

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY: THROUGH THE LENSES OF COMPLEX ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP THEORY

HAMIT OZEN

Eskisehir Osmangazi University

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the effectivity of school management according to the perceptions of Turkish school principals of Syrian refugee students through the lenses of complex adaptive leadership, which was conceptualized from complexity theory and complex adaptive leadership. This was qualitative research designed as a phenomenological study. The participants of the study were identified via a snowball sampling strategy. Nineteen school principals working at public schools in Turkey during the summer term of 2016-2017 and the fall term of 2017-2018 were selected as the participants. Data were collected using the interview technique and descriptive analysis was employed. The results showed that school principals commented on resource management, risk, decision making, and planning and control when functioning as managerial leaders. Secondly, they touched on network dynamics, change and innovation, and safe schools in terms of their adaptive leadership skills. Lastly, they pointed out interaction, win-win interdependency, and ethical values of enabling leadership. Overall, it was found that the structure of the Turkish Ministry of National Education is strictly centralized, and complex adaptive leadership does not function properly in this context. However, school principals do make ceaseless efforts to meet the educational and humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees.

INTRODUCTION

There are more people displaced by crises in the world now than at any point in time since World War II (UNHCR, 2016a). As of the end of 2016, 65.6 million people were forcibly displaced by conflicts nationally and internationally; this represents an increase of 3.3 million refugees since 2015 and is the equivalent of one person displaced every second. The ongoing crisis in Syria, which has been the deadliest in the Middle East, has taken a toll of millions of lives, with its effects reverberating around the globe. The Syrian Civil War has also created an educational crisis for Syrians in the Middle East and it is estimated that 380,000 Syrian refugee children are not receiving education (UNHCR, 2017). A generation of Syrian children is thus at risk of missing out on a formal education. The future of Syrian children, as well as the stability and prosperity of the region, will depend on ensuring that school-age children receive the education they need, which must take into account the circumstances that they face. These circumstances result in the lack of education, development of critical thinking skills, and opportunities that result from education, which could also make more youth vulnerable to recruitment to radical groups (Culbertson & Constant, 2015).

However, there are fruitful approaches to address the lack of learning spaces and lack of access to education in host nations of Syrian refugees. In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) imposed a plan for the education of Syrian refugee children, providing formal and informal education for a great number of at-risk out-of-school refugees by establishing Education in Emergencies and Migration Units. The MoNE has taken over the Student Education Management

Information System for Foreign Students to track the enrollment and learning achievements of Syrian students in order to promote evidence-based, prioritized programming. Although the lack of learning spaces remains a challenge, 574 classroom containers were erected. Turkey has also exerted efforts to widen tertiary education opportunities for youth through increased numbers of scholarships, strengthened partnerships, and the establishing and reinvigorating of coordination among relevant stakeholders. Protection was consistently mainstreamed in educational activities through several interventions such as Reaching All Children with Education (RACE), which has a strong focus on reaching out to children with special needs, enhancing protective environments, and developing a child protection policy in schools (UNHCR, 2016a). Conditional cash transfers for education building on the existing national system are also under development to ensure the attendance of children from vulnerable refugee families and other vulnerable children with a special focus on children with disabilities. Unfortunately, a lack of qualified teachers and non-payment of teachers has affected the program implementation. The Turkish government has advocated for the regular payment of teachers and has provided incentives in Turkey. Almost 13,000 Syrian volunteer teachers received regular incentives as of December 2016 (UNHCR, 2016b). Additionally, the lack of relevant curricula, programs, and teacher training to help refugee children become proficient in the Turkish language causes both academic and social problems and leaves the children unable to fully comprehend their classes. They may become less engaged and learn less in school. Researchers (UNHCR, 2016a) claim that Turkish politicians have exerted efforts to educate refugee children. However, these efforts were made in a haphazard manner, lacking any stable system that pays attention to problems of psychology, language, culture, shelter, food supply, and education. In short, the problems that refugees face are not a matter of quantity but a matter of quality.

The management of the schools in which Syrian refugee students are educated has been an important issue in Turkey because the influx of Syrian refugees has created extra challenges. The number of Syrian children was 527,860 in 2016 but it rose to 608,084 in 2018 (MoNE, 2018). There are two schooling systems for Syrian refugees in Turkey. The first one comprises temporary education centers, where an adapted Syrian curriculum is taught. Staff and directors are under the supervision of official Turkish principals. The second one comprises public schools, which are called integrated schools. These schools teach both Syrian and Turkish students. Syrian students are enrolled only if they have a sufficient mastery of Turkish language skills (Arar, Örucü, & Ak Küçükçayır, 2018).

