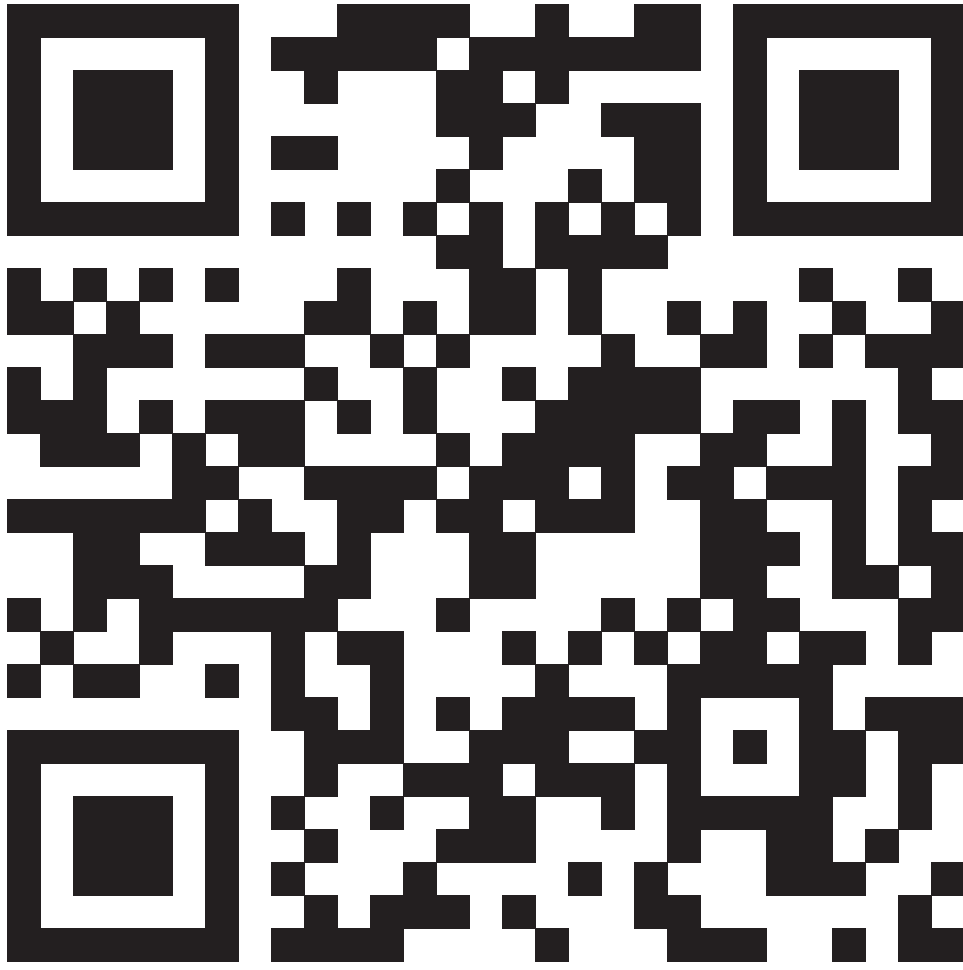




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**SYRIAN CHILD WORKERS WORKING IN TEXTILE  
WORKSHOPS: A FIELD RESEARCH IN BAGCILAR, ISTANBUL**  
TEKSTİL ATÖLYELERİNDE ÇALIŞAN SURİYELİ ÇOCUK İŞÇİLER:  
İSTANBUL BAĞCILAR'DA BİR SAHA ARAŞTIRMASI ÖRNEĞİ



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## SYRIAN CHILD WORKERS WORKING IN TEXTILE WORKSHOPS: A FIELD RESEARCH IN BAĞCILAR, ISTANBUL TEKSTİL ATÖLYELERİNDE ÇALIŞAN SURIYELİ ÇOCUK İŞÇİLER: İSTANBUL BAĞCILAR'DA BİR SAHA ARAŞTIRMASI ÖRNEĞİ

