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HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY STRATEGY FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES AND ITS EFFECT ON JORDAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

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Abstract: *This research examined the effect of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy for Syrian refugees on its foreign policy and attempted to determine whether the strategy is financially sustainable. Humanitarian diplomacy is persuading decision-makers and leaders worldwide to act at all times and in all circumstances in the best interest of vulnerable populations by completely respecting fundamental humanitarian principles. Jordan has allowed many Syrian refugees to cross over and settle in Jordan. This study used a qualitative systematic literature review and quantitative data from the UNHCR to determine the effect of the strategy on Jordan's foreign policy and whether the strategy could be sustained. The findings showed that Jordan's stature in terms of its foreign policy has grown, leading to bilateral agreements and participation in international negotiations. However, its humanitarian strategy may not be sustainable with the current level of funding. The funding from foreign countries and international organizations has been insufficient to support the growing number of Syrian refugees in Jordan. The literature on this topic is limited, and comprehensive quantitative research is recommended to determine the future effect of the strategy on health care and education for Syrian refugees in Jordan.*

Keywords: *Jordan; Humanitarian Diplomacy; Foreign Policy; Syrian Refugees*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, governments have been the main stakeholders responsible for providing humanitarian aid to people in times of crisis, internally or externally, at home or in other countries. The state's activities in providing international humanitarian aid are intrinsically connected to national, regional, and international politics (El-Taraboulsi, McCarthy, Metcalfe-Hough, and Willitts-King 2016, 1). Whereas countries like the United States and European countries have previously dominated humanitarian actions because of their soft power resources and political influence, many other states have become global humanitarian diplomats following their rapid economic growth and increased international emergencies. For instance, in the Middle East, Turkey and Jordan have demonstrated humanitarian diplomacy in their actions to support refugees from countries such as Iraq, Palestine, and Syria during crises in those countries.

While Syria and Jordan have had a close relationship in the past and even fought side-by-side against Israel, their relationship was strained by Syria's decision in 1970 to support Palestine Liberation Organization guerillas engaged in resistance against Israel, who were occupying Jordanian lands and not Syrian lands (al-Weshah 2014, 199). Today, Jordan has become one of the countries with the largest number of refugees from Syria (Lenner and Schmelter 2016, 122). As of 2012, approximately one million Syrians had fled to Jordan, and

671,551 Syrian refugees were registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Farah 2020, 130). This hosting of many Syrian refugees, following earlier hostings of refugees from Iraq and Palestine, has positioned Jordan as a humanitarian, diplomatic state in the international arena.

Humanitarian diplomacy has been defined as persuading decision-makers and leaders worldwide to act at all times and in all circumstances in the best interest of vulnerable populations and to completely respect fundamental humanitarian principles (De Lauri 2018, 1). Europe has locked its borders against Syrian and other refugees from the Middle East. However, despite the negative repercussions of this action, Jordan has kept its borders open for refugees from Syria. Whereas some studies have found that the influx of immigrants in a country may bring capital to and increase the purchasing power of local economies, thus offsetting negative effects on the domestic labor force, other studies have found that there is a negative effect of immigration on the employment and wages of the less experienced and unskilled local workers of the host country (Fallah, Krafft, and Wahba 2019, 206). This raises the question of the sustainability of humanitarian diplomacy for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, engaging in humanitarian diplomacy should not be a country's choice; instead, it is a responsibility flowing from the privileges societies enjoy (IFRC 2022, 1). The main functions of humanitarian diplomacy are engaging in negotiation, advocacy, and communication and making formal agreements.

This paper aims to explore how Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy for Syrian refugees has affected its foreign policy and determine whether the strategy is sustainable in the future.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The increased emergencies from natural disasters and other environmental threats have resulted in the need for humanitarian aid in many parts of the world. One of the challenges that policymakers have faced is making humanitarian aid accessible to people in areas experiencing complex emergencies and conflicts. Therefore, diplomacy with other nations, especially those experiencing extreme insecurity and political unrest, has become vital. Through these humanitarian diplomacy efforts, nations can promote their foreign policies and improve their relations with other states.

