

A Psychosocial Evaluation of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Koronavirüs Pandemisine Yönelik Psikolojik Bir Değerlendirme

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Abstract

In this study, the coronavirus pandemic process, which caused a global crisis, was evaluated in the framework of some psychological theories. This pandemic, in which the whole world goes through and is affected at the same time, has many consequences both on social and individual levels. The current age of technology seems to have opened new doors to humanity during the pandemic. Despite curfews and physical distance rules in many countries, people can continue their business, shop and socialize through virtual platforms. In this process, people are looking for new ways to adapt to existing conditions and try to cope with negative emotions such as fear, anxiety and stress created by the pandemic. Along with the Coronavirus pandemic causing a global crisis, it has been thought that there are similar tendencies in the behavior and attitudes of individuals and all humanity to cope with the process. Pandemic process is handled from the perspective of social trauma and in this study, explanations are given in terms of helping behavior, coping and well-being within the framework of terror management theory.

Keywords: Coronavirus, pandemic, global trauma, terror management theory, well-being

Öz

Bu çalışmada, küresel bir krize sebep olan Koronavirüs pandemi süreci Terör Yönetimi Kuramı çerçevesinde değerlendirilerek ele alınmıştır. Tüm dünyanın aynı anda içinden geçtiği ve etkilendiği bu salgın sürecinin hem toplumsal hem de bireysel düzlemde birçok sonucu bulunmaktadır. İçinde bulunulan teknoloji çağı, salgın sürecinde insanlığa yeni kapılar aralamış görünmektedir. Pek çok ülkede sokağa çıkma yasakları ve fiziksel mesafe kurallarına rağmen insanlar, sanal platformlar yoluyla işlerine devam edebilmekte, alışverişlerini yapabilmekte ve sosyalleşebilmektedir. Bu süreçte insanlar mevcut şartlara uyumlanabilecekleri yeni yollar aramakta ve pandeminin yarattığı korku, kaygı ve stres gibi olumsuz duygularla baş etmeye çalışmaktadır. Küresel bir krize sebep olan Koronavirüs pandemisi ile birlikte bireylerin ve tüm insanlığın davranış ve tutumlarında süreçle baş etmek için benzer eğilimler olduğu düşünülmektedir. Pandemi süreci toplumsal travma perspektifinden ele alınmış olup bu çalışmada, terör yönetimi kuramı çerçevesinde yardım etme davranışı, baş etme ve iyi oluş kavramları açısından açıklamalara yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Koronavirüs, pandemi, küresel travma, terör yönetimi kuramı, iyi oluş

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THROUGHOUT the history of humanity, it is possible to come across different situations such as war, famine, epidemic or disaster, in which individuals frequently faced death and the fear of death interrupted daily life. In order to survive in such times, people have sought ways to cope with the fear of death that occurred, sometimes with active and sometimes passive resistance. Today, like the situations that triggered the birth of a new age for humanity with different life crises at different times and have massive effects, today, people are trying to survive under the influence of a global epidemic and the atmosphere created by it. The coronavirus pandemic, which started in China and has become a common and acute problem of all countries of the world, has brought people to death threat regardless of ethnic origin, religion, socioeconomic level, cultural structure or geography. In this period when life threats are felt intensely, some individual and social psychological effects may arise in issues such as thinking about death and the life cycle, awareness of being mortal and trying to cope with this awareness. News from different parts of the world show that there are people who are intensely anxious about staying in quarantine, trying to stock up at home by shopping too much in the markets, and who make intense efforts to buy many products such as toilet paper and pasta (Asmundson and Taylor 2020, Garfin et al. 2020, McCarthy 2020, Suryawanshi 2020).

Based on this in the present study; how the coronavirus pandemic process has psychological effects on the individual and social dimensions and what the strengths can be in individual and social coping with this process are discussed in the light of the psychology literature together with its social and cultural dimensions. For this purpose, starting from Freud, the theoretical foundations that deal with the fact that humans are mortal and their confrontation with this reality, as well as trying to explain the survival behavior of people will be briefly mentioned, and then, within the framework of the Terror Management Theory (TMT), explanations regarding the reactions observed in individuals during the pandemic process will be made.