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to examine the working and living conditions of Syrian children aged 15 and younger, working in textile workshops in Bağcılar region, from the perspective of social work. The research process is six months in total, from November 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018. The research is based on qualitative research method with in depth-interview. During the research, 32 people were individually interviewed, and one focus group discussion was held in which a total of 35 people, were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in Turkish, Arabic and Kurdish. The data were recorded with tape recorder and then analyzed with descriptive analysis method. The observation notes for the field were also included in the study. According to the findings of the research, child workers work on average 11 hours a day, 60 hours a week. The wages of participants vary between 500-1,200 TL. Long working hours, difficulties in working conditions and malnutrition have led to many illnesses such as developmental disorders (height, weight), asthma, arthralgia (pain in the joints), fainting fit, and etc. in the participants. Some participants also reported exposure to physical and verbal violence. Male and younger participants were found to be exposed to more physical violence. The participants stated that they had to share the economic burden of their families and thus felt compelled to work. There is a greater sense of responsibility in the families in which the father is absent or sick. According to the research data, most of the participants feel nostalgia (longing for the past) and feel despair for the future. The participants sometimes felt that they were being excluded and alienated. Almost all of the participants expressed that they want to go to school, to get a profession and to integrate with the local culture.

**Keywords:** Child labor, immigration, social work, Syrian child workers, textile.

### ÖZ

Bu araştırma, Bağcılar bölgesindeki tekstil atölyelerinde çalışan 15 yaş ve altı Suriyeli çocuk işçilerin çalışma ve yaşam şartlarını sosyal hizmet perspektifinden ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma süresi 1 Kasım 2017-30 Nisan 2018 olmak üzere toplam 6 aydır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden derinlemesine görüşme tekniğinden yararlanılmış, araştırma kapsamında 32 bireysel, 1 odak grup görüşmesi olmak üzere toplam 35 katılımcı ile görüşülmüştür. Görüşmeler Türkçe, Arapça ve Kürtçe dillerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ses kayıt cihazı ile kayıt altına alınan veriler betimsel analiz yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Alana ilişkin gözlem notları da çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre çocuk işçiler günde ortalama 11 saat, haftada ortalama 60 saat çalışmaktadır. Katılımcı ücretleri 500 ile 1200 TL arasında değişmektedir. Çalışma sürelerinin uzunluğu, çalışma şartlarının zorlukları ve yetersiz beslenme katılımcılarda birçok hastalığın (gelişim bozuklukları (boy, kilo), astım, eklem ağrıları, baygınlık nöbetleri vb) oluşmasına sebep olmuştur. Bazı katılımcılar ayrıca fiziksel ve sözel şiddete maruz kaldıklarını bildirmişlerdir. Erkek ve yaşı küçük olan katılımcıların daha fazla fiziksel şiddete maruz kaldığı tespit edilmiştir. Katılımcılar ailelerinin ekonomik yükünü paylaşmak zorunda olduklarını, bu sebeple kendilerini çalışmaya mecbur hissettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Babanın olmadığı ya da hasta olduğu ailelerde hissedilen sorumluluk daha yüksektir. Araştırma verilerine göre katılımcıların çoğu geçmişe yönelik özlem, geleceğe yönelik "umutsuzluk" duygusu içindedir. Katılımcıların zaman zaman kendilerini dışlanmış ve yabancı hissettikleri görülmüştür. Katılımcıların tamamına yakını okula gitmek, meslek edinmek, yerel kültürle kaynaşmak istediklerini dile getirmişlerdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çocuk işçiliği, göç, sosyal hizmet, Suriyeli çocuk işçiler, tekstil.

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### INTRODUCTION

"Globally, 218 million children between 5 and 17 year-old are in work life. Among them, 152 million are the victims of child labor. 73 million of these children work in hazardous child labor. Almost half of child labor, 72.1 million, is to be found in Africa; 62.1 million in the Asia and the Pacific; 10.7 million in the America; 1.2 million in the Arab countries and 5.5 million in Europe and Central Asia. One of every five children in Africa is thought to be in child labor. Almost half of all children victims (152 million) of child labor are aged 5-11 years. 42 million (28%) are 12-14 years old; and 37 million (24%) are 15-17 years old (ILO, 2012-2016). There are 88 million boys and 64 million girls in the child labor. 62% of all children in hazardous work are boys. Boys appear to face a greater risk of child labor than girls, but this may also be a reflection of an under-reporting of girls' work, particularly in domestic child labor. Child labor is globally employed 71% in agriculture, 17% in services; and 12% in the industrial sector. The number of children workers in the industrial sector appears to increase with the age of children. According to ILO data, 26.2% of the workers aged between 5-11, 22.6% of the workers aged between 12-14, 51.2% of the workers aged between 15-17 are employed in hazardous works" (ILO, 2012-2016).