However, scholars and practitioners have questioned the neutrality of humanitarianism since some countries are perceived to promote their political interests in their humanitarian negotiations and diplomatic activities even as they provide access to humanitarian support (De Lauri 2018, 2). This has been exercised through soft power by the most influential nations that possess power resources (Huda and Ismail 2022, 467), enhancing their foreign policies. It is known that Turkey, as one of the countries with a high number of refugees, has successfully used its humanitarian diplomacy to promote its foreign policy and affirm its global image as a growing Middle Eastern power. However, there is a lack of knowledge about how Jordan's foreign policy strategy, in association with its humanitarian diplomacy efforts for Syrian

refugees, has affected its image globally and whether its humanitarian strategy is sustainable. This paper fills that knowledge gap.

Research Question

How has Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy for Syrian refugees affected its foreign policy, and is its approach sustainable?

Justification

Policymakers rely on well-supported evidence to make national and international decisions. During the Iraqi conflict and later Syrian conflict, Jordan was one of the countries that opened up its borders and allowed refugees to stream into the country, with the partial intention of promoting its foreign policy and being able to negotiate in the international arena for development. The humanitarian diplomacy approach might have positively influenced its foreign policy in terms of helping other nations learn. The sustainability of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy has not been widely researched, and this research intends to add knowledge and increase the understanding of the sustainability of the approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a literature review of some studies on Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy.

Concept of Humanitarian Diplomacy

In recent years, disasters such as wars and environmental challenges caused by global warming have threatened human existence. Ongoing conflicts in countries such as Syria, Palestine, and Somalia have led to a rising number of refugees who have fled to other countries, resulting in the growing need for humanitarian aid to assist vulnerable populations. Countries have used the situations orchestrated by such natural emergencies to develop humanitarian diplomacy for different countries' foreign policies. Humanitarian diplomacy began in the 2000s, intending to act at all times in the best interests of vulnerable populations in line with fundamental humanitarian principles. Diplomacy refers to representing an individual polity in relation to another polity, and humanitarianism refers to advocating for and assisting a needy population (De Lauri 2018, 2). Elise Rousseau and Achille Sommo Pende (2020, 254) have defined humanitarian diplomacy as all negotiation activities employed by different actors with organizations, governments, and public figures to help intervene in an emergency threatening human existence. The negotiation activities are meant to persuade policymakers and leaders to act in a way that promotes fundamental human rights.

Jordan's Approach to Humanitarian Diplomacy

Gerasimos Tsourapas (2019, 464-465) argued that the humanitarian diplomacy employed by Jordan is based on a back-scratching strategy that depends on bargains since the position of Jordan in the Middle East is not strategic enough to give the country much influence in the area. Jordan tends to cooperate with Syria to use its exit corridors for importing goods. Any action that might strain the relationship between Syria and Jordan would be detrimental to Jordan. The author argued that although Jordan hosts many Syrian refugees, it is not geopolitically important compared to Europe or Turkey. In this regard, it can be argued that a country's geopolitical influence plays a significant role in shaping its attitude toward humanitarian diplomacy. Those countries that have a strong geopolitical influence or those countries that are strategically placed to benefit the country experiencing a crisis tend to "call the tune" of the relationship. For instance, because of its geopolitical position, Turkey had employed "hard power" (Huda and Ismail 2022, 466) for a long time in handling the Syrian refugee crisis. However, in the 2000s, it reverted to soft power and public diplomacy to further its foreign policy agenda (Huda and Ismail 2022, 469). Soft power refers to using a country's culture, values, and policy resources to achieve a desired national outcome.

In contrast, hard power refers to coercion and threats to achieve a desired outcome. The case of Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy confirmed that a country's geopolitical position significantly affects its humanitarian diplomacy approach. In contrast, Jordan's position may not favor a hard power strategy for humanitarian diplomacy but favor a cooperative approach.

