

The Acculturation and Adaptation of Syrian Refugee Students: A Systematic Review of the Literature

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Abstract

In the contemporary landscape, we confront the global refugee crisis, a complex phenomenon rooted in a confluence of political, economic, and social factors. Refugees are compelled to immerse themselves in unfamiliar cultures, often markedly distinct from their places of origin. As they navigate the intricacies of integrating into novel social and cultural milieus, the concepts of acculturation and adaptation assume paramount significance, particularly within the sphere of education. The primary objective of our review paper is to provide a meticulous and systematic examination of academic studies undertaken to illuminate the experiences and outcomes of the acculturation and adaptation processes among Syrian refugee students in Turkey. To accomplish this, we conducted comprehensive keyword searches across ten English-language databases and three Turkish-language databases. In the initial sweep of the literature, we identified a total of 591 pertinent studies. Subsequently, following rigorous scrutiny, we selected and included 14 full-text articles, authored in both English and Turkish, spanning the period from 2011 to 2022, for our analysis. These fourteen articles were assessed and reported in accordance with the PRISMA criteria. Our analysis of the available sources revealed that language proficiency emerged as the most pivotal variable influencing educational outcomes and adaptation to the host culture. Indeed, our findings underscore the pivotal role that educational institutions play in facilitating the acculturation and adaptation of Syrian refugee students.

Keywords: Syrian refugee students; acculturation; education; Syria; Turkey

Introduction

The global landscape is witnessing a rapid escalation in displaced populations, primarily attributable to ongoing conflicts and pervasive insecurities. Remarkably, more than half of these displaced individuals are children and youth, as reported by the UNHCR in 2020. This demographic is acutely vulnerable, given that their displacement occurs during critical phases of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, as elucidated by Ellis et al. in 2016. The resettlement process, characterised by its mix of opportunities and uncertainties in accessing resources, poses particular challenges for children and young people, a point corroborated by Reed et al. in 2012 and Adams & Kivlighan III in 2019. Furthermore, refugees often endure prolonged stays in different countries or within refugee camps before achieving permanent resettlement, adding another layer of complexity to their experiences, as documented in the Global Trends Report on Forced Displacement in 2017 (World, 2018).

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It is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that all children possess the unassailable right to education, a right of even greater import for refugee children whose educational opportunities have been curtailed or disrupted due to the harsh and challenging conditions they face, as emphasised by Nho et al. in 2019. The journey of refugee children and youth is frequently marked by multiple losses and traumatic experiences during migration, as observed in studies by Koyama & Chang (2019) and Cerna (2019). Consequently, this group often encounters heightened difficulties in resettlement, acculturation, and adaptation, a notion corroborated by the works of Berry & Sam (1997) and Sheikh & Anderson (2018).

Turkey has emerged as a significant host for refugees originating from Syria, whom the ongoing civil war has displaced. Of the 13 million Syrians who have left their homeland, approximately 3.7 million now reside in Turkey, and a substantial portion of this population falls within the education-age group (5-18 years), numbering around 1.4 million. Notably, as of June 8, 2021, the Ministry of National Education reported that 938,138 Syrian students were enrolled in Turkish schools, indicating that roughly 67% of Syrian children and youth are actively pursuing their education (Number of Syrians in Turkey May 2022, 2022). In the Turkish legal context, displaced individuals are classified as immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, or persons under temporary protection. For this study, individuals under temporary protection, specifically Syrian students, are considered refugee students.

It is imperative to ensure early access to education for refugee children, a proposition underscored by Morrice et al. in 2020. The time spent in education plays a pivotal role in the acquisition of academic skills, the formation of social relationships, and the process of adapting to a new culture. Indeed, a cyclical relationship exists between education, acculturation, and adaptation, as expounded by Sheikh and Anderson in 2018. This study seeks synthesise existing research that sheds light on the educational, acculturation, and adaptation experiences of Syrian refugee children in Turkey. Through a systematic analysis, it aims to assess the intricate interplay between acculturation, adaptation, and education. The findings of this study hold relevance for professionals in the field and policymakers alike.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 delineates the interconnections between education, acculturation, and adaptation, as discerned from the extant research literature. Section 3 outlines the materials and methods employed in this study, encompassing the search strategy, screening and inclusion criteria, data extraction, and other pertinent elements. Section 4 presents the primary findings of the study, while Section 5 engages in a discussion of these findings. Lastly, Section 6 offers concluding remarks and discusses the broader implications of the study.

Education, acculturation and adaptation

In recent discourse, there has been a growing recognition of the crucial role played by early access to educational opportunities for the holistic development of individuals, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and intellectual facets (Morrice et al., 2020). Commencing formal education for refugee children is instrumental in expediting their process of integration into the host culture, a concept highlighted by Masten and Narayan in 2012. Education serves as a means to mitigate the traumatic experiences faced by refugee children, which can have profound and long-lasting effects, as posited by Patrick and Ijah in 2012. The formal education of refugee children assumes paramount importance in fostering their psychological



well-being, acculturation, social and cultural adaptation, competence, and skills, an idea supported by the scholarship of Sheikh and Anderson in 2018 and Watkins et al. in 2016. Consequently, education emerges as a pivotal determinant in the acculturation and adaptation of refugee children, a notion corroborated by the works of Berry (1997), Motti-Stefanidi and Masten (2013), and Guo et al. (2019).

Schools, as primary educational institutions, constitute the focal point of daily life for refugee children, providing not only academic instruction but also a platform for interaction with members of the host culture, the cultivation of a sense of belonging, and the formation of personal identity, an argument articulated by Masten in 2014 and Crooks et al. in 2020. Concurrently, schools serve the essential function of supporting the cognitive, psychological, and social development of refugee children, facilitating their access to valuable resources, as highlighted by the research of Pagel and Edele in 2021. The attendance and success of refugee students in school serve as crucial indicators of their overall academic and general adjustment, profoundly impacting individual psychological well-being, as substantiated by Reynolds and Bacon in 2018, Cassity in 2013, McBrien in 2009, Taylor and Sidhu in 2012, Ziaian et al. in 2018, and Berry (1997), among others.