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data (2012), 5.9% of the 15 million 247 thousand children in the 6-17 age group work in an economic job; in other words, they are employed (893 thousand people). This rate was also the same (5.9% / 890 thousand people) in 2006. The number of working children increased by 3 thousand people in 2012. In Turkey, 44.8% of employed children in this age group live in urban areas, while 55.2% of them live in rural areas. 68.8% of the employed children are boys and 31.2% of them are girls. The rate of employed children was 2.5% in 2006, the rate of employed children in the 6-14 age group was 2.6% in 2012. According to the 2012 report, 44.7% of the employed children work in agriculture, 24.3% in industry and 31% in service. Regarding the weekly working hours of children, in the 6-17 age group, it is 40 hours. Boys work 43.2 hours while girls work 33 hours averagely. The weekly working hours of children dropping out of school is found to be 54.3 hours. According to the 2016 data of Turkish Statistical Institute, the rate of working children in the 15-17 age group was 20.8%. The rate was 20.3% in 2017 (TÜİK, 2017). The data obtained show that child labor continues to be a great concern all over the world. When the reasons for this situation are examined, it is seen that child labor is a phenomena arising from the combination of many factors. Surveys show that poverty is

the biggest problem in child labor. Poverty is influenced by many variables such as income inequality, unemployment, inefficient use of resources, rapid population growth, and the informal economy. Apart from poverty, other factors causing child labor are immigration, the inadequacy and inefficient use of educational opportunities, traditional viewpoint, unemployment, lack of legislation and supervision (Kulaksız, 2014: 98). The low education level of parents and parents' lack of responsibility towards their children are among the reasons of child labor (Yüksel et al. 2015: 26).

In this study, child labor will be discussed by putting more emphasis on immigration, which is one of the leading factors of child labor on the basis of "Rights of the Child" and "Human Rights". Rights of the Child are protected by many national and international legal arrangements. One of them is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989 by majority vote. The Convention on the Rights of the Child consists of 54 articles and includes the rights to survival, protection, development and participation. The right to protection also includes the right to protection from all exploitation, neglect and abuse. Special protection for refugee children, security for working children, protection of children who have been subjected to abuse or exploitation, and their rehabilitation are also discussed within this context (Çobaner, 2015: 29).

Regarding the rights of asylum-seeker and refugee children under general titles, these are the access right to education, the access right to health service, the right to social services and social assistance, and the right to respect for private life. The right to education is protected with the 26<sup>th</sup> article of Universal Declaration of Human Rights dated 1948, Article 13<sup>th</sup> of the United Nations Convention on Economic and Cultural Rights, Article 28<sup>th</sup> of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 22<sup>nd</sup> of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees dated 1951, (Güneş, 2012: 45-46). In addition, 2<sup>nd</sup> article of Education and Training Law numbered 222 states as follows: "Primary education shall be given in primary education institutions. Education is compulsory for all girls and boys at educational age, education is free of charge in public schools". According to the 27<sup>th</sup> article of Asylum and Refuge Regulation dated 1994, "Refugees and asylum-seekers are subjected to general provisions related to their education and working, limited to the period of their stay in our country". This article states the right and freedom of education and working, though not as a compulsion.

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The right to health is guaranteed with the 1<sup>st</sup> clause of the 25<sup>th</sup> article of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 12<sup>th</sup> article of The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and 24<sup>th</sup> article of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Güneş, 2012: 47-48). According to the amendment made in Social Insurance and General Health Insurance Law no. 5510 on April 4, 2013, "People who have applied for the international protection, or who have the international protection status, and people who are recognized as stateless" are also under the coverage of general health insurance. In addition, foreign citizens have the right to apply to the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation for health expenditures exceeding their budget. Child asylum seekers have the right to benefit from social services and social assistance.

This study is a field research aiming to address the problems of child workers employed in textile workshops in Bağcılar region (İstanbul) and to contribute to remedy this problem. The original value of study lays its in-depth analysis of a single sector. The trust relationship established with interviewers, the length of study time in the field, observation notes and family interviews increased the reliability of research data. Participants all know Turkish, but interviews were held in their own languages (Kurdish, Arabic) when they had difficulties expressing themselves, thus the problems were stated more clearly.

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

#### Research Method

In-depth interview method from qualitative research methods was employed in this study. The main purpose of the interview is to try to understand the inner world of the individual. In this technique, it is aimed to reach embedded information such as attitudes, experiences, thoughts, intentions, mental perceptions, interpretations and reactions of the individual. Interview techniques have different techniques as structured, semi-structured, and unstructured and focus group techniques (Karataş, 2015, 71).

