



MEDIA USE AND LOCKDOWNS: NAVIGATING EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL STATES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

MEDYA KULLANIMI VE SOKAĞA ÇIKMA KISITLAMALARI: COVID 19 PANDEMİ SÜRESİNCE DUYGUSAL VE RUHSAL DURUMLARI YÖNETMEK

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Abstract

This study examined the psychological and behavioural impact of media use and trust on mental states and behaviour. We examined the effects of both traditional and new media, and included the effects on social and psychological states associated with a lockdown. A cross-sectional study was conducted with 339 participants. Media use, government and scientific trust, conflict and compliance, as well as a range of emotional and mental states were examined. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling. Results reveal that use of traditional media, rather than new media, was significantly associated with fear of Covid-19. Among social media, only Facebook use had a significant negative relationship with psychosocial negativity. Compliance with preventive measures was predicted only by trust in science. Higher trust in government was related to lower levels of fear and psychosocial negativity, which, in turn, were positively associated with depression. The results demonstrate that different media can alleviate or exacerbate negative emotions and it is important to discern their effects. They also show how social and psychological states during home confinement may further impact mental health and affect interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Media, Trust, Emotions, Lockdown.

Öz

Bu çalışma zihinsel durum ve davranışlar üzerinde medya kullanımının ve medyaya olan güvenin psikolojik ve davranışsal etkisini inceler. Çalışmada hem geleneksel hem de yeni medyanın etkileri incelenmiş ayrıca kısıtlamanın sosyal ve psikolojik durumlar üzerindeki etkisi de çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. 339 katılımcı ile kesitsel bir çalışma yürütülmüştür. Medya kullanımı, hükümete ve bilime güven, çatışma ve uyumun yanı sıra bir dizi duygusal ve zihinsel durum incelenmiştir. Yürütülen çalışmada medya kullanımı, korku, depresyon, çatışma, uyum ölçekleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada oluşturulan hipotezler yapısal denklem modellemesi kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Çalışma sonuçları geleneksel medya kullanımının yeni medya kullanımına göre Covid-19 korkusuyla önemli ölçüde ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Sosyal medya türlerinden sadece Facebook kullanımının psikososyal olumsuzluk ile anlamlı negatif korelasyonu vardır. Önleyici tedbirlere uymanın sadece bilime olan güvenle ilintili olduğu tespit edildi. Hükümete olan daha yüksek güven, daha düşük seviyede korku ve psikososyal olumsuzlukla ilişkili olup bunun depresyonla olumlu bir ilişkisi vardır. Çalışma sonuçları farklı medya türlerinin olumsuz duyguları azaltabileceği veya şiddetlendirebileceği ayrıca bunların etkilerinin fark edilmesinin önem teşkil ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu sonuçlar ayrıca kısıtlama dönemindeki psikolojik ve sosyal durumların ruh sağlığı ve kişiler arası ilişkiler üzerindeki etkilerini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19 Pandemisi, Medya, Güven, Duygular, Sokağa Çıkma Kısıtlaması (Karantina)

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INTRODUCTION

Media has a strategic role in influencing public perception. While traditional media still have a role to play, digital media have brought an abundance of new options for news. Social media have become one such source, even as they support unique communication needs of individuals with the integration of written, verbal, visual, and auditory channels (Güngör, 2020, s. 400). In prolonged stressful situations, individuals may have an altered perception of reality increased future concerns and a greater sense of uncertainty, fear, anxiety and panic . These cognitive-emotional stressors could motivate information-seeking behaviour through the media as individuals seek to better understand and adapt to the new circumstances (Pakkan & İldaş, 2021, p. 244). At the same time, trust is an especially valuable commodity in a crowded media environment as people with trust in certain entities are more likely to be receptive to their message.

From the first reports of a virus brewing in Wuhan in December, it took just a few months before the coronavirus spread to virtually all parts of the world (Wilson & Chen, 2020, p. 1). Watching a pandemic unfold and having to adapt to changing government strategies to deal with the virus can be distressing. A lockdown of a province or country disrupts routines, and requires adjustment and adaptation as plans are disrupted, with no normality to turn to for comfort. Besides the watching the death toll and infection numbers rise in their own country and all parts of the world, people have to learn to cope with social isolation and financial insecurity.

