

***Implications of the Danish integration and immigration
process on the Syrian Refugee women***

-A case study of the factors that hold back the Syrian women refugees to work.



Supervisor: Vibeke Andersson

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Alborg University

Global Refugees Studies

Yosra Ibrahim Al asmi :20196785

ABSTRACT

The aim/purpose of this mixed methods research was to investigate the critical factors contributing to Syrian refugee women lagging behind on the Danish labour market, despite their higher/better educational levels than males. With successful integration as key for refugee wellness, this study examines the Danish integration and gender equality issues that have implications on the Syrian refugee women joining the Danish labour market. This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to adopt a constructivist approach to respond to the study questions. Data collection was done through both surveys and in-depth interviews, asking participants open-ended questions, which formed the epitome for the analysis. In fully answering the specified research question, thematic analysis was conducted, with a step-by-step examination of responses and deciphering key themes (patterns). Upon thematic analysis, it was found that for the Syrian refugees, and other included participants, key obstacles causing slower or poor job market integration are cultural/traditional practices, religious practices, gender inequality, language barriers/hindrances, inadequate job experience. Other participants noted that the Danish government work-related policies highly hindered getting employed. Moreover, Danish Education system's ability to support job market integration, key concerns were not efficient for refugee women, failure in ensuring competence, i.e., skills differing, slower incorporation/integration, no work guarantee and market demand for advanced academic levels.

Keywords: Cultural factors, labour market, gender equality, integration theory, Syrian refugees.

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INTRODUCTION

In society, employment forms one essential developmental aspect, either socially, economically, or environmentally. This makes measures, and practices within a country, which especially for refugees highly impacts capacities in attaining employment opportunities or working in various designated avenues. For citizens, part of whom are refugees, employment is pivotal in offering personal and financial freedom, by allowing members to have power in their decisions. This makes proper integration measures implemented by the Danish government, e.g., language and education attainment crucial in supporting refugee progress within the labour market.

Education attainment is touted as a significant basic need and recognised by the United Nations as critical Human Rights. At the core of promoting measures towards ensuring refugee education is Sustainable Development Goal #4, which is based on delivering education that is inclusive and of quality for all as a tool in promoting lifelong learning. The circumstances refugees go through and other underlying risk factors make meeting educational goals challenging.

Like other global nations, Denmark is not free from refugees, making it paramount in adhering to current, previous, and future measures towards promoting efforts in assuring refugee wellness and education. The Danish government's commitment for refugee wellness dates to the 1951 signing of the then prepared Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, in addition to the 1967 Protocol (Hofverberg, 2016). Since then, Denmark has played a crucial role in integration by assisting refugees in fulfilling their academic needs. The need for refugees'

education is also supported by “*The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*,” putting education attainment as one of the crucial matters towards responding to refugees.

Of the various platforms, these goals' success has been supplemented by the existing laws, policies and a comprehensive education system promoting refugee inclusion within the Danish education system. Through the Danish government's actions, the measures offer refugees opportunities for refuge, protection and accessing a human right, i.e., Quality Education. Education plays a primary role in encouraging the integration of immigrants in their new countries. It plays an even more critical role in ensuring women and children find a better position within the new countries. Suppose the refugee's abilities acquired in their dream country are not compensated or recognised under their recent settlement's unfamiliar conditions. In that case, they need to adjust or increase their human capital. Many of them also need to have the ability to speak the language of their country to improve their job market and the possibility of social integration. Danish educational achievement is pivotal in filling integration gaps, both financially and socially, and is supplemented by the current education system structure and learning background.

Like other EU member states, the number of refugees in Denmark increased sharply in 2014 and 2015, most of them were refugees from Syria. The massive influx triggered a political response and is still the subject of public discussions. From one perspective, developing housing and migration guidelines is increasing, so the attractiveness of applying for asylum in Denmark has decreased. Despite the positive events, refugee integration faces numerous close-related challenges in Denmark. In 2014, Syrian refugees accounted for 48% of the total number of refugees, and in 2015, they accounted for 40%. Other larger groups are refugees from Iraq, Eritrea, Afghanistan, and Iran (Crea, 2016). Regarding the quality of the leading social

subdivisions, the largest gathering of asylums is male of 15-29 years. A survey by UIM in 2016 showed that more than 33% of Syrian refugees did not go to school for a long time. Likewise, on Danish education; less than 10% of people have completed secondary, long-term, or advanced education (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017).

Research Background (My Story)

“For it is often the way we look at other people that imprisons them within their own narrowest allegiances. And it is also the way we look at them that may set them free” (Ameen Maloof).

I always believe that our life is difficult and complicated, but what makes us happy is having hope, determination, aspiration, and a sense of achievement. If we have a brain, we can move forward, adapt, and survive.

For us, the idea of moving to Europe and settling there was unthinkable. And yet, in 2015 we realised that the situation in our home country, Syria was unbearable. There was no other way, so I made up my mind to travel to Denmark, where my brother lived. After 3 years, my son and husband joined me, thanks to the family unification program. In the last 5 years, I have faced many hardships and challenges, especially considering that I am a mother, a wife, and a student living in extraordinary conditions, with worries about my family stranded and scattered worldwide. As a female refugee seeking stability in different life aspects, I struggled with differences in lifestyle and cultural background. Even though Denmark facilitated our access to education, health care, housing, and employment, I faced many obstacles on my way.. There were some difficulties learning the Danish language, more so, since the language has many vowels that are pronounced in a way different from English. The Danish natives speak fast, often swallowing letters; therefore, it's hard to understand them. Some illiterate Syrian people have

never read or written at the school before; so the school was a big problem for them . They were afraid to touch the laptop. The teachers in the language school were fast in teaching, pushing the students to pass without checking whether the refugees speak Danish well or not. The municipality hurried to send the refugees to internships to join the labour market, putting the refugees under pressure. Gradually ,the problems began to breake out inside the refugees' houses because they suffered from coping with the new life. They fell in the vortex of school, studying, internship, looking after children, a life they hadn't been into before, especially the women from the Middle east. They were not yet ready for this, as most still suffered from leaving their country and facing new life trauma.

As I said before, I started learning the Danish language as an essential part of the integration process. When my husband and my son arrived, we began to look for a house and furnish it. We went through many procedures regarding residence, banking documents, schools, and modifying our university certificates. Meanwhile, I had to get an internship at the high school to get an idea about the schools' teaching methods to find a job for me in the future. I taught 11th grade, and everyone considered me such a brilliant teacher who spent 25 years teaching in different countries in the Middle East. But that won't lead to the Danish labour market because I don't speak Danish well. As most Of the Danish people in Denmark speak English, that facilitated my communication with them easily but, on the other hand, impaired me to speak Danish well. In the schools, the teachers teach English in the Danish language, starting from vocabulary to Grammar. Thus, there was no chance for me to work. I stopped teaching and continued learning Danish. I completed Dansk 2 module 6 and moved to study Danish in VUC,,a school for adults. I stayed there for six months when the government with the different political parties agreed not to grant the refugees the permanent residence, and that means we were under threat of

deportation at any time or looking for a new country to settle. Thus , We felt not safe anymore. I was so upset and pessimistic concerning our future. But luckily, three months earlier, the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science amended my university certificate and that was a good motive to continue my study in English and to be in touch with my English language, which gradually had slipped away from my mind. I was convinced that I should keep and improve my English to look for another place to settle down, such as the UK or Canada. I applied to many universities for studying master's degrees and within two months, I got the approval to study in the current master's program .

Inspired by the different stories of the Syrian women around me , I made up my mind to write this thesis about those women who have struggled to survive and sought security and stability for their families away from the horror and misery .They have kept working persistently to complete their mission ,so I feel like the world to recognise their suffering . Furthermore , my personal experience and my majoring in Global Refugees Studies have intrigued me and helped me to dive more profoundly into the domains ,connected to the integration process , that have affected the Syrian refugees women's being with its different dimensions.

Problem Statement

In a historical perspective, like the 1951 signing of the then prepared Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and statistics, historical events show that Denmark is a pioneer in the Educational system. Despite these positive outcomes, evidence shows some refugee women lag in their education levels, and joining the labour market, i.e., getting employed. This study aims to answer the “**Why?**”

The United Nations, under its supreme Sustainable Development Goal #4, recognised Education attainment as a Human Right. Hence, like other ordinary citizens, refugees have the right to study. However, despite being considerate and ambitious, unknown and unwanted factors contribute to the refugees dropping out.

The Danish government has verified various methods and implemented projects to help refugees and continued to do so (DeVaul-Fetters, 2014). One of the four on-going activities of the Danish government is called #WelcomeRefugees, which includes inviting and supporting the resettlement of 40,000 Syrian refugees who appeared in Denmark between 2015 and 2017 (Bauman, 2016). Not only the Danish government, but also private supporters have been carrying out activities to help refugees. However, many academies in Copenhagen have also initiated projects to help Syrian refugees, for instance, providing appropriate confirmations, grants, and ESL courses. One of the difficulties encountered by displaced persons and foreigners in the Danish resettlement cycle is the business gap between new immigrants and Danes (Asaf, 2019). This book reveals the importance of receiving supplementary education, which is a way for new immigrants to overcome job gaps and is a typical enhancement to useful placement work (AIDA, 2016).

As a societal dilemma, this study will examine the Danish Education system and document the underlying facets contributing to the evident dropping out or failure in attaining higher and better education among female refugees aged 16 years and above. There is a leap for some women refugees to be familiar with technology if you have no digital skills. Notably, it is difficult with the background, mentality, infrastructure, and conditions of refugees. Women are stuck in provinces and can't travel to far places to continue studying. It is a struggle for them.

With the professional and white-collar working environment demands, there is a need to study in international languages, sometimes hindered, given refugees' unwanted conditions.

Statement of Purpose

This inductive research's primary aim/objective is to investigate the Danish integration processes implications on the Syrian refugee women in joining the Danish labour market. It is alarming that despite the fact that Syrian refugee women generally have higher education than their men, they lag behind in the Danish labour market. Understanding and explaining this problem is key in this research. Using constructivism as the primary philosophical framework and relying on surveys and the in-depth interviews for data collection from participants, this study offers useful foundational information for people in society in recognizing societal gender differences. Constructivism is important to this research question because it creates new ideas and notions. Also, it explains the educational, cultural, language and religious issues, explains the feminist perspectives on masculinity, and explicitly shows how Danish government integration measures impact Syrian women, especially regarding getting employed. Influenced by personal experiences and evidence from other Syrian women, completing this investigation helps document refugee critical challenges in hosting countries, e.g., Denmark.

Research Questions

This research aims at answering the below research questions by using a survey approach:

1. The Syrian refugee women are more educated than their men, yet they are lagging behind on the Danish labour market, why?
 - a. To what extent men-women equality affects The Syrian women 's wellness in Denmark ?

Theoretical Framework

Gender Theory and Integration Theory form the foundational models and concepts for this research, offering a broader perspective to examine the Danish Education system's implications on Syrian refugee women. The desire to realise positive outcomes from the Danish Educational system ranks as a critical goal for refugees, whose needs form this research's epitome. Thus, with an existing educational system and the rising demands for refugees, there are intertwining two concepts, including this research's theoretical foundation. According to Crea (2016), there has been a rise in Syrian refugees, surpassing the 40% mark, with the likelihood of more numbers. Thus, as a group settling in a new Danish environment, timely and smooth incorporation into the community is critical. Of the various societal practices, education forms a fundamental human right (UNESCO, 2020), making a successful realisation of this need by refugees is essential. However, various issues arise, making the timely and efficient attainment of quality education and realising positive impacts linked to education challenges despite this desire. In elaborating the implications on Syrian Refugee women, Gender Theory and Integration Theory are explained.

Theoretical Framework Representation

1. Gender Theory

In society, gender ranks as a critical phenomenon, impacting multiple aspects, ranging from how individuals act and conduct themselves, among other elements linked to the assignment of sex. The variation and underpinning similarities across genders have formed a key topic area for key researchers (e.g., Asaf, 2017; Booker, Kelly & Sacker, 2018; Jule, 2014), especially examining factors impacting everyone's wellness, as linked to their assigned sex.

Hence, with evident differences across females and males, it becomes essential to discuss how defined external factors impact their wellness, especially when intertwined in a society that encompasses males.

Gender theory centres on understanding or studying what is known as feminine, masculine, and queer behaviours within communities, societies, or other study fields (Jule, 2014). Hence, there is an emphasis on documenting and critically comprehending what assigns masculinity or feministic behaviours. The adverse implications attributed to the crisis, especially making person refugees, impact persons of all ages, across all genders, and even surpass individual statuses. As a critical subset, women's implications, associated with growing national conflicts and crises, are recognised to exhibit significant adverse effects globally. Authors Asaf (2017), Al-Shar and Al-Tarawneh (2019), says growing refugee issues have significant socio-political and even economic implications, and in this domain, women are not left out. With the influx of Syrian refugees, especially into European countries, which have seen a significant rise in numbers (Crea, 2016), examining how this trend impacts women, as a distinct gender, is paramount to study and recommend workable solutions improving their wellness.

Through the lens of gender theory, it is possible to study feminine issues, ranging from history, philosophical, historical, sociological, and even educational (Jule, 2014), among other fields. With this multi-dimensional approach, understanding the needs, adverse implications, and measures women refugees adopt in co-existing with the male in communities becomes possible. Jule (2014) explained, with sex primarily referring to categorisation based on one's biologically visible or observable bodily aspects, one is assigned the male or female, and even intersex natures. Hence, with some underlying differences that make one male and female (Booker, Kelly

& Sacker, 2018), taking a closer examination of how the Danish Educational system has various implications on women refugees forms the epitome of this project or study.

