UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

The Integration Process and Coping Strategies of Farsi Speaking Refugee Women in Sweden

Akram Khoshkharam Roudmajan

Author

Erasmus Mundus Master's Program in Social Work with Families and Children

Björn Jonsson

Supervisor

University of Gothenburg, May 2019

Abstract

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Author: Akram Khoshkharam Roudmajan

Keywords: Immigrant women, Refugee women, Farsi-speaking women, Integration, Integration challenges Coping Strategies.

The purpose of this study was to explore integration meanings, experiences, and challenges as well as coping strategies among Farsi-speaking refugee women in Sweden. Therefore, three questions related to the main aims of research prepared including; (1) what does integration mean to Farsi-speaking refugee women? (2) What challenges did Farsi-speaking refugee women face during the process of integration in Sweden? (3) How do they cope with their problems and challenges during the process of integration?

A qualitative method with an explanatory interview was used to collect the data. The interviews conducted among six Farsi-speaking refugee women from Iran and Afghanistan in Sweden and findings were analyzed by using thematic analysis.

Results of the findings showed that women perceived integration as an adaptation to Swedish culture and law. The main challenge that they faced was the language barrier which impacted the different aspects of their life such as employment and their well-being. In respect to coping strategies, although, participants used both problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping, emotion-focused coping were more common among women. In the first coping strategy, seeking social support was identified, and in the latter one, praying, social activities, the success of their children, and distance from participation in their own community were the main strategies which used by participants.

Findings of this study highlight the role of social work professsion to address the challenges which refugee women have faced during the process of integration, in different levels, and provide better services in regard to their challenges in order to help them to overcome their challenges.

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Chapter 1, Introduction

1. Introduction

In compliance with international statistics, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of immigrants and asylum seekers around the world in the past decade, especially in 2017. The United Nation report (2017) showed that the number of immigrants grew and reached to 258 million in 2017 in comparison to 2010 with 220 million. Based on this report, more than 60 % of international immigrants live in Asia and Europe with 80 million and 78 million, respectively. Among EU countries, Sweden is a country with a huge number of immigrants and refugees from all around the world. Based on the WHO report (2018), the number of international immigrants in Sweden was 1.747.710 in 2017 which has increased "at an annual rate of 4.3% since 2015". "Of these migrants, 3.174.77 were refugees and asylum seekers (18.2%)" (P.27). Considering Sweden as the country of refugees and immigrants with a multicultural population shows the importance of studying on immigrants' issues.

Although the host countries benefit from the refugees, one of the major points that they are dealing with in the migration phenomena is the challenges associated with them. Among all of the issues of migration phenomena, integration has gotten a major concern among different groups such as government, researchers, and etc. Since integration has a remarkable impact on increasing the benefits of refugees with regard to human capital and economic development, it has become a major concern of EU countries, especially Sweden. Integration is the main challenge that has affected the Swedish society as well as refugees. Accordingly, the importance of integration is not only about economic benefits, but also is about creating the cohesion in society (Wiesbrock, 2011). "In general, social cohesion can be described as a quality of a national community that may be threatened because of dividing lines between class, religious, linguistic, cultural or ethnic groups" (Femin et al, 2005, P. 70). According to Fermin et al, (ibid), social cohesion, which is the result of real integration, first, fortify social relations and bilateral acceptance among different groups in a society and then diminish social exclusion and imparity among refugees and immigrants. As stated above, the impact which integration has on society, refugees, and especially women, and also the lack of studies in refugees' perspective in this area, has gotten the concern of the author of this research as well. Hence tracing those integration strategies that lessen the challenges of newcomers during the process of integration, is vital for Sweden.

To define what the integration is, it should be mentioned that there is no consensus among scholars about the exact meaning of integration and it has been considered as a vague and unclear concept. According to Berry (1997), there are two perspectives about integration's definition among scholars. Some scholars considered integration as a linear process and others believed it as a two-way process. Integration has been defined by Pennix as "the process by which immigrants become accepted into society" (2003, 1). Korac has defined integration as "a process by which individuals and groups of newcomers maintain their cultural identity while actively participating in the larger societal framework…" and also is "a process of building bridges and shaping identities to accommodate the translational realities of the modern world" (Korac 2005, 28-31 cited in Kutle, 2013, 18). Pahud (2008) defined integration as "the process by which newcomers contribute to the dominant society's social and economic well-being while retaining their own cultural identity. It is a two-way process involving the participation and cooperation of both newcomers and members of the dominant culture" (P.12). As it can be

seen in these definitions provided above, for Pennix integration is a linear process through which immigrant should be accepted in the society while in the next definition, integration is a two-way process which means involving the host society as well as immigrants.

Since there is no clear definition and no agreements about this term, scholars tried to make a conceptual model for integration. Researchers like Ager and Strange (2008) have attempted to recognize and the main indicators of integration, which might hinder or accelerate the process of integration of individuals and to make a conceptual model. Since their model includes all different aspects of life, such as economic, social, etc, most of researchers, as well as the author of this research, adopted their conceptual model as it can define integration better.

According to Boateng (2010) and Hough (2013), challenges which refugees have faced during their resettlement have had adverse impacts on the integration process. These challenges include language barriers (Shakespeare-Finch and Wickham, 2010; Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; Slobodin and DeJong, 2015), access to the required information (Muli, and Shteir, 2009), social support (Pittaway et al, 2009; King et al, 2017; Simich, Hamilton and Baya, 2006), unemployment (Dako-Gyeke and Adu, 2017; King et al, 2017; Saidi, 2016; El-Radi, 2015), problems associated with acculturation and understanding a new culture (King et al, 2017; Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; Slobodin and DeJong, 2015), and age, length of stay, and place of residence (Shakibaie, 2009; Magro, 2008; Bernard and Mikesova, 2014; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014).

As have been stated earlier, Ager and Strange (2008) proposed four domains which include the main themes of integration. The domains cover first; sectors of employment, housing, education, and health, second; social bridges, social bonds, and social links, afterward the language and cultural knowledge, and safety and stability, and finally right and citizenship. These domains cover all aspects of life; it means that success in each of these sections will speed up the process of integration. On the other hand, any barrier in one of these sectors will generate challenges in others as well.

These challenges, especially the language barrier, caught my attention when I was doing my internship in one of the centers that work with refugees and their main target group were housewives. Surprisingly, I observed that these women are still dealing with learning the Swedish language, despite living in Sweden for almost 10 years, why do these women still learning the language? Almost all of these women were from Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Iran. It is worth to mention that in the Middle East culture, the women are the main caregivers at home. As primary caregivers, learning the language is vital to carry out their roles such as buying grocery, taking care of children and helping them in their assignment and being in contact with their schools and teachers and so many other similar tasks. In this regard, my questions are: How could these women do their job and participate in society without knowing the host society language? How this barrier can affect their social life? Aside from language, what are other barriers that they are dealing? Finally, what are the consequences of this barrier for these women? This challenge navigated me to think about the consequences of the lack of integration for both the Swedish society and refugee women.

The mentioned challenges above put people in a situation which may influence their well-being. Moreover, failure to manage these challenges can lead to marginalization and isolation of immigrants, which result in a reduction in the participation of immigrants in the community activities. They also impact the well-being of immigrants due to the lack of participation and

intensify the risk of suffering from physical and mental health problems (Funk, et al. 2010). Funk et al, (ibid) consider in their report those people who are dealing with mental health problems as vulnerable. According to this report, the vulnerability might intensify poor mental health, which restricts the ability of people to participate in society and put obstacles in attending school and finding a job.

Existing literature supported the impact of post-migration stressors on psychological distress. According to Porter and Haslam (2005), conditions such as accommodation and financial stress are factors that cause poor mental health and they lead to poor well-being and poor quality of life. In addition, the study of Liebkind and Jasinskaja-Lahti (2000) divulged that second-language proficiency positively affect the psychological well-being of participants. Moreover, in the study of Shishegar et al. (2017), findings indicated that cultural, social and material factors have a great impact on the health of refugees. In this respect, Junhyoung et al. (2015) results showed that participation in meaningful activities has promoted the well-being of her participants.

Undeniably, the existing obstacles not only hinder refugees from integration but also they would be considered as serious barriers in the process of development of the society. The more an immigrant could get integrated, the less the cost will burden on the government, NGOs and the host society.

> the global direct and indirect economic costs of mental disorders were estimated about US$. .5 trillion. Importantly, the indirect costs (US$1. 7 trillion) are much higher than the direct costs (US$0. 8 trillion), which contrasts with other key disease groups, such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer. For the EU, a region with highly developed healthcare systems, the direct and indirect costs were estimated at €798 billion. Both direct and indirect costs of mental disorders are expected to double by 2030. (Trautmann, Rehm, and Wittchen, 2016,1245)

To prevent the unfavorable economic consequences of these challenges, scholars are looking to find or develop those effective adaptation strategies, which might help refugees and immigrants to deal with stressful situations. To be adjusted in a new society, it is essential to have a good mental health situation that cannot be reached without coping strategies. Koons, (2017) stated that as time goes and the immigrant's situation does not change, they start to develop coping strategies. Many studies showed that coping strategies are crucial factors, which can affect the well-being of people who experienced trauma. Furthermore, using coping strategies will promote the quality of life of immigrants due to the improvement in their well-being and mental health (Graven and Grant, 2013).

Folkman and Lazarus (1984) defined coping as "a person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources" (P. 141). According to Pahud (2008), "coping has to do with approaches, skills, and abilities that allow people to face and manage their life's difficulties. It is a process and not an outcome which helps to master a problem, but does not necessarily mean the problem is mastered" (P.47). Based on these definitions, coping is a way through which people try to control and mitigate external stressors.

Scholars have classified coping strategies in two categories: problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies. The problem-focused strategy is when a stressful situation is amenable.

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Meanwhile, in emotion-focused strategy, people perceived the situation out of their control and unamenable (Atkin, 2016).

Following these categories, coping strategies of these two classifications are as follows; social support from families, communities or other sources (McMichael and Manderson, 2004; Alzoubi, Al-Smadi, and Gouhazeh, 2017; Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; Theodoratou, et al, 2015; Schweitzer, Greenslade, and Kagee, 2007; Shisana and Celentano, 1987; Teye and Yebleh, 2015; Way, 2018), strong ethic of collectivity (Goodman, 2004); cognitive processes that include refugees' attitudes toward their internal resources, adaptive cognitive, positive cognition, and hope and aspiration (Brune et al, 2002; Gorman, Brough, and Ramirez, 2003; Vázquez, et al, 2005; Basoglu et al., 1997) and belief/religious systems (Pahud, 2008; Brune et al., 2002; Gorman, et al. 2003; Halcon and colleagues 2004; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2003), Social network (Pahud, 2008; Boateng, 2010; Karooma, 2014).

Based on my observations, I could see these women may have difficulty in learning languages and I premised the language barrier might originate some extra problems. Thinking about the language barrier navigated me to the questions like how they deal with language barriers? How are they satisfied with living in Sweden? How is their mental health situation? My observations revealed another key point. Surprisingly, I observed some of these women seemed happy and showed good mental health, in spite of facing language barrier in comparison with others. This observation pushed me toward the last question which was what are their coping strategies which help them to manage stressful situations?

Apparently, coping strategies and integration are interconnected. In fact, as much as a person has more skills in using various coping strategies, the process of integration will be easier and faster. Likewise, a high rate of integration provides more and new coping strategies. Briefly, coping strategies as well as integration indicators impact on refugees and immigrant's mental health. That is to say, poor mental health among immigrants and refugees is due to the lack of integration and poor coping skills. Although, several studies have shown that women are more subjected to poor mental health such as depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide, (Bhui et al., 2003; Grisaru, Irwin, and Kaplan, 2003; Lin and Cheung, 1999; Shepherd, 1992). Women have been considered as a group in the society who have special needs and are more vulnerable in comparison with other groups (Olsson, 2002).

Indeed, women are "about one half of the world's refugee population" (Shishehgar et al., 2016) that their voices are less heard, and in general, they are more isolated even among the refugee population (Hassan et al., 2015). Since, refugee women are less integrated into the host society because of the obstacles that they faced (Cheung and Phillimore, 2017), they are at a higher risk of mental health problems. "While depression is the leading cause of disability for both males and females, the burden of depression is 50% higher for females than males" (WHO, 2008). Being immigrant women from a collective culture makes the situation even worse. Notably, women in these cultures have fewer opportunities to pursue individual interests and build communities outside of the family. Besides, they face additional barriers to integrate into society. Therefore, as stated earlier considering the economic cost of mental health problems, it is important to study women as a vulnerable group.

To conduct this research among women from collective cultures, I chose Farsi-speaking women from Iran and Afghanistan because first; they both speak Farsi language as well as me, and then based on accessibility to them, since there are three countries which speak Frasi language;

Afghanistan, Iran, and Tajikistan which I could access to two of these nationalities who were coming to refugee center to receive the social services. Moreover, according to the Swedish Migration Agency statistical reports (2019), both of these two countries have placed among those countries which had the highest number of asylum seeker applications and also the highest number of granted applications in Sweden during the year of 2018. In this report, Afghanistan with 7408 assylum seeker applications which 2348 of those has been granted was placed in the beginning of this list and Iran with 2278 asylum seeker applications that 771of those has been granted was in the fifth place among 178 countries. Considering that these two communities have almost the biggest communities in Sweden, there is a lack of research on topics related to them such as coping strategies and integration, especially on women. Given that statistics which have been presented above community the importance of studying these communities get more clear.

Consequently, to address the issues mentioned above, it is necessary refer to the role of the social work profession. Inasmuch as social work is a major that works at the same time on the meso level (people's life) as well as collaboration with the macro level (policymakers), it ideally fill the gap between people's life and policy makers. Therefore, social work profession has the potential to safeguards people's right and provides necessery services to those who are in need and on the other side, and it can affect the policies which are directly or indirectly influencing the life of people. In other words, social work has the potential to help people in the process of integration to the new society, problem-solving, and capacity building, that is to say, it assists them to employ their potentiality for the social enhancement. (Dominelli, 2013).

1.1. Aims of Research

Overall aims of this study are to explore the integration definition from Farsi-speaking refugee women perspective in order to identify determinative factors in the integration process from their standpoint. In addition, to discern What are the challenges these women experienced during the years of living in Sweden and how are these challenges influence their integration? Ultimately, to explore their coping strategies which helped them to deal with the challenges of integration.

1.2. Research Questions

The present research aims to answer the following questions as follows:

- What does integration mean to Farsi-speaking refugee women?

- What challenges did Farsi-speaking refugee women face during the process of integration in Sweden?

- How do they cope with their problems and challenges during the process of integration?

Chapter 2, Literature review and Background

2.1. Introduction

"The task of the literature reviewer is to uncover all the articles on the review topic; however, this task is difficult because the full complement of articles is never known"(Evans, 2002). Reviewing the literature creates "generativity which helps to develop both integrity and sophistication in research" (Gray, 2018, 98). Therefore, the literature review in writing an academic paper is the most significant part.

This chapter provides major works which have been done in the studied subject. Although, the main topic is about refugees, this chapter reviews existing literature in the area of both refugees and immigrants' main challenges and processes and factors affecting integration, wellbeing, and coping strategies. In this part, at first, I presented each concept and their main factors and then followed by the presentation of the previous literature on that area.