The pandemic has a psychological impact on the general population who experienced anxiety (Cao et al., 2020, p. 4), stress, depression (Wang, Pan, Wan, Tan, Xu, Ho, et al., 2020, p. 21) and fear (Bakioğlu et al., 2020, p. 11-12). Some research have related such negative states and emotions to media use, in particular social media (Bendau et al., 2020, p. 288). Most did not consider traditional media. Chao et al. (2020) included traditional media and websites, but did not examine social media. Our study compares the use of TV as traditional media, and news websites, Facebook and Twitter as new media, to better understand media's relationship with psychological factors in a pandemic. In addition, we examine the relationship of psychosocial negativities associated with home confinement (e.g., sense of isolation, anger and frustration) with other emotions and mental states to determine how they affect behaviours and relationships such as compliance with preventive measures and family conflict. Unlike similar studies that have examined the social or psychological effects of a lockdown (Nilima et al., 2020, p. 47-52; Odriozola-González et al., 2020, p. 1-8), this study takes into consideration media use, trust and other emotions that may influence psychosocial elements related to home confinement. By surfacing the interplay of factors relating to media use, trust, negative emotions and states, and behaviour during the pandemic, the study can contribute to more strategic use of media and greater provision for mandatory mass quarantine impact in future events.

Hypothesis development

People obtain most of their information about Covid-19 and health protection from media sources. During a pandemic, media may carry an abundance of negative news. Negative news have greater salience (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, p. 279), and are more impactful and resistant to disconfirmation than positive news (Baumeister et al., 2001, p. 323; Peeters & Czapinski, 1990, p. 33). To a certain extent, people are able to avoid negative news with online media by choosing the news they want to consume. For instance, if people see a headline on morgues overwhelmed by Covid-19 deaths, they can choose not to read the article and avoid the disturbing details and images. On traditional media, such as television, such an option is not available and Covid-19 dominated news bulletins during the spread of the

pandemic. This may lead to fear. Over-reporting of crime, for instance, is linked with fear (Holbert et al., 2004, p. 334). Moreover, television stations tend to replay these reports and images in their news bulletins, repeatedly exposing viewers to the unsettling images. Exposure to graphic images has been associated with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (Schlenger et al., 2002, p. 581). While television exposure has been linked to fear of the avian flu, the effect of news watching in a pandemic has not been demonstrated. The evidence so far suggests that watching news on television can lead to fear. Other research has shown that television watching, especially news programmes, is also related to depression (Lucas et al., 2011, p. 1017; Potts & Sanchez, 1994, p. 79).

While people are able to choose what they want to consume online, the proliferation of rumours, misinformation and conspiracy theories online is more rampant through easily-created fake accounts on social media platforms and with little to no gatekeeping on websites, leading to an infodemic. Not only do falsehoods confuse the public making them unsure of what to believe is the truth, they can spread fear when misinformation exaggerates the severity and extent of the problem. With the predominant negativity in Covid-19 news coverage, people's perceptions of reality could be affected and their expectations shift towards pessimism (Garz, 2013, p. 156), resulting in fear of Covid-19.

H1: Use of a) television, b) news sites, c) Facebook and d) Twitter are positively associated with fear.

H2: Television use is positively associated with depression.

At the same time, social network sites (SNS) can provide social support from close and non-close relationships (Rozzell et al., 2014, p. 272) in distress situations (Bogen et al., 2019, p. 130; Antonucci et al., 2014, p. 88). Strong social support minimises stress and enhance health and well-being (Nabi et al., 2013, p. 721). When people are mandated to stay home, SNS allow people to stay in touch, and may provide social and emotional support for people who feel isolated or frustrated. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: a) Facebook and b) Twitter are negatively associated with lockdown-related psychosocial negativities.

Public compliance with health recommendations is key to successfully manage highly contagious diseases. To ensure public compliance during a pandemic, trust is essential, especially when people do not have the knowledge needed to make a decision (Siegrist & Cvetkovich, 2000, p. 713).

A lack of trust in government is likely to relate to a lack of trust in whatever policies or measures the government proposes and communication from the government to the public would be met with uncertainty. In times of crisis, a lack of trust can deny the government public support and compliance to critical measures. Research has generally shown an association between trust in government and compliance during disease outbreaks (Prati et al., 2011, p. 761; Tang & Wong, 2003, p. 1887). In a health crisis, the belief that government and medical institutions would render direction or support may reduce fear of contracting the disease. Active intervention by the government through directives and guidelines, such as mandatory stay home measures, may be drastic but they may indicate that the government is taking action to curb the spread of the outbreak. Hence, people who have trust in the government may be less negative about being confined to the home as they construe it as the government acting in the public's best interest in dealing with the pandemic. We postulate the following hypotheses :

H4: Trust in government is positively associated with compliance with preventive measures.

H5: Trust in government is negatively associated with fear.

H6: Trust in government is negatively associated with lockdown-related psychosocial negativity.

Trust in science is as crucial as trust in the government, given that the pandemic situation is dependent on scientists to provide knowledge to inform health decisions. Trust in science refers to the degree that people think that science is beneficial and that scientists work for the good of humanity. People who trust in science would be more likely to turn to experts (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 232), e.g., scientists, medical doctors, and reputable international health agencies, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), on Covid-related matters. In the absence of clarity regarding Covid-19, those with high trust in science are inclined to accept scientific and evidence-based information. Preventive measures which are based on scientific evidence can expect compliance from those with high trust in science. Recent research appears to support this (e.g., Plohl & Musil, 2020, p. 5-10).