Previous studies on refugee education have usually employed general descriptive surveys or qualitative research to draw a general picture of the phenomena. Many researchers in the field see the dearth of theory-informed research and practice as a grave concern. This concern keeps us aware that a theoretical viewpoint is paramount for seeing phenomena from different perspectives. I have tried to fill this gap in the literature because there is a lack of empirical studies in the field regarding the leadership skills of the principals of Syrian refugees' schools as seen through theoretical lenses to understand their educational challenges.

In this paper, I aim to explore the perceptions of school principals who have enrolled Syrian refugee students to meet the educational and social needs and general situations of refugees because the growing exodus caused by political turmoil greatly affects children and their educational life. Thus, I also intend to understand the school principals' behaviors as they approach the issues they face at school through complex adaptive leadership (CAL) theory (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). My focus will be on analyzing social phenomena through the lenses of CAL by employing a

qualitative research method because complexity suggests that growth and change in organizations are non-linear, iterative, and recursive (Obolensky, 2010; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of management is developing day by day, including the ontological part of human experience. Leadership models of the last century are the products of top-down, bureaucratic paradigms. These models are eminently effective for an economy centered on physical production, but they are not well suited for more knowledge-oriented economies, which run completely via complex systems. Complexity science suggests a different paradigm for leadership that frames it as a complex interactive dynamic (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Obolensky, 2010; Schneider & Somers, 2006; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). The paradigm of CAL was employed for this study (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007), as it was considered that CAL was a leadership approach well suited for complex and chaotic times. I will now expand on the elements of CAL, beginning with managerial leadership and then moving into the adaptive and enabling roles.

Managerial Leadership

Managerial leadership explains the actions of people in their managerial roles to plan, control, and coordinate organizational activities. Managerial leaders organize tasks, take part in planning, build vision and mission, acquire resources to reach the goals of an organization, manage crises and risks, and make decisions. Managerial leaders as described by CAL take for granted the exercising of authority and skills with consideration of the organization's needs for creativity, learning, and adaptability for actions that can have serious impacts on resource management, risk management, decision making, planning, and control (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).

Adaptive Leadership

Schools today are open to all kinds of influences and are complex organizations for which internal and external factors need to be considered. Adaptive leaders do not just make changes; they carefully recognize potential changes in the external environment and consider the best path that will positively affect the organization. Adaptive leadership involves changing behaviors in appropriate ways as situations change. CAL describes the conditions in which adaptive dynamics emerge and generate creative and adaptive knowledge with sufficient significance and impact to create change, letting leaders emerge naturally within the context (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). School principals as adaptive leaders are not acting as individuals, but rather as a dynamic of interdependent agents in the complex adaptive system of the school. To exhibit significance and impact, adaptive leadership must be embedded in an appropriately structured, neural-like network of complex adaptive systems and agents and exhibit significance and impact that generate change in the social system. Adaptive leadership has three dimensions: network dynamics, change and innovation, and crisis management (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007).

Enabling Leadership

The role of enabling leadership in CAL is to prepare a context that catalyzes adaptive leadership and allows for the emergence of CAL. The functions are to enable effective complex adaptive systems dynamics by fostering conditions that catalyze adaptive leadership and allow for

its emergence and manage the entanglement between managerial and adaptive leadership, which includes managing the organizational conditions in which adaptive leadership exists, and also by helping to disseminate innovative products of adaptive leadership upwards and through the formal managerial system (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). Enabling leadership means to catalyze CAL leadership, which depends on an interactive relationship, interdependent context (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007), and ethical leadership behaviors. The facets of enabling leadership are interaction, which creates effective networks in organizations, and interdependency, which derives from emergent conflicting constraints in its domain. The third facet comprises the ethical values of CAL, related to leadership and valuing creative consciousness in organizational life.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This is a qualitative study, conducted by a semi-structured interview technique, that focuses on the CAL perceptions of school principals who have registered Syrian refugee students in their schools. For this aim, qualitative, open-ended, semi-structured interview forms were used. The interviews were guided by an interview schedule, which included set questions and prompts. The research questions included the following:

