

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The impacts of refugees and immigrants on Turkish housing sales and rental prices

Levent Sümer¹

Bogazici University, CEM Master Program, Part-Time Faculty, Istanbul, Türkiye

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Abstract

Housing affordability is a rising problem all around the world. Türkiye is also tackling this issue seriously. Türkiye is ranked at the top of the list among the most refugee-hosted countries, the United Nations Refugee Agency reports. After the Civil War started in Syria in 2011, millions of Syrians migrated to different countries. Türkiye, which is struggling with many socioeconomic problems, hosts 4.6 million officially confirmed refugees, and 3.6 million of them are Syrians. Immigration of many Russian and Ukrainian citizens after the Russia-Ukraine war started in the first quarter of 2022, and their choice of living in Türkiye by way of purchasing housing units also had an impact on the Turkish housing sector in terms of supply-demand balance and sales and rental prices of housing units. By conducting a questionnaire, this study investigates the Turkish people's perception of the impacts of refugees and immigrants on Turkish housing sales and rental prices. The effects on unemployment rates, inflation rates and level of tax revenues were also analyzed as other macroeconomic factors. The results of responses of 157 respondents were analyzed by using R programming. The analysis revealed that 89% of the participants had the perception that the tax revenues had decreased due to unregistered work. This was followed by an increase in housing rental prices and unemployment rates. The analysis showed that age, gender, location, or industry had no statistically significant impact on the results. As one of the pioneer studies in this area, this research suggests some policies to overcome refugee-related problems, especially in the housing sector.

1. Introduction

“When I first arrived in Türkiye, I had two main concerns: shelter and food. Living in a safe place and having access to staple foods such as yogurt, eggs, and bread is what matters most to me,” said Dalia, a mother of three, when she and her husband left their Syrian hometown of Idlib in 2011 [1].

Shelter and food are humankind's two most important needs to survive, but even these two main needs are sometimes impossible for millions of

people to meet. People have to leave their hometowns for several reasons, including wars, security problems, internal conflicts, and even for adequate food, education, health, and protection. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), as of 2023, there are 110 million forcible displaced people worldwide. 40% of 110 million people, corresponding to 44 million, are children under 18. Ironically, 75 % of the refugees are hosted by low- and middle-income countries,

Correspondence Levent Sümer

 Levent.sumer@bogazici.edu.tr

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and 20% of total refugees are living in the least developed countries. Türkiye, with 4.6 million official refugees, is listed as the most refugee-hosting country in the world [2]. The political position of the Turkish government about refugees, especially for the millions of Syrians who escaped from the civil war that started in 2011, is built on a humanitarian perspective. Although this novel approach is high above the worldwide norms, the socioeconomic impacts of millions have created huge problems, and the Turkish government wanted to share the responsibility with the European countries based on the EU-Türkiye deal signed in 2016 [3]. Unfortunately, this deal did not bring a permanent solution to the problems. In contrast, the burden increased in the subsequent years.

The civil war in Syria lasted more than a decade. Millions of Syrians did not return to their homeland, thanks to the United States (US) politics in the region, which did not allow a “Safe Zone in the north of Syria”. Due to its geopolitical position, Türkiye has also been a transit country with thousands of illegal immigrants from different countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, and many others. Another war between Russia and Ukraine started at the beginning of 2022, and many Russian and Ukrainian citizens migrated to Türkiye and settled down by way of purchasing housing units.

While the number of refugees and immigrants increased sharply in the country, the potential consequences of this severe fact, including its impact on homeland security and economic and social life, started a debate within the country. Some people supported the government policies that made Türkiye a second homeland for millions of refugees and immigrants. In contrast, others pointed out the long-term risks and demographic impacts of immigration policies. Similar to many countries, Türkiye is struggling with high inflation rates due to low-interest rate policies. Due to high inflation, devaluation of Turkish Lira against foreign currencies and increased labor prices due to labor shortages who are mostly employed in reconstruction of the cities affected in February

2023 earthquake, construction costs have risen sharply, and housing sales and rental prices skyrocketed in the last few years. Affording a house became almost impossible for even mid-level income groups. There is a debate about the reasons behind the rise in housing prices, and rents are the increased demand due to refugees and immigrants. Thus, this study aimed to measure the perception of Turkish people living in Türkiye about the impact of the refugees in terms of increase in unemployment rates, increase in inflation rates, increase in housing sales and rental prices, and decrease in tax revenues.

2. Past Literature

The socioeconomic impact of refugees and immigrants has always been an exciting topic for many scholars. Many studies evaluate the link between refugees and the labor market, economic growth, and unemployment rates from economic impact perspectives [4, 5]. Under the EU Commission and OECD study, Mikaba [6] reports that the employment rate of refugees in the EU is 56%, just 3% higher than family migrants and 9% percentage points lower than native-born people. On the other hand, according to a study by George Mason University, decreases in immigration worsen worker shortages, and admitting more immigrants may help to reduce inflation [7].

The effect of the refugees on the housing market is another vital area of research, especially in the periods that we are experiencing a global housing sales and rental prices boom [8-14]. Türkiye has been hosting millions of Syrians since the civil war started in Syria in 2011. The study by Balkan et al. [15] exhibited that rents of better-quality housing units increased due to the refugee inflows, and they also concluded that the demand for neighborhoods where fewer refugees live increased because of the potential refugee-native conflicts in other districts. The study of Akgündüz et al. [16] focused on the early impact of Syrian refugees on the Turkish economy, which resulted in increased housing and a moderate rise in food prices. Kaya and Aydin [4] also concluded that while the increase in Syrian refugees significantly affects the unemployment

rate, the inflation and housing demand remain stable.

On the other hand, Saiz [17]'s research on the rental price increase in Miami in 1980 showed a 9% increase after the Mariel Boatlift, where around 150,000 Cubans and Haitians arrived in Florida. Opposite to Balkan et al.'s [15] study, the rent increase was observed in low-income units in this case.

