

The Teachers' Perspectives of the Barriers That Migrant and Refugee Children Face in Mainstream Classrooms in Scotland

Göçmen ve Mülteci Çocukların İskoçya'daki Genel Eğitim Sınıflarında Karşılaştıkları Engellere İlişkin Öğretmen Bakış Açıları

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ABSTRACT

Migration, driven by social, economic, and political factors, has been a longstanding aspect of human history (Bade, 2015). In recent years, the United Kingdom and Scotland have received a substantial number of refugees through various resettlement programmes, leading to significant demographic changes within the education system. While migrant and refugee students often face numerous challenges, including discrimination, xenophobia, and migration-related trauma, schools and teachers play a crucial role in facilitating their adaptation and development. However, increasing diversity within educational settings may create challenges for educators seeking to establish inclusive learning environments. Therefore, examining teachers' perceptions of migrant and refugee students, as well as potential misconceptions and misinterpretations surrounding these groups, is of considerable importance. This article explores teachers' perspectives on the barriers encountered by refugee and migrant students within mainstream classrooms in Scotland. Furthermore, it investigates how teachers' conceptualisations of "refugee" and "migrant" may influence educational inclusion. The study examines the issues of language, psychological-emotional well-being and social experiences of children throughout the perspectives of teachers and further explores their conceptualisations of teachers by receiving insight from them. Drawing on from qualitative data from 7 teachers' experiences and observations, this article highlights several barriers that refugee and migrant children face in mainstream classrooms including the teachers' misconceptions of refugee and migrant.

Keywords: Migrant children, refugee children, inclusion, primary education.

ÖZ

Göç ve mültecilik olguları sosyal, politik ve ekonomik sebepler gibi çeşitli faktörlerle insanoğlunun hayatında uzun süredir yer eden olgulardır (Bade, 2015). Birleşik Krallık ve İskoçya, son yıllarda çeşitli yeniden yerleştirme programları aracılığıyla önemli sayıda mülteci kabul etmiş ve bu durum eğitim sisteminde demografik değişimlere yol açmıştır. Göçmen ve mülteci öğrenciler; ayrımcılık, yabancı düşmanlığı ve göç travması gibi çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaşırken, okullar ve öğretmenler bu öğrencilerin uyum ve gelişim süreçlerinde kritik bir rol üstlenmektedir. Ancak artan çeşitlilik, öğretmenler açısından kapsayıcı öğrenme ortamları oluşturmayı zorlaştırabilmektedir. Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin göçmen ve mülteci öğrencilere ilişkin algılarının ve olası yanlış kavramsallaştırmaların incelenmesi önem taşımaktadır. Bu makale, İskoçya'daki genel eğitim sınıflarında mülteci ve göçmen öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları engellere ilişkin eğitimcilerin bakış açılarını incelemektedir. Ayrıca, eğitimcilerin "mülteci" ve "göçmen" kavramlarına ilişkin tanımlamalarının kapsayıcı eğitim uygulamalarını nasıl etkileyebileceğini araştırmaktadır. Çalışma eğitimcilerin bakış açısından çocukların dil gelişimleri,

psikolojik-duygusal iyi oluşları ve sosyal deneyimlerini incelemekte ve eğitimcilerin, öğrencilerinin kimlik ve deneyimleriyle ilgili kavramsallaştırmalarına dair derinlemesine görüşler sunmaktadır. Yedi eğitimcinin deneyimlerinden ve gözlemlerinden elde edilen nitel verilere dayanarak bu makale, mülteci ve göçmen çocukların genel eğitim sınıflarında karşılaştıkları çeşitli engelleri – özellikle de eğitimcilerin mülteci ve göçmen kavramlarına dair oluşturduğu yanlış ya da eksik kavramsallaştırmaları- ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göçmen çocuklar, mülteci çocuklar, kapsayıcı eğitim, ilköğretim.

INTRODUCTION

Migration, driven by social, economic, and political factors, has been a longstanding aspect of human history (Bade, 2015). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2015) reports that displacement due to conflict now surpasses levels seen during World War II, with the Syrian Civil War (2011) contributing to a significant refugee and educational crisis. In reviewing literature, it is possible to find various perceptions and categorisations that are employed to define the terms migrant and refugee. In the Glossary of Migration (2011) prepared by International Organization for Migration, migrant defined as a person who voluntarily choose to migrate from their country of origin to another country for the personal comfort without intervention of an external factor. A similar definition of migrant employed by UNHCR (1951) to refer individuals who leave their country of residence in order to improve their personal well-being and Access better life standards. In contrast, refugee is used to describe individuals who are forced to leave their country of residence due to persecution, war, violence and well-founded fear for their safety (UNHCR, 1951). These definitions clearly demonstrate that there is a fundamental distinction between migrants and refugees in terms of both their identities and experiences, particularly when considering the underlying causes of migration and whether it is voluntary.

Despite this distinction, in context of the United Kingdom (UK) and more specifically Scotland the term migrant often used as an umbrella term encompassing both refugee and migrant experiences (Scottish Government, 2015). The Scottish Government defines migrant broadly as a person who arrive in the country from outside of the UK (Scottish Government, 2015). This definition does not include the motives behind migratory movement or whether it is based on voluntariness. However, the voluntariness aspect of a migratory movement may significantly influence a range of factors including socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds which in turn may shape academic experiences (Eren & Cakran, 2017; Zhou, 2001). Therefore, such inclusive approaches, where migration is treated as a broad umbrella term may lead to overlooking group-specific needs and experiences of migrants and refugees (Edwards, 2016). Therefore, to avoid neglecting group-specific experiences arising from their respective status, concepts of migrant and refugee are approached from a residualist perspective grounded in the definitions provided by the UNHCR (1951) in this study.

The United Nations (1989) highlights the global responsibility to ensure education for all children, including refugees and migrants. Under this responsibility, the UK has welcomed many diverse refugee population through government programmes such as, Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme (2016), Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (2021) and Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (2022).

In Scotland, the education system has adapted to accommodate increasing numbers of refugee students. By 2023, 58,153 students with English as an additional language were enrolled in Scottish schools (Scottish Government 2024a), with 1,276 asylum seekers and 3,649 refugees recorded in 2023, comprising 1.28% of the student population (Scottish Government, 2024b). Migrant and refugee children face multiple stressors, including racism, xenophobia and

migration-related trauma (Arnot & Pinson, 2005; McBride et al., 2018). Within these stressors, education and teachers plays a crucial role in their resettlement and development (Adams & Santos, 2022; Block et al., 2014; Hamilton, 2004; Hones, 2014). However, the rapid demographic changes in the population present challenges for teachers in fostering inclusive classrooms. Understanding teachers' perspectives is vital for addressing barriers to inclusion (Due, Riggs & Mandara, 2015). While previous studies explore these challenges (Bacakova, 2011; Entholt & Yule, 2006), research on the Scottish context is limited (Candappa et al., 2007; McBride et al., 2018). Furthermore, the impact of teachers' misconceptions about migrant and refugee identities on inclusion remains underexplored.

1.1. Background

McBride et al. (2018) reported that 40% of the first 1,000 refugees under the Syrian Resettlement Programme resettled in Scotland, highlighting its role as a home for diverse ethnicities and cultures. Since 1999, improving inclusion and reducing exclusion has been a key goal of the Scottish education system (Riddell, 2009). To achieve this, various policies, including the Education Additional Support for Learning Scotland Act (2009), Education Scotland Act (2016) and the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (2018-2022), support the right to education for all children. The New Scots Strategy emphasises inclusion, diversity, and equality as core values in Scottish educational policies (Scottish Government, 2018).

