

THE EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEE WOMEN: FINDINGS FROM A COMMUNITY-
BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

THE EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEE WOMEN: FINDINGS FROM A COMMUNITY- BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

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This study explored the experiences of refugee women in Turkey by employing a qualitative methodology. The researcher was aimed to understand the experiences of refugee women by collecting data related to their vulnerabilities, resilience, and the role of gender. The semi-structural in-depth interviews combined with anecdotal records conducted with refugee women ($n=7$, $M=23.71$) who resettled in a small city in the Black Sea Region of Turkey. The interpretative phenomenological analysis was utilized with the help of NVIVO 12 program. Results indicated that refugee women were experiencing a tremendous amount of difficulties and issues that exacerbate their vulnerabilities. Despite all these hardships, refugee women were also found to have both internal and external resilience strategies to be empowered and bounced back quickly. While refugee women's resilience enhanced by the coping, hope, spirituality, support system and the personal characteristics; It might be hindered by the role of traumatic experiences, living conditions, discrimination, and language-based problems. Refugee women also were found that the one who negotiate balanced positions between traditional-cultural norms and the outside world because of the emancipation. Even though refugee women were socio-culturally vulnerable; they were resilient in conflict-related situations. The findings suggest that if counselors, policymakers, and non-governmental organizations gain inside about

resilience of refugee, they may implement a need-based plan to facilitate the adjustment process of refugee women.

Keywords: Refugee Women, Vulnerability, Resilience, Community-Based Participatory Research, Gender Role

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE’ DEKİ MÜLTECİ KADINLARIN GÖÇ DENEYİMLERİ: TOPLUM TEMELLİ KATILIMCI ARAŞTIRMA BULGULARI

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini nitel bir metodoloji kullanarak araştırmaktır. Bu bağlamda mülteci kadınların göç deneyimlerine ilişkin veriler toplanmıştır. Araştırmacı katılımcıları kırılgan veya dayanıklı yapan unsurlar ve katılımcıların cinsiyetlerinin onların göç sürecindeki rolü üzerinde durmuştur. Veri toplama sürecinde yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmış, anekdot kayıtlarıyla veri çeşitlemesi sağlanmıştır. Çalışmaya yaş ortalamaları 23.71 olan yedi mülteci kadın katılmıştır. Veri analizi sürecinde yorumlayıcı fenomenolojik analiz yöntemi kullanılmış ve NVIVO 12 olarak adlandırılan analiz programından yararlanılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucunda; mülteci kadınların, psiko-sosyal yaşantılarında kırılganlıklarını artıran birçok faktörün yanında onların dayanıklı olabilmelerine destek olan içsel ve dışsal faktörlerin olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Mülteci kadınların dayanıklılıkları; kullandıkları başa çıkma stratejileriyle, umutla, maneviyatla, sosyal destek sistemiyle ve kişisel özellikleriyle arttığı gözlemlenirken; travmatik deneyimler, yaşam koşulları, ayrımcılık, yabancılaşma ve dile dayalı sorunların kırılganlıklarını artırdığı ortaya konmuştur. Bunun yanında yerleştikleri ülkenin sosyokültürel bağlamının getirdiği özgürleşmeyle mülteci kadınlar, geleneksel normlar ile dış dünya arasında dengeli bir pozisyon oluşturma gayreti içerisinde oldukları bulunmuştur. Sosyo-kültürel açıdan

kırılgan olduđu düşünölen mülteci kadınların, savaş, göç gibi durumlarda dayanıklı olduđu ortaya konmuştur. Mülteci kadınların dayanıklılık anlayışlarının alan yazında bilinen anlayışlardan farklılaştığı bulunmuştur. Çalışma verileri; ruh sağlığı uzmanlarına, karar mekanizmalarına ve sivil toplum örgütlerine; mülteci kadınların dayanaklılıkları ve dayanıklılıklarını etkileyen faktörler hakkında kaynak oluşturarak mülteci kadınlar için uyum sürecini kolaylaştırabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mülteci Kadınlar, Kırılganlık, Dayanıklılık, Toplum Temelli Katılımcı Araştırma, Toplumsal Cinsiyet

To My Family and
My Best Friend Selin Üstündağ

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Agency
APA	American Psychology Association
BMMYK	Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komisyonu
CAB	Community Advisory Board
CBPR	Community-Based Participatory Research
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
DGMM	Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management
HSEC	Human Subjects Ethics Committee
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
İAEK	İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu
LFIP	The Law on Foreigners and International Protection
METU	Middle East Technical University
MTO	Mülteci Topluluk Organizasyonları
N	Number (Sample number)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCO	Refugee Community Organization
SES	Socio-Economic Status
STK	Sivil Toplum Kuruluşu
TDK	Topluluk Araştırma Kurulu
TSSB	Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu
TTKA	Toplum Temelli Katılımcı Araştırma
UEAM	Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi (Ethics Committee)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugee
YFA	Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Refugees live in a divided world, between countries in which they cannot live,
and countries which they may not enter.
(Moorehead, 2005, p. 3).

The world is currently experiencing ‘the highest levels of immigration rate, with 68.5 million displaced people, 25.4 million of whom are refugees (UNHCR, 2019). Forced migration is defined as the movement of people due to conflicts, such as civil war, violence, natural or environmental disasters, or famine (Forced Migration Review, 2018). Today, Turkey hosts the largest refugee population in the world. The number of people who applied to Turkey for international protection reached 4 million in March 2019. These people are mostly of Syrian origin, and once they arrived, they received a temporary protection status. Other temporarily protected people ($n=370.000$) were coming from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Somalia. While the city of Istanbul hosts over half of the displaced people, others were mainly replaced to the towns close to the southern border of Turkey (Rygiel, Baban & Ilcan, 2016; Turkish Red Crescent and World Food Programme, 2019).

While researchers have concentrated on Syrian refugees due to their constituting the largest population among the refugees, Afghan refugees are given less attention. However, 2.7 million Afghans make up the second-largest group in the world. In Turkey, their growing number was reported as 170,000 (Brown, 2019; UNHCR, 2019). Besides, migration of Afghans is still in continuation from both Afghanistan and from secondary countries where Afghans were initially resettled and later removed for various reasons (UNHCR, 2019), some of which were the collapsed economy of and social problems in the initially resettled country (Biehl, 2015; Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010).

With many traumatic issues and humanitarian needs, refugees seek psychosocial services from international and local authorities. Having a refugee status helps individuals to have access to the benefits of various aids, protection, and rights (Ludwig, 2016). However, according to the 1951 Geneva Convention and the Foreigners and International Protection Act, except the ones who have a European background, people forced to migrate to Turkey do not have refugee status. Turkey only gives refugee status to the citizens of

the member states of the Council of Europe (Refugee Rights Sub-Commission, 2018). Based on the Foreigners and International Protection Law No. 6458, the legal status of the people forced to migrate to Turkey is entitled as 'under temporary protection.' Thus, one might say that people forced to migrate to Turkey do not have full access to the benefits of refugee rights. These regulations cause refugees in Turkey to have an unpredictable future and feel a great deal of distress (B. A. van der Kolk, A. C., 1996; Kneebone, 2005; Silove et al., 2007; McEwen, 2017). One study conducted with refugees of nine different nationalities ($n=56$) reported that the uncertainty experienced by refugees led to the feeling of powerlessness (El-Shaarawi, 2015; Laban et al., 2004), which may mean that the traumatic experiences of refugees may be heightened by these types of legal issues (George, 2012).

Displaced people have a hard time accessing fundamental human rights, healthcare, freedom of movement, education, social security, and employment (Biehl, 2015). Examining related literature reveals the stressors faced by refugees. These are traditionally specified under three categories: (a) *pre-migration stressors* (such as experiences of violence, political conflict, torture, trauma), (b) *during migration stressors* (such as long asylum-seeking timeline, violence, abuse, loss of loved ones and material goods, and lack of essential sources), and (c) *post-migration stressors* (such as multi-displacement, acculturation distress, xenophobia, discrimination, marginalization, lack of social support, and postponed education (Attanayake et al., 2009; Fox, Cowell & Montgomery, 1994; Garbarino & Kostelny, 1996; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012). Clearly, hardships continue even after refugees arrive in a safe country (Lusk, McCallister, & Villalobos, 2013; Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2012), which may mean that reaching secure locations may release some distress, but after resettlement, refugees might experience further stress, anxiety, and depression (Beck, 1963; Dunn, 2016; Mölsä, Kuittinen, Tiilikainen, Honkasa, & Punamäki, 2017; Scholte et al., 2004; Shedlin, Decena, Noboa, & Betancourt, 2014; Song et al., 2015). They may also be in grief as they left behind their loved ones (Bjertrup et al., 2018). Besides, they may not find adequate social support in terms of dealing with all these hardships, and consequently, they may feel alienated in the host country (Berkes et al., 2003; Bugay, Karakedi, & Erdur-Baker, 2018; Gore, 1978). For example, studies showed that Afghans are adversely affected not only by their past experiences of conflict after the Taliban regime fell but also by the poor conditions in the host country, such as lack of essential resources and services (Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010). To illustrate, the temporarily protected people in Turkey were

found to be experiencing economic difficulties. While 54% of them were reported to have a working status, only 3% were reported to have formal work. As for the remaining refugees, their irregular working status created some difficulties, such as unreliable access to employment and low wages. Notably, women were found to be less likely to have a working status when compared to men, and the childcare responsibilities were reported as the main reason underlying 34% of women's unemployment (Turkish Red Crescent and World Food Programme, 2019). As a consequence, these women may feel that they do not spend their time effectively and experience a sense of missing out on life (Bjertrup et al., 2018; Shan, 2009).

Among the refugee population, women are considered as one of the most vulnerable groups under the risk of developing psychopathologies such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Al Gasseer, Dresden, Keeney, & Warren, 2004; Baines, 2017; Blair, 2000; Breslau & Anthony, 2007; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Steel, Chey, & Silove, 2009; Vojvoda, Weine, McGlashan, Becker, & Southwick, 2008), depression (Schweitzer, et al., 2018), and suicidal ideation (Keygnaert, Vettenburg, & Temmerman, 2012). They are comparatively experiencing more hardships than men because they were additionally exposed to gender-based violence, such as rape and abuse and are reported as more likely to lack essential sources and safe conditions (Boyd, 2018; Minihan, Liddell, Byrow, Bryant, & Nickerson, 2018; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Robertson et al., 2006). Besides, refugee women who have a lower level of education, a lower socioeconomic status, and who have children tend to be more vulnerable among other refugee women (Hsu, 2017). Researchers also found that inequality and daily stressors predicted the mental health of refugee women (Miller, Omidian, Rasmussen, Yaqubi, & Daudzai, 2008). Besides, they are more likely to experience a lack of equal representation in leadership and management (Freedman, 2016; UNHCR, 2018). Overall, refugee women are considered to be vulnerable under most circumstances, and they are treated as beneficiaries rather than contributors to communities' resilience and development (Pearce & Lee, 2018).

However, despite all the traumatic experiences, not all refugee women develop serious mental health issues; on the contrary, they manage to learn from their adverse experiences and to develop themselves (Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012). The new school of thought criticized the traditional psychopathology-oriented line of research and explored the strength of the refugee people (American Psychological Association, 2018; Masten, *Ordinary Magic*, 2014). In other words, the researchers, in the last decade, have adopted more asset-based approaches by exploring positive concepts, such as their strengths,

resources, supportive factors, and coping mechanisms (Karunakara et al., 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Thus, the newest line of research emphasized the exploration of how and in which ways refugee women are strong and resilient rather than vulnerable (Abraham, Lien, & Hanssen, 2018; Donner & Rodríguez, 2008; Enarson, 2007; Haddadi & Besharat, 2010; Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012).

Resilience was defined in different ways in different scientific areas, such as economics, ecology, engineering, and psychology. Even though there are disagreements over the definition of resilience, majority of researchers seem to agree with the fact that resilience is related to overcoming hardships, remaining healthy and even bouncing back without falling apart after being exposed to adversities (Schmidt, Kravic, & Ehlert, 2008). Resilience is also defined as a process rather than a personal trait or characteristic (Pulvirenti & Mason, 2011). Similarly, Rutter (2012) considered resilience as one of the personal characteristics under protective factors. Resilience is also suggested to have a dynamic nature which is affected by a person's culture and the specific context (Masten & Obradovic, 2008).

Nevertheless, the definitions of resilience remain vague, and there is an ongoing attempt to conceptualize the phenomenon more specifically (Boring, 1945). After conducting urban anthropological research, Yotebieng et al. (2018) reported the following:

It appeared that resilience equated to little more than surviving the enormous trauma of war and being forced to migrate. This was a testimony to a need to seriously refine the concept of resilience (Yotebieng, Syvertsen, & Awah, 2018, p. 14).

Carpenter and Brock (2008) also asserted that studying resilience was not simple and straightforward because it is inconvenient to render the notions down as single testable theory. Therefore, even though researchers have been attempting to define resilience since the 1960s, resilience remains to lack conceptual clarity (Béné, Newsham, Davies, Ulrichs, & Godfrey-Wood, 2014). However, the effort given to understanding the phenomenon should not be considered as a Sisyphean task or redundancy. On the contrary, that would provide an insight into getting closer to the experience of migration (Strunz, 2012). A recent study suggested that refugee communities can be resilient and vulnerable at the same time. Socially vulnerable groups tend to (a) create sources such as social networks and (b) improve their coping skills due to their migration experiences. Therefore, highly vulnerable groups may become highly resilient at the same time (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017). With these findings, resilience is considered in the current thesis as (1) a dynamic

process related to overcoming hardships, remaining healthy and (2) a concept that is not inevitably synonymous with lack of vulnerability. As for studies concerned with refugees' resilience, researchers found that resilience was a protective factor against psychological distress (Arnetz, Rofa, Arnetz, Ventimiglia, & Jamil, 2013; Bhugra & Ayonrinde, 2004). It is suggested that various support channels may contribute to refugee women's levels of resiliency and promote their overall psychological well-being (Almedom & Glandon, 2007; Pulvirenti & Mason, 2011; Tierney, 2014). In one study, while the experience of emotional neglect decreases the resilience of refugees, having strong relationships with fellow refugees and acquaintances was claimed to contribute to their resilience (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006). In one study, 88% of the Syrian refugees in Jordan were seeking social support after migration. Notably, refugees in high-risk groups, such as women, old-aged persons, and widows were reported to be seeking higher social help compared to other refugee populations (Bartolomei et. Al., 2014; Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019).

Moreover, cultural factors significantly influence the resilience levels of refugees. As it is suggested, "culture was functioned both as an anchor for resilience and an anvil of pain" (Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010, p. 71). Which may mean that the maintenance of their cultural heritage may, on the one hand, provide the preservation of their social identities and instill hope in them, but, on the other hand, cultural expectations may bring cultural dictations and norms which may cause other psychosocial distress.

Researchers have found that cultural identities would predict the resilience understandings of ethnic minorities (Phan, 2006). Traditionally, it has been argued that fulfilling responsibilities would be related to refugee women's intention to meet the traditional expectations for continuing to be supported by their fellows. Moreover, the differences and incompatibilities among the cultural settings may lead refugee women to question culture, and refugee women's inner journey may be triggered by new places and people. Previous research suggests that refugee women reconstruct their identity among the internal and external worlds (Hoffman, Tierney, & Robertson, 2017; Smith, 2013). For example, before migration, women were responsible for homemaking while men were responsible for the financial support of the family (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019). Therefore, refugee women would negotiate balanced positions by incorporating traditional gender roles and their reconstructed roles after resettlement (Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013).

Further, differences among cultures of the host country would influence refugee women's adjustment experiences. A previously conducted study revealed that refugee women experienced seclusion due to different cultural settings (Smith, 2013). The results of the previous studies with refugees of Middle Eastern origin who resettled in European countries and Australia emphasized more social alienation and adjustment problems (Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018; Schweitzer, Melville & Steel, 2006). To illustrate, refugee women who resettled in the U.S. expressed that they lacked social support and had a hard time building friendship due to the individualistic culture of the U.S. (Smith, 2013). Therefore, refugee women's adjustment would be enhanced when they meet what they are culturally accustomed to. Previously conducted studies indicated that shared religious activities might increase the sense of belongingness and facilitate refugee women's adjustment (Newbold, Chung, & Hong, 2013; Park, Cohen & Herb, 1990).

Some other resilience factors are found to lead to strong faith, hope, spirituality, and religious beliefs (Schweitzer, Greenslade, & Kagee, 2007; Orosa, Brune, Huter, Fischer-Ortman, & Haasen, 2011). Thus, having a strong faith and practicing religion would facilitate refugee women's adjustment process stemming from the belief of fairness, destiny, and not blaming oneself (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006).

According to researchers, refugee women were bounced back and remain healthy by using some of the resilience strategies and coping mechanisms such as task-oriented coping strategies (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019). While some researchers suggest that using emotion-based coping mechanisms, such as forgiveness can contribute to refugee's resilience, other researchers claim that some different emotional coping strategies, such as blaming oneself, may even hinder their resilience (Worthington & Scherer, 2004; Zeidner & Saklofske, 1996). In one study, while 39.5 % of 550 refugees were reported to be using problem-solving skills that heightened their resilience, 64.5% of them were reported to be resorting to avoidance, which may decrease their levels of resilience (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019; Labys, Dreyer, & Burns, 2017).

Refugees may also be using some other defense mechanisms that have immature, self-inhibiting characteristics, and this may decrease the refugee's resilience (Jun et al., 2015).

Further, refugee women's resilience levels were found to be related to some of their characteristics, such as being hard-working, conscientious, and extroverted. Being extroverted was linked to flexible thinking and expanded behavioral options, which are suggested to be contributing factors to refugee women's resilience. In that way, refugee's self-efficacy would increase, and this, in turn, may enable them to feel that they are

spending productive time in the host country. Also, being extroverted may allow refugees to succeed in social interactions that may be related to receiving more social-related supports. On the other hand, being neurotic, which is related to being unable to control or unable to cope with negative impulses, may exacerbate their vulnerabilities (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006).

Notably, language-based problems have been reported to be hindering factors affecting refugees' lives. However, researchers indicated that having advanced language skills may also decrease refugee women's resilience due to their expectations of obtaining better opportunities in the host country, such as their expectance of being employed in qualified jobs and their hope of increasing their visibility in other socio-political contexts (Schweitzer et al., 2018).

To sum up, the related literature documents that refugee women are more likely to have extensive and cumulative traumatic experiences before, during, and after immigration, including violence, rape, poverty, discrimination, and are less likely to reach available humanitarian and social support (Oynut et al., 2009). There seem to be two lines of research in the literature. One school of thought identifies refugee women as being under risk of developing psychopathology due to not only the likelihood of their experiencing more traumatic events (Poureslami, MacLean, Spiegel, & Yassi, 2004), but also the likelihood of coming from a low SES (International Rescue Committee, 2018) and lack of access to financial and other humanitarian aids (Indra, 1987). However, another school of thought suggests that despite the hardships that refugee women have to endure, they bounce back, remain healthy and adjust well (Colvin, 2018) or they may even exhibit post-traumatic growth by making sense of their traumatic experiences (Chan, Young, & Sharif, 2016). Finally, more recent research suggests that vulnerability and resilience may not be mutually exclusive concepts. That is, people may be under risk of developing pathologies and resilient at the same time (Hofer, 2006; Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017). Interestingly, the emphasis researchers put on resilience arises partly from the everyday inequalities and some of the vulnerability factors such as past traumatic experiences of refugees. Therefore, refugees' vulnerabilities would trigger their resilience. Thus, one might think that vulnerability factors would provide refugees with a chance to become resilient (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017).

However, little is known about how and in which ways vulnerability and resilience are converged. Moreover, it is not clear what culture-specific factors play a role in their migration experiences (McLaughlin & Dietz, 2008; Munt, 2012). Although both schools

of thought produced vital knowledge about the traumatic experiences of refugee women and how they respond to such experiences, some questions are yet to be answered and elaborated on further. That is, research needs to reveal who and under what circumstances they are under the risk of developing psychopathologies, what makes refugee women resilient and what kinds of resilient strategies refugee women utilize to protect them from the negative impacts of traumatic experiences.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The present study aims to understand the experiences of refugee women by taking into consideration gender-specific vulnerabilities and resilience in the participants' socio-cultural context. According to the literature, experiences of refugee women can be affected by personal as well as socio-cultural factors. However, most of the existing research seems to reflect the experiences of refugee women through a western point of view (George, 2012). The majority of existing studies engaged in more quantitative-based studies by utilizing unidimensional scales to measure resilience or vulnerability. Therefore, exploring refugee women's meaning-making of resilience with qualitative research might be beneficial. The current study proposes to explore the experiences of refugee women in a given socio-cultural context by paying close attention to their meaning-making processes. In light of the existing literature, this study seeks to answer the following general research questions:

1. What are the migration experiences of refugee women?
 - a. What are the vulnerabilities of refugee women who resettled?
 - b. What are refugee women's meaning making of resilience?
 - c. Which resilience strategies are utilized by refugee women to increase their well-being?
 - d. How and in which ways does being a woman influence their vulnerabilities and assets?

1.2. The Significance of the Study

In most of the catastrophic scenarios, women are considered to be at risk because they have to deal with not only lack of resources but also various gender-specific risk factors, such as abuse, oppression, rape, domestic violence and even human trafficking (Poureslami, MacLean, Spiegel, & Yassi, 2004). As a result of these experiences, they may experience - demoralization, stigmatization, and mental and physical health decay

(International Rescue Committee, 2018). However, refugee women's psychological and physical responses vary even if they share similar experiences. In other words, not every refugee woman develops psychopathology, but some build a new and better life. Thus, understanding what differentiates the responses of refugee women in the light of the asset-based approaches, such as exploration of the assets, strategies, resilience, coping mechanisms, capacities can provide insight into the possible ways of promoting refugee women's mental well-being (Erdener, 2017; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; McLean & McNeice, 2012). Moreover, gender is considered as "a key constitutive element of migrations"; yet it is undervalued in the mainstream of migration studies (Arango; 2017; Mahler & Pessar, 2006, p.27). Furthermore, refugee women are asserted to be one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged ones, among other refugees (Jensen, 2019). As a result of this, women are claimed as having a broader point of view for social reality and norms because they are oppressed and affected by gender roles (Harding, 1987). Therefore, studying refugee women can contribute to gender studies (Indra, 1987).

Furthermore, exploring refugee women's perspectives on resilience is vital since some disagreements exist among researchers in terms of what resilience is and what it constitutes (Masten, 2014). The vagueness in the conceptualization and operationalization of the term may affect methodological practices, and its epistemological orientations (Ainuddin & Routray, 2002; Bryman, 2012). Thus, gathering information about how refugee women make sense of resilience seems to be essential to create and implement need-based and better working psychosocial programs. Moreover, exploring how different aspects and dimensions of refugee women's meaning-making of resilience significantly contribute to the scientific understanding of the concepts and the replicability of the research (Berg, 2009). If, indeed, there is a discrepancy among refugee women's meaning-making of their experiences and discrepancies among policymakers, counselors and other mental health professionals regarding how they understand these, then all prevention, intervention, and postvention models to promote healthy coping mechanisms to reduce disruptive impacts should be reviewed and revised (Connor & Zhang, 2006).

Sociocultural factors appear to impact refugee women's resiliency and vulnerability, and they are claimed to have a dynamic nature (Masten & Obradovic, 2008). Most research seems to reflect experiences of refugee women who settled in relatively more developed western countries where they can reach abundant resources, well-designed interventions, and resettlement plans (Shishehgar, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Green, & Davidson, 2017). However, most refugee receiving countries are less developed

countries with much fewer resources (UN DESA, 2017) such as Turkey. Thus, a better understanding of the experiences of refugee women requires research conducted in diverse sociocultural contexts in which there may be variation in not only the needs and issues of refugees but also how related terms are defined (Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012). Therefore, examining both resilience and vulnerability by considering the impacts of the roles of sociocultural context can shed light on the experiences of relatively more refugee women (Afana, Tremblay, Ghannam, Ronsbo, & Veronese, 2018; Schweitzer, Greenslade, & Kagee, 2007).

Other significant characteristics of this thesis came from the adopted research approach, which is Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR). In this study, eligible women who matched the selection criteria were identified by their status of temporary protection. All the refugee women who participated in the research were Muslim with Eastern, collectivistic cultural backgrounds. This population was suggested to be afraid of stigmatization and of being judged by the interviewer and other people (Meade & Craig, 2012). In order to overcome these types of difficulties, CBPR was utilized in this study. CBPR allowed the researcher to collaborate with the community members who had facilitator roles in all phases of the research process. This model was suggested to be used, especially with vulnerable populations (Holkup, Tripp-Reimer, Salois, & Weinert, 2004; Li, Liddell & Nickerson, 2016; Newell & South, 2011). CBPR helps to establish trust between participants and the researcher, as it acknowledges the researcher in terms of cultural differences, local knowledge, and perceptions. Therefore, the researcher of the present study acknowledged the importance of interference of various cultural nuances in the migration experiences of refugee women. Thus, the research becomes more credible and trustworthy (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 2001; Stevens & Hall, 1998).

The researcher valued the process and went beyond testing the hypothesis by adopting two components of post-positivist philosophy, with its emic, and idiographic nature, to reach a more in-depth understanding of the world of the refugee women (Tuffour, 2017). The aims of this study guided the researcher to adopt integrative hermeneutic phenomenology with the analysis method called Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Finlay, 2011). This data analysis method enabled the researcher to have an active role in interpreting, meaning-making, and translating to reach a detailed interpretation of the experiences of refugee women. Therefore, refugee women's vulnerabilities and resilience could be explored profoundly and comprehensively. In

addition, the data triangulation method was adopted by combining anecdotal records and semi-structured interviews to ensure the study's trustworthiness.

All in all, the researcher aimed to explore the experiences of refugee women with phenomenological, gender-specific, and culture-specific concerns by taking into consideration refugee women's gender, vulnerability, and resilience in a given socio-cultural context, i.e., in Turkey, where there are limited means and comparatively fewer resources and opportunities.

In conclusion, considering the Turkish context, with the 4 million refugees all over the country, the field of counseling needs to increase its capacity to include human resources that understand the needs and challenges of refugees as well as their strengths and assets. Families and their children with different needs and sociocultural backgrounds are new clienteles for counselors working in various settings, such as schools, universities, justice systems, and other community settings. Moreover, it should be reminded that about 500,000 babies have been born in Turkey since 2011 (Turkish Red Crescent and World Food Programme, 2019). Such a significant number of refugees have the potential to change the demographic characteristics of the country, which puts massive pressure on a host country with already limited resources, and, in turn, may provoke xenophobic attitudes among the local people.

1.3. Definition of Terms

An asylum seeker who departed from their home country to seek sanctuary in another country because of the exposure/ threat of oppression, persecution, or cruelty in their previous place (Nolin, 2017). These people may be a refugee, migrant, or a displaced person for some reason. The asylum seeker may recognize as a refugee based on the 1951 Refugee Convention rules or other domestic refugee laws.

The refugee is "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because they have well-founded fear based on having a specific race, religion, nationality, political state, or membership to any organizations/social groups count as the refugee (Unrefugees, 2018; The UN Migration Agency, 2018). However, the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) in Turkey decided to give the temporary protection status to these people based on the geographical concerning.

The temporary protection provides to these people protection and assistance in Turkey. It includes the right to stay in Turkey until a more permanent solution and address

the needs and give fundamental rights (UNHCR Turkey, 2019). In this research, the term used “refugee” for the people who have juridical status that “temporary protected” in Turkey.

Resilience considers as ability (Bonanno, 2005). It allows one to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological functioning even after they knocked down by life (de Terte & Stephens, 2014) Resilience linked to the higher cognitive ability, positive self-esteem, hopefulness, problem-solving repertoire, and flexibility.

Vulnerability is a state of being more likely to develop mental health problems due to the migration difficulties and traumatic experiences and being less accessible to various supports and protection.

Being under risk is for disadvantaged people who are more vulnerable to overcome migration-related difficulties. Notably, women, children, people who need special needs, and elderlies are the ones who influence the consequences intensely; those need to protect as they are in the risk categories.

Resilience is about managing somehow to remain healthy and bouncing back quickly, even experiencing mental health problems.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Migration to another country is defined as changing one's locality or place of residence by settling into another country (Oxford Dictionary, 1948). Based on current estimations, there are 244 million international migrants in the world, which equates to 3.3 percent of the global population (UN DESA, 2016). International migration is divided into 'regular migration' and 'irregular migration.' While regular migration is about following the immigration rules and regulations of the relevant country (passport, observance of visa rules), irregular migration, according to the Refugee Rights Sub-Commission (2018), involves the violation of these rules. In other words, irregular immigration is (a) entering into a new country illegally, (b) attempting to leave the country illegally, or (c) entering the country legally, but later assuming an illegal status. Thus, people who move into a new state by means of irregular migration do so without a valid passport or travel documents or do not fulfill the administrative requirements of the host country.

Some of the irregular migrants were forced to migrate, i.e., go beyond the borders of their country and initiate the process of asylum in a new country as consequences of conflict, oppression, persecution because of the existing coercion, such as life threats arising from either natural or artificial causes (IOM, 2011). Forced migration has been on the front burner of the world, and every two seconds, one person is forcibly displaced (Eisenman, Gelberg, Liu, & Shapiro, 2003). In recent years, 68.5 million people have forcibly been displaced from their homeland because of exposure to such conditions as war, persecution, violence, and oppression. Of these, 68.5 million migrants, 25.4 million were refugees, 40 million were internally displaced people, and 3.1 million were asylum-seekers (Unrefugees, 2018). These migrants experience both domestic and political violence, lack of security (Porter & Haslam, 2005; The UN Migration Agency, 2018; Tracy, Keller & Rasmussen, 2013), and discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2018) while they live in their home country. In fact, even after migration, most of the time violation continues. For instance, the conditions of camps increase the tensions within the family, causing domestic violence, the rates of which can even be on the rise after the migration (Feseha & Gerbaba, 2012; UNHCR, 2002).

After the invasion of Soviet Russia in 1979, wars in Afghanistan became permanent, and instability prevailed throughout the country. With the lack of security and the emergence of economic problems, the Afghan people have found the solution to emigrate to other countries. Thus, Afghanistan has become one of the largest refugee resource countries in the world. The Islamic Republic of Iran, neighboring the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, is one of the countries inhabited by Afghan immigrants and refugees (Durmaz, 2019). In today's world, which is defined as the post-industrial era, Afghans emigrate in the most "primitive, ways, and at their destination, they seek to emigrate again as a result of the othering and exploitation of labor. Immigration has become one of the phenomena that have never diminished the history of the country and the lives of refugees (Geyik, 2019).

