

The Role of Adult Education Centers in Syrian Refugees' Integration Process

Esen Altunay
Serap Karabulut

Abstract: The aim of this study is to reveal the views of administrators and instructors regarding the role adult education centers (AECs) have in the process of integrating Syrian refugees and to present relevant suggestions. This qualitative study has employed a phenomenological design, obtained the data using a semi-structured interview form. The study group of the research consists of administrators and instructors working at AECs in Izmir, Turkey between 2019-2020 and were identified using criterion sampling, a purposive sampling method. As a result of the research, the participants were revealed to have most commonly emphasized language learning under the theme of Syrian refugee adults' social needs. Among the problems regarding the integration process of the Syrian refugees enrolled in the AECs, absenteeism and economic inadequacy came to the fore under the theme of problems regarding instructees. In terms of the AECs' contributions to the adaptation process, their contributions to language learning, social adaptation, and establishing communication and relationships were emphasized under the theme of social skills development. According to the research results, states should develop certain policies to produce permanent solutions regarding Syrian refugees' education and provide financial assistance regarding the problem of refugees' economic inadequacy; AECs should also strengthen their collaborations with other institutions.

Keywords: Adult education centers, Izmir, Syrian refugees, integration process, adult education.

Öz: Araştırmanın amacı, Suriyeli mültecilerin uyum sürecinde Halk Eğitim Merkezlerinin (HEM) rolü üzerine yönetici ve eğiticilerin görüşlerini ortaya koymak ve öneriler sunmaktır. Nitel araştırma yaklaşımlarından olgubilim deseniyle yürütülmüş bu çalışmanın verileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme kullanılarak belirlenmiş ve 2019-2020 yılında İzmir ilindeki HEM'lerde görevli yönetici ve eğiticilerden oluşmaktadır. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen bulgulara göre Suriyeli mültecilerin en çok "sosyal ihtiyaçlar" teması altında dil öğrenme amacıyla HEM'lere başvurdukları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. HEM'lerde Suriyeli mültecilerin uyum sürecindeki sorunlarda en çok devamsızlık ve ekonomik yetersizlik konularında "öğrencilerle ilgili sorunlar" teması öne çıkmıştır. HEM'lerin uyum sürecindeki katkısı bakımından en çok "sosyal becerilerin gelişimi" teması altında dil öğrenme, toplumsal uyum sağlama, iletişim ve ilişki kurma katkıları vurgulanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre Suriyeli mültecilerin eğitimlerine yönelik kalıcı çözümler üretmek adına devlet politikaları geliştirilmeli, göçmenlerin ekonomik yetersizlik sorununa yönelik finans sağlanmalı, HEM'lerin diğer kurumlarla işbirlikleri güçlendirilmelidir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Halk eğitim merkezi, İzmir, Suriyeli mülteciler, uyum süreci, yetişkin eğitimi, kültür.

@ Assoc. Prof., Ege University. esen.altunay@ege.edu.tr
Gazi Ortaokulu. serapkarabulut@hotmail.com

id <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8200-8871>
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8962-3727>

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Introduction

The concept of migration is regarded as a social phenomenon almost as old as human history. Even though people are known to move away due to wars, political turmoil, economic hardships, or the search for prosperity, migration also describes when people move away or are forced to move away from where they live to new settlements due to these reasons (Castles, 2003; Giddens & Sutton, 2014; Toros 2008). In its basic sense, migration is also accepted as a geographic phenomenon (Bartram et al., 2017, p. 13). Faist (2003) defined migration as permanent or temporary movements from one political or social phenomenon to another or from one place to another. Forced migration involves the effect from factors and forces outside of one's own will, especially situations that force one to move from one's current residence to another or even to another country (Özkan, 2019). The refugee population has been displaced all over the world through migrations in recent years and continues to significantly increase. The Global Trends Report from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR, 2019) reported 79.5 million people to have migrated during 2019. Because migration is a process of displacement with socio-psychological effects on individuals, as has been seen for many years, immigrants may take a long time to integrate to their new place and society in which they've settled, and this can result in a number of problems (Apak, 2014; Çakmak 2018). Among the significant problems countries need to solve regarding migration in this context are the social, political, and psychological problems that arise. The literature on migration (Brüß, 2003; Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016) shows that social, cultural, and psychological studies have mostly focused on issues such as integration, social/mutual harmony, and coexistence. Europe-based studies in particular handle the issue of migration in relation to the immigrants and examine their integration with the society to which they've migrated (Favell, 2001; Valtonen, 1999). When looking at the results from these studies, the management policies and approaches of the countries on migration based on social democracy is seen to have evolved into an understanding more geared toward improving cohesion. This issue is seen as a sociopolitical concern of the states, and the role of many social institutions, especially educational institutions, have increased with regard to adaptation processes. Since the civil war that started in Syria in 2011, the number of immigrants coming to Turkey has reached 3,670,069 (Directorate General of Migration Management, 2021). The size of the Syrian immigrant population being undeniably large requires that the problems experienced by such a mass be evaluated in terms of both human rights and the country's social structure. In many parts of the world, refugees face social, economic, political, and psychological problems (Miller, 2009). Problems such as cultural incompatibility, humiliation, exclusion, need for shelter, not knowing the

language, not being able to communicate, and finding a job are seen in refugee groups, including Syrian refugees in Turkey (Diker & Karan, 2021). In this context, the role of many social institutions, especially educational institutions, has increased regarding solving the cohesion problems of individuals who've been displaced by migration.

Integration is the ability of an individual to establish healthy communications with the society in which one resides and to live in harmony with oneself and the culture of the society in which one lives (Tutar, 2016). According to Heckmann (as cited in Haksever, 2014, p. 22), cohesion is the inclusion of a new social group into society through existing social structures, with the new group being included in this process in the socio-economic, legal, and cultural relations of the society in which they live. Although people who immigrate bring with them their life styles, beliefs, and rituals to their new destination, they also encounter new cultures and living conditions (Adıgüzel, 2016). Therefore, they commonly encounter certain integration problems. Indeed, when the number of immigrants is high, the local people's negative psychological responses toward immigrants may increase. From the perspective of Turkey, it was once only a transit country for immigrants but has in recent years become a country hosting millions of Syrian refugees, due in particular to Syria's internal turmoil. The number of Syrian refugees with temporary protection status living in Turkey is approaching four million, and this status becomes permanent over time. The importance of social cohesion also increases when considering that more than 100,000 refugees will become Turkish citizens (Gülerce & Demir, 2021). In order to prevent the Syrian refugees living in Turkey who have not received much education, who have low incomes, and who feel excluded from posing problems for the society in the future (Şimşek & Kula, 2018), a social environment needs to be provided in which these refugees can live in peace and tranquility with the local people. This situation needs to be seen as a priority concern for society, and the process should be managed effectively.

