

# **An Ethical Problem in Troubled Times: Ethical Decision Making by Local Managers Employing Immigrant Workforce in Gaziantep, Turkey**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to understand the ethical decision-making process of local managers of medium-sized companies in Gaziantep, a highly industrialized metropolis in Turkey, near the Syrian border, where there has been an influx of Syrian refugees. Intensive interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire allowing participants to state their views and tell their stories. The findings revealed that the managers of the companies had difficulty making ethical decisions about how to treat the Syrian immigrants, especially during the initial phase of the crisis, and they took wrong steps when they faced with both economic and social conflicts. Thus, they faced some serious ethical challenges.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**The aim of paper:** The aim of this paper is to reveal the understanding of managers on ethical decision making of hiring Syrian immigrant workers in Gaziantep province of Turkey. Syrian civil war was a big crisis that created huge refugee waves and related humanitarian problem in the region. As a neighboring country, Turkey faced millions of war refugees. In this troubled time, Turkish managers had new challenges in making ethical decisions. Gaziantep province is the most troubled province in the South East of Turkey.

**Importance of the research field:** Gaziantep is a highly industrialized metropolis in Syrian border with over 2.000.000 population. After the Syrian civil war, the city has accommodated most of the Syrian refugees. It is estimated that about 4 million refugees from Syria live in Turkey by 2017 and Gaziantep hosts approximately 400.000 refugees being the second biggest industrial city with Syrian refugees after Istanbul. Although an estimated 600.000 Syrians live in Istanbul, their percentage is only 4% of the population, whereas this number is almost 20% in Gaziantep.

**Research question:** How do Syrian immigrant refugees affect ethical decision-making process of managers and company owners in Gaziantep Province of Turkey? To what extent are they using Utilitarian or Kantian approaches in their decision-making process? And how did their decision-making process change after the arrival of Syrian immigrants?

**Research philosophy and data gathering approach:** We adopted a phenomenological research philosophy in this research. We have no intention of generating results applicable to all managers in Turkey. Instead, we tried to understand the feelings of business managers in Gaziantep toward the Syrian immigrant workforce. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather data for a qualitative analysis. A total of 24 top managers from industrial companies in Gaziantep, including the chairman of the Gaziantep Chamber of Industry, were interviewed for the field work of this research.

We conducted 24 in-depth interviews in the field study. Polkinghorne (1989) noted that in phenomenological research, in-depth interviews with 5 to 25 participants who have experienced the same phenomena are sufficient for a sample size. In-depth interviews provide an intimate and secure environment that is ideal for establishing rapport and facilitating the discussion of potentially sensitive topics such as attitudes about migrant workers. When sufficiently reassured, in-depth interviews allow respondents to talk about their experiences, whether they are positive or negative, uninhibited by the presence of others. Paired in-depth interviews were also used in this study. Interviewing two persons together can be a revealing process, giving insights into different priorities, attitudes and the role each person plays in, for example, decision-making. Such interviews are also necessary for some larger firms where employment and training are separate responsibilities held by two different persons. This method allows the research to cover both employment and training issues in a single interview.

All managers in this study have at least ten years' experience in their industry. A semi-structured interview questionnaire was used and conducted in-person during the research process. Participants were asked to comment on statements. While some statements endorse Kantian ethics based on duty, others endorse utilitarian ethics. We asked the managers to tell their stories based on each statement. Their answers are not simple endorsements, but short narratives that describes the facts and their feelings about them. As a result of this type of data/information gathering process, we used narrative analysis as a methodology. It should also be noted that people tell stories in different situations and in different ways. Stories are not created in a social vacuum but are shaped by a social context and interactions between the story-teller and audiences. Furthermore, in this research we focused on how stories are presented and why they are told. We believe that a story is merely a selective

reconstruction or version of events. This approach may help us to identify issues or events that are significant to the individual telling the story.

## **IMMIGRANT WORKFORCE IN TURKEY AND RELATED LITERATURE**

The immigrant workforce is an essential topic in the applied ethics literature. People escaping from war zones have no choices, but to immigrate to neighboring countries. The civil war in Syria created waves of immigrants to Turkey and Europe. Turkey welcomed about 4 million asylum seekers and provided the basic needs for survival. The civil war in Syria started in 2011 involving numerous actors in short time, lead to one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. As of the end of 2017, the crisis continues and is unlikely to come to an end in the short term. Even after the war is over, its impact will be felt deeply across the country. Unfortunately, everything has changed for the Syrians who lost their lives, homelands as well as their future, to the extent that it cannot be reverted back to 2011 (Erdogan, 2017). As a result of this tragedy, a reasonably young workforce appeared in the Turkish labor market.