These policies aim to promote inclusivity, diversity, anti-racism, and equity, demonstrating Scotland's commitment to supporting refugee and migrant children's education. However, despite these efforts, racism remains a challenge for refugee and migrant populations (Arshad, 2016). To evaluate the effectiveness of these policies, it is essential to examine practices within the Scottish context. Thus, relevant literature is reviewed to better understand the barriers faced by refugee and migrant children in UK mainstream classrooms.

1.2. Refugee and Migrant Children's Experiences in Scotland

The literature underscores the vital role of education in the lives of migrant and refugee children (Candappa et al., 2007; Hamilton, 2004; Hek, 2005; McIntyre & Hall, 2018; Peterson et al., 2017a, 2017b; Rutter, 1994). However, refugee children often face negative educational and social experiences, including inadequate language support, lack of psychological-emotional support and exposure to prejudice and bullying in educational settings (Candappa et al., 2007; McBride et al., 2018; Rutter, 1994, 2001, 2006). In addition to refugee children, migrant children in Scotland also face similar challenges (Dabbous, 2019; Moskal, 2010, 2016; Sime, 2018). While some studies highlight positive experiences and strengths (Frather-Mathieson, 2004; McPake, 2006; Morrison, 2018), the majority focus on negative experiences, possibly due to a focus on identifying needs rather than strengths. Regardless, this indicates that UK schools have frequently struggled to effectively meet the needs of refugee and migrant children.

Numerous studies examine the challenges of both refugee and migrant children face in UK mainstream education (Hek, 2005; McBride et al., 2018) and the perspectives of educators (Dabbous, 2019; Kovinthan, 2016; Reakes, 2007). However, research specifically on the experiences of refugee and migrant children in Scotland remains limited (Dabbous, 2019; McBride et al., 2018; Moskal, 2010). The literature shows that teachers play a crucial role in the academic and social development of these children (Hamilton, 2004; McIntyre & Hall, 2018), and their perspectives shape the classroom experience (Hones, 2014; OECD, 2018). Yet, much of the research focuses on secondary or higher education, with limited attention given to primary settings.

The categorisation of asylum-seekers, migrants, and refugees impacts societal perceptions and influences how they are treated (DeConnick, 2020; Goodman et al., 2017). However, the literature reveals inconsistencies in how these categories are conceptualised. While some studies group migrants and refugees together, others distinguish between them (Cewart & Cewart, 2002; Eren & Cakran, 2017), as shown above. Furthermore, in this literature conceptualisations of the migrant and refugee categories are often not overtly examined. This gap highlights the need to understand teachers' conceptualisations of these categories (Peterson et al., 2017a; Arnot & Pinson, 2010). Thus, exploring the experiences of migrant and refugee students in primary schools in Scotland and how teachers conceptualise these children is crucial for contributing in the field of migrant and refugee education. Accordingly, this study contributes to the literature by examining primary school teachers' insights into the barriers that migrant and refugee children encounter in primary mainstream classrooms in Scotland, as well as by exploring teachers' categorisations of these students. The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. How do teachers conceptualise their refugee and migrant students?
2. How do teachers' conceptualisations of migrant and refugee students impact the students' experiences in the mainstream classroom?
3. According to teachers, what challenges and opportunities do refugee and migrant children experience in mainstream classrooms?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative design, commonly used in educational research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), to explore the barriers faced by refugee and migrant children in mainstream classrooms. Qualitative research focuses on how meanings are constructed through human interpretation and interaction (Creswell, 2009), making it ideal for gaining in-depth insights from individuals with direct experience of the phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach was well-suited in this study to understand teachers' beliefs, experiences and perceptions regarding the barriers their refugee and migrant students face.

Participants who were expected to provide diverse and rich insights were invited to the study, considering variations in professional experience, educational background, experience working with refugee and migrant children and the formal and informal training teachers received in this field. In order to identify and recruit information-rich cases and individuals appropriate to the subject phenomenon, a non-probability purposive sampling strategy was employed. This approach facilitated the invitation of individuals who are knowledgeable and experienced with the subject phenomenon of this research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Tajik et al., 2025; Walliman, 2011).

Using this approach seven teachers who work with migrant and refugee students and who represent diverse levels of experience and educational backgrounds were recruited to provide varied perspectives and insights on these students. Ensuring that participants possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding the phenomenon of interest as well as alignment with the research purpose contributed positively to achieving data saturation (Mwita, 2022). Another factor increasing the data saturation was the use of in-depth semi-structured online interviews each lasting between 45-60 minutes. These interviews resulted in over five hours of audio recordings yielding significant amount of transcribed data. The duration and depth of the data collection sessions further enhanced data saturation (Aldiabat & LeNavenec, 2018; Mwita, 2022). To further support data saturation, all seven participants were consulted to confirm whether the

generated codes and themes accurately reflects the experiences of participants (Akçay & Koca, 2024). Data collection and analysis were conducted concurrently in this study and data collection continued until no new codes emerged.

As mentioned the study involved seven teachers with experience teaching refugee and/or migrant children in mainstream primary schools, all of whom were informed about the research and provided pseudonyms (e.g., T1) for anonymity. Participants volunteered for the study and were invited through personal contacts. The majority of participants were female, with professional experience in primary schools ranging from 5 to 30 years. Table 1 below presents their demographic information.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

	Education Level	Experience As A Primary School Teacher (Years)	Any Formal Input About Refugee And/Or Migrant Children	Any Experience Of Teaching Migrant And/Or Refugee Children	Gender
T1	PhD	15 years	Received formal training	both	Male
T2	Master's Degree	30 years	Received no formal training	migrant children only	Female
T3	PhD	20 years	Received no formal training	migrant children only	Female
T4	Teaching certificate	22 years	Received no formal training	migrant children only	Female
T5	Postgraduate teaching certificate	14 years	Received no formal training but informal input	both	Female
T6	Bachelor degree	5 years	Received formal training	both	Female
T7	Bachelor degree	14 years	Received no formal training but informal input	both	Female

Online in-depth semi-structured interviews which took 45-60 minutes were conducted with each participant. Interview questions aimed to understand how teachers perceived the experiences of refugee and migrant children in mainstream classrooms and how teachers conceptualised the refugee and migrant students. First question of each interview allow teachers to freely define, categorise and conceptualise their students. Then follow-up questions further enquired about the concepts that are used by participants to define their students. All interviews were recorded utilising an audio recording device.

During the fieldwork, the researcher's positionality was reflexively considered. The researcher's role is co-constructed with the participants and therefore evolved and shifted throughout the research process (Konstantoni & Kustatscher, 2016). Researcher's role was not a single fixed one but rather composed of multiple selves, such as "research-based" and "brought" selves (Reinharz, 1997). In this study, researcher's "research-based selves" were that of a Master's student and a listener. During data collection, the researcher presented himself as a learner who was newly engaging with the topic and as an attentive listener. This positioning allowed participants to be more comfortable during sessions and gave them some power and control over the interview process. Additionally, adopting a listener position prevented the

researcher from manipulating the interviews and enabled participants to share any information they considered relevant to the topic.