Accompanying the migration movements in the world, the concepts of *assimilation* and *acculturation*, which had often been used for the early theories on immigration, are being replaced with contemporary multiculturalist theories (i.e., the concept of integration; Martikainen, 2004). However, multiculturalism should be noted to have yet to be discussed in Turkey at the academic and political levels. In the laws and works of the General Directorate of Migration Management (2019, p. 25) regarding the integration of refugees in Turkey, *harmony* is envisaged neither as assimilation nor integration but as the harmonization that occurs when immigrants and society understand each other voluntarily. According to these statements, Turkey's perspectives toward integration (Taşçı & Kara, 2019) and its integration

strategy involve a multilateral, active two-way interaction and an immigrant-focused approach. In this respect, the rights of refugees are seen to be emphasized based on policies. According to Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX, 2015) data, however, Turkey's performance regarding the integration process is considered insufficient in terms of education, health, political participation, permanent residence, access to citizenship, and prevention of discrimination. Refugees' social cohesion indicators and determinants include education, access to health opportunities, political participation, permanent residence, access to citizenship, and non-discrimination (MIPEX, 2015; Social Micro-Indicators (SMI), 2019). Meanwhile, Ager and Strang (2004) identified adaptation indicators under four headings: markers and tools/structural cohesion (e.g., work, housing, education, health), social connections/interactive cohesion (e.g., social bridges, social bonds, social connections), facilitators/cultural cohesion (e.g., knowledge of language and culture, trust, stability), and basic/identical cohesion (e.g., rights, citizenship). Among these basic indicators is the preparation of national education policies to integrate refugees into the education system (Alba & Foner, 2015; Song, 2011). Every uneducated individual may become a potential problem for the future of the country (Rutter, 2006). In this context, and in line with studies carried out in the field of education as an important dimension in ensuring social cohesion, the adaptation problems of Syrian refugee children in particular were first addressed and prioritized. As such, those who'd been educated at the Temporary Education Centers were later directed to the public schools of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in order to provide them with schooling (Coşkun & Emin, 2018). Another important factor facilitating solutions to problems in integration involves coming up with a solution to communication problems. In this sense, one important step that has been taken is the protocol signed between the Directorate General of Migration Management and the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning under MoNE for trainings to be carried out for adults. As a result, a great many Syrian immigrants have enrolled in language courses and supplemental vocational training activities (MoNE, 2019). According to the e-Yaygın data, which is the electronic information system MoNE uses regarding AECs, more than 300,000 Syrian instructees have enrolled in Turkish language teaching and adult literacy courses since 2014 within the scope of various projects (General Directorate of Longitudinal Learning, 2019). Adult education centers (AECs), which are the state's education institutions with the capacity to contact Syrian adult refugees, have been assigned on this point to support Syrian refugees' cohesion process.

Educational institutions are considered important actors in solving refugees' social integration problems. According to Ereş (2015), not only can the risks refugees might encounter be reduced by providing education for immigrants and facilitating

their individual integration, but so will the country in which they've settled achieve certain benefits as an end result. Education also functions to ameliorate the traumatic situations caused by migration (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2016). Immigrant children can receive this service from formal education institutions and adults from non-formal ones. Adult education aims to cause change in adults' behaviors, thoughts, and actions by providing them with new knowledge and skills. According to Knowles' (1996) theory, adult education planning should be made by considering the interests, needs, and readiness of adults as well as the needs of a society (as cited in Kaya, 2015). In Turkey, adult education is mainly carried out within AECs in order to help adults develop the habits necessary for collective living, cooperation, and team work and to learn Turkish (MoNE, 2019). These two main objectives are also the fundamental education-related motives for ensuring Syrian adult refugees' integration into society. The large mass of Syrians that migrated to Turkey and the uncertainty of any likelihood that they'll return to their homelands has made finding permanent social and legal solutions necessary. Education and employment have grown particularly important, being two sectors where sustainable policies are needed in this process (Babahanoğlu, 2018). The correct and effective management of AECs is critical due to their significant role in regard to realizing the relevant education policies. Likewise, the opinions of the relevant institutions' administrators and instructors on how to integrate the refugees who've been educated in these educational institutions also have great importance.

AECs are strategic units that respond to the society's needs, interact with their surroundings, and affect a wide segment of society (Şişman & Taşdemir, 2008). When considering Katz and Kahn's (1978) open social system theory, AECs as important actors should be aware of the changing social structure and be able to manage the process. On the other hand, according to Blau's (1970) structural differentiation theory, managements need to build an appropriate organizational structure toward unexpected occasions (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003; Vibert, 2004). In other words, building an organizational government that is able to integrate differences for the sake of society's needs, expectations, goals, wishes, and culture has proven to be more effective than organizational management, which has a management approach that does not conform with differences (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). In this context, having emerged as a new problem in the education system, the attempt has been made to solve the integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey through AECs. The aim is to contribute to social justice and equal opportunities in education through AECs to ensure that the Syrian refugees, who are considered a disadvantaged group in society, have open access to education. In parallel with this effort, the level to which refugees' basic needs are met should be considered in order to increase the effectiveness and

efficiency of the training AECs provide. According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory, when considering refugees' needs, first physiological needs (e.g., food and water), followed by safety needs and the needs for belonging and love (e.g., communication, acceptance, belonging to a place) should be met. Otherwise, meeting their learning needs becomes difficult. Simultaneously, meeting education and learning needs mediates and contributes to meeting the adult instructees' other requirements.

The relevant literature shows studies on Syrian refugees' integration process to generally be based on their relationships with the local people (Karasu, 2016). Apak (2014) investigated the integration of Syrian refugees living in Mardin in the context of their socio-demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Many studies (Budak, 2017; Çalışkan, 2019; Kemik et al., 2019) concluded the local people to have negative perceptions and attitudes toward Syrians due to economic and sociocultural factors. Academic papers regarding the role of education in the integration process seem to be generally related to the education of Syrian refugee children between the ages of 0-18 (Levent & Çaylak, 2017; Sakız, 2016; Ünal et al., 2018). Erdem's (2017) research on Syrian refugee instructees' problems with respect to teachers' opinions emphasized the problem of language insufficiency. Moralı (2018) identified the problems encountered in teaching Syrian refugee instructees the Turkish language within the scope of the Project on Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into the Turkish Education System (PIKTES). In addition to language education AECs provide Syrian adults with training that is important to the adaptation process and that contributes to their societal conditions. Only one study (Tamer, 2020) has been accessed in the literature that can be associated with this subject. The need exists for research findings that will provide insight in terms of how to improve the trainings AECs conduct while making decisions regarding Syrian refugees' integration process. At the same time, these types of research findings will enable the experiences in adult education programs to be evaluated in terms of how to increase individuals' active participation in life, support entrepreneurship, create a productive society, and increase people's environmental and societal sensitivity in terms of refugees' adaptation process. Therefore, the issue of refugees' social cohesion and education is important in terms of adult education programs not only in Turkey but also in other countries of the world where refugees live. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the views of AEC administrators and instructors regarding AECs' role in the integration process of the adult Syrian refugees trained in these centers. To this end, answers are sought to the following research questions:

1. What are the needs of Syrian refugees enrolled in AECs during the integration process?
2. What educational problems have been experienced regarding the Syrian refugees enrolled in AECs during the integration process?
3. What do the AECs contribute to the Syrian refugees enrolled there during the integration process?

Method

Research Design

This qualitative study has adopted a phenomenological research design and an inductive analysis approach based on the role AECs have in Syrian adult refugees' integration. Qualitative approaches offer the opportunity to make inferences by examining individual experiences in depth regarding a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In this respect, a researcher attempts to determine the meaning, structure, and essence of the phenomena that emerge through the experiences of the individual or individuals (Christensen et al., 2015). Phenomena appear in a variety of forms such as experiences, events, orientations, concepts, perceptions, and situations in the existing world. Phenomenological studies are also able to offer experiences, results, examples, and explanations that help one better recognize and understand an existing phenomenon (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In addition to being a model preferred for solving complex situations, the phenomenological design enables researchers to go beyond the initial theoretical foundations and concepts by supporting the existing conceptual infrastructure of the research subject (Miles & Huberman, 2016), thereby contributing to the theoretical literature. The phenomenon this study examines involves the experiences of Syrian refugee adult instructees receiving education in public education centers. For this reason, the phenomenological design is used to reveal the opinions of the AEC administrators and instructors, to determine the problems Syrian refugees have had in the adaptation process, and to propose solutions to these problems.