- What kinds of managerial skills do school principals employ for Syrian refugee students?
- How do school principals manage the resources?
- What risks do school principals confront?
- What dynamics do school principals exert their managerial functions?
- How do school principals control their plan?
- What kind of adaptive skills do school principals employ for Syrian refugee students?
- What are the interdependence mechanisms?
- What do school principals think about change and innovation in the educational settings of Syrian refugees?
- What kind of enabling skills do school principals employ for Syrian refugee students?
- How do school principals establish interaction with Syrian refugees?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research findings will help schools identify, approach, and overcome the problems of their students and partners in a turbulent environment, especially those schools that educate refugees. Furthermore, the research will guide school principals and schools in complex environments to understand the skills needed to communicate and lead successfully as CAL. This study will provide outcomes that will help school principals to effectively challenge the conflicts in the complexity of a school ethos. This study will foster complex adaptive school principals to develop and strengthen the skills needed to comprehend the tenets of CAL and complex adaptive systems to manage their schools, adapt to a changing world, and enable their partners to behave according to complexity theory. Most importantly, the study will add significantly to the knowledge of complexity theory and CAL, and its practice, which may be the first such study in an educational setting.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

I used a qualitative research paradigm. This methodological perspective is intended to study the perceptions of humans and the meanings that people construct in real settings. I employed phenomenology as a method for this research. Phenomenology could be defined as a theoretical point of view advocating the study of individuals' experiences because human behavior is explained by the phenomena of experiences rather than an objective, physically described reality that is external to the individual (Creswell, 2012).

This method was suitable because this research sought to understand the meaning of the school principals' experiences as leaders of both Turkish and Syrian refugee students. Secondly, phenomenology focuses on individuals' interpretation of their past and present experiences (Creswell, 2012). Finally, the researcher is inclined to let school principals interpret their own experiences through the lenses of CAL theory. I employed descriptive analysis, which has certain tasks that must be accomplished before an in-depth analysis. Coding of the transcribed data is an initial step. Afterwards, I derived the codes and themes from the elements of the theory using descriptive analysis.

There are some steps involved in collecting and analyzing data. One of them is epoche, where the researcher must refrain from judgement. The second step is phenomenological reduction, for which text descriptions were used to mine the meaning and the core of the school principals' experiences. Elaboration was performed using verbatim reports of what was lived, experienced, and perceived. Third, imaginative variation explained the important bases of the phenomena. While performing the study, I developed proposed conceptual meanings for the research gathered during this part. Fourth, I defined codes and themes that defined the emerging phenomena. Finally, aggregation was done with texting and structural explanations to clarify the phenomena.

Data Collection

I employed interviews to gather the data, asking one or more participants general, open-ended questions and recording their answers (Creswell, 2012). First, I conducted face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions in this study. The second avenue for collecting data was Skype interviews, if it was not possible to meet people face-to-face or if participants were geographically dispersed and unable to come to a meeting point for interviews (Creswell, 2012). The interview questions were developed based on themes that emerged from the CAL paradigm (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). A total of twenty-three interviews were conducted with school principals. Four of them were used for the pilot study. The data collection began in September and ended in December of 2017. All the interviews were tape-recorded and took from 40 minutes to 75 minutes.

Sample

The sample was intended to employ a purposeful criterion with snowball sampling to identify the research participants. Samples that are small and purposeful allow researchers to explain phenomena more deeply (Creswell, 2012). As I planned to understand the issues of a distinct group of school principals, criterion sampling was appropriate. The criterion for the research was that each school principal must work in a school that enrolled Syrian refugee students. Next, I employed snowball sampling (Creswell, 2012). Various school principals, mainly friends and colleagues, were contacted in order to locate potential participants to begin the sampling process. Initially, two

individuals were chosen on the assumption that this would provide a strong base to work from. Once individuals who met the criterion had been located and interviewed, they were asked if they knew of anyone else who might be willing to participate; those leads were then followed. Interviews were planned with 29 school principals. Six school principals declined the interview, declaring that they did not have the authority to talk. Of the 23 participants, 3 were female and 20 were male. There were 4 English, 11 religious culture, 3 technical, 2 mathematics, 1 class, and 2 preschool teachers. The participants had 9-28 years of teaching experience and had worked at least 4 years in their present schools. Their age range was from 27 to 56 years.

