big problem in communication, we try to explain ourselves by using gestures and mimics." (Emel, Modern Languages Department, 2)*

> *"They should learn a little Turkish, they need to prepare some sub-level related to Turkish culture and student notion. The message cannot be transmitted because language is a problem. Something is tried to be explained with body language with hand and arm movements or a translator is found." (Jale, Psychology Department, 6)*

Another situation the managers assert that academics and managers have problems caused by language is exams. One of the participants mentioned this as follows:

> *"…we don't know how to solve the problems during the exam. For example, I don't speak Arabic. They speak Arabic during the exam, they make such an attempt and we don't know if they want to open the window, if they want to give the eraser or if they cheat..." (Mahir, Health Sciences Department, 4)*

Participants also mention other areas outside the school where the refugee students have problems with language. One of the managers mentions clinics as problematic areas related to Syrian students:

"When we send the students to the clinic, we are not there, and the internship is in Turkish. The students who do not know Turkish have a big problem.'' (Orkun, Health Sciences Department, 5)

One of the participants gives an example that students may have as to their health. Besides, he points out the necessity of a separate department referring to problems of refugee students caused by the deficiency of Turkish.

"Another problem is that the child does not speak Turkish and does not speak English. He may experience during the year, for example, a health problem. He did. He doesn't know, cannot explain how to tell, where to go, what to do. There must be a department which they can call, explain their problems and consult their social problem because the basic problem is language and communication." (Deniz, Modern Languages Department, 22)

The cultural background of Syrian refugees is the source of another problem perceived by half of the managers in higher education. However, different points were identified to come up with related to cultural background. For instance, one of the participants explained the reason for this difference between the two cultures. He expresses his thoughts as follows:

"There is also a difference between coming from a very particularist and universalist culture. If people come from a particularist culture, they love to bend and bend all the rules for themselves. When they come to a universalist environment, there will be problems in compliance with the rules. We are not half-fame, nor orientalist or western. But we try to work as institutionally as possible here, so we try to be universal. We need to explain these rules well to these students." (Osman, Modern Languages Department, 8)

Similarly, another participant has the opinion that the problem is originated from the difference between Turkish and Syrian cultures, and they are supposed to get used to living in Turkish culture rather than bringing their culture to the host country. He gave his opinion as follows:

"…Their culture is different from Turkish culture. They can't adapt to community culture." (Ahmed, Engineering Department, 4)

Besides, the problems arising from the cultural background can be seen in the education system itself. Because the education culture is also different between Syria and Turkey, refugee students have problems with the education practices in Turkey. Some examples are the problems with manners in the classroom, relationships with their teachers or classmates. One of the managers stated that:

"…Once there is a difference in culture, I hear from the lecturers that they have difficulty in balancing student manners, student-teacher relationships and their contact with classmates." *(Jale, Psychology Department, 6)*

Besides, according to interviews, the difference led by cultural background is so clear that it causes managers to add one more minute to the meetings. One of the participants mentioned this as follows:

"…We try to integrate them into the practices we do in classrooms. That's a separate agenda item in our meetings. When students come here, they also have emotional problems and adaptation problems..."

Another problem is led by refugees' academic backgrounds. Most of the participants give examples from their experiences as to the refugees' adaptation problems to the Turkish education system. One of the participants gave very specific examples to show that refugee students do not know very basic practices as follows:

> *"…He does not know the examination system, multiple-choice examination, and scantrons in our country. He still does not know how to mark the answer key. We need to teach the evaluation system." (Osman, Modern Languages Department, 8)*

Very similarly, according to another participant, Syrian students have serious adaptation problems as the education system is very new for refugee students. She presented her experience as follows:

> *"We may also have to talk about the rules and the assignment because the system is completely different. We're having adaptation problems." (Emel, Modern Languages Department, 2)*

One another participant highlighted that there was a sharp difference between the teacher-student relationships of the two countries. She also emphasized the importance of rules and the concept of being a student in college as follows:

> *"…cultural differences, differences between educational systems, teacher and student relationship. In college, you have to act according to a set of rules and regulations. You should have a notion of being a student." (Jale, Psychology Department, 6)*