From conflict of death and life to terror management theory

Freud mentions the existence of death and life instincts, which he claimed to cause a fundamental internal conflict in humans. According to him, the death instinct is destructive, and although it sometimes turns to the environment, sometimes it has a system that works with the heart to destroy one's own existence. On the other hand, the life instinct is the life energy that provides the basic motivation that a person needs to survive and is in a strong struggle with the death instinct (Freud 1996). While Freud defines the opposition of life and death as a part of man's own existence, he seems to refer to the dark and light face of man and his potential to be good and evil at the same time.

The death instinct is often described in relation to the aggressive instinct that is thought to be part of human nature, and is described as the desire for one to attain absolute stillness, that is, death. Freud named this death instinct, which he described as destructive, after the son of Nyx, known as the night goddess in Greek mythology, and Thanatos, the god of death

(Freud 1996). Freud, who frequently refers to Greek Mythology while shaping his theory, positions Eros as the life instinct directly opposite the death instinct, Thanatos. Even though the life instinct may seem like a survival motivation, it actually does not only individual function. The life instinct also has a social functionality that includes love, affection and creativity and protects survival beyond the individual dimension with the continuity of the species, that is, sexuality (Freud 1996).

Although Freud and the scientists who came after him had different opinions on these life and death instincts, it would not be wrong to say that these two have different aspects that serve humans in a balance. So, how can traumatic experiences such as war, disaster, etc. relate to all this life-death balance?

According to Freud (2014), trauma is an invasion of the self and this invasion desires to return to absolute stillness by activating the death drive. Psychoanalyst Erlich (2017) adds to Freud's definition of the invaded self that the being that feels alive and connected (belonging) can no longer feel alive and connected. According to Erlich (2017), in traumatic situations, not only the ability of the individual to adapt, but also the capacity of creating and continuing existence, which he defines as the "modality of being", is damaged, that is, the individual experiences the modality of "being" as "non-being" and experiences mental death. While "modality of being" is defined as a concept that also refers to social belonging, it is stated that the traumatic experiences of the society are treated through the emotions, values, beliefs and ideologies shared by the individuals in the society and community leadership (Erlich 2017).

While Freud (1949) states that individuals make narcissistic investments for the social structures they belong to, he refers to the fact that when faced with negative life events, if the in-group libidinal (sexual) structure and emotional adjustment are damaged, the experience can turn into a traumatic experience. In a traumatized society, the dissolution in the libidinal structure is reconstructed on the basis of external reality and factual realities, and the groundwork is laid for the meaning of life (Erlich 2017). As it can be understood from that, traumatic experiences require the realignment of the libidinal structure that is shaken in the social dimension as well as in the individual dimension. In the process of restoring harmony, new belonging to individuals may develop and individual treatment is also helped by balancing the libidinal structure in the new or existing groups in which these individuals belong.

Social belongings are essential for human beings, who are social creatures, and individuals cannot be thought of as lacking a moral system in which to be evaluated because of their actions. At this point, it may be appropriate to examine the dimensions of "security" and the subsequent "belonging and love", which Maslow mentions in the Hierarchy of Needs, who offers a different view from psychoanalysts. According to Maslow, the need for security, which comes after basic physiological needs, requires people to be part of a system that minimizes the threat to life, not as an individual, but within a community.

Meeting the need for security by laws and/or the customs and traditions of the community to which it belongs offers people the feeling that they are in a safe environment that does not require them to defend against external threats in order to survive (Maslow and Lewis 1987). Similarly, individuals who pursue a sense of security and who, as part of a community, can be loved by, belong to, and love others in that community, can tailor their behavior to the rules of the community to satisfy their need for love and approval. In this way, people believe that nothing bad will happen to them if they act in accordance with the law or the rules set by the society. With this basic belief, they do not need to feel any fear and anxiety in their daily lives and in fact, they perceive the world, events and people as controllable, as referred to by Janoff-Bulman's World Assumptions Theory. Janoff-Bulman (1989) argues that as long as these basic assumptions are not distorted by traumatic experiences, individuals have beliefs that the world and people are good, that everything is fair in life, that life is controllable, not accidental, and that they are good and valuable. Having belief in the just world also makes you feel that you can have control over the world (Lerner and Simmons 1966). Traumatic experiences can cause a jolt in our cognitive beliefs and schemas we have towards people and the world, as they are events that bring death closer and remind us of death, and as explained in the theory, force the limits and definitions of life that were previously functional and safe for the individual (Janoff-Bulman et al. 1998).

