





Classroom Management Experiences of Preschool Teachers with Refugee Students*

Ali CULHA¹, Salih YILMAZ²

¹ Department of Physical Education and Sports, Harran University, Şanlıurfa, Türkiye  0000-0002-5215-0823

² Ministry of National Education, Bursa, Türkiye  0000-0002-5890-0699

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received 12.09.2022

Received in revised form

18.02.2023

Accepted 04.03.2023

Article Type: Research

Article



ABSTRACT

Although refugee education is among the prominent research topics today, there is limited information in the literature about preschool, one of the important periods of education, and classroom management in this context. The purpose of this study is to explore the classroom management experiences of preschool teachers who have refugee students in their classrooms. In this way, this research examines the experiences of teachers about how they make sense of the difficulties they face in the classroom and the strategies they develop to combat them. Twenty-one preschool teachers with refugee students in their classrooms were included in this qualitative study through criterion purposive-measure sampling method. The data were collected using a semi-structured interview form and analyzed using content analysis. Research findings showed that the difficulties experienced by teachers in terms of classroom management with the presence of refugee students in their classrooms were listed under the categories of grouping tendency, difficulties in implementation, need for additional activities, lack of time, communication problems, exhibiting unwanted behaviors, adaptation problems, tendency to disobey rules and cultural differences. Furthermore, the study revealed what kind of solutions teachers applied in terms of classroom management for the difficulties arising from the presence of refugee students in the classroom. The teachers used some strategies such as using visual elements, mainstreaming, considering individual differences, increasing comprehensibility, peer support, social communication, language activities, using reinforcement, intensive communication, and family support. In line with the results of the research, suggestions for future research and practices are discussed.

Keywords:

Inclusive education, early childhood, migrant, refugee, preschool, teacher, classroom management

1. Introduction

Due to conflicts and wars in many regions of the world, mass refugee mobility is experienced (Oplatka, 2021). War, conflict and famine, especially in the Middle East and various parts of Africa, have forced many people to leave their families, homes and countries to reach safety (Biasutti et al., 2019). This mobility has also affected children, and refugee children face academic and social challenges in addition to life challenges (Weekes et al., 2011). Refugee children are often marginalized because they come from socioeconomically disadvantaged and culturally diverse family structures (Ferfolja & Vickers, 2010; Vickers & McCarthy, 2010). In such a climate, the trauma, violence and conflicts experienced by refugee children negatively affect their development, and the importance of school as a safe haven for them becomes even more prominent (Mendenhall et al., 2020). However, on the other hand, there are some problems in the educational activities of host countries with the increasing number of refugee students and differentiating needs (Kollender & Nimer, 2020; Naslund-Hadley et al., 2020; Wrench et al., 2017). These problems are also reflected in the classrooms, and the fact that students

*This study was presented as an oral presentation at IXth International Eurasian Educational Research Congress held in İzmir on June 22-25, 2022.

¹Corresponding author's address: Harran University, Department of Physical Education and Sports, Şanlıurfa /Türkiye

e-mail: aliculha@harran.edu.tr

Citation: Culha, A. & Yilmaz, S. (2023). Classroom management experiences of preschool teachers with refugee students. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 10(2), 393-405. <https://dx.doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2023.10.2.1028>

from different cultures study in the same classrooms has brought along some classroom management problems. The importance of classroom management approaches in refugee students' adaptation to a new society, schools, teachers and friends has come to the fore (Saklan & Erginer, 2017). With these developments, teachers' classroom management skills have gained a special meaning in the preschool period, which has become more important in recent years (Akgün et al., 2011). Thus, it is expected that this research will contribute to the refugee education and classroom management in terms of its subject and findings.

1.1. Classroom Management

Classrooms are a functional, private and interactive environment in which educational goals are translated into behavior. Classroom management is a systematic method of coordinating the diversity, multiculturalism and complexity of the modern classroom. It is the management of classroom life in harmony like an orchestra, including elements such as organizing resources and the environment effectively, observing student development, and anticipating problems that may arise (Taş & Minaz, 2021). Every word and action of the teacher in the classroom is a part of classroom management, and teachers can significantly affect students' educational and learning experiences through the strategies they follow, verbal or non-verbal communication and interactions (Youssef, 2003). In this context, classroom management practices include teacher strategies to address behavior management and student needs as well as teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy. Classroom management also includes practices and interactions that occur as part of the learning activity (Burgoyne & Hull, 2007). Considering that each student is unique, classroom management requires a special competence in regular classes, and this can become even more challenging in diverse classrooms with refugee students.