However, the educational journey of refugee children is often fraught with challenges, as elucidated by Reynolds and Bacon in 2018. These challenges encompass language barriers, limited familiarity with the educational system, and academic deficiencies (Brown et al., 2006), restricted educational opportunities before they arrived in the host country (Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017), absence of documentation or recognition (Shakya et al., 2010; McWilliams & Bonet, 2016), as well as interpersonal issues with teachers and peers (Dryden-Peterson, 2017), cultural conflicts, acculturation stress (Trickett & Birman, 2005), exclusion, and discrimination (Correa-Velez et al., 2017). These hurdles detrimentally affect learning capabilities and academic achievements (Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Masten, 2014), potentially leading to issues such as peer bullying, discrimination, acculturation stress, identity confusion, family conflicts, and school-related challenges, in by Berry (1992) and d'Abreu et al. (2019). The cumulative effect of these barriers results in decreased academic success and heightened dropout rates, as evidenced by Dryden-Peterson in 2016 and Reynolds and Bacon in 2018.

In essence, formal education emerges as a linchpin directly impacting the psychological well-being and adaptation of refugee children while endowing them with the skills necessary to access resources within their new cultural context. Education is the conduit that facilitates the participation of refugee children who have been compelled to select their new host culture as their residence (Sheikh & Anderson, 2018). It is, therefore, imperative to comprehend the acculturation process of refugee children and to be cognizant of the factors that either enhance or impede their adaptation to the host culture, as emphasised by Tonui and Mitschke in 2022.

The acculturation experience of refugee children commences with their contact with the dominant culture, often driven by imperatives such as educational pursuits and employment. Acculturation is an intricate process involving transformations in an individual's cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural frameworks due to exposure to a different culture, as expounded by Berry (1997) and Ferguson & Birman (2016). As individuals traverse from one cultural milieu to another, a dynamic interplay unfolds between the heritage and host cultures.

In explicating the psychological, social, and cultural changes experienced during the acculturation process, various models have been proffered (Berry, 1992). Gordon's one-dimensional model (1964), which posits a unidirectional shift from preserving one's original culture to assimilation, has faced criticism for its assumption of a singular cultural identity and disregard for multiple identities (Phinney & Ong, 2007). In response to these critiques, a two-dimensional model emerged (Ager & Strang, 2008; Berry, 1997), which incorporates psychological and cultural and behavioural acculturation. This model contends that the acculturation process prompts newcomers to address two fundamental questions: the extent of their interaction with the host culture and the importance of preserving their cultural heritage. Based on their responses to these questions, four acculturation strategies emerge, namely assimilation (high interaction with the host culture and low preservation of cultural heritage), separation (avoidance of interaction with the host culture and the shielding of cultural heritage), integration (high interaction with both cultures), and marginalisation (discontinuity of cultural heritage due to compelling reasons or the absence of interaction with the host culture owing to exclusion and discrimination) (Berry, 2019, pp. 18-25). These strategies are not rigid or immutable but are influenced by contextual factors (Berry, 2019, pp. 18-25). According to this model, an individual's adaptation hinges on their preferences regarding the heritage and host cultures and the degree of integration between these two cultures (Berry, 1997). Consequently, individuals must preserve their cultural identity while concurrently embracing the values of the host culture as they construct their identity in their new place of residence (Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Giuliani et al., 2018).

Adaptation is the eventual outcome of the changes that transpire during the acculturation process (Berry, 2005; Sam et al., 2008). Ward et al. (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1994, 2001; Ward et al., 2004) have elucidated two distinct forms of adaptation within the acculturation process, encompassing psychological and socio-cultural adaptations. The long-term consequences of an individual's acculturation process exert a profound influence on their psychological and socio-cultural adaptation. Psychological adaptation encompasses the individual's well-being, life satisfaction, and general psychological health. Concurrently, the absence of depression and anxiety serves as key indicators of psychological adaptation. Those individuals who maintain strong affiliations with both their heritage culture and the host culture tend to experience improved psychological well-being and greater life satisfaction.

Socio-cultural adaptation pertains to the acquisition of cultural competencies that enable individuals to participate within the host group effectively. This form of adaptation primarily focuses on the absence of behavioural problems, the demonstration of social competence, and success in educational or occupational domains. These two facets of adaptation, psychological and socio-cultural, are interconnected. Effective coping with challenges leads to positive interactions with members of the host society, resulting in enhanced psychological well-being and life satisfaction (Ward & Kennedy, 2001; Berry et al., 2006; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). Predictive factors for both forms of adaptation have been identified in research. Social support, personality traits, and life events have been established as the most significant predictors of psychological adaptation. Meanwhile, socio-cultural adaptation is influenced by factors such as cultural distance, cultural knowledge, frequency of contact with the host culture, perceived discrimination, education level, duration of residence, age, and gender (Ward et al., 2004; Zlobina et al., 2006; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). If individuals are unable to adapt to the host culture successfully, they may experience acculturation stress, a phenomenon more pronounced when there is a considerable divergence between an



individual's culture, values, and traditions and those of the host culture (Berry et al., 2006; Berry & Hou, 2016; Kashima & Sadewo, 2016). The negative experiences encountered throughout the processes of acculturation and adaptation have a direct impact on both the individual and host cultures.