Moreover, cooperation among countries is enhanced by effective communication. Having clear and proper communication during the refugee crisis has been found to play a critical role in humanitarian diplomacy (Cevik and Sevin 2017, 1). With proper communication, a country can engage with target audiences to build mutually beneficial relationships and engage in meaningful interactions (Cevik and Sevin 2017, 6). To this end, Jordan has communicated its stand clearly regarding the Syrian crisis. Unlike other Arab states that took sides in the conflict, Jordan's goal has always been to remain neutral. Jordan has therefore defined the crisis as a crisis of internal affairs within Syria and has thus not wanted to intervene in it (al-Weshah 2014, 197). Not only was the message of being neutral regarding the Syrian crisis communicated verbally by Jordan's government, but Jordan also showed a commitment to fostering a strong relationship with Syria through its open-border policy (Achilli 2015, 3; Murshidi et al. 2013, 206). The decision to open borders so Syrian refugees could enter Jordan was applauded internationally for its humanitarian stance. This action has maintained close relationships between Jordan and Syria as trading partners in exchanging military firearms (al-Weshah 2014, 205), thus promoting Jordan's foreign policy and image internationally.

It has been pointed out that Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy for Syrian refugees has paid off for Jordan because the country has maintained a close relationship with Syria. The strategy has also gained international attention and attracted investments from European and other international organizations in Jordan. For instance, al-Weshah (2014, 205) claimed that support from NGOs and foreign countries supported the refugee influx into Jordan and enhanced Jordan's economic growth through employment opportunities. The Norwegian Refugee Council is one of the NGOs that have boasted about how Jordan's strategy has

provided new jobs for many Jordanians and expanded the labor market to accommodate Syrians (Farah 2020, 133). Therefore, the closer working relationship between the Jordanian government and foreign countries and NGOs to promote humanitarianism has given Jordan a positive image internationally, thus promoting Jordan's foreign policy. Although the humanitarian diplomacy employed by Jordan has cemented its relationship with NGOs and Syria, it is not known whether the approach is sustainable in the long run.

METHODOLOGY

This research used qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Hammarberg, Kirkman, and de Lacey 2016, 498; Gupta and Gupta 2022, 11) to determine the effect of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy and sustainability. Qualitative research allows the researcher to examine people's experiences through in-depth research methods, such as interviews, surveys, content analyses, and observations. It also studies people in their natural settings to determine how the contexts of their lives, such as cultural, social, economic, and physical contexts, shape their experiences and behaviors (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2020, 10; Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005, 14). The study also used quantitative research, a methodology involving the collecting and analyzing of numerical data (Apuke 2017, 40–47; Williams 2007, 66).

Research Design

The research used data (Kothari 2004, 95) through a systematic literature review to examine the relevant studies that found positive effects of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy for Syrian refugees on its foreign policy. A systematic literature review thoroughly examines information from previous research articles to understand the phenomenon under study (Zawacki-Richter et al. 2020, 3). In addition, a descriptive analysis was performed to examine the correlation between Syrian refugees in Jordan and the funding of their needs to determine the sustainability of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy regarding Syrian refugees.

Data Collection Procedure

Relevant articles were selected through an advanced search on Google Scholar using keywords such as "Jordan humanitarian", "Jordan", "Jordan diplomacy", and "Syrian refugees in Jordan". The articles for inclusion had to be available as full text and contain the keywords in the title. Additionally, the article included must have been published within five years. Therefore, articles not available as full text or published for more than five years were excluded.

Quantitative data about the number of Syrian refugees from 2012 to 2022, the funding received, and the resulting funding deficit was obtained from the UNHCR Operational Data Portal (2022) and UNHCR Humanitarian Data Exchange for Jordan (2022).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed by reading the full text of each article to determine whether the study contained content about the positive side of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy. The literature review also explored indicators of the potential unsustainability of humanitarian diplomacy in Jordan. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 to determine the relationship between the funding trends and the growing number of Syrian refugees. Using the regression model, these data showed how much the number of Syrian refugees influenced funding decisions. The findings are presented in tables and figures.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The qualitative analysis showed that Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy for Syrian refugees gave Jordan the reputation of being a humanitarian advocate internationally. As a result, many global expatriate humanitarians were attracted to Jordan to work on humanitarian issues, leading to increased investments and employment for Jordanians (Farah 2020, 130). Furthermore, integrating Syrian refugees into the labor market of Jordan was considered a humanitarian act of advocacy for equal rights and opportunities for everyone residing in Jordan. The Jordanians and the Syrian refugees have been treated almost equally, though Syrian workers accepted slightly lower wages (Farah 2020, 137). This increased the status of Jordan in the eyes of the international community. Zeynep Sahin Mencutek and Ayat J. Nashwan (2021, 621) described how in 2016, Jordan offered a very advanced plan, the Jordan Compact, for allowing Syrian refugees to enter the Jordanian labor market through internationalization at Supporting Syria and the Region Conference (The London Conference). The government of Jordan committed to introducing the right to employment for Syrian refugees if the international community would accept the financial and trade-related demands. Therefore, the EU worked closely with Jordan to ensure that Syrian refugees were employed to help overcome the challenges of resettlement (Panizzon 2018, 244). In this regard, humanitarian diplomacy enabled Jordan to participate in international financial and trade agreement negotiations. Moreover, Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy aligned with national and regional laws (al-Qaralleh 2022, 2). The country acted to uphold the provisions of regional laws, thereby improving its image in the region.