Based on Freud's (1996) views on death and Becker's (1973) discourses about humanity's avoidance of mortality, Terror Management Theory (TMT), which was developed by Solomon et al. (1991), is similar to the theory of Janoff-Bulman. The theory speaks of beliefs about the world, other people, and the self. TMT tries to explain how the mortal man copes with this existential anxiety. As Freud also mentioned, in the theory, it is emphasized that human beings are born with a life instinct and that the human being who has an intellectual side is also conscious of his own mortality (Becker 1973, Rosenblatt et al.1989). The desire to survive and be immortal on the one hand, and death one day on the other, seems to create a difficult conflict for people to deal with. According to TMT, instead of remembering the fact that they are mortal frequently in their daily lives, they attribute a meaning to their lives in order to continue their lives with the effect of their life instinct (Leary 2004, Pyszczynski et al. 2003, Solomon et al. 1991). This meaning attributed to life can actually be thought of as a belief system that enables people to understand themselves and the environment. While this belief system provides the person with a cultural worldview, the environment, the world and other people are adopted as being controllable, reliable and good, and as long as the person behaves in accordance with his belief system and cultural worldview, he/she can keep the perception that his self is valuable.

In terms of TMT, when a person adopts a cultural worldview and gives meaning to his/her life, he/she can cope with the fact that he/she is mortal, and since he/she defines himself/herself with his cultural worldview, he/she guarantees his/her own immortality as long as his/her worldview exists (Solomon et al.1991). Similarly, in order to cope with the

awareness of being mortal, it is stated that people tend to leave a concrete product that will exist after them, such as a child, a book or a work of art (Leary 2004). Such concrete products can actually be considered as a desire to reach immortality with a worldview, contributing to the continuity of one's own cultural worldview. From the point of view of TMT, it is expected that the fact that traumatic experiences reveal mortality awareness, which is tried to be ignored, would attract individuals to their small social environment in a way that strengthens social belongings (Pyszczynski et al.2003). In this way, people may be pulling their lives to the limits they know and can control while at the same time trying to meet their unsettled security needs.

Fear of death and socialization of trauma

Although it is theoretically known that psychological traumas can only affect individuals on an individual level or can have a social dimension that can affect a family, a group or a nation; the idea that it is difficult to differentiate in practice and that even individually defined experiences can have an impact on a social system such as the butterfly effect is often overlooked. However, traumatic events that can affect a large number of people and masses as of their emergence are frequently defined as social trauma (Kasapoğlu 2007, Zara 2018). Such as disasters, wars or terrorist bombings.

The fact that the traumatic event was created naturally or manmade, and also it was deliberate or involuntary, are seen as factors that can determine the degree of psychological destruction on people (Kanel 2015, Lowe et al.2020). In addition, in social traumas, factors such as how many people were affected by this event and the fact that this event happened to a certain social group that belonged are also factors that affect the meaning of the traumatic event and how to cope with the process (Hutchison 2010, Muldoon and Lowe 2012).

When it comes to difficult life events, it is seen that the events are evaluated in many different contexts such as economic, political, sociological and psychological for cases of mass influences, although it varies from person to person whether it is attributed to traumatic or not (Kasapoğlu 2007). Looking at the example of the Second World War, it would not be wrong to say that even though all countries of the world did not take part in the war, it had effects on the lives of the people of the period in many different dimensions such as economic, commercial, military and public health. On the one hand, there is an ongoing genocide, occupied cities, displaced people, fear, commercial activities coming to a halt and especially in Europe, the deterioration of the daily rhythm of life... Or, the Sandy and Katrina Hurricanes that hit America... Disasters where cities are destroyed and people lost their lives... Such adverse life events can lead to intense psychological distress, bringing people to death, sometimes feeling a danger to their own lives and the lives of loved ones (Kanel 2015).

Based on this general information, it is possible to explain the effects of the social

dimension of the traumatic event on the individual level by considering the above-mentioned theoretical framework. For example, for an individual suffering from war trauma, the borders of the country he/she belongs to may be unclear, and many situations such as deaths, bomb attacks or direct threats to his/her own bodily integrity can make it impossible for him/her to maintain his/her daily life. And the person may think that the world and humanity are not that good. Or, after a disaster, the belief that life is controllable for survivors in an environment where homes have become unusable and people have lost their lives may no longer function. At this point, while Janoff-Bulman's theory explains cognitive changes after traumatic experiences, it can be stated that in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, breaks begin in the steps of security and belonging. Depending on the severity of the traumatic event and the destruction it creates on the person, individuals may begin to question whether they are still safe in the place, time and society they think they are safe (Hutchison 2010, Kanel 2015).

