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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EXTENT OF CREDIBILITY OF HEALTH
RELATED NEWS ON DIGITAL PRESS

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EXTENT OF CREDIBILITY OF HEALTH RELATED NEWS ON
DIGITAL PRESS

DİJİTAL MEDYADAKİ SAĞLIK HABERLERİNİN GÜVENİRLİĞİNE İLİŞKİN BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explain the relationship between the perception of the public on health news, the institutional reputation of media companies and the trust of the public regarding the media companies. By using health communication approach, people's perception of health news will be analyzed. To analyze the relation better, survey method is used and people are asked about their perceptions of media and how the trust they have for the media affects their participation in the news. With developments in the technology, such as the increasing usage of internet, the media changed shape and transformed into Web 4.0, which involves the users in the news making process through actions such as commenting and sharing. That is why the participation of the people in media became significantly important.

Özet

Bu tezin amacı, sağlık haberlerine yaklaşım ve medya kuruluşlarının itibarının ilişkisi ile halkın medya şirketlerine duyduğu güven arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Sağlık iletişimi yaklaşımı içerisinde, kişilerin sağlık haberleri ile ilgili izlenimleri araştırılmıştır. Bu ilişkiyi daha iyi incelemek amacıyla, anket yöntemi kullanılarak bir araştırma yapılmış ve katılımcılara medya ile ilgili izlenimleri ve medya şirketlerine duydukları güvenin haber katılımlarını nasıl etkilediği ile ilgili sorular sorulmuştur. İnternet kullanımının artması gibi teknolojik gelişmeler ile birlikte geleneksel medyada da çeşitli değişimler ve Web 4.0'a geçiş görülmektedir. Web 4.0 kullanıcıların da haber paylaşma ve yorum yapma gibi yöntemler ile haber üretim sürecine dahil olmalarını sağlar. Bu gelişmeler ile birlikte, kullanıcıların medya içerik üretim süreçlerine katılımları gitgide daha önemli hale gelmektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

With the advances in technology and widespread use of the internet, contemporary media is going through several accompanying transformations. Health communication is one of the domains that are severely affected by this technological shift. This aim of this study is to investigate to what extent people trust and believe in health-related news. To do this, the relation between institutional reputation and news trust as well as the relation between news participation and reputation will be analyzed. The two hypotheses of this thesis are that, a) there is a significant relationship between institutional reputation and news trust; and b) there is a significant relationship between credibility and news participation.

Media is considered as an important source for acquiring news and information regarding health-related developments as it is for several other areas. In this respect, press organizations have begun to employ expert staff specialized in medicine in order to ensure professionalism in the news they provide relating to the area of health. However, it is understood that adequate professionalism has not been achieved in health journalism. Especially, due to the nature of the subject content relating to developments in the area of health covered in media having the potential impact to cause consequences, which are difficult or impossible to redress, it requires more professional attention and concentration. Furthermore, since it is a new area, there are not many academic types of researches on the effect of health news, and trust and participation regarding this topic. Although news analyses have a significant place in the area of communication, studies focusing on health news do not appear to have reached an adequate level (Damlapınar & Işık, 2017)

Health-related events, cases, problems or problems are of interest as an important issue that attracts human interest. Unlike other news items, health-related issues point to the

irony in the nature of health-related news. Two famous saying explains this irony very well. "Lawyers hang their mistakes, doctors bury them" and "journalists publish their mistakes" (Çaplı, 2002, p. 15) These two sayings reveal the sensitivity of the problem and the importance of academic studies and communication studies on the topic (Damlapınar & Işık, 2017)

According to Baker, one of the most important debates about the journalism process, which is on health, medicine and especially scientific and difficult to understand subjects, is the search for excitement, but still cannot fully explain the issue "Can we be sure that scientific truths are presented by the media without any unfairness?" (Baker, 2002, p. 9) . Most of the research on health and medical issues are a source of information, consciousness, behavior, opinion or attitudes (Moynihan et al., 2000; Gandey, 2003; Stryker et al., 2008; Dorfman, 2003; Seale, 2003). It makes more meaningful to discuss the approach to similar problems through concrete data. (Damlapınar & Işık, 2017)

The relationship between health, communication and media has been started to be discussed in master's, doctoral and medical specialty theses especially after the 2000s. The academic research that focuses on the question is examining this newly developing area in different dimensions, in the field of health, communication and media studies. What this thesis aims to do is also to contribute to this specific topic, analyzing the relation between reputation, trust and news participation.

While analyzing the relation, it should not be overlooked that the dynamics of the media is changing. Today, we are talking about media, which is very different from the media of thirty years ago. The internet is everywhere and affecting our interaction with media as well. Today, we are going through what Henry Jenkins describes as the "convergence culture" (Jenkins, 2006). Convergence culture refers to the convergence of old and new media. Today, the media is changing shape in which both old and new media are together. Old media is not

completely eradicated; however, it is transformed to a new shape. For most of the big media companies, the online presence carries a bigger importance than the printed versions, since people follow it more. Under these circumstances, it is important to measure the trust towards the online presence of media companies.

In Turkey, as all around the world, media companies should have a respectable online presence as well as their traditional existence, meaning broadcasted or written versions. As the internet's significance is increasing, people follow the news outlets online too. According to Alexa.com's 2017 data, Sabah newspaper is the 5th most-visited website in Turkey. Hurriyet newspaper is 10th, and Milliyet is 11th. (Yılmaz, 2017) These are among Turkey's biggest newspapers, and their online presence also carries a significant place in the online world. These numbers explain us very well the importance of media websites for people.

This study analyses people's habits and perceptions on the media and trust, by using the quantitative method of surveys. Preparing a survey through a Likert type scale, this survey is implemented on 430 people. The aim of this research is to make inferences regarding the demographic information of the participants and their perceptions of news participation trust.

This study is significant since there is not a research instrument (questionnaire) which is applied to people to find out to what extent they believe and take the health-related news seriously, as well as their internet habits and trust to media companies on health-related news. With an extensive questionnaire that measures the demographic characteristics of the participants as well as their perception of the relation between the institutional reputation, news participation and trust, this study tries to find an answer to the question of the relation, which has not been done before as an academic research.

This thesis consists of two parts. The first part is the literature review. Literature review analyses the topic in three different sub-topics, which helps us to understand the

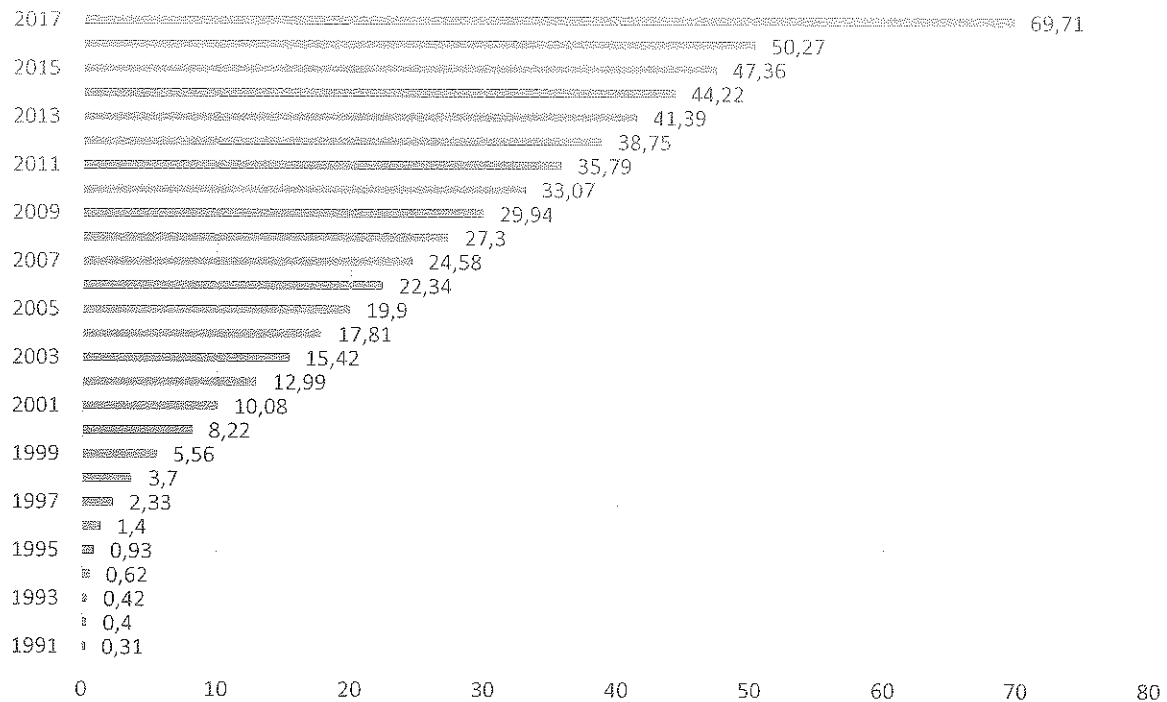
relation between our three concepts better. First, the importance of corporate reputation for any company is analyzed. It is important since corporate reputation gives to the individuals the first impression of people about any company including media companies. Second, the place of transition from traditional to social media, and changing dynamics of media in the academic research is analyzed. Today, talking about media, we cannot just talk about traditional media (such as printed and broadcasted). The effect of Media 2.0, which includes the importance of the user-generated content, is getting more and more common each day. Hence, in order to understand media and the changing dynamics, both traditional and social media should be worked on. The third part of literature review is about the health news and health communication. Health news can be considered as different from the other type of news, since it directly affects everyone in the society who follows the health news. That is why effective health communication is very important in reaching to the audience. In the third part of the literature review, the characteristics of effective and trustworthy health communication is analyzed. And in the second part of the thesis, the analysis of the questionnaire is explained. The questionnaire is an extensive one, implemented to 430 people. That is why; its analysis gave us important answers to understand the significance of the research and the statistical significance of the research questions.

