



Article

Understanding Social Media Dependency, and Uses and Gratifications as a Communication System in the Migration Era: Syrian Refugees in Host Countries as a Case Study

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Abstract: Through the theoretical frameworks of the media system dependency model and uses and gratifications theory, this study examined the uses of social media by Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey. A mixed-methods approach was used to increase the credibility and validity of the study's findings by combining a qualitative method with quantitative data. The findings show that there were some factors that affected the Syrian refugees' use of social media before seeking refuge in Jordan and Turkey, which were mainly its ban due to the regime's censorship and a bad Internet connection due to the bad infrastructure. The absence of these two factors led to an increase in their social media dependency after seeking refuge. There are variances in which social media sites Syrian refugees use the most and why. The majority relied on Facebook for various reasons, and this dependency had varying repercussions on individuals. Furthermore, many immigrants were acquainted with new platforms, implying that refugees became social-media-literate and participated in the updates of the new platforms, even if such sites were not well known to the general public. The Syrian refugees' dependency on social media varies from person to person due to differences in personal goals, social status, locations, living characteristics, and easy access to the Internet. Furthermore, this dependency on social media has different effects on them according to the media system dependency model. The refugees become increasingly dependent on social media to satisfy their needs and, because of that, social media dependency will become more important in their lives and will increase its influence and effects on them. Furthermore, the study found that the Syrian refugees depended on social media for various gratifications, such as educational, work, and business; information access; cultural and social aspects; connecting with networks and families; establishing friendships; learning new skills; self-expression; making business; and finding work, in addition to reaching routes and contacting smugglers to help them leave the country.

Keywords: Syrian refugees crisis; social media; media system dependency; migration; uses and gratifications; communication system



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1. Introduction

The Syrian war, which started in 2011, has killed hundreds of thousands and displaced millions of Syrians who fled the war and moved across borders to neighboring countries. It has been called the century's most serious humanitarian crisis (Sherwood 2014). The International Committee of the Red Cross described the situation as "the world's largest and most complex humanitarian crisis" (International Committee of the Red Cross 2016). One of the features of the Syrian refugee crisis is that it is continuing and has no end in sight. Because of the escalating carnage among Syrian residents as well as security and military activities, hundreds of thousands of Syrians have fled to neighboring countries such as Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey in order to escape the conflict and preserve their lives and the lives of their children. The violence raised the number of refugees in 2013, reaching 2 million in September. The humanitarian situation in Syria has deteriorated.

A total of 1 million refugees live in Lebanon, and Jordan established the Azraq Refugee Camp in April 2014 to accommodate further refugees. By June 2014, the number of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries had surpassed 3 million, with 100,000 arriving in Europe. In 2015, the flood of Syrian migrants continued; thousands of refugees arrived in Greece every day, and around 1 million refugees arrived in Europe (UNHCR 2015).

For both internally displaced persons and refugees, media are a vital tool that enable them to have information and build desired connections with others to manage their daily lives. Social media have become an integral part of modern-day communication and has transformed the way people interact with each other. Social media have become a significant tool for refugees and individuals impacted by violence to raise awareness about their communities' predicament and rally global assistance. Prior to the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, the Syrian people had almost no access to the Internet, and so their usage of social media platforms was restricted, owing to the regime's tight censorship and suppression of freedom of speech. Since taking control in 2000, the Syrian President's government has sought to smother opposition by forbidding websites such as Facebook, where people can associate with other individuals outside Syria. As Reuters (2011) detailed, numerous web cafes in Damascus had begun utilizing web intermediaries to bypass the square and get onto Facebook but, earlier in 2011, Syrians all of a sudden found that they seemed to get onto the site. Activists described that as a trick from the government (News 24 2011).

Social networking sites were blocked in Syria in 2007, but some Syrian users used different proxies to access those sites, and the number of these users is estimated at 400,000. In addition, it was understood that tens of thousands of Syrians entered Facebook through special programs to break the block (BBC 2011). In March 2011, Facebook became a great platform for protesters. They launched a Facebook page, "The Syrian Revolution is just a click away", and it quickly reached over 100,000 followers. Social media platforms played a noticeable role in mobilizing people during and after the Arab revolutions, specifically the Syrian war, which is the most prolonged conflict of its kind in the era of social media (Tufekci and Wilson 2012; Eltantawy and Wiest 2011).

2. Social Media Use in Crises, Conflicts, and Wars

When it comes to publicizing society's most pressing challenges, the media in general bear a significant deal of responsibility. Online media, on the other hand, are significantly more effective in this area, according to audience (Aldamen 2017). The media are used effectively in many crises, including natural disasters, political uprisings, and humanitarian crises. In natural disasters, social media are used to coordinate relief efforts and provide important information during natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and forest fires. People may use social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook to post information about their safety and whereabouts, request assistance, and offer updates on the situation on the ground. In public health emergencies, social media have been used to spread critical information, such as during the SARS epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic. For example, data showed an increased reliance on the media during the 2003 SARS epidemic in China, as the Chinese relied more on the Internet (Tai and Sun 2007).

Furthermore, social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook were utilized to disseminate information about COVID-19, provide advice and instructions, expose misinformation, and advocate public health measures such as mask usage and social distancing. Despite the knowledge gap across nations, they were also employed effectively in online learning. Because students rely on media to continue their education throughout the epidemic, they were able to devise solutions to manage this reliance without severely impacting their academic performance (Mohammad and Aldamen 2023).

There are three main drivers for sharing information and news on social media: social interaction with others, communication, and information seeking (Kümpel et al. 2015). Internet users are interested in interacting with news and information through social media platforms because the news comes to them from platforms that they know or trust, which keeps them connected to each other despite the distance (Ruangkanjanases et al. 2020).

In the case of political uprisings, such as the Arab Spring, social media platforms play a critical role. Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp were used to organize protests, spread information about government actions, coordinate activities to oppose authoritarian governments, enable refugees to interact with one another, and circulate videos. According to [Charmarkeh \(2012\)](#), Somali migrants in France used social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, as well as voice service apps such as Skype and MSN Messenger, to assist them in negotiating their migratory courses and trajectories.

Social media are also used in humanitarian crises to raise awareness and request funding for humanitarian crises such as the Syrian refugee crisis. YouTube, Instagram and Facebook have enabled users to share photos and videos of the crisis, humanizing the experiences of those affected and encouraging support from around the world, as well as keeping in touch with other people outside and inside the host countries. For example, according to [Anderson and Daniel \(2020\)](#), the use of social media by Eritrean, Syrian, Iraqi, and Yemeni refugees in Norway has increased for a variety of reasons, including communication with family and friends abroad, having a better Internet connection, and having more free time since their arrival in order to integrate into Norwegian society.

[Christensen and Khalil \(2021\)](#), and [Singer and Brooking \(2015\)](#) have examined the reasons why users use and prefer social media in wars and conflicts. The use of social media on devices in times of crises, wars, and conflicts is very useful for communicating with a wide range of people via the Internet. They are an important means of communication in areas of war and conflict, especially for both news correspondents and anchors using the Internet, as social media platforms allow them in Iraq, for instance, to enrich and share content, whether they are recipients or producers or contributors ([Al-Majdhouh and Hamzah 2016](#)).

Social media scholars such as [Diminescu \(2020\)](#) and [Dekker et al. \(2018\)](#) have taken up addressing the importance of social media from the perspective of refugees and migrants. Social media platforms that refugees and displaced people access through mobile Internet devices have become moveable platforms for refugees and internally displaced persons, especially in the countries of Iraq, Syria, and others ([Taha and Sijbrandij 2021](#)), on which they share their news, photos, and stories. The results of studies conducted in this field show that it is necessary for host countries to realize the importance of access to digital communication for refugees, especially women. Refugee women struggle to use their mobile phones and apps to surf the Internet. For refugees, and especially refugee women, access to the Internet and surfing is a basic human right. Failure to obtain this right hinders them from integrating into the society of host countries ([Aléncar 2020](#); [Bulbul et al. 2018](#)). Internally displaced persons seek information on social media to view others affected by conflict or in a similar situation. They also exchange information on social media to communicate their voice to local, regional, and international bodies ([Al Dulaimi 2021](#)). They interact with others using social media because they want to be in touch with other people, family members, relatives, and friends to share their news ([Al-Rawi and Fahmy 2018](#)).

3. Media System Dependency (MSD), New Media Dependency (NMD), and Social Media Dependency (SMD)

3.1. Media System Dependency (MSD)

The media system dependency model (Figure 1), proposed in 1976 by Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, suggests that individuals and society become increasingly dependent on media for information, entertainment, and socialization. The model posits that the level of dependency on media is influenced by three factors: the importance of the information, the degree of uncertainty, and the availability of alternative sources of information.

The MSD model depends on explaining the use of conventional media as a consumer. However, in the age of social media, the user of social media is a consumer and producer at the same time. Regardless, the MSD model is applicable and beneficial for understanding the role of social media in society. However, there have been some changes to the media landscape that have altered the way in which individuals and society interact using social media. The rise of social media has increased the amount of user-generated content and

enabled individuals to participate in media production and distribution. This has led to a blurring of the lines between media consumers and producers, challenging the traditional role of media as a one-way channel of communication.

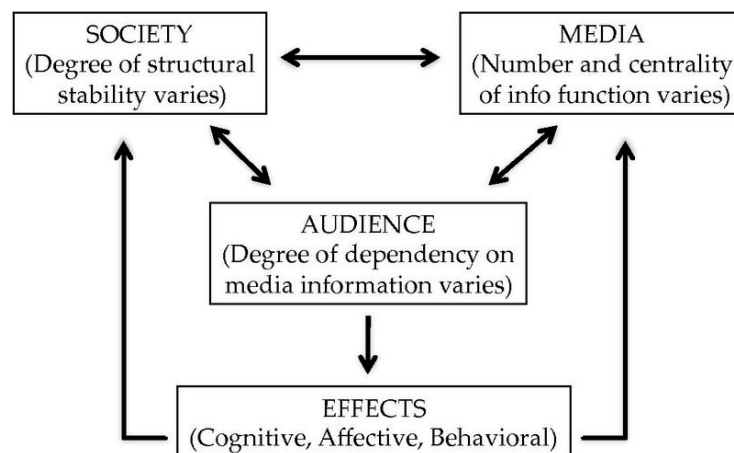


Figure 1. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's (1976) media system dependency conceptual model.