1.2. Refugee Students in Classroom Management

An effective educational activity requires a suitable classroom environment, a qualified teacher, effective management, school, student and parent cooperation, and a regular classroom environment where rules are mutually determined. In order to create such an environment, all teachers should have knowledge and skills in classroom management (Taş & Minaz, 2021). Because the greatest responsibility for achieving the goals in the teaching process falls on the teacher and this responsibility imposes various tasks on the teacher. Effective classroom management and positive classroom atmosphere, which is one of the most important of these tasks, lead to an increase in students' academic and social success (Akgün et al., 2011). When it comes to refugee students, teachers play a key role in creating such environments by providing a safe space with positive discipline to create an inclusive classroom (Mendenhall et al., 2020). Especially in the education of refugees, it is possible to say that the teacher is sometimes the only resource available for students due to limited resources (Richardson et al., 2018). However, the research shows that teachers with refugee students in their classrooms have difficulties in classroom management (Taş & Minaz, 2021; Yağan, 2020). At this point, first of all, it should be taken into consideration that refugee students often have limited opportunities to access education; they face disadvantages such as language problems, socioeconomic status, and inability to benefit from quality educational opportunities (Roxas & Roy, 2012). These disadvantages affect not only refugee students but also the structure of schools. The increasing number of refugee students in schools and classrooms changes and challenges the learning environment of classrooms (Baker & Jones, 2006). It seems that there is a need for culturally responsive classroom management interventions that focus on refugee students' behaviors, emotions, and ways of thinking, and studies that contribute to the professional development of teachers with refugee students (O'Neal et al., 2017). This need becomes even more evident in the context of pre-school.

1.3. Refugee Students and Classroom Management in Preschool Period

The preschool period is a time when basic knowledge, skills and habits are acquired and the foundations for children to adapt to life are laid. In this period, children have their first institutional experience and spend the whole day without a break with an adult for the first time outside their family and immediate environment. For these reasons, the preschool period is a special period that requires a serious, scientific and systematic organization that cannot be left to coincidence (Akgün et al., 2011). Research shows that children aged 0-6 are the group most at risk due to social inequalities, lack of access to basic services and poverty. In this context, preschool education has a critical role in overcoming social inequalities (Erol & Savaş, 2022). When it comes to refugee students, increasing numbers of migrant and refugee students bring unique cultural experiences and knowledge to schools and classrooms. This causes preschool education programs to be affected by global

trends stemming from immigrants and refugees (Morland & Levine, 2016). In the context of classroom management, some educators who are not adequately prepared to support refugee students also identify this as a challenge (Moore & Shirdon, 2021). For example, refugee children who are not familiar with preschool routines may show more peer problems because they have not learned how to interact with others at school and in the classroom (Buchmüller et al., 2020). This may cause some problems in classroom management. Indeed, one of the main problems that preschool teachers face with children at risk in their classrooms is the difficulties they encounter in classroom management and unwanted behaviors (Erol & Savaş, 2022). On the other hand, although most of the research has been conducted on students of refugee origin in primary education, there is a growing awareness that refugee children in preschool need support in identifying supportive, inclusive, effective pedagogical and behavioral strategies (Moore & Shirdon, 2021). While some studies focus on refugee students in preschool period (Buchmüller et al., 2020; Erdemir, 2021; Erol & Savaş, 2022), some studies focus on refugees and classroom management (Biasutti et al., 2019; Kara & Özenc, 2020; Mendenhall et al., 2020; O'Neal, 2016; Saklan & Erginer, 2017; Taş & Minaz, 2021); some studies focus on classroom management in preschool period (Akgün et al., 2011). There is a gap in the intersection of preschool period, refugee students and classroom management. This study claims to fill this gap in the literature. The rationale for the problem situation of the research is a real life situation. The function of the research problem in this type of research is to create justification(s) for the problem planned to be studied (Creswell, 2016). In this research, the life situation is the fact that teachers may encounter different situations in terms of classroom management, experience difficulties and develop some strategies to combat these difficulties due to the presence of refugee students with ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences in the classroom environment. Based on this, this phenomenological study was designed to explore the classroom management experiences of preschool teachers with refugee students. The sub-problems that emerged in line with the main problem are given below:

- Which different situations are caused by the presence of refugee students in the preschool classroom?
- Does the presence of refugee students in the classroom affect teachers' classroom management and if so, how?
- What experiences do preschool teachers with refugee students in their classrooms gain?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

This research was designed in accordance with the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs. Phenomenology is an appropriate approach used to explain human experiences (Merriam, 2018). Phenomenology emphasizes the intersecting meanings of participants' experiences of a phenomenon or concept. The main goal of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences of phenomena to universal expressions (Creswell, 2016). A phenomenological study focuses on how people make sense of something-phenomenon they experience (Patton, 2014). Considering this information, it is possible to say that phenomenology is an appropriate design for exploring the classroom management skills of preschool teachers who experience the phenomenon of refugee students. In the study, it is aimed to reveal the classroom management skills of preschool teachers with the precondition that they experience the phenomenon of refugee students.

