

Chapter 14. Attitudes of Shopping Mall Workers Towards Somali Asylum Seekers

Elif Gökçearslan Çifci, Burcu Özdemir, Ezgi Arslan, Fulya Akgül Gök¹

Introduction

Globalization effects countries differently and social, cultural, economic and political problems create a lot of conflicts in many countries. As a result of these conflicts many people have been forced to or have voluntarily leave their countries as their countries are no longer safe to be lived in. These people have sought shelter in different countries. Even though the term migration primarily connotes the movement of a particular population from one location to another, migration has a structure that is much more extensive and deep-rooted than mere geographic replacement (Aksu & Sevil, 2010).

The number of immigrants and asylum-seekers are rapidly raising because of severe conflicts, wars, poverty and globalization (Topçu, 2006). Considering migration routes and transit countries, it is seen that Turkey geographically occupies a central location and route. It should be particularly noted that a high number of asylum-seekers and immigrants from African, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries still choose Turkey both as a destination and as a transit country (Kolukıncı, 2014). And Somalia is one of these countries.

At the end of 1997 there were 2400 immigrants and 2200 asylum-seekers in Turkey from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq and Iran. Also asylum-seekers from Somalia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Palestine have come to Turkey but these movements are not massive like Syrians (İçduygu ve Toktaş, 2005). According to data of Echo Papers 2016 registered immigrants (Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia and etc.) in Turkey apart from Syrians are 256, 700'dür.

According to Report on Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum-Seekers of TBMM İHİK (2010) total 58.804 people from 53 different countries apart from European countries have demanded asylum from Turkey between 1995 and today. It is also stated that 1.835 of them are from Somalia.

The objective of this study is to describe the attitudes of these shop keepers in these two shopping malls towards Somalian asylum seekers.

Methodology

In the scope of the study, quantitative research methodology is employed. This study is aimed to be a descriptive study. Descriptive studies are used to describe the basic features of the sample in the study conducted. They summarize the whole data and depict the current situation about the sample (Creswell, 2003). This study is conducted in Isparta, Turkey. Because Isparta is one of the satellite cities of asylum-seekers in Turkey. The target population of the study is the shopkeepers in two big shopping malls in Isparta province of Turkey. These two shopping malls are İYAŞ

¹ Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey.

and Garden Centrum. The objective of this study is to describe the attitudes of these shop keepers in these two shopping malls towards Somali asylum seekers.

The questionnaire is designed by the researchers and it is composed of 2 sections. The first section consists of 9 socio-demographic questions and the second includes 16 attitudinal questions which aim to investigate the attitudes of small shop keepers towards Somali asylum seekers.

A pilot study is conducted with 10 shop keepers in the shopping malls before the questionnaires are applied to the whole population. In regard to the responses and feedbacks, the questionnaire is revised. The researchers distributed questionnaires to all shop keepers in these two shopping malls, which ended up being 113 questionnaires. The objectives of the study are explained to the participants and their informed consent is taken.

Since Isparta is a small city and it is hard to establish contact with the shop keepers, 2 gate keepers are used to distribute the questionnaires. In İYAAŞ, we contacted the director of the shopping mall and he mobilized the head of the security team to help us with the distribution of the questionnaires. In Garden Centrum shopping mall, a shop owner helped to distribute the questionnaires to the shops. These 2 gatekeepers helped the researchers in explaining the objectives of the study and their mediation and facilitation has increased the response rate to the questionnaires. Especially the Out of 150 questionnaires, 110 questionnaires have been returned. This 73 % of response rate is considered successful for this study.

The researchers formed a database using the responses to the questions. Data entry and coding is done by the researchers. The data is analyzed with the SPSS software. Descriptive analysis is employed and frequency tables are formed.

Findings

Sociodemographic Findings

According to findings 65 of the participants (57,6%) are between the ages of 18 and 25. After that 27 of the participants (23,9%) are between the ages of 26 and 30. Lastly 16 of the participants (14,2%) are between the ages of 31 and 36. It can be said that most of the participants are young adults and adults. Thirty-seven of participants (32,7%) are graduated from high school and fifty-five of participants (48,8%) have bachelor's degree. When we look at marital status of participants, married participants (23%) are 26 and single participants (77%) are 87. According to answers to question about position in the shops, 80 of the participants are sales assistants and 20 of them are managers. Other positions are cook, waiter, employer and cashier. Mean income of the participants are mostly between 450 and 2500 Turkish liras. Seventy-six of the participants (67,4%) have income between 450 and 1500 Turkish liras while twenty-three of them (19,4%) have income between 1501 and 2500 Turkish liras. The official minimum wage of workers is between 1000 and 1600 in Turkey.

