

Examining the change in brands' marketing communication during COVID-19 from crisis communication perspective

Research Article

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Received 03 February 2025; Accepted 13 April 2025

Abstract: This research investigates how companies modified their communication strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, viewed as an exogenously driven crisis from a marketing perspective. Although the literature on crisis communication in marketing predominantly focuses on internally driven crisis, exogenously driven crises are yet to be investigated further. Based on situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), we first examine how marketing professionals constructed suitable marketing communication strategies during the pandemic by conducting interviews and employing thematic analysis on the collected data. Then, we analyze social media messages of certain brands to compare the discourse and emotional variation over three periods: before, during, and after the pandemic. The interviews reveal seven key topics: the benefits of the COVID-19 pandemic, the societal benefits, the importance of circumspect and peaceful communication, the precautions related to COVID-19, consumer orientation, the suspension of marketing campaigns, and the need to diversify communication channels. Social media analysis shows that while online transactions are featured, marketing-related campaigns lost their relative importance during the pandemic. Furthermore, discrepancies exist between the desired strategies identified in interviews and the implementations reflected in the social media posts. Moreover, we discuss that the construction of crisis communication cannot exclusively rely on organizational reputation and crisis responsibility, as posited by the SCCT. In addition to those, the temporal dimension, contextual changes, and emotional variation should be considered, especially in the context of a prolonged external crisis impacting multiple societal actors.

Keywords: SCCT • COVID-19 • Marketing communication • Thematic analysis • Text-mining

1. Introduction

Proper communication has been considered essential during a crisis for brands (Li & McCrary, 2022; Lou et al., 2023), because transmitting accurate and reliable information to all stakeholders is vital during such a situation (Coombs, 2010). Specifically, externally driven crises impact businesses and brands significantly. For example, Volkswagen's gas emission scandal influenced the reputations of other brands in the industry (Trump & Newman, 2017); the TransAsia Airways accident eroded people's trust and safety perceptions toward other airlines (Li et al., 2015); and the Great Recession

led to the bankruptcy of giant enterprises such as GM and Chrysler in the US (Duignan, 2024). Brands also had to respond to the changes in consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic (henceforth, "the pandemic") (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020; Mehta et al., 2020). The pandemic, a unique exogenous-based crisis, demands novel communication approaches (Wenzel et al., 2020; Whitley et al., 2021).

Previous research indicates how brands adjusted their communication strategies to encourage socially responsible behaviors (Deutsch & Mouton, 2022), integrated pandemic-related content into their communication materials (Mele et al., 2023), employed positivity and humor (Belobrovkina & Rodgers, 2023), and incorporated emotional and ethical themes (Mangiò et al., 2021) during the

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pandemic. However, most studies on crisis communication have primarily centered on creating messages or compiling social reactions, and only a few have investigated message types, timing, appropriateness, congruence of information dissemination, and actor coordination through time (Bányász, 2023). Also, most studies on crisis communication after major crises have been conducted in the US and European countries (Eisele et al., 2021; Verhoeven et al., 2014). With few exceptions (e.g., Chaskar & Upadhyay, 2023), past research relies on data from developed countries. Additional research across diverse regions is necessary to understand different communication strategies. Moreover, existing research often overlooks the changing nature of communication strategies across the pandemic's phases, instead focusing on shorter timeframes (Scheiwiller & Zizka, 2021). Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) has been extensively applied in crisis communication research; however, the literature reveals inconsistent results, indicating the need for more robust communication strategies than those typically provided by SCCT, particularly in light of the pandemic's severity and prolonged duration (Zizka & Chen, 2024).

In this study, we aim to provide insights into the diverse crisis communication strategies that brands can use in case of socially disruptive external crises. Specifically, we examine how and to what extent companies have altered their digital communication strategies in response to the pandemic. We answer these questions from two perspectives: interviews provide information regarding marketing professionals' communication-related strategy decisions during the pandemic, and social media analysis offers insights into how those strategies were implemented.