To some extent, fear of Covid-19 stems from the fatality and many unknowns surrounding the virus. People trust scientists to provide knowledge that will be beneficial for applications in medicine, technology and other domains (Resnik, 2009). Those who trust in science believe that scientists and doctors are working to ensure that we have developing knowledge about the virus, and vaccines will be safe and effective. Accordingly, they would be less fearful. It is therefore hypothesised that

H7: Trust in science is positively associated with compliance with preventive measures.

H8: Trust in science is negatively associated with fear.

People who have experienced a disaster or epidemic tend to suffer some consequences in mental health (Norris et al., 2002, p. 248-249; Reardon, 2015, p. 13). The Covid-19 pandemic has been associated with mental distress (Sibley et al., 2020, p. 7; Wang, Pan, Wan, Tan, Xu, McIntyre, et al., 2020, p. 47). Scholars have pointed out how a confluence of factors during the pandemic may have inadvertently increased the potential for suicide (Reger et al., 2020, p. 1093-1093). When people are fearful, being made to stay home with normal activities curbed gives rise to increased occasions to ruminate about the insecurities surrounding oneself, which may increase negative emotions. At the same time, being confined to the house with reduced opportunities for social, religious and community support, people may feel depressed (Paykel, 1994, p. 55; Smith et al., 2003). Fearful people may also find it difficult to cope with the challenges of the pandemic and be more likely to feel helpless and depressed (Kalimo & Mejman, 1987 p. 23). On the other hand, fear may push people to comply with recommended guidelines as they may not know the best course of action to take (Harper et al., 2020, p. 1-14). Negative states and emotions may reduce one's patience and tolerance, increasing conflict at home. Conflict can further undermine physical and mental health (Choi & Marks, 2008, p. 6-10) and contribute to emotional distress (Ayoub et al., 1999, p. 309-311). Depression may strain personal resources leading to more irritable and conflictual interactions in the family (Patterson & Dishion, 1988, p. 300-305). It is therefore hypothesised that:

H9: Fear is positively associated with lockdown-related psychosocial negativity.

H10: Fear is positively associated with depression.

H11: Fear is positively associated with compliance with preventive measures.

H12: Lockdown-related psychosocial negativity is positively associated with depression.

H13: Lockdown-related psychosocial negativity is positively associated with conflict.

H14: Depression is positively associated with conflict.

Taking into consideration the hypothesised relationships, we construct a model involving media use, trust, emotions, mental states and behaviour (Figure 1).

