

The Effect Of Covid-19 Pandemic on Religion¹

Kovid 19 Pandemisinin Dindarlık Üzerine Etkisi

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Öz

Bu çalışmada, koronavirüs pandemisinin dindar insanların dini anlayış ve yaşamları üzerindeki etkilerinin tespit ve tasvir edilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışma toplumunun dini değerleri önceleyen eğitimli kesim üzerinde, nicel araştırma teknikleriyle tanımlayıcı bir çalışma olarak yapılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak bu çalışmanın yazarları tarafından geliştirilen "Koronavirüs Pandemisinin Dini Anlayış ve Yaşam Üzerine Etkisi Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Ölçeğin keşfeci faktör analiziyle geçerliği analiz edilmiş ve yüksek düzeyde güvenilir bulunmuştur. Araştırma örneklemindeki katılımcıların %58,8'i düzenli namaz kılmakta; %95,2'si Ramazan ayı orucunu tutmakta; %81,9'u orijinal metninden Kur'an okumakta ve %90,3'ü düzenli dua etmektedir. Kendisini dindar olarak algılayan bu insanların %72,5'i koronavirüs pandemisi gibi afetlerin Allah'ın hatırlatması ve işaret ettiğini ve %90,8'i ise bu tür afetlerle mücadelede ibadet, tövbe ve dua gibi manevi önlemlerle desteklenmesi gerektiğini düşünmektedir. Sonuç olarak, pandemi dindar insanlara kendi dini anlayış, inanç ve ibadetleri üzerine tekrar düşünmek, nefis muhasebesi yapmak, inancını güçlendirmek, ibadetlerine özen göstermek, kul hakkı, sosyal sorumluluk ve bir arada yaşama bilincini geliştirmek fırsatı vermiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: COVID-19 Pandemisi, Din Psikolojisi, Dindarlık, Afet, İnanç, İbadet, Türkiye

Abstract

This study aims to identify and define the effect of coronavirus pandemic on religious people's perspectives and practices. This descriptive study used quantitative research techniques to examine the educated people of working class and their prioritized religious values. Data were collected using "The Scale of Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Religious Perspectives and Practices" which was developed by the authors of this study. The validity of the scale was tested using exploratory factor analysis and it was found to be highly reliable. 58,8% of the participants declared they have regularly performed salaat, 95,2% declared they have fasted during Ramadan; 81,9% declared that they have read Quran from its original manuscript and 90,3% declared they have prayed regularly. 72,5% of these religious people think the calamity such as the coronavirus pandemic is a sign and a reminder from Allah and 90,8% think that the fight against calamities should be supported by spiritual measures such as worship, penitence and prayer. In conclusion, the pandemic allowed religious people to contemplate their religious perspectives, faith and worship again and provided the opportunity to make self-evaluation, to strengthen their faith, pay attention to worship and raise awareness of human rights, social responsibility and coexistence.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Psychology of Religion, Piety, Calamity, Faith, Worship, Turkey

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Introduction

Religion, which, in the most general terms, means to believe in and to be connected to a being is also defined in different ways (Sönmez, 2008, p. 21). James interprets religion as one's belief in a transcendent being and how this devotion further shapes one's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors (Günay, 2000, p. 197) whereas Freud defined religion as a neurosis that people should overcome (Köse, 2000, p. 75). Fromm, on the other hand, emphasized the functional aspect of religion as a system that provides the society a common goal and way of behavior (Fromm, 1993, p. 45).

Religion has specific concepts and systems (Düzungün, 1997: 14, 18) and is a series of beliefs and rituals (Johnstone, 1992: 58). Glock distinguished five major dimensions of religiosity: religious belief, religious experience, practices, theology (i.e., knowledge) and ethics (i.e., consequences) (Yıldız, 2006, p. 98).

Religion is a phenomenon that affects the whole life of man (Turan, 2018a). Religion, in particular, is stated to be effective on healthy living. It is effective against negative lifestyles such as using alcohol and drugs, unhealthy sex life, unhealthy diet (Jones, 2004, p. 219). Furthermore, it directs people to virtues such as forgiveness, helping and compassion and in this respect, it contributes positively to mental health (Koenig & Larson, 2001, p. 72).

Therefore, religious life is shaped under the influence of many factors (Turan, 2018a; Turan 2018b; Kurt, 2009: 1, 6). Natural events such as wars, epidemics, and earthquakes, which affect social life in psychological, physiological, and social aspects, affect human life in its entirety and affect their religious life. (Küçükcan & Köse, 2000; Kula, 2002; Yilmaz & Isitan, 2012; Altun, 2018; Kiriş & Dilek, 2019, p. 504). These changes in social life can lead to differentiation in religious perspectives as well as directing individuals to religion (Çapçıoğlu, 2011: 268). In this context, the relationship of a religious individual with religion and religious life during the periods of natural disasters is evaluated in various aspects. Freud's approach that people's weaknesses to nature lead them to turn to God (Freud, 1961, p. 24; Köse, 2016, p. 119-121) These explanations for human nature reveal that individuals turn to more religion, the supreme being, the worship, and prayer in the troubled and desperate situations. In the face of such situations, the importance of scale development efforts to determine the direction of the change in individuals' perceptions of religiosity emerges (Baynal, 2020, p. 263).

Although there is no common definition related to the concept of religion (Hökelekli, 1993, p. 69), it is not possible to talk about a common definition because the concept of religiosity also derives from the concept of religion. As the scope is rather broad, no definite judgment could be reached about the definitions of religiosity, the criteria for defining religiosity, the qualifications of religious individuals or the typologies of religiosity (Yapıcı, 2007, p. 19). The nature of religiosity is among popular research topics (Sönmez, 2016, p. 560). A large number of religiosity scales have been prepared in the field of religious psychology related to religiosity in Turkey (Albayrak & Kurt, 2019: 139; Baynal, 2020, p. 263-286). The scale studies include the adaptation of a scale developed mostly in international literature or original studies on community-specific Islamic religiosity (Arrow, 2011, p. 533) Despite the ongoing debate about whether religiousness can be measured or not, scale studies have continued to increase in recent years, especially in our country.

