

The suffering of Syrian refugee children in Jordanian host communities : A follow-up study to reveal the problems facing the Syrian refugee children

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Abstract

The current follow-up study aims to identify the economic, educational, health and social problems facing the Syrian children in the Jordanian host communities. The study adopted the descriptive method, as a questionnaire was designed to collect data from a sample of (425) refugee children selected by the facilitated method, and the statistical packages and SPSS program were used to analyze data. The study results showed an increase in the forms of problems facing the refugee children in Jordan, as the most prominent economic problems facing the refugee Syrian children in Jordan were low pay, accumulation of debts owed by family, inability to repay debts, poverty, high costs of living and labor exploitation. The educational problems were the inability of the family to pay education expenses, the priority of work over education and the pressure on living conditions that created an unwillingness to continue education. The health problems represented in the high expenses of treatment, long distance and lack of documents. The social problems were the inability to maintain relationships with friends and relatives due to spending most of their time in work and increasing disputes within the family. In light of the results, the study presented a set of recommendations to reduce the forms of suffering facing Syrian refugee children in Jordan.

Keywords: Jordan, refugee children, Jordanian host communities.

Introduction

The conflict in Syria has resulted in the biggest problem of refugees in the world, as more than (5,556,417) refugees have fled their hometown and more than (6.1) million people have been displaced from inside the country distributed in 126 countries. The Syrian refugees form (25.8%) out of the percentage of refugees in the world according to UNHCR until January 30, 2020, where the most of them are concentrated in the Syrian neighboring countries with a percentage of (83%) distributed in Turkey with (3.344.576) refugees, Lebanon (915) thousand refugees and Jordan (1.300) million refugees, as (659000) thousands of them are registered to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2020), and (668) thousands of them are children, i.e. slightly more than half (51.4%). (Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2016: 4), and a half of them (nearly 330,000) are less than 18 years, while 16% (about 103,000) are less than 5 years (Valenza & Al Fayez, 2016). Sarayrah (2018) mentioned that according to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), there are more than (655,000) Syrian refugees in Jordan, as (86%) of them are below the poverty line, and (10%) of them are below the extreme poverty line. In 2015, it

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was found that the number of the Syrian refugees children in Jordan who were without parents raised to (4,395), and most of them arrived to Jordan with second-degree relatives, but (17%) of them came alone (Study on Suffering, 2015).

In light of the difficult living conditions that many Syrian refugees live in Jordan, the high cost of living, and the insufficient assistance offered to refugees to provide them with the basics of a decent life for them, families are obliged to push their children into the labor market, either partially after school, or even completely by working full-time and leaving school, which is also welcomed by employers, who benefit from the cheap labor of these children (Syrian Network for Human Rights, previous reference, 2016:P 7).

The report by the High Commissioner in Jordan in 2013 indicated that there were young Syrian refugees children where their age was 7 years who work for long hours for low pay, and in some conditions, they are exposed to danger and exploitation. Although there are some girls who work in the agriculture and house works in particular, the boys form the majority of the working children. In some families, fathers are not able to find a work, they do not earn enough to support their families or they cannot work for physical, legal or cultural obstacles, as a heavy burden falls on the working children. Some of those are abused in the workplace, perform illegal activities or fall into troubles with the law (United Nations High Commission, 2013:18).

The aim of this study is to highlight the types of problems that the Syrian refugees children face in Jordan who live in the host communities (outside the camps), which is a follow-up study to our previous study about the refugee children in a crises, as we wanted to explore the extent of suffering that the Syrian refugee children exposed to especially after the occurrence of great national and international changes, as some of them related to deteriorating living conditions in Jordan, and others related to the Syrian refugees' attitudes towards stay or return in Jordan, where studies showed the Syrian refugees desire to stay despite their deteriorating living conditions; Sarayrah (2018) indicated that according to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), there are more than (655,000) Syrian refugees in Jordan, as (86%) of them are below the poverty line, and (10%) of them are below the extreme poverty line. Therefore, the current study seeks to reveal the problems facing the Syrian refugees children in the host communities ((Northern Jordan region specifically), where the refugees are crowded in this region, as the study seeks to reveal the problems through the asking the main question, what are the most prominent problems facing the Syrian refugees children in Jordanian host communities? A set of the following sub-questions emerge from this question:

1. What are the forms of economic problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities?
2. What are the forms of educational problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities?
3. What are the forms of health problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities?
4. What are the forms of social problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities?
5. Are there statistical differences in the economic, educational and social problems facing these children can be attributed to variables including gender, age, family income, number of family members, work, years of education, educational level?

Based on the problematic of the study, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the forms of economic problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities.

2. Identify the forms of educational problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities.
3. Identify the forms of health problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities.
4. Identify the forms of social problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities.
5. Identify the statistical differences in the economic, educational and social problems facing these children can be due to variables including gender, age, family income, number of family members, work, years of education, educational level.

Importance of the study

The importance of the current study stems from two dimensions: the first is represented in the theoretical dimension which is filling the gap in the lack of studies related to the refugee children in Jordan, where the researchers focused on knowing the effect of the Syrian asylum on Jordan, some studies focused on the problems of refugee women, and others dealt with services provided to the refugees, whereas the current study highlights the suffering of the Syrian children, which is among the studies dealt with this category until now within the limits of the researcher's knowledge. The second dimension is the practical one taking into account the studies' results, reports and previous studies mentioned in the literature review of this study. We sought to study the current condition that the Syrian refugees children staying in the northern Jordanian region (outside the camps) face. Our goals consisted of two parts: first, investigating the current forms of challenge that the Syrian refugees children face, and second, focusing on the refugees children conditions staying outside the host communities, noting that the national and international statistics indicate that more than (516,000) Syrian refugees live outside the camps (Culbertson Constant, 2015). We also sought to obtain the related current information, which is able to help us in suggesting solutions that may mitigate the suffering of Syrian refugees children. In general, our goal was to use the results and recommendations of our study together with other recommendations to end this suffering, especially in Jordan. Therefore, we sought to attract the attention of the formal and informal institutions to the suffering that these children live in order to direct and encourage the aid efforts, especially the funding.

