Socioeconomics situation and animal food consumption characteristics of Syrian refugees residing in Ankara**

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ABSTRACT:

This study aims at analyzing some social and economic characteristics of Syrian refugees residing in Ankara. 50.1% of total 1,022 individuals in 178 households that participated in the survey consist of females and 49.9% thereof consist of males. It was determined that 80% of the family members were below the age of 35, 48% of the housewives is primary school graduates and 40% of the male head of households is primary school graduates. The average number of individuals of the families was calculated as 5.78 (±0.18), number of employed persons as 1.19 (±0.05) and average family income as TRY 1,282.30 (±60.31). It was also determined that 82 families are receiving monetary aid and that this aid is to TRY 745.30 (±28.64) per family. The refugees who participated in the survey were mostly working as tradesmen, casual workers, private sector employees (in descending order) before coming to Turkey. The duration of staying in Turkey of the refugees, who are the subject matters of the study, was calculated as average 3.43 (±0.10) years and the duration of their staying in Ankara as average 2.88 (±0.10) years. Upon inspection of current food consumption of refugees after coming to Turkey, it was seen that their vegetable, fruit, meat and dairy product consumptions decreased in general and their carbohydrates (pasta, bread, rice, bulgur, etc.) and chicken consumption increased. The increase in carbohydrate consumption of refugees is caused by the decline in their income. On the other hand, it was determined that their legumes (lentil, chickpea, bean, etc.) remained the same.

Ankara'da ikamet eden Suriyeli mültecilerin sosyo-ekonomik durumları ve hayvansal ürün tüketimleri

ÖZET:

Bu çalışma Ankara'da ikamet eden Suriyeli mültecilerin bazı sosyal ve ekonomik özelliklerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ankete katılan 178 hanedeki toplam 1022 bireyin %50,1'i kadınlardan ve %49,9'u erkeklerden oluşmaktadır. Aile üyelerinin %80'inin 35 yaş altında olduğu, ev hanımlarının %48'inin ilkokul, erkek aile reislerinin %40'nın ilkokul mezunu oldukları tespit edilmiştir. Ailelerde ortalama birey sayısı 5,78 (±0.18), çalışan sayısı 1,19 (±0.05), aile gelir ortalaması01282,3 (±60,31) TL olarak hesaplanmıştır. Ayrıca 82 ailenin para yardımı aldığı, bu para yardımının aile başına aylık 745.30 (±28,64) TL olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ankete katılan mültecilerin Türkiye'ye gelmeden önceki meslekleri çoğunlukla (çoktan aza doğru); esnaflık, yevmiyeli işçilik, özel sektör çalışanlığıdır. Çalışmaya konu olan mültecilerin Türkiye'de kaldıkları süre ortalama 3.43 (±0.10) yıl, Ankara'da kaldıkları süre ise ortalama 2.88 (±0.10) yıl olarak hesaplanmıştır. Mültecilerin Türkiye'ye geldikten sonra gıda ürünlerinin güncel tüketim durumları incelendiğinde ise sebze, meyve, et ve süt ürünleri tüketimlerinin genel olarak azaldığı, karbonhidrat (makarna, ekmek, pirinç, bulgur vb.) ve tavuk eti tüketimlerinin arttığı görülmüştür. Mültecilerde karbonhidrat tüketimindeki artışa gelir seviyesindeki düşüklüğün sebep olduğu söylenebilir. Bununla birlikte bakliyat (mercimek, nohut, fasulye vb.) ve yumurta tüketimlerinin aynı kaldığı belirlenmiştir..

