

## Evaluation of the socioeconomic status in the Covid-19 pandemic process

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### ABSTRACT

*Covid-19 virus, which started to be seen in Turkey as of March 2020, affected human health negatively. Many people's life-threatening virus-related illnesses and deaths have disrupted everyday life. This situation, which also adversely affected the working life, caused economic losses. The purpose of this study is to determine and evaluate the socioeconomic status of individuals during the process of experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, quantitative method was used. The data were collected through a questionnaire. The research data were obtained through a questionnaire created online. 433 participants were reached. The findings were evaluated using frequency values and Chi-square analysis. The majority of the respondents stated that they had restricted the expenditures deemed unnecessary during the pandemic period, postponed their future plans, increased internet usage and changed their social lives. In addition, most of the participants stated that their psychology was negatively affected during the pandemic period. It was determined that the majority of those who did not continue in the COVID-19 process were singles. The majority of people whose economic income has decreased during the pandemic process are composed of lower income group people. On the other hand, the participants, who stated that their social life has changed, mostly live in metropolitan areas.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus, which first appeared in Wuhan, Hubei province of China in December 2019, started to be seen in our country as of March 2020. The COVID-19 virus was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020 (Akca 2020). The concept of corona virus is derived from the Latin word corona, which means crown or wreath. The appearance of the virus reminds of the crown or sun figure has been effective in its name (Alpago ve Oduncu Alpago 2020). There are various thoughts on how this new disease-causing coronavirus, called COVID-19, came about. According to some ideas, it emerged as a result of eating wild animals and consuming them by humans. According to some, it is a virus created in the laboratory (Menachery et al. 2020). However, in this study, it was aimed to examine some of the effects of the virus on human life after its emergence. For this reason, there is no detail on this subject. The purpose of this research is to identify and evaluate the socioeconomic status of individuals during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Studies on this subject in the Turkish literature are as follows; (Akça and Tepe Küçüköğlü 2020), (Alpago and Oduncu Alpago 2020), (Özatay and Sak 2020), (Karataş 2020), (Duran and Acar 2020) and (Üstün and Özçiftçi 2020). In the content of these

studies, the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are discussed. So much so that the COVID-19 virus has seriously affected human health. In addition, a protective or therapeutic drug or vaccine against this virus has not yet been discovered (Alpago ve Oduncu Alpago 2020). Diseases and deaths due to this virus, which threatens the life of many people, have disrupted daily life. This situation, which also negatively affected the working life, caused economic losses. It is known that outbreaks throughout history (Plague, Spanish Flu, Cholera, SARS, H1N1, MERS, Ebola, Zika) have had enormous effects on economic, social and social life. (Akça and Tepe Küçüköğlü 2020; Bostan et al. 2020). It is predicted that the COVID-19 virus seen today will also cause radical changes in economic and social terms.

Physiological, shelter and security-related needs are the most basic needs that will ensure vital continuity, as included in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. During the pandemic, it has been observed that the demand for products that will meet these needs has increased. Also, online education, shopping, games, events, etc. Electronic systems that enable activities have also been popular during this period. (TÜBA 2020).



Şekil 1. COVID-19'un sektörlere etkileri (Dcode Economic & Financial Consulting)

It is known that human-to-human transmission of the disease due to COVID-19 virus occurs through respiration and droplets. For this reason, the first measures taken by many countries against the virus have been to terminate the activities that require a large number of people to be together. Accordingly, weddings, parties, etc. organizations were banned, and education and training were suspended. Also, by Presidential decree, which was announced on 03.04.2020 in Turkey, it was brought to a partial curfew in the streets (Karataş 2020). There have also been changes in business life. Sectors that have the opportunity to work remotely have chosen this way. People who have the disease and are likely to be caught are obliged to lead an isolated life for a certain period of time. This situation is called social or physical isolation. Social isolation is the situation

that expresses the partial or complete lack of contact between the individual and the society (Gierueld 2006).

