

Eliciting Children's Perceptions of Migration through a Puppet-Making Task

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ABSTRACT

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to investigate the perceptions of immigrant children who participated in a puppet-making workshop about the story of an immigrant puppet, called Amal. The study involved 11 participants, 5 girls and 6 boys aged between 9 and 12 years, who joined the *Children Like Us* puppet-making workshop organized by the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) Izmir Al Farah Child and Family Support Center in Turkey. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews from the children. The interviews were conducted face-to-face by the second researcher. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that the migrant children expressed enthusiasm and joy in participating in the puppet-making workshop and used the Little Amal character to convey their perspectives on migration. The study offers useful methodological implications; it shows how artistic experiences can facilitate the expression of thoughts and feelings for children.

Key words: Children, Migration, Art Literacy, Art Therapy, Puppet Art.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, migration has become a global problem. Turkey, located on the Asia-Europe route, receives migrants while also having emigrants (Tekin, 2007). Migration can be defined as an active process of relocating between administrative settlements, geographical regions, or states for social, economic, political, military, legal, educational, cultural, individual, or other motives. It is generally considered a temporary or permanent change of location. A comparison of the 19th and 20th centuries reveals a significant increase in the intensity of migration (Dumancı & Gür, 2022). Migration is driven by a multitude of reasons, with political and economic factors being among the most significant. Other reasons include threats to the right to live and violence, which prompt people to migrate in order to improve their living standards or simply to survive (Sever & Sever, 2013). Due to similar situations in Syria, millions of people have fled their home country and sought refuge in Turkey recently (Yenen & Ulucan, 2020). This is not only because Turkey and Syria share a border but also because the Turkish nation is guided by conscientious values that prioritize the protection of the oppressed, as reflected in its customs and traditions (Günay et al., 2017). When the Russia-Ukraine crisis began on February 24, 2022, Turkey again demonstrated its hospitable stance by opening its doors to Ukrainian refugees. The refugee problem resulting from war is a critical and widespread issue in our globalizing world.

The terms migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeker are used interchangeably or incorrectly in publications on Syrian asylum-seekers or refugees seeking asylum in Turkey. To eliminate conceptual confusion, it is necessary to include some definitions from the *Glossary of Migration* prepared by the International Organization for Migration (Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2009). Although no universally accepted definition of "immigrant" exists, the term "immigrant" has been accepted to apply to individuals and family members who move to another country or region to improve their material and social conditions and improve their prospects for themselves and their families. The United Nations has emphasized that an immigrant must be an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year (UN, 2012). According to the *Glossary of Migration* prepared by the International Organization for Migration the term "refugee" is defined as:

a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons such as race, religion, nationality, and membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and, due to this fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country (Perruchoud & Redpath-Cross, 2009).

"Temporary protection" refers to the arrangement organized by the State to provide temporary protection to persons fleeing conflict or widespread violence without prior individual status determination. The word immigrant is

used internationally as a collective term covering both migrants and refugees. Therefore, this study adopted the term immigrant.

Undoubtedly, children and women are the most affected by the negativities encountered during and after migration (Arabacı et al., 2016). Loneliness, adaptation problems, financial difficulties, migration-related traumas, behavioral difficulties, and insecurity (Almutairi, 2015; Hodes, 2000) can be challenging for children who must leave behind their home country and traumatic experiences (Emin, 2016; Eren, 2019; Özservet, 2015). Upon arrival in their new countries, immigrant children may experience problems with adaptation, mental health, dirty living conditions, a sense of not belonging, limited access to medical care, and language barriers (Kanbur, 2017). When these children are asked to discuss their traumatic experiences, they may show resistance or hesitation due to the psychological impact of their experiences and their lack of fluency in the new language, which makes it difficult for them to express their feelings.

Migration, which is a global problem with its effects in many areas such as social, diplomatic, political, economic, and geographical, is subject to the field of art, which cannot remain insensitive to social problems, and it is also possible to express the difficulties of migration through art. In 2015, the loss of Aylan Kurdi became a global news topic through communication networks. This event was reflected in different disciplines and art (Yağmur & Arslan, 2021). Art is a spiritual activity in which people use tools such as lines, colors, forms, sounds, words, and rhythm to convey their feelings and thoughts toward nature incorporating their own interpretation (Özer, 2013). This enables people to free their emotions and mold them into new creations through different art forms. Artists perform their art to make the gravity of a problem clear with individual and social manifestos, and people who experience migration create artworks that symbolize what they lack, what they long for, and their hopes (Uyar, 2021). Artistic activities are an effective way of changing attitudes toward migrants and reaching out to those in authority.

It is known that making use of art can be a relief for immigrant children in situations such as not being able to express themselves and share their feelings due to not having learned the new language yet. The best way to communicate with children is through creative methods such as games and art (Malchiodi, 2008; Terr, 2007). Instead of having children recount traumatizing experiences, art therapies that make them feel less threatened can be useful (Rousseau et al., 2003). Art therapy studies have focused on the needs of migrant children and families (Lee, 2013; Linesch et al., 2012).

