

# THE EFFECT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING COURSES ON THE CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN: THE CASE OF THE FATIH DISTRICT IN ISTANBUL

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## Abstract

This study aims to investigate the issues faced by migrant women in the host country, such as language problems, adaptation difficulties, and unemployment. To this end, a field study was conducted to measure the impact of vocational training programs on the cultural integration of these women. A mixed research design was adopted to evaluate the effects of the training program, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. In the quantitative part, the effects of the training on participants were measured using a single-group pre-test-post-test model with scales for "psychological well-being," "happiness," "life satisfaction," and "psychological resilience." In the qualitative part, the impact of the training on participants' adaptation processes and its contributions to overcoming language barriers were examined in-depth through semi-structured interviews with 7 Syrian and 4 Turkish women. The analysis revealed that the primary challenges faced by Syrian women during their integration process were language barriers, adaptation difficulties, and unemployment. Additionally, the training significantly increased participants' overall well-being and helped them develop their language skills by expanding their social networks. Moreover, the acquisition of vocational skills was found to enhance participants' job prospects and self-confidence. The study's findings suggest that vocational training programs can play a crucial role in the integration process of disadvantaged groups, such as migrant women. These programs were found to contribute to participants' social and economic integration and help them overcome language barriers. In conclusion, it is necessary to adopt policies aimed at establishing vocational training courses that can facilitate the integration of Syrian women into Turkish society.

**Keywords:** Istanbul, Adaptation, Integration, Vocational Skills Course, Syrian Women

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# MESLEKİ EĞİTİM KURSLARININ SURIYELİ MÜLTECİ KADINLARIN KÜLTÜREL ENTEGRASYONUNA ETKİSİ: İSTANBUL FATİH İLÇESİ ÖRNEĞİ

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## Öz

Bu çalışma, göçmen kadınların ev sahibi ülkede karşılaştıkları dil sorunları, uyum güçlükleri ve işsizlik gibi sorunları araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, mesleki eğitim programlarının bu kadınların kültürel entegrasyonu üzerindeki etkisini ölçmek için bir saha çalışması yapılmıştır. Hem nicel hem de nitel veri toplama yöntemlerini kullanarak eğitim programının etkilerini değerlendirmek için karma bir araştırma tasarımı benimsenmiştir. Nicel kısımda, eğitimin katılımcılar üzerindeki etkileri, "psikolojik iyi oluş", "mutluluk", "yaşam doyumu" ve "psikolojik dayanıklılık" ölçekleri olan tek gruplu bir test öncesi-test sonrası model kullanılarak ölçülmüştür. Nitel kısımda, eğitimin katılımcıların uyum süreçleri üzerindeki etkisi ve dil engellerinin aşılmasına katkıları, 7 Suriyeli ve 4 Türk kadınla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla derinlemesine incelendi. Analiz, Suriyeli kadınların entegrasyon sürecinde karşılaştıkları başlıca zorlukların dil engelleri, uyum zorlukları ve işsizlik olduğunu ortaya koydu. Ek olarak, eğitim katılımcıların genel refahını önemli ölçüde artırdı ve sosyal ağlarını genişleterek dil becerilerini geliştirmelerine yardımcı oldu. Ayrıca, mesleki becerilerin kazanılmasının katılımcıların iş beklentilerini ve özgüvenlerini artırdığı bulunmuştur. Çalışmanın bulguları, mesleki eğitim programlarının göçmen kadınlar gibi dezavantajlı grupların entegrasyon sürecinde çok önemli bir rol oynayabileceğini göstermektedir. Bu programların katılımcıların sosyal ve ekonomik entegrasyonuna katkıda bulunduğu ve dil engellerini aşmalarına yardımcı olduğu bulundu. Sonuç olarak, Suriyeli kadınların Türk toplumuna entegrasyonunu kolaylaştıracak mesleki eğitim kursları oluşturmaya yönelik politikaların benimsenmesi gerekmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İstanbul, Adaptasyon, Entegrasyon, Mesleki Eğitim Kursları, Suriyeli Kadınlar

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## Introduction

Movement of people, whether voluntarily or out of necessity, is a multidimensional phenomenon that reshapes an individual's psychological, social, and physical life. In order to continue living healthily, individuals must adapt to their new location. Put differently, it is crucial for individuals to integrate into the society they have migrated to, which means being open to change. Therefore, if migrants do not complete the adaptation process and construct a new "social identity," they might be viewed as outsiders by the host society. In extreme cases, they may face exclusion or, in other words, othering.

Migrants undergo various stages throughout the adjustment period. According to the Chicago School, this process occurs in four steps: diffusion, competition, succession, and invasion (Güler, 2020). Integration facilitates individuals' adaptation to social organizations and social life, without necessitating them to abandon their own cultural identities, values, or norms (Buz and Çevik, 2020). Therefore, integration entails understanding the norms of the prevailing culture and adopting these values, ultimately allowing individuals to merge with the prevailing culture. Additionally, integration is considered a softer adaptation method compared to assimilation.