Study concepts

Refugee children: The international conventions are empty of a definition of a refugee child (the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees define a refugee regardless of age and do not include any special text related to the status of refugee children), while we find its definition in the Child Convention of 1989 as "Every person under the age of eighteen, unless he reaches the age of majority earlier based on the law applied to him, as defined by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1990 in Article Two, as "every human who is under the age of eighteen (Al-Assaf, 2019: 307).

Jordanian host communities: They are the Jordanian governorates of large overcrowding of the Syrian refugees who came to Jordan after the outbreak of events in Syria in 2011, and settled in cities (outside the camps), including the governorates of Irbid, Jerash, and Mafraq.

Syrian asylum in Jordan - children in the forefront

The asylum and asylum seekers children face certain threats to develop their human capital, such as lack of access to food and health care, in addition to the general threats to their physical and psychological well-being. As is the case in many contexts, families and children living in poverty are most exposed to health and social risks, and they often face the biggest barriers to reach the essential services and interventions. In addition, these risks contribute to the absorption of negative coping mechanisms such as selling assets, limiting

the consumption of household foods, taking children out of school, child labor, and child marriage (UNICEF, 2018:28). The two researchers observed while collecting data from children and meeting some of their families these mechanism of confrontation spread among the Syrian refugees.

Omoush (2016) found that(84% of Syrian refugees live in host communities, as among the challenges that these refugees faced were extreme poverty, lack of food, lack of health care, the need to beg for survival, exploitation, lack of job opportunities, accumulation of debt and the desire to escape from reality. In addition, Omoush indicated that the main problem, in many cases, is the absence of the main breadwinner (husband, father, or older brother) because of illness, death, or detention. In addition, the majority of the Syrian refugees are financially indebted to the homeowners of their rented accommodations with an average rent of about 350 Jordanian dinars, equivalent to about \$500, per month, "extended families are obliged to share narrow rooms for long periods of time" (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015: 9). Norwegian Refugee Council (2015) also indicated "according to the formal official statistics, estimations indicate that rent prices in Jordan have increased by an average of 14 percent since January 2013" (p. 7). In Mafraq and Ramtha (cities in northern Jordan), rents have increased six times because of the intensive demand by Syrian refugees (Francis, 2015). In addition, "Amman (the capital of Jordan) is classified as the most expensive city in the Middle East and Africa, according to The Economist magazine in its annual report by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) 2015" (Syrian Network for Human Rights, Euro-Mediterranean Monitor, previous reference, 2016: 7).

Based on a UNICEF report (2018), (94%)of Syrian children under the age of 5 who live in host communities suffer from multidimensional poverty, which means that they are deprived from- at least- two of the following five basic needs - education, health, water and sanitation, child protection and safety child. (Item 2).

The report indicates that (40%) of the Syrian refugees in the host communities have no sufficient food, and (45%) of the children who are 5 years or less do not easily obtain the health services including vaccinations and services for the disabled for reasons including high cost of education and lack of school space, as (38%) of these children go to school intermittently or they left school (UNICEF, 2018). In addition, (16%) of those children who are 5 years or less do not have birth certificate which may led to challenges and obstacles in the future (UNICEF, 2018). At the same time, the safety of the age category from 6-17 years is threatened by participating in child labor and exposed to violence (Valenza & Al Fayez, 2016).

Working conditions of Syrian refugee children in Jordan

The National Survey of Child Labor in Jordan for the year (2016) concluded that Syrian children have the highest employment in relation to the population, compared to Jordanians and other nationalities. "Within the framework of the demographics of Syrian working children, the sectors of wholesale and retail trade, construction and manufacturing, and particularly hazardous work environments form the main sources as construction and manufacturing form dangerous work environment , since the child is exposed to dangerous equipment, loud noises, fumes, and hard labor, (Center for Strategic Studies, Ministry of Labor, 2016) Moreover, the same survey found that Syrian children who are from (5-17) years have the lowest school attendance rate (72.5%) compared to (95%) among Jordanian children, where other research confirmed this result related to Syrian refugees, who reported that large numbers of young males were withdrawn from school, left school, or did not enroll in school until they could find a work to support their families. (Shteiwi, & SaadEdeen, 2016).

A study by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (2016) showed that the reasons for Syrian refugee families in Jordan taking their children out to work or beg include the burden of debt, the family's inability to meet basic human needs, and the risk of adults being detained when working without permits. These researches mentioned that regarding

these refugees, obtaining food should take priority over education, so children are often asked to take responsibilities exceeding their ages and abilities (pp. 11-19). We also learned from Van Esveld, Martinez, Human Rights Watch, and Pushnik (2016) that (60%) of Syrian families in host communities depend on money that their children earn (item 14). We also knew from Steve and Pushnik (2015) that instead of children going to school, they work in quarries, bakeries, shoe industry, construction or cleaning to support their families, and they often expose themselves to a physical danger (p. 60). In addition, the conditions of employing these children are usually from 6-7 days a week without vacations, and a third of them work more than 8 hours a day for daily income ranged between 4-7 US dollars (International Labor Organization, 2014:31).

