



Intercultural Fashion and its Contribution to Women Empowerment in Refugee Camps in the Middle East; Refugee Artisan Collaborations by Fashion Brands

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ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on the concept of intercultural fashion and its contribution to women's Empowerment in refugee camps in the Middle East. It outlines the alternative and possible solutions in establishing economic and social opportunities for refugee women. It then attempts to analyze how international fashion brands contribute to the lives of refugee women while emphasizing the significance of Feminist Theory in International Relations to understand the broader consequences of gender and power-changing aspects. By analyzing partnerships between global fashion enterprises and artisans, the study will highlight how these collaborations can be a possible solution to promote economic growth, cultural preservation and social incorporation for displaced women. This paper also explores the influence of fashion as a tool for Empowerment and its alignment with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.

Introduction

By the early 1980s, refugees and forced migration crises had become a global issue due to a significant increase in refugee situations worldwide (Qasmiyeh, 2021). Ongoing humanitarian catastrophes remain the most challenging due to the terrifying geopolitical situation across the Middle East region, with the conflict in Syria defined in April 2013 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, as "the most dramatic humanitarian crisis that the U.N.H.C.R. has ever faced" (Chulov, 2013, p. 3). The crises of displaced people in the Middle East have brought about substantial challenges in humanitarian aid and women's rights due to intensity, gender inequality and variability. Women have been confronting challenges at the Refugee camps, not being able to work nor provide their children the needs required, awaiting humanitarian aid and donations conducted to the refugee camps for food and shelter. Almost over millions have no substitute but to cross a border, and once they do, they become refugees (Betts & Collier, 2017). About millions of refugees in the Middle East were forced to flee from their own homes and communities to a place where they could find welfare and protection called "Refugee Camps".

Women, in particular, have encountered difficulties after the war, where some of them lost their families and husbands throughout the conflict, and the only thing left is their infants and their dependency on funding from nonprofit organizations and the United Nations. They have abandoned the feeling of security, liability and dignity in preserving financial support. In this complex time, the United Nations and nonprofit organizations are contributing massive outcomes to support the lives of refugees, especially women, by partnering with different institutions that empower them economically and socially, following the development goals of gender equality. Refugee women should not be contingent on nonprofit organizations for compensation depending on the funding; instead, there has to be an alternative and effective tool to create opportunities for women at refugee camps in the Middle East through several sectors, including intercultural fashion, which has been determined for centuries and emerged economically, becoming the world's necessity. This capstone project examines a new complementary way to empower refugee women through fashion within the Middle East by exploring the partnerships of refugee artisans in the fashion world, contributing to social and economic opportunities. The main research question for this paper revolves around the following: How do global fashion brands incorporate refugee artisans within the supply chains, and how does this contribute

to empowering women in refugee camps in the Middle East? This research question is about social and economic inclusion, involving cultural upholding and women empowerment in the Middle East; intercultural fashion can positively contribute to women's lives, especially those at the refugee camps. Moreover, identifying these dynamic contrasts can advise strategies and practices that aid humanitarian attempts and could lead to a new alternative economic empowerment for women. I use a qualitative approach using case studies of three fashion brands, focusing on their contribution to refugee camps in the Middle East region, particularly Jordan and analyzing how those brands contributed to women's Empowerment since the inimitable socio-economic situation around the refugee women in particular, exemplifies the Middle East region with its immense number outraged of refugee crises. The objectives will explore the international fashion designers' strategy for integrating the artisans at the refugee camps into their approach, presenting strategy recommendations mainly supporting women by strengthening their wellbeing and financial independence.

Therefore, this research paper covers six chapters outlining the connection between intercultural fashion, women empowerment, and refugees in the Middle East. This volume will present in section 1 an overview of the refugee situation in the Middle East, who the refugees are, and their positions and conditions in the Middle East to understand the region's density. Section 2 illustrates the definition of intercultural fashion and how it can contribute to women's social and economic situation, from challenges to a new rise at the demoted camps. Section 3 It demonstrates the theme of women's economic empowerment in refugee camps and how intercultural fashion can lead to economic gains for women facing poverty and refugee crises, exemplifying the transformative possibility of illustrating fashion as a source of financial gain for women. Section 4 Examines the influence of Feminist Theory in International Relations, defining women's empowerment, the incredible history of social transformation work and the development of Feminist perception fostering women economically and socially, highlighting the position of the feminist perspective in determining policy and practices. Section 5 Illustrates the position of the Refugee Artisans, in collaboration with International brands, covering the situation of refugee women in the Middle East and the brand's contribution to their lives. Conclusively, Section 6 presents existing practical case studies of three Middle Eastern brands' partnerships with artisan and their involvement with women in the refugee camps, as well as how those brands have bridged cultures and improved the lives of

women at refugee camps. Through this constructed approach, the aim is to analyze the challenges faced in the lives of the refugees and the opportunities that refugee women confronted, emphasizing the possible influence of intercultural fashion as a tool for change and women empowerment.