Integration encompasses an individual's stance towards the financial, societal, cultural, mental, and political spheres in their new environment, as well as the host society's political stance towards the migrant and the process of the society accepting the individual. This highlights the highly multidimensional nature of the process. The initial phase of this process is psychological, and the "psychological resilience" required for the migrant to adapt is of vital importance. When a migrant leaves behind the economy, politics, religion, culture, rules, and social life they are familiar with, they encounter different versions of these dynamics, which can lead to mental, psychological, and consequently physical problems. Sociocultural adaptation is crucial for coping with these issues. Sociocultural adaptation determines the migrant's interaction with the newly encountered culture and how they articulate their perceptions based on this interaction, forming the second dimension of integration. In this context, acquiring the language of the host country can ease the process, as language barriers are a complicating factor in the adaptation process (Batuk and Adıgüzel, 2022).

The economic dimension constitutes the third phase of the adjustment process. It is essential for migrants to generate an income to support their livelihoods. In this context, obtaining employment and a profession is necessary to achieve social acceptance and integration. The value of having a profession arises from the need for individuals to participate in the division of labor within society (Sirkeci, 2016). Migrants may abandon their previous professions and acquire new skills and occupations to adapt to the conditions of the new society. This process plays a vital role in achieving economic autonomy and social integration.

The adaptation process also includes a political or legal dimension. As a part of the country where they obtain citizenship, migrants gain legal rights and protection (Akıncı, Nergiz, and Gedik, 2015). Therefore, the adaptation process is considered long-term and dynamic. Consequently, considering all dimensions of the adaptation process, the view that “Adaptation is a fundamental duty of the migrant” (Karasu, 2017) prevails.

### **Migration, Adaptation, and Integration**

Discussions among social scientists about the phenomenon of migration typically revolve around concepts such as adaptation, integration, and acculturation. Migrants who are perceived as failing to integrate into their host society are often seen as the primary source of social, cultural, and economic problems by the host community. Integration is often constrained by the preconceptions that migrants must “be like the hosts” in socio-cultural, political, economic, psychological, and everyday life practices, “eliminate foreignness,” “minimize mistakes and errors,” “adapt quickly,” and fundamentally “be individuals/groups/communities/societies that do not cause problems” (Adıgüzel and Ok Şehitoğlu, 2022:18). Cultural integration process is not limited to the efforts of politicians, NGO’s and public institutions. All social institutions, local governments host society, immigrants community, civilian actors are a part of this important process. It is necessary for immigrants to make efforts for integration, especially by respecting the laws and cultural values of the host society they have been included, and countries accepting immigrants are expected to adopt non-discriminatory, fair, tolerant, transparent and reassuring policies that respect different identities and cultural values (Adiguzel, 2017: 206).

In societies accepting migrants, the integration process can either progress negatively or fail to occur at all. In such cases, negative outcomes like assimilation, discrimination, marginalization, and racism can emerge. Among Turks migrating to Germany and France, instances of acculturation and assimilation are evident, manifesting in children who do not speak Turkish or are unfamiliar with Turkish culture (Demirağ and Kakışım, 2018; Uzun, 2021). Assimilation is considered the mildest consequence of failed integration. More severe consequences can include discrimination and prejudices that distance society from moral values, leading to negative practices such as racism, aggression, and even murder. Additionally, these situations can inflict psychological and physical harm on migrants. At this point, migrants who fail to integrate, experience issues of belonging, and cannot find a purpose in life may exhibit deviant behaviors such as suicide or substance abuse.

Due to its geopolitical position and location on migration routes between the East and West, Türkiye has historically been subject to numerous migration flows. Additionally, Political and economic uncertainty in the area has increased the interest of migrants in Türkiye. Based on data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Türkiye hosts

approximately 3.8 million refugees, establishing it as the nation with the highest refugee population globally, with Syrians being the most predominant ethnic group among the refugees in Türkiye (UNHCR, 2021). In this context, Türkiye's integration policies hold significant importance both nationally and internationally.

Due to the internal conflicts in Syria, the migration movements of Syrians to neighboring countries have turned into some of the most severe and significant topics in recent years. More than 5 million refugees from Syria have sought asylum in five surrounding countries. Among these countries, Türkiye has accepted the highest number of Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2022). Faced with a large influx of migration, Türkiye has adopted approaches focusing on integration, resettlement to third countries, and voluntary return. Initially, adaptation training is offered to Syrians under temporary protection. Additionally, migration/refugee associations carry out integration-focused activities.

Since 2011, the count of refugees under temporary protection in Türkiye has risen annually. According to data from the Ministry of Interior, as of June 16, 2022, the total number of Syrian refugees is 3,724,240 under protection.

Examining the general educational condition of the Syrian, in 2020, 83.6% of Syrians under temporary protection had an education level of primary/secondary school or below. The illiteracy rate was 8.2% (Erdoğan, 2021: 68). Within the Syrian population in Türkiye, the proportional majority of women and the lack of education among this population bring about a series of problems. The gender-based disadvantage that exists globally turns into a multiple disadvantage as a result of being refugees and uneducated.

At the heart of the issues encountered by migrants after migration are the difficulties in adapting to the cultural, economic, and social frameworks of the host country. Xenophobia, unemployment, language barriers, and the inability to integrate are among the primary issues. Additionally, being a woman amplifies the impact of these problems.

Women are among the disadvantaged or specially protected groups that face participation difficulties in domains such as education, work, healthcare, and political participation (Tokol, 2018: 175). The socio-economic and cultural empowerment of women, who are deemed disadvantaged due to their gender, falls within the responsibility of the state, and various policies are developed in this context (Zavalsız, 2020: 11). In her study on Syrian woman's migration trauma and integration Aydin points out that the obstacles to social integration are language barrier, psychological problems, lack of education, economic problems and inadequacies in social services (2017: 209-225).