When emphasizing the healing effects of art therapies, it is necessary to mention the term “flow” in art. Flow describes the psychological state of optimal attention and engagement, creativity, and well-being. The experience of flow in art is characterized by feelings of achievement, control, and autonomy (Reynolds & Prior, 2006) and results in feelings of satisfaction when the task is completed (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Art and flow are the common points of experience (Chilton, 2013). The art therapy

literature points to the therapeutic benefits of flow in art therapy in terms of promoting concentration, increasing self-esteem, and improving health and well-being, which contribute to the overall quality of life (Chilton, 2013; Wilkinson & Chilton, 2013). Lee (2013) reported that migrant children’s flow experiences in art therapy enabled them to cope with the daily challenges of anxiety and boredom related to social isolation. A study in which art education was applied to children in the risk group suggested that art education positively impacted children at risk (Özer, 2013). UNESCO (2006) considers it a universal right for every child in society to have access to art experiences and art regardless of their status such as economic status, refugee status, being a minority, or having special needs. For this reason, the individual should have the ability to combine and evaluate the artistic accumulation in his own culture with the art products of other countries, that is, he should have art literacy. Not only are children required to read and write about art but they must also apply this knowledge in creating their own artwork. Unfortunately, there is limited research on literacy and literate practice in the arts. It is important to explore the experiences of children studying arts. Children acquire their art experiences in out-of-school contexts and it is important to explore these experiences of children studying arts.

In the literature, studies on the impact of migration on migrant children are limited (Durgel & Yağmurlu, 2014). Art therapies conducted by NGOs have been shown to provide positive feedback on the psycho-social and cultural state and the well-being of refugee women and children. Researchers have emphasized the need to ensure the continuity of these activities (Yırtmaç, 2022). The Ministry of Interior Presidency of Migration Management organizes various art events in provinces by initiating adaptation workshops that emphasize the importance of culture and art in social and psychological integration in the lives of migrants (Ministry of Interior Presidency of Migration Management, n.d.). The Refugee Support Association has pioneered the concept of the Peace and Art Center to contribute to the self-confidence of women and children and support their social adaptation processes (Refugee Support Association-MUDEM, 2021). According to Altıntaş and Tanyıldız Balçık’s (2018) study, 63 middle school students who were immigrants faced challenges such as exclusion, loneliness, and discrimination. Moreover, the authors observed a lack of interaction between immigrant and non-immigrant students and indicated that immigrant students tended to form their own groups. To address these issues, the researchers recommended organizing cultural and artistic activities that encourage joint participation among students, which would help them adapt better to the school environment. Erkayhan (2008) examined the artwork of Turkish plastic artists who migrated to Germany after 1960 and explored how their identities transformed over time, as well as how their artwork reflected the migration and identity change processes. Uyar (2021) studied the lives of refugees living in the Malatya Refugee Camp and Torbalı, Izmir, highlighting the constructive role of art in addressing social problems. Kapancıgil (2019) reported that Bulgarian Turks who could not migrate from the Balkans during the

19th-century Ottoman Empire preserved their cultural identity through language, music, oral, and written culture. Uyar and Aktuğ (2020) discussed various artistic projects, such as Art for Refugees, Za'tari, Skoun, Paint Outside the Lines, Blanket of Migration Project, and We Color Grey Lives, that attempt to heal, console, and provide hope to refugees who have experienced pain and trauma.

The unifying power of art that creates an understanding and empathetic environment in an egalitarian, peaceful atmosphere of mutual cooperation plays an important role in solving the problems faced by migrant children. Although various studies have emphasized the relevance of this issue, the number of studies on the views of migrant children directly involved in art activities is quite limited. In this context, the researchers believe that examining the views of migrant children participating in art activities will contribute to artists, institutions, and organizations related to migrants, researchers, and teachers.

Objective and Research Questions

This study aims to explore the perspectives of immigrant children who participated in a puppet art workshop, focusing on their views on immigration and how their art experience influenced their perceptions. The research question aimed to be answered in the study is as follows:

- What are the feelings and thoughts of the immigrant children who attended the puppet workshop about the story of the immigrant puppet Amal?

METHODS

Research Model

The qualitative study applied a phenomenological approach. The primary goal of the phenomenological approach is to explore people's perceptions of the phenomena they experience firsthand and reveal the cognitive structures that underlie their experiences (Creswell, 2014). The data obtained in the study were analyzed using content analysis.

Validity and Reliability of the Study

In qualitative studies, researchers must consider certain criteria to ensure validity and reliability. The actions carried out within the scope of validity and reliability of the research are as follows:

1. The semi-structured interview form was finalized based on the opinions of six academics and a psychologist experienced in working with immigrant children. (Internal validity-Credibility)
2. The study group for the research was determined using the purposive sampling method. (External validity-Transferability)
3. The data were recorded with a voice recorder during the interview and then transcribed. (External credibility-Verifiability)
4. Codes and themes were created by different researchers and compared. Inter-rater agreement was

examined using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula, and the agreement was determined as .85. (Internal reliability-Consistency)

5. All stages of the research were conducted in line with the opinions and suggestions of an experienced expert. (Internal reliability-Consistency)

Study Group for the Research

The study group for this research was determined using the purposive sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. Purposive sampling method allows the selection of the necessary situations to obtain detailed information (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018). In this context, the study group comprised 11 children (5 girls and 6 boys) aged between 9 and 12 years who participated in the "Children Like Us" puppet-making workshop organized by ASAM Izmir Al Farah Child and Family Support Center as part of the "The Walk Art Festival."

Data Collection Tools

Semi-structured interview form

Phenomenology, requires interviewing people who have lived experiences (Patton, 2014). Interviewing allows people to make sense of their experiences (Glesne, 2013). It is recommended that children experience with original artworks so that they can understand how works of art are created (Savva, 2003) and it is very important for children to interact with works of art (Sanderson & Savva, 2004; Hancock & Cox, 2002). In this context, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers was used to collect data in the research. The questions in the question pool aim to learn the feelings and thoughts of children about the puppet art they are involved in. The researchers consulted six academics working in the departments of Child Development, Preschool Teaching, Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Turkish Language Teaching, and Sociology for their expert opinions. The semi-structured interview form was finalized based on expert feedback. Before conducting the interviews, a psychologist at the Izmir Al Farah Child and Family Support Center reviewed the interview questions and suggested removing any questions that might touch upon sensitive topics for the children. Interviews occurred after finalizing the interview form. The interview questions used in the research are given in Appendix 1.

