



## The Situation of Feeling the Effect of Religion in Individuals Who Play and Do Not Do Sports in the Covid-19 Process

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of religion in individuals who do and do not do sports during the Covid-19 process, according to some parameters. For this purpose, the "Scale of Feeling the Influence of Religion", filled by 275 people, 131 men and 144 women, was evaluated. Independent t-test, one-way analysis of variance and LSD tests were used in statistical operations. There was no statistically significant difference between gender, students and non-student feeling the influence of religion ( $p>0.05$ ). A statistically significant difference was found between those who do sports and those who do not, and those who have had an outbreak of Covid-19 and those who have not, in terms of feeling the influence of religion ( $p<0.05$ ). Those who do not do sports feel the influence of religion more than those who do sports and those who have a disease than those who do not. The scores of feeling the influence of religion were found to be statistically different according to educational status and smoking status ( $p<0.001$ ). University graduates feel the influence of religion more than undergraduate students. Again, non-smokers feel the influence of religion more than smokers. As a result, it was concluded that the Covid-19 epidemic caused people to feel the effect of religion more. It has been concluded that while feeling the influence of religion during the Covid-19 epidemic process is similar according to gender, it varies according to the status of having a disease, education status and smoking status. Sports and non-smokers are more likely to feel the influence of religion. In addition to getting counseling on religious issues, it is recommended that people do sports and stay away from harmful habits such as smoking.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Sports, Educational Status, Occupation, Religion.

### INTRODUCTION

Corona virus (CoV) is a large group of viruses that can cause disease in humans and wildlife (Lu et al., 2020). The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, which started in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and spread to other parts of the world, has become a global health threat (CAO et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Covid-19 outbreak, which threatens the whole world, a "pandemic", meaning a global epidemic (Ghebreyesus, 2020; Cucinotta and Vanelli, 2020). The measures implemented in response to this highly contagious disease have kept many people at home and unfortunately negatively impacted many aspects of their lives (Brooks et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2020). Researchers and clinicians have expressed concern about the potential negative effects of COVID-19 on the mental health of the general population (Ornell et al., 2020). The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) work in an ongoing relationship to protect health, promote sporting activity and ensure the health of athletes (IOC, 2020). The coronavirus pandemic changes the social structure of society and isolates people. This situation has affected people's psychology both directly and indirectly (Kansu & Hızlı Sayar, 2018). During the coronavirus pandemic, there have been

many changes in religious orientations shaped by the need for psychological help and different perspectives on the isolation of people. In addition to its psychological effects on people, this pandemic can also negatively affect attitudes towards religion and all other areas of life (Balcı, 2020). Since sport is a social institution, its relationship with religion has become increasingly important (Bölükbaşı & Kılıcıgil, 2004). Additionally, the widespread implementation of social distancing measures due to the pandemic can have physical and psychological effects, primarily on performance athletes (Tekkurşun et al., 2020; Bıyık and Doğan, 2023; Erail and Uzun, 2023). In addition to the social aspect of sports, it is a fact that the religious aspect of athletes is an impressive parameter in success. In sports, as in religion, there are some rules and prohibitions. Religions have introduced basic commands and prohibitions to limit and discipline people's desires and wishes in certain situations. In divine religions there is an acceptance of certain situations by a person or a society. People comprehend and accept the existence of a power above themselves and what they need (Taylan, 1979).

There has been research indicating that the Covid-19 pandemic can cause many psychological negative effects on people. The potential of being caught in the Covid-19 pandemic can cause severe stress, panic attacks, chronic anxiety and anxiety, fear, feelings of hopelessness, poor patience and depression, low performance and decreased quality of life, loss of loved ones and death (Aksoy et al.,2022; Ataman et al.,2021; Doğan and İmamoğlu,2020; İmamoğlu and Doğan,2020; Öğütçü,2022; Yamak and İmamoğlu,2019; Yamaner et al.,2020; Çebi et al.,2021). Many attitudes such as the tendency of individuals who do not have religious beliefs to believe, the increase in the fulfillment of religious duties (worship) by people who do not fulfill religious duties, and people who consume products that are forbidden in their beliefs to stop consuming them can occur more in extraordinary processes (Okumuş, 2020 a,b). In one study, it was stated that there was an unusual stage in the pandemic process that led to an increase in religious orientation (Kaplan et al., 2020). It is stated that religion plays an essential role in resolving the pandemic and its multifaceted consequences as a whole (Choudhury, 2020). It is thought that people may increase their devotion to God and religion for reasons such as fear of the Covid-19 pandemic. The helplessness of people against the coronavirus may lead them to seek refuge and help from a higher power when they are powerless. It is thought that this tendency will be more especially among Muslims. Because in the Qur'an, Surah Kahf, Verse 39 states that "There is no true power other than Allah" (<https://www.kuranmeali.com/>). In this context, it was aimed to examine the changes in the situation of the individual in the

Covid-19 process in line with both personal reasons and religious reasons according to various variables.