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1. Introduction

One of history's biggest humanitarian crises started as of April 2011, after the political disturbance quickly turned into a civil war in the homeland of Syrians, who constitute the majority of the refugees residing in Turkey, as of 2017. In the biggest crisis that was seen from World War II until today, more than half of the Syrian people (13.5 million people) with a population of 22 million had to leave their homes and over 5.5 million Syrians had to leave their countries (4). 6.3 million Syrians who had to leave their homes went to different places in their homeland while around 5 million people refuged to different countries (17). Since April 2011, 3.5 million Syrians took refuge in Turkey and around 1 million of them refuged to other countries. In total, over 4.5 to 5 million people left their countries. Around 1-1.5 million of those who came to Turkey transited to Europe especially in 2014 and 2015. Thus, around 3.5 million refugees are left in Turkey (3). Number of Syrians living in Turkey as of December 2016 is around 3.1-3.2 million and only 8% of them, namely 257,566 persons live in camps set up in areas near the border region. Another 2.8-3 million Syrians continue living in cities all around Turkey as city refugees. Number of Syrians within the scope of Temporary Protection (TP) in Adana, Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Malatya, Mardin, Osmaniye and Şanlıurfa provinces, where refugee camps are set up, is total 1.6 million (in camps and city centers). Number of Syrians included in the scope of TP living in Istanbul, Bursa, Mersin, Izmir, Konya and Ankara, which are the first 6 provinces that shelter the highest number of refugees outside the area, is around 1 million (4). The number of Syrians under temporary protection who settled in the city of Ankara in June 2019 was 92,073 (6). This figure was reported to be 80,037 in August 2018 and 64,613 in December 2016 (5).

It was stated that the average household size of the Syrian Families under the temporary protection is 6.2 according to a study that targeted 1327 Syrians from 215 households in Gaziantep city (14).

Another study on Syrians under temporary protection in Kilis indicated that 28.4% of the Syrian population were high school graduates, 27.5% were university graduates, 20.9% were primary school graduates, and 3.6% received postgraduate education. In addition, 14.8% of the respondents were literate people (13).

According to UNHCR statistics, the gender segregation of registered Syrians under temporary protection is 53.7% males and 46.3 % females. As for the segregation according to age groups was 13.4% within the age group (0-4), 17.3% within the age group (5-11), 13.2% within the age group (12-17), 52.7% within the age group (18-59), and 3.5% are in 60 years old and above (18).

In terms of occupational distribution, it was found that most Syrians technical and vocational professions such as tradesmen, shoemakers, tailors and teachers (7). In another study in Urfa (10), it was found that 30.0% of Syrians refugees were worker, 5.7% students 28.6% unemployed, 2.9% craftsmen, and 1.4% government employee.

According to Sönmez & Mete (14) the total income in Turkey is quite low. 64.5% of the families who are living in Gaziantep earn less than $375, 23.7% earn between $375-750, 10.1% between $750-1000, and the remaining 1.7% earns more than $1000.

In a study conducted in Urfa, the monthly average income for Syrian under temporary protection was (34,28-85,70 USD) 100-250 TL 25.7%, (85,70-171,40) 251-500 TL 68.6%, (171.40-257,10) 501-750 TL 5.7% (10).

With increase in the number of refugees coming to Ankara, it is important to analyze the characteristics of this group in order to support implementing the needed policies which can help in solving refugees related problems.

This study aims at analyze some of the social and economic characteristics of refugees living in Ankara, and study the factors affecting their animal products consumption

2. Material and Methods

The main material of this study is the data obtained as a result of face-to-face interviews with randomly selected 178 Syrian refugee households between July 2018 and October 2018 in Önder, Solfasol, Ulubey, Beştepe, Yeşilöz and Ümit neighborhoods of Altındağ, Yenimahalle, Keçiören and Çankaya districts, where Syrian refugees living in Ankara province are seen intensely. The sample was determined after referring to the General Directorate of Migration database regarding the number and distribution of refugees, and applying the following statistical equation

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = \frac{N \times (t)2 \times (p \times q)}{(d)2 \times (N-1) + (t)2 \times (p \times q)}$$

N= Number of elements in the population 88739 / 6* = 14790
t= t table value (0.05 for Sd above 1000 until infinite with a probability of 1.96)
p= Frequency of occurrence for the examined event   %95 =0.95
q= Unseen frequency of the event under investigation %5 =0.05
d= Desired probability according to the frequency 0.05
*Average household size 6 people
Animal products consumption rate is assumed to be 95%.

n = 72.63. Therefore, at least 73 households will be included in the research. In order to better express the target sample, the number of questionnaires was increased as much as possible until the number reached 178 families.