Their arrival resulted in some ethical problems for local managers and company owners. A recent field study report conducted by Business and Human Rights Resource Center (2016) revealed that undeclared subcontracting is a persistent issue for textile brands that source from Turkey, which threatens their ability to identify potentially vulnerable workers. Some leading textile brands are building open and supportive relationships with first-tier suppliers that go beyond compliance so that they could understand where vulnerable workers in their supply chain are. The report argued that if accompanied by a meaningful dialogue with workers, this can be effective in tackling abuse. Low wages, child labor and sexual abuse are reported to be the reality for some Syrian refugees working without a permit in Turkey, posing a significant challenge for the garment brands that source from the country to supply European markets. This report summarizes the responses of 28 of Europe's largest clothes brands who were asked to explain how they are protecting Syrian refugees in their supply chain. It seems that a few of them are taking some decisive actions, but many are doing too little (Goethals and et al., 2017).

Turkey currently hosts a quite large number of the refugee population in the world amounting to 3.5 million. Refugees can find jobs, but almost all of them work in the informal job sector and face temporary employment for long hours, under difficult working conditions, with low wages often paid late, if they receive payment at all (Leghtas and Hollingsworth, 2017).

In early 2016, Turkey introduced a system for issuing work permits to Syrian refugees. Turkey's decision was a significant step forward, but nearly two years later, the reality is that these work permits remain

inaccessible for the vast majority of refugees in Turkey. Both Syrian business owners and employees need to have work permits. While there are now at least 6,000 Syrian-owned businesses in Turkey, for those who are not able or not interested in opening their own businesses, work permits are rare. Employers must apply for the work permit on behalf of the refugees they seek to employ. They have to pay a fee for it and prove that they cannot find a Turkish citizen to fulfill that job. As pockets of hostility towards Syrian refugees appear to be increasing, a need arises for strong incentives from the Turkish government and international community, including the private sector, to encourage employers to hire more refugees (Leghtas and Hollingsworth, 2017).

Although the work permit for Syrian refugees under temporary protection in Turkey was regulated in January 2016, it is not sufficient. Since the regulation only around 10,000 Syrians joined the workforce by getting their work permits. Syrians living in urban areas do not have many other options except working to sustain their lives. Though it is assumed that 800,000 to 1 million Syrians are part of the workforce, they work in unregistered status. Syrians do not really compete with local people for jobs because of their low wages, low-level jobs, and difficult working conditions. It has become a rather accepted fact that Syrians participate in the Turkish economy, even if informally. However, it is clear that such a large informal workforce is not sustainable. Interestingly enough, the real tensions within the Turkish society pertain not to the fact of Syrians workforce but rather to the new businesses they establish (Erdogan, 2017).

An AIDA (Asylum Information Database) report (2018) indicated that the number of work permits issued to temporary protection beneficiaries in Turkey has increased following the adoption of the Regulation on 15 January 2016. During 2017, Syrians represented 24.5% of work permits granted to foreigners in Turkey. By the end of 2017, between 6,000 and 8,000 businesses were owned by Syrian nationals. Civil society organizations are important employers for Syrians under temporary protection. Despite the legal framework introduced in 2016 to regulate the access of temporary protection beneficiaries to the labor market, substantial gaps persist to exist concerning access to employment in practice. Beneficiaries receive little or no information on the work permit system, as the number of community centers providing information about such opportunities remains limited. There are seven such centers in Istanbul, where a large population of Syrian refugees resides. Syrians in Turkey are affected by the widespread practice of undeclared employment under substandard working conditions and low wages. Undeclared employment flourishes, especially in the agricultural sector. In other provinces such as Muğla, unreported employment frequently occurs in the construction sector. The wages of 46% of Syrians and 20% of Turkish workers are below the minimum wage level In Istanbul, in the textile industry. According to the report, it seems that the minimum wage is not applicable in unregistered textile workshops. In terms of stratification of wages in the labor market, Turkish men

are at the top, followed by Turkish women, while Syrian men are close to the bottom and Syrian women are at the bottom. About 99.6% of Syrian men and all Syrian women working in this industry are informally employed without social security. Unacceptable working conditions in urban centers often lead to large-scale movements such as November 2017 strike of shoemakers in major cities including Istanbul, İzmir, Adana, Gaziantep, Konya, and Manisa, demanding lawful employment and better working conditions. Poor health and safety conditions are also a matter of concern. Women, in particular, face significant challenges in obtaining adequate access to the labor market. This situation is both due to obstacles such as lack of childcare, lack of information and training opportunities and traditional gender roles assigned to women as caretakers, especially in Southern Turkey regions.