Educational problems are a reality and an unsafe future

Van et al. (2016) concluded that a large number of Syrian fathers cannot bear education expenses such as fees and formal uniform. In addition, there is a low access to education because of blocking, restrictions and undesired sites, and so these challenges create together a desperate educational reality and unsecure future.

Although poverty is the dominant problem that keeps Syrian refugee children out of school, but it is not the only problem. The weakness of infrastructure of education in Jordan forms a great challenge even to non-Jordanian students. In addition, some parents consider the modest level of education available is insufficient.

In addition, some refugee children drop out of their studies because of the violence they exposed to at school (Valenza & Al Fayez, 2016). Van Esveld et al. (2016) stated that Syrian children described how teachers beat them with sticks, books and rubber hoses. In other cases, children faced severe harassment by Jordanian students at school or while going to school. UNICEF reported that (1,600) Syrian students dropped out in 2016 because of the phenomenon of peer bullying (Item 23).

The policies in place in Jordan make it difficult for Syrian children to go to school, since these policies require children at the age of school obtain documents of identity card or "service cards" for enrollment in government schools (Van et al. 2016, item 8). As for thousands of Syrians who selected to leave the refugee camps without a sponsor, it is difficult for them to obtain an identity card (UNHCR, World Food Program, UNICEF, 2014: 8). Based on Jordanian government policies, the required sponsor must be a Jordanian citizen or a first-degree relative older than 35 years (Van et al., 2016, item 8). Moreover, there are other policies that make it very difficult for refugee children to attend school like some school principals have required that children should have official Syrian school certificates proving that they have completed the previous grade. This is impossible for many families who have fled the fighting in Syria without bringing their assets. (40%) of Syrian refugee children in Jordan do not have birth certificates, which are required to obtain service cards. The lack of certificates will be an obstacle for increased numbers of children when they reach the age of school (Van et al. 2016, item 9). According to Salem (2018), even when the Syrian refugee children are able to attend school, they often do not stay there: "The Syrian refugee students leave school because of financial pressures, harassments, discrimination and the lack of natural life" (p.4).

The problem of health care for the refugees in Jordan

Syrians face difficulties to obtain the minimum level of health care since a prior decision taken in November, 2014 stating to stop the services of the health care for Syrian refugees staying in Jordan outside the camps in Jordan. Based on a questionnaire conducted by Doctors without Borders Organization in 2016 about the access to health care, as (30.2%) of adults who need health care did not seek to obtain it; the reason behind that was they were not able to bear its costs. It was found that the average income of a family per month is (239) Jordanian dinars (272 euros), and (79.3%) of families were in debt (Doctors without Borders Report, 2018).

The Jordanian government introduced new systems aimed to ensure that all Syrian refugees outside the refugee camps have identification documents to help them access aid. Based on a report by the World Bank's Jordan Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Team (2013), refugees who have health certificates can access health care, but anyone who is over the age of 12 must pay the costs of a health care of US\$42. The report also indicates that Jordan has witnessed an outbreak of a number of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, polio, and measles (p. 15). Providing Syrians with vaccinations was one of the most important tasks related to health care, and the most expensive are those provided to refugees outside the refugee camps (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Team in Jordan of the World Bank, 2013).

Literature review

Several studies have dealt with the life of Syrian refugees in the world , regional and local levels, but they did not focus on the problem of the suffering of the refugee children in Jordanian host communities. Some of these studies such as a study by Hassan (2018) which highlighted the social and economic difficulties. The study, which used a purposive sample consisted of (487) Syrian refugees staying in Zarqa city, showed that the social problems that Syrian refugees suffer from revolve around their fear to leave Jordan, the difficulty to use the entertainment facilities and fear of returning to the camps, while their economic problems revolve around the high costs of commodities and rent.

Zaghloul (2016) investigated a sample consisted of (120) Syrian refugee families in Zaatari Camp to identify the family and economic problems. He concluded that the most important problems related to the family were the inability to meet the main family needs, the desire to flee from difficult conditions that forced these families to live in. As for the economic dimension, Zaghloul also found that the main problems were the low income, unemployment, child labor and the need for leaving school to support the family. Abu Tarboush (2014) conducted a study including a sample consisted of (100) Syrian refugee children and their parents who were living in Jordan which showed that the severity of social and psychological effects decreases with age.

Habib et al. (2018) conducted a survey study in Lebanon on (4377) working children showed that among working children from (4-18) years, the average beginning of work was (10.9 years, and (74.8%) of them worked in agriculture. Compared to boys, girls earn less and are less involved in school. As for (96.3%) of working children between the ages of 8-18, the forced displacement to Lebanon was associated with their first work experience. The working conditions were harsh and worse for girls, where they did not receive their salaries on time and they did not get a leave, compared to boys. The study found that girls worked longer in the heat and cold, and they were more likely to report health symptoms at work.

A study by Al-Shatanawi, et al. (2023) aimed to identify psychological needs and problems and adapting mechanisms among Syrian adolescents in Jordan, showed that the most important problems faced by Syrian adolescents include stress, frustration, isolation, insecurity, fear of war and family disintegration. According to the study, most of the participants confirmed that Syrian children still need more services, including more entertainment places, psychological support and guidance, medical care and health insurance.

MAJTHOUB (2012) conducted a study aimed to highlight the most prominent challenges and obstacles faced by Syrian refugee children in Jordanian public education. The study showed that the process of enrolling Syrian refugee children in schools and the educational services provided to them in Jordan have been negatively affected by the policies that restricted their entry into public schools. Other obstacles include child labor, early

marriage, problems of cooperation between stakeholders and the tensions between Syrian refugees and host communities.