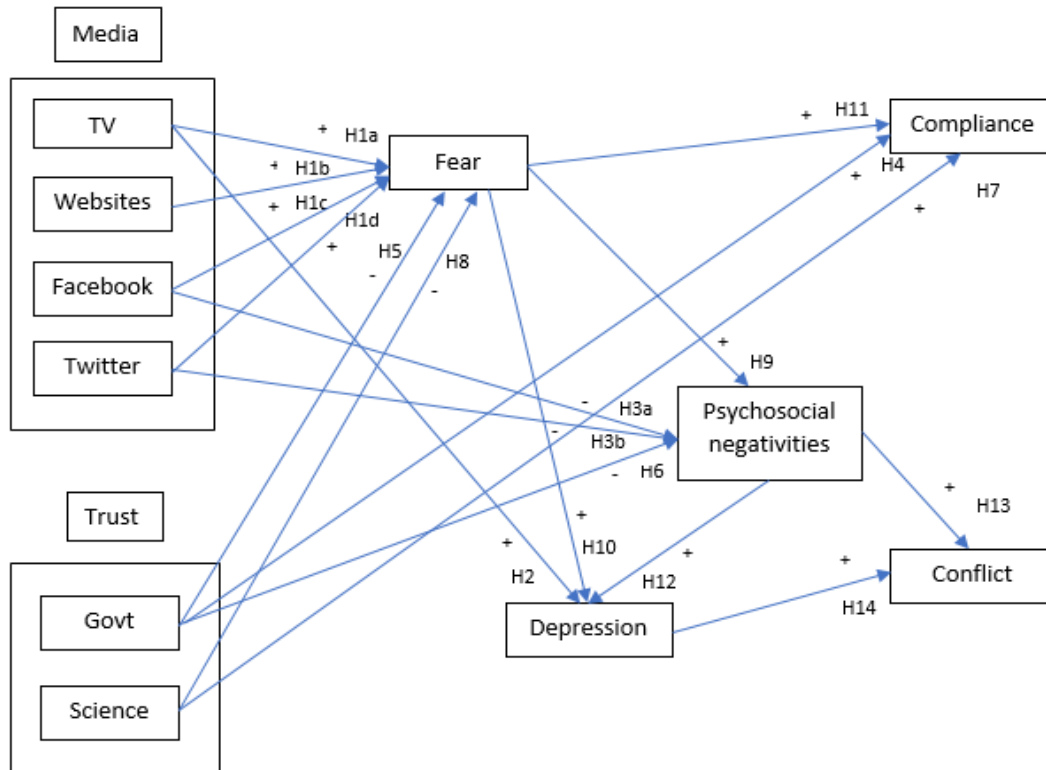


Figure 1: The proposed research model.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 339 participants in central Turkey were recruited in an online survey through snowball sampling. Our sample had equal numbers of males and females (49.9% vs 50.1%) aged between 18-62. The majority (45%) have a bachelor’s degree and 11% have at least high school qualifications.

Data Collection Tools

Media use

Respondents were asked to report, in hours and minutes, the amount of time they spend on watching the news on television, consumption of news on websites and use of Facebook and Twitter on the days that they use that particular medium. Responses were converted to minutes. Descriptive and reliability statistics are found in Table 1.

Trust in government and trust in science

Trust items were measured on a five-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Trust in government was assessed with five items where respondents rated their agreement with the government actions in terms of necessity, timeliness, correctness. Trust in science was measured with a five-item scale (Bak, 2001, p. 784) comprising items

such as “Most scientists want to work on things that will make life better for the average person”.

Fear

Seven items from the Fear of Covid-19 Scale (Ahorsu et al., 2020) were used to measure fear on a five-point scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Sample items include “I am afraid of losing my life because of Covid-19” and “I cannot sleep because I’m worrying about getting Covid-19”.

Psychosocial negativities associated with home confinement

Respondents were asked the extent they feel isolated, angry and frustrated with the home confinement. Five items were measured on a 5-point scale from “not at all” to “extremely” (Wheaton et al., 2012).

Depression

Three items from the depression subscale of the 12-item version of the depression anxiety stress scale (Lee et al., 2019) were used. Items such as “I felt that I had nothing to look forward to” were measured on a 5-point scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

Conflict

Four items questionnaire on a 5-point scale from “never” to “always” assessed how often respondents shouted at or had arguments with family members (Hilliard et al., 2013)

Compliance

Assessed on a 5-point scale from “not likely at all” to “extremely likely”, compliance was measured with five items. Items asked how likely respondents are to comply with preventive guidelines, such as wearing a mask when they go out or maintaining social distancing when they are in a queue (Elliott et al., 2003).

To reduce the potential impact of extraneous variables, gender, age, education level and social desirability were included as control variables.

Table 1: Descriptive and reliability statistics

	Mean	SD	α
TV	86.89	88.39	
News websites	65.83	86.01	
Facebook	53.67	97	
Twitter	59.97	118.64	
Trust in government	3.713	1.120	.917
Trust in science	3.991	.826	.806
Fear of Covid-19	2.320	1.041	.879
Psychosocial negativities	2.763	1.142	.865
Depression	2.3245	1.229	.887
Conflict	2.310	.963	.937
Compliance	5.595	1.312	.903

Measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess measurement validity of each construct in the structural model. The model fit was not entirely satisfactory with $\chi^2(443) = 1042.992$, $p < .001$, $RMSEA = .063$, $SRMR = .054$, $NFI = .870$, $CFI = .920$. Modification indices (MI) were examined and items from constructs of fear, government trust, compliance, negative emotions and science trust were removed. The fit statistics indicate that the final model provides a good fit to the data ($\chi^2(278) = 522.298$, $p < .001$, $RMSEA = .051$, $SRMR = .043$, $NFI = .916$, $CFI = .959$).

As common method bias was detected, we accounted for the bias with a common latent factor and performed imputation to extract the common variance. Composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct were examined to assess internal consistency of the constructs. The CR for all constructs were above .80, well over the .70 recommended threshold while the AVE exceeded the recommended .50 threshold (see Table 2). The squared correlation between one latent construct and the other is lower than the AVE for each variable, demonstrating discriminant validity.

To assess possible multi-collinearity issues, the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values for each construct were analysed. The highest VIF was 2.024, below the recommended value of 5 and the lowest tolerance value was 0.494, above the 0.1 threshold. Consequently, multicollinearity was not a significant problem in our dataset. Although all cases fall within Cook’s distance, three cases that were outliers were removed.