Additionally, when women get jobs outside their homes in the textile industry, they often face discrimination and ill-treatment. This is especially true for unregistered workshops in Istanbul. The Turkish labor market also presents particular risks for children, given the widespread phenomenon of child labor in textile factories as well as in restaurants at big cities. That is why The Ministry of Employment and Social Security announced a six-year National Action Plan to Fight against Child Labor in 2017 and 2018 is declared as the year of the fight against child labor in Turkey.

A BHRRC (Business and Human Rights Research Center) report (2016) pointed out that the decision of the Turkish Government to allow Syrian refugees to apply for work permits is a welcome move. Giving refugees legal status would mean that they will emerge from the informal workforce to a formal one with new legal rights and protections. However, it would be unrealistic to think of work permits for Syrian refugees as a magic stick that will solve all problems. The legislation does not ensure a work permit for every Syrian refugee in Turkey in all circumstances. First, a refugee will have to wait 6 months after registering in Turkey under “temporary protection status” and the work permit will be restricted to the city in which they first registered – which will not necessarily be where the Syrian refugees wish to reside or seek to work - particularly if many register in border towns where job opportunities are limited. These restrictions mean it is highly likely that there will still be desperate Syrian refugees who are willing to work in exploitative conditions. Secondly, Syrians will only be able to make up to 10% of an employer’s staff (although there is some flexibility in certain cases). So, there will be a significant number of refugees still in the informal workforce. There may also be some additional problems about how the permits will function in real life. The regulation states that Syrians may work in cities where they are allowed to reside and are registered. However, in practice, the local authorities in certain cities such as Antalya, a well-known tourist destination, decided that Syrians cannot reside there. It is difficult to know how this will play out. It is also not clear whether the work permits will overcome the problem of Syrian child labor. Also, there will naturally be tensions with the

local population, particularly when the domestic unemployment rate remains high during the economic crisis in 2016. Brands must consider all these issues and fight against abuse, exploitation and wage depression. Collaboration both within the industry and with civil society and trade unions will be the key to ensure proper working conditions (BHRRC, 2016).

The immigrant workforce is generally seen as a remedy for lack of local labor by business organizations in developed economies. Business ethics is not the main issue in hiring them. Nguyen (2008) stated that U.S. corporations are facing dual crises with an aging workforce and a shrinking pool of younger talent. The current workforce consists primarily of baby boomers who are beginning to reach retirement age, and prospects for replacing the existing workers do not look promising. Some corporations are turning to immigrants to alleviate these problems. While there are benefits of having immigrants in the workforce, issues related to cultural and value differences also exist. Nguyen (2008) suggested that corporations must develop strategies to utilize and retain immigrants to remain competitive effectively. This suggestion is of course ethically questionable. Forden and MacKenzie (2010) investigated the role of employment agencies towards refugee workforce in the UK. They argued that these agencies could focus on more than just the first transition of migrants into the labor market; can formalize transitions within the labor market and link people to jobs that are more appropriate to their skills and experience, as a means of preventing the perpetuation of skill underutilization.

Lundborg and Skedinger (2016) reported that they found a favorable attitude toward refugees on the part of Swedish employers, although social desirability may have biased their responses. Employers believe that refugees have generally lived up to their expectations in terms of productivity and language skills. However, such satisfaction with the job performance of refugees seems not to have been achieved by employers who spent more resources on screening these workers than other staff. They stated that while they have found little indication of generally negative employer attitudes toward refugees, this should not be interpreted as evidence of the absence of discrimination against these workers. An important finding of their survey is perhaps the heterogeneity of employer responses across different types of firms. This heterogeneity manifests itself in a variety of ways: differences in attitudes towards the anticipated employment effect of a hypothesized wage cut, differences in attitudes regarding the job performance of refugees, and differences across industries. In line with much of the previous research, they find that most firms in the survey would be reluctant to lower wages for low-skilled workers. These firms tend to agree with at least one of the statements that wage reductions would be detrimental to worker cohesion, work effort or the quality of job applicants. Accordingly, most firms do not regard minimum wages as a critical obstacle to the hiring of

refugees. However, firms with many refugees on the payroll report that is cutting minimum wage rates would contribute considerably to increasing employment (Lundborg and Skedinger, 2016).