1. Refugees in the Middle East

The Middle East region is confronting the most massive load of refugee crises since World War II; following the break of the Arab Spring Protest and armed conflict, the region became a place of nearly 2.4 million refugees and 12.6 million internally displaced, 370,300 homeless individuals (U.N.H.C.R., 2022) raising the MENA region as the second utmost region affected by internal displacement worldwide (IDMC, 2019). The region is facing a substantial vulnerability to refugee crises from conflicts that emerged immensely from the Palestine- Isreal conflict following Lebanon, Iraq and Syria crises (Maha Yahya, 2018). Syria remains the province's main root of displacement, with almost 5.5 million recorded as Syrian Refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey and Iraq (U.N.H.C.R., 2023. a). In protracted settings like Jordan and Lebanon, the impact of the Syria catastrophe and financial difficulties have been critical (U.N.H.C.R., 2024). In Lebanon, 90% of Syrian refugees live in severe poverty, with food prices rising by 32% since June 2021; in Jordan, there are about 710,000 refugees from different nationalities registered with U.N.H.C.R., and Two-thirds of refugees relate to deteriorating financial settings (Beaujouan & Rasheed, 2020). The Kingdom of Jordan currently has the second highest number of refugees per capita worldwide, meaning that the refugees comprise about 7% of Jordan's population, marking the country as the top refugee hosting state (Jordan, I.L.O. 2024). The crisis of refugees is increasing, and around 11.7 million people in the Middle East region are expected to be expatriated within their own homes in 2024 (Global Focus, U.N.H.C.R. n.d.). There are about 43.4 million refugees globally, and the Mena region has about 2.5 million refugees, of which approximately 1.2 million are women. An estimated can make up about 50% of the refugee population: girls and women (U.N.H.C.R., 2023. a). Among 370,300 homeless people, the area is suffering from political and economic instability, a delicate security situation, and an undefined funding position in 2023; rising food prices made the cohesion of donors vigorous, signifying 50% of U.N.H.C.R.'s 2023 budget for programmed activities and mainly for basic needs such as food, water, shelter and cash support (Budget, U.N. 2024). Continuous political and economic crises intensify the challenges confronted by

internally displaced people refugees, who await necessary assistance and U.N.H.C.R.'s provision for self-independence and incorporation. However, U.N.H.C.R. is eager to help 5.8 million refugees receive welfare (Middle East and North Africa, UN.b). Nonetheless, it is crucial to highlight that gender is commonly examined as a variable in research, specifically in the context of migration and gender-correlated tendencies. Almost half of the transnational migrants (48%) and recorded refugees (46%) are women (Zlotnik, 2003). The encounter of displacements in the region can construct gender-specific difficulties and intensify enduring gender inequalities. Several reports by U.N. Women highlight that refugee women are the most effected in situations of crises (U.N. Women, 2017). With all the humanitarian emergencies, women face a substantial challenge in gender-based violence, safety apprehensions, and economic obstacles in adopting financial stability and insecurity (UNICEF, 2022). The gender relations context in the region depends on the issues of women remaining restricted to household duties, being deprived of access to education, and having job opportunities self-employed (U.N., 2024). It is essential to tackle those issues sustainably, including educating refugee women, offering them potential training for economic opportunities and ensuring U.N. sustainable development goals (S.D.G.'s) on gender equality-altering gender associations (Norman, n.d.). Over the past years, the 1951 convention concerning the position of Refugees added by its 1967 protocol has been an essential foundation for the protection of refugees, granting them all the rights and protection by handling all the uprooted cause and their position through the establishment of the General Assembly resolution which shaped U.N.H.C.R. as the leading agency that is accountable for delivering global protection and pursuing sturdy resolutions for refugees (U.N.H.C.R.,2019).

The U.N.H.C.R.'s role in protecting refugees and the impact of local and foreign policy factors on executing refugee legal methods is worth noting (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). Refugees have become an essential problem for international politics. Refugees are not just a human-centred problem but also a complex political challenge that requires global coordination to address those issues effectively. It is significant to outline the role of international organizations as they have been the fundamental actors in assisting and promoting women's participation, including educational programs, community-based protection initiatives and addressing refugee women with all their specific needs (U.N., 2016). The United Nations manages the activities and programs on an annual budget proposed to tackle universal needs; the total

budget acknowledged by the U.N.H.C.R. on the funding sustenance from governments, N.G.O.'s and individuals is estimated at \$10.247 billion (Budget UN, 2025). Besides a budget of 55,858,623 USD directed only to empowering programs at the refugee camps, the total fund operation of 374,786,849 USD is conducted and utilized for budget operation in Jordan. The funds in the Middle East and North Africa are estimated to be 22% of the total budget, 2.342 billion (Funding U.N.H.C.R.,2024). U.N.H.C.R. is doing beneficial acts to enhance the U.N. development goals and support refugees with their needs and wants. The U.N. has established training centres in collaboration with nonprofit organizations for girls and women to teach them crafting and embroidery to empower women economically and socially; aligned with this is the substantial initiative that carried a beneficial transformation in the lives of the refugee women established by the U.N. Refugee Agency, U.N.C.H.R. is a platform to advocate and encourage refugee women as a goal to boost the economic inclusion and lighten up the future of refugees called MADE51 (Made51, 2023) This initiative is made to connect refugee artisans in an international level by marketing their products and refining their supply chain globally, in partnership with brands, private sectors, and donors to support refugees. The concept of MADE51 refers to the 1951 Refugee Resolution as the legal key to a policy that frameworks the rights of refugees and the legal duties of countries to protect refugees, forming the foundation of the U.N.H.C.R.'s effort. By providing them with their primary source of income, such initiatives help them to contribute to society (Middle East and North Africa, UN.b), (Ada Hasanagic, UN 2023), ((MADE51Impact, 2022).