According to research, there has been an increase in natural disasters since the 20th century. It is predicted that the number of people who will suffer a catastrophe in the world will double in the near future (Aten et al, 2014, p. 20). Epidemics such as plague, leprosy, cholera, malaria; natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, storms, droughts, and famines cause people to die, their places to be damaged or destroyed (Sarıköse, 2013, p. 317). These kinds of events that develop out of the human will, or situations caused by human error, such as wars, nuclear disasters, transform society (Deaf, 2018, p.1). Epidemics not only change society in socio-economic and cultural terms but also affect religious life (Genç, 2011, p. 123, 142). People can turn to religion as a result of natural disasters such as earthquakes and associate this with fate, a subject related to faith (Okumuş, 2002, p. 372).

The person losing control with his life order and plans in his life due to natural disasters is driven into a sense of uncertainty. The material and moral losses may lead the person to psychological disorders (Köse & Küçükcan, 2006, p. 152; Gencer & Cengil, 2020: 326). Although reactions vary according to the individuals' personalities and the nature of events, such life-threatening disasters cause severe stress situations (Tarhan, 1999, p. 107).

Religion has important functions in coping with all kinds of difficulties (Özcan, 2019, p. 130). In related studies, it is observed that religiosity has a positive relationship with mental and physical health (Kazemzadeh Atoofi, et al. 2019; Dadfar, et. al. 2019; Turan, 2018a; Pargament et al., 2004; Koenig, 2012;

Göcen, 2013; Aydemir, 2008; Çufta, 2014; Kurnaz, 2015; Sevindik, 2015; Baynal, 2015; Ayten & Yıldız, 2016; Yorulmaz, 2016; Ahrenfeldt et al., 2017). In particular, the fact of death as a result of increasing epidemics leads people to seek refuge in divine power. People can turn to prayer, worship, etc. in a feeling of helplessness and can attribute miraculous meanings to the arising events (İstek, 2017: 199). Indeed, by doing various studies on religiosity about extraordinary times such as earthquake, migration, epidemic, etc. The relationship between religiosity and extraordinary times were examined (Okumuş, 2002; Köse & Küçükcan, 2006; İstek, 2017; Sağır, 2018; Özcan, 2019; Trevino & Pargament, 2007; Osheim, 2008; Wildman et al., 2020). Findings have emerged indicating that religious practices such as praying, reading the Qur'an, fasting and performing prayers, which are adopted in the religion of Islam, are effective in coping with problems thereby have positive psychological effects (Haque, 2004, p. 55; Kaya & Küçük, 2017, s. 41).

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to significantly affect the Islamic world and Turkey, along with all humanity. With the first case in Turkey on 11 March 2020, many precautions such as school holidays, changing working conditions and changing flexible working methods, making social distance and social isolation practices a rule, stopping sportive, scientific and cultural activities were taken (TÜBA, 2020: 30-31). It is thought that all these measures will lead to a complete change in daily life and that people do not go out unless it is mandatory, living under stress and anxiety. The findings of this study when the coronavirus epidemic was felt intensely supports this idea (Başaran & Aksøy, 2020; Bilge & Bilge, 2020; Dadfar & Lester, 2020).

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is expected to affect religious people as well as all people and affect their religious perspectives and practices. It is also vital to understand the perspectives of religious people on the pandemic, the meaning they attribute, and their religious approaches in the fight against the pandemic.

The study aims to determine how coronavirus pandemic affects the religious perspectives and practices of religious people and provide to understand their tendency to interpret and fight the pandemic with a religious approach. This research will contribute to the psychology of religion in the context of analyzing the relationship between religiosity and natural disasters such as epidemics.

Method

This descriptive research aims to identify and define the effect of coronavirus pandemic on religious people's perspectives and practices using quantitative research method. Research data were collected through a survey analysis with a questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale, which was communicated and applied online to the participants who declared that they were willing to participate in the research. The sample of the research was determined using the snowball sampling technique where the questionnaire form was prepared as a google form and sent to the prospective participants who were already recorded in the address book of the authors. Participants were also asked to further send the form to their contacts. The research was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Ethics declaration. The study was approved by Ordu University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee On 26/10/2021.

Population (Universe) and Sampling

The study aimed to define the effect of the pandemic and the approaches to make sense of this situation on the educated part of the society prioritizing religious values. Therefore, within the scope of the purpose sampling method, 393 participants were accepted in the study sample. 7.4% of the participants are at high school, 8.7% at the associate degree, 59% at the undergraduate level, 24.9 at the graduate level; 40.7% are female, and 59% are male; 51.7% are in the age group of 39 and under and 48.3% in the age group of 40 and over; It was determined that 32.3% were single and 67.7% were married.

Data Collection Scales, Process and Scale Analysis

In the research, the Likert-type questionnaire consisting of the "The Scale of Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Religious Perspectives and Practices" as a data collection tool, which measures the socio-demographic characteristics, religious beliefs, and ways of living of the participants as well as the demographic and descriptive part, which measures the religious perspectives and life of the participants, was used. The expressions on the quintet scale are graded from never agree (1) to fully agree (5). The high scores show that religious perspectives, worship and attitudes are strengthened with the effect of a pandemic. The participants voluntarily filled out the survey prepared online via computers and mobile phones in their environment. The survey was applied between April 24-30, 2020. Being in an extraordinary process, the lack of the possibility of face-to-face surveys, being in people's homes, and under stress are the constraints in the collection of research data.

Since the The Scale of Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Religious Perspectives and Practices is a five-point likert scale, it was validated with factor analysis. Validity is a test or the degree of measuring what the scale is meant to measure (Coşkun et al., 2017). Also, reliability analysis was calculated with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results of the factor analysis of the scale were shown in (table 1).

