



Department of education, Communication & Learning

Exchanging cultural heritage knowledge, communicating cultures and participating in community through a virtual community of practice

Exploring Syrian immigrant craftsmen activities through interactive online communities to promote cultural integration in Sweden

Rasha Al Massalmeh

Thesis:	30 higher education credits
Program and/or course:	International Master's Programme in IT & Learning
Level:	Second Cycle
Semester/year:	Spring/Autumn term 2020
Supervisor:	Linda Bradley
Examiner:	Anne Algers
Report no:	VT20-2920-001-PDA699

Abstract

Thesis: 30 higher education credits
Program and/or course: International Master's Programme in IT & Learning
Level: Second Cycle
Semester/year: Spring/Autumn term 2020
Supervisor: Linda Bradley
Examiner: Anne Algers
Report No: VT20-2920-001-PDA699
Keywords: Online community, Community of practice, Social theory of learning, Cultural integration, Cultural heritage, Handicrafts, Professional work, Immigrants, Design recommendation

Purpose: The reason behind this study comes from the numerous difficulties and challenges that have affected promoting the cultural integration of Syrian immigrant craftsmen and decreased their opportunities for practicing their crafts in Sweden. Thus, the main aim of this study is to explore these challenges that eased up their integration and also hindered entering the Swedish labor market from Syrian craftsmen's experiences to provide potential solutions to real obstacles through participating in an interactive online community of practice. These obstacles are not identified yet, for that reason, this study aims to identify gaps to cultural integration and practising professional work through involving online communities of practice central structural features and dimensions to overcome real obstacles in Sweden. The focus will be on the concept of cultural integration embodied in exchanging cultural heritage handicrafts knowledge and skills by Syrian and Swedish craftsmen through interactive online communities to overcome real barriers to cultural integration and practicing professional work in Sweden.

Theory: This study follows the notion of the community of practice principles (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Wenger's (2000) social theory of learning. These theories stress the role of social practices and active participation of members in a community who share the same concerns as a means to promote knowledge acquisition, which consequently leads to personal and professional development. Design based research is another theory adopted since this research aims to provide design recommendation for the online community of practice platforms that is based on participants' needs to overcome real barriers to cultural integration and practising professional work in Sweden.

Method: In-depth online interviews and online written questionnaire

Results: Through exploring Syrian immigrants' craftsmen motives, activities and impacts of utilizing interactive online communities to overcome real barriers to cultural integration and practicing professional work in Sweden, the participants of this study expressed the crucial role of online communities that can play in exchanging

heritage knowledge by employing mutual learning and social learning practices. The results also showed that active participation in online communities can produce positive effects on the cultural integration process since connecting cultures can be facilitated by social networks features such as locating relevant people, communicating through online forums, sharing heritage crafts and personal experiences, receiving reviews and feedback, and also receiving multicultural projects offers. Furthermore, involving structural features and dimensions of a community of practice in an Interactive online community might provide substitutional mediums to overcome barriers that were identified as knowledge, skills, environmental and communication gaps to cultural integration, and also to practicing professional work in Sweden.

Foreword

This research thesis is dedicated to my supervisor Linda Bradley, a faculty member in the Department of Education, Communication, and Learning at the University of Gothenburg for being such a wonderful mentor, for her support and feedback, and for helping me more than I need to complete my thesis. To my teacher Mr. Markus Nivala, a faculty member in the Department of Education, Communication, and Learning at the University of Gothenburg for his support and guidance through the whole program.

To my role model, my father Dr. Mowaffaq Al Massalmeh, who supported me with his unending love, and who stands behind every success I have in my life. To my lovely mother, Fadwa Al Massalmeh, for her unconditional love and prayers she has given to me. To my other half my husband Mhd Nour Al Msouti who stood by me and was always there for me, who was the reason behind this study and the reason to overcome all difficulties to successfully complete the thesis.

To all participants of this study and my friends for being helpful and supportive.

Finally, I would like to thank the University of Gothenburg for giving me a study scholarship to complete my studies and to live the most wonderful experience in my life.

Table of Content

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Problem Definition

1.2 The intangible cultural heritage of handicrafts (Syria)

1.3 The intangible cultural heritage of handicrafts (Sweden)

1.4 Immigrants and Online communities

1.5 Technology and Cultural heritage

1.6 Aim of the study

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Culture and Intangible Cultural Heritage of handicrafts

2.2 Cultural integration

2.3 Social networking based online communities

2.4 Cultural heritage based online communities

3.0 Theoretical perspectives

3.1 Wenger's social theory of learning

3.2 Community of practice

3.3 Design-based Research

4.0 Methodology

4.1 The choice of research methods

4.2 Participants selection process

4.2.1 Criteria

4.2.2 locating participants

4.2.3 Sample Size

4.2.4 Participants

4.2.5 Materials

4.3 Data Collection

4.4 Data Analysis

5.0 Results

5.1 Syrian craftsmen involvement in interactive online communities

5.1.1 Interactive online communities that attract Syrian craftsmen

5.1.2 Motives of involvement in interactive online communities from the participants perspective

5.1.3 Adopted activities through interactive online communities

5.1.4 Real Impacts of involvements on participants experiences in Sweden

[5.2 The role of interactive online communities in the domain of cultural handicrafts heritage](#)

[5.2.1 Delivering, receiving knowledge and communicating cultures from participants experiences](#)

[5.3 Offered Solutions through an interactive online community of practice](#)

[5.3.1 Barriers to culture integration and practicing professional work](#)

[5.3.1.1 Barriers to culture integration through gaps identification](#)

[5.3.1.1.1 Knowledge gap](#)

[5.3.1.1.2 Skills gap](#)

[5.3.1.1.3 Environmental gap](#)

[5.3.1.1.4 Communication gap](#)

[5.3.1.2 Barriers to practicing professional work through gaps identification](#)

[5.3.1.2.1 Knowledge gap](#)

[5.3.1.2.2 Skills gap](#)

[5.3.1.2.3 Environmental gap](#)

[5.3.1.2.4 Communication gap](#)

[5.3.2 Potential Solutions that might be applied through an interactive online community of practice](#)

[6.0 Discussion](#)

[6.1 Syrian immigrants craftsmen participation in online communities groups](#)

[6.2 Online communities as a medium to promote cultural integration](#)

[6.3 Bridging the gaps: a virtual community of practice to overcome real obstacles to cultural integration and practicing professional work](#)

[7.0 Conclusion](#)

[7.1 Implications](#)

[7.2 Limitations of the study and future research](#)

[7.3 Ethical Consideration](#)

[Reference List](#)

[Appendix](#)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Problem Definition

The ongoing armed conflicts and political upheavals in Syria have led to displacing millions of people to other countries to seek for settlement and safety (Cunliffe, Muhesen & Lostal, 2016). Sweden was one of the countries that have experienced an unprecedented number of refugees, particularly from Syria. According to Migration board statistics (Migrationsverket.se), the number of Syrian asylum seekers has reached more than 121300 applications in the period from 2012 to 2019, registering the highest rate in 2014 and 2015 which has reached 81,800 applications for both years. The waves of migration have proposed many cultural challenges on Immigrants in Sweden (Riegert & Hovden, 2019), as many researches have been focused on cultural difficulties and the significant role of cultural integration of immigrants in Sweden (Lund, 2019; Saidi, 2016.; Nekby, 2012). Cultural integration can be seen as a combination of what people inherit in their homelands and what they learn in hosted countries over time, it is a process of transformation that immigrants might adapt by placing their identities and inserting their belongings to create local ties in their new place (Ehrkamp, 2005).

While the focus of previous researches surrounding cultural integration was dealing with the adoption of Swedish values, norms, traditions, language and laws by immigrants as a means to promote cultural integration in Sweden (Saidi, 2016; Lundborg, 2013; Nekby, 2012), using cultural heritage as a way to foster cultural integration of immigrants, did not bring much attention by experts and scholars in Sweden. Cultural heritage field plays a vital role in the cultural area, it was defined by ICOMOS (The international cultural tourism charter in Mexico) as “ an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expression and values. Cultural Heritage is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage” (ICOMOS, 2002, p.21). The tangible cultural heritage forms any physical buildings, artworks, monuments, and artifacts that moved intergenerational in any society, on the other hand, the intangible cultural heritage forms the living heritage from generation to another such as traditional crafts, skills, and knowledge that is still associated with specific communities (UNESCO, 2003).

According to Colomer and Holtorf (2019) cultural heritage is seen as “the visible manifestation of a shared cultural history and common collective identity which the members in a given ethnic group or nation ascribe to themselves. When members of such tightly connected cultural groups get dispersed from their land of origin their cultural identity can nevertheless stay alive. In the diaspora, the culture of the homeland, including movable parts of its heritage, can survive even though the location is now different” (p. 147). Thus, with stress on the significant role of cultural heritage in the cultural integration of immigrants in Sweden, the concept of cultural integration in this context can be seen as cultural heritage exchange between Syrian immigrant craftsmen and Swedish craftsmen who are working with heritage handicrafts in Sweden. Exchanging cultural

heritage knowledge and skills will be adapted as a means to find potential support for cultural integration and also to promote practising heritage handicrafts of Syrian immigrants in Sweden. The reason behind choosing this group of immigrants is the numerous difficulties and obstacles that affected Syrian craftsmen integration and also hindered practising professional work in Sweden. Moreover, these obstacles are not identified yet since this group of immigrants did not get much attention from researchers and experts in the heritage field in Sweden. For these reasons, the focus in this context will be on this marginalized group of immigrants to be able to find potential solutions to enhance cultural integration and increase Syrian craftsmen opportunities in practicing professional work.

1.2 The intangible cultural heritage of handicrafts (Syria)

Syria is one of the countries that enjoys rich cultural intangible heritage forms that are associated with craftsmanship practices. According to the UNESCO (2011), the capital of Syria (Damascus) is considered to be among the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world and was the center of a flourishing craft industry with different areas of the city specializing in particular crafts such as swords and lace. For hundreds of years, the Damascenes were famous for their creativity in the field of handicrafts and the uniqueness of handcrafted products that basically depend on inherited skills and imagination of each craftsman. Many authors and historians have devoted their works to highlight the authenticity of heritage handicrafts in Damascus and to dive into the history of these crafts (Keenan, 2000; Moeini & Arefian, 2019), especially in knitting textile fibers, furniture studded with seashell, mosaic marble artwork. In addition to that, the Brocade" (Damasks) cloth is one of the famous and expensive old fabrics in the world which its history dates back to nearly 300 years is still considered the Damascus's global imprint, and have always been known globally for their quality and texture since its manufacture is complex and requires high craftsmanship skills where the fabric is made of threads of gold, silver and natural silk. Moreover, in a book published by the American University, foreign areas studies division (1965), a description about Damascene handicrafts was provided to stress the importance of Syrian handcrafted heritage "Syria is world famous for its handicrafts...The ancient Omayyad capital was famous for its textile-agabani and brocades embellished with floral, bird and geometric designs. Syrians are proud of the fact that Queen Elizabeth chose Damascus silk for her wedding gown. Syrian glass was famous before the Romans. Woodcarving and pottery making have also been important. Centuries-old crafts are declining in the face of modern industrial expansion, but they still provide a livelihood for thousands of artists" (p. 107).

With the start of war in Syria in 2011, the destruction and damage to the Syrian tangible heritage sites have been widely addressed by scholars and experts in the heritage field (Alabrash, 2019; Kanjou, 2018; Lababidi & Qassar, 2016; Munawar, 2019), as a means to highlight the urgent need for protection. However, the effect of the crise on Syrian handicrafts heritage and displaced craftsmen has been less considered. The war had a great effect on Syrian craftsmen work and products since the harsh circumstances have forced them to leave their companies, and imposed

financial difficulties. Thousands of them have decided to travel abroad to seek a peaceful life and search for a good income for their families. Syrian craftsmen might be exposed to cultural challenges particularly in European countries that hold different cultural heritage and totally new environments for Syrian immigrant craftsmen. According to the UNESCO (2016) in the article published to highlight the difficulties that displaced craftsmen might encounter in host places which in turn would prevent them from their right of practising their heritage handicrafts: "Refugees and displaced people tend to draw from their intangible cultural heritage as a resource for social and psychological resilience in the face of intense difficulties. At the same time their intangible cultural heritage is threatened, not least due to the disruption of communities and families. Their ability to access and enjoy culture and cultural rights must be guaranteed in these circumstances as it helps them cope with the psychological distress of forced displacement, and ensures their well-being in adapting and settling into the new context of a host country" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 6). The UNESCO organization (2017) has also conducted a survey with displaced Syrian to investigate the role of intangible cultural heritage in achieving settlement in host countries (Jordan and Lebanon). The results showed that intangible cultural heritage (customs and traditions, craftsmanship) can play a role in coping with displacement, creating ties with host communities and also transmitting their heritage to host countries (UNESCO, 2017).

1.3 The intangible cultural heritage of handicrafts (Sweden)

In Sweden, the government's cultural heritage policy is constantly evolving to invest in better conditions for culture, cultural heritage, and culture creators. The Swedish government in 2017 proposed an investment worth 115 million SEK per year to enhance the artistic freedom and cultural arts publications which represent an increase of the grants that are allocated for cultural creators and preserves. Likewise, in an article published by the Swedish Ministry of culture (2017), the Minister for Culture and Democracy Alice Bah Kuhnke confirmed that "Cultural freedom and independent cultural practitioners are essential to all free societies. In a world where those in power are restricting the conditions for independent artists, the Government is moving in the opposite direction,". The Swedish government aimed to strengthen the grant to the cultural environment to support civil actors in the field of cultural heritage to make it open and accessible to everyone in society. The Swedish Local Heritage Federation (Sveriges Hembygdsförbund) which was founded in 1916 in Stockholm, is a good example that magnifies the adaptable governmental efforts to apply appropriate reforms and civilian response to the cultural heritage development. It is the national organization of the local heritage movement that has appeared as a reaction to industrialization as many people saw a threat to the old cultural traditions, to preserve traditional crafts, customs, folklore, historical architecture and all kinds of intangible cultural heritage at all levels (Bergdahl, 2012). Authors, academics, and other forces began to form associations to preserve the heritage and provoke public interest in local heritage activities and also to handle all questions affecting local communities. Open-air museums were founded in various parts of the country such as the world's oldest open-air museum Skansen (www.Skansen.se) which inspired many similar museums in Europe, it was opened in 1891 in the middle of Stockholm city against

the materialism of industrial culture and to safeguard man-made heritage. In parallel with institutional efforts to promote and preserve local heritage, many Swedish heritage institutions expanded their work scope to include threatened international cultural heritage objects and handcrafted products that belong to Syrian and Iraqi heritage practices. According to the Swedish ministry of culture website (<https://www.government.se/>) the national museums of World Culture (<http://www.varldskulturmuseerna.se/>) has received SEK 1.3 million in an attempt to develop long-term project to serve in promoting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Syria and Iraq and also in preserving threatened culture heritage as a result of the ongoing conflicts that has led to illegal trade of cultural objects and destruction of cultural identities (Government offices of Sweden, 2017). The National Museum of World Culture has established contacts with international actors to promote cultural heritage protection and deliver knowledge of international heritage through displaying cultural heritage objects handcrafted products in the museum. Nowadays, cultural heritage associations and organizations serve as places for students' educational activities, community learning experience, and cultural festivities by showcasing heritage practices and handmade heritage products from different cultures to insure diversity and multicultural environments (The Swedish Exhibition Agency, 2015).