The level of the media's impact is proportional to the degree of reliance on the media by individuals and societal structures. Two fundamental assumptions are advanced in this regard: (1) the larger the amount of social tasks fulfilled for an audience by a medium (e.g., informing and entertaining), the greater the audience's reliance on that medium. (2) The greater the insecurity of society (for example, in times of social transition and conflict), the greater the audience's reliance on the media, and therefore the larger the potential impacts of the media on the public (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976). According to this, the more useful information individuals expect to receive, the greater their trust in the media.

The MSD model is based on the view that the media provide more cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects with a more pronounced and intensive information transfer.

(1) Cognitive effects are effects that can be listed as revealing mysteries, understanding the events correctly, obtaining information or explanations, creating a tendency toward controversial issues in society, prioritizing, knowing the prominent problems, and forcing the problems among many issues in society. (2) Affective effects include expressing emotions, fear, anxiety, moral support, alienation, and emotional desensitization. (3) Behavioral effects include information from different communication sources that affects the behavior of the individual; in short, influencing factors. Two basic behaviors are included in behavioral effects. These are mobility and inactivity. Mobility is sequential, but inactivity means avoiding participation in events.

Klapp (1972) stated that the type of media content has a substantial influence on people's morale and level of alienation in cultures where the mass media play a vital communication role. The individual aims to fulfill the functions that provide psychological, moral, educational, entertaining, and social gratification in the communication process, gain new skills, and acquire useful information (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976).

3.2. New Media Dependency (NMD) and Social Media Dependency (SMD)

In light of the widespread use of new media, the dependency on them is increasing for many reasons. According to Cho (2009), the participatory usage of these new media is addressed, as is the measurement of individual media dependency (IMD) connections as a mediator. This logical IMD mediation mechanism is known as new media dependency (NMD).

There are three primary factors for media system dependency (MSD): the social environment, media system activity, and individual characteristics. According to the MSD, these factors are derived from both the macro and micro levels of society; the two-way resource-dependency relationships with people (micro) and other social systems (macro)

(Ball-Rokeach 1985). Whereas the traditional media remain on one level, the function of social media dependency (SMD) goes beyond these levels, where social media have enabled users on a micro level to create the story and on a macro level to share the story publicly with others. Thus, social media can move across levels and not just one level (Jung and Moro 2012). On the micro level, users can publish a post or content on social media platforms, and the post or content can also be posted openly (on the macro level) or not. As a result, social media can now flow between the two levels.

The results of the study of Ha et al. (2013) reveal that social media are the preferred source for young people through their online audio and video news, especially soft news rather than serious news. They have become a news portal for online users and are closely related to the use of other online content media.

Modern media have changed the communication environment as social media have provided more options for the audience to choose and share information rather than passively receiving it as it is sent through satellite (Jung and Moro 2012). Despite this, many scholars and theorists remain concerned about whether it is appropriate to apply the media system dependency model (MSD) to study social media use. Some believe that MSD can account for social media because social media demonstrate that power is determined by the relationship between the transmitter and the receiver of information rather than by individual persons or events. Furthermore, (MSD) offers a foundation for the numerous interactions via which information may move on social media platforms (Matei 2010).

4. Uses and Gratifications Approach (U&G) and Its Application in New Media Apps and Social Media Platforms

4.1. Uses and Gratifications Approach (U&G) Assumptions

The uses and gratifications approach (U&G) by Katz et al. (1973) summarizes the gratifications of mass media in four assumptions. First, the audience is active and therefore uses the mass media for a specific purpose. Second, audiences choose the media outlet that they believe will satisfy their needs. In the third assumption, it is stated that other media sources have also provided some gratification. Finally, media gratification brings diversion, entertainment, and information to the audience. The five main different reasons audiences choose to use media are personal identity, entertainment, information and education, integration, and social interaction. The uses and gratifications approach by Katz et al. focuses on individuals' media consumption and the drives behind why audience members select particular media to meet their demands (Sun et al. 2008; Rubin 2009; McQuail 2010).

McQuail (2010) summarized the purposes for audience use of media into five uses: (1) to be informed or educated; (2) to identify with the characters in the media environment; (3) to be entertained; (4) to enrich social contact; and (5) to escape from the rigors of daily life. It is a method of understanding mass communication that is oriented toward the audience, and it aims to understand why and how audiences use specific media to satisfy certain needs (Menon 2022).

4.2. Uses and Gratifications in Mobile Phones, Internet, and Social Media

Social media have many uses and gratifications, especially since they can be used anywhere, at any time, and even on the go, as they can be easily accessed, and their content can be easily shared, interacted with, and commented on. The same people use the means of social compliance, but for different reasons and needs. According to individual motives, behaviors, and desired gratification, audiences can use them to satisfy basic psychological needs, such as entertainment, social interaction, or the search for information. The gratifications vary with different audiences and different contexts. A study conducted by Leung and Wei (2000) found that people use cell phones for some uses and gratifications, such as affection, social interaction, entertainment, fashion, direct access, instrumentality, mobility, and psychological reassurance. However, those uses and gratifications vary based on location and audience, such as on buses, cars, and trains, where immediate access, building business partners, and connecting with family members are related to

instrumentality and affection. According to [Stafford et al. \(2004\)](#), the uses and gratifications of the Internet are categorized into three gratifications. First, the social ones include establishing and developing social relations. Second, the process of gratification explains the purposeful browsing or unplanned navigation of the Internet. The third is the content one, which includes looking for or searching for particular material or information.

People can feel connected, make new friends, find old friends, create social functions, and learn about events through the feature of socialization offered by social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook ([Raacke and Bonds-Raacke 2008](#)). [Chen \(2011\)](#) found that the recurrence of tweets and the number of replies, as well as the number of public messages, interceded in the relationship between Twitter users. This made a difference in both the utilization and gratification of the media by fulfilling the requirement for association and connection. Because of the increasing use of smart mobile phones for communication and the sharing of content, many studies have examined the UG of smart devices that use multimedia.

The key satisfactions, according to [Chua et al. \(2012\)](#), were amusement, convenience of access, effective access to information services, and the desire for high-quality information. Individual users will continue to connect with social networking sites if their needs and gratifications are addressed by these sites according to the uses and gratifications theory ([Ifinedo 2016](#)).

5. Understanding the Syrian Refugees Social Media Use through the MSD Model and the U&G Approach

Internet access is the basis for social inclusion ([Selwyn 2002](#)), where the Internet and social media have made societies an information society “converging with an inclusive society” ([Andrade and Doolin 2016](#)).

The Internet and the widespread use of social media platforms help to improve the integration of Syrian refugees into host communities and communication with their host communities. Participation and interaction enable refugees to access information about their rights, services, and local support ([Obschonka et al. 2018](#)). Digital and new technologies help refugees to make better use of the resources available to them, which helps them to integrate more efficiently and faster into host societies ([Scholten and Van Nispen 2015](#)). The use of social media is an important step for the better integration of migrants into host societies. Through Internet connectivity and the use of digital tools and social media, many resources are facilitated, such as providing access to educational training, health, and psychological services, and bringing support to refugees in communities ([Oudshoorn et al. 2020](#); [Bache 2020](#)). Social media applications contribute to helping refugees track their asylum routes and find aid provided by international organizations ([Yalim and Kim 2018](#); [Ballout et al. 2018](#)).

In the study of [Gillespie et al. \(2018\)](#), they found that smartphones were essential for the lives of Syrian refugees, and [Wissö and Bäck-Wiklund \(2021\)](#) found that they helped them to communicate with their families and friends and plan their paths, and helped with their supplies of food and water.

According to the study by [Anderson and Daniel \(2020\)](#), the three main drivers of the refugee youth’s use of social media were access to information, communication, and learning. As for entertainment or spending time, it was not vital for the respondents. Some studies show that many refugees use social media platforms to communicate with smugglers in order to get them to European countries ([Narli 2018](#)).

The above-chosen studies, as well as other studies, discussed the uses and gratifications of social media, which shows that the media system dependency model (MSD) can still be applied to understand how individuals, including refugees in host countries, rely on social media outlets for information, socialization, and entertainment.

6. Methodological Framework

Despite the richness of the previous studies on the topic, the literature lacks extensive survey-based research concerning the adoption of social media by Syrian refugees in two neighboring countries: one is classified as developed (Turkey), whereas the other is classified as a developing country (Jordan). The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of social media in the communication system in the era of Syrian migration and to a better understanding of the use of media by refugees in neighboring host countries.

The overall purpose of this study is twofold. First, to investigate the dependency on social media and discuss the uses and gratifications of using social media by Syrian refugees, as well as to discuss the functions of social media use that affect their lives and the type of media that they depended on more after seeking refuge in neighboring countries. Second, to examine and uncover new factors that influence refugees' media use and may lead to new studies that could investigate alternative strategies for supporting refugees' access to information and social support during the resettlement process and, additionally, to answer the question of whether uses of social media differ depending on respondents' gratifications in host countries. Depending on the mentioned purposes, the study hypothesized three hypotheses as Table 1 shows:

Table 1. The study's hypotheses.

N	Hypothesis
H1	Some factors affected the Syrian refugees' use of social media before and after seeking refuge and led to an increase in social media dependency after seeking refuge in host countries.
H2	There are differences in what social media platforms Syrian refugees rely on the most and the reasons for that.
H3	The Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey have a high level of social media dependency for many gratifications, such as information, social, commercial, educational, and cultural gratifications.

To test its hypotheses, the study applied a mixed-methods approach, which was applied to the refugees surveyed and interviewed, who represent the general demographics of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey.

