

## Chapter 9

# Measuring the Attitudes of Governmental Policies and the Public Towards the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to measure the effect of the preventive policies on public during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as measuring the public's trust in the government. The study examines the determinants of public trust in governments and the associations between the preventive measures. It is also aimed to determine the protective measures that governments prefer to implement together by using association rules of data mining algorithms. By this means, double and triple action packages are presented. This study finds that basic characteristics such as education, health, and age are among the most basic determinants of trust in governments during the pandemic. The trust in government and opinions that measures taken are sufficient decreased as the education level increased. Considering the age criteria, this situation is the opposite. It is observed that women followed the preventative policies more strictly than men. It is also observed that public trust in governments is directly proportional to the development levels of countries.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) causing severe acute respiratory syndrome was first seen in Wuhan in Hubei Province of China in December 2019. The virus spread to the whole world as the third coronavirus pandemic after SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome) outbreaks, which are also induced by coronaviruses. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in January 2020 and as a pandemic in March 2020, when the first case was observed in Turkey.

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A disease or medical condition that leads to lots of deaths cannot be qualified as a pandemic as it also needs to be communicable. For instance, cancer is a disease that causes a large number of deaths in humans, but the emergence of cancer cases is not called a pandemic as it is not communicable (Wu, McGoogan, 2020). A pandemic is defined as an epidemic that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents or worldwide, and usually affects several individuals (WHO, 2020).

According to WHO, a pandemic is considered to have emerged only when it meets the three following conditions:

- The emergence of a disease that the population has not been exposed to before,
- The disease spreads easily and constantly.
- An epidemic that spreads globally.

As of May 30 2021, 236 countries, areas or territories around the world have reported a total of 169.597.415 confirmed cases of COVID-19 including 3.0530.582 deaths. As of May 26 2021, a total of 1.546.316.352 vaccine doses have been administered (WHO, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic puts countries and their governments in an unprecedented situation never experienced before (Rieger & Wang, 2020). The ongoing spread of the coronavirus around the world has prompted many countries to take various protective measures to manage the crisis with the most effective way. They implement preventive policies depending on the situation of the pandemic. Several governments are currently implementing these measures to decrease the spread of COVID-19 (covid19-survey.org).

Some of these measures disrupt the everyday life substantially. These measures can be listed as follows; lockdowns in cities, closures of schools and workplaces, transition to online learning, cancellation of public events, restrictions on national movements, reducing social mobility and economic activity to the minimum level possible, working from home to slow down the spread of the infections (Hale et al., 2020)

Public trust is a fundamental requirement to ensure good governance in all political systems. According to the literature review, there are various determinants for public trust in governments such as health conditions of people, income and education, freedom of press. Public trust in government especially in times of crisis is very important for handling these unpredictable events (Gozgor, 2020). As public trust increases, governments can govern more effectively (Cooper et al. 2008).

This study aims to measure the effect of the preventive policies on public as well as measuring the public's trust in the government. The study examines the determinants of public trust in governments during COVID-19 and the associations between them. The study also aims to determine the protective measures that governments prefer by using association rules of data mining algorithms. By this means, double and triple action packages can be presented to countries.

This study uses a dataset from a large-scale survey covering respondents from more than 170 countries. The data was collected as of March, 2020 onwards (data collection is ongoing) using snowball sampling with more than 100.000 participants through a survey whose data collection is still ongoing (Fetzer et al., 2020). Data analysis was performed using the R language and RStudio software that is dedicated to sustainable investment in free and open-source software for data science (RStudio, 2021).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The introduction section describes the general perspective of the chapter. The background section includes literature review of the related articles. The focus of chapter section presents the main idea and the applied methodology. The solutions and recommendations section presents the results of the analysis and discusses solutions and recommendations

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