Findings on Attitudes towards Somali Asylum Seekers

According to answers for considering adaptation of Somali asylum-seekers; 66 of participants (58,4%) consider that Somali asylum-seekers have not been adapted

to Isparta city and people. Forty-six of them (40,7) think that Somali asylum-seekers have adopted to Isparta city and people.

Table 1. What do you think about adaptation of Somali asylum-seekers to Isparta city and people of Isparta?

	Frequency	Percent
Not Adopted	66	58,4
Adopted	46	40,7
Missing	1	0,9
Total	113	100,0

Table 2. Thoughts About Order of Importance of Problems Experienced by Somalis Living in Isparta (Economical Problems)

Order of Importance	Frequency	Percent
First	52	46,0
Second	28	24,8
Third	14	12,4
Fourth	19	16,8
Total	113	100,0

According to findings 46% of participants think that economical problems of Somalis are the first most important problems of them. As Somali people have been forced to leave their country and now living in country that they don't familiar, it can easily be said that they are working low paged works and having troubles to find jobs.

Table 3. Thoughts About Order of Importance of Problems Experienced by Somalians Living in Isparta (Social Problems)

Order of Importance	Frequency	Percent
First	18	15,9
Second	24	21,2
Third	34	30,1
Fourth	37	32,7
Total	113	100,0

According to participants the least most important problem of Somalis is social problems (32,7%). It can be concluded that Somalis and Turkish people are both Muslims, Somalis may not be suffering from important social and cultural problems.

37,2% of the participants think that physical problems are the third most important problems of Somalis. Physical problems are about sheltering and social place. Since Isparta governance provide Somalis houses to stay, the participants do not think that they suffer from physical problems.

Table 4. Thoughts About Order of Importance of Problems Experienced by Somalis Living in Isparta (Physical Problems)

Order of Importance	Frequency	Percent
First	17	15,0
Second	29	25,7
Third	42	37,2
Fourth	25	22,1
Total	113	100,0

Table 5. Thoughts About Order of Importance of Problems Experienced by Somalis Living in Isparta (Psychological Problems)

Order of Importance	Frequency	Percent
First	26	23,0
Second	33	29,2
Third	22	19,5
Fourth	32	28,3
Total	113	100,0

Psychological problems are considered the second most important problems of Somalis by 29,2% of the participants. Since as asylum seeker Somalis have troubles of building new lives and also they have suffered great traumas on losing their parents, children or friends, psychological problems seem to be among the most important problems of them.

62% of the participant do not think that Turkey's economy cannot strong enough to support all Somali asylum seekers alone. Turkey has its own employment and economical problems and participants expressed that during filling in questionnaires.

Table 6. Do you think Turkey's economy strong enough to support all Somalian asylum-seekers alone?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	38
No	70	62
Total	113	100

Table 7. For What Purpose You have given a product or products from your shop to Somalis as a support? (For Religious Purposes)

Religious	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	30,0
No	79	70,0
Total	110	100

When it's asked if they were giving products to Somalians as a support, 22,1% of the participants answered "yes". 70% of them expressed that they are giving products because of religious reasons. Since Islam orders to support people in need this result seems natural.

When the respondents were asked why they were helping Somali asylum seekers/migrants, nearly one quarter (24,5 %) of the shopping mall workers stated that they are doing it for cultural reasons because Turkish culture requires to help the people in need. And similarly around a quarter of them (25,5 %) stated that they help these Somali asylum seekers/migrants because of emotional reasons. As it can be inferred from the findings, there are various motivations behind helping Somali asylum seekers/migrants.

When the participants are asked if the Somali asylum seekers/migrants should be granted Turkish citizenship, 34,5 % of them stated that they should be granted Turkish citizenship and the remaining 65,8 % were against this practice. This finding shows that majority of the shopping mall workers do not want Somali people to become Turkish citizens. This can be explained by the nationalistic characteristic of the respondents.

Table 8. Should the Somali asylum seekers/migrants be granted Turkish citizenship?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	33,6
No	73	64,6
Missing	2	1,8
Total	113	100,0

Table 9. Do you think Somali asylum seekers/migrants have positive contributions to Isparta economy?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	26	23,0
No	83	73,5
Missing	4	3,5
Total	113	100,0

When the participants are asked if the Somali asylum seekers/migrants have positive effect on Isparta economy 23,9 % of them said yes and the remaining 76,1 % said no. Since the Somali people have limited income and financial resources, they do not go out shopping. This situation makes the shopping mall workers think that they are not contributing to the economy of Isparta since they do not go to shopping malls and they do not work.

As it can be seen from the table below, only 21,2 % of the respondents stated having a social or personal relationship with Somali asylum seekers/migrants. Most of them (80%) does not have any social or personal interaction with Somali people,

which might be one of the causes of nationalistic attitude taken by the shopping mall workers in the city of Isparta.