Inquiries that start after traumatic experiences with the aim of making sense of the event and the events can often lead individuals to the question of "why me?". And it is known that after the traumatic event, it can be seen that negative attributions of individuals about themselves can emerge (Startup et al.2007, Zara 2018).

It is true that the terrifying nature of a traumatic experience makes the individual question himself, others and his beliefs about the world. However after such experiences, why do people often change their positive attributes of their self with negative attributes? This information raises the question of whether negative attributions to the ego can be explained by the death instinct that Freud mentioned. The death instinct, which seeks absolute serenity in the conflict of survival with the awareness of being mortal, which is visible through traumatic experiences, may be the initiator of an inner destruction with aggression and anger. In addition, people may attribute to themselves the cause of the horrifying event rather than changing their attribution to other people and the world (Landsman 2002). They may be doing this for the sake of staying safe in their community and remaining a part of that community. Similarly, according to TMT, adhering to a cultural worldview seems to give individuals the opportunity to attain immortality through their own cultural worldview (Leary 2004, Solomon et al. 1991). Belonging to a group enables the individual to maintain self-esteem, receive social support from group members, and feel better (Tajfel and Turner 1979), and in this respect, belonging to a group protects the individual's self while meeting the need for security. Therefore, belonging offers a functional area in terms of the symbolic immortality of TMT. In summary, as long as a person serves the cultural worldview that he/she believes and feels belong to, he/she can cope with the awareness of being mortal with the belief that his/her own cultural worldview will also exist after him.

From social trauma to global trauma: Coronavirus

The coronavirus pandemic, which emerged in China and spread all over the world very

quickly and became a common problem of all countries and humanity today, poses a vital threat to all people. Although being elderly, having chronic diseases, being a man, and smoking increase the risk of fall ill and death (Jordan et al.2020), it would not be wrong to say that such a situation, which equates people in the reality of being mortal, is rare all over the world. It is seen that early in the process, the failure of the world states to agree on a prepared and joint action plan on the possible effects of the pandemic and the measures to be taken, has negative effects. With the increase in the number of cases day by day, it is observed that curfews, working from home and distance education systems are activated as much as possible in many countries. Although it is known that production has come to a halt in many countries due to the virus epidemic and serious economic problems have arisen (Fernandes 2020); the policies implemented aim to eliminate the threat to life and point out that all humanity, including those in the country's governments, is at similar risk.

Considering that the number of deaths around the world today is close to 250 thousand, it is seen that the information spread on social media about mass deaths, the physiological effects of the disease and the risk of transmission, which does not reflect the truth, has an effect that feeds fear in the society (Kırık and Özkoçak 2020, Van Bavel et al.2020). However, it has been observed that the risk of death in a pandemic is related to the strength of the immune system, and therefore, the importance of healthy and balanced nutrition, regular exercise and quality sleep is often emphasized by experts, and people are directed to activities that nurture their psychological well-being (Xiao et al.2020).

In addition to these, it is reported that people who should still be on active duty, especially healthcare professionals, and their families are in a more critical situation in terms of transmission risk (Xiao et al.2020). In the process of applying quarantine all over the world, it was observed that grocery shopping increased and many products started to be stocked (Asmundson and Taylor 2020, Garfin et al.2020, McCarty 2020, Suryawanshi and More 2020). Besides, in this process, it is known that there are families who are unemployed and cannot meet their basic needs, and therefore these people are considered to be at risk in terms of health along with poverty. While everyone is said to be at risk of the pandemic, on the other hand, the presence of more sensitive groups seems to create a contradiction, in the light of new social awareness, despite physical distance, it is seen that people are beginning to unite on a higher denominator that strengthens social ties.

In this period, it is seen that social cooperation, social support, being able to produce something and creativity that will contribute to well-being increased. It can be said that people exist not only for their own society and themselves, but as part of humanity trying to deal with the pandemic on a global scale. In this respect, it is observed that many institutional structures and especially famous people have a mission to instill hope in all humanity in the fight against the pandemic.