### **Method**

This study aims to investigate the issues faced by migrant women in the host country, such as language problems, adaptation difficulties, and unemployment. The study employs a mixed-method design, using semi-structured interviews for the qualitative part and a one-group pre-test post-test quasi-experimental for the quantitative part.

In this section of the study, details about the model, the study group, the measurement instruments used, gathering data, and analyzing data is provided.

### **Research Model**

The study was carried out utilizing a mixed-methods research approach. In the qualitative section, a semi-structured interview technique was employed, while in the quantitative section, a one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental model was employed. Mixed-methods research is characterized by the integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, techniques, and frameworks within a single study or in consecutive studies (Creswell, 2017). In the quantitative dimension, a group of Syrian female immigrants was provided with sewing training, and the one-group pretest-posttest model was employed to investigate whether the training increased their happiness, well-being, psychological resilience levels, and life contentment. In the qualitative dimension, A case study method, a form of qualitative research design, was utilized. This design investigates factors related to one or several cases holistically, examining how they influence and are influenced by the case in question in depth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this framework, a semi-structured interview was conducted to gather detailed information about the migration and adaptation processes of immigrants from Syria.

### **Sample and Study Group**

The convenience sampling technique was utilized to select the study (experimental) group (Baki & Gökçek, 2012). Among the identified Syrian migrants, 20 individuals were selected for the test group based on their voluntary participation. The experimental process, which began with 20 individuals, was completed with 9 individuals due to various reasons, including the separation of educational activities. Conversely, in the qualitative aspect, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 7 Syrian and 4 Turkish participants, also based on voluntary participation.

### **Measurement Instruments**

In the numerical aspect of the study, life contentment, happiness, well-being, and psychological resilience scales were used. The translation and evaluation of the Oxford Happiness Scale into Turkish, including its validity and reliability, were performed by Doğan and Çötök

(2011, pp. 165-172). The evaluation of the reliability and validity of the Adult Psychological Resilience Scale was conducted by Arslan (2015, pp. 344-357). The process of translating and adapting the Psychological Well-Being Scale for use in Turkish was conducted by Özmete (2016, pp. 361-391). The translation and validation of the Life Satisfaction Scale into Turkish, including its reliability, were performed by Dağlı and Baysal (2016, pp. 1250-1262).

### Data Collection and Analysis

Before the research process began, permissions for the scales intended for use in the research were sourced from the relevant researchers via email. After obtaining the permissions, the life contentment, happiness, well-being, and psychological resilience scales were administered to the 20 female migrants selected for the study group. To facilitate the participants' understanding of the items on the measurement instruments, Arabic translations were provided, and verbal explanations were given in Arabic when necessary. Post-tests were administered in the same manner after the training process. As the study concluded with 9 participants, it was assumed that the distribution was not normal, and the non-parametric Wilcoxon analysis was utilized to compare the outcomes of the pre-test and post-test. In the qualitative part, the content of the recorded interviews was evaluated using content analysis and discussed along with the experimental research data.

### Findings

#### Analysis of Quantitative Research Results Applied to Participants

This section presents the statistical analyses aimed at examining whether the educational activities conducted for the experimental group increased levels of psychological resilience, well-being, happiness, and life contentment.

#### Pre-Test and Post-Test for Well-Being

To determine whether the educational experiences of individuals attending the course affected their well-being levels, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was performed. This analysis compared the well-being levels of participants prior to and following the experiment, the obtained results are presented.

Items and Groups		<i>N</i>	<i>SO</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
1. I cannot solve my personal problems.	Decreased	5	3,00	15,00	-2,121	,034
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				

2. I am skeptical and confrontational.	Decreased	7	4,00	28,00	-2,646	,008
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
3. I am angry with myself.	Decreased	7	4,93	34,50	-2,420	,016
	Increased	1	1,50	1,50		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
4. I feel burdened by my liabilities as a spouse.	Decreased	7	4,57	32,00	-1,166	,244
	Increased	2	6,50	13,00		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				
5. I feel helpless in managing family-related matters.	Decreased	7	4,00	28,00	-2,530	,011
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
6. I feel guilty.	Decreased	5	3,00	15,00	-2,236	,025
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
7. I feel burdened by my liabilities as a parent.	Decreased	8	4,50	36,00	-2,828	,005
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
8. I think there are uncertainties about my family's future	Decreased	7	4,00	28,00	-2,428	,015
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
9. I am angry with my spouse and children.	Decreased	9	5,00	45,00	-2,719	,007
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				
10. I require support from neighbors and other family members.	Decreased	6	3,50	21,00	-2,232	,026
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
11. I experience disappointments related to family life.	Decreased	8	5,31	42,50	-2,434	,015
	Increased	1	2,50	2,50		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				
12. I feel embarrassed about my family's living conditions.	Decreased	7	4,00	28,00	-2,646	,008
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
13. I allocate enough time for childcare.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,333	,020
	Increased	6	3,50	21,00		