Data collection

The data of the study were obtained from immigrant children who participated in the *Children Like Us* puppet making workshop organized by the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SGDD-ASAM) Al Farah Child and Family Support Center in Izmir. This event is part of an international arts project in 2021 by the UK-based Good Chance Theater Production Corporation. A giant child puppet named Little Amal was created by the Handspring Puppet Company in this art organization called The Walk.

Amal is only 9 years old, 3.5 meters tall and searching for her lost mother. In fact, she is so majestic because she set out to make a big call to the world with her tiny heart. This artwork, which will portray a Syrian child refugee, is crafted from sturdy and lightweight materials such as a cane and carbon fiber. Little Amal two in both arms; he played a total of four puppet artists, one walking on her waist and on her feet. These four puppeteers were also responsible for controlling the ‘harp’, a complex weaving of threads that moves Amal’s face, head and eyes. Little Amal started her ten-million-step walk from Gaziantep on July 27, 2021 in Turkey to support refugees, passed through Greece, Italy, France, Switzerland and Germany, completed in the United Kingdom and traveled 8000 km. In order to draw attention to the needs of child refugees, a series of art activities were organized in the cities on Amal’s walking route within the scope of this special festival, which was realized with the slogans: *We want the world to grow enough to embrace Amal and hope is built step by step.* On August 8, 2021, Amal got on a boat in Çeşme and went to Greece, the next stop of her walk. Amal was greeted with an art installation of shoes stretching to the seaside representing those who lost their lives in the Mediterranean while crossing the opposite shore, and then sent off from Turkey.

The data of the research was carried out by the second researcher with a semi-structured interview form, by recording face-to-face and telephone in a noise-free environment. Without interviewing each of the participants, information was given about why this interview was held, and interviews were conducted with the participants who were willing to express their opinions.

The data collection process was carried out in two stages. The first phase of the research with 11 migrant children who participated in the *Boys Like Us* puppet making workshop was held on 05.08.2021 before meeting the puppet Amal. At this stage, in order to meet Amal, the children created six puppets that would become Amal’s friends for two months and learned to play them. The second stage was held on 07.08.2021, one day after the day they met Amal with the six puppets they prepared for the immigrant children to be friends with Amal. The first phase of the interviews was 63 minutes 29 seconds and the second phase was 57 minutes and 36 seconds, and lasted for a total of 121 minutes and five seconds.

Data analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using the content analysis method. Themes were identified, and coding was done under each theme. This study used codes for the participants instead of using their names to protect their confidentiality. The interview forms were numbered from 1 to 11, and each one was given the codes “P1” and “P2” meaning “Participant 1” and “Participant 2.”

RESULTS

Figure 1 presents the semi-structured interview form questions used in the research as 5 main themes.

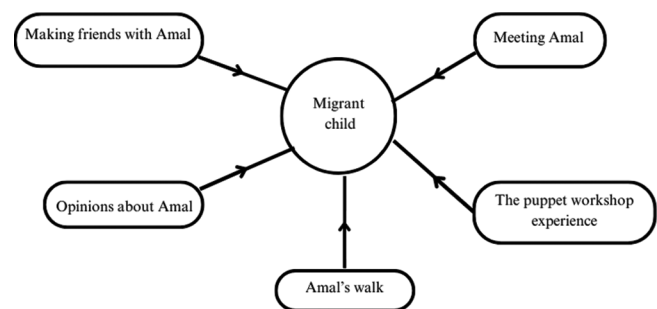


Figure 1. Main themes

Figure 2 presents the distribution of the migrant children’s responses to the questions related to the theme of being friends with Amal. Figure 2 depicts that migrant children would approach Amal as a friend through verbal communication and body language. Participants’ statements are as follows:

Okay. I will meet her. I will introduce myself. Then she will introduce herself. Then I would ask her to be friends. Then it is up to her. [P3]

I do not think we can speak the same language. She comes from another country. I will communicate with gestures. [P9]

According to Figure 2, the games the migrant children preferred to play with Amal included soccer, the floor is lava, hide and seek, and volleyball.

This student shared his/her opinion stating, “Football, the floor is lava, hide and seek.” As the figure shows, the foods that the migrant children preferred to eat with Amal were hamburgers, pizza, and pita bread. Participants’ statements are as follows:

Hamburger, pizza, pita bread. [P11]

Figure 2 also depicts that migrant children wanted to gift Amal a dress and a phone. Participants’ statements are as follows:

I would like to gift her a dress. [P5]

A car, water, food, a hat (because it is hot), and a bicycle. A telephone. [P9]

Figure 3 presents the distribution of responses to the questions related to the theme of opinions about migrant children. Frequencies related to the theme of opinions about Amal are presented in Tables 1 to 6.