The section after the introduction part is the methodology section of the questionnaire, and explains what type of methodology is used while creating and implementing the questionnaire.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

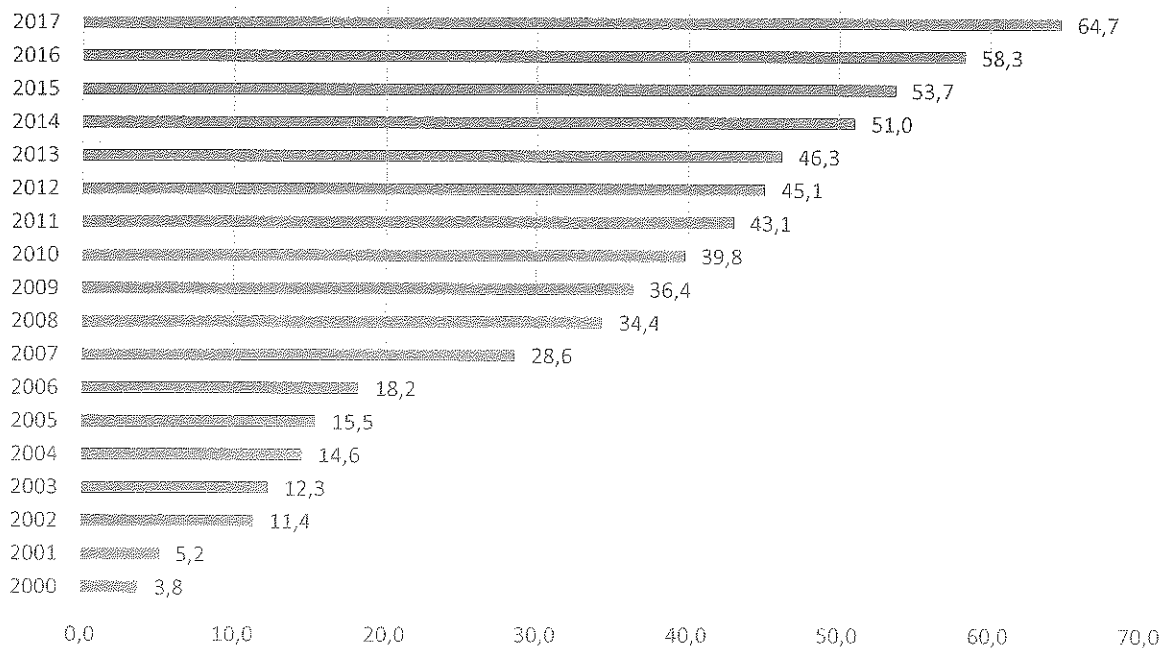
The literature review of this thesis consists of three parts. In order to explain my argument in a clear way, it is the best way. First of all, I start my argument with the importance of reputation for a company. I argue that, reputation is one of the most important things to protect for a company. While good reputation increases the chance of preferability, bad reputation decreases it. Hence, corporates should protect their reputation to build good relations with the customers. Then, I make my argument more specific and analyze the literature on credibility and reputation of media institutions, as well as the transition from traditional media to social media. Today, social media carries a significant importance, maybe even more than traditional media. That is why analyzing the social media patterns is also important. In Graph 1 and Graph 2 below, we can see the increase in the Internet use over time, in Turkey and in the world. This number is constantly increasing; hence, the research on health news online by the internet participants is also Increasing. According to the NBC News' article in July 2016, "80 percent of Internet users, or about 93 million Americans, have searched for a health-related topic online, according to a study released by the Pew Internet & American Life Project. That's up from 62 percent of Internet users who said they went online to research health topics in 2001, the Washington research firm found." (Weaver, 2016)

Individuals using the Internet in the World (% of population)



Graph 1: Individuals using the Internet in the World (% of Population)

Individuals using the Internet in Turkey (% of population)



Graph 2: Individuals using the Internet in Turkey (% of population)

The third section of the literature review explains the health communication perspective and the credibility of the online health news. After researching the literature on reputation, credibility and news participation, their specific reflection on the health news will be explained.

2.1. Why Corporate Reputation Is Important for Any Company?

When we talk about the credibility of an institution, whether it is a media institution or any other, it is strongly linked to the corporate reputation of the institution. Hence, we should start our discussion with the importance of corporate reputation for an institution. In the discipline of communication, corporate reputation is defined as, "Reputations are corporate traits that develop from relationships companies establish with their multiple constituents." (Fombrun, et al., 1999, p. 243) So, there are multiple constituents that have a relation with the companies, and which effects the corporate reputation of these companies. As Fombrun et al. (1999) argue, "converging trends are making stakeholder perceptions more critical to companies. They invite managers to take a more active, centralized, focused and scientific approach to communicate with these stakeholders" (Fombrun, et al., 1999, p. 241) So, with this increasing trend, the credibility of the media institutions is a strong indicator for the corporate reputation for these institutions. The perception of the institution in the eyes of the consumer, as a stakeholder, directly affects the reputation of an institution since the trends make the institutions take stakeholder approach into account.

Fombrun (1997), who can be considered as the leader of the corporate reputation literature, defines corporate reputation in six different perspectives: "the economic view, the strategic view, the marketing view, the organizational view, the sociological view and the accounting view" (Fombrun, 1997), and he offers an integrative approach which consists of these six approaches. As a result of this integrative approach, his definition is: "A corporate reputation is a collective representation of a firm's past actions and results that describes the

firm's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders. It gauges a firm's relative standing both internally with employees and externally with its stakeholders, in both its competitive and institutional environments." (Fombrun, 1997, p. 10) From Fombrun's description, we can infer that corporate reputation involves past and present actions, as well as its standing both internal and external. All these four together creates the corporate reputation, overall.

According to Adeosun and Ganiyu (2013), corporate reputation is a "strategic asset." They argue that "reputation may not be identified as an asset on the balance sheet but it affects the investor confidence, staff recruitment, supplier attitudes and a myriad of other stakeholders in its capacity as relationship capital." (Adeosun & Ganiyu, 2013, p. 222) So, even though it is not directly linked to financial capital, corporate reputation is a big asset for a company, affecting positive or negative perspectives towards it.

Reputation is one of the most important aspects of a business to survive. All the stakeholders care about the reputation of institutions they are involved with. As Chong describes, "reputation influences the value of your company's equity, your ability to attract and retain talent, and your fundamental license to operate (among other things)." (Chong, 2012) A good reputation makes the customers choose that specific company against others. Looking from a business perspective, if a company has a good reputation, "Clients will prefer to deal with it instead of others and they in turn can influence other potential customers. Suppliers will be more inclined to trust the organization if it has a reputation for a fair dealing. A potential employee will be more likely to prefer the organization if it has a good reputation for the treatment of staff compared with others.(Anon) So, a good corporate reputation increases the competitive advantage of a company against the others, as well as increases its attractiveness towards the clients. Losing reputation is one of the most important risks for a

company, since it decreases the attractiveness of the company in the eyes of the consumer. So, corporate reputation should be protected for the survival of the company.

However, it is not easy to create a good corporate reputation. It takes a lot of time and a lot of strategic thinking. Especially in our day, when it gets easier to reach any information day by day, and when a company needs to update itself constantly to stay relevant, having a good reputation is more difficult than the past. So, what should be done to create and protect the good corporate reputation? Balunova (2017) suggests that companies should pay attention to ethics, and may undertake an ethical audit. "The standard tools in ethics implementation applied in firms are ethical codes, the ethical motif, the position of an ethics manager (a company ombudsman), a committee for ethics, ethical round tables, ethical seminars, workshops, discussion forums, ethical hotline, ethical balancing and ethical audit." (Balunova, 2017, p. 11) Good ethics increases the reputation of the company, since with good ethics the company will automatically behave in good manners, which will result in the positive attitude of the customers.

The reputation of the company is linked to the emotional association of some of the stakeholders with the company. By stakeholders, here, we can understand the employees and the consumers. This emotional association, whether positive or negative, affects the attitude towards the company directly. Chun argues that the key elements of the corporate reputation are identity and image. (Chun, 2005) While identity is how the company sees itself, the image refers to how others see the company. Identity of the company is determined by the company through asking the questions "Who are we?" and "How do we see ourselves" (Chun, 2005, p. 95) Image is the "summary of impressions or perceptions held by external stakeholders". (Chun, 2005, p. 95) The external stakeholders are mainly consumers, and image is related to the how consumers connect with the company. Through this connection of the consumers, the relation of the consumers is defined with the company.

Analyzing the corporate reputation of media companies, I will follow the theory that is offered Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis (2006). They combine agenda setting theory and issue ownership theory to explain the problem. The main idea behind the agenda- setting theory is, “the transfer of salient issues from the media agenda to the public agenda” (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006, p. 544). There are two levels of agenda setting. First level deals with “The salience of an object or an actor”, and the second level is about “The attributes of the object or the actor concerned. (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006, p. 544) And, issue ownership theory argues that “The effect of the salience of a particular issue on the attitude towards various competing organizations is determined by pre-established issue-specific reputations of these organizations.” (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006, p. 545) Combining the two theories, what is argued that, both the salience of issues and the salience of the object in question are important. Hence, while discussing about the reputation of a media institution, what should be looked at is not only the issue or the news discussed or the reputation of the media company, but two of them together in order to have a good and broad understanding of the corporate reputation.

