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From Trickle to an Influx: Exploring the Digital Footprints of Syrian Immigrants in Turkey

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Abstract

Turkey currently hosts the largest number of refugees worldwide, including 3.65 million Syrians. What began as a trickle soon became an influx, and Turkey has become the primary destination for Syrian refugees since 2011. The purpose of this research is to explore the digital footprints of the Syrian immigrants in Turkey. Consumers use various technologies in their everyday lives, such as mobile applications, internet browsers, and social networks. In doing so, consumers leave a digital footprint that describe their online activities.Consumers can relay both active and passive digital footprint through their online activities. Both active and passive digital footprints can reveal consumer attitudes, interests, and preferences. This brings numerous opportunities and challenges for companies, consumers, and public policy makers. This exploratory research study was carried out in the neighborhoods of Önder and Karapürçek districts in Ankara, which are densely populated by Syrian immigrants. In-depth interviews were conducted with these immigrants regarding their digital footprints. Specifically, emphasis was placed on the Syrians that possessed smartphones, then their social media usage profiles, application downloads and online shopping patterns were investigated. A total of twelve interivews were completed during the research and the results indicated that the majority of the immigrants have smartphones and they are very active on social media platforms. However, Syrian immigrants prefer online shopping for especially clothing and home decoration. The results of this study are noteworthy since understanding and explaining the importance of digital footprints is significant for businesses as well as the society and government.

Keywords: *Consumers, immigrants, digital footprints, consumer behavior, cross-cultural marketing*

Introduction and Objectives

Today, Turkey is host to the world's largest refugee population, with 4 million people, of whom 3.65 million are Syrians. The humanitarian crisis in Syria, the largest in the world after World War II and the largest in the history of Turkey, is entering its 11th year. Due to this crisis, Turkey has became the country with the largest number of "refugees" in the world , and it presently hosts almost two-thirds of the people who were forced to flee Syria.(KDK,2022).

Migration is a population movement that changes the structure of society in economic, cultural, social and political aspects along with the process of changing geographical space (Özer 2004). The great mass movements caused by a war carry great dramas and social problems with them. However, when the event is examined in terms of its socio-economic dimension, it is possible to make both negative and positive inferences for the host country. Migration has many effects on host countries such as increasing labor supply, contributing to employment, increasing GDP due to production, increasing economic productivity by contributing to innovation (Van der Mensbrugghe,Roland-Holst, 2009; Ortega and Peri, 2009; Mohapatra, 2010).

In previous studies along this stream of research, the political and social effects of the concept of war and migration as well as their effects on employment & economy have been discussed. However, there are no specific studies on the consumption behavior of this mass consumer group in their new environment, where they attempt to adapt to their changing lives.

Technology, an indispensable element of our century, regardless of the conditions and space, has become a basic need from shopping to communication, while increasing its significance in our daily lives day by day.The developments in the rapidly globalizing world have facilitated the access of people from all walks of life to technology and adapted to their daily lives.

A growing portion of offline and online human activities leave digital footprints in electronic databases. Resulting big social data offers unprecedented insights into population-wide patterns and detailed characteristics of the individuals (Lambiotte,2014) One of the goals of social research is exploration and this includes trying different methods to conduct research, analyzing problems from different perspectives, or analyzing phenomena for the first time.

The traces left behind on the Internet by users, which are called digital footprints, represent a new source of data that can be used for conducting exploratory research. Digital footprints occur in different forms such as uploaded photos, posted reviews, or clicked links. These data are collected by most websites and can be used as a data source for research and marketing (Önder,Koerbitz, Hubman-Haidvogel,2016). In addition, exploratory research can open up new and unexplored horizons in order to access the preferences and usage tools of a particular sections of the society such as immigrant communities.

The number of Syrians who are under the temporary protection corresponds to 4.22% of the population of Turkey, which is 80,810,525. In other words, the number of GK in the scope of the Syrians, among them Armenia, Qatar, Bahrain, Mongolia, Japan, Slovenia, Macedonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Luxembourg, Is more than the population of many countries,

including Malta and Iceland (KDK,Syrians in Turkey Special Report,2018) in the last seven years at this point, the language barrier,cultural differences, and migration processes,which evolve with financial difficulties, as millions of immigrants that can adapt to the society they live their existence in the territory of Turkey is considerable proportions has become undeniable.The consumer behavior of this community, which is almost the size of the population of a country, appears as a brand new field of research.In this context, the active and passive digital footprints of immigrants provide information in many areas it will allow us to comprehend.