According to Figure 3, migrant children believed Amal came from the Gaziantep Province. According to Figure 3, migrant children’s answers to the question “Does Amal have a family, and if so, where are they?” were “Yes” and “No.” Participants’ statements are as follows:

Amal may not have a family, but I think she can have a family with the puppets we made. [P3]

I do not think she does because I think they would have come together if she did. [P9]

She must, I do not know where they are. [P6]

According to Figure 3, migrant children’s answers to the question “Does Amal have friends, and if so, where are they?” were Gaziantep, another country, and another city. Participants’ statements are as follows:

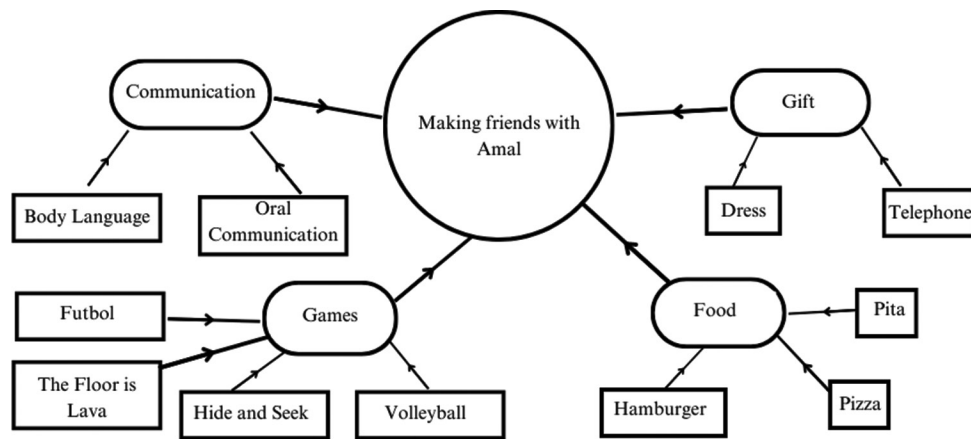


Figure 2. First main theme: Making friends with amal

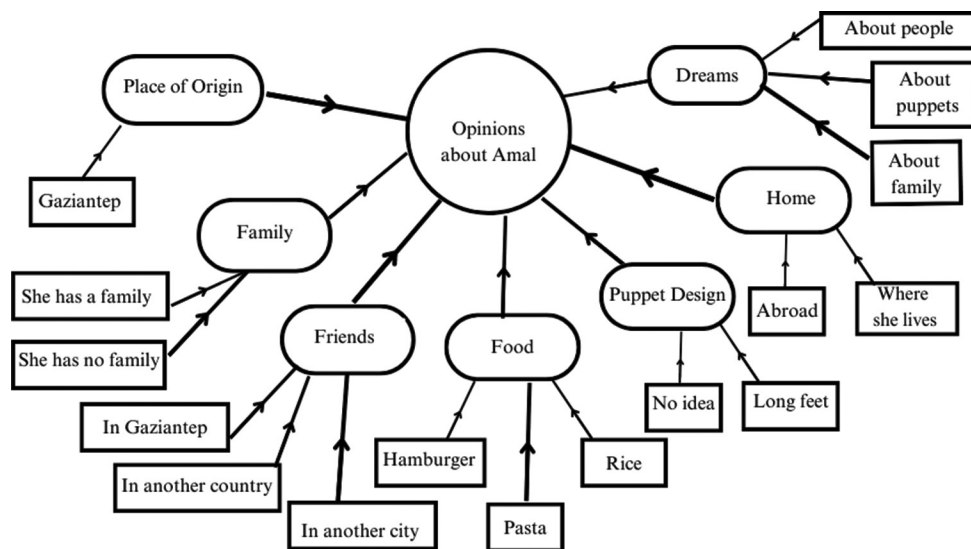


Figure 3. Second main theme: Opinions about amal

She must, maybe they are in other cities. [P5]
I think she has many friends, and they are also in Gaziantep. [P6]

According to Figure 3, the migrant children believed that Amal's favorite foods were hamburgers, pasta, and rice.

According to the migrant children's opinions in Figure 3, Amal is long because her feet are long, and some children stated that they had no idea why she was so big. Participants' statements are as follows:

She had feet, we do not. We made her walk ourselves. That is why she was so long. [P3]

According to Figure 3, migrant children's answers to the question "Where is Amal's home?" were "abroad" and "where she lives."

The answers to the question "What kind of dreams might Amal be having?" were dreams about family, people, and puppets. Participants' statements are as follows:

In her dreams, she may think "Will I find my mom, will I find my dad?" She can dream of them and say, "I re-united with my parents, hurray!" [P4]
She sees puppets and people. [P5]

Figure 4 presents the distribution of migrant children's responses to the questions related to the theme of Amal's walk.

According to Figure 4, migrant children's answers to the question "Why did Amal go on this walk?" were as follows: "I don't know," "to look for her family," and "to travel." Participants' statements are as follows:

She is going to where her mother is. [P4]
To visit other places. [P10]

Based on our results, migrant children's answers to the question "How did Amal feel when she started her long walk?" were "tired" and "happy." Participants' statements are as follows:

I think she was very happy because she would make people happy. [P3]
She felt tired and had difficulty. [P11]

As the data in Figure 4 show, migrant children's answers to the question "Where will Amal go after this?" were as follows: She does not know, Istanbul, and to a different country. Participants' statements are as follows;

I do not know that much. [P3]
She can go to Istanbul. [P7]
To another country. [P11]

Table 1. Main themes

Themes	Questions
Making friends with Amal	How will you say “Welcome” to Amal? How will you get along with Amal? If you want to be friends with Amal, how would you tell her? Which games would you like to play with Amal? What food would you like to have with Amal? What would you like to give Amal as a gift to keep with her during her walk?
Opinions about Amal	Where could Amal be coming from? Do you think Amal has a family? If so, where might they live? Do you think Amal has friends? If so, where could her friends be? Which dishes do you think Amal likes the most? Why do you think Amal was designed as a giant puppet? Where do you think Amal’s house is? What kind of dreams do you think Amal might be having?
Amal’s walk	Why did Amal go on this walk? How did Amal feel when she started her long walk? Where do you think Amal will go after Izmir? Where do you think Amal might be walking to? What do you think Amal might need on the walking trail? What do you think Amal should do if she gets sick on the walking trail? What do you think Amal should do if she gets scared on the walking trail? Before Amal continues her walk, what would you like to say to her? What would you change in the world for children like Amal?
The puppet workshop experience	How did you feel while preparing the puppets that would be Amal’s friends? What did you consider when making the puppets that will be Amal’s friends? What name did you give your puppet? How did you name your puppet?
Meeting Amal	How do you feel about meeting Amal? How did you feel the first time you saw Amal and welcomed her with the puppets you prepared?