2. Intercultural Fashion

By the mid-19th century, designers like Charles Frederick Worth created custom clothing for women, assessing the founding of haute couture. This began the fashion establishment, marking women as the leading clients of high fashion trends. Today, women are the fashion innovators with several leading female designers in the fashion industry and understanding the influence of fashion, precisely intercultural fashion, and how it can contribute to the nation's economy and textile, as such, could be an awareness for cultural exchanged between the countries by strengthening the cultural aspects and perseverations identity (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The fashion industry model, exemplified by fashion designers and brands, expanded by the 19th century (Julia Vilaca, 2022). The model of bridging cultures through a piece of cloth and empowering women through the contribution of intercultural

fashion is not just innovative but also transformative (C.I.A.F.E. HQ, 2023). Intercultural fashion is the way that presents a means of communication through clothing; it represents the vision of individuals and nations through cultural identity and traditional background; many people nowadays present their emotions and interconnect through several ways, by arts, music, and fashion, to express their outlooks and sentiments. Nevertheless, it has become more than just uttering voices and revelations through fashion brands. It also became a tool for bridging cultural understanding between nations internationally following several festivals that contribute to fashion involving global fashion designers, showcasing their identity and cultural perspectives through fashion (Chloe, 2023). International fashion brands such as H&M and Chloe have been integrating their brand, which is utilized by intercultural spheres, into modern fashion (H&M Group, 2024). The H&M brand focused on building a foundational framework for expanding the diversification within their operation system by including cultural designs in their designed clothing (H&M, 2024).

Additionally, the brand has partnered with UNICEF to fund ECD programs, which are estimated at US\$13.5 million (H&M Foundation, UNICEF.). Chloe partnered with refugees to create accessories for a better social impact (Common Objective, 2022). Those major fashion brands have been major UN donation partners and manufacturing their clothing line by outsourcing their textile and manufacturing companies in different deprived countries, partnering with N.G.O.'s and U.N.H.C.R supporting refugee women with inferior wages in contributing to their fashion clothing establishments and taking the exclusive pieces handmade, embroidered by artisans to create traditional crafts and cultural patterns (Made51Partnerships, 2024). This perception has significantly been embraced in the refugee camps, where refugees have requested employment and applied their traditional methods. The refugee camps in the Middle East have created centres facilitated by international nonprofit organizations to practice and enhance their interests. Natural artisans know the diverse cultural patterns through textile design and knitting embroidery, as there is now market demand, especially in substantial fashion brands, to add the touch of unique cultural patterns from different nations. Through the framework of intercultural fashion, entrepreneurs, fashion designers, fashion brands, business owners in the fashion industry, and manufacturers could additionally play a significant role in the economic sphere, precisely for women in the refugee camps. Clothes are the best representation of fashion; the attire industry has been rapidly growing with its supply chain, giving opportunities for job

creation, businesses and entrepreneurs worldwide to construct millions of job opportunities, especially for women. The textile business is worth an estimated US\$2.5 trillion, and more than 100 billion apparel is sold yearly (Licata & Kemp, UN 2020).

3. Women's Economic Empowerment in the Middle East, Refugee Camps

Intercultural fashion could lead to economic gains for women confronting challenges in the context of poverty and refugee crises (Refugee atelier, U.N. 2023). It is significant to understand the insight of financial capital to support poverty, especially concerning women, as they are the most plagued by conditions such as refugee encampments and struggles (Rya G. Kuewor, WEF 2021). Complex political issues and security challenges continue to weigh upon the economic stability in the Mena region; the rate of poverty has increased from 3.8% in 2015, reaching to 7.2% in 2018 (Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine (Work4Women), U.N. n.d.). There is tremendous data evidence globally that presents women and girls as the most disadvantaged than the opposite gender in accessing their essential beneficial resources (Bureau of International Information Programs, 2012). More than 340 million girls and women will be living in ultimate poverty by 2030, which is extremely important to act upon and progress the development of women's economic empowerment (U.N. Women, 2024). Poverty has been detected to be a common framework, particularly among refugee women; they are the most tolerant of social discrimination and deprived conditions due to their cultural values and norms, power dynamics and gendered separation of assistance (Shishehgar et al., 2016). Beyond the financial gains from funds, refugees who are independent workers provide better opportunities for their families (Kabir & Klugman, 2019). There have been macroeconomic facts about women participating in the compensated economy in an equivalent position to men; the Mena region G.D.P. will increase up to 47% over the next coming 10 years, which adds up to an additional 600 billion USD in an economic impact yearly and 2.7 trillion by 2025 (Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine (Work4Women), U.N. n.d.).