2.2. Challenges

Studies indicated that immigrants experience many obstacles and challenges after arrival in a new society (Boateng, 2010; Hough, 2013). In compliance with previous studies, the main challenges which immigrants confronted are language barrier (Shakespeare-Finch and Wickham, 2010; Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; Slobodin and DeJong, 2015; El-Radi, 2015; Shishehgar et al., 2016; Mukundiyimana, 2014; Pittaway et al, 2009; Martin, 2004; Halcón et al, 2004; Bajracharya, 2015; Kristjánsdóttir and Dís Skaptadóttir, 2018) Access to required information (Pittaway et al, 2009; Mukundiyimana, 2014), social support (Almqvist and Hwang, 1999; Mukundiyimana, 2014; pittaway et al, 2009; Dako-Gyeke and Adu, 2017; King et al, 2017; Smich, Hamilton and Bay, 2006; Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; Shishehgar et al., 2016; Slobodin and DeJong, 2015; Hassan et al., 2015, Kristjánsdóttir and Dís Skaptadóttir, 2018) unemployment (Dako-Gyeke and Adu, 2017; Dick, 2002; King et al, 2017; Saidi, 2016 Martin, 2004; El-Radi, 2015), problems associated with acculturation and understanding new culture (King et al, 2017; Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; S lobodin and deJong, 2015), and age, length of stay, and place of residence (Shakibaie, 2009, Magro, 2008, Bernard and Mikesova, 2014, Cheung and Phillimore, 2014).

Corresponding to the former studies, the challenges which mentioned above are the main reasons which stop refugee and immigrants to fully integrate into society. Also, these challenges increase the risk of suffering from mental health problems and lead to poor well-being and poor quality of life. Existing literature demonstrates that post-migration stressors, as well as pre-migration experiences, have a considerable impact on psychological distress (El-Radi, 2015).

2.3. Integration

Previous studies reported different factors, which affected the process of integration of refugees/immigrants in a new society. The main effective factors, in accordance with the available literature, come as follows:

- Language
- Feeling toward the first place

- Employment
- Education

- Social support
- Right and citizenship

2.3.1. *Language*

Language facilitates communication between refugees and the host country, which through that refugees express themselves. Not only knowing the language hastens the process of integration into the new society, but also it helps refugees to acquire a job and learn the main elements of the culture. Also, learning the dominant language helps refugees to broaden their social networks. Findings of empirical evidence support that language plays a noteworthy role to help people to integrate into society.

Lack of ability to speak the host language considered as a remarkable need for women, which is related to integration (Olsson, 2002). As it is stated by Cheah et.al (2011), the ability to speak the dominant language has a positive effect on the process of integration. The finding of another study endorsed Cheah's finding of the vital role of learning the language in a successful integration (Burnett, 2012). Identically, findings of Mukundiyimana (2014) confirm that one of the main challenges of integration in Swedish society was the lack of knowing the Swedish language. Further, language proficiency increased the consumption of news media in the host country, which led to the increase of integration and assimilation (Alencar and Deuze, 2017). Furthermore, findings of Cheung and Phillimore (2017) demonstrated that language is one of the factors which affected the integration. Additionally, it revealed that women are worse than men in obtaining and employing the dominant language in the new society.

2.3.2. *Feeling toward the first place*

Findings of Zegarac, which has done on Bosnian society in Värnamo (A municipality in southern Sweden) has revealed interesting results. Based on this study, this municipality had a great impact on the integration process of refugees. "Värnamo is perceived among the participants as an open and friendly city toward everybody, including newcomers, which is a good prerequisite for the integration process" (2015, P. 2)

2.3.3. *Employment*

Employment is one of the core factors of integration and it lets refugees have a sense of control in their life and in a way empowers them but it needs some preconditions. Having language skills and strong social networks are those preconditions which can facilitate the process of getting a job. Also, it helps people to be independent of social welfare (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014).

Acquiring a job is difficult for women as there are some segregations in Sweden's labor market based on gender, education, and ethnicity (Mukundiyimana, 2014). Further, employment has been considered as a human right, which through that people provide their basic needs like house and food (Silva, 2014). As reported by Shakibaie (2009), getting a job is difficult for Afghan women, especially for those who are living in Sweden for less than 4 years. It means that the length of stay in Sweden increases the chance of getting employed. Similarly, it has been suggested that more focus on the job market will contribute to more successful integration (Saidi, 2016). Lastly, Ager and Strang (2004) in their studies considered employment as one of the main strategies of effective integration.

2.3.4. Education

It has been emphasized on education as a tool which improves the financial situation of refugees, which ultimately affect the process of integration (Zegarac, 2015). Other findings disclosed that education has a direct effect on learning a new language. Particularly, educated refugees allocate more number of hours to learn the new language (Iqbal, 2012). Equally findings of Ager and Strang (2004), confirmed the importance of education in the process of integration. According to Alencar and Deuze (2017), educational background certainly impacted the integration process and assimilation of participants.

2.3.5. Social connections

The social connections include social bridges, social links and in sum, it creates social networks. Social connections considered as ways of strengthening refugees by providing information, resources, and job opportunities. Also, it makes the process of integration in the host country easier. Zegarac (2015) concluded in her study that social support networks play a guiding role in the process of integration. Identically, building strong social networks was the main factor that helped the participant in the study of Luster et al., (2010) to overcome their traumatic situation and facilitate the process of integration. Equally, findings of Cheung and Phillimore (2014) endorsed that the presence of social networks helps refugees with housing and employment opportunities. Likewise, in another study, findings showed that the social networks of participants were weak and limited. Then, as a result of that participants' opportunity to be integrated into Swedish society got much more difficult. Besides, they found that the main reason for weak integration among his participants was becuase of strong relationship with their communities, families, and friends (Bayram et al. 2009). Similarly, other scholars reached the same result in one of their studies. In this group, a strong sense of belonging to their community stop them from integration in the new society which resulted in less effort to learn the language skills of the host society (Crul and Vermeulen, 2003). The study of Ager and Strang (2004) indicated that, in spite of diverse definition of integrated community among participants, social networks and relationships within society are considered as the main strategies of integration. Correspondingly, the results of the study of Kang (2018) among different genders illustrated that social support has a considerable effect on bicultural identity integration. Similarly, it showed that the women had remarkably less social support in comparison with the men. Findings of Alencar (2018) showed that the integration process could have been affected by social networks, which is the result of using social media. Comparably, findings of a study about the integration experience of Nepalese immigrant's women in Portugal displayed the importance of social network for the integration of women with different marital status. It revealed that single women who came alone to Portugal faced more problems in creating networks which made the process of their integration difficult. While for those participants who came there with their husbands and families, accessing the networks was much easier(Bajracharya, 2015). Identically, Kristjánsdóttir and Dís Skaptadóttir (2018) in their study indicated that lack of social ties and feeling loneliness have put barriers in the process of integration. Correspondingly, the idea that social ties and networks of individuals affect health outcomes have been proved in Seeman's findings (1996). Also, available social networks which, assist people to get integrated into the society easily considered as one of the main keys of life satisfaction of refugees in the findings of Kutle (2013).

2.3.6. *Right and Citizenship*

Obtaining citizenship is one of the requirements for effective integration. Having the citizenship equips refugees to equal right and brings respect for refugees. From the perspective of participants in the study of Ager and Strang (2004), accessing the equal right is an essential issue in maintaining social connection within the society. Equally, findings of Burnett (2012) showed that achieving citizenship is essential for the integration of refugees. Although, another scholar showed different results that obtaining the equal right when it combines with other factors such as generous social welfare like what there is in Sweden led to poor integration. (Koopmans, 2010)

2.4. Coping Strategies

Scholars illustrated that different methods had been used by refugees to cope with their challenges. Coping strategies are fundamental elements that can diminish stressors and improve refugees well-being. These stressors lead to poor mental health which affects refugees well-being and quality of their life (Mirabzadeh, et al. 2013). Based on the review of former literature, the main coping strategies are as follows:

- Social support
- Education
- Avoidance
- Problem-solving
- Positive appraisal (religious activity)

- Distancing and Self-controlling
- Meaningful activities
- Cultural resources
- Internet communication

2.4.1. *Social support*

Findings of scholars endorsed this idea which relationship between social support as a coping strategy and well-being is positive. To put it simply, those migrants who received high social support, illustrated high well-being and less poor mental health (Shisana and Celentano, 1987; Schweitzer et al, 2006). Seeking social support from friends, family and community was one of the coping strategies that refugees used to cope with their challenges (Farwell, 2001; Alemi, James, and Montgomery, 2016; Lavie-Ajayi and Slonim-Nevo, 2017; Alzoubi et al, 2017; Atkins, 2016; Saldana, 1992; Gladden, 2012; Hussain and Bhushan, 2011; Khawaja, et al, 2008; Hutchinson and Dorsett, 2012; Schweitzer et al, 2006; Schweitzer et al, 2007; Shisana and Celentano, 1987; Teye and Yebleh, 2015; Thomas et al, 2011; Way, 2018; Akcapar, 2010; Jops, Lenette, and Breckenridge, 2019; Kung, Castaneda, and Lee, 2003; Mui, 2000; Teye and Yeble, 2015; Diwan, Jonnalagadda, and Balaswamy; 2004; Sossou et al, 2008; Ruwanpura et al, 2006; Theodoratou et al, 2015; Abraham, Lien, and Hansen, 2018).

Despite all of these studies, which have mentioned the importance of social support, the type of support that has been reported various amonge the literature. For example, the findings of two studies stressed community support or migrant's ethnic community (Alemi, et al., 2016; Schweitzer et al, 2007). On the other hand, the results of other studies showed the significance of available formal and informal support (Way, 2018; Lamba and Krahn, 2003). These two types of supports include three sub-sets including family, friends, and institutions.

Correspondingly, Lamba and Krahn (2003) explained that the availability of many formal and informal social networks is a valuable opportunity for people to access many resources and supports. For instance, these networks can assist people when they face problems such as unemployment.

Result of a study revealed that formal support had a considerable impact on their participant's resilience. Also, it identified that when formal support is unavailable, family bonds and support groups will help participants to be resilient (Duah, Afua, and Melander, 2017). For instance, for Diwan et al, (2004) consider satisfying friendship, for Sossou et al, (2008) family and friend's support and for Donnelly et al. (2011) informal support system were prominent social supports. Moreover, Participants in Yeh and Wang (2000) study preferred to choose those coping strategies which encompassed talking with family rather than professionals.

In some studies, social support was the main coping strategy which has been employed by refugees (Khawaja, et al, 2008; Jops et al. 2019; Kung, et al, 2003; Ada , 2000; Schweitzer et al, 2007; Teye and Yebleh, 2015). For example, in the studies of Theodoratou et al, (2015), and Alzoubi et al, (2017) social support was the main coping strategy with 65%, and 88% respectively. Although, in Alzoubi et al (2017), coping strategies were different between two genders based on education, income and employment status;

> Participants who were male, single, younger, and who had higher education and a higher total income were satisfied with their income, were employed and free of chronic illnesses, and had higher problem-solving scores. Higher social support-seeking scores were associated with being female, older, and widowed; having a lower education and lower total income; being dissatisfied with their income; being non-employed; and having chronic illnesses (ibid)

The higher level of social support has been considered as a protective factor which helps women to deal with their challenges and get empowered (Cakir and Guneri, 2011). Comparably, Pahud (2008) in her study demonstrated that the main coping strategy was the interrelationship of personal resources. Participants of her study reported the available support that they received from family and informal institutions were the main strategies which help them to cope with their challenges. Identically, the importance of social support as the coping strategy which controlled the effect of stress on the quality of life has been shown in the findings of Young, (2001). Iranian female participants in the study of Ghazinour, Richter, and Eisemann (2004) coped with stressors more effectively. Their findings showed that as these women were living with their families, they had better access to social support which helped them to cope with challenges better than men who were living alone.

2.4.2. *Avoidance of challenges*

Avoidance like shopping and drinking was the main strategy for participants of Waite and Killian (2009) study which played a temporary relief. Correspondingly, Alzoubi et al, 2017 reported that 64.5% of his participants used avoidance strategy among other strategies as the second main strategy. While in Atkins (2016), the main strategy that had been used by participants was the avoidance of 63%. Knudsen (1991) showed in his study that avoidance seems a safe coping strategy which has been employed by refugees.

2.4.3. Distancing and Self-Controlling

Theodoratou et al (2015) conducted a research among Greek refugees, including 62 males and 36 females. She and her colleague found that 40% of their sample used self-controlling coping strategy. While the findings of another study revealed that only 6 persons out of 280 participants (1.8% in total) used self-controlling strategy and also in the category of distancing coping strategy, only 3 persons have situated (Atkins, 2016).

2.4.4. Problem-solving

Findings of Atkins' study (2016) illustrated only 12 persons out 280 participants reported problems-solving coping strategy which means 3.7% of the total sample. Similarly, the same result revealed that the problem-solving was the least used strategy with only 39.5% at Alzoubi et al, (2017). Besides, applying problem-solving strategy was affected by factors like gender, age, marital status, education, and income. In fact, men with higher education and income who were single and young mostly used problem-solving coping strategy. While the result of these studies showed that problem-solving is not common among women refugees and mostly used by men, other study demonstrated that problem-solving was the most used strategy among Iranian married women to deal with stress in his study (Mirabzadeh et al, 2013).

2.4.5. Positive Reappraisal

According to Atkins (2016), Positive Reappraisal includes activities and efforts such as praying and believing in God. A significant body of literature is available on the effect of religion, religious beliefs, and praying on decreasing stress. Scholars endorsed that refugees who used this strategy to deal with their problems, experienced a better well-being which led to accessing a better quality of life (Khawaja, et al. 2008; Gladden, 2012; Alemi, et al, 2016; Spence, et al, 2007; Sanchez, et al, 2012; Shakespeare-Finch et al, 2014; Way, 2018; Schweitzer et al, 2007; Ruwanpura et al, 2006; Ano and Vasconcelles, 2005). Having a high quality of life led to using more positive reappraisal among Iranian women to cope with their stress according to Mirabzadeh et al, (2013). Likewise, findings of Atkins (2016) divulged that 40 out 327 of participants reported using positive reappraisal which means only 12.2% in total. While findings of Halcón et al (2004) demonstrated that praying with 53% was the main coping strategy among her participants. Similarly, Theodoratou et al (2015) had reached the same result as Halcón, faith in God was the main coping strategy among refugees with 80%. Uniformly, Brune, et al, (2002) presented that having a firm belief system as a coping strategy is pretty effective for reaching a better therapy outcome. Identically, findings of another study showed that religious beliefs helped participants to cope with their challenges as well as helping them to access more hope for their future (Ruth et al., 2018). Eventually, engaging in religious activities has been reported as the main coping strategy used by participants in Yeh and Wang (2000) study.

2.4.6. Hope and Education

Other studies addressed the other coping strategies such as hope for the future and following education. Focusing on the future and thinking positively identified as the main coping strategies which help participants to cope with their problems (Abraham, et al. 2018). Comparably, findings of Gladden (2012) illustrated that the feasibility of the following education in the future will be a hope for, especially young people. In the same manner,

academic access was a coping strategy among Afghan refugees in the study of Alemi. et al (2016). He conducted a research on the Afghan community in the U.S. and findings of his study disclosed that the success of refugee children in chasing their academic studying was one of the main alleviations for refugees. Equivalently, Taloyan (2008) conducted a research among the Kurdish immigrants in Sweden and the findings of her study demonstrated that getting an education is one of the coping strategies among her sample.