The organisation and support of formal education for refugee children play a significant role in influencing and facilitating their acculturation and adaptation processes. The context of this importance is underscored by several factors, including the Syrian student population residing in the host country, the extended timeline for their potential return to Syria, and the reduced desire among them to return to their homeland. These elements collectively accentuate the criticality of educational endeavours for Syrian students, as addressing their educational needs can significantly ameliorate their lives and contribute positively to the host community.

Numerous empirical studies conducted in Turkey have sought to evaluate the challenges experienced by Syrian students within the educational and school environment. These investigations have encompassed perspectives from the students, educators, school administrators, and their families. However, it is noteworthy that research involving the Syrian student population as a sample group has been somewhat limited. Turkey's evolving status as a destination country for refugees necessitates the development of new educational regulations. The demographic landscape, which was once relatively homogeneous a decade ago, has now transformed into a more heterogeneous composition, reflecting the diverse needs and issues of this multicultural group. Consequently, there is an emerging imperative for studies in this domain to illuminate the challenges within the educational system.

It is evident that the existing body of literature lacks comprehensive studies pertaining to the acculturation and adaptation of Syrian students. Addressing this gap through a systematic assessment of the existing literature is paramount. Moreover, the outcomes of this study are poised to provide guidance for future investigations aimed at uncovering the factors and consequences that influence the acculturation and adaptation processes of Syrian students. In essence, the principal objective of this study is to expound upon the pivotal concepts that impact the acculturation and adaptation of Syrian students within the scholastic environment. To achieve this, we undertake a systematic examination of the acculturation process of refugee students and their engagement in formal education, employing a qualitative analysis of the extant empirical evidence.

Within the academic discourse, it is well-established that acculturation yields benefits, particularly in enhancing linguistic proficiency, which, in turn, fosters greater interaction and adaptation within the host community. We expect that adaptation to the host culture will correlate with advantageous educational outcomes, thereby underscoring the interconnectedness of acculturation and academic progress.

Materials and methods

This systematic review was guided by the Cochrane Collaborative methodology (Lasserson et al., 2019, p. 4) and presented according to the PRISMA reporting guidelines (Moher et al., 2015; Salameh et al., 2020). The PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1) illustrates the article selection process. The table of the articles was prepared in PICOS (Population, Interventions, Comparators, Outcomes, Study Designs) format. As this study presented a compilation of existing data, approval from the human research ethics committee was not required.

Table 1. Search terms used in the study for systematic literature review

English	Turkish
“Syrian Student” OR	“Suriyeli Öğrenci” OR
“Syrian Children” OR	“Suriyeli Çocuklar” OR
“Young” OR	“Genç” OR
“Youth” OR	“Eğitim” OR
“Education” OR	“Öğretim” OR
“Acculturation” OR	“Kültürleşme” OR
“Adaptation Process” OR	“Kültürlenme” OR
“Adaptation” OR	“Entegrasyon” OR
“Adjustment” OR	“Uyum Süreçleri” OR
	“Uyum” OR

→ AND

The searches were conducted between March 07, 2022, and May 30, 2022; in total, six databases in English and two databases in Turkish: Web of Science (WOS), SCOPUS, ERIC, Science Direct, Google Scholar (En-Tr), TRDizin (En-Tr). The searches include studies on the subject between the years 2011-2022. Turkish and English titles and abstracts were examined in searches and used search terms to describe articles in each database: Syrian refugee children/refugee students, education, acculturation, and adaptation. These terms and synonyms were used to search titles and abstracts in databases to identify relevant studies (see Table 1).

Screening and inclusion criteria used to identify the articles in the full-text scanning phase were:

1. Population Group (Syrian children and youth refugees aged 5 to 18)
2. Refugees in the educational process
3. Acculturation processes
4. Adaptation processes
5. Empirical articles

It has included articles in the analysis according to these criteria. Researchers scanned abstracts and titles to identify papers to be selected for further review. Articles published only as abstracts or without a full text are excluded. Theses, book chapters, and conference papers are also excluded from the study. The researchers resolved inconsistencies regarding which articles to include in the review by discussing them.

Full-text articles were coded as article1 (A1), (A2), ... and stored in a computer environment. Researchers developed an evaluation form under the inclusion criteria of the articles. Researchers have scanned studies using this form. Sample characteristics (i.e., age, gender, education level), research design (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods), and details (i.e., author, year of publication, purpose, findings) of each selected article are presented. This information was recorded separately in an extraction chart.

The weight of the evidence is determined by evaluating the methodological quality of the study, its methodological relevance, and the subject's relevance as a whole. The quality of the articles included in the analysis was evaluated according to the weight-of-evidence assessment