	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
14. My spouse is not understanding and caring.	Decreased	4	2,50	10,00	-2,000	,046
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	5				
	Total	9				
15. I experience problems in my marriage due to daily household chores.	Decreased	7	4,00	28,00	-2,646	,008
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
16. I feel embarrassed of my personal appearance.	Decreased	6	3,50	21,00	-2,271	,023
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
17. I cannot visit my relatives due to childcare responsibilities.	Decreased	6	3,50	21,00	-2,333	,020
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
18. I am overwhelmed by household chores.	Decreased	5	3,00	15,00	-2,070	,038
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
19. I am pleasure with my partner.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,000	,046
	Increased	4	2,50	10,00		
	Equal	5				
	Total	9				
20. If I could live my life over, I would choose to marry the same person.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-1,342	,180
	Increased	2	1,50	3,00		
	Equal	7				
	Total	9				
21. I am pleasure with other family members and relatives (extended family).	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-1,342	,180
	Increased	2	1,50	3,00		
	Equal	7				
	Total	9				
22. I am pleasure with my children.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-1,890	,059
	Increased	4	2,50	10,00		
	Equal	5				
	Total	9				
23. I am pleasure with relatives and neighbors.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,264	,024
	Increased	6	3,50	21,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
24. I am pleasure with my sexual life.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,000	,046
	Increased	4	2,50	10,00		
	Equal	5				
	Total	9				

25. I am pleasure with managing the number and spacing of my children.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-1,841	,066
	Increased	4	2,50	10,00		
	Equal	5				
	Total	9				
26. I can meet the economic needs of my family.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,121	,034
	Increased	5	3,00	15,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
27. I am pleasure with my family income.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,070	,038
	Increased	5	3,00	15,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
28. I rarely feel ill and generally feel healthy.	Decreased	5	4,60	23,00	-0,722	,470
	Increased	3	4,33	13,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
29. I am pleasure with my overall life.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,271	,023
	Increased	6	3,50	21,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
30. I am pleasure with my health.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,271	,023
	Increased	6	3,50	21,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
31. I am pleasure with family management.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,232	,026
	Increased	6	3,50	21,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
32. I am pleasure with my religious life.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-1,841	,066
	Increased	4	2,50	10,00		
	Equal	5				
	Total	9				
33. I struggle with raising my children well.	Decreased	6	3,50	21,00	-2,271	,023
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
34. I have opportunities to earn extra income.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,070	,038
	Increased	5	3,00	15,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
35. I have enough time for social participation.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,555	,011
	Increased	8	4,50	36,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
36. I have opportunities to pursue personal interests.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,232	,026
	Increased	6	3,50	21,00		

	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
Total Score	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,673	,008
	Increased	9	5,00	45,00		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				

**Table 1.** Pre-Test and Post-Test for the Well-Being Scale

The findings of the Wilcoxon indicated a notable decrease in responses to the following items: “1. I cannot solve my personal problems,” “2. I am skeptical and confrontational,” “3. I am angry with myself,” “5. I feel helpless in managing family-related matters,” “6. I feel guilty,” “7. I feel burdened by my liabilities as a parent,” “8. I think there are uncertainties about my family’s future,” “9. I am angry with my spouse and children,” “10. I require support from neighbors and other family members,” “11. I experience disappointments related to family life,” “12. I am ashamed of my family’s living conditions,” “14. My spouse is not understanding and caring,” “15. I experience problems in my marriage due to daily household chores,” “16. I feel embarrassed of my personal appearance,” “17. I cannot visit my relatives due to childcare responsibilities,” “18. I am overwhelmed by household chores,” and “33. I struggle with raising my children well.” Responses to the following showed a significant increase: “13. I allocate enough time for childcare,” “19. I am pleasure with my partner,” “23. I am pleasure with relatives and neighbors,” “24. I am pleasure with my sexual life,” “25. I am pleasure with managing the number and spacing of my children,” “26. I can meet the economic needs of my family,” “27. I am pleasure with my family income,” “29. I am pleasure with my overall life,” “30. I am pleasure with my health,” “31. I am content with family management,” “34. I have opportunities to earn extra income,” “35. I have enough time for social participation,” and “36. I have opportunities to pursue personal interests.” However, no important differences were observed in the replies to: “4. I feel burdened by my duties as a spouse,” “20. If I could live my life over, I would choose to marry the same person,” “21. I am pleasure with other family members and relatives (extended family),” “22. I am pleasure with my children,” “28. I rarely feel ill and generally feel healthy,” and “32. I am content with my religious life” ( $p > .05$ ). Conversely, the fluctuation in the overall scores for the well-being scale was found to be significant ( $z = -2.673$ ;  $p < .01$ ), indicating that the educational activities significantly increased the well-being levels of the test group.

### **Pre-Test and Post-Test for Happiness Levels**

To determine whether the educational experiences of individuals attending the course affected their happiness levels, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was performed. This analysis compared the happiness levels of participants prior to and following the experiment, and the obtained results are presented.

Items and Groups		<i>N</i>	<i>SO</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
1. I cannot solve my personal problems.	Decreased	5	3,00	15,00	-2,121	,034
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
2. I am skeptical and confrontational.	Decreased	7	4,00	28,00	-2,646	,008
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
3. I am angry with myself.	Decreased	7	4,93	34,50	-2,420	,016
	Increased	1	1,50	1,50		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
4. I feel burdened by my liabilities as a spouse.	Decreased	7	4,57	32,00	-1,166	,244
	Increased	2	6,50	13,00		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				
5. I feel helpless in managing family-related matters.	Decreased	7	4,00	28,00	-2,530	,011
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
6. I feel guilty.	Decreased	5	3,00	15,00	-2,236	,025
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
7. I feel burdened by my liabilities as a parent.	Decreased	8	4,50	36,00	-2,828	,005
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
8. I think there are uncertainties about my family's future	Decreased	7	4,00	28,00	-2,428	,015
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
9. I am angry with my spouse and children.	Decreased	9	5,00	45,00	-2,719	,007
	Increased	0	,00	,00		
	Equal	0				

**Table 2.** Pre-Test and Post-Test for the Happiness Scale

The Wilcoxon analysis results showed that the variations among the experimentals for all items were significant in the direction of increase. The variation in the overall scores of the scale was also deemed significant ( $z=-2.670$ ;  $p<.01$ ), indicating that the educational activities significantly increased the happiness levels of the group.