A total of twelve participants were interviewed in depth, using the qualitative research method for the study. Unlike the generalization-specific quantitative research method of the positive sciences, qualitative research focuses on the diverse and deep nature of the individual characteristics inherent in man. In this context, qualitative research, which defends the claim that the depth and originality of information are important rather than generalizations, focuses on deep and specific data obtained from smaller study groups rather than large samples (Baltacı, 2019).Within the scope of the literature, internet and mobile phone usage data of Turkey are shared that will provide information about active digital footprints such as internet access and social media percentages. However, these datas do not indicate the specific situation of immigrants.Therefore with the exploratory research method we will be able to obtain deep and specific data.

Conceptual Framework : Internet Access, Social Media, Mobile Phone Usage and Online Shopping

Human needs are endless. Maslow states that individuals are motivated to meet certain needs and that some needs are superior to others. According to Maslow, it is necessary to meet the needs of the lower level before the needs of the higher level are met. Individuals become ready for those at the higher level only when their needs at the lower level are satisfied. Our most basic needs are those for biological and physiological life, and these needs guide our behavior. When our physiological needs are met, the needs at the next level will be our source of motivation (Henden Sholt, 2018).

Millions of people who were victims of the civil war, migrated by taking great risks for their most basic needs, security and physiological needs, and then began to turn towards their needs at the top level of the pyramid in their new lives.

The useage of mobile phones and the Internet, on the other hand, has become perhaps the most easily accessible means of existing both materially and spiritually, staying fully connected to the world in a new sense. This existence, the effort to remain connected to the world,will also affect the consumption behaviors of immigrants who want to hold on to life.Individuals with different ethnicities, income levels and lifestyles from almost every part of society are taking their place in digital media in many different ways by accessing information, shopping or using social media.Besides, the concept of influencer has taken its place in consumer behavior literatur. Influencer marketing is a new strategy that is increasingly adopted by companies (Lou & Yuan, 2019;De Veirman, 2017). It could be defined as the use of influential opinion leaders (influencers), celebrity or non-celebrity, with many followers on social platforms, to foster positive attitudinal and behavioural responses in their followers (consumers) regarding the brand's interests by using posts shared on such platforms, and which also allows influencers and followers to participate in the co-creation of the brand image on social media(Martinez-Lopez, 2020).

Internet Access

According to the data from the 2019 Household Information Technologies Usage Survey, while the proportion of individuals using the Internet in Turkey was 75,3%, it was observed that 88,3% had access from home. This rate was 83,8% in the previous year.

Comparing to last decade there is a significant rise of household with internet access from 30% to %88,3.When Female usage percentage is 68,9%,male usage is 81,8% .Also from 2004 to 2019 it is an enormous change by technological progress,from 7% to 88,8%.

Bilgi Toplumu İstatistikleri, 2004-2019
Information Society Statistics, 2004-2019

(%)

	2004	2005	2006 [*]	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 [**]
Girişimlerde Bilişim Teknolojileri Kullanımı ICT Usage in Enterprises																
Bilgisayar Kullanımı - Computer Usage	-	87,8	-	88,7	90,6	90,7	92,3	94,0	93,5	92,0	94,4	95,2	95,9	97,2	97,0	96,7
İnternet Erişimi - Internet Access	-	80,4	-	85,4	89,2	88,8	90,9	92,4	92,5	90,8	89,9	92,5	93,7	95,9	95,3	94,9
Web Sitesi Sahipliği - Having Website	-	48,2	-	63,1	62,4	58,7	52,5	55,4	58,0	53,8	56,6	65,5	66,0	72,9	66,1	66,6
Hanelerde Bilişim Teknolojileri Kullanımı ICT Usage in Households and Individuals																
Bilgisayar Kullanımı (Toplam)- Computer Usage (Total)	23,6	22,9	-	33,4	38,0	40,1	43,2	46,4	48,7	49,9	53,5	54,8	54,9	56,6	59,6	-
Erkek - Male	31,1	30,0	-	42,7	47,8	50,5	53,4	56,1	59,0	60,2	62,7	64,0	64,1	65,7	68,6	-
Kadın - Female	16,2	15,9	-	23,7	28,5	30,0	33,2	36,9	38,5	39,8	44,3	45,6	45,9	47,7	50,6	-
İnternet Kullanımı (Toplam) - Internet Usage (Total)	18,8	17,6	-	30,1	35,9	38,1	41,6	45,0	47,4	48,9	53,8	55,9	61,2	66,8	72,9	75,3
Erkek - Male	25,7	24,0	-	39,2	45,4	48,6	51,8	54,9	58,1	59,3	63,5	65,8	70,5	75,1	80,4	81,8
Kadın - Female	12,1	11,1	-	20,7	26,6	28,0	31,7	35,3	37,0	38,7	44,1	46,1	51,9	58,7	65,5	68,9
Hanelerde İnternet erişimi - Households with access to the Internet	7,0	8,7	-	19,7	25,4	30,0	41,6	42,9	47,2	49,1	60,2	69,5	76,3	80,7	83,8	88,3

