

A Comparative Study of Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan and Turkey: An Exploratory Research

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Abstract:

This research paper compares the experiences of Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, focusing on the educational, social, and psychological dimensions of their lives. Adopting an exploratory research methodology. The findings highlight both similarities and differences in the support systems provided to Syrian refugee children in the two countries. While efforts have been made to provide access to education and support social integration, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, language barriers, and limited resources persist. The psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children has been significantly impacted by their exposure to violence and displacement. The study suggests policy recommendations, including strengthening education systems, developing language support programs, enhancing mental health support, fostering collaboration, and advocating for the rights and well-being of Syrian refugee children. Implementation of these recommendations can contribute to improving the educational, social, and psychological support provided to Syrian refugee children, ultimately facilitating their successful integration into host communities.

Introduction:

The Syrian refugee crisis, which began in 2011, has had a significant impact on the lives of millions of Syrians, particularly children. The displacement of Syrian families has led to the search for refuge in neighboring countries, with Jordan and Turkey emerging as key host nations for Syrian refugees. The influx of Syrian refugees has posed numerous challenges, particularly in meeting the unique needs of children who have experienced trauma and displacement.

The objective of this research paper is to explore and compare the experiences and challenges faced by Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey. By adopting an exploratory research methodology, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the educational, social, and psychological aspects of the lives of Syrian refugee children in these host countries. The findings from this research will contribute to the ongoing efforts

to enhance the well-being and integration of Syrian refugee children in their host communities.

1.1 Background

The Syrian refugee crisis has resulted in one of the largest forced displacements in recent history. As conflict and violence engulfed Syria, millions of Syrians were forced to flee their homes in search of safety and stability. The neighboring countries of Jordan and Turkey have shouldered a significant burden as primary hosts for Syrian refugees. The massive influx of refugees has placed substantial pressure on these nations' resources and infrastructure, impacting various sectors, including education, healthcare, and social services.

1.2 Research Objectives

This research paper aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the educational support provided to Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, including access to schools, language barriers, curriculum adaptation, and teacher training.
2. To explore the social integration of Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, encompassing aspects such as community engagement, access to healthcare, housing conditions, and social networks.
3. To investigate the psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, focusing on the impact of exposure to violence, loss, and displacement, as well as the availability of mental health and psychosocial support services.
4. To compare and contrast the support systems and initiatives in place for Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, with the aim of identifying best practices and policy recommendations.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the key challenges faced by Syrian refugee children in accessing education in Jordan and Turkey, and what initiatives have been implemented to address these challenges?
2. How do Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey integrate into their host communities, and what factors influence their social integration?

3. What are the psychological well-being challenges experienced by Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, and how are mental health and psychosocial support services provided?
4. What are the similarities and differences in the support systems and initiatives available to Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, and what policy recommendations can be derived from these comparisons?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Understanding the experiences and challenges faced by Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey is of paramount importance for policymakers, practitioners, and organizations working in the field of refugee support and integration. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing knowledge on the topic and provide insights into the effectiveness of current interventions. Furthermore, the study's outcomes will inform the development of evidence-based policies and practices aimed at enhancing the educational, social, and psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children in these host countries.

By adopting an exploratory research methodology, this study aims to delve into the nuanced experiences of Syrian refugee children, shedding light on the specific challenges they encounter and the support systems available to them. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the global understanding of refugee experiences and foster improvements in policies and interventions that positively impact the lives of Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Syrian Refugee Crisis The Syrian refugee crisis, which began in 2011, has resulted in the displacement of millions of Syrians, with a significant number seeking refuge in neighboring countries such as Jordan and Turkey (UNHCR, 2019). The crisis has had a profound impact on the lives of Syrian children, exposing them to a range of challenges and vulnerabilities.

2.2 Challenges Faced by Syrian Refugee Children Numerous studies have highlighted the unique challenges faced by Syrian refugee children. These challenges include limited access to education, language barriers, disrupted social networks, loss of family members, exposure to violence and trauma, and psychosocial distress (Fakih & Sidani, 2017; Hodes et al., 2018; UNICEF, 2019). These challenges can have long-term implications for the well-being and future prospects of Syrian refugee children.

2.3 Education of Syrian Refugee Children Access to quality education is crucial for the development and integration of Syrian refugee children. However, studies have shown that many Syrian refugee children face barriers to education, such as overcrowded schools, insufficient resources, and language difficulties (Alsukhon et al., 2020; Mina & Hout, 2018). Efforts have been made by host countries, NGOs, and international organizations to address these challenges and provide educational support to Syrian refugee children.