2.4.7. *Meaningful activities*

For others, participation in meaningful activities and money-earning activities were the main coping strategies. It has been reported that participation in meaningful activities has two benefits for refugees. First, it will help refugees resettle in the new society and then it will help them to expand the support structures for new refugees in the future (Hunt, 2008). Comparatively, for participants of Stack and Lwasaki' study (2009), engaging in meaningful activities do not only assisted them to adapt the new society and cope with their problems but it also is a way to build and develop their networks. Correspondingly, the study of Junhyoung, et al, (2015) led to the same results and it disclosed that engaging in activities had a strong effect on the well-being of refugees. It, also, indicates that participation in activities assisted refugees in two ways: first improving psychological well-being and then the developing their social networks. Identically, community engagement, which leads to more activeness in the society, has affected the mental health and physical functioning of participants in the study have been divulged by Fothergill et al. (2011). Participants of another study reported that participation in activities which make them occupied and active was one of their coping strategies (Taloyan, 2008). On another note, Dako-Gyeke and Adu (2017) proclaim, participation in those activities which help them to gain money which in result decrease some of their worries was one of the main coping strategies.

2.4.8. *Cultural Resources and Internet communication*

Other scholars addressed the role of cultural resources as one of the coping strategies which refugees used (Hussain and Bhushan, 2011; Shishegar, 2017). The role of internet communication technology (ICT) in migrant caregivers has been investigated by Brown (2016). Participants of her study used (ICT) as a coping strategy which helps them to strengthen their social networks. Similarly, findings of a study of Alencar (2018) supported the impact of social media on the building of social networks.

Chapter 3, Theoretical Framework and Analytical Framework

3.1.   Introduction

According to Bryman (2016), theory plays an important role in social research as it provides logic for the research which has been conducted. This chapter provides a summary review of literature related to the concepts which have been used in this study. The initial aim is to present theories used in this study in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social phenomena under the study. In addition, to serve as a tool, theories help the researcher in the selection and interpretation of different aspects of the data.

As stated by Creswell (2014), the use of theory is different in qualitative studies. However, in most qualitative studies, researchers generate theories after gathering and interpreting the data like in grounded theory. In some other qualitative researches, theories come first and then the data would be gathered in order to provide a big picture which outlines what should be looked for and what questions should be asked? In this study, the existing theories are tested after gathering and interpreting the data. Therefore, integration and coping strategies are existing concepts and theories which are used with an aim to explain how they affect the daily life of Farsi-speaking immigrant women. In other words, how these two theories hamper or accelerate the integration process. Given the above information, for integration concept in my study, I used Conceptual Framework of Core Domains of Integration defined by Ager and Strange (2008) and for coping concept, I used Ways of Coping strategies introduced by Folkman et al., (1986) have been utilized.

3.2.   Integration Theory

In the light of integration concept, it should be mentioned that there is no consensus among scholars due to the lack of a clear and single definition, (Silva, 2014; Zegarac, 2015; Alencar, 2018; Burnett, 2012; Westby, 2017). Robinson (1998) considered integration as a chaotic term which means it is used by many scholars but understood differently (Robinson, 1998 cited in Ager and Strange, 2008). As stated by Berry (1997), there are two common views about integration, namely: one-way process and two-way process. The former view expects all immigrants and ethnic groups to become like the host society (ibid). This perspective gives a normative meaning to integration and considers integration as what it should be. From this point of view which is parallel with an assimilatory perspective, all immigrants have to relinquish their own culture and accept the culture of the host society (Alencar, 2018). While the dominant society does not take responsibility to adapt to them. In that case, the integration definition of Pennix could be classified in this category "the process by which immigrants become accepted into society" (2003,1). Hence, in compliance with what is mentioned above, the integration process has been considered as a linear process which refers to the acceptance of immigrants by the new society.

Whereas in the latter view which Berry called it "integrationist", immigrants have been accepted in the host society with their own cultural terms (1997). According to him, integration strategies defined as "the maintenance of cultural integrity of the group, as well as movement by the group to become an integral part of a larger societal framework" (P. 27). Indeed, "when there is an interest in both maintaining one's heritage culture while in daily interactions with other groups, integration is the option" (Berry, 2005, 705). Similarly, Korac has considered

integration as "a process by which individuals and groups of newcomers maintain their cultural identity while actively participating in the larger societal framework…" and also is "a process of building bridges and shaping identities to accommodate the translational realities of the modern world" (Korac 2005, 28-31 cited in Kutle, 2013, 18). As defined by Pahud (2008), integration is "the process by which newcomers contribute to the dominant society's social and economic well-being while retaining their own cultural identity. It is a two-way process involving the participation and cooperation of both newcomers and members of the dominant receiving culture" (P.12). By regarding the definitions provided above, here integration is considered as a two-way process which balance between adapting cultural elements of new society and keeping refugees own culture that involves responsibilities for both societies; and members of the host society.

Taking into account the lack of a clear meaning of integration, Ager and Strange (2008) have proposed a model of core domains of integration for the purpose of understanding what does establish a successful integration. According to this model, there are different indicators which might impede or accelerate the process of integration. Their conceptual model covers four main domains which play an important role in the process of immigrants' integration. The main four domains are namely: Markers and Means, Social Connections, Facilitators and Foundation which are interdependent. These domains and their indicators have been presented at the table below.

Table 1. Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration (Ager and Strange, 2008)

Markers and Means	Social Connections	Facilitators	Foundation
Employment	Social Bridges	Language and Cultural Knowledge	Rights and Citizenship
Housing	Social Bonds		
Education		Safety and Stability	
Health	Social Links		

The first recognized domain is "Markers and Means" which covers indicators of activities in the public sphere. Moreover, positive outcomes in this domain, which has covered indicators of employment, housing, education, and health have been considered as indicative of successful integration. Furthermore, these indicators regard as the social right of immigrants, which help them to progress in their new life (ibid).

The next domain is social connections which have a basic influence on the integration process. According to Ager and Strange (ibid), there are two categories of factors which act as "connective tissue". Social connections are considered to be one of the grouping factors which provides "connective tissue" between the public outcomes and foundation indicators. Scholars classified social connections to three different forms, namely: Social Bridges, Social Bonds, and Social links. To put it briefly, while social bonds are about the connection "with family and co-ethnic, co-national, co-religious or other forms of group", social bridges mainly have

focused on contacts "with other communities", and social links are related "with the structures of the state" (ibid, P. 178)

The third domain that accelerates the process of integration in other domains is facilitators which include indicators of language and cultural knowledge and safety and stability. As it is stated previously, there are two grouping factors of "connective tissue" which the first one was social connections and the second is the facilitators group. To scholars, the function of facilitators is to remove the existing barriers in the integration process. For example, knowing the dominant language in a new society can facilitate the process of getting a job or develop refugees' social connections and also increase participation of refugees.

The last point in this model is the foundation domain which contains the indicators of right and citizenship. The significance of foundation is in the notion of "nation's sense of identity" which includes particular values which shape the way that integration is reached. It means this domain provides a base for creating a more cohesive society. Particularly, the foundation shows both refugees' right and their responsibilities as well (ibid).

To sum up, all of these indicators act as tools which not only assist and facilitate the integration process but also provide guidelines for service providers and policymakers.

3.3. Coping Theory

Folkman and Lazarus (1984) defined coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (P.141). As stated by them, this definition implies some characteristics; first, coping is a "process-oriented" effort, second coping is not an automatized adaptive behavior, third it is defined "as efforts to manage" demands. In fact, "managing can include minimizing, avoiding, tolerating, and accepting the stressful conditions as well as attempts to master the environment" (ibid, P.142). According to Pahud (2008), "coping has to do with approaches, skills, and abilities that allow people to face and manage life's difficulties. It is a process and not an outcome which helps to master a problem but does not necessarily mean the problem is mastered" (P.47). In other words, coping is a way through which people try to control and mitigate external stresses. Therefore, coping refers to the ways which people respond to the challenges they have faced with different circumstances. Coping strategies taken by people are different and they may change over time and situations (Mohamed Saleh Baqutayan, 2015).

There are two approaches toward coping; person-based approach versus situation-based approach. According to Carolyn and Aldwin (2007), "Person-based approaches to the study of coping posit that personality characteristics are primary in determining how people cope with stress" (P.100). Meanwhile, "a situation-based approach would argue that environmental demands or situational characteristics evoke differing coping strategies" (ibid, P. 99). To put it differently, in the first approach, it has been surmised that a person ascertains coping strategies while in the latter one the situation is determinant.

Generally speaking, scholars divided coping strategies to two main dimensions; problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies. As declared by Zeidner and Endler (1996), the first dimension entails those strategies which "attempt to solve, re-conceptualize, or minimize the effect of a stressful situation" (9). Whereas the latter dimension implies coping strategies which

"involve self-preoccupation, fantasy, or other conscious activities related to affect regulation" (ibid, 9). Folkman and Lazarus (1984) referred to them as amenable and unamenable strategies. Considering this, problem-focused coping strategies are used when a situation evaluated to be amenable to alteration. In fact, "problem-focused efforts are often directed at defining the problem, generating alternative solutions, weighing the alternatives in terms of their costs and benefits, choosing among them, and acting" (P.152). Comparatively, emotion-focused strategies related to those situations in which the appraisal shows that a person cannot do anything to change the harmful situation. According to Folkman and Lazarus (ibid) emotion-focused coping forms, mostly include cognitive processes which aim to lessen the emotional distress. Cognitive processes "include strategies such as avoidance, minimization, distancing, selective attention, positive comparisons, and wresting positive value from negative events" (P.150).

Folkman and her colleagues (1986) expanded a measure named ways of coping which they have divided it to eight scales as follows:

Table 2. Ways of Coping strategies used by Folkman and Lazarus., (1986, 995)

Problem-focused coping	Emotion-focused coping
Planful Problem Solving "Efforts to alter the situation (e.g., "I knew what had to be done, so I doubled my efforts to make things work")". **Confrontive Coping** "Aggressive efforts to alter the situation (e.g., "stood my ground and fought for what I wanted," "tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind"). It also suggests a degree of hostility (e.g., "I expressed anger to the person(s) who caused the problem") and risk-taking (e.g., "took a big chance or did something very risky," "I did something which I didn't think would work, but at least I was doing something")". **Seeking social support** "Efforts to seek informational support (e.g., "talked to someone to find out more about the situation"), tangible support (e.g., "talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem"), and emotional support (e.g., "accepted sympathy and understanding from someone")".	**Escape-Avoidance** "Wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to escape or avoid (e.g., "wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with"), (e.g., "tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc." **Self-control** "Efforts to regulate one's own feelings (e.g., "I tried to keep my feelings to myself," and actions (e.g., "tried not to burn my bridges, but leave things open somewhat". **Accepting Responsibility** "Acknowledges one's own role in the problem (e.g., "criticized or lectured myself,")". **Distancing** "Efforts to detach oneself (e.g., tried to forget the whole thing)". **Positive Reappraisal** "Efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth (e.g., "changed or grew as a person in a good way," "I came out of the experience better than I went in") It also has a religious tone (e.g., "found new faith," "I prayed")".

In summary and based on Folkman and Lazarus (1984), problem- and emotion-focused copings are interconnected. To put it another way, they can hinder or facilitate each other in the coping process.

3.4.   Summary

As has been noted in chapters one and two, introduction and literature review, both of these concepts might affect the mental health of immigrants. For being adjusted in a new society, it is vital to be fully integrated. Integration in the new society would affect well-being and quality of life of immigrants, which means any deficiency in this area might jeopardize their well-being. On the contrary, as a consequence of poor mental health and well-being, the speed of integration will decrease. It is not possible to return or amend immigrants' well-being without having good coping skills. Hence, being equipped with good skills not only assist immigrants and expand their capacity to tolerate challenges which they have faced, but also helps them to get more integrated into the host society. By mentioning this fact that for being integrated into society having coping skills is vital, it should be pointed out that integration would provide more coping skills for immigrants. All in all, given these points, the main point is that integration and coping strategies are interconnected which means success in one result in success in another one.

Chapter 4, Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the method that has been used for addressing the research questions in this study. According to Silverman "methodology refers to the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis, etc. in planning and executing a research study" (2013, 113). Halperin and Heath (2012) defined methodology as a strategy which through that researcher gain knowledge to answer the questions of the research.

Thus, this chapter gives an overview about the method that is used to conduct the research, explains the research design, how the sample and participants are selected, the data collection method, the data analysis and processing method, and ethical considerations. In other words, it describes how the research conducted from the beginning to the end.

The aim of this study is to discover the integration strategies as well as the coping strategies of Farsi-speaking women in Sweden.

To answer the research questions below, a qualitative research approach was applied:

- What does integration mean to Farsi-Speaking women?

- What challenges did they face during the process of integration in Sweden?

- How do they cope with their problems and challenges?

As Denzin and Lincoln (2018) stated, through qualitative research, the world could be seen using a set of interpretive and material practices. These practices change the world into a series of representations through which the world will be visible like interviews, photographs, and etc.

Based on this definition, a qualitative research approach is more about words than numbers regarding the collection and analyzing the data. In other words, it tries "to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the people that they study" (Bryman, 2016,399). To put in another way, the main emphasis of this approach is to understand the context that phenomena and social events are happening. Therefore, a qualitative research approach has been employed to explore the integration process and experiences, and coping strategies of women from their perspective.

4.2. Philosophical Orientation

Epistemology and ontology are crucial factors when a researcher chooses a method for conducting research. In accordant with Gray (2018), methods can be used based on their methodology (Qualitative or Quantitative). Put it simply, epistemology not even affect the theoretical perspective and methodology, but also affects the method that the researcher chooses to collect the data. (See Figure1)

Figure1. The relationship between Epistemology, Theoretical Perspective, Methodology and Research Method

Source: Adapted from Gray, 2018

Epistemology → Theoretical Perspective → Methodology → Method
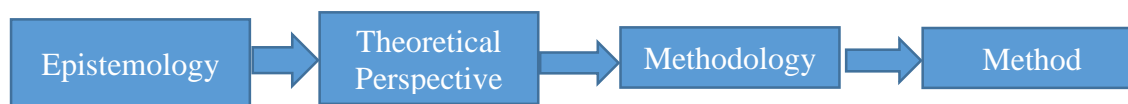
While, epistemology is about "what it means to know" and gives the researcher the wisdom to understand what kind of knowledge is acceptable, the main concern of ontology orientation is "the study of being" and tries to understand "what is". (ibid, P.21)

Considering that the approach of this research is qualitative, a constructivism ontology and an interpretivism epistemology were applied. As stated by Gray (2018) in constructivism view, meanings are created by the subjects via interaction with the world. In this perspective, understanding of social phenomena depends on how social actors construct them. In addition, it entails that "social phenomena are not produced by social interaction, but are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman, 2016, P.29). It means that the meanings are indeterminate, and stem from social interaction and subjects are those who change them through the way which they are describing realities. This perspective requires researchers to consider the subject's views to understand the meaning and interpret realities.

In qualitative research, interpretivism is a theoretical approach which linked to constructivism. Interpretivism is a term which refers to this issue that natural science and social science are two different subjects so they need to apply different methods to make the research process (Bryman, 2016; Gray, 2018). The main concern of this perspective for comprehension of social reality is through "culturally derived and historically situated interpretation of the social life-world" (Crotty, 1998, P. 67; as cited in Gray, 2018, P. 24).