The Inqscribe software (*Version 2.2.4.262*; Inquirium, n.d.) was used for transcription of the recorded interviews. At the end of the fieldwork, over 5 hours of audio recordings were transcribed. After transcribing the recorded interviews, thematic analysis was adopted to identify, analyse the realities, patterns of meanings and experiences of the participants (Robson, 2011). Various researchers suggested some steps to develop accurate thematic analysis and stated the importance of coding process (Goodrick and Rogers, 2015; Sarantakos, 2013). Following these steps analysis of the data began while conducting fieldwork and after each interview, general topics and themes that were emerged from the interviews were reviewed (Creswell, 2013; Sarantakos, 2013). Audio recordings were transcribed with careful attention to pauses and vocal cues; these features were represented in the text with punctuation marks such as exclamation points and commas. Then all transcribed documents were read repeatedly to be familiarised with the data. Upon completion of transcriptions, each participant was provided with the transcript of their interview and asked to provide feedback regarding its accuracy. Following transcription, the coding process was conducted guided by the steps proposed by Tesch (1990). Initially transcribed interviews were read multiple times and taking notes where relevant. Then, a randomly selected transcript was examined without focusing on the substance of information; instead the aim was to understand what the participants were talking about. This procedure was repeated with several different participants' transcripts, which help to identify recurring patterns across the data. Then similar patterns across all transcribed documents were identified and codes were generated accordingly. The codes were labelled using the most descriptive wording possible and were organised using Nvivo 12. Similar codes then grouped under broader categories, which ultimately led to emergence of themes from the data .

2.1. Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) and ERIC (Graham et al., 2013) to protect participants from harm. Approval was obtained from The Moray House School of Education and Sport ethics committee prior to the study.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they understood the research's purpose, process and potential risks (Alderson, 2014). Information sheets were sent via email, and participants had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify details before the interviews. A consent form outlining the recording process and participants' right to withdraw was provided, and signed forms were collected prior to participation. Verbal consent was also confirmed at the start of each interview. To protect confidentiality, identifying details such as participants' names, schools, and demographic information were omitted (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Pseudonyms (e.g., T1) were used in place of participants' names. Data, including audio recordings and transcriptions, were stored securely on password-protected university network and OneDrive accounts. Only the researcher had access to the raw data and all identifying information was removed from transcriptions. Excerpts from interviews were shared anonymously with participants' consent.

FINDINGS

In this study, four key findings were generated through the analysis: (1)Language; (2)Psychological- Emotional Well-Being;(3) Social Relationships and (4) Teachers Conceptualisations of Migrant and Refugee Children.

3.1. Language

Every participant in this study placed strong emphasis on language as a barrier when working with migrant and refugee children. According to most participants, English language proficiency was a factor that affects various aspects of the educational journey of migrant and refugee children. As T7 remarked that “the biggest barrier of all is the language... That is definitely a barrier in the beginning...I think the language definitely is a bigger barrier”.T7 strongly emphasised the language was a barrier and furthermore T7 mentioned it was the primary obstacle for the children to attend mainstream classrooms. Similarly, T4 highlighted the language as a barrier towards refugee and migrant children’s education in mainstream classrooms, stating that “written and spoken language is a barrier”. This emphasis on the second language competency for academic and social development was dominant through almost all interviews. To stress the academic impact of language proficiency further, most teachers mentioned that both refugee and migrant children struggled with the language demanding curricular areas. As T3 mentioned, “any course which demands proficiency in a language that is not their first language can cause difficulties”. Among these difficulties, how the language barrier affected the academic success of migrant and refugee children in mainstream classroom mentioned. T6’s comment exemplified;

“I think written subjects like English history could potentially be more challenging because of the burden of translation. In numeric classes they tend to be more successful. But in science for example biology is more challenging since it has a language, key vocabulary. I do know it is harder for them.”

The remarks of T3 and T6 demonstrated that refugee and migrant children tended to be more successful where they could overcome the language barrier or where local language was not a key component to comprehend the subject matter or concepts. Although the second language acquisition was a predominant concept in the data, only one participant mentioned the impact and importance of first language of the migrant and refugee children. As T1 stated;

“They need opportunities to use the first language as much as possible. Either conversation with the children who share the same language or through technology... now there are a lot of good teaching resources that you can use in the first language.”

These findings indicate that participants ascribed significant importance to refugee children’s acquisition and proficiency in the host country’s language, regarding it as a key prerequisite for their academic and social success. Moreover, participants identified insufficient competence in the host country’s language as a major barrier to both the educational attainment and the effective inclusion of refugee and migrant children. Notably, despite the considerable emphasis placed on second language acquisition, only one participant acknowledged the potential active role of the child’s first language in this process. The comments of the participants demonstrated that language was perceived as an active factor that affects both the experiences of inclusion and academic success of refugee and migrant children.

3.2. Psychological-Emotional Well-Being

All participants in this study put significant emphasis on the lack of psychological-emotional well-being of refugee and migrant children. All participants clearly stated that they observed hints of traumatic events among refugee children, in particular. T5 mentioned that “in my experience, every refugee child experienced trauma”. This trauma discourse was dominant throughout the interviews. All participants reported observations regarding the lack of psychological well-being of refugee and migrant children. In addition, most participants offered potential explanations as to why psychological and emotional well-being might be affected negatively. T7 mentioned that “the experience they have had can be difficult. That was a barrier

as well. Our older refugee boy has really struggled in possibly with what he has experienced himself”. Similarly, T3 explained;

“In my experience they [refugee and migrant children] often came [to the host country] experienced trauma and sort of shock of change. I suppose that the emotional impact of the change and the trauma of the child is quite significant.”

Similar to above, most participants often emphasised pre-migratory factors when talking about psychological-emotional well-being of refugee and migrant students. On the other hand, few participants emphasised the post migratory stressors such as uncertain settlement status and poverty. As T1 remarked;

“I think for the refugee children need is about their social and emotional well-being. If there are issues, then it is going to impact on their learning. So, say for example just their status is seen as temporary they can be perceived differently. There may be issues around getting basic things. You know access to food, accommodation, clothing. So those additional issues and also pressures on the families in terms of their status whether they feel settled or whether they are seen as sort of temporary. Generally, refugee children may want to return home. They are maybe upset.”

The above excerpt of T1 highlighted uncertain settlement status and poverty as obstacles to refugee child’s psychological emotional well-being. In terms of post migratory stressors, T5 stated some distinctions between the experiences of refugee and migrant children. As T5 mentioned;

“I guess migrants still have somewhere to go back to. But refugees they don’t have a place to go back. Their life will change in Scotland more than migrants. A lot of migrants for example go home and visit so they still have two sides. At one side they’ve got the Scottish culture and at the other side they can go visit home and be a part of their home culture. Whereas for refugees they are not getting home so this is the culture for them.”

T5’s comment highlighted a perceived distinction between the psychological-emotional needs of refugee and migrant students, suggesting that refugee students may require greater support. Furthermore, most participants highlighted that psychological-emotional support service provision for refugee and migrant children was often insufficient. T4 remarked that “for refugee and migrant children especially who are suffering from emotional trauma there is emotional support services but emotional support services are very much underfunded and under staffed”. This excerpt of T4 indicated the inadequacy of the services that provided psychological-emotional support.

These findings indicate that participants observed migrant and refugee students to exhibit low levels of psychological and emotional well-being. Moreover, participants predominantly attributed this diminished well-being to the traumatic experiences of these students had undergone prior to migration. Only few participants mentioned post migratory stressors, such as poverty and uncertain immigration status. Moreover, findings indicate that few participants distinguished the psychological emotional needs of refugees and migrants. Finally, some participants mentioned inadequate psychological emotional support provision for refugee and migrant students.