1.4 Immigrants and Online communities

The development of technology has been harnessed to support immigrants' cultural integration in host countries (Alencar, 2017). Furthermore, the widespread usage of technology among immigrants has also opened the doors for new digital platforms that can be used to promote the integration process (Recupero, Triberti, Modesti & Talamo, 2018). Thus, many immigrants are seeking to gain knowledge through different digital technology platforms to increase their opportunities of communication and getting suitable jobs in host countries. Recent trends of online communication have been focused on by many researchers to explore purposes and impacts of utilizing social networks based on online communities as a means to enhance immigrants integration process (Alencar, 2017; Collin, Karsenti, Rico, Fielden & Sánchez, 2019; Calonne, 2015), since online communities are increasingly used as a means to facilitate immigrants communication and participation in host countries. The emergence of virtual communities has provided immigrants with new alternative tools to overcome real-life barriers and empower their integration process (Tabor & Milfont, 2013). Hence, this study will adopt online communities as a means to help Syrian immigrants craftsmen to overcome real-life barriers to cultural integration and practising their crafts in Sweden. There will be a focus on identifying learning approaches that can be utilized through online communities to overcome real integration challenges through examining Syrian craftsmen's activities and participating in what Lave & Wenger (1991) have conceptualized as communities of practice.

1.5 Technology and Cultural heritage

In recent years, digital technology has surpassed the borders of time and place by allowing us to experience new connections that we never thought about. Technology evolution is not only confined to the present and future transformation of our lives but also has the potential to transform the way we perceive and preserve the past of our predecessors. In other words, nowadays the role of digital technology has dramatically increased in the field of cultural heritage (Taboni, 2019), where the past within the heritage and historical field is not just associated with specialists of the domain but also it has become as a source for worldwide learners and scholars to contribute in intercultural communication and local communities' development (Brizard, Derde & Silberman, 2007).

Cultural heritage is an expression meant to describe the processes that are learned and products that are preserved from one generation to another. It also manifests the ways of living and practices that are developed and transmitted through generations in specific societies such as language, costumes, places, artistic endeavors, knowledge, crafts, and traditions (ICOMOS, 2002). Furthermore, according to UNESCO (The United Nation Educational, Scientific, and cultural organization) in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Heritage, the field of cultural heritage is divided into two forms: tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This field combined with digital information and communication technologies has the potential to address the appearing challenges in the heritage domain (Brizard, Derde & Silberman, 2007), possibly in the serves of presenting and protecting valuable heritage.

1.6 Aim of the study

The main aim of this research is to find potential solutions to real barriers to cultural integration and practising professional work of Syrian immigrant craftsmen in Sweden through participating in a virtual community of practice platform. This study focuses on identifying gaps that hindered their cultural integration and practising their crafts in Sweden through Syrian craftsmen experiences to provide basic recommendations of virtual community of practice platform based on Wenger and Lave (1991) community of practice theory and Wenger's (2000) social theory of learning and their characteristics, principles and features. The investigations will be focused on Syrian immigrants' craftsmen's online behaviors, attributes, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge towards online communities to enhance the Swedish cultural heritage knowledge of handicrafts. Moreover, the study aims to define the role of online communities in Swedish cultural heritage of handicrafts knowledge acquisition and explore online social learning approaches that Syrian craftsmen utilize to promote cultural integration into Sweden country. Finally, to derive systematic data from participants to know how to utilize community of practice principles through an online community to foster knowledge and skills exchange between Syrian and Swedish craftsmen to

support an early entrance of Syrian craftsmen into the Swedish labor market. The proposed research questions are as follows:

Research Questions

1. *What are the motives, activities and impacts of Syrian craftsmen involvement in interactive online communities (e.g. web communities, Facebook groups,..etc.), from participants' experiences?*
2. *What is the role of interactive online communities in delivering, receiving heritage knowledge and also in connecting cultures embodied in heritage handicrafts?*
3. *What are the potential solutions to the barriers of Syrian immigrants' craftsmen's professional work and cultural integration that can be offered through an interactive online community of practice?*

2.0 Literature Review

This section will bring up research dealing with definitions about culture, culture heritage and cultural integration. Following that there will be a focus on how online communities based cultural heritage is being used to promote heritage knowledge through adapting social practices and participating in communities. There will also be focus on the development of social networks to become a community that involves groups of people who share the same interest and concern to overcome problems.

2.1 Culture and Intangible Cultural Heritage of handicrafts

A widely accepted definition of culture that was provided by Tylor (1920), he describes the term as the complex whole that includes any capabilities or habits acquired by a human as a member of society. Culture acts as a base area that encompasses various aspects of human life, it can be any habits, norms, laws, customs, arts, values, and behavior (Meier, 2007), learned and adapted by members of any society. According to Worsley (1999), the term culture in old times was monopolized by a specific class of society, it was meant to describe 'fine arts' such as literature, paintings, and sculptures created by upper classes and educated middle class but the definition developed over time to describe "the way of life of a particular population". Worsley in the same context suggested that culture is "All behavior and relationships that are informed by ideas and beliefs, in any society, anywhere, at any time". Culture is a negotiated set of shared symbolic systems (Meier, 2007), shared knowledge, and belief that shape human perception (Bennett, 1990), and involves a learned behavior that is inherited from generation to another (Offorma, 2016).

As stated in the introduction, our main focus of this study will be on intangible cultural heritage particularly heritage handicrafts. The term of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) “relates to forms of cultural heritage that lack physical manifestation. It also evokes that which is untouchable such as knowledge, memories and feelings” (Stefano, Davis & Corsane, 2012), that have moved and transmitted through groups of individual and communities, “which can be argued to be the central of its survival” (Stefano, Davis & Corsane, 2012). The term was also defined by ICOMOS (2002) as follows:

“Intangible Cultural Heritage can be defined as embracing all forms of traditional and popular or folk culture, the collective works originating in a given community and based on tradition. These creations are transmitted orally or by gesture, and are modified over a period of time, through a process of collective re-creation. They include oral traditions, customs, languages, music, dance, rituals, festivals, traditional medicine and pharmacopeia, popular sports, food and the culinary arts and all kinds of special skill connected with the material aspects of culture, such as tools and the habitat” (the international cultural tourism charter in Mexico, 2002, p. 23).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, has also defined the term in 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as: “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and know-how, transmitted from generation to generation within communities, created and transformed continuously by them, depending on the environment and their interaction with nature and history”. Furthermore, *Intangible* stands for transmitted practices by imitation, *Cultural* stands for practices that provide a sense of identity to a community, and *Heritage* stands for intergenerational transmission of practices (UNESCO, 2003).

The intangible cultural heritage has also been categorized by UNESCO (2003) to include the traditional craftsmanship and practices of heritage handicrafts. Furthermore, heritage handicrafts are considered as a part of global culture and heritage, they are widely accepted as an old practice or profession that requires handy skills and deep knowledge of traditional techniques and materials that are transmitted from generation to another. As a matter of fact, heritage handicrafts have no official definition, yet several cultural organizations in different countries have attempted to define heritage handicrafts in an attempt to promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of living heritage. The Heritage Crafts Association (HCA) in the UK defined heritage crafts as “a practice which employs manual dexterity and skill and an understanding of traditional materials, design, and techniques, and which has been practiced for two or more successive generations”. It is a creative process of an imitative handmade product based on the motives of a folk tradition (The Georgian Arts and Culture Center, 2012), to produce creative handmade crafts without the help of modern machines and equipment.

2.2 Cultural integration

Cultural integration can be seen as the meeting of different cultures, and accepting a sufficient number of values from the other culture to create a homogeneous culture (Danchev, 2008).

Moreover, cultural integration in its essence aims to transfer the cultural heritage of a specific society to another society with different cultural backgrounds, to create multicultural societies, and strengthen the ties between immigrants and native people of the host country. This happens when people from different cultural backgrounds adopt the host country's cultural values, attitudes, and traditions and also introduce their values, traditions and attitudes as a means to facilitate their integration process and expand their living opportunities in the host country.

Costoiu (2008) suggested that the integration process is multidimensional and has to be assessed on political, cultural, social, and economic dimensions. Thus, cultural integration according to Costoiu (2008) should focus on the way the minority groups are allowed to preserve their cultural values and have a chance to present these values in the public and in the private spheres. It happens when immigrants from different cultural backgrounds introduce their cultural values, attitudes, ceremonies and heritage traditions to the new host countries; It is the process of reorganization by social agents to reconstruct a societal order based on their specific understandings (Samson, 2006). This can be exemplified in attitudes, food, music, inherited traditional crafts, and many other cultural characteristics.

Danchev (2008) suggested that cultural integration is not an instant process, it goes through different three levels which start with Cultural coexistence when the minority culture meets the majority culture which results in isolation and no interaction of minority culture group with majority culture group. Danchev (2008) elaborates on the next level as Cultural exchange which starts when minority culture groups accept some majority culture values and exchange occurs. Consequently, this will lead to the acceptance of more values over time and reach the cultural integration level (Danchev, 2008).

According to UNCHER (The UN Refugee Agency, 2014), the integration of immigrants is two-way process that include preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt new society “without having to forego their own cultural identity and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population. The process of integration is complex and gradual, comprising distinct but interrelated legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions, all of which are important for refugees’ ability to integrate successfully as fully included members of the host society” (UNCHER, 2014).

Accordingly, it can be argued that cultural integration refers to 1) immigrants craftsmen learning and adopting host country cultural heritage embodied in heritage handicrafts knowledge and skills, with ability to 2) introduce and share their cultural heritage embodied in heritage handicrafts knowledge and skills, to foster 3) cultural heritage knowledge and skills exchange as a means to promote cultural integration and to facilitate the inclusion of immigrants craftsmen into the Swedish labor market.

2.3 Social networking based online communities

In recent years, the development of Web 2.0 based social networking has offered a multitude means for communication, interaction and collaborative learning (Gunawardena et al., 2009). Basically, social networks can be seen as a group of people that communicate with each other on a regular basis through utilizing the internet based social networks technologies. The term has been labelled by Issa and kommers (2013) as: “the new social mechanism driven by justin-time communication and the mentality to share”, through various types of social networks platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Website and Web blogs. Gunawardena et al. (2009) has defined social networking “as the practice of expanding knowledge by making connections with individuals of similar interests”(p. 4), thus the development of social networks platforms has been used as a means for knowledge acquisition by creating interactive online communities that involve groups of people who share same interest, same concerns, same challenges and same goals. According to Wenger (2002), these communities already existed long time ago, but the advent of practical and powerful social network platforms have expanded the possibilities of groups engagement in online communities, since it comes from an intrinsic motivation drive (Hamid, 2002) to facilitate knowledge sharing and solving problems without physical meetings.

Kim (2000) argued that social online communities can have the same effect of physical communities in developing social communication of groups of people who work together for personal goals, she said that “In terms of their social dynamics, physical and virtual communities are much the same. Both involve developing a web of relationships among people who have something meaningful in common, such as a beloved hobby, a life-altering illness, a political cause, a religious conviction, a professional relationship, or even simply a neighborhood or town. So in one sense, a Web community is simply a community that happens to exist online, rather than in the physical world” (Kim, 2000). The power of social networks lies in the ability of creating interactive community platforms that enable new relationships and connections (Mancini, 2015), such as individuals to organization, employees to employers, students to teachers and paved the way to new informal social practices between members of social networks such as sharing, discussing and creating (Kietzmann, 2011). More importantly, what drives a social network to become a successful community is its members' interactive, collaborative, collective and social practices that bound them to solve problems together.

2.4 Cultural heritage based online communities

Since the emergence of digital technologies, many challenges have been posed on the domain of cultural heritage (Ciolfi, Damala, Hornecker, Lechner & Maye, 2018), as many researchers assume that the relationship between technology and cultural heritage is dialectical and complex (Piccialli & Chianese, 2017). The main key issues arose back to the era that precede the inclusion of internet based technologies. Ciolfi et al. (2018) in their book that meant to examine the challenges of online communities participation and engagement described the key issues that already exist in

the domain as follows: “the complex interrelationship between cultural heritage and a variety of stakeholders communities has been a subject for investigation for a long time: key issues have ranged from the understanding of visitors communities and their various motivations, background and interest, to the self-reflection by the professional heritage community on their own practices and strategies”. Moreover, the issues of communication, preservation and participation in heritage communities has been focused on as a way to increase engagements and participation in heritage communities (Ciolfi et al., 2018).

For that reason, many scholars, experts and institutions in the field of cultural heritage have taken advantage of the development of digital technology by utilizing internet-based technology approaches and tools as a means to present and preserve heritage such as online libraries, archives, virtual museums and exhibitions. Mixed and Virtual reality systems have been increasingly used in the service of presenting museums and heritage sites to enable heritage experiences and make cultural heritage accessible for all users (Tabone, 2019). Researchers in the field have also put much attention to the inclusion of digital technologies into cultural heritage practices. For example, Jailani, Araki and Kusakabe (2016) has conducted a study to design an interactive scenario based on the user's interests to encourage engagement in the informal learning process. Mancini (2015) has focused in her study on how we can incorporate user participation in heritage institutions such as museums with new social media networks.

Cultural heritage institutions are utilizing internet-based technology tools as a means to present and preserve heritage such as online libraries, archives, virtual museums and exhibitions. The advancement of digital technologies has also expanded the opportunities of community engagement in professional culture settings (Giglietto, Claisse, Lockley & Ciolfi, 2019), where individuals became able to contribute in local cultural heritage development together with specialized scholars and cultural heritage institutions (Brizard, Derde & Silberman, 2007). In addition to that, the evolving of digital technologies has led practitioners, experts and institutions in the heritage domain to transform and adjust their practices of recording and presenting digital content by utilizing different means of interactive technologies (Giglietto, Claisse, Lockley & Ciolfi, 2019). This shift has also led to create new approaches of communication that engage people from heritage domain and relevant communities through online communities and expanded the opportunities of open discussions and knowledge acquisitions, on the basis of new strategies to facilitate community engagement and participation (Ciolfi, Damala, Hornecker, Lechner & Maye, 2018). The American Institute for Conservation (AIC and FAIC) website (<https://community.culturalheritage.org/home>) is an example of digital technologies' contribution in the heritage field. It is an online community that has been created to contribute in preserving, transmitting and learning of American cultural heritage, where individuals, experts and scholars can altogether participate in open discussion, online courses, events, and workshops.

3.0 Theoretical perspectives

Considering the main objective of this research, this section presents the theoretical perspectives that underpins this study which aim to investigate the use of interactive online communities by Syrian immigrants craftsmen to promote cultural integration and practising professional work in Sweden. The interactive online communities in this research follow the notion of social practices through participating in communities of practice.

The concept of community of practice (COP) was originally developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) which is characterized by clear boundaries, membership, stability and has a single center of supreme skill and authority, typically embodied in the master (Engeström, 2007) but even to complement and coin the concept of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) which stresses the crucial role of full participation in social collective practices of a community. In other words, a community of practice is an interactive, collaborative, collective and social learning environment that facilitates knowledge sharing through a group of individuals to promote learning. The individuals through a community of practice usually share the same domain and interest, and employ informal conversing and learning between each other that can be highly effective on knowledge generation related to a specific field (Hinton, 2003). According to Lave and Wenger (1991), the process of socializing to share information and experiences within a group of members might contribute to personal and professional development of members.

Based on the aim of this study which is about investigating the role of social practices in knowledge generation through online community of practice to promote cultural integration and Syrian craftsmen inclusion into Swedish labor market, the author finds that Wenger's social theory of learning (1998) and community of practice (1991) are applicable to this study since both theories are coined the sense and purpose of the community that this paper aims to discuss.

3.1 Wenger's social theory of learning

According to Wenger (1998) the proposed social theory of learning is not to substitute other learning theories, it is rather a conceptual framework that consists of a set assumptions and recommendations for understanding learning. These assumptions are derived from the nature of learning and knowledge matters, and based on four premises:

1. People are social beings is a central aspect of learning
2. Knowledge is about competence that consider valued enterprises
3. Knowing is about active participation to pursuit such enterprises
4. Meaning is the output of learning as a meaningful experience

Through these assumptions, Wenger (1998) assumes that learning can be seen as a social participation that involves the necessary components which constitutes the process of knowing

and learning. The four components of learning according to Wenger (1998) are meaning, practice, community and identity.