Participants

The study group has been identified as the administrators and instructors who have experience working with Syrian refugees in AECs and were selected using the criterion sampling technique, a purposive sampling method. İzmir Province has AECs in 30 districts. The particular districts with large Syrian refugee populations were first

determined with respect to the relevant data from the Izmir Provincial Immigration Administration. This study consisted of AEC administrators and instructors who work in İzmir Province's Konak, Buca, Bornova, and Karabağlar districts where Syrian immigrants received intensive education in the 2019-2020 academic year. A total of 22 participants voluntarily participated in the study, including four principals, five vice principals, seven certified instructors, and six instructors. The following criteria were used to determine the study group: (1) to have worked as an administrator or instructor at an AEC in any of Izmir's Konak, Buca, Bornova, or Karabağlar districts in which Syrian immigrants receive intensive education during the 2019-2020 academic year, (2) to have experience working with Syrian refugees in an AEC, and (3) to have worked at the AEC for at least a year. Table 1 presents the study group's demographics.

Table 1.

Distribution of the Participants by Demographic Characteristics

Variable	N	%	
Ages	21-30	7	31.81
	31-40	6	27.27
	41-50	8	36.36
	61 and over	1	4.54
Gender	Female	14	63.63
	Male	8	36.36
Duty	Administrator	4	18.18
	Assistant manager	5	22.72
	Certified instructor	6	27.27
	Instructor	7	31.81
Professional seniority	0-5 years	8	36.36
	6-10 years	1	4.54
	11-15 years	3	13.63
	16-20 years	2	9.09
	21+ years	8	36.36

When looking at Table 1, most of the participants are seen to be between the ages of 41 and 50 ($n = 8, 36.36\%$) and to be female ($n = 14, 63.63\%$). Instructors (not certified) are the most prominent ($n = 7, 31.81\%$) in terms of duty. With regard to the participants' professional seniority, the number of employees with 0-5 years of work experience ($n = 8, 36.36\%$) is the same as the number of those with 21+ years of experience ($n = 8, 36.36\%$). The reason for including both AEC administrators and instructors in the study group is that the instructors mostly conduct the program-based and in-class assessments while the AEC administrators are involved in the adult instructees' enrollment process and are able to evaluate the AEC's institutional effectiveness and contributions.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data were collected through semi-structured interview forms. The semi-structured interview technique facilitates the researcher's ability to continue the interview based on pre-prepared questions and to present systematic and comparable information for the research (Karasar, 2014; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Prior to creating the interview form, a literature review was conducted regarding education in AECs and Syrian adult refugees' education and integration processes in order to explore the main problems and their sub-problems. The interview forms used in the qualitative research were prepared by writing easy-to-understand questions, preparing focused questions, asking open-ended questions, avoiding directing the interviewees, avoiding asking multidimensional questions, preparing alternative questions and probes, writing different types of questions, logically arranging the questions, and improving the questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Brookfield, 1992; Patton, 2014). To determine the content validity of the interview form, opinions were taken from two field experts, and the necessary corrections were made in line with the experts' opinions.

The semi-structured form consists of two parts. The first part involves variables such as age, gender, duty, and professional seniority and other personal information about the participants. The second part has three questions related to the main problem of the research and probe questions for each main one. Two questions from the interview form are as follows:

- What do you think are the needs of the Syrian adult refugees attending AECs regarding their integration process?
- What problems have you encountered in the Syrian adult refugees' education?

In order to determine the appropriateness of the interview forms, a pilot trial was carried out in the Konak district's AEC with one instructor and the vice principal. The procedure started with determining the clarity and comprehensibility of the

questions and their ability to analyze the main problem. The interviews took place by making appointments in the relevant institutions where the administrators and instructors work. Each interview took around 40-60 minutes to complete and was recorded with an audio recording device with the participants' permission.

Validity and Reliability

The validity of the present study was ensured by drawing on the validity strategies to be used in qualitative research, as stated by Christensen et al. (2015). Utmost attention was paid to the compatibility of the research questions and data with the theoretical concepts of the main problem in order to ensure theoretical validity. Based on Lincoln and Guba (1985), achieving internal validity (i.e., credibility) was attempted using long in-depth interviews, expert examination, and participant feedback.

In order to determine the content validity of the interview form, two field experts were consulted to make the necessary corrections. During the data collection process, probing questions were used as much as possible so that the participants could express their opinions in detail. The interpretation validity approach was adopted by ensuring that the participants checked the results and comments revealed at the end of the study. During the reporting stage, credibility was also ensured by including participants' direct quotations. Study reliability involves the concept of consistency in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) and was attempted to be provided through the strategy of confirmation analysis (Erlandson et al., 1993). For this purpose, the opinions, comments, and suggestions reached in the research were confirmed with raw data by two academicians who are experts in adult education. In addition, the current situation in the study, the method used, and the data collection and analysis methods have been explained in detail in order to ensure the study's external reliability. Two researchers worked together to examine whether the codes and themes created as a result of the analysis had been organized effectively. The generated codes and themes were presented to the opinion of two experts, and the necessary adjustments were made in line with their suggestions. For calculating the reliability of the research, the reliability formula as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) where $\text{Reliability} = \text{Agreement} / (\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement})$ was used. As a result of the calculation, the agreement rate between the encoders was calculated as .85 for the first question, .90 for the second question, and .88 for the third question. Reliability calculations greater than .70 have been accepted as reliable for this study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data Analysis

As frequently preferred in qualitative research, content analysis has been used to analyze the data, as content analysis provides an in-depth analysis of the collected data and reveals previously unclear themes and dimensions. In this context, similar data in the content analysis were brought together within the framework of certain concepts and themes, and the researchers arranged and interpreted them in a way that the reader can understand. To do this, the data were analyzed in four stages: encoding the data, finding the themes, arranging the codes and themes, and defining and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

After conducting the interviews in the study, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim using the program Microsoft Word. A 250-page dataset was obtained. During the data encoding phase, which is the first step of the content analysis, all the data were first read over and over and encoded so as to form a meaningful whole. Next, similar codes were brought together, and the thematic coding process was carried out. The data were systematically arranged in accordance with the codes and themes that emerged and reported using direct quotations. Table 2 presents the themes that emerged as a result of the analysis of the research data.

Table 2.

Themes Emerging According to Analysis Results

Sub-problems	Themes
The needs of Syrian refugees enrolled in AECs during the integration process	Meeting social needs
	Meeting economic needs
	Meeting educational needs
	Meeting emotional needs
	Meeting their need for self-satisfaction
Educational problems regarding the integration of the Syrian refugees who come to the AECs	Problems regarding instructees
	Problems regarding social processes
	Problems regarding educational processes
	Problems regarding administrative processes

	Contributions to social skills development
AECs' contributions to Syrian refugees' integration process	Economic contributions
	Educational contributions
	Emotional development
	Contributions regarding institutions

According to the views of the AEC administrators and instructors, the themes of meeting social needs, meeting economic needs, meeting educational needs, meeting emotional needs, and meeting their needs for self-satisfaction appear under the heading of the needs of Syrian refugees enrolled in the AECs regarding their integration. According to the administrators' and instructors' opinions, the themes of problems regarding instructees, problems regarding social processes, problems regarding educational processes, and problems regarding administrative processes appear under the second heading of educational problems regarding the integration of the Syrian refugees who come to the AECs. According to the administrators' and instructors' opinions, the themes of contributions to social skills development, economic contributions, educational contributions, emotional development, and contributions regarding institutions appear under the third theme of AECs' contributions to Syrian refugees' integration process.