Becoming a refugee is a condition, but not an identity (Who Is a Refugee and Who Is Not - the Crisis of Identity as a Challenge to Protection | U.N.H.C.R. U.K., 2022). Refugee women living in camps are barred from drastic employment prospects and restricted to traditional Arab settings of being a

housewife. This segregation extends the women's economic dependence and defect, which expands the phase of poverty. A development study on women's earnings deficiency projected that women must be economically and socially independent to reduce poverty. Statistics indicate that women's engagement in financial activities influences revenue profits, infants' education, and the refugee community's progressions (Areej Al-Hamad et al., 2024). Women are essential to boost growth in the MENA region; augmenting economic prospects for refugee women through policies and structured collaborations with fashion brands is a form of monetary enhancement in empowering women economically. Women's power has been compromised in many areas, comprising 21% of the workforce and subsidizing 18% of MENA's overall G.D.P. (Invest in Women to Boost Growth in MENA, 2019. c). Connecting the gender disruption will improve regional productivity and position the MENA region on future advanced and comprehensive growth. It is significant to alter social standards and values to shift behaviors (Invest in Women to Boost Growth in MENA, 2019. c). Gender employment initiatives empower women economically, granting them the ability to earn income, understand the corporate dilemma, and become business productive representatives. Such liberation will enable women to participate fully in their households and the broader association despite the gender customs discouraging female social programs and activities (Tang, 2020). With its immense size and job opportunities, the fashion industry could solve the world's economic crisis by handling refugees. It has the potential to provide job opportunities for women and bring justice to a turning point for all the women in the Middle East, specifically refugee artisans, making them the key to their clothing line manufacturing and embroidery (Licata & Kemp, 2020). However, it could become a possible solution for creating jobs for women in refugee camps. Also, having fashion brands contribute to women's lives in a marginalized community can enhance the United Nations (U.N. Women & U.N.H.C.R.'s) initiatives and goals to promote gender equality, decent work opportunities and women's self-determination. If every fashion brand contributes to this initiative and constructs a supply chain for women at the refugee camps, creating job opportunities can defeat the crisis of women's instability in the Middle East and enhance women's stability (Jabbar & Zaza, 2015).

4 Feminist Theory in International Relations; Women's Empowerment

Feminist perception fostering was learned in the early relevance of international development in the 1970s.

Women's Empowerment was conveyed in the 1980s and 1990s as a fundamental approach that involved shifts in power relations, gender equality, and women's rights (Enloe, C. 2014). International N.G.O.'s and effective Western regimes have advocated women's empowerment, or so it would appear, the whole universal development organizations (Cornwall, 2016). Empowerment was a model that described the process of perception changes and united power in proclaiming fundamental rights in favour of better gender equality. Gender equality is "smart economics", the word created at the World Bank to foster investing in Women (Cornwall, 2016. Pg.1). Depending on Women's authority, it could be economic, social, cultural, political, etc. In the 19th century, a quote that grew popular in signifying the value of women was, 'Behind every great man there is a great woman,' which was embraced as a motto for the feminist movement. (Martin, n.d.).

"Empowerment is the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions that both build individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context that govern the use of these assets." (Andrea Cornwall, 2016) Page 345

Women can contribute to society economically and socially, leading to hastening the progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, including assurances by the United Nations participant states to fill the gap on (S.D.G. 1) ending poverty and attain gender equality (S.D.G. 5) endorsing comprehensive development for economic growth and decent work (S.D.G. 8). By ending the refugee gender gap it will benefit host nations and refugees by enhancing the financial framework (Kabir & Klugman, 2019). Providing women with opportunities empowers them to have their primary income. This will enable the world to have a prosperous future in terms of gender qualities and reduce poverty, which is a transformation. Stating the basis of poverty and the root of gender inequality is crucial to assisting women's approach to power (Khatib et al., 2024). The extreme instabilities over the last two decades in the collective economy and the substantial influence of economic and social assemblies have replicated the idea of Empowerment with such global crises, following the Covid-19 pandemic and enduring geopolitical strains in the region have emphasized women in the development process system (International Monetary Fund, 2023). No matter what shape it takes, women's economic empowerment faced by insecurity hinders them from their fundamental