In recent years, Turkey seems to be a target country as a center of attraction for displaced people (Refugee Rights Sub-Commission, 2018). One reason would be the convenience of its geographical location, i.e., Turkey is considered as a natural bridge between economically less developed countries in the East and the developed countries in the West. In addition, the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts are convenient for illegal crossings of coastal borders due to the geographical nature of the coasts (Refugee Rights Sub-Commission, 2018). However, even if these illegal entries from the coasts seem convenient, it is highly risky. According to the reports of international organizations, 1,857 irregular migrants had lost their lives in the whole Mediterranean basin by October 2018 (IOM, 2018). However, the number of irregular migrants reached 14,892 in 2014 (Refugee Rights Sub-Commission, 2018). Turkey receives hundreds of people because of (1) increasing wars in Turkey's geography, (2) economic bottlenecks, and (3) both unemployment problems and low-income politics of the emigrating countries (Refugee Rights Sub-Commission, 2018).

As stated by Aygün, the President of The Syrian Friendship Association, the Syrian population ($n= 3,651,997$) in Turkey is equal to the population of many European countries (Refugee Rights Sub-Commission, 2018). The people forced to migrate to Turkey do not have refugee status (except the ones who have a European background) based on the international law terminology determined at the 1951 Geneva Convention and in the Foreigners and International Protection Act (Refugee Rights Sub-Commission, 2018). Turkey determined a temporary protection status for masses of refugees because of the geographical reservation article. The article offers safe lands to temporarily protected people until they are placed in third countries by the United Nations (Refugee Rights Sub-

Commission, 2018). Therefore, refugee women have to live with uncertainty, which positively correlates with anxiety and depression (Brekke, 2010; Hynie, 2018). Moreover, currently there are 169,919 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey, the second-largest immigrant group in Turkey, and their flow towards Turkey has rapidly been increasing in recent days owing to “open door” policies (UNHCR Turkey, 2018). Although Turkey was reported as having problems regarding the welfare and employment of refugees, it should be noted that Turks have a nomadic culture. In this sense, the Turks who migrated throughout history by continually making changes in the geography they live in would be considered as guests as well as hosts (Altunok, 2019).

UNHCR (2019) reports indicate that Turkey has the largest refugee population ($N=4$ million) and has taken its place at the top of the host countries since the Syrian civil war started in 2011 (Eruiyar, Maltby, & Vostanis, 2018), and the highest proportion of the refugees were from Syria ($n=3.6$ million), which was then followed by Afghanistan ($n=170.000$) and Iraq ($n=142.000$). Turkey’s Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) identified refugees (almost six million refugees, of whom 49.04% were women and 50.06 % were men) as one of the most vulnerable populations that benefited from some of the services provided to them, such as food assistance (96.64%), monthly cash-based interventions (93.62%), adequate shelter service (8.7%). The same report states that all the refugees benefited from community centers (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights underlined that “everyone has the right to a nationality;” however, 10 million people are considered as stateless, i.e., they do not belong to any country (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). These stateless people have limited access to fundamental human rights, such as healthcare, freedom of movement, education, social security, and employment (Kneebone, 2018). In one study conducted with Bosnian Muslim refugees ($n=126$), it was indicated that exposure to war and violation of human rights cause PTSD, (Momartin, Silove, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 2003). In addition to legal issues, women also experience a lack of legal protection, economic difficulty, and the absence of emotional support (The UN Migration Agency, 2018). It is suggested that having a low socioeconomic status leads to distress and depression or PTSD among refugees (Bogic, Njoku, & Priebe, 2015; Chen, Hall, Ling, & Renzaho, 2017). Besides, crossing the borders of a country does not mean difficulties end; refugees face and undergo more challenges and traumatic experiences, such as language problems and xenophobia, during the resettlement process (Yotebieng, Syvertsen, &

Awah, 2018). Experiencing these types of traumas and hardships may cause psychological and physical health problems (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Steel, Chey, & Silove, 2009).

Among the refugees, women, when compared to men, tend to have a lower socioeconomic status, education level, and power within the home and in public spheres (Boyd, 2018). Besides, women are subject to more sexual and physical abuse and gender-based violence (Sideris, 2003; Tanabe et al., 2015). Women mostly face separation, displacement, and grief (Momartin, Silove, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 2003) because of the breakdown of community support systems and support channels (de Bruijn, 2009), which put them at higher risk (Beswick, 2001; Botticello, 2009). Consequently, Renner and Salem (2009) suggest that women are one of the most vulnerable ones among the migrated population and, when compared to men, they have more somatic symptoms, emotional outbursts, and loss of sexual interest (Briggs, 2011). Therefore, gender influences refugees' experiences and women are suggested to be one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged ones, among others (Jensen, 2019). As a result, during conflicts, refugee women may further experience inequality, exclusion, and discrimination because of stigmatization and humiliation based on their gender. However, even though gender is considered as "a key constitutive element of migrations," it is undervalued in the mainstream of migration studies (Mahler & Pessar, 2006, p. 27). Hence, the present study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of refugee women located in Turkey. The motivation of the study comes from the fact that 4 million of the refugees in Turkey are women, who are under the risk of developing psychosocial issues (UNHCR, 2019). These women are also the primary caregivers of the children and adolescents who make up 36% of the total refugee population (UNICEF, 2019).

As the line of research mentioned above documents vulnerabilities of refugee women, a newer line of research draws attention to the assets or strengths of refugee women. This line of research emphasizes that despite the hardships that these women endure, they can bounce back (Abraham, Lien, & Hanssen, 2018). Experiencing difficulties and consequently developing psychopathologies, such as depression and PTSD, provides valuable information for developing better interventions for refugee populations. However, studying asset-based characteristics and protective factors of refugees to understand how and to what extent some refugees bounce back after adversity and remain healthy (Abraham, Lien, & Hanssen, 2018) appears to be an equally important area of study. Therefore, in order to provide a theoretical background for the current study,

these somewhat different lines of research are summarized below. Furthermore, how these risk and resilience aspects would coordinately coexist, and function together has been discussed to make progress in drawing a comprehensive picture of refugees' resettlement process and bringing forward realistic and practical proposals of implications to the refugee context.

2.1. The Vulnerability of Refugee Women

Hardships of women go beyond the civil war context. Cockburn (1998) stated that women are affected by a war from the "bedroom to the battlefield" (p.8). Researchers conducted a study with 858 refugee women and found that 26.7 percent of the women had been physically abused and had experienced domestic violence inflicted by their spouse and family members (Sipsma et al., 2015). Some of the disturbances of refugee women were found to be anxiety, depression, PTSD, and distress. Besides, both gender-based and domestic violence exacerbates refugee women's psychosocial well-being and cause even more psychological disturbances in the context of civil war (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995; Beswick, 2001). In one study conducted with ever-married Congolese refugee women ($n = 548$) residing in Rwanda and aged between 15 and 49, researchers found that during the conflict in Rwanda, half of the refugee women reported that they considered committing suicide because of the violence they were subjected to (Sipsma et al., 2015).

Abused refugee women mostly prefer to stay in silence, which was entitled by Pittaway (2006) as "conspiracy of silence"; Pittaway stated that even though refugee women experience more violence than others, they do not tend to report it. At this point, the impact of cultural norms, local religious beliefs, and gender roles on refugee women's psycho-social well-being should be emphasized. Refugee women who were raped during the conflict in both cases, namely in Bosnia Herzegovina and in Mozambique, reported after a later period in time that they were rejected by both their families and society (Arcel, 1994; Sideris, 2003). Social dislocation affects the responses and attachment of refugee women differently from men because refugee women have comparatively less access to power, material resources, and social status than refugee men (Sideris, 2003). Because of physical, political, and sexual violence that Afghan refugee women were experiencing, 40 cases of suicides were reported in 2004 by the New York Times newspaper with the headline, "For More Afghan Women, Immolation is Escape" (Hyder, Noor, & Tsui, 2007, p. 1536). Besides, 34% of the Afghan women expressed that they were a child bride (The

Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2018). One of the qualitative studies with a focused group design revealed that Syrian refugee girls were having psychological comorbidity, e.g., PTSD, dissociative disorders, depression, and anxiety because they were forced to get married at an early age for the sake of their protection from social and physical harm (Hattar-Pollara, 2019).

Owing to the wars, refugee women's daily life consists of precariousness as they experience economic difficulties and lack protection, while there is an absence of emotional support (Castañeda et al., 2015; Wilson, 2018). Political violence affects women more severely than men. Some of the experiences reported by Afghan women during the Taliban regime and afterward were being subject to burns, acid attacks, and rapes (Hyder, Noor, & Tsui, 2007). The challenges continue to exist throughout the migration process (Bugay, Karakedi, & Erdur-Baker, 2018). Addressing the challenges faced by refugee women in three periods is possible. These are (1) pre-immigration: the challenges they face in their own countries, (2) during immigration: the difficulties in the process of migrating and, (3) post-immigration: problems encountered during the adjustment process (Arango, 2017; Lindencrona, Ekblad, & Hauff, 2008).

During the pre-migration phase, refugee women experience a significant number of traumatic experiences, such as losing their spouses, lack of financial resources which force women to earn their money in undesirable conditions, i.e., prostitution, torture, and trading of organs and tissues (Brown-Bowers, McShane, Wilson-Mitchell, & Gurevich, 2015; Culcasi, 2019; Jaranson et al., 2004; Shishehgar, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Green, & Davidson, 2017). Other traumatic events are ethnic and religious persecution, rape, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment, sex slavery, and oppression (Kalt, Hossain, Kiss, & Zimmerman, 2013; Pavlish, 2005). In one study, 20 % of the refugee women among all the participants stated that they experienced sexual abuse (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2014). One study demonstrated that 91% of the refugees came to a new country with at least one pre-existing condition such as depression or PTSD (Center for Research on Migration & Refugee Integration, 2018). Researchers also investigated issues of refugee women's motherhood and maternity care (McLeish, 2005; Owens, Dandy, & Hancock, 2016; Pangas et al., 2019). With respect to this topic, pregnancy periods, maternity care, and birth outcomes of the refugee women were explored (Heslehurst, Brown, Pemu, Coleman, & Rankin, 2018). The majority of these studies have indicated that women forced to migrate were most likely to have shortened pregnancy lengths and adverse birth outcomes (Pangas et al., 2019). They experienced

pregnancy complications, maternal and neonatal mortality, morbidity, and postnatal depression (Kingsbury & Chatfield, 2019; Yelland et al., 2016). Moreover, the destruction of social life maintenance, e.g., schools, mosques, and vital civilian infrastructures, such as medical facilities made their daily life unlivable (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

During migration, refugee women continue to experience difficulties, such as lack of food, water, and shelter, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, rape, and bullying, which also included police bullying, (Mollica, McDonald, Massagli, & Silove, 2004). Refugee women have a higher number of protracted displacements compared to the men, and their hardships aggravate over time (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2015). Due to the conditions of immigration, most of the refugee women left their families behind or were separated from family members on the way (Steel, Silove, Bird, McGorry, & Mohan, 1999). Family separation has a significant impact on refugees' mental wellbeing; it contributes to post-migration distress (Bogic et al., 2012).

After migration, refugee women experience new physiological and psychological difficulties (Lusk, McCallister, & Villalobos, 2013). In Turkey, although it is said that the post-migration situation of Afghan refugees has undergone a relative change compared to pre-migration, researchers concluded that there are still severe deficiencies in terms of living conditions after resettlement. Therefore, refugee women have again faced poverty at their destination. Consequently, the only thing that changed after the journey was the geography where poverty was experienced. One of the concerns related to refugee women as they were considered as "cheap labor" for their employers; thus, their poverty seems never to change (Geyik, 2019). Similarly, when they arrive in a new country, they are generally placed in refugee camps, i.e., challenging living places after crossing the border where refugee women's basic needs such as food and water cannot be met (Adams, Gardiner, & Assefi, 2004). These types of difficulties in camp life and lack of resources put women in a challenging position and cause stress (Adams, Gardiner, & Assefi, 2004). Besides, they have to deal with unemployment, language problems, xenophobia, marginalization, oppression, violation of rights when they are in the host country (Vromans et al., 2018). Language problems affect almost all aspects of their daily life by limiting, for example, their access to education and health services (Bhatia & Wallace, 2007; Ross-Sheriff, Husain, & Tirmazi, 2011). In addition, 9-30% of the women refugees have developed posttraumatic psychopathology because of trauma exposure and post-migration living difficulties (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Steel, Chey, & Silove, 2009).

Because people forced to migrate, they left their status behind, they may experience severe demoralization in the host country and experience discrimination based on their ethnicity, skin color, accent, and clothing; further, they may have difficulties in acquiring social support (Bugay, Karakedi, & Erdur-Baker, 2018; Briggs, 2011). Besides, while the feeling of acceptance in a new country contributes to well-being, loss of social support may cause them to have depression (Bogic et al., 2012; Fortuna, Porche, & Alegria, 2008). Discrimination was found to be positively correlated with high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Shedlin, Decena, Noboa, & Betancourt, 2014). Re-traumatization, discrimination, and uncertainty could increase the depression levels of refugees, and it may cause social isolation after resettlement (Beswick, 2001; Bogic, Njoku, & Priebe, 2015; Carroll, Epstein, Fiscella, & Volpe, 2007; Rousseau, Jamil, Bhui, & Boudjarane, 2015). In one study, 63% of the refugee women having grief-related distress caused the loss of roles in the family and community (Vromans et al., 2017).

Therefore, as mentioned previously, women refugees are affected by the war, in Cockburn's terms "[from the] bedroom to the battlefield" (1998, p.8) by experiencing multiple traumatic events simultaneously (Fortuna, Porche, & Alegria, 2008). Refugee women are subject to long-term progressive and highly induced cumulative stress that poses a threat to their psychosocial well-being (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Steel et al., 2009). When the number and severity of exposures to traumatic experiences increase, the number of psychological symptoms also increase, i.e., dose-response relationship theory (Craighead & Nemeroff, 2005; Nickerson, Bryant, Silove, & Steel, 2011). Furthermore, women are claimed to be sensitive to the effects of their previous traumas, which would increase their current stress (Breslau & Anthony, 2007; Opaas & Varvin, 2015).

Refugee women are claimed to have more psychological problems when compared to the average population (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2012). A study conducted in Australia found that while 39.8% of Iraqi refugees who settled in Australia experienced severe psychological distress, the rate was 2.6% for the Australian population (Slewa-Younan, Guajardo, Heriseanu, & Hasan, 2015). One study compared postpartum depression among refugee women and that among women living in their country of origin. It was found that refugee women experienced five times more postpartum depression than their counterparts in their country of origin (Stewart, Gagnon, Saucier, Wahous, & Dougherty, 2008; Tsai, Barr, & Welch, 2017). Thus, it can be deduced that refugees experience more psychological disturbances than the average population.

With respect to differences between genders, researchers found that male and female brains processed trauma in different neural activation patterns when they were exposed to the same stress. For example, the male and female brain's reflections are dissimilar in terms of neural remodeling (McEwen, Gray, & Nasca, 2015). The related literature suggests that women are more vulnerable to PTSD than men are (Al Gasseer, Dresden, Keeney, & Warren, 2004; Breslau & Anthony, 2007; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Vojvoda, Weine, McGlashan, Becker, & Southwick, 2008). Besides, anxiety is more commonly observed among women, as indicated by the mean scores that the HSCL-25 subscales yielded (Scholte et al., 2004). Additionally, refugee women had higher scores compared to men in terms of feeling lonely and getting bored (Robertson et al., 2006). The researchers conducted a meta-analysis in which they reviewed 181 research studies and found that depression was more likely to be observed among women (13.1%) than men (8.5%), and the prevalence of PTSD and major depression was 30% in refugees (Steel, Silove, Bird, McGorry, & Mohan, 1999). In another study, Renner, Salem, and Ottomeyer (2007) used five psychometric instruments, and they conducted semi-structured interviews with 150 refugees from Chechnya, Afghanistan, and West Africa. Their results indicated that women had a significantly higher number of somatic symptoms than men did. In one review, nine studies, all of which were conducted in Europe, found that female refugees tended to be more vulnerable in terms of mental health problems (Mohwinkel, Nowak, Kasper, & Razum, 2018).

Overall, exclusion, poverty, separation from the family, being out of their social environment, being homeless and not accessing health services are the factors that lead to anxiety disorders and depression (Eisenman, Gelberg, Liu, & Shapiro, 2003). Commonly seen psychological disorders in refugee women are PTSD, depression, and anxiety disorders (Steel et al., 2009). Moreover, traumatic exposures may reduce refugee women's self-esteem and, when combined with social exclusion, exposures may cause them to suffer a great deal of low morale (Briggs, 2011). Based on the results of the General Health Questionnaire, one study reported that 34% of the Afghan refugees in southern Iran had symptoms of mental health disorders (Scholte et al., 2004). Robertson and colleagues (2006) suggested that having more children, having a low level of socioeconomic status, and being old determine the degree of PTSD refugee women experience. The research demonstrated that 97% of the women living in Kabul or refugee camps in Pakistan had symptoms of major depression, and approximately 86% of them showed anxiety symptoms during the Taliban regime in 1998 (Rasekh, Bauer, Manos, & Lacopino, 1998).

However, some of the refugee women were claimed to pull through, i.e., become empowered, strengthened, and adjusted after experiencing trauma despite the hardships and traumatic experiences (Adger et al., 2002; Goodman, 2004; Goodman, Vesely, Letiecq, & Cleaveland, 2017). Gebreyosus (2014) stated that this uncertainty and limitations might encourage female refugees to develop coping strategies and work on their resilience. In the next section, studies that have similar motives to those of second research aspects (studying asset-based characteristics and protective factors of refugees to understand how and to what extent some refugees bounce back after adversity and trauma) are provided.

2.2. Rising Like the Phoenix: The Resilient Refugee Women

The mainstream of migration studies initially focused on the psychopathologies of refugees, i.e., depression, anxiety, depression levels, and PTSD (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Investigators initially studied the impact of adverse experiences on the development of mental health problems. However, they came to realize that many of the processes that led to mental health problems were leading to positive growth (Masten, 2014). Joseph and Butler (2010) indicated that after traumatic events, refugees also have positive outcomes, such as becoming empowered and resilient. Thus, experiencing traumatic events and living under stress might not always cause mental or physical degradation (Hobfoll et al., 2007). Studies revealed that while refugee women gain “personal autonomy, independence, and greater gender parity,” refugee men lose their ground (Mahler & Pessar, 2006, p. 34). Consequently, there was a shift in the paradigm to strength-based approaches, i.e., studying positive constructs, such as hope, coping strategies, PTG, and resilience (Erdener, 2017; Munt, 2012). As a result, resilience became one of the concepts that drew attention in the late 20th century in the area of mental health research.

In the science of resilience, *four primary waves* followed each other over time (Masten, 2014). In the first wave, researchers attempted to reveal the actual mechanisms underlying overcoming adversities and being invulnerable in order to describe the phenomenon of resilience. In the second wave, researchers tried to understand how resiliency processes work and what the underlying influences were, e.g., preventive, promotive, or protective influences. In the third wave, with the motive of promoting resilience via interventions, researchers tested the hypothesis proposed in the first two waves to gain insight into how and what matters for resilience. Thus, in the third wave, the

main effort was given by building and testing interventions to promote resilience. Finally, the fourth and last wave emerged owing to the developments in technology and knowledge, which enabled researchers to use advanced neuroimaging techniques, conduct neurological and genetical research by using advanced statistical methods to carry out in-depth investigations into the biological mechanisms underlying resilience by employing a multidisciplinary approach (Buk, 2009).

Based on popular belief, resilience is about the ability to bend, yet not break, and bounce back and even grow after adversities (Southwick & Charney, 2018). Resilience embodies a multitude of concepts, various definitions, and frameworks. Nevertheless, researchers agreed upon investigating multiple variables, such as social, cultural, demographic, developmental, genetic, epigenetic, and economical to gain a more in-depth understanding of resilience (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014).

However, is a blurred concept a concept at all?
Is an indistinct photograph a picture of a person at all?
Is it even always an advantage to replace an indistinct picture by a sharp one?
Is not the indistinct one often exactly what we need?
(Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 71).

Therefore, in *the first wave*, researchers were attempting to describe resilience. To illustrate, Wagnild and Collins (2009, p. 1) defined the term to be a condition “following adversity and challenge and [which] connotes inner strength, competence, optimism, flexibility and the ability to cope when faced with adversity effectively”; Garmezy (1993) defined it as a competence or capacity to function and adapt to new conditions despite experiences of stress, trauma, and depression. Moreover, Berger (2017) expanded the definition and considered resilience as a matter of incorporating trauma in a person’s life rather than only bouncing back to previous conditions. Despite these various definitions, the effort to describe and understand the phenomenon continued because understanding resilience is vital for its enhancement, especially when it is not naturally occurring (Masten, 2006). Thus, throughout time, researchers have proposed various conceptualizations of resilience, some of which are displayed in Figure 1 (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010).

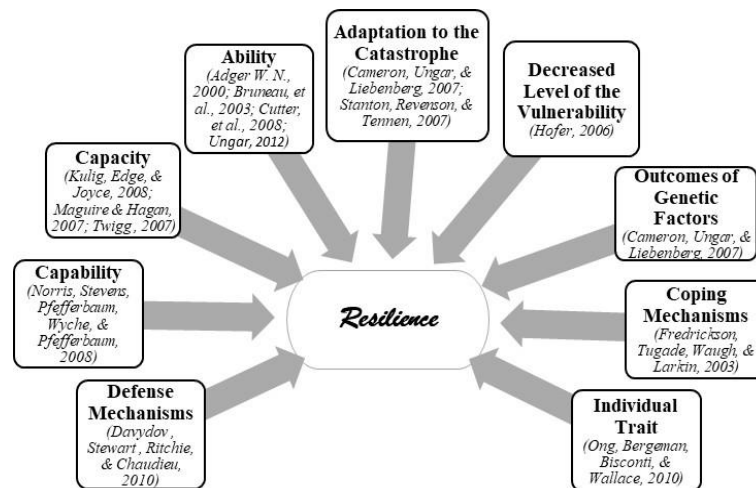


Figure 1. Resilience associated with various terms.

The initial phases of defining resilience correspond to a definition made by Holling in 1973 in the domain of environmental science. He described resilience in his research paper titled “Resilience and stability of the ecological system.” He suggested a new perspective on ecological science by shifting the paradigm to species’ sustainability (Holling, 1973). He indicated that the base of species’ sustainability is about reaching equilibrium states with persistence. He linked persistence to resilience, and he defined resilience as an ability to adapt oneself to changing environments in order to stay alive (Holling, 1995). The resiliency of human beings was claimed to be related to the capability to recuperate from adversity to the restoration of the stability of functioning (Masten, Garmezy, Tellegen, Pellegrini, Larkin, & Larsen, 1988).

Person-specific resilience is also mentioned in the literature as it is associated with a person’s ability to come through or recuperate. It is claimed to have various components, e.g., individual behaviors, characteristics, attitudes, strengths, and resources (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2014). New concepts also descend from resilience, such as emotional resilience, i.e., using emotions flexibly to overcome adversities (Wagnild & Young, 1993). However, as Masten (2014) pointed out that back in those days, their descriptions were valuable, yet were not comprehensible as they are nowadays thanks to the advancement of technological tools that are used in brain and gene studies to conduct multilevel analyses, which she called as the fourth wave in resilience research studies.

Despite the positive content of linkages, there are also unfavorable conditions attributed to resilience, such as being withdrawn, defensive, and confrontational (Adger, 1997; Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2014). One researcher indicated that resilient

people's personalities contain a sociopathic aspect (Glover, 2009). Resilience is also considered as a muscle that improves its strength day by day to handle traumatic events more effectively (Bennett, Aden, Broome, Mitchell, & Rigdon, 2010). Even though resilience has different categorizations, inferences that can be drawn from the term are not share commonalities so that one might find common ground among all the categories. Owing to the complexity of the definition, Brand and Jax (2007) suggested categorizing resilience with ten descriptions classified into three groups of concepts (1) the descriptive concept with its ecological science and the social science subparts, (2) the hybrid concept and (3) the normative concept.

Table 1

Ten Definitions of Resilience Concerning the Degree of Normativity (Brand & Jax, 2007)

(I) DESCRIPTIVE CONCEPT	
ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE	
1) Original-ecological	The persistence of systems & level of absorbing (Holling, 1973).
2) Extended-ecological	The magnitude of absorption levels & resistance to shocks (Folke et al., 2002)
3) Systemic heuristic	A quantitative attribute which alters its functions (Holling, 2001).
4) Operational	Maintaining itself against internal or external shocks (Carpenter et al., 2001; Cumming, 2011).
SOCIAL SCIENCES	
5) Sociological	Changing that comes after coping (Adger, 2000).
6) Ecological-economic	The transition between states and the ability of the system to resist shocks (Perrings, 2006).
(II) HYBRID CONCEPT	
7) Ecosystem-services-related	Capacity to endurance (Folke et al., 2002).
8) Social-ecological system	The capacity to absorb disturbances to retain functions (Adger et al., 2005).
(III) NORMATIVE CONCEPT	
9) Metaphoric	Showing tolerance for a long time (Pickett et al., 2007).
10) Sustainability-related	The endurance of natural capital over time (Ott & Döring, 2004).

In *the second wave*, researchers were attempting to gain an understanding of the processes involved in resilience, thus asking “how” and “in which ways” questions. Resilience can be seen at any age, and it appears in one’s life through the operations of basic protections; that is why Masten (2014) entitled her resilience book as “Ordinary Magic.” With this, resilience is implied to have a dynamic nature and considered as a mundane practice rather than a personality trait (Jacelon, 1997; Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013). Rutter (1987) maintained that resilience is associated with the developmental outcomes of people at risk. Resilience levels are believed to be influenced by personal experiences in lifespan, the culture they live in, their developmental stages, and the resilience levels of other systems surrounding them (Gillespie, Chaboyer, & Wallis, 2007). In one case study with two women who experienced sexual violence, researchers found that women seek different ways to cope with their experiences of sexual abuse. While one of them speak out and seek advocacy, the other one denied the experience and found comfort in religion (Haeri, 2007). Thus, resilience is demonstrated in a person-specific way.

Resilience is also described as a scale which has adverse outcomes on one side and positive outcomes on the other side with a fulcrum in the middle. While the role of our genes is to shape where the fulcrum position, in the beginning, experiences of individual works for following changes of fulcrum position (Tschann, Kaiser, Chesney, Alkon, & Boyce, 1996), similarly, resilience is reported to be affected by numerous factors (Rothermund & Brandtstädter, 2003). The Compensatory model of resilience suggests that genetic vulnerability is the primary antecedent of the psychopathology of people at risk, and some believe that being at risk has a complex structure that includes more than one factor (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994). In the Afghan refugee women context, three risk regulation factors were identified: (1) type of marriage, (2) living situation, and (3) family dynamics. In this model, these factors may both facilitate and exacerbate the resilience of refugee women (Hyder, Noor, & Tsui, 2007). Masten (2014) also mentioned associated factors of resilience such as capable caregiving and parenting, close relationships, problem-solving skills, self-regulation skills, motivation to succeed, self-efficacy, faith, hope, belief in life, effective schools, well-functioning communities in one of her talks at a conference titled “New Worlds of Adoption Conference: Launching into Adulthood.”

According to the report of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (2014), resilience is interconnected between personal characteristics and a person’s network external to him/her. Similarly, resiliency is suggested as a process of the person-

environment relationship (Egeland, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1993). In one longitudinal study, researchers reported that an intimate relationship and being part of minority groups cater to person-specific resilience levels (Sanders, Munford, & Boden, 2017). Another study conducted with refugee women ($n=9$) who have different ethnic identities and religions indicated that being part of a social group and collective engagement is essential for the development of resilience (Munt, 2012). However, Boss (2003) suggested that the establishment of an inflexible identity of community or family negatively affect resiliency levels. Thus, both individual characteristics and the environment determine the resilience of a person (Masten, 2014; Suárez-Orozco, Motti-Stefanidi, Marks, & Katsiaficas, 2018). In one study conducted with 16 Pakistani and 8 Somali refugees in Nepal, researchers found that both personal aspects, such as being religious, having high self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect, and positive environmental factors, e.g., family, social support and financial stability, enhance the resilience of refugees. One other study reported that resilience was vital in promoting the mental well-being of Spanish women ($n=60$) who had experienced gender violence. It was also stated that these women's resilience increased by means of both internal sources (e.g., humor, spirituality, control) and external sources (e.g., social support) (Sánchez & Lopez-Zafra, 2019). Therefore, it can be deduced that resilience can be affected by the community itself and by community resilience (Bruneau et al., 2003; Maguire & Hagan, 2007).

Community resilience refers to the ability of a society (Paton, Millar & Johnston, 2001; UNISDR, 2009) to withstand adverse situations. More specifically, the community is capable of bouncing back soon after a disaster happens (Cutter et al., 2008) via minimizing the effects of the hazard by means of increased its socio-economic tolerability. Community resilience can be enhanced by expanding the integration of people, promoting community cohesion, and raising social capital (Chenoweth & Burdick, 2001). As a result, the community's self-regulation levels and their operation in the environment improve, thus increasing the community's resiliency levels (Paton & Fohnston, 2001). Researchers defined community resilience by referring to social system's endurance (inherent ability) to various disasters (Cutter et al., 2008; Kulig, Edge, & Joyce, 2008; Tobin, 1999; Twigg, 2007). Another indicator of community resilience is the extent to which stresses are absorbed and the degree to which it maintains itself for the future. Some of the support functions of community resilience are collectively held norms, expectations, and values (Glasgow Centre for Population Health, 2014; Kahneman, 2000). One of the characteristics of resilient communities is connecting a set of capacities, such as a positive

trajectory of functioning and adaptation to coping with adverse events (Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008).

Depression is claimed to be a hindrance to resilience (Wagnild, 2012), and researchers found a relationship between positive emotions and resilience (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003; Ong et al., 2010). Researchers also note that the absence of legal recognition hinders refugee's resilience (Thomas, Roberts, Luitel, Upadhaya, & Tol, 2011). A study conducted with 445 North Korean refugees reported that while self-efficacy levels of refugees were affected by acculturation stress, it affected their coping mechanisms, which determined their overall resilience levels. Thus, to increase the resiliency of refugees, one should offer programs aiming to improve the self-efficacy levels of refugees (Lim & Han, 2016). Protective factors are also suggested to increase the capacity for change, and thus, the resiliency levels of refugees (Rutter, 2006).