TÜİK, Girişimlerde Bilişim Teknolojileri Kullanımı Araştırması, Hanelerde Bilişim Teknolojileri Kullanımı Araştırması

According to TUİK data, there are approximately 82 million mobile phone subscribers in our country.While an increase of 10% was observed compared to the previous year, it is observed that 20 million additional subscribers were added compared to 2010.

| Year	Number of fixed telephone subscribers	Number of mobile telephone subscribers	Number of internet subscribers
2010	16 201 466	61 769 635	14 443 644
2011	15 210 846	65 321 745	22 371 441
2012	13 859 672	67 680 547	27 649 055
2013	13 551 705	69 661 108	32 613 930
2014	12 528 865	71 888 416	41 272 940
2015	11 493 057	73 639 261	48 617 291
2016	11 077 559	75 061 699	62 280 191
2017	11 308 444	77 800 170	68 869 578
2018	11 633 461	80 117 999	74 500 089
2019[1]	11 542 548	82 896 108	77 048 026

Social Media

Social media is an up-to-date, emerging communication platform for the marketers. It provides several advantages such as cost efficiency, ability to reach the current and potential customers smoothly, and get instant feedback from them. In order to maintain a sincere relationship with customers and build brand and company image on social media, the marketers should know the users' habits, preferences, and behaviours(Çiçek,Eren-Erdoğmuş,2013).

While social media has become one of the most popular channels of the twenty-first century, it is turning into a platform that is often criticized with positive and negative aspects, but increasing its influence day by day, dragging large masses after it. Along with the positive aspects of the use of social media to increase the individuality, the reduction of face-to-face relations and, most importantly, can be said to have some psychological problems such as causing its negative points (Akıllı and Gezgin, 2016).

Social media accounts of individuals share with the entire world showcases the new generation of communication that serves as one of the most popular and indispensable tools.Facebook is one of the most popular platforms for Syrian immigrants.During the course of spending time on social media,it is also possible to come across many pages titled 'Syrians living in Turkey' on platforms such as facebook.

Nowadays the most used within the scope of social media networks are: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogger, Instagram, Foursquare, Google+, WhatsApp, SnapChat, Wordpress, LinkedIn, Flickr, Tumblr, Vimeo, Dailymotion, Skype, Pinterest. Although some of them are used in different countries around the world, they are not used much in Turkey. An example of this is Google+ (Çağala, 2017).In the report published by We are Social, the most used platforms in Turkey were Youtube, Instagram and Whatsapp.
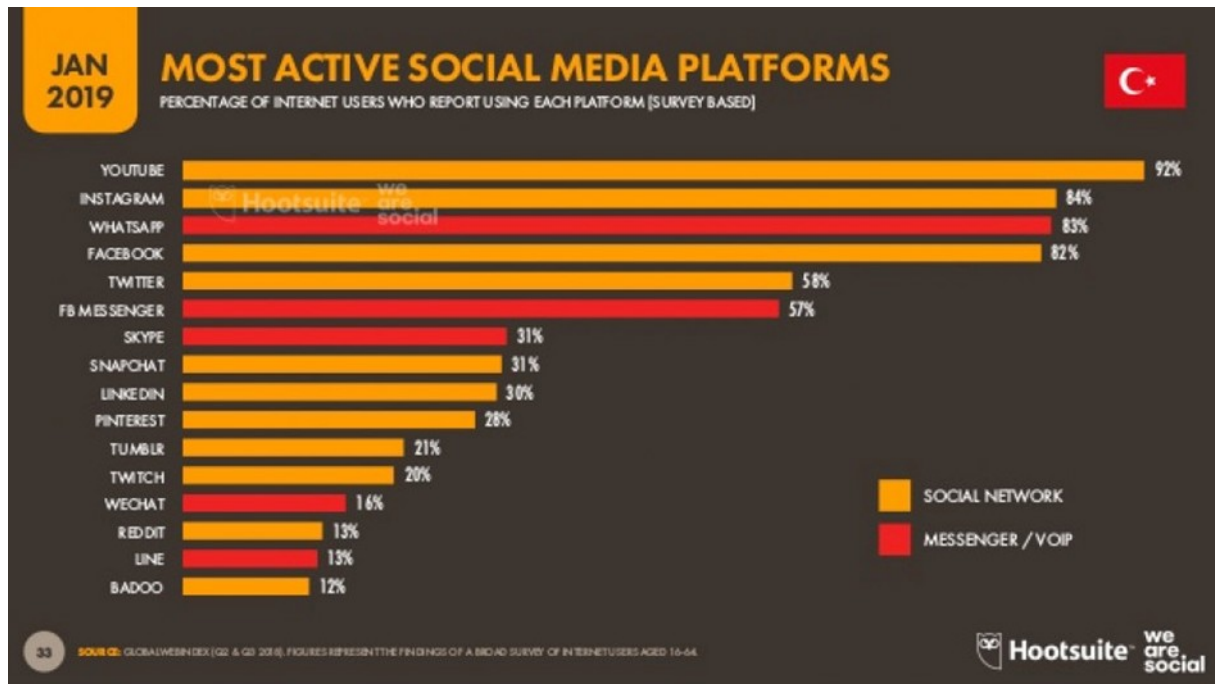
Online Shopping