1. *Meaning: a way of talking about our (changing) ability – individually and meaning: collectively – to experience our life and the world as meaningful;*
2. *Practice: a way of talking about the shared historical and social resources, frameworks, and perspectives that can sustain mutual engagement in action.*
3. *Community: a way of talking about the social configurations in which our enterprise is defined and our participation is recognizable as competence*
4. *Identity: a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities.*

(Wenger, 1998, p. 5)

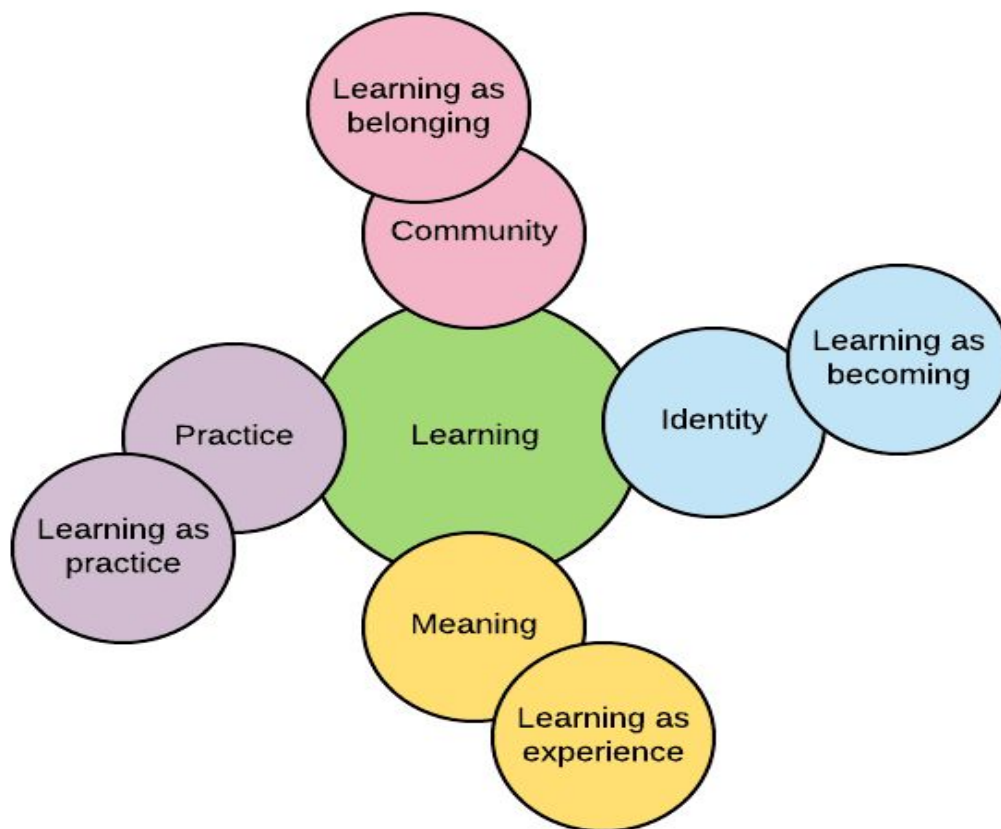


Figure 1: Components of a social theory of learning

Wenger (1998) in his social theory of learning proposed that learning is fundamentally a social phenomenon that demands placing learning in the context of participation in meaningful experiences. Thus, the social nature of human beings reflects our capability of knowing and learning to contribute directly in individuals and community development. Accordingly, learning is not an individual practice, it is rather an individual participation in community practice, where the history of shared knowledge is embraced by group members through their participation in meaningful shared concern and goals (Barab, Warren, Del Valle & Fang, 2012).

Applying the principles of Wenger's social theory of learning to this context, many research studies have focused on employing theoretical frameworks to the arising social networking sites and applications to understand the learning practices that occur through utilizing social network practices by individuals to solve problems (Gunawardena et al., 2009). The evolution of social networks based on Web 2.0, has proposed changes in knowledge acquisition and also in human behavior and interaction (Gunawardena et al., 2009). Furthermore, these social networks have offered different means of communication between individuals that share the same concerns and challenges and enabled them to share meaningful experiences that enhance personal and professional development. Hence, participation in social practices through social networks can be seen as a proper medium to facilitate interactive, collaborative, social and collective learning by a group of people who lack the knowledge that would contribute in addressing real problems such as the challenges of integration for a group of immigrants craftsmen in this study.

3.2 Community of practice

The notion of community of practice has drawn much attention since the publication of situated learning theory by Lave and Wenger (1991). The concept of community of practice was proposed to describe the situated learning that considers learning, participation and practice in community as inseparable units. Wenger (2002, p.4) defined the term community of practice as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis". Accordingly, we can not regard every group of people inside a community as the community of practice, however, there are certain principles and aspects that must be considered inside a community to become a community of practice. Wenger (1989) proposed three dimensions that define a community of practice, these dimensions are 1- a mutual engagement of participants in meaningful actions, 2- a joint enterprise that is negotiated and understood by members of community, 3- a shared repertoire of collective resources such as (stories, tools, styles, artifacts, concepts).

These dimensions are in relation to the social practices that members employ through active participation in the community. Moreover, members might spend time together discussing their situations, sharing experiences and information, creating valuable documents and tools, exploring new ideas and knowledge that might help in developing a tacit knowledge and also in solving problems. According to Wenger (2002), these social practices inside a community might contribute in changing the meaning of members participation where they find value in their interaction together, thus becoming informally bound by the value of collective learning.

Wenger in his book (2002, p.5) described the learning process that occur inside the community of practice as follows:

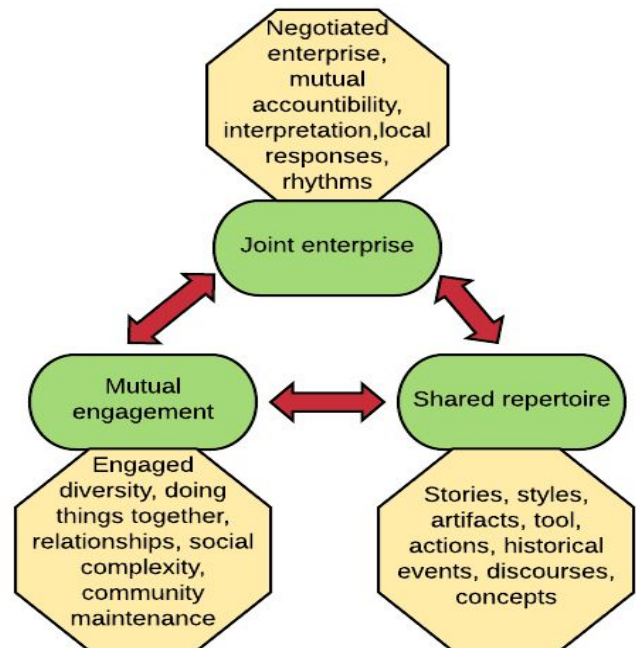


Figure 2: Dimentions of practice as the property of community (Wenger, 1998, p. 73)

“Over time, they develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of common knowledge, practices, and approaches. They also develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting. They may even develop a common sense of identity. They become a community of practice” (Wenger, 2002, p. 5)

There are three central structural features of community of practice according to Lave and Wenger (1991) :

1. Domain feature involves shared domain, shared concern, shared interests and engagement to participate.
2. Practice feature involves actual practitioners, shared repertoire of resources, build knowledge and focus on community development.
3. Community feature involves collective learning, social learning, information sharing, joint activities, relationships building and problem solving.

Features of community of practice are shown in figure three below.

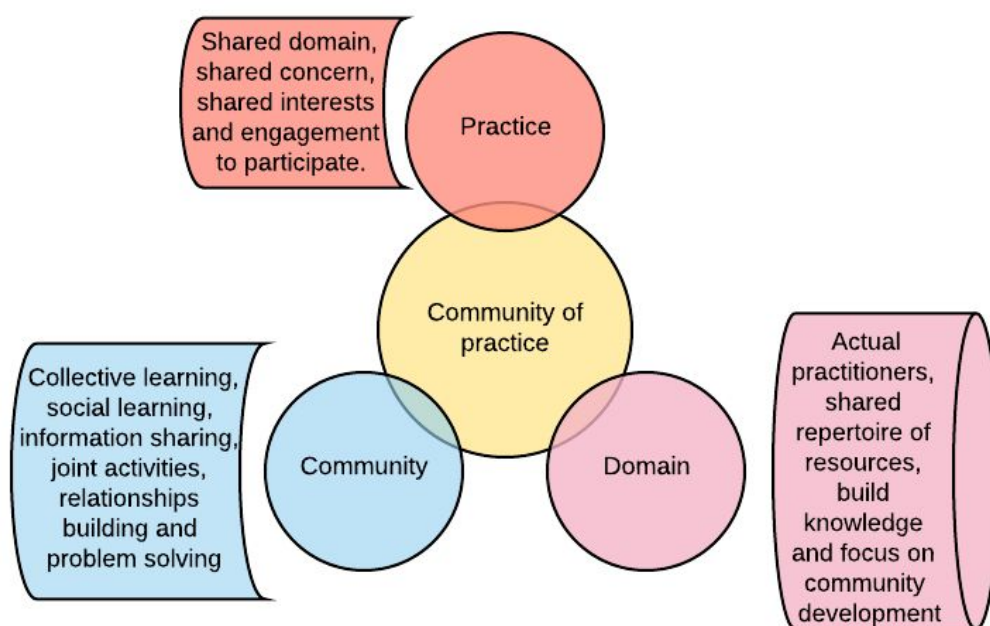


Figure 3: Central features of community of practice

Wenger (2002) mentioned that these features “When they function well together, these three elements makes a community of practice an ideal knowledge structure-- a social structure that can assume responsibility for developing and sharing knowledge” (p. 29).

Even though the process of learning through community of practice was introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) to describe a group of people that meet physically, the advent of Internet-based networking technologies have expanded the opportunities of communication between individuals and facilitated the means to embrace community of practice principles and features.

Wenger (2000) mentioned that online communities can be utilized by groups of people who are seeking help to overcome barriers. He also added that virtual communities are arising, so it would be beneficial to let people test the principles of communities of practice but virtually: “As these technologies became more accessible, they were employed to bridge the gaps of space, time, and organizational location. Virtual teams started to emerge, and research began to look at practices that could bridge distance and yet provide some of the benefits of face-to-face social learning and collaboration. Now that we are in the world of virtual teams, communities of interest, and communities of practice, let's examine their differences” (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p. 34).

Since this study is concerned with online communities of practice to foster cultural heritage knowledge and skills exchange between Syrian and Swedish craftsmen, it is worthy to mention

that online communities can facilitate the communication between individuals by enabling building deep relationships and knowledge sharing through participating in joint meaningful activities to help in solving problems of members of community of practice.

3.3 Design-based Research

Design based research is a type of research methodology that was first proposed as design-experiments (Collins, 1990 & Brown, 1992) and design research (Oha & Reeves, 2010). Sandoval and Bell (2004) talked about introducing design based research as a way to distinguish the term from other types of research: “We have settled on the term design-based research over the other commonly used phrases “design experimentation,” which connotes a specific form of controlled experimentation that does not capture the breadth of the approach, or “design research,” which is too easily confused with research design and other efforts in design fields that lack in situ research components. (p. 199). Design based research can be seen as research that basically aims to design educational materials and learning environments which is considered a crucial part of the research with testing or developing new theories (Bakker & Van Eerde, 2013). Wang and Hannafin (2005) proposed a definition to the term as “a research methodology aimed to improve educational practices through systematic, flexible, and iterative review, analysis, design, development, and implementation, based upon collaboration among researchers and practitioners in real-world settings, and leading to design principles or theories” (p. 2).

Accordingly, design based research can offer researchers and practitioners in the field of learning with powerful tools that addresses learners’ real needs and difficulties through producing interventions of real values that are tested to be effective and also might contribute in generating knowledge through focusing on the development of real solutions to real problems. According to Reeves & McKenney (2012), design based research or educational design research has two primary goals: “to develop knowledge, and to develop solutions. Like other research, EDR extends theoretical knowledge through data collection and analysis. But unlike many other kinds of research, the EDR process is embedded in the (often cyclic) development of a solution to the problem being tackled” (Reeves & McKenney, 2012, p. 1).

Thus, the rise of design based research has the potential to address problems in relation with the application of technology in teaching and learning in order to change the disconnect between education research and design practice (Bakker & Van Eerde, 2013), and also to bridge the gaps that might exist in learning environments.

According to Dirksen (2015): “If you have a really clear sense of where the gaps are, what they are like, and how big they are, you will design much better learning solutions” (p.23), hence there should be a communication with learners to be able to identify the gaps as a way to design a learning environment and also to bridge the gaps between learners and a successful learning experience (Dirksen, 2015).

According to Dirksen (2015), there are five gaps to design a successful learning experience:

- 1) A successful learning experience doesn't just involve a learner knowing more—it's about them being able to do more with that *knowledge*.
- 2) Sometimes a learner's main gap is knowledge, but more frequently knowledge and information are just the supplies the learner needs to develop *skills*.
- 3) You need to consider the *motivations* and attitudes of your learners. If they know how to do something, are there other reasons why they aren't succeeding?
- 4) The *environment* needs to support the learner. People are much less likely to be successful if they encounter roadblocks when they try to apply what they've learned.
- 5) Sometimes it's not a learning problem, but rather a problem of *communication*, direction, or leadership. Recognizing those instances can save a lot of effort in wrong directions. (Dirksen, 2015, p. 23)

As shown in figure 4, design based research has four phases, however, in this context, the main aim is to provide design recommendations (Phase 1-2) of an online community of practice that involve Syrian and Swedish craftsmen that might incorporate with each other to overcome real barriers to cultural integration and practicing professional work in Sweden. Accordingly, there will be a focus on analyzing participants problems and developing potential solutions that are based on participants' needs and gaps that hindered their cultural integration process in order to design an online community platform that is grounded in community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and social theory of learning (Wenger, 1998).

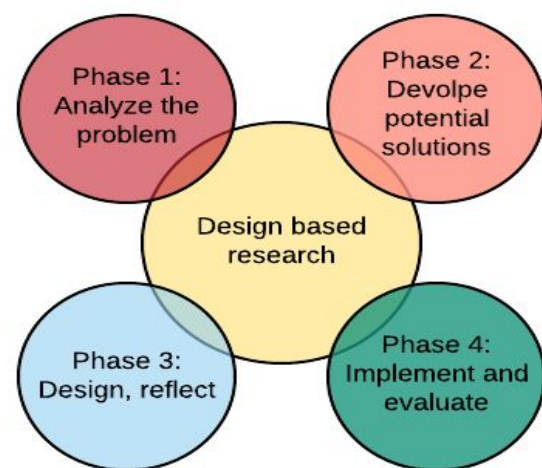


Figure 4: Design based reseach process

4.0 Methodology

This section will explain in detail the choice of research methods and how this study was conducted. There will be a focus on the process of choosing participants, participants' criteria, setting, and how data was collected and analyzed.

4.1 The choice of research methods

The research methods of this study were chosen to seek answers for research questions and understand research problems from particular participants' perspectives. The choice of research methodology is based mainly on the nature of the research questions of this study which demand rich information from a particular population. Qualitative research methods were chosen to collect

data and derive meaningful responses from chosen participants. Qualitative methods are especially effective and optimal in this study since the suggested research questions require extensive knowledge about participant's experiences with online community platforms to enhance their learning process in a cultural heritage context. This type of question demands a complex description of participants' opinions, behaviors, and beliefs in order to explore more in-depth information and generate broad overviews that serve the study. The strength of qualitative methods lies in its ability to help the researcher to understand the complex reality of participants' online activities and also helps in interpreting particular information by adapting flexible procedures.