While some researchers believe that protective factors promote resilience, others suggest that resilience itself is one of the protective factors (Rutter, 1987; UNHCR, 2013). Moreover, O'Grady and Metz (1987) indicated that resilience, as a protective factor, promotes coping strategies influenced by (1) the availability of social support systems and (2) other individual characteristics. One of the personal characteristics was reported as being religious, i.e., having strong faith, which is claimed to be beneficial to refugees as it allows them to confront or derive meaning from their traumas (Matheson, Jorden, & Anisman, 2008). Spirituality was also reported to be essential during the adjustment process of Bosnian refugee women (Maton, 1989; Sossou, Craig, Ogren, and Schnak, 2008). One study reported that between 50% and 75% of the refugees prayed to reduce their unhappiness (Halcón et al., 2004). They received support (e.g., emotional, social, psychological, and financial) from family members, acquaintances, official channels, which are suggested as protective factors (Gladden, 2013; Schweitzer, Greenslade, & Kagee, 2007). Similarly, another study, conducted with Chinese Refugee Women in Delhi, confirmed that strong faith and social support facilitated coping (Jops, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019). Further, educational life is put forward as an opportunity for refugees to (1) gain social support and (2) increase their levels of resilience (Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008). Moreover, it is pointed out that resilience factors (see Figure 2) are not definitive but influenced by various factors (Southwick & Charney, 2018).

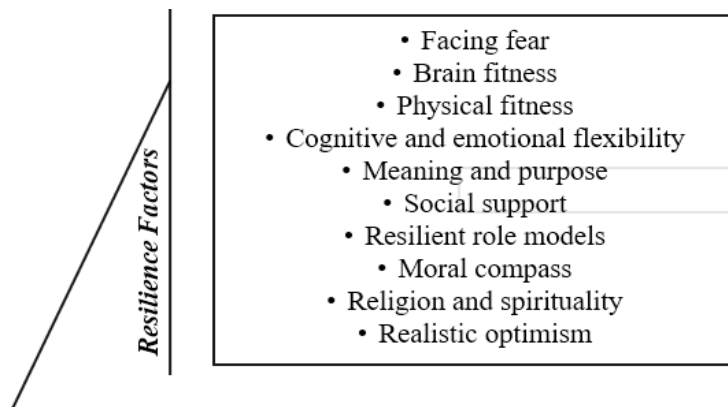


Figure 2. Suggested coping mechanisms as resilience factors (Southwick & Charney, 2018).

Protective factors are opportunities, motivation, coping strategies, and defense mechanisms (Culcasi, 2019; Masten, Obradovic, 2008). Resilience is also considered as one of the defense mechanisms, i.e., the psychoanalytic concept of the ego's defense against unpleasant ideas and feelings (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010; Gladden, 2012). After investigating the resilience of Vietnamese refugee women, Phan (2006) pointed out that resilience is one of the coping mechanisms. In one study, conducted with 18 female Eritrean refugees whose ages ranged between 18 and 60, researchers found that refugee women became resilient by using coping strategies, e.g., being future-oriented and improving self-awareness (Abraham, Lien, & Hanssen, 2018). Adaptive coping was found to be partially mediating the link between positive emotions and resilience (Gloria & Steinhardt, 2016). Moreover, while task-oriented coping strategies were positively related to resilience, emotion-oriented coping strategies were associated with low resilience (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006). To illustrate, avoidance and reassessment, i.e., emotion-oriented coping strategies, were found to be harming refugee women's resiliency (Pahud, Kirk, Gage, & Hornblow, 2009).

Researchers report in the related literature that there is a link between PTG and the resilience (Almedom, 2005; Butler et al., 2001; Hobfoll et al., 2007; Lepore & Revenson, 2006; Levine, Laufer, Stein, Hamama-Raz, & Solomon, 2009). PTG is about gaining a positive outcome after traumatic events happen (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). However, as Westphal and Bonanno (2007) stated, there is also a difference between PTG and resilience. To illustrate, resilient people do not need to have PTG to reconstitute their relationships with others because the outcome of resilience leaves no room for primarily PTG (Hobfoll et al., 2007). One study conducted with adolescents

exposed to terror (n =2908) and with citizens and army personnel following the second Lebanon War (n =588) revealed that high levels of resilience were associated with the lowest PTG scores (Levine, Laufer, Stein, Hamama-Raz, & Solomon, 2009). This may imply that even these two terms sharing salutogenic constructs are negatively correlated. Researchers indicated that gender and PTG are mediated by coping mechanisms and women tend to have higher scores on PTG, which may stem from the fact that they are able to engage in more profound thought and assertively ask for help assertively better than men (Akbar & Witruk, 2016). Another reason may be related to some of the women's physiological characteristics, e.g., oxytocin and reproductive hormones that women have (Taylor et al., 2004). Additionally, it suggested that the specific brain-derived neurotrophic factor that prevents depression in men better than it does in women is an indicator of resilience (Verhagen, van der Meij, & van Deurzen, 2010). Perceived life-threat (appraisal-focused coping, support functions, problem-focused coping, and positive reappraisal) is found to be significantly correlated with PTG (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

In *the third wave*, the Wagnild and Young (1993) aimed to measure resilience and develop a scale. They suggested five components of resilience (perseverance, existential aloneness, self-reliance, meaningfulness, and equanimity) that determinate adjustment processes. Perseverance is related to the reconstructing of one's life with determination, whereas existential aloneness is a unique experience that requires personal realization. Self-reliance is linked to believing in oneself, which has similar characteristics with self-efficacy, whereas meaningfulness is about finding the purpose of one's life. Lastly, equanimity is about moderating response levels towards hardships (Wagnild & Young, 1993).

In *the fourth wave*, brain studies were conducted, which enabled researchers to reveal that (1) early life experiences determine a person's capability to deal with adversity, and that (2) the brain maintains its plasticity via epigenetic pathways for later flexible adaptation to difficulties (McEwen, Gray, & Nasca, 2015). Therefore, resilience is believed to be linked with early life experiences that are determined by neuroplasticity. Differences in genders in terms of the influence of risks are also suggested to be existent as while female participants are affected by internalizing risk factors, and male participants are affected by externalizing risk factors (Botticello, 2009). The Mental Health Protection framework proposes multi-causal models to overcome confusion and to reach unification on the basis of mental immunology, i.e., resilience (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010). The model is rooted in the 19th-century understanding of mental hygiene,

which corresponds with the contemporary knowledge of resilience (Rossi, 1962). There are (a) non-adaptive and (b) adaptive concepts of resilience. Non-adaptive ideas of resilience were found to be resistant to stressful events, whereas adaptive ones were revealed to be managing responses to circumstances and counteracting possible developments in psychopathology (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010).

Throughout the migration process, refugee women were reported to be experiencing various psychological disturbances and mental health problems because of their traumatic experiences and experienced difficulties. Nevertheless, researchers indicated that refugee women seem to manage somehow to remain healthy, and even if they do experience mental health problems, they bounce back quickly (Abraham, Lien, & Hanssen, 2018). Refugee women were also claimed to have become empowered and resilient and to have found a new ground for themselves; after all, the migration process does not end when they settle in the host country; instead, it is just a new beginning. However, in the related literature, refugee women portrayed as both vulnerable and resilient, yet there is little research on how they can be both. In the next section, studies and notions concerning (1) coexistence, and (2) distinctness are presented.

2.3. Resilience and Vulnerability: Are They Complementary or Conflicting Concepts?

Overall, refugee women are considered to be vulnerable to risks and deprivations because of the traumatic exposures and difficulties they face during the different phases of migration; however, researchers also suggested that refugees have capabilities to overcome risks and build a new and even better life for themselves (Daud, af Klinteberg, & Rydelius, 2008; Macdonald, 2019). Thus, the fundamental question of whether refugee women are vulnerable or resilient arises.

The distinction between vulnerability and resilience is claimed to stem from different epistemological perspectives held towards these concepts (Miller et al., 2010). Researchers claim that while resilience research is influenced by the positivist mainstream in that resilience can be systematically measured; vulnerability research is mostly affected by the constructivist mainstream, which explores its phenomenological essence (Embree, 2011; McLaughlin & Dietz, 2008). Some believe that these concepts are conflicting in nature because of their distinct disciplinary origins (Seery, Holman, & Silver, 2010). While resilience is primarily grounded on ecological sciences and is subsequently transferred to the discipline of social sciences, vulnerability is grounded in various disciplines with the

consideration of the role of culture (McLaughlin & Dietz, 2008). Researchers indicate that reduced vulnerability is similar to having resilience (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010). Similarly, Haddadi and Besharat (2010) argue that while resilience has a positive correlation with mental well-being, it is negatively correlated with vulnerability. In one study with participants (n=191) aged between 23 and 65, researchers found that while cognitive impairments hinder depressive symptoms and make patients more vulnerable to other mental illnesses, using positive reappraisal contributes to patients' resiliency (Hoorelbeke, Van den Bergh, Wichers, & Koster, 2019). After researching with remitted depressed sample (n=69), resilience was also found to have a vital role in remission from depression. In the same study, resilience was found to be associated with working memory and emotion regulation processes to decrease depression versus neurobiological and cognitive vulnerability (De Raedt & Koster, 2010; Hoorelbeke, Marchetti, De Schryver, & Koster, 2016). Furthermore, resilience is claimed to be one part of vulnerability, which is inversely proportional to both sensitivities and exposure (Turner Li, 2010). Thus, in the mainstream of the scientific domain, vulnerability and resilience are artificially separated with the notion that they do not share linkages, nor do they complement each other (Miller et al., 2010).

However, the argument that both vulnerability and resilience are disparate concepts have recently been challenged by studies demonstrating that both concepts could be present in an organism at the same time (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017). Researchers conducted studies, proposing various explanations, and offered multiple frameworks to this end. Gallopin (2006) conceptualized the strong relationship between vulnerability, resilience, and adaptive capacity. In fact, in one study with 16 refugees, researchers found that refugees could be both vulnerable and resilient at the same time. Therefore, researchers suggest that vulnerability and resilience can shift their states in a continuum (Sleijpen, Mooren, Kleber, & Boeije, 2017). Similarly, in the socio-ecological framework, resilience is in a dynamic interaction with vulnerability, and both individual and social levels, e.g., micro, meso-, macro levels determine the relationship of these concepts (Sleijpen, Mooren, Kleber, & Boeije, 2017). Another model visualized resilience as a balance scale, i.e., teeter-totter, where on the one side there are positive outcomes, such as adaptive skills and protective factors, and on the other hand, there are negative consequences, such as adversities (Tschann, Kaiser, Chesney, Alkon, & Boyce, 1996). Consequently, the following questions arose: (a) Are resilience and vulnerability antonymous concepts? (b) How would they ensure the healthy functioning of refugee

women simultaneously? Overall, the fuzziness of defining constructs and the interrelation of both vulnerability and resilience may hinder the practice and implications, yet it is recommended that knowledge should be provided to fuel the debate (Wittgenstein, 2009). In that manner, researchers lay special effort on building common lexicons for interdisciplinary integration.

In short, in the last decades, researchers have studied resilience and vulnerability to gain comprehensive and reliable answers — these concepts were explored as two distinct concepts, yet they were found to be convergent concepts in terms of organisms' responses to adversity (Hoorelbeke, Wichers, & Koster, 2019; Pearce & Lee, 2018). Moreover, the growing focus on resilience encourages researchers to explore the functions of the 'stealing effects,' i.e., a strengthening contributor to resilience (Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010; Phan, 2006; Rutter, 2012). Thus, the illustration of refugee women's phenomenological perspective of resiliency and vulnerability needed to be explored to provide a more profound understanding of women's migration experiences. Besides, most of the quantitative studies consider a gender's nature as static and dichotomous; in fact, gender is entwined with various factors, e.g., social class, race, generations, and sexual orientations (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). In addition, ideologies, practices, and institutions regulate one of the socio-cultural processes called migration, which is influenced by these types of quantitative perspectives; thus, qualitative and exploratory studies are recommended to be conducted in the refugee context (Adams, 2007; Mahler & Pessar, 2006). Moreover, understanding sociopolitical conditions, as well as cultural and religious backgrounds that shape the experiences of displaced women, is essential to offer a congruent, culturally sensitive plan of care and to create a targeted and relevant educational and treatment intervention strategies and referrals (Hattar-Pollara, 2019).

Overall, the related literature documents that refugee women are more likely to have extensive and cumulative traumatic experiences before, during, and after immigration, including violence, rape, poverty, discrimination, and are less likely to reach available humanitarian and social support (Nickerson & Bryant, 2018). There seem to be two lines of research in the literature. On the one hand, refugee women are considered to be under the risk of developing psychopathology due to not only their likelihood of experiencing more traumatic events (Poureslami, MacLean, Spiegel, & Yassi, 2004), but also the likelihood of having a low SES (International Rescue Committee, 2018) and lack of access to reach financial and other humanitarian aids (Indra, 1987). On the other hand, researchers suggest that despite the hardships that refugee women have to endure, they

recover and adjust well (Colvin, 2018) or they may even exhibit posttraumatic growth by means of making sense of their traumatic experiences (Chan, Young, & Sharif, 2016). A recent school of thought has suggested that vulnerability and resilience are not inevitably antonymous concepts but are strictly linked to each other. To illustrate, people may be under the risk of developing pathologies but may be resilient at the same time (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017). Therefore, the present study aims to understand the experiences of refugee women by taking into consideration their gender-specific vulnerabilities and resilience in the participant's socio-cultural context.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

3.1. Overall Design of the Study

A qualitative methodology was adopted in this present thesis to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of refugee women. The overall philosophical ground was determined as *a post-positivist paradigm* as it gives attention to the importance of gathering “multiple perspectives from participants rather than a single reality.” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p.23). The ontological standpoint that was adopted was *the critical realist position* because it suggests that even though there is objective truth, researchers may gain an understanding of only know a narrow portion of it. Qualitative research acknowledges the researcher’s subjectivity; it also considers the researcher as a source of data (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Therefore, informing readers of the role of the researcher is essential, so it is presented under the heading *The Researcher Reflexivity*.

The current thesis aimed to gain an understanding of the experiences of refugee women who resettled in Turkey by conducting both semi-structural in-depth interviews and collecting anecdotal records. Howitt (2010) mentioned the importance of all the interviews being carried out by the same researcher as it promotes the researcher’s familiarity with the details of the data. Therefore, in the present study, the data were collected by the same researcher by means of one-on-one interviews on more than one day in either Turkish, half Turkish and half Dari, or English in quiet and comfortable environments. Each interview lasts approximately one and a half hour.

All the refugee women who participated in the research were Muslim with Eastern, collectivistic, cultural backgrounds. As this population was anticipated to be afraid of being stigmatized and of being judged by the interviewer or the others (Meade & Craig, 2012), the researcher tried to overcome these types of feelings, which could be obstacles to the research by means of attempts to build trust in the participants, to reach out to the efficacious participants, and to overcome participant bias; the researcher utilized *The Community-Based Participatory Research Approach (CBPR)* to (a) gather a deep understanding of the experiences of refugee women, and (b) explore rather than test predetermined theory. In this study, CBPR consisted of two members belonging to (1) the

Community Advisory Board (CAB) and (2) the Refugee Community Organizations (RCO). This approach is suggested to be utilized when engaging with vulnerable populations (Holkup, Tripp-Reimer, Salois, & Weinert, 2004). In this study, CBPR (a) functions as a bridge between the two parties, (b) builds trust between the participants and the researcher, and (c) acknowledges the researcher about the studied population's characteristics, their cultural nuances, specific gender issues, and the local knowledge. In this way, as Coughlin, Smith, and Fernandez (2017) stated, "this approach increases the value of the research product for all partners and sustains its impact on population health" (p. 1). In this current research study, CBPR was implemented throughout the study in two main ways; it established a partnership with CAB and RCO. Their primary responsibilities were as follows:

1. Providing insight into the research questions,
2. Facilitating the outlining of the interview protocols,
3. Reaching out to the participants,
4. Reminding the researcher of cultural nuances, specific gender issues, and
5. Reviewing and providing feedback throughout the data analysis.

CAB consisted of community leaders and members who were familiar with the population. More specifically, CAB included (a) two scholars who had a similar research interest in the same population, (b) a clinical psychologist who was holding regular sessions with many refugee women, and (c) one refugee woman who functioned as a social bridge between refugees and host community members. RCO consisted of the existent community organizations operating in Turkey: (a) two managers in public education centers highly engaged with refugee women and (b) authorities at various refugee associations. CBPR is considered to be ethically grounded, to enrich science, and give rise to positive social impacts (Roberts, 2013). Moreover, research becomes more credible and trustworthy by adopting this approach (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 2001; Stevens & Hall, 1998).

Further, to reduce the researcher bias and enhance credibility, the researcher was placed particular importance to devote time with refugee women around a year. Such as researcher was participated in daily activities with them, e.g., guests at dinner tables, have additional meetings with them, to get to know their culture better.

3.1.1. Participants

After finding the first participant with the help of CAB, the other participants were found based on the referral of the previous participant, i.e., the snowball participant selection method was employed. It suggested implement when studying difficult to reach populations and in vulnerable issues (Lee, 1993).

The interviews were conducted with seven refugee women who lived in a small city in the Black Sea Region of Turkey between October and November 2018. Researchers determined the number of participants as seven because a small sample size between one to fifteen participants is suggested for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Turpin, 1997).

Participants were aged between 19 and 42 years ($M=23.71$, $SD= 8.24$). Refugee women's length of stay in Turkey ranged between 6 months and 5 years with a mean duration of 2 years and three months. Female participants' were selected because (1) gender influences refugees' experiences, and women were suggested to be one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged ones among refugees (Jensen, 2019), (2) even though, gender is considered as "a key constitutive element of migrations", it has been undervalued in the mainstream of migration studies (Mahler & Pessar, 2006, p.27), and (3) women are suggested to have a broader point of view for social reality and norms because they are oppressed and affected by gender roles (Harding, 1987).

In the present study, the post-migration stage is considered as the period after the participants' arrival in Turkey. Table 2 presents comprehensive information regarding the descriptive statistics of the demographic characteristics of the participants in the current research.

Table 2

Summary of Demographic Information of Participants Interviewed

Demographic Category	Groups	No. of participants	Percentage of participants
Age	18-30	6	85.71
	31-43	1	14.29
Marital Status	Married	2	28.57
	Single	5	71.45
Education Level	No Education	1	14.29
	Middle School	1	14.29
	High School	3	42.86
	University	1	14.29
	Postgraduate	1	14.29
Occupation	Working	4	57.14
	Not Working	3	42.86
Number of Years in Turkey	0-1 years	2	28.57
	2- 3 years	4	57.14
	4- 5 years	1	14.29
Previous Country	Afghanistan	3	41.67
	Iran	3	41.67
	Iraq	1	16.67
The People They Live With	Family	6	85.71
	Acquaintance	1	14.29

3.1.1.1. Participant Profiles

The researcher used pseudonyms instead of the participants' names to conceal the real identities of the participants throughout the study. In the following sub-headings, a synopsis of refugee women's ($n=7$) biographies from a migration perspective is provided.

Participant ID: Yasemin

Yasemin is a young girl of Afghan origin. She is single and 19 years old. She and her family migrated from Afghanistan to Iran when she was three months old. Thus, she did not live in Afghanistan during her childhood and youth. She mentioned that she does

not feel Iranian. She believes that if she goes to Afghanistan, people there will say to her, "you are Iranian and a foreigner." Thus, she does not feel any sense of belonging to either of the countries. She was subjected to discrimination in Iran. She and her family migrated to Turkey illegally with her family at the age of 13-14. Thus, she has been living in Turkey for five years. She started her education at 8th grade in Turkey, and her last educational level is a High School of Fine Arts Degree, and her profession is an artist. She has an elder sister and a brother.

Participant ID: Ayşe

Ayşe is a 42-year-old woman of Afghan origin. She was married at 16 years of age and had one son and five daughters. She has two sons-in-law and two grandchildren. Her profession is a tailor. After the war in Afghanistan, she immigrated to Pakistan. She mentioned that even though she had never been to school, she was skillful in different domains, and learned many languages on her own, such as Urdu, Persian, Turkish, and English. She said that her life in Pakistan had been tough because she had adjustment problems, so she returned to Afghanistan. She stated that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan posed a danger for herself and her family; thus, she came to Turkey illegally after staying in Afghanistan for 15 years. Her elder brother, who lost one leg during a civil war, was a veteran. She was in grief as she had not heard from her brother for four months during this period.

Participant ID: Hatice

Hatice is a 19-year-old young girl of Persian origin. Her parents got divorced when she was five. She stated that her father did not allow her to meet her mother after their divorce. During this time, her grandmother looked after her. She started working as a child laborer in Iran when she was ten years old. Her father was not working. She went to school every morning, and after school, she worked from 4 pm to 9 pm. She said that she would hand over the money to her father at the end of each month. She mentioned that she had witnessed violence inflicted against her mother by her father and all kinds of violence (such as hitting, swearing). Besides, her father had the habit of gambling, and he was a drug addict. In later years, the participant learned that her mother had remarried, and she was content in her current life. Her father had also remarried, and her stepmother left them after giving birth. Hatice stated that she had to take care of the newborn who was suffering from heart disease. Thus, she worked hard to undertake all hospital and care

responsibilities. Hatice had a boyfriend, but their relationship was not considered to be acceptable in their culture since while her boyfriend was of the Sunni sect, she herself was of the Shi'a sect of Islam. Thus, her father did not allow her to marry her boyfriend. The participant's life in Iran was full of hardships; she experienced religious oppression, abuse, and violence. Thus, she felt she had to migrate with her husband and his family. After she settled in Turkey, she wanted to attend school. However, her husband's mother, who came to Turkey with them, wanted her to drop out of school as she believed that women should not be educated. Currently, she works in a hairdresser's shop in Turkey. Her husband is also employed. She mentioned that they work because they need to save money.

Participant ID: Zeyneb

Zeyneb is a 22-year-old young woman of Iraq origin. She has two older siblings. Her oldest brother lives in Germany. Due to the war in Iraq, the participant and her family migrated from Iraq to Libya when she was four years old. They lived in Libya for 15 years. She did not spend much time in Iraq. She mentioned that her life in Libya was beautiful. She finished primary, secondary, and high school in Libya. She stated that they were forced to return to Iraq in 2011 due to the emerging war in Libya. The participant, who stayed with her family in Iraq for three years, mentioned that she had no good memories and was constantly in danger. Her grandmother came, along with them, to Turkey in August 2014. She wants to go to university and has long-term career plans. She is interested in fashion design, but she also wants to be an interior designer. However, she started working as a secretary in the office of a real estate agency in 2018.

Participant ID: Gülsüm

Gülsüm is a 22-year-old young girl of Afghan origin. She has an elder brother and a sister. She lives with her mother and siblings. Her father died as a martyr in the Taliban in Afghanistan when she was five years old. After that, her mother did not marry; she looked after her children. Gülsüm's mother was previously employed, but the doctors did not allow her to work because she was sick. Formerly, her mother was a legal counselor for women in Afghanistan. Currently, Gülsüm's brother and herself are working part-time. However, she sometimes cannot work because she has to take care of her mother. Gülsüm was a teacher in Afghanistan. She used to go to school in the mornings. After school, she used to work at an office between 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. She illegally moved from Afghanistan to Turkey two years ago (in 2016). Gülsüm graduated from high school in Afghanistan,

where she also started her university education, and because she had earned a high GPA, she was directly accepted into the Economics Department at a university in Turkey.

Participant ID: Fatma

Fatma is a single 19-year-old woman of Afghan origin. Because of the ongoing war in Afghanistan, she and her family came from Afghanistan to Turkey illegally in the spring of 2018. She had studied high school in Afghanistan until 12th grade. After she came to Turkey, she went to the governor's office to apply for further education. However, because she left essential documents, such as diploma, school documents on the migration route could not submit to the governor's office; thus, they did not accept her high school application. Currently, Fatma is working nonstop between 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to meet the study expenses of her five younger siblings as her parents cannot work. While her father is blind, her mother has stomach-related health problems and, thus, needs to rest.

Participant ID: Rukiyye

Rukiyye is a 23-year-old young girl of Afghan origin. She was born in Iran, in Tehran. She has a bachelor's degree in Education Management Department, where only female students are enrolled. Only professors and assistants were male in the university. During her university education, Rukiyye participated in international festivals, seminars, and conferences. She was involved in groups, such as Afghan student organizations and international student clubs. One of them was the Genius Afghan students' group, whose aim was to search for solutions to overcome Afghan students' problems.

3.1.1.2. Detailed Description of The Participants

In this research, the researcher took anecdotal records. Based on that records, it can be said for the overall situation of the participants in the research process was;

For Yasemin, when I first met Yasemin by helping of CAB, she was eager to talk about herself, her family background, and her immigration experiences. In the data collection process, when I asked her some questions concerning the post-migration stage, she became angry. She seemed to be experiencing frustration when she expressed her feelings. Moreover, she seemed to could not able to stomach the xenophobic attitudes of others; however, she also seemed like repressed her frustration, became silent and introverted.

For Ayşe, my meeting with Ayşe was quite random. Ayşe was the only woman who had a shop in an area where male artisans predominated. I ran into her while she was working in her small store. I visited her often, and perhaps on my fifth visit, I told her about my research project. She said that she would like to be a participant and stressed her gratitude for settling in a new and safe country throughout the interview.

For, Hatice, I have reached her by helping the previous participant. When I met her, she seemed hesitant, but as the process progressed, she made sincere sharing. She said that she told me about some of her life experiences that she had never told about anyone. I had the feeling that we were going through a process based on trust.

For Zeyneb, I have reached her with help from CAB, that woman standing in front of me was confident about herself and dedicated for what she wanted to do in her life. The interview with her took place in the evening. Due to the late time, her family called her on the phone constantly and asked when the interview would end. She had been annoyed by this situation and had expressed her embarrassment. Later, we decided to arrange our meeting for another time. When we were out of the building, her father was there, and he came to take her home.

For Gülsüm, when I met, her eyes were shining with joy. I have never seen a woman so energetic, hopeful, and determined. My conversations with her lasted about a year, and she was always like the first day.

For Fatıma, she was one of the most naive and kindhearted people I have ever seen. When I told her about my research and asked her if she wanted to be a participant, I got the answer, “I will happily participate.” I have met her family, invited her to my home, and we even went to the cinema altogether. Throughout this process, I had a chance to make better sense about the information that she has been given.

For Rukiyye, when I met her, she seemed to be anxious, she asked me lots of questions about the educational process at the university before the interview. I realized that her main concern was the educational problems; thus, I put aside my research protocol and listened to her then make some calls. Afterward, on a different day, we met for the second time, and we conducted an interview. Initially, she accepted being recorded, but in the process, I realized that she often checked the voice recording machine and asked me to stop recording when she gave me the specific confidential information. The confidential information was not included in the analysis.

3.1.2. Data Collection

The data of the present study were recorded by means of a cell phone and then transferred into the personal computer right after the interviews were completed. The researcher labeled the data in detail and made a clean copy of the anecdotal notes. On the following days, the researcher transcribed the recordings and saved them on the researcher's personal computer. All the data were transformed into an encrypted file for confidentiality due to ethical concerns.

3.1.2.1. Data Collection Instruments

The researcher collected data by following the triangulation method. The researcher conducted face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews and collected anecdotal records. The anecdotal records were focused not only on the participants' daily life routines but also on their general livelihoods. While studying ethnic minorities, acknowledging participants' traditional cultural norms are considered essential (Lodico & Spaulding, 2006). Therefore, the interview questions were determined and revised with the help of the co-advisor of the thesis and by receiving feedback from both CAB and RCO. Thus, the researcher gained insight into the participant profiles, and the participants' traditional cultural norms to understand their possible interference with the participants' migration experiences. Hereby, this collaboration assisted in constructing the last version of the questions.

The research protocol consisted of four main research concerns: demographics, refugee women's experiences before, during, and after migration. Respectively they were (a) What are the vulnerabilities of refugee women? (b) What is refugee women's own understanding of resilience? (c) Which resilience strategies are utilized by refugee women to increase their well-being? (d) How and in which ways being a woman influence their vulnerabilities and assets? The researcher also asked questions to explore further the role of culture and gender in order to gain insight into how cultural differences or similarities influenced the participants' migration experiences. The reason underlying the researchers' understanding of refugee women's meaning-making of resilience was related to the lack of consensus regarding the nature of resilience and owing to the fact that it could provide insight to service providers, e.g., mental health professionals and policymakers.

3.1.2.2. Researcher Reflexivity

As a woman who has grown up in the crossroads of Europe and Asia, my purpose in life is to become involved in a learning environment which will broaden and deepen my subject knowledge while gaining the opportunity for interdisciplinary study to extend my expertise in new directions, and finally to be interconnected with both knowledge and people. My enthusiasm for studying forced migration and refugee studies was based on my journey to Damascus, when, at that exact moment, the mass was bored down abusively and shrewishly on my gender-fluid friend in front of the entrance of Culture Centre in Lublin to attend an LGBT+ film festival. The mass of protestors was commoved because of the event and people who were participating in the event. Seeing me, a Muslim girl with a headscarf, and my gender-fluid friend wearing colorful makeup on his face with a lace dress and purple tights, they got confused by the combination of the two of us and could not decide whom they should attack first. We had to run away from the crowd and sat in silence for a while; we knew that we were not the only ones who felt the discrimination far away from their homeland. There are millions who have to face it in their everyday lives -even in their home country- not only minorities such as refugees but majorities as well, such as women. At that moment, I realized that I must break the silence; I thought I should start doing research and report results accompanied by recommendations. From that moment on, I held the belief that being silent would mean participating in the oppression, the violation, and the pain that has such power and impact on so many people's lives. As Martin Luther King Jr. stated, "a time comes when silence is a betrayal."

Take account of the fact that Turkey hosts the world's largest community of displaced people from the ongoing conflict in their country. Especially today, when it is the 8th year of battle of Syrian civil wars, the Syrian refugees, particularly minors and women's incapacitated bill of rights, are one of my biggest concerns. After the completion of my studies, my future career plan is to found "Counselors Without Borders in Turkey", a non-profit organization to provide culturally responsive services in post-disaster situations and to organize teams to provide training, consultation, and counseling, which culturally informs about taking precautions for emergency support functions, providing support in earthquake zones, migration issues, and refugee crises. That being said, my research interests are cross-cultural mental health, post-disaster mental health, adaptation, and psychosocial adjustment.

To improve my competence in the field of qualitative research, I attended one of the Tübitak Projects called “Qualitative Research Journey with Field Experts III.” This project included qualitative research perspectives, methodologies, reliability and validity issues, development of data collection tools, improvement in qualitative data analysis (via the Nvivo software). From beginning to the end, I took full account of the discourse of what qualitative interviewer needs, such as “highly developed listening skills, on-the-spot analytic skills, satisfactory interpersonal skills and experience” (Howitt, 2010, p. 60). Moreover, I paid particular attention to investing in the non-hierarchical relationship, and I listened to all the interview recordings throughout the analysis process to get a better understanding of the migration experiences of the participants.