Furthermore, while the literature looks at the advantages of a good corporate reputation, it generally looks at the traditional reputation. What also should be considered the online reputation of a company, considering that online existence of the companies, especially the existence on the social media carries a crucial importance for their survival in modern days. Social media increased the awareness of the people, and changed their behavior towards the companies. So, as a consequence of embracing social media, a number of authors and researchers agree that companies should refrain from the traditional top-down communication models and build open, qualitative, and trustworthy dialogues with stakeholders in social media to increase consumers’ awareness and perception of them. (Grützmacher, 2011, p. 34) The growing importance of social media makes it a necessity to use these tools for companies

to continue their good reputation. "Why organizations should adopt social media tools in business is due to the fact that online marketing tools are highly essential to access target customer groups." (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) In order to reach to the target groups they desire, all the companies should use social media and their online existences.

Gurau (2008) argues that the impact of social media applications on companies is;

- (1) Social media equal a network, making it possible for various audiences to communicate back to companies
- (2) Audiences are connected to one another, enabling discussions and debates about companies and their product
- (3) Audiences have access to other information ensured through the spread of the Web and discussions with other stakeholders of the companies
- (4) Audiences are now able to select the information they want to receive (Gurau, 2008)

As seen in the items mentioned by Gurau, social media is a very important part of corporate reputation in the modern world. It creates a healthy and communicative environment between the companies and the audiences. It allows the audience to choose from different alternatives, not just like receiving the information from only one source. Also, they can check the information they receive from one source easily. However, this naturally increases the risk and competition from the side of the institutions. Thinking about the media institutions, social media increases the feedback from the audiences of media companies and gives them the an opportunity to receive up-to-date feedback. The institutions need to prove themselves to the audience and be trustworthy and ethical to protect their corporate reputation. Good feedback and good communication are very important for corporate reputation, and social media allows this for the media companies.

To sum the part about corporate reputation and its importance, both traditional and online presence of the companies are very important for their reputation. Moreover, a good

reputation is established through both the product (in case of media institutions), it is the content they provide to the audience, and the brand name of the institutions, which is achieved through a long time of work and experience.

2.2 Credibility Issue and the Changing Dynamics of Media: From Traditional to Social Media

Sadaf (2011) describes the role and the importance of media for society as: "Media as the fourth pillar of state and an important agent of society serves for the public by providing them basic knowledge and information on all aspects of a single issue or on various issues within international and international level. It not only provides information and updates on various issues but it also gives a direction to the public for making up their judgments and perceptions." (Sadaf, 2011, p. 228) So, media is a very important agent for society. It not only informs the public, but also leads the public on specific issues. The knowledge that the media provide to public can be either national or international. In any case, what is important is that it plays the role of almost a leader for the public. That is why, the credibility of the media institutions in the eyes of the public is very important. If not credible, then media cannot realize its function of informing and giving direction to the public. Newell and Goldsmith defines corporate credibility as "the extent to which stakeholders feel that the firm has the knowledge or ability to fulfill its claims and whether the firm can be trusted to tell the truth or not." (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001) If the institutions are credible, then they are known as capable of fulfilling what they offer to the consumer. If a media company is credible, it means that the company will fulfill its duty of providing trustable and up-to-date content to the audience.

Regarding the credibility of a media institution, there are two types of the credibility: source credibility and news medium credibility. Source credibility refers to the

“trustworthiness of the individual who constructs the message” (Howland & Weiss, 1951). News medium credibility refers to the “overall credibility of a larger entity, such as a local television news station, newspaper.” (Graziano & McGrath, 1986). While analyzing credibility of content, both types of credibility should be analyzed in order to have a broader understanding of credibility. Just looking at one news piece or the overall credibility is not enough. Hence, while preparing the survey, I have taken both source credibility and news medium credibility into account and prepared the questions accordingly.

Different factors together create the credibility of a media company. “Trustworthiness, expertise, dynamism, believability, fairness, accuracy, depth of the information, sensationalism, believability, bias, fairness, objectivity” (Garrison, et al., 2002) are factors used by different researchers. In this thesis will analyze the trustworthiness component and how the audience’s trust affects the credibility of media. Trust is the audience’ trust that determines the behavior of the audience, whether to find the institution credible or not credible, and whether to continue or not continue following that institution anymore. Credibility directly affects the reputation of the media company, and is related to the perception of the media institution in the eyes of the audience. When the credibility of the media company is harmed due to any event, such as Murdoch scandal, it effects the reputation of the institution negatively and institution loses both credibility and reputation the eyes of the audience. Trust and reputation are also linked to each other and loss or gain of one directly affects the other. If reputation of the institution is low, trust towards it declines, and vice versa.

One of the factors that determine the media companies’ credibility is the trust relationship that these companies establish with the viewer/audience. As Fletcher and Park argue, analyzing credibility of the news, “trust and credibility have been used interchangeably, or with one seen as a component of the other. If the focus is on credibility -

as it is in much of the literature- trust can be seen as a central element, along with accuracy, fairness, telling the whole story, being unbiased and balance.” (Fletcher & Park, 2017, p. 1282) All these components together create credibility of the news media. Hence, trust is a very important part of it. Fletcher and Park argues the reason of the independent studies in trust as, “Trust, is a product of behaviors, but it can also produce behaviors.” (Fletcher & Park, 2017, p. 1283) In order to understand this trust relation, we can look at the daily examples. For example, if the news made by a certain media institution does not create a trust in the audience, the credibility of the media institution in the eyes of the audience is low. It also harms the corporate reputation of this company, which is very predictable.

And, Credibility directly affects the reputation of the media institution. Reputation means the prestige of an institution. Stakeholders depending on their perspectives can perceive reputation differently. To economists, reputations are traits that signal a company’s likely behaviors. To strategists, a company’s reputation is a barrier to rivals, a source of competitive advantage. To marketers, reputations are perceptual assets with the power to attract loyal customers.” (Fombrun, et al., 1999, p. 241) However, in any case, reputation is an advantage for a company, which increases its attractiveness and its advantage towards the rivals. A good example based on the importance of a good reputation is phone-hacking scandal, also known as Murdoch scandal. When the employees of Robert Murdoch owned News of the World were accused of phone hacking and bribery to police, affected celebrities, politicians, and other worldwide known figures such as the Royal Family of the Britain, it was a huge scandal, which decreased the reputation of Murdoch, and the News International, which was a big media corporation also owns News of the World as well as the closure of the News of the World. It was a very big problem of trust. The news medium credibility of Murdoch-owned organizations hit rock bottom in a very short time. After the scandal,

Murdoch's business plans were reversed, he was forced to resign and he could not achieve the audience numbers he was planning before. (Lieberman, 2012)

Another effect of the interesting phone hacking event was the shift of trust from the traditional media towards social media. Today, both ownership and influence of media is shifting towards the social media. And, the oligopoly of the big media bosses such as Murdoch is disappearing. However, oligopoly is not disappearing. Today, instead of the big media bosses, there are tech companies. Today, the top most important firms in the world are tech firms, such as Apple, Facebook, and Google. This changes the way people look for news and the way of access to news.

There are different roles of media for the public. These roles are described by Sadaf (2011) as, "providing education, entertainment, information in addition to the role of gate keeping which is to keep a check and balance on which information is passing by and which is not." (Sadaf, 2011, p. 229) However, today, when we talk about media, we cannot only talk about traditional broadcasted media. There is a very high social media interest, which is the new form of media and while discussing the role of the media plays in shaping the public perception, we should also consider the role of the social media.

Today, there is a transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is a completely new structure, which is shaped by user experiences. Web 1.0 started with the inception of "World Wide Web". However, Tim O' Reilly, who found the idea of Web 2.0 describes Web 2.0 as "a platform" (Reilly, 2005), which is user-driven, and users' contribute to the creation of the content. In order to be involved in Web 2.0, it is not necessary to learn coding or programming. Internet is an easy-to-use platform, and allows large room for the users to participate in content creation. Hence, in Web 2.0, the users are not passive, but rather active and take part. The content in the Web 2.0 is created through the participation of the users. It is more interactive, and can be changed very quickly. O'Reilly gives Britannica Online and

Wikipedia as an example to the transformation from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. While in Britannica Online the users are passive and can only reach to the content that is provided to them through Britannica Online, Wikipedia allows the users to create the content of the online dictionary. (Reilly, 2005) Furthermore, especially the emergence of social media contributed significantly to Web 2.0. Today, anyone can contribute to the creation of the content in social media, in a second. So, the users transformed from “consumers” to “producers”. In Web 1.0, they were consuming to content that is presented to them. However, now, they take an active role and get involved in the Web from their home.

Henry Jenkins describes today’s media culture as “convergence Culture”. In his words, Convergence Culture is “where old and the new media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways.” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 2) Today, the world is changing. culturally, technologically, and socially. In this process, old and new collides in a point. The citizens become active participants in the news participation. However, the methods that they use are not completely new. We still have televisions; we still have computers and music players. Even though the content of the media changes, the tools used by the media are not completely different from the past. “Convergence does not depend on any specific delivery mechanism. Rather, convergence represents a paradigm shift -a move from medium-specific content toward content that flows across multiple media channels, toward the increased interdependence of communications systems, toward multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture.” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 243) In this new culture, media consumer becomes much more powerful, considering that their access to media is much easier than before.