Factor Analysis		Scale
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,929
	Approx. Chi-Square	10282,718
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	528
	Sig.	0,000
Factor load range		528-886
Factors: Anxiety (5 items), Worship (7 items), Spiritual Protection (4 items), Spiritual Justification (4 items), Change (11 items)		
Total variance explained	%	67,287
Cronbach's alpha		0,941

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Analysis of the Scales

When table 1 was analyzed, it was observed that the scale's KMO sample coefficient is 0,929 above 0.80. As the KMO value approached 1, the used sample size in the study was reaching perfection, and this value was considered to be 0.80 very good and 0.90 perfect (Karagöz, 2017). Barlett globality test used to assess the compliance of the scale with the factor analysis was found to be significant ($p=0.000$). Accordingly, the scale being gathered under four factors consisted of the factors such as Anxiety (5 expressions), Worship (7 expressions), Spiritual Protection (4 expressions), Spiritual Reason, and Result (4 expressions), and Change (11 expressions). The scale initially consisted of 33 questions, and 2 statements were excluded from the scale as a result of the analyses. The scale was observed to be high on the factor loads, and the total variance explanatory power was understood to be a high value of 67,287. The reliability analysis of the scales was found to be highly reliable since Cronbach's alpha coefficients were above 0.80, 0.941.

The participants in the research sample; 83.9% of them have undergraduate and graduate education, almost all of whom consider themselves to be faithful, 74.6% of them emphasize the sensitivity of religious belief; 58.8% perform regular salaat; 95.2% hold the fast of Ramadan; 81.9% of them read the Quran from their original text and 90.3% pray regularly.

SPSS statistics software was used to test the aims of the study. The analyzes were realized within the 95% ($p = 0.05$) confidence interval. The study data were analyzed through descriptive statistical methods, materiality tests, and correlation analyzes.

Results

The descriptive information of the participants about the Covid-19 pandemic and their religious perspectives and practices are given in table 2.

5. Have you or a family member contracted COVID-19?

Yes	36	9,2
No	357	90,8

6. Has anyone you know died of Covid-19?

Yes	64	16,3
No	329	83,7

7. How is your employment status during this period?

I'm not working, I'm at home	215	54,7
I work from home, I rarely go to work	82	20,9
I work in shifts	57	14,5
I keep working normally	38	9,7
I work harder	1	,3

8. How would you define yourself in terms of belief under normal circumstances?

I do not find religious beliefs correct	6	1,5
I believe in Allah and the principles of faith	94	23,9
Religion has a high level of influence on my life	47	12,0
I try to make religious principles prevail in my life	184	46,8
I think I have a strong faith	62	15,8

9. How is your prayer under normal conditions?

I don't pray	36	9,2
I perform Friday prayers	22	5,6
Even if it's not five times, I perform daily prayers.	104	26,5
I perform the five daily prayers	163	41,5
I perform Qada and Nafl prayers as well as the obligatory five daily prayers.	68	17,3

10. How would you describe your attitude to fasting under normal circumstances?

I don't fast	19	4,8
I fast during the month of Ramadan	231	58,8
I perform Nafl fasting together with the month of Ramadan fasting	143	36,4

11. How would you describe your contact with the Quran under normal conditions?

I did not need to read the Quran	4	1,0
I do not know how to read the Quran, but it is good to read	33	8,4
I read the Qur'an in Turkish	34	8,7
I read the Qur'an even though it is on and off	217	55,2

Prayer is the refuge of the weak	4	1,0
I pray when I'm in a difficult situation	14	3,6
I pray on spiritual days and nights	20	5,1
I pray after performing Salaah	105	26,7
I pray regularly along with other worship.	250	63,6

13. What is your opinion about illness, accident or natural disasters?

Such situations are the result of natural events	37	9,4
Such situations are the result of people destroying nature.	48	12,2
Such situations are the result of sins committed by people.	15	3,8
Such situations are reminders and signs of Allah	285	72,5
Such situations are punishment by Allah.	8	2,0

14. Which one do you find correct in the fight against illness, accident or natural disasters?

The struggle is enough to be done with scientific and technical methods.	27	6,9
The struggle should be supported spiritually (worship, prayer, repentance) as well as scientific and technical methods.	357	90,8
Struggle must be spiritual (worship, prayer, repentance)	9	2,3

Table 2. Descriptive Variables for the Participants' COVID and Religious Perspectives

When table 2 is examined, one relative of 9.2% of the participants became COVID patients, and one familiar person with the participants of 16.3% died from a COVID disease. While 54.7% of the participants did not work during the pandemic process, 10% continued to work normally.

If we looked at the participants' perceptions of religious beliefs and worship, only 1.5% did not find religious beliefs correct. 23.9% of the participants stated that they believed in God and the principles of faith. 12% stated that the effect on the life of religion was high, 46.8% stated that they tried to make religious principles prevail in their practices, and 15.8% had a strong faith.

According to the analysis, it is seen that only 9.2% of the participants did not perform salaat. The participants stated that 5.6% of them Friday salaat, 26.5% daily salaat, 41.5% five times salaat, and 17.3% five times with Qada salaat or the supererogatory salaat performed. Moreover, 4.8% of the participants stated that they did not fast, 58.8% of them fast in Ramadan and 36.4% of them were in supererogatory fasting with the month of Ramadan fasting. 55.2% of the participants said that they read the Qur'an even though it was irregular and 26.7% said they read the Qur'an regularly. 63.6% of the participants stated that they prayed at will apart from worshipping.

72.5% of the participants stated that they thought natural disasters like pandemics as reminders and signs of Allah and the fight against pandemics should be supported with spiritual elements such as prayer, worship, and repentance as well as scientific techniques. Religious perspectives and the practices of the participants affected by the coronavirus pandemic are given in (Table 3).