For this research, two qualitative methods were used, in-depth interviews and questionnaire to collect data concerning the usage of online community platforms to enhance cultural heritage knowledge acquisition and to explore the role of cultural heritage content based online communities in cultural integration. Finally, to determine how online communities can be promoted to enhance Syrian craftsmen early entrance into the Swedish labor market. The participants were given a choice to choose between two forms of questions, verbal (online interview) and written (online questionnaire) questions according to their preferable setting. The online interviews and questionnaire included open-ended questions that led to increase the interaction with the participants. Furthermore, the open-end questions imposed less formal interviews that help the participants to be comfortable to respond in detail rather than that in structured questions and gave the researcher a chance to ask unplanned questions at random based on participants' responses and individual experiences. Similarly, the major principal advantage of open-end questionnaires is that the participants were not restricted to fixed answers, and they had a chance to elaborate and express themselves in their own words.

4.2 Participants selection process

4.2.1 Criteria

The first step of the selection process was defining the population that is eligible for inclusion in the sample of participants for this study (Morgan, 2012). Therefore, the participants' selection was based on specific criteria that must be obtained and depended mainly on the research problem, the questions, and the objective of this study. Furthermore, the research problem deals with promoting interactive online communities to support a specific group of immigrants inclusion in Sweden, particularly Syrian craftsmen who worked with heritage handicrafts in their homeland. Thus, the research questions are focusing on Syrian craftsmen's experiences with participating in online communities, to derive their difficulties, needs, and opinions towards enhancing their learning process of Swedish heritage handicrafts. Consequently, there were certain criteria that participants must meet to be eligible to take part in this study. Basic required criteria of participants are as follows:

1. From the Syrian Arab Republic
2. Language Arabic or English
3. Reside in Sweden
4. Worked as a craftsman with heritage handicrafts in Syria

4.2.2 Locating participants

In order to find the participants, the digital social media platform was the basic tool to gather the participants. The reason behind this choice is the difficulty in locating the specific population of this study since all the participants must be Syrian immigrants' craftsmen that might reside in different districts of Sweden. Under such circumstances, using digital social media as a medium for communication has provided multiple means of interaction and appeared to be homogeneous for this sort of choice (Markham, 2012). Furthermore, about seven posts have been published in seven Facebook groups that involve a huge number of Syrian immigrants residing in different districts and municipalities in Sweden. The published posts were written in Arabic and English languages since all participants have to be originally from Syrian Arab republic and emigrated to Sweden. In addition to that, the posts have introduced information about the study combined with the required criteria of participants, research ethical consideration, and included notes asking the participants to send background information to the private inbox to ensure that they meet the required criteria. Besides that, the notes informed the participants that they can choose between verbal Q&A form and written Q&A form since online interviews might be undesirable by several participants (Markham, 2012).

As a result of this procedure, 17 participants sent their background information to the private inbox in Facebook application, however, only 8 of them were eligible to take part in this study, and 9 participants were excluded because they did not meet the basic required criteria which is craftsmen who worked with heritage handicrafts. Accordingly, only 2 of 8 participants accepted to participate in online interviews, whereas 6 participants preferred the written Q&A form. Nevertheless, initial interviews were conducted with 2 participants who were the source to find more participants that might be eligible for this study. This process of snowball sampling was optimal under this situation because for the purpose of finding the hidden population it would be an uneasy and frustrating mission (Morgan, 2012). Finally, by utilizing the snowballing sampling method, the number of participants increased to become 13 in total.

4.2.3 Sample Size

Since the qualitative approach methods might evoke an enormous number of data, the sample size of this study was based on a criterion of saturation of data (Thompson & Walker, 1998). Thus, the number of participants was determined at the beginning of the data collection phase to ensure that participants' responses are sufficient to answer research questions. Accordingly, the number of participants who took part in this study is 13 in total. The number was divided into two groups

based on participants' choice of setting (online interviews or a written questionnaire) to be able to include a sufficient number of participants. Under this condition, 7 participants chose to be part of online interviews while 6 participants preferred the written form to the same interview questions.

4.2.4 Participants

As mentioned above, the 7 participants of this study are all Syrian craftsmen who worked with heritage handicrafts and living in Sweden. About 7 participants agreed to take part in online interviews, however, 6 participants decided to answer the online written questionnaire. The online interviews and questionnaire participants, were coded by their crafts as follows in the table 1:

Online Interview Participants	Questionnaire Participants
<i>Architect</i>	<i>Wood Carver</i>
<i>Copper Artist</i>	<i>Glass Maker</i>
<i>Manual Embroiderer 1</i>	<i>Sculptor 2</i>
<i>Manual Embroiderer 2</i>	<i>Stone Carver 2</i>
<i>Mosaic Artist and designer</i>	<i>Manual Embroiderer 3</i>
<i>Sculptor 1</i>	<i>Pottery Maker</i>
<i>Stone Carver 1</i>	

Table 1: Online interviews and questionnaire participants codes based on their crafts.

4.2.5 Materials

The questions and types of questions are similar in both verbal and written forms, they were written in Arabic language since all participants were speaking Arabic language. The questions included open-end questions, dichotomous questions, and also a free text option was added to each question to enable the participants to formulate their responses in their own words (De Vaus, 2002). The choice of open-ended questions depended mainly on many aspects to fulfill the data requirements of research questions. These aspects are categorized by content, respondent type, methods, available time, and also the ability to code open-ended responses (De Vaus, 2002). In addition to that, the selected type of open-ended questions in this context comes from the ability to be used in a range of qualitative methods formats which include qualitative interviews and questionnaires (Roulston, 2012), that have been employed in this study. Furthermore, open-ended questions allowed the participants to elaborate on self aspects that are meaningful to them and construct responses in accordance with their chosen orient of the research topic (Roulston, 2012). The questions content was based on the research objective of this study which aims to explore participants' attributes, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge (De Vaus, 2002), towards online communities based on the cultural heritage of handicrafts. To be precise, the questions have focused on Syrian immigrants' craftsmen's online activities and the role of interactive online communities in promoting cultural integration in terms of delivering and

receiving heritage knowledge and also connecting cultures embodied in heritage handicrafts. In addition to that, there will be a focus on identifying online social learning approaches that Syrian craftsmen adopt to overcome real barriers to practising professional work in Sweden through social networks based online communities.

4.3 Data Collection

As a matter of fact, qualitative research is exploratory in nature and the main objective of qualitative studies is to provide a deep understanding and detailed description of chosen research topics. More importantly, the term qualitative is often associated with words that belong to participants of a certain study in order to explore their behaviors, opinions, and beliefs towards particular problems (Firmin, 2012). In addition to that, qualitative data is concerned with deriving meaning from participants' experiences for the purpose of examining the influential factors that guided their behaviors (Thompson & Walker, 1998). With this in mind, qualitative means have been harnessed and systemized to obtain sufficient data for this qualitative study in which data was collected through two qualitative methods. Furthermore, the participants were given the opportunity to choose between two question forms (verbal or written Q&A form). To begin with the verbal form, online semi-structured interviews via Facebook Messenger application have been adopted. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher is still dominating the conversation with participants through following a predetermined list of topics or a set of questions but all strategies have to involve the principle of the open-end question (Ayres, 2012). The interviews data was collected through an audio recording of online interviews by utilizing the personal smartphone recorder. An interview-guide was constructed concentrating on different sets of themes to explore participants' experiences and to be able to identify gaps that hindered their cultural integration and practising their professional work in Sweden. The collecting data process of online interviews is summarized as follows:

1. Audio recording.
2. Notes were taken through online interviews.
3. Audio recorders were transcribed into a Word document, one document for each participant.
4. Each document was translated from Arabic to English language.

For the other method of data collection, a web-based questionnaire was created by Google forms, the link to the web page was sent to each participant's personal account via messenger application to ensure the validity of the submitted answers and gain systematic responses that would enrich research data. The responses were organized and presented in a Google Sheets document to be translated and analyzed later. Consequently, 7 participants accepted to join the verbal Q&A which is in the form of online interviews through Facebook Messenger application whereas 6 participants

preferred the written questionnaire which is a web-based questionnaire created through Google forms.

4.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative studies attempt to understand life experiences and are concerned with the understanding of social realities by focusing on meaning patterns, processes, and structural features from the participants' point of view (Flick, Von Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). Moreover, qualitative methods help in generating data that can be interpreted thematically and also help in theorizing new concepts that could be applicable to contemporary societies challenges. More importantly, qualitative methods in a cultural context can be subjected to critical analysis and investigation of the cultural forms and practices of the individuals (Winter, 2004). With this in mind, the main framework that used to analyze the finding of this study is the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), where the gathered information is then analyzed in a subjective and interpretative manner by using semi-structured online interviews and open-end questionnaire methods. The results of both forms of questions (online interviews and questionnaire) were collected and analyzed on the basis of the proposed research questions.

For the first and second questions, the data analysis was based on the inductive thematic analysis approach which involves allowing the data to determine research themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this sense, the thematic analysis was data-driven and themes were generated through the coding process of data level following the step-by-step guide to conducting the thematic analysis provided by Braun and Clarke (2006). The step-by-step guide involves six phases of analysis that start with familiarization with data through transcription of verbal data, generating primary codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and finally writing up the process of the analysis (Braun & Clarke. 2006).

For the third question which aims to deduce potential solutions from real obstacles that might be offered through an online community of practice platform, the data was analyzed based on Dirksen (2015) gap identification to design a successful learning experience. Dirksen (2015) has introduced five gaps between learners' current situation and where they need to be in order to be successful. Thus, she suggested that if those gaps are identified (Knowledge, skills, motivation, environmental and communication gaps), then you can design a better learning experience that is based on users needs and difficulties to achieve a successful learning environment (Dirksen, 2015). The reason behind this procedure is that this study will provide an online community design recommendations based on participants' needs in order to enhance heritage knowledge acquisition and increase participants opportunities of integration in the host country.

5.0 Results

The aim of the gathered data was to find answers to the proposed research questions. Thus, this section will present the participants profiles and the results of semi-structured online interviews with seven Syrian immigrant craftsmen and an open-end questionnaire that involved six Syrian immigrant craftsmen in Sweden. Participants profiles are presented below:

Online Interviews Participants								
Participants codes (Based on their craft)	Age	Gender	Number of years in Sweden	Practicing heritage crafts in Syria (years)	Type of employment in Syria	Current employment	Craft matching	Participation in online communities
Architect	40-50	Male	5>	10>	Company owner	Architect	yes	yes
Copper Artist	60>	Male	5>	10>	Company owner	No job	Limited	Limited
Manual Embroiderer 1	29-39	Female	3-4	10>	Company employee	No job	yes	yes
Manual Embroiderer 2	51-60	Female	5>	10>	Company owner	No job	yes	limited
Mosaic Artist and designer	29-39	Male	3-4	10>	Company owner	Chef	Limited	yes
Sculptor 1	40-50	Male	3-4	10>	Company owner	Company owner	yes	yes
Stone Carver 1	29-39	Male	5>	10>	Company owner	Company owner	yes	yes

Web based questionnaire Participants								
Participants codes (Based on their craft)	Age	Gender	Number of years in Sweden	Practicing heritage crafts in Syria (years)	Type of employment in Syria	Current employment	Craft matching	Participation in online communities
Pottery Maker	40-50	Male	3-4	10>	Company owner	No job	yes	Yes
Glass Maker	40-50	Male	3-4	10>	Company owner	No job	Yes	Yes
Sculptor 2	29-39	Male	3-4	10>	Company owner	No job	yes	Yes
Stone Carver 2	40-50	Male	5>	10>	Company owner	No job	yes	Limited
Manual Embroiderer 3	29-39	Female	3-4	10>	Company owner	Nurse	Yes	Yes
Wood carver 1	40-50	Male	3-4	10>	Company owner	Driver	Yes	Limited

Table 2: Participants profiles

The results of both forms of questions (online interviews and questionnaire) were collected and analyzed on the basis of research questions in terms of utilizing online communities by Syrian craftsmen as a medium to enhance the Swedish heritage of handicrafts knowledge sharing and acquisition, and also to promote their cultural integration process in Sweden. The data analysis was based on the inductive thematic analysis approach which involves allowing the data to determine research themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Accordingly, the thematic analysis of data coding has generated eight qualitative sub-themes related to three primary themes. The primary themes and sub-themes are presented in the table 2 below.

Primary themes	Sub-themes
5.1 Syrian craftsmen involvement in interactive online communities	5.1.1 Interactive online communities that attract Syrian craftsmen 5.1.2 Motives of involvements from participants perspective 5.1.3 Adopted activities through interactive online communities 5.1.4 Real Impacts of involvements on participants experiences in Sweden
5.2 The role of interactive online communities	5.2.1 Delivering, receiving knowledge and communicating cultures of handicrafts heritage through interactive online communities from participants experiences
5.3 Offered Solutions through an interactive online community of practice?	5.3.1 Barriers to cultural integration and practising professional work 5.3.2 Potential solutions to cultural integration and to practicing professional work

Table 3: Themes and Sub-themes generated through coding of participants data

5.1 Syrian craftsmen involvement in interactive online communities

Through online interviews and online written questionnaire, many questions have been directed to investigate the use of online communities by Syrian immigrants in Sweden. In this theme, the focus was on the usage of interactive online communities in terms of the type of digital online community platforms that have attracted them to participate in, motives of involvement, adopted activities and if there is a real impact of involvement in online communities on their personal experiences in Sweden.

5.1.1 Interactive online communities that attract Syrian craftsmen

For this theme, the participants of this study were asked about their involvement in online communities particularly what characteristics of online community platforms have attracted them to be part of. The participant responses vary between different available technological platforms that enable participating in communities that involve many people from different cultures and backgrounds. One participant declared that social media groups and web communities might be the best for craftsmen. However, other participants preferred not to use social media communities such as Facebook groups since you can find uncertified sources and might be a way to steal other works and ideas. Other participants mentioned that Instagram communities would be the most effective platform for craftsmen to share products and be able to introduce new heritage handicrafts in pictures and videos and also to gain comments and feedback through the interactivity characteristics. One participant stated that:

“I tried many kinds of technology platforms, but I think Instagram is the best. I can picture my work and publish it with tags, so I got many likes and reviews from people around the world” (Sculptor 2)

5.1.2 Motives of involvement in interactive online communities from the participants perspective

The participants in this study have regarded the interactive online communities as the most convenient and appropriate platforms for newcomers generally and for craftsmen in particular. Interactive online communities have been regarded by participants as the fastest method to find proper information in time through the interactivity aspect such as chat rooms which enable them to find people who are experiencing the same problems or people who have experienced the same problems and might be able to afford help. In addition to that, the participants' motives to use interactive online communities are mainly due to the ability to communicate with companies owners, stakeholders and other craftsmen from Syria or Sweden. Moreover, these communities were described as the ideal place to collect numerous information surrounding practicing their crafts in Sweden and a trustworthy source to solve problems as long as the community involves experts from the same domain. The participants described their motives in the following quotes:

“through Facebook groups I can find solutions to my problems...they saved a lot of time, simple and easy to obtain information through chat... they also help in communication with companies or people who share the same problems ...(Architect)

“The online communities are the most important source for craftsmen.. Although a handicraft needs to be touched to see its value, the online community helps in identifying us as craftsmen and communicating with companies and stakeholders...(Manual embroiderer 2).

“I have my own website... it's a place where I can communicate with people, and they can easily find me and interact with me....(Sculptor 1)

“Even though I believe that real communities are more effective but online communities are the best for me as a newcomer, I can find all the information that I need even without asking...it is easy to find people from the same domain....(Manual embroiderer 1)

“As a newcomer it could be a good place to find people that are practicing my craft such as experts from Sweden...they could be a source.. or a trustworthy source to gain missing information....(Mosaic artist and designer)

5.1.3 Adopted activities through interactive online communities

In terms of adopted activities by Syrian craftsmen through online communities, the results showed that participants have adopted different activities in interactive online communities for different purposes giving the online marketing of their products as their first activity purpose. One of the participants stressed the crucial role of the online community for advertising, since it is easier to introduce his products and to find specific customers that would be interested in his craft (Stone carver 1). Another main reason was given is to search for crafts materials that could be hard to find in other ways (Architect). Communication with experts from the field was another usage purpose by craftsmen in this study, they utilize online communities to find experts and information as a medium to search for the necessary information regarding their handicrafts. According to a participant in this study (Mosaic designer), that might be helpful in finding a job and collecting information about setting up a private company. Illustrative examples from participants' interviews are presented below.