Analyzing the media companies, it can be easily argued that there is a shift of demand towards from traditional media to online media. "Internet has significantly increased the amount of available information, and lowered the costs required to access it." (Fletcher & Park, 2017, p. 1284) Since it is more easily accessible than traditional media, the traditional media channels also started to have online platforms, which is another factor increasing online reachability of news. According to the article of Pew Research Center, "As of August (2017), 43% of Americans report often getting news online, just 7 percentage points lower than the 50% who often get news on television. This gap between the two news platforms was 19 points in early 2016, more than twice as large." (Gottfried & Shearer, 2017) And, regarding health news, "A survey showed that approximately 73 million adults in the United States reported using the internet to locate health information" in 2006. (Horrigan, 2006). It is not a surprise that this number must have significant increase in our day. So, this numbers makes us necessary to analyze the credibility of both the social and traditional media, and maybe make a comparison between them.

The conclusion of the research conducted by Fletcher and Park is that, "those with low trust in the news are more likely to say that their main source of news is either social media, blogs, or news outlets that do not have a broadcast legacy." (Fletcher & Park, 2017, p. 1294) They link broadcast legacy with trust. The reason of this linkage can be considered as the fact that Internet can be considered as a medium, which is less reliable, due to its basic characteristic, which is "its potential free access to everybody to upload information without much scrutiny" (Johnson & Kaye, 1998). As broadcasted agencies go through verification before publishing news, it is not always the case for social media.

Furthermore, the research that Kovacic, Erjavec and Stular conducted in Slovenia measuring credibility through the journalists shows that, "The majority of journalists still

believe that the traditional news media are most credible.” (Kovacic, et al., 2009, p. 129) However, they link this conservative attitude of Slovenian journalists with the “weakly developed online news media scene in Slovenia, where the online media mostly operate as extensions of the traditional media.” (Kovacic, et al., 2009, p. 129) It can be true for the cases that while the online news media work like continuation of the traditional media, and people do not have the habit to look at the social media constantly.

However, this does not have to be the case all the time. Winter’s research proves otherwise. In his research, Winter(2018) compares the effect of the user comments in social media with the comments from news sites. The result is that, “The valence of user comments not only affects perceptions of the general opinion climate but also readers’ own attitudes and the valence of their thoughts about the topic. However, although the SNS (Social Network sites) environment induces stronger social considerations, results did not provide support for the assumption that comments in the social media are generally more influential than on online news sites. Instead, the persuasive effects were fairly comparable across platforms and also occurred on a “less social” website.” (Winter, 2018). So, Winter’s research shows us that trust is not always linked to broadcast legacy. Furthermore, Schweiger’s research shows us that “web users and non-users alike rate the credibility of the Web as remarkably similar to television and newspapers.” (Schweiger, 2000) Sometimes user comments on a social networking site can also be as influential as a broadcasted news site.

As Sundar argues, “a credibility scale for both traditional and online news sources is appropriate by arguing that striking similarities exist between the factor structures underlying receivers’ perceptions of print and online news.” (Sundar, 1999). This also proves that; online news sources are not very different to analyze from the traditional news sources regarding credibility. Hence, the same methods can be implemented to both of them while measuring the credibility of media sources. The difference of the online media from traditional one is

described my Chung, Nam and Stefanone in three different dimensions: Interactivity, multimediality and hypertextuality. (Chung, et al., 2012, p. 174) However, even though the methods of these two channels are different from each other regarding the delivery of the news, the credibility does not change from one to other.

Garrison, Casey and Driscoll argue the difference between different media sources, which are; newspapers, television and online news as: "For newspapers, the dominant aspect of currency is that it is perceived to be up-to-date. Television news is thought to be current, but also up-to-date and timely. Online news is seen to be timely, but also current and up-to-date." (Abdulla, et al., 2002, p. 20) So, while all the media channels have their own advantages, the one that we can have the most instant updates is online news media.

However, talking about online media, we should not forget that there are different types of online media that should be analyzed. Chung, Nam and Stefanone's research analysis the "traditional and technological factors that contribute to credibility perceptions for three categories of online news sources." (Chung, et al., 2012, p. 171): Mainstream, independent and index-type websites. What they found out through the research they conduct on college students is that, "online media have diverse levels of credibility which are contingent upon the nature of their design and format" (Chung, et al., 2012, p. 183) Furthermore, "online media differ widely based on credibility and users' perceptions are in part based on the technological affordances of the media." (Chung, et al., 2012, p. 182) For example, their research shows that, hyperlinks are very important in providing credibility for websites. It is interesting to see that unlike the traditional and old school view, developments in technology change our perception of credibility as well. When the audience realizes that the context in the online media can be verified from other sources or is linked to other sources, it makes the content more credible.

Online media provided an opportunity for the audience to be more actively involved in the process of news making, and gave the chance to participate to them through different methods on news-making process. The Credibility of an institution directly influences participation. Participation can be defined as "Social interactions directly connected to the news production, consumption, and interpretation." (Fletcher & Park, 2017, p. 1282) Participation can take different shapes such as sharing or commenting. In Fletcher and Parks's research, which analysis participatory behavior of the audience, negative relation was observed between trust in the media organization and participatory behavior. The participants who have low/very low or high/very high level of trust to the media showed participatory behavior. (Fletcher & Park, 2017) However, the motivation behind these behaviors is different. While those with low trust participate to express their counter-arguments, those with high trust show their approval through participation. According to Winter, sharing online news also be related to "social acceptability of opinions" (Winter, 2018, p. 10) . People want to see their opinions to be accepted by others. It makes them feel more involved. Furthermore, comparing the effectiveness of the comments on social media and online news sites; there is no evidence in Winter's research regarding the assumption that "comments in the social media are generally more influential than on online news sites." (Winter, 2018, p. 10) Both are platforms to share opinions.

Internet is taking a very big part of our life, and there is no escape from it. This also changes the media structure. The fact that the internet is more accessible than traditional media creates a new discussion, which refers to the credibility of online news. Even though there are various factors that determine media credibility, which I stated at the beginning of this section, I analyzed the effect of trustworthiness on the credibility. As the current research on the issue shows us, there is not a big different regarding online media and traditional media in regards to credibility. As people become used to Internet more, credibility also increases.

However, while analyzing credibility, both source credibility and news medium credibility should be considered. While source credibility refers to the specific content, news medium credibility refers to the credibility of the institution. They both are at the same importance regarding credibility.

In the next section, the health communication approach and literature related to the credibility of health-related news will be analyzed.

2.3 Health News and the Effect of Health Communication in Reaching Towards Health News

According to Feely and Chan, there are two primary focuses of the communication research: 1) Examining the production of human communication (e.g. communication forms, communication channels and message features), and 2) the effects of communication on human beings. (Feeley & Chen, 2013) While analyzing the communication process, both how communication is produced and the effect of communication on human beings should be analyzed. Health communication is also a sub-type of communication, which these two focuses apply to.

There are various descriptions of health communication. US Department of Health and Human Services defines the concept as, “the art and technique of informing, influencing, and motivating individual, institutional, and public audiences about important health issues.” (Anon., 2000) Çınarlı emphasizes “health communication includes the purpose of obtaining information, defined health communication as the process of obtaining information about health status of health care recipients. “ (Çınarlı, 2008, p. 40). Sezgin (2010, 117) defines the same topic as “awareness raising of the awareness of individuals, institutions and societies on health communication in health and health issues, elimination of the need for information; giving accurate information; creating health awareness; creation and promotion of health literacy; as the right to health as a patient or individual and to create awareness on this issue

and use of communication strategies and methods to protect the right to live in healthy environment.” (Sezgin, 2010, p. 117) Based on these definitions, it can be said that health communication is a communication process aimed at raising awareness about health, increasing the need for information and increasing health literacy.

Health communication is very important in terms of raising awareness among the public. Through health communication, people are informed about different health-related topics. And, it is a very broad area. For example, “health communication plays a vital role in public health campaigns designed to prevent infectious diseases in the developing world.” (Prilutski, 2010, p. 51) As an example, in the research conducted by Prilutski, we can see how in Ghana health communication created a very big success in Ghanaian public health initiatives in fighting with infectious diseases. In this example, successful communication was established with “integration with the community and cultural familiarity” (Prilutski, 2010). Actually, this is valid for every case of effective health communication. Whether through direct communication with public or through media, effective communication requires understanding cultural norms of that society and present. If not, the communication cannot reach the success that is aimed.

“News coverage of health constitutes one of the most visible features of the contemporary world.” (Briggs & Hallin, 2016) Through health communication, people can be informed about the developments in the health sector, and in the end, they become informed about health-related topics. Schiavo defines the goals of health communication as, “To influence individuals and communities, to create a receptive and favorable environment in which information can be shared, understood, absorbed, and discussed by the program’s intended audiences.” (Schiavo, San Francisco, p. 6) Furthermore, as Schiavo argues, “health communication should be to support and sustain change.” (Schiavo, San Francisco, p. 7), as health is a sector that is open to the new developments constantly.

Analyzing health news, it can be easily argued that health communication is necessary for the majority of the people, considering that health is one of the most important factors in people's lives and so people have a natural tendency to acquire information related to the health-specific topics. As Picard and Yeo explains, "Health is highly relevant at a personal level to the general public because issues have distinct effects on individuals, families, and community health and well-being; it has consumer and consumer perception aspects related to the provision for services; and it has social and political aspects because of the roles that national and local authorities play in health care provision." (Picard & Yeo, 2011)

As mentioned above, health is an area that constantly develops. Hence, health communication also needs to update itself constantly. These new developments need to find an echo in the community, which means that these developments should be introduced to people. If not, people cannot benefit from them, or be biased towards them. That is why health communication is very important for the development to happen in the health sector. As Sezgin explains, "one of the most crucial goals of health communication is to inform individuals on health-related topics, increase their awareness on these topics and lead them towards the right behaviors." (Sezgin, 2010, p. 118) The main logic behind this goal is that if the awareness of the individuals can be raised, they can help to improve the health-related problems. If health communication is successful, people can easily be motivated to follow what they are suggested to follow. That is why correct strategies should be watched by the institutions who deliver health news to people.