Icduygu and Diker (2017) pointed out that the mass influx of Syrian refugees in Turkey has accelerated the ongoing legislative initiatives on the issue of migration. Adoption of the work permit regulation for temporary protection status holders in early 2016 is indicative of a shift towards long-term planning concerning 3 million Syrians. Many remain informally employed under poor working conditions. They suggested that policymakers should focus on the regulations that prevent refugees' engagement in the informal market without harming them and encourage employers to hire Syrians by providing incentives. Further, they argued that designing skills building programs that recognize refugees' skills and match them with the needs of the market will both improve refugees' quality of life and contribute to the economy.

Korkmaz (2016) stated that a large informal sector, child labor, long working hours and problems over freedom of association are endemic within Turkey's garment industry. The movement of the Syrian refugees and their participation in the labor market made these problems much worse and much more complicated. In the garment-textile-leather sectors, in addition to one million formal workers, it is estimated that almost one million more workers are employed informally. They do not have the legal right to receive the minimum wage, and their employers do not pay taxes and other social security contributions.

As the Turkish garment industry relies on quickly providing low-cost and quality products, there has been a long-standing relationship between formal and informal economies. As formal workplaces are generally suppliers to international brands, they usually comply with the requirements of the Turkish law, international standards and the codes of conduct of global brands. However, there are no such binding rules in the informal sector and authorities are not willing to take concrete and effective steps to eliminate such forms of business. To produce low-cost, quality products rapidly, formal companies have been mobilizing large networks of other workplaces, many of them being informal, to meet deadlines. With the movement of Syrian refugees into Turkey, the character of informality began to be transformed. Before, informal and formal workers were Turkish citizens. Now, since the informal sector began to employ Syrian refugees, this situation has become more complicated and has caused an ethnic concentration in the industry (Korkmaz, 2016).

Similarly, Cihan (2016) in his book chapter titled as 'Turkey's Policy on Employment of Syrian Refugees and its Impact on the Turkish Labor Market' pointed out that Turkey put into force the regulation granting work permits to those under temporary protection five years after the outbreak of the Syrian crisis. Syrians are treated as a cheap labor force by small firms in Turkey. Syrians, especially with the

lack of Turkish language, will continue to be exploited. However, there is a lot of medium- and large-sized companies searching for qualified workers in Turkey and now; they can hire Syrian workers legally by the help of this regulation.

On the other hand, following the regulation, the labor supply in the formal labor market gradually increases; as a consequence, a decrease in wages and an increase in the unemployment rate for natives can be expected. However, these effects might be smaller than expected because the regulation brings a 10% quota for the Syrian workforce. We expect that informal employment of Syrians will continue, and especially low-skilled Turkish workers might lose their jobs or be forced to accept low wages. There will be another competition in the labor market for more qualified Turkish workers as well. However, high-skilled natives might face a weaker competition since highly skilled Syrian workforce has already left the country.

A European Parliament report (2016) indicates that for the majority of refugees, labor market integration is the most relevant durable solution. There is a widely shared consensus among experts that labor market participation is the most critical step to successful integration into host societies as presumably high numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees will stay in the EU for years. The EU Common Basic Principles of Immigrant Integration (2016) also state that "employment is a vital part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society. Over the medium to long term, a positive economic impact can only be achieved if the refugees are well integrated into the labor market. Of course, this requires high investments into human capital, especially in countries where the recent inflow of refugees is seen as an opportunity to address skill shortages in an aging society. Full integration of refugees may help to close demographic and labor supply gaps in the context of an aging society (European Parliament, 2016).

The integration barriers identified are:

- Language (including literacy), especially vocational (major priority)
- Lack of work experience in the host country
- Lack of host country references
- Lack of appropriate training or unrecognized educational and professional qualifications
- Lack of access to networks which would strengthen employment prospects and knowledge of recruitment methods (MPC Migration Policy Center, 2016)

Another European Parliament Report (2016a) is about Turkey, and it depicts that Turkey has taken significant steps on the regulations which aim to create an attractive economic environment and to facilitate the application process of work permissions for foreigners as part of integration policies.



Furthermore, social integration policies are rather weak and started to develop since the recent immigration flow from Syria. Even though there have been improvements in the integration policies, policymakers should focus on the implementation of more stable and long term policies and practices.