rights; it is crucial to outline the challenges and provide them their social value as the foremost economic actors (U.N. Women, 2024). The founding of the feminist movement was significant in activating the progress of women's rights and the enhancement of women's prospects; women were always involved in social movements seeking their right to equality and upholding their norms (Howard-Hassmann, 2011). Controlling its novel meaning and absorbed by the United Nations, World Bank and donors. They have used and unified the term and their financial streamline. In the 1970s, the idea was used to structure and accelerate the resistance to women's equality and social justice by adapting economic and social structures. The potential of financial opportunities to empower women is immense and a cause for optimism and encouragement (Cornwall, 2018). Empowerment is the development of change by which those who have been opposed can make strategic choices, and it is an essential component of the World Bank Gender Strategy 2024-20230 (World Bank, 2023). According to the U.N. Women's Representative in Jordan, the number of refugee women households is increasing having the Oases camp integrate their job placement services, such as tailoring and makeup artists, to equip the refugee women with skills and knowledge, empowering them to start their businesses and have a secured life (U.N. Women, 2023). Women's talents should be exploited and enhanced, not left behind (U.N., 2018). According to feminists, the enhancement of women's status, especially females in devastated countries or refugee camps, has dire consequences for peace, stability and development. Assertive women enhance family and community economic status and resist constraints on femininity in their society. Feminism is a recent intercession in the philosophy and practice of International Relations, stimulating several worthwhile perceptions by undermining masculine power relations and underlining gender quality. The depiction of I.R. is "high politics" is utterly gendered in so far as its power (Tickner, 2014). The main critical theories of International relations are Liberalism and Realism. Those theories mainly focus on soft and hard power, highlighting economic dynamics and political control. Realists primarily practice adequate three levels in their analysis of combat and state security, this analysis system divides it into the individual, state and the universal system, mainly regarding state relations and war conflicts (Tickner, 1992). Beyond this, the Feminist definition of protection and security must involve the illumination of a variety of violence; feminist influence on International Relations can be identified within their deconstructionism of gender, which is equally influential in shaping logic and constructed identities (Smith, 2018). In the areas of

concern, understanding the economic aspects, we find out how empowering the economy can enable fundamental shifts in the lives of females and, therefore, combat androcentrism; such cooperation between international fashion brands and refugee women is arguably one of the greatest expressions of such power (Usman Safiyanu Duguri et al., 2021), (Olivius, 2015).

5. Refugee Artisans, in collaboration with International brands

Refugee artisans are the key to transforming economic and social lives in marginalized communities; they aim for "Opportunities, not only Funding" artists with a potential future, bringing their exclusive talents into the fashion world and substantially influencing community building and cultural preservation. Through the art of fashion, women at refugee camps, with their creativity, can transform their lives from deprivation to self-resilience and independence (U.N.H.C.R., 2021). Arts have been proven to be a powerful form of expression, especially for those women who have been through suffering and loss. This is a way of expressing emotion in difficult times who have faced trauma and challenges. Through arts and fashion, this is a formidable weapon for change in the demoted community (Creating Art in a Refugee Camp: How Palestinian Street Artist Laila Ajjawi Is Using Art to Improve the Lives of Refugees - G.Q. Middle East, 2023). The handcrafted arts are historically embedded across the Arab region and initially preserved by the Palestinian artist named "Tatreez", which enabled women to collaborate and use fashion for economic stability (U.N., 2021.d). Partnering with fashion designers and entrepreneurs promotes economic and social empowerment for refugee women. This opportunity provides refugees with better social connections, wellbeing, financial independence, and a new beginning to change their lives through the icon of fashion (Upadhyay, 2024). Refugee Women from Syria, Iraq and other countries are experiencing several challenges around the refugee settlements. However, acquiring a sense of belonging can support the refugee community's development (U.N., 2021.d). Initiatives and collaborations with brands can raise awareness about their situations; many individuals are aware of refugees living in demoted communities but are unaware of their conditions or their capabilities, skills, and abilities. Artist women in the refugee camps faced several challenges in accessing the fashion industry, which included limited access to resources, language and cultural barriers, economic instability and lack of network (U.N., 2022). However, many initiatives have been implemented to support refugee women, such as

U.N.H.C.R. and nonprofit organizations, involving hundreds of refugee women across the Middle East and other areas. For example, the Jordan River Foundation united with the Scandinavian household store IKEA to produce opportunities for Palestinian and Syrian women at refugee camps to showcase their work at the stores, but they stayed limited, supporting less than a thousand women; nonetheless, these collaborations enabled women to retrieve a broader market. This is one of the limited projects in Jordan that associates women in training them in the basics of design stitching and embroidery. This outline utilized by the J.R.F. helps women access constant employment through collaborations that assist in employing refugees. U.N. Women J.C.O. also organizes unified services presented by the Oasis program as a launching point for the Nokia-UN Women technical cooperation initiative in Jordan. These collaborations enabled to promote women and girls in the centre for empowerment and strength in Za'atari and Azraq camps (U.N. Women, 2024). This initiative of international brands collaborating with refugee women is a justification for the resilience and strength it contributes to empowering women at refugee camps. Donors are often uncertain about fund programs for so long in humanitarian settings. Still, the extended landscape of refugee conflict has pushed government organizations and donors to reconsider an approach for refugees to count on aid (U.N., 2021.d). In the settings of refugee women, their source of wages supports them to overcome their trials of displacement and shape the nation's local economy in host communities; it is also estimated that refugees may generate around 1.4\$ trillion on the annual global G.D.P. if hired and agreed to be given the equivalent pay in the top 30 refugee host countries (World Creativity and Innovation Day: How Refugee Women Use Their Artisanry to Empower and Support Their Families and Communities, U.N.H.C.R. n.d.). Creating the partnership is bridging connections to the outside world; with a piece of cloth, it can transform into economic stability for women at refugee camps, awareness of their situation, bridging cultures and an indication of the intensity of human disposition (More than Art: Tatreez and Syrian Women Refugees, U.N. 2021.d).