Another ongoing war, the war between Russia and Ukraine, started a migration flow from Ukraine to European countries. Trojanek and Gluszek [10] analyzed the impact of this war on rental and housing prices in two major cities of Poland, Warsaw and Krakow. The results of their study exhibited an astonishing change in rents due to a housing demand shock, but a similar increase in housing prices was not observed.

The study of Sanchis-Guarner [13], which focused on the immigrant inflow in Spain, exhibited a 3.3% rise in housing prices for a 1% increase in the immigration rate. The research of Dikici [21] also indicated a 1.19% increase in rents for a 1% rise in the number of immigrants in Türkiye. The study also concluded that low-quality units were affected less than high-quality housing units.

On the other hand, Lastrapes and Lebesmuehlbacher [9] estimated the effect of asylum seekers on house prices in England and Wales. They concluded that there was a negative impact on housing prices, especially for lower-quality and lower-priced units, due to the outward movements of the local population.

3. Refugee Crisis: Causes and Consequences

Every day, people are forced to leave their homes to find a safer place to live or have a better quality of life. Leaving everything behind in one's life is not easy, as they risk everything, even their lives, to escape war, conflict, disaster, poverty, or hunger. The only thing they take with them is their clothes, but they leave all their belongings and memories behind.

Migration is not a new phenomenon but an issue that needs to be managed seriously and

systematically. Since 2010, the number of forcibly displaced people has risen from 41 million to 110 million, almost tripled within 13 years [2]. This number could be the 15th largest populated country in the world. According to Oxfam Report [18], 80% of people leave their countries due to severe food insecurity and undernourishment. Unfortunately, one in five displaced women has experienced gender-based violence.

The problems do not end for them, even when the refugees arrive in host countries, as they may face discrimination caused by lack of acceptance. Finding affordable housing, getting a job, language and communication problems, access to health and education services, psychological issues, financial difficulties, separation from family members, and changes in roles, status, and responsibility of family members are the other main problems that the refugees face in the host countries.

On the other hand, the local population of host countries is also positively or negatively affected by refugee inflows. Verme and Schuettler [19] list the impacts of refugees on host countries under population and expenditure shocks. While an increase in GDP, an increase in local income due to the increased population, which may cause a rise in consumption and a decrease in labor costs, are considered as the short- and mid-term positive outcomes, the increase in prices, local displacements, increase in unemployment and decline in wages for locals are listed as negative consequences.

3.1. Türkiye case

3.1.1. Number of refugees

The Syrian crisis is considered the largest displacement crisis in the world. Within 13 years, over 12 million Syrians were forcibly displaced in the region. The civil war in Syria started a big migration wave from Syria to its border countries and then to Europe.

The February 2023 earthquakes increased the impact of the crisis as the houses of millions of people were destroyed. According to the UN Refugee Agency 2023 statistics [2], among 6.5 million Syrian refugees, 3.6 million are hosted by

Türkiye. Fig. 1 shows the number of Syrian refugees in Türkiye since the civil war started in Syria in 2011.

İstanbul is the most refugee-hosted city, where 17% of the total Syrian refugees are living. This is followed by Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, and Hatay (the border cities) with 14%, 9%, and 8%, respectively. The average age of the Syrians living in Türkiye is

22.6. The rate of Syrian refugees living in Türkiye is 3.56% of the country's total population. Among 3.6 million refugees, 238,055 Syrians have become Turkish citizens since 2011 [20].

Only 60,165 Syrians are currently living in “temporary accommodation centers” provided by the government. The remaining more than 3 million people live in cities, as shown in Fig. 2.

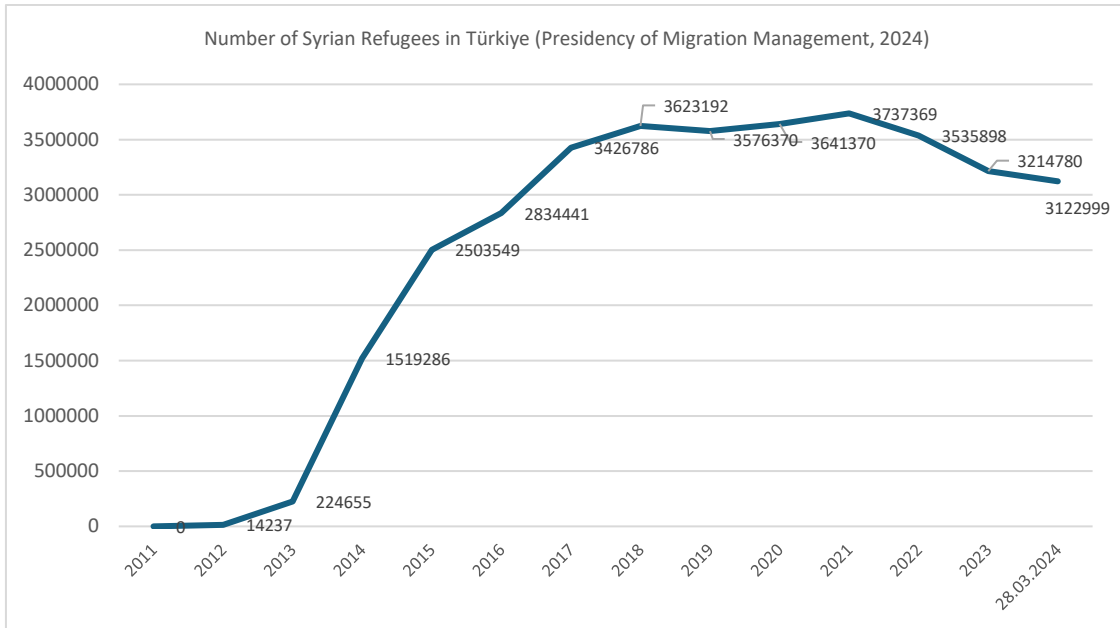


Fig. 1. Number of Syrian refugees in Türkiye [20]