2. Gender Integration Theory

The rise in refugee numbers is a global problem with health, economic, and social implications for children and adults (Asaf, 2017; Cousins, 2015; Crea, 2016). Moreover, the fact that one is a refugee, means that he will be away from his mother's land and this is what happened to the Syrian women who are accommodated in other countries. With these shifts, there are significant impacts that can have detrimental impacts on women's lives and their future well-being if not managed.

Gender integration, or in other terms, gender mainstreaming, explains the process applied in assessing associated impacts of planned actions to the respective gender, i.e., women and men (WHO, 2020). Thomassen (2019) recognises the value of integration, explaining that this should encompass having jobs for the various refugees and cover other associated aspects that define the integration process. Thus, through integration, there is a focus on allowing refugees to incorporate into the newer system; in this case, Denmark, and other hosting countries.

The promotion of gender integration serves varied reasons, one of which entails promoting equality (WHO, 2020), something that is necessary, especially for women refugees finding themselves in foreign countries and newer communities. According to Thomassen (2019), several factors, including employment, are essential in determining a person's integration level. These factors are pivotal and need recognition by individual governments for Syrian women refugees. As part of the integration process to support women, the main elements or parameters that require assessment and realisation include employment opportunities, attainment of education, language, and equal treatment, among other parameters (Thomassen, 2019).

Moreover, with women refugees finding themselves in foreign countries, efficient assessment of their lives and the implications existing policies have on their lives is necessary. The growth in refugee numbers is associated with varying factors, including constant wars, contributing to deaths, and unwanted people's displacement or families (Asaf, 2017; Al-Shar & Al-Tarawneh, 2019; Crea, 2016). And within the family set-up, women serve an essential role, indicating that shifting countries and settling in foreign nations put a significant demand for their social and cultural needs. Gender integration includes implementing gender norms that compensate for gender-based inequalities. Through gender integration, there is a need to adopt strategies that, upon adoption, will be vital in supporting and incorporating women's needs [and even those of men] through a multi-dimensional approach. The Danish Education system ranks as a critical aspect that impacts people's lives and is pivotal in supporting the continued education desires for refugees, and in this case, Syrian women. Through the gender integration theory/model, the aim is to ensure existing programs and policies, promote and protect women's rights (WHO, 2020), and operate in a manner that supports their development to realise global gender equality (WHO, 2020).

3. Sustainable Development

The market and societal demands that Syrian refugees face, only accounts for a minor portion of broader issues facing communities and especially women worldwide. This makes sustainable development essential, as a platform in ensuring capacity in attaining needs and demands. According to the United Nations (UN), sustainable development focuses on ensuring as human societies, there is living and meeting their daily and life needs, while in the same process, not compromising future generations' abilities in meeting their needs (UNDP, 2021). Thus, as opposed to only focusing on current status and situations, sustainable development puts

the needs of future generations in mind, by creating a sustainable environment. As for Syrian refugees, integration in foreign countries is a phase with its numerous challenges, and as special members of the society, promoting sustainable development is at the epitome in improving population and family's wellness. Moreover, according to Bayeh (2016), in attaining sustainable development, there is a need in working towards women empowerment, as one of the tools in realizing gender equality. With the issues facing women, especially in a highly man-dominated society, with issues of gender defining community actions (Booker, Kelly & Sacker, 2018), sustainable development measures must incorporate women's needs, and define policies that support the same.

As a population, developing measures that promote wellness is necessary, and this starts with working on sustainable development measures. Through the sustainable development initiatives, the United Nations (UN) and other associated agencies have a role in supporting community and population wellness, of which includes women equality. According to UNDP, it is working in supporting nations towards fully achieving the various sustainable development goals (SDGs), and this is realized by integrating solutions within communities. Apart from working in improving living conditions, preventing community conflicts, and managing disease spreads, the United Nations is committed to promoting gender equality within communities. For Syrian women, with the societal demands and challenges, gender-equality ranks as an essential aspect needing promoting. And for the United Nations, especially the UNDP, there is the aim and focus on improving community systems, pinpointing the various root causes hindering gender equality and adopting policy and community measures in dealing with these challenges. Moreover, for Syrian women, and other refugees living in Denmark, the integration process faces varied issues/challenges, one of which is language acquisition and attaining desired employment

opportunities (Thomassen, 2019). Thus, with different challenges existing, dealing with male-female inequalities is one step in improving women wellness. For the United Nations, part of its SDGs lies in building solutions, pivotal in responding to the varied people's and community's daily realities (UNDP, 2021), and this encompasses women's needs through promoting supportive policies. Lastly, in meeting sustainable development objectives and long-term goals, the United Nations recognizes that this process requires collaborations and partnerships, with private agencies, current governments, civil societies, community leaders and citizens (UNDP, 2021), making working together useful in ensuring gender equality and promoting women wellness within the community. As communities and associated agencies, e.g., United Nations, there is demand in working on continuously empowering women, as this and other measures are essential in realizing fairness and gender equality (Bayeh, 2016), as all this are paramount in accomplishing the various community goals and subsequently attaining sustainable development. Sustainable development not only focuses on community wellness, but must also work in promoting human rights, and this also encompasses gender equality. Through these measures, processes, and coordination, there is adopting sustainable measures, which are essential in safeguarding future generations.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research aims to examine the implications of the Danish integration process on the Syrian refugee women to join the Danish labour market. The issue of refugees in Denmark has significant implications. Syrian women form a unique subset within the community facing personal, family, and national-based challenges. As part of the integration process, education attainment and learning languages are essential, it is necessary to examine how the Danish government's integration measures are crucial to support Syrian refugee women in fully joining the current and future labour markets. In meeting this goal, this research focuses on [1] Gender Theory, and [2] Integration Theory, while answering the below specific key questions.

At the core of integration theory, which will be the basis for this research, there is focus on the measures and “how” various minorities or newcomers become incorporated into new social structures. Hence, with this study mainly focussing on the Syrian refugees women, deeply examining their concerns, is paramount in helping to decipher their integration needs. Successful integration has major implications on the life quality of those affected, especially refugees (Thomassen, 2019). Moreover, with gender theory, there is deeper focus on comparing needs across male and female members, and how the refugee process has impacted their employment and educational endeavours while in Denmark. Through applying gender and integration theory, this study incorporates a wider view on Syrian refugees, i.e., women's needs, and this will be useful in giving recommendations that meet their personal and social needs. Likewise, since integration theories explain dynamic aspects within the community, it affects integration processes . Using this theory and studying Syrian refugee women will be important to pinpoint their concerns, and show measures that the Danish government, and other interested agencies can

apply in improving refugee wellness. As explained by Hofverberg, (2016), Hovden, Mjelde and Gripsrud (2018), refugees face multiple challenges, and with integration concerns, creating supportive measures becomes essential. Using these two theories, they will help answer the below explained research questions.

Research Questions

Arabic is vastly different from the Danish language. Therefore making the transition as a Syrian woman was demanding and at the same time, essential to ensure smooth integration into the society. Cultural differences along with the various chores that comes with motherhood made the whole process of transition extremely challenging. Language is so essential to survive in a country, to find work and support yourself. With language as one of the main issues, there is an added struggle of finding employment and integrating in the Danish society.. It has been observed that such problems are being faced by other Syrian women and that was the motivation behind my thesis topic. The cultural and integration barriers that Syrian refugee women face in Denmark rank as key motivators for this research.

Based on my personal experience as a Syrian refugee, this research aims at answering key research questions by using a survey approach. However, as an author-based study, there exist key bias aspects worth examining in this research process. My research, pegged on personal experiences, closely examines the risks impacting the openness and viability of refugee integration for Syrian women. The issues and challenges suffered by the numerous Syrian refugee women calls for an objective focused research as opposed to an experience based subjective one. Secondly, there is risk of author bias, based on a need to depict the negative outcomes associated with the integration process. As opposed to incorporating facts based on existing literature and evidence from the sampled participants, excessive incorporation of

personal views and personal experiences risk lowering the research's validity or trustworthiness. Hence, with these challenges looming, basing the research on facts, and minimizing personal implications is essential in improving the overall acceptability of the result and its recommendations. The main study questions are;

1. The Syrian refugee women are more educated than their men, yet they are lagging behind in the Danish labour market, why?
 - a. To what extent men-women equality affects The Syrian women 's wellness in Denmark?

Research Design

Exploratory research strategy or approach is utilised in this study, which entails starting research processes that contain qualitative phases, with exploring subject's/participant's views (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this approach, there is utilisation of surveys in successfully answering the outlined research questions. With exploratory research, there is less focusing on human behaviour outcomes, and directly or more on the causal mechanisms underlying and producing the respective social phenomena (Reiter, 2017). Moreover, according to Creswell and Creswell (2017), exploratory design is a key type of mixed methods, sometimes encompassing quantitative techniques, then applying qualitative research as the other vital phase towards exploring participant views. In this study, this exploratory aspect was used to collect numerical data (quantitative) and supplement the information with open-ended questions and in depth interviews (qualitative). With demand in getting useful information on how the Danish government's integration measures are vital in supporting the entering into the current labour market by refugees, using surveys in getting data from selected participants was essential. By applying an exploratory approach, the goal is to discover the participants' useful ideas and their

respective views about the Danish government, educational methods used, and practices adopted towards language acquisition. Moreover, the data collection covers Syrian, Danish nationals, and persons from other nations supporting the exploratory study for a broader perspective. With the collected qualitative information based on all the selected persons' personal views, qualitative analyses help document the main themes from the sample, which helps show the implications the Danish integration measures have in successfully supporting Syrian refugees in entering into the labour market.

Research Philosophy: Constructivist Philosophical Framework

Freedom of choice is a key aspect that individual researchers possess, allowing for the successful choosing of the proper techniques, and methods allowing for efficient meeting of research purpose and needs (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In line with this, this research adopts a Constructivist approach, encompassing key concepts from this field in fully answering the defined study questions. Although varied philosophical approaches exist, the Constructivist method fits this study, based on various aspects.

First, by definition, with constructivism the main argument is that as humans, there is generating knowledge as well as meanings based on the distinct interactions across one's experiences and their unique or distinct ideas (Mogashoa, 2014). Hence, as an epistemological theory, constructivism approach works well in this refugee-based research, as there is focus on establishing an understanding of the ideas and perception of the sampled refugee women. Secondly, this study mainly adopts a qualitative method, which forms one of the key techniques, in addition to quantitative and mixed methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Thus, by centring on a qualitative method, there is emphasis on the ideas and perceptions gained from the sampled responses. In this regard, the constructive approach acts as the benchmark in depicting the

underlying forces, either socially, economically/financially as well as politically associated with women refugees lagging behind. Moreover, through constructive approach, getting responses from the sampled persons, and hearing their point-of-view is vital in deciphering the main reasons for women, i.e., Syrian refugee women lagging behind, especially on employability and in the labour market. As opposed to relying on numerical data only, which forms a key aspect in quantitative studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), this study digs deeper into the perceptions, feelings and emotions of the sampled participants. Through this, the constructive approach helps in presenting reasons on how the association between existing Danish integration and the socio-economic backgrounds of the sampled women, affects their success and ability in joining the Danish labour market. Likewise, this approach helps in deciphering how the Danish integration measures' impacts Syrian refugee women, not only on a social level, but also economically in joining the current labour market.

Research Approach

The study uses a mixed-method approach that relies on inductive reasoning (qualitative data collection), as well as deductive reasoning (quantitative data collection), for final analysis in making conclusions. The research used a designed survey and three in depth qualitative interviews where three Syrian women were involved in answering open-ended questions. The interviews took a maximum of 60 minutes and a minimum of 30 minutes. One interview was physical and two interviews were conducted via the internet. In collecting this data ethical consideration was observed to ensure participants confidentiality and privacy.

Using the designed surveys, it was possible to gather the required minimum responses to form analysis data from the sampled Syrian and Danish nationals on the different items included within the questionnaires. Although only one approach could have been applied, using the mixed technique increased the informational scope. The participants had an opportunity to share their personal views and give specific information on the asked close-ended questions. This multi-dimensional approach that involved sections on personal information (demographic data) and question-based sections, was useful in getting an in-depth idea of how integration measures support Syrian women's success and abilities in joining the labour market.

In collecting data, ethical considerations were necessary to ensure the study protected participants by promoting their privacy and confidentiality by not gathering personalised information and obtaining consent before data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Yip, Han & Sng, 2016). The questionnaire was designed into three main sections in the survey, comprising items on demographic data, where the participants were required to fill. Secondly, the questionnaire included closed-ended questions, giving the participants specific options to choose from among the provided list. Through using this format, it was easier and direct to get responses, as opposed to having a less uniform format. During the survey, a third section comprised an open-ended section, with the chosen respondents offering their ideas or view to those questions that were asked. In using this format in the surveys in collecting data, the subjects gave information with close-ended sections on the Danish educational system, the different Syrian refugees' issues, and other associated questions relating to the implications of realising or not realising educational services. The survey process was vital in getting qualitative as well as numerical data to support statistical or figure-based conclusions by focusing on close-ended questions.

Research Sample and Data Sources

The rationale in undertaking this survey was investigating Syrian refugee women and answering three key questions.

1. Troubles or weaknesses with the Danish Education system concerning refugee educational needs.
2. Documenting the specific requirements of Syrian refugee women.
3. Examining the Danish educational system vis- vis these needs.

Lastly, this survey is essential in explaining the underlying reasons the Danish government supports refugee's education. The survey timeline was three (3) weeks (October 16th to November 6th, 2020) to gather responses on specific Syrian refugee concerns related to joining the labour market.