This research examines the pandemic as an illustration of an exogenous brand crisis and employs the SCCT (Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Coombs, 2007) as the theoretical framework. To address the identified gaps in the current literature, we utilize an exploratory research design that combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Regarding qualitative analysis, we performed 11 interviews with marketing experts and analyzed the transcriptions using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019). The primary objective of these interviews was to obtain insights into strategy construction related to marketing communication, rather than to assess the generalizability of the findings. We used these insights to evaluate the results of quantitative research. For quantitative research, we employed text-mining tools to examine the social media messages posted on the X accounts of the brands under investigation. Consistent with previous research emphasizing the role of brands in society during times of crisis, this study investigates how established national

and international brands in an emerging economy, Türkiye, adapted their marketing communication strategies to the pandemic-driven circumstances compared to previous and post-pandemic. This article is in response to several scholars who have emphasized the need to investigate the marketing strategies employed at different stages of the pandemic (Maulana, 2020; Scheiwiller & Zizka, 2021). By studying the context of an emerging market, we also address calls by Tebessi et al. (2024), Basri and Siam (2019), and Ajayi and Mmutle (2021) to study more deeply other contexts outside of the US and Europe.

In the subsequent sections of the study, we commence with an examination of SCCT, followed by a literature review. Then, we elaborate on qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, respectively. Thereafter, we provide discussion, practical implications, and research limitations. The article ends with a conclusion section.

2. SCCT

Effective communication is a challenge for all actors in society, depending on the severity of the crisis. To cope with the crisis-driven circumstances in terms of strategic communication, the literature suggests various approaches. For example, Sturges (1994) proposes a model of "crisis communication content," which advises organizations to use instructional, adjusting, and internalizing crisis communication strategies in communication materials. The maturity level of the crisis defines the weight of the strategy used. The model's ultimate goal is to efficiently and effectively influence the opinion development of important community members. Another example is Benoit's (1997) "image restoration discourse." This model focuses on message strategies based on the type of crisis threatening the organization. These strategies include denial, evasion of responsibility, reduction of offensiveness in events, corrective action, and mortification. Lee (2020) discusses that stealing thunder, which is a crisis strategy claiming to be proactive and honest during the whole process of crisis management, would be an effective communication strategy during crises.

Conversely, SCCT, the foundational theory of this study, claims that understanding the current crisis is essential for formulating appropriate response strategies to protect the organization's reputation. The theory posits that experts should initially identify the type of crisis. This assessment enables experts to assess the organization's ability to manage the crisis and the degree to which the public holds the organization accountable for it. Based on these initial evaluations, they determine the appropriate response strategies to the crisis. This aspect of SCCT is a

significant contribution to the crisis communication literature because earlier crisis response strategies had been evaluated independently from the type of crisis and organizational responsibility. In SCCT, organizational responsibility serves as a conceptual link between crisis situations and crisis response strategies (Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Coombs, 2006, 2007). With these aspects, SCCT is regarded as one of the pioneering theories in crisis communication, which elucidates the impact of crisis response strategies and offers guidance for organizational communication during crises (Coombs & Tachkova, 2024).

Depending on the crisis cluster, communication can take various forms, ranging from completely defensive to entirely accommodating. While denial and diminish strategies are rather defensive to protect organizational reputation, rebuild strategies are designed to be rather accommodative to address the victims of the crisis. In terms of organizational responsibility for a crisis, denial strategies are more appropriate if there is no organizational responsibility, whereas instructing and adjusting information can be employed when the organizational responsibility is minor. Furthermore, when the organization is largely responsible for the crisis, an apology, compensation, or both can be preferred, along with instructing and adjusting information (Coombs, 2019).

The literature frequently uses SCCT to evaluate the communication strategies of various companies. For instance, one research study indicates the use of dealing-based communication strategies during the pandemic, whereas denial strategies were not preferred (Parmelee & Greer, 2023). Hotels, on the contrary, utilized denial strategies (Chaskar & Upadhyay, 2023) specifically at the beginning of the pandemic to highlight that it would be limited in China (Atasoy et al., 2022). As asserted by the SCCT, instructional messages implicitly address victimization by emphasizing health and hygiene. Many organizations reportedly used instructing and adjusting information to minimize reputational damage during the pandemic (Dhar & Bose, 2022). However, contrary to the claims of the SCCT, the research indicates the infrequent use of adjusting information in communication materials (Brewer & Imes, 2023). Instructional messages in organizations' social media posts contained pandemic updates, as well as empathy, solidarity, and moral support (Kwork et al., 2022). Moreover, organizations used instructive messages to encourage individuals toward certain behaviors that might help them cope with pandemic-related conditions (Brewer & Imes, 2023). These results are consistent with other research as well, because brands included informative content in their communication materials to educate and motivate individuals toward desired behaviors

that align with the rules aimed at controlling the spread of the pandemic (Hesse et al., 2021).