The fact that the coronavirus pandemic poses a life threat even in developed countries such as America, England and European countries and changes the course of daily life, countries

are competing with each other for the sake of buying masks, strengthens the perception that the pandemic is a threat to all humanity. It is clear that in such a process, an individual or nationwide coping will not be enough. Even if all cases are cured and sterilization is achieved in any country, it will not be possible to ensure the continuity of sterilization unless there is a global measure and way of coping with the virus. When the coronavirus pandemic is considered in terms of process, it is the common war of all humanity on a global scale. With this feature, it can be said that, with the TMT perspective, it triggers the human awareness of being mortal and threatens the existence of the human species rather than the individual dimension, risking the human desire to reach immortality. Considering that the pandemic poses a mortal threat only to the human species, it is thought that individuals may have worried about the existence of humanity. In this process, the increase of conspiracy theories, especially on social media, can help to understand the effect of existential anxiety on people. In this respect, beyond the cultural worldviews to which it belongs, concerns about the existence of humanity seem to unite the whole world under the roof of "humanity". Under this roof of which individuals are a member, they feel closer to each other and unite in the upper social identity as a new resource to cope with the stress created by the pandemic. Combining with the identity of humanity against coronavirus also seems to make it easier to see every individual on earth as a member of the inner group. For this reason, the whole world trying to cope with the same virus simultaneously, it is suggested that all humanity may gather in the same group against the common enemy and develop a higher identity beyond the national identities. In this global trauma, the fact that people who try to feel their existence have this global identity feeds the belief of immortality and increases the sense of belonging (Haslam et al.2005, Tajfel and Turner 1979, Tajfel and Turner 1986). It is stated that belonging to a group opens a door that serves people's well-being by making them feel that they are not alone. Therefore, the next section is devoted to broader explanations of well-being.

Pandemic and well-being

The negative experiences by the individual may cause some physical symptoms. The accumulated negative effects of the stress are mentioned in individuals who have been in a negative and anxious environment for a long time (Karstoft et al.2015). With this information, it is seen that the coronavirus pandemic, which has been on the world agenda since December and changed daily life greatly with the first case seen in March in Turkey, created a long-term and anxiety-causing environment. It is thought that the stress that occurs in people's daily lives with the pandemic is a factor that negatively affects their well-being, and also disrupts the individuals' quality of life, general satisfaction and positive affect. It is known in the literature that the most critical method of coping with stress is social support (Haslam et al.2005, Saygın and Arslan 2009, Siewert et al.2011). Accordingly, thanks to the social support from the environment, people become more able to cope with stress, the quality of life of individuals increases, their sense of loneliness decreases and they feel better

and are more satisfied with their lives. It is seen that it directs individuals to communicate through virtual platforms. Considering the role of social support in coping with stress, it cannot be denied that the use of social media during the pandemic process has positive effects in terms of sharing experience, understanding and communicating with other people. In this way, people have found the opportunity to reach their loved ones they could not be together. Although social media has increased the anxiety level of individuals from time to time with the potential of information pollution or the rapid spread of fabricated news, it also seems to allow individuals to express emotions and contribute to their social support mechanisms as a platform that brings individuals together on a common ground. In addition to increasing the use of social media and virtual communication platforms, the common feelings and experiences from different geographies may have ensured the unification in the upper identity of “being a part of the human species” and may have emerged as a source of support in coping with the process. With a universal upper identity in the fight against coronavirus, people can access social support from all over the world, even if they have different sub-identities, feel that they are not alone and other people understand themselves (Asmundson and Taylor 2020, Garfin et al.2020, McCarthy 2020, Suryawanshi and More 2020).

In countries where coronavirus cases are beginning to occur, governments advise their citizens to stay at their homes, not go out to prevent the epidemic, and curfews are declared in some countries. Although faced with a deadly epidemic, some people do not obey this prohibition and continue to go out; or they do not take precautions such as physical distance and use of masks (Asmundson and Taylor 2020, Garfin et al.2020, McCarthy 2020, Suryawanshi and More 2020). Even if they are at risk of death in the end, many people prefer to be on the streets because they are bored with staying home. It is thought that the reasons such as being bored with staying at home, not being alone, not being able to produce an idea about how to spend time may be related to the person’s capacity to be alone and the meaning to his/her life. When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that whether individuals have a meaningful and qualified life or not is an important criterion for survival motivation (Diener et al.2010, Keyes et al.2002). Similarly, according to Terror Management Theory, life instinct attribute individuals to find their meaning of lives, and individuals feel valuable as a part of their cultural worldview (Solomon et al. 1991). When the individual’s worthiness, meaningfulness of life and life instinct are considered from this point of view, it can be considered as a mechanism that works together. It is observed that when people believe that they are valuable, their lives have a meaning, and they are worth for living, they cling to life more, take responsibility, and actually become more productive (Harland et al.2007, Saran et al.2011). Considering this theoretical background, it is predicted that individuals who find their life meaningful, have social support, devote time to various hobbies, and see staying at home as an opportunity to devote time to themselves may be more adapted to the call to stay during the pandemic process (Asmundson and Taylor 2020, Garfin.