**Pre-Test and Post-Test for General Life Satisfaction**

To determine whether the educational experiences of individuals attending the course affected their general life satisfaction levels, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was performed. This analysis compared the life satisfaction levels of participants before and after the experiment, and the results obtained are presented.

Items and Groups		<i>N</i>	<i>SO</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
1. I have a life close to my ideals.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,636	,008
	Increased	8	4,50	36,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
2. My living conditions are excellent.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,588	,010
	Increased	8	4,50	36,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
3. I am pleasure with my life.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,060	,039
	Increased	5	3,00	15,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
4. To date, I have achieved the significant things I desire in life.	Decreased	1	3,00	3,00	-1,667	,096
	Increased	5	3,60	18,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
5. If I were given the opportunity to live my life again, I would alter almost nothing.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,070	,038
	Increased	5	3,00	15,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
TOTAL	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,684	,007
	Increased	9	5,00	45,00		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				

**Table 3.** Pre-Test and Post-Test for the Life Satisfaction Scale

The Wilcoxon analysis results showed that the variations among the experimentals for all items were significant in the direction of increase. The variation in the overall scores of the scale was also determined to be significant ( $z=-2.684$ ;  $p<.01$ ), indicat-

ing that the educational activities significantly increased the general life satisfaction levels of the group.

### Pre-Test and Post-Test for Psychological Resilience Levels

To determine whether the educational experiences of individuals attending the course affected their psychological resilience levels, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was performed. This analysis compared the psychological resilience levels of participants prior to and following the experiment, and the obtained results are presented.

Items and Groups		<i>N</i>	<i>SO</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
1. I collaborate with those around me.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,121	,034
	Increased	5	3,00	15,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
2. It is crucial for me to possess and develop skills or qualities.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-1,841	,066
	Increased	4	2,50	10,00		
	Equal	5				
	Total	9				
3. I am aware of how to conduct myself in various social environments (e.g., work, home, or other social settings).	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,232	,026
	Increased	6	3,50	21,00		
	Equal	3				
	Total	9				
4. My family has generally supported me throughout my life.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,060	0,039
	Increased	5	3,00	15,00		
	Equal	4				
	Total	9				
5. My family knows a lot about me (e.g., who my friends are and what I enjoy).	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,456	,014
	Increased	7	4,00	28,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
6. I try to finish the activities I start.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,588	,010
	Increased	8	4,50	36,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
7. Religious beliefs provide me with strength.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,414	,016
	Increased	7	4,00	28,00		
	Equal	2				

8. I take pride in my ethnic heritage.	Decreased	1	2,50	2,50	-1,983	,047
	Increased	6	4,25	25,50		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
9. I talk to my family/spouse about how I feel (e.g., when I am sad or worried).	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,392	,017
	Increased	7	4,00	28,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
10. When events don't unfold as expected, I can resolve the situation without harming others or myself (e.g., without resorting to violence or substance use).	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,687	,007
	Increased	9	5,00	45,00		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				
11. I feel bolstered by my friends.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,410	,016
	Increased	7	4,00	28,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
12. I have a sense of belonging to the community where I reside.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,558	,011
	Increased	8	4,50	36,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
13. My family supports me during challenging times (e.g., when I am sick or in trouble).	Decreased	1	2,50	2,50	-1,983	,047
	Increased	6	4,25	25,50		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
14. My friends supports me during challenging time.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,456	,014
	Increased	7	4,00	28,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
15. I have chances to demonstrate to others that I am an adult and can take responsibility.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,565	,010
	Increased	8	4,50	36,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
16. I recognize my strengths.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,565	,010
	Increased	8	4,50	36,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
17. I engage in religious events (such as going to the mosque).	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,226	,026
	Increased	6	3,50	21,00		
	Equal	3				

	Total	9				
18. I feel secure when I am with my family.	Decreased	1	3,00	3,00	-2,165	,030
	Increased	7	4,71	33,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
19. I have chances to enhance my skills I will use in the future (such as professional skills).	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,401	,016
	Increased	7	4,00	28,00		
	Equal	2				
	Total	9				
20. I love the culture and traditions of the community I live in.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,565	,010
	Increased	8	4,50	36,00		
	Equal	1				
	Total	9				
21. I take pride in being a citizen of this country.	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,716	,007
	Increased	9	5,00	45,00		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				
TOTAL	Decreased	0	,00	,00	-2,675	,007
	Increased	9	5,00	45,00		
	Equal	0				
	Total	9				

The Wilcoxon analysis results showed that the variations among the experimental for the item “It is crucial for me to possess and develop skills or qualities” were not significant, while the discrepancies among the experimental for all other items were significant in the direction of increase. The variation in the overall scale scores was also determined to be significant ( $z=-2.675$ ;  $p<.01$ ), indicating that the educational activities significantly increased the psychological resilience levels within the test group.