In this study, semi-structured interview form was used. Interview form covers topics relevant to the research content. This form allows the researcher to ask questions prepared beforehand as well as to add new questions at the points she/he wants to get detailed information.

During the interview, it is important to allow the participant to express herself/himself as she/he wants. At the end of the research, 211 pages of data were obtained

and these data were analyzed with descriptive analysis method. Findings were coded according to certain themes, relationships were established between them, the data were summarized and interpreted. Direct quotation is used when more striking information is desired to be presented. Observation notes were also included in the findings.

#### The population and sample of research

The research process has lasted for six months in total, from November 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018. The research population consists of the children aged 15 years and younger working in textile workshops in Bağcılar region, İstanbul. Bağcılar region was selected due to the fact that it is one of the counties with the highest number of textile workshops (Erol et al 2017). This region was preferred due to the high number of immigrant population and workshops. Snowball sampling was used in the research and 35 participants were reached. 12 of the participants were female and 23 of participants were male. The research was carried out in the following six neighborhoods, Mahmutbey Neighborhood, Fevzi Çakmak Neighborhood, Çiftlik Neighborhood, Göztepe Neighborhood, Demirkapı Neighborhood and Fatih Neighborhood.

#### Research Ethics

Research was conducted by the researchers who can speak Turkish, Kurdish and Arabic. Before the research, detailed information related to the subject was given to participants in their own languages, their families were contacted and they were required to sign a voluntary consent form. The interviews lasted for 45 minutes on average, and the conversations were recorded with the tape recorder. The tape recorder was turned off when participants felt uncomfortable, and interviews were continued by taking notes. Conversation data was coded as Participant (Participant abbreviated as P), (1,2,...), Age. During the research, a maximum of 3 working children from the same family were interviewed.

#### Limitations

Some participants (four families), who had been interviewed before, decided not to participate in the study as they were below the legal age limit and their families didn't have identity cards. One other obstacle in reaching to the participants is their long working hours.

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### FINDINGS

#### Demographic Data

Table 1. Age, Gender and Status of Record

Variable	Response	N	%
Gender	Female	12	34
	Male	23	66
Age	10	1	3
	11	3	9
	12	4	11
	13	10	29
	14	7	20
	15	10	29
Status of Record	(Recorded) Female	9	26
	(Recorded) Male	19	54
	(Unrecorded) Female	2	6
	(Unrecorded) Male	5	14

Within the scope of research, 32 people were individually interviewed, and one focus group discussion was held, thus a total of 35 people were interviewed. As indicated in Table 1, 12 of the participants (34%) were female and 23 of the participants (66%) were male. The distribution according to age groups is presented in Table 2 as follows. In the study, there is one individual aged 10 (3%), three individuals aged 11 (9%), four individuals aged 12 (11%), 10 individuals aged 13 (29%), seven individuals aged 14 (20%), 10 individuals aged 15 (29%). Nine of female participants in the study are recorded (26%) while two of them are unrecorded (6%). 19 of male participants in the study are recorded (54%) while five of them are unrecorded (14%).

Table 2. Family Structures

Variable	Response	N	%
Family	Mother is alive	35	100
	Mother is dead	0	0
	Father is alive	29	83
	Father is dead	6	17
Parents are separated	Yes	3	9
	No	32	91
No parents	(Recorded) Female	9	26
	(Recorded) Male	19	54
Father is not working (ill)	Yes	5	14
	No	30	86
Number of siblings	1	1	3
	2	5	14
	3	5	14
	4	9	26
	5	3	9
	6	3	9
	7	1	3
	9	3	9
	11	4	11
	12	1	3

While the mothers of all participants are alive, the fathers of the six participants (17%) died during the war. Three (9%) participant's parents are separated. One participant (3%) lives separated from her/his parents. Fathers of the five participants (14%) cannot work due to illness. The number of siblings of the participants is as follows: one participant has no sibling (3%) (parents have one child), five participants have one sibling (parents have two children) (14%), five participants have two siblings (parents have three children)

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(14%), nine participants have three siblings (parents have four children) (26%), three participants have four siblings (parents have five children) (9%), three participants have five siblings (parents have six children) (9%), one participant has six siblings (parents have seven children) (3%), three participants have eighth siblings (parents have nine children) (9%), four participants have 10 siblings (parents have 11 children) (11%), one participant has 11 siblings (parents have 12 children) (3%).