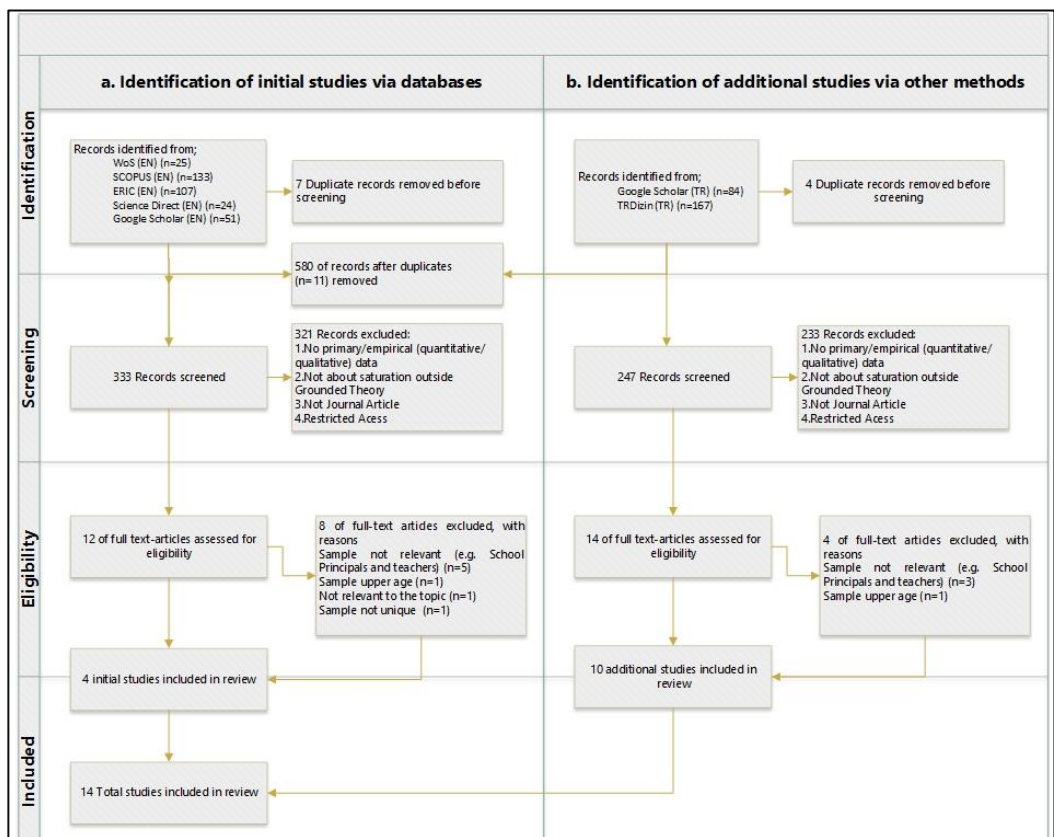


framework of Gough, Oliver, and Thomas (2017) and What Is a Systematic Review? (2018). The articles were assessed by grading from 1 to 4 according to the prepared quality control list. The findings were summarised, coded, and synthesised. Then, themes were created by combining standard codes.

Results

A total of 591 articles were identified in the first search. After removing duplicates, the titles and abstracts of 580 studies were reviewed. Full texts of 26 eligible studies were evaluated, of which 14 selected papers were for inclusion in the review. Reasons for exclusion are given in the PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1). A total of 14 studies selected were reviewed in this systematic analysis. Findings from the study were listed using the PICOS strategy. It is presented in Table 2, that follows after the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Prisma flowchart that shows the step-by-step work process



Study characteristics

This section presents similar and different aspects of the analysed literature. The articles included in the research were completed between 2017- 2022. Only one study is in the quantitative research design, while the others are in the qualitative research design. There have been no longitudinal studies. The articles reviewed evaluated the acculturation and adaptation

experiences of Syrian students (6-18 years old). These studies were conducted in different provinces of Turkey. It has been determined that the sample of the studies consists of student, teacher, and parent groups. The researchers paid attention to the condition of being in formal education in the study.

In the inference stage, the educational outcomes in the studies were coded qualitatively: acculturation experience in education and school adaptation. The findings of this systematic review (Table 2) are collected and presented based on these classifications.

Table 2. Characteristics of the studies used in the review

Author and Year	Aim	Study Design	Sample Description
Saklan, E., & Karakütük, K. (2022).	The research aims to identify the difficulties that Syrian students face in education, address the challenges faced by teachers in the education of Syrian students, and offer solutions to overcome these difficulties based on student and teacher opinions.	Qualitative and Phenomenology design	The research study group was conducted using easily accessible convenience sampling. In the research, data were obtained through semi-structured interview forms. Participants were 35 teachers (16 F, 19 M) and 42 Syrian students (26 F, 16 M/ 13-16 years old).
	Research Method	Results	
	Data analysis was performed using descriptive and content analysis in the study. The researchers used a semi-structured interview form as a data collection tool.	In the study, Syrian students could not adapt to the education process due to language and culture in the education process. Additionally, they faced discriminatory behaviours, disciplinary problems, and economic factors. Likewise, teachers had difficulties in classroom management, lack of course materials, and discipline in the education of Syrian students.	
Tamer, M. G. (2017).	This study focuses on school-age Syrian children in temporary shelters and their problems, expectations, and demands in their education processes. In addition, the experiences of school principals and teachers in the work of the children they attend are also included.	Qualitative and descriptive analysis	The 32 Syrian students (18F, 14 M) studying in the six primary schools (primary and secondary) and the six school principals, nine teachers (5F, 4M) working in schools are the research samples.
	Research Method	Results	
	The researcher used a semi-structured interview form to prepare himself for the study.	The article gave some advice and recommendations within the scope of policy development for the rights of children under temporary protection, preparation and implementation of an adequate education program, performance and development of educational materials, regular and direct monitoring activities, and educational and political tactics in the awareness of access to education processes.	