A study by Kelly (2014) aimed to investigate some of the problems that affect access to education for Syrian refugees in Jordan. The study adopted the analytical qualitative research method and descriptive survey research. The study found that Syrian refugees in Jordan face many problems including enrollment in school, public safety problems and inability to attend school because of their educational background. The study could identify the difficulties faced by refugees, organizations and the government to enroll refugees in schools, and that the difficulties were not the fault of the government or organizations, but because of the enormity of the Syrian refugee crisis, and the lack of funding to provide services.

Amayreh et al. (2019) conducted a study on the living problems that the refugee students face in Jordanian public schools applied to a sample consisted of (320) male and female refugee students. The study concluded that there were several problems facing students including, in order: teaching- learning problems, social family problems and health psychological problems.

Carinja (2010) discussed the educational difficulties that Sudanese refugee face in Nairobi in Kenya, as children from Sudan face foreigners' hatred and discriminatory urban refugee policies, which prevent them from attending the public primary schools (p.147); as for these children, private schools are not an option because of the social and economic problems that their families face.

A study by Rashid (2009) on the spread of child labor among Iraqi refugees in Syria confirmed that more families slide into poverty, and they are prevented from work legally in Syria, which pushes families to send more of their children for work instead of education. The study explained that most children worked in in fields such as in restaurants or toilets for low pay.

Valenza and Al Fayez (2016) conducted a study for UNICEF on the conditions of Syrian children in host communities in Jordan using a random sample consisted of (1201) individuals in the governorates of Mafraq, Amman, Irbid and Zarqa. The study concluded that financial hardship plays the most important role in discouraging children from attending school and encouraging those who have attended school to leave, as the adolescent children are the most vulnerable to drop out of their education to support their families. The two authors also found that many refugees seek to obtain healthcare services by informal methods because of financial and bureaucratic obstacles, and only (45%) of families in need of medical services which enable them to benefit from formal healthcare. The researchers also found that most children living in informal camps do not have identity cards and refugee documents, engage in child labor, and do not attend school.

According to Shaaban (2014), a study by CARE International Organization showed that a half million Syrian refugees live in urban regions in Jordan who fight increasingly to adapt with improper residence challenges, big debts and high living costs, in addition the costs of educating their children. A survey study by CARE Organization on more than (2,200) Syrian refugees found that (90%) of them suffer from big debts to relatives, property owners, shop owners and neighbors. In addition, their financial conditions get worse because the depletion of their savings (Shaaban, 2014). The refugees have no rent contracts, and this exposes them risk of eviction (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015:11).

Study procedures

The study adopted the descriptive method included a description of the study sample and the method of data processing. The following is a description of the design vocabulary and methodology:

Study population and sample

The study population consisted of all Syrian refugee children staying in northern Jordanian region where the refugees are overcrowded, as based on estimations that the number of Syrian refugee children in Jordan exceeds 51.4% (), which means that about (330) thousand children outside the camps who are from (0-less than 18 years), as the percentage of females is (48.6%), and the percentage of males is (51.4%) (). An available sample of (425) children aged between 10 and under 18 was drawn. Our sample was collected only from the northern Jordanian region (Irbid, Jerash, and Mafraq). It should be noted that the two researchers could not obtain a framework of the sample, which through a random sample could be selected, where Syrian refugees live in separated and unorganized regions, and there are no lists of their names and there are no available statistics about the refugee children. Data was collected from children at their workplaces after the approvals have been obtained from the child himself and his parents by telephone, and with accordance and acceptance of the employer.

Instrument

To collect data in order to answer the five study questions, we developed a questionnaire of two parts: the first part includes the primary data reflecting the characteristics of the study sample including gender, age, family income, family members, job, years of education and educational level, and the second part includes the forms of suffering which are the economic, educational, health and social problems that Syrian refugee children outside the camps and who live in northern Jordanian region are exposed to.

Validity and reliability of the instrument

Agreement of arbitrators' method was adopted, as the instrument was introduced to a number of specialists in sociology, then the questionnaire was modified in light of their comments, it was formulated in its final image. The reliability of the instrument was done using the equivalent method distributed to (38) children outside of the study sample, then it was redistributed after (18) days from the date of the first distribution to the same group, where stability rate was (88%), which is suitable to conduct this study.

Statistical treatment

The study relied on the statistical program related to social sciences (SPSS), as statistical models were used for the purposes of the study including the simple descriptive models “frequency distributions and percentages to analyze the characteristics of the sample”, means and standard deviations to analyze the forms of the problems facing Syrian refugee children, in addition to T-test and ANOVA to reveal differences in the primary data towards the forms of suffering.

Reliability of study instrument

The two researchers conducted an analysis of Cronbach's Alpha on the questionnaire to test the reliability of study instrument, and the following table shows this:

Table (1) Cronbach's Alpha coefficients to test reliability of the study instrument

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient
Economic problems	0.83
Educational problems	0.81
Health problems	0.86
Social problems	0.89
Problems as a whole	0.88

Through the values of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients in the previous table, we notice that all of them are valid to the purposes of the study.