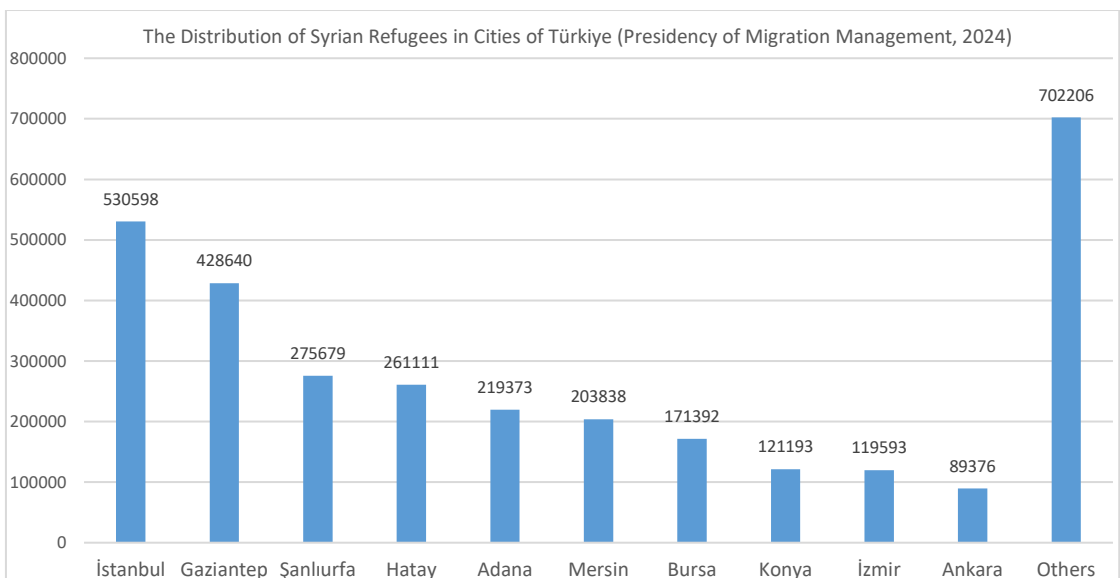


Fig. 2. The distribution of Syrian refugees in cities of Türkiye [21]

From 2016 to 2024, there were only 65.732 Syrians who were replaced in the US, Europe, or other countries. It is also important to note that around 1.1 million foreigners have a residency permit in Türkiye [21].

3.1.2. Inflation, interest, and unemployment rates

Türkiye has been struggling with high inflation, thanks to the interest policy of the Central Bank of Türkiye Republic (CBRT) applied during and after the COVID-19 period. Like many central banks worldwide, Türkiye prioritized economic activities and applied monetary expansion policies. By keeping the interest rates as low as possible, the aim was to stimulate growth and decrease unemployment rates. Until September 2021, the interest rates and the inflation rates were very close to each other, but since then until the end of May 2023, despite the rapid rise in inflation rates, the CBRT kept decreasing the interest rates, unlike major central banks such as Federal Reserve (FED) or European Central Bank (ECB). This policy resulted in a devaluation of the Turkish Lira (TL) against many currencies, and the inflation rates

increased rapidly. Interest and inflation rates in Türkiye are shown in Fig. 3.

Unemployment rates were an important impact of the pandemic due to the sudden stance the global economy experienced in 2020. The unemployment rate in the US hit 14.9% in April 2020, and the rate in Türkiye hit 13.5% on the same date [23]. (The low-interest rate policy of Türkiye helped decrease the unemployment rate to as low as 8.6%, as shown in Fig. 4. On the other hand, it is estimated that around 1 million Syrians are actively working in Türkiye, but only around 91,500 are legal. That is creating a significant loss in tax revenue [24].

3.1.3. Housing prices

The number of refugees in Türkiye rapidly started after 2013, as shown in Fig. 1. On the other hand, while the unit sales price of a housing unit was 1,090 TL/m² in July 2011, it took five years to double that price. Despite the gradual rise in housing prices, the actual start date of the sharp increase in housing prices in Türkiye started in 2021, parallel to the decrease in interest rates and increase in inflation. Fig. 5 shows the housing prices in Türkiye, İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir.

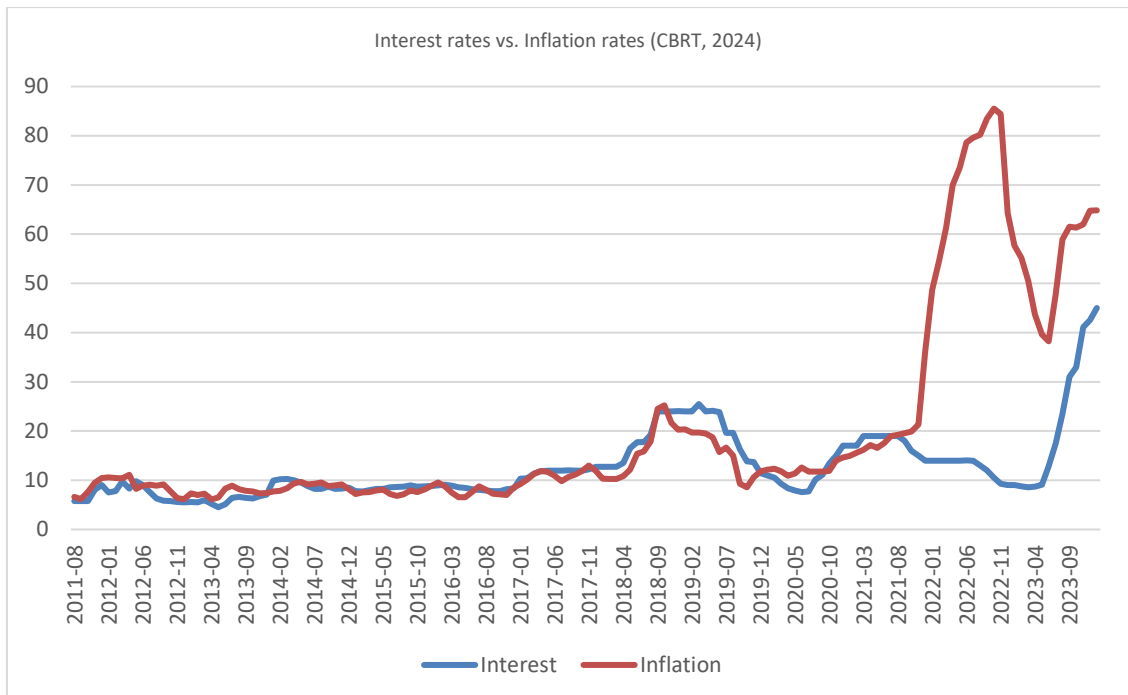


Fig. 3. Interest rates vs. inflation rates in Türkiye [22]