6.1. Quantitative Method

A questionnaire was designed with dichotomous, multiple-choice, and Likert-scale questions. The questionnaire's population included all Syrian refugees, both within and outside of camps in Jordan and Turkey. A representative sample was drawn from that demographic. A total of 305 questionnaires were gathered in Turkey, with 307 collected in Jordan. Following a review and verification, it was determined to delete questionnaires that were unsuitable for statistical analysis. A total of 303 questionnaires from Turkey and 303 from Jordan were approved as samples. The participants were over the age of 18 and freely participated on social media. The questionnaire was conducted in Jordan from October 8–December 7, 2018, whereas it was conducted in Turkey from October 12–January 31, 2019. Through validity examination of the scale content, the validity of the questionnaire content showed to what degree the scale measures were prepared to measure in a specific situation. It validated the study's content's validity. Repeating the questionnaire and obtaining comparable responses is one technique used to test its dependability. The test–retest reliability approach was employed for the questionnaire. The comparability of measurement findings obtained at different periods was used to assess the consistency of the test or scale. A total of 33 questionnaires were issued as a pilot sample (10%) from people who were not included in the study's sample. Furthermore, the scale was administered to the same group every 7 days (second application).

The correlation between the scores of the first and second applications was determined. The Pearson moment correlation coefficient ("R") was 0.906 when the correlation between

the first and second applications was computed. Because this score is near to 1, it represents the questionnaire's reliability coefficient.

Telephone interviews, face-to-face meetings, and a conventional online survey built with Google Forms were used to collect questionnaire data.

Participants were sent a link to the questionnaire through e-mail, WhatsApp, and Facebook on their cellphones, where they could log in and answer the questions.

The survey link, as indicated in Table 2, was shared to 10 Facebook groups representing Syrian refugees from varied educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as from different places in Jordan and Turkey, to improve the response rate and assure impartiality. Facebook groups provide four purposes: "socialization, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information" (Park et al. 2009).

Table 2. Facebook groups where the questionnaire was distributed.

#	Facebook Groups In Turkey	Link
1	Student Community in Turkey	https://www.facebook.com/groups/turkiyedekiogrencitoplulugu/
2	International Students Community in Kahramanmaraş	https://www.facebook.com/groups/1429901697319612/
3	Community of Syrians in Turkey	https://www.facebook.com/syrian.tr/
4	Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University Union	https://www.facebook.com/KSU.Birligi/
5	Kırıkhan Syrians Community	https://www.facebook.com/syria.kirikhan
6	Bu ne?	https://www.facebook.com/groups/452659511553316/
#	Facebook Groups In Jordan	Link
7	Tagamo Syria	https://www.facebook.com/groups/tagamo3syria/
8	Syrians Gathered in Jordan	https://www.facebook.com/Syrians.gathered.in.Jordan/
9	Zaa'tari Refugee Camp	https://www.facebook.com/ZaatariCamp/
10	Syrian Jordanian Aid	https://www.facebook.com/groups/348669608913195/

Because of the crisis, vulnerable groups such as refugees fear being exploited and do not trust participation in activities about which they are ignorant. A broad sense of fear was exacerbated by systematic bombing, arbitrary incarceration, murder, robbery, and kidnapping. The crisis also affected individual trust by 31% (Social Watch 2017). As a result, the snowball approach offers participants the degree of confidence that Facebook groups have. Furthermore, a snowball strategy encourages people to volunteer to publish the link on their accounts or forward it to trusted family and friends. This method aids in the identification of individuals who are difficult to contact or who, for unknown reasons, do not want to disclose or express their bad war experiences (Lewis-Beck et al. 2004).

The data were processed, analyzed, and validated using the SPSS statistical technique after being evaluated, confirmed, and coded. To achieve the necessary statistical results and answer the study questions, simple frequencies and percentages were utilized in the analysis of study data.

6.2. Qualitative Method

The study is also based on a qualitative approach using focus group discussions. Focus group discussions were conducted to gain a better understanding of the thoughts, opinions, and attitudes regarding the study questions and to obtain supporting data on the information and statistics that were collected in the questionnaires. The participants in the focus group discussions represented the Syrian refugee population that lives in Jordan and Turkey, and they were a statistically representative sample of the population.

The two focus group discussions were conducted in Arabic. A total of 15 Syrian refugees of different ages, education, and backgrounds participated in each focus group discussion; the first focus group discussion was held in Amman, Jordan, on March 20, 2018, whereas the second focus group discussion was held in Istanbul on April 20, 2018. The

discussions, which lasted one hour for every group, were mainly focused on the use of social media before and after leaving Syria and what the reasons and purposes were for that use. Table 3 shows the characteristics of both focus group discussions participants. Discussions with both groups provided important information about how these participants see the effects of social media on their lives. The data from the focus group discussions were organized into themes and analyzed later.

Table 3. Characteristics of the participants in the focus group discussions in Istanbul and Amman.

Focus Groups Discussion in Istanbul					Focus Groups Discussion in Amman			
#	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education
1	Female	31	Single	PhD student	Female	30	Single	Current graduate student
2	Female	21	Single	Current undergraduate student	Male	33	Single	Undergraduate graduate/working
3	Female	35	Single	Current Postgraduate/not working	Male	34	Single	High diploma/not working
4	Male	26	Single	Undergraduate student	Female	29	Married	Undergraduate/not working
5	Female	33	Single	High school graduate/not working	Male	45	Married	High school graduate/working
6	Male	27	Married	High school graduate/not working	Male	22	Single	High school graduate/working
7	Female	33	Married	Undergraduate graduate/working	Female	32	Married	Undergraduate graduate/working
8	Male	21	Single	Undergraduate graduate/working	Male	31	Married	Undergraduate graduate/working
9	Male	24	Married	Less than high school graduate/working	Male	39	Married	Undergraduate graduate/working
10	Male	33	Single	Current Master's degree/working as engineer	Female	48	Married	PhD/working
11	Female	43	Married	High school graduate/not working	Male	19	Single	Undergraduate student
12	Male	22	Single	High school graduate/not working	Female	34	Married	Less than high school graduate/not working
13	Male	23	Single	Current undergraduate/working as a translator	Female	25	Single	High school graduate/working
14	Female	20	Married	Less than high school graduate/working	Male	27	Single	High school graduate/working
15	Male	19	Single	Undergraduate student	Male	32	Single	Graduate student

7. Results and Findings

7.1. The Quantitative Results

7.1.1. The Main Characteristics of the Sample

The demographic data and features of the respondents are available in the Supplementary Materials, and Figure 2 illustrates the provinces of Turkey and Jordan where the respondents dwell, with the province of Mafraq in northern Jordan accounting for the biggest share of the sample (38.6%). The reason for this is the presence of Jordan's largest refugee camp, Zaatari, which houses 78,410 Syrian refugees according to UNHCR estimates from October 2018 (UNHCR 2018). The percentages from Zarqa, Irbid, and Amman are depicted on the map. In Jordan, 0.7% of the sample came from two additional provinces: Madaba and Ma'an. In the sample of Turkey, the largest percentage of the sample was 38.6%, and it was from Istanbul, followed by the other provinces shown on the map. A total of 8.3% of the sample in Turkey was from different provinces: Eskişehir, Kastamonu, Van, Kayseri, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Kocaeli, Denizli, Isparta, Siirt, Sakarya, Düzce, Elazığ, Ankara, Aydın, and Çorum.

A total of 142 people live in camps in Jordan and 46 people live in camps in Turkey. Figure 3 shows that 105 people live in Zaatari Camp in Mafraq province and 37 people live in Azraq refugee camp, which is located in Zarqa province in Jordan. For the sample in Turkey, 27 are in Boynuyöğün Refugee Camp, 10 are in Öncüpınar (Kilis Refugee Camp), 5 are in Sarıçam Çadır kenti (Adana Refugee Camp), 3 are in Suruç Çadır kenti (Şanlıurfa Refugee Camp), and 1 is in İslâhiye Çadır kenti (Gaziantep Refugee Camp).

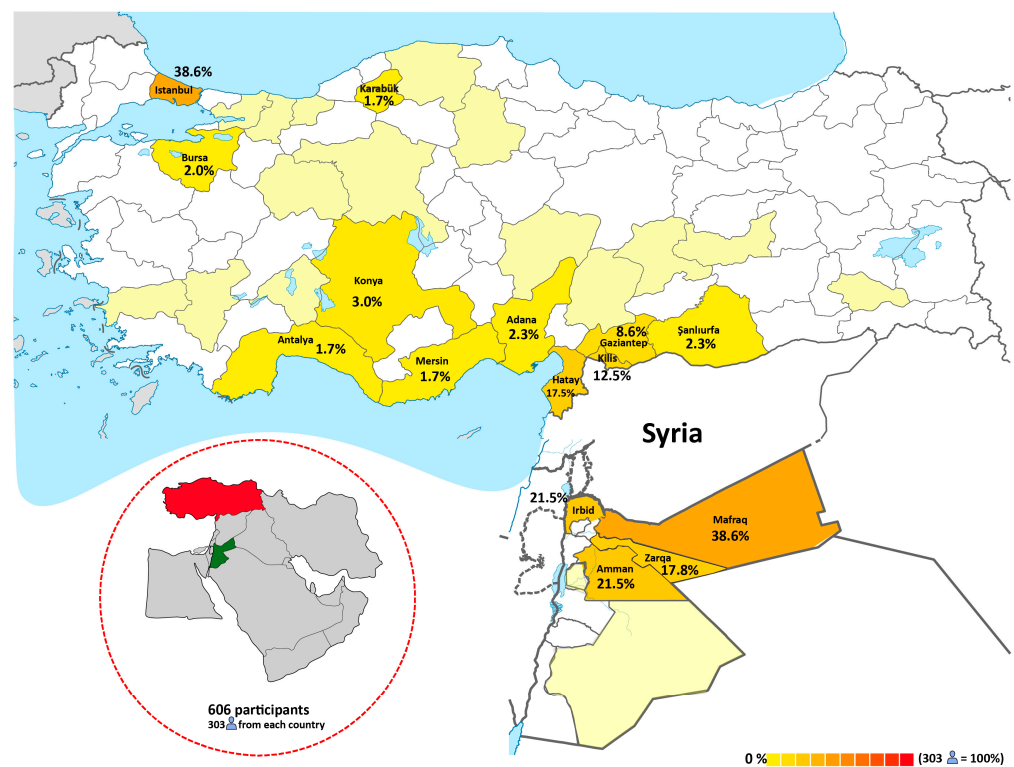


Figure 2. Provinces of Turkey and Jordan where the respondents live.