2.4 Social Integration of Syrian Refugee Children The social integration of Syrian refugee children in host countries is essential for their well-being and future prospects. Studies have examined various aspects of social integration, including access to healthcare, housing conditions, community engagement, and social networks (Korkmaz & Aydin, 2020; Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015). Social integration can have a significant impact on the overall adjustment and psychosocial well-being of Syrian refugee children.

2.5 Psychological Well-being of Syrian Refugee Children The psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children is a critical area of concern. Exposure to violence, loss, and displacement can lead to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among Syrian refugee children (Fazel et al., 2014; Miller & Rasmussen, 2017). Efforts have been made to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to address the psychological needs of Syrian refugee children.

3. Methodology

This research paper utilizes an exploratory research methodology based on a comprehensive review of existing literature and references. The methodology focuses on analyzing and synthesizing the available scholarly works, reports, and studies related to Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey. The literature review serves as the primary data source, providing insights into the educational, social, and psychological dimensions of the lives of Syrian refugee children in these host countries.

The methodology involves conducting an extensive search of academic databases, such as JSTOR, PubMed, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "Syrian refugee children," "education," "social integration," and "psychological well-being." The search is restricted to scholarly articles, reports, and studies published within the past ten years to ensure relevance and currency of information.

The identified literature is then critically reviewed and analyzed to extract key findings, themes, and trends related to the experiences and challenges faced by Syrian refugee

children in Jordan and Turkey. The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the educational policies and support systems, social integration initiatives, and psychological well-being considerations for this vulnerable population.

The findings from the literature review are synthesized and presented in a structured manner, highlighting similarities and differences between the situations in Jordan and Turkey. The analysis emphasizes the key challenges and areas requiring improvement in the support systems provided to Syrian refugee children.

The limitations of the methodology primarily stem from the reliance on secondary sources, such as published articles and reports. Although efforts have been made to gather a diverse range of literature, there may be inherent biases in the existing studies. Moreover, the methodology does not involve primary data collection, such as surveys or interviews, which could provide more in-depth and firsthand insights into the experiences of Syrian refugee children. However, the rigorous and systematic review of the available literature allows for a comprehensive understanding of the topic within the scope of this research.

Overall, the methodology employed in this research paper is based on an extensive review of existing literature and references, offering valuable insights into the educational, social, and psychological dimensions of the lives of Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey. The findings derived from the literature review serve as the foundation for the subsequent analysis and discussions presented in this research paper.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Educational Support for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan and Turkey

The analysis of data collected on educational support for Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey revealed both similarities and differences in the approaches adopted by the two countries. In both countries, efforts have been made to provide access to education for Syrian refugee children. However, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, language barriers, and limited resources persist.

In Jordan, the Ministry of Education has implemented various policies to enroll Syrian refugee children in public schools. These policies include double-shift schooling and the provision of catch-up classes. However, the strain on the education system remains significant, leading to crowded classrooms and reduced quality of education. Language barriers, particularly for older children, also pose challenges in academic achievement and integration.

Turkey has implemented a temporary education policy for Syrian refugee children, providing them with access to Turkish public schools and establishing Temporary Education Centers (TECs) for those who do not speak Turkish. The TECs offer Arabic language instruction and curriculum adapted to Syrian students' needs. However, the limited availability of TECs and the high demand for education among Syrian refugee children continue to present obstacles.

4.2 Social Integration of Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan and Turkey

Regarding the social integration of Syrian refugee children, both Jordan and Turkey have made efforts to provide support and facilitate their integration into the host communities. In both countries, access to healthcare services for Syrian refugee children has been improved through the implementation of national policies and partnerships with international organizations. Additionally, community engagement initiatives, such as vocational training programs and community centers, aim to foster interaction and collaboration between Syrian refugee children and the local population.

In Jordan, the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program has been implemented to enhance social integration. This program focuses on providing community-based support for children with disabilities, including Syrian refugees. It offers services such as rehabilitation, inclusive education, and psychosocial support. In Turkey, community centers have been established to provide a range of services, including language courses, counseling, and recreational activities, to promote social interaction and integration.

4.3 Psychological Well-being of Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan and Turkey

The analysis of data related to the psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children revealed significant challenges faced by this vulnerable population. Exposure to violence, loss of family members, displacement, and the overall trauma of the refugee experience have profound effects on the psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children in both Jordan and Turkey.

In Jordan, mental health and psychosocial support services are available through NGOs and international organizations. Programs such as art therapy, counseling, and trauma-focused interventions aim to address the psychosocial needs of Syrian refugee children. However, the demand for these services often surpasses the available resources, leading to limited access and long waiting lists.

Turkey has also made efforts to provide mental health support to Syrian refugee children. Psychological support centers and clinics have been established to offer counseling and therapy services. However, the high demand for these services, coupled with language

barriers and cultural differences, presents challenges in meeting the psychological needs of all Syrian refugee children.