4.3. Deduction and Induction

There are two approaches which by them the relationship between theory and research is explained, namely; deductive and inductive. Deductive begins with theory and hypothesis and then drive the process of collecting data and; in contrast, an inductive approach is about generating theory after collecting data (Bryman, 2016; Gray, 2018). In this research, both of these approaches have been applied, although the deductive approach is more dominant. It started with the deductive view by reviewing the existing literature and theories. But it did not conduce just to deductive approach. According to Bryman (2016) deduction reasoning has elements of induction, which refer to the last step in which new theories have been generated in consequence of analyzing the data which is named "Revision of theory" (ibid, P. 21).

In other words, the first step of this study was to test the existing theories on the topic of integration and coping strategies among Farsi-speaking women in Sweden through a qualitative method. But analyzing the data revealed new findings, which required applying an inductive approach.

4.4. Research Design

Gray stated, "research design sits between a set of research questions and the data, and shows how the research questions will be addressed (Punch, 2005)" (2018, 169). To be more precise, a research design is a plan which has chosen by an investigator in order to answer the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Similarly, Yin (2009) sees research design as a "blueprint" which makes an outline to connect different parts of a research.

In this study, an explanatory approach related to "what" questions have been utilized to reach a better understanding of the research topic. The aim of this research is to explain the process of integration of women into the society, their integration's challenges, and their experiences from the moment of their arrival. Besides, it aims to explore their coping strategies as well.

4.5. Literature review of the search method

In order to conduct a research, the first step is to find the relevant literature on the research topic. Therefore for collecting the literature related to the topic. First; I started with the keywords that I recognized in my topic in order to narrow my search domain such as" refugee women, immigrant women, the experience of refugee or immigrant women, challenges of migration, refugee or immigrants and coping strategies, refugees or immigrants and integration, Iranian/Afghan refugees or immigrants in Sweden".

In this step, focusing just on one resource for finding literature is not logical, in other words, researchers must use multiple sources to access authentic resources. Then; I looked up for specific search engines that could help me to find the related articles on my topic, like; Google Scholar, Scopus and Library's database of the University of Gothenburg. Moreover, another way to access literature is the articles that we already have. It means available articles or reports can be a good source. As it has been mentioned above, all of these resources and references of available literature help the researcher to access to a good source of literature. I attempted to give priority to the most relevant resources that could help me to find rich information in these domains. Although I tried to look for the most recent publications in these areas, it was difficult or it was limited in some areas.

4.6. Sampling

The target group of this study was Farsi-Speaking refugee women from Iran and Afghanistan who come to the refugee services center (church) to receive social services. There are two reasons which I decided to conduct research among this group; first, the initial reason was that Farsi language was the mother tongue of both of these groups and me as the author of this research. It is easier to conduct a reaserch among those groups who speak the same language as the researcher since it gives more deep understanding to the researcher about the answers which her/his participants provide. Second, as it has been mentioned in the first chapter, these two nationalities which speak the same language and share most of their cultural elements are among those nationalities with the highest number of applications for asylum seeker and have the highest number of granted asylum seekers as well. Although they have big communities in Sweden, there is a scarcity of studies on asylum seekers who speak Farsi, are women, and receive support from the government. Available literature in this study prove this claim, which

only there are six studies among Farsi speaking refugees, and only two out of six was conducted among women.

Since I have been in the organization once before for my internship with my colleagues, the staffs and some of the beneficiaries already knew me. Initially, I contacted the head of the organization introduced myself and informed her about the topic and aims of the research and asked her permission to visit the center. After visiting the organization, since she knew me, she agreed to help me and even let me do my interviews in their offices. Then, she introduced me to some of her colleagues and informed them about my research topic and its aims and asked them to help me. Meanwhile, she gave me the permission to attend at the some of their activities such as; Swedish class and sewing class in order to look for cases that are relevant to my criteria where I met the first person of the sample. I talked with her about my research topic and its aims and asked her if it is possible for her to be part of my sample. She accepted to do the interview and also gave me information about the time schedule that Afghan and Iranian women attend the center to participate in the activities of the organization.

I came back to the center to find the rest of my sample. There, I met newcomer families who have come there to receive their basic needs. Although I tried to contact some of these women who seemed qualified, I was not successful to get their attention. I perceived that newcomer women had two main concerns. Their first concern was about providing the basic needs of their families such as food and clothes. Then, I comprehended that the other main concern was accessing the information which helps them about completing their immigration profile. This information mainly is including how to present their cases to the migration officers to increase their chance of getting accepted by the immigration office.

Then, I realized that these newcomer women are not qualified to be a part of my sample. Therefore, for selecting my sample, I placed a criterion which means they should be qualified to be selected. Those women who have lived in Sweden for more than one year and are coming to the refugee services center (church) to receive social services and taking part in social activities were qualified. The purpose of putting limitation for years of living in Sweden was based on these observations that I mentioned earlier.

In addition to that, during the process of selecting my sample, I faced another problem which led to another criterion. In the beginning, all of Hazare Afghan women that I confronted with looked to be qualified to be included in my sample, but I found that it is not true. Due to the lack of means of communication with Afghan women because Hazare ethnic Afghans speak Dari Farsi which is a little bit different from the official Farsi (my language) which is spoken in Iran. Some parts of Afghanistan speak Dari that is the old version of Farsi which made the conversation difficult with them. Then I had to make some changes and choose two criteria in order to select my final sample: first was the duration of living in Sweden and then ability to speak the official version of Farsi fluently.

As I stated before, I met my first participant on the first day of attendance at the organization. She played an important role in finding the other participants based on the criteria that I mentioned. She played a gatekeeper role and introduced three other participants and provided information about their time of attendance at the center or even if they can speak Farsi Fluently or not. And eventually, these women introduced me to other prospective participants. Accessing the social setting and participants that are related to the research topic and questions is one of

the most important and difficult steps in conducting a research. Gatekeepers play a "key informant" role which makes access to participants easier (Bryman, 2016).

Two sample methods have been used to select the sample. Sampling method has an intense impact on the result of research and it has been affected by the method which is used by the researchers. Sampling refers to "the process of selecting samples from a population who shares a common set of traits" (Gray, 2018, 208). Due to putting the certain criteria mentioned above, a purposive strategy was chosen to access important information. The aim of this type of sampling is to get access to the cases that are typical and present the dimensions has been explored. In other words, to reach cases that are relevant to the research topic and questions (Gray, 2018; Bryman, 2016). This type of sampling does not let the outcomes of the study to generalize to a population.

As "purposive sampling involves more than one approach" (Bryman, 2016), a snowball sampling, as well as typical cases, has been applied. First, the initial cases have been chosen and afterwards, a snowball method was applied. In snowball sampling, the initial cases proposed other cases who had the relevant criteria of the study. Thus, I selected one participant who had the criteria of research and then she introduced two other women who had the same experience and criteria like her and lastly they introduced the rest of the participants.

According to Bryman (2016) sample size of a research which is conducted by a student can be affected by different factors such as the lack of resources and time. He suggested maximizing the number of interviews in a way that we can manage. Regarding this, and also the suggestion of my supervisor, the sample size for this study was six women. Six Farsi-speaking women were interviewed. Four women were from Iran and two women were from Afghanistan. One of the women came to Sweden as a result of marriage and the rest were asylum seekers.

4.7. Data Collection Method

In this section, the process and tools of data collection are described. Since, the present study used a qualitative method which aims to understand social realities in-depth and through the participants' eyes, a semi-structured interview was applied. The aim of employing a semi-structured interview was to obtain an insight on how participants interpret their own perspectives and see the world. There is an interview guide in this method which covers relevant questions to the topic and also stresses to gain rich information by giving room to participant in how to answer the questions. (Bryman, 2016) Before conducting the interview and based on the previous studies, an interview guide to open thematic guide was prepared. It means that follow-up and probing questions were employed based on interviewees' reply due to obtaining more detailed answers.

The right to decide where to do the interview was given to the interviewees. And, since these women were housewives and it was difficult for them to meet the interviewer in another place or another time, all the interviews carried out during the preferable time for them. As I have been given permission to conduct my interview in the organization and for creating a convenient and comfortable atmosphere, I conducted interviews at the office of the organization.

Before starting the interview, the purpose of the interview was clarified for women, and a consent form was given to them to read and sign. In the consent form, they were informed about

voluntary participation, recording the interviews, and this fact that they will stay anonymous. All of the interviews were recorded with their consent. Whereas recording just gave me this opportunity to have their explanations, I tried to take notes on their reactions to questions which were impossible to inscribe by recording. The interviews lasted 30-40 minutes and since the mother tongue of both interviewees and interviewer was Farsi language, the interviews were conducted in Farsi in order to achieve more valuable and clear information.

4.8. Data Analysis

For analyzing the data gathered in this research, thematic analysis method has been used. Thematic analysis is a technique for distinguishing themes inside qualitative data such as interview (Gray, 2018). The thematic analysis reveals the existing patterns in the collected data, explains the meaning that participants present, and identifies the themes. And finally, based on these themes, thematic analysis tries to address the research questions. The process of analyzing the data started with the coding phase in order to access the sub-themes and main themes which were relevant.

For this reason, first I listened and transcribed the data to Farsi and also I tried to avoid transcribing unrelated topics. As I stated, interviews conducted and transcribed in Farsi language which entail translating all the quotations in English. For protecting the accuracy of the data, I tried to avoid changing the meanings that the women provided. Transcribing the recordings helped me to get more familiar with the data.

Then in the next phase, first I tried to read the data for a better understanding of information. Following this, I reread and highlighted the significant concepts and also put marginal notes on them. My first intention of reviewing transcriptions for several times was to discover the frequency and repetitive topics. Also, it helped me to explore differences and similarities of interviewees on topics and questions relevant to the research. Furthermore, it was helpful to find about missing data and related theories (ibid). In order to organize my findings, creating codes and themes, I used a mind-map. And after finding the main themes, I referred to the data to quote them in my findings section.

4.9. Ethical Consideration

Ethics are moral principles which led the research and matter about how should researcher treat research subjects. Considering this issue that social sciences are dealing with subjects who are living in a real world, ethical issues cannot be overlooked during conducting a research. The researcher should apply proper behavior in regards to subjects who are studying and respect their values. (Gray, 2018). As stated by Diener and Crandall (1978), ethical principles included four main principles, namely: avoid harm, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception.

Before starting writing questions and interview, I discussed the ethical issues with my supervisor. As these women are mostly asylum seekers, our first concern was about how they look at me as a researcher. We pictured two assumptions which could be ethical and affect the final findings. First, we thought maybe they cannot trust the research aim and they might see this research as a tool to somehow spy on them and reach their information to report to their origin country. Second, they may see the researcher as a person who is in touch with the Swedish government that can affect the process of their asylum seeker application.

During conducting the interviews, I realized that our second assumption came true. I felt that some of these women are not comfortable with one question and refrained answering it, for example, one of them directly said that she will skip that question.

Her explanation was that "I presented a reason to get accepted as an asylum seeker in migration office to get a residence permit and I would not like to destroy my chance by providing extra information for this research". Therefore, they considered me as a person who might be in contact with the Swedish government that may endanger their chance. Despite explaining my research topic and my situation that I am a Master student and clarifying that this research is just for my thesis, still, some of them could not completely trust.

In the first step, I wrote to the head of the center and explained my topic and its goals. Next, I provided an introduction letter and a consent form in Farsi and English for both the head of the center and participants as well. Further, before starting the interview, I gave both introduction letter and consent form in Farsi to participants to give them information and informed them about their rights. Content of consent form covered various issues such as voluntary participation by participants, the audio recording of interviews, terminating the interview without any penalty from the side of the researcher or providing any reason, anonymous process which means their name will not be mentioned in the research or researcher changes their name in order to protect their confidentiality. Eventually, all these data will be used exclusively for academic purposes. After providing a summary of the research and having their written consent, I started my interviews.

4.10. Validity and Reliability

According to Gray (2018) credibility is one of the main forces behind designing an interview in order to be sure that the findings could be trusted. Credibility covers the issues of validity and reliability. These two factors, validity and reliability, should be considered in analyzing the results by the researcher. Validity deals with trustfulness and accuracy of findings, while reliability is concerned about consistency and repeatability. (ibid)

Validity as Golfeshani (2003) stated, is about whether the instrument, which has been used, measured what it was intended to measure or results of the research are trustful. In other words, whether the aims of research have been addressed by the content of the questions or not. Thomson explained that in order to maintain the validity of the results, "the data must accurately reflect what the participant has said or done" (2011, 78). Hence, for enhancing the validity of my findings, I tried to maintain the accuracy during the process of transcription, translation, and reporting of what participants said during conducting the interviews. Similarly, in cases that the meanings which they have provided were ambiguous, I tried to make an accurate summary of what they told me with getting their confirmation. Also, in the end, they were asked to add additional information that they think it can be useful for the research aims.

Gray (2018) referred to reliability as "avoiding the interview effect" by the researcher. He mentioned that for avoiding to affect the responses of the interviewees, the behavior of interviewer should be standardized. He suggested some ways to avoid errors during the process of the interview. To Gray, the first step is to provide the questions for respondents and asking them to read them exactly as they are written. The second step is to respect their right to refuse to answer a question. And finally exploring in a non-directive way. Given that, I applied all of the suggestions above, first of all, I provided a questionnaire in Farsi and after explaining my

research and its aims, I asked them to read the questionnaire carefully. The aim was to give them this chance to get to know and prepare for the questions and also provide the opportunity to reject answering the questions in case they felt uncomfortable. In addition, I asked them if they are illiterate and cannot read questions, I can ask another person to read it for them or I can do it by myself. In fact, I had to read the whole questionnaire twice for one of these women who was illiterate to be sure that she has understood the exact meaning of each question. In some other cases, it took almost along to read and understand the questions. Secondly, considering their right to refuse to answer the questions, there was an interviewee who refused to answer one of the questions, and I passed the question without any insistence. And the last point that I tried to apply was to access those questions which they have responded shortly in a non-directive way or through follow up questions.

4.11. Challenges

The initial challenge that I confronted was in the process of sampling. First, I thought it would be easy to access to Farsi-Speaking women (Afghan women) as both of us speak Farsi. And then after distinguishing them, I could see there are some differences in our dialects. Some of these Afghan women, who were eligible to be interviewed, were from Hazarajat of Afghanistan who spoke Dari dialect of Farsi which is the old version of Persian that was not understandable for me.

As a Farsi speaking person, I could not understand even a word that's why I chose the snowball method sampling. By applying a snowball method, I could reach those Afghan women who could speak the official Farsi fluently in order to make it possible to communicate with them. Language challenge placed barriers on the sampling process and took more time to access to participants than what I expected.

The second challenge was about the emotional situations that participants were crying or were disappointed. Inasmuch as these women had been through different trauma and faced many challenges during the process of settlement in Sweden, I kept in mind that they may get emotional and start crying. First, as a human being and then as a co-national person, it was difficult for me to see them in this situation. Also, it was hard to handle this situation and give them the time to express themselves until they felt relieved.

The third challenge which I faced with was the level of education of my sample. As mentioned earlier, these women were not that much educated and just two out of the six had finished high school. This issue made the process of interviewing difficult. For this reason, some of the concepts were complicated for them to understand such as integration concept. Although I provided three different synonyms for integration, it was still difficult for some of these women to understand it. That's why it took me more time to clarify concepts or give them some examples until they could realize it.

Chapter 5, Findings

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, findings, analysis of the collected data are presented. As it has been mentioned earlier in chapter one and four, the main aims of this study are first to explore the meanings of integration from interviewees point of view. Secondly, to identify the main challenges of Farsi-speaking women and their ways of coping with these challenges.