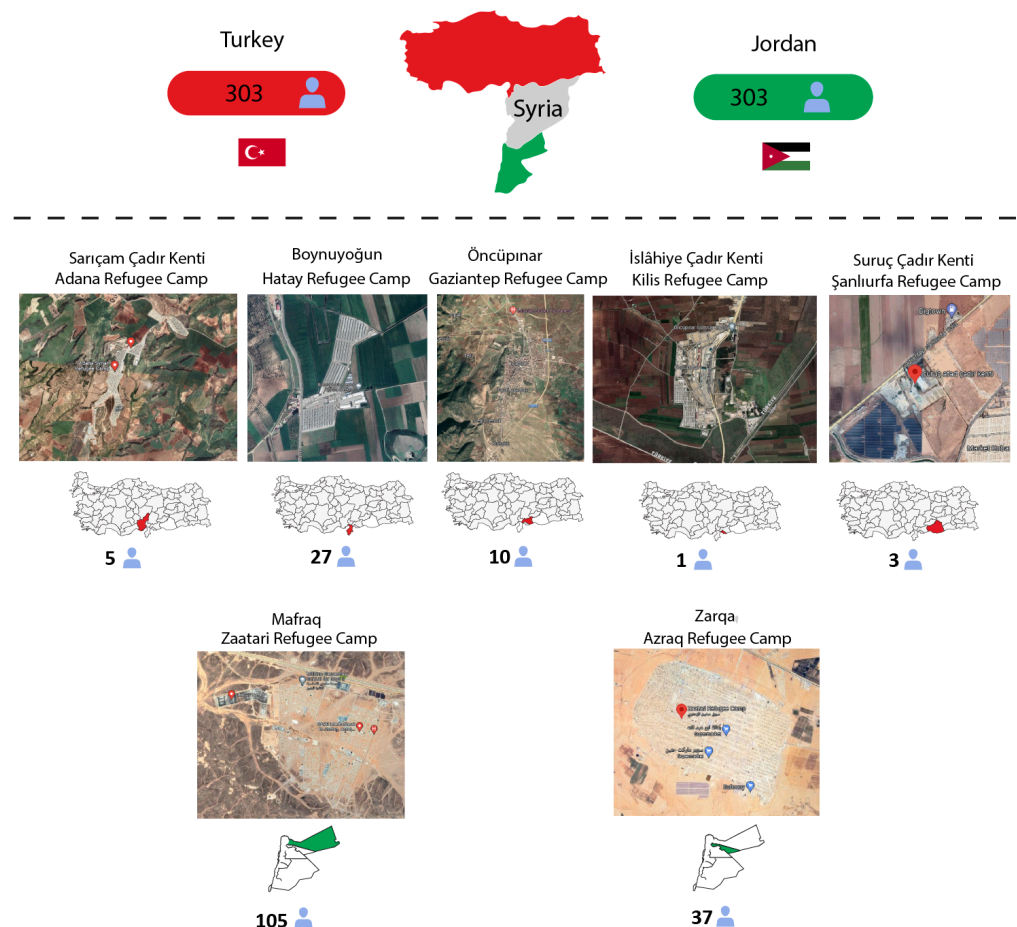


Figure 3. The Syrian refugee camps in Jordan and Turkey where the respondents were living.

7.1.2. Social Media Dependency of the Syrian Refugees

Table 4 shows that 12.2% of Jordan's sample and 31.0% of Turkey's sample use wireless (Wi-Fi) to access the Internet for their computers, while 18.2% of Jordan's sample and 7.9% of Turkey's sample use Internet subscriptions (packages) for the Internet. A percentage of 6.9% of the sample in Jordan and 17.5% of the sample in Turkey use both Wi-Fi and an Internet subscription to access the Internet, while 62.7% of the Jordan sample and 43.6% of the Turkey sample do not have a personal computer.

Table 4. Internet connection for the respondents' computers.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Wireless (Wi-Fi)	37	12.2%	94	31.0%
Internet Subscription	55	18.2%	24	7.9%
Both of them	21	6.9%	53	17.5%
No Personal Computer	190	62.7%	132	43.6%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 5 shows that 9.9% of the sample in Jordan and 38.3% of the sample in Turkey use Wi-Fi to have access to the Internet on their smartphones, while 73.6% of Jordan's sample and 22.1% of Turkey's sample use the Internet subscription. A percentage of 14.9% of the sample in Jordan and 39.3% of the sample in Turkey access the Internet from both Wi-Fi and Internet subscriptions. A total of 1.7% of Jordan's sample and 0.3% of Turkey's sample do not have smartphones.

Table 5. Internet connection for the respondents' smartphones.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Wireless (Wi-Fi)	30	9.9%	116	38.3%
Internet Subscription	223	73.6%	67	22.1%
Both of them	45	14.9%	119	39.3%
No Smartphones	5	1.7%	1	0.3%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 6 shows that a percentage of 60.7% of the sample in Jordan and 77.6% of the sample in Turkey have family members who are over 18 and use social media, while a percentage of 10.6% of the sample in Jordan and 4.0% of the sample in Turkey have family members above 18 who do not use social media, and the percentages of those who do not have members older than 18 years in their families were 28.7% in the Jordan sample and 18.5% in the Turkey sample.

Table 6. Family members of the respondents who are over the age of 18 and use social media.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	184	60.70%	235	77.60%
No	32	10.60%	12	4.00%
No member in the family over the age of 18	87	28.70%	56	18.50%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 7 shows that a total of 279 people from the sample in Jordan and 292 people from the sample in Turkey have Facebook accounts, while 93 people from the sample in Jordan and 181 people from the sample in Turkey have Instagram accounts. In addition, 101 people from the sample in Jordan and 139 people from the sample in Turkey have

accounts on YouTube. A total of 95 people from the sample in Jordan and 80 people from the sample in Turkey have a Twitter account. A total of 45 people from the sample in Jordan and 29 persons from the sample in Turkey have accounts on other social media platforms, such as Quora, 9GAG, Flickr, InterPals, ASKfm, Telegram, and LinkedIn.

Table 7. The platforms of social media on which the respondents have account.

Answer	Number in Jordan	Number in Turkey
Facebook	279	292
Youtube	101	139
Instagram	93	181
Twitter	95	80
Others: Quora, 9GAG, Flickr, InterPals, ASKfm, Telegram, LinkedIn	45	29
Multiple answers were accepted from each respondent The total is more than 303, so the percentage is not valid in this question		

Table 8 shows that Facebook ranks first as the most used social media platform among 86.5% of the Jordan sample and 63.4% of the Turkey sample, followed by Instagram at 2.6% in the Jordan sample and 17% in the Turkey sample, and then YouTube at 2.0% of the sample in Jordan and 8.6% of the sample in Turkey. A total of 8.3% of the sample in Jordan and 7.3% of the Turkey sample use other social media platforms such as Snapchat, Quora, 9GAG, Flickr, InterPals, ASKfm, Telegram, and LinkedIn more than Twitter, which comes at the bottom of the list with a percentage of 0.7% of the respondents in Jordan and 2.6% of the Turkey sample.

Table 8. Most used social media platform (only one answer).

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Facebook	262	86.5%	192	63.4%
Instagram	8	2.6%	54	17.8%
Youtube	6	2.0%	26	8.6%
Twitter	2	0.7%	8	2.6%
Others: Quora, 9GAG, Flickr, InterPals, ASKfm, Telegram, LinkedIn	25	8.3%	22	7.3%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 9 shows differences in the number of hours that the respondents in Jordan and Turkey use social media daily. A percentage of 19.1% of the sample in Jordan and 31.4% of the sample in Turkey use social media for more than four hours per day. A total of 27.4% of the sample in Jordan and 36.0% of the sample in Turkey use social media for two to four hours per day. A total of 53.5% of the sample in Jordan and 32.7% of the sample in Turkey use social media for less than two hours per day.

Table 9. How many hours a day the respondents use social media.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
More than 4 h per day	58	19.1%	95	31.4%
2–4 h per day	83	27.4%	109	36.0%
Less than 2 h per day	162	53.5%	99	32.7%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 10 shows that 73.6% of the sample in Jordan and 86.8% of the sample in Turkey reveal their real identities when they use social media, whereas 26.4% of the sample from Jordan and 13.2% of the sample from Turkey do not reveal their real identities when using social media.

Table 10. Do the respondents reveal their real identities on social media?

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	223	73.6%	263	86.8%
No	80	26.4%	40	13.2%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 11 shows that 83.5% of the sample in Jordan and 81.5% of the sample in Turkey provide real information about their personal lives, such as age, gender, address, and personal photos, on social media. A percentage of 16.5% in the Jordan sample and 18.5% in the Turkey sample do not provide this information.

Table 11. Do the respondents provide facts about their personalities, such as age, gender, address, and personal photo, on social media?

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Evet	253	83.5%	247	81.5%
Hayır	50	16.5%	56	18.5%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 12 shows that 85.8% of the sample in Jordan and 79.5% of the sample in Turkey said that all the photos and information that they publish on social media reflect their real characters, whereas 14.2% of the Jordan sample and 20.5% of the Turkey sample said that not all the photos and information that they publish on social media reflect their real characters.

Table 12. Do the respondents reflect their real personalities in all photos and information shared on social media?

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	260	85.8%	241	79.5%
No	43	14.2%	62	20.5%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 13 shows that 93.4% of Jordan's sample and 82.8% of Turkey's sample said that their use of social media increased after leaving Syria.

Table 13. Does the respondents' social media use increase after leaving Syria?

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	283	93.4%	251	82.8%
No	20	6.6%	52	17.2%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 14 shows that 176 people in the Jordan sample have children: 75 people, which represents 24.8% of the sample, said that their children have increased their use of social media after leaving Syria. In the sample of Turkey, 103 people have children: 52 people, which represents 17.2% of the sample, said that their children's use of social media has increased since leaving Syria.

Table 14. Does the respondents' children's use of social media increase after leaving Syria?

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	75	24.8%	52	17.2%
No	101	33.3%	51	16.8%
I do not have children	127	41.9%	200	66.0%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

7.1.3. Syrian Refugees' Social Media Uses and Gratifications

Table 15 shows that 26.7% of the sample in Jordan and 24.4% of the sample in Turkey use social media for commercial purposes to market their products and businesses.