et al.2020, McCarthy 2020, Suryawanshi and More 2020). Basically, based on the life instinct on which Terror Management Theory is based, it is thought that finding life meaningful affects whether individuals take risks against a deadly virus, and they stay at home (Solomon et al.1991). At this point, it is thought that the individual who thinks that his/her life is quality and meaningful, tries to be more protected from the epidemic by staying at home, and takes less risks with responsibility to prevent the spread of the disease. Likewise, if the person is not satisfied with his/her life in general and thinks that he/she does not have a quality and meaningful life, he/she may show less obedience to “stay at home” calls by taking risks. The person’s instinct life can actually be considered as a factor that reduces risk-taking behavior and increases staying at home.

The perception that the whole world is united in universal upper identity seems to cause individuals to benefit from a global social support network. At this point, it is obvious that technological developments make it easier to get news from all over the world and help people to update themselves quickly on how to fight the same virus anywhere in the world. Similarly, individuals communicate with each other over kilometers, especially through social media and different communication channels supported by the Internet, and can access the social support, even when they are alone and in home quarantine (Garfin et al.2020). For example, people from different parts of the world who are watching when they are singing on their balconies at 6 pm on social media simultaneously in Italy, lived this atmosphere together, and shared common feelings with them. Sharing feelings and experiences seems to offer a functional way to deal with the stress of this process that unites people on common grounds. This sense of unity makes it easier to cope, and also serves the well-being of people and foster hope.

Pandemic and helping behavior

Helping behavior is defined as behaviors made to benefit another individual (Oswald 2000). When the whole world is trying to cope with the same difficult situation and faced with the death threat in this period, the news draw the attention that people cooperate more with primitive impulses and helping behaviors are frequently increasing. In Turkey, after the promulgation of curfew has been created new helping groups on social media for 65+ and people with chronic illnesses. Some people took action to meet the basic needs of those who were close to them and could not leave their homes due to the ban, and anonymous benefactors appeared in different provinces and neighborhoods who paid their grocery and butcher debts.

Helping behavior and collaboration culture that emerges after such stressful events affecting a large part of the society can be considered as an actioned version of social support system. In this respect, it is thought that helping behaviors have an aspect which serves social well-being during the pandemic process.

When the literature is examined, there are different theories for explaining helping

behavior. It is worth mentioning how the helping behavior observed during the coronavirus pandemic process is handled by different theories.

It is claimed that the Social Responsibility Norm is effective in increasing helping behavior. According to the Social Responsibility Norm, individuals are more willing to help by using their own resources when someone from their group needs help. According to the ethical rules of many societies, when someone who needs help is seen in that society, it should definitely be helped (Glavas 2016, Sen et al.2016, Welp and Brown 2014, Zebel et al.2009). The coronavirus pandemic, which is a globally affected situation, also pushes individuals to evaluate in terms of equity. There are economic injustices especially in the treatment process, and thus it is observed that people tend to help hospitals with gloves, masks and helping other people in need for soap and disinfectant.

When helping behavior is examining in terms of cultural differences, an important problem experienced by a Turkish and Syrian student was mentioned in a study. In situations where the problem was vital importance, helping behavior did not differ. This situation shows us that is no difference between social responsibility in both cultures for life-threatening situations such as the coronavirus pandemic, uniting against this threat as mentioned with TMT and consequently helping behavior (Caniöz 2019; Solomon et al. 1991). This suggests that when it threatens to life, cultural differences may be giving way to a humanistic and existential perspective.