**Table 3.** General Data on Pre-Migration and Post-Migration

Variable	Response	N	%
Pre-migration Residence	Afrin	16	46
	Aleppo	9	26
	Idlib	2	6
	Damascus	2	6
	Participant didn't specify	6	17
Province where the participant first migrated	Kayseri	4	11
	Bursa	1	3
	Şanlıurfa	1	3
	Gaziantep	1	3
	Istanbul (Esenyurt)	2	6
	Istanbul (Bağcılar)	26	74
Length of residence in Turkey	Less than 1 year	1	3
	2 year	3	9
	3 year	4	11
	4 year	4	11
	5 year	14	40
	6 year	2	6
	7 year	1	3
	Participant didn't specify	6	17

Participants receiving help	Yes	6	17
(Kızılay (Red Crescent), municipality, etc.)	No	29	83

When asked about their residences before the migration, 16 participants (46%) stated Afrin, nine participants (26%) stated Aleppo, two participants (6%) stated Idlib, two participants (6%) stated Damascus. six participants (17%) didn't specify their previous residences.

All of the participants were residing in Bağcılar region county (İstanbul) during the research. When asked about the province where they first migrated, 26 participants (74%) stated İstanbul-Bağcılar, where they were currently residing. Four of the participants (11%) first migrated to Kayseri, one participant (3%) first migrated to Bursa, one participant (3%) first migrated to Şanlıurfa, one participant (3%) first migrated to Gaziantep and two participants (6%) first migrated to İstanbul-Esenyurt. Those who migrated to Bağcılar region from other cities or counties stated that they migrated in order to find a job and get a better salary.

The length of the participants' residence in Turkey varies. One participant (3%) has been in Turkey for 8 months, three participants (9%) have been in Turkey for 2 years, four participants (11%) have been in Turkey 3 years, four participants (11%) have been in Turkey for 4 years, 14 participants (40%) have been in Turkey for five years, two participants (6%) have been in Turkey for 6 years, one participant (3%) has been in Turkey for 7 years. Six of the participants (17%) didn't give information about their length of residence. The participants were asked "Are you receiving help from any institution in Turkey?". Six of the participants (17%) stated that they were receiving education support, meal card, etc. from Kızılay (Red Crescent) or municipality. 29 of the participants (83%) stated that they did not receive help or had no idea about the situation.

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### Qualitative Data Analysis Evaluations about the Situation before the Pre-Migration

Concerning their evaluations about the situation pre-migration, many participants expressed longing for the past. Participants expressed that they missed the pre-war period and missed family and relatives. One participant (P13, 15) expressed her/his desire to return as follows: "I was very happy. Because everyone was with me. I had friends. My grandfather was with me. My uncle was with me... Everyone was with me... I was very happy. But we came here, and we are like strangers here.". Another participant (P3, 14) mentioned that the economic situation of her/his family was well in Syria and expressed that she/he missed her/his house. Another participant (P8, 13) also stated that their economic situation was well "It was beautiful, we were going to school, we could go outside. Only my father was working there. We had a house. We had our store. We had everything. But here, all of us working and we cannot still make ends meet.". Another participant (P11, 12) expressed her/his longing for days when she/he did not have to work. It was observed that participants longed for the days they attended the school and they could be together with their families and the social circles (P6, 15-P7, 13- P12, 15).

Concerning their views related to the pre-migration process, some participants smiled, some participants shared their memories. In addition, some participants closely witnessed the war. It was observed that participants who closely witnessed war expressed no longing or less longing for their country (P6, 15). A participant (P13, 15) expressed her/his experiences as follows: "They were murdering people. We were looking at it from window just like that. For example, they shot her/him, and then grabbed her/him from her/his feet and threw into the building. We couldn't stand it; we were so young. I was 9 years old, my brother was 7 years old. My mother couldn't do anything, there were just three of us: me, my mother, my brother.". The same participant stated that her/his father had been missing at that time, then they were informed about his death.

### Evaluations about the Work

Participants in the survey reported that they were working as sewing machine users and errand boys/girls in textile workshops. These workshops usually produce sweaters, pants, shirts and socks. The number of employees in the workshops varies between and 14-15 and 50 persons. None of the children working in the workshops has insurance. The lowest working age at the workshops is 9 (P2, 12). The

participants expressed that they did not like the lunches served at the workshop, and that they mostly went their houses to eat lunch. When asked about their reasons to work, majority of the participants mentioned that they worked as they felt compelled to, their mother or father was ill, they took all the responsibility of the house, they took care of their younger siblings, and they had no other choice. Boys were observed to feel this pressure more (P20, 15). One participant (P1, 11) stated that she/he started to work as she/he couldn't be enrolled to the school when her/his family first migrated to Turkey.