Table 15. The respondents' use of social media for commercial purposes.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	81	26.7%	74	24.4%
No	222	73.3%	229	75.6%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 16 shows that 75.9% of the sample in Jordan and 71.6% of the sample in Turkey used social media to search for language courses and educational or training workshops.

Table 16. The respondents who use social media for educational purposes.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	230	75.9%	217	71.6%
No	73	24.1%	86	28.4%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 17 shows that 55.8% of the sample in Jordan and 66% of the sample in Turkey used social media to learn another language.

Table 17. The respondents who use social media for learning a new language.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	169	55.8%	200	66.0%
No	134	44.2%	103	34.0%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 18 shows that 86.8% of the sample in Jordan and 70.6% of the sample in Turkey used social media to learn new crafts or skills such as programming languages, new information, sales processes, designing something, new recipes, etc.

Table 18. The respondents who use social media for learning new skills such as programming languages, new information, sales processes, designing something, new recipes, etc.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	263	86.8%	214	70.6%
No	40	13.2%	89	29.4%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 19 shows that 10.2% of the sample in Jordan and 7.9% of the sample in Turkey have created an educational page on social media platforms.

Table 20 shows that 90.1% of the sample in Jordan and 81.2% of the sample in Turkey used social media to increase their knowledge of the customs and traditions of the country where they took refuge.

Table 19. The respondents who created pages on social media platforms for educational purposes.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	31	10.2%	24	7.9%
No	272	89.8%	279	92.1%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 20. The respondents who used social media to learn more about the customs and traditions of the host country.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	273	90.1%	246	81.2%
No	30	9.9%	57	18.8%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 21 shows that 79.2% of the sample in Jordan and 45.5% of the sample in Turkey find that social media were a convenient tool or platform for expressing their thoughts.

Table 21. The respondents who find social media to be a suitable platform for expressing their concerns and addressing their problems.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	240	79.2%	138	45.5%
No	63	20.8%	165	54.5%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 22 shows that 34.7% of the sample in Jordan and 25.1% of the sample in Turkey used social media to find a smuggler to help them get out of Syria, while 7.6% of the sample in Jordan and 2.3% of the sample in Turkey from Syria had been contacted by one smuggler to offer them help getting out.

Table 22. The respondents' use of social media to contact a smuggler to leave Syria and reach another country.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	105	34.7%	76	25.1%
No	175	57.8%	220	72.6%
An attempt was made to reach me	23	7.6%	7	2.3%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 23 shows that a total of 128 people in Jordan and 83 people in Turkey used social media to find smugglers or that social media were used by smugglers to reach them. It also shows that 31.4% of those in Jordan and 19.1% of those in Turkey verified the smuggler's identity before contacting them.

Table 23. The respondents' verification of the smuggler's identity before contacting them. (Only for the respondents who have experience in that; total = 128 in Jordan, 83 in Turkey.)

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	95	31.4%	58	19.1%
No	28	9.2%	14	4.6%
Refused to answer	5	1.7%	11	3.6%
Total	128	42.2%	83	27.3%

Table 24 shows that, when the whole group of respondents was asked whether they were exposed to financial or physical exploitation while looking for a smuggler to smuggle

them to another country, 1.3% of the sample in Jordan and 3.3% of the sample in Turkey stated that they were exposed to financial or physical exploitation. In addition, 4.0% of the sample in Jordan and 6.6% of the sample in Turkey refused to answer, and the rest said no.

Table 24. Whether the respondents were exposed to financial or physical exploitation while communicating with smugglers via social media.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	4	1.3%	10	3.3%
No	287	94.7%	273	90.1%
Refused to answer	12	4.0%	20	6.6%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

Table 25 shows that a percentage of 58.7% of the sample in Jordan and 60.1% of the sample in Turkey heard of a Syrian refugee who was financially or physically exploited by smugglers to facilitate going to another country.

Table 25. Whether the respondents heard about stories of other Syrian refugees who were financially or physically exploited by smugglers while communicating via social media with the aim of leaving Syria.

Answer	Number and Percentage in Jordan		Number and Percentage in Turkey	
Yes	178	58.7%	182	60.1%
No	125	41.3%	121	39.9%
Total	303	100%	303	100%

7.2. The Qualitative Data

The focus group discussions revealed important insights regarding the study questions. The qualitative views and opinions were implicitly discussed to support the numerical data. Several quotations of Syrian refugees' views and opinions were extracted to firstly be categorized into the main common codes, as data coding was one of the thematic analysis steps used hereafter for familiarization and then developing the themes (Guest et al. 2012). As Table 26 shows, the main extracted opinions of the participants' were drawn regarding their dependency on, use of, and gratifications from social media platforms.

Table 26. The opinions of the participants in the focus group discussions on social media dependency and their uses and gratifications in Jordan and Turkey.

Extracts	Codes	Themes
"The internet was weak and slow in Syria, but here it is fast and available at affordable prices". (Extract 1, Istanbul Participant 4, Male, 26, Undergraduate student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Internet was weak in Syria. Availability of the Internet in the hosting country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The availability of access to the Internet in the hosting countries increased the use of social media by the Syrian refugees.
"I had no idea what social media was before because the Internet was not available well in Syria or its speed was slow, but the Internet availability and technological development in Jordan are more advanced than in Syria." (Extract 2, Amman, Participant 13, Female, 25, College graduate/working)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before leaving Syria, we had no idea what social media were. The Internet speed in Syria was slow. Technological development in comparison to Jordan was good. 	
"I was living in the countryside in Syria; I didn't have a cell phone, and the technology wasn't advanced. The use of social media was not successful due to the poor quality of the Internet". (Extract 3, Istanbul, Participant 9, Male, 24, Less than high school education/working)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not owning a phone in Syria. The technology was not advanced. Poor quality of the Internet. 	

Table 26. Cont.

Extracts	Codes	Themes
<i>"There was no freedom in the past. We know that Tal Al-Mallohi, a secondary school student in Homs, was arrested by the Syrian State Security in December 2009 for posting some materials on her blog". (Extract 4, Istanbul Participant 1, Female, 31, PhD. student)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no freedom to use the Internet in Syria. Arrest of persons who express their opinions on their blogs, even if they are students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The censorship and ban of the Syrian regime on social media made Syrian people afraid of using social media, where they could be arrested.
<i>"There were restrictions on internet use in Syria, and Facebook was banned due to pressure and security control." (Extract 5, Amman, Participant 8, Male, 31, Bachelor's degree/working)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrictions on Internet use in Syria. Facebook was banned. Security control on the Internet in Syria. 	
<i>"I have nothing to do in Turkey. I am alone and have neither money nor friends to have fun. But I have fun with social media." (Extract 6, Istanbul Participant 6, Male, 27, High School graduate/not working)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using social media enables refugees who are alone to have fun. Even though they do not have money, they spend money to use social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugees use social media or psychological gratifications, including achieving comfort and getting rid of the negative energy left over from the war.
<i>"I use social media a lot to distract myself from the state of being a refugee and the troubles and difficult conditions I am in. I want to relieve myself of the stress and shortness of breath caused by the war." (Extract 7, Istanbul Participant 8, Male, 21, Bachelor's degree/working)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using social media often as a method to protect oneself from the stress and repercussions of the war. Thinking that social media are able to relieve the self. 	
<i>"Social media was the only window to express the views and know the news of cities and towns that were completely uncovered in the news of the traditional media. If social media platforms were not there, those would be buried in the traditional media." (Extract 8, Istanbul Participant 3, Female, 35, Master's degree/not working)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressing their views. Knowing the news about cities in Syria. Some news is not covered in traditional media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media helped refugees to express their gratifications and know what happens in Syria because traditional media covered everything.
<i>"Social media has helped me communicate by following lessons and getting help from my teachers and friends." (Extract 9, Istanbul, Participant 1, Female, 31, PhD student)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicating. Following lessons. Contacting teachers and friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media have a big role in social and educational gratification.
<i>"Social media has helped me communicate, follow lessons, and get help from my teachers and friends." (Extract 9, Istanbul, Participant 1, Female, 31, PhD student)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Becoming an online activist since the Syria crisis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The refuge of Syrians in other countries made them online activists, able to receive aid, convey what happens in Syria, and make the whole world more aware of their suffering.
<i>"Syrian refugees would not have received the help and aid that were provided if social media did not convey the conditions of the Syrian revolution." (Extract 11, Istanbul, Participant 4, Male, 26, Undergraduate student)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping in receiving aid. Conveying the conditions of the Syrian revolution. 	
<i>"The family broke up, but social media gathered us." (Extract 12, Istanbul Participant 11, Female, 43, High School graduate/not working)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering people after distances separated them because of the war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media helped Syrian refugees find social gratification by maintaining ties and communication between refugees and their families and friends.
<i>"Social media was able to connect families and bring people from multiple countries or regions together, despite the distance and difficulty of physiological communication during the revolution. It also expanded the circle with other people" (Extract 13, Amman, Participant 3, Male, 34, Higher Diploma, not working).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting with families and bringing people from multiple countries or regions together. Helping in getting in touch with other people and being introduced to them. 	
<i>"After I left Syria, social media has helped me a lot in finding opportunities and networking with organizations and individuals." (Extract 14, Amman, Participant 1, Female, 30, Graduate student)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding opportunities and networking with organizations and individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media helped refugees to find opportunities such as networking and presenting their stories.
<i>"Social media platforms focused on some people's success stories, and it has had a nice effect on them." (Extract 15, Amman, Participant 2, Male, 33, Undergraduate/working)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media helped in focusing on some success stories of Syrian refugees. 	

8. Discussion and Analysis of the Findings

8.1. The Increase in Social Media Use among Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Turkey and the Social Media Dependency (SMD)

8.1.1. The Increase in Social Media Use among Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Turkey

The quantitative and qualitative findings show that there was an increase in social media use among Syrian refugees in the two host countries, Jordan and Turkey.