Companies interested in employing refugees may have numerous motivations, ranging from corporate social responsibility (CSR) to a desire to benefit from the new pool of cheap labor. While many companies are motivated in employing refugees, practical obstacles such as language skills, cultural differences and issues related to the experience of forced displacement often stand in the way of employing refugees. These barriers seem to frequently override the benefits of having an enlarged workforce, as perceived by companies. Although legal frameworks differ across countries, employers referred to similar obstacles during the consultations: uncertainty regarding rights and length of stay, the need for information on skills and matching, training and hiring costs and lack of business incentives, and problems with attitudes and expectations. Even when legal access to the labor market is granted, some factors may stand in the way of employing refugees and asylum seekers (OECD, 2016).

Ruhs and Chang (2004) examined the critical ethical questions in the design of labor immigration programs. Their theoretical framework inspired us to construct our field study using deontological and utilitarian dimensions. They propose a two-dimensional matrix of ethical space that isolates many different ethical structures on the basis of the degree of consequentialism they allow and the moral standing they accord to non-citizens.

They argue for the rejection of extreme consequentialism and propose criteria that should guide national policymakers in their choice and application of a frame within the ethical subspace of moderate consequentialism and moderate moral standing for non-citizens. To translate these “ethical guidelines” for the design of labor immigration programs into policy practice, they advocated new types of temporary foreign worker programs. In contrast to many existing and past guest worker policies, the programs that they propose would more actively promote the interests of migrant workers and sending countries by more clearly defining, and more effectively enforcing, certain core rights of migrant workers.

## **DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

**Deontology:** Deontology is also known as ethics of duties and was developed by German philosopher Immanuel Kant. According to Kantian ethics, morality consists of our will to act on duties. He argued that some actions are right or wrong regardless of their consequences (Stackhouse et al. 1999). Right or wrong cannot be changed by time and place. Kant believed that happiness and benefits could not be reference points for morality since happiness is a subjective reality of each person. For Kant, the

ethical imperative has to be based on something stable, unchangeable and everlasting that is a natural ethical law. It is not a hypothetical imperative, but a categorical imperative. One should act according to the maxim that you would wish all other rational people to follow as if it were a universal law (Goodin, 1994).

From a Kantian point of view, business ethics should follow universal ethical principles. Benefits and costs should not be reference points to determine what is good or bad in the workplace. Some values can be different in different cultures, but the business world needs universal ethical principles in business organizations (Stenberg, 1994).

**Utilitarianism:** Utilitarianism is also a part of a broader concept of consequentialism or teleology. According to the classical utilitarian approach, the aim of human life is to pursue happiness and pleasure. Utilitarianism advocates that actions initially are not good or bad (Shaw and Barry, 1992). Consequences of actions make them good or bad, and they can be measured by the amount of utility gained (Pettit, 1994). According to the utility approach, less evil can be tolerated to avoid a bigger evil. ). Hobbes, Mill, Hume, and Bentham were utilitarian philosophers (Bentham, J. 1998)

After classical or act utilitarianism, some philosophers developed rule utilitarianism in the light of criticism to act utilitarianism. Brandt (1996) developed rule utilitarianism which advocates that utilitarian standards should be applied to whole ethical rules. Utilitarianism encourages business companies to reconsider their business policies in terms of consequences they produced. It should be noted that some unethical business practices can easily be justified using utility as an ethical reference point. The utilitarian decision-making process is also questionable by virtue ethics and theory of justice (Smith, 1976).

Seven utilitarian and seven deontological statements were used in the research. Utilitarian statements explain a situation from a Utilitarian perspective, and Deontological statements explain the situation based on the ethics of duties. Although some statements are not about immigrants, these statements were used to understand the general ethical inclination of the 24 participants. For this reason, we added a statement about waste management. Gaziantep city has a high-tech sustainable waste management system. We used this statement as a control question so that we could gauge the ethical tendencies of participants. We wanted to know whether they took a utilitarian or deontological approach to ethical questions on other topics.

**Utilitarian Statements:**

- (U1) A business firm should only serve society through an increasing level of employment and GNP.

- (U2) Society should accept some social costs of business firms, including environmental pollution simply because business firms create jobs and employ people.
- (U3) Illegal employment of foreign immigrants will provide economic benefits to society. It will reduce labor costs; make business firms more profitable and productive. As a result of this, national income will increase.
- (U4) Illegal employment of foreign immigrants will help to keep them away from hunger, poverty, and crime.
- (U5) Illegal employment of refugees serves society through preventing crime.
- (U6) The existence of refugee workforce helps different industries in Turkey to find employees for unwanted jobs which do not attract the attention of local people.
- (U7) Regarding waste management, it is more than enough for business organizations to follow up local regulations.