During the last two decades, the rapid diffusion of computer and information technologies throughout the business and consumer communities has resulted in dramatic changes. The application of the Internet to purchasing behavior is a notable change in the way buyers and sellers interact (Cai, Cude,2016). Nowadays, when accessing and using technology has become as easy as touching the screen of a mobile phone in our hands, it is inevitable that the course of shopper behavior will change, develop and evolve at the same speed.

When online consumer purchasing behaviors are examined, "it is seen that consumers have three basic beliefs about shopping over the Internet. These are; saving time, reaching the most affordable price, finding the most suitable product for him in accordance with his wishes and needs" (Işler, Yarangümelioğlu and Gümülü, 2014: 79-80)

Looking at the figures in Turkey, clothing and sports equipment are the most preferred goods and services of consumers in the online environment with 67.2%, followed by travel expenses with 31.7%

İnternet üzerinden alışveriş yapan bireylerin sipariş verdikleri ya da satın aldıkları aldıkları mal ve hizmet türleri Type of goods and services ordered/bought over the internet	Toplam Total								
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Gıda maddeleri ile günlük gereksinimler Food or groceries	17,3	18,3	15,7	18,0	17,4	19,8	21,9	22,1	27,4
Ev eşyası (Mobilya, oyuncak, beyaz eşya vb) Household goods (e.g. furniture,toys,excluding consumer electronics)	19,8	21,2	25,6	27,0	25,5	25,8	25,3	26,8	26,9
İlaç Medicine	6,4	4,0	4,2	3,9	3,1	3,0	4,3	4,4	4,1
Giyim, spor malzemeleri Clothes, sports goods	28,8	44,4	48,6	51,9	57,4	60,0	62,3	65,2	67,2
Bilgisayar ve diğer ek donanım Computer hardware	10,7	6,9	7,5	15,1	12,1	11,4	11,0	12,3	12,1
Elektronik araçlar (Cep telefonu, kamera, radyo, TV, DVD oynatıcı vb.) Electronic equipment (including camera)	27,8	25,5	25,8	24,9	22,4	21,0	19,0	18,6	20,3
Telekomünikasyon hizmetleri (TV, genişbant abonelik hizmetleri (ADSL vb.), sabit veya cep telefonu abonelikleri, ön ödemeli telefon kartları için para yükleme/yatırma Telecommunication services (e.g. TV, broadband subscriptions, fixed line or mobile phone subscriptions, uploading money on prepaid phone cards, etc.)	1,6	1,7	2,3	8,7	5,8	12,4	10,3	15,6	15,3
Hisse senedi / Finansal hizmet / Sigorta alımı Share purchases, insurance policies and other financial services	1,5	1,7	1,6	3,5	2,6	-	-	-	-
Tatil konaklaması (Otel vb. rezervasyon) Holiday accommodation (hotel etc.)	7,3	7,2	7,8	15,0	14,3	16,9	14,5	15,4	14,8
Seyahat ile ilgili diğer faaliyetler (seyahat bileti, araç kiralama vb.) Other travel arrangements (e.g.transport tickets, carhire, etc.)	15,2	17,4	20,0	26,8	27,0	29,7	24,1	31,9	31,7
Sportif ve kültürel faaliyetler için bilet satın alımı (sinema, tiyatro, konser, maç vb.) Tickets for events	7,1	7,6	7,6	15,0	14,8	14,7	13,6	16,8	18,0
Film, müzik Films, music	5,2	4,3	4,5	7,1	6,9	6,8	5,4	7,7	9,0
Kitap, dergi, gazete (e-kitap dahil) Books, magazines, newspapers (including e-books)	17,6	15,6	15,9	15,9	18,4	19,4	15,8	20,6	20,2
e-öğrenme araçları (çevrimiçi eğitim siteleri, CD vb.) e-learning material	2,5	1,8	2,6	4,8	3,9	3,9	2,7	4,9	3,3
Oyun yazılımı, diğer bilgisayar yazılımı ve ve yazılım güncellemeleri Video games software and other computer software and upgrades	-	-	-	5,6	5,9	6,1	5,3	6,4	6,6

TÜİK, Hanehalkı Bilişim Teknolojileri Kullanım Araştırması, 2011-2019

Methodology

1.Research Model: The main purpose of this study is to investigate the digital footprints of Syrian immigrants in Turkey.In accordance with the goal, qualitative research, which focuses on phenomena in the flow of social life and is engaged in examining these phenomena without any transformation (Maxwell, 2008), includes a wide variety of perspectives used to determine the multifaceted and complex nature of modern social life (Kitzinger, 1995)