2.2. Participants

The participants of the study were preschool teachers. Since the participants should have experiences related to the phenomenon in phenomenological research (Creswell, 2016), the participants were determined with the purposeful-measure sampling method (Patton, 2014), which allows understanding and analyzing these experiences. The teachers to be interviewed were required to have at least 10% of the class size as refugee students. It is predicted that teachers working in classrooms where the number of refugee students is above this rate will have sufficient experience with the phenomenon of the research. Interviews were started to be conducted under these conditions, and the interviews were terminated when it was realized that the data had reached saturation as of 21 participants. While transcribing the study, the names of the participants were not mentioned within the framework of ethical principles, and the participants were given pseudonyms. All of the refugee students within the scope of the study came to Turkey away from the conflict in Syria. In order to

draw attention to this point, each participant was given the name of a settlement in Syria. Some characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Information About the Participants

Nickname	Gender	Age	Years of service at school	Education Status	Professional Experience (years)	Class Size	Number of Refugee Students
Halep	Female	30	6	Bachelor	6	20	3
Şam	Female	34	7	Bachelor	11	22	3
Humus	Female	29	3	Postgraduate	3	17	3
Lazkiye	Female	25	6	Bachelor	4	22	4
Hama	Female	27	4	Bachelor	4	18	5
Rakka	Female	31	7	Bachelor	7	18	3
Deyrizor	Female	28	1	Bachelor	6	24	4
Haseke	Female	28	2	Bachelor	5	16	3
Kamışlı	Female	26	4	Bachelor	4	20	2
Tartus	Female	29	1	Bachelor	6	25	5
Duma	Female	24	2	Bachelor	2	18	4
Menbic	Female	27	1	Bachelor	1	11	4
Dera	Female	28	2	Bachelor	5	10	3
İdlip	Female	31	5	Bachelor	9	11	4
Harasta	Female	27	4	Postgraduate	4	17	4
Cebele	Female	35	4	Bachelor	4	22	3
Palmira	Female	26	4	Bachelor	4	19	4
Afrin	Male	28	1	Bachelor	6	21	3
Azez	Female	29	1	Bachelor	6	23	6
Telbise	Female	24	1	Bachelor	1	15	2
Yebrud	Male	29	4	Postgraduate	4	17	5

2.3. Data Collection Tool and Procedure

Data collection is a process of activity that aims to gather information to answer research problems (Creswell, 2016). In phenomenology, data are collected through individuals who have experience with the phenomenon, usually through in-depth and multiple interviews. The data of the study were collected by individual interview method. Although the individual interview method is a widely used method in qualitative studies, it is actually more preferred especially in situations where observation cannot be made such as emotions, thoughts, past experiences (Merriam, 2018). In individual interviews, participants are asked questions about their experiences related to the phenomenon and the situations that affect this experience (Creswell, 2016). While collecting the data of this phenomenological study, it was determined as a prerequisite that the participants had lived experiences related to the refugee student phenomenon. The common points of the experiences of preschool teachers with refugee students in the context of classroom management were tried to be highlighted. In order to start the data collection process, interview questions and a structured interview form were prepared in line with the purpose of the study. The questions in the form, the order of the questions and personal information were standardized in advance. In the first part of the form, variables such as gender, age, professional seniority, class size, number of refugee students in the class, length of service in the school and education level were included. The second part of the form included five basic questions and sub-questions. These questions are as follows:

1. How do you evaluate yourself in classroom management?
2. Do you experience difficulties in classroom management, and if so, what are these difficulties?
3. How do you cope with the difficulties you experience in classroom management?
4. What kind of difficulties does the presence of refugee students in your classroom cause in terms of classroom management?
 - Explain what you think are the difficulties in the physical order management dimension of classroom management.
 - Explain what you think are the difficulties in the plan and program management dimension of classroom management.

- Explain what you think are the challenges in the time management dimension of classroom management.
- Explain what you think are the difficulties in the relationship management dimension of classroom management.
- Explain what you think are the difficulties in the behavior management dimension of classroom management.

5. What kind of solutions do you apply in terms of classroom management for the difficulties arising from the presence of refugee students in the classroom?

- Explain what your solutions are for the difficulties in the physical order management dimension of classroom management.
- Explain what your solutions are for the difficulties in the planning and program management dimension of classroom management.
- Explain your solutions to the challenges in the time management dimension of classroom management.
- Explain your solutions to the challenges in the relationship management dimension of classroom management.
- Explain your solutions for the difficulties in the behavior management dimension of classroom management.