3.3. Social Relationships

Another challenge that was frequently observed by the participants of this study was social exclusion. Discrimination towards migrant and refugee students, prejudice and social exclusion often mentioned by the participants of this study. T6 provided an example of prejudice by mentioning her observations on the native community;

“... most people assume that a refugee [person] is a middle-aged single man coming in with boats illegally to steal jobs or train to be a terrorist, you know. This is the picture that a lot of people put forward.”

Throughout the interviews participants often mentioned the prejudice against refugees and migrants and the stereotypes that wider population of society hold. The data showed that most participants identified the broader public and parents of other students as the source of this bias and social exclusion. T3 stated that “sometimes you can also have prejudice of parents in the community outside school can come in to school. This hostility in the community against migrant children can affect classroom”. T1 gave an example of how prejudice of community may affect the classroom by remarking;

“One school of I was working in and I often work with the group of migrant children and English-speaking Scottish peers and in one school a parent complaint they did not want their child working with the migrant because there was a perception that they would be held back by doing that.”

Overall, the data shows that social exclusion and prejudice against migrant and refugee children persisted in classrooms. However, evidence suggests that such prejudice and social exclusion were exhibited not primarily by the children’s peers, but rather by the wider population and the other parents in the community.

3.4. Teachers Conceptualisations of Migrant and Refugee Children

The data demonstrated that participants employed two approaches to conceptualise refugee and migrant children when they were asked how they define their students. Most participants grouped refugee and migrant, utilised overarching identities as “child” and used the terms migrant and refugee interchangeably. Most participants demonstrated that they saw no difference between the migrant and refugee. As T2 exemplified, “I would say they are just children. I don’t see any difference. Of course, all the children have differences but I don’t describe them as essentially different”. In this excerpt, T2 used “child” as an overarching identity in order to employ an inclusive language. Furthermore, T2’s comment about “seeing no difference” was frequently employed rhetoric among other participants.

Most participants often defined and used the terms refugee and migrant without distinguishing between them, in terms of their needs and underlying motivations for migration. T4 employed a similar approach and she said that “I would define them [migrant and refugee children] as children whose families left their home environment and travelled to a different place”. Furthermore, when asked a follow up question about whether there was a difference between two groups, T4 stated;

“I think officially their definition is different. Right? But difference in the definition does not really translate to how you deal with the children. I guess label that we put on a child sometimes effect the perceptions of their needs but I don’t think it should.”

This comment of T4 indicated that T4 was not sure if the official definitions of the terms were different. Moreover, she perceived that differences in the definition did not apply to practices. On the other hand, T1 provided examples of some group specific barriers and needs. T1 remarked;

“Some of the Syrian refugee children who are coming to Scotland, some of them also have hearing impairments because of the bombs you know and the effects of bombs and explosions. So, you know these are children who may well have lost members of the family. Some of them maybe are unaccompanied. The older ones they arrive here without their parents.”

The comment of T1 showed group specific experiences such as injuries and trauma caused by the war and loss of loved ones due to the war which were potentially not experienced by the migrant children. To understand the migrant and refugee conceptualisation of the participants, their definitions were further asked. T1 remarked;

“I think they have different definitions you know official definitions according in terms of ... I see migrants as those who often move for economic reasons so particularly with the opening up of the European union and countries like Poland and Latvia and Hungary people who allowed to move freely across Europe for employment opportunities. These are the people other ones consider as migrants. Whereas refugees are those people who are forced to flee their country of origin it may be because of political instability might be to do with religious grounds.”

With this reply T1 demonstrated that he viewed both groups as being distinct. He highlighted the reasons of migration and voluntariness aspect of it in order to distinguish the terms. T5 and T6 replied with similar answers. Both participants demonstrated their awareness of distinct group specific needs and barriers of migrant and refugees. Moreover, T6 demonstrated that she put emphasis on voluntariness aspect of the migration alongside with the awareness of group specific diverse needs and barriers, such as an experience of more traumatic journey than migrants. T6 remarked;

“I know, they have their differences, right? So, I feel like a migrant is a person who came from overseas with choice involved and a refugee [person] potentially came from a traumatic background and perhaps more traumatic journey as well.”

The data from this study highlights that the participants followed two different approaches when conceptualising migrant and refugee children. The first approach involves grouping the concepts of “refugee” and “migrant” together, without distinguishing between the needs and underlying motivations of these two groups. The second approach, on the other hand, treats “refugee” and “migrant” as two distinct groups, each with their own specific needs, barriers and motivations.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Discussion

As mentioned literature indicated a need for further research on the experiences of migrant and refugee children in mainstream primary schools in Scotland, specifically regarding the challenges and barriers they encounter (Dabbous, 2019; McBride et al., 2018; Moskal, 2010). Although existing studies have examined teachers’ perspectives on the barriers faced by migrant and refugee students, these have largely focused on secondary or higher education levels. Consequently, there remains a notable gap in research at the primary school level, especially concerning teachers’ perception of migrant and refugee students and the barriers they experienced (Hamilton, 2004; McBride et al., 2018; McIntyre & Hall, 2018). Therefore, this research sets out to examine teachers’ insights on the barriers of refugee and migrant students in primary educational settings in Scotland. The findings suggest that majority of participants mentioned several barriers to inclusion of migrant and refugee students. According to the data, these barriers were often concentrated in the areas of language, psychological emotional well-being and social relationships. Participants provided various perspectives about the causes of these barriers. Furthermore, the data revealed how the teachers’ conceptualise their refugee and migrant students and how their conceptualisations may shape their understandings of academic and social experiences and needs of the children in classroom. Hence, the findings of this study are further

discussed under four themes- namely, language, psychological emotional well-being, social relationships and teachers' conceptualisations of migrant and refugee children.

4.2. Language

In the literature, many studies emphasise the importance of learning the host country's language for refugee and migrant children to develop academic and social skills (Candappa & Egharevba, 2000; Loewen, 2004; Marriott, 2001; Stanley, 2001). Similarly, every participant of this study placed strong emphasis on language as a barrier when working with migrant and refugee children. According to most participants, English language proficiency was a factor that affected various aspects of the educational journey of migrant and refugee children. This emphasis on the second language competency for academic and social development was dominant through almost all interviews. To further emphasise the academic implications of language proficiency among migrant and refugee students, the majority of participants mentioned that both refugee and migrant children encountered significant challenges in curriculum areas with high linguistic demands.

The comments of the participants demonstrated that language was perceived as an active factor that affected both the experiences of inclusion and academic success of refugee and migrant children. Many interviews of this study demonstrated competency in additional language was often associated with academic success. As Baker (2001) suggested, the reason for minority children's underachievement was identified by most participants in this study as a lack of child language or additional language competency.

However, the data also revealed another point of discussion regarding language: whether teachers perceived children's language deficiency or lack of language support as a barrier. Although all participants mentioned the language factor, few clearly stated that the barrier was originated from the lack of language support provision. Some participants tended to perceive lack of language competency in host country's language as a barrier within the refugee and migrant children and their parents. The main problem with this deficit perception was to viewing lack of language proficiency as a fixed problem within the child and ignoring the potential social, institutional, political and environmental oppression towards minority children (Loewen, 2004). This view may have created prejudice about the learning skills and abilities of the child. It could have further negatively affected the teachers' will to challenge the barriers and led to a lack of teacher confidence when teaching refugee and migrant children. Therefore, perceiving lack of language proficiency as a fixed barrier within the child was emerged as one of the barriers to inclusion of refugee and migrant children in this current study.