6. Case studies of effective fashion brand-artisan relationships

Artisans are the second highest employers in the developing world, with almost generating \$32 billion yearly; it is significant to raise the artisans sector for economic growth and maintain traditional artwork thriving (Artisan Alliance, 2014). An estimated 65% of artisans' movement occurs initially in developing

economies. Artisans' enterprises, in collaboration with multinational fashion brands, have been a tool of economic and social growth precisely in developing countries; it is substantial to say that the artisan segment provides an increase in employment for women worldwide and allows them to preserve their traditional and cultural practices through their partnerships with fashion brands (A.G.I., Sarah Kallassy and Gina Rogari 2019). The artisan's cooperation has been growing with the support of the United Nations and other non-profit organizations, including states. In this context, we will share an example of three global brands owned by "Women" that have supported refugees in implementing their cultural identity and patterns through their designs, such as Noor Designs, S.E.P. Jordan, and Gap I.N.C. Those brands based in the U.A.E. and Jordan have employed refugee women from Syria and Palestine at the Jordan Refugee Camp to create Middle Eastern cultural patterns in their designs, forming cross-cultural awareness and offering the opportunity to support their talents with impartial revenue.

"If you are looking for innovative ways to help developing countries in order to flourish, artisans are a terrific place to begin." — Secretary of State John Kerry, Artisan Enterprise: The New Startup Economy, September 2015

Case 1: Social Enterprise Project (S.E.P.)

S.E.P. is a fashion brand first established in 2013 by a Founder named Roberta Ventura, inspired by the women's kindness and resistance at Jerash Camp in Jordan. The initiative of the fashion brand is to create progressive economic and social influence among refugee women in Jordan (S.E.P. Italia Srl, 2024). In 2014, the brand operated in Jerash Camp, working closely with refugees from Palestine and Syria, praising their traditional and cultural conservation. Through the support of S.E.P., the refugee artisans get their primary income from a decent job at the refugee camps in the north of Jordan (S.E.P. Jordan, 2020). By 2024, the brand has successfully empowered more than 500 refugee artisans displayed in 1967 during the Palestine- Israel conflict to become refugees in Jordan (S.E.P. Jordan, 2024). With the brand's support, refugee women are selling their crafted arts and traditional patterns internationally, creating designs in clothing and creatively broadening to home décor, bags and scarves. The S.E.P. Jordan project implemented a business strategy centred on Jerash Camp as a home for Palestinian refugees from Gaza, and now it's a global platform for Palestinian artists. The academy has been training around 1000 Palestinian and Syrian artisans since the beginning of

the foundation. S.E.P. Jordan is not only a key to economic prospects for women at refugee camps in the Middle East but also a key to keeping the culture and heritage of Palestinian women alive; the refugee artisans are creating the designs through the inspiration behind embroidered Kuffiyehs, Islamic geometry for home décor and fashion fittings blinding with the taste of Middle Eastern style. Through the creativity of the refugee artisans in partnership with S.E.P., now the brand has expanded to celebrity and has the most award-winning designer, Jacqueline Duran, choose to wear from the refugee artisans at S.E.P. to embroider the attires for the Hollywood film Mary Magdalene this reach is an effective success to the brand awareness. Still, the artisans from the Jerash refugee camp have been known for their work, inspiration and determination of skilled women (Harper's Bazaar Arabia, Julia Maile 2018). It is also significant to determine the market interest in the traditional designs embroidered; most customers have been pursuing a substitution for conventional luxury brands interested in wearing the story behind the mission of the fashion brand (S.E.P., from Embroidery to Fashion Week | Lombard Odier, 2022). Through the work of the Gazan refugee women, they can obtain financial liberation, grant their children and families full financial support and contribute to the refugee community. Refugee women involved in such campaigns are not only gaining financial independence but also reflecting on their identity, gaining business skills and a professional mindset, and learning the market interest, creating a design that belongs to the market demand through the support of training contributed by S.E.P. fashion brand; through this, they will expand their roles from refugee women artisans to dynamic economic representatives.

"We live in a world saturated by high-end brands. The inspiration behind S.E.P. Jordan was to transform this fashion category by introducing a brand that sells unique stories" (Harper's Bazaar Arabia, Julia Maile 2018)

The S.E.P. is a global route for women's economic empowerment, cultural conservation, and social impact by showcasing the Palestinian spacecraft capability. In addition, S.E.P.'s perspective is to be a socially influence-minded and planet-mindful brand aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, targeting to become a zero-net carbon brand. The fashion brand focuses explicitly on (SDG1) reducing poverty by increasing the job opportunities for women and implementing (SDG3), ensuring they are promoted with good health and wellbeing. Additionally, the decrease in gender differences in economic and social involvement focused on (SDG8)

decent work and economic growth and (SDG10) reduced inequalities promoting decent work for refugee women, ensuring they receive basic wages and presenting chances to other women who might be barred from labour fairs. The brand is focused on implementing the United Nations sustainable development goals, from fashion to a better, more sustainable future (United Nations, 2015).