2.Research Sampling: Convenience sampling is a non-random sampling method in which the sample cut to be selected from the main mass is determined by the researcher's judgments. In easy sampling, data is collected from the main mass in the easiest, fastest and most economical way (Malhotra, 2004, Aaker , 2007, Zikmund, 1997). Kinnear and Taylor (1996) stated that the usage rate of the convenience sampling method in practice is 53%. Similarly, Kurtuluş (2012) stated that convenience sampling method is used in approximately 90% of the studies conducted in Turkey (Haşıloğlu, Baran, Aydın, 2015). In the research, the sample of Syrian immigrants residing in the Ankara province in the largest number and residents of Karapürçek neighborhoods were selected with the convenience sampling method.

3.Data Collection and Analysis: Data were collected using interview technique for discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is a research method used in wide-ranging social and cultural research that deals with meaning products formed through speech and texts (Çelik, Eksi, 2008). Any material in discourse analysis has been formally codified or text (News, advertisements, company, political party, organization, etc... organizations in speeches and papers, academic articles of the nature of social interaction with any document, chat for example, focus group discussions, individual interviews or media, television programs, advertisements, magazines, novels, stories, etc...) may be the subject of research (Elliot,

1996)June May-June 2021, twelve participants were interviewed face-to-face in-depth and the research data were collected by conducting interviews.While time-consuming and labor-intensive, in-depth interviews can provide rich data (Guion,Diehl,Mc Donald,2001).

Research Findings

Question 1: Can you tell us what purpose you use the Internet for the most?

' Now the Internet has become everything,life without the Internet is difficult.It all depends on the smartphone.I go to facebook and youtube the most.For entertainment, most of all for news, politics,what happened in Turkey, what happened in Syria, for example, what is the state of war.'(Mohammed,34,Grocer)

'I use it to get information, to research, maybe to read to my children. As a translator for Turkish for education, I am completing my deficiencies from there to teach my children.' (Hiba,32, Housewife)

'I use Instagram,Whatsapp to talk to my girlfriends.To talk to my relatives in Syria,to my mother from home, to go through instagram to see what she wants.' (Mohammed,22, Carpenter)

'I use Facebook, Instagram.I'm watching a few Turkish TV series on Youtube.' (Rema,20, Student)

'If there's something I don't know, I'm researching, I'm looking at Google, I'm learning.I talk to people who are far away, I meet people I don't know sometimes.I'm chatting with my friends.If I'm going to shop, for example, I order something from the Internet that I can't find with me.So the Internet has a lot of benefits.' (Nur,24, Pharmacy employee)

' For example, I constantly use it to contact my mother.Mom's already here, but I'm on video when she's worried about me.I'm talking to my relatives in Syria.For example, if there is another series, I watch it from youtube.Sometimes I study, they give it online.' (Hanin,17, Student)

'When I'm doing research for my job,and when I get home, the fun is watching Youtube and stuff.I use social media programs, Facebook, Twitter, and so on.Whatsapp is of course for communication between us and our family ..also to watch a movie.' (Mohammed,20, Phone Operator)

'Instagram,Facebook,Youtube,Telegram..Telegram is more beautiful.I don't like Tiktok.I did not used it to shop before I came to Turkey,there is no shopping in Syria.Because they have no way of paying.I came to Turkey, I want to shop.' (Yazan,26, Student)

Question 2: How often do you connect to the Internet from desktop computers other than a smartphone? For what purpose?

'I'm using it, but there's no time.When you go home in the evening, you eat, you are tired.I already have a smartphone, I don't think I need it anymore.' (Mohammed,34,Grocer)

'I started using laptops when I started college.Because distance learning is easier.I understand the lesson more easily.I'm watching videos.I'm entering the university system.It's easier and better than the phone.I use it maybe every day for the exam time lesson.' (Rema,20, Student)

'I'm just using it for Netflix.And sometimes it's a game,but I don't play a lot of games.' (Muhiddin,21,Phone Operator)

'I have a laptop.There are lessons, for example, sometimes there are free lessons.I'm watching tv series,there's a game or something, I started Pubg.' (Ahmet,18, Student)

The smartphone is better.There is a laptop everywhere, there is no more practical then phone' Yazan, 26, Student)

Question 3: Can you tell me why/how important it is for you to have a smartphone?