First of all, survey forms previously prepared on subjects similar to the subject of this research and previously carried out literature studies have been analyzed in the preparation of the data supply form used in this research, which is based on assessments on quantitative data. Opinions of experts were also obtained and thus, a form which is suitable to the main objective of the research was prepared. Answers given to the survey were compiled with (KoBoToolbox) program (11).

The data obtained through data obtaining forms were processed with SPSS (8) and MS Excel program (12) and then descriptive statistical analyses were carried out.

Regression analysis is a powerful statistical method that allows to examine the relationship between two or more variables of interest. In the study multiple linear regression analysis (Enter method) were used to examine the relationship between the dependent variable (Y = Household consumption) and the independent variables, $\chi 1$=family size, $\chi 2$ Number of employees in the family, $\chi 3$ family Income.

3. Results

The average number of individuals in the households that participated in the survey was found as 5.78 (±0.18). Among 1,022 persons from the participants, whose surveys were taken into consideration, 50.1% were females (n=512) and 49.9% of them were males (n=510). There were 253 persons below the age of 7, 287 persons between 7-17 ages, 283 persons between 18-34 ages, 108 persons between 35-44 ages, 45 persons between 45-54 ages and 46 persons of 55 ages and above among these 1,022 persons who participated in the survey.

Regarding to head of household's gender distribution, 159 out of the 179 head of households, who participated in the survey, are males and 20 of them are females. When the 170 housewives within the scope of the research were asked their current jobs/professions, 162 of them defined themselves as unemployed, 4 as a teacher, 2 as private sector employee, 1 as tradesman and 1 as a student. It was determined that 17.3% of the 178 interviewed households had one or two children working in different jobs (37 children) (casual worker, private sector, tradesman). The average age of children is 15.

Among the housewives in the households that participated in the survey 48% (83 persons) stated that they were primary school graduates, 20% secondary school graduates (34 persons), 13% were illiterate (22 persons), 10% were high-school graduates (18 persons), 6% were college graduates (11 persons) and 2% stated that they were literate but had no school degree (4 persons). 1 of the housewives stated that she had a Postgraduate/Doctorate degree.

Upon inspection of education statuses of the male head of households who took part in the survey, it was seen that 40% of them were primary school graduates (63 persons) and 29% of them were secondary school graduates (45 persons). It was found out that 13% of the head of households were illiterate (21 persons), 8% of them were high-school graduates (12 persons) and 7% of them were college graduates (11 persons). 2% of them were literate but had no school degrees (4 persons) whereas 1% had a Postgraduate/Doctorate degree (1 person).

The participants answered the question "How long have you been in Turkey?" as average 3.43 (±0.10) years and the question "How long have you been in Ankara?" as average 2.88 (±0.10) years.

The participant families were asked why they were residing in Ankara and 45% (116 persons) stated that it was because they had relatives/friends/acquaintances, 26% (67 persons) because there are higher job opportunities, 16% (42 persons) because house rents are cheaper, 5% (14 persons) because there are more humanitarian aids, 5% (13 persons) gave other reasons and 3% (8 persons) stated that it was because there are refugee groups in Ankara.

Head of households of the participants were asked their professions they had before coming to Turkey and their answers were calculated as follows: 27% (47 persons) tradesmen, 14% (25 persons) casual workers, 14% (24 persons) private-sector employees, 9% (15 persons) officials, 7% (13 persons) housewives, 7% (13 persons) drivers, 6% (11 persons) business owners, 5% (8 persons) construction workers, 3% (6 persons) students, 3% (6 persons) teachers, 2% (4 persons) unemployed, 2% (4 persons) employees of other occupational groups and 1% (1 person) farmer.

Out of total household's head persons, 99 of them (62%) stated that they couldn't carry out their previous professions in Turkey, whereas 38% of them (60 persons) stated that they were continuing their previous professions.

It was determined that there were 40 casual workers, 38 tradesmen, 35 private-sector employees, 33 unemployed, 6 drivers, 3 other, 2 teachers and 2 retired persons among the male head of households within the group of 159 persons who participated in the research. Number of working individuals were determined as 1,19 (± 0.05) persons in average.