Undoubtedly, the contraction of economic activities due to the COVID-19 Pandemic strongly affected employment and workers. Contraction in economic sectors led to unemployment (Balci and Çetin 2019). It is thought that the negative effect of social isolation is observed more in groups of people working with arm strength. It is also known that the COVID-19 virus, spreading worldwide, affects the poorest households the most. (Kestel 2020). As a result of this virus, which requires social (physical) isolation, both economic income loss is experienced and the flow of social life changes.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The quantitative method was used in this study. The data were collected through a questionnaire containing 24 questions. The questions were created by the researchers. The content of the questionnaire includes questions including demographic information and socio-economic information during the pandemic period. The research data were obtained through an online questionnaire. Research

data were collected online due to the fact that there are curfews and face-to-face meetings of people are risky. 433 participants were reached via social media accounts and mail. Convenience sampling method has been adopted. The data were analyzed through SPSS 26 Package program. Findings were evaluated using frequency values and Chi-square analysis.

### RESULTS

Findings are presented in tables in this section.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information of Participants

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	142	32,8	Married	183	42,3
Female	291	67,2	Single	250	57,7
<b>Age</b>			<b>Education status</b>		
18-26	211	48,7	Elementary-High School	84	19,4
27-35	136	31,4	University	255	58,9
36+	86	19,9	Graduate	94	21,7
<b>Number of people in the family</b>			<b>Region of residence</b>		
1-2	65	15,0	Village-Parishes	76	17,6
3-4	235	54,3	City-District center	163	37,6
5+	133	30,7	Metropolitan	194	44,8
<b>Sector</b>			<b>Income (monthly)</b>		
Industry-Trade	73	16,9	0-2300	95	21,9
Education Services	154	35,6	2301-4000	104	24,0
Health Service	66	15,2	4001-6000	103	23,8
Agriculture	20	4,6	6001 and above	131	30,3
Unemployed	94	21,7			
Public service	26	6,0	<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 1, 32.9% of the participants are men and 67.1% are women. 48.7% of the participants are in the 18-26 age group. 58.7% of the

participants are undergraduate graduates. 54.3% of the participants stated that they live in a family of 3-4 people. 45.2% of the participants reside in a

metropolitan city.

**Table 2.** Socio-Economic Status of the Participants in the Pandemic Process

Socio-Economic Status of the Participants		N	%
Having a disease due to Covid-19	Yes	4	0.9
	No	429	99.1
Having a relative who has had a disease due to Covid-19	Yes	60	13.9
	No	373	86.1
Continuation of work during the pandemic		190	43.9
		No	243
Income decline during the pandemic		221	51.0
		No	212
Increased spending on food, cleaning, protection and supplies during the pandemic process	Yes	369	85.2
	No	64	14.8
Restricting spending deemed unnecessary during the pandemic process	Yes	336	77.6
	No	97	22.4
Familiar people with economic difficulties during the pandemic		345	79.7
		No	88
Increase of internet usage in Covid-19 process		388	89.6
		No	45
Do you think the post-Covid-19 life will continue as it did before?	Yes	113	26.1
	No	320	73.9
Postponing future plans due to Covid-19		356	82.2
		No	77
Changes in social life during the pandemic		416	96.1
		No	17
The negative impact of the pandemic on psychology	Yes	326	75.3
	No	107	24.7
Adequacy of measures taken in Turkey		254	58.7
		No	179
<b>Total</b>		<b>433</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 shows that 1% of the participants had a disease related to the covid-19 virus, and 13.9% of them had acquaintances who had a disease related to the covid-19 virus in their environment. 85.4% of respondents reported increased spending on food, cleaning and protective materials during the outbreak. Most of the participants stated that during the pandemic period, they restricted their

expenditures that were deemed unnecessary, postponed their future plans, their internet usage increased and their social lives changed. Additionally the majority of the participants stated that their psychology was negatively affected during the outbreak period and that Turkey was following a successful path in the process of combating the virus.

**Table 3.** In the COVID-19 Process, Employment Status \* Marital Status

		Marital Status		Total
		Married	Single	
Continuation of work during the pandemic	Yes	104	86	190
		54.7	45.3	100.0
	No	79	164	243
	Percent (%)	32.5	67.5	100.0
Total	Number (N)	183	250	433
	Percent (%)	42,3	57.7	100.0
Chi-square test and Kramer V	Value	Asymp. Sig.		
Pearson Chi-Square	21.57	0.000		
Cramer's V	0.223	0.000		

It has been determined that the majority of those who do not continue to work during the COVID-19 process are singles. There is a significant difference between single and married people in working situation. This difference is weakly significant. In addition, Chi-square analysis was performed

between marital status and internet usage. Statistically low level of significant difference was found between singles and married people. Accordingly, the internet use of singles has increased more during the pandemic process.