Analysis of the data gained during the interview of the participants reveals that problems arising from the behavioral background were among the most frequently repeated notions by the managers. Most of the participants stated that the basic problems with refugee students' behavioral problems were related to exams. For instance, three of them expressed their opinions as follows:

> *"There are problems that this situation causes in Turkish institutions. The first is student problems with behavioral disorders. The profile of students with behavioral disorders causes serious problems in terms of classroom management for the lecturer. Apart from this, cases of discipline that have not been experienced before are also observed. For example, another student took the exam instead of the student who is supposed to take the exam. It was one of the first disciplinary cases in terms of cheating. It seems a serious behavioral disorder." (Deniz, Modern Languages Department, 22)*

> *"There were problems during registration. We are having problems that have never been experienced before. Cheating, taking exams interchangeably… Besides, respect problems, behavioral disorders..." (Osman, Modern Languages Department, 8)*

> "Students have a different tendency to cheat, they can have different tendencies when they are not successful." *(Melek, Engineering Department, 5)*

At the same time, according to the analysis of the interviews, behavioral problems of refugee students are among the minutes of the meetings with academics. One of the participants revealed that it was a problem the lecturers had that the students tend to use another language and laugh during the lessons. She reflected her experience as follows:

> "A second problem is behavior. They can be so lame. They suddenly start arguing among themselves in Arabic and laughing among themselves. They're acting on their own in terms of the dates. These

are the problems experienced by the lecturers, but of course, they are reflected in the meetings and management." *(Emel, Modern Languages Department, 2)*

Moreover, one of the participants pointed out that the behaviors of the students change depending on the gender of the lecturer based on his experiences. Also, she expressed that their meeting agenda had changed with the coming of those refugee students:

"In the exam, I noticed that the students were very comfortable in one of the classes with the majority of international students. The supervisor in the class said that since she was a woman, they might not pay much attention to her, and asked if I would help her. So, I tried to show up and help him. That's a very interesting point. The way they perceive the female figure can be different. The meeting's agendas changed to what we could do for them." (Melek, Engineering Department, 5)

A general analysis of the answers by the participants revealed that all of the participants agreed that problems emerged with the registration of Syrian students, and the problems led by lingual, cultural, academic, and behavioral background were the most commonly faced ones by the managers in the higher education institution studied in the current study.

Theme Two: Hegemonic Integration

According to the findings, inclusion is perceived by the managers in the higher education institution in the current study as a hegemonic tool to integrate refugees into the education system and culture of the host country, which is Turkey. There are two categories under the second theme which is *hegemonic integration*: *mainstream culture* and *integration into the education* system. The study findings indicate that there are a dominant culture and an operational education system from its curriculum to exam-style that inclusion practices aim to make refugees accommodate themselves to.

Most of the participants preferred to define inclusive education by focusing on *mainstream culture*. For example, one of the participants mentioned the necessity of learning Turkish culture in her answer:

" Education integration, students ' confusion, how to fill that cultural gap can be looked at… If you ask me personally, these students need to go through a process of integration. They should definitely learn some Turkish, they should learn some basics about Turkish culture..." (Jale, Psychology Department, 6)

Some of the managers emphasized the integration of different cultures into education, and three of them employed the notion of inclusion:

"In school, we include students from a very different culture in the classroom into education programs. Ensuring that all these students achieve attainment is the foundation of inclusive education." (Melek, Engineering Department, 5)

"… If our culture gathers their culture, like adding their culture to ours, and if the goal is not assimilation, but adaptation, we try to do this, but because it has to be done by planning, it could not be done this year." (Osman, Modern Languages Department, 8)

"Equal education for all religion, language, culture, nation." *(Ahmed, Engineering Department, 4)*

One another category of this theme is *the integration of students into the education process*. For example, one of the participants highlighted the language and education system while describing inclusive education. Two participants expressed their thoughts as follows:

"It's like the integration of Syrian students into our education system. In terms of language and education system…" (Jale, Psychology Department, 6)

"…we have to treat everyone equally. We tell the lessons accordingly. Since the program is in English, you tell the lessons accordingly. After all, if there is someone who does not know Turkish in the environment, you speak a common language." (Mahir, Health Sciences Department, 4)

Another participant explained inclusive education by focusing on the differences between students' learning types and speed:

"If there are 50 people in the class, everyone's learning speed, learning ability is not the same. It is necessary to apply such a technique so that it appeals to everyone. " (Orkun, Health Sciences Department, 5)

A general analysis of the perceptions of the managers demonstrated that managers defined inclusive education based on culture and education system. Most of the participants emphasized that Syrian students should learn Turkish culture, language, and the notion of being a student in higher education, for they experience problems about these points.