Used statistical analysis

Through the program of the statistical package program SPSS; the following statistical tests were used:

1. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentages, frequency and the relative importance defined through the following formula:

Length of period =	Upper limit – lower limit	=	5-1	= 1.33
	Number of levels		3	

So that the number of levels is as follows:

Table (2) Statistical standard for interpreting the means of the study variables

Level	Period
Low	2.33 –1
Medium	3.66 – 2.34
High	5 – 3.67

1. Independent samples of T-test

2. One Way ANOVA

Data analysis and answering the study questions

A description of the characteristics of the study sample

In this part, there is a description of the distribution of the study sample members according to their personal variables (gender, age, family income, number of family members, job, years of education, educational level), and the following table shows this:

Table (3) Distribution of the study sample members according to personal variables

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	male	311	73.2
	female	114	26.8
Age	14	40	9.4
	15	34	8.0
	16	153	36.0
	17	198	46.6
I live with	my family	402	94.6
	my relatives	23	5.4
Does your family have money to provide the necessary needs?	sometimes	410	96.5
	rarely	15	3.5
Do you work?	yes	425	100.0
Work wages	less than or equal to 100 dinars	203	47.8
	more than 100 dinars	222	52.2
Are you in school?	yes	83	19.5
	No	342	80.5
Did you lose school years after war	yes	425	100.0
Number of family members	less or equal to 8	342	80.5
	more than 8	83	19.5
Do you suffer from chronic diseases?	No	425	100.0

Through the table above we notice that the distribution of the study sample members according to their personal variables was as follows:

- Gender: The percentage of males was (73.2%), and the females (26.2%).
- Age: The largest percentage of the study sample members was those who are 17 years with a percentage of (46.6%), and who are 16 years with a percentage of (36.0%).
- The largest percentage of the study sample members live with their families with (94.6%).
- (47.8%) of the whole study sample work for less than 100 dinars, (52.2%) of them work for more than 100 dinars, and (96.5%) of them have money to provide for family needs.
- (80.5%) of the study sample members are not at school, all of them lost years of education after war and all of them do not suffer from chronic diseases.
- (80.5) of the study sample members have fewer than 8 family members.

As shown in table (2), the majority of the sample (67.5%) is from males, since data in this study was collected from the participants in the workplaces, this result may reflect the reality that males search for jobs more than females. All children work in order to meet their families’ needs, but about a half (51.7%) obtain low income (□100 Jordan dinar per month) despite of the high cost of living in Jordanian society. This reflects the lack in the available job opportunities and there is a surplus of job seekers.

Answering the study questions

1. Answering the first question: What are the forms of economic problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities?

To answer the first question, means, standard deviations and percentages were found, and the following table explains this:

Table (4) Means, standard deviations and percentages of the economic challenges

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Percentage	Degree
I am often underpaid although I work long hours.	3.76	0.931	75.2	high
I participate in paying the debts owed by my family	3.74	0.522	74.8	high
Poverty that my family suffers from pushed me to work	3.72	0.707	74.4	high
High cost of living pushed me to work	3.71	0.710	74.2	high
The job I do exposes me to great risks	3.51	0.721	70.2	medium
I work for long hours for low pay	3.34	0.978	66.8	medium
I work to provide the main needs of my family	3.24	1.079	64.8	medium
Economic challenges	3.57	0.457	71.5	medium

Through the results in the table above, we notice that the economic problems “I am often underpaid although I work long hours, I participate in paying the debts owed by my family, Poverty that my family suffers from pushed me to work and High cost of living pushed me to work” have got high degrees ranged between (3.71 – 3.76). The problems “The job I do exposes me to great risks, I work for long hours for low pay and I work to provide the main needs of my family” have got medium grades (3.51, 3.34, 3.24) respectively. The total average was (3.57) which represents a medium degree, as it indicates that there is a medium degree of the forms of economic suffering facing Syrian refugee children in the host communities.

The responses in table (3) represent the exploitation of children through the low pay they get through working for long hours (67.6%), and not receiving full pay for the completed work (75.6%) among other violations of their rights.

The results indicate that the most common reason that pushes children to work is to pay family debts (75.4%) due to the high cost of some necessities such as rent and medical treatment. The second common reason forcing children to work (74.6%) is the high costs of living; the high prices affect all aspects of life even for Jordanians and not only for Syrian refugees in the host communities. Struggle for survival among Syrian families led to new adaptation strategies such as taking children out of school (80.8%) and forcing them to obtain jobs (100%). The study results here agree with the results of Hassan study (2018) in that the high living especially rent was the main economic challenge facing Syrian families in Zarqa governorate. Other several studies have been reviewed in the literature review such as the study by Zaghoul (2016), as it agrees on that poverty is the main reason forcing children to work. A study conducted by CARE Organization (2014) revealed that the living conditions of Syrian families are getting worse due to the run out of their savings.

2. Answering the second question: What are the forms of educational problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities?

To answer the second question, means, standard deviations and percentages were found, and the following table explains this:

Table (5) Means and standard deviations of educational problems

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Percentage	Degree
My family seeks to reduce expenses, so I decided to withdraw from school even though I want to continue my education	4.52	0.500	90.4	high
Searching for work is more important than continuing education	4.42	0.665	88.5	high
I could not continue my education because of its high costs	3.89	1.511	77.9	high
Education in the current conditions does not represent a priority to me	3.71	1.120	74.2	high
I could not continue my education because there were not registration documents	3.50	1.454	70.0	medium
Educational challenges	4.01	0.618	80.2	high

Through the results in the table above, we notice that all the educational problems got high degrees ranged from (3.71-4.52) except for the problem “I could not continue my education because there were not registration documents”, as it got a medium degree (3.50). The challenge “My family seeks to reduce expenses, so I decided to withdraw from school even though I want to continue my education” got the highest degree.

The total average was (4.01), which represents a high degree that indicates a high degree of the educational problems facing Syrian refugee children outside the asylum camps in Jordan.

The main reasons that the participants do not attend school are high costs of education, and the perception that education is not worthwhile to them (table 4), and searching for a job takes priority over education among children in the same sample. These results agree with the results of the stud by Valenza & Al Fayez (2016) which concluded that “the biggest obstacle preventing children from attending school is the financial one” (p.11).