**Wages:** According to the research data, wages vary between a minimum of 500 TL and a maximum of 1,200 TL\* per month. One participant (P27,13) had previously worked for 400 TL in Esenyurt, which is another district of Istanbul. A participant working with her/his brother (P15,12) said that she/he would get 300-350 TL if she/he worked alone. A participant (P31,13) who stated that she/he earned 500 TL attributed the low wage to the fact that she/he was Syrian. Sewing machine users earned more than errand boys/girls. It was determined that the wage increases with the age. Some participants working on Saturdays (P4, 15 -P23, 11) stated that they could get partial overtime fee or couldn't get at all. Some participants (P20, 15- P14, 13- P17, 15) stated that they could get overtime fee 5 TL per hour. Some of the participants (P31, 13- P1, 11) said they had wage deduction for 2 or 3 days when they couldn't go to work for 1 day.

**Working Hours:** It was found that participants worked 11 hours on average during the week. Working hours were generally reported as 08.30-19.30. During the working hours, apart from lunch break (45-60 minutes), participants had 2 breaks at 10.00 and 15.00 for 5 minutes. Working hours and durations can vary. There were participants who worked 10.30 hours apart from their working hours, while some participants (P16, 13- P4, 15- P1, 11) stated that they worked 12.00 or 12.30 hours including their working hours. Some participants stated that they worked till 13.00 or 15.00 on Saturdays, and they sometimes worked overtime till 17.00.

**Violence:** Some participants stated that they were exposed to verbal and physical violence.

According to the research data, male workers were exposed to more physical violence than female workers. According to research data, as the age increases, the physical violence towards boys gives way to verbal violence. It was observed that many of the participants had to often change jobs for reasons such as physical, verbal violence and low wages in the workplace.

\* 1 dolar = 5,32 TL



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When participants were asked about their social relations at work, they stated that they often did not get along with headworkers and bosses but they had good relationships with their colleagues.

### Evaluations about other Problems

**Recording:** The fact that families who were unrecorded or recorded in other provinces revealed that the recording problem still continues. There was a participant (P17,15) who couldn't apply for family reunification due to lack of identification.

**Education:** Participants expressed their desire and longing for school during the interviews. Some participants said they were late for school. For example, a participant expressed this situation as follows: (P6, 15) "When we first arrived here, I would go to the school, 4-5 years ago ... that is to say, I used to love school ... The school didn't accept Syrian children ... I could not go to school ... 3 or 4 years passed then they called us to school ... I did not want to go to school because I was working, and I was older ... I couldn't go to school, I was helping my father, I was working". Another participant (P8, 13) said, "I tried to get enrolled to school but the school refused. Then, after 3 years, the school started to accept Syrians but I couldn't go". One participant (P27, 13) stated that they went to local authority so her/his 7 years old sibling could go to school, but they couldn't get an answer. Another participant (P1, 11) said that her/his sister (10 years old) was afraid of going to school, as she was afraid of fights in the school. Some of the participants reported that their siblings could go to school with Turkish Red Crescent support, even though they couldn't go to school themselves. The working participants (P3, 14) stated that they saw their friends who went to school as lucky and wanted to be in their place.

When asked in what language they would like to be instructed if they could go to school, participants usually chose Turkish as instruction language. Apart from participants who wanted to be instructed in Turkish and Arabic, there was one participant (P18, 14) who preferred Arabic as she/he couldn't learn Turkish.

### Health, Sheltering and Security Problems:

Participants expressed they suffered from waist pain, back pain, foot and leg pain, asthma (due to dust) and suffered from problems in their eyes. One participant (P21, 14) mentioned that her/his sibling had a hole in her/his heart, and they couldn't go to hospital as their records were in Kayseri. Another participant (P24, 13) stated that sometimes she/he trembled and fainted. The same participant told that she/he constantly woke up crying, she/he didn't want to return to Syria as there were war and dead people. Participants stated

they couldn't get a day off due to illness, they (those who were not recorded or were recorded in another city) couldn't go to hospital, and most often they recovered by buying medications from pharmacy. It was expressed that children got frequently sick during winter due to the heating problems in the houses. There was one participant who exhibited signs of trauma and she/he was in need of physical treatment for her/his foot. This participant (P32, 14) stated that she/he did not apply to any health facility. When discussing health problems, it would be appropriate to explain the sheltering conditions. Participants are known to reside usually in basement houses with poor heating system. The fact that too many people live in the same house makes it easier to spread infectious diseases.