Triangulation, Reliability, and Credibility

Data analysis was triangulated via member control, coding, and using CAL theory. Member control is a process that requires feedback from participants to gather validation (Creswell, 2012). Reliability in qualitative research refers to the absence of random error so that if the research is repeated researchers will arrive at the same findings. Reliability involves transparency and replication (Pius, 2015). The study required the demonstration of transparency by documenting and referencing the qualitative study's research database (Creswell, 2012), in order to support the arguments for the reliability of the study findings. In addition, I made reference to existing research databases to obtain consistency in the study results and to confirm that the appropriate theory was utilized to guide the study. Construct reliability was employed to obtain the accuracy and dependability of the data collected. Furthermore, this study utilized peer collaboration to verify data. A peer examiner not only questions the analysis of data but also critiques the methodology, approach, and process (Creswell, 2012). Peer consultation terms were employed while data were analyzed. Recording interviews is a reliable method. In addition, in this study, transcripts were available to be checked by both the researcher and the participants to enable them to articulate their views about the position of the phenomenon being studied. The procedures of documentation enhanced the transparency on how the research was developed. Results or findings of the study were shared and reviewed together with the participants, allowing for accuracy, reliability, and credibility of the findings in the study (Creswell, 2012).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Managerial Leadership

The principals were asked about their managerial functions. Questions aimed to predict how school principals managed their schools by exercising managerial functions. Four sub-themes were obtained: mapping, analyzing, and supplying the needs; risk; dynamics; and planning and control.

Mapping, analyzing, and supplying the needs

Resource management is an important step for CAL. Principal No. 5 (P5) realized that the big picture looked bad. He first started to map the educational needs, but he was discouraged because the needs of the Syrian refugees were greater than he thought. The refugees needed food, clothing, doctors, and medicine. He dejectedly stated:

In the beginning we wanted to learn their educational needs. However, we found that shelter, food, clothes, doctors, and medicine were urgent. One mother [was] saying that her children were skipping one or two meals every day (P5).

P1 observed the unpredictable psychological status of Syrian women, which isolated them from male teachers (mappers).

We mapped their needs assigning female teachers and female translators, because women could not reveal their needs to male mappers (P1).

It could be suggested that the school principals were successful even though the situation was gloomy. The actions that the school principals took during the process of mapping the needs were very wise. P1 successfully approached the Syrian women by assigning female teachers and translators in order to work with the modesty and privacy of the Syrian women and their children, because Muslim women are usually reluctant to reveal themselves or express their gender-specific needs to men. According to Rusaw (2009), successful managerial school principals are career public servants for the most part, who may initiate and carry out the roles and responsibilities of leadership at multiple institutional levels, being sensitive to all kinds of values, which supports my study.

Finally, school principals took action to analyze and supply the needs. P3 complained about insufficient budgets because school principals did not have any financial or official power to supply needs.

I prepared a list to supply their needs, but I had no budget. I relayed all their needs, except shelter, finding NGOs and benefactors via social media (P3).

It was impressive that this school principal did not simply wait for an official budget to come from the state. He used social media to find NGOs and private benefactors. Even though the financial gap is significant in supporting refugees' education, school principals are willing to establish networks to supply their needs. Managerial leaders might be identified as having personal characteristics, good networks, and competencies that enable them to create resources and make better decisions according to changing situations (Rusaw, 2009). This indicated that school principals employed a good practice of enabling leadership at the level of mapping, analyzing, and supplying needs.

Risk

Interviewers were asked questions about the risks that Syrian families and students faced and the risk management skills that the school principals showed. Principals were aware that risks were major concerns among Syrian families. P12 and P11 expressed their perceptions about mainly unemployment and economic and social risks. They also mentioned language barriers and prejudice. Life-threatening risks also appeared. The Syrian refugees were suffering from economic deprivation that pushed their children onto the streets as street vendors and beggars. P2, P18, and P11 all mentioned this.

The refugees were saying that they do not have a permanent job. Life as a refugee particularly throws children into child labor, begging on the streets, and early marriages. To include them in education is just salvation (P2).

Moreover, I talked to a mother. She said that her life was desperately bad. She could accept becoming someone's second wife to feed her children (P18).

The language barrier was the first risk for us in their education (P11).

Social phenomena have made Syrian refugees open to criminal and terrorist organizations. Another risk is that Syrian women are also victimized and vulnerable, thought to be concubines for

Turkish men, and little girls are forced to be child brides, representing a great social and moral issue in the nation. The overall situation of Syrian refugees is severe in Turkey, including the language barrier (Amnesty International, 2014). Turkish school principals remark that the loss of education is particularly harmful for females, as females not participating in education are more at risk of entering into sex work and more likely to marry early, and therefore more likely to experience sexual abuse. School principals also pointed out several other problems, including the difficult economic conditions that teachers in temporary education centers face. P4 stated:

The employment of Syrian teachers in temporary education centers is very hard because the salary is not enough or is not paid; for that reason, whenever they find a better job, they escape (P4).