3. Methodology

3.1 Qualitative research on the change in companies' communication strategies during the pandemic

To conduct qualitative research, we contacted brand management, corporate communication, and marketing communication professionals through LinkedIn, authors' personal networks, and contact forms featured on the corporate websites. We identified the brands from the lists of independent organizations, including "Brand Finance: Turkey 100 2021; 'The most valued and powerful brands of Turkey'"¹, "Capital: Much appreciated Brands of Turkey," and "ISO 500"². Participants had an average of 14 years of experience. We selected the interviewees from different industries to ensure data diversification. We recorded 9 of 11 interviews; we used instant notes for one of the interviews, and one participant answered the questions in written format. The interview period spanned from December 2021 to March 2022. The semi-structured interview entails five sections, including ten open-ended questions that provide insights regarding the company's industry, general branding and marketing communication strategies, and those strategies executed specifically during the pandemic.

Our objective with qualitative research was to develop our understanding of marketing professionals' strategic decisions within the scope of communication during the pandemic. We employed thematic analysis, which is a well-established qualitative research method. We utilized thematic analysis to analyze the responses provided by the participants. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a qualitative research approach that involves the identification, investigation, and reporting of specific patterns that are present within a given dataset. We used an inductive categorization method to highlight the main themes that captured the important details related to our research question (Fawaz et al., 2023). We transcribed the interviews meticulously to ensure that the transcripts were sufficient for conducting the thematic

¹ <https://static.brandirectory.com/reports/brand-finance-turkey-100-2021-full-report.pdf>.

² <https://www.iso500.org.tr/500-buyuk-sanayi-kurulusu/2020/>.

analysis. We employed the inductive thematic analysis approach to ascertain the predominant patterns and topics present within the texts, which enabled us to be flexible in conducting thematic analysis. Rather than relying on a predetermined set of coding templates, we conducted an in-depth analysis and coding of the data set, adopting a data-driven approach in our qualitative research. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that we implemented the coding procedure consistently throughout the dataset to effectively capture themes and patterns relevant to the research. We gathered initial codes that were related to each other to obtain major categories, which subsequently led us to identify the themes. Figure 1 exemplifies the process, from coding the interview to identifying a theme.

Thematic analysis, similar to other qualitative research methodologies, commences with the gathering of data and culminates in the reporting phase, whereby the detected themes are presented. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the process is not linear but rather recursive.

According to Braun and Clark (2019), the analysis necessitates a reflective approach, which entails a creative yet subjective process in terms of knowledge generation. Furthermore, the authors provide specific stages for carrying out the thematic analysis: familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, evaluating the themes, defining and naming them, and producing the report. Figure 2 provides a brief overview of the complete procedure with the respective definition of each step.

3.2 Themes that emerged from thematic analysis

We have identified seven distinct themes at the end of thematic analysis. The themes are as follows: benefiting from COVID-19-driven circumstances, societal benefits, circumspect and peaceful communication, COVID-19-related precautions, consumer orientation, suspension of marketing campaigns, and diversification of communication