The first three interview questions were to talk about the participant's experiences regarding classroom management skills, in a way to prepare for the main questions. The main questions for the purpose of the research are the last two questions and their sub-questions. After the interview form was prepared, the opinion of an expert who mainly conducts qualitative studies in the field of Educational Sciences was consulted. The expert found the personal variables sufficient and suggested that the interview questions be organized within the framework of the dimensions of classroom management. Taking this suggestion into consideration, the interviews were conducted as above. After the finalization of the interview form, the approval of the ethics committee was applied, and after this approval, permission was obtained from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in order to visit the preschool institutions and collect the data in the environment, and information was obtained about the number of students in preschool institutions and the number of refugees in these institutions. Considering these numbers, pre-school institutions with a high number of refugee students were visited and pre-interviews were held with school principals. In this way, 7 pre-school institutions were visited and all of the school principals declared that they would support the research. In the next stage, teachers with more than 10% of refugee students in their classrooms were informed about the research and asked for an interview. Then the consent form was prepared for the teachers. Interviews were conducted with 21 teachers who signed the consent form and agreed to participate in the study. The interviews were conducted in the institutions where the teachers work, in the teachers' room where teachers can express themselves easily, in a way that does not affect the educational activities. During the interviews, voice recordings were taken to avoid missing data. Some notes were also taken to emphasize important points. After the data were collected, all participants and institutional administrators were thanked, and those who wanted to access the research after it was published were informed that they could access it from the Google Scholar profiles of the researchers.

2.4. Data Analysis

In data analysis, based on the data obtained in relation to the research problems, the prominent statements about how the phenomenon is experienced are listed and presented in a way to form a semantic whole. Then, the statements presented are expressed as a verse to describe the experiences of the participants. In the last stage, a basic structure (essence) is tried to be created by focusing on the common experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2016). While creating this structure, the content analysis method was adopted. Content analysis is an attempt to make sense of and reduce qualitative data in a consistent manner (Creswell, 2016). In this framework, the participants' statements were categorized in a way to make semantic connotations. An emic approach was adopted in the analysis of the data and an effort was made to understand the phenomenon from the participants' perspective. In addition, in accordance with the explanatory nature of qualitative research, care was taken to make descriptions by emphasizing quotations, context and verbal expressions rather than numbers.

Validity in qualitative research is an attempt to test the accuracy of the findings. It can be defined more accurately by the participants and the researcher. It is recommended that the researcher adopt some validity strategies developed. The first of these strategies is long-term participation and continuous observation (Creswell, 2016). In line with this strategy, enough time was spent in the field to conduct individual interviews and intensive communication was established with the participants. Another validity strategy is member checking (Creswell, 2016). In line with this strategy, after the categories were created in line with the findings of the research, a focus group interview was conducted by going back to an institution where the data was collected and the participants were asked whether the research findings reflected their views. The participants stated that the findings were parallel to their own views. They did not have any objections.

Preventing data loss by audio recording the interviews and taking notes on important issues can be considered as efforts to increase reliability. In addition, it was taken into consideration that reliability in qualitative research is generally based on the coders' responses to the data sets (Creswell, 2016). The raw data were analyzed independently by the two authors conducting the research, and the categories created were compared and evaluated. The first author created 17 categories for all interviews, while the second author created 16 categories. Since 15 of these categories were similar expressions, final category names were given with joint decisions. For the remaining two-three categories, a common point was found by evaluating together. Approximately 90% of the categories were agreed upon. It can be said that this initiative will play a role in increasing reliability.

2.5. Limitations

The participants of the study are preschool teachers of refugee students living in a certain geography. Considering that refugees' past experiences, cultures, the time they came to the host country, their current lifestyles, etc. will affect the readiness of refugee students, it can be said that this situation may also affect teachers' classroom management experiences. Therefore, the study does not claim to generalize. In addition, most of the participants of the study were female and young teachers. This is due to the fact that preschool teachers are mostly female and young, there are very few male and middle-aged/over-middle-aged" teachers in the schools visited for data collection, and those who are present are usually institutional administrators.

2.6. Ethical

For this research, the necessary approval was obtained with the decision numbered 2022/119 of the Harran University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee. Following this approval, permission was also obtained from the Provincial Directorate of National Education in order to visit preschool institutions and collect the data in their environment.

3. Findings

In line with the problem of the study, the data obtained in the light of the questions directed to the participants were categorized by expressing them as meaningful words or word groups.

Firstly, the participants were asked the question "What kind of difficulties does the presence of refugee students in your classroom cause in terms of classroom management?". The participants were asked to explain their views on this question in the dimensions of physical order management, plan and schedule management, time management, relationship management and behavior management. The categories created in line with the explanations are given in Figure 1.

