



IMPROVING TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEE STUDENTS

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Abstract

In a classroom environment where refugee students are present, teachers' attitudes towards these students are considered to be one of the important key factors affecting the students' adaptation process to the education system and the society in which they live. Based on this important factor, the aim of the study was to improve teacher attitudes with the "Attitude Improvement Module towards Refugee Students" designed by the researchers and to contribute to professional development studies on the subject by taking teachers' views about the module. In the research process, an attitude scale was used to measure teachers' attitudes towards these students, covering the dimensions of communication, harmony and proficiency, it was applied to the teachers in the experimental and control groups before and after the module and the attitudes of the teachers before and after the module were analyzed. After the analyses, teachers' views were sought regarding the results. As a result of the quantitative analyses conducted in this mixed-method research, a decrease was observed in the arithmetic average of the communication and adaptation dimensions, while an increase was observed in the arithmetic average of proficiency in the dimension. According to the qualitative analysis, it was revealed that teachers had feelings such as "prejudices, inability to accept refugees, language problems" towards refugee students, but after the module was implemented, their feelings, such as "gaining awareness and empathic approach in refugee education", improved. Based on the findings, it is recommended to develop policies aimed at nurturing the emotional aspects of teachers as well as their proficiency in improving their attitudes towards refugee students.

Keywords: *refugee student education, improvement of teacher attitudes, mixed methods, exploratory sequential designs*

Introduction

Due to its geopolitical location, Anatolian lands have served as a corridor throughout centuries due to migration waves from various countries. The intensity of migration waves reached its peak due to the ongoing Syrian civil war and Arab Spring events that have continued since 2011 (Keskin & Okçu, 2021; Uğurlu, 2018; Yaşar et al., 2020), and Turkey hosted nearly 4 million refugees (Yeşildağ, 2022). Refugees are defined as people who are forced to settle in a country other than their own due to the fear that they will be persecuted in where they were from the country in which they live and which they inherited from their ancestors because of their affiliation or opinion (IOM, 2009). Although there have been ongoing debates about the clarity of the concept (Dost, 2014), in this research, the term "refugee" has served as an umbrella term in describing individuals who had to migrate to another country and seek asylum due to the internal conflicts and wars in Syria (Şahin, 2020; Yaşar et al., 2020).

In addition to the physical mobility it creates, migration also leads to a social and economic structuring and differentiation process in the destination (Atmaca, 2020). For example, with the influx of refugees fleeing the internal conflict in Syria into Turkey, it is seen that social integration problems have emerged especially in provinces close to the country's border neighbors such as Gaziantep and Kilis (Yaşar et al., 2020). As time goes by, the host region gets tired of showing hospitality and perceives refugees as a threat (Ataş, 2021; Günay et al., 2019).

When the current situation of migrant students in Turkey and studies on their adaptation processes to the education system are examined (Yaşar et al., 2020), it is understood that more than 800,000 Syrian refugee students were enrolled in compulsory education (Özdemir & Aypay, 2022), in other words, primary school, as of the beginning of 2021. The unprepared and sudden inclusion of students who came with migration into the system caused Turkish students' reluctance to form groups and make friends with students (Keskin & Okçu, 2021) and also language and adaptation problems. In addition, the reluctance of school administrators to accept refugee students (Sağlam & Kanbur, 2017), the rejections of refugee students by teachers, students and parents (Yaşar et al., 2020) and the bullying towards refugee students also emerge as problems experienced by refugee students (Coşkun & Emin, 2016). However, it can be said that an inclusive and qualified education (Karabacak, 2020) that refugee students receive in primary school will not only protect refugee students from exclusion, involvement in criminal activities, child labor, and child marriage (UNHCR, 2019), but also protect society from all these risk factors.

Teacher Attitudes Towards Refugee Students

Teachers have a major role in helping refugee students overcome the difficulties they face and integrate into society as qualified individuals (Kovinthan, 2016). It is vital that teachers have a positive attitude that refugee students can overcome the problems (Moglu et al., 2020) they face in their efforts to adapt to their schools and therefore to society, and that they can contribute to the new society (Kaukko et al., 2021). It is known that supportive teacher attitudes and activities provided to students facing various difficulties due to language and cultural differences accelerate the adaptation process (Fisher et al., 2000; Tosun et al., 2018). Therefore, improving teachers' pre-existing knowledge and attitudes towards refugee students can be seen as the first step in fostering desired behavioral development and integrating students into society (Bacakova & Closs, 2013).

However, attitudes signal problematic behaviors resulting from incorrect or incomplete knowledge about a particular subject (Robbins & Judge, 2017). According to Oskamp (1975; cited in Uğurlu, 2018), the most important factors in the formation of attitudes are personal experience, parental influence, school, and the individuals in one's surroundings. In this context, it is possible to say that teachers' feelings, thoughts and attitudes towards refugee students are shaped within the framework of their awareness, knowledge and experiences about the students (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007).