**Deontological Statements:**

- (D1) Waste management needs precautions beyond local regulations.
- (D2) When we make a decision in the organization, the first question we ask should be whether that decision is right or wrong, rather than it is beneficial or harmful
- (D3) It is wrong to hire immigrants illegally, no matter how useful they are.
- (D4) Obeying rules and regulations are much more important than providing benefits to organizations or society.
- (D5) Integrating immigrants to society and providing them job opportunities is a duty of the government rather than the duty of business firms.
- (D6) It is not fair to give responsibility to society to pay the costs of pollution created by business companies.
- (D7) It is simply against human rights to employ an immigrant worker illegally for dirty or inconvenient jobs that generally do not attract local people.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**Table 1 shows the endorsements of the statements.**

<b>STATEMENTS</b>	<b>ENDORSEMENTS</b> <b>n=24</b>
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(U1) A business firm should only serve society through an increasing level of employment and GNP.	20/ 24
(U2) Society should accept some social costs of business firms including environmental pollution simply because business firms create jobs and employ people.	5/24
(U3) Illegal employment of foreign immigrants will provide economic benefits to society. It will reduce labor costs, make business firms more profitable and productive. As a result of this, national income will increase.	3/24
(U4) Illegal employment of foreign immigrants will help to keep them away from hunger, poverty, and crime.	6/24
(U5) Illegal employment of refugees serves society through preventing crime.	3/24
(U6) The existence of refugee workforce helps different industries in Turkey to find employees for unwanted jobs which do not attract the attention of local people.	4/24
(U7) Regarding waste management, it is more than enough for business organizations to follow up local regulations.	5/24
(D1) Waste management needs precautions beyond local regulations.	20/24
(D2) When we make a decision in the organization, the first question we ask should be whether this decision is right or wrong, rather than it is beneficial or harmful	22/24
(D3) It is wrong to hire immigrants illegally, no matter how useful they are.	19/24
(D4) Obeying rules and regulations are much more important than providing benefits to organizations or society.	20/24

(D5) Integrating immigrants to society and providing them job opportunities is a duty of the government rather than the duty of business firms.	19/24
(D6) It is not fair to give responsibility to society to pay the costs of pollution created by business companies.	24/24
(D7) It is simply against human rights to employ an immigrant worker illegally for dirty or inconvenient jobs that generally do not attract local people.	20/17

### DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

We choose some critical phrases from the stories of participants. When we directed questions to them, we also encouraged them to tell their stories informally. This approach helped them to express their feelings whole-heartily. Some critical quotations from the participants showed us how they had changed their ethical reasoning over time.

#### (U1) A business firm should only serve society through an increasing level of employment and GNP:

This statement does not recognize any social or ethical responsibility of business, it only covers economic responsibilities. If a firm provides useful economic benefits to society, there should be no other ethical expectation. From a deontic point of view, this understanding limits the duties of business organizations to economic and legal responsibilities, and the ethical reasoning behind this statement is the utility provided by the companies. We observed that 20 over 24 participants endorsed this statement. They mentioned a high unemployment rate and low-income level in Turkey and stated that the most important responsibility of business companies should be to create new jobs for educated unemployed youth in Turkey. Only 4 participants acknowledged that business firms should serve society not only by producing economic outcomes but also by fulfilling some social responsibilities. For instance, Participant 23 stressed that

*“Serving society by increasing level of employment is fine, but we should ask first how?”*

(U2) Society should accept some social costs of business firms including environmental pollution simply because business firms create jobs and employ people: We observed few endorsements, i.e., only 5

participants, for this statement. They said that pollution is unavoidable in most industrial activities and a reasonable amount of pollution may be tolerated for the sake of employment.

(U3) Illegal employment of foreign immigrants will provide economic benefits to society. It will reduce labor costs, make business firms more profitable and productive. As a result of this, national income will increase. While nearly half of the participants were in favor of this statement to some extent, only 3 of them showed strong support. These reactions reveal that Turkish managers in Gaziantep acknowledge that using cheap immigrant labor will increase the income level of the province. However, they also stated that the social costs of such economic benefits would also be higher. One of the participants reacted to the statement this way:

*(Participant 19, U3): "If we are speaking about economic benefits to society by illegal activities I can give you other examples such as growing cannabis or using child labor, they are all very economically beneficial."*

(U4) Illegal employment of foreign immigrants will help to keep them away from hunger, poverty, and crime. Only 6 participants endorsed this statement. Other participants highlighted that illegal employment is not the only solution to prevent hunger, poverty, and crime. They also added that illegal employment might produce some temporary relief for immigrants, but it may at the same time result in more serious problems after that. One of the participants highlighted the criminal side of illegal employment.