In this research, covering Danish nationals and Syrian Refugees, 55 participants took part, of which 81.5% were female and 16.7% male. Those 24-30 years were 27.8% across age groups, 31-35 20.4%, 41-45 years 16.7%, and least group was 36-40 years at 5.6%. In this survey, information on participant's marital status was also recorded, where 64% were single, 22% were married, and 8% divorced. Based on education, most had bachelor's (42%), with masters (32%), and lastly high school/college (26%). Lastly, 48.1% were Syrian nationals on nationality or status, 44.2% Danish Nationals, and others were 7.7%. Collecting responses from different subjects helped improve the data scope by getting diversified views and perceptions (*see Appendix A for Questionnaire*).

Table 1

Demographic data

Focus Item	Description	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
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Gender	Male respondents	9	16.7
	Female respondents	44	81.5%
Age-groups	24-30 Years	15	27.8%
	31-35 Years	11	20.4%
	36-40 Years	3	5.6%
	41-45 Years	9	16.7%
	46-50 Years	8	14.8%
	Over 50 Years	8	14.8%
Education Level	High school/college	26	13%
	Bachelors	21	425
	Masters	16	32%
	Doctorate/PhD	0	0
Nationality Status	Syrian National	25	48.1%
	Danish National	23	44.2%
	Others	4	7.7%
Employability	Working/Employed	28	53.8%
Situation/Status	Self-Employed	2	3.8%
	Not working	22	42.3%
Description of Working Level/Role	Junior Staff/Employee	8	21.1%
	Senior Employee	4	10.5%
	Supervisor Position	4	10.5%

	Employee	1	2.6%
	Management Position	21	55.3%
	Employee		
	Others		

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis process used in this research is inductive content/thematic analysis, focusing critically on examining and evaluating the participants' responses, i.e., interview responses, and deciphering specific items within the responses that align with the research question. Through this approach, the goal is to get useful information from the recorded transcripts from each participant. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the inductive content analysis focuses on deriving from the specific recorded data, useful items ranging from openly visible themes, categorisations on views from the participants and various concepts related to the study topic. Hence, in this study, there is an emphasis on Syrian refugees taking an in-depth examination of their responses and pinpointing key themes that are essential in supporting the study's research question.

The statistical techniques were used to represent numerical or quantitative-based responses from the participants. During the survey, sampled Syrian refugees and Danish nationals were asked specific close-ended questions (see *Appendix for more information*), useful in generating numerical responses. Hence, applying mathematical and statistical tools, e.g., descriptive measures (Salkind, 2018), was useful in summarizing and describing the responses with this data. Some of the valuable tools used included descriptive statistics, e.g., mean,

frequencies, and total counts for the respective reactions. The data presentation included pie-charts, histograms, and tabulations.

Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness in research is pivotal in supporting how good and dependable the finalised results will be viewed, i.e., aspects of validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). As a part of this research process, trustworthiness was ensured through multiple measures like triangulation. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defines triangulation as the application or utilisation of more than one technique or method during data collection, hence acting as a useful method to confirm and supplement previously collected data. It was evident in this research, through surveys that comprised two different sections : one on quantitative aspects for the study and another section asking qualitative questions and allowing participants to give their personalized views. Through this process, it was possible to improve relationships among the responses and pinpoint any outlier responses, i.e., highly out of context or out of the norm. Secondly, trustworthiness was ensured in this study by following ethical considerations while conducting investigations. The study's specific details were communicated to all the sampled Syrian and Danish nationals and their consent was confirmed before the initiation of the data collection. Since ethical considerations form an essential aspect within the research process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017), promoting the ethical practices helped show how the research respects ethical considerations, thus improving trustworthiness in the finalised outcomes. Thirdly, in this study, trustworthiness was enhanced by the emphasis on primary data, which was explicitly obtained from the sampled participants to answer the research questions. Although secondary sources exist, e.g., existing literature, getting first-hand data/information from the Syrian women and other Danish nationals helped raise the credibility of the data

collected, as it was directly from the members and not borrowed from existing records or sources that might have been distorted. Lastly, in improving trustworthiness, collaboration in the recording and re-examination of the data, e.g., by research peers and thesis instructors, was essential in pinpointing any anomalies or complications within the dataset. As opposed to solely examining the data, reliance on extra professionals in confirming the specific information through peer examination was vital in raising the quality of the information, and raising trustworthiness. This timely cross-checking was essential to ensure collected data aligned with the planned goals and verifying all the data collected before the final analysis and deciphering conclusions. This coordination and collaboration process is essential in increasing the data collection and analysis trustworthiness.

Limitations

One primary limitation of this study was the sample used. It was not based on random selection but on convenience sampling/selection to meet the right participant numbers. As opposed to randomly choosing subjects, using convenience sampling holds a likelihood of causing selection bias during research, which can adversely affect reliability.

A second limitation was the research scope, as the study was primarily focussing on examining issues among Syrian refugee women, hence side-lining any other challenges experienced by other females within the Danish society. A restrictive sampling frame limits the application and generalizability that the findings can support. There was also only focus on Danish integration and implications on entering the job market, despite other integration concerns existing.

Thirdly, since the sampled participants were only from Denmark, this procedure limits the findings to only Danish issues and not to other regions. That is, when compared to

quantitative methods, which focus more on generalizability, qualitative studies are specific. This is explained by Creswell and Creswell (2017) who explains that for qualitative generalization, there is only generalizing findings to the respective individuals, or specific sites and places under study, as opposed to those outside. Hence, for this study, taking a qualitative method makes getting an understanding of specific themes describing only members within the sampled population context or specific site. In future, researchers can adopt a quantitative method, as part of the data collection process, incorporating other nations or areas can help improve generalizability, e.g., covering different countries. Refugee issues are global, restricting the research to only Denmark limiting its use and generalizability to a broader population.

A fourth limitation in the methodology is the smaller sample chosen, which lowers the quality and quantity of responses on the different asked questions. Since a sample acts as a critical depiction or representation for the specific population studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), having a more comprehensive sample would have been useful in getting more information for use in successfully answering the research questions. With a selection of only fifty-five participants, collecting data was limited, especially on quantitative-based questions. The last limitation was time constraint, given that interviews take time, making it impossible to collect extensive data from the Danish nationals and Syrian refugees to answer the study questions fully. Given enough time, it would have been possible to gather important data and more participants for this study without deadline limitations. However, with a defined and restricted timeline, data collection for subsequent analysis and evaluation was limited, hindering comprehensive information gathering.

Delimitations

One key delimitation is that in this study, there is emphasis on only examining issues associated with women, and more specifically Syrian refugees, within Denmark demographics. Notably, gender issues are broad, with factors impacting females and males existing within communities. Thus, despite this study centring on Syrian women, there are other issues and challenges that females face on the whole that could have been examined. Nevertheless, with this study being specific, there are existing weaknesses in examining broader issues, and documenting solutions for the wider female population.

Secondly, in designing this study, there is evident focus on only Danish participants; an aspect restricting the geographical extent the research can take place. As delimitation, this region-based feature contributes to some of the arising limitations that this study has. Generally, by focusing on the Danish market only, getting additional or global-based information becomes impossible, acting as delimitation to the research process.

A third delimitation is the sample group, as this study was only for adult persons, a feature that means for anyone outside of the required age bracket, there was exclusion and thus their opinions and responses were not included in this study. For example, for persons with valuable information, yet they were under 18 years, this study puts them out meaning their impacts on the whole process cannot be heard. As a researcher, getting quality and reliable information ranks as a key goal in the subsequent having of successful research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This means, with the study defining a restrictive age bracket, other members are excluded in actively participating and offering their insights.

Lastly, not all people within Denmark have access to existing technologies, something that shows that in getting survey responses, over-reliance on online measures or tools in data

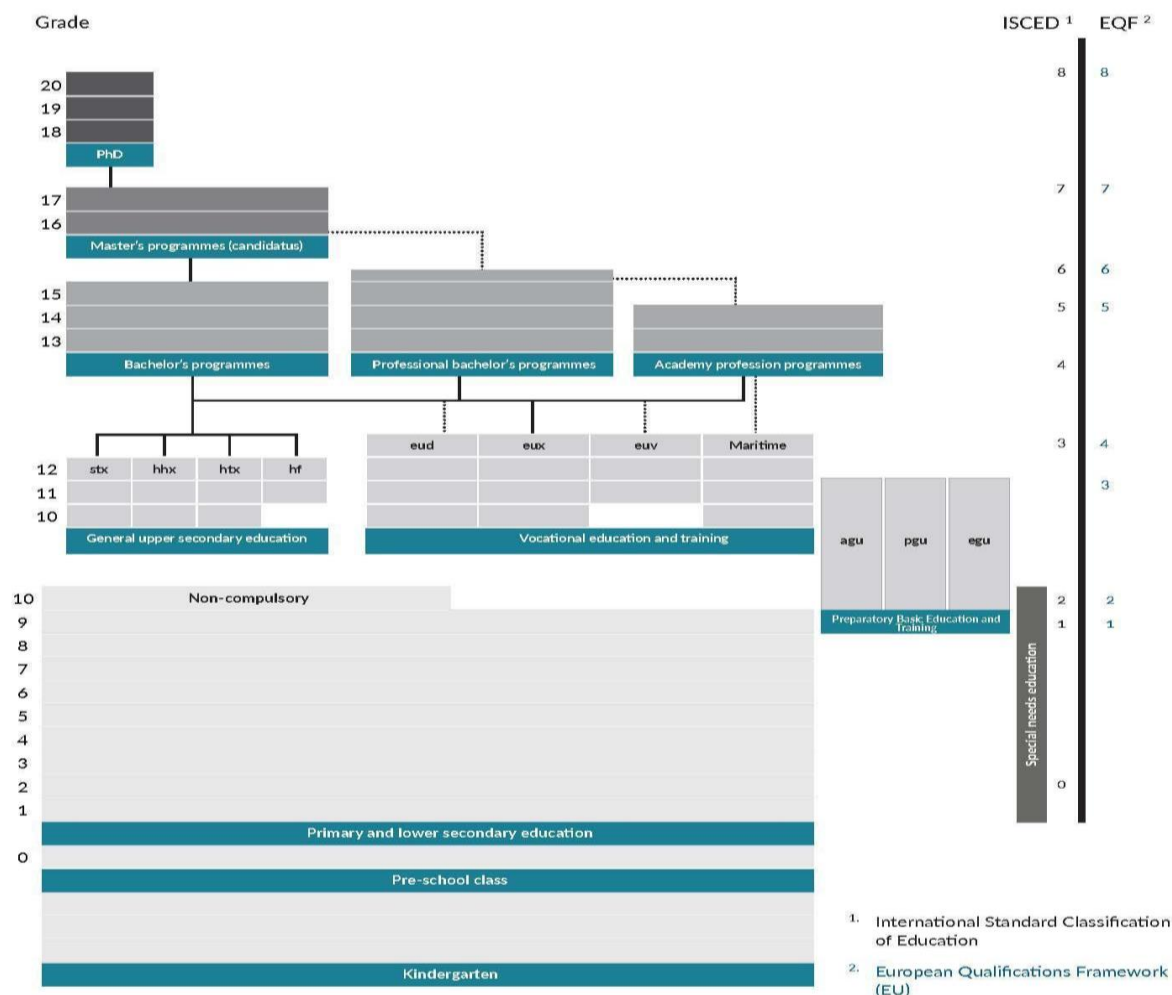
collection acts as a tool in restricting other non-online participants. Thus, as opposed to having a quality sample that comprises all aspects of the population, some useful participants and population statistics are excluded, making their inherent contributions invalid. As a control measure, there is the need to incorporate additional or supplemental techniques that can help gather data from online and non-online subjects, which is key in improving the data scope, and how it is representative of the Danish market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Analysing the Danish Education System and Incorporation of Refugee Needs

Education forms a pivotal human right, with all humans entitled to having it (Lee, 2013; Monteiro, 2010; UNESCO, 2020). Secondly, the successful integration of refugees into newer communities or societies in host nations is essential, as education is a crucial integration aspect, among other parameters, e.g., language, equal treatment, and employment (Thomassen, 2019). High prices and expensive life in Denmark, comparable to refugee's home countries, e.g., Syria, make it necessary for family members to study towards getting salaries in fully affording the expensive life. Examining the Danish Education System is vital and will help better understand the system's impacts on Syrian Women Refugees.

The Danish education system encompasses six (6) primary areas. The first three form the Danish Folkeskole Education, which are mandatory/compulsory levels, entailing pre-school as the lower level, primary school, before one is enrolled into lower secondary education (Ministry of Children and Education, 2020). These levels are essential, and as mandatory, act as a benchmark in advancing to other higher levels, i.e., upper secondary, vocational, as well as higher education (Ministry of Children and Education, 2020). The figure below offers a diagrammatic representation of all levels within the system.



In successfully meeting refugees' educational and learning needs, an existing Denmark Education system is paramount. As part of the current education measures, there is teaching Danish in the camps, which forms a pivotal phase towards integration. Thomassen (2019) explained that language is a critical parameter in allowing proper and timely refugee integration. With the teaching of Syrian refugees, the Danish language forms a crucial step in promoting good communication. Upon distributing the refugees into different municipalities, refugees go to language school (Sprogskole), which is introductory to education to language and society. There is potential for the refugees to reach Preparatory Basic Education and Training (FGU) and

Danish Voksenuddannelses center (VUC) levels focused on adult education, offered within municipalities. Moreover, as part of the educational system, Service Assistance ranks as one of the simple training or education systems one can attain. Education for refugees, especially those from Syria, is essential, as complete integration needs language skills, including Danish level C and English D. Similarly, employment forms a key parameter in refugee integration (Thomassen, 2019), making attaining of skills essential, e.g., cooking and cleaning jobs highly require undertaking courses in hygiene, first aid, and fire fighting. There are high expectations. Cleaning jobs in Denmark demands more cleaning than cleaning in Syria. Nonetheless, for refugees desiring higher academic achievements, there is a need to travel outside municipalities and Danish camps for continuation. Statens Uddannelsesstøtte (SU) forms the state's distinct educational grant/money paid by the Ministry of Education for students seeking to study.