Case 2: Noor Designs

Noor Designs is an international cultural abaya brand based in the U.A.E.. It is known for its exclusive, influential designs showcasing the traditional Middle Eastern abaya with a touch of cultural patterns worldwide. The brand vision is "Bridging the world's culture through a piece of cloth". It was established in 2019; the brand conceived the idea of cultural connection during the Expo 2020 festival in the U.A.E., a global event with over 192 participating countries (Home | Expo 2020 Dubai | Connecting Minds, Creating the Future, 2019). Noor Designs' initiative is to grow the concept of cross-cultural exchange into empowering women financially, allowing them to develop their embroidery skills into a business model. The partnership of Noor Designs and talented artisans from Jordan and Palestine has signified the brand's vision to translate the unique cultural and historical roots of each nation into fashion, a way of inspiring women to speak out their emotions through the creation of artistic and traditional patterns originated from ancient artworks which were then integrated into the conventional Middle Eastern abaya.

"In my opinion, this method can bring about a convergence between the Emirati and Arab Culture and its foreign counterpart and give any piece a unique view to increase love and communication between cultures" (Albayannnews, Ghasan 2022).

Noor designs aim to develop cultural exchange, which improves cultural understanding and relations by exporting traditional fabrics from more than three countries' cultural patterns, starting from Rwanda, Jordan, and Bhutan. It is fundamental to identify how the fashion brand line has increased its vision from cross-cultural exchange to empowering artisan women from Jordan socially and economically. The brand realized that artisans are the key to expanding the traditions and culture of the Middle East into the traditional abaya clothing line. The brand aims to also contribute to the United Nations sustainable development goals focusing on

(SDG5 gender equality) in providing economic opportunities for women, which aligns with the principle of feminist theory addressing the connection of gender and economic relegation, demonstrating how financial independence can change women's life, (SDG8) promoting a decent job opportunity for women in Jordan contributing to sustainable economic opportunities and (SDG10) to reduce economic inequalities by integrating the women skills into the global fashion supply chain. Since the brand is focused on cultural patterns and traditions, the most excellent alternative way was instead of buying the patterns ready from suppliers and shop owners, substitute to promote women an opportunity to have a decent, stable job by buying their cultural patterns and embracing them in the traditional abaya designed under the brand's vision (تلفزيون دبي- Dubai T.V., 2022).

Case 3: G.A.P.INC

The Gap is a foremost global fashion brand that operates in Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps in Jordan; the brand vision is implemented under the personal progression and profession development program, which is designed to provide mechanical sustenance teaching and life skills tutoring for women, giving them the essential tools to integrate into the workforce. The personal advancement & career enhancement (P.A.C.E.) program started in 2007 in partnership with several suppliers and factories from the textile industry and has empowered refugee women through the innovation of rise to establish innovative gender equality with more than 1.4 million women and adolescents have reached over the P.A.C.E. program, with 54% tactical factories have at least 50% of the women workers joined in the program, focusing on 98% of strategic factories have existing P.A.C.E. as a part of the factories H.R. administration to hire refugees. The brand's goal by 2025 is to devote 100% to women's Empowerment through their involvement in the program (P.A.C.E. And RISE | Gap Inc., 2016). The brand focuses on social empowerment and building women's confidence and qualified skills in apparel production. The program under this brand focuses on financial and business literacy, time management, and communication soft skills, which are essential for artisans for economic self-determination. In 2022, the G.A.P.INC united with 13 firms in cooperatively assigning to employ 2,275 refugees and in Jordan, the brand reinforced around 3,200 refugee women in Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps and in urban locations through the P.A.C.E. program in association with nonprofit organizations such as International Relief & Development, Care and the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for human development and the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (Our Members, Tent 2024). The program of P.A.C.E. aims to prepare refugee women to achieve financial independence and self-resilience. It strengthens the U.N.'s sustainable goals by implementing its vision into (S.D.G. 5) promoting gender equality and empowering the women at the refugee camps to participate in the labour business market. The brands aim to empower women by giving them decent job opportunities (S.D.G. 8) and (S.D.G. 4) quality education; the brand focuses on educating women for a better economic contribution. "If you educate a woman, you educate a society" (Educate the Girl, Educate the Society | Margaret's Secondary School, 2019).

"The minute a refugee gets a job is the minute they stop being a refugee." (Hamdi Ulukaya, n.d.)