3. Answering the third question: What are the forms of health problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities?

To answer the third question, means, standard deviations and percentages were found, and the following table shows that:

Table (6) Means and standard deviations of the items expressing the health problems

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Percentage	Degree
I could not go to hospital to get treatment because of its high costs	2.69	1.533	53.9	Medium
The long distance prevents me from getting treatment	2.66	1.376	53.2	Medium
Since I do not have health documents, this prevents me from treatment	2.52	1.396	50.4	Medium
I suffer from diseases and none helps me	2.09	1.231	41.9	Low
Health challenges	2.49	1.069	49.8	Medium

Through the results in the table above, we notice that all the health problems got medium degrees ranged from (2.52 - 2.69) except for “I suffer from diseases and none helps me” as it got a low degree which was (2.09). The challenge “I could not go to hospital to get treatment because of its high costs” got the highest degree.

The total average was (2.49) which indicates a medium degree to the health challenges facing Syrian refugee children outside the asylum camps in Jordan.

One of the obstacles preventing the participants from receiving medical treatment was the high cost (table 5), as the medical insurance may help reduce this cost, but the lack of official documents makes obtaining the insurance very difficult. Several studies dealt with the health condition of Syrian refugees concluded that the main obstacle in obtaining the required documents was that Jordanian government set complex procedures for applicants. Some participants in this study mentioned that the lack of documents prevented them from receiving health care. These results agree with the results of the study by Valenza and Al Fayez (2016) in that the bureaucratic and financial obstacles push many refugees to seek health care by unofficial ways.

4. Answering the fourth question: What are the forms of social problems facing the Syrian children in Jordanian host communities?

To answer the fourth question, means, standard deviations and percentages were found, and the following table shows that:

Table (7) Means and standard deviations of the items expressing the social problems

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Percentage	Degree
I rarely visit my relatives around me	4.19	0.673	83.7	High
I find it difficult to get to entertainment places	4.18	1.156	83.6	High
I was not able to go for a trip with my friends since I work	3.98	1.082	79.6	High
I was not able to make new friendships because there were problems within my family	3.96	1.257	79.2	High
I was not able to play with my friends since I live alone	3.96	1.204	79.1	High

I was not able to visit my friends because of difficult conditions	3.85	1.333	77.0	High
Social challenges	4.02	0.670	80.4	High

Through the results in the table above, we notice that all the social problems got high degrees ranged from (3.85 – 4.19), as the challenge “I rarely visit my relatives around me” got the highest degree.

The total average was (4.02), which represents a high degree indicating that there was a high degree of the social problems facing Syrian children outside the asylum camps in Jordan.

The participants faced a difficulty in maintaining social relationships with their relatives and friends (see table 6). As we see, many children bear economic responsibilities within the family, as this reduces their opportunities in making friendships with their peers and maintain them, and participate in social interaction with their family. In addition, the participants mentioned that it was difficult for them to get to entertainment facilities; one reason for that may be the cost, which should be balanced against necessities such as food and rent. Hassan (2018) concluded that the social problems were presented in the difficulty of using recreational places.

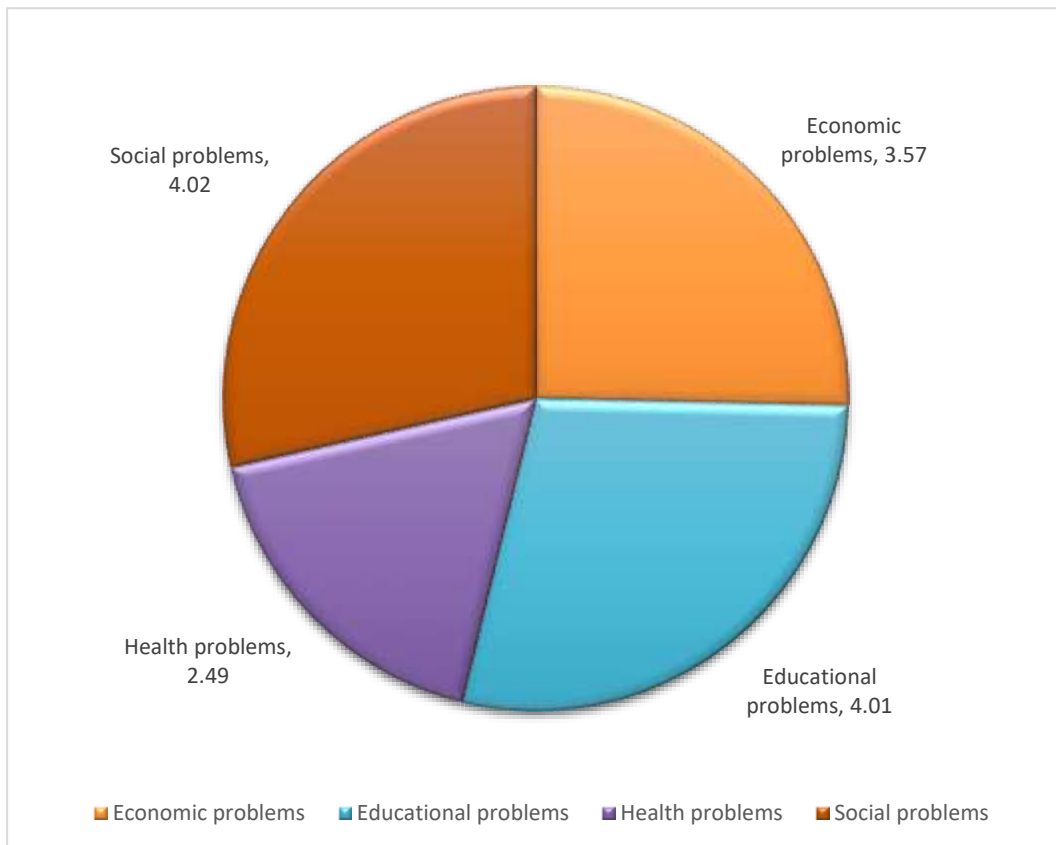


Figure. (1)

Answering the fifth question:

A-Are there statistical differences in the forms of economic, educational, health and social problems facing Syrian children in the host communities due to gender variable?