Not only the wages of temporary education center teachers are low but also those of most Syrian refugees are not enough to support an adequate standard of living. Refugees from Syria, including children, tend to work as day laborers in construction, collect plastic materials from the garbage for recycling, wash dishes in restaurants, or do other menial jobs, earning between \$2.50 and \$15 per day (UNHCR, 2017), which means that children miss out on schooling. In this respect, school principals were able to see the educational risks, but the reality was heartbreaking. The Syrian refugee families were not meeting their basic needs such as healthy living conditions or permanent and secure jobs. The study findings support the idea that economic welfare today is not shared equally in the world, which increases the possible risks around the globe. Developed countries especially neglect the economic and social deprivation of refugees (Sheehey, 1996). It is a fact that prejudice is a great concern, creating conflicts and street fights between Turks and Syrian refugees. P6 addresses this issue:

The refugee children of Syria face bullying not only by students but also teachers. If you ask me, I do not understand why they are here. They must return to their country to fight (P6).

It was understood that refugee students were perceived as a burden by some Turkish school principals and teachers. This prejudice, which is very prevalent, increased the tensions that caused conflicts on the streets and bullying in schools. There are heuristic and saliency biases whereby people, even school teachers, are likely to regard impactful events as more common than they actually are. The first influx of Syrian refugees was assumed to be temporary, but now it is permanent, which is now affecting the mindset of Turkish people. The perceptions of refugees, especially the Syrian refugee influx, changed across Europe during the refugee crisis, revealing suspicion and hostility, which creates a deadlock in the refugee problem (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). The findings of this study also disclose similar situations.

Dynamics

Dynamics are another dimension of managerial leadership. For this dimension, I asked school principals what dynamics they used while performing their duties related to Syrian refugee students. They reported using social and cultural attachments and managing the diversity.

For example, P8 said that male and female refugee students did not want to stay in the same classrooms; they wanted sex-segregated classrooms.

Some Syrian girls and boys were wanting to study in sex-segregated classrooms. I invited an imam to talk to the children. Finally, they believed that it was not a sin (P8).

P8 approached phenomena from the aspect of social-cultural-religious attachment. Creating sex-segregated classrooms is generally not possible in Turkish educational settings because the education system is secular. It seemed that the school principal could only address this issue by declining the students. However, P8 employed attachment theory, which explains the development of the relationship center of the brain and shows how our internal working model of attachment impacts our behavior in close relationships. The term “attachment bond” is normally reserved for the warm, intuitive feelings felt by teachers towards children, which is increasingly recognized as the domain of the child-teacher relationship (Bowlby, 1988). It could be concluded that Turkish school principals found intrinsically suitable dynamics and implemented them by understanding human psychology.

Another finding was that some teachers did not want to teach Syrian students in their classrooms as they thought that the success of Turkish students would be negatively affected.

My teachers were reluctant to teach Syrian students because the Turkish students’ success level was declining. They neglected the refugees because of their ethnic roots. Also, I urgently invited academics for lectures on managing diversity (P10).

P10 took immediate action to inform the teachers and Turkish families by establishing some lectures by university academics on inclusion and managing diversity. He believed that including the Syrian students in the classroom could possibly decrease the success levels of Turkish students, but, from a broader perspective, it would give insight into sharing emotions that would develop the human sides of both Turkish and Syrian students. Inclusive education means that all students participate in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute, and take part in all aspects of school life.

Planning and control

Principals were asked about planning their educational courses in light of CAL. Their perceptions were recorded under the themes of bypassing the hierarchy, entrepreneurship, and measuring performance. P9 asserted that she was not hopeful about planning and control because of the centralized management system.

My student did not know the Turkish or the Arabic alphabet. I made a specific lesson plan for him and found a Turkish Arabic teacher to teach them the Arabic alphabet. I mean I changed everything such as the curriculum, educational plans, and so on (P9).

As an example, P9 assigned an Arabic teacher who was a Turk to teach the Syrian students the Latin alphabet, and thus changed the central curriculum. Principals were eager to solve problems despite the fact that they did not have the formal power or budget for it, using instead their skills of entrepreneurship. They were not bound to the bureaucracy and they found solutions to work around their problems. The MoNE is responsible for refugee education together with the interim Syrian government. Both sides missed important points in designing refugee education. However, P9 found a solution using her legitimate and expert power when she established new standards.

Another serious problem was measuring performance. Refugee education is characterized by inadequate educational resources and inequality of opportunity. P14 presented another deficiency.

Learning outcomes for refugee children are full of disappointments. We are in need of in-service training on authentic measurement techniques (P14).