When examining the research focusing on teachers' awareness and education regarding refugee students, it is observed that in countries such as Germany, Austria, and the UK, teachers receive training on how to deal with problems such as communication, discrimination, exclusion, and prejudice, as well as on how to conduct classes considering multiculturalism (Toprakçı & Yazıcı, 2021). In Turkey, it is stated that teachers do not receive pedagogically sufficient training on how to educate refugee students during their undergraduate studies (Östen et al., 2017; Toprakçı & Yazıcı, 2021). After starting their teaching careers, efforts have been made under the Ministry's projects such as PICTES and Inclusive Education (Kara, 2022; OECD, 2020; UNICEF, 2018). However, it is observed that these trainings do not reach all teachers who have refugee students, and even if they do, teachers often lack sufficient awareness about the training (Aykırı, 2017; Er & Bayındır, 2015). In the studies conducted, it is seen that the majority of teachers who do not have sufficient education and awareness believe that they cannot carry out the education of refugee children smoothly (Aykırı, 2017) and are reluctant to provide education to refugee students. Therefore, it is understood that there is a need for awareness (Köse et al., 2018) and multicultural education (Yurdakul & Tok, 2018), as well as professional development (Erdem, 2017), specifically targeting teachers' needs, but such

planning is not being made by the Ministry. For this reason, it can be said that in order to improve the attitudes of teachers working in Turkey towards refugee students, practices that will provide teachers with awareness and professionalism about refugee students and refugee student education should be developed (Karabacak, 2020).

When the studies conducted in the academic field are examined, it is understood that teachers' attitudes towards refugee students are taken with quantitative studies and the attitudes are examined in the context of different variables (Çiftçi, 2019; Kazu & Deniz, 2019; Keskin & Okçu, 2022; Köse et al., 2019; Kılcan et al., 2017). In addition to this, there are quantitative studies linking teachers' attitudes towards refugee students with multicultural education, school climate, and organizational commitment (Akman, 2020; Dolapcı & Kavgacı, 2020; Kırımlı, 2022). In qualitative research, teachers' views about refugee students (Aykırı, 2017; Başaran, 2021; Kardeş & Akman, 2018; Yurdakul & Tok, 2018) and the problems they encounter (Erdem, 2017; Başar et al., 2018; Gülceğül, 2020; Özoruç & Sığırtaç, 2022). Therefore, it can be said that studies that could increase teachers' knowledge and awareness regarding refugee students and enable them to develop positive attitudes have been overlooked.

Research Focus

In light of all this data, it emerges that the attitudes that teachers develop towards refugee students are a leading variable in ensuring that refugee students become qualified individuals in society, and that planning and implementation of activities aimed at improving teachers' attitudes are necessary.

Research Aim and Research Questions

In this research, it is argued that teachers' attitudes towards refugee students are the leading variable in supporting the adaptation of refugee students, who are rapidly integrated into the education system to the primary school level, to the system, where they have problems adapting to the system (Kaukko et al., 2021; Moglı et al., 2020). However, it is seen as a problem that teachers are unprepared for the rapid integration they encounter and that they do not have sufficient awareness and training to develop positive attitudes towards these students. For this reason, the research conducted, "Attitude Improvement Module towards Refugee Students", was developed in order to increase teachers' awareness of refugee students and refugee student education, and it was aimed to reveal how the module affects teachers' attitudes towards refugee students. In this context, answers to the questions determined as follows were sought:

- 1) What is the impact of the Attitude Development Module towards Refugee Students on teachers' attitudes towards refugee students (communication, adaptation, proficiency)?
- 2) What are the views of the teachers who participated in the Attitude Improvement Module towards Refugee Students about the module (its planning, scope, contribution, to whom it can be applied and the reasons for the quantitative results)?

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this study, in order to reveal the impact of the "Attitude Improvement Module towards Refugee Students", the activities in the module were applied to teachers in the experimental and control groups, the attitudes of the teachers in the groups were determined by pre-test and post-test analyses, and then the impact of the module was examined comprehensively. In this process, the views of the experimental group teachers who participated in the activities

in the module were sought. A mixed design approach was adopted in the research because qualitative methods were used in the section of the research process regarding the module after the quantitative module in the section of the research process regarding the teachers' views (Tashakori & Creswell, 2007).

In mixed methods research, there are different ways in which the quantitative and qualitative stages are related to each other (Tashakori & Creswell, 2007). Exploratory sequential designs allow the quantitative data obtained from the research to be examined with qualitative research methods and described by loading deeper meanings (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2020). For this reason, the data regarding the test scores applied in the first part of the research were collected using quantitative methods and the stages of the explanatory sequential design were followed by applying the qualitative research method through interviews to explain the obtained data.

In the quantitative phase of the conducted study, a pretest-post-test matched control group quasi-experimental design (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) was used to test the effectiveness of the designed module and the implementation of the module lasted for 6 weeks. The design of the quasi-experimental design is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Attitude Improvement Module Towards Refugee Students Quasi-Experimental Research Design

Groups	Pre-test	Process	Post-test
Experimental Group (15 Teachers)	RSAS	Attitude Improvement Module Towards Refugee Students (6 weeks)	RSAS
Control Group (15 Teachers)	RSAS	-	RSAS

Refugee Student Attitude Scale=RSAS

After completing the quantitative method section, the aim of explaining the participants' perspectives on the applied module required adhering to the nature of qualitative research methods. A case study, which is within the scope of qualitative research, is based on examining a situation that people experience in real life within a limited time period (Mariam, 2018; Yin, 2009). Therefore, the fact that the research design covers a limited time period of 6 weeks, and the module is based on real-life experiences required the adoption of a case study.