Syrian Women Refugees and Issues Affecting them

Syrian refugee women face varied challenges, making it essential to design measures and policies that promote their wellness, especially educational needs. Sansonetti (2016) noted that women refugees, and those seeking asylum, suffer limitations for full integration, an issue associated with less accessibility to learning, and poor skills in learning the hosting nation's language. Hence, with language weaknesses among Syrian refugee women (Ozturk, Serin & Altinoz, 2019), this acts as a hindrance in realising language-related benefits, and even get sidelined on other education-related advantages. Successful refugee integration is pivotal, as it determines their quality of life (Thomassen, 2019) and how they undertake different social and life-related activities.

Secondly, Syrian women suffer most due to their female-related roles, attributed to cultural norms and practices (Habib, 2018; Ozturk, Serin & Altinoz, 2019). For example, a

Syrian woman is expected to shoulder and prioritise her familial responsibilities first - as a wife, a caretaker and a mother. This practice continues even in Denmark for Syrian women, this undermining and adversely affecting their capacity to study or work. With these cultural hurdles, there is conflict and high dilemma that Syrian women face, between adhering to existing traditions or embracing current integration measures in Denmark. Likewise, Sansonetti (2016) explains a need to have policies that effectively and sufficiently guarantee refugees' wellbeing and various associated rights. Thus, as opposed to having gender-neutral policies, there is a need to define gender-sensitive measures or procedures. As women, they faced different gender-specific issues/challenges, not only in their host countries but also in their local communities. With peaceful integration as essential, the success of this process lies in existing integration policies and their reception by refugee women

Thirdly, with the inability to understand main languages in hosting nations, refugee women lack independence and suffer from a reduced sense of belonging, contributing to their reliance on others, e.g., family members in translating and final communications (Sansonetti, 2016). Hence, with refugee number rising globally (Al-Shar & Al-Tarawneh, 2019; Asaf, 2017; Crea, 2016), for Syrian Refugees in Denmark, these weaknesses in language and lacking essential educational skills act as significant hindrances in accessing employment and other opportunities within the labour market (Sansonetti, 2016). Work is necessary, acting as a means in supplementing the quality of life one desires by providing income sources. Moreover, as shown in the theoretical framework, integration ranking as an essential pillar for Syrian Refugees, realising sufficient education and language skills are primary aspects of the integration process (Thomassen, 2019). This means that for Syrian Women, the inability to learn Danish

language level C, or English level D at the minimum, has adverse impacts on their employment, career progress, and life quality.

The other negative implications lie in their inability to make significant contributions, associated with limitations that Syrian Refugee women face. According to Sansonetti (2016), communication difficulties, attributed to inabilities in entirely speaking the host nation's languages, in this case, Danish, makes it hard for refugees to participate effectively in various training courses. Hence, with this limitation, there is a likelihood of not undertaking additional educational advances, limiting their academic scope. Similarly, since language and education are essential parameters in successful integration (Thomassen, 2019), lacking them hinders refugee participation in actively contributing or supporting labour or market policies procedures/measures formulation and implementation (Sansonetti, 2016). Hence, despite these policies being pivotal to refugee wellness, none-involvement associated with their lesser skills, in the end, works to their disadvantage. The escalation of these issues has foreseeable negative implications on refugee careers and success.

Danish Refugee Laws/Policies and Impact on Syrian Women Education

A country's policies have significant effects on society outcomes, making it vital to examine Denmark's refugee laws/policies and show how it impacts Syrian women's education, employment and living. As the "*Refugee Convention*" signatory member, Denmark is obligated to grant asylum to seekers and refugees looking for subsidiary safety and protection (Hofverberg, 2016). As a nation, the quota program (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees program for relocating refugees) and border-based applications rank as two of the principal means refugees gain entry. Moreover, in line with this, Denmark has existing laws governing and granting asylum seekers. In 1951, the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees'

established, with the recognition that the first signatory was Denmark (Hofverberg, 2016).

Another act that is pivotal in supporting and providing asylum seekers opportunities in the Danish Aliens Act, if one qualifies based on the refugee Convention (Hofverberg, 2016).

In addition to protection statuses given to the different non-qualified asylum seekers, mainly due to hostile conditions and instabilities in their home countries, Denmark also ensures asylum seekers' health care needs (Hofverberg, 2016). Lastly, as a critical aspect that is pivotal to Syrian women refugees, schooling forms a key provision. According to Hofverberg (2016), for the respective asylum seekers, as long as one is 7-16 years, they are rightly entitled to attend school, without any charges required at the asylum centre, at the various local municipality schools.

Thomassen (2019) and Sansonetti (2016) recognise the need for smooth refugee integration, which is made possible with existing and supportive policies. As refugees, learning the Danish language, gaining essential skills through a current educational system, and better policies. As Hofverberg (2016) explained, with the Danish Aliens Act and the existing Refugee Convention, the Danish government offers essential protection, good healthcare services, and refugees' opportunity to access unpaid schooling for 7-16 years. These policy implications have significant outcomes for Syrian women refugees, acting as an opportunity to support their integration into the Danish society and system.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the underlying reason as to why despite Syrian refugee women being more educated than their men are lagging behind in the Danish labour market. While focusing on to what extent the men-women ratio affects the Syrian women's wellness in Denmark. With the varied research approaches, a qualitative methodology was applied, while adopting a constructivist philosophical approach in accomplishing the respective defined research aims/goals. The data collection phase, relied on a sample comprising 55 participants, encompassing Syrian and Danish nationals, grouped into Syrian Nationals (48.1%), Danish Nationals (44.2%) and Others were 7.7%. Through taking a qualitative approach, thematic analysis of the responses were applied, with critical examination of the different answers and deciphering specific themes associated with the research problem. Primarily, the thematic analysis identified unique and specific recurring patterns essential in characterizing the various collected data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). These recurring patterns, is what forms the study's findings, based on the gathered data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Hence, with the analysed data, there is basing the interpretation on what was obtained as key in understanding the different participants and the overall sample population, i.e., Syrian refugees and other included Danish and non-Danish nationals. Given the multi-diversity in the sample, it was necessary to examine the answers both from a general perspective, as well as on specific items, from individual participants.

Thematic Analysis of Qualitative-Based Questions on Syrian Women Refugees

This study involved asking open-ended questions, and get respondents personal views. As a qualitative study, examining key patterns within the different responses forms the basis of

documenting the study findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which are explained in the next sections.

Obstacles keeping Syrian women refugees away from the Danish labor market

In the literature review, key issues were identified, adversely affecting refugees, especially Syrian Refugee women currently residing in Denmark. To fully comprehend these issues, it was useful to ask the participants to comment on any issue that they felt kept them from being fully included in the labour market.

Language barrier or communication challenges were the most reported factor hindering Syrian women from being part of the labour force. Secondly, cultural issues were another highly noted issue, with the women explaining how differences in dressing and cultures adversely affected their working and ability in getting employed. For example, one respondent said

“لعمل رئيسا قبل من المحتشم ولباسها حجابها رفض بسبب” (translated as “*Because her headscarf and modest dress were rejected by the boss*”).

Other concerns were life-work balance, associated with the demand in caring for families, while desiring to work to improve living conditions. Lastly, one participant said the challenging work policies or procedures that somehow hindered getting work. For example, one said:

“*if want to work in kindergarten you should have certificate of good conduct and you can't get it before ten years*”.

Based on this, the extensive period and strict requirements adds to the challenges Syrian refugee women go through in trying to get incorporated into the job market. Moreover, racism also arose as a key hindrance, with general negative attitudes towards Syrian women in the job market. The table below gives some of the responses, and key themes.

Table 1**Responses (Verbatim) from Participants and Themes**

Participant Verbatim Responses	Themes
<p>“a- The costumes , tradition and religion 2- inequality between the women and the man 3-the education system in Denmark is different from the education system in Syria 5- the daily life is different , there is no luxury and they work all the time .the difficult conditions of work and precision keep women away from the labour market .</p> <p>‘Clothing’</p> <p>“بسبب رفض حجابها ولباسها المحتشم من قبل رئيس العمل”</p> <p>(Because her headscarf and modest dress were rejected by the boss)</p>	Traditional practices
<p>“hijab or the veil is another obstacle concerning the labour market”</p>	Religious practices
<p>We feel stressed all the time due to laws and rules concerning the residence and deportation. We came from different mindset concerning work values and ultimately you get only temporary residence, so we don't feel secure even though we work, there is no gain.”</p> <p>“The women live under social pressure such as picking and</p>	<p>Gender inequality</p> <p>Laws in Denmark</p> <p>Financial issues</p>

<p>dropping children to from school, taking care of their house , financial problems because they don't have enough money to pay for their living .The Syrian women used to be housewives in Syria and men work for living .Those women came from war to another kind of war . Some Syrian men still behave as dependent on women. They don't share or help the women .This led to many economic and social problems like divorce.”</p> <p>“The Eastern culture , men and women are not equal and she should be a house wife and her priority is her husband and children”</p>	
<p>“I am 50 years old , so it is so difficult to learn in this age with a lot of concern and worries concerning my family and country.”</p>	Education system
<p>Danish language</p> <p>“Not acquiring the Danish language .Not having confidence .To be away from taking part in the Danish community.</p> <p>“Language difficulties, infrastructure”</p> <p>“Sprog kundskaber”</p> <p>The period for learning language is not sufficient to prepare you for labour market</p> <p>“The Danish language is difficult”</p> <p>“There is no professional method for teaching Danish language”</p> <p>not speaking the Danish language”</p>	Language

<p>“The language is the most important obstacle in the labor market”</p> <p>“The Danish community doesn't accept me due to lack of Danish language”</p>	
<p>“1-Refugees who have residence permit under art.7.3 of the Immigration Act cannot attend the university freely the first 3 years they are here , even if they only need one year to finish a master's degree , seeing that a Syrian master's degree is 4 years of studies and in Denmark it is 5 years”</p> <p>“Danish governments did not recognize our academic degrees and experience, and they put obstacles in front of us in obtaining licenses to practice the profession”</p> <p>“a-The severe laws concerning work .For example ,if want to work in kindergarten you should have certificate of good conduct and you can't get it before ten years”</p> <p>“The laws turned the children against their parents and that drew to many problems inside the families”</p>	<p>Danish government policies</p>
<p>A lot of women I have met have no experience from the Syrian labor market; they have no 'labor identity'.</p> <p>In my experience Syrian women do not want a job they consider low status such as cleaning. However, cleaning is often a realistic goal when you come to Denmark with no language skills and no</p>	<p>Job experience</p>

<p>job experience.”</p> <p>Any job required competence and certificate and some women are housewives</p>	
<p>“Not shaking hands with men. Cultures and traditions”</p> <p>“Maybe culture”</p> <p>“Culture within family structure (maternity leave, working hours)”</p> <p>Also, a lot of these women have the full responsibility regarding the 'domestic obligations such as taking care of the children, cleaning and cooking. Moreover, many of these women have a lot more children than the average Danish woman and hence the workload at home is a lot more substantial.</p> <p>“I have 5 children and a big responsibility to work outside.”</p>	Culture
<p>“Because of the lack of job opportunities in this country”</p> <p>“There is difficulty in finding job in general”</p> <p>“There are no job opportunities”</p>	Inefficient jobs
<p>“Disease is another obstacle. I have a problem with my shoulder”</p>	Diseases-health
<p>“I am 50 years old , so it is so difficult to learn in this age with a lot of concern and worries concerning my family and country.”</p>	Age hindrances
<p>“The Danish community doesn't accept me due to lack of Danish language”</p>	Socio-economic challenges
<p>“Racism against veiled women. I own my hair dress shop, one of</p>	Racism

my clients refused to let one of my employers to cut her hair because she was wearing Hijab.”	
“1- Racism, some people are racist towards the refugee women”	

Using the information from *Table 1*, one can identify major issues, i.e., recurring themes from the respondents that help show that these items have the major impacts. Out of the entire theme summary, key issues are cultural/traditional practices, religious practices (demands), gender inequalities, language barriers/hindrances, job experience (inadequate/insufficient), and Danish government work-related policies. Despite responses coming from varied members, there were a higher proportion of highly related answers, creating the major identifiable themes.

Perspectives and Views on Ideal Integration Situations for Refugee Women

Timely and efficient refugee integration within the Danish system is pivotal. However, there exist varied aspects, both socially, economically and education-wise that adversely affects this process. Thomassen (2019) says integration success encompasses facets like employment, language acquisition, equal treatment, among other constructs. In this survey, asking this question to the chosen participants helped get their views, towards reporting measures that can be used to improve women refugee situation in Denmark, relating to their sufficient integration. Of those surveyed, some most important ideas included finishing school and attaining required qualifications for work, job availability for refugees and timely language proficiency. Moreover, dealing with gender inequality issues is also important, and this is linked to the strain placed on women, e.g., only considered as housewives, with lesser room to work or grow academically. The table below gives some of the responses, and the main themes from the verbatim answers.