Author and Year	Aim	Study Design	Sample Description
Yiğit, A., Şanlı, E., & Gokalp, M. (2021).	The study aims to reveal the views of school staff (administrators and teachers), students and parents in western Turkey about the problems of Syrian students and possible solutions.	Qualitative and situational research method	Turkish students were studying at the primary school level, and Syrian students, teachers, and administrators worked in this school. To determine the study group, researchers used a criterion-based sampling method. The total 24 participants in the study group were 7 Syrian students (3F, 4M;9-12 years old), 7 Turkish students (3F, 4M;9-12 years old), eight teachers and two administrators (3F, 7M;32-60 years old).
	Research Method	Results	
	The data used in the study were obtained through semi-structured interview forms created by the researcher.	The most crucial factor in all evaluations was language deficiency. The adaptation process of Syrian students to school is affected by language, mutual prejudices, parents' attitudes, and academic inadequacy. A significant compliance obstacle that draws attention is students' and teachers' acceptance of adaptation. The peers have difficulty obtaining individual school needs due to economic reasons.	
Kıral, E., & Beyli, R. (2021)	The study aims to reveal the views of school staff (administrators and teachers), students and parents in Western Turkey about the problem and possible solutions for Syrian students.	Qualitative and situational research method	The study group of the research was chosen according to the sampling method. The study group of the research is the administrator (M-43 years old), six teachers (1F(41 years old), 5M(31-41 years old)), seven students (2M (8 and 13 years old), 5F (6-9 years old)) and five parents (3M(29, 34, 54 years old) 2F (50-30 years old).
	Research Method	Results	
	The data collection tool of the study is a semi-structured interview form. The data of the study were obtained using descriptive and content analysis.	<p>Researchers made sub-themes of results;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The administrators and teachers mentioned that Syrian students are examined under the sub-themes of physical, security, social, physiological, education, and family problems. -The Syrian parents and students are examined under the sub-themes of physical, emotional, educational, and needs for raising a child. The possible solutions for the problems that emerged from the sub-themes are as follows: supplying school materials and clothing, having a security seminar and supplying schools with security staff, activities such as sports tournaments, breakfast organisations, reading activities, etc., giving students responsibilities. 	
Gün, M., & Baldık, Y. (2017).	To reveal the problems that Syrian students experience in schools.	Qualitative and situational research method	Students were possibly studying ages at the primary and secondary school levels.

Author and Year	Aim	Study Design	Sample Description
			Students were studying in Temporary Education Centers (20 students), students studying in public schools (20 students), and young people residing in the city centre but not going to school (30 people).
	Research Method	Results	
	A semi-structured interview form was used in the data-gathering tool. The data were analysed using descriptive and content analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Language deficiency emerges as the primary obstacle for Syrians in social and educational life. - Some Syrian families do not enrol their children in public schools where they live, fearing that they will be bullied at school and have difficulty socialising with their Turkish classmates. – The deficiencies of the introductory course materials of the students studying in the Temporary Education Centers should be determined and provided for the lessons. - Syrian students’ teachers should receive in-service training about acculturation. - Psychological support should be given to Syrian students, and to be supported to overcome the trauma they experienced before. - Efforts should be made to overcome the economic difficulties that are a severe obstacle to the schooling of Syrian students. 	
Demir, R. (2019).	The study was conducted to determine the educational problems experienced by Syrian students in religion-based public schools in the southern province of Turkey, where a large number of Syrians live.	Qualitative and content analysis.	Participants are 12 students (2F,10M 14-16 years old) in two schools. In addition, the opinions and experiences of 5 teachers (1M, 4F 23–35 years old) are included in the study, those who work in the schools where Syrian students are enrolled.
	Research Method	Results	
	Qualitative data has been collected through interviews via semi-structured interview forms. The data have been analysed via the content analysis technique.	It determined that Syrian students in High Schools have had problems such as language deficiency, adaptation to school, and feelings of alienation. It was determined that these students are more adapted to religion-based high schools because of their Religion and cultural codes. They were more successful in lessons like Quran, Arabic, and Hadith, which are based on Arabic. Also, there is resistance to learning Turkish. Additionally, female students can adapt quickly.	
Aktan, L., & Bilen, E. Ş. (2020).	The study aims to discover how students interact with different cultures, conditions of economic classes, legal rights, and other languages.	Qualitative and content analysis.	Participants are 15 refugees (7 th primary school, non-mentioned years old; sixth secondary school, non-mentioned years old; 2 nd High school, non-mentioned years old), 16 Turkish citizens. All students are 6-18 years old



Author and Year	Aim	Study Design	Sample Description
			range and non-mentioned gender.
	Research Method	Results	
	A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool in the research. Descriptive and content analysis were used to analyse the obtained data.	Language has been seen as an essential factor in primary education. In secondary schools, it was observed that there were problems with the daily use of the language. Identity affects adaptation in high school education. Students stated they experienced discrimination and weak peer relations in secondary and high schools.	
Aslan, A. (2020).	The study examined the school experiences of Syrian students.	Qualitative and content analysis.	Within the scope of this research, the participants are 6 Syrian students (2F, 4M (12-17 years old)).
	Research Method	Results	
	The study used a semi-structured interview form as a data collection tool. The data of the study were analysed using descriptive and content analysis.	The Syrian students' adaptation problems decrease when they encounter general acceptance in the school climate. When the schooling time of the students in Turkey increases, it has been observed that the students develop a sense of belonging to Turkey. It is recommended that students be supported in terms of psycho-social-cultural aspects with qualified support programs. The school positively contributes to Syrian students' secondary socialisation, the development of social integration, and the sense of belonging towards Turkey.	
Doğan, S., & Özdemir, Ç. (2019).	The study was carried out to understand the interactions of the students who come to the school for education.	Qualitative and content analysis.	The participants are school administrators (N=6), teachers (12), Turkish (N=12), and Syrian (N=12) students (old and other demographic data are not found).
	Research Method	Results	
	The study used an interview form with ten topics developed by the researcher. The content analysis method was used for the analysis in the study.	In the study, it was determined that Syrian students were more likely to think that the five subjects did not have a significant effect on the school climate. It has been stated that these issues are general safety and order, classroom management, teacher-student communities, social-cultural sports activities and behavioural values, and school discipline. As a result, it was concluded that Syrian students affected the dimension of "student interpersonal relations" as "positive", "family-school relations", and "academic achievement" as "negative".	
Ürünibrahimoğlu, M., Göçer, V., & Özer, S. (2021).	The study is to reveal the experiences of Syrian students and teachers studying in secondary school.	Qualitative and Phenomenology design	Student Participants of the Research 3 Female (12-14 years old), 3 Male (12-14 years old), 5-7 Grade secondary school. Teacher Participants of the Research 2 Male (40 and 53 years old), 11 and 22 years of work experience.
	Research Method	Results	
	A semi-structured interview form was used	In the study, different determinations were made regarding Syrian students. When Syrian students came to	