Table 2. Frequencies related to the theme of making friends with Amal

Themes	Question	Answers	Frequency
Making friends with Amal	Communication	Body Language	12
		Oral Communication	22
	Games	Futbol	7
		The Floor is Lava	3
		Hide and Seek	4
		Volleyball	2
		Food	Hamburger
		Pizza	5
		Pita	2
	Gift	Dress	2
Telephone		2	

Also as shown in Figure 4, migrant children’s answers to the question “Where would Amal be going on foot?” were “traveling” and “I don’t know.” Participants’ statements are as follows:

She travels to countries. [P9]

According to Figure 4, migrant children’s answers to the question “What do you think Amal might need on the walking trail?” were rest, nutrition, and a safe place/person. Participants’ statements are as follows:

Table 3. Frequencies related to the theme of opinions about Amal

Themes	Question	Answers	Frequency
Opinions about Amal	Place of Origin	Gaziantep	8
		Family	She has a family
		She has no family	4
	Friends	In Gaziantep	2
		In another country	2
		In another city	2
	Food	Hamburger	2
		Pasta	2
		Rice	2
	Puppet Design	No idea	6
		Long feet	2
	Home	Abroad	6
		Where she lives	2
	Dreams	About family	3
		About puppets	2
About people		5	

Her family. [P2]

Rest, water, and food. [P3]

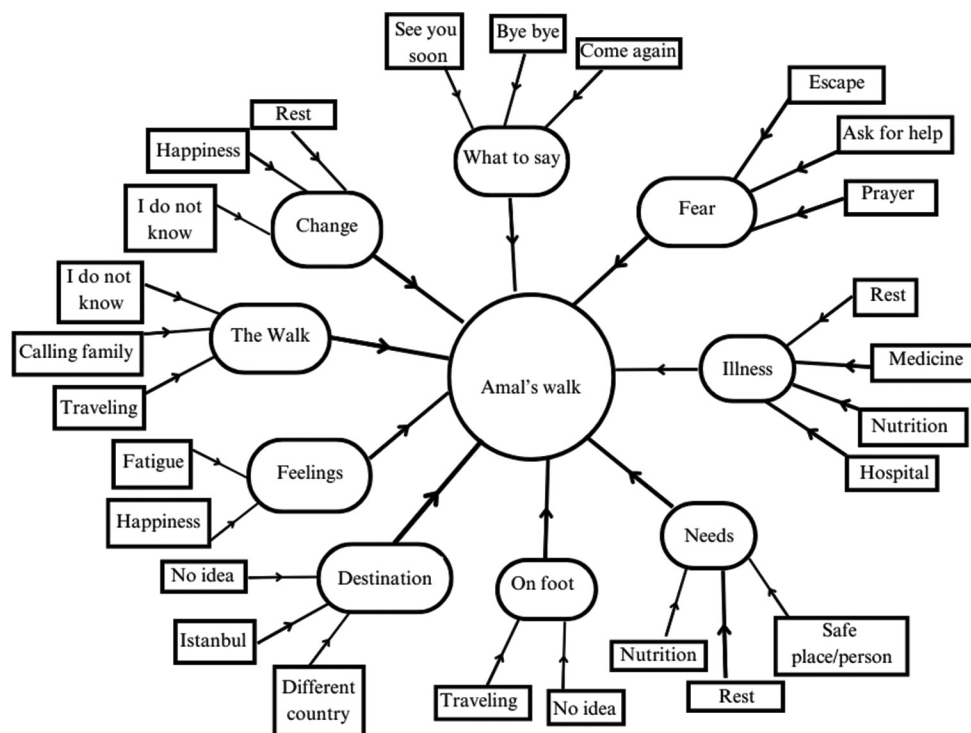


Figure 4. Third main theme: Amal's walk

If she is a real person, food, water, and a place to stay in the evening. [P8]

The answers of migrant children to the question, “What should Amal do if she gets sick on the walking trail?” were rest, take medicine, eat, and go to the hospital (Figure 4). Participants' statements are as follows:

She should take medicine for 2-3 days, sit, and rest. She can drink something hot. She can lie on the bed. [P1]

She can stop and rest, eat, and drink water. [P6]

She should stop and rest. She should go to the hospital. [P9]

Participants' answers to the question “What should Amal do if she gets scared on the walking path?” were as follows: She should run away, ask for help, and pray (Figure 4). Participants' statements are as follows:

She can pray to God. [P3]

She should run away. She can tell others and ask for help. [P9]

Migrant children's answers to the question “What would you like to say to Amal before she continues her walk?” were “See you soon,” “Goodbye,” and “Come again” (Figure 4). Participants' statements are as follows:

Goodbye, I hope to see you again. [P7]

I would tell her that I loved her very much and that she should come again. [P10]

The answers of migrant children to the question “What would you change in the world for children like Amal?” were “I do not know,” “happiness,” and “rest” (Figure 4). Participants' statements are as follows:

I would want them to be happy. I wish they were comfortable. I wish they could have some rest. Clean clothes.