Table 2**Responses from Participants and Themes**

Participant verbatim responses	Themes
<p>"I think this is relevant to how old you are. The younger you are the better. The older you are the worse .If you are young, that, means have a lot of chances and ways to study and work</p>	Age-related measures
<p>"The women should learn to work. My wife used to be a teacher in Syria and hair dresser and now she is studying to work."</p>	Education attainment
<p>The ideal situation for refugee women is, in my opinion, that we act fast to integrate them in meaningful ways in education or employment and secure the possibility for an independent life for them and their families."</p> <p>"The municipalities should find the suitable jobs for the refuge women instead of giving them money. I know some women with high education work in cleaning jobs or in the restaurants .The municipalities put the women under pressure when they send them</p>	Employment opportunities

to internship. Why don't they find jobs for them?"	
<p>Some old women suffer from many diseases. They can't work and they should live comfortable life."</p> <p>We must act fast in cases of refugee women who have PTSD close to their everyday life and refugee women who are constrained by negative social control. Every woman in Denmark must be aware of their rights and how the welfare system can help in multiple ways.</p>	Health dealing with diseases
"The Syrian refugee women shouldn't be equal to men because Women are working outside and inside the house. As a woman, I am responsible for everything	Work-family balance issues
"To participate in society – a lot of studies show that real integration starts when the women get a job - they take responsibility for their economy, the children participate in school and SFO and are less absent because staying at home with mom is not an option.	Income sources

<p>The women obtain more information about the society they live in, they get a Danish network which can help them, and it improves the language skills. I think everyone likes to feel needed/useful and appreciated and that is the feeling they get when they join the labour market.”</p>	
<p>ان يتقبل المجتمع الدنماركي اختلاف الدين واختلاف الثقافة وان “ يتقبل المرأة في سوق العمل على ما هي عليه وان تعطيتها البلدة “الفرصة المناسبة لتعلم اللغة الدنماركية لانها مفتاح كل شيء</p> <p><i>(For Danish society to accept the difference in religion and culture, to accept women in the labour market for what they are, and for the town to give her the appropriate opportunity to learn the Danish language because it is the key to everything)</i></p>	Cultural differences
<p>“more help in getting in the school system”</p>	Education integration
<p>The women obtain more information about the society they live in, they get a Danish network which can help them, and it improves the language skills.</p>	Language acquisition

<p>“That they have the same options as any Danish people”</p> <p>“When coming to Denmark, it should be very clear from the beginning how the Danish society works and that our society and labour market are built around both men and women participating in it.</p>	Equity with Danish people
<p>“It depends on her education. Many prefer to work part time as they have kids.”</p>	Work conditions supporting families and cultures
<p>“Practicing cultural exchange with Danish woman and creating their own lives in cooperation with other women. But there's no single answer to what an ideal situation is.”</p>	<p>Culture supporting measures</p> <p>Efficient policies for women</p>
<p>In Syria women used to be housewives and men work outside for living. So this ideal situation for women.”</p>	Promote males support

Danish Education System Suitability in Preparing for Joining the Labor Market

Table 3

Education System Suitability to Prepare for Job Market Joining

Participant Verbatim Response	Themes
<p>"I think the current education system didn't prepare the refugee women to the labour market. The state here doesn't promote women to have their own work due to not having good qualifications or competence. They think that the Syrian women are backward and not competent. I proposed to work in the kindergarten to teach children drawing because I used to work as teacher in Syria but my supervisor refused and told me to that I should study pedagogue for 4 years and then you can work."</p>	<p>Not efficient for refugee women</p> <p>Fails to ensure competence</p> <p>Slow to incorporate or integrate Syrian women in work</p>
<p>"It's also difficult. You need language to join labour market. But language isn't all. It needs to be a combination of education and work."</p> <p>But the language schools are bad because they are passive schools.</p>	<p>Integration challenges (language and education)</p>
<p>"Yes , the education system prepares the</p>	<p>Efficient in preparing women</p>

refugees to work . You can study and work and fulfil your goals'	
<p>The government has raised the age go retirement to I give people a chance to work</p> <p>The education in my children schools are positive and good to prepare the young people for the labour market.</p>	Higher retirement age supports working time
They failed to deal with refugees and the way they teach is not enough to teach. They just want or push people to graduate and get more statistics for the government"	Rushed teaching practices in language schools
<p>"The Danish vocational system is good because it combines work and study, but there is no guarantee that you will find work or acceptance from company owners."</p> <p>"It depends on the market requirements. The women have to choose what is the most demand education"</p>	No work guarantee
(The education system does not grant refugees to be proficient in the language)	Fails to ensure competence
"It depends on the market requirements. The	Depends on expertise demanded

women have to choose what is the most demand education”	
Security and stability are so important and vital to push these women successful and unfortunately the refugees miss that in Denmark.	Needs to align with Arabic relevant roles Need to ensure security and stability for women
<p>They facilitate work and the education is free.</p> <p>“This depends a lot on many factors. I am not sure that the educational system is suited to meet the needs for fx refugees. With the implementation of the IGU, refugees have more options to enter the labour market through educational programs.”</p> <p>“...I believe there are a lot of opportunities within the Danish educational system but the direct connection to the labour market is not always clear. A clear connection would ensure a more goal-oriented counselling and the student would be more motivated and be part of the labour market earlier than now.”</p> <p>“Vocational training combined with</p>	Education is paramount

theoretical education and improvement of language skills could help more women regarding access to the labour market. As it is now a lot of women have an unrealistic dream about getting a higher education in Denmark – this dream proves difficult as they have to start all over by getting the 9.th grade and afterwards what is equivalent to a high school diploma – so there is a long way if you want to do a bachelor's go master's degree. Also, the Danish educational system is almost solely theoretical – there should be an obligatory internship during the formal education so you know what you will be dealing with once you finish – and also it would make sense to have a more concrete image based on practical experience when you deal with theoretical matters – it will qualify your understanding of the topics. This is of course different from education to education – my first master's degree was solely theoretical, whereas my second

master's degree is case-based. I prefer the way my second master's degree is taught."	
"Career guidance referring to a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used'. It includes 'individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision making and career management skills."	Counselling and timely planning needed
"Yes , the educational system prepare the women to join the Danish market . We have the vocational education and internship , there is SU ,money is given to pupils to study."	Academic advances are need for better outcomes, e.g., masters from single bachelor's
"It is, but you have to master the Danish	Language skills are vital

language”	
“Yes , the educational system prepare the women to join the Danish market . We have the vocational education and internship, there is SU ,money is given to pupils to study.”	Offers a platform for integration
<p>”نظام التعليم لا يمنح الاجئ ان يتقن اللغة“</p> <p>(The education system does not grant refugees to be proficient in the language)</p> <p>“1-The municipality shouldn't put the illiterate women under pressure . They should teach them in a simple and easy way .They should teach them crafts and let them work in the labor which relevant to the Arabic origin . They should learn the language and encourage these women to learn how to have goals and to be successful in their life</p>	Not very efficient
They are racist and not promoting refugees to learn the Danish language.	Racism in language schools
It will be difficult for the first generation to integrate but it will be easy for the second	Less efficient in supporting integration

generation to assimilate in the Danish society through language and work .”	

As seen from *Table 3*, the participants offered varied responses on how well or suitable the current Danish Education system is in supporting one’s capacity in joining the labour market. Of the responses, there is a mixture of positive, and negative connotations. Some of the major themes from the responses include not being efficient for refugee women, failure in ensuring competence (among learners), there is slower incorporation or integration of Syrian women in work, and also there is no work guarantee [upon study completion]. Moreover, some participants agreed that joining the labour market, was highly pegged to expertise demanded for the specific job, and for those with higher levels, i.e., academic advancement, was key in getting employed.

Thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with 3 refugees

The final analysis of the data collected involved the analysis of transcripts from the interviews of 3 refugees based in Denmark. The data collected was also analysed to determine key thematic areas within the responses from the selected respondents.

Gender equality

The first section of the interviews involved gaining an understanding of the perception of the refugees regarding gender equality. By first understanding the refugees’ perception on gender equality, the study may be able to further understand why the women refugees were lagging behind their male counterparts with regards to integration and employment.

A key aspect that is evident in the responses from the interview is that the respondents had similar opinions regarding the meaning of gender equality. All three participants identified that they perceived equality to mean that both men and women have equal opportunities, duties and rights with no discrimination between the genders. This is important as it indicates the women's views on gender equality regarding employment and civil rights. Going by this definition of gender equality, the women also identified that equality in their home country of Syria was lagging far behind the Western countries due to several factors including culture and religion. For example, one participant stated:

‘In my opinion, there is no difference in the meaning of equality all around the world but surely there is still difference in where the equality have reached in my culture and in the western culture, because equality still needs huge efforts to be achieved in Syria.’

Regarding how gender equality has impacted the women physically and mentally, a key theme that arose in the interviews is that the women upon coming to Denmark have had their options and opportunities expanded to include employment and financial independence from the man. While the respondents did mention that this has brought on a number of challenges within the homes of Syrian refugees, the respondents were in favour of the expansion of the opportunities available to women. For example: one of the challenges raised within the interviews was the work life balance where one respondent stated :

‘I think many of Syrian women in Denmark are facing massive challenges to balance between their personal and career development, and their families. Therefore, many Syrian women might decide to withdraw from education or work to focus on their families, because it is physically and mentally challenging to focus on both.’

This statement highlights how the culture in Syria was based on the idea that men should be the sole providers of the family. And how it clashes with the western equality culture where both men and women can gain financial independence. In the Syrian culture, the women were expected to take care of the household and family in all ways which when some women attempt to accomplish along with career development may prove to be too difficult leading them to abandoning their own career developments in favour of their familial duties.

Education in Syria and Denmark

Regarding education in Syria and Denmark, a common theme arose from the interviews. The women agreed that women should have higher education as it opens up more opportunities for them to have their independence. , However, it was clear that higher education was more important in Syrian culture for women because of the limitations set on their type of employment.. In Syria, the employment opportunities open for women, require higher education whereas the wide range of opportunities in Denmark does not necessitate higher education. For instance, one respondent stated that

‘So in my opinion the woman in Syria should have a high education because in our country if the woman gets a high education degree that means that she is guaranteed to have a very respectable job’

The women therefore stated that even though a higher education would be important in improving the socio-economic status of the women, it wasn’t necessary within Denmark. They however also stated that albeit some challenges experienced within the education system in Denmark, the policies and curriculum in place does enable women to gain employment. The women agreed that the Denmark education system through its focus on practicality enables them

to be equipped for future employment in whatever sector they choose to be a part of. For example, one respondent stated :

‘Yes, it will help . It will promote the skills and qualifications related to the new Danish and the global market. The education in high schools, colleges and universities prepare and qualify the students for the labour market through paid and unpaid internships.’

Integration in Denmark

A key issue that was raised in the interviews by the respondents with regard to the integration policies in Denmark was the language barrier. This, according to the respondents, is a significant barrier as to be able to work and study in Denmark, it is necessary to understand and speak the Danish language. The policy according to the respondents has failed in 2 ways: the first is that the refugees are not well exposed to the Danish language and culture within the education system and the second is that certain aspects of the policies restrict the access to education that would be necessary in learning the language. For instance, one respondent stated that

‘The language schools didn’t work properly because they didn’t contribute to daily interaction’.

Regarding their future within Denmark, the respondents had a positive outlook for the integration into the country’s culture over the next ten years. The respondents stated their aspirations regarding their personal and professional lives which indicates that their long-term aspirations with regard to their integration in Denmark is positive despite their challenges. For instance, one respondent stated :

‘As a refugee, most importantly, I see myself and my family are settled down and having either permanent residence permit or Danish citizenship.’

Work in Denmark and Syria

In general, the respondents stated that the primary reason why highly educated women in Syria did not seek employment was due to social standards and pressures that did not necessitate a woman to work because the men were deemed the financial providers. The education of women was therefore seen as a protection tool if she would be required to work at some point in her life such as in the case of divorce or death of the husband. The respondents also agreed that the employment of the women could improve the socio-economic status of the family as they would be able to support and share financial responsibilities with the male counterparts..

A key aspect mentioned by the respondent regarding the relative ease of entry into the job market for Syrian women is that they would have to seek education and empowerment programs that would enable them to learn the language and also acquire the necessary skills and knowledge that they would need to compete in the job market. The respondents also agreed on one of the advantages of working in Denmark as opposed to in Syria being the equality and respect within employment. For instance one respondent stated that ‘No one is above law. Laws are applied to all people in Denmark. No bribes, no corruption . Respect is one of the features of the Danish market’.

The respondents stated that in Denmark, they were able to work in positions that they may not have been able to work in in Syria and that they were free from disrespect and abuse within the workplace. In Syria, the respondents stated that because the work environment was based on Syrian culture, the work was more flexible compared to in Denmark which allowed the women to have a greater work life balance. The major disadvantage however was that corruption was the order of the day which required the people to have connections in order to obtain gainful

employment all the while the compensation package was not as good as in Denmark. One respondent stated :

‘There are corruptions, bribes and most people that in charge are above law. If you have connection, surly you will be employed and everything will be O.K. with you’

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Understanding the needs, and potential concerns faced by Syrian refugee women forms the first step in advocating and promoting communities that improve their wellness. In this study, using a survey, it was possible to get useful information to decipher the key issues; Syrian refugees face, especially relating to the Danish Education System. Collecting different information from a diverse sample group helped improve the scope, as it allowed getting varied ideas from various persons, including Syrian women refugees, Danish Nationals and others. Although responses varied and personal, the collected quantitative and qualitative data is essential in answering the previously defined questions and supporting the creation of better measures and policies towards promoting wellness among Syrian Refugee women, and other women refugees worldwide.