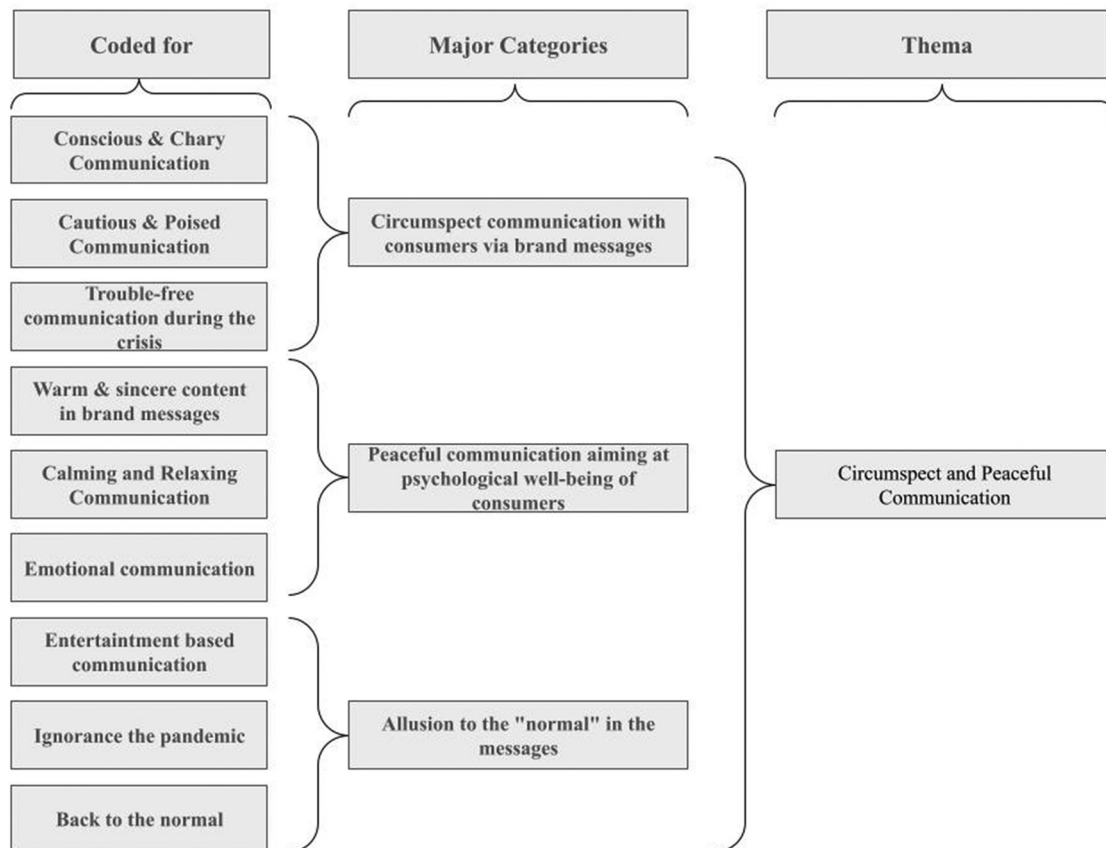


Figure 1. Illustration of a theme identification process.

Source: Authors' own drawing.

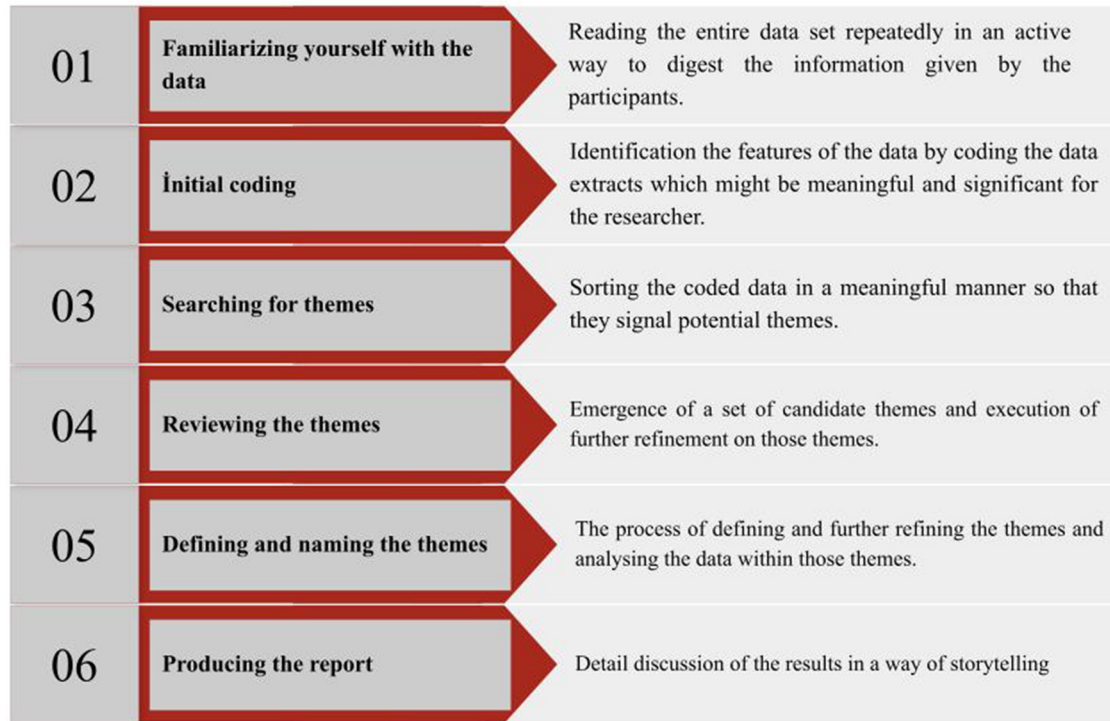


Figure 2. Step-by-step thematic analysis.