“Marketing is easy through the online communities... when I am done with stitching a dress, I just take a picture of it and publish it through a Facebook group..”(Manual embroiderer 1)

“Online communities are the easiest way to know information about my craft, materials and work, especially web communities of construction companies who market their building products....every company puts everything related to products from building materials, paints, and tools and I can communicate with them if I have any inquiries...this thing was not available in my country before, in

Sweden there is more organization related to that... I can find all the information in one place... This thing helps me as a craftsman and encourages me to work here...(Architect)

"... On the Internet, they think that our product is very expensive, but the piece actually reflects its price and value. For example, my products have a special smell, you have to smell it to recognize its value...but I think online communities are the most important for me, it can help to introduce myself as a craftsman, certify my ideas and also to market the products...(Manual embroiderer 2)

"I use them for marketing my products and introducing myself to people in Sweden..."(Sculptor 1)

"Web communities and social media communities can be the best way to market my products...even though I pay to advertise sometimes but I think it is a great way to make it popular..."(Stone carver 1)

"...the main reason for me is to ask people about problems related to setting up a company and contact experts from the field...even though sometimes you don't get a response but it is good to try in order to find a job...(Mosaic artist and designer)

5.1.4 Real Impacts of involvements on participants experiences in Sweden

In terms of the impact of use of interactive online communities on their experiences in Sweden, the participants' responses vary between high effect to no effect at all. One of the participants' responses showed that online communities had a big effect on his experience in Sweden. Illustrative examples from participants' interviews will be represented below.

"ooh...a big effect in my experience because I knew everything I wanted to know about the background of the craft in Sweden and if it is a required profession...(Stone carver 1)

"...even though the online communities did not help me in finding a job but I can say that web communities that provide resources have a high impact on obtaining knowledge in different aspects... for example, I needed a ceramic sticker, so I just entered the company website that afford quick chat service and I got a piece of detailed information about the product, for example, the amount of water that must be added to a specific product, how to make a specific substance for builders, and how much time it needs to dry....they also helped me to know the appropriate environment to use the product... Sweden is generally a cold country and for this reason, they use resistance materials for rain and moisture factors....This thing helps me as a craftsman and encouraged me to work here..."(Architect)

"...I am displaying my products through my website... I also have used websites to communicate with companies...I think they have a good impact on my experience..." (Sculptor 1)

Other participants explained that, the use of online communities do not have a high impact on their experience, examples are below.

“Actually, they have a medium impact on my experience, it could be higher if I could set up my business...The employment office set up an appointment with an economist who studied my situation and admired my job. He told me, as a start, you should contact a marketing company and advise us to work on a website to start working with my products ...I mean to communicate with people and to introduce and market my products...but there was a need for much money to connect my products with an official website that include many artists and craftsmen...so I just canceled the idea for now... (Manual embroiderer 2)

“I think they just helped me to know the basic information about the country, not more than that...(Copper artist)

5.2 The role of interactive online communities in the domain of cultural handicrafts heritage

5.2.1 Delivering, receiving knowledge and communicating cultures from participants experiences

In this theme the participants were asked about their activities through online communities concerning delivering knowledge about their heritage handicrafts to people from different cultural backgrounds, receiving Swedish heritage knowledge and also about communicating cultures activities to promote cultural integration through participating in interactive online communities.

The participants declared that participating in online communities has a crucial role in delivering heritage knowledge and also in obtaining cultural heritage knowledge that belongs to other cultures particularly for newcomers. Even though some participants expressed that the language could be a problem to communicate in Swedish but utilizing digital translators from Arabic to Swedish language was a substitutional solution to communicate with Swedish people.

“...sometimes the language is a problem especially if I want to dive deeply in materials and techniques that I use. But I think digital translators are very helpful in these situations, I just copy and paste the translation even though I know that some words may be wrong” (Mosaic artist and designer)

Other participants mentioned that communication in Swedish language is not a problem since they consider themselves proficient enough to speak Swedish.

In terms of delivering and receiving heritage knowledge, one participant mentioned that participating through interactive online communities has a big role in delivering his heritage

handicraft (that is not considered as Swedish heritage craft) to Swedish people through Facebook group and interactive Instagram pages that involve hundreds of immigrants and Swedish people.

“...there is a Facebook group that involves many Syrian people that work with my craft, we also invite Swedish craftsmen that might be interested in communicating and giving help to us. Actually many of Swedish craftsmen are helping us through this group. They also ask questions about our craft or any other techniques that we use” (Architect)

The same participants added that involvement in these groups has enabled him to introduce his heritage handicraft to relevant people and made the process easier through a user based content approach that allows users to publish descriptive texts, photos and videos to deliver new knowledge to people who do not have a previous knowledge about Syrian heritage handicrafts. Moreover, the interactive characteristics that online communities provide to users has added the value of receiving comments that include people's opinions and feedback which has a positive effect rather than negative effect since they address the aesthetics and uniqueness aspects of products and contribute in increasing their motivation to actively participate in online communities.

The open discussions with people and craftsmen have helped them to receive reviews and share their personal experiences to relevant people and also encouraged them to publish since these communities are regarded as the ideal places to obtain new and necessary knowledge. Users are also taking advantage of the interactive opportunities to exchange knowledge and employ mutual learning benefits through knowledge transfer objectives from stakeholders and organizations to people who need this knowledge. In other words, the process of communicating through interactive online communities has eased up the methods of obtaining information about Swedish heritage handicrafts, their crafts situation in Sweden, obtaining resources about available materials and also helped in solving real life problems.

Apart from the ability to deliver and receive heritage knowledge through online communities, the participants also talked about the role these communities play in communicating heritage handicrafts through exchanging skills and techniques that belong to every craftsman heritage. For example, two of the participants in this study declared about past and ongoing projects that aim to integrate both Syrian and Swedish handicrafts heritage to produce multicultural products. According to a participant of this study, one of the Swedish craftsmen is working with wood carving to create tables that belong to Swedish heritage design, on the other hand, the Syrian craftsman was working with mosaic art and design. Thus, both craftsmen agreed to apply their artistic heritage design in one product (the role of Swedish craftsman to design a table while the role of Syrian craftsman to decorate the surface of the table with small pieces of glass that belong to his craft) to create a multicultural piece of art.

“...for a newcomer it is like a drowning man trying to catch a straw....when I found that locating people is difficult in real life I thought that online communication might be a solution, so I searched

for online groups that involve Swedish crafts. I could find many, but I was afraid of introducing myself with a craft that doesn't belong to them...then the admin of one group published a text including a welcoming message as a new member, so I just introduced myself with some pictures about my craft...I loved their supportive and lovely words....I was happy that one of them asked me to design a table with him..." (Mosaic artist and designer)

Another craft project was mentioned by a participant involved in this study aimed to integrate the manual embroidery heritage that both counties have preserved for a long time. The project started through participating in Facebook groups that involve Syrian and Swedish manual embroiderers to become then a real life project that aimed to communicate heritage handicrafts and produce cultural integration at its finest. Moreover, the role of Syrian embroiderer was to apply the Arabian thread stitching (One knitting needle) to embroider pictures of Swedish heritage landmarks on pillows. On the other hand, the role of Swedish embroiderer is to apply the Swedish thread stitching (Two knitting needles) to embroider Arabian landmarks and flags.

"...my participation through online groups of Facebook helped me to communicate with people who work with the same craft, I always see craftsmen publishing their works and I give my opinion to them...I also discuss with them the differences between our craft and Swedish craft in techniques and kind of threads used...I also have the opportunity to participate in cultural project that involved many Swedish people..." (Manual embroiderer 1)

This means that through interactive online discussions, many Swedish craftsmen were motivated to integrate Syrian heritage to Swedish heritage and vice versa by utilizing online communities to contribute in the process of cultural integration.

On the other hand, this was not the case for all participants of this study since many of them complained about negative effects of participating in online communities. The negative effects that were mentioned by participants involve the process of stealing their ideas through online communities, the publishing of untrusted resources and also the negative comments that some users add in terms of racism and destructive words. Here are examples from participants' online interviews.

"I was using Social media groups to communicate with people relevant to my craft but didn't work with me, there were people stealing my ideas, so I decided to avoid them..." (Manual embroiderer 2)

"...the problem is that sometimes you get wrong information that would affect you and would have a negative impact on you. I prefer to be part of communities that are headed by official organizations to make sure that all the information is true..." (Architect)

“...I read bad comments from people that in my opinion just want to be harmful with others such as “go back to your homeland”....or “you won’t find a job here”..something like that...but I ignore them...” (Mosaic Artist and designer)

5.3 Offered Solutions through an interactive online community of practice

5.3.1 Barriers to culture integration and practicing professional work

In this theme and through in depth discussions and online questionnaire, the participants were asked to talk about challenges and common barriers that appeared at the beginning of their arrival to Sweden in terms of the cultural integration process and also to practice professional work through investigating the common barriers in order to find the potential solutions through an interactive online community of practice. The responses of this theme were analyzed according to Dirksen (2015) gap identification to design a learning experience which include knowledge, skills, environmental, motivation and communication gaps. The collected data indicate that participants have faced many challenges and barriers that not only eased up the integration process into Swedish community but also hindered the inclusion into the labor market. The identified gaps concerning barriers to cultural integration and to practicing professional work are knowledge, skills, environmental and communication gaps. First, I will start with barriers to cultural integration gaps.

5.3.1.1 Barriers to culture integration through gaps identification

5.3.1.1.1 Knowledge gap

Through the online interviews and online questionnaire, the participants confirmed that there was a knowledge gap that decreased their opportunities for cultural integration in Sweden. This gap is exemplified in the lack of knowledge about Swedish handicrafts heritage, lack of knowledge about Syrian handicrafts heritage and also the lack of knowledge about the differences that occur in handicrafts heritage of both countries. Illustrative examples from participants' online interviews will be presented below.

“The most important thing is to know the differences, we have to know the Swedish people taste and inspiration to development to be able to enhance integration” (Manual Embroiderer 3)

“I don’t know anything about Swedish heritage handicrafts, I just know that there are Swedish sculptors like me...there must be an introduction about Swedish heritage for me as a craftsman because I believe that if I have a chance to know about them before it would increase my chances of integration in Sweden and would make it easy for me to know what I have to do from the beginning...” (Sculptor 1)

“..many Swedish people don’t know about mosaic craft even though it already exists here and many companies work with it and integrate mosaic in design. The problem started from the beginning of my experience because I did not know what is the situation of my craft here and nobody could provide me with basic information. For a newcomer it is a complicated process to let people know that mosaic design here is different from our heritage mosaic. For example, we use marble most of the time but here they use ceramic and glass since they are cheaper materials. The difference also lies in the style of the product, we use small stones next to each other but here they use undefined broken pieces of ceramic and glass to form the product. This was a problem because I needed to introduce my heritage in different ways, so I tried to use glass and ceramic materials but in the way I used to in order to introduce my craft...” (Mosaic Artist and designer)

“I was curious to know about the situation of my craft in Sweden and how people deal with it...it took from me a lot of time to know about Swedish heritage of handicrafts particularly my craft...I still don't know everything but I hoped that if the information is available through official organizations because it might be a great way to introduce my craft and get more knowledge about Swedish heritage embroidery...”(Manual embroiderer2)

“...it was the biggest problem for me, I discovered that my craft already exists after years of living here but I knew that by chance! We should have more knowledge about Swedish heritage handicrafts to increase our opportunities of living here and I believe that it is an organizational issue ...” (Architect)

5.3.1.1.2 Skills gap

Through the online interviews and online questionnaire, the participants mentioned that their experienced skills acquired through practicing their crafts in their homeland was not enough in order to increase their opportunities of integration in Sweden since Swedish craftsmen are using different skills and techniques that fit Swedish country. In other words, one of the participants declared that the differences between the two countries not only depend on heritage differences but also the climate nature in Sweden requires the acquisition of skills and techniques that suit this condition. This means that the low temperature in Sweden has driven craftsmen to use specific techniques to produce crafts products and also led to illuminate other techniques that might not work in Sweden's case. These skills and techniques were regarded by the participants of this study as an urgent need to achieve the aspects of the integration process. The process of cultural integration for many participants of this study means the exchange of skills by acquiring Swedish heritage techniques and introducing new skills and techniques to Swedish community to form cultural integration. examples from participants' interviews will be shown below.

“...I took a course that is relevant to my craft...even though I can identify all materials and techniques they use but I recognized that there are more techniques I need to know regarding how

to deal with the cold weather of Sweden...fortunately I can know them through my course...”
(Architect)

“My craft deals with stone carving, when people hear about that they think that my craft is limited to creating tombstones and Monuments, however, it involves many other products and art pieces that we used to create in my homeland....I always try to describe the difference...” (Stone carver 1)

“I believe that if we were able to share our techniques and also acquire new skills it might be the cornerstone of cultural integration....” (Mosaic artist and designer)

5.3.1.1.3 Environmental gap

The heritage differences between Sweden and Syria have had negative effects on many participants of this study. The most problematic issue was the total or partial absence of the handicraft and materials from the Swedish heritage of handicrafts and markets. For example one of the participants expressed that the absence of his craft was a reason for all the difficulties that he went through, even though he brought with him some products to introduce his craft but it was difficult to know how and from where to start. Other participant complained about the difficulty of finding the same materials that she usually use in order to be able to introduce her handicraft. The issues of materials and the absence of the crafts have decreased their abilities to prove themselves as they really are and have complicated the process of building a multicultural environment as they stated. examples of participants' interviews will be added below.

“I was surprised that my craft is not popular as it really is, it is used with different forms and materials...it is totally different...it is really hard for me to know what to do and where to begin....”
(Mosaic artist and designer)

“...the materials were a big challenge for me, it was a problem that arose at the beginning of my experience in Sweden...I wished if there was someone to help with that to start planning my goals....the materials are the basis of any craft and you can't do anything without it....” (Manual embroiderer 2).

5.3.1.1.4 Communication gap

The participants' responses showed that communication with relevant people from the field was not an easy matter for them. Moreover, the participants described the difficulty in locating Swedish craftsmen that work with the same craft and also the difficulty in communicating with experts that might provide help in communicating their goals and directing them to the right way. Illustrative examples are below.

“...I believe that communication with experts is the thing that all craftsmen need from the beginning...we all need to talk with experts to provide plans depending on what is suitable to every one of us...” (Manual embroiderer 2)

“...through the four years in Sweden, I just had a chance to meet a few people that helped me to understand the situation of crafts and to do the right thing...I remember that I contacted someone working in Sweden with artistic projects through Facebook, and he gave me some advice...” (Mosaic Artist and designer).

5.3.1.2 Barriers to practicing professional work through gaps identification

5.3.1.2.1 Knowledge gap

The participants were asked about barriers and challenges that they faced which have a direct effect on practicing professional work in Sweden. Their responses indicated that the gaps to practice their profession in Sweden exist in terms of knowledge, skills, environmental and communication gap (Dirksen, 2015). Concerning the knowledge gap, all the participants complained about the lack of knowledge and information about Swedish labor market system, knowledge about how to set up business and knowledge about Sweden industrial craftsmanship situation. The participants regarded the knowledge in these areas as urgent to practice their profession to enable them to set plans and be aware of possible circumstances that would reduce the chances of success. In addition to that, the participants mentioned the lack of knowledge about marketing craft products and the appropriate places to promote their works. Last but not the least, in terms of the knowledge gap, many participants clarified that the practice of professional work is dependent on obtaining the appropriate materials to create craft products. Thus, the lack of knowledge about available materials in markets, how and where to find these materials were problematic issues that complicated the process of practicing their professional crafts. Examples from participants' responses surrounding these issues will be presented below.