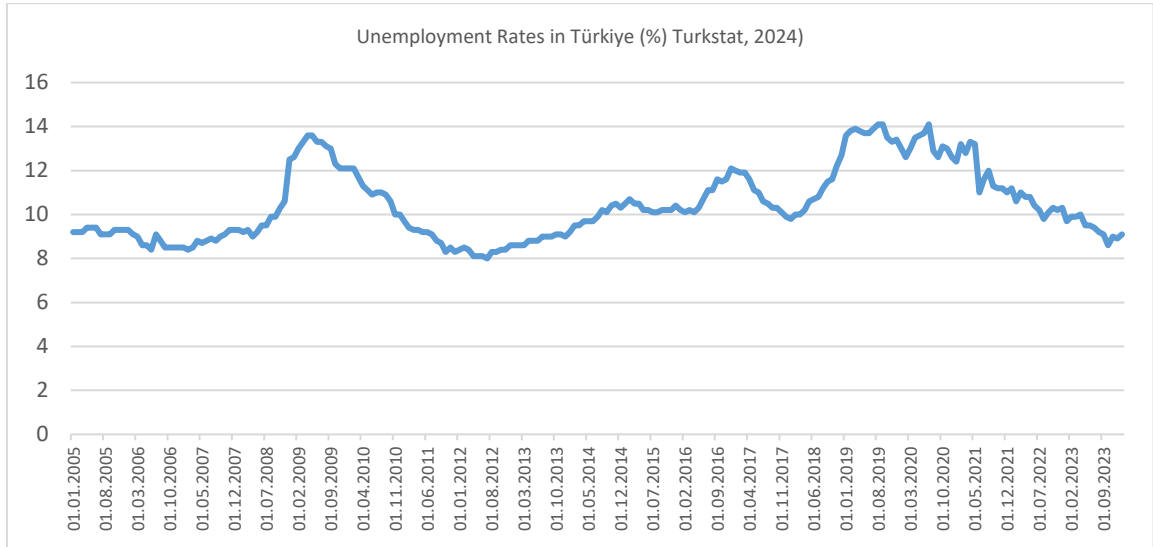


Fig. 4. Unemployment rates in Türkiye (%) [23]

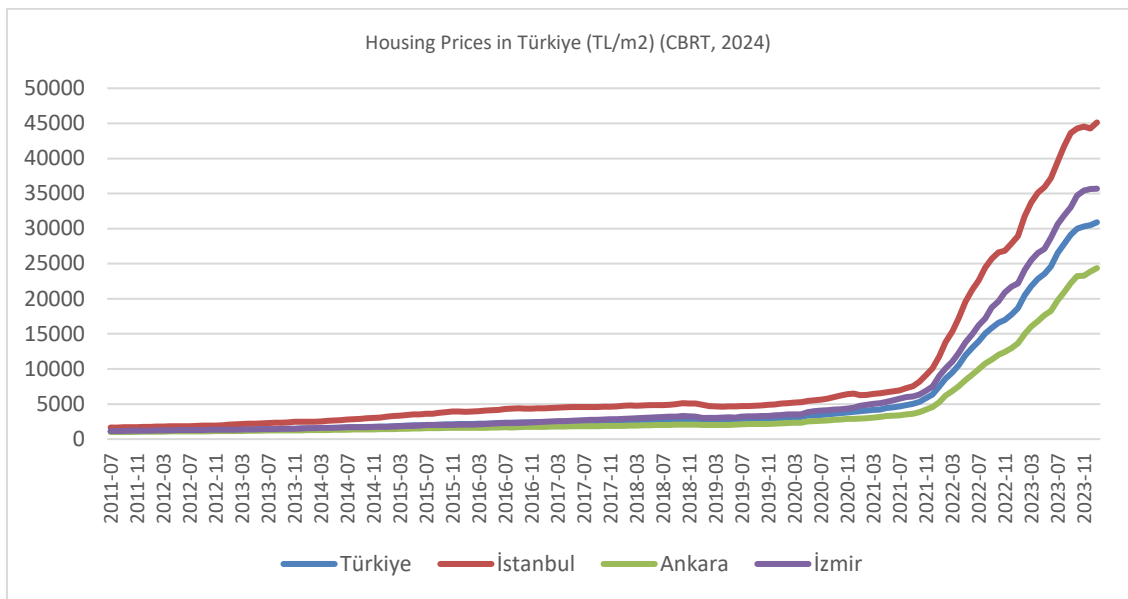


Fig. 5. Housing unit prices (TL/m²) in Türkiye [25]

In addition to the sales prices, the unit rental prices increased sharply within the last five years. While the average unit rental price in Türkiye was 16 TL/m² in January 2019, it went up to 149 TL/m² in January 2024 [26]. 2021 was also the same year that the construction cost index started skyrocketing, as shown in Fig. 6. Construction costs have risen more than five times within the last four years since 2021.

3.1.4. Housing sales to foreigners

In 2013, a new law was enacted that enabled foreigners to purchase a housing unit in Türkiye. Since then, 357,817 foreigners purchased houses within the country. According to the law, foreigners who buy a unit with a sales price of USD 400,000 can become Turkish citizens. Those who purchase a house valued at USD 200,000 obtain a residency permit.