Table 2: Correlation matrix with Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

	CR	AVE	Govt trust	Science trust	Fear	Psycho-social negativity	Depression	Conflict	Compliance
Govt trust	.906	.712	.844						
Science trust	.837	.562	.475 ***	.750					
Fear	.887	.611	-.093	.027	.782				
Psycho-social negativity	.887	.726	-.189**	-.041	.372***	.852			
Depression	.888	.725	-.131*	-.027	.615***	.527***	.851		
Conflict	.938	.792	-.168**	-.010	.247***	.386***	.431***	.890	
Compliance	.887	.724	.152*	.306***	-.144*	.035	-.081	.058	.851

Hypothesis testing

The research hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling. The overall fit of the structural model to the data was highly acceptable ($\chi^2(29) = 35.021$, $p > .05$, RMSEA = .025, SRMR = .0257, CFI = .994).

From the results, the R^2 of fear shows that 14% of the variance in fear was accounted for by television use, trust in government and trust in science. Fear, Facebook use and trust in government accounted for almost 22% of the variance in psychosocial negativity. More than half of the variance in depression (55%) was accounted for by fear, psychosocial negativity, and television use. Both trust in science and psychosocial negativities respectively accounted for 26% of the variance in compliance and 37% of the variance in family conflict.

The results of path coefficients in Figure 2 show that television use was positively associated with fear ($\beta = .112$, $p < .05$) and depression ($\beta = .080$, $p < .05$), supporting H1a and H2. H1b, 1c and 1d were not supported as no relation was found between use of news websites, Facebook or Twitter with fear. Only Facebook had a significant negative influence on home confinement negativity ($\beta = -.123$, $p < .05$); H3a was supported.

Contrary to expectations, H4 was not supported as trust in government was not associated with compliance. Trust in government was negatively related to fear ($\beta = -.152$, $p < .05$) and psychosocial negativity ($\beta = -.146$, $p < .05$), H5 and H6 were supported. As well, H7 was supported; trust in science was positively related to compliance ($\beta = .206$, $p < .001$). Regarding H8, the effect was in the opposite direction of that predicted: trust in science led to greater fear ($\beta = .255$, $p < .001$). Fear was positively associated with psychosocial negativity ($\beta = .405$, $p < .001$) and depression ($\beta = .437$, $p < .001$). Accordingly, H9 and 10 were supported. No relation, however, was found between fear and compliance, thus H11 was not supported. H12 was supported as a significant positive relation was found between psychosocial negativity and depression ($\beta = .389$, $p < .001$). Psychosocial negativity ($\beta = .193$, $p < .001$) and depression ($\beta = .350$, $p < .001$) were positively related to family conflict, providing support for H13 and H14.

In terms of controls, gender demonstrated a significant positive association with fear, compliance and conflict. Age was negatively related to depression and family conflict. Education had a significant positive relationship with psychosocial negativities and compliance but a negative association with depression. Social desirability was positively related to fear and compliance, and negatively related to conflict.

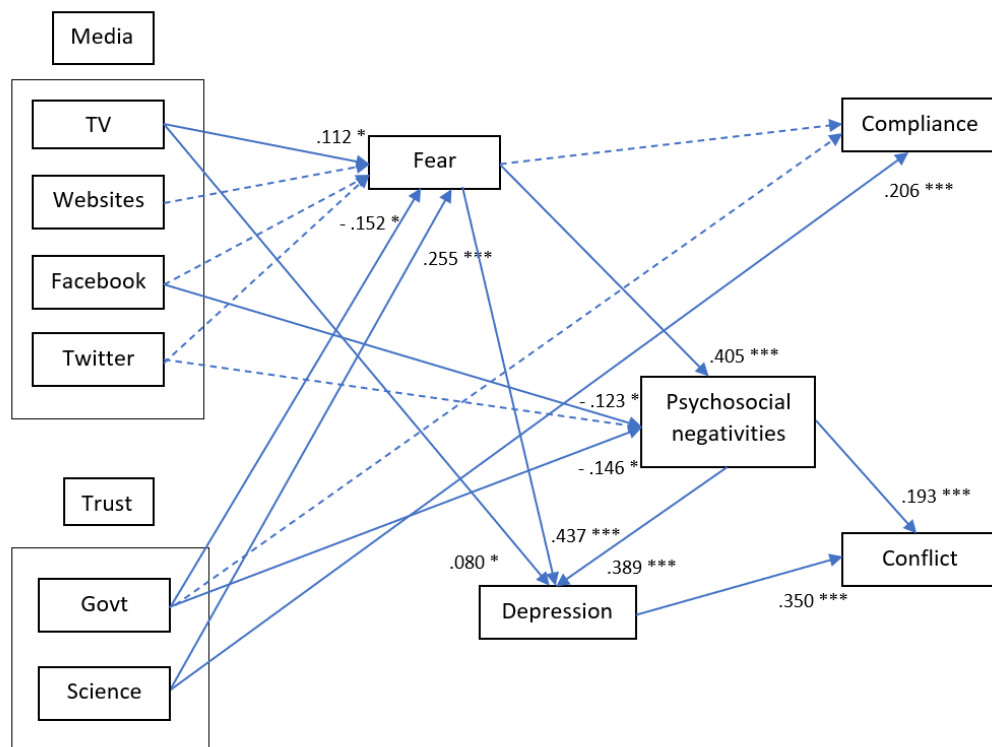


Figure 2: Estimated model.