They can watch television. They can answer the phone and talk on WhatsApp. [P1]

That their exhaustion passed. [P10]

Figure 5 presents the distribution of migrant children's responses to the questions related to the Puppet Workshop Experience theme and the photograph of the Puppet Workshop is presented below.

According to Figure 6, the answers of migrant children to the question “How did you feel while preparing the puppets that will be Amal's friends?” were happiness, excitement, and fatigue. Participants' statements are as follows:

I was very happy. There was nothing like that in my imagination. When they pointed to Amal and said you are going to do something like this, I was very excited. I said how are we going to do it? I thought maybe ours would be small, but it was big. [P3]

I felt happy. I got tired, but it was worth it. [P4]

I felt a little bit of happiness, we were waking up at 8 in the morning to make the puppets and I was very sleepy.

Now I will go to sleep as soon as I go home. [P8]

According to Figure 6, the answers of migrant children to the question “What did you pay attention to when making the puppets that will be Amal's friends?” were; durability and aesthetics. Participants' statements are as follows;

I made sure that the coloring was smooth. I warned my friends. Even if we did not pay attention, our teachers would come and make corrections. They were more careful than we were. [P3]

I made sure that it was not ugly, over-painted, or sharp. [P5]

I paid attention to everything. I paid attention to their coloring and clothes. [P7]

According to Figure 6, migrant children’s answers to the question “What name did you give your puppet?” were; Hasan Osman, Lina, Cemre, Abdullah, Enes, and Ayşe.

According to Figure 6, the answers of migrant children to the question “How did you name your puppet?” were as follows: with a friend’s name, famous person’s name, and Syrian name. Participants’ statements are as follows;

I wanted to call it Hasan Osman, Ahmet said its name should be Hasan, so gave him his surname Osman. Gassan Osman is the name of my friend in Germany. [P1]

I thought it would be a very beautiful puppet. Because it has Enes Batur’s name. [P4]

There was a lady on Tiktok, I liked her very much. I named it after her. [P5]

We decided with our friends to name it Abdullah because he is Syrian and the name Abdullah is common in Syria, so we named him Abdullah. [P6]

Figure 7 presents the distribution of migrant children’s responses to the questions related to the theme of meeting Amal.

According to Figure 7, the answers of migrant children to the question “How do you feel about meeting Amal?” were happiness and excitement. Participants’ statements are as follows:

I want to go out with my puppet, I want to take photos. I want to have a memorable moment with it. I did not know anyone called Amal before, but I came here and I got

to know her. I would not have gotten to know her if I had not come here. Thanks to our teachers. [P3]

Well, I will be very happy. I am so happy and excited.

I am very, very excited. [P4]

I feel impatient. I am excited. [P6]

According to Figure 7, the answers of migrant children to the question “How did you feel when you welcomed Amal by moving the puppets you prepared and when you first saw Amal?” are presented below. Participants’ statements are as follows:

I felt very good. I sweated a lot in rehearsals, but when I saw her, I did not sweat and I did not get tired. [P1]

I felt very happy, I never thought I would hug her. It feels good. Every child should experience this. [P3]

I was shocked, I felt like I was going to explode. [P4]

DISCUSSION

This research aims to determine the views of migrant children who participated in The Walk Art Festival, an international art event. Participants expressed that they used verbal communication and body language to make friends with Amal. This suggests that children’s ideas about making friends with Amal reflect their ideas about making friends with other individuals. The fact that the children stated that they could communicate with Amal verbally or through body language suggests that they were ready to be friends with Amal without prejudice. One study examined migrant children’s ideas about communicating. According to the study, the main challenge in communication between immigrant and Turkish children was due to language barriers and discrimination (Avcı, 2020). Turkish students revealed through their drawings and interviews that they held prejudices against migrant children, including the perception that they were unclean and an unwillingness to include them in games due to language differences.

The children stated that they would like to play games with Amal such as soccer, the floor is lava, hide and seek, and volleyball. This suggests that they prefer social, outdoor, and competitive games. Their inclination toward social, face-to-face, and outdoor games indicates their need for play and social interaction after the period of social isolation



Figure 5. The six puppet friends made by migrant children
Description: The six puppet friends made by migrant children are waiting for Amal. 08.05.2021-Izmir