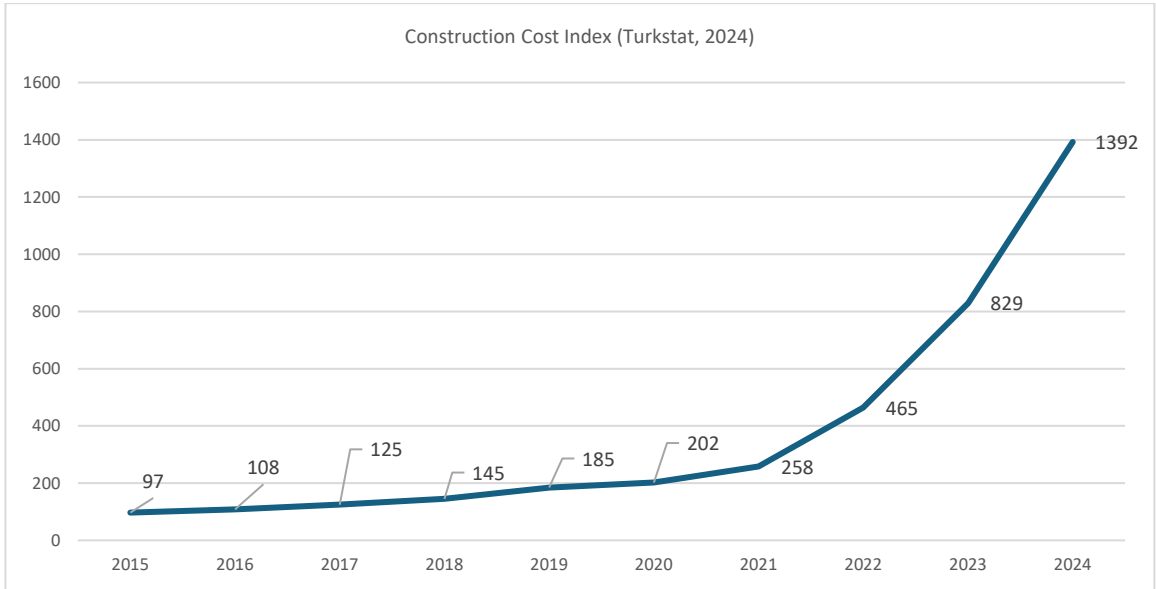


Fig. 6. Construction cost index [27]

As Fig. 7 exhibited, 2022 was the year most foreigners purchased a home in Türkiye, totaling 68,210 sales [28].

Iraq, Russia, and Iran are the top three countries in which their citizens purchased the most units in Türkiye, as shown in Fig. 8. On the other hand, Russians and Ukrainians are the two nations that started purchasing housing units in Türkiye in 2015.

While the Russians have purchased 46,060 units within nine years, Ukraine was listed among the top 10 countries that bought houses in Türkiye. In 2022, their interests peaked after the war started between Russia and Ukraine. The citizens of both countries immigrated to Türkiye and purchased 16,312 and 2,574 units, respectively.

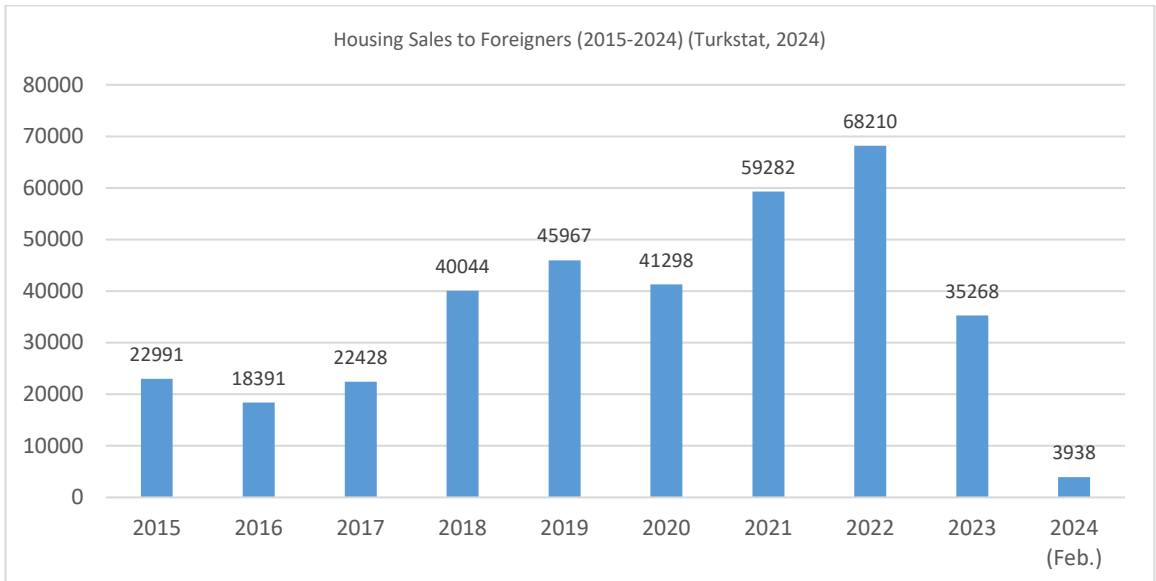


Fig. 7. Housing sales to foreigners [28]