The data have been systematically arranged with respect to the codes and themes obtained in the research and reported using direct quotations. While presenting the participants' opinions in the findings, each participant has been coded as P1, P2, ..., P22, by taking into account the principle of confidentiality.

Data Collection

The interviews took place at the institution where the relevant administrators and instructors work by making an appointment beforehand. Each interview was completed in 40-60 minutes, and the interviews were recorded using an audio recorder with the participants' permission.

Research Ethics

This research was carried out under the permission of Ege University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee with Decision No. 150260 dated June 25, 2020.

Findings

The data related to the sub-questions of the study have been analyzed with the findings being presented in four stages:

The Needs of Syrian Refugees Enrolled in the AECs Regarding Their Integration

The first sub-question of the study is “What are the needs of Syrian refugees enrolled in the AECs during the integration process?” Figure 1 presents the results obtained in line with this sub-question under five themes: social needs ($f = 46$), economic needs ($f = 30$), educational needs ($f = 23$), emotional needs ($f = 22$), and need for self-satisfaction ($f = 5$).

According to the administrators and instructors, the theme of meeting social needs was emphasized the most among their opinions regarding what Syrian refugees need during the integration process. This theme includes the issues of language learning ($f = 18$), establishing relationships with people ($f = 12$), achieving social cohesion ($f = 9$), and communicating to express oneself in regard to status of the immigrants attending AECs. The prerequisite for meeting social needs is surely the need to learn the language spoken in the country of immigration. A few excerpts from some of the participant’s opinions on this issue are as follows:

Wherever they go, they have language problems. Simply put, they cannot help their children attend school in any way. Aside from this, the most vital things they say are not understood at all... The first thing they think of for accelerating the integration process is to learn Turkish. That’s why they come to the courses. (P10)

They cannot learn any profession without learning a language. They want to learn a language first, and after learning the language, we direct them to the professions. (P4)

Because they live here, they have the goal of learning Turkish. This is one of their most important needs. (P21)

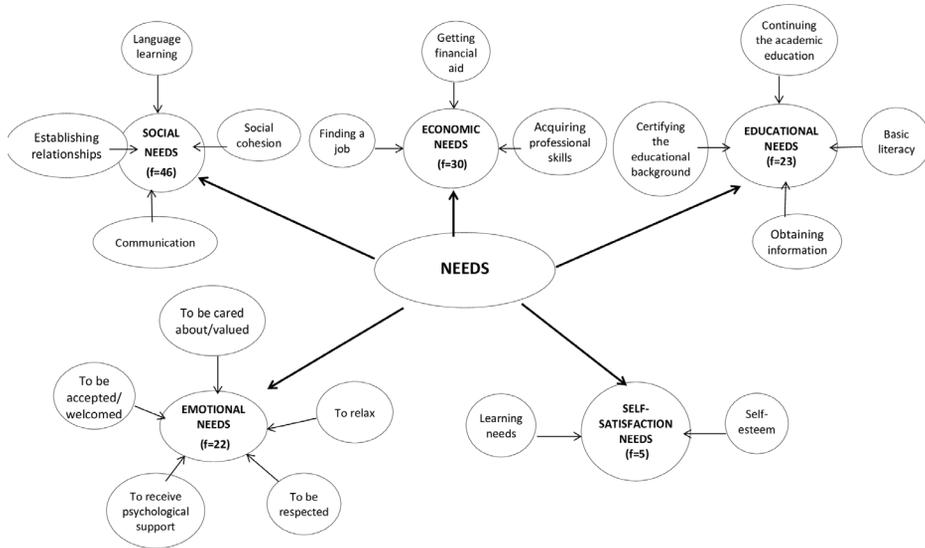


Figure 1. *The needs of Syrian Refugees attending AECs during the integration process.*

The participants in particular stated language learning ($f = 18$), being refugees' primary need, to also be necessary for learning a new profession and ensuring social integration. The participants additionally explained that learning the daily spoken language is a priority for receiving health services and obtaining information on any subject, as well as for administrative and institutional (e.g., ministerial, municipal) processes. The most emphasized issue associated with the theme of meeting social needs is the need to build relationships between people ($f = 12$). The participants stated that the immigrants who attend the courses try to get together with others in order to socialize because they often have a limited number of people around them. They also emphasized WhatsApp groups where the instructees and instructors are members to be beneficial and to be used for not just lesson purposes but also for arranging meetings after class. One participant's view on this theme is as follows;

There is another reason. For example, they want to get together and socialize. They find each other. It's the social environment. For example, now a social circle has formed. They relate to each other. We already have WhatsApp groups that we have set up for teaching purposes. They can also meet with each other even after the course is over. (P4)

The theme of meeting economic needs is about refugees' meeting their needs with respect to getting financial aid ($f = 15$), finding a job ($f = 8$), and acquiring professional skills ($f = 7$). The participants also underlined the per course payments made to boost participation in the courses, especially regarding the projects carried out in cooperation with the European Union and the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning. In this context, the issue of getting financial aid gains importance under the theme of economic needs. According to the participants, the assistance paid in some courses helps refugees meet their basic needs, as they are concerned about earning a living. The fact that the courses generate financial income encourages participation and can be seen in what they choose during the course registration stage. An excerpt from one participant's views are as follows.

Syrians have financial concerns. Some of our courses are financially supported. As such, they get paid each day they attend.... I mean, they both benefit from their aim to learn the language and from getting some money... Their greatest needs are related to maintaining daily life and meeting their economic needs. (P10)

The theme of meeting educational needs is related to fulfilling the needs of the Syrian refugees' attending AECs regarding continuing academic education ($f = 8$), certifying their education ($f = 7$), getting basic literacy/competence ($f = 5$), and obtaining information/getting guided ($f = 3$). According to the opinions of the administrators and instructors, some Syrians had either been unable to receive education due to the war, their education had been interrupted, or they need to certify their existing educational background and applied to an AEC to validate their relevant documents in Turkey. Another excerpt of one of the participants' views is as follows:

Since they want to get a driver's license, they need certificates of equivalence. We have instructees who've attended school in Syria, but they have difficulties getting a driver's license or applying for a job because their documents are not valid in our country. If they have already graduated from a high school, then they come to us to get certificates of equivalence. (P1)

On the other hand, some participants stated that some refugees are unable to even read or write in their own language or have never gone to school and that they try to help them gain basic literacy skills. The participants also emphasized that, by the same token, some refugees intend to pursue an advanced academic education. An excerpt of one participant's views is as follows: "Those with a basic educational background or with different future designs may choose to follow such paths... Their aim is to be better equipped while going abroad" (P2). In addition, some refugees

were determined to have already graduated from a university in their own country, yet they enrolled in AEC courses with the desire to continue their academic education because their diplomas are invalid in Turkey.