The definition of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), provides us with the principles that are attributed to effective health communication in the table below:

Accuracy	The content is valid and without errors of fact, interpretation, or judgment.
Availability	The content (whether a targeted message or other information) is delivered or placed where the audience can access it.
Balance	Where appropriate, the content presents the benefits and risks of potential actions or recognizes different and valid perspectives on the issue.
Consistency	The content remains internally consistent over time and also is consistent with information from other sources.
Cultural competence	The design, implementation, and evaluation process that accounts for special issues for select population groups and also educational levels and disability.
Evidence base	Relevant specific evidence that has undergone comprehensive review and rigorous analysis to formulate practice guidelines, performance measure, review criteria, and technology assessments.
Reach	The content gets to or is available to the largest possible number of people in the target population.
Reliability	The sources of content are credible, and the content itself is kept up-to-date.
Repetition	The delivery of/access to the content is continued or repeated over time, both to reinforce the impact with a given audience and to reach new generations.
Timeliness	The content is provided or available when the audience is most receptive to, or in need of, the specific information.
Understandability	The reading or language level and format (including multimedia) are appropriate for the specific audience.

Table 1: Principles as attributes of effective health communication practice and message development (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control)

All of the factors mentioned in the above table are related to trust and affects the trustability of the media companies in health communication. That is why all these factors are important while analyzing the success of health communication. A good health communication practice should be accurate, available to everyone, balanced, consistent, culturally competent, evidence-based, reachable, reliable, repeated, timely and understandable. Unless not, we cannot expect people in society to trust the news related to the health.

A good example of this issue is described in the report of University of Oxford's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. In this report, the coverage of UK media regarding health news is analyzed. The authors described the media coverage of health news in the UK as "weak", arguing that, "the number of studies is highly limited, they investigate a narrow range of media and units of media, and rarely ask more than rudimentary questions." (Picard & Yeo, 2011, p. 14) Furthermore, they argue that the news lack statistical data, which makes the news less evidence-based.

Mechanic's article published in 2005 explains, since media can be considered as a battleground in which who has access to resources more than others win, it is biased. He argues that, "media is, of course, a business, and will market almost anything that will sell." (Mechanic, 2005, p. 210) That is why; it is difficult for the media organizations which have fewer resources to ensure credibility and good corporate reputation for themselves. However, with the increasing power of social media, as explained in detail in previous sections, this situation changed. With social media, everyone can access to others and even the independent institutions that do not have much money as big media companies can ensure credibility for themselves.

Nkanunye and Obiechina define the barriers against effective health communication as: "low health literacy, poor communication link and poor research". (Nkanunye &

Obiechina, 2017) Health is an interesting area of communication. It is related to the life of everyone. At the same time, it requires some amount of technical knowledge. That is why in order to create effective health communication between the communicators and the public, it is crucial to transmit the messages with a language, which is not very technical.

US Department of Health and Human Services, realizing the importance of health communication for the public, and in the reports that they publish they constantly stress this. In the 2020 objectives, the Department explains what they aim with effective health communication as: “improve health care quality and safety, increase the efficiency of health care and public health service delivery, improve the public health information infrastructure, support care in the community and at home, facilitate clinical and consumer decision-making, build health skills and knowledge.” (Anon., tarih yok) Through effective health communication and by using means of technology well, these goals are very doable.

Online health information constantly increases. While it is good in terms of knowledge, it also creates a danger of information pollution. It is very important to have the information related to the health news from the right sources. “Anyone with access to a server can post information on the Web without restriction, calling the Web’s credibility into question.” (Johnson & Kaye, 1998) So, credibility and trust to the health news carry a significant importance for people to believe the information they receive online. And, considering health is an issue, which is very serious, and which is directly linked to people’s lives, the credibility of the news carries even more importance.

Today, as mentioned in the previous sections, the internet is a very serious factor that people consult for having information. A research conducted in 2008 shows that, “80 percent of Americans who are online are looking for health care topics; 80 percent of those are using a search engine to start their inquiry; and 60 percent to 80 percent of those start their health

care search on Google.” (Bottles, 2009) So, not only the traditional but the role of social media again carries huge importance regarding health news.

Looking at the context of Turkey, which is the subject of this thesis, health news had a serious transformation in the last decades. Atabek, Atabek and Bilge’s research analyses this transformation as decades, and argue that especially transformation to the liberal economy is the milestone in the health news perception in Turkey (Atabek, et al., 2013). What their research shows that, with the liberalization of Turkey in the 1980s, a transformation began regarding health news and these news started to have more existence in the media. Especially after the 2000s, this transformation has gained momentum. However, as health news increased, two phenomena are observed in Turkey’s media: First, the problems of patients and doctors regarding the health system in the country found more reflection on the media. Second, even though the number of news increased, the quality of the news did not. And, most of the news in the media are not informative, but rather magazine. (Atabek, et al., 2013)

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

With the increasing use of social media to reach the news, the participation of the audience in the news making process also increased. Today, most of the online news followers participate in this process by commenting/ sharing the news they find. However, news participation is also affected by the reputation and credibility of the institutions. The literature review shows us that, in cases of low trust to the media institution, audience participates to criticize. And, in cases of high trust, the audience participates to approve the news. The relation between credibility, trust and participation can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Flow of Reputation, Credibility, and Participation in News

In this thesis, to explain the relation in the Figure 1 better, quantitative method is used. Through the survey method, questions are asked to the participants. The hope while conducting the survey is that, through the standardized questions to the participants, we can interpret a pattern in a clear way. While preparing the questionnaire, Likert type scale was used. Likert type asks closed-ended questions to the participants, and provides them with a specific set of answers to choose from. A well thought Likert type scale is very reliable, and provide the researcher with accurate answers on the questions.

The questions asked to the participants can be divided into three groups: questions related to the demography, questions related to the perception of the individuals regarding internet use and questions related to the perception of the individuals regarding health news. The survey was created in surveymonkey.com, and implemented to individuals. The data of

the survey and the analysis of the data can be found in the section called “Analysis of the Survey”, and the questions of the survey are in the Annex 1.

The survey was conducted between January 27- February 27, 2019. The survey consists of Yes/No questions, multiple choice questions and Likert Type Scales (from 1 to 5). In total, 430 people responded to the survey. However, 97 out of 430 respondents answered that they do not follow health news online. Hence, 333 respondents completed the survey. These people were from different age groups, different genders and different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. All of the participants were above 18 years old. In order to create a non-homogeneous group, demographic variability was especially taken into consideration.

During the design of the survey, some sources were used in order to find the most effective style. These sources gave us an overall idea of how to create a good survey on the topic and our limitations during the implementation of the survey. Philip Mayer’s article dated 1988, “Defining and Measuring Credibility of Newspapers: Developing an Index” and Fico et al’s article dated 2004, “Influence of Story Structure on Perceived Story Bias and News Organization Credibility” were used to create the questions about bias in health news. “Participants were asked to evaluate the credibility of the news story using a scale comprised of six semantic differentials on an eleven-point scale with the following anchors: fair/unfair, biased/unbiased, accurate/inaccurate, doesn’t tell the whole story/tells the whole story, cannot be trusted/can be trusted, balanced/imbanced.” (Borah, 2014, p. 582) However, while the sources measured the credibility of news and bias towards them in general, in this thesis, the question is more specific. So, questions were asked regarding the credibility of health news online.

Fletcher and Park’s article dated 2017 “The Impact of Trust in the News Media on Online News Consumption and Participation” was used in order to find a pattern about

participants' news participation. Fletcher and Park ask the research question "What is the relationship between individual trust in the news media and online news participation?" (Fletcher & Park, 2017, p. 1286), through an online questionnaire, asked over 20,000 respondents in 12 countries. Respondents were asked, "During an average week in which, if any, of the following ways, do you share or participate in news coverage?" and they select all that apply from "(1) share a news story via a social network, (2) share a news story via email, (3) rate, like or favorite a news story, (4) comment on a news story on a social network, (5) comment on a news story on a news website, (6) write a blog on a news or political issue, (7) post or send a news-related picture or video to a social network site, (8) post or send a picture or video to a news website/news organization, (9) vote in an online poll via a news site or social network, and (10) take part in a campaign or group based around a news subject." (Fletcher & Park, 2017, p. 1289) This methodology was taken from Fletcher and Park's article and adapted to the health news concept.

Finally, to measure a good reputation of a company, Fombrun et al "The Reputation Quotient: A Multi-stakeholder Measure of Corporate Reputation." (1999) uses eight determinants: "familiarity, operational capability, strategic positioning, industry leadership, distinctiveness, credibility, influential, caring" (Fombrun, et al., 1999, p. 247) To measure the reputation of internet news and the online news sources, questions are produced regarding these eight determinants and asked to the participants.

The survey started with two main hypotheses.

H1: There is a significant relationship between news reputation and news credibility.

H2: There is a significant relationship between news credibility and news participation.

At the end of the survey, it is observed that both H1 and H2 are accepted, with statistically significant results.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY

This study investigates the reputation of health news. Accordingly, an empirical study was conducted, using a quantitative research method, on participants reading health news.