It can be seen that it is very important for the Syrian refugees to have Internet, as shown by the percentage in Table 4 where 12.2% of Jordan's sample and 31.0% of Turkey's sample use wireless (Wi-Fi) to access the Internet for their computers. In addition, 18.2% of Jordan's sample and 7.9% of Turkey's sample use Internet subscriptions (packages) for the Internet, and a percentage of 6.9% of the sample in Jordan and 17.5% of the Turkey sample use both Wi-Fi and Internet subscriptions to access the internet. According to Mancini et al. (2019), despite the limited access to the Internet and connectivity data in some camps, the internally displaced persons have to purchase mobile phone data. This technology has been a key factor in keeping the internally displaced Iraqis abreast of news from their homes and the world. The importance of smartphones and their use of them in the hosting countries can also be seen. The majority have smartphones, which shows their importance: 73.6% of Jordan's sample and 22.1% of Turkey's sample use an Internet subscription. A percentage of 14.9% of the sample in Jordan and 39.3% of the sample in Turkey access the Internet from both Wi-Fi and Internet subscriptions, and only 1.7% of the Jordan sample and 0.3% of the Turkey sample do not have smartphones, as shown in Table 5.

This is consistent with a study by Sabie et al. (2019) that found that mobile phones were ultimately the most popular smart device in terms of use, with 70% and 69% of respondents owning smartphones or SIM cards, respectively. They also found that other digital devices, such as tablets, laptops, and desktop computers, have limited use. It is shown in Tables 6 and 7 that having a smartphone is more important than having a laptop for Syrian refugees. In both countries, the percentage of those who do not have laptops is higher than that of those who do not have smartphones. A total of 62.7% of the sample in Jordan and 43.6% of the sample in Turkey do not have a personal computer. A total of 1.7% of Jordan's sample and 0.3% of Turkey's sample do not have smartphones.

Furthermore, there were problems with Internet access in Syria due to the regime's outages and censorship or weak Internet signals due to the bad infrastructure. Syrian refugees had relatively good access to the Internet and social media through free access to Wi-Fi or purchasing local Internet packages for their SIM cards in the hosting countries (Dekker et al. 2018).

It was also revealed that the use of social media is still increasing more in hosting countries than it is in Syria, as shown in Table 13, where 93.4% of the sample in Jordan and 82.8% of the Turkey sample said that their use of social media increased after leaving Syria. Furthermore, as Table 14 shows, 24.8% of those who have children in the sample of Jordan and 17.2% of those who have children in the sample of Turkey said that their children's use of social media has increased since leaving Syria. In addition, 60.7% of the sample in Jordan and 77.6% of the sample in Turkey have family members who are above 18 and use social media in the hosting countries.

During the focus group discussions, the participants were asked whether they thought their use of social media increased after leaving Syria and what they thought about the reasons behind that increase. The fact that Internet access is easier and cheaper in Jordan and Turkey than in Syria is one of the main reasons for the increase in Internet usage by Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey. In addition, the availability of smartphones at affordable prices, has contributed to the increase in Internet usage.

"The internet was weak and slow in Syria, but here it is fast and available at affordable prices".

(Extract 1, Istanbul Participant 4, Male, 26, Undergraduate student)

Other participants in the focus group discussions made this clear when they explained that social networks such as Facebook were banned in Syria due to the regime's pressure and security control.

"There were restrictions on internet use in Syria, and Facebook was banned due to pressure and security control."

(Extract 5, Amman, Participant 8, Male, 31, Bachelor's degree/working)

The refugees' consumption of social media also increased, as the results in Table 9 show, where 19.1% of the sample from Jordan and 31.4% of the sample from Turkey use social media for more than four hours a day. A total of 27.4% of the sample in Jordan and 36.0% of the sample in Turkey stated that they use social media two to four hours a day. The new lifestyle in the host countries, which was described as fast-paced by some respondents in Amman, has pushed many Syrian refugees to use social media more than before. New members of society want to keep up with the transformation process, influenced by its openness in the country that they sought refuge in. The fact that the Internet has become the backbone of economic and social life in the 21st century also has an effect on this rate of adaptation, as is understood below:

"I had no idea what social media was before because the Internet was not available well in Syria and its speed was slow, but the Internet availability and technological development in Jordan are more advanced than in Syria."

(Extract 2, Amman, Participant 13, Female, 25, College graduate/working)

The level of technological development that enables faster and better-quality Internet connections and cheaper prices in hosting countries, as well as the freedom of access, has also contributed to the increase in social media usage. These conditions represent a situation quite different from the infrastructure in Syria.

"I was living in the countryside in Syria; I didn't have a cell phone and the technology wasn't advanced. The use of social media was not successful due to the poor quality of the Internet".

(Extract 3, Istanbul, Participant 9, Male, 24, Less than high school education/working)

Table 10 shows that 73.6% of the sample in Jordan and 86.8% of the sample in Turkey reveal their real identities when they use social media. In addition, Table 11 shows that 83.5% of the sample in Jordan and 81.5% of the sample in Turkey said that they include real information about their personal lives, such as age, gender, address, and personal photos, on social media. Moreover, the results of Table 12 show that 85.8% of Jordan's sample and 79.5% of Turkey's sample answered that all the photos and information that they publish on social media reflect their real characters.

Here, it is concluded that some Syrian refugees have started to live with freedom and get rid of the fear of the regime's censorship that they were living under, while we can see that other refugees still feel uncomfortable in expressing all their characteristics on social media, which could be considered as the remnants and repercussions of the regime's suppression of them or the fear of the unknown as refugees in another country.

Commenting on those percentages, the focus group discussions reveal another point that explains the reason for the difference between Syria and other countries such as Jordan and Turkey in terms of participants' freedom to access the Internet and use social media. Syrian society had some difficulties using social media due to fear of the regime. Therefore, many Syrians were unaware of what social media are and how they are used effectively because social media platforms were banned and not open to public use, as there were restrictions on the use of the Internet in Syria.

"There was no freedom in the past. We know that Tal Al-Mallohi, a secondary school student in Homs, was arrested by the Syrian State Security in December 2009 for posting some materials on her blog".

(Extract 4, Istanbul Participant 1, Female, 31, Ph.D. student)

Based on the results, H1 is approved, indicating that some factors affected the Syrian refugees' use of social media before seeking refuge and led to an increase in social media dependency after refuge in Jordan and Turkey. The percentages in the questionnaire of the above-discussed questions and the insights of the participants in the focus group discussions asserted the two main reasons for why Syrian refugees did not use social media well before their refuge in Jordan and Turkey, as shown in Figure 4.

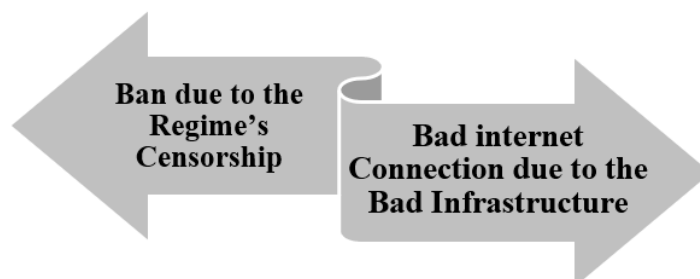


Figure 4. The two main factors that affected the Syrian refugees' use of social media before the refuge to host countries.

8.1.2. Social Media Dependency (SMD) among Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Turkey

The results in Table 7 show that 279 people from the Jordan sample and 292 people from the Turkey sample have Facebook accounts. As can be seen, Facebook is the most popular social communication tool used by Syrian refugees. Table 8 shows that Facebook ranked first as the most used social media platform among 86.5% of the Jordan sample and 63.4% of the Turkey sample. Facebook is judged to be easier than Twitter and other platforms to use. For example, the participant in the focus group discussions who came to speak about the ban mentioned only Facebook as if it were the familiar equivalent of the term social media for him during his time in Syria.

"There were restrictions on internet use in Syria, and Facebook was banned due to pressure and security control."

(Extract 5, Amman, Participant 8, Male, 31, Bachelor's degree/working)

Facebook is a widely utilized platform that provides users with a wide range of features and functions. According to Etzel (2022), Syrian refugees prefer Facebook and Instagram above other platforms for accessing and connecting with one another. This is consistent with the study by Alshwawra (2021), where Syrian refugees in the Netherlands, for example, prefer social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp to other audience applications such as YouTube and Google TV. This is visible in the ability to connect with people and utilize numerous services given by Facebook and WhatsApp.

There are six main purposes for sharing photos on Facebook: social influence, attention seeking, affection, habit, disclosure, and the sharing of information (Malik et al. 2016). There are three key incentives for utilizing Facebook music listening applications: communication, amusement, and habitual distraction (Krause et al. 2014), where users can publish and listen to their music through Facebook.

Based on the above-discussed results, H2 was approved, indicating that there are differences in what social media platforms Syrian refugees rely on the most and the reasons for that. The majority depended on Facebook for different purposes, and this dependency had different effects on them. Furthermore, it is seen that many refugees became familiar with new platforms, which means that refugees became social-media-literate and interacted with the updates of the new platforms even if those platforms were not famous and widely known by the average person. The availability of answering this question enabled refugees to mention other platforms they use: 8.3% of the sample in Jordan and 7.3% of the sample in Turkey said that they use other social media platforms such as Snapchat, Quora, 9GAG, Flickr, InterPals, ASKfm, Telegram, and LinkedIn. We can see that, after the outbreak of the Syrian migration, the situation changed. Social media platforms have become vital

for Syrian refugees who sought refuge in neighboring countries as the only means of communication between them and the people in the societies of the countries that they took refuge in.

Referring to [Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's \(1976\)](#) media dependency model, the more useful information refugees expect to receive, the greater their trust in social media. The above-discussed findings show that the Syrian people who became refugees in Jordan and Turkey were able to use social media platforms efficiently due to their access to Wi-Fi and their ability to purchase Internet packages. In addition, they became able to use it freely after the absence of the effects of the ban and Syrian regime censorship on the use of social media platforms, which affected their use while they were in Syria, as shown in [Figure 4](#) above. Thus, they achieved an acceptable Internet usability degree; consequently, their dependency on social media had different effects on them, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects. (1) Cognitive effects can be listed as revealing mysteries, understanding the events correctly, obtaining information or explanations, creating a tendency toward controversial issues in society such as hosting refugees, prioritizing, knowing the prominent problems, and forcing the problems among many issues in society. (2) Affective effects include expressing emotions such as fear and anxiety; moral support, alienation, and emotional desensitization are examples of affective effects. Again, for example, frequent exposure to violence in the media and helping others when violent events are real lead to a feeling of dullness, apathy, and reluctance. The repetition of violence, terror, disasters, and assassinations arouses fear among individuals. (3) Behavioral effects include information from different communication sources that affect the behavior of the individual; in short, influencing factors. Social media exposure encompasses selective exposure, which has behavioral effects that enable individuals to select the information that supports their current tendencies. When an individual needs information about a problem, he or she starts looking for information about the problem from external sources of information.