Participants were asked "Do you have a fear?" Some of them (P30, 14- P25, 13) were afraid of getting lost and were afraid of their family members', especially their younger siblings' being kidnapped. During interviews, it has been observed that these types of incidents have been experienced in the neighborhood, so that the participants do not feel safe, especially the families with no identities are at greater risk. It has been determined that some participants witnessed the theft and the extortion, and thus they fear. Another participant (P20, 15) expressed that she/he felt safe in Turkey: "I become happy after we came here, because there is peace and safety here, I feel safe. Nobody shot us, or threw us out of our house."

**Future Expectation:** When asked "Do you have any plans/dreams for future?" most of the participants answered "I don't have any, that's fine". When participants were given some time to consider on the question, they gave the following answers. Some participants dreamed to return their own country. One participant (P13, 15) said she/he dreamed setting up her/his own business as people got constantly angry at her/him at workshop. One participant (P33, 15) dreamed of seeing her/his mother living in Beirut. Some participants dreamed of going to Europe. Some participants dreamed of bicycles, motorcycles and cars. One of the participants (P18, 14) said that she/he dreamed of being a doctor, playing the piano, and being loved by everybody.

When asked "What would you like to do if you have a magic wand in your hand?", the participants firstly stated that they would want to go to the school. House, car, mobile phone, tablet computer, being rich and dressing beautifully were among the things participants dreamed of. Some participants (P24, 13- P28, 12- P21, 14) stated that they did not want anything except the comfort and happiness of their families.

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It was observed that some participants were in despair for the future. For example, a participant (P25, 13) said that if she/he had a magic wand she/he would change her/his life altogether. In a similar way, another participant (P6, 15) said, "Everything. I do not want such a life ". Another participant (P26, 13) expressed that she/he no longer believes in miracles as follows: "I think I would sleep again, it would be a dream".

When asked "If you were going to the school, what profession would you choose?" most of the participants stated that they would be doctor, police, footballers and teachers. Engineer, lawyer, soldier, hairdresser was among the answers; one participant chose shoemaking as it was the profession of her/his father.

### DISCUSSION

Child labor is not a new problem in Turkey and in the world. But immigration is known to increase this problem. The war that started in Syria in March 2011 led to an immigration wave. Turkey have also suffered severely from this condition as the country hosting most Syrian refugees in "temporary protection" status. Informal employment and child labor increased during this period. This study was conducted with the participation of child workers under the age of 15, in İstanbul-Bağcılar region; it was observed that children have been working as they feel they are obliged to and should support their families financially. Their parents said they wanted to send their children to the school, but for economic reasons it was not possible. According to a study conducted in Kilis the child's work is welcomed by the parents. Families think that children are being prepared for the future as they cannot continue their education due to poverty (Harunoğulları, 2016: 48).

It has been found that the wages of the children working in the workshops vary between 450 TL and 1,200 TL per month. It is observed that there is an increase in the wage of the children with older ages and good command of Turkish. According to a survey conducted by Lordoğlu and Aslan with 165 Syrian children in 3 cities, 15-17-year-old sisters working in textile industry earn 750 TL per month. In the same research, it was observed that a participant working in a textile workshop in İstanbul worked for 12 hours a day and earned 800 TL. No difference was found with regards to girls and boys in this study. According to the research, Turkish workers who do the same job have insurance and earn 1,250 TL per month (Lordoğlu, Aslan, 2018:727-730). In this survey conducted in Bağcılar, some participants also said that they were paid less because they were Syrian. According to the

observation notes, the reasons such as being below the legal age limit, having no identity, not knowing the language results in wage inequality. In another research conducted in Antakya, a textile workshop owner expressed that she/he had previously paid 200 TL per week to the over locker while paying 50 TL per week for the same job; and stated that every workshop owner decreased the wages (Kireçdağ, 2017:34).

The fact that participants cannot fully fulfill the physical development required by their age is among the other findings of the study. Duyar and Özener also stated that children who started early to work cannot show "normal" development in terms of height and weight (Duyar-Özener, 2003:194). According to the survey data, the participants do not eat well although they work very long hours. Participants stated that they did not like the food in the workshops and went to their houses during lunch break. Some participants were observed to suffer from waist and back pain due to the workload; some participant suffered from asthma due to the dust in the workshop. Also, the families mentioned that their children had some psychological problems. According to the study conducted by Harunoğulları in Kilis, some of the children were working in unhealthy and bad working conditions harmful for human dignity and they were exposed to physical, psychological and social pressure. This situation creates an obstacle to the psychosocial development of children. The children, who cannot do the same things with their peers, who cannot get education, who cannot play, who are separated from their friends, develop inferiority complex; which negatively affects child psychology (Harunoğulları, 2016: 47).