4.1 Sample Plan and Collection of Data

The group consisting of all units that qualify for a research study is called the universe. However, it is not always possible to reach all units constituting the universe due to time and cost-related reasons. Therefore, a research is conducted on a smaller group selected from among the units comprising the universe and constituted by a limited number of units. This smaller group is called a sample. In this context, the universe of this study is comprised of everyone that have access to news and its sample is comprised of 430 people.

The data collection technique used in the study is an electronic survey technique called Internet-based survey technique. In this process, the survey form was used on the participants via the website Survey Monkey. A pilot study was carried out in order to test the understandability of the questions on the survey created. As a result of the pilot study, the survey form was revised in line with the requests of the participants.

430 people volunteered in the survey conducted during January 27 – February 27, 2019. Survey forms were examined for the reliability of the study. As a result of the examination, the answers obtained from 97 people were not included in the study since the participants who said no to the survey question “Do you read health news on the Internet?” could not be included in the analyses. Therefore, the analyses conducted include the answers of 333 participants.

4.2 Designing the Data Collection Tool

The reputation of health news will be investigated based on the universe and the sample. In this study, the survey form prepared to measure the reputation of health news consists of demographic and judgment questions. The demographic section of the survey form consists of sixteen questions. These questions were asked to obtain information on sex, age,

educational status, employment status, and similar statuses of the participants. This was intended to find out the profile of individual participants. The remainder of the survey form used a Likert scale intended to measure the reputation of health news in the eyes of the participants. The following studies were used for the Likert scale:

- (Fornbrun et al., 1999).
- (Meyer, 1988; Fico et al., 2004).
- (Fletcher & Park – news participation)

43 closed-ended questions of judgment were asked to investigate the reputation of health news. The closed-ended questions were Likert scale questions with the options “I totally disagree”, “I disagree”, “I am neutral”, “I agree”, and “I totally agree”. Thus, the participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements in the questions on a scale of 5.

4.3 Analysis of Data and Findings

4.3.1. Answers to the Participants’ Demographic Questions and Evaluation

In this study, a field study was conducted on the readers of health news. In this process, data was collected using the Internet-based survey technique. The survey forms of 333 people who were found to be eligible for the survey study conducted on a voluntary basis were examined. The frequency distribution of the demographic features of the 333 people is given in Table 2 to 17.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Yes	333	77.4
No	97	22.6

Table 2: Response trends to the question “Do you read health news on the Internet?”

Table 2 shows the responses of the participants to the judgment question asked: “Do you read health news on the Internet?”. According to Table 2, 77.4% of the participants read health news whereas 22.6% do not read health news. Based on the answers given here, the participants who answered negatively to this question did not answer the questions in the next sections of the survey that measured the reputation of health news, which is the purpose of the study.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Male	133	39.9
Female	200	60.1

Table 3: Trends of the participants by sex

Table 3 shows the trends of the participants by sex. According to Table 3, 39.9% of the participants are male whereas 60.1% are females.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Primary school graduate	9	2.7
Secondary school graduate	22	6.6
High school graduate	76	22.8
Undergraduate degree	40	12.0
Graduate degree	134	40.3

Master's degree	37	11.1
Doctoral degree	15	4.5

Table 4: Trends of the participants by educational status

Table 4 shows the educational statuses of the participants. According to in Table 4, 2.7% of the participants are primary school graduates, 6.6% are secondary school graduates, 22.8% are high school graduates, 12% has undergraduate degrees, 40.3% had graduate degrees, 11.1% had master's degrees, and 4.5% had doctoral degrees.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
18-24	66	19.8
25-29	61	18.3
30-34	43	12.9
35-39	39	11.7
40-44	27	8.1
45-49	23	6.9
50 and above	74	22.2

Table 5: Trends of the participants by age

Table 5 shows the age trends of the participants of the survey. According to Table 5, 19.8% of the participants of the survey were 18-24 years old, 18.3% were 25-29 years old,

12.9% were 30-34 years old, 11.7% were 35-39 years old, 8.1% were 40-44 years old, 6.9 were 45-49 years old, and 22.2% were 50 years old and older.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
TRY 0-1500	50	15.0
TRY 1501-3000	84	25.2
TRY 3001-5000	98	29.4
TRY 5001-7500	49	14.7
TRY 7501-10000	22	6.6
TRY 10001-15000	18	5.4
TRY 15000+	12	3.6

Table 6: Trends of the participants by income

Table 6 shows the income statuses of the participants. According to Table 6, 15% of the participants earn 0-1500 TL, 25.2% earn 1501-3000 TL, 29.4% earn 3001-5000 TL, 14.7% earn 5001-7500 TL, 6.6% earn 7501-10000 TL, 5.4% earn 10001-15000 TL, and 3.6% earn 15000 TL and above.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Married	151	45.3
Single	173	52.0
Other	9	2.7

Table 7: Trends of the participants by marital status

Table 7 shows the trends of the participants by marital status. According to Table 7, 45.3% of the participants are married, 52% are single, and 2.7% gave the answer "other".

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Yes	135	40.5
No	198	59.5

Table 8: Trends of the participants by having children

Table 8 shows the trends of the participants by having children. According to Table 8, 40.5% of the participants of the survey have children whereas 59.5% of them do not have children.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Yes	224	67.3
No	109	32.7

Table 9: Trends of the participants by employment

Table 9 shows the trends of the participants by employment statuses. According to Table 9, 67.3% of the participants are employed whereas 32.2% are unemployed.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
1 hour or less a day	74	22.2
2-3 hours a day	108	32.4
More than 3 hours a day	136	40.8
Once in 2-3 days	10	3.0
Once a week	3	.9
More seldom	2	.6

Table 10: Trends of the participants by the time spent on the Internet

Table 10 shows the responses of the participants regarding the amount of time they spend on the Internet. According to Table 10, 22.2% of the participants spend 1 hour or less on the Internet, 32.4% spend 2-3 hours a day, 40.8% spend more than 3 hours a day, 3% spend time on the Internet once in 2-3 days, 0.9% spend time on the Internet once a week, and 0.6% spend time on the Internet more seldom.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Yes	187	56.2
No	146	43.8

Table 11: Trends of the participants by following health blogs on the Internet

Table 11 shows the trends of the participants by following health blogs on the Internet. According to Table 11, 56.2% of the participants follow health blogs on the Internet while 43.8% do not.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Yes	212	63.7
No	121	36.3

Table 12: Response trends of the participants to the question “Do you follow Instagram accounts that post content about healthy life?”

Table 12 shows the responses of the participants to the question “Do you follow Instagram accounts that post content about healthy life?”. According to Table 12, 63.7% of the participants follow Instagram accounts that post content about healthy life whereas 36.3% do not.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
I do not believe it provides helpful information	32	9.6
I am neutral	82	24.6
I believe I get helpful information for my health and my environment both	219	65.8

Table 13: Response trends of the participants to the question “Which of the following describes best your opinion on health news?”

Table 13 shows the responses of the participants to the question “Which of the following describes best your opinion on health news?”. According to Table 13, 9.6% of the participants answered, “I do not believe it provides helpful information”, 24.6% answered “I am neutral”, and 65.8% answered “I believe I get helpful information for my health and my environment both”.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Yes	295	88.6
No	38	11.4

Table 14: Response trends of the participants to the question “Do you take notice of warnings such as ‘do not try before consulting a doctor’ and “...people who have a condition of ... should not use’ indicated under health news?”

Table 14 shows the responses of the participants to the question “Do you take notice of warnings such as ‘do not try before consulting a doctor’ and “...people who have a condition of ... should not use’ indicated under health news?”. According to Table 14, 88.6% of the participants take notice of warnings whereas 11.4% of them do not.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
I am neutral	71	24.1
It affects positively	211	71.5
It affects negatively	13	4.4

Table 15: Response trends of the participants to the question “How does this affect your trust in health news?”

Table 15 shows the responses of the participants to the question “How does this affect your trust in health news?”. According to Table 15, 24.1% of the participants responded “I am neutral”, 71.5% responded, “It affects positively”, and 4.4% responded, “It affects negatively”.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Technology	144	9.9%
Politics	167	11.5%
Health	223	15.4%
Astrology	86	5.9%
Sports	111	7.6%
Economy	125	8.6%
Tabloid	111	7.6%
Columns	96	6.6%
Interviews	89	6.1%
Travel	154	10.6%
World	146	10.1%

Table 16: Response trends of the participants to the question “Which news categories do you follow on the Internet?”

Table 16 shows the news categories followed by the participants. According to Table 16, 9.9% of the participants follow technology, 11.5% follow politics, 15.4% follow health, 5.9% follow astrology, 7.6% follow sports, 8.6% follow economy, 7.6% follow columns, 6.1% follow interviews, 10.6% follow travel, and 10.1% follow world categories.

There are 223 participants who follow the category of health news on the Internet. Table 16 shows the types of health news followed by the participants that follow health news.

Variables	Frequency	Frequency (%)
Healthy nutrition	174	25.1%
Physical exercise	105	15.1%
Family health	69	9.9%
Chronic diseases	69	9.9%
Recent developments in the field of health	101	14.6%
Columns	36	5.2%
Informative articles on diseases	140	20.2%

Table 17: Response trends of the participants to the question “What are the news categories you follow under the health category?”

According to Table 17, 25.1% of the participants that follow health news category read about healthy nutrition, 15.1% read about physical exercise, 9.9% read about family health, 9.9% read about chronic diseases, 14.6% read about recent developments in the field of health, 5.2% read columns, and 20.2% read informative articles on diseases.

4.3.2 Statistical Analyses

This study investigates health news. For such purposes, data were collected from the participants who read health news, using a survey.