3.1.2.3. Researcher Bias

In addition to researcher reflexivity, researcher bias should be taking into consideration. Researcher’s own biases may have interfered throughout the research study. Thus, it is highly suggested that how the researcher’s phenomenon influences the study by considering (a) how the researcher shaped the research process and (b) how the research process influenced the researcher. In that regard, the personal background information should be revealed by the researcher;

I am (Güler) a 24 years old, white, female research assistant who is about finishing her master’s degree and starting her Ph.D. degree at the guidance and counseling psychology in Turkey. My religious background is Islam. I have a strong faith to Allah (the God), and I wear a headscarf.

I have spent my childhood and adolescence in three different regions of Turkey; during my first years, while I was living in the eastern part of Turkey, I became a part of and connected with the impacts of eastern culture. I had spent most of my time in my grandmother ‘s house in Elazığ, observing relationships in the neighborhood, their marriage ceremonies in villages, how they shear the sheep and herd the cows and also discovering Eastern accents. Later, we moved to a seaside town in the Mediterranean region, Fethiye, which receives thousands of tourists yearly. Therefore, I spent some of my childhood years picking olives and learning how to preserve Mediterranean olives with daisy wreath on my head and being aware of cultural schemas and understanding Levantine accents. Afterward, we moved to the central Anatolia region to Konya, where Rumi had taken a final stop and spent the last 50 years of his life. Those were the years occur that I met spiritual aspects of my life; therefore, I understand my search for love and

the ecstatic in the coil of daily life and accept all humans as a carrier of the same splendor.

As psychoanalytical perspective's highlight of childhood memories, I believe that my unlimited curiosity to multicultural perspectives come from my childhood experiences.

The first thing about me is that I do not believe any people to be without biases, for example as you read this passages, you started building ideas that would blend with your past experiences, but the fact that remains that breaking down the prejudices when someone understands based off of connections are achievable. Therefore, I firmly believe that unlike Albert Einstein, this empathic adaptation in mindset is not harder to crack than an atom. Through my practical lectures such as Special Needs Education, Selected Practices in Social Inclusions, and Introduction to Religious Studies, I have learned to create a sense of unity and breaking down barriers via knowledge.

I have traveled to more than ten countries by just buying my tickets and starting as a backpacker for meeting local people and sharing their stories and moments. On the one hand, I have attended chants with Jehovah's witnesses in Lublin, as well as having danced with Hindus and received the flower of honor in Lviv, visiting more Catholic Churches than Mosques in my entire life and also asking the Jewish community about their afterlife believes in Wroclaw. On the other hand, I have attended pottery classes with children who have mental handicaps and visited ghettos to see the pariah's everyday lives and how Polish government policies staff them via my practical lectures. All these cultural achievements and social gains through my practical education are enriching experiences that contributed to give me a broader view of the world. Lastly, I feel the reason why we are all here is to help others, and kindness and compassion is not about feeling sorry for someone else. Instead, it is showing up to help them, especially now as the refugee crisis in its 8th year of conflict, and for the world's most massive catastrophe devastation and upheaval continue to plague Syria at an unimaginable scale. Turkey now hosts the world's largest community of Syrians displaced by the ongoing conflict in their country. As Sheryl Sandberg once said, "We cannot change what we are not aware of, and once we are aware, we cannot help but change."

Those reasons are the core of the selection of my research topic. Further, I feel lucky because I have had a chance to study the topic that I had mentioned in my master's degree interview. I have thought that studying refugee women, would allow me to learn and discover the way to welcome the hurt and the abandoned, the persecuted, and the destitute. Moreover, I believe that sharing knowledge is the key to the creation of a sense of unity to break down barriers for once, and we are aware it is highly possible.

3.2. Data Analysis

Creswell and Poth (2017) suggested that qualitative data analysis was quite challenging as it includes steps such as “organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming the interpretation of them” (pp. 195). The researcher employed the data analysis method called “Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA was selected because it emphasizes the meaning-making process of both the researcher and participants. In addition, Howitt (2010) stated that “qualitative interviewing is a key aspect of interpretative phenomenological analysis” (pp. 81). Additionally, the utilization of IPA is suggested explicitly in studies on migration, acculturation of various ethnic minority groups, and culture (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA was based on *double hermeneutical phenomenology* that has phenomenological, idiographic, and hermeneutics components (Smith, Harrè & Van Langenhove, 1995). As an expression of *double hermeneutics*, the combination of both the researcher's interpretation and themes that drive from the raw qualitative data were essential. Therefore, it facilitated the researcher's making sense of the participant's way of understanding (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Furthermore, IPA has *idiographic* components, which allow the researcher to go one by one before building the holistic statements during data analysis. Because the researcher had an active role in interpretation, meaning-making, and translating, the analysis became more abundant and more comprehensive (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The analysis process (phenomenological reduction) started right after each specific interview to avoid being influenced by the following ones. The researcher took into consideration the detailed anecdotal notes with all the transcriptions. In addition, the researcher used the bottom-up process throughout the code building process from the raw transcripts. The bottom-up approach is different from just adopting previously appeared codes derived from the preexisting literature. Therefore, the researcher bracketed and followed the phenomenological reduction. Further, the researcher listened to all the interviews and reviewed the anecdotal records once more to eliminate personal/researcher bias and personal assumptions in order to get a complete understanding of the data. The analysis method follows deductive reasoning to make sense of the raw data with careful consideration. Figure 3 indicates the steps followed during the interpretation of the data. During the coding process, researchers initially determined the themes that later clustered together to become superordinate themes.

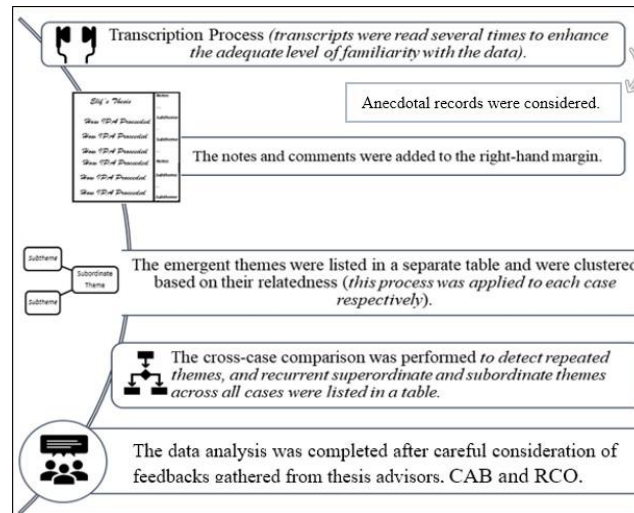


Figure 3. IPA analysis process.

The interpretative phenomenological analysis method was utilized with the partial help of analysis program called NVIVO 12. It made the analysis process easy to manage by visualizing the themes that emerged, analyze the networks, and manage the testimonials efficiently.

3.3 The Trustworthiness of the Study & Ethical Considerations

Qualitative data were validated through both content-related and construct-related evidence. The trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative data were reached through accurate evidencing. The participants' expressions were explicit, and when it was not, the researcher paraphrased the same question. During the transcription, the researcher was assisted by one of the CAB members who also worked as a translator. In that way, the misunderstandings that could arise from language differences were minimized. Respectively, the researcher (a) read the transcribes repeatedly, (b) consulted CAB, (c) approached the participants later for member checking and, (d) got peer debriefing from a research partner to increase credibility.

The researcher described the design and the participant profiles in detail to improve dependability. Confirmability is a criterion that is tried to be ensured by (a) focusing on the participants' experiences and preferences rather than the researcher's assumptions and beliefs, and (b) clarifying the researcher's role. Generalizability, as mentioned in the quantitative context, was neither the essence nor a necessity for qualitative research/the post-positivist paradigm — triangulation method followed by the inclusion of anecdotal records into the qualitative data analysis.

The research approval letter from the Ethics Committee at Middle East Technical University (METU) was received (See Appendix A for the permission). The informed consent form gathered from the participants as an indicator of voluntary attendance, free of such elements as fraud, deception, or any pressure. It was informed in the form that the participants were free to leave the study when they wanted to at any point in the study. In addition, via the form, their permission was received to make voice recordings in alternative ways, e.g., taking detailed notes (see Appendix E). The researcher considered ethical issues and the rights of participants throughout the study. The researcher used pseudonyms instead of the participants' names to protect the identities of the participants throughout the study. The reporting of the study was apart from any pressure or reservation. In addition, the aim of the study is not to inculcate to any community or authority.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this section, findings from analyses were presented with three main superordinate themes that included both subordinate and sub-themes. Based on the hierarchical model of concept classification within the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), emergent themes starting from very general to very specific (respectively, superordinate-subordinate-sub-themes). The main headline of all determined themes was the “Experiences of Refugee Women.” The analysis of the seven interviews resulted in three superordinate themes. The superordinate themes were:

(A) ***Vulnerabilities of Refugee Women*** included sub-ordinate codes entitled as (1) *traumatic experiences*, (2) *lack of recognition of previous education*, (3) *living conditions*, (4) *multiple displacement*, (5) *discrimination, alienation, and lack of social support*, and (6) *psychological difficulties* which contained (a) behavioral difficulties (comprised suicide), (b) cognitive difficulties and (c) emotional difficulties and lastly (7) *language-based problems*. The past experiences and/or dispositions that create distress and put refugee women under risk of developing further mental health concerns are classified under this theme. All vulnerability codes were observed to have links among each other.

(B) ***The Resilience of Refugee Women*** included sub-ordinate codes entitled as (1) *meaning making of resilience* and (2) *resilience strategies* which contained sub-themes as (a) internal resilience strategies that comprised (i) personal characteristics, (ii) coping (covered the appraisal focused, problem-focused and emotion-focused copings) (iii) taking others as leverage, (iv) having hope, and (v) spirituality, (b) external resilience strategies that comprised (i) socio-cultural similarities and (ii) social support systems, (iii) humanitarian aids and psychosocial programs. Under this theme, Refugee women’s own understanding of resilience was presented. Individuals’ characteristics were observed to be interacting with environmental factors as well. Also, in the face of their traumatic experiences, what enables refugee women to stay healthy and/or allow them to adjust, what constitute resilience and the sources of resilience were explored.

(C) ***Being a Woman*** was the last superordinate theme included a sub-ordinate code entitled as *emancipation*. This theme reflects the refugee women’s testimonies on how

being women made their experiences different as well how characteristics of resilience differ between men and women. All the superordinate, sub-ordinate, and sub-themes were provided in the figure in the below for a clearer picture (presented in Figure 4The experiences of refugee women).

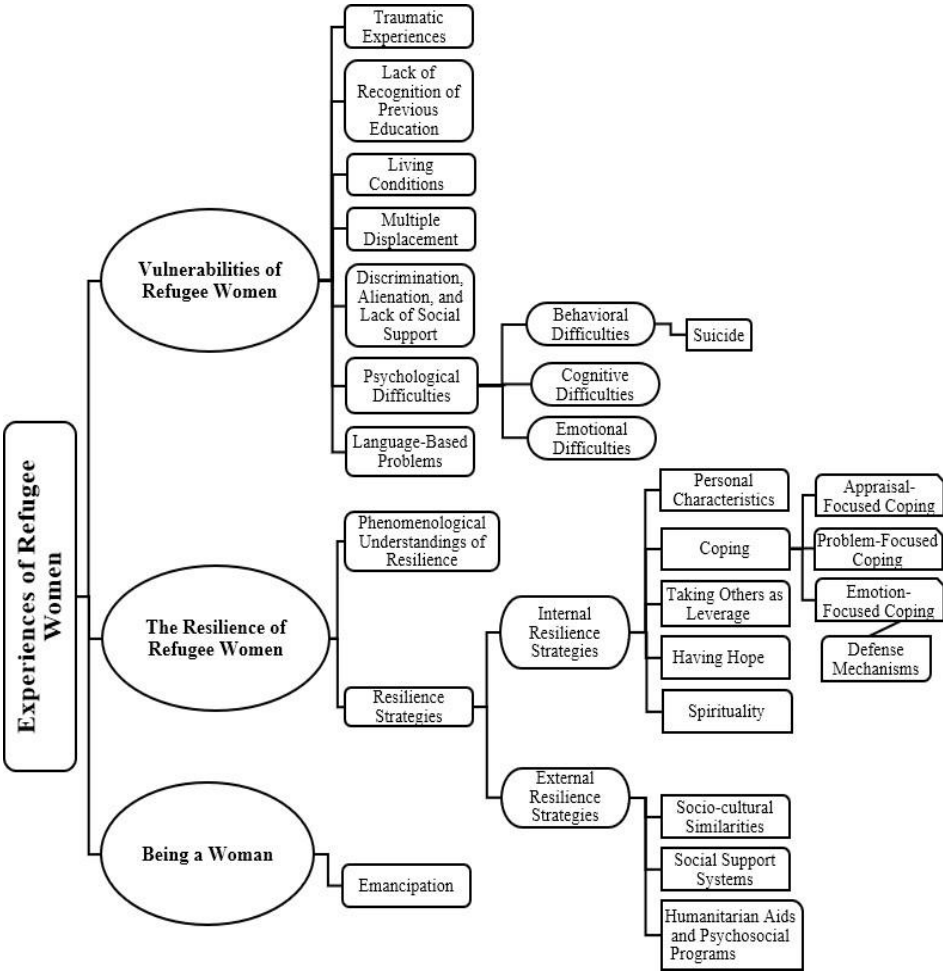


Figure 4. The experiences of refugee women.

4.1 Experiences of Refugee Women

The researcher conducted both the semi-structured interviews and the anecdotal records under the CBPR design to understand the migration experiences of refugee women. It appeared that refugee women had to undergo various hardships and exposed to multiple traumas. In the pre-migration stage, being a woman seemed to harden the participant’s migration experiences because of their further exposed to gender-specific traumatic experiences. However, interestingly, being a woman with traditional female

characteristics, seemed to rise the refugee women up, and encourage participants to be vulnerable, to eventually become resilient. Refugee women appeared to use some of the resilience strategies to increase their well-being. Under this section, the superordinate themes; vulnerabilities of refugee women, the resilience of refugee women, and being a woman were covered with both of their subordinate and sub-themes.

4.1.1. Vulnerabilities of Refugee Women

Refugee women were seemed to be dealing with various difficulties and issues that may decrease their overall psychological well-being throughout the migration process. These factors categorized as (1) *traumatic experiences*, (2) *lack of recognition of previous education*, (3) *living conditions*, (4) *multiple displacement*, (5) *discrimination, alienation, and lack of social support*, and (6) *psychological difficulties* which contained (a) behavioral difficulties (comprised suicide), (b) cognitive difficulties and (c) emotional difficulties and lastly (7) *language-based problems*. They explained in detail in the following headlines.

4.1.1.1. Traumatic Experiences

During the data analysis, some of the experiences of refugee women appeared to be exacerbated their vulnerabilities and hardened their adjustment process. Refugee women's traumatic experiences were mostly related to living under threat, terrorist attack, lose one's loved ones, and be subjected to abuse, violence, oppression. The traumatic experiences of refugee women emerged as the most critical determinant of their migration decisions. Participants declared that they live in constant fear of something unpleasant or violent would happen. Rukiyye stated that "*I went to my uncle house in Afghanistan. He did not let me go outside because of the danger.*" She added, "*in 40 days; I saw two attacks happened in Kabul. I shocked in the first time, and three weeks later, the second attack happened, so many people died.*"

Furthermore, before they were migrated, not only the terrorist groups but also police and soldiers were a constant danger for refugee women. According to participants, fear of being taken into custody by police or be captured and shot by soldiers had also made refugee women afraid. According to the participants, the level of oppression was beyond measure before the migration. For example, Rukiyye points out that the Iranian Government demanded her to work for Intelligence Service as an intel agent. She also talked about threats that she received from the official sources:

I went to university to get information about the process of my graduating. They gave me the address of building in the most important street in Tehran. I went there and met with one man. He knew everything about me, such as where I live, who are my family, friends, where I spend time. He said if I want to get my graduation license, I should give the promise to work at the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan then to give information. They told me that you have some time to decide but do not forget it is a kind of obligation for you. You must do it. If you do not accept the offer, you will be in trouble (Rukiyye, 23).

Similarly, Zeyneb stated that *“What ISIS did was too bad in Baghdad. We could not leave the house. Emergency news was on television all the time. There was no internet. Then we could not take it anymore, and we left Iraq.”* These traumatic conditions and their effect were one of the reasons behind their migration. Refugee women were embarked on an immigration journey under severe conditions. Zeyneb specified that *“best option was the safest option, and that was coming to Turkey because it was the safest option among neighbor countries.”* They mentioned that employment opportunities in Turkey also attracted refugee women:

While my father watched the news on TV. Erdogan was saying that he always accepts emigrants in Turkey. Thereupon, we came to Turkey. My dad told us, “I cannot do business in Afghanistan, but I can do business in Turkey (Fatima, 19).

Most of the participants came to Turkey illegal ways that took days and cost too much. To start their journey, they needed to make a deal with smugglers who were threatening during the migration. Five of the cases, participants told how the migratory route was threatening and full of danger:

The minibus that we got on the way to cross the border was very fast. Suddenly, the back door of the bus opened. A Pakistani man rolled on the ground. The driver did not wait for him. We just left him in blood out of nowhere. I cried a lot. The smugglers in the van yelled at me, “Shut up, or we will kick you out (Yasemin, 19).

During the migration, they could not have proper food to eat, a place to stay/ sleep or shelter when the rain poured. Fatima specified that *“we were thirsty and kept walked without having any food; that journey lasted a week. The smugglers brought some unwashed tomatoes.”* Rukiyye revealed that she and her family were being a target for Iranian soldiers. She was under risk of the shot while crossing the Iranian mountain to reach Turkish east border:

I understood that migrating was illegal; thus, it was legal that we got shot and die. We were terrorist rather than a family who try to survive. It was a night on the migration route, and suddenly I saw the shooting, and I heard shouting. I could not

check my family; I just hide in the snow and could not move. I waited for hours in there, but no one showed up. Then a man came who crossed the border before; he whispered, “come, come with me! I saw that Iranian soldiers captured all your family (Rukiyye, 23).

In Rukiyye’s migration story, she told how refugee’s make a deal with smugglers. According to her, traffic was a large-scale business. She said guiding and leading are the primary function of smugglers, yet they refuse all the responsibilities. She put emphasize being on the road much worse than death:

I came an illegal way; there were high mountains, there was no light, and the weather was terrible. After we stayed one month in our first dormitory, we started to walk. The smuggler told us after 7 hours that we walked that we must go back because we were not made it at the right time. Thus, we had to go back to another dormitory by walking for 5 hours back. Five families accompanied us on the road. The second time we took the road was two weeks later, but at this time we walked towards another boundary. That night we started to walk at 4 pm, after 3 hours we got on the bus for 6 hours journey, then we started to walk again on the mountain until 11 pm. The weather got bad, and there were rain and storm, and the smugglers forced us to return. We go back to another dormitory; it was around 4 am. Last time was our third attempt to cross the border. It was snowy. We walked for around 4 hours. We arrived at the wire of the Iranian line. First, we throw our bags from top of the wire then we cross under the wire. The smuggler told us that after we cross the first wire, we should walk until we see the second wire. The time we arrived at the second wire Iranian police shot my family, and I hide by myself in the snow for hours (Rukiyye, 23).

We saw from a distance the mountains appear as dark perpendicular barriers, it was nightfall, and when we came into one point, we cut the wire. The journey was rough; it was my first experience. I still remember the feeling of starving (Hatice,19).

In that night, me and my family, we followed one smuggler until a specific point. Then they let us down by giving us one broken lighter and vague map of mountains. We had no chance but kept walking. In one point, we decided to rest for a night. It was worse night ever. I remember that I slept on the sharp rocks of the mountain. When I think about the past, I surprise how we could even make it (Gülsüm, 22).

Participants were not only exposed to war-related traumatic events, but they also exposed to domestic violence. Hatice stated that “*my father always engages in violence. He swore, struck, and hit to my mother, my brother, and me before I leave him.*”

4.1.1.2. Living Conditions

Participants talked about problems before migration was linked to the infrastructure, unsafe living conditions, living on the breadline, violation of their rights.

They also mentioned they were lacked essential sources, e.g., economic and humanitarian aids, to cover their basic needs. According to participants, several aspects of half-baked operations creates political discrimination in an unstable political environment before they migrated. The interviewees mentioned that they were experienced electricity cut for days, which largely undermine daily functioning.

According to refugee women, the living conditions were harsh even after they arrived in a safe country. Gülsüm and Ayşe mentioned that they forced and oppressed because of the legislation about the head-scarf ban. It is important to note that this legislation has been removed; however, these two participants mentioned this problem because these rules still maintained its validity when they settled in Turkey. Therefore, these two participants had to against the religious practices for the right of education. Some considered the ending of their educational life. Yasemin stated that *“the school manager asked me to take off my headscarf in school, and I was so embarrassed when I did it. I was a hijabi girl since I was little.”*

Participants also mentioned about the economic problems that they faced in a new country. Based on the anecdotal records, finding a job in a new country and gaining a place in the free market were seemed very difficult for a foreigner. It was seemed almost impossible for refugees to find a job in the government office. As a result, in a new country, which was seemed to expensive for them, a shortage of livelihoods was a factor that made refugee women’s lives difficult and made women vulnerable:

Everything cost too much in Turkey. When I compare myself with Turkish girls, they go to college, have gorgeous clothes, their fathers are rich, so their houses are wonderful. However, my house is tumbledown because my father cannot earn money. I do not have clothes. Look! I am wearing this today, and I am going to wear it again (showing the clothes on her). I want to be as like the other girls, then I cry... (Fatıma, 19).

I do every job but the money that I earn end of the day is 50 Turkish Liras. Every night, when I came back home, my father asked me the money and I give him all. One day he buys gas; another day, he buys food, tea, sugar (Zeyneb, 22).

Women expressed that they did not have medical guidance. They lacked information about maternal and infant health, prenatal care, medical tests, and preventative care services. Based on the anecdotal records, refugee women had difficulty in keeping up with the new medical system, and they were unaware of what doctors demanded from them and what they should do in the next step. Based on the interview results, they believed that knowledge at the pre-pregnancy stage to avoid early pregnancy loss is crucial:

One night, while was going to the bathroom, I did not realize how slippery on the ground, and I slipped and fell. For a while, I lied in a pool of blood and not made any sense of what just happened. Every part of my body was in pain. It was scary, yet I did not tell anyone, including my husband. I was afraid and kept in myself. A few days later, I mentioned to my best friend. She forced me to find a doctor and make an appointment. After inspection, the doctor told me, I got pregnant, and because it was too late to see him, I suffer a miscarriage (Hatice, 19).

4.1.1.3. Lack of Recognition of Previous Education

In addition to the traumatic experiences and living conditions, participants pointed out that they were also experienced problems related to lack of recognition of their previous educations. It is important to note that, in line with the issues determined by the higher education institution, women often did not have any problems regarding the validity of their education when they came with a document showing their old education. However, almost all participants mentioned concerns on their recognitions of existing diploma as well as prior learning and/or training. The main reason behind their problem was they lacked documentation to prove their past education. Therefore, it seemed that undocumented refugee women faced tremendous educational problems about (1) validate their last degree, (2) getting accepted for institutions and the (3) seek education in different places. Although refugee women have tried many ways to pursue further education, various legal obstacles discouraged participants after migration. Some of the legal hurdles were requirements of demand for original signed educational diplomas and related documents. Participants were mentioned because of the extraordinary conditions on the migration route; they have lost most of the legal documents on the way. Therefore, they cannot deliver of means of proof. Besides, temporary protected people have no right to leave the city where they were initially resettled, which prevented participants from seeking various university degrees in different cities. Even if they would illegally leave the town to find further education, they must come back to the initially resettled city every week to sign an attendance document at a police station due to the inspection reasons.

4.1.1.4. Multiple Displacement

The timeline of the pre-migration stage includes the participants ($n=4$) who had already flown another country and lived there for some time before they came to Turkey. Thus, in this study, the pre-migration stages of participants included some of the post-migration experiences. Being multiple replaced might harden refugee women's adaptation and readjustment process as they must go through all the adjustment difficulties as a

consequence, they were vulnerable to experiencing cumulative trauma. Therefore, they might experience xenophobia, discrimination, legal obstacles, and lack of resources repeatedly. The destinations of multi displaced refugee women as follows:

Table 3

Destinations of Multi-displaced Refugee Women

Yasemin, 19	The participant is a young girl of Afghan origin. She was not in Afghanistan during her childhood and youth. The participant went to Iran from Afghanistan at the age of 3 months. She grew up in Iran. She never lived in Afghanistan. Participant arrived in Turkey illegally with her family at the age of 13- 14. She has been living in Turkey for about five years.
Ayşe, 42	The participant is a 42-year-old woman of Afghan origin. After the war in Afghanistan, she immigrated to Pakistan. When she was 23, she returned to Afghanistan. After staying in Afghanistan for 15 years, she came to Turkey illegally.
Zeyneb, 22	The participant is a 22-year-old young woman of Iraq origin. Due to the war in Iraq, the participant and her family migrated from Iraq to Libya when he was four years old. They lived in Libya for 15 years. She did not spend much time in Iraq. She stated that they were forced to return to Iraq in 2011 due to the war. She arrived in Turkey in August 2014.
Rukiyye, 23	The participant is a 23-year-old young girl of Afghan origin. She was born in Iran, in Tehran. She has grown up in a refugee settlement environment. Thus, she experienced post-migration difficulties. She arrived in Turkey in 2018.

4.1.1.5. Discrimination, Alienation, and Lack of Social Support

The researcher asked questions to explore the roles of socio-cultural factors in refugee women's adjustment process. It seems that socio-cultural factors would be both adaptive and maladaptive influence on participants' life. The maladaptive social factors would be related to experiencing discrimination, alienation, and lack of social support. These maladaptive social factors found to be associated with the experience of xenophobia, cross-cultural differences, cultural deprivation, family structure, cultural-gender norms, and taboos. Discrimination, alienation, and lack of social support turn out to be triggering the refugee women's experience of social isolation. Initially, according to participants, discrimination, alienation, and xenophobic attitudes of the host societies

appeared to be one of the troubling issues. Participants pointed out that people would understand their ethnicity based on their clothing, facial characteristics, and the way of using language. Yasemin expressed how she was lucky not to share similar visible characteristics with her fellow Afghan people. Based on the anecdotal records, it was noteworthy that the attitude towards foreigners was tended to be harmful than positive. Participants mentioned that they had been japed and bullied from the people at host countries. Yasemin stated that *“they make fun of the Afghans because they have slanting eyes. They mocked with my friends as calling them Chinese.”* According to the participant's discriminations were not only based on ethnicity but also race:

One night, we attended an exhibition in Libya. There was a Libyan black woman with us. Then a young man appeared just behind her. He turned to the woman and said, “well, I am not able to see you, where are you?”. He and his friends laughed at the woman. This situation made my blood boil (Zeyneb, 22).

Participants were further expressed that they experienced threat, oppression, bullying, discrimination because of their cultural and national identity. One individual added that the Iranian Government has been discriminated and neglected her because of her Afghan origin. She exemplified with this issue:

I was born in Iran, and I lived there for all of my life. They never accepted me as a native person. I never had any permission for getting a job or for other things. I could not have the right to get a sim card for my mobile phone. I had no right to open a bank account. I did not have an ID number. All the Afghan students have eleven nine as for their ID number in Iran. When it was required, we all coded the same number. Which means that I did not have any identity. Yeah, the problem was my identity (Rukiyye, 23).

... because we were immigrants, some people wanted to stay away from us. Some of them were even stared (Gülsüm, 22).

Eventually, they began to burn down the homes of Afghans. I even witnessed a battle royal. On one side, there were Iranians, and on the other side, there were Afghans. They were throwing stones at each other (Yasemin, 19).

Another day, there was one Iranian man with a motorcycle, that man riding the motorcycle smacked the face of the little Afghan baby who was playing outside. After the Afghan people saw what happened, they hurt deeply for a long time (Yasemin, 19).

Even so, they managed to come to Turkey; their experiences of bullying and discrimination did not end. Yasemin commented as *“I gathered all my courage, and I went to the man whom I fell in love with, and I asked him, “can we be friends?”* He said, *“You are Afghan; I do not have anything to talk with you.”* Ayşe also remarked that *“I looked*

for an apartment in Tokat around 10 to 11 days. Most of the flat owners said to me: I do not rent any house to migrants.” Besides, participants also touched on experiencing culture shock. Refugee women expressed that some of the sociocultural differences made refugee women feel excited in the beginning; concerned in the later. They talked about how they annoyed about lifestyle in Turkey and how the people are irritating in some cases:

After some time passed, I realized that there are many problems here (Tokat). I irritated Turkish movies because they are immoral. For example, in the movie, there is one woman who has both a husband and a boyfriend. Besides, several divorcements in here. I realized that Turkish people give pay too much attention to their children, and they do whatever a child wants, which is wrong (Rukiyye, 23).

When it comes to lack of social support, participants revealed that they did not have friends in the host country and feel alienated by host people. Participant’s social networks were limited to family members and a small number of other refugees. In Rukiyye’s case, she had to come to Turkey by herself, and she pointed out that “*I live by myself, and sometimes I feel overwhelmed and depressive because I have absolutely no one around me.*” The lack of social interactions was found to be related to language-based problems covered in the following headline.

4.1.1.6. Language-Based Problems

All of the participants mentioned their language-based problems. Learning the host countries language seems to have a critical role in integration to brand-new culture. The frequency of the specified language problems was high. However, that problem seems to decrease rapidly in time. They suggested that all languages and cultures have their uniqueness and challenging parts in themselves. Yasemin stated that “*when I came to Turkey because of differences at language, I felt that I came to a new world where I am not able to communicate for a quite some time.*” Especially in the first months of their arrival, the language barrier was seemed to be a significant problem. According to anecdotal records, it should be noted that five of the participants, except Rukiyye and Ayşe, were able to speak Turkish fluently. They were determined to learn the Turkish language and were eager to receive the necessary training to learn the new language. Interviewees mentioned hardships of neither being understood nor understand:

When we came to Istanbul, the Turkish bus driver told us "Tamam" *. However, in our language (Dari) when someone says “Tamam” it means “Hush!”. When he

said “Tamam” to us, we wondered what we even said! (Gülsüm, 22) * *in Turkish “Tamam” means “all right.”*

The participants emphasized because they were not communicating with local people, and they felt socially isolated, they did not improve their language skills. They pointed out that learning an entirely new language requires a lot of effort and time. They also expressed the importance of having bilingual interpreter, especially for the first days of arrival. Ayşe stated that *“we needed an interpreter when we arrived. We had to go to the hospital; it was tough to communicate with healthcare personnel.”*

We did not understand when people spoke, and they did not understand when we talked. The language was a huge problem. Nobody could understand us when we had problems” (Yasemin, 19).