Among the 178 analyzed families, it was determined that there were 112 families with 1 employed person, 34 families with 2 employed persons, 9 families with 3 employed persons, 1 family with 4 employed persons and 22 families with none employed persons.

When the source of incomes received by participant families in Turkey was inspected, it was seen that 28% of them were receiving State/NGO/Red Crescent/UN aids (107 persons) whereas 22% of them were receiving monetary aids (83 persons). It was found out that 19% of family members were casual workers (73 persons), 11% of them were private-sector employees (43 persons) and 10% of them were tradesmen (37 persons). On the other hand, 3% of family members stated that they were living on aids from family/relatives (9 persons). It was also determined that 2% of these individuals were gaining income by working in the humanitarian aid industry (7 persons), another portion of 2% by working in other professions (7 persons), another 2% by owning a private business (6 persons), 1% by working as a public servant (4 persons), 1 person by working as a carrier, 1 person by selling the donations they receive and 1 person by working at constructions.

The families that receive aids were asked the monthly aid amounts they receive and according to their answers, it was concluded that the average aid amount received by 82 families was TRY 745.30 (±28.64).

Monthly income of 178 families participating in the research was calculated as average TRY 1,282.30 (±60.31). Among the 178 families that participated in the research, income distribution was determined as follows: 37 families whose monthly income is TRY 750 and below, 80 families whose monthly income is between TRY 750-1,500, 49 families with a monthly income between TRY 1,500-2,500, and 12 families with a monthly income between TRY 2,500-6,000. When the participant families were asked the share of food expenditure within their monthly incomes, monthly average food expenditure costs of 178 families were found as TRY 855.98 (±33.32) according to the answers given.

Within the scope of the research, the participants were asked how they supplied their foodstuff. According to the answers given, it was found out that 43% of the individuals were buying foodstuff from markets/grocery stores (171 persons), 35% were receiving food aids (NGO/UN, local foundations and state) (141 persons), 17% were supplying

them on account (67 persons), 5% were getting support from family/friends/neighbors (18 persons) and 2 persons were supplied by other means.

When the changes in carbohydrate (bread, pasta, rice, etc.) consumption of participant families were inspected, it was found out that carbohydrate consumption of 46% increased (82 families), 38% remained the same (68 families), 14% decreased (25 families) and 2% didn't know whether there were any changes in their consumptions (3 families).

From the answers given by the participants to questions asked about their legumes consumption after coming to Turkey, it was concluded that consumption of 47% of the families remained the same (79 families), 27% of them increased (45 families), 24% of them decreased and 2% of them didn't know whether there were any changes in their legumes consumption (3 families).

Participant families were asked if there were any changes in their poultry meat consumption after coming to Turkey and 39% of them stated that their consumption increased after coming to Turkey (70 families), 39% of them stated that it decreased (69 families), 21% of them stated there were no differences (37 families) and 1% family stated they didn't know if there were any changes or not (2 families).

When changes in the red meat consumptions of participants after coming to Turkey were inspected, it was determined that red meat consumption of 76% of them decreased (136 families), 13% of them increased (23 families), 10% of them didn't changes (18 families) and 1% of them didn't know if there were any changes or not (1 family).

The participants were asked about their milk and dairy products consumptions after coming to Turkey and 40% of them stated that their consumptions decreased (70 families), 32% of them stated it remained the same (57 families), 27% of them stated that it increased (49 families) and 1% of them stated they had no idea about the change in their consumptions (1 family).

When the egg consumptions of participant families after coming to Turkey was inspected, it was found out that 40% of them didn't have any changes in consumption (71 families), consumption of 33% families decreased (58 families), 26% of them had an increase (47 families) and 1% of them didn't know whether there were any changes.

Table 1 shows the results of multilinear regression analysis, which was carried out to determine the impacts of the number of household members in the inspected households, total monthly income and received financial aids on the monthly food expenditure of the household.