Furthermore, the policy to grant Syrian refugees the freedom to live among Jordanians increased its agricultural output and land use while improving the livelihoods of the country's population. A study by Sattam al-Shogoor et al. (2022, 372) on the influx of Syrian refugees into the Irbid district in Northwestern Jordan found increased urbanization and agricultural efforts in the area. Not only did the granting of freedom of association among Syrian refugees and Jordanians promote the country's productivity for the benefit of everyone, but it also promoted Jordan's foreign policy internationally so that Jordan's actions became a positive influence on other countries in terms of being an example of how to enhance the peaceful coexistence of groups of people in crisis.

Whereas Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy has increased the country's positive brand image internationally, Jordanians are facing social, economic, political, and institutional strains because of it (Alougili 2019, 83). Syrian refugees in Jordan threaten political and socioeconomic stability and internal and national security, making the humanitarian diplomacy approach unsustainable for Jordanians. Moreover, it may be that this threat to internal security is making Jordan an insecure country for foreign investments by other countries. While Jordan is part of a coalition that targets eradicating terrorist groups and combating radical extremist ideologies in the region, its internal and external security may be threatened by its open-border policy for Syrian refugees fleeing war (Alougili 2019, 90–91). The possibility that terrorist groups may be smuggled across Jordan's borders in the guise of refugees may make the country appear risky, thereby blocking serious engagements with foreign countries that may wish to invest in Jordan to facilitate mutual economic growth. Trying to sustain contributions to Syrian refugees in the country may be challenging in the absence of some growth in economic activities that would support the provision of services, including the employment of refugees on an equal basis with Jordanian employees.

Research by Mitra Naseh et al. (2020, 3) found several discrepancies based on the interviews conducted in Jordan with Syrian refugees and service providers on their expectations for humanitarian services and the actual services received. For instance, the refugees stated that the Jordanian government was providing shelter for them but that the humanitarian organizations working in Jordan did not provide any required services. Several complaints revolved around limited funding for health care, education, financial assistance, and training programs based on available financial resources, as well as a lack of assistance with rent and the insufficient availability of electricity and water. These complaints could lead to negative perceptions of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy in the international community; if the country cannot uphold the spirit of diplomacy, which maintains that humanitarian diplomacy is a responsibility and not a choice, then its image may be tarnished (IFRC 2022, 1). Irresponsibility for providing all of the essential services the refugees need could endanger Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy, and it should be reviewed to enhance the country's foreign policy.

The growing tension between Syrian refugees and Jordanians in the Jordanian labor market also pointed out a possibly unsustainable humanitarian approach. Many Jordanians, especially unskilled workers, perceived that Syrian refugees were taking over their jobs. Because Jordan had established a system whereby Syrian refugees had become perfect substitutes in the labor market, some Jordanians lost their jobs (Dougherty 2021, 33). The Jordanian government's efforts to allow Syrian refugees to live freely and the growing mistrust between Jordanians and Syrian refugees about access to resources, including employment, may have made the government's strategy unsustainable in the long run. A proper plan for addressing this issue needs to be put into place. Divisions between the two groups are likely to dominate their social interactions and may contribute to a negative image of Jordan in the future.