As mentioned above, only one participant mentioned the impact and importance of first language of the migrant and refugee children. The emphasis on first language opportunities highlights a critical point: the inclusivity of Scotland's language education policy. Hancock (2014) criticised this policy for its limited support for heritage languages of migrant and refugee children, except Urdu and Chinese. This lack of inclusivity adversely affects these children's educational experiences. Since second language development is closely linked to first language proficiency (Cummins, 2001), insufficient support can hinder bilingualism and its associated cognitive, linguistic and social benefits (McPake, 2006). Consequently, neglecting first language development was identified as a barrier to inclusion.

The data further indicated that language proficiency was perceived as a major barrier impacting assessment, academic progress and social integration. Some participants viewed language deficits as an inherent trait rather than a result of inadequate support, reinforcing a deficit perspective that could have limited teachers' confidence and hindered inclusive practices. Conversely, some participants identified the lack of language support provision as the primary

obstacle, aligning with existing research (Candappa et al., 2007; Jones, 1998; McBrien, 2005; McIntyre & Hall, 2020; Rutter, 1994, 2001). As Marishane (2013) notes, language-related barriers are significant challenges for migrant children's education and inclusion. Thus, both the literature and study data underscore the need for improved language support to enhance refugee and migrant children's educational experiences.

4.3. Psychological Emotional Well-Being

Psychological-emotional well-being and traumatic experiences of refugee and migrant children appears to be one of the most predominant themes in the literature of refugee and migrant studies (Barret & Berger, 2021; Chase *et al.*, 2008; Entholt & Yule, 2006; Fazel & Stein, 2004; Frather-Mathieson, 2004; Leavy *et al.*, 2004; Li et al., 2016; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010; Steel *et al.*, 2006). Similarly, all participants in this study put significant emphasis on lack of psychological-emotional well-being of refugee and migrant children. This dominance of the trauma discourse in both the data of this study and the literature on refugee and migrant children creates a point of discussion. While acknowledging the importance of examining the trauma and mental health of refugee and migrant children, some of these discussions might risk pathologising both refugee and migrant children by rendering their identities to simply "traumatised" (Rutter, 2006). Many participants of this study often emphasised pre-migratory factors when talking about psychological-emotional well-being of refugee and migrant students. Focusing heavily on trauma may lead to over-emphasise the pre-migratory experiences of the children and consequently, may lead to individualising the issue by overlooking the other dimensions of inequality such as uncertain immigration status, poverty and racism (Matthews, 2008; Rutter, 2006).

In addition to the intense focus on pre-migration factors, only few participants highlighted the post migratory stressors such as uncertain settlement status and poverty. In terms of post migratory stressors, some participants' remarks highlighted a perceived distinction between the psychological-emotional needs of refugee and migrant students, suggesting that refugee students may require greater support. However, research indicates that factors such as limited language proficiency (Dawson & Williams, 2008), adaptation challenges (Steinhausen et al., 2009; Robila, 2013), discrimination and poverty (Steel et al., 2017) can impact well-being irrespective of migratory status (Sangalang et al., 2019). Comparative studies show that both refugee and migrant children often experience poorer mental well-being than their non-migrant peers due to pre-, intra-, and post-migratory stressors (Castles et al., 2004; Heptinstall et al., 2004; Li et al., 2016; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). While assumptions persist that young children may forget traumatic events or rely on resilience (Frater-Mathieson, 2004), recovery without appropriate support is unrealistic (Kaplan, 2000). Supporting this, some participants of this study strongly emphasised the importance of psychological-emotional support provision to migrant and refugee children. Many participants' remarks indicated the absence of these services, providing psychological-emotional support. Similar to the literature (Hek, 2005a; Jones, 1998; Rutter, 1998, 2001, 2006; UNICEF, 2018), the data of this research highlighted that there was a lack of psychological-emotional well-being support and in some cases, support was not available at all. Therefore, this study argues that lack of psychological-emotional support acts as a barrier to refugee children in mainstream classrooms.

4.4. Social Relationships

Literature suggests that socialising and forming friendships are significantly important for all children (Dunkerley *et al.*, 2006; Kim, 2022; Kim, Park & Kim, 2016; Samara *et al.*, 2020; Schwab, Huber & Gebhardt, 2016) to challenge isolation (Parker & Asher, 1993) and anxiety (Fordham & Stevenson-Hinde, 1999). Despite the importance of socialising, the data of this study suggests that refugee and migrant children experienced lack of social acceptance. In addition to

that, discrimination and prejudice were frequently mentioned themes throughout the interviews. Although many participants did not mention any lack of peer acceptance, majority of the participants stated that there were examples of lack of social acceptance from the wider community. Both the literature and data of this study indicate that peers are not the only source of bullying and discrimination. Literature highlights negative attitudes, discrimination and prejudice towards migrant and refugee children from teachers (Lee, 2002; McIntyre & Hall, 2018; Tereshchenko & Archer, 2014) and from wider population (Gonzalez-Barrera & Connor, 2019; Hellwig & Sinno, 2017). This prejudice towards migrant and refugee population can be identified as one of the reasons for the lack of social acceptance, which can negatively affect the classroom experiences. Studies emphasise the vital role of the family in the process of attitude formation (De Bojer et al., 2010; Paseka & Schwab, 2020). Children tend to internalise the attitudes and behaviours of their parents and are inclined to apply these learned attitudes and behaviours in social contexts (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, parents' acceptance towards diversity and their display of positive attitudes contribute to the development of inclusive peer cultures and consequently to the success of inclusive education (Kalyva et al., 2007; Karpati & Miklosi, 2026; Sümer- Dodur & Yüzbaşıoğlu, 2025). However, findings of current study indicate that there is lack of social acceptance among parents and wider population. This may negatively affect the formation of an inclusive peer culture within the classroom and as a result hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education.

A recent study by Sobitan (2022) highlights that bullying, discrimination and negative attitudes towards refugee and migrant population are often racially motivated. Findings of this study show that despite the political commitment to social justice, racism still exist in Scottish schools (Arshad, 2016; Meer, 2016). Related with that, there is negative attitudes and lack of social acceptance towards migrant and refugee children due to anti-immigration and religious intolerance in Scotland (Hopkins *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, current study suggests that lack of social acceptance, prejudice and negative attitudes continue to create a barrier to successful inclusion, academic and social experiences of refugee and migrant children in primary mainstream classrooms in Scotland.

4.5. Teachers' Conceptualisations of Migrant and Refugee Children

Conceptualisations significantly shape the lived experiences of those being conceptualised, influencing both their lives and societal perceptions (DeConnick, 2020; Goodman *et al.*, 2017). Teachers' ability to foster inclusive environments is closely tied to their understanding of students' identities and needs (Pugach *et al.*, 2019). Consequently, teachers' perceptions of migrant and refugee children directly impact these students' experiences in educational settings (Hones, 2014; Mogli, Kalbeni & Stergiou, 2020; OECD, 2018). In this study, participants employed two approaches: first, some distinguished between migrant and refugee students, and second, some used the terms interchangeably.