### Analysis of Qualitative Research Results Applied to Participants

Qualitative research findings were subjected to thematic analysis and the views of Turkish and Syrian women were analyzed under the following themes: pre-training perceptions, Turkish education, skill and awareness training, and their views on receiving education together.

### Participants’ Emotions and Thoughts Before the Research

#### Syrian Participants

Before the research, some interviewees expressed that they felt intense fear because of the conflict in Syria and anxiety about potential crises they might face in Türkiye. Conversely, despite all the adversities, other participants mentioned that being in Türkiye provided them a sense of secure.

The family responsibilities of Syrian women who feel fear are considered a significant element in their experience of fear. In this context, Interviewee 1 expressed their fears through their children by saying,

*“We knew Türkiye was comfortable. But we were afraid for our children.”*

Another mother, Interviewee 2, conveyed her feelings as follows:

*“I was very, very scared when I first came because my country is far away. The language is very different. When I first came here, my husband had died in Aleppo. I was very scared with my six children.”*

Interviewee 7, who has fears related to the war, expressed the relief of coming to a safe area from the war as follows:

*“When we arrived, we were afraid of the war in Syria; we came here for a more comfortable life.”*

The feelings of participants who stated that being in Türkiye provided a sense of security and comfort were noticed to be more favorable compared to others. Interviewee 3 expressed that coming to Türkiye provided not fear but security as follows:

*“I knew that Türkiye was comfortable; I was never afraid and, on the contrary, I feel secure.”*

Similarly, Interviewee 4 expresses feeling safe through their love for Türkiye. In this context, Interviewee 4 states,

*“I wanted the war in my country to end. However, I love Türkiye very much. I knew it was safe here. I was never afraid to come here.”*

Another participant who feels safe, Interviewee 6, expresses their sense of security with the statement:

*“I was sad because I had left my homeland. Now I am safe, thank God.”*

Despite the difficulties they experienced, Interviewee 5 expressed their feelings as follows:

*“When I first came, I had no clothes, no belongings. I had nothing. My husband had passed away. My children were young. I had a great responsibility. I had no relatives, they all stayed in Syria. I was never afraid of Türkiye when I came here. I loved its people very much, but there are all kinds of people here, both good and bad. However, my children had a very hard time here, especially with school. We have a lot of difficulty getting my children to school.”*

The social, economic, and cultural distinctions between the the country and host nation of origin can cause refugees to face challenges in the nations where they are under temporary protection. The most significant difficulty experienced by Syrian women under protection in Türkiye is the language barrier. Participants were inquired if they had made any efforts to adapt when they first arrived in Türkiye and what they experienced. Interviewee 1, who stated that they had difficulties with communication in Turkish, expressed their thoughts as follows:

*“We had difficulties in the market and with official procedures. Previously, we were only afraid of the language; our concern was in that direction. Our languages were different. Later, our relationships with people increased, we met our neighbors, and they helped us a lot. Now our children have started school, we arranged a school for them, thank God we are not struggling as much as before.”*

Another participant who faced difficulties related to the language barrier in terms of adaptation is Interviewee 3. Interviewee 3 expressed their thoughts as follows:

*“The language is very difficult, and I had a lot of difficulty with it. The culture and traditions here are very different from those in Syria. The language was a barrier to my communication.”*

Another participant who experienced language difficulties, Interviewee 4, stated that they overcame this challenge through their children with the following sentences:

*“I had difficulty with the language, but I felt more at ease thanks to my children. My children first learned the language, then they started school. I love the people around me very much. They helped me a lot. Thanks to my children, I was able to communicate in the market and with official procedures.”*

Another participant who experienced language difficulties is Interviewee 6. Interviewee 6 expressed that the only problem they had in Türkiye was the language:

*“I had a lot of difficulty with the language. My only problem was the language.”*

The children of Syrian participants have a significant role in easing communication within Turkish. Additionally, social interaction and adaptation training are also seen as important factors in adaptation. For instance, Interviewee 2 mentioned that their children acted as translators during shopping. They mentioned that they did not face any challenges in adaptation apart from the language problem:

*“I am a very social person, so I did not have much difficulty in adapting.”*

Interviewee 7 expressed this situation as follows:

*“My children study in Turkish schools. They learned Turkish and help me as well. I also took social integration and life skills training. It helped a lot in adapting.”*

Local communities generally expect refugees under temporary protection in their countries to learn their language to facilitate social communication. A comparable situation can be observed in Türkiye. For example, Interviewee 5 stated that Turkish citizens are distant when they speak Arabic. Interviewee 5’s thoughts are as follows:

*“I love speaking and learning Turkish. However, people are very distant towards us when we speak Arabic. When we speak Turkish, this distance is broken.”*

### **Turkish Participants**

Residing in the same vicinity or being employed in the same sector with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers can play a mediating role in breaking the prejudice of locals in Türkiye. Interviewee 2 expressed that residing in the same place as Syrians under temporary protection increased their awareness as follows:

*“I am already integrated with them because I live in a place where migrants are concentrated. I had not come together with them only in the context of courses. This was a first for me. Otherwise, I used to visit them. Individually, I visited Syria once. Until the war and until people started coming here, I was not familiar with Syrian culture. I started getting to know them more here. Since I volunteered in NGOs here, I first came together with them through visits, delivering aid, or organizing programs with children, including orphan children, etc. In my opinion, refugees should be present in every society. May God not make anyone a refugee, but I feel something very different towards them. They need us, and we need them. We need to be together. They have a lot to teach and offer us, whether it is the difficulties they have experienced or their different cultures, which I love getting to know and integrating with. I have often been at their tables, and now I prefer the foods they eat. They always hold a special place for me; it is also a matter of interest. Their children are very smart and have a unique innocence. I taught them, and there is much we can learn from them. I am very happy to live with them.”*