Coefficients are standardised.
* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

DISCUSSION

This study explored predictors of negative emotions and behaviour in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. It highlighted substantive links between behaviour, emotions and trust, as well as effects of media use on emotions.

Our findings show that among the different media considered, only television news watching is positively related to fear and only Facebook was negatively associated with psychosocial negativities. While also a SNS, Twitter was not found to reduce negative emotions as it may be used more often for professional networking and be less appropriate for providing emotional support (Hayes et al., 2016, p. 9). This evidenced the importance of understanding how people use media as certain media may lend themselves better to certain functions than others.

Consonant with some studies (e.g., Brouard et al., 2020, p. 257; Clark et al., 2020, p. 79), our study did not find compliance to be related to trust in government. Instead, trust in science was a predictor of compliance. Trust in government, however, was effective in reducing fear and psychosocial negativities. This suggests that building legitimacy and trust with the people is helpful in assuring them in times of crisis, which is crucial for people to not panic and behave in a self-enhancing manner. Moreover, fear is related to other negative

states as well as depression. For instance, while Facebook use and trust in government reduced negativities, fear had an intensifying effect. Similarly, fear, followed by psychosocial negativities, had the strongest effect on depression. As such, reducing fear could be helpful in managing other negative emotions.

Mandatory stay home orders, implemented in a number of countries, bring psychosocial negativity, which has implications for mental health. There are also consequences for family life as conflicts easily arise when people suffer from a poor mental state and negative emotions. Discord may bring additional stress that can further worsen existing psychological conditions.

Contrary to expectations, trust in science was found to be positively associated with fear. One possibility could be that people who trust in science trust in scientists' ability to quickly understand the virus and limit its spread. However, when knowledge about the virus and vaccine production did not appear to catch up even as the number of deaths mounts , , people's trust may be shaken. They may, therefore, wonder if this is something that perhaps even science may not quite be able to handle and hence, be more fearful.

To increase trust in science, scientists and their organisations could increase their communication with the public, sharing their research and its implications. In a way, this shows the public that there is incremental progress. Social media have increased the opportunities for scientists and the public to have more open communication. Dialogues can help clear misconceptions and debunk myths, which may benefit both the public and increase trust in science.

Implication for policymaking

The findings raise some considerations for policy. Policymakers need to strengthen their position as trustworthy and reliable in regular times so that the build-up of trust can be utilised in times of crisis. Clear and transparent communication is essential for trust in a crisis. A public that understands how government decisions are made – not triggered by knee-jerk reactions or to pander to certain groups or industries but based on careful assessment of available evidence and public interests – would be more easily persuaded that the government is trustworthy. If policymakers base decision-making on reliable sources and institutions (e.g., the WHO), it not only lends credibility to its directives but could also help increase public trust in science due to government trust in it. This is important because trust in science has been shown to increase compliance with health guidelines and recommendations.

Fear, exacerbated by television news watching, is associated with a host of other negative emotions. At a time when people are feeling unsure and unsafe, it is integral that broadcast stations should deliver news without sensationalism and unsettling images. The government may provide clear guidelines for the media and even remind them not to engage in fearmongering. The public, on the other hand, can be advised to avoid disturbing news items with no new developments that are repeatedly broadcast, and to turn to the health ministry or the WHO for critical updates. Additionally, they may turn to alternative media for news, e.g., news websites, which have been identified as having no significant links with fear or psychosocial negativities.

Media that put an emphasis on social relationships and ties, e.g., Facebook, can provide social and emotional support and are helpful in alleviating negative emotions and states. During home confinement, people can be encouraged to maintain social contact through such apps or other tools for video calls even when they cannot meet face-to-face. However, not all social media are useful for providing support, hence selective use of apps is necessary.

Declines in psychosocial well-being may result in depression. With subsequent waves of re-infection, a return to restrictive measures is a possibility. However, besides economic considerations, there is a need to take into account the mental toll on individuals. With home confinement, access to counselling and other community services are curtailed and the possibility for support through religion is limited, which may further exacerbate mental health issues. As mental illness places a significant burden on all facets of society, including individuals, families and workplaces, and is associated with a high economic burden (Doran & Kinchin, 2019, p. 43), policymakers need to be cognisant of both health and economic challenges in making decisions on home confinement. If indeed necessary, counselling or community services cannot cease entirely but instead may have to be stepped up accordingly, perhaps through technology or home telephone lines so as to assist the non-technology-savvy elderly.