Weaknesses in the Danish Education System Concerning Refugee Educational Needs

According to some of the interviewed participants, the efficiency of an education system which lies in the capacity to meet its foundational goals, seemed missing on multiple aspects. Collecting data from the selected 55 participants and the three interviews was useful in better comprehension of what goes on in Denmark, especially relating to Refugee education. Authors, Sansonetti (2016) and Thomassen (2019) recognize how important smooth refugee integration is, given the differences in background, cultural values and associated religious issues. With Denmark as a pivotal signatory to what is commonly called the “*Refugee Convention*”, there exists an underlying obligation in offering and supporting measures that contribute to the asylum seekers and refugees wellness (Hofverberg, 2016). Of the various essential integration issues,

education attainment is critical and recognized as necessary and other issues supporting smooth integration (Thomassen, 2019).

In this study, based on the reported findings, a proportional number of respondents held that the current Danish Educational system failed in fully meeting everyone's educational needs. Of all surveyed participants, the majority had a bachelor's degree (42%), and this was followed by those with masters (32%), and finally high school/college as the highest academic attainment (26%). Alarming, of the participants, only 17.3% reported that the Danish Education system is very satisfying, with other levels spread across moderate, to less satisfying. These indicators make it necessary to discuss some of the explained reasons, which will help recommend policies and education-based measures in improving outcomes. With the documentation of the attained skills and expertise, the dissatisfaction levels paint a picture of an educational system, not well attuned in supporting refugee women academic needs. Moreover, since the study also incorporated views from non-refugees, i.e., Danish nationals and others, the conglomeration of all view help decipher the underlying reasons for the dissatisfaction.

Based on evident dissatisfaction with the current Danish Education System, in ensuring an effective education, there is a need in adopting proper tools and incorporating them within the learning system. As opposed to transferring learning measures that work for locals, i.e., Danish nationals, onto the different refugees, adopting customized measures is vital.

In the article by Okkels (2020), the author recommends the application of gender-sensitivity measures within the system, as a tool in improving outcomes. These gender-sensitive measures can be included through the procedures provided to women refugees accounting for their migration specific needs and the differences in cultural values. Also, considering closely what a refugee goes through during movement and attaining asylum status, there is need in customizing

procedures with the consideration of the trauma, torture and potential exploitations they go through in the whole process (Okkels, 2020).

Moreover, there is evidence of women facing numerous challenges, some of which are associated with some traditional, cultural differences and existing women roles (Habib, 2018; Ozturk, Serin, & Altinoz, 2019; Sunata & Abdulla, 2019). Likewise, within the Danish asylum system, women continue facing challenges in effectively accessing support for their psychological needs, some of which are attributed to the trauma, sexual violence they continually experience and domestic challenges or abuse within the social settings (Okkels, 2020). Thus, rather than only considering basic items within the curriculum, more emphasis is needed on the various issues that impact Syrian refugee women, from the moment they leave their home countries to the period one settles in a hosting country. The inclusion of these needs, and the subsequent promotion of the same within the education system is pivotal in supplementing better outcomes from the learning. Also, since the Danish educational system is multi-dimensional, encompassing different levels undertaken by the various learners, implementing supportive tools for the refugees across the different levels is essential. With the traumatic and torturous experience refugees face, considering this issue in the designing and applying the Danish curriculum is critical for their wellness. There is a need to ensure that proper and practical arrangements are adopted that factors in the deeper needs of asylum seekers, ranging from their age differences, potential health needs, and gender differences (Cousins, 2015; Okkels, 2020), all of which impact their educational attainments.

Challenges on Syrian Women and Special Needs from the Danish Education System

In attaining primary education, there are varied challenges that Syrian refugee women face, adversely affecting their educational and employment journeys. Using the summarized

open-ended responses in *Table 1* and *Table 2*, and the responses from the in-depth interviews, one can pinpoint critical challenges that, if solved, are pivotal in supporting success among women, mostly current women refugees residing in Denmark.

Of all the responses, language barrier or challenges emerged as the most pressing issue among the participants and was seen as adversely impacting on their integration, educational progress and employment opportunities accessibility. Within the community and in work-related settings, speaking efficiently is paramount, making those less skilled in communicating the Danish language, disadvantaged in their progress and employment journeys. As a significant hindrance, there is a demand for women refugees to take considerable time and resources to ensure timely language acquisition. This is one particular area that the educational system could focus on if they are to improve their efficiency as this is a theme that was apparent in the in-depth interview responses.

Gender inequality and other social issues emerged as other challenges from the respondents, the combination of which adversely affects the learning process and getting employment. Based on gender theory, it becomes possible to critically examine and understand essential feminine and masculine aspects distinguishing between men and women (Jule, 2014). Also, within communities, cultural practices and norms have impacts on people, despite their gender. Culture and traditions form an essential part of life. From the participant responses, there is an evident equality challenge, especially among Syrian families, with the women given the significant role of only acting as housewives. The social system hinders their progression. The in-depth interviews also indicated that the main reason for the unemployment of even highly educated women is social pressures that dictate that women should be housewives taking care of the family as the men provide financially.

The cultural differences between Syrian and Danish families are evident, with Syrian culture allocating primary home-based responsibilities to the women, which vary from men. For example, based on one participant's responses, many Syrian women are tasked with numerous domestic obligations within the home setting, some of which entails caring for children, cleaning, and doing the family cooking, mostly without the support of their husbands. Moreover, within the Syrian culture and traditional practices, key aspects emerge, varying significantly from Danish women. For example, in this case, compared to Danish women, many Syrian women have more children, with the numbers surpassing the average seen among those of Danish women. Thus, with this difference, there is an additional level of responsibility and workload the women must deal with in their homes, contributing to their exhaustion and less time in pursuing other activities. And with the need to support their family, the result in settling for less desirable jobs, e.g., cleaning, is attributed to the inefficiencies in language skills and lack of essential job experiences. In some instances, even when the women are able to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to attain more desirable positions the fact that the burden of taking care of the family still falls on the woman despite the fact that they are also employed makes some women abandon their work and careers. This is a specific aspect that arose from the in-depth interviews with Syrian refugee women.

According to Okkels (2020), as a tool in ensuring equality, there are vital gender-guidelines specifically described towards ensuring there is protection beyond only legal principles. Apart from protection on issues such as violence within the homes and other associated abuses, the adherence to the gender-guidelines is essential in ensuring refugee women safety, of which is key in supporting their wellness and capacity in advancing academically or professionally through their various jobs.

Racism is another challenge adversely affecting Syrian women's success, both within the academic sphere and their employment journeys. The issue of racism also was key among challenges contributing to slower integration and successful employment attainment among Syrian women. As an issue, these outcomes violate existing rights, prohibiting the discrimination of persons or essential applicants based on their language or other aspects like race, sexual orientation, and colour (The Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2017). Moreover, it is illegal to discriminate or deny employment opportunities solely based on their respective religion and social origin or citizenship (The Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2017). In this case, the reported cases of being side-lined in employment due to one's religion and race depict the violation of refugees' rights within the Danish asylum system. Upon arriving in Denmark, the inherent desire to accomplish key family-related goals makes it vital to seek employment. However, the challenges faced, primarily due to discrimination and racism, make achieving these goals impossible. In the end, there is a sense of depression and feeling unwelcome, all of which adversely affect the successful integration process. As a solution, there is a need to manage these challenges if the different Syrian women realize their personal and career goals.

Cultural and religious practices ranked as other challenges impacting Syrian women and their capacity to getting better education and entering the job market. For example, as a cultural and spiritual practice, the wearing of hijabs, niqab as well as burqas forms a key aspect within the Syrian community (Ozturk, Serin & Altinoz, 2019). Nevertheless, with the banning and restriction of some of these dressing, there is the overall infringement on religious freedom that Syrian women feel, contributing to their less socialization. There is a significant number of different participant responses, who reported dressing as a critical issue, hindering employment.

Thus, despite the qualifications and willingness that one might have, these cultural and religious demands act on their disadvantage when facing other applicants during job interviews.

Inadequate jobs form the last issue that adversely impacts Syrian refugee women, as seen from the various recorded responses. As refugees, the high living standards demanded within Denmark requires income sources, of which employment is necessary. However, based on the reactions, getting work is a problem, which has affected the incorporation of Syrian refugee women within the current labour market. Through the massive underemployment and unemployment cases, there is the exclusion of various societal benefits and the attainment of quality life the same way as Danish nationals and other members within the employment domain. This challenge risks causing social exclusion and other associated issues like the inability to access basic needs and services, e.g., healthcare. The weaknesses are linked to language inefficiencies (Thomassen, 2019) and the lack of quality experience among refugees (Ozturk, Serin & Altinoz, 2019; Sansonetti, 2016). rank as some of the contributing factors for the inability to get jobs. However, despite these underlying challenges, there is no guarantee of getting employed to learn and obtain the necessary academic qualifications and papers. From the participant's responses, not being employed upon reaching Denmark and even going through the education system formed a significant challenge, adversely affecting refugees' lives. Despite getting jobs, there are hindrances in their career advances since they are most precarious and seasonal (Ozturk, Serin & Altinoz, 2019). Hence, there is less likelihood of rising to the various job ranks with the market demands, given the minimal experience, or getting in jobs with no significant implications.

These, and other problems like inefficiencies in language, contribute to the overall challenge; Syrian women face within the employment sectors. With the seasonal jobs, career

development becomes impossible, making it essential to devise and champion for measures in managing the existing structural barriers within the Danish labour market. Moreover, there is a need to promote and implement long-term training among all the Syrian refugee women despite the permit status, as opposed to the adoption of highly restrictive policies (Ozturk, Serin & Altinoz, 2019) disadvantageous to the women's success or progression measures.

CONCLUSION

Study Summary and Key Findings

The integration process encompasses varied aspects (Thomassen, 2019), and for Syrian refugees, making the transition comes with various demands and challenges. Of the different social factors, this study focused on examining the underlying reasons, why despite being well educated, many Syrian women still lag behind, especially in the job market, compared to males. The diversity in issues facing refugees, some of which are escalated by key underlying home nation-based issues, makes it necessary to examine how the integration process supports their wellness. In this study, qualitative and thematic analysis was applied to decipher some key data patterns to answer the research question. Major obstacles keeping Syrian women refugees away from the Danish labour market included cultural/traditional practices, religious practices (demands), gender inequalities, language barriers/hindrances, job experience (inadequate/insufficient), and Danish government work-related policies. Secondly, the Danish Education system's ability to support job market integration, key concerns were not efficient for refugee women, failure in ensuring competence, i.e., skills differing, slower incorporation/integration, no work guarantee, and market demand for advanced academic levels.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, there was a qualitative approach, with a primary focus on understanding perceptions and opinions from the participants on the asked items. Given that different research methodologies exist, e.g., mixed, quantitative, and qualitative (Creswell & Creswell, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), further research can apply the same measures and focus on quantitative technique. This approach is vital in using statistical and mathematical methods in showing association.

Further studies can expand the research scope and study other socio-political factors affecting women within societies. In this study, there was a significant focus on job market integration, limiting the study scope. With women facing varied issues within their communities, e.g., sexual abuse, reproductive health, psychological health, etc., examining other areas by future researchers can help increase the informational scope.

Thirdly, further studies can replicate the current research, using a broader sample/participant size, helpful in understanding factors adversely affecting women's abilities to succeed within the job market.

Another useful further study area is undertaking a comparative study to examine females and males and compare their job market integration abilities. As a critical assumption in this study, there was a presumption that males within communities have better opportunities and capacity in joining the job market across genders.

Finally, further studies can take a specific approach, examine the educational level, and possess technical skills to impact job market integration. There was a general focus in this study, with respondents not entirely responding based on their academic levels or technical skills.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

SECTION I: PARTICIPANT'S DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Participant's Gender

Which among the below items defines gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Rather not say

Participant's Age

Which among the below items defines your age?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 24-30 Years | <input type="radio"/> 41-45 Years |
| <input type="radio"/> 31-35 Years | <input type="radio"/> 46-50 Years |
| <input type="radio"/> 36-40 Years | <input type="radio"/> over 50 Years |

Participant's Marital Status

Which among the following describes your current status? *

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Single | <input type="radio"/> Divorced |
| <input type="radio"/> Married | <input type="radio"/> Widow |
| <input type="radio"/> Engaged | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
-

Education level

What is your current highest attained academic/educational level?

- ☐ High school/college
 - ☐ Bachelors
 - ☐ Masters
 - ☐ Doctorate/PhD
-

Nationality Status

Of the below items, kindly select only one distinct option

- ☐ Syrian National
 - ☐ Danish national
 - ☐ Others
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
-

Employability Situation/Status

Which among the below items offers the best description of your current employability state *

- ☐ Working/Employed
 - ☐ Self-Employed
 - ☐ Not working
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
-

Employability Level

If you answered Working/Employed above, which among the below items offers the best description of your level*

- ☐ Junior Staff/Employee
- ☐ Senior Employee

- ☐ Supervisor Position Employee
- ☐ Management Position Employee
- ☐ Others
- ☐ Prefer not to say

SECTION II: RESPECTIVE QUESTIONS about EDUCATION SYSTEM

A. General Satisfaction with Existing Education System towards academic achievement

As a current resident, how would you rate your distinct satisfaction level with the current education system?

- ☐ It is very satisfying
- ☐ It is Moderately satisfying
- ☐ I have a neutral view/experience
- ☐ It is Moderately unsatisfying
- ☐ It is Very unsatisfying
- ☐ Prefer not to say

B. Close-Ended Specific Items Associated with Academic Achievement

As a participant, the various below items give summaries of important information on academics, and as a participant, kindly choose the best response that you feel relates wholly to you. Your honest response is highly appreciated.

I have improved my academic skills based on the learning received through the education system things learned.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

The current education measures and associated practices meet my needs for academic success

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

I feel happy with the education process based on the positive impacts it has now then before

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

I can say my academic skills and competencies have been improved by being part of the current education system

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

I can say that the government plays an essential role in supporting refugee education?