The Scale of Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on**Religious Perspectives and Practices**

Statements		̄x	SD
Anxiety		3,75	0,91
1. I'm afraid of getting infected with coronavirus	3,2519	1,29369	
2. I am afraid to spread the disease to one of my relatives	4,3486	1,02674	
3. I'm afraid of dying from coronavirus disease	3,0458	1,45964	
4. I'm afraid to cause death of my relatives	4,2621	1,20374	
5. I remember death more	3,8524	1,26111	
Worship		3,19	1,1
8. I am trying to pray during this period	3,7201	1,48566	
9. During this period, I perform Salah much more attentively.	3,4682	1,50497	
10. During this period, I perform the Nafl prayer together with the obligatory prayer	2,4148	1,49095	
11. During this period, I am trying to read the Quran	3,2697	1,46508	
12. During this period, I read the Quran more frequently.	3,0331	1,48854	
14. I repent more during this period	3,4427	1,32765	
26. During this period, even if I cannot go to the mosque, I am doing my tarawih prayer at home.	3,0305	1,50139	
Spiritual Protection		4,39	0,9
15. During this period, I pray for myself and my family to be protected from the disease.	4,3384	1,05944	
16. During this period, I pray for my country and my nation to be protected from the disease.	4,5089	,93707	
17. During this period, I pray for the Muslims around the world to be protected from the disease.	4,3842	1,07497	
18. During this period, I pray for humanity to be protected from the disease.	4,3639	,99356	
Spiritual Rationale and Conclusion		3,28	1,1
19. I think that this epidemic is the result of the mistakes of all humanity.	3,9084	1,28641	
20. I think that this epidemic is the result of the mistakes of all Muslims.	3,0102	1,43744	
21. I think we are dismissed from social spaces as humanity	2,9796	1,49986	

22. As Muslims, I think we are dismissed from the Kaaba and masjids.	3,0153	1,49992
Change	3,74	1,1
6. Now I will remember Allah more	3,8626	1,25416
7. I will pray more now	3,8550	1,24615
13. Now I will think about my mistakes and regret more	3,4860	1,45351
25. I will perform my Ramadan fasting more enthusiastically now	3,6031	1,43221
27. I will try to be more helpful now	3,5293	1,31117
28. I will now keep my faith in God stronger	3,8168	1,36353
29. Now I will pay more attention to my worship	3,7277	1,33236
30. I will now give my family more value and time	3,9109	1,22254
31. Now I will be a more humble person	3,6641	1,36620
32. I will now pay more attention to righful due.	3,8550	1,36158
33. I will be a better servant now	3,9338	1,30958

Table 3. The Results of Coronavirus Pandemic Impact Scale on Religious Perspectives and Practices

When Table 3 was examined; It is seen that the religious people had high (3,75) anxiety to catch COVID disease or infect it to someone else during the pandemic process. In particular, they have a very high level of anxiety about infecting the disease (4.34) or causing someone else's death (4.26). They also remembered Allah (3.85) at a high level in this process.

The worship practices of religious people (3,19) appeared to have been moderately positively affected during the pandemic process. In this process, especially when they were trying to perform the prayer at a high level (3,72), there was a moderate influence on other matters related to worship.

It was found to be very high (4,39) for religious people to pray for protection from the Coronavirus outbreak. The religious people stated that they prayed at a very high level for the protection of themselves and their family (4.33), their country and nation (4.50), Muslims (4.38), and humanity (4.36) from the pandemic.

The religious individuals stated that they thought that the pandemic was the result of the mistakes of all humanity (3,9) high; and that Muslims thought that it was the result of their mistakes (3,0) moderate. The participants thought at a medium-level that during the pandemic, all humanity was expelled from social places (2,97) and Muslims from the Kaaba and masjids (3,0).

The pandemic had a high level of positive change effect (3,74) on religious perspectives and practices. The religious people stated at a high level that they would remember Allah more (3.86), keep the faith in Allah stronger (3.81), pray more (3.85), devote more time to their families (3.91), pay more attention to the righful due (3.85) and become a better servant of Allah (3.93).

The differentiating effect of the independent variables of the research on the scale factors was analyzed by t and ANOVA tests. According to this; $P = 0,002$ post-graduate students with the level of significance perceived the effect of the pandemic on religious life less than all other educational groups.

It was found that the female participants were more concerned about the pandemic than men at the level of significance $P=0.000$, prayed for more spiritual protection, and experienced more religious perspectives and positive spiritual changes in their practices. The participants who were 39 years of age and below, were more affected by the pandemic than 40 years of age and above in $P=0.002$ significance level anxiety and $P=0.022$ significance level spiritual change factors. The singles were more concerned about the pandemic than married people at the level of $P=0.022$. It was observed that a relative of the participants had

coronavirus or that one of their acquaintances had died of coronavirus did not cause changes in their religious perspectives and practices.

The faith status of the participants was effective on the factors of worship and spiritual protection, at the significance level $P=0.000$. According to this; Those who believe in God and the principles of faith are less affected by the pandemic process than any other group in the matter of worship. In the pandemic process, the worship life of those who tried to make religious principles prevail in their practices and who said that they had a strong faith were more positively affected than those who believed in God and the principles of faith. Those who stated that they had a strong faith in the spiritual protection factor from the pandemic process were more affected than those who believed in their religious perspectives and worshiping God and the principles of faith.

Participants' prayer situations caused a significant difference in $p = 0.001$ level of significance, anxiety factor $p = 0.000$ level of significance, worship factor $p = 0.003$ level of significance, spiritual protection factor and $p = 0.005$ spiritual reason factor. The anxiety levels of those who perform five times salaat were lower than those who didn't not perform salaat during the pandemic period and those who perform daily salaat. Those who perform five times salaat were more affected than those who do not perform in the worship factor during the pandemic period, who perform Friday salaat and daily salaat, and less than those who perform supererogatory salaat in addition to five times salaat. The spiritual protection behaviors from the pandemic of those who performed supererogatory salaat apart from five times salaat were more affected than those who did not perform salaat in the spiritual protection factor and those who performed daily salaat. Those who performed supererogatory salaat apart from five-time salaat were separated from those who did not perform salaat in the spiritual justification factor during the pandemic.

The participants' fasting states differed in the factors of worship, spiritual protection, spiritual justification, and spiritual change at the level of significance $P=0.000$. Those who do not fast, differentiated with a lower average score than fasting in worship, spiritual protection, and spiritual change factor. In the spiritual justification factor, those who had supererogatory fast beside Ramadan fast differentiated with a higher score than those who fast in Ramadan.

The Quran reading status of the participants caused a significant difference in all factors at $p = 0.000$ and $P = 0.003$ levels. It was found that those who do not know how to read the Quran had higher levels of anxiety during the pandemic process than those who read the Quran regularly. In the worship factor, the irregular Quran readers were found to have a higher average than those who did not need to read the Quran, did not know how to read it, and read its Turkish; and lower average than the regular Quran readers. The average of those who read the Quran in Turkish is lower than the average of all other groups except those who didn't need to read the Quran.