“I am a newcomer, and I am really struggling to know the system...they must consider that I don't know everything about laws and the system, we need more attention from the government....”(Glassmaker)

“...it was so hard for me to find a place to start my business...I didn't know how to search for a place and how to find the materials that I need...I also could not find the tools that I usually use....this is appointed me...these things were part of my problems because despite off these difficulties, the Swedish labor market system is so complicated for me...I try to get information through the internet but I still lack much knowledge about how to practice my profession.....’ (Manual embroiderer 1)

“...I try to collect information about the labor market system but that is not enough...I need to know what companies that might provide me with glass and ceramic because without these

materials I will not be able to do anything...I heard that some companies have extra materials that can be provided with low prices but it is an impossible mission for me as a newcomer....” (Mosaic artist and designer)

“..the lack of knowledge about Swedish system and laws is a big issue, I could find someone to inform me with everything needed.. The situation of foreigners must be taken into consideration because they are new, and they do not have full knowledge of labor laws and I have fallen into financial trouble because of this...they have to overlook some issues..They should not be strict and accept that we are new to the job market...” (Stone carver 1)

5.3.1.2.2 Skills gap

With regard to the skills gap, many participants have shown a skills gap to practicing their professional craft in terms of work language skills, online marketing skills, digital skills, proof of work experience, and skills that fit Swedish craftsmanship industry. The work language skills were one of the most problematic issues that participants stated about, since the Swedish language is a prerequisite to have a job in Sweden. The participants declared that for a newcomer it would be impossible to acquire the language without having specific courses in relevance to work in the crafts field. Another issue was highlighted is the necessity of acquiring online marketing skills and also digital skills to have a chance of introducing their crafts and products to relevant people. The participants also talked about other difficulties that prevented them from practicing professional work, these difficulties and barriers are related to the Swedish labor system which require a proof of experience or certificate in order to apply for a job. This prerequisite contradicts the situation of Syrian craftsmen in Sweden since practicing heritage crafts in their homelands follow another system where the crafts are moved intergenerationally and do not need a proof to practice professional work. Finally, the participants have drawn attention to the need of acquiring more skills that Swedish craftsmen have in particular the techniques that fit the low temperature of Sweden in terms of materials used and how to apply these techniques in specific conditions such as craft design in outside places. Illustrative examples are provided below.

“Facilitating the procedures for obtaining a professional certificate would be the best thing....it is much needed in Sweden...” (Wood Carver 1)

“...when I was looking for job, I found that there is a need for experience and proof of that...I don't know how someone like me can proof that, I worked with this craft in my country for 15 years and it was a craft that my father was working with, so I just worked with it after him...” (Mosaic artist and designer)

“I think the language is the most important thing, and we need more time to be able to communicate with people and also to understand the requirements of the labor market clearly...”

Another thing that I found there are techniques that Swedish craftsmen use to deal with the cold weather of Sweden, so we need to know them in order to have a job here...” (Architect)

“Actually I don't have much digital skills, but I am trying now to improve my skills in order to market my products through my website...I think marketing is a big issue because we did not do that in our country but here you have to know at least the basics of using the technology...” (Sculptor 1)

“Marketing is my biggest issue...I don't know how and where to introduce my works....” (Copper Artist)

5.3.1.2.3 Environmental gap

The participants declared that most of the difficulties have come from the different environments of both countries. For example the absence of the profession in the Swedish labor market has created many issues and challenges particularly for them as newcomers. One of the participants described this issue from his personal experience:

“I was shocked !!! that I might not be able to practice my craft anymore, I am disappointed...I am thinking all the time if coming here was a good choice for me...even though I lost my company, and I was living in a danger place in Syria but sometimes I think that dying might be better than living here and working with something else....I am trying to do my best and there are many Swedish people trying to help me but it is a complicated situation and I need a suitable place to move on....” (Mosaic artist and designer)

Another issue mentioned by the participants is labor market laws that differ from home country laws, describing the system as very complicated for newcomers and asking for particular rules for immigrants. In addition to that they complained about the high taxes that affect the sale of craft products, financial issues to set up their own business and finally the lack of opportunities of having a job due to the type of resident permit afforded by the migration agency. Illustrative examples from participants' interviews will be shown below.

“...I think they should put much attention on us as craftsmen by facilitating the procedures to start our business...” (Manual embroiderer 2)

“...the type of my residence permit has put many barriers in front of me, for example I can't take a loan to set up my own business...” (Mosaic Artist and designer)

Even though two participants of this study have succeeded in setting up their own companies, they still face many challenges as they stated.

“...I believe that Sweden's country puts much effort to support art and manual crafts, and they pay much hard work for that...the problem lies in the marginalization of immigrants even though the law supports us...” (Sculptor 1)

5.3.1.2.4 Communication gap

Communicating goals is one of the main issues for the participants of this study. In other words, besides all mentioned above many participants of this study clarified their inability to define their goals since they are missing much needed information to achieve their aims and find difficulty in predicting possible challenges. The need of communication with experts to direct their goals is becoming a necessary step to set up their own business and also to have the opportunity to connect with companies and stakeholders from the field that might contribute in expanding job opportunities.

“We need a guide, we need to plan our life to achieve settlement” (Pottery maker)

“...I have big dreams but I'm not able to achieve them because there are many things I need to know before that...if there are people who can help me or direct me to the right place I would be ready to do anything...” (Manual embroiderer 1)

The barriers to cultural integration and to practicing professional work are summarized according to Dirksen gap identification to design learning (2015) in the table four below.

Barriers to cultural integration		Barriers to practicing professional work	
Knowledge gap	<p>Lack of knowledge about Swedish handicrafts heritage</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about Syrian handicrafts heritage by Swedish people</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about countries differences in handicrafts heritage</p>	Knowledge gap	<p>lack of knowledge about Swedish labor market system</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about how to set up a business</p> <p>lack of knowledge about how and where to find the materials of crafts</p> <p>lack of knowledge about how and where to market products</p> <p>lack of knowledge about Sweden industrial craftsmanship situation</p>

Skill gap	Inability to exchange skills and techniques	Skill gap	<p>language issues</p> <p>lack of Swedish or international certificates</p> <p>lack of experience in Sweden</p> <p>Craftsman skills that fit working in Sweden</p> <p>Lack of online marketing skills</p> <p>lack of digital skills</p>
Environmental gap	The absence of the profession in Sweden heritage	environmental gap	<p>lack of suitable environment to practice the craft</p> <p>The absence the profession in the Swedish labor market</p> <p>Legal difficulties</p> <p>Tendency to set up private business</p> <p>High taxes that affect the sale of craft products</p> <p>Financial problems to start a business</p> <p>lack of opportunities to practice due to migration issues (Newcomer, type of resident)</p>
Communication gap	<p>Inability to communicate with Swedish craftsmen</p> <p>Inability to communicate handicrafts heritage</p>	Communication gap	<p>Communication of goals</p> <p>Lack of contacts</p> <p>Inability to communicate with companies and stakeholders</p>

Table 4: Gap identification of barriers to cultural integration and practicing professional work according to Dirksen (2015) gap identification of learning experience

5.3.2 Potential Solutions that might be applied through an interactive online community of practice

In order to transform the barriers of cultural integration and professional work into potential solutions through interactive online community of practice, there was a need to present the fundamental elements of community of practice theory (Wenger, 2002) based on technology to form the basis of a virtual community of practice. The theory characteristics involve three main categories which are domain, community and practice (Wenger, 1990). In order to achieve the characteristics of community of practice combined with technology, the fourth category which is technology has been added to the basic three categories to become the virtual community of practice. Illustrative figure is provided below.

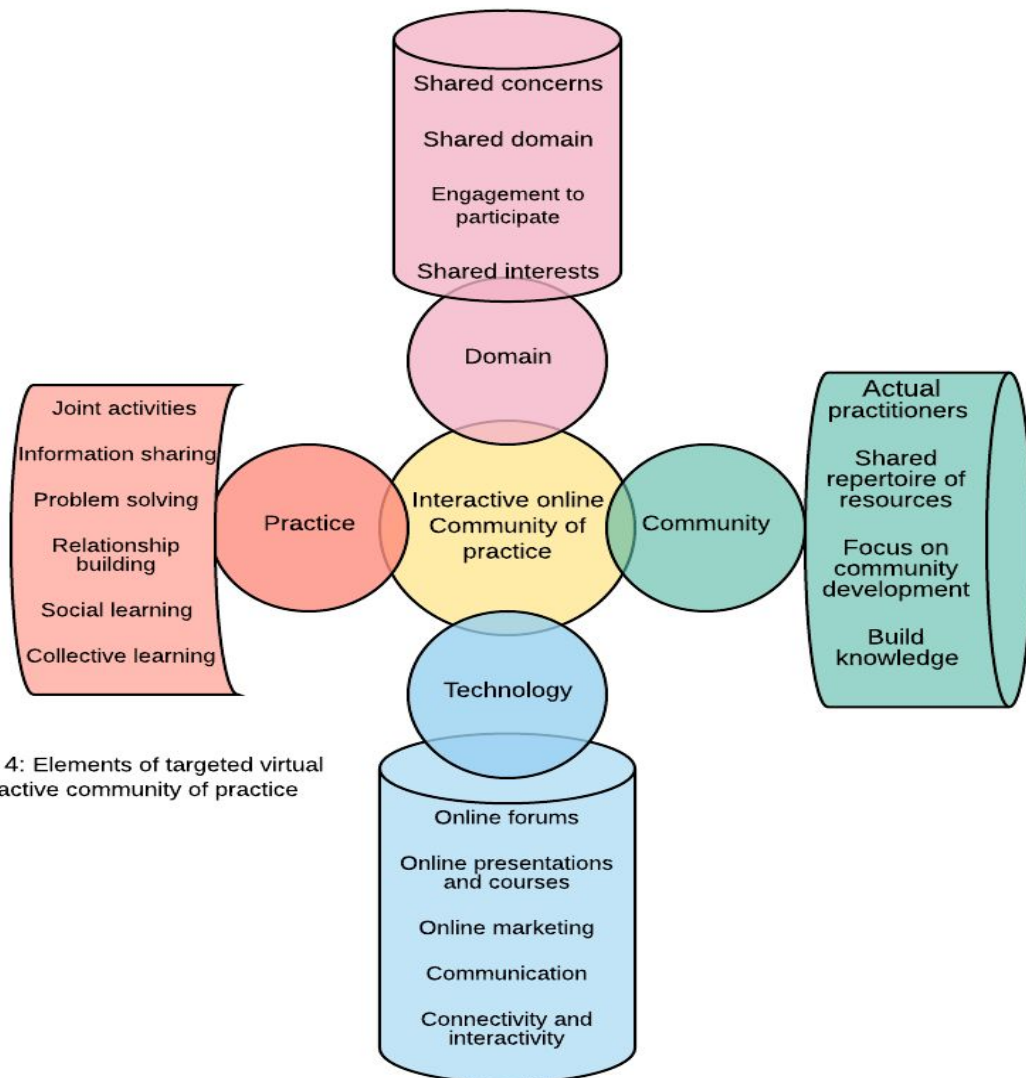


Figure 4: Elements of targeted virtual interactive community of practice

The characteristics of virtual online community of practice have the potential to support the involved community through many aspects. These aspects are derived from the three basic characteristics of community of practice (Wenger, 2002), and technology as the fourth characteristic has been added. they are categorized as follows:

1. Domain characteristics involve shared domain, shared concern, shared interests and engagement to participate.

"I believe that we as Syrian craftsmen, if we could communicate with Swedish craftsmen, they will help us in many things and it would be a great opportunity to do something special and powerful" (Manual embroiderer 2)

2. Practice characteristics involve actual practitioners, shared repertoire of resources, build knowledge and focus on community development.

"I have used these communities since I came to Sweden and I was able to get a lot of information about new techniques from people that work with my craft.." (Architect)

3. Community characteristics involve collective learning, social learning, information sharing, joint activities, relationships building and problem solving.

"...I just introduced myself with some pictures about my craft...I loved their supportive and lovely words....I was happy that one of them asked me to design a table with him..." (Mosaic artist and designer)

4. Technology characteristics involve connectivity and interactivity between members, introduction of identity, online forums, communication with experts and companies, online courses and presentations and finally online marketing.

"...it is easier to market my products, it is easier to find relevant people and companies..." (Pottery maker)

The characteristics mentioned above will be added to the data collected from participants about the barriers to integration and professional work to derive potential solutions based on virtual interactive community of practice characteristics. The potential solutions to cultural integration and professional work through bridging gaps are categorized in the table five below.

Potential solutions to cultural integration through interactive online community of practice		Potential Solutions to practicing professional work through interactive online community of practice	
Bridging Knowledge gap	<p>share Information that immigrants need to know about Swedish handicrafts heritage through online forums</p> <p>Share Syrian handicrafts heritage through online forms</p> <p>Exchange heritage knowledge and experiences through online forums</p>	Bridging Knowledge gap	<p>online information and presentations to provide Information about Swedish labor market and craftsmanship industrialization</p> <p>Involve start up companies to provide information about how to set up a business with relevant issues</p> <p>Involve companies and shops that might help in providing crafts materials</p> <p>what to do with that information, when to use, what format to support them.</p>
Bridging Skill gap	Exchange skills and techniques through online forums	Bridging Skill gap	<p>Ability to create workshops to improve work language skills</p> <p>Create workshops to enable skills exchange</p> <p>Ability to create courses based handicrafts heritage to involve relevance crafts</p> <p>workshops to develop proficiency skills that fits Swedish labor market to expand the opportunities for professional practice</p> <p>courses to develop online marketing and digital skills</p>
Bridging environmental gap	Introduce handicrafts heritage of both countries through interactive online discussions, presentations, workshops and courses	Bridging environmental gap	<p>provide interactive online community Environment</p> <p>Ability to communicate with companies to start</p>

			<p>new projects</p> <p>Involve Swedish official organizations and institutions</p> <p>Ability to create online page to every craftsman separately to display heritage profession and products</p> <p>Involve loan companies</p>
Bridging Communication gap	<p>Involve Swedish craftsmen through interactive online community</p> <p>Ability to introduce Syrian handicraft heritage to Swedish people through interactive discussions</p>	Bridging Communication gap	<p>Involve experts to provide Syrian craftsmen with suitable plans to achieve goals</p> <p>Involve Swedish craftsmen, companies and experts from the field to enable communication</p>

Table 5: Bridging gaps, potential Solutions (characteristics of virtual community of practice) to the barriers to cultural integration and practicing professional work based on Dirksen gap identification (2015).

6.0 Discussion

The main aim of this study was to investigate the role of online communities in Syrian craftsmen cultural integration and practicing professional work in Sweden. The reasons behind conducting this investigation come from the obstacles and challenges that they faced from the beginning of their arrival to Sweden. These obstacles have affected their settlement in Sweden and also had negative consequences on their integration process due to their inability to practice their heritage handicrafts in Sweden. The key issues of their inability to practice their handicrafts were the main topic to be discussed with participants of this study. In addition to that, the participants had the opportunity to talk about challenges that appeared and hindered their integration process with focus on cultural integration as a main reason to achieve their inclusion in the Swedish community and labor market.

The participants of this study were asked to provide information about their age, gender, number of years in Sweden, number of years of practising heritage craft, type of employment in their homeland, current job title, craft matching and also about participation in online communities. The reason behind these questions is to explore differences that might occur surrounding their age and gender in terms of utilizing digital technologies and online communities to overcome obstacles, and also to explore any differences in terms of number of years, age and gender in

employment in Sweden. The results showed that differences might occur in terms of age and utilizing digital technologies where older adults participants aged (40-50, 51-60, 60>) reported technical problems and lower technology skills attributing these issues to insufficient prior knowledge about dealing with digital technology devices and systems. However, in terms of employment the results indicate that both males and females have the same opportunities of employment, even though three males were able to have a job, but they attributed that to their personal effort. The other questions about the number of years of practising heritage craft, type of employment in their homeland, current job title, craft matching were added to understand participants' conditions before and after coming to Sweden and to be able to obtain basic information about their problems.