*"Participant 21 (U4): If you say illegal employment of foreign immigrants will help to keep them away from hunger, poverty, and crime, I can say prostitution and slavery can also provide such benefits too."*

(U5) Illegal employment of immigrants serves society through preventing crime. This statement is a continuation of (U4) putting more stress on crime rates. Only a few participants stated that it might be a short-term solution. However, they also underlined that illegal employment is also a crime by itself. For instance, a participant said:

*"Participant 16 (U5): I don't believe that illegal employment can be a remedy. It is also a crime and how can you stop crimes through committing another crime."*

(U6) The existence of refugee workforce helps different industries in Turkey to find employees for unwanted jobs which do not attract the attention of local people: There is also minimal support for this statement among participants. Although they accept that many Syrian immigrants work in

undesirable jobs in Gaziantep, they claimed that these works were executed by Kurdish citizens before the arrival of Syrian refugees.

(U7) Regarding waste management, it is more than enough for business organizations to obey local regulations. At first glance, this statement looks as if it reflects a deontological point, but it limits the duties of a business organization into a legal framework. In fact, from a deontological point of view, the duty of a business organization must be "not to pollute." This statement allows business firms to pollute the natural environment with their waste if local regulations are weak. Most of the participants did not endorse this statement. They stated that local regulations could be very flexible or avoidable in some cases. Waste management is taken very seriously by Gaziantep Municipality, and the city has a high-tech sustainable waste management system. We also observed that all participants were environmental -conscious people and this influenced their reactions to this statement. One of the participants complained about water pollution on the beaches of Turkey:

*"Participant 9 (U7): Last summer, I took my family to a lovely Mediterranean coastal town for a holiday. The resort hotel we were staying in was very luxurious. But we were told by locals that we should not spend much time in the sea because it is polluted by hotels and boats. So we used the pool instead of the beach. I got furious and disappointed. If local regulations are not satisfactory or law enforcement is weak, do you think you are free to pollute seaside and poison innocent people?"*

(D1) Waste management needs precautions beyond local regulations. This statement reflects a strong positive attitude toward duty based on Kantian ethics since it does not limit the environmental duties of a business organization with local regulations. In some cases, local regulations can be unsatisfactory to provide real protection of the environment. From this point of view, a business firm should focus on the real protection of the environment. Most of the participants (20 of them) showed strong endorsement for this statement.

(D2) When we make a decision in the organization, the first question we ask should be whether this decision is right or wrong, rather than it is beneficial or harmful. Utilitarian approaches give importance to the results of the decisions, while duty ethic focuses on ultimate moral duties. Except 2 of them, all participants strongly agree with this statement. A participant explained how they were confused at the beginning of the crisis:

*"Participant 3-(D2): At the beginning of the crisis, we were thinking about how we could help the refugees. We did not ask questions such as "am I doing the right thing?"*

(D3) It is wrong to hire immigrants illegally, no matter how useful they are: Most of the participants (19 of them) agree that illegal employment is wrong. Their common point is that unlawful employment generally involves the exploitation of workers and child labor. However, some of them stated that it could be a temporary solution for refugees when they urgently need a job for survival. We understood from in-depth interviews that interviewees were more tolerant toward illegal employment at the beginning of the refugee crisis; however, they concluded that it is not a real solution for immigrant employment. This is perhaps the most important finding of the study showing their shift from utilitarian reasoning to a more deontological one. One of the participants explains his feelings about the situation:

*“Participant 5 (D3): I really believe that it is wrong to hire immigrants illegally in any case or unregistered employment whatever the name is. We all know that some small business firms employ unregistered workers and this is their way of producing cheap products with cheap labor. We started our business as a legal organization and obeyed all the rules of the government. At the beginning of the Syrian immigration, we did not have a legal framework to hire them. Some of them insisted on working in our factory as a gardener, cleaning lady or unqualified worker and at that time we thought we are helping them by providing them a temporary low wage simple job. But then we realized that we created trouble with our hands. Since there was no official contract among us, some of them left the job without telling us anything. Some of them left the job when they have better offers and complained to local authorities that we are employing them illegally. Some of them insisted on bringing their relatives to work, and when we said we had no space for them, we confronted with some troubles. After 2015, we took a decision that we will never hire a Syrian immigrant unless he or she had a legal work permit. Now, we have Syrian workers here, thanks to the employment regulation implemented after 2016. This regulation gives us an opportunity in hiring Syrians that get a work permit. We can choose qualified workers among them.”*