**Table 4.** Decline of Economic Income in Covid19 Period \* Monthly Income of the Family

		Income (monthly)					
		0-2300	2301-4000	4001-6000	6001 and above	Total	
<b>Income decline during the pandemic</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Number (N)	71	63	52	35	221
		Percent (%)	32.1	28.5	23.5	15.8	100.0
	<b>No</b>	Number (N)	24	41	51	96	212
		Percent (%)	11.3	19.3	24.1	45.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>		Number (N)	95	104	103	131	433
		Percent (%)	21.9	24.0	23.8	30.3	100.0

  

Chi-square test and Kramer V	Value	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	56.158	0.000
Cramer's V	0.360	0.000

In Table 4, it is seen that the decrease in income during the pandemic process creates a statistically significant difference between the economic income level groups. This difference is moderately

significant. The majority of people whose economic income has decreased during the pandemic process are people of low income.

**Table 5.** Change in Social Life During the Pandemic \* Region of Residence

		Region of residence				
		Village-Parishes	City-District center	Metropolitan	Total	
<b>Changes in the pandemic</b>	<b>Yes</b>	Number (N)	71	153	192	416
		Percent (%)	17.1	36.8	46.2	100.0
	<b>No</b>	Number (N)	5	10	2	17
		Percent (%)	29.4	58.8	11.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>		Number (N)	76	163	194	433
		Percent (%)	17.6	37.6	44.8	100.0

  

Chi-square test and Kramer V	Value	Asymp. Sig.
Pearson Chi-Square	7.837	0.020
Cramer's V	0.135	0.020

As shown in Table 5, there is a statistically significant difference in poor levels between the regions experienced in the event of social life

change. It is observed that the participants who stated that their social life has changed mostly live in metropolitan cities.

### CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 virus on humans are evaluated. As a result of the research, it was observed that post-pandemic life did not continue as before. According to Özatay and Sak (2020), it is inevitable that the pandemic, which affects the whole world, has deep-rooted political, economic and social consequences. When the results of this study are analyzed from an economic perspective, it has been determined that most of the people do not continue their jobs and therefore their economic income has decreased. With

this decrease, it was observed that serious financial difficulties were experienced and unnecessary expenditures were restricted. On the other hand, it was determined that more than usual expenses were spent on cleaning and protection materials.

One of the results of the study was that people in the lower income group and people with lower educational attainment experienced greater economic loss of income. According to Karataş (2020), the negative aspects of the pandemic affect people living

in precarious economic conditions and individuals in need of protection more. In addition, the idea of people helping each other emerged with the economic hardship and the existence of a social solidarity was observed. One of the biggest effects of the pandemic is that technological tools are getting more into our lives. Now, instead of direct contact with each other, it seems necessary to maintain life through various means connected to the internet. As stated in Akça and Tepe Küçüköğlü (2020), internet usage for both business and education purposes has increased during the pandemic period. This result is also in line with this study.

In the Covid-19 process, there has been a process in which people are confined to their homes and life is limited. It is possible to say that the sociological and psychological state of society has also been affected during this process in which the flow of life has changed (Akca ve Tepe Küçüköğlü 2020). In this study, it was observed that the participants' psychology was negatively affected due to the pandemic, serious changes occurred in their social

lives and they postponed their future plans. In the study conducted by Alpage and Oduncu Alpage (2020), it was stated that the corona virus pandemic caused changes and transformations in education, health and sociocultural areas, especially in socioeconomic life. In addition, it has been argued that the change and transformation process will gain weight in the direction of digitalization and online transactions. It is a reality that the pandemic period will increase digitalization and pave the way for great changes in social lifestyle. According to one view, in the 21st century, due to the corona virus, elements with small volumes and large functions such as Bitcoin, micro robots and nano technology will begin to dominate the market. (Alpage ve Oduncu Alpage 2020).

This study is limited by the sample size and the answers given to the questions asked to the participants. It is recommended to update the research by reaching a larger sample population or to conduct qualitative studies that can obtain in-depth information with a smaller number of participants.

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