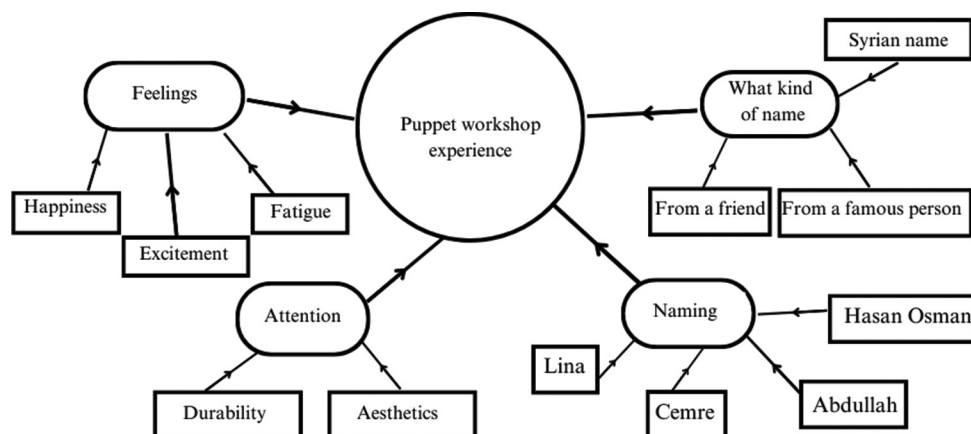


Figure 6. Fourth main theme: Puppet Workshop Experience

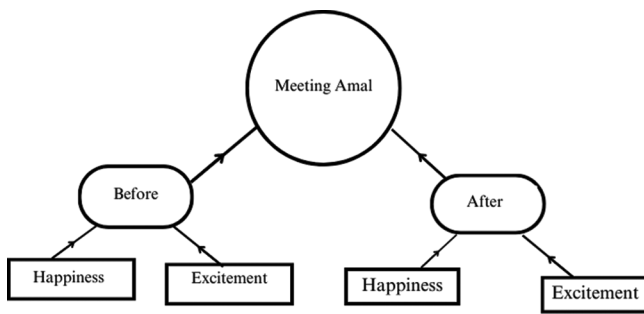


Figure 7. Fifth main theme: Meeting Amal

Table 4. Frequencies for the theme of Amal's walk

Themes	Question	Answers	Frequency
Amal's Walk	The Walk	I do not know	3
		Calling family	2
		Traveling	3
Feelings		Fatigue	5
		Happiness	6
Destination		No idea	3
		Istanbul	2
		Different country	2
On foot		Traveling	6
		No idea	2
Needs		Nutrition	9
		Rest	5
		Safe place/person	2
		Illness	8
Fear		Rest	4
		Medicine	2
		Nutrition	2
Hospital		Hospital	2
		Fear	5
		Escape	2
What to say		Ask for help	2
		Prayer	2
		See you soon	5
Change		Bye bye	2
		Come again	3
		I do not know	3
		Happiness	2
		Rest	2

they experienced during the pandemic. The children also expressed their desire to eat foods such as hamburgers, pizza, and pita bread with Amal, as well as give her a dress or a phone as a gift. These preferences demonstrate the influence of popular culture on the children's thoughts about food and gifts.

When asked where Amal came from, most of the children said that Amal's walk started in Gaziantep. This finding suggests that the NGO organizing the art festival shared detailed information about the festival with the children and informed

Table 5. Frequencies related to the Puppet Workshop Experience theme

Themes	Question	Answers	Frequency
Puppet Workshop Experience	Feelings	Happiness	11
		Excitement	2
		Fatigue	2
		Attention	5
		Aesthetics	10
	Naming	Hasan Osman	2
		Lina	2
		Cemre	2
		Abdullah	2
		What kind of name	From a friend
	From a famous person	3	
	Syrian name	2	

Table 6. Frequencies related to the theme of Meeting Amal

Themes	Question	Answers	Frequency
Meeting Amal	Before	Happiness	7
		Excitement	8
	After	Happiness	9
		Excitement	8

them. Most children reported that Amal had a family; fewer children reported that Amal did not have a family. According to this finding, it can be interpreted that children are aware that some children may not have families. It is noteworthy that one child said, "I do not think she has a family, if she did, they would have come together." When asked where Amal's friends were, the children answered as follows: Gaziantep, another country, and another city. According to the children, Amal's favorite foods are hamburgers, pasta, and rice. One can suggest that these are foods that all children like to eat.

When asked why Amal was so big, most children said they did not know, while a few said that Amal had long feet. The design of Amal as a giant puppet as part of an art festival intends to attract the attention of the whole world. The slogan of the festival is "We want the world to grow big enough to embrace Amal" (Figure 8) (Zuabi, 2021). Although the children in the study could not fully comprehend the reason why Amal was designed as a giant puppet, the fact that they stated that Amal had long legs to walk suggests that the size of the puppet attracted the children's attention. The art festival succeeded in attracting children's attention with its giant puppet design.

When asked where Amal's home is, the responses were abroad and where she lives. Most of the children believed that Amal had a home. When asked what kind of dreams Amal has, the children responded as dreams about family, humans, and puppets. One child stating, "In her dreams, she may think 'Will I find my mom, will I find my dad?' She can dream of them and say, 'I reunited with my parents, hurray!'" suggests that the child can empathize with Amal's feeling of longing she may feel for her family.

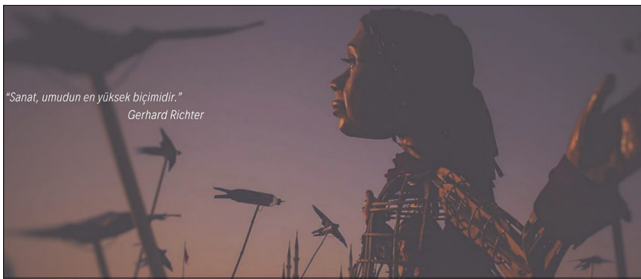


Figure 8. Little Amal

Description: Because we want the world to grow big enough to embrace Amal

The children answered that Amal's reason for going on this walk was that Amal was looking for her family and visiting other places. Some children stated that they did not know the reason for the walk. It can be said that the few children who stated that Amal was looking for her family were aware that migrant children can be separated from their families. More than half of the children indicated that Amal might feel happiness from the walk; the other children indicated that she might feel tired. Children also noted that Amal would need food, rest, water, and safe places and people on the trail. Based on one child's answer, "If it is a real person, food, water, and a place to stay in the evening" one can say that the festival contributed to children's consideration of the concepts of puppets and real people in line with the festival's aims. These findings suggest that children think that Amal may have feelings and basic human needs and that they embrace her as a living being rather than an inanimate puppet. Some of the children said that they did not know where Amal would go next. Some children also said that Amal would go to Istanbul or other countries. One can say that the children had no information about Amal's walking route, but they knew that she was going to walk to different countries.