Theme Three: Leading the Experience

The findings demonstrate that the managers in the higher education institution selected in the study do not have any preparations both academically and administratively to integrate the Syrian refugees into the higher education, however, they learn how to deal with the process by improvising as they experience. The managers in the current study neither were informed that Syrian students would be registered nor were trained on inclusive education. Some of the participants asserted this situation as it is given in the following:

"I haven't got any training, I have been in the same place since the beginning of the conversation. So I have to be trained on this subject. It means that it is a point I need to be trained." (Jale, Psychology Department, 6)

"I have not received any training. I don't know much about the content of such an education." (Mahir, Health Sciences Department, 4)

Accordingly, it can be inferred that the managers have to deal with the problems as to Syrian students instantly and planlessly. Both findings reached through individual interviews and the meeting minutes bolster these categories by emphasizing the situations the managers have had to intervene in during the events about the inclusion of Syrian refugees into higher education. Three of the participants emphasized the importance of being good at crisis management as follows:

"In Turkey, these conditions are not notified in advance. The pin is pulled, left in front of you. If you knew before, you should be good at strategic planning. However, you should be good at crisis management because you do not know." (Deniz, Modern Languages Department, 22)

"In terms of both managers and lecturers, crisis management was expected by the managers." (Osman, Modern Languages Department, 8)

"They should be able to deal with all kinds of problems and be good at crisis management. They have to stay calm and deal with it patiently." (Emel, Modern Languages Department, 2)

Being able to be solution-oriented is another notion that was emphasized by the managers to be successful at the inclusion of Syrian students into higher education. Some of the participants expressed their opinion as follows:

> *"…He should be aware of all the problems. He must have prudence and initiative to make the necessary decisions to eliminate problems." (Jale, Psychology Department, 6)*

> *"A good observer, good communication, calm, solution-oriented. He should create a peaceful environment..." (Melek, Engineering Department, 5)*

> *"It is necessary to be able to do a lot of work with little opportunity. Being solution-orientated and motivation are important." (Ahmed, Engineering Department, 4)*

When the participants' statements are analyzed in general, it is revealed that crisis management and being solution-oriented were emphasized quite often by the participants, and that being a good leader was not enough to cope with inclusive education.

Discussion and Conclusion

Analysis of the findings is expected to contribute to a wider comprehension of how managers of higher education perceive the inclusion of Syrian refugees into higher education, what kind of differences they undergo and what is expected from the managers to integrate Syrian refugees into higher education. The analysis of the findings of the current study has shown that managers mostly agree that they cope up with problems emerging with the registration of Syrian refugees. These problems are led by different sources such as **language, culture, education, and attitude.** As for the definition of inclusive education, the managers in the current study preferred to define inclusive education based on culture and education. They also alleged that the most important features expected from a manager in the inclusion process were being good at crisis management and solving problems. The managers in the selected higher education institution considered the inclusive education process for Syrian refugees to be a nonconformist process stemming from differences in the **language, attitude, culture, and education systems** of Syrian students.

Language difference is one of the fundamental problems in terms of the integration of refugee students into education (Apak, 2014; Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Sinan & Gültekin, 2018; Taskin & Erdemli, 2018). Also, the language problem that refugee students have to deal with was identified as the 'number one' problem by Watkins, Razee, and Richters (2012). Kaysılı, Soylu, and Sever (2019) reached the result that language was not only an instructional problem but also a socio-cultural problem. Similarly, in the current study, language deficiency of Syrian students is perceived as one of the roadblocks of the inclusion process of these students into higher education according to managers in higher education. It causes some communication and discipline problems, which makes the inclusion of Syrian students difficult. The current study shows that the cultural, academic, and behavioral backgrounds of Syrian students have also a role in why the inclusion of Syrian refugees is perceived as a source of difficulty by managers. Language and education cannot be ignored as they provide a transition in terms of culture (Vedder & Horenczyk, 2006). Language and education are essential to this transition including integration and mutual adaptation rather than assimilation and important means of communication and social abilities within the new culture (Turner & Fozdar, 2010). On the other hand, the findings of the current study have shown that managers face problems during the inclusion process of Syrian students in higher education, caused by a different lingual, cultural, academic, and attitudinal background of Syrian refugees.