## METHOD

### Research group (population-sample)

The research was conducted on a total of 275 people, 131 men and 144 women, with an average age of 24.36 years for women and 28.79 years for men. Since the data were collected through Google Forms, the participants voluntarily participated in the research.

### Data collection tools

The Scale for Feeling the Impact of Religion was first designed by Yapıcı and Zengin (2003b) in Turkey. The Scale for Feeling the Impact of Religion applied in this study is the scale designed by Yapıcı (2006). The scale consists of 19 items. Likert-type "Feeling the Impact of Religion Scale" was used. Each item was ranked from the most negative to the most positive in terms of strength as "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", "agree" and "strongly agree" and was scored as 1, 2, 3 and 4 points (Yapıcı, 2006). A high score on this scale is considered positive.

### Data analysis

SPSS 25.00 package program was used in statistical procedures. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to test whether the data were normally distributed and it was determined that the data were normally distributed. Independent t-test, one-way analysis of variance and LSD tests were used in statistical procedures.

### Ethics Committee Report

It was taken by Ondokuz Mayıs University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee with the decision number 2022-609 dated 30.06.2022.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1. Comparison of Anthropometric Characteristics According to Gender**

	Gender	N	Average	S.d	t	p
Age	Woman	144	24,36	13,40	3,94	0,000**
	Male	131	28,79	7,60		
Boy	Woman	144	163,88	7,66	-18,48	0,000**
	Male	131	178,90	5,50		
Painfulness	Woman	144	65,40	11,79	-8,75	0,000**
	Male	131	76,70	10,16		

When the anthropometric characteristics of the participants were compared in the gender variable, a significant difference was found ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 2. Scale scores for Feeling the Impact of Religion by Gender and Occupational Status**

		N	Average	S.d	T	P
<b>Gender</b>	Woman	144	51,49	11,69	-0,63	0,525
	Male	131	52,36	10,78		
<b>Profession</b>	Student	96	51,42	11,63	-0,51	0,60
	Other	179	52,16	11,08		

There was no statistically significant difference between the feeling of the influence of religion according to gender and occupation ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table 3. Scale Scores of Feeling the Impact of Religion According to Sports Participation and Covid-19 Pandemic**

		N	Average	S.d	t	p
<b>Doing sports</b>	Doing it	127	50,12	9,98	-2,45	0,015*
	It doesn't	148	53,43	12,07		
<b>Covid-19 Pandemic</b>	I passed	142	53,71	11,85	2,78	0,006*
	I didn't	133	49,97	10,29		

There was a statistically significant difference ( $p<0.05$ ) in feeling the influence of religion according to the status of practicing sports and having Covid-19 pandemic. Those who do not do sports feel the influence of religion more than those who do sports and those who have had a disease feel the influence of religion more than those who have not.

**Table 4. Scale Scores of Feeling the Impact of Religion According to Educational Status and Smoking Status**

		N	Average	S.d	F/LSD	P
<b>Education Status</b>	High School (1)	54	53,43	11,86	8,36 3>2	0,000**
	Undergraduate Student (2)	180	50,15	11,36		
	University Graduate (3)	41	57,60	7,31		
	Total	275	51,90	11,26		
<b>Smoking Status</b>	Non-drinker (1)	119	54,81	10,39	7,29 1>2,3	0,001**
	Occasional Drinker (2)	59	49,86	10,60		
	Regular Drinker (3)	97	49,59	11,94		
	Total	275	51,91	11,26		

The scores of feeling the influence of religion according to education level and smoking status were found to be statistically different ( $p<0.001$ ). University graduates feel the influence of religion more than undergraduate students. Again, non-smokers felt the effect of religion more than smokers during the coronavirus process.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, age, height and body weight of males were higher than females. A significant difference was found when the anthropometric characteristics of the participants were compared in the gender variable ( $p<0.001$ ), (Table 1).