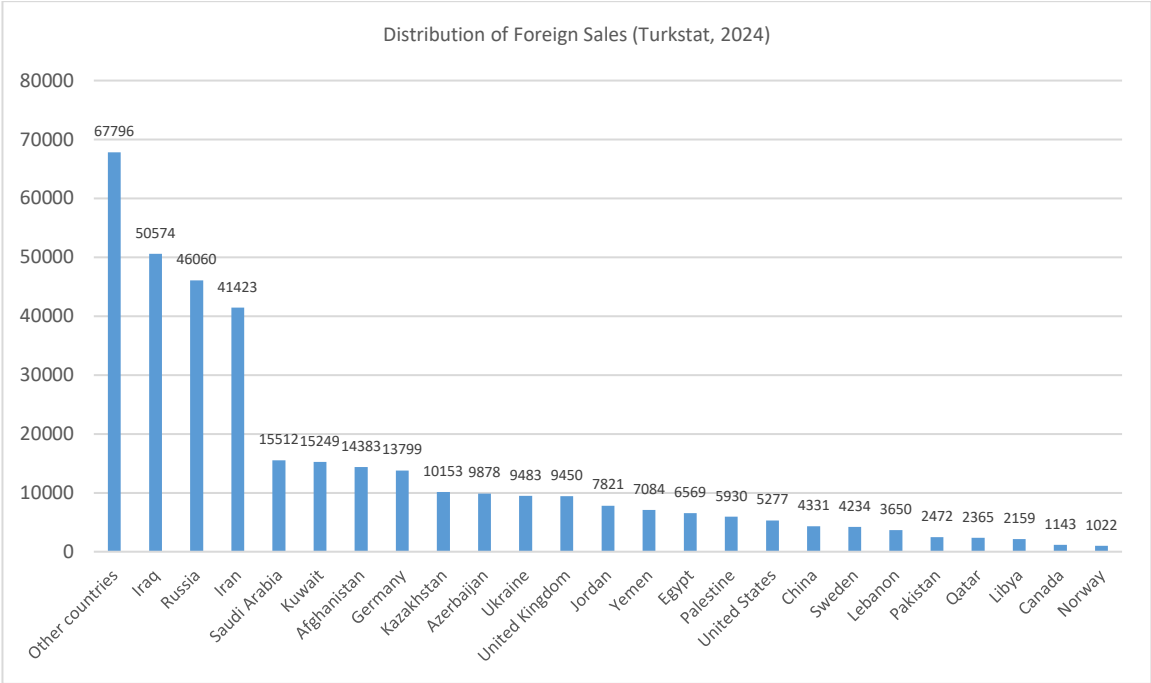


Fig. 8. Distribution of foreign sales [29]

The interest continued even in 2023, and despite a dramatic decrease in the total sales to foreigners compared to the previous year, the rate of sales to Ukrainian and Russian citizens to total sales was 35%, meaning every one of three sales was made to either Ukrainians or Russians. Fig. 9 shows the yearly sales to Russian and Ukrainian citizens and how the number of sales tripled for Russians and

doubled for Ukrainians in 2022, compared to 2021 sales.

Another important figure about housing sales to foreigners is the cities that the foreigners prefer to live in. According to Turkstat 2024 data [29], Istanbul and Antalya are the cities where foreigners purchased units, 38% and 26%, respectively.

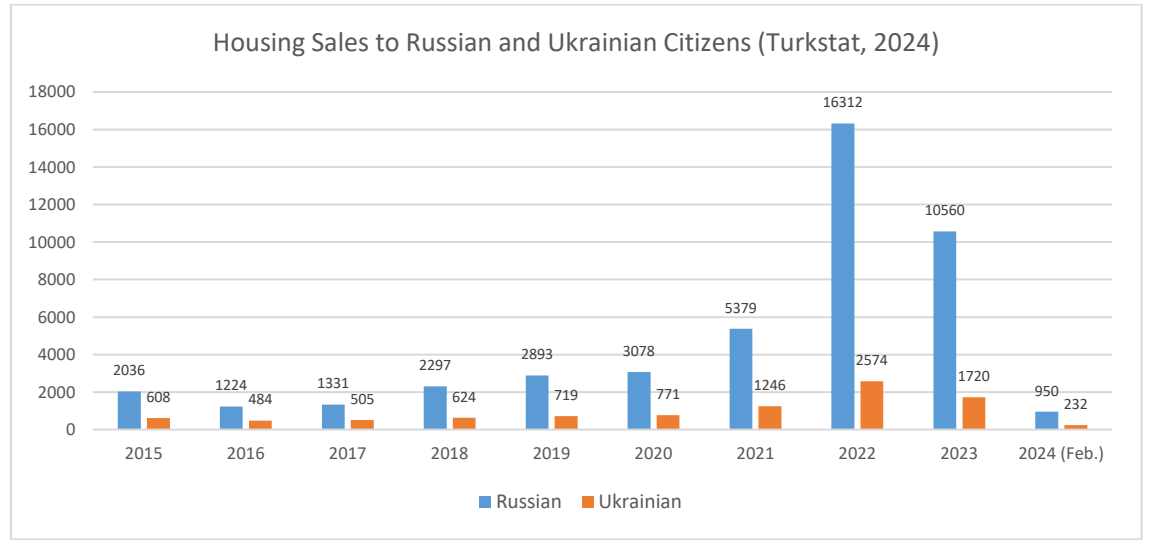


Fig. 9. Housing sales to Russian and Ukrainian citizens [32]

Since 2013, foreigners purchased 147,867 units in Istanbul and 100,197 units in Antalya. Ankara, Bursa, and Yalova followed these two cities. In 2022, home sales transactions were mainly made to Russians. 21,860 units were sold in Antalya, the city mostly preferred by Russian citizens for vacation or living. The Russians did not only purchase housing units but also rented houses in Antalya. In 2023, 1.6 million Russian tourists rented more than 100,000 housing units instead of staying in a hotel [30].

On the other hand, as can be observed in Fig. 8, it is important to note that Syria is not shown in the list of the countries that purchased a housing unit in Türkiye, as it is forbidden by law for Syrian refugees to buy a house [31].

4. Data and Methodology

This study aims to analyze the perception of Turkish people about the socioeconomic impacts of refugees living in Türkiye by focusing on their effects on economic indicators such as inflation rates, unemployment rates, tax revenues, housing prices and rents. Thus, a survey was conducted, and 157 responses were collected from people living in different cities, especially from Istanbul, where the refugees live most. The survey was conducted by asking the participants to respond the questions online. To underline the importance of the impact on the housing industry, the professionals working in the real estate and construction industry were the leading focus group. The respondents were asked first to multiply select the potential impacts of the refugees and then scale their responses by using the Likert Scale from 1 to 5 (1:strongly disagree, 5:strongly agree) for the questions given in Table 1.

The results were analyzed using R statistical programming, a free, open-source programming language primarily used for data analysis and statistical computing.

The participants were also asked to answer the potential positive impacts of the refugees, such as ease of labor supply, cheaper labor prices, decrease in costs, and production of value-added works. The questionnaire also asked the respondents to provide their opinions on this specific question, if any.