Table 1: Factors that impact monthly average food expenditure

Tablo 1: Aylık ortalama gıda harcamalarını etkileyen faktörler

Dependent variable: Monthly average food expenditure (Y)					95% Trust Limits for A and βj			
Independent variables:	bj	S(bj)	Beta	VIF	BOTTOM L	TOP S	t	p
Constant	193,713	79,827	-	-	36,159	351,266	2,427	0,016
Number of household members (x1)	65,124	14,489	0,347	1,615	36,528	93,721	4,495	0,000
Monthly income (x2)	0,152	0,035	0,275	1,105	0,082	0,222	4,311	0,000
Financial aid (x3)	0,266	0,084	0,246	1,629	0,100	0,431	3,173	0,002
N=178, Durbin-Watson=1,934, R=0,598, R^2=0,358, Adj.R^2= 0,347, (F= 32,364; p=<0,001)								

Upon inspection of the above table:

F was found statistically significant (p=<0,001). The R2 value was calculated as 0,358. Independent variables can explain 36% of the changes in the dependent variables (monthly average food expenditure).

In the above table, the significance value of variables $\chi1$ (total number of individuals in the family), $\chi2$ (total monthly income) and $\chi3$ (amount of financial aid) are smaller than (p) 0,05.

Accordingly, the standard multiple regression equation was as follows:

$$\gamma = 193,713 + 65,124\,\chi1 + 0.152\chi2 + 0.266\,\chi3$$

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The average number of individuals in the refugee households participating in this survey was determined as 6 persons. In another research carried out in Ankara, the number of average household members is 8 persons (2). In another research carried out on refugees in Istanbul, 22.9% of the interviewed persons have six individuals in their families, 14.7% have 5 individuals and 12.8% of them have 4 individuals (9).

It is seen that 53% of refugee households are children and this figure is close to those given by the General Directorate of Immigration Authority. The General Directorate of Immigration Authority reports that 54% of the total Syrian population in Turkey is children as of November 2015 (19). Ages of around one-third of this population range between 18-34.

In the study, it was determined the majority of head of households is male (89%) and 11% of females is head of the household. In another study carried out in Istanbul, sex of the head of households in participant families was asked. 88% of participants said the head of the household was male while 12% of them stated that the head of the household was female (9). This rate is below the national average which estimates that females constitute 22% of Syrian head of households (1).

In the research around 70 percent of housewives stated that they attended primary school and secondary school. These rates are close to the rates of the male head of households. On the other hand, it was reported that 95% of housewives were unemployed. According to the data obtained from another research carried out in Istanbul, it was reported that 16% of head of households are illiterate and 17% of them graduated from secondary school. Only 8.3% of head of households are college graduates (9). Primary school and secondary school are compulsory in the Syrian education system. Primary school starts at the age of 6 and lasts for six years and secondary school lasts for three years (16).

In this research, the basic reasons why Syrian refugees prefer Ankara for a living was stated: "relatives/friends/acquaintances", "more job opportunities" and "lower house rents" in descending order. According to the results of another research, the basic reason underlying settling in Istanbul is shown as "to find a job" (54.8%). The second most common reason is reported as social ties such as family ties, ethnocultural ties and religious ties whereas the third reason is that Istanbul is considered a secure city for Syrian refugees (9). The number of working household members was determined as average 1 person in this research carried out in Syrian refugee households residing in Ankara. It was determined that 17.3% of these families have one or two children working in different jobs (casual worker, private sector, tradesman). It was determined that the average age of working Syrian children was 15.

In Şanlıurfa 15 percent of Syrian households have at least one working child while this rate increased to 24 in Hatay. Average ages of working children in Şanlıurfa and Hatay are 14 and 15, respectively (20). In Istanbul at least 1 child works in one job in almost every 3 Syrian households (9).

The duration of staying in Turkey of the refugees, who are the subject matters of the study, was calculated as average 3.4 years while the duration of their staying in Ankara was calculated as average 2.9 years.

According to the data obtained from the research carried out by Kaya et al. in Istanbul in 2016, nearly half of the refugees (46.4%) have come to Istanbul in the last one or two years. Around one third (36%) of them stated that they came to Istanbul recently last year while 17.6 percent of them stated that they came to Istanbul three or four years ago.