I always go to the library to translate my books. I got low marks from all my lectures in Turkey. When I was in Afghanistan, all my grades were above 90%. Only translating even requires much time (Gülsüm, 22).

To sum, both interviews and recorded observation notes were showed that refugee women seemed to experience a tremendous amount of difficulties and issues that exacerbate their vulnerabilities. While they expressed their traumatic experiences related to living under threat, terrorist attack, lose one's loved ones and be subjected to abuse, violence, oppression. Besides the harsh living conditions were related to the infrastructure, unsafe living conditions, living on the breadline, violation of their rights they were also seemed to be lacked essential sources, such as economic, humanitarian aids, and social support to cover their basic needs and to deal with all the problematic issues. Participants were emphasized their wish to continue their education. However, they have faced educational problems related to lack of recognition of their previous teachings due to being undocumented and prevented from going to another town to seek further education. Besides, the multiple displacements may be resulted in living those types of difficulties in the long run and in different contexts, which may harden to refugee women's adjustment and overall psychological well-being. When the participants talked about their experiences during migration, they seemed frustrated and tired, and migratory experiences were recorded as experiences they would never want to experience again. Based on the results, the hazardous events were experienced by the participants during the migration route that consisted of complex processes. Therefore, the researcher tried to understand the process better by making notes and drawings about the migration path. Besides, results indicated that refugee women might not find adequate social support to deal with discrimination,

alienation, xenophobia, cross-cultural differences, cultural deprivation, and consequently, they may experience social isolation. In the next headline refugee, women's psychological difficulties were provided. Respectively, they were, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional difficulties that were supplied throughout the migration process, e.g., before, during, and after.

4.1.1.7. Psychological Difficulties

Based on the interview records and observation notes, refugee women have a variety of difficulties as reactions to the difficulties they encounter before, during their immigration and resettlement process. These difficulties classified as (1) behavioral (contained suicide attempt), (2) cognitive, and (3) emotional. Understanding the difficulties were essential to explore the impact of traumatic experiences, harsh living conditions, lack of recognition of their previous degree, multiple displacements and discrimination, alienation, and lack of social support. These psychological difficulties were both results of adverse experiences and causes of further vulnerabilities impacting refugee women's daily functioning. Three subordinate themes derived and one sub-themes that attached to behavioral difficulties (see in Table 4). Only a small number of participants indicated that they were experienced physical difficulties (such as stomachache, headache, and vomit).

Psychological difficulties of refugee women would be affected so many things such as the severity of the traumatic events, current stressors in their life, personal factors (traits, attitudes, resilience levels), potential support systems, and previous trauma history. It should be mentioned that; responses of participants were natural, and it should be considered as a part of the coping and healing process. Sequentially, Behavioral Difficulties, Cognitive Difficulties, and Emotional Difficulties incorporated into the tables (see in Table 4, Table 5, Table 6).

4.1.1.7.1. Behavioral Difficulties

While exploring behavioral issues, the researcher considered the ones which relevant and related to the migration process. Thus, only related behavioral difficulties covered under this heading. Table 4 summarizes stated behavioral difficulties at migration stages.

Table 4

Behavioral Difficulties at Migration Stages

Pre-migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crying • Toddle away
During migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crying • Leave a sinking ship
Post-migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crying • Laughing (as a defense mechanism) • Engaging in violence • Using bad language • Having an obscene gesture • Hassling • Burst of anger • Begging someone's pardon • Relaxed • Relieved • Sobbing fit

4.1.1.7.1.1. Suicide

Two of the participants (Hatice and Fatima) have suicide history in pre-migration stage. Hatice mentioned that because she was assumed full responsibility for her family since she was nine years old. She felt in a way that she carried the weight of the world on her shoulders. Her father forcibly detached herself from her mother after they got divorced. She expressed that she did not meet her mother afterward. She explained final straw that made her commit suicide:

I committed suicide when I was nine by swallowing lots of pills. Because when I went to school, everyone was talking about their moms, I envied them. I committed (*silence*) (Hatice, 19).

Because of the cultural norms in Afghanistan, Fatima revealed that she committed to suicide. As the majority of participants also emphasized that in Afghanistan, women have no right to speak about their truths. They declared that women were considered weaker than male in terms of mental and physical aspects. Besides, some participants added the problematic frequency of child brides in Afghanistan:

They forced me to marry the old man when I was 14. That old man came to our house one evening; he was so ugly and nasty, he offered to deal. He said, "I will give you a great deal of money if you give me Fatima." I could not bear what

happened, and I swallowed all my grandmother's pills. They got me an IV in the hospital, and then I got stomach irrigation. My dad said, "if you ever do something like that again, I will never forgive you," and hopefully he returned the deal (Fatima, 19).

What is so common in Afghanistan was the father of a 10-year-old arranges the marriage to receive money from the 40/ 50-year-old man. If you're a woman in Afghanistan, you have no right. There are no laws, no legislation to protect the woman (Ayşe, 42).

4.1.1.7.2. Cognitive Difficulties

In this headline, the researcher identified essential components of cognitive difficulties of participants who encounter the traumatic experiences throughout the migration process. Table 5 summarizes stated cognitive difficulties of refugee women at all migration stages.

Based on the findings, refugee women reported that they had experienced mental derangement and mental instability. Moreover, they expressed that they concerned a sudden attack or torture before the migration. When it comes to during migration, participants shared similar concerns about "anything can happen at any moment." It can be said that refugee women expressed cognitive difficulties mostly had adverse content, especially, at pre and during migration stages. However, some of their cognitive difficulties slightly became more favorable and changed to serve for their benefit at the post-migration stage. As an example, toleration, having gratitude, relieving mind pressure, developing self-control, letting others guide them, cultivating the hope. However, some of the other cognitive difficulties seemed to be continued. Such as having flashbacks of past traumatic experiences, having dark thoughts, getting out of one's element.

Table 5

Cognitive Difficulties at Migration Stages

Pre-migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental derangement • Mental instability • Creating a sense of being exposed to torture at any time • Always cautious for a possible attack: "after the bomb attack happened, we were calling each other immediately. We were asking each other "is there anything happened to you, are you okay now?"
During migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking of being exposed to death at any time: "I felt that I am going to die. I understood that it is an illegal work and it is legal that we are going to die."

Table 5. (cont'd)

Post-migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the idea that who earnestly seeks good finds favor”: “do good things and good things will happen to you.” • Tolerating • Being patient • Having flashbacks • Being out of one's element • The sentiment of gratitude: “I think I need to do something for Turkey in return.” • Relieving mind pressure: “But the Turkish people are so kind than Iranian people. That made me feel more comfortable, easygoing. Also, I do not have mind pressure as before”. • Developing self-control: “Before I was susceptible, but now, I control myself.” • Re-arranging thoughts; changing maladaptive thoughts into adaptive ones • Distracting herself: “I must be into social life; I do not like to stick inside the house.” “When I work efficiently, I do not feel homesick or lonely and makes my mind healthy.” • Getting guidance from elderlies: “My father says you are young now that’s the reason that you think like that. He said, do not worry; your thoughts will change when you grow up.” • Internalize the discriminations • Hope: “I hope that one day, I arrive there and live with my family in comfort.” • Weighed down by dark thoughts: “Every night I thought to myself that where should I go next.”
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4.1.1.7.3. Emotional Difficulties

Participants mentioned about the various type of affections and emotions. Some of the participants stated that these were fleeting, superficial, sometimes overpowering, often fail to produce action and usually short and sometimes uncontrollable, kind of burst of emotions. As they stated, for some of the difficulties continued extended period. Some other emotional difficulties were more like the affection type such as long-lasting, deep, consistent with beliefs, involve the mind, will, and feelings. Table 6 summarizes all mentioned types under the emotional difficulties at all the migration stages.

Table 6

Emotional Difficulties at Migration Stages

Pre-migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling horrible: "I felt that how people were under pressure of fire and terrified by the ISIS." • Feeling anxious: "I had to go to the government office to stamp my high school diploma, but I was too worried that there might be an attack, and so I could not go." • Being in great distress • Feeling like an outsider • Feeling restless • Feeling uneasy • Feeling insecure • Being frightened: "we were afraid to go from one place to another." • Broodiness • Feeling frustrated: "They said it was forbidden to wear headscarves at school. I frustrated, and I thought they would prevent me from studying." • Feeling trapped: "I was in there, but I felt that I am in prison because everywhere was in danger." • Feeling home: "I felt trapped; however, I also relieved because I felt that I belonged there."
During migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frightened to being caught red-handed: "one cop saw us; we were so scared that we ran." • Abandon oneself to despair: "I was hopeless, and I told myself, ain't no sunshine anymore." • Feeling emotionally exhausted • Having emotional pain: "the effects of my experiences on the migration night are continuing although many years have passed. It was a challenging experience. I suffer a lot when I remember." • Frightening to death of herself and her loved ones: "I frightened that police shot them"
Post migration Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation • Feeling like an outsider, (however, in one case, Zeyneb stated that she does not feel aligned "I felt like I am home." • Feeling alienated: "suddenly, we were like in another world." • Gratitude: "Turkey gave me a place to stay and provided free education. I am trying a find a way to save Turkish new generation, in return." • Being indebted to somebody • Being aware of the distress • Being homesick

Table 6. (cont'd)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being worried for the ones who stayed in the former country: “Just to one thing annoys me is my family’s situation, they live in danger in Afghanistan, in 6 months seven attacks happened there. Every time that I hear there is an attack in Kabul, I am wondering my family.” • Feeling loneliness: “I did not receive any psychological support, I felt alone,” “feeling of loneliness annoys me a lot.” • Feeling trust because of the mate’s support: “I have (got) my husband’s back, that why I feel good.” • Holding no fears • Being astonished: “In one class, the lecturer asked a question to 150 people, he asked what you want to do in the future. I was the only one in the classroom who answered this question. It was shocking to me that I was the only one who has future career plans.” • Feeling more comfortable compared to the previous country: “I feel more comfortable than I was before.” • Feeling empowered: “I was not expecting to come to Turkey illegally at all. However, now, I feel that I am more powerful than ever,” “I felt like a hero when I was boxing.” • Make no apologies: “I got the biggest risk in my life, but I did not regret.”
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It is important to note that, refugee women’s expressed difficulties mostly had adverse content, especially, at pre and during migration stages. However, their difficulties or reactions slightly became more favorable at the post-migration stage. Which may arise questions that what may be interfering between those migration stages and which strategies would accelerate the process of shifting. Therefore, the researcher asked various questions to explore these strategies and their role in the migration experiences of refugee women. In the following headline, resilience strategies of refugee women were provided.

4.1.2. The Resilience of Refugee Women

After exploration of participants’ immigration stories, they were explicitly asked to talk about how they overcome with the adversities that they have faced. Participants spoke about how they survived and overcame these traumatic experiences. They were also requested to commend on the phenomenon of resilience in terms of what it means to refugee women and their ways of being resilience. The data analyses revealed the various resilience definitions of refugee women as well as the assets and strategies that refugee women were utilized to become and remain resilient. Respectively, refugee women

utilized both external and internal strategies to increase their psychological well-being. Some of the internal strategies were emerged as personal characteristics, coping, taking others as leverage to increase self-awareness, having hope, and spirituality. Spirituality was found as a wide concept that includes lots of points of views. When all is said and done, it seems to incorporate a feeling of association with an option that is greater than oneself, and it was found as commonly including a sense of the meaning of everyday life. The external strategies also emerged as socio-cultural similarities, support systems, and humanitarian aids and psycho-social programs. The results of related content were presented below.

4.1.2.1. Meaning making of Resilience

During the interview, refugee women’s meaning making of resilience explored. According to women, the number of resilient ones was as much as the ones who developed mental illnesses. The answers to who is resilient and what makes someone resilient were variated. Based on refugee women’s understanding of resilience, some of the sub-codes related to internal characteristics of resilient refugee women summarized in Table 7.

Table 7
The Resilience of Refugee Women

Meaning Making of Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women who have hope, • Women who have faith in God, • Brave people who can take risks, • The ones who are self-sacrificing, • Women who control over her thoughts, • Women who do not need to ask a favor, • By being able to leave the comfort zone, • Women aware of their potential and fulfill it, • Women who can embrace their responsibilities, • Women who set a goal and work to make it real, • Women who work on their problems and solve them, • Feelings of mercy and compassion make women resilient, • The ones who fight to a finish rather than who cut and run, • By being agile women (by following the opportunities rather than make no headway), • The ones who can make herself happy despite the hazardous events by keeping working
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Gülsüm pointed out that *“I have survived a lot of great difficulties, and I want to move on and make some progress; I cannot give up now.”* When they were asked who is the most resilient *“the mothers”* were mentioned many times during the interview, Ayşe stated that *“I believe mothers are the most resilient ones in the family. Because they have lots of responsibilities that she must fulfill.”*

Fathers can be the door-slammer in hardest times, but mothers stay no matter what. Because they have “bigger heart,” They are emotional when it comes to their children. I believe the feelings of mercy and compassion that keep mother resilient. I believe that “men make houses, women make homes.” Vital responsibilities of mothers keep them healthy and resilient (Yasemin, 19).

The answers to the question “who could not cope with adversities”; they answered as the ones affected intensely from the traumatic events and developed psychopathological disorders. According to the participants, even lots of people shared similar traumatic events and have similar exposure levels, some people more opened to developmental disorders. These refugees characterized by the participants as who was more vulnerable than the others:

The most vulnerable ones are the youngest child in the family and the boys. They seem to open to the outside danger. They influence easily by their bad behaving friends (Yasemin, 19).

Of course, the young boys are the ones who are least resilient. Why? Because they are the ones who take the risk, easy to acquire bad habits. More, they less responsible for domestic responsibilities. I think the oldest daughter would be the most resilient one among the children (Ayşe, 42).

What Yasemin was mentioned was compatible with the Ayşe’s belief. Yasemin was the oldest daughter who was taking care of all her family and seeing herself as a resilient one. Because the parents of Fatima has a severe illness, she considered herself as a mother to her brothers and sisters (she has two brothers and three sisters) and the head of household. She expressed that her father considers her as his son, which means that in the Afghan cultural setting, she is the one who is taking charge of everything. Even this situation brought new responsibilities to her, and she was pleased because she empowered by her father. She pointed out that she must go to work rather than continuing her education. Otherwise, she said that she would be let her family down. When it comes to the answers to the questions that “how did they recover after the traumatic exposure?” answers variated. Participants expressed that *“the resilient women focus on what they have rather than what they do not have”* or similarly *“the resilient women who acknowledge about what they accomplished rather than what they failed.”* Fatima stated that *“the*

resilient women who keep going their life by leaving the past behind.” This phenomenology compatible with the “knowing the value of life” and “living the moment” emphasized by different participants:

We should cherish our life. My father says to me that in this world, we humans here today and gone tomorrow. Thus, I told myself that why I should feel blue if I will not be in here tomorrow, instead I make the most of now (Fatıma, 19).

According to participants, resilient refugee women would use different strategies when they were addressing a problem. One participant was taking a well-planned action after making a needs analysis. One of the explanations for how they became resilient was related to how resilient ones address a problem differently. Rukiyye pointed out that “...*they (the women who are not resilient) believe that they would solve the problem by just ruminating about the problem.*”

The resilient women do not say “I am not able to solve problems” when she encounters a problem. She should put a logical goal and then reach that goal. Resilient women do not wait for someone else to solve their problems. Unlike the others, resilient ones who work on their issues and solve them (Gülsüm, 22).

Participants seemed to have well-founded philosophy in their life. In some cases, they have a mind of one's own. In other cases, especially if they cannot make sense of what/why happened, they seek to answers from the books and psychologist. In one example, Rukiyye mentioned that she has influenced by the philosophy of Albert Ellis; she also seemed to adopted fate and fatalism:

Nobody can give you promise that there will not be any misfortune in this life. Thus, you should accept that the bad thing would happen to you. I do not forget that nobody is whole, everyone has some problems in their own lives that you do not know. More, you do not live their life; thus, you cannot judge them (Rukiyye, 23).

4.1.2.2. Resilience Strategies

Refugee women seemed to use some of the resilience strategies to deal with the issues that had mentioned as the factors that exacerbate their vulnerabilities. Refugee women seemed to be using resilience strategies by activating either internal or external resources to increase their psychological well-being. These internal and external resources appeared to be in constant interaction. For example, being assertive (internal characteristic) would facilitate to take advantage of available external sources such as humanitarian aids.

4.1.2.2.1. Internal Resilience Strategies

Internal resilience strategies consisted of sub-themes. Respectively, they were (a) internal resilience strategies that comprised (i) personal characteristics, (ii) coping (covered the appraisal focused, problem-focused and emotion-focused copings) (iii) taking others as leverage, (iv) having hope, and (v) spirituality. They explained in detail in the following headlines.

4.1.2.2.1.1. Personal Characteristics

Combining with the internal resilience strategies, participants also mentioned some of the individual characteristics such as being assertive, extroverted, friendly, open to new experiences, seeking opportunities, easygoing, curious, and adaptable would facilitate to resume personal and social interactions. For example, Zeyneb expressed that because she is a sharp person, she can be assertive for the things that she is curious. In her beliefs, these characteristics made her be the one who follows the opportunities. Thus, she could find courses, aids, and engage more with interactive social events. These personal attributes might also facilitate participants' language learning:

We went to the estate agent to rent a house; the manager was on the phone. He was telling me that he is looking for a new employee for his office. I learned the Turkish language, so I could understand what he was talking about. After he turned off his phone, I directly asked him whether I would be the new employee. He surprised and asked me if I have any certificate. I told him that after I came to Turkey, I attended lots of courses that included a computer, diction and vocational training courses and I can speak almost fluent Turkish. Then I got the job. My mom did not get what was just happened, and when I explained to her, she delighted (Zeyneb, 22).

They mentioned about their experiences in new culture after leaving their familiar, home culture. Being open to new experiences have emerged. Zeyneb mentioned that when they first arrived, she was excited and joyful. She said, *"I had never felt foreign when I arrived in Istanbul. I loved it."*

More, being future-oriented and self-organized seemed to contribute to finding a purpose, motivation to keep going, and became the better version of themselves. By having goals, they felt the time that they spend in Turkey beneficial and valuable. Two of the participants mentioned their plans for reaching out their dream job. Gülsüm and Fatıma pointed out that they want to become a businesswoman and establish their own company. While they were talking about their goals, they also had well-established step by step plans. They mentioned their needs for analysis. Gülsüm stated that *"I want to establish a new*

international trade car company which offers new jobs for Turkish people. I made up a shortage on my plan, and I am working on it.”

4.1.2.2.1.2. Coping

Refugee women appeared to be using both coping strategies by altering their thinking style to reach equilibrium throughout the migration process. These altering (modifications, pliability) mentioned assisting participants in mostly reducing stress and tolerating the conflict. By using those strategies, refugee women may fit themselves better into various environments such as war zone, migratory route, and xenophobic host environments. Using coping strategies seemed to contribute to the participant's adjustment process. Some of the sub-themes under the coping were (1) *Appraisal Focused*, (2) *Problem Focused*, and (3) *Emotion-Focused* (included utilizing defense mechanisms). They explained in detail in the following headlines.

4.1.2.1.2.1. Appraisal Focused Coping Strategies

Refugee women seemed to deal with new and challenging conditions by shifting their thinking ways, such as their assumptions. The determinant factors on participants appraisal coping emerged as personal attitudes, hope, faith, comparison with others, and social support. They mentioned that they were detecting and disputing negative self-talk and using positive reinterpretation. Based on the observation data, they seemed to be well-grounded with accepting the facts and focusing on how to improve their conditions. Similarly, all refugee women specified the importance of rational thinking. Zeynep stated that *“when you think logically, you start to love yourself, and you accepted yourself as just the way you are.”*

Participants also emphasized the importance of managing their thoughts. Rukiyye mentioned about how she learned to control her thoughts by changing the way she thinks and behave. She stated that *“everything is related to you your mind. You should be a master of your thinking style. When you think logically, you start to accept yourself and love yourself.”* Participants seemed that by using positive reinterpretation, they were considering new challenges as they were opportunities that serve their personal development. Such as instead of complaining about the language problems; participants were considering learning a new language as it was a chance to personal fulfillment.

Zeyneb stated that *“I thought in a way that there would be a new and unique language that I will receive in my life. Why should I not enjoy it?”* They mentioned that welcoming new perspectives and culture into their life facilitated their adjustment process.

4.1.2.1.2.2. Problem-Focused Coping Strategies

Problem-Focused coping strategies used by refugee women to reduce or eliminate the life stressors to receive positive feedback. Some of the problem-focused strategies that refugee women mentioned were active problem solving, seeking social support, self-management, improving self-control, becoming more assertive. Initially, deciding and managing migration considered as a solution to one of the most significant problems of refugee women. They mentioned that leaving everything behind was all by itself a laborious process. It included separation from their family members. Gülsüm stated that *“war-related problems continue in there, we came here because of our sense of safety threatened, and we wanted to reassure their security.”*

Refugee women used problem-focused strategies related to the problems in their occupations. Participants talked about changing, and improvements at their career path served their psychological wellbeing. Rukiyye stated that *“I was working as a waitress. When I found a job, simultaneously, I felt better even it was a temporary job.”* Hatice mentioned, *“when I work efficiently, I do not feel homesick or lonely, it makes my mind healthy.”* Therefore, participants received positive feedback by having some changes in their permanent occupations. Some of the participants seek opportunities to back on track by giving a new direction to their career path:

I learned Turkish, attend courses such as “Women's Tailoring,” “Introduction to the Turkish Language,” “Computer and Vocational Training Course” “Diction Training,” “Hairdresser Course,” and “Fashion Design Course.” I did all to get a job. I wanted to create a better future for myself (Zeyneb, 22).

Zeyneb mentioned about attending those courses opened a new door into getting a better job. She exemplified as *“if I did not become a qualified employee, they would only offer me a job that requires man-handling as it was in the beginning. I tried to work in a factory for some time, but I could not handle it”*.

4.1.2.1.2.3. Emotion-Focused Coping Strategies

The Emotion-Focused coping strategy was used by refugee women to manage their potential emotional distress and feelings of hostility. Some of the strategies were

accepting responsibility or blame, exercising self-control, and positive reappraisal. Some of the used emotion-focused tactics that women mentioned were releasing pent-up emotions, distracting oneself, managing hostile feelings, forgiving others, exercising, meditating, and seeking emotional support. Family and communities support function role seemed to contribute their psychological well-being and coping. It also seemed to support participants positively in terms of managing stressors. Hatice stated that *“if my husband were not here for me, I would not handle all this chaos. Because of him, life is more beautiful than ever. I count on him. I feel secure when I am with him.”*

When refugee women cope with their problems, they adopted spending time with themselves and working on their inner work. Hatice stated that *“I talked to myself; Hatice, you-beautiful, control yourself, give yourself a time to relax. Then I find peace in my heart”* Rukiyye also stated that *“I learned to manage myself and be good enough for the current situation.”* Therefore, emotion-focused coping strategies would help participants to reduce stress. Notably, in some cases, some of the emotion-focused coping strategies would have maladaptive characteristics which would be harmful to the participants in the long run. That is why the researcher gives a room to defense mechanisms as a subtheme under emotion-focused coping strategies.

4.1.2.1.2.3.1. Utilizing the Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanisms counted as sub-conscious interfered mechanisms during coping. None of the participants stated that they used these mechanisms to feel better or reach better emotional states. Instead, the researcher collected the pieces on their speech and considered and analyzed as possible interfered mechanisms. Participants utilized some of the defense mechanisms, such as avoidance, sublimation, and intellectualization, to defend against stress and feelings of anxiety. The outcome of using defense mechanisms seemed to reflect the participant's life as imperfect environmental fit or adjustment.

They seemed to use “avoidance,” “sublimation,” and “intellectualization” at both pre-migration and post-migration stages. When refugee women found herself in a situation that made her anxious, she mentioned that she chose to disclaim or avoid the situation. Participants mentioned about their avoidance of emotional distress by distracting themselves. Refugee woman pointed out that even though, the avoidance of situation did not help her to deal with her distress, yet, she said it provided her to escape from facts. Fatima stated that *“after I discriminated, I crawled into my shell and did not speak to*

anyone for nearly a month. I do not have any friend; I abstain from people” and Gülsüm expressed that “I feel like people laughing at my behind. That is why I keep my distance and avoid reconciling with them.” Fatima also seemed to use avoidance by saying, “whenever I see my crush, I run away and hide.” While Yasemin revealed that “I pretended that I do not care for a while even I convinced myself that I do not bother” Zeyneb stated, “I did not visit with any of my family or friends, go to school or work, run errands, or take part in daily activities for a year.”

Another defense mechanism that has been mentioned by the women was sublimation. When the anxiety-driven situation is exerting pressure on the participant’s ego, the ego may try to go off on a sidetrack from the offending stimuli by deriving its opposite. Participants were seemed to act out unacceptable impulses by converting these behaviors into a more acceptable form. The researcher observed that using it help refugee women to shift from general negative energy to more positive ones. In Hatice’s case, she has been using that mechanism, particularly after the resettlement.:

Everyone has gone through various difficulties. However, there is nothing to do. Nobody wants to tell their story, and they do not want even to remember because it will make them sorry. I do like that too. I am laughing all around. People say Hatice is very happy, but they do not know how hard my life is (Hatice, 19).

Intellectualization also was mentioned during the interviews. Based on the data, sometimes refugee women seem to remove herself from a stressful event by thinking rather than feeling. When Yasemin felt that her classmates discriminated and marginalized her. She mentioned blocking the emotional side of a stressful situation and addressed only the facts:

When the students talked about the Afghans, they say we fled the war. Look, our family fought with all their strength, and many women remained. Many women and many kids, how would we handle it? So, we had to run; we did not escape from the war. When students say so, I grieved (Yasemin, 19).

4.1.2.2.1.3. Taking Others as Leverage to Increase Self-Awareness

Based on the shared information, most of the time, participants compared themselves with others to increase their self- awareness. Some women mentioned that by doing so, they found their truth. Hatice stated that *“when I came to Turkey, I saw many women who were not wearing hijab. Then I thought to myself, why would I wear them in the first place. Then I left wearing it. I felt more beautiful than before.”*

When it comes to dealing with the problem's, refugee women compared themselves with other family members; they stated that they are more assertive than others:

Initially we came to Ankara, but we were obliged to head to Tokat. We were desperate, non-communicative, broke, and exhausted. We were waiting for someone magical to rescue us from that situation. Then I saw and walked through the police officer to ask for help. My parents were out of their mind with worry. They were %100 sure that a police officer will arrest all of us. It turned out he feeds us, gave us some money and bus tickets to Tokat (Fatima, 19).

Therefore, taking others as leverage emerged as another internal resilience strategy used at the post-migration stage. Zeyneb stated that *"I realized that there are millions had to face similar hardships. More, I see that local people and migrated ones share so much in terms of facing daily life difficulties."* Ayşe pointed out that *"we had been experiencing forced migration for 30 years. My mom had to migrate as I did later, further my daughter experienced the same,"* and Fatima mentioned *"one day I will buy a new house and get married. Inshallah (if god lets), I will be so happy as other girls."*

4.1.2.2.1.4. Having Hope

Refugee women mentioned, despite being exposed to traumatic events having hope for the future has a vital role. Participant's hope seemed to link to their faith. Their faiths seem to assist refugee women in overcoming the hardships and giving participants to the power of endurance for anything and everything that comes their way. Ayşe stated that *"even after all that happened, I persevered, then God helped me. As long as, you are alive, there is hope."* They mentioned that they want to carve out a better future for themselves and their family members at during migration:

On the migratory route, I scared, cried, and regretted, but I said to myself: "Never mind! You will go to Turkey, and you are going to study at college. Then you will get a job to earn money. Thus, finally, I would have money for the medical operation of my father and for looking after my siblings (Fatima, 19).

Sometimes I said to myself "you should give up your dream of having a master's degree" then I think about the past, I think about hardness, I think about that night (the migration night; the night she crossed the borders). I say, "I have survived a lot of great difficulties, and I want to move on, and progress, I cannot give up now (Gülsüm, 22).

Even though refugee women struggle because of a variety of traumatic reasons, they emphasized that their hope for the future gave participants the motivation to keep going. Hope seems to be a facilitating factor to cope with resettlement stressors. Ayşe expressed that *"everything is going to be all right; that is what I say to myself, and I tell*

my daughter that “we look ahead, inshallah (if god lets), future will be bright.” Zeynep also said that “then, I thought “ok, Zeyneb all right, forget about living in Iraq for a while and think about the future. Life goes on”. Fatıma mentioned “how I deal with all that? Because I thought the future, not the past.”

4.1.2.2.1.5. Spirituality

Having faith in God (turning to spirituality) seemed to be a source of strength for some participants. Spirituality may be strengthening their hope, patience, toleration, and link to their resilience levels. Ayşe stated that “if there is a God, there is a light. I have strong faith, and it makes me tough,” and Rukiyye mentioned that “every day I pray, read the Quran. It makes me relief. I give my energy to god, and this makes me calm.”

More, during the interviews, refugee women used much spiritual context in sentences. They were used liturgical language. When a language- though relationship considered, one might think that spirituality has a significant role in their life. Some of the highly used phrases were; “*Insha Allah*: God-willing,” “*Allahu Akbar*: God is most great,” “*Alhamdulillah*: Praise to god,” “*Mashallah*: What god wishes.”

4.1.2.2.2. External Resilience Strategies: Adaptive Socio-cultural Factors

In addition to internal strategies, some of the adaptive socio-cultural factors seemed to facilitate refugee women adjustment process and increase their psychological well-being. The socio-cultural similarities between their origin country and host country found to facilitate their adjustment process. The similarities were expressed as giving refugee women a sense of closeness to the host people and culture. In that way, participants did not be like a fish out of water in an utterly distinct place but find in comfort in a new environment. More, receiving social support and have been benefited from humanitarian aids, and psycho-social programs made it easy for refugee women to cope with migration difficulties. The external resilience strategies have emerged as (i) socio-cultural similarities and (ii) social support systems, (iii) humanitarian aids and psychosocial programs. They explained in detail in the following headlines.