The prayer status of the participants differed in the level of significance $p = 0.000$, worship, and spiritual protection factors. Those who prayed regularly after the salaat and those who regularly prayed are distinguished by a higher average than others in worship and spiritual protection.

The participants' approach to interpreting disasters from a religious perspective creates a significant difference in worship, spiritual protection, spiritual justification, and moral change factors at the level of significance $P = 0.000$. According to this; Those who saw disasters as a reminder and sign of Allah had a higher average in worship and moral protection factors than those who saw disaster events as a result of people destroying nature. Those who stated that disaster events were the result of people destroying the nature had a lower average in spiritual justification and moral change factors than those who saw disasters as the result of sins, Allah's reminder and punishment by Allah.

The participants' diversities of views in the method of combating disasters differed in worship, spiritual protection, spiritual justification, and spiritual change at the level of significance $p=0.000$. According to this, the average scores of those who considered the struggle adequate by scientific methods and techniques were lower than the other two groups in the factors of worship, spiritual protection, spiritual justification, and spiritual change. In other words, it was shown that those who advocated fighting against pandemic with both scientific methods and spiritual methods or only spiritual methods were more powerful than those who only expressed the use of scientific methods in the fight against pandemic with their religious perspectives and practices.

The relation between the religious beliefs, worship, and practices of the participants under normal conditions and the factors of the research scale were examined by correlation analysis and the results were given in (Table 4).

	Spiritual Anxiety	Spiritual Worship	Spiritual Protection	Spiritual Justification	Spiritual Change	Faith	Salaat	Fast	Quran	Prayer	Disaster
Anxiety	1										
Worship		,171				1					
			(**)								
Spiritual Protection		,302		,475			1				
Spiritual Justification		,160		,343		,236					
			(**)				1				
Spiritual Change		,342		,655		,517		,410			
			(**)					1			
Faith			,359		,238		,104		,189		
			(**)				(*)			1	
Salaat				,168		,525		,177		,172	
											1
Fast						,415		,258		,136	
											1
Quran											
											1
Prayer											
											1
Disaster											
											1
Fighting											
Method											

Table 4. The relationship between the participants ' religious beliefs and their perspectives of worship and the factors of the research scale

Table exhibits a poor relationship between anxiety about the transmission of COVID-19 and worship and moral justification throughout the pandemic at $p=0.001$ level of significance, a linear and weak relationship between anxiety and spiritual protection and spiritual change. In addition belief, salaat, fasting and reading

the Qur'an were found to have a very poor relationship in the opposite direction. As the person's level of anxiety increased due to the pandemic, the level of worship, spiritual protection, spiritual justification, and spiritual change increased slightly. Under normal circumstances, as the level of religious belief, prayer, fasting, and reading of the Qur'an decreased, the level of anxiety increased slightly.

It was determined that the worship behaviors of the person during the pandemic were linear and weak in relation to spiritual protection, spiritual justification, faith, prayer, the meaning of the disaster, and methods of combating the disaster at the level of significance $p=0,001$. Again, in the pandemic process, there was a linear medium level relationship between the person's worshiping behaviors and spiritual protection, prayer, fasting, and reading the Qur'an. During the pandemic, a linear high-level relationship was observed between one's worship behaviors and spiritual change. According to this, during the pandemic, one's worship behaviors were positively affected by all other factors, and worship behaviors increased. Under normal circumstances, as one's religious views about faith, prayer, fasting, reading the Koran, understanding of disaster and fighting disasters became stronger, worship behaviors more or less increased during the pandemic process. Finally, it can be said that pandemic positively affected and increased the behavior of worshipping in people.

In the pandemic process, a linear relationship was found between the moral protection factor and all variables except reading the Qur'an at the level of significance $p = 0.001$. This relationship was at a moderate level with the prayer behavior in the spiritual change factor and spiritual justification, under normal circumstances, belief in fasting, understanding of disasters and the method of fighting disasters under the normal conditions were weak; Again, a very weak relationship was found with performing salaat under the normal conditions. In the pandemic process, the people's spiritual protection behaviors increased depending upon the increase in other factors. Under normal circumstances, as people's religious approaches to faith, salaat, fasting, praying, interpreting disasters, and fighting disasters increased, the behavior of praying for protection from pandemics also increased. The people praying for spiritual protection from the pandemic increased in parallel with all other factors and the increase in their religious perspectives.

A linear moderate relationship was observed between the factor of explaining the pandemic on religious grounds and the factor of spiritual change at the level of significance $p=0.001$. The level of spiritual justification for the pandemic increased in parallel with the level of spiritual change. In other words, those who found the reason for the pandemic to be the wrongdoings of humanity and Muslims further improved their spiritual perspectives and worship. Besides, $p=0.0001$ and $P=0.005$ at the level of significance, as the religious approaches of people in faith, prayer, fasting, reading the Qur'an, praying, meaning disasters and fighting disasters became stronger, the level of religious justification in explaining the pandemic became very weak or weak.

As participants' levels of belief, salaat, fasting, reading the Qur'an, praying, making sense of disasters from a religious point of view and having a spiritual approach to combating disasters increased in the level of significance $P=0,001$ and $P = 0,005$, their spiritual changes in the pandemic process also increased at a very weak or weak level.

In the normal period of the people, with religious belief levels, $p = 0.001$ and $p = 0.005$ level of significance, a linear middle level with salaat; a linear weak relationship was found between fasting, reading the Qur'an, praying, interpreting disasters from a religious perspective, and having a spiritual approach to fighting disasters. As the religious belief levels of the people increased, their religious approach to worship and events increased. Here, the strong intermediate relationship between belief level and salaat was interesting to explain the continuity in salaat behavior.

At the level of significance $p = 0.001$ of the participants performing salaat under normal conditions, there was a linear and middle force relationship between fasting and reading the Qur'an; A linear and weak relationship was defined between prayer, interpretation of disasters and having spiritual approaches in fighting disasters. It was understood that people's ability to perform salaat under normal conditions increased their level of fasting, reading the Koran, praying, making sense of disasters, and having spiritual approaches in fighting disasters.