'For example, I had eight thousand liras in total, all my money.I bought this phone two days ago for eight thousand liras.I was even going to borrow and buy 11pro for thirteen thousand liras, but then I said if you have the money to borrow, you can buy it.For me is so important.' (Muhiddin,21,Phone Operator)

'The smartphone is very important right now.For work, for the Internet, everything depends on it anyway.Life without a phone is not what it used to be,it's hard.You will have to, because you need to.' (Mohammed,34, Grocer)

'For me, it's not very important, except for Whatsapp .'(Yusuf,36,GSM dealer)

'I bought a smartphone two years ago.I was very insistent to my mother.So our situation wasn't that good.I waited a long time, I waited for eight months.I told my mom to buy me a phone every day.Then, when my father worked and brought good money, my father bought it for me,and I was very happy.I can't even spend a day without a phone, I guess.' (Hanin,17, Student)

'It's 99% important, for example, we talk about everything, they send it on Whatsapp.I also take pictures,I have a photograph hobby,I love it very much.' (Ahmet,18, Student)

'It's very important to have a smartphone when the time is up.Old phones only make calls.If I want a picture for my work, for example, if I don't have a smartphone, I have difficulty.Fifty percent is important for business.There's some old stuff for entertainment, television and stuff like that, it's okay, but it's very important for work.' (Mohammed,20, Phone Operator)

'The phone is more important because, for example, I'm in Turkey now, my family is in another country.We see each other like it's real.' (Rema,20, Student)

'Actually, it's become more difficult to live without a smartphone now.You know, you're going somewhere to find a place,navigation,to research something.To translate for the language, that is.To communicate, it is very difficult when there is no smartphone.' (Hiba,32, Housewife)

Question 4: Do you do online shopping? Do you order food online? Which sites do you use for these purposes ?What are your reasons for your preference?

'Most of the time, I order from the fashion store, for example.Household items,clothes, everything.It's all here, it's gone,it's gone,a basket of flowers.Safe, affordable,high-quality stuff.' (Nur,24, Pharmacy employee)

'For example, I've been ordering my clothes online all the time for six months.I'm getting some food or something.I use a lunch basket at dinner.I also use 90% Trendyol for clothes for a dress.There's a refund or something.Sometimes I get something I like from Instagram.There are various various dishes at Yemek Sepeti, but we can't use it much, this region is far here to serve.' (Muhiddin,21, Phone Operator)

'I'm not doing too much, I'm researching but more,which is appropriate.Lcwaikiki,I order when I want,when it's convenient.Farmasi(cosmetics) is not very convenient, but I like it, because women take care of it.' (Hiba,32, Housewife)

'I use Yemek Sepeti because the food in our dorm is not that good.Shopping, for example, clothes are very scarce.I buy it myself, I prefer it more.' (Rema,20, Student)

'I used Getir and Yemek Sepeti.I did it during that virus time, for example.I bought this cardigan I'm wearing,I bought shoes from Bershka and Pull&Bear.I also did it from N11, it's not a good experience, it didn't turn out as I wanted.' (Mohammed,20, Phone Operator)

' I bought a watch.I bought two watches with my uncle's son.I also bought Adidas shoes.When I saw it on Facebook, I bought dumbbells.I tried dumbbells before, but I quit.I bought it for pleasure,when I saw it,I put it home.' (Mohammed,22, Carpenter)

'For example, I used Trendyol, I made shopping.They all come here, they give high prices, but trendyol is cheap.People prefer Trendyol the most.I don't trust too much others. I buy cheaper things, I don't buy expensive things.' (Mohammed,34, Grocer)

Question 5: Which apps do you prefer on your smartphone? What are the reasons?

'There are many of them.Instagram Facebook,Tiktok,Whatsapp,Youtube of course,they are installed.There is E-Nabız for health.I have a Papara card,when you shop at the pharmacy, there is a 50% discount.Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok for fun, to get news,shopping more.To buy clothes for the children.There is a page on Facebook for Syrian residents at Ankara.One for community and healthy living,one for help,one for shopping.These are Arabic pages.I don't share much.I dont want to show them how we live here, on Facebook,Instagram.They (in Syria) can be upset.' (Hiba,32, Housewife)

'Facebook,Instagram,Tiktok,Whatsapp,that's it.At work to spend time,talk to relatives,talk to a little lover, that's what it is.Tiktok is sometimes something to listen to songs,and something that makes you laugh.There are solidarity groups on Facebook.For example, when I came here, the first four years were hard for me.Even when I was eating, Facebook was with me.There's a group,a few girls, a few boys.It's a conversation, we're taking a picture.I've met one or two of them.The name of the group is our friends from Syria-Aleppo.' (Mohammed,22, Carpenter)

'There is Instagram, there is Facebook, there is Tiktok, Pubg game, there is joker card playing' (Abdulvasit, 38, Carpenter)

'Facebook,Instagram,Letgo,Tiktok   are   installed   but   I   don't   use,   Twitter,   Snapchat, Tinder..For example, a friend of mine met a girl in a game and got married.There are groups on Facebook,buying and selling cars,phones and stuff.For example, this is the Önder neighborhood, Syrians have a leading community group, there is a Keçiören group, there is an Ankara group, there is an Istanbul group.Each-zone has a group.For example, only the Arabic of the news around there.' (Muhiddin,21,Phone Operator)