Source: Authors' own drawing based on Braun and Clark (2019).

channels (see Appendix for the examples of interview quotations for each theme).

3.2.1 Benefiting from the COVID-19-driven circumstances

The theme of benefiting from the COVID-19-driven circumstances provides a comprehensive explanation of the pandemic-induced challenges, as well as the strategies taken by enterprises to adapt to the evolving circumstances. The interviewees noted that the pandemic sped up digitalization and led to personalization. Companies had to strengthen their digital capabilities in order to maintain communication with their current customers and gain new ones. Therefore, targeting certain customer segments through personalization became of utmost importance during this period. These developments led to growth in specific industries as well, like coffee, FMCG, and furniture.

3.2.2 Societal benefit

Another identified theme is societal benefit, which discusses the promotion of environmentally friendly products and production in response to an increase in customer awareness of

sustainability and a change in corporate social responsibility activities. We see that the participants explained how consumers have been willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products if this issue is well-reflected in communications. Moreover, professionals expected that sustainability-related discussions would preserve their existence even after the pandemic. In addition to sustainability, marketing professionals had to change corporate social responsibility activities according to the pandemic conditions.

3.2.3 Circumspect and peaceful communication

The third identified theme is circumspect and peaceful communication. The pandemic has generated an unfavorable environment in the realm of marketing, mostly because of its long-lasting and worrisome nature. The interviewees provided insights into their approach to addressing these challenges, emphasizing the significance of exercising caution while developing marketing messages. Brand communications have been strategically designed to prioritize the psychological well-being of consumers by employing emotional and calm communication during the pandemic. Maintaining a delicate equilibrium between acknowledging the prevailing circumstances and

proceeding with commercial communication proved to be of utmost importance during the pandemic. In addition, the corporations sought to calm and relax consumers, and they crafted their brand messages appropriately.

3.2.4 COVID-19-related precautions

This theme exemplifies how companies incorporated hygiene and health-related conversations into their communication materials directly or indirectly to disseminate information regarding the preventive measures in response to the pandemic. Companies did not only disseminate information to consumers regarding their preventive measures against the pandemic, but also intensified their promotional efforts for certain products.

3.2.5 Consumer orientation

The pandemic conditions have forced brands to strategically structure their messages in a way that benefits consumers. These strategies highlight the advantages and satisfaction of consumers. The primary issues associated with this strategy include consumer benefit orientation and customer experience, the necessity for simplicity, and the need for flawless connection with consumers. Participants explained in detail that customers attach more importance to their benefits. As a result, brand loyalty transitioned into benefit loyalty, a trend that we anticipate will continue. Moreover, we identified that customer experience, which is based on continuous improvement in process addressing customer experience.

3.2.6 Suspension of marketing campaigns

The participants posited that the pandemic period was not appropriate for implementing marketing initiatives aimed at promoting products and/or services, given that consumers are experiencing apprehensions regarding their personal lives. As a result, the pandemic compelled brands to suspend their marketing initiatives for a while, leading to changes in brand communication as marketers faced challenges in executing their usual promotional activities during this period.

3.2.7 Diversification of communication channels

As elucidated in the theme of the “suspension of marketing campaigns,” corporations were compelled to seek alternate methods to sustain their marketing activities, although they postponed them for a while. To effectively maintain their

appearance, the companies employed several communication channels, particularly within the digital realm. Influencer marketing, in particular, emerged as a prominent topic among the participants. However, we found that carrying out influencer marketing activities without demonstrating authenticity and sincerity is insufficient. Hence, the sincerity and authenticity of the influencer were equally crucial in terms of marketing communication during the pandemic. Although many organizations have attempted to broaden their communication channels, traditional channels continue to play a significant role. Briefly, it is essential for brands to ensure their appearance during crisis times by employing various communication channels while maintaining an existing presence in traditional communication channels, especially TV.