4.1.2.2.2.1. Socio-cultural Similarities as a Source of Resilience

Refugee women seemed to acknowledge both the facilitator /exacerbating roles of the similarities and differences among cultures at their adjustment processes. Participants were expressed that Turkish culture and their origin culture were shared similar contents

in terms of rituals, culture, religious factors. This may be a result of the fact that both cultures are middle eastern cultures:

Turkish and Afghan cultures are sharing more commonalities compare to the European cultures and Afghan ones. European people's world views different than us*. Turkish people are compassionate; I feel their warmness. Oppositely, I discriminated in European countries. There was a common regret among the families who went to Europe; they feel trapped because their children were growing up in the culture with noncompatible values (Gülsüm, 22). (*us* was corresponded both Turkish and Afghan customs*)

When it comes to religious factors, refugee women mentioned that religion's compatibility contributed to their adjustment process. Because of the similarity of their faiths, they felt intimate with people and culture. Moreover, being able to continue their practice (i.e., some of the women were able to go to the mosque in Ramadan days, they could find the religious materials easily (such as hijab, Islamic clothes) made their life more comfortable. Shared Islamic culture and faith emerged as one of the resilience factors that facilitate the adjustment process of refugee women. Fatıma mentioned the importance of religions compatibility in the very first days of her arrival:

...after we arrived at the Tokat, we found ourselves in the city center. I was desperately searching for something similar in there; I mean hearing Darii language or seeing any Afghan people. However, I ended up finding nothing similar at all. Then I sat on the park bench in tears. I broke into tears. I did not even realize that the people around us were staring at me. Then something happened. Suddenly, we heard the afternoon adhan, we listened to that then, I told my father "look their adhan as same as us," and my father replied, "even there is nothing similar in here, there is Allah that we both share (Fatıma, 19).

Additionally, the culture shock that refugee women were experienced made them felt that they did not belong to Turkish culture; however, they found a ground that they became comfortable about the differences and challenges. They have learned to navigate their unwarranted anxiety, negativity, and criticism:

...but now, I feel that I am more powerful than ever. Before I was susceptible, but now, I learned to control myself. I do not get angry about everything; I learned to manage myself to be enough and become good for the current situation (Ayşe, 42).

I met new Afghan people who came before than us. I asked them how they feel about living in Turkey. Most of the refugee people were homesick, and they do not like living in here because of every challenge that they face. In that case, my vision is so different from their vision. They say negative words about living in here; only they acknowledge what they do not have. I believe whatever you should make yourself happy in any place (Rukiyye, 23).

4.1.2.2.2. Social Support Systems

All participants mentioned the importance of receiving social support from others. However, participants revealed that after resettlement, refugee women had a hard time to make Turkish friends for some time, thus felt alienated. Participants social networks were limited to family members and a small number of other refugees. Nevertheless, participants mentioned that after migration, they could receive various aids and assistance from different types of sources, mainly from their family, people who share similar migration experiences and host people. Refugee women mentioned that their relatives and family members even they were in the long-distance give them not only psychological support but also financial support. Rukiyye stated that *“I got supported by my cousin who migrated to Europe.”* Hatice pointed out that talking on the phone with her mother helped her to manage her problems more effectively. Zeyneb mentioned that she received family support in order to stay healthy in the conflict. In some cases, they discussed all together about what they should do for next:

My brother asked me why to do not consider migrating to Turkey. He acquainted me with various information about the process. I told him I have no idea about what I am supposed to do in there and how much I afraid. He responded, “when we are together, we can face any challenges, and we get over all the difficulties (Zeyneb, 22).

However, one participant added that her parents emotionally neglected her during her childhood period. Her parents failed to show the level of affection and attention that she expected from them. Hatice stated that *“I had a hard life. Neither my mom nor my father was in there for me. I felt parentless. They did not go to bat for me.”* Especially at during the migration stage, support of family and fellow migrants seemed to have vital importance. Most refugee women crossed borders with their families. They mentioned how it would be impossible to reach Turkey if they did not have each other. They shared the troublesome experience on a migration route. The fellow migrants also contributed their feeling of safety and accompaniment because they were in the same boat altogether. Even though the smugglers were rip off refugees; they take strength from each other.

Some of the refugee women had previously settled relatives in Turkey who facilitated their adjustment process by decrease newly coming’s resettlement stressors. According to the participants, people who settled to Turkey were discussing the aspects of living in Turkey with people who considering coming. As participants mentioned about one the problem that Directorate-General for Migration Management in Turkey, did not

allow refugees to settle down where their relatives already resettled. Rukiyye said that she has an aunt in Sivas, and even though she wanted to stay with her aunt, they did not allow her to do so. They forced her to choose another city. Selecting the city seems to be a vital decision for the newcomers. However, most of the refugee women appeared to decide the town where they settle by chance:

After we arrived in İstanbul, we went to Ankara to visit UNICEF. When the authorities in there asked where we would prefer to live, we simply said the same preference as one of the random Afghan refugees who were on the waiting line. To us, it would not matter at that point of time (Zeyneb, 22).

Another aspect that facilitates their resettlement process was their acquaintances. Based on the interviews and observations, the acquaintanceship was one of the most crucial resilience factors from the beginning of the migration process. It seemed that this prevented possible stressors that would rise from the unpredictable nature of living in a new country. Most of the participants stated that after their arrival in Turkey, their acquaintance opened their house to them until they rent their own apartment, helped refugee women master the environment, and find a job. Thus, refugees get both informational and instrumental support for the first stage of their resettlement process. Zeyneb expressed that *“when we came here, we had an Iraqi acquaintance in Tokat. They open their home to us.”* After resettlement, the protective factor of having acquaintances kept positively serve refugee women:

I had no one in here until I met Nilofer and her family (Afghan family who came earlier). After that, her family became my family; they helped me in all possible ways (Ayşe, 42).

First time we came to Tokat, we sat in the bazaar. I sat for an hour. I looked this-a-way and that-a-way. Then I saw one Afghan boy pass by in front of us. We asked help, and he helped us in all the administration and accommodation issues (Fatma, 19).

Interviewees emphasized that locals in Turkey helped them in social, economic, psychological aspects. In that way, they mentioned they recognized hardships left behind, and they have hopeful futures in a peaceful country. Ayşe stated that *“mashallah (praise be!), Turkish folks were nice. They brought us provisions; I mean bed, mattress, pillows, blankets.”*

When we came to Turkey, we did not have anything except one abandoned flat. We were sleeping on the ground for days. Then neighbors realized our situation; they brought food, furniture, heater, and some money. If we were in Iran, no one would bother to do that, especially ones they learn that we have Afghan origin (Yasemin, 19).

In terms of receiving both material and psychological support from locals:

We went to a village, in Van, we knocked on the door, and they accepted us to go inside. We communicated via body language; they understood that we were refugees they told us we should not worry, and we were safe in Turkey (Rukiyye, 23).

The participants mentioned about satisfaction with resettlement, expressed gratitude toward hosting country and locals. They compared countries in terms of values, generous, and humanitarian aid. Nevertheless, they also mentioned about the difference among people in those countries. Yasemin stated that *“there were a lot of bighearted people in Turkey, yet there were also some ill-natured ones. I think Turkey is better at humanitarian aid and hosting compare to Iran.”* Gülsüm also stated that *“there was an old lady who visited our flat. When she looked at our conditions, she could not help but cried. She brought furniture; more she called her son to find me a job.”*

4.1.2.2.3. Humanitarian Aids and Psychosocial Programs

Refugee women mentioned the aid and support that they received from the non-governmental organization (NGO) and governmental organizations. They stated that these aids included money, psycho-social support, and guidance. Both officers of the governor and municipality were mentioned providing access for fundamental rights, services, and helping refugee women to fulfill their primary needs. It seems that the NGO' aimed to pave the way for the participants' adjustment process. Participant's mentioned that they were received financial aids from Turkish Red Crescent and received guidance from Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) in order to find the city, they should resettle and perform legal obligations. Rukiyye supported this information by saying, *“when I came here by myself, I went directly to the SGDD-ASAM. I got registered; they said that they would call someone to find me a place.”* In Fatıma's case, she received financial aids from official channels *“The Turkish Red Crescent gave us the Kızılay card that receives 500 Turkish Lira per month. Moreover, there is a social center here where we can get free fuelwood for winter and clothes.”*

Four of the participants mentioned that they have access to community colleges and public education centers in Turkey. Further, they indicated that because they were forced migrated, the administration in these places did not charge any fee; thus, they would join classes for free. Moreover, six of the participants (except Ayşe) attended sports classes three days a week for free because of their status. Some of the lessons that participants attended include “Women's Tailoring,” “Introduction to the Turkish Language,”

“Computer and Vocational Training Course” “Diction Training,” “Hairdresser Course,” and “Fashion Design Course.” The participants mentioned many benefits of going to these courses. They stated that “these courses are not only assisting interviewees learning new knowledge and skills in a particular area, but it also facilitates their socialization and speeds up their language learning process.

There are also psychosocial factors that seemed to affect refugee women. Some of the questions in the interview protocol were built to address the issues of psycho-social support functions and to explore how that support channels would be offered more practical implications. Only two of the participants (Hatice and Gülsüm) mentioned that they received psychological support (e.g., psychological counseling or psychotherapy). Gülsüm received psychological support from a psychologist who works at the Refugee Association in Tokat after she came to Turkey. Gülsüm pointed out that “there was a *psychologist at UNICEF center. We had regular weekly sessions by helping the translator.*” Hatice has been received necessary psychological support from a psychiatrist after she attempted to suicide in Iran. Both participants mentioned that getting psychological support improved their mental health and general wellbeing. While most of the others stated that they felt neglected before and after the migration in terms of receiving any support from any channels.

4.1.3. Being a Woman

When the researcher asked to what extents and in what ways, being a woman influenced their experiences at all migration stages, refugee women mentioned that social gender inequality, suppressive cultural norms, sex-role stereotypes, and gender-related persecution were affected their migration experiences. It seemed that all forms of discrimination and oppression against women in their home and outside world influenced their coping, adjustment, and resilience:

I invited some of my friends to register for the course that I have been attending. They did not come; Later, they admitted that even they wanted to attend; their brothers do not let them join courses (Zeyneb, 22).

My uncle threatened me, and he said if I do not marry this guy, he will break my legs. He frightened me, by saying, "I will do a lot of bad things to you." They forced me to marry; then, I commit suicide not to marry him (Fatıma, 19).

Based on the observation data, some of the women seemed to internalize the social norms and justify the inequality towards them. When the researcher asked to Gülsüm about

feminism, she considered the mainstream as an extreme movement. Rukiyye mentioned that she was eligible to attend the university in Iran. However, she did not want to attend because all the students in that university were female. She stated that *“surprisingly, women in the school can compete against the boys in all areas.”* During the interview, refugee women mentioned that most of the girls and women have no access to higher education, and they had to drop out after middle school in Afghanistan. Refugee women were talking about the fact that they could not go to the streets by themselves in their own countries, could not drive or start a business.

According to the participants, the level of oppression was beyond measure before the migration. Yasemin stated that *“men would not let the girls educated. They sat up a bomb in the girls' schools for too many times. They also threw poison into girls' school meal,”* and Ayşe said that *“Taliban trapped girls out of college, and they threw nitric acid on female student's faces.”* Based on the cultural norm of the former country, women were not eligible to work outside. Women neither select the occupation they want, nor they can be employed. Ayşe stated that *“I wanted to work outside, but Taliban did not let me do so.”* Participants also mentioned they were exposed to verbal harassment, abusive, sexist behaviors in origin country. Notably, these oppressions made participants feel worthlessness, have neither identity nor right to express themselves before they were migrated.

It is hard to be a businesswoman in Afghanistan. When I was going to school or going to the course, the men were verbally abusing me and bothering me. Besides, we could only work in the office only if there were no men around us (Gülsüm, 22).

However, in Turkey, it is necessary to say that refugee women were acquired a right to set up their businesses and were came into the open and stand on their own feet. Observation data indicated that women acknowledge their rights and rise in arms when it comes to injustice and inequality. Refugee women rise against these types of conservative attitudes. Hatice mentioned that being a woman empowered her in terms of dealing with any challenges in her life. She confronted with her father about her migration decision, which would be considered an objection to cultural norms. She stated, *“I gave hostages to fortune; I bought a one-way ticket to Turkey.”* Importantly, one can say that even refugee women were socio-culturally vulnerable; they were resilient in conflict-related situations.

Forced migration seemed to have a vital role in encouraging women to begin to work. Therefore, financially independent refugee women have become more responsible

for the well-being of the family. Having more responsibilities were contributed to the resilience of refugee women by giving meaning to their effort and makes them feel valued.

4.1.3.1. Emancipation

Emancipation from restrictive gender roles emerged as a sub-theme of being a woman. Before the migration, refugee women were expected to do what their fathers or spouse asked and only charge with domestic work. Participants pointed out that they were not able to go out without a male escort (someone from their family member) or they were not able to drive a car.

There were many comparisons made by participants between their own culture and Turkish culture. According to participants, they were comparatively more liberated in Turkey. Zeyneb said that *“in Iraq and Libya and even in Arabia general, some men were verbally abusive to nicely dressed women. Women were not safe in Turkey.”* Participants further explained that some socio-cultural differences between Turkey and the other countries that they previously settled (such as differences in gender norms) were facilitated their adaptations. Liberty mentioned assisting factor in participants’ adjustment processes. For example, Yasemin stated that *“women in Iran oppressed a lot, but Turkish society gives them the freedom they deserved.”* Emancipation seemed to encourage refugee women to go further in terms of being visible in social life, and obtain rights that they did not have before, such as being employed and seek further education.

In Turkey, women are free to wear hijab if they want. Moreover, I can walk in around by myself without concerning. It is the very first time that I have a job. The men here are showing us respect, but there is no such thing in Afghanistan (Fatima, 19).

Because of the emancipation, social norms were observed to be shifting. Notably, even refugee women changed their microsystems; they still had to go through family traditions. On the one hand, the preservation of their social identities was secured bond with family and fellow refugees. On the other hand; the family traditions and origin country’s cultural expectations may bring cultural dictations and norms which may cause other psychosocial distress. Refugee women were found to negotiate balanced positions between traditional cultural norms and the outside world. Therefore, being comparatively free in a new environment may contribute to the process of reconstruction of self-identity.

In sum, in this chapter, the researcher provided qualitative data analysis concerning the migration experience of refugee women. The researcher found that

traumatic experiences, harsh living conditions, and lack of recognition of their previous education would exacerbate refugee women vulnerabilities. Some of the experiences before migration were related to infrastructure, unsafe living conditions, living on the breadline, violation of their rights, living under threat, terrorist attack, and be subjected to abuse. More, being multiply displaced may harden coping and add more post-migration-related traumatic distress to refugee women's life. Besides, refugee women may not find adequate support that would help them to overcome the experience of discrimination, alienation, and language-based problems. As a consequence, refugee women may experience behavioral, emotional, and cognitive difficulties.

Refugee women seemed to be used some of the strategies that work together in harmony to increase refugee women's resilience to deal with all the hardships. These resilience strategies determined as internal resilience strategies and external resilience strategies. Among the internal strategies, various coping strategies were outstanding.

Respectively, they were appraisal focused, problem-focused, and emotion-focused copings. By using these coping strategies refugee women would (a) successfully deal with new and challenging conditions by shifting their thinking ways, (b) implement problem-solving skills to reduce or eliminate the life stressors to receive positive feedback, and (c) manage their potential emotional distress and feelings of hostility by exercising self-control, and practicing positive reappraisal strategies. Individuals' characteristics were observed to be interacting with environmental factors as well. Further, refugee women

may increase their self-awareness by taking others as leverage. Another resilience strategies that were appeared as using spirituality and hope that converged in many ways, such as the role of faith and belief of justice will prevail seemed to shared content of both spirituality and hope. More, the spiritual refugee women also seemed to be hopeful.

Among the external strategies, the socio-cultural similarities were giving participants a feeling of closeness to host people and culture. Refugee women expressed that they were received some of the outer support mainly from their family, acquaintances, humanitarian aids, and psychosocial programs, which would increase their resilience. Lastly, the influence of being a woman explored. Based on the data, refugee women were exposed to

gender-specific experiences related to gender inequality, suppressive cultural norms, sex-role stereotypes, and gender-related persecution and violence. The gender-specific experiences seemed to exacerbated refugee women's vulnerabilities. Nevertheless, refugee women seemed to be empowered, become visible in the common areas as they were reconstructing their identity which apart from both of their origin and

host county's norms and became a new version of themselves. In this transition, emancipation seemed to be a vital factor that liberated refugee women to find their realities. Being a woman was linked to having responsibility, being merciful, compassionate, and emotional; it may be a strengthened characteristic that empowered women to deal with hardships and increase resilience.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings of the current community-based participatory research were discussed within the scope of the existing literature. The researcher conducted semi-structural in-depth interviews combined with anecdotal records with seven refugee women who resettled in a small city in the Black Sea Region of Turkey. The purpose of this thesis was to explore the migration experiences of refugee women. For this aim, the researcher was examined in detail (a) which factors exacerbated refugee women's vulnerability, and (b) which resilience strategies assisted refugee women in overcoming the adverse migration experiences. Moreover, there was a little general agreement on what is resilience and how it constitutes. Thus, the current thesis sheds new light on (c) what is refugee women's meaning-making of resilience. Lastly, (d) the gender role in the overall migration experiences were outlined. Therefore, in this chapter, after reviewing the main results within the scope of the current literature, conclusions that included implications, limitations, and suggestions for further research were presented, respectively.

5.1. General Discussion

The qualitative analyses revealed three main themes that provided a storyline of the overall experiences of refugee women. The first superordinate theme was the vulnerabilities of refugee women. According to the results, refugee women were experiencing several difficulties and issues that exacerbate their vulnerabilities. Results indicated that the problems such as living under threat, terrorist attack, lose one's loved ones, and be subjected to abuse, violence, and oppression might create a risk of developing mental health problems. These results match with those revealed in earlier studies (Boyd, 2018; Minihan, Liddell, Byrow, Bryant, & Nickerson, 2018; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Robertson et al., 2006). Importantly, refugee women were reported experiencing gender-related problems such as sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and being exposed to sexist attitudes and behaviors of others. Women at Risk Program's identification of traumatic experiences of refugee women were consistent with current findings (UNHCR, 2019). The gender-related traumatic experiences seemed to be related to traditional cultural norms.

Indeed, Pittaway (2006) suggested that cultural norms and local religious beliefs reported as decreasing the psycho-social well-being of refugee women. Besides, refugee women were lacked essential sources to overcome migration-related difficulties, which may increase the risk of developing psychological problems. Such as, lack of protection seemed to one of the most significant hardships of refugee women. During the civil war, not only the terrorist groups but also the security forces such as soldiers and the police officers posed a danger for refugee women. Similarly, in one study, Chin refugee women, who were one of the major ethnic groups in Myanmar, reported that they were exposed to gender-based violence that comes from the military junta. Besides, these types of abuses and gender-based violence were continued as the refugee women were not allowed to leave the place; they initially resettled (Jobs, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019; Lather, 1991; OXFAM, 2016). Taken together, findings of the current study found that living under unsafe and unsecured areas may cause refugee women not to trust anyone and feel alienated. The results of the present study are consistent with Vromans and his friends' (2018) findings that resettlement experiences refugee women included the sense of loneliness, thus experiencing further distress. The sense of loneliness was found to be also related the social isolation because of discrimination and xenophobia.

Current findings suggested that while some refugee women received social support, others did not. Similarly, refugee women who did not receive sufficed social support from local people found to feel lonely (Gladden, 2013). Importantly, refugee women who were lack of social support were found the ones who did not put much effort to engage social interactions. This finding confirms the association between, the chance of reaching more social capitals (resources) and engaging social interactions (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019; Jobs, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019). To sum, living under hazardous conditions may cause refugee women to become isolated, and less likely to reach out social capitals. Current thesis results indicated that being a lack of social resources may harm the feeling of belongingness of refugee women, thus exacerbated refugee women's vulnerability. Similar findings were suggested in the literature (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017).

Nevertheless, despite all these difficulties, refugee women were also found as resilient. Results suggested that refugee women have both internal and external resilience strategies to decrease their vulnerabilities to be empowered and bounced back quickly. Interestingly, refugee women indicated that resilience is an internal characteristic that women were striving for and aim to accomplish repeatedly. Some of the mentioned

internal characteristics were found as increasing refugee women's resilience.

Importantly, refugee women mentioned some of the personal attributes of resilient women, which were varied from the mainstream of resilience characteristics. More, refugee women reported that their resilience was increased by taking responsibilities and by being self-sacrificing. These results differ from the related literature in a way that "losing herself for the sake of others" in other terms being self-sacrificing was considered as psychopathological. More, in the literature, self-sacrificing was found as women's, especially the mother's, defect attributes which come from social and gender norms (Ruddick, 2009). The current findings suggested that the burden for refugee women may be defined as a blessing for other members of the family. However, in the collectivistic cultures and the context of Judeo-Christian heritage criticized the Western mindset by suggesting that taking responsibility of others is an absolute requirement of human existence and it promotes family rejoices (Bauman, 1989; Bahr & Bahr, 2001). Altogether, one can say that refugee women's idea would be right to a certain extent, especially considering the opportunities provided by taking responsibilities and being self-sacrificed. However, it should also be considered that self-concession, self-sacrificing would be overwhelming overtime for refugee women and exacerbate their vulnerabilities.

Surprisingly, none of the external resilience strategies emerged for the question of "how one can be resilient." Therefore, refugee women may not bear for receiving external help, and this might be one of the indications of collectivistic cultural norms on refugee women's life. Such as, women's role in a collectivistic society was more like "lent assistance rather than ask for help"; "practical," and "pick up after someone." Researchers indicated that women who have collectivistic cultural norms became resilient by way of weaving family, community (McCleary & Figley, 2017). In this sense, cultural impositions and cultural values force refugee women to use only their "internal strategies." Only in this way can society allocate some external support channels for women. In other words, if refugee women want to get support, they have to produce their own resources and allocate services to the remaining individuals. It should be noted that these and similar cultural factors may adversely affect the well-being of refugee women in the long run.

Notably, refugee women were associated with taking lots of responsibilities with being compassionate, generous, and merciful. These characteristics were considered as an emotional attribute that hardens to cope with adversities (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019). On the contrary, these personal characteristics found as increase refugee women's

resilience. The finding would be explained by the benefits that refugee women gain from containing traditional gender roles (Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013).

The last superordinate code has covered the role of being a woman throughout the migration process. Gender seemed to play both facilitating and hindering roles at the migration experience of refugee women. On the one hand, gender-specific traumatic experiences such as sexual harassment, and sexual abuse were put refugee women under risk of developing mental health problems. On the other hand, refugee women were indicated that the most resilient ones in the family were the mothers because they were more emotional and responsible for others. On the contrary, previous research result was indicated that men were more resilient as they were better at problem-solving because it requires a sense of responsibility, tolerance, and firmness (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019). However, the findings of the current study were suggested that women were successfully used their problem-solving skills to cope with the difficulties they face in the process.

The findings of this study are in agreement with that comparatively liberated women perceive herself as empowered and independent ever before, which may contribute to their self-esteem (Culcasi, 2019). Participants were mentioned that there are relatively more freedom and less oppression for women in Turkey. Therefore, refugee woman was found chances to reconstruct stereotypical identities and gains a new level of respect. Similarly, researchers revealed that refugee women's positions in the family were changed after they put hard work and take most substantial responsibilities, they were appreciated and gained "right to speak out" (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017, p.358). It may mean that oppression towards women may reduce due to the migration. Importantly, one can say that even refugee women were socio-culturally vulnerable; they were resilient in conflict-related situations. Refugee women seemed that they rise against these types of attitudes rather than accepting them as before. The previous study conducted with Karen refugee women (Karen or Kariang is a people who are living in Southeast Asia. They live in Burma and Thailand, and the religious and ethnic persecution came from government were accepted as the reason behind their migration) , researchers, indicated that after resettlement refugee women indeed redesign the cultural and gender roles (Hoffman, Tierney, & Robertson, 2017). Overall, it seems that the meaning that refugee women give to her experiences were created the difference. The issues and conditions are not the only things that determine the psychological vulnerability of refugee women. Thus, even in the worst conditions refugee women can produce the greatest success. In other terms, the

greatest darkness can give way to refugee women for giving the most intense profound meanings to that darkness; in other words, the greatest darkness can give way to the greatest light. In the following headlines, refugee women's vulnerability, resilience, and gender role were discussed in more detailed (Frankl, 1963).

5.1.1. Vulnerabilities of Refugee Women

Under this heading, other vulnerability factors will be mentioned in addition to those mentioned above. Such as refugee women were mentioned about the insufficient amount of aids and economic hardships that harden their everyday life. In one study, after migration, 96.4 % of Syrian refugees were found to have problems based on financial challenges and low payment (Abdi & Matthews, 2015; Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019). Similarly, the negative influences of economic hardships on refugee's daily life were linked to the vulnerability of refugee women (Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, 2016).

Based on the findings, the frequency of the mentioned language problems was high. However, language problems were mentioned decreasing rapidly in time. Language seemed to have a critical role in refugee women's social integration, adaptation to the host country. Previous research also indicated that language has a significant role in the social adjustment of refugees (Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018). Notably, researchers noted that having advanced language skills may also exacerbate refugee women vulnerabilities due to their expectation of reaching out to better opportunities in the host country such as their expectance of being employed at qualified jobs and their hope of increasing their visibility in other socio-political contexts (Schweitzer et al., 2018). Therefore, even refugee women may improve their language skills; their hardships were might not diminished completely.

Some other issues such as the severity of the traumatic events, current stressors in their life, lack of social support systems, and previous trauma history were seemed to increased participant's vulnerability to develop mental health problems. For example, based on the expressed cognitive difficulties; it appeared that at the pre-migration stage refugee women experienced mental derangement, mental instability, besides, they were always cautious for a possible attack (Folkins, 1970). These experienced were linked to some of the behavioral difficulties such as crying and toddling away. Similarly, when it comes to expressed emotional difficulties at the pre-migration stage, refugee women revealed that they were feeling horrible, trapped, anxious, insecure, and in great distress. Besides, having arrived in a safe country did not solve all the problems of refugee women.

Such as, participants were experienced loneliness, homesick, alienation after they arrived in a safe country; thus, they were experienced some of the behavioral difficulties such as the burst of anger, sobbing fit, crying. These findings are also consistent with earlier studies (Bogic et al., 2015; Jobs, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019; Lindencrona et al., 2008; Philpot & Tipping, 2012). Besides, some of the participants revealed their suicidal attempts. It appears that refugee women were likely to at risk of suicidal attempts (Jobs, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019; Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017). Interestingly, current findings were indicated that refugee women were observed that they were laughing when speaking about their traumatic experiences and difficulties. This also accords with earlier observations, which showed that bereaved individuals were exhibited genuine laughs, which later understood that people who were laughing due to their adverse experiences were adjusted better. However, researchers emphasized that people who laughed at their traumatic experiences may struggle decreased social competence (Bonanno, 2004).

In this study, most of the refugee women were multi-displaced. In other terms, they had to displace another country before they came to Turkey. Thus, refugee women were found as experiencing adjustment difficulties over and over again. Therefore, they might have been sensitized by their previous trauma's effect. Similar results suggested that when the number and the severity of exposure to traumatic experiences increases, the number of psychological symptoms also increases, i.e., dose-response relationship theory (Breslau & Anthony, 2007; Nickerson, Bryant, Silove, & Steel, 2011). However, other researchers indicated that relocated migrants who had previous experiences of adjustment problems found as more resilient as they were better equipped to deal with hardships, which may be related to earned strength theory (Price 2007; Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017). More, refugee women found as prepared, cautious, and became skilled to overcome new adjustment difficulties. Thus, being multiple displaced not the only indicator of psychological vulnerability, but it may also a foundation of the resilience of refugee women.

5.1.2. The Resilience of Refugee Women

Despite the issues that refugee women experienced, they were seemed to be bounced back and even created a better life for themselves. Based on the results, psychological difficulties and reactions of refugee women were slightly shifted from maladaptive to adaptive in the process of migration (Kelly et al., 2008). Such as, after resettlement, there was a positive shifting on refugee women's emotional difficulties.

Refugee women mentioned about feeling empowered, more indebted, and appreciated at post-migration stages. Participants also indicated that they were relaxed and relieved. Previously conducted studies were found similar results (Derluyn, Broekaert & Schuyten, 2008; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Sjoberg, 2013).

Therefore, there must be some of the strategies that refugee women were utilized in the migration process to create better outcomes and bounce back quickly. The current study found that both internal and external resilience strategies collaboratively enabled participants to overcome difficulties and remain healthy. Researchers suggested that resilience is a dynamic process that displays over time and through the interaction of both internal and external resilience strategies (Lazarus, 2006; Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013; Newbold, Chung, & Hong, 2013). Importantly, as researchers were suggested, exploration of refugee women's resilience strategies with careful attention given to the gender-specific, culture-specific components might offer insightful data for implications (Masten & Obradovic, 2008; Wong et al., 2007). Even researchers have been attempting to define resilience since the 1960s, yet resilience remains to lack conceptual clarity (Béné, Newsham, Davies, Ulrichs, & Godfrey-Wood, 2014). Therefore, gathering information about how refugee women make sense of resilience could give a fresh look to the resilience of refugee women. Based on the results, the way refugee women became resilient were varied from most of the existing research. Similarly, George (2012) pointed out that literature was seemed to reflect the experiences of refugee women through a western point of view. In the next headline, the meaning making of resilience were provided.

5.1.2.1. Meaning Making of Resilience

In the literature, resilience's definitions, usage, and context were varied (Han, Berry, & Zheng, 2016). Very little was found in the literature on the question of "what is refugee women's meaning-making of resilience?" Participants have associated various internal characteristics with resilience, such as having high self-esteem, self-control, self-determination. Previously conducted study confirms that self-determination is a refugee women's resilience source (Newbold, Chung, & Hong, 2013). Results showed that some of the personal attributes, such as being assertive, curious, and open to new experiences which seemed to facilitate refugee women's adjustment process and expedited bouncing back. Similarly, some of the personality traits were found as eliminating the distress and promoting resilience (Bonanno, 2004; Han, Berry, & Zheng, 2016). Based on the five-factor model, resilient refugees were found as extravert and conscientious; and neuroticism

was found as negatively correlated with resilience (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006). Findings of this study also suggested that refugee women would decrease to the possibility of experiencing social isolation by being curious, assertive, engaging in social interactions, and finding a job. This finding supports previous research suggested that personal attributes (internal resilience strategies) may lead to having benefited by external resilience factors (Kristjánsdóttir & Skaptadóttir, 2018; Thompson, 1991).

More, participants indicated that their resilience was increased by having a purpose, gratitude, faith, and hope. Researchers suggested that the role of hope in refugee women's survival is a testament to their resilience (Jops, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019). Interestingly, participants mentioned that brave women who can take risks are resilient. However, people who are brave enough to embrace possible failures are also considered as vulnerable. Therefore, resilient women might be the one who is brave enough to be vulnerable. Similarly, researchers indicated that minorities are actually "resilient because they are vulnerable" (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017, p.355).