The chapter begins with a description table of demographic information of participants. Then, it continues with the main themes which have been discerned in accordance with the main questions of this research as well as theories in the framework section. The obtained information will be presented via these two themes and their sub-themes. According to the tables of the main themes which will be presented later, integration as one of the main themes is classified into three sub-themes including women's integration perception, integration challenges, indicators of integration. And, coping strategies as the second main theme covers two main sub-themes; problem-focused coping, and emotion-focused coping. Likewise, respondents' quotations have used to achieve a better understanding of the findings. In the table below, the demographic information of participants has been presented.

Table 3. Demographic Information of Participants

Number of Participants	Age	Nationality	Education	Marital Status	Immigration Status	Employment status	Years of living in Sweden
Elham	43	Iran	High School	Divorced	Refugee	Employed	7
Zohre	46	Iran	High School	Divorced	Refugee	Unemployed	6
Nasibe	48	Afghanistan	Primary Education	Divorced	Refugee	Unemployed	7
Adele	58	Afghanistan	Illiterate	Married	Refugee	Unemployed	6
Faride	52	Iran	Primary Education	Divorced	Refugee	Unemployed	8
Roya	56	Iran	Primary Education	Married	Asylum seeker	Unemployed	3

Referring to the table of demographic information of participants, the youngest participant was 43 years old and the oldest one was 58 years old. Moreover, more than half of the interviewees were from Iran, four out of the six. It is clear that the majority of respondents were from a low educated background. And most of these women, four out of the six had the same marital status, they were divorced which means they were single mothers. Most of these women had almost three children who were taking care of them by their own for many years which have made their condition more difficult. However, most of these women had been living in Sweden for

more than six years, only one of them was financially independent and has succeeded and achieved a job.

5.2. Integration

This section will begin with the table of integration theme and its sub-themes and will be followed by the quotations and explanations of each theme and sub-themes of the table below.

Table 4. Integration Theme

Sub-themes	
	Women's integration perception
	a. Adaption to culture
	b. Adaption to law
	Integration challenges
	a. Language
	Indicators of integration
	1. Means and Markers
	a. Employment (practice)
	b. Education
	c. Health
	2. Social Connection
	3. Facilitators
	a. Language
	b. Information

5.2.1. Women's Integration Perception

In order to reach a better understanding of what integration means to Farsi-speaking immigrant women, participants have been asked to define integration first. The goal was to perceive which aspect of integration is important for them. And also, they were asked to show their feeling toward their integration level on the scale which has been provided in the questionnaire. The initial aim of asking this question was to realize that do they presume themselves as an integrated person in the society or not? And besides, to comprehend what are the reasons which they considered themselves as an integrated or disintegrated person? It was important to realize what are the considerable indicators of integration from their point of view. Thus, the scale was numbered from 1 to 10 which Number 1 was considered as the lowest level of integration and Number 10 was considered as the highest level of integration. According to interviewees definition, women's perception of integration divided into two categories: adaption to culture and adaption to law.

a. Adaptation to culture

Most of the respondents, four out of the six, have situated in this category.

> "Adapting the new society (cultural aspect) and people and matching with
> the target community" (Elham)

In this respect, integration to her is following the new society which culture is the most important part. She gave herself grade two according to proficiency in the language. However, she asserted that she is trying to improve her language skills by getting to number 10. At the same time, she presumes herself integrated regarding that she is employed. In fact, in her eyes, working was one of the main elements of being integrated which she was successful in this part.

Participant number three defined integration as having good behavior and assimilation:

> "Integration means to behave like the people in the new society, and having
> a good behavior leads to assimilation to the society that you are living in".

In other words, integration is harmonizing with the society which you are living in, regarding different aspects. Following this definition, she did a self-evaluation and graded herself number 8 due to obeying rules and culture.

> "For example, I do not say this thing is Swedish, there are too many people
> who do not eat Swedish food, do not eat Swedish bread, well what is wrong
> with this bread. Swedish people treat others in a good manner and we should
> behave like them, when we are living here, we should not be different".

From her point of view, she defines integration in a similar way as Ager and Strange who says that integration is "preparedness to adopt the lifestyle of the host society" (2008, 176).

As has been stated by Faride, integration means:

> "Cohesion, equality, and harmonizing with society's expectations, and
> accepting the target society's culture, in general, to be alike the host society".

Her definition of integration covers culture and the expectation of society which brings equality and harmony. Regarding the level of integration, she scored herself number 5. She had two reasons for this evaluation: the first reason was that she did not know the dominant language.

> "I haven't learned the Swedish language and hence I could not enter into the
> society to speak about myself".

The second reason is that she has learned the Swedish culture which means to her that she is in the middle of the way of integration.

Other participant, Roya, has defined integration as:

> "Being familiar with the culture for entering the new society"

As she has stated in the definition above, culture is the main element of her integration definition. She graded her integration level based on the progress which she had made in learning the language, gave herself number 5. Though this grading was not only based on her language skills but her familiarity with the culture as well.

Based on the above self-evaluations, obviously, culture is the most critical keyword in the definition of integration. From their views, immigrants should respect the culture of the host society with their behavior and also they should try to embrace all traits of the host society's culture.

b. Adaptation to law

Two participants were placed in this category.

> "To harmonize with the law and respecting regulations which result in discipline for everyone, even myself" (Zohre).

Thanks to learning the language and finding a job, she considered herself in the middle of the scale, that is to say, she scored herself grade 5. She reasoned that in this way:

> "If I knew the Swedish language, and I was able to speak, it was easier for me to get a job and I could be more active"

To Adele integration is:

> "To harmonize with each other, to behave well with everyone, and respect the law of the society that you are living in".

She graded herself according to her language skills:

> "Since my Swedish language is not good, I graded myself 2-3. Integration means knowing the dominant language and since I don't speak the language fluently, I gave this number to myself".

In spite of giving a low grade to herself with regard to language insufficiency, she asserted that she is integrated according to respecting the law. It is obvious in this sub-themes which respecting the law is the outstanding element of integration from their point of view.

c. Analysis of integration perception

To sum up my findings in this section, it is important to realize how these women define the integration. According to their definitions of integration, three key points have been found. The first key point is that most of these women considered integration as a one-way process which results in being accepted by the host society regardless of their own culture. Berry (1998 and 2005) refers to this process as "melting pot" and it happens when a group of people come to a new society melt into the dominant society and then assimilation occurs. In this manner, immigrants wish to give up their own cultural identity and they seek a new identity which is acceptable for the host community.

The second key point which is connected to the first one is that the ways which they have tried to assimilate into Swedish society, namely: culture and law. As can be seen, in the first category, four out of the six used words "harmonize, assimilation". All these words show their efforts and eagerness to be accepted by the Swedish society. Even one of the women pointed to the society's expectations which means they are looking to know what they should to do to be accepted by the new society. Although in the second category, participants have used the words "harmonize" as well, it does not refer to culture, indeed, it implies to the law and rules. In this respect, two of the six mentioned that assimilation means to respect the law and rules.

And the third and last key point is that in all of the discussions which we had together about their level of integration, there were two domains which have been emphasized for improving their integration level. "Language and Employment" were golden keys of good and successful integration in the Swedish society in the participant's eyes. To put it differently, any progress and success in these two domains will result in an effective integration.

5.2.2. Integration challenges

a. Language

The second theme in the integration table is "integration challenges". In order to reach the main challenges which interviewees have faced, they were asked to clarify if they are satisfied with their new life in Sweden. Explicitly, the first aim was to know how they feel about Sweden, which navigates us to the next level which was to know about their challenges. Therefore, the researcher asked them to express the challenges which they have faced from the arrival time in Sweden. In fact, the objective was not only to know about the type of their problems but also to comprehend why dealing with that problem was hard for them.

Generally, four of the interviewees have almost completely consented with the new opportunities which this new life has been provided for them and their families in Sweden. Below I have provided three statements of satisfied participants.

Zohre declared:

> "Yes, I am consent, I was divorced, I did not have money, I was out of a job, I did not speak Swedish language and the Swedish government protected me, and that was a big aid".

Another satisfied participant, Nasibe, stated:

"I completely consent to living here, in here they do not discriminate among people, they respect all the people the same. The day that I went to my children's school, her teacher told me that we do not treat your child differently and she has the same right as the Swedish children, even though you are not the resident. I was so delighted to hear that".

Likewise, participant number Adele asserted:

> "Yes, I am satisfied, my children are studying here and continuing their studies, they are successful and I am here only for them".

On the contrary, two interviewees shared that although, their life got better in some aspects, to some degrees they are not satisfied with their new life in Sweden. For example, one of them explained that there is nothing left behind in her country.

> "I ruined the ways behind and I lost some of my important things". (Elham)

For another interviewee, the challenges which she has faced are the main reasons for being dissatisfied.

> "I am fifty percent satisfied with this new life as I have confronted many problems which cause this dissatisfaction. I would love to work and I am not afraid of that --- but I cannot". (Faride)

Following the next question, all the women declared that lack of knowing the Swedish language was the main barrier that they have been through and has made their life difficult. Admittedly, this challenge has produced new challenges that have obstructed their activities. One of these main challenges is employment. Obviously, knowing and speaking the Swedish language is one of the main elements of gaining job which results in achieving money and improving their families' economy. Besides, due to the very poor language skills, they were alien to the new environment. Meanwhile, these are the direct consequences of lack of language proficiency, there are other indirect consequences which with other challenges have put too much pressure on interviewees such as depression. Half of these women (3 out 4 Iranian women) stated that they had experienced depression in the beginning and two of these women asserted to some degree they are still dealing with it.

Elham expressed:

> "I did not know the language, I was out of money, and I was depressed, what could I do? I could not afford an independent house. I was living with my friend and I was embarrassed".

Another participant said:

> "My worst experience goes back to the first years of coming to Sweden, I was not able to speak the Swedish language. It was difficult at the time for my husband and me, we could not do anything. The time that we were going to the Swedish classes in Malmo, the teachers had a strong accent which was difficult for us to understand. Even if she was asking me to leave the class and go home, I could not get what she is saying and there was no one to help us" (Adele).

And similarly, another participant declared:

> "My worst experiences go back to the time when I was depressed, although I did not know that. Then, one day I went out to buy a diaper for my daughter and I got lost. I did know even a Swedish word and could not find my way. I was out until 11 pm and then I shouted police... police... then they helped me to find my house" (Faride).

b. Analysis of challenges

As has been presented in the literature review section, there is a large volume of studies which have shown language as the main barrier that immigrants and refugees have faced during the process of settlement. Ager and Strange (2008), considered language as a salient factor of integration, which connects immigrants to the public arena that any achievement in this area will lead to other achievements in other areas of integration. Correspond to Kristjánsdóttir and Dís Skaptadóttir (2018), language is one of the key majors of making and expanding social networks. To put it differently, the lack of knowledge of the dominant language results in less interaction with the host society and the local environment. Undeniably, as a result of less interaction with the locals, immigrants will have less social networks, which is one of the crucial factors of finding a job. Lack of language skills, lack of good social networks, and being unemployed contribute to the sadness and loneliness of immigrants. The finding of Hutchinson and Dorsett (2012), supported the importance of language on other aspects of integration. According to them, proficiency in the host society's language not only enables immigrants to communicate with the locals and through which helps them to express their feelings but also influence their employment prospect. That means language abilities empower immigrants in all aspects of life which leads to better integration in the new society.

Ager and Strange (2004) have enumerated the importance of language for immigrants as follows: First and foremost, language helps immigrants to develop their friendship with the locals. Second, it conducts more effective communication with institutions and members of the new society. Hence, language gives immigrants better access to services and activities as well as promoting their "self-esteem and feeling of well-being" (P, 10). Also, it helps children to develop academically and last but not least fortifies the sense of belonging to the community.

Evidently, the results of the present study testify the findings of previous researches which lack of language knowledge has had tremendous effects on immigrants' life such as employment, social networks, and their well-being. Participants in my research have regarded proficiency in the Swedish language as the chief means that has impacted their life in different aspects. In fact, the function of language is to give them a sense of being productive in the society which brings on better integration. On this process, having a sense of effectiveness encourages immigrants to put more efforts to modify their life which conduces to lessen the loneliness, depression, and fear of the future. Given these points, it is obvious that language proficiency brings more satisfaction to immigrants' life.

5.2.3. Indicators of integration

The last sub-themes that have been recognized from data gathered are indicators of integration. Indicators of integration from the participants' standpoint are those factors which help them during the process of integration and facilitate their integration.

According to Ager and Strange model (2008), there are four domains which cover different aspects of integration as listed in chapter three: markers and means, social connections, facilitators and foundation. In the first domain, markers and means, indicators of employment, housing, education, and health are the four main indicators. In the next domain which is social connections include indicators of social bridges, social bonds, and social links. The third domain (facilitators) covers indicators of language and cultural knowledge and safety and

stability. Eventually, they have placed the indicator of rights and citizenship in the domain of foundation.

Given these points, and based on the data gathered, I have placed the findings of my research according to Ager and Strange (ibid) conceptual framework of domains of integration. Likewise, these domains and their indicators have been presented earlier in this chapter. Therefore, the first domain consistent with their model is markers and the means which contain factors which have been found in the findings.

a. Markers and Means

I have identified three main factors in this domain:
- Employment
    - Practice Sessions
- Education
- Health

1. Employment

In this area, all participants have indicated employment as one of the biggest steps of integration within the host community that they were successful in reaching it or they are trying to reach it.

For example, one of the interviewees has enunciated that:

"I could get a job which is, in my opinion, a big step that I could do" (Elham).

Since employment provides multiple benefits, from the eyes of participants, finding a job was one of the main factors of a successful integration. It helps people to achieve a stable economic situation which assists them to relieve in different parts of their social life. In addition, it helps immigrants to feel independent which increase their sense of belonging. Below I have provided statements of four participants.

Elham declared:

"Being out of money was worse if I could afford to have an independent house --- it could be easier for me to tolerate".

Similarly, Zohre expressed:

"If I could get a job, I could be more active in society. Financial supports are limited to meeting everyday needs and I could not save money for traveling. I have not traveled and it is a big problem".

In the same way, Nasibe said:

"I hope I can work in order to do not take money from the government, to feel free".

Correspondingly, the last one, Roya, pronounced:

> "We have some Iranian friends here, but since our economic situation is not good we cannot communicate with them; we just call them. However, our children are very financially supportive, it bothers me to live with them".

Since it is clear from their responses, being employed has affected their life in different aspects. First of all, making money enables immigrants to save money, which in result helps them to make plans for their future such as traveling. Afterward, employment is a good way of communicating with the society that assists them to be active and expand their social networks. Also, it has been identified as one of the reasons which stop women to communicate with their small networks because they do not have enough money to invite their friends.

On the other hand, getting a job requires some prerequisites which one of them is language, it has been implied as to the main requirement that lack of it hinders the process of getting a job. Ager and Strange (ibid) have considered the ability to speak the dominant language as one of the requirements of promoting "employability".

One of the interviewees mentioned:

> "I could not speak the Swedish language and therefore I was not able to get a job. If I knew the language, getting a job was much easier" (Zohre).

Another interviewee said:

> "I tried to find a job, and applied for different jobs, even I asked my Afghani friends, but since my Swedish language is not good enough I could not get a job" (Nasibe).