Interviewee 2, who expressed a special closeness to Syrian migrants, mentioned that Syrians do not wish to be as closely associated as they currently are. In the continuation of the interview, they explained the reasons for this distance both with the conditions of the war and the political climate in Türkiye:

*“The other side is a bit distant. Because war makes people different; they become distant. They cannot trust, they do not know what to expect, and right now there is serious racism. People tend to immediately link political and policy issues with refugees and impose those issues on them. There is a perception that everything bad that happens is because the refugees came. Because of this, they also keep their distance from us. They do not want to face such things. It can happen in any country; their behaviors might be problematic or different, but that does not mean all Syrians are bad. We are a bit of a closed society in this regard. Although we embrace them, we have a certain boundary and do not allow it to be crossed. There are also external factors, political and economic issues, and hearsay from Twitter journalism. That’s how it seems to me.”*

*Although Interviewee 2 mentioned that Syrian women do not form as close a bond as they do, they believe that the participation of both Turkish and Syrian participants in training sessions increases dialogue.*

*“I support such participation. Most of them do not know Turkish, and we manage with as much Arabic as we know, and with body language. Here, I felt that warm atmosphere; we are more united. In my eyes, there is no difference; there is no such thing as ‘oh, they are Syrian, I am Turkish.’ We are us, as women, we are us. I did not feel that racial or cultural difference. There might be a language barrier, but as long as there is body language, there is no problem, we understand each other somehow.”*

*There are also Turkish participants who have never had prejudice against Syrians or migrants but do not empathize with them. Interviewee 1 expressed this situation as follows:*

*“I have never had prejudice. I also did not have empathy. I am only against this: I do not want people of a certain age to be refugees. Everyone should stay in their homeland. I have a soft spot for the elderly; let the elderly, children, and women come. I am uncomfortable with those between the ages of 18-50. When Interviewee 1 was asked the main reason for their discomfort, they expressed that the socioeconomic capacity of the country is*

*strained with the following sentences: The main reason for my discomfort is not just them, but all refugees. We are crowded, job opportunities are limited; I say everyone should live in their homeland. Generally, I am not uncomfortable with any of them. When I say those between the ages of 18-50 should stay in their homeland, I think about how they will fight against a state that has declared war on its own people. Even though I have such thoughts, I am not against any of them.”*

*Among Turkish participants, there are those who have prejudices against Syrian refugees. Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 4 expressed that these prejudices were dismantled through the training provided within the scope of the research. Interviewee 3 described this situation as follows:*

*“There were other opportunities for us to be together before the training, but as a result of this training, my feelings were reinforced in a positive way,*

Interviewee 4 expressed:

*“I had a prejudice about living with Syrians. I think these trainings broke my prejudice because I used to think, based on hearsay, that they were not very hygienic, that there were lifestyle differences compared to our Turkish culture, and that cleanliness was almost nonexistent for them. But after getting to know them, I witnessed that their hands, feet, and clothing were very clean and that they were very orderly.”*

### **Turkish Language Training for Participants**

All Syrian participants believe that the training they received as part of the research helped them learn the language, as well as acquire professional skills. All participants feel that their communication with people around them has strengthened and that the training has contributed to their language learning. However, they also noted that the training duration was short and that they remained at a beginner level in Turkish. Interviewee 1 expressed that the training provided language gains and expressed a desire for the training to continue as follows:

*“It definitely strengthened us. We don't want the time to end; we want more lessons here. I was always with my friends in the lessons. We don't want the training to end. After the training ended, we wanted it to continue via the ZOOM application, even if it was only one day per week, that would be enough. Here, I learned letters, adverbs, and many other things.”*

Similarly, Interviewee 2, who shares these sentiments, said:

*“It strengthened me a lot and contributed significantly. I can’t speak Turkish fully. I’m still at the beginner level, but I am slowly speaking. I want it to continue. The duration is not enough; for example, I’m currently at the first level, and I want to move to the 2nd and 3rd levels. I want to progress further.”*

The research results indicate that Syrian women are eager to learn Turkish but remain at the beginner level due to the limited duration of the training. Interviewee 3 expressed this situation as follows:

*“I really want to learn Turkish. I love talking to people, but I can’t communicate. It helped a little. I’m still at the first level.”*

One of the signs indicating the sustainable outcomes of the research is that the gains made during the training continue in the following periods. Interviewee 4 expressed this situation as follows:

*“I think it will be better next year. Previously, I couldn’t help my children with their lessons at all; now I can.”*

Interviewees 5, 6, and 7 believe that these trainings have contributed to their learning of Turkish.

### **Skill and Awareness Training for Syrian Participants**

Many participants believe that the training they received has provided them with professional skills, abilities, and awareness. Interviewee 1 expressed the gains they acquired through the training as follows:

*“For example, I previously had no knowledge about blouses, skirts, etc. It was very little. Now, I have learned many things here. I even know how to make a zipper. I learned how to sew with a machine.”*

Interviewee 2 mentioned that they benefited greatly from the training and that the instructors were helpful, while Interviewee 4 expressed,

*“I am very satisfied, and I previously knew very little about sewing; now I am much better.”*

There are also participants who mentioned that they had received similar training in Syria but learned it at a more advanced level in Türkiye. Interviewee 7 expressed this situation as follows:

*“We knew a little about sewing; we learned it in Syria, but very little. Now we continue to learn. We are satisfied because we have learned it better now, and we can progress and work.”*

Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 5 expressed that the training was beneficial both to themselves and their friends, but the benefits were limited due to health problems.