The fashion brand's case studies are a possible solution to transform lives, especially for refugees, from jobless to resistant employers, with self-determination and dignity. The three case studies of S.E.P, Noor Designs and G.A.P.INC are alternative resolutions to creating job opportunities for women addressing the economic and social welfare in the refugee camps. S.E.P. supports women from Palestine and Syria artisans in the northern part of Jordan located at the Jerash Camp for refugees, giving them a chance for stable income through their creative crafts and embroidery, which does not only encourage cultural and traditional conservation nonetheless aligns with the theories of International Relations such as the theory of Liberalism which highlights cooperation and promotes economic prospects of the host country and the refugee women in their demoted communities. The second case study of Noor Designs Brand was established during the opening of Expo2020, Dubai, which was the foremost time to meet more than 192 countries in the U.A.E. and buy their traditional patterns; the brand initiative went beyond assorted cultural patterns and bridging cultures through empowering women in establishing a workable corporate model in the textile sector, this reflects the feminist theory advocating women's empowerment socially and economically augmenting their position in the attire industry. The third case study is G.A.P. I.N.C., which created an education program specially for refugees to support them with overall development skills in workforce, communication, and management for over 1.4 million refugees. The key findings from those brands initiated include the significant importance of women and economic empowerment through preserving national identity and developing self-skills. However, the case studies reveal a few challenges, such as the traditional and cultural understanding, the market scale, and sustainability.

For instance, one of the challenges faced by the S.E.P. brand is the market scale of the handcrafted design, which could limit the production capacity. Additionally, the brand must maintain a long-term strategy to sustain the market demand with the quantities as the economic viability of hand-embroidered designs and products depends on the consistent target consumers. While Noor Designs, despite its success in bridging cultures, its challenge is the high cost of production and distribution of cultural handmade patterns, which limits the brand's ability to expand and support more women economically. At the same time, the confronts encountered by G.A.P.Inc is ensuring the sustainability of the P.A.C.E. program beyond the initial training period. The program ensures a productive training period that provides beneficial skills, but much more support is required to help those women secure long-term employment in the competitive market. These barriers highlight the necessity for continuing support and collaborations to continue the positive impact on the lives of women at the refugee camps.

Overall, those case studies demonstrate how intercultural fashion can influence the lives of refugee women in the Middle East by supporting them with proper education, training centres, and workforce opportunities that empower women economically and socially. The opportunities granted to refugee women are not just jobs and basic salaries but also have a significant effect in boosting the economic scale of the host country. It is essential to underline the weight of Liberalism Theory in International Relations role with the three global fashion brands in bracing humanity, cooperation and economic empowerment while specifying the position behind the principles of the feminist theory in I.R. by advocating women's rights in many sectors, including education and the workforce.

Conclusion

To conclude, the significance of this paper is to increase awareness and the influence of how intercultural fashion could be a solution and transformation to the critical challenges confronted by refugee women in the Middle East due to conflict in the region, which led to millions of displacements and social demotion depending only on funding received from the United Nations and nonprofit organizations. Exploring the international fashion brands and their partnership with refugee artisans presented an alternative economic and social possible solution to the traditional funding program for financial independence and social integration. The three fashion brands' case studies demonstrated how they braced for empowerment and economic resolution by partnering with refugee artisans. It also indicated the challenges

tackled by the fashion brands for future collaborations with entrepreneurs or international brands to work on those encounters and restore future partnerships with refugee artisans, empowering the business and its contribution to the lives of refugees. Additionally, we examined how feminism theory in International relations has extensive value in empowering women with their rights and its advocacy for gender-inequalities that centre women's voice and empowerment. Presenting women can contribute to society economically and socially, leading to hastening the progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, including assurances by the United Nations participant states to fill the gap on (S.D.G. 1) ending poverty and attain gender equality (S.D.G. 5) indorsing comprehensive development for economic growth and (SDG8) decent work. As we explored the facts about women participating in the compensated economy in an equivalent position to men, the Mena region's G.D.P. will increase to 47% per cent, adding up to an additional 600 billion USD in an annual economic impact and 2.7 trillion by 2025. Ending the refugee gender gap will benefit host nations and refugees by enhancing the financial framework. Refugee women can begin to have new revenue opportunities and develop personal and business skills to contribute to the global market while maintaining their cultural identities. These collaborations provide a platform for breaking down cultural obstacles, adopting cross-cultural dialogue, and presenting new prospects for refugee women economically and socially. International fashion prepares an important hypothetical and will confront fair partnerships, reasonable compensation and socio-political framework of refugee camps; those three brands presented an illustration of how effective it could be to partner with refugee women, with the region crises and ongoing conflict setting in the region, there has to be an alternative way to empower refugees and have a sustainable approach for the long run, It is necessary to claim the identity and power of those women; obtaining this partnership agenda globally will possibly change the situation of refugee women, positively contributing to their lives economically and socially and presenting them with future security and financial independence agenda, offering them and their families a new beginning and hope. This will be life-shifting if one brand collaborates with refugees and empowers them. This research paper indicates the possible solution from the traditional funding of United Nations and nonprofit organizations to encourage entrepreneurs, startups and global brands to integrate this strategy incorporation with refugee artisans within their supply chains, which will present higher opportunities for refugee women to be

financially independent and It will be a fair cost and sustainable partnership for both the fashion brand and refugee artisans; it will contribute to empowering women in refugee camps in the Middle East. Suppose this topic has more attention and is implemented by international brands, fashion entrepreneurs, and global fashion brands. In that case, it will change lives and become the key to maintaining cultural preservation across different nations, and it will be life-changing for refugees.

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