The theme of meeting emotional needs is about meeting the needs of refugees enrolled in AEC courses in order to be accepted/welcome ($f = 7$), to be cared about/valued ($f = 5$), to relax ($f = 5$), to receive psychological support ($f = 3$), and to be respected/appreciated ($f = 2$). The participants indicated the refugees to need acceptance and a sense of being welcomed to their new place of residence. They also emphasized that Syrian refugees are in need of emotional support because they have been traumatized by being forced to leave their country. An excerpt from one participant's views is as follows:

We are talking about a group of people that changed their country, experienced a great trauma, left a decent environment with a financially and emotionally established order in their homeland and country, and came here to make a new start. They have emotional needs; they primarily come to AECs to be accepted and welcomed. (P14)

Additionally, meeting the need to relax stands out, as their new lifestyles were not at all desired. In this regard, the participants stated that some female instructees live together with several families, and this crowded family structure leads to problems. According to the participants, the instructees likely come to the courses to relax and get away from home. In other words, AEC courses help instructees meet some of their positive emotional needs such as laughing, having fun, and relaxing. One excerpt regarding a participants' views on this subject are as follows:

Some of our female instructees live with two or three families. They feel bored, especially at home. They want to breathe, relax, and socialize. Frankly, they come here so that they can talk to instructees and socialize. Sometimes going out offers them a real change. (P6)

The theme of need for self-satisfaction is directly related to the Syrian refugees' need to learn and be an independent individual/gain self-esteem as they attend AECs. According to the participants, some instructees attend the courses just to learn new things, do a different activity, or provide satisfaction. Here is an excerpt from the relevant views:

I mostly hear my female instructees say, "When I come to the course, I learn a lot. There is a change in my mind. When I go home, I ask my husband, 'Did you know this, I learned this, did you know about this?' I really like it," they say. (P6)

Some participants emphasized the instructees' needs related to self-esteem. In this respect, they stated that the instructees are able to achieve something and want to see what they have learned; having a relevant certificate provides satisfaction and motivates them in life.

Educational Problems Encountered with Syrian Refugees Enrolled in AECs Regarding Their Integration

The second sub-question of the study is "What educational problems have been experienced regarding Syrian refugees enrolled in AECs during the integration process?" As a result of the analyses, Figure 2 provides the four themes determined as follows: problems regarding instructees ($f = 54$), problems regarding social processes ($f = 43$), problems regarding educational processes ($f = 33$), and problems regarding administrative processes ($f = 22$).

Among the themes related to the educational problems experienced with Syrian instructees enrolled at AECs, the theme of problems regarding instructees was emphasized the most. This theme includes absenteeism and dropping out of the course ($f = 18$), failure to comply with classroom rules ($f = 18$), economic hardships ($f = 10$), lack of motivation and willingness ($f = 6$), unaware of responsibilities ($f = 4$), practicing what has been learned ($f = 3$), psychological problems ($f = 3$), and problems with self-care ($f = 2$). Syrian immigrant female instructees were determined to stop coming to the courses or fail to attend often because their husbands don't allow them or they have a lot of children but no one to take care of them; the male instructees drop out for other reasons such as intense work conditions and no regular work hours. However, both groups tend to stop coming to the courses or do not attend regularly because they can't afford the transportation fees.

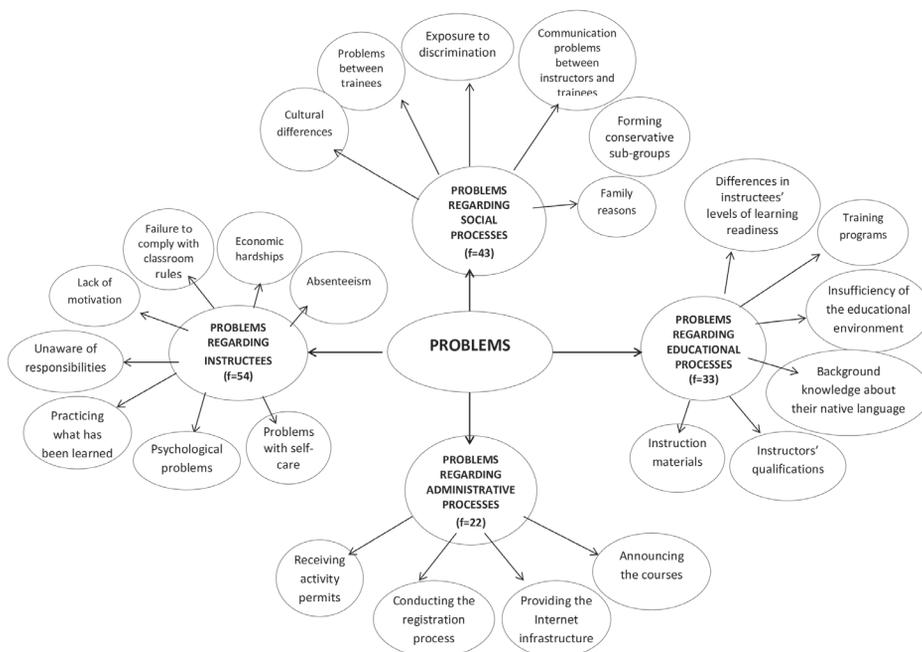


Figure 2. Problems encountered in the education of Syrian refugees at AECs.

Examples of the participants' relevant opinions are as follows:

The biggest problem is absenteeism. They may suddenly stop coming and want to attend another course. Because they are very mobile in terms of residence, we start the courses with 25 people, but finish with 10 or 8. (P2)

Absenteeism among the adults is due to such reasons as pregnancy or the husband being unwilling to let them work or enroll in courses. (P5)

Another problem the participants mentioned by involve economic hardships, indicating that the immigrants have to work, lack financial power, and have high financial concerns. Here is one excerpt from a participant:

When they first arrive, they are broke. They have nowhere to live, no place. They do not speak Turkish; they have many children... They sometimes even have no clothes to wear. For two years now, we have been trying to help many of them. For example, we donate clothes and food. (P6)

On the other hand, the Syrian instructees' lack of motivation and awareness of responsibility was emphasized as another problematic aspect. Problems regarding personalities and lifestyles, as well as the lack of any sense of responsibility regarding

the lessons was stated to be observable in the classes. The participants mentioned the problems caused by literate and illiterate groups of instructees attending the same training, or instructees having low or disparate academic levels. One participant said, "They are academically deficient. Their developmental levels are also different. We have difficulties because they have different levels regarding readiness to learn." (P8). Some participants additionally emphasized immigrants' lack of motivation and practice as a instructee-related problem.

The theme of problems regarding social processes is related to understanding cultural differences ($f = 13$), exposure to discrimination ($f = 8$), family reasons ($f = 8$), communication problems between instructors and instructees ($f = 7$), and forming conservative sub-groups ($f = 4$). The participants stressed cultural differences to exist between the local and refugee groups in terms of social processes such as not want mixed education, causing certain problems in terms of attitudes and behaviors in class, or expressing dislike and unwillingness toward accepting Turkish culture. The relevant opinion of one participant is as follows: "There was an integration problem regarding cultural differences. For example, they spoke too loud in class, so loud that it would disturb those in the other classrooms" (P22). Another participant said, "There is a traditional understanding in their education systems. They often come to us as people who have grown up with very harsh methods like being beaten and punished. They've asked, 'Why don't you guys beat us?'" (P8). Another problem is that immigrants object to mixed education in classes. One participant said, "We had a group of 20 men. One instructee's wife and sister wanted to attend the course, but no matter what I did, I could not convince him. He just didn't want his wife in that group" (P14). The participants also stated that refugees are exposed to discrimination by non-refugee instructees and that non-refugee instructees are prejudiced, judge the situation from a political perspective, cannot see the victimization, and react toward immigrants so that even the instructors feel the extent of exclusion. The participants were of the opinion that the refugees also avoided such reactions by forming their own small groups, acting with the psychology of being a minority. One participant's view on this issue is as follows: "Local people are somewhat reactive. They do not engage in dialogue in the same playing field. They also act toward them with an excluding minority psychology. I feel that exclusion." (P19). In addition, a number of opinions were expressed regarding the emergence of problems related to Syrian refugees' family reasons influencing their education. The participants pointed out that pregnancy, child care, spousal restrictions, spousal dependence, and domestic violence frequently prevent women in particular from attending the courses and that women's roles in the family prevent them from adapting to education. As an apparent example of this situation, one participant expressed their opinion saying, "Actually,

there is emotional violence at home. An instructee of mine told me yesterday that she divorced her husband due to violence. There is too much domestic violence” (P18). Another problem regarding social processes at AECs, particularly in relation to communication problems between instructors and instructees, is that the instructors have to manage the training process through an instructee who can speak Turkish at least a little from among the group, or through an interpreter. Another problem regarding social processes, as expressed by the participants, is that immigrants fear assimilation, and consequently, tend to form closed subgroups.