The school life of Syrian refugee children in Turkish schools is tumultuous. They cannot be tracked regularly in terms of educational, physical, and psychological development. This causes refugee children to fall far below the age-appropriate grade levels. Measuring performance is a way of putting together the parts of the educational mosaic in a way that accurately reflects the student's learning and the teacher's teaching competence (National Academy of Engineering, 2009). P14 noted that they were not able to evaluate the Syrian refugee children and must be given in-service education on authentic assessment and evaluation techniques.

The most common issue is that school principals deal with the psychological problems of Syrian refugee students and they want to take some necessary steps to address these problems. P13 touched on this:

We planned to find children who had post-traumatic stress disorder. I invited psychologists and psychiatrists for therapy with no cost (P13).

If good planning and control are employed, then a final step will come, which is corrective action. It is seen that school principals are aware of the importance of correcting deviations; in other words, the psychological conditions of refugee students must be healed. It can be claimed that school principals are successful in discovering these deviations and are able to take necessary actions. Because of the disruption of their physical, intellectual, cultural, and social development stemming from their refugee experiences, the children often suffer from depression, engage in vengeful behavior and conflicts, and experience anxiety and loneliness.

Adaptive Leadership

The principals were asked about their adaptive leadership functions. The questions addressed innovation in education and interdependence mechanisms. I found two categories revealed by the school principals.

Technology usage

Principals stressed the importance of technology usage. P14 tries hard to bridge the gap between Turkish and Syrian students. He pointed out that technology usage of refugee children is not at a satisfying level and legislation did not allow him to spend the budget on innovative devices. He also expressed that technological and social dynamics are key factors because integrating technology into the classroom is an effective way to connect with students of all learning styles. Furthermore, it is a tool for eliminating the inequality between Syrian and Turkish students in school.

With Turkish students, we used tablets and interactive boards and other technological devices effectively. The Syrian refugee students have nothing. I mean no technological devices. They were excessively behind the Turkish and some other Syrian students (P14).

It has been long accepted that using technology in the classroom gives teachers and other faculty members the opportunity to develop their students' digital citizenship skills. Technology is believed to serve as a valuable tool in the educational experience of students (OECD, 2016), and that

is why the usage of it should be enhanced to develop refugee students' learning capabilities. It is a fact that not investing in and encouraging new and innovative ways of delivering training skills will result in many Syrian youth falling behind Turkish children and contemporary educational levels on the global scale.

Negative interdependency

Another important issue that P6 mentioned was the adverse effect of asymmetric beliefs. One of them was corporal punishment in school. P6 commented that Syrian families practiced it easily as immediate discipline. P6 tried to convince them that corporal punishment was legally banned in the Turkish education system. He endeavored to end corporal punishment by inviting an adolescent psychiatrist and psychological counselor, but this failed. Another important issue was that no matter how the Turkish principals wanted to change the daily routines of Syrian children and families at school, strong barriers were met. P16 stated that the Syrian refugees are extremely pessimistic about positive change in their lives. Furthermore, he observed that some refugees accuse the Turkish government of creating their situation by supporting the political turmoil in Syria.

Syrian families justify corporal punishment as an immediate discipline. However, in the Turkish education system, beating is not legal. When Syrian teachers are beating students disproportionately, a very bad climate exists because there are some Turkish teachers that adopt corporal punishment (P6).

It is too hard to say that something will develop soon from bad to good in the life of refugee children. Forget about change. They hold Turkish politics responsible (P16).

Syrian refugees are in unfavorable moods that engender learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975). This is a term explaining a human learning to accept and endure unpleasant situations, and being unwilling to avoid them. P6 and P16 found that Syrian refugees do not have any control over their situations in a continuously changing environment. This situation paralyzed the adaptive skills of the school principals because a desire for change and interdependence mechanisms are important dynamics for complex adaptive leaders (Obolensky, 2010). In brief, adaptive leadership is an emergent, interactive dynamic that produces adaptive outcomes in a social system (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). Adaptive skills of leaders are collaborative actions yielding change in a natural space. This space emerges from interactions among people and thus results in cooperative efforts. It is possible to say that school principals are aware of the fact that, before educational needs, Syrian refugees need more economic and social support. Currently school principals have insufficient economic and social power to focus on providing services to women and children to foster social inclusion and cohesion. It is critical that formal and informal agencies maintain a rich educational environment, decrease their hopelessness for the future, and enable them to change their wrong beliefs.