To know if there are differences due to the effect of gender variable, the independent samples T-test was used, and the following table shows that:

Table (8) Results of independent samples t-test for the effect of gender variable

Challenge	Gender	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Level of significant
Economic challenges	Male	311	3.48	311	-7.069	423	0.000*
	Female	114	3.82	114			
Educational challenges	Male	311	3.96	311	-2.656	423	0.008*
	Female	114	4.14	114			
Health challenges	Male	311	2.30	311	-6.413	423	0.001*
	Female	114	3.02	114			
Social challenges	Male	311	3.86	311	-8.693	423	0.000*
	Female	114	4.45	114			
Challenges as a whole	Male	311	3.48	311	-10.125	423	0.000*
	Female	114	3.92	114			

Through the table above, we notice that the value of T was statistically significant the level of less than 0.05 for all problems, which indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the forms of economic, social and health suffering facing Syrian children in the host communities due to gender variable, and they were more among females.

As for gender variable, the suffering reported to female participants exceeded that suffered by males in all four forms, which may be due to the amount of responsibility that Syrian girls often have to bear. The patterns of strength began to change in Syrian refugees families, as the girls responded to the pressure of asylum through bearing more responsibilities. The previous result agrees with the results of the study by Habib et al. (2018) in that the girls work for a long time in the heat and cold, and they were more likely to report health symptoms at work.

B- Are there statistically significant differences in the forms of economic, educational, health and social problems facing Syrian children in Jordanian host communities due to number of family member variable?

To know if there are differences due to the effect of number of family member variable, the independent samples T-test was used, and the following table shows this:

Table (9) Results of independent samples t-test for the effect of number of family member variable

Challenge	Number of family members	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
Economic challenges	less than or equal to 8	342	3.64	0.463	5.826	423	0.002*
	more than 8	83	3.32	0.332			
Educational challenges	Less than or equal to 8	342	4.11	0.625	7.220	423	0.000*
	more than 8	83	3.60	0.360			
Health challenges	less than or equal to 8	342	2.55	1.037	0.342	423	0.067
	more than 8	83	2.25	1.168			
Social challenges	less than or equal to 8	342	4.06	0.702	0.362	423	0.125
	more than 8	83	3.86	0.494			
Challenges as a whole	less than or equal to 8	342	3.66	0.459	6.308	423	0.001
	more than 8	83	3.34	0.196			

Through the table above, we notice that the value of T was statistically significant at a level of less than 0.05 for all problems except for the social and health ones, which indicate that there are statistically significant differences in the forms of economic and educational suffering facing Syrian children outside the asylum camps in Jordan due to number of family members variable, and they were among those whose family members were less than 8.

As for the size of the family, the economic and educational suffering was bigger regarding families consisted of 8 members or less, and this may be due to the smaller the number of family members, the greater the responsibility each member bears.

In addition, data showed a statistically significant effect on the health and social challenges among the participants who live with relatives and or acquaintances instead of their families. In most cases, these so-called “friendly children” face exploitation or deprivation.

C- Are there statistically significant differences in the forms of economic, educational, health and social problems facing Syrian children in Jordanian host communities due to the variable with whom the child lives?

To know if there are differences due to the variable with whom the child lives, the independent samples T-test was used, and the following table shows this:

Table (10) Results of independent samples t-test for the effect of the variable with whom the child lives

Challenge	I live with my	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
Economic challenges	family	402	3.57	0.469	-1.511	423	0.132
	relatives	23	3.71	0.000			
Educational challenges	family	402	4.00	0.633	-1.521	423	0.129
	relatives	23	4.20	0.000			
Health challenges	family	402	2.41	1.035	-7.377	423	0.000*
	relatives	23	4.00	0.000			
Social challenges	family	402	3.96	0.645	-7.704	423	0.000*
	relatives	23	5.00	0.000			
Challenges as a whole	family	402	3.56	0.425	-7.504	423	0.000*
	relatives	23	4.23	0.000			

Through the table above, we notice that the value of T was statistically significant at the level of less than 0.05 of all challenges except for the economic and educational problems, which indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the forms of health and social suffering facing Syrian children outside the asylum camps in Jordan due to the variable with whom the child lives, and they were among those who live with their relatives.

D- Are there statistically significant differences in the forms of economic, educational, health and social problems facing Syrian children in Jordanian host communities due to school enrollment variable?

To know if there are differences due to the effect of school enrollment variable, the independent samples T-test was used, and the following table shows this:

Table (11) Results of independent samples t-test for the effect of school enrollment variable

Challenge	School enrollment	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
Economic challenges	yes	83	3.52	0.541	-1.100	423	0.272
	no	342	3.59	0.434			
Educational challenges	yes	83	3.91	0.483	-1.672	423	0.095
	no	342	4.03	0.644			
Health challenges	yes	83	1.61	0.711	-9.182	423	0.000*
	no	342	2.71	1.032			
Social challenges	yes	83	4.09	0.150	1.121	423	0.263
	no	342	4.00	0.742			
Challenges as a whole	yes	83	3.42	0.310	-4.223	423	0.000
	no	342	3.64	0.456			

Through the table above, we notice that the value of T was not statistically significant at less than 0.05 to all problems except for the health one, which indicates that there statistically significant differences in the health problems facing Syrian children in Jordanian host communities due to school enrollment variable, and they were more among those non-enrollment in school.