'There is Instagram, Facebook,Whatsapp,Ziraat bank for banking, and there is about state because I am a student.There's Snapchat, there's Tiktok, there's everything.I have Twitter, but I don't use it much.There are friends on Instagram, I look at the pictures.I don't use Tiktok very much.We are talking to a friend and teacher on Whatsapp, we are using it a lot right now or there is a pandemic.There are Facebook groups, but I don't really look at them.' (Ahmet,18, Student)

'There's   Facebook,   it's   all   there.I'm   looking   at   Facebook   for   a   language lesson.'(Yusuf,36,GSM dealer)

'Youtube is very good for education.Now there are multi-channels,teaching education.I use Instagram more for social media.My relatives are there,my friends are there.' (Rema,20, Student)

'Facebook,Youtube,Netflix,Whatsapp,Telegram,Twitter,Instagram,Getir,Yemek Sepeti.I have also Trendyol, I look at its prices sometimes.The prices are good, but I haven't tried it yet.' (Mohammed,20, Phone Operator)

Question 6: Which social media platforms do you have accounts on?What are your reasons for preference?

'Facebook I didn't use that much before but now I've switched from twitter to Facebook to see the news better.You know, we live here as foreigners, we don't have Arabic TV.I am searching on Facebook to see my country and other countries.My friends, you know, they distributed the things of our country.The one who went to Germany was the one who went to America,Facebook has become like a meeting for us now.To follow the most sports on Twitter,to follow the teams I support.Instagram for photos,I can say I use it the least.' (Mohammed,20, Phone Operator)

'There's Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok.All my friends uploaded Instagram and I was curious.I also wanted to share a photo.It's like everyone can see it.The friendship thing.So installed.But I've never used Twitter, I've never downloaded it, so I don't understand it at all.' (Hanin,17, Student)

'I'm getting all the news from the world on Facebook, from those in Syria.Customers from Instagram are also throwing models or something they are looking for.' (Abdulvasit,38, Carpenter)

'I'm only using Facebook, the other one I'm not.Because I don't like.There is something very ridiculous.For example, Twitter don't have everything like facebook, there is something special about it.I have never used Instagram.I never download Tiktok.That's not appropriate to our culture.Everything is different,it comes from foreigns.They teach children something unfamiliar.On Facebook, sometimes your friends don't have a phone, sometimes it's hard to call in another country.We talk sometimes as a messager.I am watching the news.Everything is on Facebook.' (Mohammed,34, Grocer)

Question 7: Do you know about and/or follow social media influencers ? How do these individuals affect you?

'I hardly know.My daughters know.For example, they follow Enis Batur.They're following the redhead on the tv serie.I don't like much.Maybe I'm not very active on TV, maybe I'm more active in life with kids and duties.But I don't give permission to them, they waste time here instead of their lessons.' (Hiba,32, Housewife)

'They're (influencers etc) doing the work for their benefits and it's hurting me.For example, it changes the minds of my children.For example, everything seemed different to me because it comes from outside.For example, he shows his personal life,I don't care?Then he does business for hundred thousands dollars a month.It doesn't matter to me, I have to think about myself. I watch Youtube,for example, to listen to music, to watch old movies.I don't use it to watch things.' (Mohammed,34, Grocer)

'It could be Bilal Sonses, Enis Batur, Mahmut Bitar exactly.After that, there is Mahmut Isavi.They are youtubers.I don't watch their youtube videos, but I just follow them.' (Muhiddin,21, Phone Operator)

'I'm following the Syrians.For example, there is Noor Eedin Marandi, he is the son of my uncle,there is Bitar.Ebin Suriya is very famous.' (Ahmet,18, Student)

'I don't know.I follow the athletes ,Messi and Ronaldo.I also follow football players a lot.For example, this newcomer Mustafa Mohammed from Galatasaray,Egyptian,I follow him.' (Mohammed,20, Phone Operator)

Question 8: Does a social media/ celebrity influencer motivate you in terms of purchasing a specific brand?

'I see a lot of things, but I don't think about it because, for example, my economic situation is not good.Sometimes I see things I like,sometimes I just search for it, it's enough to become satisfied.' (Mohammed,22, Carpenter)

'I'm not doing anything because I know it's advertising.Check them out.But some people suggest, for example,a restaurant.I keep them in mind, for example.I mean, the things I'm going to visit.But for one product,there is none.' (Muhiddin,21, Phone Operator)

'It happens sometimes.A few years ago, Ronaldo advertised a shampoo.I pick him up a few times.Because I love Ronaldo.If it's an expensive thing, I won't buy a fake,the most important thing is quality.The shampoo is the most beautiful, Clear.I'll take it when it's convenient.' (Mohammed,20, Phone Operator)

Conclusion

The results of the study supported the active use of smartphones and the Internet by Syrian migrants .In addition to owning a smartphone, all participants reported to use their smartphones in social media, online shopping and other communication activities.While desktop computers are not very preferred, it has been stated that they are mostly used to watch movies, play games or spend time on platforms such as Netflix.