Enabling Leadership

CAL emphasizes good ability in enabling leadership. I asked questions about enabling the leadership skills of school principals. The questions scrutinized the means of interaction. I found sympathy and compassion and religious and cultural values, along with win-win policy and the importance of acting fairly. Some excerpts follow.

Compassion and values

A question was asked about how respondents established interaction. P1 and P19 expressed their beliefs that they use sympathy and compassion and religious and cultural values.

At least, I care for their hair. I look into their eyes and hug them (P1).

She was upset about her father, lost in the war. I prayed for her father and pointed to the sky, saying “your father is a martyr and in paradise now”. When I use Islamic language, I see that we agree easily (P19).

Principals stated that urgent interaction was a must for impacting Syrian children. Despite the language barrier, school principals sympathized with them, caring for their hair and looking into their eyes. School principals took care of their needs without thinking about whether they were vital or not. Here we should note the meaning of “interaction”. An interaction is a kind of action that occurs between two entities having effects upon one another (Obolensky, 2010). The idea of a two-way effect is an important point of an interaction, as opposed to a one-way casual effect. Human interactions enhance salient commonalities, which help to understand, connect, and analyze them. It is understood that principals engender the skill of social awareness by showing compassion to refugee students, which creates negotiation and shapes the students’ inner worlds. Principals also used religious discourses to interact because that is a medium that affects the construction of meaning and individual identities. Religion still plays a major role in uniting the members of society by allowing them to frequently reference their common beliefs and values. Research in forced migration studies and religion highlights the importance of spirituality as a psychological support for many refugees (Godziak & Shandy, 2002).

Win-win policy

Generally, principals stated that the conflicts at school were frustrating because they were personal. Sometimes they became bothersome. P10 explained a dilemma in his school as follows:

A Syrian student was fighting with everybody. I invited his family. I first started talking about the good sides and his sharp brain. Then I expressed my excuses if we had hurt and humiliated the brother and mother... I supported the student by planning extra courses during the school period. Omar ranked third in school. We win together (P10).

In this situation, the principal realized that everybody at school was equal and did not alienated him. Instead he made him feel one of us. Principals balanced the situation and opened the doors to productive interactions and communications. Another way to create a win-win solution is to establish communication. P10 did not reprimand the student and the family. Lastly, it can be inferred that school principals were able to use motivational language effectively (Sullivan, 1988).

Acting fairly

P14 defined how he dealt with the issues and how he treated the Syrian students at school. He stated that he acted completely fairly and that both sides perceived it.

To tell the truth, I treat the Syrian students without segregating them. I do the same thing as what I would do with the Turks. Moreover, I took affirmative actions for Syrians to enable them to talk over their issues, leaving my door open to them (P14).

Syrian refugee students are minorities in Turkey. We can say that school principals are aware of their life conditions. Principals also are eager to establish a set of good behaviors by practicing school routines. Transparency, fairness, and empathy to meet ethical criteria are sought by leaders (Andre & Valaques, 1990). School principals were not oppressive and opened their doors to the Syrian refugees because they believed that enforcing ethical rules would enhance the personal and academic integrity of Syrian children (Brune, Haasen, Krausz, Yagdiran, Bustos, & Eisenman, 2002). This increases the reputation of Turkish society among people of the world. However, the MoNE is a huge centralized organization and it is impractical to communicate managerial decisions to different levels in the hierarchy because decisions are made daily and changed without applying pilot studies. Thus, the school principals, who are lower level managers, are uncomfortable while performing their tasks and might not use their enabling skills. However, they use their capabilities intrinsically and sometimes they bypass the bureaucratic rules.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to determine the perceptions of school principals regarding the educational challenges of Syrian refugees and how they approached them in their school routines through the lenses of CAL theory. I found three leadership styles according to CAL for school principals. These were managerial leadership, adaptive leadership, and enabling leadership. Results showed that school principals generally exerted conscientious efforts to map, analyze, and supply the needs of Syrian children and their families. After mapping the needs, principals analyzed the problems. Next, school principals spotted the risks successfully. As an example, if Syrian refugees are suffering from economic deprivation their children might become street vendors, while Syrian women become concubines. Young Syrian girls are also forced to become child brides. Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey (2007) state that CAL proposes that the function of an administrator should not be limited with centralized goals. Rather, administrators should act to enable informal emergence and to coordinate the contexts in the knowledge production era. It can be claimed that school principals were effective at spotting the issues, but their managerial skills were not strong enough for them to manage the resources and supply them. School principals were skilled at producing knowledge and coordinating the context. However, they were limited by the strict top-down, central bureaucratic structure of the MoNE and Turkish public administration system. Turkish policy makers and education planners must be aware of the fact that decentralized education promises to be more efficient, better reflects local priorities, and encourages the participation of all stakeholders and improved teaching quality. The present awkward structure does not allow school principals to manage the resources using managerial skills of CAL in complex and chaotic times. I found that the language barrier was an important issue and prejudice toward the Syrian refugees was prevalent among teachers. School principals were successful at crossing the language barrier and decreasing the prejudice somewhat. They used sociocultural attachments successfully and tried to convince the Syrian families to send their girls to schools by inviting academics to speak on inclusion and diversity. Post-war trauma because of learned helplessness was widely seen among Syrian families and their children. As a correcting action for deviation, school principals helped Syrian families and their children have psychiatric support. It was seen that the prolonged refugee crisis has created severe social turmoil in Turkey, causing societal trauma. However, school principals strengthened their inclusive policy and sectarian equity via common religious values in important humanitarian and educational interventions, while building local resilience by supporting community-based services.