E- Are there statistically significant differences in the forms of economic, educational, health and social problems facing Syrian children in Jordanian host communities due to the effect of the work income variable?

To know if there are differences due to the effect of the work income variable, the independent samples T-test was used, and the following table shows this:

Table (12) Results of independent samples t-test for the effect of work income variable

Challenge	Work income	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Level of significant
Economic challenges	less than or equal to 100	203	3.85	0.390	14.267	423	0.000*
	more than 100	222	3.33	0.362			
Educational challenges	less than or equal to 100	203	4.34	0.682	12.347	423	0.000*
	more than 100	222	3.71	0.335			
Health challenges	less than or equal to 100	203	2.81	0.972	6.082	423	0.000*
	more than 100	222	2.20	1.074			
Social challenges	less than or equal to 100	203	4.14	0.587	3.589	423	0.000*

	more than 100	222	3.91	0.722			
Challenges as a whole	less than or equal to 100	203	3.85	0.396	13.526	423	0.000*
	more than 100	222	3.37	0.340			

Through the table above, we notice that the value of T was statistically significant at less than 0.05 to all challenges, which indicates that there statistically significant differences in the economic, educational, health and social problems facing Syrian children in Jordanian host communities due to the work income variable, and they were more among whose work income is less than 100 dinar.

F- Are there statistically significant differences in the forms of economic, educational, health and social problems facing Syrian children in Jordanian host communities due to the age variable?

To know if there are differences due to the effect of the age variable, the independent samples T-test was used, and the following table shows this:

Table (13) Results of the one-way analysis of variance test for the effect of the age variable

Challenge	Age	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	F value	مستوى الدلالة
Economic challenges	*14	40	4.19	0.286	3	51.747	0.000*
	**15	34	3.32	0.360			
	**16	153	3.68	0.390			
	**17	198	3.42	0.416			
	Total	425	3.57	0.457			
Educational challenges	*14	40	5.00	0.000	3	58.580	0.000*
	**15	34	4.18	0.202			
	**16	153	3.96	0.633			
	**17	198	3.82	0.513			
	Total	425	4.01	0.618			
Health challenges	*14	40	3.71	0.250	3	23.098	0.000*
	**15	34	2.46	1.386			
	**16	153	2.45	1.102			
	**17	198	2.28	0.918			
	Total	425	2.49	1.069			
Social challenges	*14	40	4.55	0.250	3	26.488	0.000*
	**15	34	4.63	0.336			
	**16	153	3.82	0.727			
	**17	198	3.96	0.612			
	Total	425	4.02	0.670			
Challenges as a whole	**14	40	4.38	0.023	3	79.689	0.000*
	**15	34	3.71	0.504			
	*16	153	3.56	0.451			
	**17	198	3.45	0.257			
	Total	425	3.60	0.440			

Through the table above, we notice that the value of F was statistically significant at less than 0.05 to all problems, which indicates that there statistically significant differences in the economic, educational, health and social problems facing Syrian children in Jordanian host communities due to the age variable, as they are higher among who are 14 years.

As for the age variable in the economic, educational and health dimensions, the highest suffering was reported occurred at 14 years. Regarding the social dimension, suffering was marginally higher in the group of 14 years. This result is expected, as the adolescents from (16 – 17) years are more likely to work and get pay. These results agree with the study results by Tarboush (2014) which concluded that the social and psychological effects on Syrian refugees diminish with age.

Summary and general conclusions

The current study aimed to identify the forms of economic, educational, social and health problems facing Syrian refugee children living in Jordan host communities. The results revealed that the economic suffering facing children included low pay, their need to any available job and long working hours. As for educational problems, they included the high costs of schools, which led most of Syrian families to push their children to work looking for a paid job instead of education, as education is no longer a priority to these families. Health problems included a lack of official documents, which made it very difficult for refugees to obtain health insurance, and so get the proper health care, as families were not able to bear the high costs of treatment without help. Social problems facing children included the lack of opportunities to make friendships, and inability to maintain relationships with friends and relatives, as the reason may be due to that children spend most of their time at work.

The economic, educational, social and health suffering facing Syrian refugee children were obstacles to their ambitions and future. The years that Syrian families spent outside their hometown led to deterioration of living. The income that many families obtain from their children work participated in meeting their needs, especially the debts they owed during their staying in Jordan. Despite adopting several adaptation strategies that aim to reduce the costs, but the longer refugees stay, the greater the burden they must bear. The forms of suffering which the children face also reflect the suffering that the families live, as their suffering will not end unless the families receive the financial support. This issue is correct for the families that lack food security, in addition to the ones having increasing debts. Based on the above and in light of the results that study concluded related to the forms of problems facing Syrian refugee children in Jordanian host communities, the following recommendations were introduced to reduce this suffering: as for Syrian refugee family and refugees in general, the study recommended to provide financial support to Syrian refugee families that goes with the increasing costs of living in the host countries; such a support will result in a better life among Syrian children, create job opportunities for heads of household through implementing existing memorandums of agreement with international organizations, focus on places where refugees concentrated, offer the biggest forms of funding and support, direct funding for educational needs to Syrian children, develop a coordinated strategy to enroll refugee children in education and provide more resources and support from the international organizations and donor countries.

As for Syrian refugee children, the study recommended to provide free public education for Syrian refugee children especially in the primary stages, provide them with health insurance with measures to reduce its cost and establish recreational facilities with low costs in places where Syrians live in Jordanian host communities.

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