Participants

The research was conducted with teachers working in two primary level public schools in Kilis province in the 2022-2023 academic year. The selection of schools was based on the purposeful sampling and criterion sampling methods, which are sampling methods with unknown probability (Marriam, 2018). The criterion used in determining the schools was that at least 50% of the students enrolled in the schools were refugee students. In addition, attention was paid to ensuring that the demographic structure of the teachers in the schools to be selected was similar. In this context, two primary schools, each with 20 classroom teachers, were selected and experimental and control groups were created. The teachers assigned to the experimental ($n=15$) and control ($n=15$) groups were formed on a voluntary basis. The purpose of selecting the groups from different schools was to minimize the possibility of sharing the activities carried out during the implementation of the module between the groups.

According to the demographic information of the participants, the majority of the participants in both groups are 30 years old and over, and the density of male and female participants is similar. When looking at marital status, it was determined that 80% of the participants in the experimental group and the control group were married, and 20% were single. When the professional seniority of the participants is examined, it is seen that the majority of the participants in the groups have 11–15 years of professional seniority (26.7%). It is also understood that all of the participants were undergraduate graduates. Based on all this data, it can be argued that the experimental and control groups determined for the research are homogeneous among themselves.

Participants in the qualitative dimension of the research were selected on a voluntary basis from the participants in the experimental group consisting of 15 people. Accordingly, qualitative data were obtained through face-to-face interviews with 13 volunteer teachers.

Data Collection

Research data were collected after obtaining ethics committee permission for the research. In the first step of the research, the quantitative method section, RSAS (Sağlam&Kanbur, 2017) was applied to the groups as a pretest. Then, the activities in the module designed by the researchers were carried out with the participants in the experimental group in the schools where they worked. Activities were held once a week for 6 weeks. No activity was organized for the control group for 6 weeks. In this context, the module designed by the researchers and carried out with the teachers in the experimental group was taken as the independent variable, and the attitudes of the teachers who participated in the activities were taken as the dependent variable. After the completion of the module, RSAS was re-applied to the groups as a post-test to demonstrate the impacts of the module. Therefore, the scores obtained as a result of pre-test analysis and post-test analysis were presented as the quantitative data of the research.

During the qualitative data collection process, data was obtained through face-to-face interviews held at an appropriate place and time with participants selected from the experimental group on a voluntary basis. The interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes. In order to prevent data loss during the interviews, the participants' opinions were recorded on a voice recorder with their approval. To protect the identities of the participants, their names were coded as P1, P2 (P1=Participant 1 etc.). Additionally, participants' attitudes and behaviors were observed and documented every week during the 6-week study period.

Content of the Attitude Improvement Module Towards Refugee Students

During the module creation phase, the recommendations of professionals such as psychological counselors, clinical psychologists and academics who have done studies on refugee students were taken into consideration. Before creating the module, preliminary interviews were conducted with teachers to conduct a needs analysis. Additionally, studies focusing on teachers' attitudes towards refugee students (Biasutti et al., 2019; Bozkurt, 2018; Erdem, 2017; Habib, 2020; Levi, 2019; Sevi et al., 2017; Sevinç, 2021) were reviewed. The activities included in the module were designed taking into account the Message Learning (YALE) approach developed by renowned psychologists (Sakallı Uğurlu, 2018). In addition, the activities are prepared according to the three sub-dimensions in the scale, namely communication, adaptation, and proficiency.

The subscale included in the scale aims to uncover teachers' views on various aspects related to their attitudes towards refugee students. The communication subscale encompasses approaching refugee students without prejudice, behaving with tolerance, understanding them, motivating them, etc. The adaptation subscale focuses on ensuring that other parents exhibit

a positive attitude towards refugee students, integrating refugee students with other students, providing guidance to refugee students, etc. The proficiency subscale is directed at revealing teacher opinion regarding feeling proficiency in refugee student education, considering language differences not to be a problem, etc. The activities included in the sessions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Sessions of the Attitude Improvement Module Towards Refugee Students

Session	Subject	Activity
Session -1	Coordination of Participants	Icebreaker Activity Setting Expectations Exercise Brainstorming Session on the Concept of
Session -2	Introduction to Migration and Refugee Concepts	Presentation of Migration, Refugee, and Attitude Concepts by the Researcher Metaphor Exercise on Refugee Students Identifying Factors Influencing Attitudes towards Refugee Students (Assignment: Reading books on the theme of refugee students by the 3rd session)
Session -3 (Communication)	Understanding the Background of Student Lives with Migration and Refugee Experience	Evaluation of the Read Books Watching Short Films with Refugee Themes Making Empathetic Assessments about the Films and Books
Session -4 (Adaptation)	Collaboration with Parents Of Refugee Students	Listening to Stories from Refugee Student Parents on Migration and Adaptation Themes. Developing Sample Scenarios on Teacher-Student Adaptation Issues Based on the Stories. Presenting the Sample Scenarios and Conducting Evaluations on Proposed Solutions.
Session -5 (Proficiency)	Teachers' Awareness of Refugee Education	Providing Information by Experts on Education for Refugee Students. Engaging in Discussions about Refugee Student Education (Assignment: Preparation for a debate on the topic "Teacher Attitude is/is not a significant variable in refugee student education").
Session -6	Establishing a Relationship between Teacher Attitudes and Student Achievement	Conducting the Debate Activity. Evaluating the Results of the Debate. Closing the Session.