Cognitive effects include how they perceive social media content. The affective effect implies fear and anxiety about living in certain conditions in the host countries. The behavioral intention effect implies the actions that a refugee would take to continue using social media platforms, as the study of [Lin \(2008\)](#) found regarding internally displaced persons.

After approving H1 and H2, [Figure 5](#) depicts a social media dependency model built for this study based on its findings and the stimulation of 1976 Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's media system dependency model.

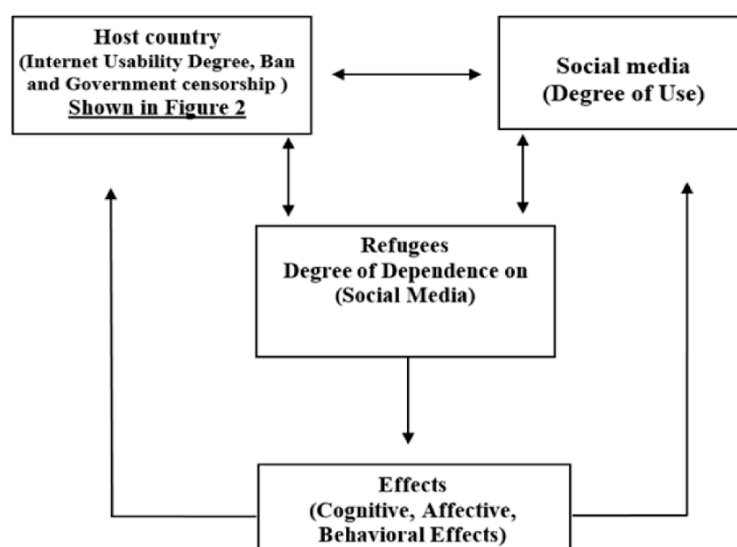


Figure 5. The Syrian refugees social media dependency model (SMD): simulating from [Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's \(1976\)](#) MSD model.

8.2. The Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among Syrian Refugees

The media dependency model is based on the assumption that people have different uses for media that match their needs, such as being informed or educated, having simple entertainment, enhancing social interaction, and escaping from the stresses of daily life (West et al. 2010).

McQuail (1972) classified the uses of various sorts of media into four categories: entertainment, personal connection, personal identity, and monitoring. These applications are based on five fundamental assumptions presented in research by Katz et al. (1974). They give the following framework for analyzing the relationship between media and audiences. (1) The audience is envisioned as being active. As they get rid of being under censorship and banning by the government, they can freely use social media for whatever purpose and whenever they want. (2) Other sources of gratification compete with the media. It was noticed that Facebook, in the case of the refugees, competes with other sources since it is a user-friendly platform. (3) Data offered by individual audience members may be used to determine many of the aims of mass media use. (4) While audience orientations are studied on their terms, value judgements regarding the cultural importance of mass media should be suspended.

People deal with user-generated media to fulfill their different purposes in different ways: they consume content for knowledge, amusement, and mood management; they strengthen social connections and virtual communities; and they express their content for practice, self-expression, and self-actualization (Shao 2009).

The use of social media has increased on a global scale since 2011, and there are other reasons to explain why the use of social media by Syrian refugees has increased. Several factors can influence an individual's choice of media. These factors include using the media to serve specific purposes, meeting basic needs in a particular subject, entertainment, the need for diversification, or personality traits (Donohew et al. 1978).

Because various persons might use the same communication message for a variety of objectives, the same social media material may satisfy the various demands of different individuals, including refugees, because they are aware of and may express their motivations and gratitude for utilizing various social media platforms.

8.2.1. The Commercial, Work, and Business-Based Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among the Syrian Refugees

The results in Table 15 show that 26.7% of the sample in Jordan and 24.4% of the sample in Turkey use social media for reasons such as enhancing work and marketing their businesses, works, and products. The reasons for the low percentages in this aspect might be that not all of the participants were working or had a job to market; a good number were students. As well as the level of education, some refugees might not have the ability or lack knowledge of how to market their businesses through social media platforms, such as the inability to make sponsored advertisements, and the lack of sufficient financial capacity for this may be other reasons for that. Marketing via social media requires a higher education level or advanced Internet-based skills.

However, social media have provided an easy access ground for Syrian refugees to find work opportunities and training courses and to build connections between people and other networks and organizations.

"After I left Syria, social media has helped me a lot in finding opportunities and networking with organizations and individuals."

(Extract 14, Amman, Participant 1, Female, 30, Graduate student)

8.2.2. The Educational Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among the Syrian Refugees

The results show that refugees display a willingness to use social media platforms when they need to learn and have educational benefits such as courses and workshops. This indicates that such platforms are largely considered education-oriented platforms. Understandably, Syrian refugees in Turkey use social media platforms intensively to learn

the Turkish language. They look for courses and training on social media to accelerate their learning and improve their Turkish language level. They need the language to facilitate their daily activities in Turkey, as English and Arabic are not widely used among Turks. For this reason, they find videos, images, posts, and articles that help them to learn the Turkish language on social media platforms.

The results in Table 16 show that 75.9% of the sample in Jordan and 71.6% of the sample in Turkey use social media platforms for languages learning purposes, such as attending lessons or accessing educational materials. Furthermore, the results in Table 19 show that refugees created pages on social media platforms for educational purposes. Their percentages were 10.2% in Jordan and 7.9% in Turkey. This means that the Syrian refugees also used social media platforms for educational contributions to help other Syrian refugees or people who wanted to learn the languages. Moreover, Table 17 shows that 55.8% of the sample in Jordan and 66.0% of the sample in Turkey used social media to learn a new language. This may be because the majority of the sample consists of young people. The search for scholarships for those living in Turkey and the fact that Turkish courses can be taken via social media may be causing this situation.

Social networks were useful for many aspects of everyday life in the host countries, including activities such as learning a new language. The results in Table 18 show that 86.8% of the Syrian refugees in Jordan and 70.6% of those in Turkey also used social media for learning new skills such as programming languages, new information, designing something, new recipes, etc. The fact that this tool is mostly free, has video content, and allows for downloading images has led refugees to gain new skills and then find new jobs.

Participants in the focus group discussions indicated that social media platforms offer more motivating training opportunities and a more convenient working environment due to the opportunity for interaction, and that they are used for contacting teachers, training courses, and institutes.

"Social media has helped me communicate, follow lessons, and get help from my teachers and friends."

(Extract 9, Istanbul, Participant 1, Female, 31, Ph.D. student)

8.2.3. The Entertainment and Leisure-Time-Based Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among the Syrian Refugees

As Menon (2022) found, users of social media platforms have incentives such as social and emotional affection, recognition, the need to get rid of negative feelings, cognitive needs, and entertainment. The gratifications of entertainment and spending leisure time were raised in the findings during the focus group discussions when some of the participants explained that they thought that the increase in their use of social media was related to their desire to spend leisure time through enjoyment and some pleasure time.

"I have nothing to do in Turkey. I am alone and have neither money nor friends to have fun. But I have fun with social media."

(Extract 6, Istanbul Participant 6, Male, 27, High School graduate/not working)

Some of them use social media not only for the entertainment that average people seek, but also to distract themselves, and get rid of stress and anxiety, as well as to forget the refugee situation in which they live, and the difficult circumstances that they went through because of the war and its repercussions on them, their families, and their future.

"I use social media a lot to distract myself from the state of being a refugee and the troubles and difficult conditions I am in. I want to relieve myself of the stress and shortness of breath caused by the war."

(Extract 7, Istanbul Participant 8, Male, 21, Bachelor's degree/working)

8.2.4. The Self-Expression, Conveying Voices, and Sympathy-Seeking-Based Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among the Syrian Refugees

Table 21 reveals that 79.2% of the sample in Jordan and 45.5% of the sample in Turkey view social media platforms as being useful tools for expressing themselves. Social media tools allowed the world to know what traditional media could not present or show and helped them in seeking sympathy and aid. Since the regime has power over the media in Syria, it has concealed the facts of killing and displacement. Social media have been an important medium for portraying the truth.

“Social media was the only window to express the views and know the news of cities and towns that were completely uncovered in the news of the traditional media. If social media platforms were not there, those would be buried in the traditional media.”

(Extract 8, Istanbul Participant 3, Female, 35, Master’s degree/not working)

According to several focus group participants, social media were useful in portraying the anguish felt, recording numerous criminal incidents, and disclosing the atrocities carried out against Syrians. Furthermore, they have learned what others think of them, how they have been portrayed in media in host countries, and whether they have received sympathy or xenophobic speech, such as portraying migrants negatively on social media and insinuating that they bring economic and social difficulties in society (Aldamen 2023a). To defend their image and portrayal, as well as how other refugees feel about it, they utilized social media for the gratification of allowing their voices, true tales, and suffering to be heard throughout the world in order to face xenophobic speech by otherizing and demonizing them through some unfavorable public representation content on social media (Aldamen 2023b).

Other reasons for Syrian refugees to utilize social media included the fact that the Syrian crisis inspired Syrians to become online activists on social media, contributing to the clear communication of the truth and raising awareness of their plight.

“I’ve been an online activist since the Syria crisis started, and there are a lot of beneficial groups for Syrians on Facebook, and that’s why I started using Facebook here.”

(Extract 10, Amman, Participant 15, Male, 32, Graduate student)

8.2.5. The Social Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among Syrian Refugees

The need to maintain social interconnectivity with others was one of the reasons for the refugees’ social media use. Increasing the likelihood of keeping close relationships with family and friends is one of the four relevant ways in which social media facilitate migration (Dekker and Engbersen 2014). Finding old acquaintances, making new friends, knowing about events, organizing social gatherings, and feeling connected inspire people to utilize social networking sites such as Facebook (Bonds-Raacke and Raacke 2010). According to the uses and gratifications hypothesis, individual users would remain engaged with social networking sites provided that such tools meet their gratifications and wants (Ifinedo 2016).