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

I can openly say that the measures put forward by the government and the education agencies towards refugee education are based on promoting everyone's welfare and equality

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

I can say the current education system is important and sufficient for preparation for entering the labour market

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

I can say that there any gender-segregated policies concerning labour market?

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

Open-Ended Questions on Education System

The following section lists essential items relating to the current education system. as a critical participant, you are requested to provide useful and honest information to each item.

1. As a participant, kindly share any existing or previous issues you have experienced within the education system you feel hinder your capacity to meet your refugee educational needs?

.....
.....

2. As a participant, kindly provide information on some of the ordinary needs you feel the current education system fails to meet

.....
.....

3) As an essential participant, kindly provide any information on positive personal, social, and work-related impacts you see in the current education system as it relates to improving your formal education

.....
.....

4) What obstacles keep the Syrian refugees' women away from the Danish labour market?

.....
.....

5) To what extent do you think the Danish government supports the refugees to fulfil their academic achievement?

.....
.....

6) To what extent the integration process promotes refugee women in the labour market?

What is the ideal situation for refugee women?

.....

.....

7) Are there any specific measures that the Danish government should take concerning the refugee women's work?

.....

.....

8) What are some of the NGO or human organisations you know are involve refugee women in the labour market?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.

9) As a participant, do you have any recommendations you can give to ensure women's better involvement in the labour market?

.....

.....

10) As a participant, kindly share some main reasons you feel makes the government measures in supporting refugee education does not meet the desired equality aspects

.....

.....

11. As a participant, kindly share your comments on whether the current education system is well suited in preparing one towards joining the labour market

THE SURVEY

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd_R-sW2bspJ9YpWeFuWmLS_vH7QcFwZ_3y01Ce5FmvZF92rg/viewanalytics

THE THREE INTERVIEWS

Interview (1)

Heba is a civil engineer . She is 46 years ,married and have 4 children . She used to work in Damascus municipality for 5 years and now she works in Roskilde municipality . She has been in Denmark for 7 years .

Man-woman equality

1- What does equality between men and women mean to you ?Do you think the word equality has the same meaning in your culture as in western culture ?

- Equality for me means to be equal with men in the rights and the duties . Our Middle eastern culture does not have the equality between the two genders. It has its positives and negatives. The positives are the woman is more honoured and is not responsible for working hard and making money to spend on the children. The negatives are the woman is stripped from her rights, she can be affected by the culture surrounding her to not continue studying and she can be humiliated because she doesn't have her own income, so she can't be financially independent,. She can't build herself in our culture without someone that is working; it can be a brother, husband, son or a father. Thus, it is both positive and negative, it came from our Muslim culture, but I believe that equality and rights are there in the Sharia law, because God forbids her to pray or do things when she can't be able to do it. Equality is something that can only be found in rights and duties and not in everything like the westerner's culture. Equality for westerners is in everything, in working, in spending, in the social life, in beliefs and everything is equal. This belief also has its own pros and cons. The pros are it contributes in developing and educating women and that helped her to thrive, with no differentiating between her and the man in any duty that can be found, but there is still a difference in the salary, men have a higher salary than women, doesn't matter to what extent the woman is educated, experienced and has a high status, still the men have higher salaries than women in the same occupation. Even the whole world, the EU and The USA are discussing this issue. As I said it has pros and cons, it got the woman out of the traditional thinking. The woman escaped from the traditional beliefs that were inherited from generations; even in Europe they had the same way of thinking and beliefs as we have in our eastern cultures. Now the woman got out of this bubble. The cons are the woman becomes tired and exhausted, because the woman's nature is to take care of her young ones and things at home, it is hard to balance between working outside and her home. So that creates many social conflicts, but if the man will understand the concept of equality between men and women, he will appreciate and help her at home and the responsibilities at home. Women can't

physically manage all that, because she gets pregnant and in nature is not physically capable of doing jobs that requires a huge amount of physical effort. So, when the society is 100 % equal, there would be no mercy for women, and that is the only con that woman could live through in the western society.

2- **To what extent men-women equality promote women's quality of life mentally and physically ?**

- It made her think that she is not weak anymore and that she needn't a man in her life to support her financially and to be responsible of her. But with the help of equality it had made the woman feel stronger and more responsible and to be more open minded and to accept that she can be more responsible of her own choices and beliefs and to go out and work and at the same time she can take care of her own family and her household even if it is a bit late because the western culture is a bit different than ours ,as the women in western culture have to be responsible for herself and be able to move out and have her own home and her own life and be responsible for many things and to do all that they would like above 30 years old to be stable in her marriage. They experience flops for 10-15 years of their lives from being a teenager until they decide what they want to be or to do in their future life and also in marriage. Then women and men will share many responsibilities together. The constitution and the law in the Western countries make the woman think more and be more mature and finally be able to decide that she and her partner would share everything 50/50 between them. This law is a bit different in our culture but overall it makes the woman mentally and physically stronger .For example ,the woman would be able to go to the gym as the man and to feel that she is equal to the man in terms of improving her physical body as the man. Unfortunately, in our culture we don't have this way of thinking because the woman is a symbol for femininity, beauty, calmness and a symbol of the household's stability. Even if she is beautiful or not she is not obliged to go to the gym or enjoyed herself by going to the cinema with her friends or have a cup of coffee with them . Of course she has her own relationships but not in the same way as in the western culture. In terms of mentality, when an eastern woman comes to Europe, she will be in a shock because she always thought that the man is her only source of assistance in her life but when she comes to the Western countries she would be treated the same way as the man does, she has to go work , share expenses and take care of her family as the man does . To live in a society such that she must be open minded and to be able to work with the mentality around her and to get used to and she must be able to live with both cultures and both identities .Some Syrian women who came to Europe , they found out that they don't need their partners anymore and they would much prefer to live independent life . Equality and the law in Denmark encouraged those women to get divorce and live their children.

Education in Syria and Denmark

3- Do you think that women should obtain high education , why ?

- In my opinion in the Eastern culture the woman should obtain a high education but it is a bit different in the western cultures because the woman is equal to the man so that she can work as the man do and she is not expected to have a high education because she can be a work every where . she can work in a factory , in elderly homes and basically can easily work with any type of man in any occupation , while in our culture the woman can only work a respectable job but she can never be allowed to work as a mechanic for example, to work as a mechanic is not a bad job or an unrespectable one but the culture around her would not leave her alone to work in these types of jobs. It is not common for a woman to work as a mechanic or in an elderly home even as a police officer because it is not socially acceptable in our cultures .For example, a woman can only work as a cleaner at schools or at hospitals but for example in Europe a woman can work in any cleaning company in any place even if she is working as a cleaner in the street or at a train station, still even today there are many jobs for women in our culture that the woman cannot work because it is somehow degrading or bad for her status, unacceptable and uncommon in our Arabian culture. So in my opinion the woman in Syria should have a high education because in our country if the woman gets a high education degree that means that she is guaranteed to have a very respectable job that she will only interact with people who is open minded and educated. But as I said the difference between our culture and the western culture is in western culture the woman is not obliged to have an education unless she works but in our country or our cultures she cannot work anything as they do in the western countries.

4- Does the education in Denmark help women obtain a job ? How is it different from obtaining the education in Syria ?

- Of course the education in Denmark would help the woman to obtain a job. It doesn't need to be a high degree educated woman . She can study whatever she wants and she can work with the degree she obtained . People in the western country have the mentality to encourage that person, but in Syria or in our culture a woman must take a very high degree in whatever field to work in a respectable occupation with a respectable status and the difference between the western cultures and our cultures is that people and the Western countries do respect every occupation not as the same as in Syria.

Integration in Denmark

5- What kind of advantages and disadvantages the integration policy in Denmark has ?

- In my opinion there are more advantages than disadvantages in the integration policy . The advantages are : you are living in a highly developed society and that could be a motivation for the woman to get along with the society and that could develop you personally, mentally ,and have new ideas and to know the culture. As I said before there are not so many disadvantages in the integration policy and Denmark but if there was any I would say it would be a personal choice because if a person cannot balance the old identity or the old culture with the new one it could lead to deleting or erasing the whole identity the newer one or the old one so that could be hard for the people to get more integrated in the system on the society of the country. Thus, if it is a personal reason it would be the way that the person understands the integration thing you could either understand it in a way that could affect you negatively or to develop you. Overall, the advantages are more than the disadvantages when it comes to integration.

6- Where do you see yourself in Denmark in 10 years?

- I can see myself to be more Stable and developed, even if the culture in Denmark is different than mine, I would be more adapted in Denmark than now and of course more Stable, personally and mentally developed, accomplishing more at work. And to feel more loyal for the country that I live in and that could be achieved by adapting more to the environment. That is my vision in 10 years.

Work in Denmark and Syria

7- Some highly educated Syrian women didn't go to work in Syria , why ?

- The reason could be either a personal choice or a choice affected by the surrounding people and culture. A personal choice could be that she doesn't wish to work or her parents don't want her to work. Her choice could be affected externally by the people around her because in our culture of the man can secure the woman's needs financially . it means that she doesn't have to work because the man covers her needs.

8- In what ways do you think the women's work contribute to improve the financial level and social status of the family ?

Of course women's work contributes to improve the social, financial level of the level, especially if her husband can't cover the daily expenses of the house . In this way , they share and support each other .They can educate their children and Provide good health care and let their family live in welfare . Money is a means to live comfortable life in Syria , Denmark or all over the world .Even though ,the government in Denmark provides free health care , free education and other facilities but by working , life will be better and people psychologically will be relieved . Something else ,when the children see their mothers are working , they will learn from her as they look at her their ideal to follow . They consider her strong and independent and they insisted to be like her in the future .The working women will contribute to build a healthy and strong family with healthy members who will build families in the future .She take her children hands to be open-minded. This should be everywhere in Syria or Denmark .

9- How can the Syrian women achieve a balance between work and family ?

Most of the Syrian Women can achieve this kind of balance because I call them the iron women .Although these women came from a culture of dominated man but she was raised and grown to be open minded . In Syria ,Women have educated since 1930 . Some women chose to study but not to work .Women were brought up in a strict and disciplined atmosphere .Although there was no equality ,but the women grew up with the culture to be responsible and to be the domino of the house . She has to take care of her husband ,her children and hold all the responsibilities of the house . When she came to Denmark , she underwent the integration programme . She has to live with two characters . To be equal with men here in Denmark marks to be unfair to her . Her essential mission is motherhood and a housewife, regardless of her husband works or not . Whether her husband helps her or not , the culture of being a housewife and a mother is ingrained and rooted inside her mind and pushes her to work outdoors and indoors and that makes her iron woman .In case she failed to balance and got tired , she would prefer to get divorce and live independent and no need to live with a partner who isn't ready to assist and support her . The Syrian women adopted the Syrian culture that helped her to integrate in the Danish society . the integration policy in Denmark gave the Syrian women a chance to work everywhere and that contribute to facilitate the women's life .

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10- Some Syrian women were housewives in Syria, Do you think those women can join the Danish labour market easily ? why ?

- I think that the person or the woman from Syria could easily be integrated and joined the Danish Labour and that by learning the language .I think learning the Danish language is the key to the integration or entering the working market. For example , me as an engineer graduate I used to work in Syria as an engineer and when I came to Denmark there was no other choice than working as an engineer a in Denmark, so my only option to enter the Danish Labour market was learning the language and working in my occupation that I also worked in Syria but there are also other options like working in a job that requires only English, but to be fully integrated the person should learn the language. And that could even give her an option to work in a job that does not require an education and is not looked down upon.

11- What you like or do not like about the Danish work values and Syrian work values ,what kind of challenges you face when adopting the Danish work culture ?

Advantages in Denmark

-I like the good treatment without titles and calling you by your own name and that supports you psychologically and raises your morale .There is no barrier between you and your manager although you should respect your manager and this creates trust between you and the manager . In the Danish labour market , you enjoy long discourses and delegations before taking any decisions .Even if you are going to take decision, you should consult and listen to your colleague's advice. There is men-women equality but unfortunately this kind of equality doesn't include salaries .The men's wages are higher than women's although women work harder than men .

No one is above law . Laws are applied on all people in Denmark . No bribes , no corruption . Respect is one of the features of the Danish market . It is not allowed to talk in religions , politics or the worker's background , means there is no racism .

In Syria

Work in Syria is more comfortable and flexible than Denmark . But you don't get professionally and mentally developed .There are corruptions , bribes and most people that in charge are above law . If you have connection , surly you will be employed and everything will be O.K. with you . Some workers are humiliated and degraded . lacking women-men equality , some women are oppressed and assaulted verbally or physically .There is no trust between the citizen and the government or state .

The first challenges that I faced when I came and worked is learning language . As a foreign woman at 46 years old came from a different background is the most difficult

thing .The younger you are , the faster and easier you will learn the language .It is so difficult to understand the mood of the labour market and the way of communication . While you are sitting and your colleagues laughing at a joke , I can't get it why they are laughing and what kind of joke it is .The nature of kidding or handling some issues , that the Danish have already known and understood, make me confused although I can speak and understand Danish well, but there is such of mind-set I can't get it .I came from a different background and I need to be in touch with them long time to understand them and interact with them .Sometimes , there is misunderstanding due to different cultures .

Interview (2)

Kati is a pharmacist . She is 29 years old , new married to a Syrian Pharmacist .She has been in Denmark for 5 years . Kati is a current student in master programme in Copenhagen university.

Kati's interview

Man-woman equality

- 1- What does equality between men and women mean to you? Do you think the word equality has the same meaning in your culture as in western culture?