Another important finding of the study is physical and verbal violence that children were exposed to. Girls stated that they were exposed to verbal violence rather than physical violence; and that boys were exposed to violence more than girls. Boys stated that they often did not get along with headworkers and bosses but they had a good relationship with their colleagues.

Regarding their social relations, some of the participants stated that they are mostly with the Syrians, and some participants mentioned that there have a few Turkish friends. Some participants indicated that they were subject to exclusion from time to time. One participant stated that if she/he had an opportunity, she/he would like to do the same things Turkish people do. This statement reveals the alienation felt by the participant. According to the research conducted by Harunoğulları in Kilis, Syrian immigrant children are faced with various problems such as identity problems in society, otherness, social and cultural incompatibility,

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falling into contempt, exclusion, working in low wage jobs, unemployment, etc. It has been observed that children want to spend time with their own people rather than local people in order to cope with such problems, to protect their identity, culture and language (Harunoğulları, 2016: 48). It has been observed that the boys participating to the study are more socialized than the girls, and boys spend more time with Turkish people. Girls spend more time in the house and with their families.

When asked "What would you like to do if you have a magic wand in your hand?" the participants gave answers often related to the family. These answers indicate that children assumed a parental role in the family and felt more responsibility. This responsibility increases especially when the father is absent or cannot work due to sickness. It was observed that a lot of participants were in despair for the future. One participant stated how she/he lost hope for beautiful days with the following sentence: "I would think that it was a dream, and I would sleep again." While the vast majority of participants mentioned the desire to go back to school, some participants said they wanted it, but they thought they were too late for the school. When asked "If you had the chance to go to the school, did you want to be instructed in Turkish or Arabic?" the majority of the participants stated that they wanted to be instructed in Turkish or in two languages; which indicates that participants care about social harmony.

The vast majority of participants expressed their longing for the past, especially for the days when they could go to school; they expressed their desire to return to their country and see their relatives and friends. It was found that the participants who witnessed the war, who lost close relatives less wanted to return to their country. A participant (P32, 14), who was abandoned by her/his parents and was found to show traumatic symptoms, stated that she/he had erased Syria from her/his memory, changed her/his name, and only befriended Turkish people.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study is a field research aiming to address the problems of child workers employed in textile workshops and to contribute a remedy for this problem. According to the research data, participants work in workshops in jobs that are not suitable for their age, work for long hours and for low wages, and they cannot benefit from many rights although guaranteed by laws such as education, health, nutrition, etc. New regulations should be made to stop violations of Rights of Child for working children. According to Snoubar,

it is extremely important to fully identify and restructure the deficiencies in the child protection law in countries accepting refugee children (Snoubar, 2016: 539). In addition, supervision on working age and working condition should be increased. Inspections in accordance with Article 71 of Labor Law No. 4857 should be conducted. According to this article, the employment of children under the age of 15 is prohibited. Even if the problem is not solved completely, it is very important that problems faced should be put forward to produce solutions. In order to minimize the problem, child labor should be discussed together with poverty, unemployment, inequality, failure of the education system, age discrimination and other reasons. While the development plans and programs are being made, the factors such as fair income distribution and the development of human resources should be considered together with economic development (Çöpoğlu, 2018: 682). The development of macro policies to prevent poverty is extremely important.

It should be kept on mind that the right to education is one of the basic rights of a child, and that supporting education plays an important role in preventing child labor. According to SETA data (2017), among the school-age children, the schooling rate is 59% while remaining 41% of children don't go to school. The schooling rate is 51% for boys and 49% for girls. These data show that education should be supported. The recording problem has been found to continue in the fieldwork. Informing families about recording is necessary for the access of all family members' to services. In addition, it is necessary to increase the number of Turkish reading and writing courses, to support the children who couldn't attend to school when they first came to country and now feel late, by providing them with compensation programs. It should not be also forgotten that important support activities were carried out by Republic of Turkey in the Social Service/Work Centers for the 3.6 million Syrian immigrants in spite of the great immigration wave and concomitant problems.

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