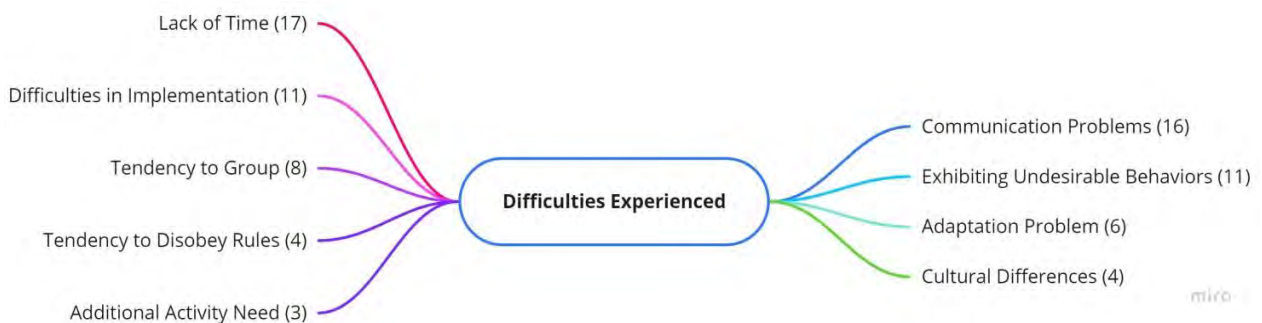


Figure 1. Difficulties Experienced by Preschool Teachers in Classrooms with Refugee Students

As can be seen in Figure 1, one of the main difficulties experienced by teachers is lack of time. Almost all of the participants mentioned this problem. Regarding the lack of time, Deir ez-Zor, *"due to the language deficiencies of refugee students, the activities take more time than planned, it is necessary to explain in more detail, which causes time problems"*; Qamishli, *"even if refugee students comprehend the activity, they progress slowly in the activity because they have not yet gained fluency, which causes time problems"*; Idlib, *"while a general explanation is enough for local students, we can make refugee students comprehend the activity with one-to-one and show-and-do technique, which takes time"*. In fact, it is possible to say that the opinions in this category are associated with language problems or communication problems. Again, most of the participants emphasized the communication problem caused by language deficiency. Afrin, who emphasized this, said, *"Because refugee students do not have a good command of Turkish, healthy communication cannot be established and it causes problems among the students"*. Harasta said, *"Due to the difference in mother tongue, refugee students have difficulty in communicating with us and other students, in this case, I can try to create a common language with less verbal messages, this situation causes me to have difficulty in doing my job"*. Some of the participants mentioned the tendency of refugee students to group together. Cebele said, *"refugee students do not want to sit with everyone, most of the time they want to sit with children who are in their own situation, this desire causes problems in establishing classroom order and leads to grouping"*. Haseke said, *"refugee children always want to sit next to each other in the classroom, this causes them to constantly move with others like them and negatively affects their development"*. At this point, it can be said that time problems arise due to the problems experienced, communication problems occur due to the children's lack of command of Turkish, and this leads to grouping.

Approximately half of the participants stated that the educational content designed in the plans and programs encountered obstacles during the implementation phase. Tartus, one of the participants who mentioned the difficulties in implementation, said, *"Refugee children do not understand the activities due to language problems and therefore cannot do them. This causes the implementation phase of the plan and program to fail to achieve its purpose"*. It was also stated that as a reflection of this problem, the need for additional activities emerged. For example, Latakia explained her thoughts as follows: *"Plans and programs are made by taking into account the general grade level, and since refugee students generally have language problems, there is a need to do extra activities related to the same outcome"*. When the opinions are analyzed, it can be seen that the difficulties experienced in implementation and the need for additional activities are largely based on language problems. With these statements, the participants stated that they had difficulty in carrying out the activities they had planned and that they felt the need to do different activities.

Some of the teachers who participated in the research mentioned that undesirable behaviors were exhibited. Among the participants who expressed their opinions in this direction, Yebrud said, *"When refugee students cannot express themselves, they can be aggressive, and negative behaviors can occur when there is no agreement in situations such as sharing and helping"*. Aleppo said, *"Students' language deficiency negatively affects their communication, they start to exhibit negative behaviors or repeat unwanted behaviors because they do not understand and are not understood"*. It is understood that language problems are at the basis of these opinions. In addition, the idea that cultural differences negatively affect students' behaviors also came to the fore. For example, Latakia said, *"Past experiences and cultural characteristics affect students' attitudes and behaviors. When children's cultural backgrounds are not the same, their reactions to situations may not be the same, which leads to the emergence of behavioral problems,"* stated the following opinion. As can be seen, it is expected that children with cultural differences who cannot adapt and communicate will exhibit undesirable behaviors.

Approximately one third of the participants mentioned the problem of adaptation. For example, Palmira said, *"Students who cannot participate in classroom activities and perform the actions required by the activities cannot adapt because they have difficulty in communicating"*. Similarly, Kamışlı said, *"They cannot communicate with their friends, which brings along adaptation problems. They cannot internalize school and what they need to do at school"*. Similarly, some of the participants mentioned refugee students' tendency to disobey the rules as a problem. Duma, one of these participants, said, *"It becomes difficult to change behavior due to communication problems, it becomes difficult to make them understand the rules of the school, and since they do not understand, they can act as if there are no rules, this situation actually affects other children negatively"*. Participants who expressed their opinions in this way emphasized the adaptation problems experienced.

When the findings are analyzed, it can be said that almost all findings are interrelated. It is also possible to say that language problems are at the focal point of these connections. Secondly, the participants were asked the

question "What kind of solutions do you apply in terms of classroom management for the difficulties arising from the presence of refugee students in the classroom?". The categories created are given in Figure 2.