Equality to me means having the same rights and opportunities in life for both genders without any kind of discrimination taking into consideration that women and men do not have the same way of seeing and handling things physically and emotionally, so even though people start to think that equality is improving, but I think we need deep understanding that the modern world is established on the old's world rules where men dominated and women had limited roles in life. In my opinion, there is no difference in the meaning of equality all around the world but surly there is still difference in where the equality have reached in my culture and in the western culture, because equality still needs huge efforts to be achieved in Syria.

- 2- To what extent men-women equality promote women's quality of life mentally and physically?

I think it is good that Syrian women are having more rights to be educated and to enter the work labour here in Denmark, but equality also involves all other aspects of life. In other words, many of Syrian men and also women, who came to Denmark, they need to expand their understanding of equality and realize that men must have roles in house chores and in taking care of the children for example. I think many of Syrian women in Denmark are facing massive challenges to balance between their personal and career development, and their families. Therefore, many Syrian women might decide to withdraw from education or work to focus on their families, because it is physically and mentally challenging to focus on both.

Education in Syria and Denmark

- 3- Do you think that women should obtain high education, why?

I think higher education is crucial for women, because it will expand women skills and competences in general, and it will open many doors for them to compete with men in fairly way in all life sides.

- 4- Does the education in Denmark help women obtain a job? How is it different from obtaining the education in Syria?

I think education in Denmark is the most guaranteed way for Syrian women to develop skills and competences that are convenient to the Danish labour market, but in the same time there are still other job opportunities that don't require education, but in my opinion, those jobs would be easy to obtain for Danish women rather than Syrian women, that's why I think education is better and more safer way for Syrian women to get jobs in Denmark.

In Syria, the only way to get good jobs for women is to be educated, because as I mentioned before, the goal of obtaining education for women in Syria, is for the purpose of either protect her future if she doesn't have a man to support her or to have a higher social status in the society. But talking about jobs, there are typical professions in Syria that women can join, but for example it is not normal to see female bus drivers, painters, supermarkets cashiers, police officers...etc. So, most of the jobs that are suitable for women, depending on the Syrian society, are those jobs that require education, for example, teachers, doctors, pharmacist, nurses, social workers in the government... etc.

Integration in Denmark

- 5- What kind of advantages and disadvantages the integration policy in Denmark has?

There are always discussions about integration, and from my personal experience, I think the Danish integration policy is still failing and will always fail unless the Danish politicians stop seeing refugees as numbers or as a whole one problem that should be solved in one way.

For example, refugees with one year temporary residence permit are not offered free tuition-fees higher education, and in fact most of the holder of this kind of residence permit are women, so indirectly Syrian women are being discriminated for not being able to develop their academic and career profile that would allow them to compete in the work labour market with men. Personally, my first two years in Denmark I had temporary residence permit, so I couldn't start my master's education, and I had to find a job before I even was able to talk Danish, and as I am working there was no time for going to the

language school, so I had to double my efforts and teach myself Danish in my workplace and from books. Other than the discrimination in education, women are also being discriminated in the work labour market, because to be realistic, men and women don't have the same physical abilities, and the jobs that can be offered without any skills, education or Danish language, are the ones that are physically challenging for women. Therefore, single Syrian women are forced to go into physically challenging work to afford the expensive life in Denmark, or for the older women, some are being financially supported by their families. On the other hand, the married women are giving up many good opportunities in education and career, because it is easier for their spouses to find jobs, so the women need to take care of the house and the kids.

6- Where do you see yourself in Denmark in 10 years?

As a refugee, most importantly, I see myself and my family are settled down and having either permanent residence permit or Danish citizenship. Personally, I see myself having fixed job in the pharma industry or at a pharmacy.

Work in Syria and in Denmark

7- Some highly educated Syrian women didn't go to work in Syria, why?

Social pressure has an effect on that, because even though higher education for women in Syria has always been somehow accepted and encouraged in many areas in Syria, but the purpose of women's education has always been as a "protection tool" for her if life pushed her to be independent and responsible, because the people's mentality in Syria is based on the fact that women has to be supported by her family's men members (father, brother, husband, uncles, and even neighbours), and this culture mentality actually could have positive effects, but in general it affected how men and women see women's role in the Syrian society.

8- In what ways do you think the women's work contribute to improve the financial level and social status of the family?

Nowadays, women's work is crucial to have stable finance for the family, and one income will not be enough to support the family. Also, woman's work improves her social network and easily her knowledge in many aspects in life would be expanded, because there is more places to express herself and her opinions, and this will definitely affect the house and the children positively.

9- How can the Syrian women achieve a balance between work and family?

I think it is not the Syrian women duty to create this balance, but if it is, I think there should be huge work within the Syrian community in Denmark by doing lectures and events between the women and the families in general to fight the old pattern of the man inside his house.

10- Some Syrian women were housewives in Syria, do you think those women can join the Danish labour market easily? why?

Unfortunately, I don't think it will be easy for them to join the labour market unless there's suitable professional education programs for them, because it is not easy to challenge in the Danish labour market without having any skills or competences.

11- What you like or do not like about the Danish work values and Syrian work values, what kind of challenges you face when adopting the Danish work culture?

There are major problems in the Syrian work values that I couldn't tolerate which are; corruption, bribery and not having any laws to protect the employees' rights. In general, the government jobs are easier and more flexible especially for women who need to balance between work and family, but the salaries would be way less than private jobs where salaries are higher, but still in my opinion, they are less than employees' efforts. In addition, the unions for all professions are corrupted and basically the system itself is different, because the unions are affiliated to the government. For example, as a pharmacist in Syria I had to pay to the pharmacists' union an amount of money yearly, so at last, I can get a pension salary that is considered low. Also, if I stop working, I need to pay what is called 'unemployed fees'.

On the other hand, in Denmark, the government jobs could be less paid than private market sector, but still the jobs would be less stressful and more flexible, except some professions.

Personally, I don't think I faced challenges to adapt the Danish work values themselves, because I felt protected and there are laws that can protect my rights if something wrong happens in the workplace, but the challenges I faced at first was system of the vacations, the salaries and the culture in the workplace. Other than that, I think it is not fair to compare between the Danish and Syrian work values.

Interview (3)

Rihab is 57 years old .She is divorced and has two children. She came to Denmark in 2016 . She used to work in Syria as a teacher for handicapped students . she had internship in handicapped school but she couldn't work because she had health problems .

Man-woman equality

1- What does equality between men and women mean to you ?Do you think the word equality has the same meaning in your culture as in western culture ?

It means that women and men had the same rights and duties and we should acknowledge that there are physical and natural differences between men and women concerning pregnancy , breasting , period and menopause. In that case men should hold more responsibilities than women . In menopause , women are weak and fragile ,thus men should take care of women and be considerate .Due to these critical period in the women's life , many divorce cases happened because of the shift in the women's hormones and mood and many men are ignorant of that shifts .

In the western culture , men and women are equal . They have the same rights , duties and the work opportunities . The government and society provide women with the same work opportunities like the men in all fields . She can work as a bus driver , a painter or in cleaning .Women can get divorce easily and share the children's custody with their men . they share the properties between them .When she gives birth , both the man and the woman share the maternity leave for one year .

In Syria , women have duties more than rights . Jobs such as painting , driving or cleaning are unacceptable for women , so they work as teachers , doctors or secretaries. Women can be in charge of high positions as managers or vice minister or minister . They suffer in divorce issues if the men refuses to divorce and she may lose her right in having children's custody .The women get 3 months on maternity leave .

2- To what extent men-women equality promote women's quality of life mentally and physically ?

This kind of equality promotes women's quality of life mentally and physically . Women became more aware of their rights and duties and they realize what they need and how to accomplish their dreams .Hence ,they can raise healthy generation that know their rights as human being.

But on the other hand , equality has disadvantages regarding the Syrian men. Struggling to be equal with the men , a battle over control broke out inside homes as the men try to impose their authority ,he confine the women with constraints that put an end to women's movement and freedom and sometimes, men refuse to let their women to go work or to be equal with him .That means he will lose control in his house including children and his wife .

I witnessed some cases of men had changed and let their wives to go to study and work . They shared their wives the whole responsibilities of the house and children.

We have another group of women know about their rights duties . When they came to Denmark they embraced the equality easily with their men and live peacefully with each other .

Education in Syria and Denmark

3- Do you think that women should obtain high education , why ?

Yes, they should obtain high education if they would like and have the opportunity for this. She has the same rights to study like men . Obtaining education promotes women's self esteem and confidence . High education make women get new skills and competence to join the labour market .Eventually she will be financially independent and that liberates her and she is no longer under men's authority .Something else , if you teach a mother it means you teach a whole nation .

4- Does the education in Denmark help women obtain a job ? How is it different from obtaining the education in Syria ?

Yes , it will help . It will promote the skills and qualifications related to the new Danish and the global market . The education in high schools , colleges and universities prepare and qualify the students for the labour market through paid and unpaid internships .

In Syria , education in is more individual and more hard skills oriented while in Denmark the focus is on the overall competencies to be prepared for the real world of the labour market through collaboration with the companies involved in the real market and emphasising on the team work . It means the focus on the practical life .

Language and cultural barriers : as a Syrian who studied in Syria , we study in Arabic and with Syrian students not with international students ,it will be easier to me to express my ideas and how I feel or need . In Denmark ,Syrian face difficulties in communication, collaborative work and environment because of the language barrier , the different mind-set and the cultural differences . we used to have separate schools in Syria, schools for boys and schools for girls .In Syria the students are more recipients than students in Denmark according the setup of the class .Students in Syria wear unified uniform for schools .

The language schools in Denmark didn't help the refugees to learn the language in the real life as to go to supermarket , in the pharmacy and the restaurant.

Integration in Denmark

5- What kind of advantages and disadvantages the integration policy in Denmark has ?

Advantages : Teaching the Danish language 2- giving lessons about the Danish culture , rule and laws and tradition 3- teaching about the labour market .4-

Disadvantages : The integration policy doesn't include the Danish citizens although the word integration means more than one or two parties involve in the programme , but the Danish integration programme involved one party which is the Syrian refugees , therefore there is a gape of interaction between the refugees and the Danish citizens who supposed to know more about the background of the newcomers . To get a job here depends on your vivid and active social network . How can I have such network and I am not accepted by the Danish citizens who look at us as foreigners . I don't have Danish friends because my neighbours are cautious to talk me and as I said the language is another obstacle .

The language schools didn't work properly because they didn't contribute to daily interaction and the government connects granting the permanent residence with learning Danish ,so people try to learn more than to work .

6- Where do you see yourself in Denmark in 10 years ?

As I have health problems , I can't work and I will get retired . but I dream to have my own café where I can spend my time sitting and talking to my friends .

Work in Denmark and Syria

7- Some highly educated Syrian women didn't go to work in Syria , why ?

a- They got married and get many children . 2- Some women are wealthy and they think they are not obliged to work .3- Some men are unwilling to let their wives work .4- Some women went to work but shocked the they got tired of going to work with the responsibilities of house .Most women prefer to study to be teachers because teaching fit them more than other jobs ,in teaching we limited hours and more holidays . 5- Most Syrian parent teach their daughter as a guarantee or insurance in case their daughters get divorced or get widow , they can go to work for making living .

8- In what ways do you think the women's work contribute to improve the financial level and social status of the family ?

- Sharing with her husband , they could pay for travelling , joining different kinds of clubs or give their children opportunities to practise their hobbies such as buying musical instruments or joining sport clubs . They can practise different social activities as buying yacht and sailing . They can share activities with their colleagues and friends .

9- How can the Syrian women achieve a balance between work and family ?

She can achieve balance . she can send her children to kindergarten or schools and her husband should help her .She can buy all appliances that assist her such as washing machines, dishwasher and vacuum cleaner etc. She can teach her children to depend on themselves to do their assignments and clean or tidy their bedrooms .

10- Some Syrian women were housewives in Syria, Do you think those women can join the Danish labour market easily ? how ?

They can join the labour market . They should go to courses for rehabilitation organised by the municipalities . Men should learn how to help their wives outside and inside houses .

11- What you like or do not like about the Danish work values and Syrian work values ,what kind of challenges you face when adopting the Danish work culture ?

In Denmark :

Advantages : , all workers feel responsible of their work . They don't put off the tasks , they are patient and persistent to complete their work on time. They are organised and punctual people . They are well paid according to their physical work . I like the breaks for having drinks and food .

Disadvantages : adopting the strict rules and laws , they miss something relating to humanity. The refugees who don't speak Danish or English , they were exploited from the system . Sometimes ,the Danish managers impose the rules and the laws ignoring what kind of persons the Syrians are . They expect you to be competent as the Danish .

In Syria

Sometimes people work in positions different from their specialty . For example , an archeology graduate works as a secretary in the education ministry , in the health ministry or in the municipality. Work is relevant to the society culture . Some families keep the jobs within the family and pass it from generation to generation ,they have family business .

The curriculum in schools is extensive , full of information that exhaust the pupils but it doesn't qualify you well to join the university or the labour market as in Denmark . You can't choose what you like to study and work accordingly ,but your total grades at the high school decide which college you must join .

In Syria , we have private and public sectors .The private sector is similar to the Danish work system that focuses on skills and competencies ,while the public sector is interested in your certificates ,not your qualifications . Work in the private companies is organised , precise and full of competition .Young men and women work in these companies from different backgrounds .As I said before ,there is a lot of competition in these companies because to prove yourself as a competent and successful employee means more bonus and appreciation .You can't find parallel concept in the public sector .

The managers or the people in charge in the Danish labour market promote the team relationships by organizing parties to make the employers and employees close to each other and build good connection and that affects positively on the work's atmosphere . In Syria ,the employers can organise such parties , it is individuals concern . In Syria we don't have group work as in Denmark . I work in the Handicapped schools in Syria , the government couldn't succeed in integrating the handicapped in the public schools as in Denmark .