Artiles, Harris-Murri, and Rostenberg (2006) emphasize cultural and linguistic differences while expressing the need for inclusive education to students who have a different language and culture from their

communities. Inclusive education was described as a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, community, and curricula of mainstream schools (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Pugh, Every and Hattam (2012) give overwhelming importance to both culture and instructive methods by stating that inclusive education consists of revised curricula and techniques that cater to all students and cultural and linguistic adaptation is required during the transition to the school process. Likewise, the current study has shown that inclusive education is associated with culture and inclusive education can be managed through new methods being used in inclusive education by higher education managers and academics. According to its universal definition, inclusive education suggests that schools are responsible for educating everyone (UNESCO, 1994). However, it must be noted that according to the Turkish higher education managers, Turkish culture and the Turkish notion of being a student must be learned by Syrian students to get accustomed to the Turkish education system.

The views of managers in higher education about what is expected from managers in the process of implementing inclusive education for Syrian refugees have been conceptualized as leading the experience. In this leading process, the importance of crisis management and being a solution-oriented focus has been emphasized by the managers. Educational management is the process of planning, organizing, applying, leading, and assessing educational policy (Olowesolu, 2016), and educational institutions are founded in a society so as to meet the educational need of individuals (Oowesolu, Hussin, & Kasa, 2016). However, as an open system, organizations live in a highly dynamic environment, and it is quite likely that managers of education institutions face different types of unexpected situations. The inclusion of refugee students is perceived as a crisis by the managers who participated in this study. A crisis is a situation that threatens the high-level goals of an organization, sometimes endangering the life of the organization and requiring an urgent response, creating tension where the organization's crisis prediction and prevention mechanisms are insufficient (Can, 1997). The managerial skills that managers will display during crisis times will help to resolve the crisis as soon as possible by relieving the panic of the crisis. In line with this, the managers who participated in the current study focused on the importance of being good at crisis management and solving problems in the process of inclusion of Syrian refugees in higher education, which was perceived as a crisis by them.

To conclude, the incongruity faced in the inclusion process of Syrian students in higher education is mainly caused by social factors such as language and culture. Syrian students' adaptation in the school context requires not to be ignored, as starting a new school system can be challenging for them in terms of finding the balance between different cultures (Birman & Ryerson-Espino 2007; Birman et al. 2007). More and more students have to deal with developmental problems as they grow up trying to keep the balance between the different cultural environments. At this point, the fact that school environment has a critical impact on minority students' acculturation (Makarova & Herzog 2014; Salo & Birman 2015). How successfully Syrian students deal with the challenges they face during their adjustment is directly affected by the circumstances of the school context where acculturation happens. Accordingly, to lessen the effects of these challenges for Syrian students, some steps can be taken both administratively and academically. Academically, orientation programs as to both the Turkish education system and the relevant higher education system can be prepared for refugee students. Furthermore, orientation programs for academics and managers can be planned about the inclusion of Syrian students in both higher education and Turkish society. Inclusive education is perceived as a hegemonic tool by the higher education managers in the current study. Seminars on inclusive education towards refugees can be given to higher education managers and academics. Administratively, all these training processes should be managed, and also a specific unit with expert academics in inclusive education can be assigned to deal with the problems of Syrian students. Besides, some events such as culture fuars and transculturation events, which contribute to the social interaction of natives and refugees, can be planned by the university administration. Similar cultural events through which natives and refugees interact can be

developed country-wide by the Directorate General of Migration Management, municipalities, or nongovernmental organizations. In terms of Syrian refugees' inclusion in higher education, there must be mutual actions. Migration is a state of interrupted existence and a way of fighting the ground we left behind (Said, 1990). If the host country wants to stop this fighting, managers as the main authorities in higher education should take on the responsibility to pursue these inclusion processes and arrange the organizations, and it should be taken into consideration that inclusion happens in consequence of integrative efforts.

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