Data Analysis

RSAS was applied as a pre-test and post-test to control and experimental groups consisting of 15 people each. The findings section presents the arithmetic means of the total scores and subscales of the RSAS. Skewness and Kurtosis values were analyzed to check whether the data exhibited normal distribution (Can, 2019). In this regard, the recommendation that Skewness values between -1 and +1 are considered a measure of normal distribution (Morgan et al., 2004, p.49) and Kurtosis values equal to 3 in data showing normal distribution (Özdamar, 2018, p.53) were accepted. In the analyses performed, it was revealed that the data were not normally distributed, therefore, the tests belonging to the groups were examined with the non-parametric tests Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test and Mann-Whitney U Test.

In the qualitative phase of the research, the interviews with the teachers and the answers to the semi-structured interview questions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. It was stated that teachers would be given a code name before the interviews and their real names would not be included in the research. Predetermined themes formed the basis of the questions in the interview form. Sub-themes were identified by coding the common aspects of the responses to the themes. The remarkable statements of the participants regarding the codes are directly quoted and included in the tables below. In this regard, the steps of descriptive analysis were followed by using predetermined themes and direct quotations under the themes, and the steps of content analysis were followed by coding the common aspects of the views under the themes (Creswell, 2018; Marriam, 2018). The findings resulting from the descriptive and content analysis were compared with the observations made during the research process, the notes taken and the forms in which the participants expressed their views about the modules every week to determine if there were any contradictions in the findings.

Validity and Reliability

In the first part of the research, the quantitative method section, the reliability of the scale consisting of three sub-dimensions, namely “communication”, “adaptation”, and “proficiency,” was examined. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used as the basis for the reliability assessment (Can, 2019). When the data regarding reliability were examined, it was found that the internal consistency coefficient (Alpha) of the scale was .91, the communication sub-dimension was .88, the adaptation sub-dimension was .88, the proficiency sub-dimension was .80 (Sağlam & Kanbur, 2017). The Cronbach reliability coefficient being in the range of “.80-1.00” means that the scale gives reliable results for use in research (Özdamar, 1999). In order for external validity to be acceptable, the opinions of three academics who are experts specialized in measurement and evaluation, program development, and refugee student education were obtained regarding the size of the study group and the scope of the applied module, and the recommendations of the academics were followed.

To ensure reliability in the qualitative method phase of the research, the “triangulation of analysts” strategy (Patton, 2018, p. 556) was used. The data obtained was coded by two different people, and the results were compared and revised based on consensus. Additionally, by following Patton's (2018, p. 560) participant validation strategy, the findings were presented to the participants, and their opinions were sought again regarding whether the findings accurately reflected the participants' views. The steps taken throughout the research were explained in detail to ensure the transferability of the research to different studies (Marriam, 2018). The resulting findings were tabulated to facilitate transfer to different studies. To prevent data loss regarding the opinions obtained during the interviews, the interviews were recorded and thus contributed to the internal consistency of the research (Creswell, 2018). The data obtained was transcribed verbatim. Common themes in the interviews were highlighted and coded, and a code book was created (Sağlam & Kanadlı, 2020). The codes in the code book were presented to expert reviewers and revised in line with consensus.

Research Results

Findings Regarding the Changes in Teachers' Attitudes towards Refugee Students as a result of the Module

Within the scope of the first problem, five sub-questions were determined, and comparative analyzes were made between the groups according to the pre-test and post-test results. Comparative descriptive analyzes between groups regarding the RSAS and its subscales (Communication, Adaptation, Proficiency) are included in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics Regarding Participants' RSAS and Subdimensions (Communication, Adaptation, Proficiency)

Tests	Dimensions	Groups	N	Min	Max	\bar{X}	SD
Pre-test	RSAS Communication	Experimental	15	2.38	3.63	2.90	.10120
	Adaptation		15	2.55	4.00	3.44	.11832
	Proficiency		15	1.56	3.56	2.52	.15199
			15	1.50	2.75	2.29	.10630
Post-test	RSAS	Experimental	15	2.17	3.42	2.90	.09367
	Communication		15	2.64	4.00	3.42	.10024
	Adaptation		15	1.89	3.22	2.45	.11621
	Proficiency		15	1.50	3.50	2.47	.15405
Pre-test	RSAS	Control	15	2.38	3.88	2.95	.10175
	Communication		15	2.64	4.00	3.47	.09927
	Adaptation		15	1.78	3.89	2.51	.15250
	Proficiency		15	1.75	3.50	2.50	.14840
Post-test	RSAS	Control	15	1.83	3.46	2.94	.10556
	Communication		15	1.91	4.00	3.39	.14406
	Adaptation		15	1.33	3.00	2.51	.11251
	Proficiency		15	1.75	3.50	2.63	.12646

According to the Table, it is understood that there is no significant change in the total attitude scores towards refugee students in the experimental group before and after the module. While there is a decrease in the "Communication" and "Adaptation" subscale total scores, an increase is observed in the "Proficiency" subscale total score. Control group scores appear to show overall less change in participants' perceptions before and after the program compared to the other group. The test results examining the relationship between the groups' pre-test data are given in Table 4.