It was found that the participants' fasting status increased their perspectives of reading the Qur'an, praying, making sense of disasters, and having spiritual approaches in fighting disasters at $P = 0.001$ level at a low level. The participants' reading status of the Qur'an was observed to increase their perspectives of praying and having spiritual approaches in fighting disasters at a low level and the level of significance $P=0.001$, and their perspectives of interpreting of disasters at a very low level. The participants' praying status increased at the level significance of $p=0.001$, their perspectives of having spiritual approaches in the fight against

disasters weak, and their perspectives of disasters very weak. It was determined that participants' understanding of disasters with a religious approach increased their understanding of having spiritual approaches in the fight against disasters at $P = 0.001$ level.

As a result; The Level of Coronavirus Pandemic Impact Scale on Religious Perspectives and Practices indicated that each of the components of anxiety, worship, spiritual protection, spiritual justification, and spiritual change had a positive linear relationship with each other, and the change in any of them was reflected in the same direction. It was especially noticed that there was an effective relationship between worship and spiritual change in the pandemic process.

The beliefs, salaat, reading the Qur'an, and praying that determined the religiosity levels of the individuals before the pandemic was related in the same direction; It was understood that the change in one reflected weakly in the others. In terms of religiousness, it can be said that the relationship between faith and performing salaat came to the fore. It was observed that the level of religiosity of individuals was also related to attribute religious meaning to disasters and using religious methods to combat disasters.

Discussion

Religion is a spiritual system based on the individual's relationship with the creator, himself, and everything else, along with differences in faith and worship (Kayıklık, 2009, p. 37). In addition to its individual aspect, religion interacts with society in terms of psycho-social, economic, political, biological, and physical aspects (Armaner, 1980, p. 71). There is no general definition of religion and religiosity (Sönmez, 2016, p. 557). In this, it is difficult for the general definition to be different from the religious beliefs and religious interpretations of the thinkers and religious interpretation, even in people belonging to the same religious belief. Whether different personal and social orientations can be transferred to scales is also controversial in religiousness measurement studies (Coştu, 2009, p. 122). Although it is difficult to say that these definitions and methods are the only and correct way, typologies and scales continue to be established and research on religiosity is carried out. In this study, the effect of the "Covid-19" pandemic on religious perspectives, and the practices of religious people was examined.

As intended, the research sample was composed of educated religious people. According to the result, 83.9% of the participants in the sample had undergraduate and postgraduate education, and almost all of them saw themselves as believing, 74.6% emphasized their religious belief sensitivity; 58.8% performed regular salaat; 95.2% of them fasted in Ramadan; 81.9% read the Quran from the original text and 90.3% prayed regularly. Accordingly, it can be stated that the study was conducted in a sample group with characteristics to be considered religious.

Pandemics have many psychological, social and economic consequences. The COVID-19 outbreak, which first appeared in China and spread throughout the world from the first months of 2020, was officially recorded in Turkey for the first time on March 11, 2020 (Bostan et al. 2020: 8). Deaths, lifestyle changes, and restrictions in the epidemic process negatively affect people's psychologies. Indeed, it was reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2020b) that the outbreak was at risk of spreading rapidly to all countries and caused social stress. The researches have shown that those who are exposed to natural disasters such as major earthquakes, tsunamis, or accidents from nuclear power plants have psychological problems such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Kukihara, 2014, p. 525; Livanou, 2005, p. 137). We see the same situation as the rapid spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, causing anxiety and panic in people, especially health workers (Bostan et al., 2020b, p. 2; Shuja et al., 2020, p. 32).

The first cases in Turkey coronavirus were detected on March 11, 2020. On April 24, 2020, when the data collection procedure of this research was started, the number of cases was determined as 104,912 and the total number of casualties as 2,600. On April 24, 2020, 38,351 people were tested, 3,122 new patients were identified, 109 people died. It is understood that as of April 30, 2020, when the data collection of this study was finalized, the total number of cases increased to 120,204 and the total loss of life to 3,124. Within a week, the number of cases increased by approximately 15% and the number of deaths by 22%. On April 30, 42,004 tests were conducted, 2,615 new patients were identified, and 93 people died (cf. Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health, Access, 06.01.2021). In order to prevent the spread of the virus, which has spread rapidly since the first cases, restrictions have been imposed in many social areas, thus the number of deaths has been decreased. However, the rapid spread of the virus, the resulting increase in the number of deaths, the frequent coverage of coronavirus programs in the media, and social isolation and other strict measures could increase the stress of despair and uncertainty in the life of the individual (Gencer & Cengil, 2020, p. 325-326; Karsh, 2020, p. 288; Özcan, 2020, p. 257; Kirman, 2020; Gashi, 2020, p. Chaiuk & Dunaievska, 2020).

Coronavirus (COVID -19) causes serious deaths in all countries; It leads to new decisions that transform practices in all aspects of social life and economically, including education (TÜBA, 2020: 75). The epidemic also caused different practices in religious life. Mass worship, in particular, is an effective mechanism to accelerate the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, in religious communities around the world, rituals have been changed accordingly. Online services have been launched to broadcast live videos of sermons and prayers at certain times of the week. Many religious communities also help to provide immediate financial aid for health (Wildman et al., 2020, p. 116). In short, the Covid-19 pandemic obligingly transforms all areas of life, including religious life.

Although there are views that religion does not always have an answer for future events, religious responses to epidemics offer people an ever-changing framework (Osheim, 2008: 37), it can be said that it is a port of refuge for people in times of fear, helplessness, obscurity, helplessness or depression (Acar et al., 1996, p. 55).