Interestingly, refugee women seemed to support her family by having heavy responsibilities and being self-sacrificing. On the contrary, researchers indicated that resilience is only present when positive attributes outweigh adversity (Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013). Taking charge of lots of duties and family may be related to the cultural values that refugee women have. Such as, in the collectivistic cultures taking care of each other, has a high value. Indeed, researchers have found that cultural identities would predict the resilience understandings of ethnic minorities (Phan, 2006). Notably, participants were believed that fulfilling responsibilities make them empowered. One of the explanations would be refugee women's intention to meet the traditional expectations for continuing to be supported by their fellows. In one study, researchers indicated that refugee women had to negotiate balanced positions by incorporating traditional gender roles and their reconstructed roles (Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013). Another explanation would be that responsibilities might give women a purpose that makes them feel valued (Bonanno, 2004; Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013). As a result, all of the vulnerability factors were found as in relation to each other, and negatively affect the well-being of women.

5.1.2.2. Resilience Strategies

Using various coping strategies were found as increasing refugee women's resilience. Researchers confirmed that coping could play a moderating role in resilience (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006; Gage, 1992; Pulvirenti & Mason, 2011; Subedi,

Goldie & Sawhney, 2019). Participants were found to be used appraisal focuses, emotion-focused, and problem-focused coping strategies.

Refugee women seem to overcome problematic situations by practicing self-control. They might improve their self-control by using both problem-focused, and appraisal focused coping strategies, e.g., positive reinterpretation, rational thinking, and by being future-oriented. Similarly, researchers found that refugee women were coping with adverse experiences by cultivating self-control (Gladden, 2013). More, rational thinking might lead them to cultivate self-acceptance and self-love. Researchers indicated that using cognitive appraisals such as using reframing increase the resilience of refugees (Gladden, 2013; Hooberman, Rosenfeld, Rasmussen, & Keller, 2010; Hoorelbeke, Van den Bergh, Wichers, & Koster, 2019; Smith, 2013). Working was found as increasing refugee women's resilience by giving sense to their life and by boosting their self-esteem. These results agree with the previous findings suggested that engaging in income-earning activities promote self-esteem (Dako-Gyeke & Adu, 2017).

Refugee women manage potential emotional distress by utilizing emotion-focused coping strategies. Researchers indicated using emotion-focused coping strategies were significantly increased the resilience levels of refugees (Hooberman, Rosenfeld, Rasmussen, & Keller, 2010; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007). Current results were compatible with previous findings suggested that refugee women engage in hobbies, such as reading, listening to music, and keeping a journal to cope emotionally (Gladden, 2013). Refugee women manage potential emotional distress by also using defense mechanisms.

Intellectualization, sublimation, and avoidance were the mentioned ones. Previous research found that refugee women were distracting themselves to not thinking about their migration experiences (Smith, 2013). Using defense mechanisms seems to serve refugee women. Similarly, researchers indicated that repressive copers who use emotional coping strategies such as avoidance were adjusted better (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019; Chase et al., 2013; Price, 2007). However, researchers indicated that avoidance might be diminished the benefits of problem-focused coping (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019; Hooberman, Rosenfeld, Rasmussen, & Keller, 2010). Refugee women were also avoided social engagements and seeking social support. Therefore, using defense mechanisms would be maladaptive and bring adverse long-term effects to a person's life. In one study, using a defense mechanism was correlated with the psychiatric symptoms in the North Korean refugee women (Jun et al., 2015). Further research would be beneficial to explore the role of defense mechanisms in refugee women's life.

Based on the shared information, most of the time, participants compared themselves with others to increase self-awareness. Some women mentioned that by doing that they found their truth. Indeed, previous studies were reported that social networks facilitate role in self-esteem, self-control, and self-assurance (Pahud, Kirk, & Gage, 2009). However, researchers found that refugees who compared themselves with others who did not recover may develop post-traumatic disorder symptoms. Which may be related to (1) experiencing survivor guilt after comparison and (2) the introspection may lead to experiencing their traumatic experiences one more time (Hooberman, Rosenfeld, Rasmussen, & Keller, 2010).

The findings of the present study revealed that using hope by altering their anxious state to a more relaxed one may contribute to refugee women's resilience levels over time. By having hope, spirituality, and faith, refugee women might be motivated to keep going against difficulties. Finding reported by previously conducted research also suggested that refugee's faith, spirituality, and hope are interconnected and generate active coping (Dako-Gyeke & Adu, 2017; Shoeb, Weinstein, & Halpern, 2007). For instance, in one study, refugee women's hope was based on their faith in God (Gladden, 2013). Researchers also indicated that interconnectedness of religious belief, hope, and faith was a demonstration of both external and internal process (Smith, 2013). Moreover, researchers noted that spirituality was linked to social adaptation, and it manifests itself via faith and hope (Han, Berry, & Zheng, 2016). Participants mentioned that their faith in God contributed to their overall mental well-being. Similarly, previous research indicated that praying and engaging in religious activities empowered refugees to overcome difficulties (Dako-Gyeke & Adu, 2017).

Some of the external resilience strategies were socio-cultural similarities, support systems, humanitarian aids, and psychosocial programs, which were found to enhance the resilience of refugee women. As the similarity between cultures increased, refugee women adapted to their new environment more quickly. It can be said that the results of studies with refugees of Middle Eastern origin who resettled in European countries and Australia emphasized more social alienation and adjustment problems (Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018; Schweitzer, Melville & Steel, 2006). Thus, it may mean that similarities of cultures between host and previous cultures might contribute to the adjustment process of refugee women. More importantly, the extent to which support is received might be related to the culture of host countries. To illustrate, refugee women who resettled in the U.S. expressed that they lacked social support and had a hard time building friendship due to the

individualistic culture of the U.S. (Smith, 2013). Therefore, refugee women's adjustment enhances when they meet what they are culturally accustomed to. A previously conducted study confirmed that refugee women experienced seclusion due to different cultural settings (Smith, 2013). Moreover, the findings suggested that shared religious components might be cultivated by social integration. These results were in agreement with the findings of other studies, which indicated that shared religious activities might increase the sense of belongingness and facilitate refugee women's adjustment (Newbold, Chung, & Hong, 2013; Park, Cohen & Herb, 1990).

One of the most apparent external resilience strategies was seeking and accessing social support functions. Social interactions were found to be increasing refugee women's chances of reaching more social capitals (resources) (Jops, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019). Researchers found that the social support system moderates the path of cultural identity to the resilience of minorities (Han, Berry, & Zheng, 2016). When refugee women had more responsibilities than they could bear, receiving support seemed to be essential to increase their overall well-being. Similarly, researchers indicated that the higher the received support is, the higher the resilience of refugees may be (Thoits, 1986; Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017).

The fact that refugee women revealed that they were receiving help from locals seemed to contribute to refugee women's sense of belongingness and connection to the country. In one study, refugee women expressed that receiving support from locals made them feel supported and welcomed (Smith, 2013). However, previous research reported that social support and coping systems were not alone sufficiently mitigate refugee women's overarching issues (Jobs, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019). Thus, internal strategies preserved their value.

Gaining the chance to attend various psychosocial programs were reported to increase refugee women's overall well-being. Researchers indicated that receiving support from benevolent associations has a significant effect on well-being (Liamputtong & Kurban, 2018). Moreover, non-governmental organizations were claimed to have a vital role in refugee women's resilience in two ways; (1) providing resources and (2) helping refugee women in enhancing their social interactions (Newbold, Chung, & Hong, 2013). However, refugee women also shared the negative experiences they had with NGOs. Similarly, Chinese refugee women also reported that they were not taken seriously and received insufficient assistance from both UNHCR and NGO (Jops, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019). The findings of the present thesis study revealed that only two

participants had mentioned that they received psychological counseling. In that manner, researchers pointed out that mental health professionals are mostly culturally alien to the refugees; besides, professionals were reported as not assisting culture-specific treatments (Newbold, Chung, & Hong, 2013). Therefore, counselors need to acknowledge refugee women's own way of being resilience to provide, culturally sensitive need assessment. Although it may seem beneficial to use some of the resilience strategies (defense mechanisms, self-sacrifice, etc.) in a short period of time, the long-term damages should also be considered. More, exploring meaning making of refugee women in regard to how the client makes sense of his or her own life, would shed light into building a profound treatment plan.

5.1.3. Being a Woman

This community-based participatory research revealed that refugee women experienced a tremendous amount of war-related trauma and were exposed to gender-based violations, persecutions, and had a hard time reaching reproductive healthcare services. The findings were compatible with previously conducted studies suggested that refugee women experienced more psychological impairments when compared to refugee men (Gladden, 2013; Halcón, Robertson, & Monsen, 2010; Jobs, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019; Robertson et al., 2006).

The participants were mentioned that in Turkey, there were relatively more freedom and less oppression for women. Overall, refugee women seem to live between different cultures. On the one hand, they live in the new and emancipating culture of the host country and, on the other hand, they conform to their family traditions. Before migration, women were responsible for homemaking while men were responsible for the financial support of the family (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, & Gougazeh, 2019). Similarly, participants of the current study mentioned that they were not allowed to work in their country of origin. Findings of this study indicated that working might serve refugee women's resilience by giving sense to their life and by boosting their self-esteem. Indeed, being part of the workforce found as cultivation the feeling of belongingness and thus increase the resilience of refugee women (Newbold, Chung, & Hong, 2013). This finding is in agreement with the results reported by Liamputtong and Kurban (2018), which suggested that new environments impacted refugees' mental health conditions.

Moreover, forced migration seemed to have a vital role in aggravating the provision of financial support by male refugees, thus encouraging refugee women to begin

working (De Terte & Stephens, 2014). Therefore, women have become more responsible for the well-being of the family. Similar findings also suggested that refugee women bore the cost of creating social capital, yet, when compared to men, refugee women were less likely to have benefited from that capital (Jobs, Lenette, & Breckenridge, 2019).

Researchers indicated that men's vulnerability might correspond to women's resilience, which may be related to changing social roles (Koren, 2016). Previous research showed that before resettling in a new country, refugee women were expected to do what their spouse asked them to do and was only in charge of domestic work. However, shifting roles brought about new challenges and required new skills, such as being assertive in the host country. The findings of the present study are in agreement with that comparatively liberated women perceive themselves as empowered and independent as ever before, which may contribute to their self-esteem (Culcasi, 2019).

Refugee women also mentioned that they have to negotiate balanced positions between traditional cultural norms and the outside world because of the emancipation. One study revealed that refugee women were not only dealing with these two socially and culturally constructed environments, but they were found to be creating a third area for coping and managing the relationships between these environments. In this third place, the reconstruction of gender and cultural norms are demonstrated (Hoffman, Tierney, & Robertson, 2017; Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013). The results indicated that while the participants redetermined their identities, they may have been perceived as strange and defiant to traditional values by their fellow community members. These results were compatible with findings reported by previous research that emphasized the shifting roles of refugee women (Smith, 2013; Wiklund et al., 2000).

However, new identity construction may not be taken kindly in the collectivistic cultural settings because of the conservative nature of the traditions in which there is resistance to change in gender roles (Cameron et al., 2007; Smith, 2013). Similarly, anecdotal records showed that refugee women's independence increased their families' concerns and the close follow-ups of their life. Nevertheless, a refugee woman finds chances to reconstruct stereotypical identities and gains a new level of respect in the host country and at home. Similarly, researchers revealed that refugee women's positions in the family were changed after they put hard work and take most substantial responsibilities, they became appreciated and gained "right to speak out" (Uekusa & Matthewman, 2017, p.358). It may mean that oppression towards women may reduce due to the migration. Importantly, one can say that even refugee women were socio-culturally vulnerable; they

were resilient in conflict-related situations. Refugee women seemed that they rise against these types of attitudes rather than accepting them as before. The previous study conducted with Karen refugee women, researchers, indicated that after resettlement refugee women indeed redesign the cultural and gender roles (Hoffman, Tierney, & Robertson, 2017).

Moreover, the differences and incompatibilities among the cultural settings may lead refugee women to question culture, and refugee women's inner journey may be triggered by new places and people. Indeed, previous research suggests that refugee women reconstruct their identity among the internal and external worlds (Hoffman, Tierney, & Robertson, 2017; Smith, 2013). However, early studies suggested that resilience was an intrinsic attribute or static characteristic that would not be reshaped (Beardslee, 1989; Masten & O'Connor, 1989). Conversely, the results of the present study found that participants tended to re-form their identity in a foreign land: their identities shifted from ethnic interdependence to independence after resettlement in a host country. These findings were compatible with the finding that by means of coping and meaning-making, individuals can modify themselves and become more skillful in overcoming adversities (Carver & Connor, 2010; Steinhardt & Dolbier, 2008). Refugee women indicated that they were empowered and started to become involved in the decision-making process in the home. The previously conducted study revealed that refugee women gained a new level of respect in the host country, which was not received kindly by their spouse.

5.2. Limitations

In the literature, having refugee women from different cultural backgrounds was suggested to reach comprehensive results; thus, the present study lay stress on implementing this during participant selection process. However, this study has a limitation of any qualitative study; thus it does not claim that participants of this study represent all the refugee women population. This study was conducted with small sample size, and the sample was also comparatively heterogeneous, such that one of the participant's age was slightly higher than the others.

However, the qualitative nature of this study required a small sample and the qualitative data analysis method is highly subjective despite the attempts to bracket it out and gathering feedback from CAB and thesis advisors.

Another possible trustworthiness concern came from the methodology of gathering oral history. Some of the interpretation errors may interfere since remembering past experiences is difficult.

5.3. Implication

Turkey is the host of the world's largest refugee population, and considering the Turkish context, with 4 million refugees all over the country, the field of counseling needs to increase their capacity to include human resources that understand the needs and challenges of refugees as well as their strengths and assets. Families and their children with different needs and sociocultural backgrounds are new clienteles for counselors working in different settings, such as schools, universities, justice systems, and other community settings. Moreover, it should be noted that approximately 500,000 babies have been born in Turkey since 2011 (Turkish Red Crescent and the World Food Programme, 2019). Such a significant number of refugees have the potential to change the demographic characteristics of the country, which puts massive pressure on a host country with already limited resources, and, in turn, may provoke xenophobic attitudes among the local people. Based on the findings, this study might offer insightful data for implications.

These findings have significant implications for policymakers and NGOs. These research findings would provide information for newly developed implications, and provisions to provide culture and gender-sensitive care to refugee women in turns helps to promote their health and well-being as well as a smooth social integration into the Turkish society. Refugee women seem to lack familiarity with the systems of education, health, politics, and finance. To integrate them for the sake of both parties seems to be essential. According to the report, psychological support is needed for more than 50% of refugee women who resettled in Turkey (AFAD, 2013). Most of the refugee women whose husbands died during the war were suffered from depression, domestic violence, sexual violence, and trauma. Even though the counselors and psychologists offered individual or group therapies, this issue seems to require advanced psycho-social programs, and well-designed integrative programs to educate refugee women in concerned areas to reach social, economic, political, and financial integration and unity.

The temporary protected status is given to the people forced to migrate and resettle in Turkey. In most of the cases, these people having a refugee status could offer them access to resettlement supports, services, and financial aids if they resettled in another country. The findings indicated that well-designed resettlement programs are essential to

fostering integration, adjustment processes, and the overall well-being of refugee women. Moreover, changing the refugee's status of being temporarily protected might not be sufficient if the official channels do not fulfill the requirement and specifications. Therefore, it may be necessary to take new steps to facilitate refugee women's adaptation process by protecting their rights and providing sufficient financial support and a safe environment. Additionally, implementations should include women's protection concerning sexual and gender-based violence and supporting them in terms of reproductive health and postpartum experiences. Moreover, implications regarding building values and a sense of community could enable refugee women to adjust better. Moreover, psycho-social programs for refugee women should include psychoeducation that comprises legal and psychological support, health, pregnancy, employment, rehabilitation, education. Additionally, raising awareness to deal with xenophobia seem crucial for decreasing refugee women's vulnerability. These programs are also recommended to have feminist insights and gender awareness (Eapen, Falcione, Hersh, Obser, & Shaar, 2016, Rasekh, Bauer, Manos, & Lacopino, 1998; UNHCR, 2013; Vromans et al., 2018).

Moreover, urban administration should consider hiring professional translators at community health centers, outpatient polyclinics of gynecology and obstetrics, and municipal buildings. One issue with translators was the confidentiality problem and being shy of the opposite sex. In that manner, even though there is a translator within the scope of the services, this assistance must be (1) culturally informed, (2) professionally conducted, and (3) sensitive to values.

These findings also have significant implications for mental health professionals. The participants mentioned that if they had a chance to see a counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist, they would mostly be open and discuss their personal traumatic stories. However, because most of the services were unavailable to them, they have felt they were left out in the cold in Turkey. Therefore, mental health professions should increase their availability and pay attention to building collaborative and culturally sensitive service delivery platforms for refugee women. Previous studies, as well as this study, emphasize the significance of refugee population's needs to discuss their traumatic experiences (Cummings & Cummings, 2008; Shannon, Vinson, Wieling, Cook, & Letts, 2015).

In that respect, rather than only adopting Westernized points of view about the phenomenon, more culturally specific understandings need to be developed. In future studies, researchers approach the issue in culture and gender-sensitive manner. In that

manner, future studies should be paid special attention to how and in what ways cultural values and cultural practices affect the well-being of refugee women in the long run. Moreover, the meaning making of refugee women about resilience should be examined in more detail. In this way, researchers would be able to examine (a) the influences of the factors that make women strong, and (b) both positive and negative consequences of these influences to the women who live in the male-dominated world.

The number of mental health professionals should be increased, and they should deepen their understandings of vulnerability issues as well as the resiliencies of refugee women to provide better service. Moreover, mental health professionals should gauge clients' worldviews before integrating spirituality into individual or group therapy. Counselors should be careful about exploring the areas of need; for instance, refugee women who lacked primary physical resources needed to meet their needs before any psychological treatment. Moreover, counselors could assist psychosocial implications for strengthening the refugee women's social interaction exploration of the strengths of refugee women; for example, how refugee women use spirituality, hope and coping to overcome adversities can give an insight into constructing new treatment plans (Acquaye, Sivo, & Jones, 2018). Importantly, creating a safe and open place to cultivate refugee women's reconstruction of self-identity would be beneficial.

5.4. Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of refugee women in Turkey by employing a qualitative methodology. This methodology enables the researcher to explore refugee women's experiences from the participants' phenomenological point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A significant contribution of this study lies in its community based participatory research approach and the adopted qualitative data analysis. This study aimed to understand the experiences of refugee women by collecting data related to their vulnerabilities, resilience, and the role of gender. In that way, what differentiates the responses of refugee women in the light of the asset-based approaches, such as exploration of the assets, resilience strategies, can provide insight into the possible ways of promoting refugee women's mental well-being (White, 1974). Moreover, gender is considered as "a key constitutive element of migrations"; yet it is undervalued in the mainstream of migration studies. Therefore, exploring the role of being a woman can significantly contribute to gender studies.

The researcher found that traumatic experiences, harsh living conditions, and lack of recognition of their previous education could exacerbate refugee women's vulnerabilities. Some of the experiences before migration were related to infrastructure, unsafe living conditions, living on the breadline, violation of their rights, living under threat, terrorist attacks, and being subjected to abuse. Moreover, being multiply-displaced may aggravate coping and add more post-migration-related traumatic distress to refugee women's life. Besides, refugee women may not find adequate support to help them overcome experiences of discrimination, alienation, and language-based problems. As a consequence, refugee women may experience behavioral, emotional, and cognitive difficulties. Vulnerability factors are found to play a role in enhancing the resilience of refugee women. Experiences of difficulties, hardships, and traumatic events seemed to increase the capacity of the endurance of refugee women against adverse experiences. Therefore, being weathered the storm and figured out how to keep going after all the adversities might enhance refugee women's tolerability for later periods. Furthermore, exploring refugee women's perspectives on resilience is vital since some disagreements exist among researchers in terms of what resilience is and what it constitutes. Therefore, revealing refugee women's opinions on resilience can enable researchers mostly with a western point of view to adopt a fresh look into experiences of refugee women.

Refugee women seem to be using some of the strategies that function together in harmony to increase refugee women's resilience to deal with all the hardships. These resilience strategies were identified as internal resilience strategies and external resilience strategies. Among the internal strategies, various coping strategies were evident. Sequentially, they were appraisal focused, problem-focused, and emotion-focused copings. By using these coping strategies refugee women could (a) successfully deal with new and challenging conditions by changing their ways of thinking, (b) implement problem-solving skills to reduce or eliminate life stressors to receive positive feedback, and (c) manage their potential emotional distress and feelings of hostility by exercising self-control, and practicing positive reappraisal strategies. Individuals' characteristics were observed to be interacting with environmental factors as well. Further, refugee women may increase their self-awareness by taking others as leverage. Other resilience strategies that appeared to be used were spirituality and hope, which converged in many ways. For example, the role of faith and the belief that justice will prevail seemed to shared content of both spirituality and hope. Moreover, spiritual refugee women also seemed to be hopeful. Among the external strategies, socio-cultural similarities were giving

participants a feeling of closeness to the people and culture of the host country. Refugee women reported that receiving external support, mainly from their family, acquaintances, humanitarian aids, and psychosocial programs increased their psychological well-being.

Moreover, being a woman seemed to influence the overall migration experiences of refugee women. While it exacerbates the participant's vulnerability before migration, with resettlement and emancipation, it brings new opportunities to reconstruct their identity in social life. The data revealed that refugee women were exposed to gender-specific experiences related to gender inequality, suppressive cultural norms, sex-role stereotypes, and gender-related persecution and violence. Gender-specific experiences seemed to exacerbate refugee women's vulnerabilities. Nevertheless, refugee women seemed to be empowered, to become visible in common areas as they were reconstructing their identity which apart from both of their origin and host country's norms, i.e., became a new version of themselves. In this transition, emancipation seemed to be a vital factor that liberated refugee women to find their realities. Being a woman was associated with having responsibility, and being merciful, compassionate, and emotional; it may be a strengthening characteristic that empowered women to deal with hardships and increase resilience. Overall, it seems that the meaning that refugee women attribute to things creates the difference. Thus, the conditions are not the only things that determine the psychological well-being of refugee women. Thus, even in the worst conditions refugee women produce the greatest success. In other words, the greatest darkness can give way to refugee women giving the most profound meanings to that darkness; in other words, the greatest darkness can give way to the most magnificent light.

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APPENDICES

A: MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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08 AĞUSTOS 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof.Dr. Özgür ERDUR BAKER

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız yüksek lisans öğrencisi Elif Tuğçe GÜLER'in "Mülteci Kadınların ve Ruh Sağlığı Uzmanlarının Dayanıklılık Anlayışları" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2018-EGT-110 protokol numarası ile 08.08.2018 - 30.12.2018 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

Başkan V

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

Doç. Dr. Yaşar KÖNBAKCI

Üye

Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK

Üye

Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

ÇALIŞMA ÖNCESİ KATILIMCI BİLGİ FORMU

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Anabilim Dalı, Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Elif Tuğçe Güler tarafından Prof. Dr. Özgür Erdur-Baker danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Bu araştırmanın amacı, çalışma, Tokat'ta yaşayan mülteci kadınlar ile ruh sağlığı alanı uzmanlarının; mülteci kadınlarda dayanıklılık olgusu üzerine etkiyen faktörler ve bu faktörleri belirleyici kılan unsurların hangi başlıklar altında toplandığını anlama üzerinedir. Bu iki grubun, kavrama yaklaşım şekillerini, benzerlikleriyle ve farklılıklarıyla incelemenin yanında, mülteci kadınların süreç içerisindeki yaşantılarını, iyi oluş halleri ile dayanıklılıklarını anlamayla, sosyal bilimlerde konuya açıklık getirme amaçlanmaktadır.

Sizden kimlik belirtici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece akademik araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Görüşme başlamadan önce size çalışma hakkında bilgi verilecek ve daha sonra da çalışmaya gönüllü katılımınızı teyit etmek için bu formu imzalamanız istenecektir. Görüşme bittikten sonra ise çalışmaya yönelik sorularınız cevaplanacaktır.

Görüşme sırasında ses kayıt cihazından yararlanması planlanmıştır. Bu kayıtlar sadece görüşmenin analizi yapılırken, araştırmacı tarafından kullanılacak olup, araştırma ile doğrudan bağlantısı olmayan 3. şahıslarla paylaşılmayacaktır. Eğer ses kaydı alınmasını istemezseniz, görüşme süresince detaylı notlar tutulacaktır.

Görüşme, kişisel rahatsızlık verecek soruları içermemektedir. Ancak katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi bir başka nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda görüşmeyi yapan kişiye, görüşmeyi tamamlamadığınızı söylemeniz yeterli olacaktır. Görüşme sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır.

Bu çalışmanın verilerinin Aralık 2018 tarihinin sonuna kadar elde edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Elde edilen bilgiler sadece bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılacaktır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarını öğrenmek ya da bu araştırma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak Elif Tuğçe Güler (E-posta: elifugceguler@hotmail.com) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Şimdi lütfen, aşağıdaki formu doldurup imzalayarak uygulayıcıya geri veriniz.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip bırakabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı olarak kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

Tarih

İmza

C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Mülteci Kadınlar için Röportaj Protokolü

- 1-Bize kendinizden söz eder misiniz? Yaşınız, eğitim ve medeni durumunuz vb.
- 2-Türkiye'ye gelmeden önceki yaşantınızdan/deneyimlerinizden söz eder misiniz?
 - a. Bu yaşantılar sizi psikolojik, sosyal vb. yönlerden nasıl etkiledi?
 - b. Kadın olmanız bu deneyimlerinizi etkiledi mi?
 - c. (Eğer söz etmezse) Neden/Nasıl Türkiye'ye gelmeye karar verdiğinizi açıklar mısınız?
- 3-Göç deneyimizi anlatır mısınız? Nasıl karar verdiniz?
 - a. Göç sürecinde neler yaşadınız?
 - b. Neden Tokat ilini tercih ettiniz?
 - c. Kadın olmanızdan dolayı yaşadığınız farklı deneyimleriniz/zorluklarınız oldu mu?
- 4-Türkiye'ye ilk geldiğiniz günlerden başlayarak, bugüne kadar neler yaşadınız?
 - a. Ne gibi zorluklar yaşadınız?
 - b. Bu zorlukları nasıl aştınız?
- 5-Bu yaşadıklarınız sizi nasıl etkiledi? Göçün hemen ertesinde Türkiye'deki ilk günlerinizde neler hissettiniz? Aklınızdan neler geçti? Hatırladığınız sizinle kalan duygular/düşünceler neler?
- 6-Herhangi bir psiko-sosyal yardım aldınız mı?
 - a. Bu yardımı faydalı buldunuz mu? Anlatır mısınız?
- 7- Bu yardım hizmetleri, sizce nasıl daha iyi olabilirdi?
- 8-Türk kültürünü ve kendi kültürünüzü ((Afgan, Suriye, İran vb.) gelenek, görenek, ritüeller, törenler vb.) karşılaştırır mısınız?
 - a. Bu kültürler arasında ne gibi benzerlikler var?
 - b. Bu kültürler arasında ne gibi farklılıklar var?
- 9-Bu kültürel farklılıklar/benzerlikler Türkiye'ye uyumunuzu nasıl etkiledi?
- 10-Zorlukları aşmanıza hangi sosyo-kültürel faktörler (aile, komşuluk ilişkileri vb.) yardımcı oldu?
 - a. Neler zorlaştırdı?
- 11- Sizce psikolojik dayanıklılık nedir?
 - a. Kendinizi ve çevrenizdeki tanıdıklarınızı düşündüğünüzde kimler yaşadığı güçlükleri kolay atlattı? Kimler çabuk toparlandı?
 - b. Bu kişilerin özellikleri nelerdi? Bunu nasıl başardılar?
- 12- Atlatamayanlar/toparlanamayanlar sizce neden toparlanamadılar?

D: TURKISH SUMMARY /TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Zorunlu göç; iç savaş, şiddet, doğal- çevresel felaketler veya açlık gibi problemler nedeniyle insanların bir yerden başka bir yere olan hareketidir (Zorunlu Göç İnceleme, 2018). Dünya şu anda 25,4 milyonu mülteci, 68,5 milyon yerinden edilmiş insanla en yüksek göç oranını yaşamaktadır (UNHCR, 2019). Türkiye'ye uluslararası koruma için başvuran kişilerin sayısı Mart 2019'da 4 milyona ulaşmış olup dünyadaki en yüksek mülteci nüfusuna ev sahipliği yapmaktadır. Göç eden kişilerin yarısından fazlası İstanbul'a yerleşmişken, geri kalan bölümü özellikle Türkiye'nin güney sınırına yakın olan şehirlere yerleşmişlerdir (Rygiel, Baban ve Ilcan, 2016; Türkiye Kızılayı ve Dünya Gıda Programı, 2019). Çoğunluğu Suriye kökenli olan bu kişiler; Türkiye'ye geldiklerinde geçici koruma statüsü almaktadırlar. Geçici koruma altında olan diğer insanların sayısı ortalama olarak 370.000'dir ve bu kişiler Afganistan, Irak, İran ve Somali'den gelmişlerdir.

Göç eden kişiler temel insan haklarına, sağlık hizmetlerine, hareket özgürlüğüne, eğitime ve istihdama erişmekte zorlanmaktadırlar (Biehl, 2015). Mültecilerin karşılaştığı stresler genellikle üç kategori altında ele alınmaktadır. Bunlar; (a) göç öncesi yaşanan stres unsurları (şiddet deneyimleri, siyasi çatışmalar, işkence ve travma vb.), (b) göç sırasında yaşanan stres unsurları (uzun süreli sığınma talebi, şiddet, kötüye kullanma, yas, finansal zorluklar ve temel hak ve özgürlüklerden mahrum kalma vb.) ve (c) göç sonrası yaşanan stres unsurları (çoklu yer değiştirme, kültürel uyum güçlüğü, yabancı düşmanlığı, ayrımcılık, marjinalleşme, sosyal destek eksikliği ve ertelenmiş eğitim vb.) (Attanayake ve diğerleri, 2009; Süleyman, Hill ve Thompson, 2012).

Araştırmalar, mülteci kadınların göçmenlik anında, öncesi ve sonrasında, birçok travmatik deneyimlerinin olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bunların yanı sıra, kadınların mevcut insani ve sosyal desteğe ulaşma ihtimalinin erkeklere kıyasla daha düşük olduğunu belgelemektedir (Oynut ve ark., 2009). Göç eden kadınlarla yapılmış olan araştırmalar sonucu kadınların psikopatoloji geliştirme riski altındaki en savunmasız gruplardan biri olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Araştırma sonuçları, kadınların başlıca travma sonrası stres bozukluğu (TSSB) (Al Gasseer, Dresden, Keeney ve Warren, 2004; Baines, 2017), depresyon (Schweitzer ve diğerleri, 2018) belirtileri göstermelerinin yanında intihar girişimlerinde bulundukları sıklıkla ortaya konan durumlardandır (Keygnaert, Vettenburg ve Temmerman, 2012). Mülteci kadınların daha kırılgan olarak kabul edilmelerinin bir nedeni de tecavüz ve istismar gibi cinsiyete dayalı şiddete erkeklere kıyasla daha fazla

maruz kalmaları ifade edilmektedir (Boyd, 2018; Minihan, Liddell, Byrow, Bryant, & Nickerson, 2018; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Robertson ve diğerleri, 2006). Dolayısıyla, çoğu durum karşısında savunmasız olarak kabul edilen kadınlar, toplumsal bakış açısına göre toplumun gelişimine katkıda bulunan bireylerden çok yardıma muhtaç bireyler olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Pearce ve Lee, 2018).