Table 4.
RSAS Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Pre-test Total and Subdimension Scores by Group Variable

Score	Groups	N	\bar{X} order	Σ order	U	z	p
RSAS	Experimental	15	15.00	225.00	105.00	-.311	.756
Total	Control	15	16.00	240.00			
Pre-test	Total	30					
RSAS	Experimental	15	15.37	230.50	110.50	-.083	.934
Communication	Control	15	15.63	234.50			
Pre-test	Total	30					
RSAS	Experimental	15	15.77	236.50	108.50	-.167	.868
Adaptation	Control	15	15.23	228.50			
Pre-test	Total	30					
RSAS	Experimental	15	14.43	216.50	96.50	-.675	.500
Proficiency	Control	15	16.57	248.50			
Pre-test	Total	30					

* $p > .05$

When the table is interpreted, it is understood that there is no significant difference between the test scores of the teachers in the groups. In this direction, it can be interpreted that the teachers in the groups had similar attitudes towards refugee students before the activities related to the module were carried out.

Table 5

RSAS Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Post-test Total and Subdimension Scores by Group Variable

Score	Groups	N	\bar{X}_{order}	$\Sigma order$	U	z	p
RSAS Total Post-test	Experimental Control Total	15 15 30	14.57 16.43	218.50 246.50	98.50	-.582	.561
RSAS Communication Post-test	Experimental Control Total	15 15 30	15.17 15.83	227.50 237.50	107.50	-.208	.835
RSAS Adaptation Post-test	Experimental Control Total	15 15 30	14.43 16.57	216.50 248.50	96.50	-.668	.504
RSAS Proficiency Post-test	Experimental Control Total	15 15 30	14.23 16.77	213.50 251.50	93.50	-.797	.425

*p> .05

According to the Table, it can be seen that there is no significant difference between the post-test total and sub-score averages of the participants in the experimental and control groups. The results of the relationship between the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test of the groups are given in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for RSAS Experimental Group Pre-test vs. Post-test Scores

Score	Groups	N	\bar{X}_{order}	$\Sigma order$	z	p
RSAS (Pre-test-Post-test)	Decreasing Increasing Equal Total	8 7 0 15	8.13 7.86	65.00 55.00	-.284	.776
RSAS Communication (Pre-test-Post-test)	Decreasing Increasing Equal Total	7 6 2 15	7.14 6.83	50.00 41.00	-.316	.752
RSAS Adaptation (Pre-test - Post-test)	Decreasing Increasing Equal Total	7 8 0 15	9.36 6.81	65.50 54.50	-.313	.754
RSAS Proficiency (Pre-test-Post-test)	Decreasing Increasing Equal Total	5 8 2 15	6.70 7.19	33.50 57.50	-.842	.400

*p> .05

According to the Table, it is revealed that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the total and sub-dimension scores of the attitudes of the teachers in the experimental group. When the rank average scores are examined, a decrease is seen in the general average and in all dimensions, while an increase in attitudes towards the "Proficiency" sub-dimension has emerged.

In this regard, it is understood that the Refugee Student Attitude Improvement Module impacts attitudes towards the "Proficiency" sub-dimension but does not significantly impact general attitudes towards refugee students in the experimental group.

Table 7
Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for RSAS Control Group Pre-test vs. Post-test Scores

Score	Groups	N	\bar{X}_{order}	Σ_{order}	z	p
RSAS (Pre-test –Post-test)	Decreasing	5	10.10	50.50	-.541	.589
	Increasing	10	6.95	69.50		
	Equal	0				
	Total	15				
RSAS Communication (Pre-test –Post-test)	Decreasing	7	7.64	53.50	-.063	.950
	Increasing	7	7.36	51.50		
	Equal	1				
	Total	15				
RSAS Adaptation (Pre-test –Post-test)	Decreasing	5	7.70	38.50	-.489	.624
	Increasing	8	6.56	52.50		
	Equal	2				
	Total	15				
RSAS Proficiency (Pre-test – Post-test)	Decreasing	2	9.00	18.00	-.975	.330
	Increasing	8	4.63	37.00		
	Equal	5				
	Total	15				

*p> .05

According to the Table, no significant difference was observed in the total and sub-dimension attitude scores of the participants in the control group towards refugee students before and after the implementation of the module. The lack of a significant difference can be attributed to the fact that no program was applied to the control group.