Author and Year	Aim	Study Design	Sample Description
	for researcher data collection. In addition, descriptive and content analysis analysed the data of the study.	the classroom, they faced exclusion from Turkish students and negative behaviours such as bullying and prejudice from their peers. It has been stated that the students like teachers because they help solve problems in school life. It has been noted that female students have specific academic goals, but generally, students cannot learn Turkish at a level to understand the lessons. In addition, although teachers approach students with empathy and adopt these students, it has been revealed that Teachers are not satisfied with the students who study together due to the lack of language.	
Eres, F., & Aslan, F. (2017).	The research was conducted to evaluate the leisure activities of Syrian children in Temporary Education Centers in Turkey.	Qualitative and Phenomenology design	A total of 29 Syrian children (9(M), 20(F), (8 years old(4), 9 years old(1), 10 years old(4), 11 years old(8), 12 years old (6), 13 years old(3), 14 years old(3)).
	Research Method	Results	
	In the research, a semi-structured interview form was used to collect data. Descriptive and content analysis was used for the analysis of the obtained data. The compatibility of the findings with the conceptual framework was checked for the study's internal validity.	In the study, it was revealed what Syrian children do in their spare time. They usually spend their free time at home on weekdays. Children spend some of their spare time outdoors on weekends. They typically spend their free time outdoors on the weekends, travelling with their families, attending Quran courses, playing games, and attending Arabic classes. Weekend leisure activities are discussed under "indoor activities" and "outdoor activities." Leisure activities of Syrian children in education during winter and summer holidays are again presented under two headings: "indoor" and "outdoor" activities. Children spend their free time outside during the winter and summer holidays. His outside activities are attending Arabic and Quran courses, visiting relatives, going on family trips, and working in a workplace.	
Güler, A., & Yıldırım, M. (2022).	The study was conducted to reveal the relationship between acculturation, perceived discrimination and subjective well-being among Syrian adolescents in Turkey.	quantitative analysis	The number of participants in the study consisted of 188 adolescents (100K, 88M). The mean age of adolescent participants was 13 (SD = 1.53; ranged from 10 to 16 years).
	Research Method	Results	
	Three different scales were used in the study. First, the Vancouver Acculturation Index (Ryder et al., 2000), consisting of two 10-item subscales, was used to understand their attitudes towards maintaining the old culture and adapting to the new culture. Secondly, their well-	The study determined that while boys experienced more positive affect, girls experienced more negative affect. On the other hand, younger adolescents reported a more significant positive impact, higher heritage culture, and less negative impact. Adolescents with high acculturation with the host society and low perception of discrimination had more positive effects, while adolescents with perceived discrimination had more negative effects. Finally, host culture and perceived discrimination significantly contributed to the variance in explaining the positive and negative impact on age and gender.	



Author and Year	Aim	Study Design	Sample Description
	being was controlled with the 10-item International Schedule of Positive and Negative Effects (PANAS) Short Form developed by Thompson (2007). Finally, perceived discrimination was evaluated with seven questions by Williams et al.'s (1997) Discrimination and Everyday Discrimination studies.		
Anis, R., Calia, C., Demir, O. O., Doyran, F., & Hacifazlioglu, O. (2021).	The study investigated the educational status and needs of Syrian refugee youth with a psycho-social priority.	Qualitative and content analysis	Participants have involved eight Syrian students (4(M), 4(F) (15-18 years old), five parents (2(M), 3(F) (38-52 years old), eight teachers (5(M), 3(F) (28- 54 years old) and two principals (both Male).
	Research Method	Results	
	In the study, data were collected through semi-structured interview forms developed by the researchers.	As the study's main result, it was stated that the problems in education are language-related. Different issues were revealed in the interviews. These reflected psycho-social concerns and concerns about being ignored, rejected, or discriminated against at school or in the host community. Educators participating in the study expressed their views on five issues: limited language skills, trauma and well-being, social integration, discrimination and bullying. Finally, all educators expressed deep concern about the traumatic experience of Syrian students.	
Yüce, E., & Doğan, T. (2020).	The study aims to examine the adaptation of immigrant Syrian children to school by taking the opinions of Turkish and Syrian students.	Qualitative and situational research method	A total of 20 participants (10 Turkish and 10 Syrian (12F, 8M (10-15 years)) participated in the study.
	Research Method	Results	
	The researcher developed the semi-structured interview forms used in the study to collect data.	In the study, Syrian students revealed the factors affecting their school adjustment. These factors were expressed as language barrier, peer relations, teacher attitudes, view of the country and school, aggression, discrimination, exclusion, cultural differences, interruption of education, and academic readiness. Turkish students stated the factors affecting the adaptation of Syrian students to school. These factors include language barriers, peer relations, teacher attitudes, aggression, discrimination, exclusion, cultural differences and academic readiness.	

Discussion of results

The main finding of the systematic analysis is that language proficiency affects students' acculturation and adaptation process. The included studies observed that they took a break from school because of economic difficulties and language deficiencies. It has been revealed that students' language proficiency facilitates social relations and acceptance by the host students. Therefore, consistent with the evidence presented in this review, language proficiency in the host culture was linked to education and facilitated adaptation.