Table 1. The hypotheses of the research

Hypotheses
The unemployment rates have increased due to refugees.
The inflation rates have increased due to refugees.
The housing sales prices have increased due to refugees.
The housing rental prices have increased due to refugees.
There has been a loss of tax revenues due to refugees.
The housing prices may decrease if the sales to foreigners are forbidden.

4.1. Analysis of the respondents

Among 157 participants, one-third of the respondents (51 responses) were female, and 67% of them were male. As exhibited in Table 2, 66% of the survey participants live in İstanbul, where the refugees are settled down the most. On the other hand, the majority of the participants (71%) are between 25-50 years old, as shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Residency of the respondents

Residency	Responses	Rate
İstanbul	103	65,61%
Ankara	12	7,64%
İzmir	9	5,73%
Bursa	4	2,55%
Mersin	6	3,82%
Other	23	14,65%
Total	157	100,00%

Table 3. The age distribution of the participants

Age	Responses	Rate
18-24	6	3,82%
25-40	58	36,94%
41-50	53	33,76%
51-60	20	12,74%
61 and Elder	20	12,74%
Total	157	100,00%

This paper specifically focuses on the impact of refugees and immigrants on the housing industry. Thus, 41% of the survey respondents work in the construction or real estate sectors. The finance industry, with 28 participants, and the education sector, with 21 respondents, follow the construction

and real estate professionals. Table 4 shows the industry distribution of the survey participants.

Table 4. The industries of the respondents

Industry	Responses	Rate
Construction & Real Estate	64	40,76%
Finance	28	17,83%
Manufacturing	15	9,55%
Education	21	13,38%
Other	29	18,47%
Total	157	100,00%

83 of 157 participants work in mid or top-level managerial positions. While 19 respondents are company owners, 7 are board members, and 10 are self-employed. 83% of the responses were given by people who work for a private company, while 17% came from people who work for public entities.

5. Analysis, Results, and Discussions

According to the results of the analysis, 89% of the respondents think that the most critical impact of the refugees is the loss of tax revenues (unregistered work). This is followed by increased housing rental prices with 69% response rate.

Despite the study of Akgündüz et al. [11] revealing an increase in housing prices due to Syrian refugees, only 56,05% of the survey respondents had a similar perception to their findings. On the other hand, Kaya and Aydin [4] had concluded no effect of Syrian refugees on inflation. The findings of this research confirm their result, with only 31,85% of the participants thought the inflation rose due to refugees (Table 5).

Table 5. The impacts of refugees

Impacts	Responses	Rates
Increase in Unemployment Rates	104	66,24%
Increase in Inflation Rates	50	31,85%
Increase in Housing Sales Prices	88	56,05%
Increase in Housing Rental Prices	109	69,43%
Loss of Tax Revenues (Unregistered Work)	140	89,17%

Participants also noted additional impacts of refugees, such as communication and adaptation problems, cultural collapse, and an increase in immorality.

The responses were also analyzed based on age, gender, location, and industry groups. I categorized the ages as young (below 40 years old) and adult (40 and above), the gender (male and female), the location (Istanbul and other cities), and industry (construction-real estate, finance, education, and others). As shown in Table 6, the analysis results revealed no statistical significance among age, gender, location, and industry groups.

The study's findings showed no difference from the perspective of the place of residency. The results for the participants who live in Istanbul, where the refugees live most, exhibited no difference compared to other cities. Among 103 participants who reside in Istanbul had the perception that loss of tax revenues (91%) and increase in housing rental prices (70%) are the two most critical factors of the refugees on the Turkish socioeconomic life. The male and female respondents also have almost the same perceptions about the effects of the refugees.

While analyzing the responses of the participants who are construction and real estate professionals, I again observed no statistically significant change compared to the general results. Examining the responses in detail, especially the impacts of the refugees on the increase in housing sales and rental prices, the analysis of the results exhibits 58% and 73% response rates, respectively. Participants were also asked about the refugees' contributions and potential positive effects. As exhibited in Table 7, 76% of the respondents think that the labor cost is cheaper, and 36% believe that refugees provide ease in the labor supply. Reducing costs was another positive contribution of the refugees, with a 31% response rate. While only 6 participants think that the refugees help provide value-added work. However, it was not asked in the question; 20 participants commented that they believe the refugees have no benefits to society.

Table 6. The results of the statistical analysis

Increase_in_Unemployment_Rates	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	0,9885	0,9584	0,0000	1,7882
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,3201	0,3276	1	0,6175
Increase_in_Inflation_Rates	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	2,0607	1,4202	0,0633	4,0411
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,1511	0,2334	0,8014	0,2571
Increase_in_Housing_Sales_Prices	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	2,0473	1,8061	0,0000	2,3677
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,1525	0,179	1	0,4997
Increase_in_Housing_Rental_Prices	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	1,0691	0,0000	0,0000	1,2176
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,3011	1	1	0,7488
Loss_of_Tax_Revenue	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	0,6734	1,2301	0,7987	5,9295
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,4119	0,2674	0,3715	0,1151
Ease_in_labor_supply	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	0,0519	1,7243	10,50	5,1378
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,8198	0,1891	0,001194	0,162
Cheap_labor	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	2,8572	0,9923	0,0080	1,9451
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,09096	0,3192	0,9287	0,5839
Reducing_costs	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	0,3393	0,0235	0,016	3,0741
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,8539	0,8781	0,898	0,3803
Producing_value-added_works	Age	Gender	Location	Industry
X-Squared	0,0021	1,9006	0,000	3,0288
Df	1	1	1	3
P-Value	0,9634	0,168	1	0,3872

One of the critical questions asked in the survey was the perception of the potential decrease in housing prices if home sales to foreigners are forbidden. 107 of 157 respondents (68%) think housing prices may decrease if no units are sold to foreigners. 61% of construction and real estate

professionals have a perception similar to that of the respondents.

As shown in Table 8, based on the scores, loss of tax revenue and increase in housing rents were listed as the first two impacts, according to the responses.