Mülteci kadınlara yönelik yapılmış olan araştırmaların, iki ana akım üzerinden ilerlediği söylenilebilir. Bu akımlardan birincisi, kadınların yaşadıkları travmatik deneyimleri, onların görece düşük sosyo-ekonomik seviyeye sahip olmaları ve finansal-insani yardımlara ulaşmada yaşadıkları güçlükleri göz önüne alarak, bu kadınların psikopatoloji geliştirmeye daha yatkın olduğunu savunmaktadır, dolayısıyla araştırmacılar araştırma ve incelemeleri mülteci kadınların psikopatolojilerini inceleme üzerine yoğunlaştırmaktadır. Bu akımların ikincisi ise, mülteci kadınların yaşadıkları tüm zorluklara rağmen hızlı bir şekilde toparlanabildiğini, onları dayanıklı kılan unsurlar sayesinde psikopatoloji geliştirmediğini vurgulayan araştırmalardan oluşmaktadır. Bu araştırma sonuçları, mülteci kadınların karşılaştıkları problemlerle başarılı bir şekilde başa çıkabildiklerini, yerleştikleri ülkeye sağlıklı bir şekilde uyum sağlayabildiklerini vurgularken dayanıklı olanların psikopatoloji geliştirenlerden çok daha fazla olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu araştırmacılar araştırmalarını daha çok mülteci kadınların güçlü yanlarına ve onların varlıklarına dayalı unsurları inceleme üzerine yoğunlaştırmaktadırlar (Chan, Young, & Sharif, 2016; Colvin, 2018).

Son olarak, daha yeni yapılan araştırmalar, mülteci kadınların kırılganlık ve dayanıklılıklarının birbirine zıt-ters durumlar olmasından ziyade birbirine sıkı bir ilişki içerisinde, değişen seviyelerde ve hatta birbirini tamamlar bir şekilde mülteci kadınların iyilik hallerini belirleyebileceğine dikkat çekmektedir. Diğer bir deyişle, bu araştırmalar mülteci kadınların hem psikopatoloji geliştirme hem de dayanıklı olmaya açık olduğunu göstermektedir (Hofer, 2006; Uekusa ve Matthewman, 2017). İlginçtir ki, dayanıklılık konusunda yapılan araştırmalar, mülteci kadınların dayanıklılıklarını artıran faktörler arasında kadınların günlük yaşamda karşılarına çıkan problemlerin ve onların travmatik deneyimlerinin etkisinin olduğunu vurgulamaktadır (Uekusa ve Matthewman, 2017). Bu bilgiler göz önüne alındığında, mülteci kadınların kırılganlıklarının onları daha dayanıklı olma konusunda tetiklediği söylenebilir.

Ancak, literatürde mülteci kadınların kırılganlık ve dayanıklılıklarının nasıl bir etkileşimle onların iyilik hallerini belirlediği hakkında çok az şey bilinmektedir. Bunun yanında, kültüre özgü faktörlerin mülteci kadınların göç deneyimlerinde nasıl bir rol

oynadığı da açık değildir (McLaughlin ve Dietz, 2008; Munt, 2012). Bu yüzden araştırmaların, kimin hangi şartlar altında psikopatoloji geliştirme riski altında olduğunu ve mülteci kadınlarının dayanıklılıklarını artırmak için ne tür stratejilerden faydalandığını ortaya koyması gerekmektedir.

Bu çalışma, mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini; kırılganlıklarını ve dayanıklılıklarını katılımcıların sosyo-kültürel bağlamında, cinsiyet ve kültüre özgü nitelikleriyle araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunun yanında, mültecilere yönelik yapılmış olan çalışmaların çoğu batı kültürlerinde batı değer yargıları göz önünde bulundurularak gerçekleşmiştir (George, 2012). Mevcut literatür ışığında, bu çalışma aşağıdaki araştırma sorularını cevaplamayı amaçlamaktadır:

1. Mülteci kadınların göç deneyimleri nelerdir?

- a. Yerleştirilen mülteci kadınların kırılganlıkları nelerdir?
- b. Mülteci kadınların fenomenolojik dayanıklılık anlayışları nelerdir?
- c. Mülteci kadınlar hangi stratejileri kendi dayanıklılıklarını artırmak için kullanmaktadırlar?
- d. Göç sürecinde kadın olmak katılımcıların kırılganlık ve dayanıklılıklarını nasıl ve ne şekillerde etkilemektedir?

Yöntem

Katılımcılar

Bu araştırmaya, yaş ortalaması 23.71 olan ve yaşları 19 ile 42 arasında değişen, toplam yedi mülteci kadın katılmıştır. Katılımcıların üçü Afganistan'dan, üçü İran'dan ve biri Irak'tan geldiğini ifade etmiştir. Katılımcıların dördü savaş koşulları nedeniyle göç sürecinde çoklu yer değişimleri deneyimlediğinden dolayı bu katılımcıların göç sonrası deneyimleri Türkiye'ye gelmeden önceki bazı deneyimlerini de kapsamaktadır. Katılımcıların Türkiye'de kalma süreleri 6 ay ile 5 yıl arasında değişmekte olup, katılımcıların beşi bekar ve ikisi evlidir. Katılımcıların üçü eğitimlerini sürdürmeleri dolayısıyla çalışmamakta olup geri kalan dört katılımcı serbest meslek yaptığını belirtmiştir. Katılımcıların yalnızca biri kendi başına yaşadığını, geri kalan katılımcıların ise aileleriyle birlikte yaşadıkları ifade edilmiştir.

Araçlar ve Veri Toplama

Bu tezde, mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini daha iyi anlayabilmek için nitel bir metodoloji olan fenomenolojik yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Post-pozitivist paradigmanın savunmakta olduğu “tek bir gerçeklikten ziyade katılımcılardan çoklu perspektiflerin toplanması” araştırma süreci boyunca sahiplenilmiştir (Creswell ve Poth, 2017, s.23). Kabul edilen ontolojik bakış açısı ise, “nesnel gerçeklik olsa bile araştırmacının bu gerçekliğe tam anlamıyla hakim olmasının güçlüğü” savunan kritik realist bakış açısıdır. Bunun yanında, bu çalışmada diğer nitel çalışmalarda olduğu gibi araştırmacının öznelliği büyük yer edinirken, katılımcıların yanı sıra araştırmacı da veri kaynağı olarak değerlendirilmiştir (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Araştırmacı, görüşmeleri; yarı yapılandırılmış yüzyüze derinlemesine görüşme ile anekdot kanıtları eşliğinde veri çeşitlemesi yöntemine başvurmuştur. Görüşmeler; aynı araştırmacı tarafından aynı katılımcılarla, sessiz ve rahat ortamlarda; bir veya birden çok günlerde, Türkçe, İngilizce ve karışık olarak yarı Türkçe yarı Dari dillerinde, her görüşme bir- bir buçuk saat arasında yapılmıştır.

Bu araştırma, Topluluk Temelli Katılımcı Araştırma (TTKA) çerçevesinde yürütülmüştür. TTKA kapsamında; (1) Topluluk Danışma Kurulu (TDK) ve (2) Mülteci Topluluk Organizasyonları (MTO) araştırma sürecine katkı sağlamışlardır. Araştırma soruları, alan yazın sonrasında TDK ve MTO’nun yardımıyla hazırlanmıştır. Veriler, ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu’ndan (IAEK) alınan izin sonrasında toplanmıştır (bkz. Ek A).

TDK aracılığıyla ilk katılımcıya erişilmiş olup, diğer katılımcılara kartopu örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak ulaşılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler, Ekim ve Kasım 2018 tarihleri arasında Türkiye’nin Karadeniz Bölgesi’nde yaşayan yedi mülteci kadınla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Anektod kayıtları yaklaşık bir yıla yakın bir süre boyunca tutulmuştur, bu süreçte katılımcılar ve kültürleri hakkında detaylı bilgi edinme araştırmacı tarafından amaçlanmıştır, bu kayıtlar veri analizi süresince araştırmacıya verilerin yorumlanması esnasında ışık tutmuştur.

Veri Analizi

Araştırmacı fenomenolojik, idiografik ve hermeneutik bileşenlere sahip olan “Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz (YFA)” adlı veri analizi yöntemini kullanmıştır. Bu

yöntem hem araştırmacının hem de katılımcıların anlam oluşturma sürecinin önemini vurgulamaktadır (Smith, Harrè & Van Langenhove, 1995).

Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ses kayıt cihazı ile kayıt altına alınmıştır. Tüm görüşme kayıtları sonrasında yazıya dökülmüş olup, araştırmacı bu dökümleri ayrıntılı biçimde incelemiş ve tekrar okumuştur. YFA yöntemi doğrultusunda her bir görüşmenin analizi diğer görüşme analizini takip etmiştir. Analiz sürecinde katılımcıların söylemleri çözümlenmiş, yorumlanmış ve kodlandırılmıştır. Sonrasında benzer kodlar belirlenip gruplandırılmış olup, bu gruplar önce kendi içerisinde sonrasında diğer katılımcıların gruplandırılmalarıyla birlikte değerlendirilmiştir. Ardından araştırmacı belirlenmiş olan grupları daha genel temaların içerisinde ele almıştır. Tüm bu süreç içerisinde tümevarımsal yöntem izlenmiştir.

Araştırmacı araştırmanın geçerliğini sağlayabilmek adına sürekli olarak kendisini ve araştırma sürecini eleştirel bir gözle sorgulamıştır. Bunun yanında, sonuçların gerçeği yansıtmayı yansıtmadığı konusunda veri çeşitlenmesinden, katılımcı teyidinden ve toplum temelli araştırma ortaklarından süreç boyunca elde edilen geri bildirimlerden yararlanılmıştır. Ayrıca araştırmacı araştırmanın güvenilirliğini artırmak için tezde kullanılan araştırma desenini detaylı bir şekilde açıklamış ve katılımcıların profillerini detaylı bir şekilde ele almıştır. Bunun yanında, araştırmanın doğrulanabilirliğinin güçlendirilmesi adına, araştırmacının varsayım ve inançlarından ziyade, katılımcıların deneyimlerine ve ifadelerine odaklanılmıştır. Aynı zamanda, araştırmacının araştırma sürecindeki rolünün açıklığa kavuşturmak suretiyle araştırmanın geçerliğini artırmayı hedeflemiştir.

Sonuçlar

Görüşmelerden elde edilen bulgular, mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini göç öncesi/sırası/sonrası boyunca ele almış olup bu bulgular genel anlamda üç temel temadan ve her bir temanın altında yer almakta olan alt temalardan oluşmaktadır.

İlk tema altında mülteci kadınlar için sıkıntı yaratan ve zihinsel sağlık problemleri geliştirme riskini artıran faktörler ele alınmış olup bu temalar şu şekilde belirlenmiştir:

(A) Mülteci kadınların kırılganlıkları, (1) travmatik deneyimler, (2) önceki eğitimin tanınmaması, (3) yaşam koşulları, (4) çoklu yer değiştirme, (5) ayrımcılık, yabancılaşma ve sosyal destek eksikliği, (6) psikolojik zorluklar (a) davranışsal zorluklar (intihar), (b) bilişsel zorluklar, (c) duygusal zorluklar ve (7) dile dayalı problemler olarak belirlenmiştir.

Hem görüşmeler hem de kaydedilmiş gözlem notları, mülteci kadınların kırılganlıklarını artıran büyük zorlukların olduğunu ve göçe bağlı sorunların süreklilik arz ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Savaş, baskı, istismar ve şiddet benzeri travmatik yaşantılarını geride bırakmak için göç etme kararı alan mülteci kadınlar, Türkiye'ye günlerce süren ve çok pahalı olan yasadışı yollardan geldiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Görüşmelerde, katılımcıların büyük bir kısmı göç yolunda yaşadıkları travmatik deneyimlere yer vermişlerdir:

Sınırı geçmek için bindirildiğimiz minibüste çok kişiydik, araç çok hızlıydı. Yolda giderken bir anda minibüsün arka kapısı açıldı ve bir Pakistanlı genç adam yere yuvarlandı. Sürücü hızını kesmeden ve bizlerin feryatlarını, uyarılarını dinlemeden yoluna devam etti. O adamı yolda kanlar içinde bıraktık. Ben çok ağladım, minibüsteki kaçakçılar beni kapa çeneni yoksa seni atarız diyerek tehdit ettiler (Yasemin, 19).

Tüm zorluklara rağmen Türkiye'ye gelmeyi başaran katılımcılar, yeni geldikleri bu ülkede de problemler yaşamaya devam ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bu problemlerden bazıları geçim sıkıntısı, yaşam koşullarının zorluğu, uyum ve alışma problemleri, yabancı düşmanlığı, dışlanma ve dil problemleri olarak ortaya konmuştur. Katılımcıların büyük bir çoğunluğu Türkiye'de de zorbalığa maruz kaldıklarını ve ayrımcılığı deneyimlediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Gülsüm, *“sırf göçmen olduğumuz için bazı insanlar bize mesafeli davranıyor, hatta bazıları biz sokaktan geçerken dik dik bakıyor”* demiştir.

İkinci tema altında mülteci kadınların yaşamış oldukları problemlere karşı içsel ve dışsal dayanıklılık stratejileri ele alınmış olup, katılımcıların fenomenolojik anlamda dayanıklılık anlayışları keşfedilmiştir. Bu temalar şu şekilde belirlenmiştir:

(B) Mülteci kadınlarının dayanıklılıkları, (1) dayanıklılık kavramının fenomenolojik anlamları, (2) içsel ve dışsal dayanıklılık stratejileri ortaya konmuştur. Bu stratejilerden içsel olanlar sırasıyla (a) kişisel özellikler, (b) başa çıkma yöntemleri (c) başkalarından güç kazanma, (ç) umut ve (d) maneviyatken; dışsal olanlar ise (a) sosyo-kültürel benzerlikler, (b) sosyal destek sistemleri ve (c) insani yardımlar ve psiko-sosyal programlar olarak belirlenmiştir. Mülteci kadınların dayanıklılık kavramına olan fenomenolojik bakış açıları aşağıda tabloda özetlenmektedir (Tablo 8).

Tablo 8

Mülteci Kadınların Dayanıklılıkları

Dayanıklı Olan	• Umut sahibi olanlar,
Kişilerin Özellikleri	• Tanrı inancı olanlar,
	• Risk alabilen cesur insanlar,
	• Kendini feda edenler,
	• Düşünceleri üzerinde kontrol sahibi olanlar,
	• Konfor/rahatlık bölgesini terk edebilenler,
	• Kimseye minnet etmeyenler,
	• İçsel potansiyellerinin farkında olanlar ve kendini gerçekleştirebilenler,
	• Sorumluluklarının bilincinde olanlar,
	• Bir hedef belirleyip ve onu gerçekleştirmek için çalışanlar,
	• Problemlerini sahiplenip, üzerinde çalışan ve çözenler,
	• Şefkat, acıma ve merhamet duygusuyla hareket edenler,
	• Problemler karşısında kaçıp gitmektense kalıp savaşımlar,
	• Becerikli olanlar (yerinde saymaktansa fırsatları değerlendirebilenler),
	• Tüm riskli/tehlikeli durumlara karşı çalışıp kendini mutlu kılanlar

Bulgular ışığında mülteci kadınlar için ümit sahibi olmak, travmatik deneyimleriyle baş edebilmelerinde hayati bir role sahiptir. Katılımcıların manevi yönlerinin onların gelecek için umut beslemelerinde rolü olabileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Dolayısıyla, maneviyatın ve umudun zorlukların üstesinden gelinmesinde rolü olabileceği ve katılımcıların bu sayede dayanıklılıklarını artırabileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Katılımcılardan biri olan Ayşe, “*bütün olanlardan sonra bile, ben tevekkül ettim ve sonra Tanrı bana yardım etti*” demiştir.

Bazı sosyo-kültürel faktörlerin katılımcıların uyum sürecini kolaylaştırdığı tespit edilmiştir. Ev sahibi ülke ile göç etmeden önceki ülkedeki kültürel yapıların benzeşmesi, katılımcıların yeni ülkede yabancılaşma çekmemesine yardımcı olurken onların yeni ülkenin kültürüne ait olma hissini artırmış olabileceği bulunmuştur. Ayrıca tüm katılımcılar, çevrelerinde bulunan diğer kişilerden sosyal destek alıyor olmanın, onların iyi oluş hallerini olumlu yönde etkilediğinden bahsetmişlerdir. Katılımcılar ilk geldikleri dönemlerde Türk arkadaş edinmelerinin zor olduğunu ve bu zorlukta dil farklılığının büyük bir payının olduğundan bahsetmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, mülteci kadınlar en fazla desteği kendilerine benzer bir süreçten geçen diğer göçmenlerden aldıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca, mülteci kadınlar, sivil toplum kuruluşu ve diğer devlet kurumlarından destek aldıklarını ancak bu desteğin yeterli düzeyde olmadığını vurgulamışlardır.

Üçüncü tema altında mülteci kadınlar göç sürecinde kadın olmanın kendilerinin kırılganlık ve dayanıklılıklarını nasıl ve ne şekillerde etkilediğine dair yanıtlar vermiş olup, verdikleri cevaplar ışığında bulgular şu şekilde ortaya çıkmıştır: (C) Kadın olmak (1) özgürleşme: Mülteci kadınlar toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliğinin, baskılayıcı kültürel ve cinsiyet normlarının, kültürel kalıpların, onların göç süreçlerini etkileyen cinsiyete ilişkin problemler olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Katılımcılar ev içerisinde ve dış dünyada bu etmenlerden olumsuz etkilendiklerini ve bu problemlerin onların yeni ülkeye uyum sürecini, sorunlarla başa çıkabilme potansiyellerini ve dayanıklılıklarını olumsuz anlamda etkilediğini vurgulamışlardır:

Amcam beni tehdit etti ve o yaşlı adamla evlenmezsem bacaklarımı kıracağını söyledi. Sana çok kötü şeyler yaparım diyerek beni korkuttu. Beni o adamla evlenmeye zorladılar, işte o zaman onunla evlenmemek için intihar ettim (Fatıma, 19).

Bunun yanında katılımcılar yeni geldikleri ülkede görece daha özgür bir ortamın olmasının onların kişisel ve sosyal gelişimlerini destekleyici bir durum olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Bu sayede, katılımcıların kendilerine dair ve bağlı olduğu kültüre yönelik farkındalığı artmış olup bu farkındalık onları değişim konusunda cesaretlendirmiş olabileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Tartışma

Elde edilen sonuçlara göre, mülteci kadınların kırılganlıklarını artıran faktörler onların ruh sağlığını olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Uzun süreli tehlike altında yaşamak, terör ve getirdiği zorluklarla mücadele etmek zorunda kalmak, bu süreçte sevdiği insanların kaybını yaşamamanın verdiği yasla sarsılmak ve baskı altında birçok sorumluluğu üstlenmek katılımcıların genel anlamda sağlığını olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Bu sonuçlar önceki çalışmalarda ortaya konan sonuçlarla örtüşmektedir (Boyd, 2018; Minihan, Liddell, Byrow, Bryant ve Nickerson, 2018; Pittaway ve Bartolomei, 2001; Robertson ve diğerleri, 2006). Daha da önemlisi, mülteci kadınların, cinsel taciz, istismar, cinsiyetçi tutum ve cinsiyet temelli baskıya maruz kalmaları gibi toplumsal cinsiyetle ilgili problemleri bu süreçte hali hazırda deneyimledikleri, problemleri artırıp onları psikopatoloji geliştirme riski altına sokmakta olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Risk Altındaki Kadınlar Programı'nın mülteci kadınların travmatik yaşantılarının tespiti, mevcut bulgularla tutarlıdır (BMMYK, 2019).

Katılımcıların cinsiyete bağlı travmatik deneyimlerinin geleneksel ve kültürel normlarla sıkı bir ilişki içerisinde olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Benzer şekilde, Pittaway (2006), kültürel normların ve yerel dini inançların, mülteci kadınların psiko-sosyal refahlarını azalttığını ileri sürmüştür. Bunun yanında, iç savaş sırasında sadece terörist grupların değil; aynı zamanda askerlerin ve polis memurlarının mülteci kadınlar için tehlike unsuru olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Benzer şekilde, bir çalışmada Chin mülteci kadınlar, askeri cuntadan gelen toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı şiddete maruz kaldıklarını bildirmişlerdir. Ayrıca, mülteci kadınların problem yaşadıkları yerlerden ayrılmalarına izin verilmemesi nedeniyle bu tür istismar ve cinsiyete dayalı şiddetin devamlı olması, ruh sağlığını olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir (Jobs, Lenette ve Breckenridge, 2019). Tüm bu sonuçlar göz önüne alındığında, bu çalışmanın bulguları, güvenli olmayan bölgelerde risk altında uzun süre yaşamamanın, mülteci kadınların çevreye karşı güvensizlik yaşamalarında ve kendilerini toplumsal yaşamdan soyutlanmış hissetmelerinde rolünün olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Katılımcıların sosyal izolasyonunu artıran bir diğer faktörün ise yeni yerleştikleri ülkede yaşadıkları ayrımcılık ve yabancı düşmanlığı olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, Vromans ve arkadaşlarının (2018) bulguları bu sonuçları desteklerken, yeni ülkeye yerleşim ve sonrasında mülteci kadınların yaşadıkları uyum probleminin kadınların yalnızlık duygusunu tetiklediği benzer şekilde ortaya konulmuştur.

Mevcut bulgular, bazı mülteci kadınların sosyal destek kanallarından yararlanırken diğer kadınların bu ve benzer desteklerden yararlanamadıklarını ve dolayısıyla kırılganlıklarının arttığını ortaya konmuştur (Gladden, 2013). Uyum sürecinde sosyal destek kanallarından faydalanamayan katılımcıların aynı zamanda sosyal etkileşime girmekte tereddütlü olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Önceki araştırmaların bulguları, dışa dönük ve atılgan olmayan kadınların sosyal sermayeye erişme ihtimallerinin azalması sonucunda gerekli ve yeterli desteği bulamadığını ve sosyal izolasyon yaşadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Literatürde de benzer bulgular öne sürülmüştür (Uekusa ve Matthewman, 2017).

Tüm bu zorluklara rağmen mülteci kadınların süreç içerisinde iyilik hallerini olumlu yönde etkileyen bazı içsel ve dışsal dayanıklılık stratejilerine sahip olduğu bulunmuştur. Katılımcılar, dayanıklılığın sürekli artırılabilir bir doğasının olduğunu ve dayanıklı olmanın sürekli bir çabayı gerektirdiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Mülteci kadınlar, sorumluluk almanın ve özveriyle hareket etmenin onların dayanıklılığını artırdığını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu sonuçlar, feminist literatürde yer alan “başkalarının uğruna kendini heba

etmek”, başka bir deyişle kendini feda etmenin psikopatolojik olarak kabul edilmesiyle ayrılmaktadır. Dahası, bulguların aksine fedakarlık, kadınların, özellikle de annenin, kültürel ve toplumsal cinsiyet normlarından gelen kusurlu bir özellik olduğunu savunmaktadır (Ruddick, 2009). Benzer şekilde Wood (1994) kültürel öğelerin kadınlarla olan tarihsel ilişkilerini yeniden ele almanın ve yeniden şekillendirmenin gerekliliği üzerinde durmaktadır. Ancak bulgular, mülteci kadınların ailelerinin sorumluluğunu üstlenerek ve fedakar olarak dayanıklı olduklarını ortaya koymuştur. Bu anlamda, kolektivist kültürde değerlerin bu kültüre bağlı olan bireyleri Batı felsefesinden ve feminist bakış açısından farklı bir anlamda etkilediği söylenebilir. Kolektivist kültürel değerler, başkalarının sorumluluğunu almanın insan varlığının mutlak bir gerekliliği olduğunu ve aile sevincini teşvik ettiğini öne sürerek Batı zihniyetini eleştirmektedir (Bauman, 1989; Bahr ve Bahr, 2001). Tüm bunlar dikkate alındığında, katılımcıların toplumsal aidiyet yapısı göz önüne alınarak, sorumluluk almak ve fedakarlıklarda bulunmak katılımcıları güçlendiren bir durum olabilmektedir. Çünkü, katılımcılar kültürel değerlere uygun hareket ederek toplumsal destek kazanabilmekte ve aile yaşantısı içerisinde destek kazanabilmektedir. Ancak bahsedilen özelliklerin uzun vadede beraberinde kendinden imtiyaz ve psikolojik bir yorgunluk getireceği ve dolayısıyla kadınları kırılgan kılabileceği unutulmamalıdır.

İlginç bir şekilde katılımcılar, risk alabilme konusunda cesur kadınların daha dayanıklı olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Ancak, olası başarısızlıkları göğüslemek için yeterince cesur olan kişiler aynı zamanda kırılgan olarak bahsedile gelmektedir (Uekusa ve Matthewman, 2017). Bu nedenle dayanıklı kadınların, kırılganlığı sahiplenebilecek kadar cesur bireyler olduğu göz önüne alınıp, kadınların dayanıklı olmalarının kırılgan olma yolundan geçebileceği gün yüzüne çıkmaktadır.

Şaşırtıcı bir şekilde, “nasıl dayanıklı olunabilir” sorusunun cevabına katılımcılar içsel dayanıklılık stratejilerinden örnekler vermiş ancak cevaplar içerisinde hiçbir dışsal dayanıklılık stratejisi yer almamıştır. Bu durum kolektivist kültürel normların mülteci kadınların hayatındaki göstergelerinden biri olabilir. Örneğin, kadınların toplulukçu toplumdaki rolü, “yardım istemek yerine yardıma koşan”, “pratik” ve “başkalarının arkasını toparlayan” kişidir. Araştırmacılar, kolektif kültürel normlara sahip mülteci kadınların aile ve topluluk normlarına uydukları müddetçe destek alabildiklerini ve toplum içerisinde yer edinebildiklerini vurgulamaktadır ((Lenette, Brough ve Cox, 2013; McCleary ve Figley, 2017). Bu anlamda kültürel dayatmalar ve değerler, mülteci kadınları tek başına bırakarak, onların sadece içsel stratejilerini kullanmaları konusunda zorlarken

ancak bu sistemin devamlılığında kendi bünyesindeki toplumsal bazı dışsal destek kanallarını kadınlar için tahsis etmektedir. Bir diğer anlamda, mülteci kadınların destek görmek isterlerse kendi kaynaklarını tek başlarına üretmeleri ve geri kalan bireylere hizmet tahsis etmelidirler. Bu ve buna benzer kültürel faktörler mülteci kadınların iyi oluş hallerini olumsuz yönde etkileyebileceği göz önüne alınmalıdır. Benzer şekilde, farklı kültürel yapılar içerisinde, merhamet, acıma duygusu, şefkat kadına ait kadını dayanıksız kılabilecek özellikler arasında gösterilmektedir (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi ve Gougazeh, 2019). Tüm bu sonuçlar göz önüne alındığında, kadın olmanın mülteci kadınların göç deneyimini hem kolaylaştırdığı hem de zorlaştırdığı öne sürülebilmektedir. Bir yandan, cinsel taciz, cinsel istismar gibi cinsiyete özgü travmatik deneyimler yaşayan mülteci kadınların psikolojik sağlık problemleri geliştirme riski artmaktayken, öte yandan ailedeki en dayanıklı bireylerin anneler olduğu, çünkü diğerlerinden daha duygusal, pratik, sorun çözmede başarılı ve sorumluluk sahibi oldukları ortaya konmuştur. Bu bulguların aksine önceki araştırma sonuçlarında mülteci erkeklerin problem çözmede daha iyi oldukları ve böylelikle problemler karşısında daha dayanıklı oldukları öne sürülmüştür (Alzoubi, Al-Smadi ve Gougazeh, 2019). Ancak, bu çalışmanın bulgularına göre kadınların problem çözme becerilerini süreçte karşılaştıkları zorluklarla başa çıkabilmeleri için başarıyla kullandıkları ortaya konmuştur.

Nispeten özgürleşmiş mülteci kadınların güçlendiği ve hiç olmadığı kadar bağımsızlaştığı ve bu durumun onların dayanıklılıklarını, uyum sürecini ve sorunlarla başa çıkabilme becerilerini olumlu anlamda artırdığı gözlemlenmiştir. Bu bulgular, daha önce benzer örneklemelerde yapılmış araştırma bulgularıyla hem fikirdir (Culcasi, 2019). Özgürleşme sayesinde stereotiplerinden uzaklaşan mülteci kadınlar toplumda saygınlık kazanırken aile içindeki konumlarını da yeniden şekillendirmektedir. Bu sayede kadınlar ev ve toplum içerisinde “konuşma hakkı” kazanmakta ve bireysel kimliklerini yeniden oluşturabilmektedirler. Benzer şekilde, önceki araştırmacılar mülteci kadınların, göç süreci içerisinde türlü fedakarlıklar gösterdiği, ailelerinin ve kendilerinin refahını sağlamak için büyük bir emek ortaya koyduklarını ve bu durumunda onların toplumsal kimliklerini şekillendirmede etkisinin olduğu ortaya konulmuştur (Uekusa ve Matthewman, 2017).

Son olarak, sosyo-kültürel bağlamlarda savunmasız ve kırılgan olarak kabul edilen mülteci kadınların çatışma ve zorluk içeren bağlamlarda dayanıklı olduğu söylenilebilir. Karen mülteci kadınlarla yapılan bir çalışma sonrasında benzer şekilde çatışma içeren durumlar sırasında ve sonrasında mülteci kadınların kültürel ve toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini

yeniden şekillendirerek dayanıklılıklarını artırdığı ifade edilmiştir (Hoffman, Tierney ve Robertson, 2017). Kırılganlık ve dayanıklılık faktörlerinin yanı sıra, mülteci kadınların deneyimlerini farklı kılan bir diğer unsurun onların kendi yaşantılarına ve deneyimlerine verdiği anlamların olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Böylelikle koşul ve şartlar ne olursa olsun katılımcıların, sürece ve sonuca atfettiği anlamlar, onların deneyimlerini farklılaştırmakta ve dolayısıyla en kötü koşullarda bile, onları dayanıklı kılabilmektedir.

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