The theme of the problems regarding educational processes is related to differences in instructees’ levels of learning readiness ($f = 10$), training program ($f = 6$), insufficiency of the educational environment ($f = 5$), refugees’ background knowledge about their native language ($f = 5$), instructors’ qualifications ($f = 4$), and instruction materials ($f = 4$) at the AECs. The participants clearly indicated some of the instructees in the AEC courses to have even received no previous education, be illiterate, or be unable to verify their educational status, resulting in problems regarding enrollment and education procedures. One participant said, “There are many education-related problems. We have to teach instructees who have different educational backgrounds in the same class. Teaching them together at the same time is very difficult” (P18). As another concern, the participants stated applying a blended model in the training programs, with some days planned as face-to-face education and others as distance education; however, they also believe face-to-face education to be more effective, despite the inadequacy of available teaching materials. Meanwhile, other participants also stated the course length to be so short that the course would end before instructees could fully improve their literacy levels. Some opinions were also found to state the educational environments to be insufficient at the AECs. Similar drawbacks are related to such things as insufficient number of AEC classrooms and authorized institutions being unwilling to open courses elsewhere, in addition to instructees being reluctant to go to course center beyond their neighborhoods.

The theme of problems regarding administrative processes is related to announcing the courses ($f = 11$), providing the Internet infrastructure ($f = 6$), conducting the registration process ($f = 3$), and receiving activity permits ($f = 2$). The administrators and instructors stated the Syrian refugees to have been insufficiently informed about the courses and the AECs to cooperate with institutions such as the United Nations, the Turkish Red Crescent, and the Association for Refugees in order to have access to more instructees, that the announcements are concentrated in certain regions, that some regions cannot be reached in any way, and that they try to communicate via

text messages or to make use of the leaflets given to schools and local administrators, i.e., mukhtars. One participant's opinion on this subject is as follows: "We are having problems with registration in courses. They come to PECs. Here, they don't know who to talk to, and they feel uneasy, which also creates a problem. They often arrive only after the courses have started. They hear the news about the courses more from each other." (P12). In addition, a problem has been detected in providing internet infrastructure though it is a prerequisite for the blended education program currently being implemented by administrators and instructors at AECs. Besides, the instructors stated that they often have difficulty in obtaining permission from the AEC principals whenever they want to have the instructees do activities with different methods and techniques.

The Contribution of AECs in the Integration Process of Syrian Refugees

The third sub-question of the research is "What do the AECS contribute to the Syrian refugees enrolled there during the integration process." As a result of the analysis, five themes were identified as contributions to social skills development ($f = 39$), economic contributions ($f = 20$), educational contributions ($f = 19$), emotional development ($f = 13$), and institutional contributions ($f = 12$). The themes related to this research question are presented in Figure 3.

"*Contribution to the development of social skills*" is the most emphasized theme by the AEC administrators and instructors, among the themes related to the contribution of AECs in the integration process of Syrian refugees. This theme covers the subjects of "*language learning* ($f=14$), *ensuring social integration* ($f=11$), *communication* ($f=5$), *establishing relationships* ($f=5$), *raising awareness about a new lifestyle* ($f=4$)". The participants were of the opinion that its function to solve the language problem, which is the most basic requirement in the integration process, is emphasized as the most important contribution of AECs to Syrian refugees. They further stated that Syrian refugees who learn Turkish seem to start achieving social integration, to develop the sense of belonging to the society and most importantly, meet the prerequisite for getting a job, earning a living, acquiring a profession, or demonstrating their existing professional competence, which are all their basic needs.

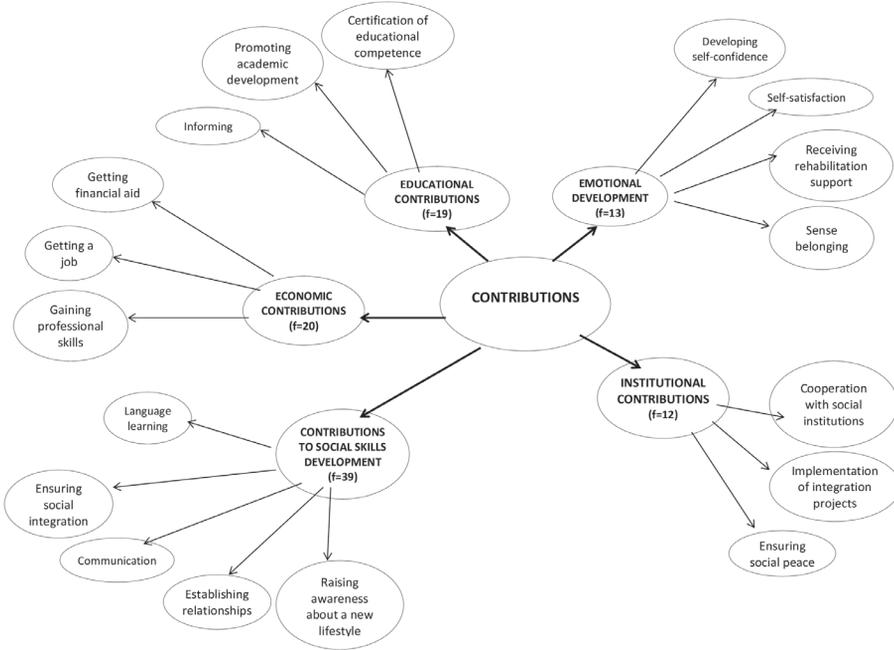


Figure 3. *The contribution of AECs in the integration process of Syrian refugees.*

An example of a participant view on this issue is as follows:

First off, you learn a language... You have to speak the language of that country, I mean, when you go out on the street, when you shop, when you chat to people. And, the only institution that can teach you the language and provide this service free of charge is an adult education center. (P6)

The participants expressed common views regarding AECs' contributions to social integration. They especially emphasized building more communication and relationships through learning Turkish to contribute to refugees' getting to know Turkish culture, integrating with it, and learning social rules and manners. One participant on this issue said:

They take all the necessary steps to ensure their integration with the society with the support of adult education centers. Otherwise, it would be very difficult for them to integrate as the language they learn on the street will only get them so far. Their social circles are predominantly made up of refugees like themselves. (P2)

In the context of AECs' contributions to communication on behalf of social skill development, the participants drew attention to the importance of the courses in Syrian refugees' lives for maintaining their daily life in hospitals, banks, and markets. One participant said:

They even asked me about a neighborly relationship. They want to take a step, but cannot do it since they do not speak Turkish. They have a desire to join the society. In fact, courses contribute to both meeting their own needs and creating an environment for socializing. (P21)

The theme of economic contributions includes gaining professional skills ($f = 11$), getting a job ($f = 5$), and getting financial aid ($f = 4$). The participants stated that AECs opened courses in cooperation with institutions such as the Turkish Red Crescent, Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), and Provincial Directorates of Agriculture in order to provide the Syrian refugees with the opportunity to gain vocational skills. Courses such as cooking, hairdressing, bread making, tailoring, pastry making, computer literacy, and seafood processing were emphasized to have been opened and Syrian instructees to have intense demand for such courses. One participant stated the following in terms of the courses' contributions toward the employment of refugees who gain professional skills thanks to the AEC courses documenting their skills with certificates:

They are learning new professions. For example, we opened a bread making course and a seafood processing course. After the course, they were placed in a job within the scope of İŞKUR with the documents they had received or they got a job by themselves or opened their own business. (P22)

Also, some participants pointed out that refugee instructees are paid within the framework of the joint projects carried out, which they regard as an advantage.