Acculturation experience in education

In this review, we have considered the participants in formal education as a sample. Moreover, other stakeholders of this experience (Turkish students, teachers/school administrators, and parents) were included in the sample in some studies. All the studies determined that the sample group experienced economic problems. Also, the sample had a language deficiency in all the studies. To avoid language barriers, Syrian students prefer Imam-Hatip schools, where Arabic-based education is given in the second and third levels (Aslan, 2020; Demir, 2019). Additionally, it has been observed that families send their children to Arabic courses so that they do not forget their native language and to speak Arabic at home (Gün & Baldık, 2017; Eres & Aydın, 2017; Saklan & Karakütük, 2022; Aslan, 2020). Moreover, it determined that refugee students who preferred İmam hatip schools resisted learning Turkish. (Demir, 2019; Eres & Aydın, 2017). Tamer (2017) provided evidence that the Syrian-origin Turkmen students in the sample did not have language problems. Language proficiency affects the acculturation process. Moreover, the students learn the language in the educational environment. Language problems negatively affect the bidirectional relationship between acculturation and education. It has also been determined that individual efforts should be made to gain language proficiency (Gün & Baldık, 2017; Demir, 2019; Aslan, 2020; Tamer, 2017). In studies, it was observed that students who received an education before coming to Turkey had more difficulties in acculturation than those who did not. The acculturation process of those in education at the early stages in Turkey passes quickly, and they experience fewer problems (Tamer, 2017).

Express the pre-migration experiences of the students. In the examined studies, it was found that the students' traumatic experiences affected their education and adaptation (Saklan & Karakütük, 2022; Tamer, 2017; Kırıl & Beyli, 2021). Studies have also determined that refugee students interrupt their education for different pre- and post-migration reasons. It has been seen that as the break in education gets longer, the compensation efforts of the students increase, and their adaptation is negatively affected (Gün & Baldık, 2017; Yiğit & Şanlı Gökalp, 2021). Since refugee students take a break, their academic readiness levels are also affected (Yüce & Doğan, 2020). Additionally, Tamer (2017) found that refugee students miss their country and relatives. Doğan & Özdemir (2019), on the other hand, determined that refugee students do not try to adapt because they see themselves as temporary and they want to return.

Social relationships refer to students' relationships with their peers, teachers, and school administrators. Research has shown that refugee students are exposed to peer bullying due to language deficiency when they first come to school. Additionally, it has been determined that host students have prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour against refugee students (Aslan, 2020; Ürünibrahimoğlu et al., 2021; Saklan & Karakütük, 2022; Aktan & Bilen, 2020; Yüce & Doğan, 2020; Doğan & Özdemir, 2019). Briefly, the adaptation of refugee students is affected



by the social support they receive from their peers, teachers, and families. Some studies state that students and teachers have nationalist discourses against refugee students (Aktan & Bilen, 2020; Anis et al., 2021). It has been observed that such experiences cause alienation and exclusion in students (Tamer, 2017; Demir, 2019; Kırıl & Beyli, 2021; Doğan & Özdemir, 2019; Gün & Baldık, 2017; Yüce & Doğan, 2020). As the language skills of refugee students increase, their peer acceptance and social support also increase. (Aslan, 2020; Ürünibrahimoğlu, Göçer & Özer, 2021; Yiğit & Şanlı Gökcalp, 2021). At first, the peer relationship started based on help and continued (Tamer, 2017). Teachers said that refugee students have relationships with Turkish students in their classrooms, but they prefer more interaction with disadvantaged students (poor, disabled, other refugee students, etc.) (Ürünibrahimoğlu et al., 2021; Saklan & Karakütük) (Aslan, 2020; Ürünibrahimoğlu et al., 2021; Yiğit & Şanlı Gökcalp, 2021; Anis et al., 2021).

Adaptation refers to the adjustment of students to the educational environment. Studies in this review found that language proficiency was the most critical variable affecting school adaptation. In different studies, it has been determined that as students gain language proficiency, their self-confidence and adaptability increase (Ürünibrahimoğlu et al., 2021; Doğan & Özdemir, 2019; Saklan & Karakütük, 2022). The adaptation of students is also affected by cultural differences (Yüce & Doğan, 2020; Saklan & Karakütük, 2022; Yiğit & Şanlı Gökcalp, 2021; Doğan & Özdemir, 2019; Anis et al., 2021). It has been observed that the acceptance and support of refugee students' teachers and friends affect their adaptation (Yiğit & Şanlı Gökcalp, 2021; Ürünibrahimoğlu et al., 2021; Yüce & Doğan, 2020). It has been determined that students, especially girls, have academic goals and adapt more easily (Ürünibrahimoğlu et al., 2021; Demir, 2019; Saklan & Karakütük, 2022). Additionally, students' language proficiency and adaptability levels in Turkish high schools are higher (Aslan, 2020). The study by Anis et al. (2021) also stated that daily problems/difficulties affect students' psychological well-being negatively. In another study, it was found that students who preferred the host culture in the acculturation process had a low level of perceived discrimination and a high level of subjective well-being (Güler & Yıldırım, 2022). The study showed that, in general, refugee students tend to maintain their own culture. Similarly, Eres & Aydın (2017) found that refugee students' efforts to adapt to the host culture were low.

Conclusions

All in all, this literature review systematically analysed and synthesised research examining Syrian refugee students' acculturation and adaptation experiences in formal education. In the reviewed articles, the acculturation experiences of refugee students are explained from their own and other stakeholders' perspectives. The concepts of education, school environment, acculturation, discrimination, social support, and adaptation are defined in the articles. Additionally, solutions are presented to help students cope with their school difficulties. Today, forced migration and displacement have increased unexpectedly. Therefore, more research is needed to understand the methods that will facilitate the lives of refugees.