The monthly average income of survey participant refugee families residing in Ankara province was calculated as TRY 1,280 (USD $ 215.55). According to the data obtained from research carried out in Istanbul in 2016, the monthly level of income of refugee families generally ranges between TRY 500 (USD $ 180) and TRY 2,000 (USD $ 700). 87% of survey participants stated that they had an income within this range. Monthly average income is around TRY 1,490 (USD $ 525). 4% of refugees have a monthly income below TRY 500 while 9% of the gain above TRY 2,000 monthly (9).

In a research carried out in Ankara, as a result of calculations it was found that these families spend monthly TRY 855 (USD $ 143.98) on food. As it is understood from the regression analysis results, the biggest impact on this expenditure amount is made by the household population (x1). This is followed by the monthly income of the household

(x2) and the received financial aids (x3), respectively. It is obvious that only the two variables "monthly income of the household (x2)" and "received financial aids (x3)", among the 3 independent variables here, are closely related to the level of welfare of the household. High impact of the household population (x1) variable can be correlated to the fact that while the number of consuming individuals increases in more crowded households, the number of individuals who work and thus contribute to the household income increases as well.

When the refugees were asked how much they spent on average on various goods and services in the past 30 days with the aim of obtaining data about monthly expenditures in the research carried out in Istanbul, it was reported that they spent average TRY 667 (USD $ 238) on food (9).

Food and rental expenses constitute the biggest share in the monthly expenditure of refugee families. Average total monthly expenditure of a Syrian refugee family is TRY 1,280 (USD $ 215.55) and this is significantly lower than the level of TRY 6,322.99 (USD $ 1,213.38) which is the poverty threshold for a family of four living in Turkey, as calculated by the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ, 2019) (15). Furthermore, it is seen that monthly average food expenditure of TRY 855 (USD $ 143.98) of a Syrian family is also below the hunger threshold of TRY 1,941.16 (USD $ 372,4779) which is set for a family of four in Turkey as of December 2018.

When we look at jobs where refugees living in Ankara work, it was determined that the rate of those working as casual workers is 41.0%, those working in private sector is 24.2% and those who work as tradesmen is 20.8%. It was stated that around 64% of the persons interviewed in Istanbul earn their living by regular wages mostly in textile, construction and service industries while 23% of them earn daily wages by working in service industry according to their skills. Only a small section of the refugees has started their own business in Istanbul, either official or unofficial (9).

When the earlier professions of refugees (before coming to Turkey) living in Ankara are inspected, it is seen that 27% of them were working as tradesmen, 14% as casual workers, 14% as private sector employees and 9% as officials. Majority of the refugees interviewed in Istanbul stated that they generally work for regular wages as low-skilled labor force, one fifth (22%) of them stated that they work as skilled and unskilled salaried workers, in the answer they gave to the question about their source of incomes in Syria (9).

Upon inspection of current food consumption of refugees, it was seen that their vegetable, fruit, meat and dairy product consumptions decreased in general after coming to Turkey and their carbohydrates (pasta, bread, rice, bulgur, etc.) and chicken consumption increased. The increase in carbohydrate (bread, pasta, rice, bulgur, etc.) consumption of refugees can be correlated to the low level of their incomes. On the other hand, it was determined that their legumes (lentil, chickpea, bean, etc.) remained the same.

From the results obtained in this study, it is seen that the low economic income of refugee families causes chicken meat to be preferred more, rather than red meat. One of the ways refugees try to compensate their lack of red meat consumption is that; they have chicken meat mixed with sheep fat when buying and cook this meatball-like mixture called "kababeh" together with their dishes and use them in the grill. Furthermore, it was also seen that the majority of refugees consume chicken meat in the form of drumsticks, broiler and breast meat. It was seen that most refugees occasionally consume red meat or never consume it at all. It was determined that the refugees who can afford consuming red meat generally consume "Mortadella", which is a sausage generally made with some amount of red meat and mostly broiler meat, seasoned with spices and pepper, and pieces of fat.

With this study, the socioeconomic conditions of refugees residing in Ankara province were determined and it is aimed to have these results contribute to the scientific researches to be carried out about refugee communities and to the process of getting knowledge on this subject.

Moreover, it is considered that this study is also important in the way that it guides the policies and supports to be implemented on behalf of both public organizations and non-governmental organizations.

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