(D4) Obeying rules and regulations are much more critical than providing benefits to organizations or society. This statement focuses on the importance of our legal duties. Most of the participants (20 of them) supported this statement. We understand from their comments that they are aware of the fact that sometimes legal duties are not beneficial to the company and even can be financially harmful. One of the participants stressed the difficulty of determining benefits:



*“Participant 1 (D4): You can know clearly what the rule is, but how can you know correctly what will be the benefit?”*

(D5) Integrating immigrants to society and providing them job opportunities is a duty of the government rather than the duty of business firms. This statement clarifies the duties of the government and companies. Most of the participants (19 of them) endorsed this statement. It is an essential reflection of duty ethic or deontology. Most of the participants do not deny the responsibility of businesses to create job opportunities. However, they believed that creating jobs for immigrants is a different subject and needs to be addressed by the government through proper regulations and public expenditure. Explanation of one of the participants` about the issue is a good example.

*“Participant 8 (D5): Everyone should know his duties. I know my duties, and I work hard to do them. So, I have the right to expect from the authorities to execute their own duties.”*

(D6) ) It is not fair to give responsibility to society to pay the costs of pollution created by business companies. All participants strongly endorsed this statement. They all pointed out that all companies should be environment-friendly and should protect the environment beyond legal regulations and obligations. Thus, there is a strong consensus among participants about the responsibility of companies in environmental matters.

(D7) It is simply against human rights to employ an immigrant worker illegally for dirty or inconvenient jobs that generally do not attract local people. Most of the participants (20 of them) strongly endorsed this statement. They reported that some people might work in some unwanted jobs and it is not an ethical problem as long as they are well paid. However, offering unwanted jobs to refugee workers with low wages is treated by many participants as an abuse of human rights. A few participants, on the other hand, stated that if refugees voluntarily accept the offer, this can be treated ethically within the market mechanism. One of the participants finds the situation against humanitarian and Islamic values:

*“Participant 12 (D7): You can` t make an excuse if you offer a dirty job to an immigrant with an illegally low wage. This is against Islamic values that we believe and also to all humanitarian values. This is exploitation. Of course, you can offer any dirty job to anybody if you are ready to pay fair compensation to the workers.”*

## **CONCLUSION**

The estimated 4 million Syrian refugees are a critical issue in Turkish society. Both the government and businesses must take actions to integrate these people into the labor market so that they can have a better and sustainable life in Turkey. In this respect, the views and attitudes of employers play a vital role in realizing this goal. That is why we designed a questionnaire and conducted interviews with company managers in Gaziantep, the most populated province of Turkey with Syrian refugees, to observe their approaches.

The results revealed that most of the participants to some extent were in favor of deontological decision-making process rather than a utilitarian method. Our findings are consistent with the previous studies. For instance, Mengüç (1998) found that when making ethical decisions, Turkish business people use a deontological ethical approach more than they use teleological evaluations. Similarly, the participants in our case mostly endorsed deontological statements. We found that they were also aware of their duties and what the state should do. Some of the interviewees admitted that they used illegal cheap immigrant labor when immigrants were desperately searching for jobs during the first wave of the refugee crisis. They reported that many Syrians are still working under inappropriate conditions in small companies. For example, one of the participants interestingly accepted that illegal employment of Syrian workforce with a low wages. He believed that it was inevitable in the beginning of the crisis but added that there must be a local regulation for Gaziantep and other Syrian border provinces regarding low-wage work permits. Of course, while producing that statement, he was not aware of the fact that he was using "categorical imperative principle" of Kant. From a utilitarian point of view, legalizing work permits with low-wage for refugee workforce looks like a practical solution. However, such legal wage discrimination serves only to foster racism and hostility of local workers against immigrants.

To sum up, many business managers admitted that they had difficulties in decision making at the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis. They also questioned the morality of their decisions at the time. Most of them said economic and social conflicts misled them when they made some ethical decisions. During the height of the refugee crisis, they had more ethical problems to manage than in normal conditions. All these challenges and troubles led the managers to change the way that they thought about ethical problems.

We also observed that managers of large businesses were more inclined to use deontological reasoning than managers of small companies. They were aware of the long-term harmful effects of opportunist decisions. Although our findings cannot be applied on the national scale, they show us how a group of managers changed the way that they thought about ethics during a crisis. At the beginning of the field research, we were expecting more utilitarian endorsements from the participants. However, we realized that they tended to give priority to economic stability and

predictability in their region. They missed the old days when they mainly worked with other Syrian companies.

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