According to the findings, refugees are willing to utilize social networking sites due to the benefits of such technologies and comparable desires to develop or maintain pleasant ties with friends and family. The focus group discussions emphasized the need for Syrian refugees to communicate with relatives, friends, and family members in Syria or elsewhere and the importance of social media platforms as alternatives to high-cost voice communication tools over long distances.

“The family broke up, but social media gathered us.”

(Extract 12, Istanbul Participant 11, Female, 43, High School graduate/not working)

According to Aléncar (2020), social media platforms have become the only platforms that they can access to navigate their trips, and, through them, they share their life experiences in the host countries, whether they live in homes or camps, and communicate through them with relatives and friends. Furthermore, social media provided the opportunity to communicate with relatives and friends at home and abroad. They are a means of meeting

new people, obtaining information about their relatives, and monitoring developments in their country. Social media platforms are sources of social support for refugees who may be experiencing isolation and disconnection from their families and communities. Social media platforms such as Facebook enable refugees to maintain connections with their loved ones, share their experiences and emotions, and seek and offer support from other refugees.

“Social media was able to connect families and bring people from multiple countries or regions together, despite the distance and difficulty of physiological communication during the revolution. It also expanded the circle with other people.”

(Extract 13, Amman, Participant 3, Male, 34, Higher diploma/not working)

The focus group discussions in Amman revealed that the use of social media contributes to the moral and psychological support of Syrian refugees by providing information, communication, and the sharing of opinions, bringing people closer together and discouraging extremist thinking.

“Social media revealed the truth by conveying the suffering of the Syrian people and documenting violations and crimes committed by the regime that are not found in the official media, such as bombing, killing, arresting, displacement, and disclosure.”

(Extract 15, Amman, Participant 12, Female, 34, Less than high school graduate/not working)

Moreover, the results in Table 20 indicate that 90.1% of the sample in Jordan and 81.2% of the sample in Turkey increased their knowledge through social media regarding the customs and traditions of the country where the refugees took refuge. From this large percentage, it is seen that social media tools have a positive effect on increasing knowledge of the traditions and customs of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey. Based on this, it is determined that social media were used as a culturally social communication tool, including for learning new things.

8.2.6. The Access to Information Uses and Gratifications of Social Media among the Syrian Refugees

According to the results of the study, seeking information on different levels and issues is one of the gratifications of Syrian refugees. According to the information search and strategies of Donohew et al. (1978), several factors can affect an individual's choice of communication message and use of information to reinforce current trends. These factors include using the information to serve certain purposes, meeting basic needs on a particular subject, entertainment, a need for diversification, or personality traits. The results show some factors that affected the Syrian refugees' access to the information that they sought. The focus group discussions revealed that looking for information about the revolution and knowing the latest news and assistance for refugees were the reasons they used social media to look for information. They trust the role social media platforms play in informing the world about their conditions. This is also because they may lack access to traditional media sources, such as radio or television, in the host countries. Social media can provide them with real-time updates and news about their home countries, the situation of other refugees, and the availability of services and resources.

“Syrian refugees would not have received the help and aid that were provided if social media did not convey the conditions of the Syrian revolution.”

(Extract 11, Istanbul, Participant 4, Male, 26, Undergraduate student)

In addition, keeping in touch with the latest news from Syria and around the world is one of the reasons for why social media are used in host countries.

“Social media platforms focused on some people's success stories, and it has had a nice effect on them.”

(Extract 15, Amman, Participant 2, Male, 33, Undergraduate/Working)

Syrian refugees also had a level of dependency on using social media to access alternative sources of information. They may be seeking information that is not readily available in traditional media, as the results in Table 20 indicate that 90.1% of the sample in Jordan and 81.2% of the sample in Turkey showed that social media platforms increased their knowledge of the customs and traditions of the host countries. From this large percentage, it is seen that social media tools gratify the cultural knowledge of Syrian refugees by providing them with easy access to information about the traditions and customs of Jordan and Turkey. Based on this, it is determined that social media were used as a culturally social communication tool to gratify the cultural knowledge of Syrian refugees in host countries.

On the other hand, the results of Table 22 show that 34.7% of the sample in Jordan and 25.1% of the sample in Turkey used social media to establish contact with a smuggler to help them to leave Syria and reach another country. Table 23 demonstrates that 128 people in Jordan and 83 people in Turkey utilized social media to locate smugglers or that smugglers used social media to find them. Jordan accounted for 31.4% of them. In Turkey, 19.1% of them checked the smuggler's identification before contacting them.

Table 24 shows that, when the entire group of respondents was asked if they were subjected to financial or physical exploitation while looking for a smuggler to smuggle them to another country, 1.3% of the sample in Jordan and 3.3% of the sample in Turkey said they were. In addition, 4.0% of the sample in Jordan and 6.6% of the sample in Turkey refused to answer, and the remainder replied no. Table 25 demonstrates that 58.7% of the sample in Jordan and 60.1% of the sample in Turkey had heard of a Syrian refugee who had been financially or physically exploited by smugglers in order to travel to another country. Although looking for smugglers to leave the country is considered one of the most dangerous uses of social media, it is, for refugees, a gratification to secure life and family and have a better life far away from war. Thus, establishing contact with smugglers and having more information about finding routes in order to leave Syria was also one of the gratifications of having information related to certain purposes.

H3 is approved by the results of the study on the gratifications that the refugees target using social media. The Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey have a high level of social media dependency for many gratifications, such as information, social, commercial, educational, and cultural gratifications. The Syrian refugees had cognitive needs such as the desire for information, education, or help in improving their skills and knowledge in particular areas, as well as social and emotional needs such as the use of social media tools to communicate with family and friends, personal integrative needs to express their feelings, or stress relief, entertainment, and recreational needs such as the avoidance of pain. Furthermore, the findings confirm what Katz et al. (1973) stated: that the audience chooses to satisfy their needs for five different reasons: education and information, amusement, personal identity, integration, and social connection.

The Syrian refugees are active and therefore use social media for a specific purpose. Second, they chose the social media outlet that they believed would help them satisfy their needs in the host countries. Third, other media platforms also provide some gratification.

Social media such as Facebook are considered as a lifeline for Syrian refugees, who use them to stay in touch with friends and family members who may have been separated during the conflict. Furthermore, many Syrian refugees used social media platforms to learn the language of the country that they had fled to. In addition, social media were also used to access news and information about the conflict, as well as to convey voices to the whole world.

9. Conclusions

Social media may function on several levels. On the micro level, users can publish a post or material on social media, and the post or content can also be broadcast publicly (on the macro level) or not. As a result, social media may now switch between many levels. Some factors affected the Syrian refugees' use of social media before the war, which were mainly the censorship of the regime and the poor infrastructure that did not provide

opportunities for Syrian refugees to use the Internet. However, in Jordan and Turkey, the use of social media by the Syrian refugees has increased as censorship has disappeared and the Internet is well available to them.

There were differences in what social media platforms Syrian refugees rely on the most and the reasons for that. The majority depended on Facebook for different purposes, and this dependency had different effects on them. Furthermore, many refugees became familiar with new platforms, which means that they became social-media-literate and interacted with the updates of the new platforms even if those platforms were not famous and widely known by the average person. Consequently, they achieved an acceptable Internet usability degree; their dependency on social media had different effects on them, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects.

The Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey have a high level of social media dependency for many gratifications, such as information, social, commercial, educational, and cultural gratifications. The Syrian refugees have cognitive needs such as the desire for information, education, or help in improving their skills and knowledge in particular areas. For the Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey, social media may serve as a tool to help them meet some of their basic needs, such as staying connected with family and friends, seeking information about their legal status and rights, and building social networks with other refugees and host communities.

It is concluded from the findings that the gratifications of Syrian refugees' social media use can be divided into two main categories:

(1) Utilitarian, which includes self-knowledge, information, benefits, and experience, such as learning new languages and conducting commercial activities and business to carry out marketing, trade, and business, as well as looking for or enhancing a job and gaining new skills, understanding host countries' traditions, explaining the culture and traditions of the host countries, obtaining information about the latest news and situations in the crisis, and looking for a route in order to leave the country.

(2) Ritual, which includes communicating with family, relatives, and friends inside and outside Syria, as well as making new friendships, avoiding problems, and creating social networks. It helped them get rid of stress and anxiety, find entertainment, spend leisure time, express themselves, their thoughts, and their problems, write about them on their pages and accounts, and learn about videos and photos that contribute to enhancing the cognitive knowledge of refugees.

10. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the study's framework, which used mixed-methods research to gather and evaluate both quantitative and qualitative data, there are several research design limitations. The study took place in 2018 and 2019. The same questionnaire and focus group discussions would produce different results now and later because situations on social media platforms change over time. Consequently, the results will be different in 2023, especially after COVID-19, which affected the gratifications of social media, especially for the Syrian refugee students in Turkey and Jordan, which applied online learning like all countries around the world during the pandemic. Moreover, Facebook was still the most popular social media platform, with billions of active users worldwide. However, since then, there has been a significant shift in social media usage, with platforms such as Twitter and Instagram gaining popularity, particularly among younger demographics. Therefore, it is important for future research to consider the potential impact of these changes when conducting future studies that rely on social media usage and Syrian refugees' perceptions.

The study provides rich information on the demographic data of the participants; an in-depth study might be undertaken in the future on how marital status can affect refugees' social media use in host countries, particularly in terms of social support, information seeking, and commercial and other gratifications. Overall, the uses and gratifications of social media among Syrian refugees are complex and multifaceted and can vary depending on individual factors such as age, gender, education level, cultural background, and even mar-

ital status. Future research could investigate whether it has an effect on the Syrian refugees' social media use in host countries; for example, if there are differences in the use of married refugees and single refugees in the context of contacting family members and friends, seeking information and resources, and looking for jobs or education opportunities in the host country. However, more studies are required to properly comprehend the complex relationships between demographic factors and social media use among Syrian refugees.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/socsci12060322/s1>. As stated in the limitations, the study provides supporting information on the demographic data characteristics of the respondents that could help other researchers to study the relationships between the dependency on social media in host countries for Syrian refugees and other demographic data such as gender, marital status, education level, age, living status, type of residence, income, provinces, and camps where they live, as listed in the above link.

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