This systematic review revealed that most students experience economic difficulties. For this result, it was observed that some students had to drop out of school. It was stated that when students needed psychological support, it was not provided. In all the studies, it was observed that Syrian students could not demonstrate their academic capacity due to language inadequacy and had problems in social relations. The student's effort in learning a language is

an important variable. The language proficiency of the students increases their academic success and facilitates their adaptation. Participation in education at an early age improves children's language proficiency and facilitates their adaptation. Students' resistance to language learning is also an important finding. Families are worried about their children forgetting their native language. Therefore, it has been observed that they use their native language more frequently. The use of their mother tongue can be interpreted as the group's efforts to adapt to the culture of the larger society in the acculturation process are at a low level, and they are trying to preserve their own identity. It has been observed that such preferences make it difficult to learn Turkish and adapt to the new culture. However, in some studies, it has been observed that children learning Turkish also teach it to their relatives at home. Studies have also emphasised that Syrian students do not come from a single ethnic group. It has been observed that Syrian students of Turkmen origin adapt more easily as their Turkish language proficiency is better. Language inadequacy causes students to become withdrawn and invisible in the classroom. It has been observed that as language proficiency increases, students' self-confidence also increases. Like language proficiency, students' academic readiness levels also affect their adjustment. A similar relationship was established with a break from school.

Syrian students see themselves as temporary in Turkey. This perspective also affects their adaptation level. Additionally, it has been revealed that these students have academic goals and do not want to return, especially female students affected by gender roles in Turkey and want to live in Turkey. Some studies have shown that students' pre-migration and past traumatic experiences negatively affect acculturation and adaptation. Students want to return because they miss their relatives in Syria. It is thought that this affects students' adaptation to the host culture.

The participants drew attention to the cultural differences of Syrian students. We observed that the students' cultural differences negatively affected their adaptation to the new environment. Cultural differences cause prejudice and discrimination toward Syrian students. This increases the risk of students dropping out of school. Studies have shown that students, their peers and teachers' adaptability increases. Teachers and school administrators observed that girls adapted quicker than boys. The contact of Syrian students with the host students increases their belonging to the group and facilitates their adaptation. Studies have revealed that students tend to maintain their culture and experience low levels of perceived discrimination. It has been observed that this tendency has a positive effect on students' subjective well-being. However, it has been observed that students who interact with the host culture perceive less discrimination and have more positive outcomes. Students' experiences in acculturation and adaptation were similarly expressed by their classmates and teachers. Parents said they could not care for their children due to language inadequacy and economic difficulties. Simultaneously, it was observed that families could not support students academically.

It has been observed in all studies that language proficiency affects children's adaptation to a new culture. In studies, Syrian students stated that they were excluded, discriminated against, and exposed to peer bullying because they did not know the language. It has been observed that when Syrian students have problems with their friends at school, they solve them outside school. Because of the increase in language proficiency and self-confidence, prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviours decrease. Studies have also observed that Syrian students make friends with Turkish students and that these relationships facilitate their



adaptation. Teachers play an essential role in the acculturation process of students. Simultaneously, teacher attitudes affect students' adaptation. It has been observed that teachers are sensitive to the psychosocial needs of Syrian students. Teachers state that students need language and inclusive education to solve school language and culture problems.

Reducing the negative impact of refugees' displacement can be achieved with education in the migration and post-migration process (Sheikh & Anderson, 2018). Teachers' efforts to involve these students in classroom activities yielded positive results. However, class size and the teacher's inadequacies regarding the multicultural classroom environment affect the process negatively. As refugees experience sudden displacement, they may not have access to formal education or experience educational gaps. During this period, the break in education must be as short as possible.

The results of this systematic analysis revealed that the adaptation of Syrian students is affected by language proficiency, peer and teacher support, social acceptance, and academic readiness. Additionally, it has been observed that teachers and administrators face deficiencies in the multicultural education environment. The deficiencies of this group should be completed. Studies can be conducted for students and their parents, and expert support can be provided. It is also essential to provide peer support to students. It is thought that when teachers strengthen students' sense of belonging, their level of adaptation will also increase.

This systematic analysis has many strengths. The first of these is the Syrian refugee group, which constitutes the study's sample and has the highest number of displaced persons globally. Turkey is one country that hosts the most significant number of Syrian refugees in the world. As long as the turmoil in Syria continues, it will take time for this displaced group to return to their countries. The number of children and young people in the Syrian refugee group is relatively high. Therefore, the study is crucial as it evaluates Syrian students' education, acculturation, and integration processes in Turkey. Another study strength is that it was conducted by the PRISMA criteria at all stages of the systematic analysis, following the Cochrane Collaborative methodology. The literature review was conducted in Turkish and English using different databases. Thus, many studies could be accessed. The systematic analysis studies were determined separately by all researchers and aimed to minimise bias in the selection of studies. The level of evidence for studies included in the systematic analysis ranged from moderate to high. The results of this systematic analysis are at a level that will contribute to the literature.

This systematic analysis has some limitations as well as strengths. The study was limited to 14 articles. Only studies whose full text can be accessed and which have permission to access were included in the analysis. For this reason, there is a possibility that studies containing valid results for the research cannot be reached. In this systematic analysis, it has been revealed that the studies on the adjustment level of Syrian students are pretty limited. It is a remarkable finding that most of the studies included in the analysis were designed with the qualitative research method. The sample of these studies, the measurement tools used, and the analysis methods differ, creating limitations and difficulties in comparing the results of the studies with each other. It has been observed that there are a limited number of quantitative studies on this subject in Turkey. A reason for this is the lack of scale adaptation studies in Turkish for student adaptation. Additionally, studies in longitudinal, quantitative, and mixed research methods are needed to understand the acculturation and adaptation process of Syrian

students. The systematic analysis of the studies and determination of inclusion and exclusion criteria were carried out by two researchers. Even if the bias in the study was minimised, it is thought that the number of researchers may have been insufficient to achieve this. Because only fourteen articles were included in the evaluation, the results should be interpreted cautiously and not generalised.

Nonetheless, this systematic analysis made it possible to reveal the deficiencies and needs in the field. As a result, there is a need for different academic studies to evaluate the problems of Syrian students' acculturation and adaptation processes. It is crucial to raise awareness and increase the level of adaptation. However, it is thought that the scales' development and adaptation on the subject to guide the studies may fill the gap in this field.

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