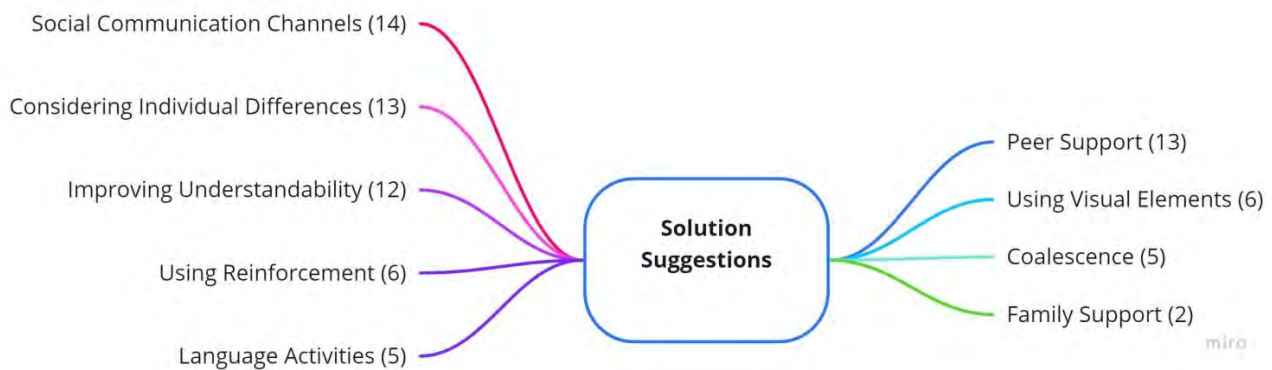


Figure 2. Solution Suggestions for the Difficulties Experienced by Preschool Teachers in Classrooms with Refugee Students

Two thirds of the teachers who participated in the study stated that they frequently use body language elements such as gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, hand-arm movements, and reinforcements such as hugging, patting, touching to activate social communication channels, emphasize language activities, and benefit from the support of local students in their relations with refugee students. Among the teachers who stated that they use social communication channels, Hasakah said, "First of all, I try to make my students trust me, sometimes I try to be close to them with a few simple words in Arabic, with a sincere relationship ground, especially adaptation problems can be overcome more easily". Raqqa said, "I believe that refugee students need more attention, I pay attention to eye contact with them, sometimes I hug them, especially I reinforce their positive behaviors". In addition, 13 teachers stated that they benefit from peer support. Refugee students are paired with local students who perform relatively better in activities in order to save time and ensure their integration. Duma, one of the participants who expressed their opinions in this direction, said, "While implementing the activities, I pair refugee students with students who perform well, this initiative provides peer learning and reduces the time I have to spend one-on-one, I reduce the time problem in this way". Tartus said, "I pair refugee students with other students, I think it works very well. It saves me time, reduces adaptation problems, reduces behavioral problems, and allows them to learn from each other. It also accelerates language development". Similarly, one out of every four participants stated that they prevent groupings by having students sit in mixed groups and that this supports students' integration with each other. For example, Haseke said, "I take care not to bring refugee students next to each other, this increases their harmony with their other friends, accelerates their language development, and ensures that there are fewer problems," Duma said, "I try to have at least one refugee in each group in the activities, I pay attention to this in the seating arrangement, and I also make sure that these students are in a position where they can easily see me". The focus of all three categories is on stronger communication and integration. Participants are trying to be more effective by activating communication channels and ensuring that students are more likely to come side by side.

About half of the participants stated that refugee students do not have adequate readiness and that they take some measures to increase comprehensibility by taking this feature into account while planning the lesson. For example, Humus explained his thoughts on this issue as follows: "Refugee students are often behind their peers in terms of the competencies they should have, they are a little behind in terms of development, so I plan activities taking this into account, I include visual elements, simplification and repetition". In parallel with this finding, most of the participants stated that they take into account the individual differences of refugee students in the planning and program process. While Telbise stated, "I take into account the characteristics of the students in the plans I make or the program I implement, I make extra effort especially for refugee students," Hama stated, "I especially take refugee students into consideration, I make some adaptations for them while planning the lesson, I try to support their learning, I spend more time on activities". Taking individual differences into account in educational activities is already an expected behavior. The importance of this increases when it comes to preschool students.

Some of the teachers stated that they try to overcome the communication problems of refugee students due to language problems by using visual elements in providing physical order, using and protecting tools and equipment. Azez, one of the participants who expressed this, said, "I create warning forms with visuals to maintain physical order, it is useful for all students, and it is effective in preventing the scattering of objects and toys. I

also use videos frequently. It is more effective and permanent," Hama said, "Starting from the entrance, I hang visuals of frequently used materials, activities to be done, appropriate and inappropriate behaviors in places that can be seen. I can see the positive reflections of this". Considering the developmental characteristics of preschool children, it can be said that using visual elements will be effective in making a difference.