Religious beliefs and practices can provide people with emotional and social support during and after disaster (Adisaputri, 2016, p. 63). As a matter of fact, during the plague epidemic that lasted from the 14th century to the late 19th century, an environment of fear and insecurity occurred in the social and economic problems emerged. The epidemic also affected religious life (Genç, 2011, p. 123, 142). Desperate people expected spiritual help to fight the disease (İstek, 2017, p. 199). Research on coronaviruses in Turkey has reported that participants prefer religious coping activities in combating this outbreak (Özcan, 2020: 274; Karslı, 2020, p. 314; Kaplan, Sevinç & İşbilen, 2020). Another study conducted by Özcan (2020) at the same time with this research found that it was below the average level of society's concerns in Turkey. The fact that the level of anxiety in the society remained below the average during the outbreak period was attributed to the individuals' capacity to use positive religious coping activities sufficiently (Özcan, 2020, p. 274). Yıldırım et al. (2021) reported that individuals using positive religious coping strategies felt less alone in relation to mental health problems that occurred during the Coronavirus outbreak (Yıldırım et al. 2021). In a study conducted by Tomas and Barbato on a Christian and Muslim sample, they found that individuals who effectively used positive religious coping during the coronavirus process had fewer depressive symptoms and psychological disorders. This effect is reported to be higher especially in the Muslim sample (Thomas & Barbato, 2020). Luchetti et al. (2020) observed that religious and spiritual beliefs were associated with low levels of fear and sadness during the Coronavirus process in Brazil (Lucchetti et al., 2020). In an analysis conducted with an artificial neural network model and including 14 variables, it was found that the meaning of life (32.2%) and religiosity (31%) were the most influential variables on the positive religious coping strategy (Kızılgeçit & Çinici, 2020).

The study also showed that the participants who stayed in their homes during the pandemic cared about worship and prayer, especially praying to themselves, their families, Muslims and all humanity to get rid of the disease. In a study conducted by Kaplan, Sevinç and İşbilen (2020), it was reported that participants preferred to pray the most from religious events in order to stop the coronavirus outbreak as soon as possible. Similar to the findings of the research, in the study of Okumuş (2002: 372) with participants with a high level of religiousness, it was observed that worships such as praying and reading the Quran were frequent after the earthquake. In the study of Köse and Küçükcan (2006, p. 153-155), religious beliefs, worship, and rituals were effective in dealing with material and spiritual problems after the earthquake. Sinding (2015, p. 1) concluded that natural disasters such as earthquakes increased religiousness both in Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism and on all continents. Sibley and Bulbulia (2011, p. 8) found that those affected by the earthquake in Christchurch New Zealand in 2011 increased their religious beliefs.

Religious beliefs and worship prevent people from being despaired in the face of problems (Çufta, 2014, p. 137). In the studies, it was effective to cope with traumas and psychological resilience in terms of positive religion (Batan & Ayten, 2015: 67; Krumrei, 2009: 380), it was seen that religion and spirituality played an important role in the healing process for the survivors (Aten et al, 2014, p. 6). In our study, it was found that coronavirus pandemic created anxiety on the religious people, and the level of anxiety remained limited as the religious belief strengthened, and the level of worship increased. In a study by Özcan reported that individuals with high religiousness levels and those who use positive religious coping strategies effectively had lower anxiety levels (Özcan, 2020, p. 274-275). In the study of Sağır (2018, p. 243) with the refugee women who experienced war and suffered various attacks, it was found that religion provided a high level of positive support. In Özcan's (2019, p. 130) study on refugee students who emigrated due to war, positive levels of religious coping were found to be effective in overcoming their traumatic life.

In the research, 72.5% of the participants thought that disasters such as coronavirus pandemic ...etc. were the reminder and sign of God and 90.8% thought that the fight against such disasters should be supported by spiritual measures such as worship, repentance, and prayer. Also, some thought that humanity and partly Muslims were wrong as the spiritual justification for the pandemic and that they would pay more attention to their Islamic faith, perspectives, and worship with this warning. Several studies on coronavirus support the results of this study (Özcan, 2020, p. 270; Karslı, 2020, p. 303-305; Kaplan, Sevinç & İşbilen, 2020). In the research of Köse and Küçükcan (2006: 153-155), they tried to explain the events experienced by disaster victims with concepts such as testing, punishment or warning, as well as those associated with a metaphysical power and fate.

83.9% of the participants in the research sample had undergraduate and graduate education, and almost all of them expressed themselves as believers. In the research conducted by Süzen (2015, p. 82) with the people who witnessed the 1999 Marmara earthquake in Gölcük, it was observed that the educational status and age were positively related to psychological resilience. It was concluded that education and age were effective in dealing with stress as a result of traumatic events.

The studies on women mentioned that women were more interested in spiritual issues than men and were more prone to anxiety and depression (Baynal, 2017, p. 28, 63). This study also showed that the female participants were more concerned about the pandemic than men, prayed for more spiritual protection, and they had a more religious perspectives and positive spiritual changes in their practices. In the study of Çırakoğlu (2011, p. 61) on the 2009 swine flu (H1N1) outbreak, it was concluded that women perceived the disease as more contagious, and accordingly, their anxiety levels were high.

It was observed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, Turkish society took precautions against the epidemic and acted consciously (Bostan et al., 2020a, p. 2). In the Ottoman Empire, when the Spanish flu appeared, people did not take a fatalistic attitude, saying that epidemics were a destiny of Allah and tried to fight the pandemic with limited medical facilities (Yolun, 2012, p. 136). This is important for the course of the outbreak. Because the attribution of society's perceptions of disasters to religious beliefs alone can make it difficult to control disasters (Adisaputri, 2016, p. 63). In this study, the religious life and perspectives of those who advocate the fight against the epidemic by spiritual methods or both spiritual and scientific methods were strong. According to this, it was determined that those having strong religious life and perspectives among the participants also cared about scientific methods in fighting the epidemic. A study conducted on 810 participants, revealed that 85.2% of the participants that people should take precautions as much as God's will in ending the Coronavirus outbreak (Özcan, 2020, p. 270).

Conclusion And Recommendations

With the new practices and restrictions implemented as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, social life has been highly limited. People are trying to keep up with a more stay-at-home lifestyle. Besides, the rapid spread of the disease and the increase in deaths in the environment and uncertainty about the end of the outbreak lead to various stress situations such as anxiety in individuals.

Individuals may feel the need to seek refuge in a stronger entity that will protect and comfort themselves in such natural disaster moments. This situation can make them both spiritually and psychologically sedate. As a matter of fact, in this research conducted with religious and educated individuals, religious people draw their religious values to the fore, strengthened their beliefs, and tried to perform their worship more carefully. Besides the increasing number of prayers, salaat, and reading of the Qur'an, their association with the cause of the epidemic on spiritual grounds limits their concern about the pandemic and strengthens their religious perspectives and worship. While individuals prayed for the protection of themselves and their families from disease, they showed that they tended to act with an understanding that embraced everyone by praying to all Muslims and humanity.