Descriptive Statistics

A descriptive analysis was conducted with SPSS version 25 to determine the relationship between the external funding of refugee needs and the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan regarding the long-run sustainability of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy for Syrian refugees. Figure 1 shows the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan from 2012 to 2022.

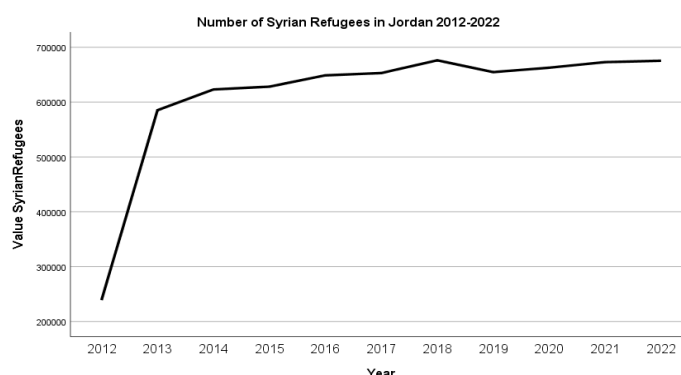


Figure 1: Number of Syrian refugees in Jordan (Source: Author's research 2022)

Figure 1 shows that the although the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan has continued to increase, the rate of increase has fallen, as illustrated by the relatively flatter curve. The UNHCR recorded the numbers and thus did not include unregistered Syrian or non-Syrian refugees. The fact that Syrian refugees have been welcomed in Jordan has given Jordan a positive image as a country that is ensuring the protection of a vulnerable population, which has enhanced the country's foreign policy. The findings confirmed al-Qaralleh's (2022) claim that Jordan's humanitarian effort to accept refugees has been in line with local and regional laws and the guidelines of international organizations, further enhancing Jordan's foreign policy.

However, despite the high number of Syrian refugees in Jordan, the funding received by Jordan in support of the refugees is relatively low. Figure 2 shows the funding received and the total funding required.

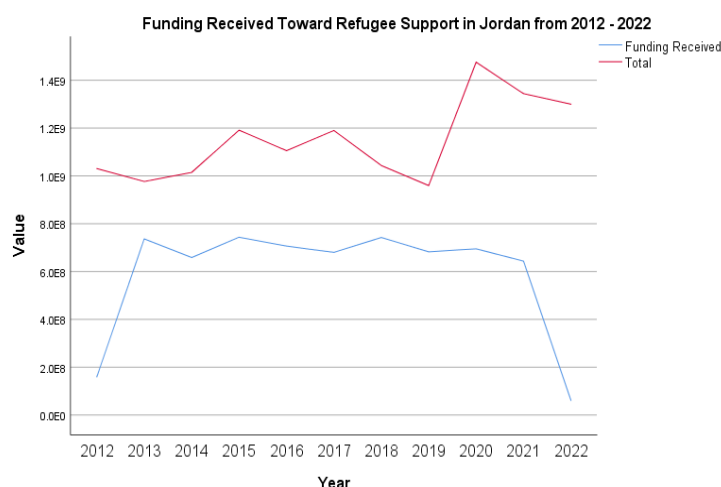


Figure 2: Funding Received for Refugee Support (Source: Author's research 2022)

Figure 2 shows that the funds received to finance the needs of refugees in Jordan are relatively low. This suggests that the Jordanian government has to finance the deficit using the country's limited resources. This finding confirmed al-Weshah's (2014, 199) claim that Jordanians are provoked and feel threatened by the growing number of Syrian refugees and feel that they are drying up the country's limited resources. Thus, without adequate funding from foreign partners and international organizations, Jordan's continued hosting of Syrian refugees will not be sustainable.