Twelve Syrian refugess were interviewed face-to-face in depth and questions were asked in order to explore their particular digital footprints. The research findings are in line with the digital media usage datas in Turkey. The dates of arrival of participants in the country are based on an average of 5-9 years. While the participants under the age of 25 stated that they grew up and studied here, it was observed that they are much more dominant in both the language and the social life of the country.

The results obtained support recent studies on smartphone addiction.Owning a smartphone has been defined as an indispensable part of life. Terms such as "Smartphone addiction" ,"mobile phone addiction","problematic mobile phone use","mobile phone dependence","compulsive mobile phone use"and "mobile phone overuse", have all been used to describe more or less the same phenomenon, that is, individuals engrossed in their Smartphone use to the extent that they neglect other areas of life(Al-Barashdi,Bouazza,Jabur,2015).

Immigrants who use the Internet to keep up with news, work-school, spend time arbitrarily and shop are also very active on social media. Instagram,Facebook, Whatsapp,and Youtube are the most preferred applications, while Tiktok, which is a relatively new platform, is also very popular.Facebook is mostly used to get news and stay connected within their community.Instagram, on the other hand, is preferred decently among the younger population. Youtube is used to listen to music and watch TV series of movies, while twitter is the least preferred application. A young participant stated that he was using the dating platform Tinder.

No hesitation has been observed wıth regards to online shopping. It has been seen that they have mastered the details such as credit card usage, price / market research, refund / guarantee

claims. Trendyol has been mentioned as the most preferrred and used platform.Sites such as lcwaikiki, hepsiburada ,let go are also reported to be commonly used. Subjects also stated that they were shopping with each other seriously from Facebook groups set up for the association of immigrants.Most often, clothing, accessories, phones and shoes are exchanged. Quality & safe product guarantee has come to the fore as the most important issues for users who attach great importance to price comparison.

Influencer marketing is prevalent in firm strategies, yet little is known about the factors that drive success of online brand engagement at different stages of the consumer purchase funnel (Hughes, Swaminathan, Brooks,2019). There are no obvious indicators related to positive brand attitudes towards the products used by celebrities on social media yet they present a very realistic point of view. Participants who clearly stated that they were not trying to have products that they thought their financial situation would never be enough, also showed a negative attitude towards imitations of these expensive products.They prefer affordable/accessible opportunity products of world-famous and reliable brands.They also have a negative attitude towards counterfeits of luxury brand products.

It was clear that the most important criterion in their choice is the reasonable price and quality. There are certain differences of opinion among the participants about following the accounts of social media phenomenon and celebrities attract attention. Participants who are older and have children believe that social media and the lives displayed there are not good for their children and that they harm their culture and values. Participants aged 17-22 years follow the events and happenings from their own culture.They also stated that they follow the player and team pages related to the sports fields they are interested in.

It was observed that the participants made significant use of the Internet during their adaptation to social life in Turkey. Facebook for overcome the language barrier, translation, communication and solidarity, applications for banking transactions, E-government and school applications, navigation are among the applications that attract attention.

Although the main limitation of the study was the native language barrier, the participants who spoke fluent Turkish clearly stated their opinions.The language skills of the participants who came to Turkey from their countries during their childhood and went to school here show a significant difference compared to those who came later and did not receive education here.Despite the older participants who feel uneasy about sharing social media, the new generation growing up here is very motivated to show their presence in the online environment.

The socio-economic and cultural dimensions that the reality of refugees brings with it to society have become an open medium for various and multifaceted research as factors affecting the behavior of shoppers.The results of this large migration wave brought about by the Syrian civil war will evolve with the succeeding generations and may reveal a new consumer / consumption concept that is open to research.

Limitations and Future Reasearch

This research was carried out during the global pandemic process. Due to frequent closures and risky face-to-face meetings, time and space constraints have been experienced. Another noteworth limitation was although most of the Syrian participants spoke Turkish fluently, the native language barrier was still observed at times during interviews. The language skills of

Syrian immigrants vary according to their dates of arrival in Turkey and the duration of the education they received here.

Due to nature and scope of the research area, a wild variety of multidisciplinary researches can be carried out both qualitative and quantitative in the future.Thus, the literature resource on the consumer behavior of immigrants can be expanded for marketing researches.

Further researches can be carried out by collaboration with non governmental organizations to reach out larger scope of participants and volunteers to involve.

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