As a result, the pandemic, with the necessary precautions to be taken by religious people, offered the opportunity to rethink their religious perspectives, beliefs, and worship, reconsideration of self-nafs, to strengthen their belief, to care their worship, rightful due, social responsibility, and coexistence.

Longitudinal studies about the religious and moral change experienced during the epidemic process and afterward may provide more detailed data on the subject. Also, the scales can be applied to different segments of the society.

Author Contributions

1. Author: % 33 2. Author: % 33, 3. Autor: %33 contributed to the study.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no financial conflict of interest with any institution, organization or person related to our article titled "The Effect Of Covid-19 Pandemic On Religion" and there is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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Genişletilmiş Özeti

Dini inanca sahip olan bireyin inancının gereklerini yerine getirmesi şeklinde tanımlanan dindarlık hakkında araştırmalar yapılmaya devam etmektedir. Araştırmalarda dini inancın, insanın tüm hayatına etki ettiği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Araştırmalarda toplumsal yaşantıda ortaya çıkan olaylar, deprem, sel gibi afet anlarında inanç sahibi bireyin dine yönelik bu gibi problemlerle başa çıkmaya çalıştığını göstermiştir. Araştırmalara göre 20.yüzyıldan itibaren doğal afetlerde artış yaşanmaktadır. Bunlardan birisi ise 2019 yılında ortaya çıkan Covid 19 salgınıdır. Salgınlar sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel açıdan toplumu değiştirecek şekilde özellikle insanların psikolojisini olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Özellikle bu dönemlerde yaşanan belirsizlik ve çaresizlik hissi depresyon ve anksiyete gibi psikolojik rahatsızlıklara neden olmaktadır. Covid 19 pandemisi sürecinde salgını kontrol altına alma amaçlı yürütülen uygulamalar da bireylere salgına yakalanma korkusu yaşamaktadır. Bunun yanında çevrede yaşanan ölümlerin artması ve salgının ne zaman sona ereceğine dair belirsizlik, bireylerde kaygı gibi çeşitli stres durumlarına neden olmaktadır. Bireyler bu gibi doğal afet anlarında kendilerini koruyacak, teselli edecek daha güçlü bir varlığa sığınma ihtiyacı hissedebilirler. Bu durum onların hem manevi anlamda hem de psikolojik açıdan teskin olmalarını sağlayabilmektedir. Bu olgulardan yola çıkılarak çalışmanın amacı; coronavirüs pandemisinin dindar insanların dini anlayış ve yaşamaları üzerinde nasıl bir etki yarattığının belirlenmesi ve dini yaklaşımla pandemiyi anlamlandırma ve onunla mücadele etme eğilimlerinin anlaşılması sağlanmaktadır. çalışmada, nicel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak beşli likert anket teknigiden yararlanılmış ve veriler bireylerin gönüllü katılımıyla internet üzerinden sağlanmıştır. Çalışma, toplumunun dini değerleri önceleyen eğitimli kesimi üzerinde pandeminin etkisini ve bu durumu anlamlandırma yaklaşımlarını tanımlamayı amaçlamıştır. Bu nedenle amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kapsamında, çalışma örneklemine 393 katılımcı kabul edilmiştir. Katılımcıların %7,4'ü lise, %8,7'si ön lisans, %59'u lisans, 24,9'u lisansüstü eğitim düzeyinde; %40,7'si kadın ve %59'3'ü erkek; %51,7'si 39 yaş ve altı ve %48,3'ü 40 yaş ve üzeri yaş grubunda; %32,3'ü bekar ve %67,7'sinin evli oldukları tespit edilmiştir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak katılımcıların sosyo-demografik özellikleri, dini inanç ve yaşama biçimlerini ölçen demografik ve tanımlayıcı bölümyle birlikte, katılımcıların pandemiden dini anlayış ve yaşamalarının nasıl etkilendiğini ölçen "Dini Anlayış ve Yaşamın Coronavirüs Pandemisinden Etkilenme Ölçeği"inden oluşan likert tipi bir anket kullanılmıştır. Bulgulara göre örneklemdeki %83,9'u lisans ve lisansüstü eğitime sahip olan katılımcıların tamamına yakını kendini inançlı görmekte, %74,6'sı dini inanç hassasiyetine vurgu yapmakta; %58,8'i düzenli namaz kılmakta; %95,2'si ramazan orucunu tutmakta; %81,9'u orijinal metninden Kur'an okumakta ve %90,3'ü düzenli olarak dua etmektedir. Buna göre dindar olarak nitelenecek özelliklere sahip bir örnekleme gurubunda çalışma yürütüldüğü ifade edilebilir. Araştırmada pandemi süresince evlerinde kalmaya devam eden katılımcıların ibadet ve duayı önemsedikleri, özellikle hastalıktan kurtulmak için kendilerine, ailelerine, Müslümanlara ve tüm insanlığa dua ettikleri tespit edilmiştir. Salgınla mücadelede manevi yöntemler veya hem manevi hem bilimsel yöntemlerle yapılmasını savunanların dini yaşayış ve anlayışları güçlü çıkmıştır. Buna göre katılımcılar arasında dini yaşayış ve anlayışları güçlü çıkanların, salgınla mücadelede bilimsel yöntemleri de önemsedikleri tespit edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak pandemi, dindar insanlarda alacakları gerekli önlemlerle birlikte kendi dini anlayış, inanç ve ibadetleri üzerine tekrar düşünme, nefis muhasebesi yapma, inancını güçlendirme, ibadetlerine özen gösterme, kul hakkı, sosyal sorumluluk ve bir arada yaşama bilincini geliştirmeye fırsatı sunmuştur. Salgın süreci ve sonrasında yaşanan dini, manevi değişim ile ilgili yapılacak boyalsal araştırmalar, konuya ilgili daha ayrıntılı veriye ulaşılmasını sağlayabilir. Ayrıca ölçekler, toplumun farklı kesimlerine uygulanabilir.