1.1. Practice Sessions

Even though proficiency in the host language has been considered as the primary factor of fostering "employability", participants have indicated another factor, practice sessions. In their standpoint, not only it has assisted them to improve their language skills, but also it has boosted immigrants' vocational ability and has facilitated the process of employment.

Elham stated:

> "It is about five months, that I am working here and before that, I have done two years of practicing in this center".

The other participant expressed:

> "I have spent two years learning sewing in another center. They gave me a certificate and then sent me to this center to do another practice. I am sewing here and I do like to go to work if I could" (Adele).

Of course, it is obvious that providing vocational training for immigrants has a deep impact on their abilities in order to get a job, but there should be some consideration such as immigrants' capability or interest. Some of the participants have mentioned that they would like to go to

vocational training or practice sessions as they benefit from that, but there are some problems which stop them to join the practice sessions or even halt their efforts to learn the training.

One of the interviewees said:

> "I have worked (went to practice sessions) at a second-hand store for 7-8 months in order to improve my language skills, but I could not find a job and it did not improve my language skills. Because people did not talk too much unless the times that they asked me to show something to them. (Low level of linguistic contact)" (Nasibe).

Likewise, Faride asserted:

> "They send us for practice and then after 6-7 months, they told me that we do not need you and I spend my time there without earning anything. I would love to work and I am not afraid of that, but they should send me to a place that I can do the training, not carpentry which I cannot lift heavy things (since I have a chronic backache). How am I able to do carpentry? Or I do not have any skills at cooking and do not like cooking, why they sent me to such places. They can send me to those places that their training or job is easier".

2. Education

Education has been addressed by two participants as one of means which has adversely influenced their integration process.

Adele pronounced:

> "I am illiterate. Illiterateness has affected the process of learning the language, those who are literate have progressed a lot in learning the language…They use their phones and find the meaning of the words (software such as Dictionary)".

In the same way, participant number six declared:

> "I am illiterate; I did not even know what is subject and the verb" (Roya).

Being educated was considered by these participants as one of the remarkable elements which can provide other means and facilitate the process of learning the language.

3. Health

Another important indicator in markers and means area is the health situation of the immigrants. According to scholars, mental health problems can be a consequence of pre-migration or post-migration problems. Accordance with the findings of this study, almost half of the participants in the present research have declared that they have experienced mental health problems such as depression. And post-migration problems were the main reasons that have influenced their well-being.

For example, for the first participant, pre-migration as well as post-migration problems, such as breaking the roads behind and fear of vague future, were the chief reasons that she had experienced the depression.

> "In the beginning, I was not in a good mood. From the time that I arrived in Sweden until I got my residence permit (I was waiting 11 months for the residence permit, during this time I did not do anything and after that, it took one and half year to start learning the language) I was depressed. Because I came here and did not leave anything behind and I thought I can get the permit easily" (Elham)

On the other hand, for the next participant, the post-migration problems such as lack of language skills, labor, and divorce out of her country were the main reasons which still are offending her.

> "My mental health did not let me learn the Swedish language, I got depressed after my second labor. I was living alone in Sweden and because I did not know the language, it caused mental health problems. After my labor, I got divorced, which was so difficult for me. I cannot even talk about it now (the time that she was talking about this issue, she got sad, her sound got changed and started to cry for some seconds). (Zohre)

For another interviewee, post-migration problems such as the visa application situation, lack of language proficiency, as well as the fear of deporting to her original country, was the main reason for feeling depressed.

> "I got depressed when my application for the residence permit has been rejected, whenever I am talking about it, I feel sad. I did the conversion into Christianity, it is difficult. I do not know what will happen if they return me back to Iran. I will not be relief there. It is difficult for me to understand why I do not learn the language and from the time that I was rejected, learning the language is going harder and slower. I have too many worries in my mind that I think there is no space for learning the Swedish language. And when I see that others who are the same as me can speak the dominant language, I ask myself that can I speak Swedish?" (Roya).

By considering that mental health problems are the key factor that hazards the well-being of immigrants, it should not be overlooked that physical problems can cause the same consequences.

One of the interviewees has stated that her physical problems made her life difficult.

> "Their therapeutic system is worst; it does not work at all. I have pain in my kidney for three years and they did not find what is the problem" (Faride).

4.   Analysis of Markers and Means Domain

Ager and Strange (2008) have chosen the term 'public outcome' to show any accomplishment in the domain of markers and means. This domain covers those indicators which happen in the public sphere such as employment, housing, education, and health. The findings of my study

have shown that three indicators in the public area have influenced the integration process of immigrants as follows: employment, education, and health.

The first and vital indicator of the public area is employment, which undoubtedly is one of the most researched arenas in the integration sphere. For having successful and effective integration, being employed is one of the main factors. And likewise, other areas of integration would benefit from this area. That means, there are other issues which are directly or indirectly related to the employment area and any improvement in this area would change them as well. Employment influence the economic situation of people, make them able to plan for the future, assist them to improve their language skills by providing more opportunities to meet new people and communicate with members of the new society and more importantly increase their sense of belonging. Although, accessing employment is not reachable without having the language skills of the host society. According to scholars, language skills are the most vital key in employment indicator. That is to say, language and employment have a mutual relationship, any improvement in one of these aspects will lead to enhancement in another one.

Additionally, from the standpoint of immigrant women in this study, there is another factor, vocational training or practicing, which has a mutual relationship with language and employment at the same time. As it is apparent from the findings, providing places for training the immigrants cannot be adequate. Indeed, the type of practice and women's interest are other remarkable factors which should be considered in order to achieve a greater advantage for both immigrants and wider society. In the process of involving immigrants in activities which help them to learn how to improve their job skills, any mistake or neglect will put them in a hard situation. Definitely, enforcing immigrant women to participate in such activities which they do not incline or enjoy will hamper them to get involved in the activities which have been provided for them. And as a result, they try to avoid participation in other activities as well, as they think their ideas and desires have been ignored which can eventuate in more isolation. All things considered, employment can affect the health situation of immigrants.

The second crucial indicator in the public sphere in my study was education. Clearly, education has been considered as a means of providing skills for immigrants who are seeking jobs, and as a means which support the integration process of refugee children (Ager and Strange, 2008). In the case of this research, education was not an issue of finding the job, technically, they have addressed it as one element which reduced the speed of learning the language. Being educated provide more resources to access information on the procedure of learning the language.

The last indicator in this area was the health situation of immigrants. As stated by Ager and Strange (2008), "good health was widely seen as an important resource for active engagement in a new society" (P. 172). In other words, the engagement of immigrants into the host society needs a good health situation which helps them to go through hard times. As has been stated earlier, the reasons that immigrants struggle with depression can be different, pre-migration problems or post-migration problems. They may conduce problems in the process of integration, stop it or make it slower. First and foremost, they jeopardize immigrants' well-being which consequently results in less engagement in society. Hence the direct result of less engagement in the community can be more isolation, the growth of disappointment will be inevitable. Hence, more involvement with mental health problems lessen the efforts of immigrants from learning the dominant language, finding the job or even expanding their social networks. Above all, all of these consequences will intensify their mental health problems which eventuate in less integration.

a. Social Connection

Social connections which are the second crucial domain in the conceptual framework of integration has been addressed in this section. I have classified my findings in this section accordance with integration conceptual framework of Ager and Strange (2008) to three categories: social bonds, social bridges, and social links.

In the first category, social bonds are divided into the relationship with family and friends, co-national, and co-religious. In brief, in the level of communicating with the family almost most of the interviewees have asserted that they are communicating with their families back home. Although, one of them rejected to answer the question related to communication with family and friends in her origin country. Whereas in the next level, communicating with co-national, and co-religious, half of the participants have declared that they avoid communication with their own co-national or co-religious communities.

In fact, in the first level, participants have stated that they need their families emotionally, for sharing their challenges, receiving positive energy, and retaining their culture. Or they keep communicating because their families have helped them to start their journey to Sweden, therefore they owe them.

Zohre stated:

> "I am in touch with my family and friends in Iran. My family only supported me emotionally. It is important for me to keep this communication to protect my lineage. I talk to my families about my problems".

Another interviewee, Nasibe, stated:

> "I have a sister in Afghanistan, she helped and gave me money to come to Sweden. And also telling me constantly to be patient, everything will be fine. I have a brother who is living here, he consoles me all the times, and help me emotionally and financially".

Correspondingly, Adele asserted:

> "My families in Afghanistan helped me and supported me financially to get my passport from Afghanistan. My brother supported me emotionally, he told me to be patient, everything will be fine".

In spite of this fact that participants have mentioned that their families make them relief, some of them have disclosed that they also receive negative energy from their families as well which obstruct their efforts. For example, being judged by their families because of their current or past behavior are the reasons which cause receiving negative energy:

One of the interviewees declared:

> "I mostly talk with my sister, sometimes we talk together the whole night. Her presence makes me relief, although they put me in trouble when I was there and I am not that much depended on them" (Faride).

The other interviewee, Roya, said:

> "My family helps me, however, they judge me as well. For example, they say, if someone else was in your situation could do that job easily, or your sister got his driving certification during this time but you could not learn the Swedish language. Their judgments make me disappointed".

On the second level of social bonds, the findings of my study have shown that half of the women who have participated in the study have a good social bonding with their own networks. And on the contrary, half of these participants are (three Iranian women) avoiding their own community. Two different reasons have been identified for this avoidance; lack of trust and being judged.

For example, three interviewees number have asserted that they do not communicate with their own community as they cannot trust anybody particularly their own community:

The first interviewee, Elham, expressed:

> "I did not have any communication with others and the only persons who helped me were Swedish. I am not in touch with the Iranian community here as I cannot trust them and I only communicate with those who are coming to this center. Also, I only have two Iranian friends that I have a good relationship with one of them".

Correspondingly, Zohre stated:

> "I do not communicate with Iranian society, even I am not part of their social networks such as Telegram or Facebook. I cannot trust them as they made trouble for me before. My friends are limited to this church and school, those Farsi speaking women and people from other countries".

And another interviewee (Roya) has declared that the reason which she does not like to have a stronger relationship is that she has been judged by people from her own community:

> "I communicate with Farsi speaking communities just at school, I do not like to participate in Farsi speaking ceremonies, I have been judged in these ceremonies a lot and I prefer to do not participate at their ceremonies. Except for our children and 4-5 Iranian friends, we do not communicate with others".

The next category in social connection sub-theme is the social bridges which include the relationships with other groups. My findings have disclosed that nearly all the participants would like to communicate with people from other society especially locals. It is important to point out that first; these women do not have any local friends outside of the church and then they mostly consider socializing with locals as the main way of improving their language skills.

For example, one of the interviewees, Zohre expressed:

> "My friends are limited to this church and school, those Farsi speaking women and people from other countries".

The second interviewee, Nasibe, pronounced:

> "I communicate with those who are Swedish and those who speak Farsi in this center".

Similarly, Adele mentioned:

> "I have friends from other communities such as Arabs, I would like to have friends from different community in order to improve my language skills, but among locals, except my teachers, I do not have any Swedish friend".

In the same manner, Faride declared:

> "I do like to talk with Swedish, but I just have Swedish friends in this center and communicate with Kurdish, Farsi speaking and teachers here" (P. 5).

And correspondingly, the last interviewee said:

> "I have too many foreigner friends who are coming to this center" (Roya).

1. Analysis of Social Connections Domain

As believed by Ager and Strange (2004), people's understanding of integration is connected to the definition of domains of social connections. That means the variety of relationships which have been mentioned by people reflect their sense of integration in the community. Also, it has been said that social connections affect the quality of life of immigrants in different directions. For example, social bonds category assists immigrants in having an effective integration by contributing to improving the health situation of immigrants. Or social bridges category helps people to be more involved in the host society activities which bring about more social harmony.

The findings of this study have revealed that social bonds (families) are the most important relationships for immigrants to receive emotional support. Obviously, sharing challenges and worries with families and receiving support is one of the key reasons for emphasizing on the importance of having a relationship with the family. In contrast, half of the people under study have divulged that they cannot have a relationship with their own community as they receive more negative feedbacks or energy. Lack of trust and fear of being judged are those reasons which have been stopped interviewees from communication with their communities. In light of these findings, it is important to consider that these immigrants will lose some benefits which are provided by their communities such as cultural activities or exchanging of information.

As has been noted earlier, the importance of social bridges is in making the sense of feeling at home. Social bridges make immigrants more participative which not only benefits themselves but also has benefits for the host community. People under study have declared that they would like to make friends among local but it seems it is not easy since they are not accepted by the host society. Therefore, their opportunity to make a friend is limited to the center, which includes locals who are coming to the center such as teachers, guests, and immigrants from other societies.

a. Facilitators

Facilitators domain plays an important role in removing factors which create barriers in the process of effective integration, in other words, they let the integration occur. Consistent with the conceptual framework of Ager and Strange (2008) as well as findings of my study, this domain has been classified into four sub-themes including language and the provided information.

1. Language

This factor has been discussed in the sub-theme of "integration challenges" earlier, therefore here I explain about it briefly. The results of my study are in line with the former studies that have found language as the remarkable indicator which lack of it affect immigrant's life significantly. All of the women under my study have identified language as the main challenge in the process of integration. According to their answers, poor language skills have made their life hard. Since they have tried to find a job, but it was not possible without having proficiency in the language. Being unemployed for these participants means that they do not have enough money to save, travel or make plans for their future and also feel independent. Similarly, lack of language skills has stopped full participation in the new society. All things considered, lack of language proficiency put people's health in danger by affecting different aspects of their life.

However, the language barrier was the main challenge that immigrant' women have faced, they have declared other factors which have assisted them during the process of learning the Swedish language or even inhibit. The role of teachers, receiving encouragement, and practice sessions were those factors that they have accentuated.

According to Roya, encouragement was one of the factors which help her to make more effort which improve her language skills or on the other hand lack of encouragement in her family has disappointed her:

> "Whenever someone encourages me, I get more energy to increase my efforts. For example, when my teacher compliments me, I encourage to work harder. But, for example, my son in law has a negative impact on me, whenever he asks some Swedish words from my husband and he cannot answer (My Swedish is better than my husband), he is telling us why are going to school, you do not have to go. You have not learned anything…. And he makes me disappointed".

For other participants, having a teacher who knows how to teach or talk with them was the main reason which improves their language:

For instance, one of the interviewees, Nasibe, asserted:

> "As the teacher who is working with us was working with refugees before, she knows how to talk with us. But others are not the same as her, they talk so fast and I cannot understand… I had a really bad experience… we had an Arab teacher who taught so badly, he filled the board and then asked us to write, we filled our notebooks without knowing about the things that we have written. He did not explain about them…. It is better to have a teacher who

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can speak Farsi or either Swedish. The Swedish teacher taught us and present the words and their meaning with their behavior… their method here is good, if you do not get the words, they explain more”.

The other one, Faride, said:

“I have been coming to this center for three years and my language skills have changed a lot as they have good teachers. My language skills were improving in the first year, but I had a teacher who disappointed me and I could not continue my studying… she accused me of cheating and tore my papers before other students… here, there are too many Swedish and whenever they are talking to us, we understand what they are saying, they express their intent with their faces and hands. But others talk so fast and unclear….”.

As stated by some of these immigrant’s women, attending vocational training or practice sessions had positive consequences as well as negative on improving their language skills:

Nasibe pronounced:

“I have worked (went to the practice sessions) at a second-hand store for 7-8 months in order to improve my language skills… it did not improve my language skills. Because people did not talk too much just in times that they asked me to show something to them (low level of linguistic contact). Now for improving my Swedish language, I am practicing in this center for two days in a week…. My language skills have improved”.