The theme of educational contribution includes informing ($f = 7$), promoting academic development ($f = 6$), and certification of educational competence ($f = 6$). The participants stated AECs to be one of the first state institutions to which refugees apply for information in Turkey. The participants also mentioned providing information about the courses, handing out brochures, guiding economically challenged instructees to apply to the proper institutions, and informing them about getting work and institutions that provide employment, as well as enlightening them about violence against women, family planning, and legal issues by inviting a lawyer to speak. One participant said:

We distributed leaflets about a course concerning the prevention of violence against women. Additionally, disinfectants, masks, and gloves were handed out due to the COVID virus. We also informed them about how to get vaccinated. (P6)

Likewise, another participant said:

We invited a lawyer to inform them about their legal problems such as shelter, divorce procedures, and obtaining identity cards in our country, to which they were very pleased. Disabled people learned about their rights, and they constantly express their appreciation. (P10)

In addition, some participants stated AEC courses' contributions in terms of enabling the Syrian refugees to complete their education that they had had to stop while in Syria. Meanwhile, AECs' contributions were also emphasized in terms of meeting the need to have a language certificate, to certify their existing training, or to certify their newly acquired professional skills while applying for a job somewhere.

The theme of emotional development covers the issues of developing self-confidence ($f = 5$), self-satisfaction ($f = 5$), receiving rehabilitation support ($f = 3$), and a sense belonging ($f = 2$). The participants stated how AECs had contributed to the refugees' self-esteem by developing their capacity to express themselves, making them feel more comfortable and safer about their problems, and helping them see that are able to sustain their lives without having to be dependent on others. One participant said, "There were individuals who were very socially introverted with no self-awareness. We have seen that women increase their self-confidence and want to enter business life and that men change their perspective a little" (P11). The Syrians refugee who saw that they had achieved something with regard to their self-satisfaction needs in relation to emotional development were emphasized to be happy and to believe themselves to be capable of self-realization. In this regard, the AECs' importance in regard to providing both guidance services and rehabilitation support as a natural return of the course process was especially highlighted. The Syrian immigrants were also reported to have received certain types of therapy in the courses and their psychological well-being to have improved so that they could overcome traumatic experiences more easily. AECs were further indicated to cooperate with the Turkish Red Crescent and Health Directorates in order to provide services with the support of psychologists and nurses on certain days. One relevant participant view was stated as follows:

Once there was an instructee who used to not go out of the house and also used to take many drugs. He could not meet with his neighbors, but now he has friends. We have seen instructees who are now reducing their medication intake. There are instructees who say, "It feels like I am receiving therapy in the course, I am getting treatment." The instructees feel lighter and more relaxed. (P22)

Moreover, many participants stated that the AECs contribute to overcoming the problems of emotional deprivation and not belonging to a place due to forced migration.

The issues of cooperation with social institutions ($f = 5$), implementation of integration projects ($f = 5$), and ensuring social peace ($f = 2$) are gathered as AEC functions under the theme of institutional contributions. Due to AECs being institutions where cooperation is in the forefront, their contribution to the integration process is fully emphasized. In that respect, the participants drew attention to the following aspects: AECs cooperate with schools and municipalities in order to provide the necessary classrooms to open the courses, AECs inform the refugees about courses by cooperating with the local administrators, particularly in districts with a large refugee population, in order to reach them. AECs also get into contact with the Directorate General of Migration Management to resolve immigrant-related problems and apply to the Turkish Red Crescent in order to help meet the refugees' financial needs. AECs also are in touch and cooperate with provincial health organizations in order to provide the refugees with public health and psychosocial support. AECs cooperate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Association of Refugees in order to reach immigrants and cooperate with İŞKUR to provide employment. AECs help the Syrian refugees gain professional skills and carry out joint projects with international organizations such as UNDP and European Commission within the framework of EU projects. The participants particularly underlined AECs' contributions with regard to their taking a role in realizing projects prepared for integrating immigrants. One participant said:

Although different institutions carry out a variety of projects, the adult education centers literally work in the field. Due to adult education centers' specific procedures, we keep absenteeism records in the adult education center's system. Their allowances are paid based on their absenteeism there. Adult education centers offer great contributions with respect to field studies. (P11)

In addition, the remarkable role that AECs play has always been emphasized in regard to their contribution to social peace. An excerpt from one participant's view on this issue is as follows: "If they don't get a job and earn money, they will somehow get involved in crime, and the refugee problem will turn into a much more dire situation than it is today" (P2). AECs were also stated to have consequently made integrating the refugees into society, preventing the formation of ghetto neighborhoods, and reducing crime rates in society possible and to contribute to production and employment by enabling immigrants to gain professional skills.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

This study has aimed to examine the role of AECs regarding the integration process of Syrian refugees based on the views of administrators and instructors. The purpose of determining AEC administrators' and instructors' opinions was primarily to determine their views based on their program and classroom experiences. Secondly, the study aimed to evaluate the experiences of AEC administrators as they interact with adult instructees during the enrollment process and try to ensure AECs' institutional effectiveness and contributions.

In relation to the needs of the Syrian refugees enrolled in AECs, the issue of social needs as shaped around the needs of language learning, establishing relationships and communication, and social integration were found to have been given importance. According to the findings, the expectations of gaining professional skills, getting a job, and receiving financial aid from projects, which correspond to Syrian refugees' *economic needs* for participating in AECs. The factors that lead Syrian refugees to AEC courses involve their need to certify their education or to complete their academic development due to their education having been mostly incomplete as a result of the war. The finding in the literature regarding Syrian refugees wanting to socialize with local people by attending language courses (Demir, 2015; Dugan & Gürbüz, 2018; Dursun, 2017) conforms with the findings of the current research. At the same time, many studies have found resolving the problem of not knowing the language to be necessary for integrating Syrian instructees into school (Özmen, 2020; Sarmini et al., 2020). According to Zhou (2001), many refugees lack sufficient skills for participating in work life in the country from which they came and have language problems. Also, the refugees who learn Turkish upon receiving education are likely to boost their access to work and social opportunities (Green, 2011). Barratt and Huba (1994) emphasized the self-confidence of those who've developed a foreign language during the adaptation process to a different culture to be higher than that of individuals with less language development. The emphasis if *social needs* as more essential than economic needs in the present study may seem to denote that the refugees coming to AECs do not correspond entirely to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. However, the refugees' basic social skills such as living in a new country, getting a job, and communicating can be assumed to mediate their ability to meet their basic needs. Therefore, in line with the literature and the findings of this research, the priority of language learning may depend on the abilities of the refugees who encounter a new culture to survive, integrate into the new society, and maintain their daily work at a minimum level. From another point of view, the language learning rate may increase refugees' ability to meet their needs to survive, adapt to society, and carry out their daily work.