When the social learning theory was examined, it is stated that helping behavior can also be a model based on the fact that individuals tend to learn by modeling each other (Bandura 1977). Considering helping behavior towards the coronavirus pandemic, it is seen that the famous and modeled individuals in the society initiate aid campaigns to meet the hospital and other needs. It was also observed that other individuals following them also provided financial support, and thus, the amount of assistance met the needs in a short time.

When it is examined in terms of the negative-state relief model, we were expected to feel anxious, sad and tired against this disease that affects everyone globally. The model was developed by Schaller and Cialdini (1988). It seems possible to explain the behaviors of all societies and countries towards meeting the material and spiritual needs with the negative-state relief model. Social support provided to citizens in quarantine in other countries, aid campaigns and social media can be considered as examples of this approach.

It has been proven by many research findings that empathy is one of the main determinants of helping behavior and increases helping behavior (Caniöz and Coskun 2019, Eisenberg et al.2010, Zebel et al.2009). For all humanity who experienced similar experiences in recent times as the pandemic process, they are similar and feeling closer to each other. For this reason, it is thought that helping behavior towards individuals who need and feel empathy during this pandemic process has increased.

According to the increase in helping behavior in this process brings to mind the question

of whether Freud's life and death instincts may have triggered. Narcissistic investment in the groups to which people belong (Freud 1949) and life instinct that is by helping other people with the side of eros, include survival, creativity and love. He/She seems to be able to protect his own well-being and existence through the well-being of another.

Finally, to Terror Management Theory, the individual is aware that he/she is mortal and cope with this awareness. He/She is motivated to make sense of his/her life and to show behaviors that make him/her feel immortal. Among these symbolic acts of immortality, helping behaviors are also included. It is known that as individuals become more aware of their own death possibilities, they help more and they need to display more beneficial behavior in terms of religion (Rosenblatt et al. 1989, Solomon et al. 1991). From this point of view, both helping behaviors observed during the pandemic process seem understandable, and it is also functional as a method of coping with individual and social well-being.

Many research findings in the literature show that helping individuals feel better (Doğan 2012, Kasapoğlu 2014). After the global trauma, it is predicted that individuals will be able to overcome this trauma more easily by helping each other and their individual well-being will change positively by coping with the stress reactions.

Conclusion

In this study the coronavirus pandemic, which has become a global problem, helping behavior, well-being and coping are discussed in the light of Terror Management Theory. In this process, which is accepted as a pandemic by the World Health Organization, it is seen that strict measures have been taken, the quarantine state has started and continues, and people often experience anxiety and fear in many countries.

In such epidemic situations, every individual bears a responsibility to humanity in terms of public health, beyond individual preferences. In addition to this, there is a process in which new roles and responsibilities that serve collective existence, such as helping others with the "humanity" upper identity, supporting other people for their well-being, and producing and creating for both the world and humanity. It would not be wrong to say that global communication has increased with the support of the internet and virtual platforms. Based on the argument of the Terror Management Theory that people who face the fact that they are mortal will turn more towards the group they feel belong to and will increase communication with that group. Increasing communication, cooperation and helping behaviors during the pandemic process can be interpreted as humanity's attempts to strengthen its existence in coping with this disaster.

When considered on the basis of Freud's death and life instincts, it can be said that the pandemic process reveals the awareness of being mortal. However, when considered in terms of new belongings and upper identity development, it is seen that emotional harmony and libidinal system preserve their functionality. In addition, it is thought that life instinct together with hope that humanity puts on the fight against this epidemic, triggers

people in the dimensions of being, producing, helping and being functional. The increase in communication on a global scale shows that the symbolic immortality attributed to the existence of humanity and the motivation to be productive for humanity is activated, as indicated by the Terror Management Theory. However, streets, workplaces, shopping malls or a restaurant, which we perceived as safe areas until yesterday, seem to be no longer safe with the current conditions. The confrontation of the process with awareness of being mortal and the change in the definition of safe place suggests that the “controllable world” belief may begin to differentiate, trigger helping behavior with the belief that world is a fair place.

Considering that the pandemic process continues, it is unclear how people’s beliefs about the world, the meaning they attribute to life and their belonging to being a part of humanity will change at the end of the process. In addition, with the death of thousands of people every day, it is still unclear how death will shape its effect on the emotional harmony and libidinal system of society and even humanity. However, it is important to examine this process with short and long-term individual, social and intercultural studies in terms of preparation for a similar process and community mental health. It is also thought that these studies will also be a guide in the treatment studies for the psychological effects of the pandemic.

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