Another interviewee, Adele, declared:

“I have worked (went to the practice sessions) at second-hand and went to sewing which helps me to improve my language skills”.

Additionally, interviewees have expressed that it would be better to have some changes in the structure of teaching the Swedish language, such as the number of people at the classes or method of teaching.

One of the interviewees expressed:

“From my point of view, it is better to start learning from the alphabet. All of the people with different level of language are in the same class. Because we are in a large group, our progress is not observable. It is better to study in a small group ---The teacher has less time for each person” (Zohre)

In the same way, the other one said:

“For example, they teach us trillion numbers that we do not use it at all, teach us the routines words. Or take an exam with us. Each week teaches us five useful words which use in our routine, tell us that they will get exams on a definite day, which put pressure on us to make more effort to learn. We are like a child in elementary school who their teacher takes dictation --- They

give us A few papers during the class which are full of words which I cannot learn them…. I told them constantly that give us one paper of these words, let us understand the meaning of them and learn them and then bring a new one" (Faride)

2. Information

One of the factors which have been mentioned by one immigrant woman was providing better information. According to her, providing better information will help people get to know about services which have been provided by social welfare. As stated by Ager and Strange (2008), decreasing barriers by providing information in refugees' mother tongue will foster integration.

"In the beginning, they helped better, and if I did not know about an issue, they would guide me. One time I should receive money from an office which I did not know about that and nobody told me about that. After 8 months I went to extend my house contract with an Afghan guy, then they told him why she did not come to take this auxiliary money. (I did not know anything about this extra money) --- it is better to provide better and more information, especially for those who are illiterate and are older" (Nasibe).

3. Analysis of Facilitators

As has been noted earlier the role of facilitators is to remove the obstacles which immigrants have faced so as to speed up the integration process. Participants of the present study have referred to language skills and provided information as the main facilitators.

Obviously, the main role of language is connecting the immigrants to the public area (employment, education, housing, and health). Absolutely, it has seen as the main and a crucial factor in the process of integration, which lack of it hinders social interaction, economic integration, and full participation. All of the obstacles which lack of language skills generate in the public sphere will affect the well-being of immigrants. Those immigrants who are suffering from mental health problems, their life is disturbed. The findings of my study support the results of previous researches about the deep impact of language on immigrant's life. Indeed, the women in my study have asserted that lack of proficiency in the dominant language has halted their lifestream with hardening the process of finding a job, interaction with the host society and expanding their social networks.

Meanwhile, previous studies have pointed that learning a new language can be challenging and can stop the process of integration, the findings of my study show that there are other factors along with learning the new language which can reduce the speed of learning. Indeed, participants of my study have indicated different factors such as the structure of teaching (methods of teaching and size of classes), the role of teacher, psychological factors such as encouragement, and vocational training.

Another important facilitator which has been mentioned by immigrants is provided information. More detailed and reliable information about the provided services fosters the integration process.

5.3. Coping strategy

As stated in the table below, I have classified coping strategies into two main themes based on Folkman et al. (1986), ways of coping scale: problem-focused coping, and emotion-focused coping. According to them, problem-focused coping covers sub-themes of planful Problem-solving, confrontive coping, and seeking social support and emotion-focused coping includes escape-avoidance, self-control, accepting responsibilities, distancing, and positive reappraisal. In the table below, I have presented the sub-themes of coping strategy and thereafter have explained each of them with examples of quotations of interviewees.

Table 5. Coping Strategy Theme

Sub-themes	
	1. Problem-focused coping
	a. Seeking social support
	2. Emotion-focused coping
	a. Escape-avoidance
	1. Social activities
	b. Positive Appraisal
	1. Pray
	2. Success of children
	C. Distancing
	. Distance from participation in their own community

5.3.1. Problem-focused coping

As has been noted by Folkman and Lazarus (1984), problem-focused coping covers those strategies which people use to change the situation or create an alternative situation to decrease the effect of the stressful situation. I have identified one problem-focused strategy from the data gathered: social support.

a. Seeking social support

Broadly similar to Folkman and Lazarus (1984), I have divided social supports into three sub-themes including seeking informational support, tangible support, and seeking emotional support. Although informational support and tangible have been presented separately, I put both of them as the same category since they are interconnected. The results of the collected data in

my study extremely reinforce the classification of Folkman and Lazarus (1984), in social support's sub-theme.

1. Seeking informational and tangible support

One of the main sub-themes of social support is informational support, in other words, immigrants try to find out about the different situations via those who know about it in order to reach the information for making their challenges lesser. Based on the responses of participants in my study, the person who could help them to access the information was the one who could do something specific about the issue. Therefore, I put informational support and tangible support in the same category.

Apparently, most of the participants in the present study have used these supports and have looked for those who could give them the information and do something. The available evidence shows that there are two groups of people which they refer to; first social workers and psychologists and second closed family such as children. It can be referred to the first one as formal support and to the second one as the informal support. In spite of this fact that there are two categories, the first group has played a notable role for immigrants.

The interviewe number one, Elham, asserted:

> "I had a great social worker, she perused everything. And I had two great psychologists as well, their collaboration helped me a lot to overcome the problems --- here whenever you have a problem there is someone to help you, social workers are everywhere, which is a positive point that helps you cope with the problems --- I told them that I cannot study in big groups and they find me a small group --- When I came to Sweden, my daughter had an earache…. She wrote an address immediately and told me to go there, they will help you, it was a big aid and I was surprised".

The next interviewee stated:

> "I am satisfied with the help of social workers…. They have done whatever is legal for me…. Which it was a big help" (Zohre).

Likewise, interviewee number six declared:

> "My psychiatrist helps me so much, as I am a stressful and depressed person. She talks with me and asks me to enter into society, she asks me to try to make myself busy".

The second group who interviewees asked for informational and tangible support are their children.

For example interviewee number two, Zohre, pronounced:

> "My son was a big aid for me, he helps me to fill the forms, teaching the addresses…. And everything which is related to language…. Even for learning the language, I ask his help".

Another interviewee said:

> "I asked my children for aid to learning the language better" (Nasibe).

> "My children take care of me, they support me financially --- They aided me to learn the language" (Faride).

2. Emotional Support

Another important social support which participants have mentioned in their responses is emotional support. Five out of the six respondents have mentioned that they have received emotional support from their families in the origin country or their children in Sweden.

The second interviewee expressed:

> "My family only supported me emotionally (from Iran) --- I have one brother and sister who are living in Norway, they help me emotionally and take care of me" (Zohre).

Similarly, interviewee number four stated:

> "My brother supported me emotionally (from Afghanistan), he asked me to be patient and told me everything will be fine" (Adele).

And the last person asserted:

> "My children take care of me --- Supported me emotionally, whenever I am alone, they invite me to their homes or even take their food and come to my home --- I talk with my family, especially my sister, their presence makes me relief" (Faride)

b. Analysis Seeking social support

According to Folkman and Lazarus (1984), the resources of a person determine the way that she/he deals with her/his challenges. A person's social environment is one of the main sources which provides vital resources which through that a person try to endure and grow. As they have stated, social disconnection has a negative impact on people health outcomes, that is to say, social relationships act as a mediator which can improve health outcomes. In other words, "a reasonably good-sized network means the potential for having one's basic social needs met" (ibid, 247).

As it is evident from the data gathered, participants in my study have referred to three types of groups that they have received their support. In the light of informational support, which covers formal and informal supports, social workers, psychologists, and immigrant's children were the main sources that they received their information from. Although, these groups not only have assisted immigrants to access information or have given them feedbacks also they have provided tangible support. On the other hand, for emotional support in addition to immigrant's children, their families in origin country or those who are living out of the country were the main sources.

5.3.1. Emotion-focused coping

Folkman and Lazarus (1984), has defined emotion-focused coping as a cognitive process which displays that a stressful situation is not amenable, and a person uses strategies of emotion-focused so that to decrease the distress. In compliance with the findings of my research, three sub-themes have been recognized as follows: escape-avoidance, positive reappraisal, and distancing.

a. Escape-Avoidance

Based on Folkman and Lazarus (ibid), escape-avoidance covers "wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to escape or avoid" (P. 995). Participants of the present study have referred participation in social activities as an effort to avoid or escape the challenges they are facing.

1. Social Activities

Immigrant women have mentioned different social activities as their ways of avoiding their problems. According to my findings, these social activities can be divided into two categories; the first includes those activities which have been provided by immigrant's communities, and the next covers those activities which the Swedish society have provided for them. From the immigrants' standpoint, social activities provide multiple opportunities. Clearly, spending time in social activities assists participants to keep their mind busy to avoid thinking about their challenges.

For instance, the second interviewee, Zohre, said:

> "Participation in general ceremonies in society --- it has been two years that I am coming here, I feel better, here is crowded, many people come to here,… they have various classes…. And provided different facilities" (P. 2).

The interviewee number three, Nasibe, declared:

> "I am active in Afghani association and attend at their language classes… they have Farsi and Quran classes --- And if there is a party absolutely I go there".

Correspondingly, Adele stated:

> "I communicate with Farsi speaking a lot, there is a mosque, which Afghanis go there, I go there for praying and other ceremonies".

And likewise, the interviewee number six, Roya, asserted:

> "I told my family, whenever I am working and I am busy, I feel better, as soon as I get busy, I feel relaxed --- It has been six months that I am coming to this center, I participate in the church ceremonies, and activities here, I have told them I will do any work which they ask me even cleaning" (P. 6).

b. Positive Appraisal

It contains "efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth" (Folkman et al., 1986, 995). Positive appraisal covers a broad range of strategies such as hope, religious tone,… Participants of my study have addressed three types of positive appraisal which help them to deal with the challenges of immigration which are including hope, praying, and success of children.

1. Pray

Notably, about 5 of 6 participants have addressed praying as one of their main coping strategies. Praying for future covers element of hoping that good thing will happen in their life which in result has increased their energy to continue and deal with their challenges.

The first interviewee, Elham, pronounced:

> "During the time that I was waiting for the result of my residence permit, I only sat behind the window and looking outside ... and just prayed during that time and after that".

Another interviewee, Nasibe, declared:

> "I use to pray, whenever I face a problem, I pray a lot, only praying and having hope helped me. Having hope helps me a lot, hoping that something good will happen such as my language improves or I can find a job and feel independent".

In the same manner, participant number four, Adele, mentioned:

> "I prayed a lot and asked God, please help us --- The time that I came from Afghanistan I experienced a hard time, I did not have anything to do except praying".

2. Success of children

Half of the interviewees have indicated that the main reason which they have beard the problems of immigration was their children. They flee from their countries, so as to make a new life for their children who were suffering. Therefore, seeing that their children established a new life here, and they can follow their dreams like to continue their studies played an important role in their coping.

One of the interviewees expressed:

> "I endured all of the problems just because of my daughter --- I wanted her success" (Elham).

The other participant, Adele, said:

> "I wished that my children to succeed in their life --- Hopefully, my children study here, my daughter is a dental student, my children have progressed, and I am here only for them".

Correspondingly, Faride, declared:

> "My children were the only reason that I beard --- I wish they succeed in their life".

c. Distancing

1. Distancing from participation in their own community

One of the coping strategies which have been addressed by participants in my study was distancing from participation in their own community. About half of participants who were Iranian women have indicated that they avoid Iranian community so that to refrain from facing more problems. As can be seen in the quotations below, the main reasons which they do not like to communicate with their own community are being judged by their communities and lack of trust. While for Afghan women, communication with their community was one of the main sources of coping strategies.

For instance, one of the interviewees said:

> "Except my children, I do not communicate with others, I do not trust anybody as they hurt me a lot" (Zohre).

Another interviewee pronounced:

> "I am in touch with Farsi speaking people only at school, I do not like to participate in Iranian ceremonies, they judge me because of the reason that I have presented for receiving the residence permit (Conversion to Christianity)" (Roya).

Even though being judged was one of the reasons of the Iranian participants which has been addressed by them, one of the Afghan women has mentioned it in another way:

> "The Swedish are really good, they do not laugh at others if they make mistakes in speaking, they help you to correct your mistake".

c. Analysis of Coping Strategy

As has been noted earlier, emotion-focused coping are those strategies which have aimed to decrease the pain, worries, and distress. Generally, interviewees of my study have used different ways of coping such as social activities, praying, the success of children, and distance from participation in their own community. And, the most common strategies among interviewees were participating in social activities, praying, and success of their children. By reviewing their coping strategies some points have been identified: first of all, all of the participants have considered participation in social activities not only as a way of avoiding their worries but also a good way to make friends and improve their Swedish language. Secondly, there was a

difference between Iranian and Afghani women, near half of the Iranian participants preferred to avoid their community as a result of being judged or lack of trust. Howevre fear of being judged by co-nationals seems to be a common fear among immigrants in both groups, in Iranian participants was stronger. Therefore, they mostly seek Swedish social activities which are more useful in their point of view and also have helped them to feel more relief. Whereas, Afghan women pursue social activities in both communities, Swedish and Afghani, which have helped them to maintain a sense of belonging to their own community as well as Swedish community.

In the second sub-theme, positive appraisal which covers the success of children and praying strategies, almost all of participants have addressed praying as one of their main coping strategies which contain hoping to the future and positive changes. In the next strategy, the success of children, it is obvious from their answers that they have accepted all of the new challenges only to establish a better future for their children since they did not have any chance to follow their dreams in their origin country especially for Afghan interviewees. Therefore, the success of their children in education or being employed helped them to cope with their problems since they can see the results of their efforts.

The last identified coping strategy is distancing which for participants of my study contains distancing from participation in their own community. Half of the interviewees who are Iranian declared that they refrain communication with their own community since they have been judged by them and they do not trust them.

Chapter 6, Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1. Conclusion

6.1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will try to answer the research questions and aimed to discuss the findings which are anchored from the picture shown in chapter five. The purpose of this research was to comprehend the integration challenges and coping strategies of Farsi-speaking women during the process of integration. Thereafter, it follows with the recommendations which I hope that I could highlight the missing points which are discovered from the finding.

6.1.2. Summary of Findings

According to respondents' answers, for Afghan women, the integration process happened as a result of war and displacement to neighbor's countries such as Iran and Pakistan. Whereas, for most of the Iranian women the integration process was due to the lack of freedom in the origin country, three of four. Immigrant women were satisfied with their displacement to Sweden as it has been provided friendly and supportive policies toward immigrant especially women.

The first question of my study was to understand what integration means to Farsi-Speaking immigrant women. Both of Iranian and Afghan women have declared that they would like to expand their communications with the Swedish society through the assimilation to culture and law. Respondents of my study have considered the integration process as a one-way process that they should participate and adapt to the host society. That means, from their standpoint, they should give up some of their own identity and culture in order to be accepted by the host society. Therefore, they tried to learn about the elements of new culture and law which are crucial for having a good and healthy life.

As has been noted in the findings' chapter, three out of four women have expressed that they avoid communication with their own community which mostly was common among Iranian respondents. It can be resulted that they are more eager to give up those elements of their own culture which they are not enjoying such as intimacy, communication. Although it is obvious from the findings that Afghan women have tried to learn the Swedish culture and law and at the same time they have not given up their ties with their own community. That is to say, they are still trying to preserve their cultural values.

Learning the language and getting a job have been stated by participants as the significant keys to a successful integration. Interviewees were aware that language proficiency plays an important role in making and expanding all forms of capital such as social and economic. Accordingly, they have attempted to use all of their capacity to gain language skills even though they have mentioned that it is difficult since they are not young and coming from a low-educated background.