As a result of the data analysis on the problems faced by the Syrian refugees who attend AEC courses, the themes were determined as *problems regarding instructees, problems regarding social processes, problems regarding educational processes, and problems regarding administrative processes*. Among these themes, *problems regarding instructees* stood out the most. Absenteeism, economic deficiency, non-compliance with class rules, and lack of motivation were determined to be mentioned the most for the theme of problems regarding instructees. This was followed by the problems that stem from cultural differences arising in relation to the theme of problems regarding social processes. First of all, when examining the literature in line with the theme of problems regarding instructees, Bozan (2014) stated that Syrian refugee students often fail to attend due to economic hardships and having to work to earn their living. On the other hand, Tanrıku (2017) found the economic deficiency of Syrian families to be the most fundamental problem constituting a barrier to education. Secondly, the theme of problems regarding social processes is related to the codes of understanding cultural differences, exposure to discrimination, family reasons, instructor-instructee communication problems, and the formation of closed-off subgroups. A number of studies in the literature are found to have revealed immigrants' exposure to discrimination in social processes due to the attitudes of the local population of the new regions where refugees have settled to result in the emergence of closed-off sub-groups and to stand out as a problem (Deniz & Etlan, 2009). Karasu (2016) stated that Syrian immigrants have a significant impact on the urban structure in terms of social, cultural, and economic aspects, and these effects are perceived as disturbing by the settled population, which causes problems and conflicts. Similarly, Ekinci (2015) found Turkish citizens to have the opinion that Syrian immigrants violate social morality. Some studies (Konda, 2016; Yıldırım et al., 2017) reported Syrian refugees to be aware of the negative perceptions toward them and to feel excluded, as well as to tend to form subgroups within themselves. In addition, studies (Miller, 2009; Yılmaz, 2015) have similarly reported Syrian immigrants to experience communication problems with their friends and instructors in educational environments due to not knowing Turkish, which also reduces the efficiency of their educational process. Şahin's (2012) study emphasized a lack of facilities, insufficient number of qualified teachers, and insufficient duration of trainings as the priority issues with respect to educating refugees. The reason why theme of problems regarding instructees stands out in this study may be due to the increase in instructees' individual behavioral problems due to war trauma, forced migration, economic hardships, and failure to integrate into the new culture, not to mention the participants' feeling the difficulty of coming up with solutions.

In terms of AECs' contributions to Syrian refugees' integration process, the themes were determined as contributions to social skills development, economic contributions, educational contributions, emotional development, and institutional contributions. Among these themes, language learning, social adaptation, and establishing communication and relationships stood out the most under the theme of contributions to social skills development. Social integration has been emphasized to accelerate for Syrian refugees who learn the language by attending the courses of the country in which they've settled. At this stage, AECs are seen to be aware of the changing social structure according to Katz and Kahn's (1978) open social system theory and to have taken the steps required to respond to societal needs through the courses for Syrian refugees. As educational organizations, AECs are structures that serve by interacting with the social structure. While the education process in AECs is carried out through interactions with the environment, taking the instructees' needs into account reflects positively on the process. Moreover, according to Blau's (1970) structural differentiation theory, organizations should be aware of the problems existing in a society and build their administrative mentality according to the social differentiations when seeking solutions to social problems. In this context, creating a supportive environment for the work of AECs regarding Syrian refugees can contribute to their acculturation process.

Other significant findings from the current study include the economic contributions of AECs by creating job opportunities for refugees after the language courses and vocational skills courses as well as AECs' contributions to emotional development, such as individuals' self-confidence developing once, they've received a certain level of education, learned the language of the society in which they have settled, integrated into the society, and noticed that they have achieved something. AECs also were mentioned to contribute to developing self-fulfillment, self-satisfaction, and a sense of belonging to the society, and AEC's joint projects with different organizations also contribute to the integration of refugees. As Kantzara (2011) stated, social integration is the glue that holds society together, and education is its cement. AECs can thus be assumed to have high levels of contributions. The importance social acceptance has to Syrian refugees is supported by a number of research studies (Karasu, 2016; Konda, 2016; Yıldırım et al., 2017). In a similar sense, the reason for the theme of social skills development standing out the most in this study can be concluded as follows: The Syrian refugees who attend the courses at AECs leave their isolated environment, learn the language of the country they have settled in, and establish communications and relationships, which appear to contributed to developing their basic social skills and to meeting the need for effectiveness in the outside world.

When viewed in a general international framework, the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes gained at school in all countries of the world may become useless after 10-15 years, and school education may be insufficient in terms of the qualified workforce required for development. The changes in information management have increased as a result of developments in information technologies, the changing nature of occupations, the emergence of new professions, and the increase in unemployment (Altunay & Bakır, 2021). In line with these transformations, a great need exists for adult education in human life and for adult education institutions to assume roles. Similarly, a need exists for adult education institutions to play an important role in the lives of refugees. In Turkey, which hosts millions of Syrian refugees, some of the Syrian refugees under temporary protection status have acquired Turkish citizenship, while others continue to move toward Europe (Apak, 2014). The social cohesion and education of adult refugees are significant issues not only for Turkey but also for other countries of the world. In this process, adult education programs for refugees have begun to be carried out in Turkey. The role AECs have in the adaptation process of Syrian refugees is important in terms of maintaining lifelong adult education, developing human capital, and having a democratic society. Suggestions based on the research findings obtained in this direction are given below.

Because the Syrian refugees' most significant need appears to be related to social needs, Turkish learning should be supported by conducting field research for the language learning problem that prevents Syrian refugees from communicating (e.g., mobile teachers, language teaching at home). Immigration policies can be implemented on a regional basis in order to ensure social integration and to encourage the refugees to stop leading closed-off lives in groups by themselves. Because the theme of problems regarding instructees also stands out among the problems Syrian refugees face, the number of vocational courses can be increased to evaluate the educational status of the instructees and to enable them to gain professional skills for getting employed. Psychological support services can be provided to Syrian instructees to reduce the traumatic consequences of war. In terms of the contributions toward Syrian immigrants in the integration process, the topics under the theme of social skills development appear to be the most prominent; as such, activities (e.g., cultural tours) can be planned during or after the course hours at AECs. In addition, activities such as exhibitions or organizations for cultural cuisines where Syrian refugees are able to demonstrate their own culture could be organized in order to allay their fears of assimilation.

The codes of creating the Internet infrastructure and announcing courses as covered under the theme of problems regarding administrative processes and relate to the

problems in the integration process of Syrian refugees in terms of lack of financing. At the same time, the code of economic deficiency under the theme of problems with instructees also includes the problem of financing regarding the courses opened for refugees. For this reason, AECs can maintain their collaborations with the official institutions, local organizations, and NGOs that will provide the necessary financing. By cooperating with the EU and international organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO, developing projects, and ensuring the sustainability of such projects, financial resources can be provided to the country and thereby reduce the financial burden on the state. The instructors who will teach refugee instructees can be provided with in-service trainings such as inclusive education and pedagogy training for the sake of sensitivity to cultural values, enabling the instructors to gain multicultural pedagogical competencies. In order to ensure that the immigrants are informed about the courses, collaborations with previous AEC graduates as a reserve audience can occur, and course announcements can be increased through different media sources and mukhtars [local administrators]. Particular spaces for child care can be arranged at course centers to prevent absenteeism and dropping out of the courses due to female instructees' childcare issues.

Further quantitative studies can be conducted using a mixed methods design to investigate the attitudes of principals and instructors working in AECs toward refugee Syrians. A similar study can be carried out to reveal the solutions to integration problems through AEC employees and refugee instructees in other regions and provinces of Turkey.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the content analysis of the data collected with semi-structured interview forms based on the qualitative approach. In addition, the study is also limited to the administrators and instructors working in the adult education centers in İzmir, Turkey in 2019-2020.

Ethics Committee Approval

This study was conducted with the approval of Ege University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board, (Decision No. 150260, dated 25/06/2020).

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest with respect to the research.

Contributions of the Authors

All authors contributed equally to the study.

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