The idea of continuing the training received as a profession is considered a widespread impact of the study. In this context, Syrian participants who received training were inquired if they had any thoughts of continuing the training as a profession. The lack of active work experience among Syrian women may cause them not to want to work. Participants who believed that the training provided them with skills and professional gains expressed some reservations about pursuing it as a profession in the future. Interviewee 1, who only plans to use the skills for her family within the household, expressed her thoughts as follows:

*“I simply wish to do something to my children, to create something at home for the household. Previously, having a zipper made or shortening a skirt cost 60 TL, for example, but now I can do everything for free.” Similarly, Interviewee 7 expressed this thought by saying: “I’m uncertain if I would pursue it as a profession, but I aspire to do it for my family, like for my daughter and son.”*

Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 5 stated that they do not want to work due to health problems.

Among the participants, there are two who consider continuing the skills they have gained as a profession. Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 4 expressed that they want to pursue sewing as a profession.

### **Perceptions of Joint Training by Turkish and Syrian Participants**

#### **Perceptions of Syrian Participants**

First, participants who received joint training, except for Turkish language courses, were asked whether there was any clustering among Turkish and Syrian participants during the training. There is no consensus on this issue between Syrian and Turkish participants.

Interviewee 1 stated that there was no clustering and that there was even an atmosphere of mutual help, with the following words:

*“No, there is never any clustering; we are all trying to learn something together. If I can’t do something, another friend helps me.”*

Interviewee 2, Interviewee 4, and Interviewee 5 also stated that there was no clustering among Syrian and Turkish participants in the classroom environment. Interviewee 3, however, mentioned that due to the language barrier, they could only communicate with Turkish participants to a limited extent using sign language, expressing it as follows:

*“Since I do not know Turkish, I could not talk to anyone; I am only trying to communicate a little with gestures.”*

Interviewee 6 and Interviewee 7 stated that there was limited communication with Turkish participants, attributing this to their own shyness, which hindered their ability to communicate.

### **Perceptions of Turkish Participants**

In interviews with Turkish participants, they were asked whether there was any clustering between the two ethnic groups in the classes. Interviewee 3 stated that there was clustering at the beginning of the training but that it gave way to integration as they got to know each other:

*“The clustering observed in the first lesson gave way to mingling in the subsequent lessons.”*

Interviewee 4 stated that, due to the Syrian participants being at a beginner level in speaking Turkish, they communicated more among themselves but were not closed to communication with Turkish participants:

*“Actually, their communication among themselves is better. The Syrians face a language problem. If there were no language barrier, they would be quite harmonious with the Turks; I have not witnessed any disharmony. When someone needs something and asks if there is something available, they quickly try to fulfill it.”*

Interviewee 2, who shares similar thoughts with Interviewee 4, stated that while they did not define the situation as clustering, there could be separations due to language issues. Interviewee 2 expressed this thought as follows:

*“It’s not clustering, but when there are language problems, Syrian women sit with their friends, and Turkish women sit with theirs. However, the dialogue between them does not break. They just support each other more in terms of understanding and being understood.”*

Interviewee 1 stated that there was no clustering with Syrians but, like the other participants, communication was hindered by the language barrier.

## Conclusion

This study addresses the problems faced by migrant women in Türkiye. These problems include language barriers, unemployment, and lack of social networks. In this context, it is proposed to provide Syrian participants with information, skills, and language training to solve these problems.

The study results indicate that both Syrian and Turkish participants who attended the sewing and embroidery training completed the courses with satisfaction. Both groups expressed their happiness with the social environment created and the training they received.

The most challenging issue for Syrian women in terms of integration is language education. Despite being in Türkiye for many years, their inability to use Turkish even at a beginner level has negatively impacted their daily lives. This situation has resulted in women not leaving their homes, being unable to assist their children with homework, and ultimately failing to socialize and integrate. Syrian participants view the language training offered within the study as a gain. However, the short duration of the training has caused participants to remain at the beginner level. The expectation of the Syrian participants is for the training to continue.

Another aim of the research is to enhance the professional skills and development of Syrian women. In this context, the sewing training provided has satisfied both Syrian and Turkish participants. However, the lack of work experience among Syrian women hinders them from turning these skills into a profession. Only a limited number of participants expressed that they considered pursuing sewing as a profession.

It is considered that having Syrian and Turkish participants attend classes together is a highly effective method for integration. However, due to language barriers, communication between Syrian participants and Turkish participants remains limited; despite this, communication through body language continues. Consequently, it has been observed that the participation of Turkish individuals in the same environment as Syrian migrants helps break down prejudices against migrants and significantly contributes to the integration of Syrian migrant women.

As a result, the host society, official institutions, local governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as the immigrant community, have duties to strengthen the relations of Syrian immigrant women with the Turkish society and to ensure the smooth functioning of the integration process. It is important for all actors, especially the Directorate of Immigration Management, to assume responsibility for the problems highlighted in this study, to increase scientific studies in this field and to disseminate field research.

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