Following the research questions of the present study, the second main question was about the challenges which immigrant women have experienced during the process of integration. As it has been mentioned former, accessing the language skills is the key point that from there the integration process starts. All participants of my study have indicated language as the main

barrier which has created other barriers as well. Since none of the participants do speak the English language, as the second main language in Sweden, knowing the dominant language is vital for them to facilitate their life in different aspects. The first and important aspect which language has influenced their integration process is employment which assists them to earn money and develop their economic capital. Without knowing the dominant language, it is impossible to change the economic situation of immigrants. Then, language skills help immigrants to develop their social capital through interaction with the host community which inverse improve their language skills as well. Given these points, it can be deduced that language has a dual relationship with other indicators of integration which any improvement in this area will enhance success in other areas. Owing to the influence of language on other areas of integration, immigrants' life has undergone changes which its first sign is enhancement or deterioration of immigrants' well-being.

Likewise, this question has divulged different domains of integration from the immigrant's point of view. Three domains were recognized from their responses, marks and means, social connections, and facilitators. In the first domain, marks and means, employment, education, and health have been identified from interviewees' responses. The first indicator in the domain of marks and means, employment, has been considered as the vital indicator of integration since it has multiple benefits. Obviously, being employed provides a stable economic situation which by means of that people are capable to decide about their life and feel independent from the social welfare system. Meanwhile, it improves immigrants' social life such as developing their networks or improving their language skills simultaneously. But obtaining a job requires having language skills which improve their employability, it means that employment and language have a bilateral relationship in which any advancement in one at the same time will lead to an improvement in another one.

There is another factor which might have a great impact on both employment and language skills, practice sessions. From interviewees' point of view attending vocational training sessions or "practice sessions" was a good way to develop their abilities and improve their Swedish language. However, attending practice sessions is not the only factor that might be important, there are other factors such as immigrants' ability and interest which should be considered when training appoints to women.

The second indicator in the first domain according to respondents was education. I found this indicator crucial in my findings since more than half of these women have not finished their education or even they are illiterate. Education has been regarded as a means which provides more educational resources such as a dictionary, and enhance immigrants' skills that lead to the process of learning the language gets easier and faster.

The last indicator in this area was the immigrants' health situation. Half of the respondents in the present study have experienced mental health problems which affected their social and economic life. Although it has been identified two different reasons for poor mental health, pre-migration and post-migration problems, the latter one had a significant impact on the well-being of women in my study. Among post-migration reasons, lack of language proficiency played an important role. It has led to less engagement in the host society which in result led to less interaction with the dominant society and has impeded the process of gaining job. In conclusion, having poor mental health which is a result of difficulties in the integration process such as learning a language has hindered integration process. As shown above, all of the indicators in

the domain of markers and means are interconnected. Any difficulty in one of the domains will contribute difficulties in other indicators.

The second domain in the integration conceptual framework is social connections. In this area, the results of my study have shown that social bonds and social bridges are important for interviewees. While social bonds have been regarded mainly as the main resources of receiving emotional support, interviewees of my study have mentioned social bridges as a tool to be more participative. Meanwhile, in social bonds indicator which covers different groups such as families, friends, and co-nationals, half of the interviewees who are from Iranian participants declared that they avoid their own community. Two reasons have been identified as the main reasons for this avoidance, lack of trust and fear of being judged. Due to this disconnection, immigrant women have lost benefits which their community provide for free. Almost all of interviewees in my study have mentioned that having friends from other communities especially from the locals was important for them since it gives the immigrants a sense of belonging to the host society. Although, reaching this aim was not easy since they do not speak the dominant language fluently.

Eventually, the last domain which has been recognized in the present study is facilitators with the indicators of language and information. The first indicator (language) has been explained in the challenges of integration. Participants of my study referred to language proficiency as the main factor which has impacted their whole life. Clearly, knowing the language of the dominant society will ease immigrants' life, since it provides multiple opportunities such as employment, broader social networks and as a result, improve their well-being.

Based on my interviewees' point of view, there are other factors which facilitate the process of learning and promoting the language such as psychological factors (receiving encouragement), teachers, and practice sessions. In the case of encouragement, one of interviewee declared that lack of this element in her family stopped her from making more efforts, in contrast whenever she has been given compliments by her teachers or others out of her house, she has gotten encouraged to endeavor more. Almost for all of my participants, the teacher's teaching style was important. Since, from the time that they have come to this center they have seen that their language skills have developed and it is only because of their teacher's method of teaching. The other factor which they have addressed was practice sessions which in a way assisted them to improve their language skills. And eventually, the last point which they referred to as a suggestion was that the size of the classes, according to them, classes were crowded and this issue has limited their chances to communicate more with their teachers and learn more as well. Besides these facilitators which make have mentioned above, I have identified another factor among facilitators which might ease the process of immigrants' integration. In interviewees' view, providing detailed information about various services which social welfare has prepared for them was another significant factor in the process of integration.

In the light of the third question of my research which is related to the ways that participants cope with integration challenges. According to the participants' answers, the most common way which was mentioned by them was from sub-theme of emotion-focused coping. In the first sub-theme, problem-focused coping, seeking social support was addressed by interviewees as the main coping strategy. Briefly, it contains three types of social support, informational, tangible, and emotional. Since participants of my study have regarded those who are providing the information as those who can help them to change the situation, both of these types of support have been put in the same category. Considering this category, receiving formal support

from social workers and psychologists and informal support from their family were the main resources. Although, it cannot be ignored that the first group has had a clearly noticeable impact. In the second category, emotional support, the main resources which immigrants receive social support are families in their origin country and their families or children in Sweden.

Evidently, emotion-focused sub-theme was the most common strategy among the interviewees of this study. In compliance with respondents' answers three different strategies have been recognized in this sub-theme as follows: escape-avoidance, positive appraisal, distancing. In detail, escape-avoidance includes social activities which its main function is to keep women' mind busy in order to avoid their challenges. These activities include Swedish activities and immigrants' community activities. Although, participation in Swedish social activities was preferable for all of these women since it was an easier way to widen their social networks among locals and enhance their language skills, avoiding their community was only a prevalent issue among Iranian interviewees. These reasons which have been referred are not the only reasons that have made participants enthusiastic about participation in Swedish activities, participants mentioned lack of trust and being judged as the other reasons which have impacted their interests. The second coping strategy was positive appraisal that includes praying and success of children. All of the participants mentioned praying as a main coping strategy which helps them to relive about their future and brings them hope. Then, giving the opportunity to their children to pursue their studying and progressing in their social life was important to these women. This new opportunity gave them pride and satisfaction which in a way contribute positively in their well-being. The last but not least coping strategy was distancing which covers distancing from participation in their own community because of being judged and lack of trust.

6.1.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, firstly, it is equally important to mention that integration and coping strategies are interconnected. Which means that by enhancing in coping skills, integration level will improve and mutually by improving integration level, more coping skills will be provided for immigrants. For example, one of my interviewees, number one, who was successful in getting job as a result of speaking the Swedish language could be able to find new coping skills such as expanding her social networks among Swedish locals which in result improved her integration level as well. Therefore, focusing on both of them at the same time is noteworthy.

Secondly, my findings have divulged some other factors which might change conceptual model of integration of Ager and Strane (2008), and also ways of Coping strategies of Folkman and Lazarus (1986) in my study. In the first theme, integration, I can refer to the significant role of education, and practice sessions which have impacted the integration process of women intensely. With regard to the first factor, in most of the former researches, education has been regarded as a chance of immigrants' children to follow their studies. While in my study the importance of education was considered as a means of facilitating and hastening learning language for immigrants' adult. There is only one research which has been mentioned the education level of refugees as one of the main factors that affect refugee' language achievement (Shakibaie, 2009). As stated in her research, those Afghan refugees' women who had the less educated background especially older women achieve less in the process of learning of the dominant language. That means without language proficiency, less job opportunity will be available and as a result of these two factors less progression in the integration level of refugee' women. Concerning the second factor, practice sessions, previous studies have emphasized on

the importance of vocational training on the increasing the chance of employment, but they have neglected those constraints that providers of practice sessions should consider such as the limitations, abilities, and interests of immigrants.

Regarding the second theme, coping strategies, teachers and their method of teaching, and also practice sessions have been found. With respect to the first factor, it is important to look at the impact that teachers have on their student's learning process. And the second factor, practice sessions, on those time that they have worked properly women got empowered and could increase their language proficiency and their chances of employability.

In addition, according to the findings, women from Afghanistan have shown a better well-being in comparison to Iranian women in spite of facing more challenges such as war. There are two reasons which I have identified for this conclusion. First of all, Afghan women have a better relationship with people from their own community and generally with the Farsi-speaking community. Clearly, they have allocated almost half of their time to participate in their community activities in order to keep their communication with them which in result relived them. The next significant reason was praying which from their standpoint contains following all ritual and practices related to the religion. Undoubtedly, following ritual in groups provide more opportunities for communicating with their own community. Therefore, they have more chances to discuss their challenges and access to vital information easily. While among Iranian refugees being a woman who is divorced and at the same time is living alone without any dominant man seems have put negative impacts on their relationship with their own community. First of all, protecting their reputation is one of their reason which they afraid of trusting and communicating with their own community. Secondly, since they are living alone and they are not conservative like Afghan women and are not following their rituals as in their own country they are afraid of being judged by others in their own way of living.

Lastly, it seems being divorced and at the same time being a single mother has affected the well-being of these participants adversely. Bajracharya (2015) admitted in her study that single women had faced more challenges in the process of integration such as creating networks. Therefore, as it is obvious, they are more in danger of suffering from mental health problem as a result of not only dealing with the new situation and problems but also being worried about their children's future which demands a better planning for assisting them during the process of integration.

6.1.4. Recommendations

Below, I have presented some recommendation for both policymakers, social workers, and researchers.

First of all, according to the finding of the present study, it is important to empower women by identifying their capacities and abilities in different activities. And it is social workers' responsibility to discover immigrants' capacity. Undoubtedly, it can be beneficial for both immigrants and society.

Since all of the interviewees have implied that they are satisfied with coming to the refugee services center (Church) and their life has changed in regards to improving their language skills, etc. It brought that to my mind which it might be useful for policymakers to recognize and

introduce those successful centers which they had positive outcomes in order to encourage other centers to follow their structure.

One of the main points that participants have indicated about refugee services center was their teachers' method of teaching which have been graded high by women. Hence, it could be a new research topic for future researchers to do more studies on the successful methods of teaching especially on illiterate or low-educated immigrants.

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APPENDIX 1 Interview guide in English

Questionnaire
General information
Nationality: Age: Job:
Marital status: educational level:
How many children: Children's age:
How long have you been in Sweden?

Integration
What does it mean integration to you?
How do you feel about yourself regarding this concept? (Choose a number on the scale)
Explanation: Number 1 is the lowest and Number 10 is the highest

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Have you tried to integrate in Swedish society? (Such as learning language, finding a job)

Challenges or problems
Are you satisfied with your new life in Sweden?
Do you have any specific experience or memory of problematic situations?
What was hard about that situation?
What kind of solution have you attempted?

Coping strategies
What did help you to solve the problem?
Did anybody help you?

Social support from the origin country or local community
Do you keep in touch with your network at your origin country?
Do you keep in touch with the Farsi - speaking community in Sweden?
Have you made friends with people from other countries or Swedish society?
Have you helped other people?

What was the main reason for moving to Sweden? (Voluntary or forced)
 Do you have anything to add?

APPENDIX 2 Interview guide in Farsi

بخش اول: اطلاعات کلی

ملیت   سن   وضعیت تاهل   سطح تحصیلی   شغل   تعداد فرزندان   سن فرزندان

تعداد سال های زندگی در سوئد

بخش دوم : یکپارچگی یا ادغام

لطفا نظرتان را در مورد مفهوم یکپارچگی یا ادغام یا هماهنگ شدن بیان فرمایید؟ یا به نظر شما ادغام، یکپارچگی یا هماهنگ شدن به چه معنا می باشد؟

با توجه به مفهوم مطرح شده در بالا (ادغام، یکپارچگی یا هماهنگ شدن) شما خود را در کجا نمودار زیر میبینید؟

_____

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

آیا تلاشی برای هماهنگ شدن با جامعه سوئدی یا ادغام در جامعه سوئدی کرده اید؟ به طور مثال یادگیری زبان سوئدی یا پیدا کردن شغل

بخش سوم: چالش ها و مشکلات

آیا از زندگی جدید خود در سوئد راضی هستید؟

آیا تجربه یا خاطره خاصی از مشکلاتی که مواجهه شده اید دارید؟

چرا آن تجربه یا خاطره سخت بود ؟

چه راه حل هایی را برای حل مشکل تان جستجو کردید؟

بخش چهارم : مهارت های مقابله ای

چه چیزی به شما کمک کرد که این مشکلات را حل کنید؟

آیا کسی یا چیزی به شما کمک کرد؟

بخش پنجم: حمایت اجتماعی

آیا با شبکه ارتباطی تان در کشورمنشا(ایران/ افغانستان) در تماس هستید؟

آیا با جامعه فارسی زبانان سوئد در تماس هستید؟

آیا توانستید با افرادی از کشور های دیگر یا جامعه سوئدی دوست شوید؟

آیا تا حالا شما به کسی کمک کردید؟

بخش آخر

چه دلیلی باعث مهاجرت شما به سوئد شده است؟

آیا مطلب دیگری وجود دارد که بخواهید اضافه کنید؟

APPENDIX 3 Informed consent in English

I have read the information presented in the introduction letter about a study being conducted by [**Akram Khoshkharam Roudmajan**] Masters student at the Department of [**Social Work**] at the University of Gothenburg.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing this interview to be audio recorded. I am also aware that all data gathered in this interview will be used exclusively for academic purposes, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. No information about my identity will be collected, retained or shared.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.

All ethical standards in compliance with the requirement will be followed.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES   NO

I agree to have interview audio recorded.   YES   NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in the thesis or publication that comes from this research.   YES   NO

APPENDIX 4 Informed consent in Farsi

اینجانب اطلاعات ارائه شده در معرفی نامه تحقیقی که توسط خانم اکرم خوشخرام دانشجوی ارشد مددکاری اجتماعی در دانشگاه گوتنبرگ ارائه شده است، را مطالعه کرده ام. با آگاهی تمام اجازه ضبط مصاحبه را به محقق داده ام. همچنین مطلع شده ام که تمام اطلاعات مطرح شده در این تحقیق منحصرا برای اهداف دانشگاهی استفاده خواهد شد با توجه به اینکه نقل قول ها از جانب مصاحبه شونده به صورت ناشناس و یا با نام مستعار خواهد بود.

هیچ اطلاعاتی در مورد هویت اینجانب پرسیده نخواهد شد و یا به اشتراک گذاشته نخواهد شد. و ضمنا، مطلع شده ام که می توانم رضایت خود را در هر زمانی بدون هیچ گونه مجازاتی پس بگیرم.

با آگاهی تمام از تمام موارد ذکر شده، موافقت خودم، را برای شرکت در مطالعه حاضر اعلام میکنم.

بله   خیر

موافقت خودم را با ضبط صدای در حین مصاحبه اعلام میدارم

بله   خیر

موافقت خود را با استفاده ناشناس از نقل قول ها در پایان نامه یا مقالاتی که از آن استخراج میشود اعلام میدارم.

بله   خیر