An important topic was discussed with participants about the use of interactive online communities as a means to overcome their problems, obstacles and challenges. The participants were asked to elaborate on their motives of participating in online communities, their main activities through utilizing online communities as means to achieve their goals and also to deduce the impacts of participating in online communities based on their personal experiences in Sweden. In parallel, the open discussions have the potential to explore the role of online communities in overcoming real obstacles in terms of communicating cultures through interacting with people from different cultures and also in delivering and obtaining heritage knowledge through actively participating, communicating and socializing in online communities.

The main objective of discussing usage activities and exploring these obstacles in terms of cultural integration on one hand and practicing professional work on the other hand is to be able to deduce the potential solutions that can be applied through an interactive online community and employ social participation and communication as a means to create a virtual community of practice to contribute in solving real problems. Applying principles of Wenger and Lave (1991) community of practice theory would provide design recommendations based on real problems of participants' experiences and perspectives to afford a multicultural environment in the services of delivering heritage knowledge, communicating cultures and participating in community as well.

In this section the results will be discussed based on the proposed researches questions, they are as follows:

1. What are the motives, activities and impacts of Syrian craftsmen involvement in interactive online communities (e.g: web communities, Facebook groups), from participants' experiences?
2. What is the role of interactive online communities in delivering, receiving heritage knowledge and also in connecting cultures embodied in heritage handicrafts?
3. What are the potential solutions to the barriers of Syrian immigrants' craftsmen's professional work and cultural integration that can be offered through an interactive online community of practice?

6.1 Syrian immigrants craftsmen participation in online communities groups

In order to explore participants' activities through online communities, there was a need to know if they have ever participated in online communities and what type of online community platforms have attracted them to participate in. The participants' responses showed that they have participated in online communities as a means to overcome their problems in terms of integration, education and migration issues. The participants also were asked about type of online community platforms that attracted them to be part of them, their answers varied between different digital technology platforms such as Facebook groups that afford different means of communication, website communities that enable interactivity between members, organizational websites that afford online serves and real chat with employees and also personal blogs that facilitate communicating with relevant people and companies.

These results were a good start to accomplish this study and to make sure that participants can reflect on the first question of this study. The objective of the first question was to explore Syrian craftsmen activities through online communities in terms of motives, adopting activities and impacts of their participation on their personal experience in Sweden. The participants' results showed that participation in online communities might have a positive effect on solving real problems since many participants confirmed that utilizing online communities has contributed in introducing their heritage crafts and their identities as professional craftsmen to people from different backgrounds. In parallel, many participants mentioned that through participating in online communities they were able to gain knowledge about Swedish heritage crafts by interacting with Swedish people. Online communities for some participants have facilitated their interaction with relevant people from the field that otherwise are difficult to communicate with. Moreover, online communities seemed to be suitable places for marketing crafts products and also for finding basic materials to produce crafts products. More importantly, the participants expressed their need to find a convenient environment to obtain trustworthy information, and they found that online communities might be a suitable place to acquire information from official organizations and experts according to many of them.

The results showed that participating in online communities might be a means to overcome challenges that they face in their lives in Sweden. Moreover, the participants regarded online communities as the most effective platforms not just for craftsmen but also for immigrants in general. These results indicate that utilizing online communities might provide important connections to immigrants in general and to craftsmen in particular. These connections can be craftsman to craftsman (same culture, other culture), craftsman to expert (in heritage domain), craftsman to company (job opportunity). The interactivity between members of online communities has the potential to connect immigrants craftsmen to relevant people, organizations, and provide communication with experts-stakeholders and companies in more convenient ways to satisfy basic needs such finding job (Thomas, Chiarelli-Helminiak, Ferraj & Barrette, 2016; Alencar, 2018). In addition to that, online communities can provide real community features by locating

members who share the same domain and concern, and also give the opportunity to take advantage of sharing members' past experiences that might help in enhancing other members' choices (Sobrero, 2008). Another important point presented is that online communities can be a suitable place for immigrants craftsmen, to share, receive and exchange information that would contribute in solving real problems (Khoir, Du & Koronios, 2015; Alencar, 2018).

However, some participants of this study mentioned that online communities might have negative aspects that reduce their motivation to take part. They expressed their difficulties of finding trustworthy resources that are relevant to their domain since any member can provide information (Alencar, 2018), thus the need of organizations participation in online communities might be an urgent need to increase immigrants participation in online communities (Benton & Glennie, 2016). Another point was mentioned is that utilizing online communities might expose immigrants to discrimination and racism by other members (Alencar, 2018), as one participant of this study has stated from his personal experience. Finally, the problem of copyright infringement was also provided by participants of this study which indicate that online communities should have policies and strategies to ensure safety and privacy of members.

6.2 Online communities as a medium to promote cultural integration

According to this study, the results showed that online communities are utilized by immigrants as a means to promote cultural integration in Sweden. In other words, promoting cultural integration has increased through active participating in online communities. The participants of this study declared that the interactive features that are provided by online communities have enabled them to share their cultural heritage knowledge to Swedish people. In addition to that, they were able to receive new heritage knowledge about Swedish culture through communicating with Swedish craftsmen. The process of delivering and receiving cultural heritage knowledge were described by some participants of this study as a mutually beneficial process for both different cultural groups. This process is basically based on a user generated content approach that enables users to share personal content that is accessible to all members of online community groups.

The participants have also stressed the role of online communities in connecting cultures by promoting multicultural projects as this study has revealed. Moreover, the processes of actively participating, communicating and sharing that are employed by members of online communities have increased intercultural communications and engaged participants to start projects that combine two different cultures to create multicultural handicrafts products. The contributions were made by Syrian and Swedish craftsmen that were members of interactive online communities.

Consequently, these results indicate that Syrian immigrants are taking advantage of the interactive opportunities through online communities by adopting social practices and harnessing social networks for cultural knowledge exchange. Knowledge sharing process availability has increased

users engagement to participate in online communities by fostering social interaction between members and involving knowledge content, expertise context, appropriate media and societal environment (Chugh, 2017). Social networking based online communities have created highly interactive platforms where individuals and communities can discuss, cooperate, share, and employ user generated content (Chugh, 2017). More importantly, the social practices that are adopted by members, indicate employing social learning (Wenger, 1998) and mutual beneficial learning to promote cultural knowledge and expand the opportunities of achieving cultural integration in Sweden.

Online communities have also been used to connect cultures and coordinate intercultural real projects and meetings with Swedish people. Accordingly, participating in online communities have the potential of building relationships with different cultural backgrounds who have a sense of common purposes, bridging cultures and constructing multicultural environments (Baltezarevic, Baltezarevic, Kwiatek & Baltezarevic, 2019), that might contribute to promoting cultural integration.

6.3 Bridging the gaps: a virtual community of practice to overcome real obstacles to cultural integration and practicing professional work

In order to explore potential solutions to real obstacles that might be applied through an online community of practice platform in terms of cultural integration and practicing professional work, the participants were asked to elaborate on their difficulties and obstacles that they faced from their arrival to Sweden. The main potential of exploring these obstacles was to be able to identify gaps that affected cultural integration and hindered their professional work. Thus, the collected data of this theme were analyzed through Dirksen gap identification notion (2015), which involve knowledge, skill, environmental, motivational and communication gaps to design successful learning experiences.

The participants' responses showed that Syrian craftsmen are having difficulty in attaining basic requirements surrounding promoting cultural integration and also practicing their professional work in Sweden. The identified gaps through participants' responses indicate that knowledge, skill, environmental and communication gaps are the key issues that decreased their opportunities of achieving cultural integration and practicing their crafts. The obstacles that were mentioned by participants of this study include:

1. lack of knowledge (Swedish heritage handicrafts, Swedish labor market, finding materials, marketing).
2. Lack of skills (language, experience in Sweden, new techniques, marketing, digital skills).
3. lack of suitable environment (the absence of crafts, labor market rules, tendency to set up private business, high taxes, financial problems, type of residence).

4. Lack of guidance and direction (Communication of goals, lack of contacts, communication barriers-companies-stakeholders).

After identifying gaps, the main objective of this theme was to find the potential solutions to these obstacles that might be applied to the online community of practice platform. The reasons behind that come from the characteristics and features that can be provided by online communities based on community of practice theory (Wenger, 1998). The potential basically is to provide interactive online community that involve Syrian and Swedish craftsmen, Swedish institutions and organizations and also companies and stakeholders that might cooperate with each other to bridge the identified gaps and increase Syrian craftsmen opportunities of integration and employment.

Since the results of this study indicate that immigrants craftsmen in Sweden are searching for substitutional solutions to overcome their difficulties and problems, I believe that a virtual online community of practice might be a solution to bridge gaps of cultural integration and practicing professional work. Furthermore, users of online communities can employ different learning and social approaches that would increase their engagement and enhance their learning process by taking advantage of interactive features such as sharing, commenting which might increase their participation in the community. Moreover, online open discussion with experts and organizations can also provide real solutions to real problems.

Participants have also proposed that obtaining knowledge about Swedish heritage handicrafts and acquiring new skills would be prerequisite to cultural integration that consequently might increase their opportunities of practicing professional work, thus learning new knowledge through social practices might ensure solving problems. Accordingly, employing social theory of learning (Wenger, 2000) and community practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) principles might help in building intercultural communication environments which would benefit both heritage cultures, increase cultural integration and practicing professional work as well.

7.0 Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to identify Syrian immigrants' craftsmen gaps and barriers to cultural integration and practicing professional work in Sweden as a means to deduce potential solutions through an online community of practice platform. The main investigations were around the role that interactive online communities play in the cultural integration process and practicing professional work of Syrian immigrant craftsmen in Sweden. The investigations started with exploring participants activities through interactive online communities in terms of motives, purposes and impacts of participating in online communities on their personal experiences from the beginning of their arrival to Sweden. The study also focused on investigating the role of the online community particularly in delivering and receiving heritage knowledge. In addition to that,

it was important to present online communities' role in connecting cultures and building multicultural environments.

Participants of this study expressed the crucial role of online communities that can play in exchanging knowledge by employing mutual learning and social learning practices. The results also showed that active participation in online communities can produce positive effects on the cultural integration process since connecting culture can be facilitated by social networks features such as locating relevant people, communicating through online forums, sharing heritage crafts and personal experiences, receiving reviews and feedback, and also receiving multicultural projects offers. According to Danchev (2008), by increasing the interaction between minority and majority culture groups, there will be exchanging in cultural values and accepting other cultures values which as a result will lead to cultural integration.

Interactive online communities might provide substitutional mediums to overcome barriers which were identified as knowledge, skills, environmental and communication gaps to cultural integration and also to practicing professional work. Employing a virtual community of practice principles of social practices and active participation of people in need with relevant experts and organizations might provide potential solutions to real life problems. According to this study, participating in online communities might provide substitutional mediums to solve immigrants' real life problems. Participants of this study are taking advantage of the online interactive opportunities to overcome barriers and challenges that they face in Sweden, and this finding may be important even for migrants in other host countries.

7.1 Implications

This study provides qualitative research that is concerned with a specific group of immigrants particularly Syrian craftsmen in Sweden. This group of immigrants did not get much attention in research before, even though there are highly important matters that should be focused on. Many researches have been conducted to identify immigrants' needs and difficulties of integration in host countries, however, immigrants craftsmen who were working with heritage handicrafts in their homelands have been out of focus. This study might indicate the crucial role of digital information and communication technology platforms in promoting cultural integration of immigrants in Sweden. Through in depth online interviews and online questionnaire with Syrian immigrants craftsmen, the results showed that immigrants are employing social networks based online communities for cultural integration purposes. What is interesting is that some participants of this study were able to set multicultural projects through communicating with Swedish craftsmen. Moreover, these projects were able to produce multicultural products that might be displayed in Swedish products companies as a unique piece for sale. This indicates that online communities might provide a cultural learning environment for immigrants and also might expand their opportunities of practising their crafts. These results insist the need to employ and harness

social networks based online communities to engage immigrants with online cultural activities and also facilitate immigrants connections with stakeholders, companies and official resources.

7.2 Limitations of the study and future research

The main limitation to this study is that qualitative research is mostly open-ended, this means that the involved participants in this study might have more control over the content of online interviews and might deviate from the main objective of this study, thus the researcher were unable to interpret and investigate the data objectively and might result in bias. Another limitation to this study is that online in depth interviews were time-consuming and the allocated time for this study has limited the opportunity to observe participants activities through the online community platform that this study is aiming to provide. The time issue has also affected the sample size of this study since locating participants and waiting for responses from participants took much time to accomplish the online interviews and questionnaire answers. In addition to that, the language that is used in both methods is Arabic language, thus all data was translated from Arabic to English language. Translation of data might impose specific challenges particularly with participants' quotes, where concepts and culturally bound words might be difficult to be translated and might result in loss of meaning. The final limitation to this study is that the results might lack generalizability due to the nature of qualitative research which propose limited size of participants, and most of the results are based on participants' perspectives, beliefs and personal experiences. Accordingly, future studies are recommended.

Even though this study has provided in depth data from participants' actual experiences through online communities, the collected data were derived from their beliefs and opinions. For that reason future research is recommended to observe immigrants craftsmen online learning activities through online communities and what learning approaches that are being adopted by users through participating in online communities of practice in order to enhance their cultural integration process. In addition to that, adopting a design based approach to create online learning experience based on community practice theory for immigrants craftsmen is another recommendation for future studies to support immigrants craftsmen knowledge acquisition process and foster virtual learning experiences to promote cultural integration and to solve real problems and challenges.

7.3 Ethical Consideration

The participants of this study were invited to participate through online written questionnaires and also online interviews. Both processes have included some description about the main objective of this study and also included that their participation is voluntary. Participants names, identities, and data were preserved. The participants were also informed that the data will be used for research aims and will be destroyed after finishing the study.

Reference List

Alabrash, Z. (2019). Old Damascus Travel Industry and Patrimony. *Journal of Hotel Bus Manage*, 8:(195). doi: 10.35248/2169-0286.19.8.195

Alencar, A. (2017). Refugee integration and social media: a local and experiential perspective. *Information, Communication & Society*. 21:(11), 1588-1603. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2017.1340500.

American University (Washington, D. Foreign Areas Studies Division. (1965/1970). *Area handbook for Syria*. Washington, D. C.: for sale by the Supt. of Docs., U. S. Govt. Print. Off..

Ayres, L. (2012). Semi-Structured Interview. In: Given, L. M. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods(EDs)*, pp. 811. Online ISBN: 9781412963909.

Bakker, A., & Van Eerde, H. A. A. (in press). An introduction to design based research with an example from statistics education. In A. Bikini Ahsbahs, C. Knipping, & N. Presmeg (Eds.), *Doing qualitative research: methodology and methods in mathematics education*. New York: Springer. Retrieved from: [\(PDF\) An Introduction to Design-Based Research with an Example From Statistics Education](#)

Bereiter, C. (2002). Design Research for Sustained Innovation. *Cognitive Studies, Bulletin of the Japanese Cognitive Science Society*, 9(3), 321-327.