The children said that if Amal gets sick on the walk, she should rest and if she gets scared, she should run away, ask for help, or pray. One child said, "Amal can pray to God." One can derive that the suggestions the children offer to Amal when she faces difficulties stem from their own experiences or from the advice that was offered to them. When asked what they would like to say to Amal before she continues her walk, the children responded "see you soon," "good-bye," and "come back again." Children said they did not know the answer to the question of what they would change in the world for children like Amal. A small number of children's response was happiness and rest. One child expressed his/her feelings as "I would like their exhaustion to pass," while another child said, "I would like them to be happy." These findings suggest that children were able to comprehend the effect of Amal's long walk on Amal. Uyar (2021) stated that artworks help refugees represent the grief, trauma, longing, and hopes of their lives since this way they process the emotions they normally cannot. This way, she stated that refugees try to integrate their personality from before the migration with their personality from after they migrated. Güngör (2020) emphasized that when we look at the reflection of the phenomenon of migration on art, the personal

memories of migrant individuals existing in the history of art highlights the issue and becomes a source of awareness. One can say that all these findings obtained from the interviews with the children about Amal's walk, based on the personal experiences of the migrants, formed an effect through the art organization and contributed to social awareness.

Children stated that they experienced happiness and excitement at the same time, even if they felt tired about participating in the puppet art workshop. One can observe that artistic experiences such as puppet art workshops contribute to children feeling good about themselves. Migrant children can express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings more easily through artistic experiences. It is considered important for them to leave a trace of themselves in the works they create and to express what is inside them. Uyar (2021) stated that refugees can adapt to life and express the negativities they experience through art forms. Artistic methods can be effective in helping refugees preserve their cultural identity. Yırtmaç (2022) found that refugee women and children who have undergone catharsis experienced positive and negative changes in their lives, as observed by expert staff of NGOs. Participating in artistic activities helped them release emotions such as pain, distress, and anger, while also increasing their knowledge and awareness. Art can be a healing tool for refugee women and children to transform their traumas while mourning the pain they have experienced. Acer (2015) demonstrated that the experiences, interactions, and sharing that children had in art projects positively contributed to their thoughts and reactions to art. Access to arts is also a child's right. According to Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1), States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity (United Nations, 1989). Children's access to art experiences contributes to the realization of children's rights in a qualified manner.

The children said that they paid attention to durability and aesthetics when making the puppets that would be Amal's friends. When asked to name their puppets, they gave the names Hasan Osman, Lina, Cemre, and Abdullah. They stated that they were inspired by the names of their friends and social media personalities while naming them. Some of the children stated that they gave the puppet the name Abdullah because Abdullah is a common name in Syria. Children expressed they felt the emotions of happiness and excitement both before and after they met Amal.

This research was carried out with migrant children reached as a result of the cooperation established with an NGO working for migrants within the scope of an international art festival in Izmir. Due to the nature and limitations of qualitative research, the results obtained from this study cannot be generalized. The migrant children in this study experienced producing a work of art, witnessing the creation of a work of art, and being part of an international art festival. The study found that the children felt feelings of happiness and excitement about these processes they experienced for the first time, and by expressing their opinions about Amal's

walk, they increased their awareness of Amal's life story and the phenomenon of migration more broadly. Art experiences related to migration enable children to express themselves more freely, contributing to their well-being, and setting a good example for the realization of children's rights.

CONCLUSSION

Works of art enable people to express their feelings and thoughts, make life meaningful, and allow people to enter into other experiences. Such art projects, that take place through the international collaboration of artists, bring together visuality, aesthetics, and thought and spread to large masses through the power of the media. With its power to influence society, art has the opportunity to find solutions to problems using common sense by examining the problem of migration, a universal problem. On the one hand, art can give voice to migrants, and on the other hand, it can transform society. Art has missions far beyond the concern of creating beauty. The fact that children acquire art experiences from an early age improves their art literacy skills. More art organizations and workshops can be established for children from diverse backgrounds to develop awareness of each other's experiences, express their feelings, support their well-being, and harness the power of art to promote social transformation. Sharing children's different life stories through art activities can increase empathy. Support mechanisms can be established to support collaborations between public and private enterprises and NGOs to create art organizations for children. The realization of such art-oriented activity proposals can break down negative perceptions related to migrants, create interactions between people from different cultures, and promote empathy and social action. Coming together through art can enable the acceptance of multiculturalism in societies.

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APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions-1 (Before the Puppet Art Festival)

1. How will you say "Welcome" to Amal?
2. How will you get along with Amal?
3. Where could Amal be coming from?
4. Why did Amal go on this walk?
5. How did Amal feel when she started her long walk?
6. Do you think Amal has a family? If so, where might they live?
7. Do you think Amal has friends? If so, where could her friends be?
8. If you want to be friends with Amal, how would you tell her?
9. Which games would you like to play with Amal?
10. What food would you like to have with Amal?
11. Which dishes do you think Amal likes the most?
12. How did you feel while preparing the puppets that would be Amal's friends?
13. What did you consider when making the puppets that will be Amal's friends?
14. What name did you give your puppet?
15. How did you name your puppet?
16. How do you feel about meeting Amal?

Interview Questions-2 (After the Puppet Art Festival)

1. How did you feel the first time you saw Amal and welcomed her with the puppets you prepared?
2. Why do you think Amal was designed as a giant puppet?
3. Where do you think Amal will go after Izmir?
4. Where do you think Amal's house is?
5. Where do you think Amal might be walking to?
6. What do you think Amal might need on the walking trail?
7. What do you think Amal should do if she gets sick on the walking trail?
8. What do you think Amal should do if she gets scared on the walking trail?
9. What kind of dreams do you think Amal might be having?
10. What would you like to give Amal as a gift to keep with her during her walk?
11. Before Amal continues her walk, what would you like to say to her?
12. What would you change in the world for children like Amal?