From the perspective of adaptive leadership, principals pointed out that technology usage as a means of interaction is an important dynamic for an adaptive environment in complex adaptive systems, but the current usage was not at a satisfying level. Cults were important dynamics as a means of interaction, as well. Corporal punishment as an inappropriate behavior among Syrian refugees was another issue. School principals endeavored to end corporal punishment by inviting an adolescent psychiatrist and psychological counselor, but that effort failed. Interaction via dynamics in schools is insufficient for functioning in a complex environment. Individuals in schools as partners must also be interdependent. While interaction among school partners allows the dynamic interplay of effective communication, interdependency creates friendship and fraternity. Change and innovation in technology and positive beliefs and behaviors from a social perspective could create interdependency, from which potency emerges naturally, occurring with social networks of conflicting constraints. However, change and innovation and wrong sets of belief pressure school principals negatively to overcome the issues. Finally, Syrian refugees were pessimistic about their future. Some refugees also accused the Turkish government of creating their situation by supporting the political turmoil in Syria. Adaptive leadership at school is an interactive and interdependent dynamic that yields adaptive outcomes in a social system. Adaptive skills of a school leader are collaborative movements yielding change in a natural school space. This space emerges from interactions and interdependence among people and thus results in cooperative efforts. It is possible to say that school principals are aware of the fact that, before educational needs, Syrian refugees need more economic and social support. School principals currently lack the necessary economic and social power to focus on providing services to women and children to foster social inclusion and cohesion while economic and technological shortages occur, wrong sets of belief hinder the process, and strong pessimism creates turmoil. It could be claimed that the adaptive functions of school principals did not work in Turkish educational settings.

School principals opened their doors to Syrian children for meeting their needs. They tried all possible avenues, like referencing religious values to help children adapt to real life. One of the school principals supported a child who had lost her father by soothing her pain and referring to the father as a martyr. School principals used religious discourses to form relationships with Syrian children because religion is a medium that affects the construction of meaning, which enables the application of adaptive skills. It could be claimed that principals endeavored to facilitate conditions for the emergence of interactions among agents consistently with strategies and missions. However, the Turkish government was unprepared for such a refugee influx. Turkish school principals as enabling leaders were unable to promote behaviors that advance critical roles by challenging the crises that threaten to derail their adaptive functions by protecting their creative efforts from their directors or from environmental pressures. This limited their official capacity to engage in learning and adaptation to the new conditions, crises, and conflicts among partners. Even though school principals did their best, it could be concluded that their enabling leadership competency fell short of enabling effective dynamics to catalyze adaptive leadership and allow for emergence. Finally, CAL does not function properly in this context. However, school principals are still exerting ceaseless efforts to meet the educational and humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Educational reforms in Turkey have been somewhat piecemeal and have not generally touched the core educational practices. Although various superficial modifications have been made in the past, most have not had the substantial effects that were hoped for. Fragmented changes

were made, usually to gain political advantage (Aksit, 2007) and neglecting the human aspects. For that reason, the basic systems to a large extent stayed the same because of the strict central structure creating an awkward MoNE. Turkish educational planning is far from a holistic approach and trivial changes have not yet touched the ontology of the human person. Educational planners are recommended to prepare school contexts that produce students who are aware of their physical, psychological, cultural, and social conditions. Education policy makers could design an education system that lets school principals confront uncertainties, being entrusted with appropriate levels of accountability and decision-making authority so that mutual trust forms the ethical foundation of partner empowerment.

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