Benton, M., & Glennie, A. (2016). Digital humanitarianism: How tech entrepreneurs are supporting refugee integration. Washington, DC: Report for Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

Bennet, C.I. (1990). *Comprehensive multicultural education: theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. United States of America. Library of congress. Retrieved from: https://openlibrary.org/books/OL2205908M/Comprehensive_multicultural_education

Brizard, T., & Derde, W., & Silberman, N. (2007). Basic Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Professionals in the Use of Information Technologies. How can ICT support cultural heritage?: This KNOWHOW booklet. *The Interactive Institute AB*. Retrieved from: [Basic Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Professionals in the Use of Information Technologies](#)

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006.) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2). pp. 77-101. ISSN 1478-0887

Brown, A.L. (1992). Design experiments: Theoretical and methodological challenges in creating complex interventions in classroom settings. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 2(2), 141-178. doi:[10.1207/s15327809jls0202_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327809jls0202_2)

Baltezarevic, R., & Baltezarevic, B., & Piotr, K., & Baltezarevic, V. (2019). The Impact of Virtual Communities on Cultural Identity. *Symposium*, 6, 1: 7-22. DOI: 10.5840. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333703120>

Barab, S., & Warren, S. J., & Del Valle, R., & Fang, F. (2006). Coming to Terms with Communities of Practice: A definition and operational criteria. In J. A. Pershing (Ed.), *The Handbook of Human Performance Technology: Principles, Practices, and Potential* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.

Chugh, R. (2017). *Harnessing Social Media as a Knowledge Management Tool*. IGI global book series: Advances in Knowledge Acquisition, Transfer, and Management (2326-7607). United States of America. Library of congress cataloging in publication: British library.

Camerona, L., & Erkalb, N., & Gangadharan, L., & Zhangb, M. (2015). Cultural integration: Experimental evidence of convergence in immigrants' preferences. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 111 38–58. Retrieved from: www.ScienceDirect.com

Collins, A. (1990). *Toward a Design Science of Education*. New York, NY: Center for Technology in Education. <http://cct2.edc.org/ccthome/reports/tr1.html>

Colomer, L., & Holtorf, C. (2019). What is cross-cultural heritage?: Challenges in identifying the heritage of globalized citizens. In H. Cornelius, A. Pantazatos, & G. Scarre (Eds), *Cultural heritage, ethics and contemporary migrations* (pp. 147-164). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329643103_What_is_cross-cultural_heritage_Challenges_in_identifying_the_heritage_of_globalized_citizens/citations

Costoiu, A. (2008). Modes of Minorities' Integration: Explaining Historical, Economic and Political Factors. *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, 2, (2). Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26575653_Modes_of_Minorities'_Integration_Explaining_Historical_Economic_and_Political_Factors

Cunliffe, E., Muhesen, N., & Lostal, M. (2016). The Destruction of Cultural Property in the Syrian Conflict: Legal Implications and Obligations. *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 23(1), 1-31. doi:10.1017/S0940739116000011

Danchev, A. (2008). Problems of Cultural Integration in Transition Societies – Case Study of Bulgaria Article- <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23977021>

Dvalishvili, M., & Kiknadze, T., & Shanshiashvili, A., & Mania, I. (2012). The Heritage crafts in Georgia, Comprehensive Research and Development Strategy of the Sector. Retrieved from: <https://www.gaccgeorgia.org/FrameCraft.html>

De Vaus, D. A. (2002). *Surveys in social research* (5.th ed). Crows Nest NSW., Australia: Allen & Unwin. Retrieved from: [\(PDF\) Surveys in Social Research, 5th edition | Alex Guetta](#)

- Dirksen, J. (2015). *Design for how people learn*. Pearson Education (US). New Riders Publishing
- Reeves, T. C., & McKenney, S. (2012). Things you should know about educational design research. *EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative*. Retrieved from: <https://library.educause.edu/-/media/files/library/2012/8/eli7087-pdf.pdf>
- Ehrkamp, P. (2005). Placing Identities: Transnational Practices and Local Attachments of Turkish Immigrants in Germany. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31 (2), pp. 345/364
- Engeström, Y. (2007). From Communities of Practice to Mycorrhizae, In: Hughes, J., Jewson, N., & Unwin, L., (Eds.), *Communities of Practice: Critical Perspectives*, Oxford, UK: Routledge, 41-54.
- Flick, U, & Von Kardorff, E., Steinke, I *2004). *A companion to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications Ltd; Retrieved from: https://books.google.se/books?id=6lwPkSo2XW8C&printsec=frontcover&hl=ar&source=gbs_ViewAPI&redir_esc=v#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Firmin, M. W. (2012). Unstructured Interviews. In: Given, L. M, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (EDs), (PP. 907). DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Gunawardena, C. N., & Hermans, M. B., & Sanchez, D., & Richmond, C., & Bohley, M., & Tuttle R. (2009). A theoretical framework for building online communities of practice with social networking tools. *Educational Media International*, 46:1, 3-16, DOI: 10.1080/09523980802588626
- Giglietto, D., & Claisse, C., & Lockley, E., & Ciolfi, L. (2019). Bridging cultural heritage and communities through digital technologies: Understanding Perspectives And Challenges. *Association for Computing Machinery*. ISBN978-1-4503-7162. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3328320.3328386>
- Hamid, A. A. (2002). E-learning-Is it the “e” or the learning that matters. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 4(3), 311–316.
- Hinton, B. (2003). "Knowledge Management And Communities Of Practice: An Experience From Rabobank Australia And New Zealand. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review, International Food and Agribusiness Management Association*, 5(3), p. 1-15. Retrieved from: [Knowledge Management And Communities Of Practice: An Experience From Rabobank Australia And New Zealand](#)
- Issa, T. B., Kommers, P. (2013). Social networking for web-based communities. *International Journal of Web Based Communities*. DOI: 10.1504/IJWBC.2013.051292. Retrieved from : www.researchgate.com.
- Jailani, A. K., & Araki, K., & Kusakabe, S. (2016). Enjoying Cultural Heritage Experiences as Informal Learning through User’s Nationality Context-Awareness. *The International Journal of E-Learning and Educational Technologies in the Digital Media (IJEETDM)*, 2(3): 120-127. ISSN: 2410-0439

Kanjou, Y. (2018). The Role of the Local Community and Museums in the Renaissance of Syrian Cultural Heritage. *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 6(4), 375-391. <https://www-muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/article/712227>.

Keenan, B. (2000). *Damascus: Hidden Treasures of the Old City*. USA. Thames & Hudson. Retrieved from: <https://archive.org/>

Kim, A, J. 2000. *Community Building on the Web: Secret Strategies for Successful Online Communities, On the web*. United States of America. Peachpit Press. Retrieved from: [Community Building on the Web : Secret Strategies for Successful Online Communities - PDF Free Download](#)

Kietzmann, J., & Hermkens, K., & McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. (2011). Social Media? Get Serious! Understanding the Functional Building Blocks of Social Media. *Business Horizons*. DOI: 10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005. Retrieved from: www.sciencedirect.com

Khoir, S., & Du, J. T., & Koronios, A. (2015). Information sharing in community associations: Asian immigrants' experiences. *ASIST : Proceedings of the 78th ASIS&T Annual Meeting: Information Science with Impact: Research in and for the Community*. 94, p. 1-4. <https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.5555/2857070.2857164>

Lababidi, R., & Qassar, H. (2016). Did They Really Forget How to Do It?: Iraq, Syria, and the International Response to Protect a Shared Heritage. *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 4(4), 341-362. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/637045>.

Lave, Jean; Wenger, Etienne (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cioffi, L., & Lechner, M., Hornecker, E., Damala, A., & Maye, L. (2018). Cultural heritage communities : Technologies and challenges. Digital research in the arts and humanities. Retrieved from: <https://dl.acm.org/>

Lundborg, P. (2013). Refugees' Employment Integration in Sweden: Cultural Distance and Labor Market Performance. *Review of International Economics*, 21(2), 219-232.

Mancini, F. (2015). Incorporating user participation in heritage institutions: approaching institutional strategies related to social media audience needs. *Journal of New Media and Mass Communication*, 2(1): 1-15. DOI: 10.18488/journal.91/2015.2.1/91.1.1.15. [http://www.conscientiabeam.com/pdf-files/soc/91/JNMMC-2015-2\(1\)-1-15.pdf](http://www.conscientiabeam.com/pdf-files/soc/91/JNMMC-2015-2(1)-1-15.pdf)

Markham, A. N. (2012). Internet in Qualitative Research. In: Given, L. M, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (EDs), pp. 455-458. ISBN: 9781412963909. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>

- Meier, C. (2007) .Enhancing intercultural understanding using e-learning strategies. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(4):655-671
- Morgan, D.L. (2012). Snowball Sampling. In: Given, L. M. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods(EDs)*, (pp. 816). Online ISBN: 9781412963909. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Moeini, S. H. I., Arefian, F.F. (2019). *Urban Heritage Along the Silk Roads, A Contemporary Reading of Urban Transformation of Historic Cities in the Middle East and Beyond*. The Urban Book Series. London, UK. Springer Nature. Retrieved from: <https://books.google.se/>
- Munawar, N. A. (2019). Competing heritage: curating the post-conflict heritage of roman syria. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 62, (1), 142–165, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.1111/2041-5370.12101>
- Nekby, L. "Cultural Integration in Sweden." In *Cultural Integration of Immigrants in Europe*, Cultural Integration of Immigrants in Europe, Chapter 6. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Oha, E., & Reeves, T. (2010). The implications of the differences between design research and instructional systems design for educational technology researchers and practitioners. *Educational Media International*, 4(47), 263–275.
- Recupero, A., & Triberti, S., & Modesti, C., & Talamo, A. (2018). Mixed Reality for Cross-Cultural Integration: Using Positive Technology to Share Experiences and Promote Communication. *Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY)*. *Front. psychol.* 9: 1223. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01223>
- Riegert, K., & Hovden, J. F. (2019) Identity, Empathy and Argument: Immigrants in Culture and Entertainment Journalism in the Scandinavian Press. *Journal of the European Institute for Communication and Culture, Javnost - The Public*, 26:2, 158-176, DOI: 10.1080/13183222.2019.1589279. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjav20>
- Roulston, K. J. (2012). Open-Ended Question. In: Given, L. M, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods (Eds)*, pp. 582-583. Online ISBN: 9781412963909 DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Saidi, Manel. (2016). *Socio- Economic and Cultural Integration of Arab Immigrants in Sweden: Integration Challenges and Strategies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ub.gu.se/en>
- Samson, R. (2006). The Cultural Integration Model and European Transformation, The Case of Romania. *Department of International Culture and Communication Studies Copenhagen Business School*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbs.dk/en>
- Sandoval, W. A., & Bell, P. (2004). Design-based research methods for studying learning in context: Introduction. *Educational Psychologist*, 39(4), 199–201.

Stefano, M., Davis, P., & Corsane, G. (2012). *Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage* (Heritage matters series, 8). Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press.

Sobrero, P. M. (2008). Social Learning Through Virtual Teams and Communities. *Extension Journal*, 46(3). ISSN 1077-5315

Tabor, A., & Milfont, T. (2013). We are all in the same boat: How online communities facilitate the process of migration. *New Zealand Journal Of Psychology*, 42(1), 31-35.

The Swedish Exhibition Agency. (2015). Diversity and the Museum. Retrieved from: http://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/doc/research_and_reports/Diversity_and_the_museum.pdf

Tylor, E. B. (1920). *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*. London Murray. volume 1. <https://archive.org/details/primitiveculture01tylouoft/page/n7/mode/2up>

Thompson, C & Walker, B. L. (2018). Basics of research (Part 12): Qualitative research (1998). *Journal Articles: College of Nursing*. 22. https://digitalcommons.unmc.edu/con_articles/22

Thomas, R. L., Chiarelli-Helminiak, C. M., Ferraj, B., & Barrette, K. (2016). Building relationships and facilitating immigrant community integration: An evaluation of a Cultural Navigator Program. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 55, 77-84. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2015.11.003>

Tabone, W. (2019). Technology for cultural heritage. *Semi-Automatic Segmentation of Human Anatomical Imagery using Mathematical Morphology Computer Vision Methods project*. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334671983>

The Gorgian Arts and culture center. (2012). The Heritage crafts in Georgia, Comprehensive Study and Development Strategy of the Sector. Retrieved from: [The Heritage crafts in Georgia, Comprehensive Research and Development Strategy of the Sector](#)

The heritage craft Association. President : HRH the prince of Wales. Retrieved from: [Definition of fields](#)

UNCHER, The UN Refugee Agency. (2014). The Integration of Refugees, A Discussion Paper. Retrieved from: [The Integration of Refugees](#)

UNESCO. (2003). Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Paris. Retrieved from: [UNESCO - Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#)

UNESCO. (2011). Ancient City of Damascus (Syria). Damascus. Advisory Body Evaluation (ICOMOS), report No 20. Retrieved from: <https://whc.unesco.org/document/152985>

UNESCO. (2016). UNESCO's response to protect culture in crises, Unite 4 heritage. Retrieved from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244984>

UNESCO. (2017). Intangible Cultural Heritage of Displaced Syrians. Retrieved from: <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/38275-EN.pdf>

Wang, F., & Hannafin, M. J. (2004). Using design-based research in design and research of technology-enhanced learning environments. *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.* Retrieved from: [\(PDF\) Design-based research and technology-enhanced learning environments. Educational Technology Research and Development, 53\(4\), 5-23](#)

Worsley, P., & Allen, T., & Skelton, T. (Eds.). (1999). *Culture and global change.* Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com> Created from gu on 2020-04-01 09:02:16.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wenger, E., & McDermott, R., & Snyder, W.M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice. A guide to managing knowledge.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press. Retrieved from: https://books.google.se/books?id=m1xZuNq9RygC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ar&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Appendix

Participants written and verbal online questions	
Where are you from?	<input type="checkbox"/> Syria <input type="checkbox"/> Other...
How old are you?	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-28 <input type="checkbox"/> 29-39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 60>
How long have you been in Sweden?	<input type="checkbox"/> less than a year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5>
Did you Work as a craftsman with heritage handicrafts in your home land?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Describe your handicraft.	
For how long did you practise your handicraft in	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5

your homeland?	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10>
How did you work with your handicrafts?	<input type="checkbox"/> I used to work for a company as an employee (workshop, factory, shop, etc ...) <input type="checkbox"/> I had my own company (workshop, factory, shop, etc ...) <input type="checkbox"/> Other-----
Do you work as a craftsman with heritage handicrafts in Sweden?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What is your current job title?	
In Sweden, do/did you communicate with craftsmen from your home country or with craftsmen in Sweden regarding your work with your craft?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Add text-----
If your answer is yes, and you have contacted a craftsman from your home country or in Sweden to set up a business, What kind of business took place between you? (Example: set up a new project)	
If you have failed to set up a business in Sweden, what are the obstacles that prevented the business occurring?	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of knowledge in how to set up a business <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of contacts <input type="checkbox"/> Financial problems to start the project <input type="checkbox"/> The absence of my profession in the labor market <input type="checkbox"/> Higher taxes affect the sale of craft products <input type="checkbox"/> The problem of finding the materials used for my craft <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing issues <input type="checkbox"/> Complicated labor market rules <input type="checkbox"/> Add text-----
Tell me about the challenges that you faced to practice your craft from the beginning of your arrival to Sweden?	
Have you ever participated in social networks based on online communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other---
What are online community platforms that have attracted you to participate in?	

Tell about your motives of utilizing online communities rather than other digital communication platforms ?	
Tell me about your activities through participating in online communities?	
What do you think the impact of participating and utilizing online communities on your personal experience?	
How do you think online communities have contributed in delivering your heritage knowledge and obtaining Swedish heritage knowledge?	
How do you think online communities have contributed in communicating your cultural heritage with Swedish cultural heritage?	
Do you think there is a close relationship between online communities and promoting cultural heritage learning of the host country? How and why?	
If you are currently working in Sweden, what was the role of online communities in entering the Swedish labor market?	
In your opinion, what kind of online community platforms would you use to enhance your Swedish cultural heritage learning embodied in heritage handicrafts?	
Does your heritage craft match any Swedish heritage crafts? Tell me about that.	
As a craftsman: Do you think that obtaining knowledge about Swedish heritage crafts can promote cultural integration and your early entrance into the Swedish labor market?why, how	
Do you think that the Swedish labor market laws make it difficult for immigrant craftsmen to enter the Swedish labor market?	
In your opinion: how can you achieve cultural integration through online communities based heritage handicrafts content?	