Firstly, only a few participants viewed both groups as distinct, highlighting the reasons for migration and the aspect of voluntariness as distinguishing factor. Carling (2017) suggests two different approaches to define the concepts of refugee and migrant. One of the approaches is inclusivist approach which groups these two terms together by viewing migrant as an umbrella term to define and cover every form of movement. Majority of the participants in this study employed inclusivist approach while defining concepts of migrant and refugee and utilised these terms interchangeably while answering questions. The second way of defining the concepts is residualist approach which focuses on the reasons of displacement and/or movement when defining the concepts of migrant and refugee. According to Carling (2017), proponents of residualist approach exclude people who migrate due to extreme conditions, such as war, famine and persecution and separately conceptualise them as refugees. Only few of the participants demonstrated that they saw difference between the migrant and refugee.

Second, some participants used “child” as an overarching identity in order to employ an inclusive language. This rhetoric appeared to be focusing on sameness rather than differences of the children. While focusing on sameness might be helpful for applying an inclusive language, it might deprive the proponent from recognising different identities and needs of the children by de-emphasising the social categories (Neville *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, conceptualising all children as “same” is often associated with less awareness (Wang *et al.*, 2014) and lesser opportunities to challenge barriers such as racism (Zou & Dickter, 2013). Furthermore, it can deprive teachers from recognising their students’ needs and consequently affect the support they provide (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Nare (2013) suggested that monetary and intellectual injustice can be understood through Fraser’s (1997; 2008) Social Justice Theory. Fraser (1997) emphasises two interrelated dimensions that are necessary in order to achieve social justice, namely *recognition* and *redistribution*. The dimension of recognition entails the necessity of acknowledging, recognising and valuing identities, needs, cultures, beliefs and more broadly group-specific characteristics of different social groups in order to achieve social justice (Fraser, 1997). The dimension of redistribution refers to the just allocation of intellectual and monetary resources among all (Cazden, 2017; Fraser, 1997). Honneth (1995) suggests recognition constitutes a prerequisite of fair distribution of resources and services. Findings of this study demonstrated the existence of misrecognition among participants regarding migrant and refugee identities. Some participants’ comments in this study indicated uncertainty about whether the official definitions of the terms differed. Moreover, the data showed that some participants use the terms migrant and refugee interchangeably. Such misrecognition among participants may lead to jeopardising the redistribution of monetary and intellectual resources (Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

While the inclusivist approach is widely used to conceptualise migrant and refugee children, it risks overlooking group-specific and individual needs, potentially creating additional barriers. By homogenising these groups (Morrison, 2018), teachers may assume identical needs and challenges, neglecting important distinctions. Consequently, this may lead to misconceptions and the omission of crucial support. Edwards (2016) emphasises the importance of distinguishing between migrants and refugees, warning that conflating these terms can obscure group-specific needs and deprive individuals of essential resources and legal protection. This study highlights those misconceptions regarding migrant and refugee identities, coupled with overlooking their unique challenges, pose barriers to inclusion. A lack of professional training may contribute to these misconceptions (Hones, 2014; Mogli, Kalbeni & Stergiou, 2020; OECD, 2018). In this study, only few participants mentioned receiving formal training, and informal input. Teachers with such training were found to be more aware of distinct group-specific needs, while those without input tended to conflate the two groups.

Since promoting inclusion relies on teachers’ understanding of their students’ diverse identities and needs (Pugach, Gomez-Najarro & Matewos, 2019), this study suggests that targeted in-service training on refugee and migrant education would improve teachers’ awareness and enhance successful inclusion. Consequently, the lack of such training is identified as a significant barrier to effective inclusion.

4.6. Conclusion

This study revealed aspects that teachers perceived as barriers to successful inclusion of refugee and migrant children. Most participant teachers in this study perceived lack of language competence, lack of language support provision, lack of psychological-emotional well-being, lack of psychological support provision and lack of social acceptance as barriers. The prevalence of these barriers were also supported by the findings of the similar studies in the literature. Therefore, this study argued that lack of language support provision, lack of psychological support provision

and lack of social acceptance occurred as barriers to successful inclusion of refugee and migrant children.

Current study challenged the predominantly employed inclusivist model to define and identify migrant and refugee students (Carling, 2017; IOM, 2023). Findings of this study demonstrated that there was a misconception about concepts of refugee and migrant among more than half of the participants in this study. It was argued that this misconception about the concepts and interchangeable uSAGE of the terms may have led teachers to overlook some group specific needs of refugee and migrant children. Consequently, this study concluded that misconception of the concepts of refugee and migrant among teachers might create a further barrier to successful inclusion of migrant and refugee children. Furthermore, this study argued that one reason for this misconception may be the lack of formal or informal input and training about refugee and migrant children. It emphasised that in-service trainings about refugee and migrant children could be beneficial for both teachers and refugee and migrant students. Therefore, lack of this training among teachers also argued as being one of the barriers to successful inclusion of refugee and migrant children.

4.7. Recommendations

This research contributes to the field of refugee education by firstly addressing a gap in the literature, through examining the potential barriers faced by refugee and migrant children in primary school settings in Scotland. In doing so, current study revealed teachers' observations of some potential barriers to inclusion of refugee children and provided a detailed analysis of how teachers perceive these barriers. Secondly, current study contributes to a central discussion about the conceptualisation of refugee and migrants by challenging the inclusivist model, which is predominantly employed to identify and conceptualise the refugees in the literature (Carling, 2017; IOM, 2023). It argues that the use of inclusivist model can cause misconceptions and may lead to overlooking some group-specific experiences, needs and barriers; therefore, it proposes the residualist approach as a more effective framework for capturing these differentiated experiences and needs (Edwards, 2016; Morrisson, 2018). In this regard, this study underscores the considerable potential of the residualist approach as a framework for recognising lived experiences of refugee and migrant children, as well as their needs and barriers within mainstream classrooms. Therefore, study advocates for the development of a formal, ongoing and comprehensive training programme focused on experiences and needs of refugee and migrant children for teachers. It would be beneficial to design this training programme on the basis of social justice theory in a manner that foster teachers' recognition of unique migrant and refugee identities and experiences and facilitates teachers' awareness of the injustices, barriers and needs that migrant and refugee children may encounter in both academic and social life. Such a programme would support teachers to work efficiently with marginalised groups, including migrants and refugees.

As mentioned, current study discussed teachers' perspectives of the barriers of refugee and migrant children. Within this discussion seven teachers participated in this study. Although, this study recruited a similar or greater number of participants than some previous research, it still remains limited in scale with a small-sample consisting of seven teachers. Therefore, the sample cannot be considered as representative of broader population of teachers in Scotland and beyond, thereby limiting the generalisability of the findings. However, qualitative research does not aim generalisation (Denzin, 2001). Instead, qualitative research establishes relevance and applicability of its findings through transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Stelmeijer et al. (2024) argue that transferability can be conceptualised as resonance and suggest that it is achieved when the research context align with the situations experienced in readers' own life. To achieve transferability uSAGE of direct quotations from participants and rich descriptions of phenomenon is suggested (Tracy, 2010). In this study, following the Tracy's (2010) recommendations,