Table 10. Do you have any in social (neighbors) or personal (friendship) interactions with Somali asylum seekers, migrants?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	21,2
No	89	78,8
Total	113	100,0

Table 11. In the region you live, have you witnessed any discriminative or dismissive behavior/act against Somali asylum seekers/migrants?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	10,6
No	101	89,4
Total	113	100,0

As far as discriminative and dismissive behavior against Somali asylum seekers/migrants are concerned, the findings show that only 10,4 % of the respondents stated that they came across such behavior whereas the remaining 89,4 % did not witness such action. This finding is rather positive regarding the degree of rejection at the attitudinal level.

Discussion and Suggestions

This study aims to state attitudes and thoughts of shopping mall workers of Isparta's two major shopping malls towards Somali asylum seekers. General results have showed that more than half of the participants have negative attitudes or thoughts. More than half of the participants (58,4%) think that Somali asylum-seekers have not adopted Isparta city and people. Similar result has been found by Gedik (2009). In this study Somalian asylum seekers in Konya providence have been founded to have troubles on adopting social life while Somali children who can speak Turkish and have education in Turkish schools do not have much problems of adaptation. Also in this study it has been concluded that Somalis have less cultural problems as they have same religion with Turkish people. Having the same religion makes them accepted more easily by Turkish people. Same results have been founded out that our study, also.

Most of the participants do not think that Turkey's economy cannot strong enough to support all Somali asylum seekers alone and the participants state that they do not give any products as a support to Somalians. In this context it can be said that the participants think that Somali people have a negative effect on economical status of Turkey. Yıldız (2013) have been stated that local people of Turkey consider asylum-seekers as a negative impact on social order, economical status and daily live. Yıldız also founded out that this negative thought and attitudes are rising day by day.

According to the participants the most and the second most important problems of Somali asylum seekers are economical and psychological. As the most of the participants are sales assistants (71%) and have income of 450 between 1500 Turkish liras (67,4%), it can be said that they consider Somalis as economical threats to themselves. The second most important problem of Somalis is psychological problems. These problems can be about adaptation to new country; devastating results of migration and problems they have experienced in migrated country. Warfa et all. (2012) state that contempt of asylum seeker identity, unemployment, legal uncertainty, long stay in migrated county and having low socioeconomical status are the factors which affect Somalis' psychological status negatively. Also Buz (2002) expressed that asylum-seekers and refugees in Turkey have faced a lot of problems. These are psycho-social problems and economical problems. As Buz stated asylum seekers and refugees suffer from language difference and hardness in social relations and adaptation as well as lack of social support networks.

When the overall reasons for providing help to Somali asylum seekers/migrants are analyzed, it is observed that the feeling of social responsibility comes first as the most popular answer, which is followed by religion. The shopping mall workers see it as a social responsibility rather than a religious duty to help Somali asylum seekers/migrants. The conscience acts as a stronger agent compared to religious obligations. This finding contradicts the argument that Muslim countries help each other because of cultural and religious commonalities. The sense of community and social responsibility goes beyond the religion. And similarly culture emerges as the third factor, which again disproves the common religion and culture argument. Finally, emotional reasons come as the last as an individual factor that facilitates providing help to Somali asylum seekers/migrants.

The fact that majority of the respondents are against granting citizenship proves the nationalistic attitudes of respondents in the study. Isparta is known as the nationalistic characteristic of its citizens. For the last 3 terms, in the local elections, the candidate from The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) has been in power. In a city where nationalist values are in the foreground, it is an expected response to be against naturalization. This response is also supported with the finding that the respondents (i.e. shopping mall workers) want Turkey to be a temporary residence rather than a permanent settling place. On the other hand, the findings that most of the respondents agree with the statement that Somali asylum seekers/migrants have negative impact on the society might be underpinning the nationalistic arguments and attitudes. And yet, economic inactivity of Somali asylum seekers/migrants and social expenditures provided by the government might also set a ground for the nationalistic attitudes. For this reason, it might be wise for both the local and central government to encourage Somali asylum seekers/migrants to engage in economic activities to invigorate the local economy, which might create positive effect on the attitudes of local residents.

Even though the respondents show a nationalistic attitude in general, it is interesting that the cases of discriminatory and dismissive behavior are seldom. However, this can also be explained by the finding that the respondents have limited social interaction with the Somali asylum seekers/migrants. Even though their

social interaction is limited, a considerable majority of the respondents would like to know more about Somali asylum seekers/migrants and their status in the country. For this reason, it is highly recommended that the local governments should implement briefing and awareness raising programmes in order to inform local citizens. By this way, social harmonization can be increased and prejudices against Somali asylum seekers/migrants can be reduced.

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