It is stated that women have a higher tendency towards religious indifference and disbelief compared to men (Bayyigit, 1989). Çalışır (2014) stated that female athletes have higher levels

of emotion, knowledge and religiosity than male athletes. Aydın (1995) states that men have a higher level of religious denial than women, and Bahadır (2002) states that women have more religious doubt than men. In this study, no statistically significant difference was found between feeling the influence of religion according to gender ( $p>0.05$ ). Although there is not a significant difference, the scores of men are higher than women. It is stated that there are many sociological and psychological reasons why university students' interest in religion decreases as they get older (Yapıcı 2006). It is stated that there is a significant relationship between religiosity and age (Yıldız, 2006). It is also stated that there is a weak but significant relationship between the level of religiosity of university students and age categories (Mehmedoğlu, 2006). On the other hand, as age increases, there is a tendency to increase in religious thoughts and behaviors (Hülür et al., 2003). In our study, the fact that there was no significant difference between feeling the effect of religion according to gender may be due to different reasons, personal characteristics, as well as sports training or sports they do. Because in some studies, death perception and anxiety were not affected by the corona virus process (Doğan and İmamoğlu, 2022; İmamoğlu and Doğan, 2022).

In a study conducted on occupational groups, it is stated that there is a difference between age groups in terms of experiencing religion more outwardly and whether religiosity is internalized or deepened (Kayıklık, 2000). In a study conducted with university students, both the tendency to disbelief and agnostic attitudes increased as the income status increased, and serious decreases in worship behaviors were revealed (Fırat, 1977). Demir (2017) found that the income group below the poverty line was more religious than the high income group. In this study, no statistically significant difference was found between feeling the influence of religion according to occupation ( $p>0.05$ ) (Table 2). The fact that the results of our study differ from the results of other researchers may be attributed to the difference in the subject group and the different characteristics.

Lyons (2013) stated in his study that the spirituality levels of individual athletes are higher than team athletes. In this study, a statistically significant difference was found between those who do sports and those who do not do sports in terms of feeling the influence of religion ( $p<0.05$ ). Individuals who do not do sports feel the effect of religion more than those who do sports. Again, the fact that those who do sports feel religion more than those who do not do sports may be due to the concern that they may encounter Covid-19 more in sports environments. Therefore, individuals who are infected with the Covid-19 pandemic or those

who feel more worried about being infected increase their belief in God and feel the effect of religion more.

It has been said that during the COVID-19 process, especially individuals who are infected with the virus and those who feel the feeling of death closely both turn to religion and attribute a religious meaning to such epidemics (Kalgı, 2021). Studies have shown that people turn to religion to overcome the effects of the pandemic on human psychology and that religion positively affects mental health (Koenig, 2018; Pirutinsky et al, 2019; Counted et al, 2020). In this study, a statistically significant difference was found in terms of feeling the effect of religion according to the Covid-19 pandemic ( $p < 0.05$ ). Individuals who have had a Covid-19 outbreak feel the impact of religion more than those who have not had a Covid-19 outbreak. In our research, the fact that those who have had an outbreak feel religion more than those who have not had an outbreak suggests that it is because they approach religion more out of fear.

It has been determined that there are significant differences between popular culture and religion, popular sports and religiosity, positive and negative effects of religion on sports, and the interaction of religion and sports (Akgül, 2014). In this study, the scores of feeling the influence of religion according to educational status were found to be statistically different ( $p < 0.001$ ). University graduates feel the influence of religion more than undergraduate students. The fact that undergraduate students have lower scores of feeling the influence of religion may be due to the fact that they are young and have filled their lives with more diverse activities. The fact that university graduates feel the influence of religion more than undergraduate students may be due to the fact that they are older than undergraduates, they may have more health problems, and they may have to work more.

It was determined that the behavior, knowledge and total religiosity levels of non-smoking athletes were higher than smoking athletes (Yorulmaz, 2019). In this study, the scores of feeling the effect of religion according to smoking status were found to be statistically different ( $p < 0.001$ ). Again, non-smokers feel the effect of religion more than smokers. The high score of non-smokers may be due to their religious beliefs. More precisely, they may be more religiously committed individuals. The fact that smokers feel the influence of religion more than non-smokers may be due to factors such as their poorer health, less confidence in their immunity, the fact that smokers have more difficulties in coping with Covid-19 than non-smokers and that they can catch Covid-19 more easily. There may also be reasons not related

to Covid-19, such as some people not smoking due to their religious feelings. In other words, some people with a higher level of religious commitment may not prefer to smoke.

As a result, it is concluded that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused people to feel the impact of religion more. While the situations of feeling the impact of religion during the Covid-19 pandemic process are similar according to gender and professions, it was concluded that it varies according to whether they have experienced the corona virus epidemic, education level and smoking status. Those who do sports and non-smokers felt the impact of religion more. Feeling the influence of religion may result in an increase in the status and anxiety of catching Covid-19. It is recommended that people receive counseling on religious issues as well as doing sports and staying away from harmful habits such as smoking.

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<b>Statement of Ethics Committee</b>		
<i>This research was conducted with the decision of Ondokuz Mayıs University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee with the decision number 2022-609 dated 30.06.2022.</i>		



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