transferability was sought to achieve through use of direct testimonies, quotations and rich descriptions reflecting participants' own experiences and emotions about the subject phenomenon. Hence, the findings of current study offer in-depth insights that may be transferable to other similar educational contexts. Furthermore, conducting interviews with refugee and migrant children regarding the barriers they encounter in mainstream classroom, alongside classroom observations would have strengthened the findings and claims of this study. However, despite inviting children and their families to participate, none of the invited families agreed to take part in the study due to a range of factors such as irregular working hours, prioritisation of financial stability and a reluctance to participate. All these reasons required further examination which this study was unable to conduct due to this topic being outside of the scope of current study. Therefore, this study suggests further research into reasons of these refusals to participate. Research with this focus could reveal valuable knowledge about the lived experiences of refugee parents.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Göç ve mültecilik olguları sosyal, politik ve ekonomik sebepler gibi çeşitli faktörlerle insanoplunun hayatında uzun süredir yer eden olgulardır (Bade, 2015). Günümüzde savaş ve çatışma gibi sebeplerle göç eden mülteci sayısı 2. Dünya Savaşı'nda oluşan mülteci nüfustan fazladır (UNHCR, 2015). Bu mülteci nüfusun sağlık, barınma ve eğitim gibi temel ihtiyaçları bulunmaktadır ve bu ihtiyaçlarının karşılanması küresel bir sorumluluktur (Birleşmiş Milletler, 1989). Bu sorumluluk kapsamında Birleşik Krallık, Suriye Hassas Kişileri Yeniden Yerleştirme Programı (2017), Afgan Vatandaşları Yeniden Yerleştirme Programı (2021) ve Ukrayna Sponsorluk Programı (2022) gibi programlarla farklı kültürlerden çok sayıda mülteci bireyi ülkeye almıştır. İskoçya da Birleşik Krallık'taki artan mülteci nüfusundan etkilenmiştir. 2020 yılında ana dili İngilizce olmayan öğrenci sayısı 47.938 iken 2022 yılına gelindiğinde bu sayıya kayıtlı 1860 sığınmacı ve 3502 mülteci öğrenci katılmıştır (İskoç Hükümeti, 2022). Eğitim bu çocukların yeniden yerleşme ve gelişiminde kritik öneme sahiptir. Öğretmen tutumları ve öğrencinin kimlik ve deneyimlerine dair bilgileri kapsayıcı eğitim deneyiminin önündeki engellerin anlaşılması ve aşılması için büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Bu demografik değişimler, eğitimcilerin kapsayıcı sınıf oluşturma sürecinde yeni ve farklı bariyerlerle mücadele etmelerini gerektirmektedir. Bahsi geçen göçmen ve mülteci öğrenciler genel öğretim sınıflarında eğitime aktif katılımlarının önünde türlü engellerle karşılaşabilmektelerdir. Bu engellerin ne olduğuna dair öğretmen görüşlerinin incelendiği çalışmalar İskoç bağlamında sınırlı sayıdadır. Bunun yanı sıra İskoçya bağlamında eğitimcilerin göçmen ve mülteci çocukların kimliklerine ve deneyimlerini nasıl anladığını inceleyen başka bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma İskoçya'daki ilköğretim genel eğitim sınıflarında göçmen ve mülteci öğrencilerin karşılaştıkları engelleri öğretmen bakış açılarına göre incelemeyi ve öğretmenlerin göçmen ve mülteci çocukların kimlik ve deneyimlerine yönelik kavramsallaştırmalarını ve bu kavramsallaştırmaların olası etkilerini keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Metodoloji

Araştırmanın amacına uygun deneyim sahibi katılımcıların davet edilebilmesi için olasılığa dayalı olmayan amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır (Walliman, 2011). Çalışmaya ilkokullarda mülteci ve/ veya göçmen çocuklarla çalışma deneyimi olan 7 eğitimci katılmıştır. Tüm katılımcılar araştırma hakkında bilgilendirilmiş ve kişisel verilerinin ve gizliliklerinin korunması için hepsine takma adlar verilmiştir. Her bir katılımcı ile 45-60 dakika arası süren derinlemesine online yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmış ve bu görüşmeler transkripsiyon için ses kayıt cihazlarıyla kaydedilmiştir. Transkibe edilen ham veride katılımcıların anlam örüntülerini, gerçekliklerini ve deneyimlerini belirlemek amacıyla tematik analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

Katılımcıları herhangi bir zarardan korumak için BERA (2018) ve ERIC (2013) formal etik rehberleri kullanılmış ve Edinburgh Üniversitesi, Moray House School of Education and Sport idari biriminden gerekli etik izinler alınmıştır. Çalışmanın içeriği hakkında her katılımcı bilgilendirilmiş, her katılımcıdan yazılı ve sözlü rıza alınmıştır. Bu katılım rızasından çalışmanın istedikleri bir kısmında vazgeçebilme hakları bulunduğu her bir katılımcıya hatırlatılmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra katılımcıların kişisel verilerini korumak ve gizliliklerini sağlayabilmek amacıyla katılımcıların kimliğini açık edebilecek herhangi bir veri kullanılmamış isimler ise kod adlar ile (T1 gibi) değiştirilmiştir. Katılımcıların kimliğini açık edebilecek herhangi bir veri transkriptlerden çıkarılmış ham veriler de dahil bütün veriler yalnızca araştırmacının erişimi olan şifre korumalı üniversite ağı ve OneDrive hesabında saklanmıştır.

Bulgular

Bulgular, katılımcıların çoğunun göçmen ve mülteci öğrencilerin kapsayıcı eğitime dahil edilmesinde çeşitli engeller gözlemlediğini göstermektedir. Eğitimcilere göre, göçmen ve mülteci çocukların genel eğitim sınıflarında eğitime aktif katılımının önündeki engeller genellikle dil, psikolojik-duygusal destek ve sosyal ilişkiler etrafında toplanmaktadır. Katılımcıların hepsi göçmen ve mülteci çocukların İngilizce'deki yetkinlikleri üzerinde durmuş genellikle İngilizce öğrenilmesi için sunulan desteğin yetersizliğinden ziyade bu engel için mülteci ve göçmen çocuğun İngilizcedeki yetersizliği sorumlu tutulmuştur. Yalnızca bir katılımcı çocuğun ana dilinin İngilizce öğrenmesi üzerindeki olası olumlu etkilerinden bahsetmiştir.

Katılımcıların hepsi göçmen ve mülteci öğrencilerinin karşılaştıkları psikolojik-duygusal problemlerle ilgili gözlemlerini belirtmiştir. Fakat çoğunluk bu alandaki bariyerleri ve sorunları sıklıkla göçün öncesindeki sebeplere bağlamıştır. Çocuğun göç sonrası ulaştığı ülkede yaşayabileceği ekonomik sıkıntılar, karşılaşabileceği ırkçılık gibi olumsuz tutumlar göz ardı edilmiştir. Mülteci ve göçmenlerin psikolojik-duygusal ihtiyaçlarının farklı olduğunu öne süren az sayıda katılımcı göçmenlerin genellikle bu alanda yoğun bir ihtiyaçlarının olmadığına dair açıklamalarda bulunmuştur. Bazı katılımcılar psikolojik-duygusal desteğin azlığı ve bazı durumlarda yokluğundan bahsetmiştir.

Katılımcıların çoğu sık karşılaştıkları bir diğer bariyerin göçmen ve mülteci çocuğa yönelik sosyal kabul ve tutumlarla ilişkili olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bu konuda gözlemlerini aktaran eğitimciler sıklıkla önyargıların ve olumsuz tutumların genel toplumdan ve göçmen veya mülteci olmayan çocuğun velilerinden kaynaklandığını belirtmişlerdir.