Our study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design of the study does not allow an examination of the change of determinants across time in the unfolding pandemic. Future studies might best evaluate these variables with longitudinal studies. The snowball sampling strategy was not based on a random selection of the sample. The study population, therefore, was not reflective of the actual pattern of the general population. Turkey adopted a somewhat unusual strategy in the handling of the outbreak by first quarantining the most vulnerable groups. Young people under 20 and the elderly above 65 were restricted to their homes first before the stay home order was extended to everyone. Respondent bias (i.e., few elderly participants) due to snowball sampling meant that there were not enough respondents from the initial quarantined group to make comparisons between the two groups. As such, our study did not differentiate between the two groups even though their perception and experience of the lockdown might be different.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated a relationship between media use, trust, emotions and behaviour. More specifically, it surfaced the predictors of important states and emotions, such as fear and psychosocial negativities, and identified factors that influence compliant and conflict behaviours. Findings have significant implications in identifying ways to promote compliance with recommended behaviours and reduce negative states and emotions, as well as for policymaking.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Kovid 19 Pandemisi tüm dünyayı tehdit ettiği gibi Türkiye’de de olumsuz etkisini göstermektedir. İnsanlar bu pandemi salgınında özellikle sokağa çıkma kısıtlamaları nedeniyle duygusal ve psikolojik açıdan çeşitli problemler yaşamışlar ve yaşamaya devam etmektedirler. Onlar Kovid 19 ile ilgili bilgi almak amacıyla hem geleneksel medya hem de

yeni medyayı sıkı takibe almışlardır. Bu araştırmada medya kullanımının psikolojik ve davranışsal etkisi, ruhsal durumlar ve davranış üzerine güveni, ayrıca sokağa çıkma kısıtlamalarına bağlı olarak geleneksel ve yeni medyanın sosyal ve psikolojik etkileri incelenmiştir.

339 katılımcı ile çalışma yürütülmüştür. Katılımcıların % 49.9'u erkek, %50.1'i kadındır. Yaş aralığı 18-62 yaş aralığındadır. Yürütülen çalışmada medya kullanımı, korku, depresyon, çatışma, uyum ölçekleri kullanılmıştır.

Araştırma hipotezleri yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Yapısal modelin verilere genel uyumu oldukça kabul edilebilir durumdadır.

Sonuçlardan, korku R2'si korkudaki farklılaşmanın % 14'ünün televizyon kullanımı, hükümete olan güven ve bilime olan güvenden kaynaklandığını göstermektedir. Korku, Facebook kullanımı ve hükümete olan güven, psikososyal olumsuzluktaki farklılaşmanın yaklaşık %22'sini oluşturmaktadır. Bunalımdaki farklılaşmanın yarısından fazlası (%55) korku, psikososyal olumsuzluk ve televizyon kullanımı ile açıklanmıştır. Hem bilime olan güven hem de psikososyal olumsuzluklar sırasıyla uyumluluktaki farklılaşmanın %26'sını ve aile çatışmasındaki farklılaşmanın %37'sini oluşturmaktadır.

Şekil 2'deki yol katsayılarının sonuçları, televizyon kullanımının H1a ve H2'yi destekleyen korku ve depresyon ile pozitif ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. H1b, 1c ve 1d, haber siteleri kullanımı ile Facebook ve Twitter'ı korku ile kullanma arasında ilişki yoktur. Yalnızca Facebook'un sokağa çıkma yasağı üzerinde önemli bir olumsuz etkisi vardır; bu nedenle H3a red edilmiştir.

Beklentilerin aksine, hükümete olan güven uyumlulukla ilişkili olmadığı için H4 desteklenmemiştir. Hükümete olan güvenin psikososyal olumsuzluk ile olumsuz ilişkili olduğu için H5 ve H6 desteklendiği görülmüştür. Ayrıca, H7 desteklenmiştir; çünkü bilime olan güven, uyumluluk ile olumlu bir ilişki oluşturmuştur. H8 ile ilgili olarak, etki tahmin edilenin tam tersi çıkmıştır: bilime duyulan güven daha fazla korkuya yol açmıştır. Korku, psikososyal olumsuzluk ve bunalım ile olumlu bir ilişki oluşturmuştur. Bu doğrultuda H9 ve 10 desteklenmiştir. Ancak, korku ve uyum arasında bir ilişki bulunamamıştır, bu nedenle H11 red edilmiştir. H12, psikososyal olumsuzluk ve bunalım arasında anlamlı bir pozitif ilişki bulunduğu için desteklenmiştir. Psikososyal olumsuzluk ve bunalımın, H13 ve H14 için destek sağladığı aile çatışması ile pozitif ilişkisi bulunmaktadır.