In this section, first the reliability of the survey forms used in the study will be measured. Later, a correlation analysis will be conducted in order find out the direction, degree and significance of the correlations among news trust, content interaction, and institutional reputation. In the following stage, the correlation between news trust, content interaction, and institutional reputation will be estimated. Finally, the study will investigate what might be the factors that may affect such variables.

4.3.3 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis measures the consistency of the responses given in the survey. Here, consistency is only the consistency of the answers given to the questions that have answers on an ordinal scale. The Cronbach's Alpha values calculated as a result of the reliability analysis are interpreted as follows:

- If $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$, the scale is not reliable;
- If $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$, the scale has low reliability;
- If $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$, the scale is considerably reliable;
- If $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$, the scale is highly reliable.

N=333	Min	Max	μ	SD	Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
News Credibility	1	5	2.9745	0.65407	6	0.808
News Participation	1	5	2.2963	0.86605	9	0.881
News Reputation	1	5	3.0164	0.48784	28	0.898

Table 18: Results of Reliability Analysis

Table 18 shows the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the scales used in the study. According to Table 18, the Cronbach's Alpha values for news trust scale, content interaction scale, the institutional reputation scale were 0.808, 0.881, and 0.898, respectively. According to the results, news credibility, news participation and news reputation scales were found to be highly reliable.

4.3.4 Normal Distribution Analysis

It is possible to benefit from various normality tests in order to find out whether the data are in coherence with the normal distribution. From among such tests, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk are the most known tests. The basic hypothesis of both tests indicates that the data have normal distribution whereas the alternative hypothesis indicates that the data does not have a normal distribution.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
News Credibility	0.130	333	0.000	0.978	333	0.000
News Participation	0.113	333	0.000	0.960	333	0.000
News Reputation	0.066	333	0.001	0.990	333	0.017

Table 19: Results of Normal Distribution Analysis

According to the results given in Table 19, the statistical probability values of both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests ($p=0.00$) are less than the critical value ($p=0.05$). According to such results, the basic hypothesis of the tests for the variables news credibility, news participation, and news reputation was negated, and it was found out that they did not have a normal distribution.

4.3.5 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method that reveals the direction, degree and significance of the relationship among variables. The coefficient that indicates the direction and degree of the relationship is the correlation coefficient. There are numerous correlation analyses. However, the most commonly used ones are:

- Pearson, and
- Spearman correlation analyses.

Pearson correlation analysis is conducted when variables have been obtained using a ratio or interval scale and are coherent with a normal distribution. Spearman correlation analysis is conducted when variables have been obtained using ratio or interval scale but are not coherent with a normal distribution.

Interpretation of the correlation coefficient (r):

- If r is < 0.2 , there is weak or no correlation;
- If r is $0.2 - 0.4$, there is weak correlation;
- If r is $0.4 - 0.6$, there is moderate correlation;
- If r is $0.6 - 0.8$, there is high correlation; and
- If r is $0.8 >$, there is very strong correlation.

	News credibility	News participation	News reputation
News credibility	1	0.224	0.559
News participation	0.224	1	0.453
News reputation	0.559	0.453	1

Table 20: Results of Correlation Analysis

Table 20 shows the results of the correlation analysis conducted for news trust, content interaction, and institutional reputation. Since the variables did not have normal distribution during the analysis, Spearman correlation analysis was used. According to such results, a positive weak correlation was detected between news trust and content interaction. Based on the same results, a positive moderate correlation was detected between news trust and institutional reputation and between content interaction and institutional reputation.

4.4 Other Analyses

In this section, statistical tests were conducted in order to determine the factors that affect the variables. When conducting these tests, it is an important factor that the variable is coherent with the normal distribution. If the variables are coherent with the normal distribution, the t-test is used to compare the two independent groups. However, if they do not have a normal distribution, the Mann Whitney U test is used instead.

Mann Whitney U test is a non-parametric test that is used to compare the means of two independent groups in the absence of normal distribution. Whereas the basic hypothesis of this test expresses that there is no difference between the two variables, its alternative hypothesis expresses that there is a difference between the two groups.

Mann Whitney U test was used to examine whether there was a difference between the sexes in terms of news credibility, between those who have children and not in terms of Content Interaction, and between being employed and unemployed in terms of Institutional Reputation. Based on the findings:

Ranks				
	Sex	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
News credibility	Male	200	176.08	35217
	Female	133	153.34	20394
	Total	333		

Test Statistics	
	News credibility
Mann-Whitney U	11483
Wilcoxon W	20394
Z	-2.129
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.033

Table 21: Results of Mann Whitney U Test for Sex

Table 21 shows the results of Mann Whitney U test conducted to find out whether there was a difference between the sexes in terms of news credibility. According to the results of the test, the basic hypothesis was negated since the statistical probability value of the test ($p=0.033$) was less than the critical value ($p=0.05$). In other words, news trust varies by sexes. It could be said that news credibility is higher in males than in females.

Ranks				
	Having Children	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
News participation	Yes	135	177.4	23949
	No	198	159.91	31662
	Total	333		

Test Statistics	
	Content Interaction
Mann-Whitney U	11961
Wilcoxon W	31662
Z	-1.632
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.103

Table 22: Results of Mann Whitney U Test for Having Children or not

Table 22 shows the results of Mann Whitney U test conducted to find out whether there was a difference between having children or not in terms of news participation. According to the results of the test, the basic hypothesis could not be negated since the

statistical probability value of the test ($p=0.103$) was greater than the critical value ($p=0.05$).

In other words, news participation does not vary by having children or not.

Ranks				
	Being Employed	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
News reputation	Yes	224	165.83	37146
	No	109	169.4	18465
	Total	333		

Test Statistics	
	News reputation
Mann-Whitney U	11946
Wilcoxon W	37146
Z	-0.318
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.750

Table 23: Results of Mann Whitney U Test for being Employed or not

Table 23 shows the results of Mann Whitney U test conducted to find out whether there was a difference between the being employed or not in terms of Institutional Reputation. According to the results of the test, the basic hypothesis could not be negated since the statistical probability value of the test ($p=0.750$) was greater than the critical value ($p=0.05$). In other words, news reputation does not vary by being employed or not.

Throughout two hypotheses have been studied.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	B	SE	t	Sig	F	Adj. R ²
News reputation	News credibility	,609	,161	6.945	,000	121.567	,269
News credibility	News participation	,377	,081	4.675	,000	21.854	,059

Table 24: The relation between dependent and independent variables

To sum up, the β coefficients indicate the highest relationship between news credibility and news reputation ($\beta=0,609$, $t=6.945$, $p=,000$), followed by the relationship between news credibility and news participation ($\beta= 0,377$, $t=4.675$, $p=,000$). Thus, **H1** and **H2** are accepted.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the main aim of this thesis was to analyze the relation between institutional reputation, news trust, and news participation to measure people's perception on health news. For this aim, the quantitative method of survey was used. 430 people from different demographic backgrounds were asked questions about their media habits, and their answers are collected to have a pattern about people's perception and trust in the health-related news in the media.

Both the relation between news reputation and news trust as well as the relation between institutional reputation and news participation are positive. It means that, when the reputation of the media institution is high, the news trust people have for this institution increases. Furthermore, as news trust increases, people participate more in the news-making process. The most important variable here is institutional reputation since it affects both the news trust and news participation. That is why increasing and protecting the news reputation of a media company should be among the most important priorities of these companies.

This thesis analyzed the hypotheses through a survey analyze and a broad literature review, to explain the relation better. As a solution, in order to increase the news participation, what should be done is to increase the trust in the media institution. And, to do this, the reputation of the media institutions should be protected through necessary steps.

Corporate reputation is important for any company to continue its business in a healthy way, including media companies. For a media company, good reputation means increasing news trust and increasing news participation. The specific focus of this thesis is health-related news. The significance of the health-related news is that these news directly affect people's lives. That is why true information sharing and up-to-date information is

crucial for health-related news. What health communication aims to provide is this accurate information regarding health-related news.

People who follow this news both online and also from the traditional media also expect to reach accurate information. Today, the Internet has both advantages and disadvantages regarding news accuracy. The advantage is that it is very easy to find the answers of the questions we are looking for. However, there is a lot of information, hence, sometimes it can be difficult to find which information is the correct one. In this situation, people can actively take part online in news-making and content creation. If information is not accurate, people can intervene easily by participating in the process, which means actions such as commenting or writing posts on the issue. Regarding health news, the situation is more serious considering health news directly affects our wellbeing. Among our participants, while 15.4% of the participants read health news online, most of them indicated that they take the warnings in the news seriously, and it affects their behavior. It is not a low statistic. Hence, the accuracy of health news is very important.

When we look at the correlation analysis, we can see that news trust and news participation, as well as news trust and institutional reputation are positively correlated. However, the correlation between news trust and institutional reputation is higher. While these results validate our hypothesis, the correlation is not as high as expected. There may be several reasons for that. The group sample may be small, there may be bias towards media environment, there may be other similar reasons.

Furthermore, while analyzing, we had three research questions apart from our hypothesis. These are; a) What is the relation between news trust and gender? b) What is the relation between content interaction and having children? c) What is the relation between news reputation and employment status?

The result of the survey conducted gives us the information that, most of the participants read the health news online. However, female participation in online news' is higher. While female participate more and read more newspapers online than male, the male rate is smaller compared to female. Regarding the relation between having children and news participation, does not vary by having children or not. Furthermore, people who have graduate degree or people who are employed tend to read online health news more.

News trust for health news is a very specific issue. For this reason, the results we got are also specific for health news. The future study can give us an idea about the relation of people with other types of news, such as sports, politics, and economics. With these future researches, we can have a better understanding of each specific topic.