Six of the participants stated that they frequently used reinforcers to address behavioral problems caused by refugee students. In this way, they stated that they increased the number and frequency of repetition of positive behaviors. For example, one of the participants, Deir ez-Zor, stated, "I often use the reward method in behavior change, especially when I reward them in front of their friends, it is more effective and the child's self-confidence increases". Using reinforcers to change behavior, especially in the preschool period, can make positive contributions.

Some of the participants stated that they tried to help them learn Turkish faster and more accurately by including language activities, which had a positive impact on their relationships. For example, Azez said, "I think the main problem is language deficiency, so I definitely do activities for language development, I encourage them to speak Turkish a lot in class, I try to create a suitable environment for this". As mentioned earlier, since the root of the problem is language problems, such efforts are seen as valuable.

Very few of the participants stated that they contacted the family when they could not solve the problems. Of course, since the native language of the family was different, they also stated that they had communication problems. Expressing his thoughts in this direction, Tartus said, "When there are behavioral disorders, sometimes we try to communicate with the family, we also have language problems with them, but sometimes there is someone to translate, sometimes we try to solve the problem by using body language". These participants feel helpless and need the support of the family if the problems they face persist.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The main aim of this study was to explore the classroom management experiences of preschool teachers with refugee students in their classrooms. Thus, the research revealed teachers' experiences about the difficulties they face in the classroom and the strategies they develop to combat them.

First of all, the difficulties experienced by teachers in terms of classroom management in classrooms with refugee students were identified. These difficulties were grouped under the categories of insufficient time, communication problems, difficulties in implementation, exhibiting undesirable behaviors, tendency to group, adaptation problem, tendency to disobey rules, cultural differences and need for additional activities. When the literature was examined, it was seen that there were findings parallel to these findings. In a study conducted by Saklan and Erginer (2017), it was revealed that most of the classroom management experiences of primary and secondary school teachers with Syrian refugee students had negative aspects and teachers emphasized language difficulties. It was found that refugee students' pronunciation problems caused them to be ridiculed. Teachers stated that they did not know what to do when they encountered communication problems with these students. A similar study (Richardson et al., 2018) reported that in addition to the workload and classroom, geographical and professional isolation, and limited resources, teachers face stress in this context (Richardson et al., 2018). Problems such as enrolling refugee students in classes that are not suitable for their developmental levels, increasing class sizes, not being understood due to language differences, not internalizing the lessons and absenteeism are experienced (Erol & Savaş, 2022). In addition, Dinçer and Akgün (2015) showed that there was no significant difference in preschool teachers' classroom management skills according to their level of education, the presence of auxiliary staff in the classroom and working hours, while there was a significant difference according to the age of the teachers, the type of educational institution they graduated from, teaching experience, employment status, class size and the age of the children. It is a well-known fact that refugee students lag behind their peers in terms of readiness, especially during the basic education period (Dicks & Lancee, 2018). In order for these children to catch up with their peers, it is important that they have access to quality pre-school education at the earliest opportunity. A quality preschool education will contribute to the development of children's readiness and contribute to closing the educational gap with their peers (Haskins & Tienda, 2011). The problem of readiness can be a source of other problems experienced in the classroom. A student who is behind in terms of readiness may have difficulty in activities and may tend to exhibit undesirable behaviors.

One of the biggest challenges for Syrian refugee children attending school in Turkey is the language barrier. While the language of instruction in Turkish schools is Turkish, the native language of Syrian refugee children is Arabic. Due to language barriers, the needs of these children cannot be met, and they may be exposed to behaviors such as discrimination and exclusion by their peers (Eryaman & Evran, 2019). While refugee students who face such problems sometimes communicate the situation to their teachers, sometimes they prefer to solve it among themselves without the help of teachers or counselors (Burgoyne & Hull, 2007). Sharing similar findings, another study (Cowling & Anderson, 2021) found that challenges in refugee education are related to language, resources, cultural differences, legal status, and experiences of prejudice. By identifying barriers and solutions to refugee education, future educators are likely to gain confidence and skills in providing effective education to students of refugee origin.

Secondly, the study revealed what kind of solutions teachers apply in terms of classroom management for the difficulties arising from the presence of refugee students in the classroom. In this framework, practices such as considering individual differences, peer support, increasing comprehensibility, using visual elements, using reinforcement, mainstreaming, social communication, family support and language activities come to the fore. In this context, Saklan and Erginer (2017) suggested planning various activities (in-class activities, field trips, etc.) to prevent other students from being prejudiced against Syrian refugee students and to ensure the integration of both groups, and raising teachers' awareness about how they should treat Syrian refugee students through in-service trainings. In another study, teachers complained about refugee parents' lack of interest in education, whereas it is considered important that many refugee families value education. Indeed, as parents struggle to survive in difficult circumstances, they may lack the long-term perspective necessary to commit to their children's education (O'Neal et al., 2016). In short, we can say that teachers are trying to produce some solutions to the problems they face. However, we would like to remind that these efforts should be more professional development oriented rather than being spontaneous and in line with the teachers' own potential.