Findings Regarding the Views of Teacher Participants in the Module

The questions in the interview form consist of themes related to the teachers' perspectives on the planning and scope of the module, their own contribution, the target audience in its implementation and the reasons behind it. The tables are coded based on the analysis of the answers to these questions. Participant views regarding the coded expressions are presented with direct quotes right below the tables.

Table 8
Teachers' Views on Planning and Scope of the Attitude Improvement Module Towards Refugee Students

Theme	Organization and Planning
Sub-themes	Codes
Process	The duration of the module is sufficient. Before the module training period starts and after the training period ends. The idea exchanges during the module process are beneficial. The duration of the module is insufficient. The module can be implemented during seminars.
Participants	Parents should participate as participants in all sessions of the module. The benefits of experts participating in the module Ministry of Education (MoNE) administrators should participate as participants in the module. Psychologists should participate as participants in the module. Educators working in Syria should participate as participants in the module.
Scope	The films and books included in the module have created awareness. Deficiencies in the module can be detected and updated. Parent visits can be organized within the scope of the module. The experimental nature of the module made the research realistic. We couldn't focus on education due to criticizing policies developed in relation to the subject matter of the module. Practical applications can be organized within the scope of the module. Children's games can be included in the scope of the module.

According to the Table, the teachers who shared their views about the module process found the 6-week period sufficient. Teacher T6's statement, *"I think the module is balanced in terms of duration. If it was long, it would be boring, if it was short, it would be insufficient."* reflects the majority's point of view.

When teachers' views about module participants are examined, it is seen that parent participation is emphasized. Teacher T9's emphasis on the importance of parents in refugee education was, *"I think parents should be involved in all modules. What is their perspective on the school? What are their expectations? We should discuss these more."* He attracted attention with his expressions.

When teachers' views about the scope of the module are examined, it is understood that they find the scope useful but also point out areas that can be improved. In this regard, the views of T5 and T12 were *"It can be improved by doing, experiencing and trying. The content can be updated in the end-of-year evaluations, we can decide together"* and *"Especially group games bring Syrian and Turkish children together and integrate them. A section about this can be added."* came to the fore.

Table 9
Teachers' Views on the Contribution of the Attitude Improvement Module Towards Refugee Students to Teachers

Theme	Contributions of the Module to Teachers
Sub-Themes	Codes
Made a Positive Contribution	It prompted the questioning of the approach towards refugee students. It instilled an empathetic approach towards refugee students. It raised awareness about the lives of refugee students.
Didn't Make a Positive Contribution	It provided motivation for the education of refugee students. It did not contribute due to prejudices. It did not contribute due to the module's ineffectiveness.

According to the Table, the teachers experienced positive changes in their lives after the module, such as the development of questioning skills, empathic approach, awareness, motivation and positive transformations. However, some teachers reported that they did not experience any change due to their existing biases or the perceived ineffectiveness of the module.

Expressing his views on the positive impacts of the module, Teacher T11 stated that they approached the students with more empathy in refugee student education with the following words: *"For example, instead of shouting and reacting when the students failed, I stayed calm and tried to understand why they did not understand something (language problem? living conditions at school)."* Teacher T1 explained how they were motivated during the module: *"I felt helpless, but I realized that I was not alone in the world, and based on our shares, I gained the courage to believe that I could do it too."* He expressed it with his words.

Teacher T7, one of the teachers who stated that the module did not contribute to their lives, expressed her existing prejudices as follows: *"There has been no change in my views. I think there is conditioning and prejudice, we cannot break them."*

Table 10
Participants' Views on whom Should the Attitude Improvement Module towards Refugee Students be Implemented

Theme	To whom it should be implemented
Sub-themes	Codes
All teachers who have refugee students.	It should be implemented for teachers in all subjects working in refugee-dense areas. It should be implemented for newly appointed teachers in refugee-dense areas.
Undergraduate students.	It should be implemented for teachers pursuing undergraduate education.
School Administrators	It should be implemented for school administrators.

When examining the Table, it can be observed that teachers expressed their views on the necessity of implementing the module for teachers in all disciplines working in refugee-dense areas, as well as for newly appointed teachers, pre-service teachers, and administrators.

Among the teachers who emphasized the importance of refugee student-dense areas, Teacher T12's statement stood out: *"This module should have been implemented in provinces with high numbers of refugee students, such as Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep, in the southern part of the country, and for all disciplines. Because due to the high number of refugee students, they cannot integrate into the education system."*

Teacher T4 expressed their views on the education to be provided by newly appointed teachers: *"Newly appointed teachers need it, for example, because they will struggle more. We have worked for a certain number of years, we have experience. We have worked in regions where the native language is different, yet we struggled."* In addition to all these requirements, Teacher T13 emphasized the participation of administrators in the process: *"Education is a team effort. I think administrators should also participate. Even if administrators tell me how well they understand me, it won't be beneficial if they don't sit down and talk with me."*

Table 11

Teacher Views on the Quantitative Results of the Attitude Improvement Module towards Refugee Students

Theme	Teacher Views on the Quantitative Results
Sub-theme	Codes
Reasons for No Change In Overall Attitude Averages	Prejudices towards refugee students Feeling of hopelessness towards refugee student education Inability to accept the presence of refugees Language barriers with refugee students High number of refugee students The impacts of the negative opinions shared within the experimental group during the module process
Solutions Regarding The Reasons	Education on refugee student education should be provided. Country policies regarding refugee student education should be improved. Incentives should be provided to teachers who teach refugee students. Parents should be included in the education of refugee students.