Table 1 shows a descriptive analysis of the mean number of Syrian refugees living in Jordan yearly, or 610,859, and the mean amount of funding received each year for their care, or \$591,721,877.60. This suggests that Jordan spent an extremely low amount of \$96.88 per year (\$591,721,877.60 divided by 610,859) on each Syrian refugee.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis (Source: Author's research 2022)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Syrian Refugees	11	238,798	676,283	610,859.45	126,364.007
Funding Received	11	60,924,740	743,537,005	591,721,877.6	241,343,466.5

Correlation

A correlation analysis examined the relationship between the funding received and the growing number of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Table 2 shows the correlation results.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis (Source: Author's research 2022)

Correlations			
		Syrian Refugees	Funding Received
Syrian Refugees	Pearson correlation	1	0.514
	sig. (2-tailed)		0.106
	N	11	11
Funding Received	Pearson correlation	0.514	1
	sig. (2-tailed)	0.106	
	N	11	11

There was a positive relationship between the funding received and the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan. This means increasing the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan should lead to increased funding from foreign countries and international organizations.

Regression

A regression analysis was performed to determine whether the relationship between the funding received and the number of Syrian refugees was statistically significant. Table 3 shows the summary of the results.

Table 3: Model Summary (Source: Author's research 2022)

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.514a	0.264	0.183	218,181,028.5
a Predictors: Constant, Syrian refugees				

The results show a positive relationship between the funding received and the number of Syrian refugees ($R=0.514$). However, the analysis found that approximately 26.4% of the increase in funding was attributed to the increase in the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan ($R^2=0.264$). This means that other factors outside this study influenced 73.6% of the changes in funding. The ANOVA analysis shows an insignificant connection between the two variables ($p\text{-value}=.106 > .05$), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis (Source: Author's research 2022)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.5404E+17	1	1.5404E+17	3.236	.106b
	Residual	4.28427E+17	9	4.7603E+16		
	Total	5.82467E+17	10			
a Dependent variable: Funding received						
b Predictor: Constant, Syrian refugees						

Coefficient

Table 5 shows the coefficient of analysis of the degree of influence the number of Syrian refugees had on the funding received.

Table 5: Coefficient analysis (Source: Author's research 2022)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-8,255,282.968	339,955,583.5		-0.024	0.981
	Syrian refugees	982.185	546.001	0.514	1.799	0.106
a Dependent variable: Funding received						

General Equation

The general equation is: $[Y = -8,255,282 + 982.185 \times \text{Syrian Refugees}]$. It implies a unit change in Syrian refugees would lead to 982.18 times the funding received. With a constant number of Syrian refugees in Jordan, the funding would be at the $-\$8,255,282.97$ intercept.

Policy Implication

The research found that whereas Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy for Syrian refugees has had a positive impact on Jordan's foreign policy, the sustainability of the strategy as the influx of Syrian refugees continues may not be guaranteed with the current funding trends. Therefore, the Jordanian government must devise a more sustainable strategy to deal with the many Syrian refugees. This would include working with foreign countries and international organizations to develop a plan for obtaining enough resources to avoid internal conflict between Jordanian citizens and Syrian refugees over access to scarce resources.

CONCLUSION

This research examined the effect of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy policy for Syrian refugees on its foreign policy and the sustainability of the strategy as refugee needs continue to grow. Using data from a systematic literature review and data from UNHCR databases, the research found a positive impact of Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy strategy on its foreign policy. However, the strategy may not be sustainable with the current funding from international organizations and foreign countries. Since 2012, their funding has decreased, and as the total amount received has fallen short of what is required to support the refugees, the Jordanian government has been forced to make up the shortfall.

The research found a positive relationship between the number of Syrian refugees in Jordan and the funding received ($R=0.514$). However, the relationship was statistically insignificant ($p=.106>.05$). This means that the foreign funding for Syrian refugees was insufficient to meet the needs of the continuing influx of refugees. Hence, the Jordanian government had to intervene to meet the deficit.

The research also found that Jordan's humanitarian diplomacy enhanced a closer relationship with Syria and other foreign countries, especially European countries. The Jordan Compact and Jordanian Response Plan fostered bilateral agreements and cooperation with international organizations. Hence, the plan has raised enthusiasm for Jordan's foreign policy on a global scale.

This research added knowledge to the literature on the effectiveness of humanitarian diplomacy in promoting Jordan's foreign policy and its sustainability in Jordan. The limitation of this study was the small number of articles reviewed. Comprehensive quantitative research is recommended to determine the relationship between funding and various support programs for Syrian refugees in Jordan, such as health care and education.

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