In classrooms with refugee students, classroom management practices, course content and teaching activities that address issues related to the transition from students' previous lives to their new lives are important. In this context, practices such as reducing the number of students in the classroom, prioritizing the development of speaking skills, not expecting the development of all skills at the same time, planning an event where teachers can share their experiences with each other, providing a consultant that teachers can reach when they need, organizing professional development activities to improve classroom techniques, institutional support, flexibility in program content, and financial support can be recommended (Burgoyne & Hull, 2007). In addition, mentoring initiatives and tutoring can help refugee students to stay connected to education and achieve positive educational, social and emotional outcomes (Weekes et al., 2011), and a short-term music therapy program can have a positive impact on refugee students' classroom behaviors (Baker & Jones, 2006). Dinçer and Akgün (2015) addressed this issue within the scope of pre-service teacher education and emphasized the importance of preparing pre-school teachers, who are responsible for guiding the development, education and learning processes of children, for teaching in four-year formal education in a university environment. Therefore, it is important to handle the activities and programs of refugee students in a more professional way. Exposing teachers to challenges and expecting them to come up with creative solutions may not yield effective results.

The important points that preschool teachers should pay attention to in order to create positive relationships in the classroom are the dimensions of classroom management such as non-verbal behaviors, behavior regulation, rules, time management and communication. Giving children skills that will have an important place throughout their lives, such as healthy communication and problem solving, self-regulation, taking rules into account, and being sensitive to the environment, in the preschool period provides them with more permanent skills. In the acquisition of these behaviors, the classroom management strategies used by the teacher are important in creating a positive classroom atmosphere (Akgün et al., 2011). O'Neal et al. (2017) suggest emotion-focused and cognitive-behavioral classroom management strategies for teachers, such as creating emotion awareness and regulating students' emotions, student-teacher relationships, and positive discipline techniques in addition to teacher emotion and stress management. Teacher self-efficacy in classroom management, the meaning teachers attribute to family-related factors, participation in professional training programs, and proactive strategies that can be used to manage student behavior are available (Paramita et al.,

2021). A more effective classroom management can be achieved when these strategies are used by teachers. This effect can be even more significant when it comes to refugee students.

Schools are a central meeting place where social inequalities are reproduced and social justice gain importance. Research shows that students use race, nationality and gender categories in ways that limit the actions and positions of some students. Teachers are therefore expected to address these unequal categorical norms and work towards overcoming them (Hummelstedt et al., 2021). Instead of trying to solve all problems at once with a classroom management strategy, teachers should prioritize problems and apply more realistic classroom management strategies. When determining the classroom management strategy to be implemented, priority should be given to solving the problems of refugee students within the school boundaries that negatively affect their educational activities. Some of the important classroom management strategies include helping refugee students to socialize and get rid of the feeling of loneliness and regain their self-confidence (Taş & Minaz, 2021). However, the teacher can expand the repertoire of practices to restore quiet and order with refugee students. Over time, classroom behavior management can shift from a teacher-centered focus to a more focused management where authority can be shared with students (Moore & Shirdon, 2021). On the other hand, schools, teachers and other students are expected to adapt to this situation as much as refugee children adapt to school. It is crucial that teachers know how to best prepare to meet the needs of refugee children and how to create schools that can meet these needs (Hamilton, 2003). Teachers with refugee students need to be aware of administrative processes, be able to overcome problematic actions, ensure healthy communication and interaction between all students in the classroom, ensure coordination, plan activities, organize goals, and evaluate results (Taş & Minaz, 2021). Eventually, we indicate that the inclusion of refugee students in the classrooms in the preschool period may affect classroom management of teachers. In order for teachers to exhibit a more effective classroom management approach, teachers should be supported for their development in this regard.

5. Recommendations

Class sizes with refugee students may be reduced or these students may receive language training in a separate class. Seminars can be organized to help teachers. Refugee education can be included in the curriculum as a course at the relevant teaching level in pre-service teacher training. However, this study deals with classroom management in the education of refugee children from the preschool dimension and the data collected from teachers are limited to this level of education and the study group. Therefore, future research can be conducted by addressing the issue of classroom management with refugee students at primary, secondary and high school levels. In this context, the difficulties experienced by teachers in adapting their teaching and solution strategies can be addressed. The experiences and opinions of parents of refugee students can be examined. Information, awareness and guidance activities can be organized to ensure the support of parents in refugee student education. Studies may be conducted to ensure cooperation between teachers, parents, school administrators and senior administrations in the context of refugee education. It can be meaningful to investigate the effectiveness of approaches, strategies and practices used in learning and teaching processes in diverse classrooms.

6. References

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