Kontroller açısından, cinsiyet korku, uyumluluk ve çatışma ile anlamlı bir pozitif ilişki göstermiştir. Yaşın, bunalım ve aile çatışması ile olumsuz bir ilişkisi bulunmaktadır. Eğitimin psikososyal olumsuzluklar ve uyumluluk ile anlamlı olumlu bir ilişkisi bulunmaktadır, ancak bunalım ile olumsuz bir ilişkisi bulunmaktadır. Sosyal istenirliğin, korku ve uyumluluk ile olumlu yönde ilişkisi bulunmasına rağmen, çatışma ile olumsuz yönde ilişkisi bulunmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, Covid-19 pandemisi bağlamında olumsuz duygu ve davranış belirleyicilerini araştırmıştır. Ayrıca, davranış, duygular ve güven arasındaki önemli bağlantıların yanı sıra medya kullanımının duygular üzerindeki etkilerini de vurgulamıştır.

Bulgularımız, ele alınan farklı medyalar arasında yalnızca televizyon haber izlemenin korku ile olumlu yönde ilişkili olduğunu ve yalnızca Facebook'un psikososyal olumsuzluklarla olumsuz yönde ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Aynı zamanda bir sosyal network sitesi (SNS) olan Twitter'ın, profesyonel ağ iletişimi için daha sık kullanılabilceği ve duygusal destek sağlamak için daha az uygun olabileceği için olumsuz duyguları azalttığı tespit edil(e)miştir (Hayes vd., 2016). Bu durum, medya araçlarının hangi işlevlerde dahi iyi hizmet edebileceğini göstermektedir.

Bazı çalışmalarla uyumlu olarak (örn., Brouard vd., 2020; Clark vd., 2020), çalışmamız hükümete olan güven ile ilgili bir uyum bulamamıştır. Bunun yerine, bilime olan güven, uyumluluğun bir belirleyicisi olmuştur. Hükümete olan güven ise korkuyu ve psikososyal olumsuzlukları azaltmada etkili olmuştur. Bu, insanlarla meşruluk (yerindelik) ve güven inşa etmenin, insanların panik yapmaması ve kendi kendini geliştiren bir şekilde davranmaları için çok önemli olan kriz zamanlarında onları güvence altına almada yardımcı olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca korku, bunalımın yanı sıra diğer olumsuz durumlarla da ilişkilidir. Örneğin, Facebook kullanımı ve hükümete olan güven olumsuzlukları azaltırken, korkunun yoğunlaştırıcı etkisi olmuştur. Benzer şekilde, korkunun ardından psikososyal olumsuzlukların bunalım üzerinde en güçlü etkisi olmuştur. Bu nedenle, korkuyu azaltmak, diğer olumsuz duyguları yönetmede yardımcı olabilir.

Bazı ülkelerde uygulanan ev hapsi emirleri, ruh sağlığı üzerinde etkileri olan psikososyal olumsuzlukları beraberinde getirmektedir. İnsanlar zayıf bir zihinsel durumdan ve olumsuz duygulardan muzdarip olduklarında çatışmalar kolayca ortaya çıktığı için aile hayatı için de sonuçlar vardır. Anlaşmazlık, mevcut psikolojik koşulları daha da kötüleştirebilecek ek stres getirebilir. Stres ve anlaşmazlıklar da ayrı yaşama ve boşanmalara neden olabilir.

Beklentilerin aksine, bilime duyulan güvenin korku ile pozitif ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Bilime güvenen insanların, bilim adamlarının virüsü hızlı bir şekilde anlama ve yayılmasını sınırlama yeteneğine güvenmeleri bir ihtimal olabilir. Ancak, aylar sonra virüs hakkında pek bir şey bilinmediğinde ve aşılarda yapılsa dahi hâlâ kesin kabul edilebilir bir aşı görünmediğinde, insanların güveni sarsılabilir. Bu nedenle, insanlar bunun belki de bilimin bile tam olarak üstesinden gelemeyeceği bir şey olup olmadığını merak edebilirler ve bu nedenle daha çok korkabilirler.

Bilime olan güveni artırmak için bilim adamları ve kuruluşları, araştırmalarını ve araştırma sonuçlarını paylaşarak halkla iletişimlerini artırabilir. Bu bir bakıma kamuoyuna artan bir ilerleme olduğunu göstermektedir. Sosyal medya, bilim insanlarının ve halkın daha açık iletişim kurma fırsatlarını artırmıştır. Diyaloglar, yanlış anlamaları gidermeye ve mitleri çürütmeye yardımcı olabilir.

Çalışmanın kesitsel deseni, ortaya çıkan pandemi sürecinde belirleyicilerin zaman içindeki değişiminin incelenmesine izin vermemektedir.

Bu çalışma medya kullanımı, güven, duygular ve davranış arasında bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Bulguların, önerilen davranışlara uyumu teşvik etmenin ve olumsuz durumları ve duyguları azaltmanın yollarını belirlemede ve ayrıca politika oluşturmada önemli etkileri vardır.

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