Table 7. Contributions of the refugees

Impacts	Responses	Rate
Ease in Labor Supply	56	35,67%
Cheap Labor	120	76,43%
Reducing Costs	49	31,21%
Producing Value-added Works	6	3,82%
No Benefits to Society	20	12,74%

They were followed by an increase in unemployment rates and a rise in housing sales prices. The scores of the potential decrease in housing sales prices in the case selling the housing units to foreigners is not allowed and the rise in inflation were the least scored impacts of the refugees and immigrants. The analysis of the results reveals that unregistered work of the refugees was perceived as the cause of a loss of tax revenues.

The responses of the survey participants who live in Istanbul and are real estate and construction professionals had almost similar scores as the results of the overall responses.

More than 500,000 refugees are living in Istanbul, and thousands of immigrants have purchased houses in Türkiye within the last decade, especially in Istanbul and Antalya. High inflation skyrocketed housing prices and rents. The respondents think the rise in rents has a more serious impact caused by refugees than the increase in housing sales prices. On the other hand, the rise in inflation rates and the effect of housing sales to foreigners with high sales prices are perceived as the least serious socioeconomic impacts of refugees and immigrants in Türkiye.

6. Conclusion

The world is struggling with many socioeconomic problems—conventional wars, pandemics, trade wars, climate change, income inequality, and many others. The refugee problem is one of those significant issues for which a sustainable and urgent solution is needed. Thanks to its open-door policy, Türkiye, with 4.6 million refugees and asylum seekers, is listed at the top of the most refugees-hosted countries. Millions of Syrians left their homes in the civil war which started in 2011, thousands of legal or illegal immigrants from different countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and many others, thousands of legal residents from Iraq, Iran, Russia, Ukraine, etc. by way of purchasing a housing unit are all changing the demographic structure of the country.

This study investigated the perception of Turkish people regarding the socioeconomic impacts of refugees and immigrants especially on housing industry. The study results revealed that loss of tax revenues due to unregistered work and increase in housing rental prices are perceived as the two most critical problems caused by the refugees. The statistical analysis of the responses of different groups, such as age, gender, location, and industry, had similar results.

The results of this study may help the policymakers to enhance the importance of the potential impacts of the refugees and immigrants on a global scale. Refugee problem is not the issue of only Türkiye faces, but the rising population and sociocultural integration problems are increasing the future threats.

Table 8. The scores of the responses

Impacts	All Responses	Istanbul Residents	Construction & Real Estate Professionals
There is a loss of tax revenues due to refugees	4,39	4,48	4,39
Housing rents have increased due to refugees	4,22	4,24	4,17
The unemployment rate has increased due to refugees	4,08	4,07	4,02
Housing sales prices have increased due to refugees.	3,94	3,94	3,86
Housing prices will decrease if selling housing units to foreigners is not allowed	3,76	3,75	3,48
The inflation rate has increased due to refugees	3,55	3,56	3,47

Thus, the policymakers shall review their settlement and housing policies.

Analyzing the effects of refugees and immigrants on the housing industry is also essential as the world is experiencing a housing crisis. In 2013, a law was enacted that enabled foreigners to purchase a house or land in Türkiye. Since then, especially in the last few years, when the number of units sold to foreigners increased, there has been a debate about one of the reasons for the increase in housing sales prices: the foreigners' purchases. Participants were asked about the effect of forbidding housing sales to foreigners on the housing prices a downward way, and 107 of 157 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed. Still, compared to other responses with better scores, this issue was listed as one of the last scored impacts.

A global housing crisis is a fact, and governments urgently need to bring sustainable solutions to this serious problem. Affordability is decreasing worldwide, and the long-term existence of refugees in host countries puts additional pressure on the industry, especially on rental prices, as exhibited in this study. From the refugee perspective, the settlement policy shall be reviewed to diminish the effects on the locals, including on health, education, and other social services. Refugees may be distributed to different cities based on the infrastructures, capacities, and needs of these cities. For instance, to rebuild the cities which were destroyed in the catastrophic earthquake that occurred in February 2023, skilled refugee labors may be used in these regions.

The rise in housing sales and rental prices impact both the local citizens and the refugees. Thus, proper planning by employing the refugee labors in producing affordable houses may help to reduce the rising housing problem of the country. Considering the rising housing affordability crisis of the country, by using the refugees, the reduced labor cost in construction industry may contribute to produce more affordable houses.

The research also investigated the potential positive contributions of the refugees. The common ideas about the positive impact of refugees were listed as reducing costs, cheap labor, and ease of labor availability. These responses match the results of Verme and Schuettler [19] and the outcome of the report of George Mason University, which underlines the importance of immigration in finding more workers and reducing inflation rates. Like many other sectors, the construction industry is affected from inflation severely [33]. Considering the current high inflation problem of Türkiye, the refugees shall be employed to help reducing the costs without losing the tax revenue.

This study focused on the perception of the socioeconomic impacts of the refugees and immigrants in Türkiye, but it had some limitations. For instance, 66% of the respondents were participating from Istanbul, which hosts the refugees and immigrants most, but no responses were collected from Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, and Hatay, the cities where the refugees reside most after Istanbul. It is highly recommended to focus on these cities due to several reasons. First, the refugee population they host, second their location close to the border of Syria and third, to prepare post-earthquake sustainable long-term concrete settlement policies. Furthermore, no participants were included in the survey from Antalya, where immigrants purchased housing units most in 2023. Further studies may include responses from these cities and compare the results with the outcome of this study.

Being one of the pioneer studies in this area, this study analyzed the impacts of refugees on primarily the housing sector from a host country perspective. Further research may also focus on the refugees' perceptions, provide intersection points, and seek solutions to the issues that refugees and the locals may benefit from.

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Author Contributions

L. Sümer: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing - Original draft, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

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Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Ethics Committee Permission

The authors acquired ethics committee permission for the research conducted in this paper from the Boğaziçi University Social and Humanities Research Ethics Committee (SBİNAREK) (Date: 30.10.2024; No: 2024/08).

Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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