When the Table is examined, it is observed that teachers harbor prejudice against refugee students, feel hopeless about refugee student education, cannot accept the presence of refugees, face language problems with students, and negative views expressed by teachers during the module process. Due to these underlying reasons, it is understood that there is no change in the overall attitudes towards refugee students before and after the module. Teacher T9 expressed their concerns about cultural differences: *"They are far from our culture, and I'm afraid to visit their homes. We have big prejudices. I don't have the courage to go to their homes and talk."*

Teachers also mentioned being influenced by negative views expressed by some teachers during the module sessions, as stated by Teacher T6: *"During the module process, we may have been influenced by the negative opinions of our teachers."* When examining the views on how teachers' attitudes can change positively, Teacher T2 expressed what areas they need education on: *"How to approach students? How to communicate with parents? How to find common ground? Training can be provided on these topics."* Teacher T11 highlighted the importance of language in state policies concerning refugee students: *"Syrian students have language deficiencies. Language proficiency should become a government policy. They should not start school without language proficiency. The government should implement sanctions regarding this."*

Discussion

In the research, it was aimed to improve the attitudes of teachers towards refugee students and to contribute to professional development studies on refugee student education by carrying out activities designed within the scope of the "Attitude Development Module towards Refugee Students" with the teachers in the experimental group. In this context, the scale used in the study and forming the basis of the module was applied as a pre-test before the activities in the module were carried out and as a post-test after the activities in the module were carried out. Afterwards, the impacts of the module on the attitudes of the teachers were examined in line with the opinions received from the teachers.

When the descriptive statistics for the attitudes of the teachers after the implementation of the activities in the module were examined, there was no significant change in the total arithmetic mean of the attitudes of the teachers in the experimental group towards refugee students. However, it was concluded that the applied module had a positive impact on the "proficiency" sub-dimension, which includes behaviors related to being proficient in refugee education but was ineffective in encouraging behaviors related to impartial communication and tolerance towards refugee students. This finding is also supported by previous studies showing that teachers' professional proficiency and beliefs can potentially be improved through training programs designed for the education of refugee students and classroom management (Babahan, 2016; Bačáková & Closs; Erdem, 2017; Kardeş & Akman, 2018; Keskin & Okçu, 2021; Sakız, 2016; Taştekin et al., 2016).

In addition, the results showing that there is no significant difference between the post-test scores show that there is no significant change in attitudes towards refugee students even if any training is applied to one of these two homogeneous groups. Similar findings were reported in Habib's (2020) study aiming to improve teachers' attitudes towards refugee students and in Arthur (2005) and Kavinthan's (2016) studies examining the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service education. These findings emphasize the resistance of teachers' attitudes towards change and the need to reveal the underlying reasons for this resistance.

When *teachers' views about the module* were examined, the majority stated that they were satisfied with the planning and duration of the module, the exchange of ideas and expert participation throughout the process. However, they emphasized the need for greater participation of refugee student parents and MEB administrators in the education process. Research on the attitudes of refugee student parents towards education reveals that they mostly do not attend meetings and show little interest in their children's education (Kardeş & Akman, 2018; Nar, 2008; Aykırı, 2017). Language barriers also contribute to the communication gap between parents and teachers (Kara, 2022). In addition, research findings show that, despite the necessity of close relations between teachers and the MEB in the education of refugees (Shaherhwasli et al., 2021), teachers often cannot receive the necessary support from relevant people and organizations (Aykırı, 2017; Taşkın & Erdemli, 2018).

Regarding the contributions of the module to teachers, expressions emphasizing that they have started to question the education they mostly apply to refugee students, approach students more empathetically, and with increased awareness, their motivation has also risen, have come to the forefront. However, statements indicating that the module did not contribute due to prejudices are also present. In the relevant studies, when examining Memiş's (2015) research in Kilis province, it was found that 67% of the participants had prejudices that Syrians harmed the local population. In the study by Özoruç and Sığirtmaç (2022) in Gaziantep province, findings suggested that teachers experience motivation loss due to communication and violence problems with refugee students. However, in a result that does not overlap with the emerging findings, Babur (2021) revealed in Erzurum that teachers already have a high level of empathetic tendencies towards multicultural education. In this regard, considering the ratio of

Syrian refugees to the population in Erzurum as 0.13%, in Kilis as 33.62%, and in Gaziantep as 17.04% (15.06.2023, www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638), it can be said that in provinces with a low number of refugee students, teachers express more positive views about refugee students without the need for any education.