Annex 1. Survey

Mevcut çalışma İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Medya ve İletişim Sistemleri Yüksek Lisans programı kapsamında hazırlanan bir tez için düzenlenmiştir. Sorulara eksiksiz yanıt vermeniz çok önemlidir. Sorulara vereceğiniz yanıtlar anonim tutulacaktır. Desteyiniz için teşekkür ederiz.

ANKET

1-İnternette sağlık haberlerini okuyor musunuz?

- ☐ Evet
☐ Hayır

(1. soruya yanıtınız “Hayır” ise ankete katılımınız için teşekkür ederiz.)

2-Cinsiyetiniz:

- ☐ Kadın
☐ Erkek

3-Yaşınız

- ☐ 18'den küçük
☐ 18-24
☐ 25-29
☐ 30-34
☐ 35-39
☐ 40-44
☐ 45-49
☐ 50 ve üzeri

4-Eğitim durumunuz

- ☐ İlkokul mezunu
☐ Ortaokul mezunu
☐ Lise mezunu
☐ Ön lisans mezunu
☐ Lisans mezunu
☐ Yüksek lisans mezunu
☐ Doktor

5-Gelir durumunuz

- ☐ 0-1500 TL
☐ 1501-3000 TL

- ☐ 3001-5000 TL
- ☐ 5001-7500 TL
- ☐ 7501-10000 TL
- ☐ 10001-15000 TL
- ☐ +15000 TL

6-Medeni durum:

- ☐ Evli
- ☐ Bekâr

7-Çocuğunuz var mı?

- ☐ Evet
- ☐ Hayır

8-Çalışıyor musunuz?

- ☐ Evet
- ☐ Hayır

9- İnternette ne sıklıkla zaman geçirirsiniz?

- ☐ Günde 3 saatten fazla
- ☐ Günde 2-3 saat
- ☐ Günde 1 saat veya daha az
- ☐ 2-3 günde bir
- ☐ Haftada bir
- ☐ Daha nadir

10-İnternetteki hangi haber kategorilerini takip ediyorsunuz?

- ☐ Teknoloji
- ☐ Siyaset
- ☐ Sağlık
- ☐ Astroloji
- ☐ Spor
- ☐ Ekonomi
- ☐ Magazin
- ☐ Köşe yazıları
- ☐ Röportajlar
- ☐ Seyahat
- ☐ Dünya

11-İnternette sağlık haberlerini en sık takip ettiğiniz 5 gazetenin adını en çoktan en aza doğru yazınız (Hürriyet.com.tr, Milliyet.com.tr gibi).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

12-İnternet sağlık bloglarını takip ediyor musunuz?

- ☐ Evet
☐ Hayır

13-Instagram’da sağlıklı yaşam üzerine içerikler sunan hesapları takip ediyor musunuz?

- ☐ Evet
☐ Hayır

14- Sağlık kategorisinde takip ettiğiniz haber kategorileri hangileridir?

- ☐ Sağlıklı beslenme
☐ Spor
☐ Aile sağlığı
☐ Kronik rahatsızlıklar
☐ Sağlık alanındaki güncel gelişmeler
☐ Köşe yazıları
☐ Hastalıklarla ilgili bilgilendirici yazılar....

15- Sağlık haberleri hakkında görüşünüzü aşağıdakilerden hangisi en iyi ifade eder?

- ☐ Kendi sağlığım ve çevrem için yararlı bilgiler edindiğimi düşünüyorum.
☐ Kararsızım.
☐ Yararlı bilgiler sağladığını düşünmüyorum.

16- Sağlık haberlerinin altında belirtilen “Doktora danışmadan denemeyiniz” ve “... rahatsızlığı olanlar kullanmamalı” gibi uyarılar olması halinde dikkate alır mısınız?

- ☐ Evet
☐ Hayır

17-16. soruya yanıtınız “Evet” ise, bu durum sağlık haberlerine duyduğunuz güveni ne yönde etkiler?

- ☐ Olumlu yönde etkiler.
☐ Kararsızım.
☐ Olumsuz yönde etkiler.

18- Aşağıda birtakım ifadeler sıralanmıştır. Her birini size hitap ediyormuş gibi okuyunuz. Her ifade için ne kadar katılıp katılmadığınızı belirten numarayı işaretleyiniz. Lütfen her ifadeyi değerlendiriniz.

1. İnternetteki sağlık haberlerinin dürüst bir şekilde hazırlandığını düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
2. İnternetteki sağlık haberlerinin önyargısız bir dille hazırlandığını düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
3. İnternetteki sağlık haberlerinin tutarlı olduğunu düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
4. İnternetteki sağlık haberlerinin el aldığı konuyu çok yönlü bir şekilde değerlendirdiğini düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
5. İnternetteki sağlık haberlerine güven duymam.	1	2	3	4	5
6. İnternetteki sağlık haberlerinin yanıltıcı bilgi vermeyeceğini düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5

19- Aşağıda birtakım ifadeler sıralanmıştır. Her birini size hitap ediyormuş gibi okuyunuz. Her ifade için ne kadar katılıp katılmadığınızı belirten numarayı işaretleyiniz. Lütfen her ifadeyi değerlendiriniz.

1. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberlerini sosyal medya hesaplarım aracılığıyla paylaşıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
2. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberlerini mail yoluyla paylaşıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
3. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberleri hakkında yorum yaparım/beğenirim/puan veririm.	1	2	3	4	5
4. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberleri hakkında yorum yaparım.	1	2	3	4	5
5. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberleri hakkında blog yazısı yazarım.	1	2	3	4	5
6. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberleri hakkında kendi deneyimlerimi yansıtan yazılı/görsel paylaşımlarda bulunurum.	1	2	3	4	5
7. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberleri hakkında yorum yaparım.	1	2	3	4	5
8. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberlerinden yola çıkarak gerekli olduğu takdirde ilgili sağlık kuruluşlarıyla irtibata geçerim.	1	2	3	4	5
9. İnternetteki ilginç sağlık haberlerinin yer aldığı platformların anketlerine katılırım.	1	2	3	4	5
10. İnternetteki ilginç bulduğum sağlık haberleri hakkında yürütülen sosyal değişim kampanyalarına katılırım (change.org gibi)	1	2	3	4	

20- Aşağıda birtakım ifadeler sıralanmıştır. Her birini size hitap ediyormuş gibi okuyunuz. Her ifade için ne kadar katılıp katılmadığınızı belirten numarayı işaretleyiniz. Lütfen her ifadeyi değerlendiriniz.

1. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının sunduğu hizmetler hakkında bilgi sahibiyim. (familiarity)	1	2	3	4	5
2. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının sahiplerinin son zamanlarda yapmış olduğu çalışmalar hakkında bilgim yok. (familiarity)	1	2	3	4	5
3. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının ekonomik kaynakları/durumu hakkında bilgi sahibiyim. (familiarity)	1	2	3	4	5
4. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarında çalışan insanlar tanıyorum. (familiarity)	1	2	3	4	5
5. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları iyi bir yönetim anlayışına sahiptir. (operational capability)	1	2	3	4	5
6. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları yetkin çalışanlara sahiptir. (operational capability)	1	2	3	4	5
7. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları güncel haber içerikleri sunmamaktadır. (operational capability)	1	2	3	4	5
8. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları yetkin yöneticilere sahiptir. (operational capability)	1	2	3	4	5
9. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları güçlü kaynaklara sahiptir. (industry leadership)	1	2	3	4	5
1. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları alanında güçlü kurumlardır. (industry leadership)	1	2	3	4	5
2. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları medya sektöründe lider konumundadır. (industry leadership)	1	2	3	4	5
3. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının medya sektöründe öncü olduklarını düşünmüyorum. (industry leadership)	1	2	3	4	5
4. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının ilginç içerikler sunduğunu düşünmüyorum. (distinctiveness)	1	2	3	4	5
5. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları rakiplerinden farklı içerikler sunar. (distinctiveness)	1	2	3	4	5
6. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının sunmuş oldukları içerikleri kendime yakın buluyorum. (distinctiveness)	1	2	3	4	5
7. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları hakkında olumlu düşüncelere sahibim. (distinctiveness)	1	2	3	4	5
8. İnternette takip ettiğim sağlık haber kaynaklarının içeriklerine inanırım. (credibility)	1	2	3	4	5
9. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının yanıltıcı bilgiler verdiğini düşünmüyorum. (credibility)	1	2	3	4	5
1. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarına güveniyorum. (credibility)	1	2	3	4	5
2. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının şeffaf ve kullanıcıları ile etkileşime açık olduğunu düşünüyorum. (credibility)	1	2	3	4	5
3. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının sunduğu içerikler toplum sağlığı için önemlidir. (influence)	1	2	3	4	5

4. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının benim gibi insanların hayatını olumlu yönde değiştirir. (influence)	1	2	3	4	5
5. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının medya ekonomisindeki yeri önemsizdir. (influence)	1	2	3	4	5
6. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları dünyanın daha iyi bir yere dönüşmesine katkıda bulunur. (influence)	1	2	3	4	5
7. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları çalışanlarını önemser. (caring)	1	2	3	4	5
8. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynakları medya sektörüne önemli katkılar sunar. (caring)	1	2	3	4	5
9. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının sosyal sorumluluk bilinci yüksek kurumlar olduğunu düşünüyorum. (caring)	1	2	3	4	5
1. İnternette takip ettiğim haber kaynaklarının çalışanlarının ve okuyucularının sağlığını önemsemediğini düşünüyorum. (caring)	1	2	3	4	5

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