4.4 Comparison of Support Systems in Jordan and Turkey

The comparison of the support systems for Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey reveals both similarities and differences. Both countries have made efforts to provide access to education and support the social integration of Syrian refugee children. However, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, language barriers, and limited resources remain prevalent in both contexts. Additionally, the availability and accessibility of mental health and psychosocial support services continue to be a concern in both countries.

Furthermore, differences exist in the approaches adopted by Jordan and Turkey. Jordan has focused on integrating Syrian refugee children into the national education system, while Turkey has implemented a temporary education policy with a combination of Turkish public schools and Temporary Education.

5. Implications and Policy Recommendations

5.1 Implications

The findings of this research study have significant implications for policymakers, practitioners, and organizations working to support Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey. The identified challenges and areas of improvement shed light on the key areas that require attention to enhance the educational, social, and psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children.

Firstly, the overcrowding of classrooms and limited resources in both Jordan and Turkey highlight the need for increased investment in the education sector. Additional funding and resources should be allocated to improve the infrastructure, reduce class sizes, and enhance the quality of education provided to Syrian refugee children. Furthermore, teacher training programs should be expanded to address the specific needs of diverse student populations, including language instruction and trauma-informed teaching practices.

Secondly, language barriers pose significant challenges to the academic achievement and social integration of Syrian refugee children. Policies and initiatives should focus on providing language support programs, both in Arabic for Jordan and Turkish for Turkey, to facilitate communication and integration. Language support should be provided not

only within the education system but also in community centers and other support services to ensure comprehensive language assistance for Syrian refugee children and their families.

Thirdly, the psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children should be prioritized. The findings indicate a high demand for mental health and psychosocial support services, highlighting the need for increased investment in this area. Policies should focus on expanding the availability of culturally sensitive and accessible mental health services, including counseling, therapy, and trauma-informed interventions. Collaboration between government entities, NGOs, and international organizations is crucial to ensuring the provision of comprehensive and effective mental health support to Syrian refugee children.

5.2 Policy Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthening Education Systems:** Increase investment in the education sector, including infrastructure, resources, and teacher training programs, to address the challenges of overcrowded classrooms and limited resources. Provide additional support for language instruction and curriculum adaptation to facilitate the academic achievement and integration of Syrian refugee children.
2. **Language Support Programs:** Develop comprehensive language support programs in Arabic for Jordan and Turkish for Turkey to address language barriers. These programs should be integrated into the education system, community centers, and other support services, ensuring that Syrian refugee children and their families receive language assistance to facilitate communication and integration.
3. **Enhanced Mental Health Support:** Allocate resources to expand mental health and psychosocial support services for Syrian refugee children. Establish more counseling centers, clinics, and support programs to address the psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children. This should include culturally sensitive and trauma-informed interventions, as well as capacity building for service providers.
4. **Collaborative Efforts:** Foster collaboration and coordination among government entities, NGOs, and international organizations to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to supporting Syrian refugee children. Develop partnerships to share resources, expertise, and best practices in providing education, social integration, and mental health support services.
5. **Advocacy and Awareness:** Increase public awareness about the unique challenges faced by Syrian refugee children and advocate for their rights and well-being. Engage in advocacy efforts to mobilize support, resources, and policy changes at national and

international levels to address the specific needs of Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey.

By implementing these policy recommendations, policymakers, practitioners, and organizations can work towards improving the educational, social, and psychological support provided to Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and integration into host communities.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper has explored and compared the experiences and challenges faced by Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey, utilizing an exploratory research methodology. The findings have shed light on the educational, social, and psychological aspects of the lives of Syrian refugee children in these host countries.

The study revealed that while both Jordan and Turkey have made efforts to provide access to education and support the social integration of Syrian refugee children, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, language barriers, and limited resources persist. Furthermore, the psychological well-being of Syrian refugee children has been significantly affected by exposure to violence, loss, and displacement, necessitating increased availability and accessibility of mental health and psychosocial support services.

The implications of this research highlight the need for increased investment in the education sector, particularly in infrastructure, resources, and teacher training programs. Language support programs should be implemented to address language barriers and facilitate communication and integration. Additionally, there is a pressing need for expanded mental health and psychosocial support services to address the specific needs of Syrian refugee children.

The policy recommendations put forward include strengthening education systems, developing language support programs, enhancing mental health support, fostering collaborative efforts, and advocating for the rights and well-being of Syrian refugee children.

It is imperative for policymakers, practitioners, and organizations to act upon these recommendations to improve the educational, social, and psychological support systems for Syrian refugee children in Jordan and Turkey. By addressing these challenges and implementing evidence-based policies and practices, we can enhance the well-being and integration of Syrian refugee children, providing them with a brighter future.

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