Regarding *whom the module should be applied to*, views have emerged suggesting that it should be applied to all teachers with refugee students and at the undergraduate education level, including administrators. In various studies, it is emphasized that all teachers with refugee students feel inadequate in approaching students from different cultures (Polat & Rengi, 2014), solving their problems (Uzun & Bütün, 2016), and have not received any training on refugee student education (Aykırı; 2017; Er & Bayındır, 2015). Therefore, it can be argued that all teachers with refugee students need to be supported with training on refugee student education through the implemented module.

In line with the views regarding the quantitative results of the module, the reasons for the lack of change in the overall average of teachers' attitudes are understood as "prejudices against refugees, feelings of hopelessness, inability to accept refugee students, language problems with students and their large numbers, as well as teachers' opinions negatively affecting each other throughout the module process." While prejudices against refugee students among teachers have been discussed before, it is evident that the feeling of not being able to accept refugee students due to these prejudices is a significant factor negatively affecting teachers' attitudes. In fact, the refugee policy pursued by the Republic of Türkiye, shaped in the 2010s towards refugees returning to their homelands, has been updated in recent years to emphasize their staying and adapting to the country (Efe et al., 2022; Yaşar et al., 2020). This situation has led to a dilemma among teachers regarding whether refugees will "leave or stay" and has contributed to the feeling of not being able to accept refugees. Additionally, with the start of education for nearly 700,000 Syrian students following the integration decision that came into effect in 2016 (Özdemir & Aypay, 2022), the increasing density of the refugee student population and the adaptation problem experienced in the social area in this direction (Arar, 2022; Yaşar et al., 2020; Taştan et al., 2017) have led to teachers developing prejudices and displaying negative attitudes towards refugee students. Furthermore, research has indicated that language and communication problems with refugee students are among the main issues hindering teachers from developing positive attitudes towards them (Çoban, 2022; Kardeş & Akman, 2018; Levent & Çayak, 2017; Nar, 2008; Oikonomidou, 2010; Yurdakul & Tok, 2018; Toprakçı & Yazıcı, 2021).

Conclusions and Implications

According to all these results, it was revealed that the module developed by the researchers improved teachers' attitudes in terms of the proficiency sub-dimension but was ineffective in improving their attitudes within the scope of the communication and adaptation sub-dimensions. In this context, it can be said that different studies are needed to improve teachers' communication and adaptation sub-dimensions, and that teachers' beliefs about their proficiency in refugee education can be improved with studies similar to the developing module.

When the teachers' views on the impact of the module are examined, it is understood that students resist developing positive attitudes towards refugee students (communication and adaptation). The reasons underlying this resistance include teachers' prejudices towards refugees (Arab culture), lack of education on refugee student education, difficulty in communicating with refugee students and parents due to language problems, refugee students feeling hopeless about their learning abilities, high density of refugee students in classes, isolation of students by the MEB during the adaptation process, and lack of a stable policy towards refugees in the country. It was revealed that teachers who stated that the module made a positive contribution to

them gained awareness and empathy towards the lives of refugee students and refugee student education after the module. In addition, the findings include opinions that the module should be applied to teachers studying at the undergraduate level, current teachers and administrators. At the same time, it is among the expectations of the teachers that the MEB should support teachers in this regard and produce policies that will allow them to improve themselves in the education of refugee students.

In the context of the findings, it can be said that strategic steps should be taken to support teachers so that refugee students can adapt to the education system, contribute to the quality of education and continue their lives as useful citizens of society. These steps should first be started by including the subject of “refugee student education” in undergraduate teacher training programs and thus improving the proficiency of teachers. In addition, special training programs should be organized for teachers who are still on duty to specialize in refugee student education, and practices should be designed to overcome factors (such as political insecurity and prejudice) that prevent teachers from developing positive attitudes towards refugee students. Teachers who are dedicated to educating refugee students should be encouraged with appreciation awards, and module-like studies should be developed and implemented to increase the attitudes and motivation of teachers, where refugee students are densely populated.

The disproportionate increase in the refugee student population in schools makes it difficult for students to adapt to school life and the education system and to learn the language of the society they live in. Therefore, efforts should be made to reduce the number of refugee students in classes in order to provide better learning environments. At the same time, preschool education should be made compulsory to support language acquisition among refugee students, and priority should be given to measures such as providing Turkish language lessons in preschool education. In addition, MEB administrators should actively participate in the education processes for refugee students and try to involve parents in education. International partnerships should be established to make all these steps permanent and to develop long-term education strategies for refugee students.

When the literature is examined, it is understood that the majority of the studies describe the attitudes of teachers towards refugee students. In the research conducted, it is thought that the research will provide a different perspective to the studies in the literature in terms of taking concrete steps to support teachers in improving attitudes towards refugee students and obtaining the findings based on real-life experiences in the research process. In this context, it can be said that the rich data set obtained will contribute to the studies of policymakers and researchers who are working to make education systems with a high density of refugee students more qualified. However, in the study where all these findings emerged, the study group was working in Kilis province, and the scope of the designed module was limited in terms of the sub-dimensions in the scale used. Considering the limitations of the study, it is hoped that future studies will be developed by taking inspiration from the module and that the developed modules will be implemented in all provinces, especially in provinces with a high concentration of refugee students, and with a larger number of participants.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interest.

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