Bunların yanı sıra bu çalışmanın bulguları, eğitimcilerin göçmen ve mülteci çocuklarla ilgili kavramsallaştırmalarının birbirinden farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Katılımcıların büyük bir kısmı göçmen ve mülteci kavramlarını birbirini yerine kullanmış, öğrencilerine dair tanımlamalar ve kavramsallaştırmalar yaparken göçün nedenlerini ve gönüllülük bileşenini göz ardı etmişlerdir. Bazı katılımcılar bireysel farklılıklara odaklanmayıp, "Çocuk" terimini kapsayıcı bir retorik olarak kullanmışlardır.

Tartışma

Katılımcıların hepsi dil ile ilgili gözlemlerini aktarmıştır. Katılımcıları İngilizce'nin öğrenilmesinin hem akademik hem sosyal açıdan anahtar rol oynadığını söylemişlerdir. Çoğu katılımcı göçmen ve mülteci çocukların İngilizcedeki yetersizliğinin, bu çocukların kapsayıcı eğitim sürecine aktif katılımının önünde engel oluşturduğunu söylemektedir. Bu katılımcılar dil ile ilgili engellerin sorumlusu olarak mülteci veya göçmen çocuğu ve onların ebeveynlerini gösterme eğiliminde olmuşlardır. Bu eksiklik temelli yaklaşım, eğitimcilerin dil yetersizliğini çocukta sabit bir sorun olarak görmesine sebebiyet vermekte ve sorunun kaynağını çocukta aramasından dolayı dil yetersizliğine sebep olabilecek dil desteği eksikliği gibi diğer çevresel, sosyal, kurumsal veya politik sebepleri göz ardı etmektedir (Loewen, 2004). Bunun yanı sıra sorunun kaynağını sadece çocukta aramak öğretmenlerde önyargı ve düşük başarı beklentisine sebep olabilmektedir. Az sayıda katılımcı dil ile ilgili engellerin çocuğun dil yetersizliğinden ziyade dil desteği eksikliğinden kaynaklandığını vurgulamıştır. Katılımcıların çoğu çocukların ana dillerini geliştirmeye dair herhangi bir yorumda bulunmamış, çocukların ana dili dil öğrenme sürecinde göz ardı edilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, çocukların ana dillerinin İngilizce öğrenmeleri üzerindeki olumlu etkisine dair herhangi bir girişimde bulunulmamıştır (Cummins, 2001). Sonuç olarak ana dilin dil öğrenmedeki etkisinin göz ardı edilmesi, yeterli dil desteğinin sağlanamaması ve çocuklara karşı eğitimciler tarafından geliştirilen yetersizlik temelli yaklaşımlar, göçmen ve mülteci öğrencilerin kapsayıcı eğitime katılım süreçlerinin önünde engel oluşturmaktadır.

Katılımcılar özellikle travmaya dair pek çok gözlem iletmışler, göçmen ve mülteci çocukların çoğunlukla psikolojik sıkıntılarla sınıflara katıldığını iletmışlerdir. Travma ve psikolojik yetersizliğe bu yoğun odaklanış katılımcıların sıklıkla bu travmanın sebeplerini göç öncesi deneyimlerle ilişkilendirmelerine sebebiyet vermiştir. Sonuç olarak göç öncesi sebeplere aşırı odaklanmak, eğitimcilerin göç sonrası yoksulluk, ekonomik ve sosyal istikrarsızlık gibi sosyal, ekonomik ve politik sebepleri gözden kaçırmasına sebebiyet verebilmektedir (Matthews, 2008; Rutter, 2006). Görmezden gelinen bu sebeplerden doğabilecek ihtiyaçların karşılanmaması göçmen ve mülteci çocukların eğitime aktif katılımlarının önüne yeni engeller oluşturabilmektedir. Psikolojik-duygusal desteğe dair katılımcıların aktardığı gözlemlerde, psikolojik desteğin sıklıkla yetersiz olduğu, çocuğun ihtiyaçlarına uygun olmadığı, ya da psikolojik desteğin hiç olmadığı durumlar yer almaktadır. Psikolojik destek ile ilgili bu eksiklik göçmen ve mülteci çocukların genel eğitime katılımlarının önünde engel oluşturmaktadır.

Pek çok katılımcı göçmen ve mülteci öğrencilere karşı sosyal kabul eksikliğine dair gözlemlerini iletmıştır. Sosyal kabul ile ilgili sorunlar sıklıkla çocuğun akranlarından değil, göçmen ve mülteci olmayan çocukların aileleri ve okul dışındaki genel nüfusun önyargı ve olumsuz tutumlarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu bulgular, politik taahhüde rağmen İskoç okullarında ve toplumda göçmen ve mülteci çocuklara karşı ırkçılığın ve önyargının hala olduğunu göstermektedir (Arshad, 2016; Hopkins ve diğerleri, 2015; Meer, 2016). Sosyal kabul eksikliği de bu öğrencilerin genel eğitim sınıflarına aktif katılımının önünde bariyer oluşturmaktadır.

Bulgular eğitimcilerin göçmen ve mülteci öğrencilerin kimliklerine ve deneyimleriyle ilgili eksik veya yanlış kavramsallaştırmalar yaptıklarını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar sıklıkla mülteci ve göçmen kavramlarını birbirini yerine kullanmış bazı katılımcılar göçmen veya mülteci yerine ise "çocuk" terimini sıklıkla kapsayıcı bir retorik oluşturmak için kullanmışlardır. Mültecilik ve göçmenliğin birbirini yerine kullanılması veya aralarında bir fak gözetilmeden kullanılması mültecilik veya göçmenlikle ilgili spesifik deneyimlerin ve bu deneyimlerden kaynaklanan eğitsel ve sosyal ihtiyaçların göz ardı edilmesine sebebiyet verebilmektedir (Edwards, 2016; Morrison, 2018). Bu grupları yalnızca çocuk olarak tanımlamak kapsayıcı bir dil kullanmak için faydalı olsa da bu yaklaşım faklı kimlik ve sosyal kategorileri önemsizleştirerek çocukların ihtiyaçlarının fark edilmesini engelleyebilmektedir (Neville ve diğerleri, 2013). Bu sebeplerle göçmen ve mülteci

öğrencilerin kimlik ve deneyimlerine yönelik eğitimcilerin geliştirdiği eksik veya yanlış kavramsallaştırmalar bu çocukların kapsayıcı eğitim sürecine katılmalarına karşı engel oluşturabilmektedir.

Sonuç

Bu çalışma, öğretmenlerin mülteci ve göçmen çocukların kapsayıcı eğitim sürecinde genel eğitim sınıflarına katılımının önünde gördükleri başlıca engelleri belirlemiştir. Öğretmenler, dil ve psikolojik destek eksikliği ile sosyal kabul eksikliğini temel engeller olarak tanımlamıştır. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerinin kimlik ve deneyimlerine dair eksik ve hatalı kavramsallaştırmalar yaptıkları gözlemlenmiş ve bu kavramsal yanılmanın çocukların farklı eğitsel ve sosyal ihtiyaçlarının fark edilmesini engelleyebileceği belirtilmiştir. Dolayısıyla bu kavramsal yanılıklar, mülteci ve göçmen çocukların genel eğitime aktif katılımlarının önünde bir bariyer oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma, bu kavramsal yanılıkların giderilebilmesi için öğretmen adaylarına ve öğretmenlere yönelik hizmet içi eğitim sunulması gerektiğini önermektedir.