3.3 Comparison of companies' social media communications across pre-during and post-pandemic

In this part of the research, we aim to detect the variation of brands' social media communication across a 3-year period, specifically prior to, during, and after the pandemic. We chose X as the social media data source because many companies prefer it as an integrated marketing communication platform (Liu, 2020) to communicate with actual and potential customers via their corporate accounts and to inform the public about crisis-related advancements (Dhar & Bose, 2022). We used the X API³ to obtain the desired tweets by using R, specifically *twitter* and *rtweet* packages, to collect and analyze the collected tweets. We once again consulted the list of three independent institutions, Brand Finance, Capital, and ISO 500, to identify the brands for this section. After carefully eliminating certain corporate accounts that are either unrelated to the research scope or inactive, we successfully identified 85 unique brands. We also omitted the English tweets, and the final dataset consisted of 22,803 tweets.

After gathering the tweets, we carried out some of the text preprocessing steps outlined by Berger et al. (2020) before analyzing the data, including removal of punctuation, digits, and stop words, and using regular expressions (regex) to eliminate certain words that do not add meaning to the sentences in Turkish. Then, we divided the entire data set into three time frames. Türkiye officially declared the pandemic on March 10, 2020. We designated the period

³ Twitter API was free to access during the research period. It is no longer available for free access.

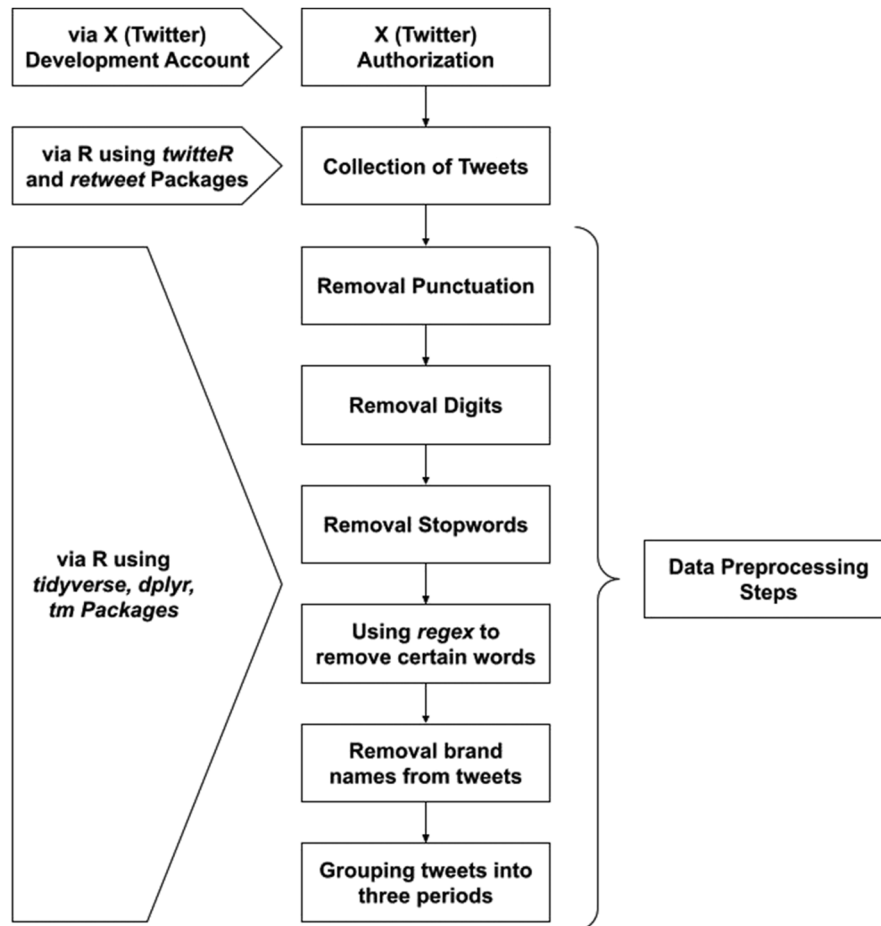


Figure 3. Text data preprocessing steps.

Source: Authors' own drawing based on Berger et al (2020).

from March 10, 2019, to March 10, 2020, as “prior to the pandemic,” whereas we considered the period from March 10, 2020, to March 10, 2021, as “during the pandemic.” We designated the final year, from March 10, 2021, to March 10, 2022, as “after the pandemic.” The number of tweets for the aforementioned periods is 5,377, 7,406, and 10,020, respectively. This procedure is represented in Figure 3. Having prepared the data for analysis, we first applied structural topic modeling (STM) to identify the major topics discussed over the years under examination. Then, we examined and compared the emotional patterns of a selection of prevalent business and marketing-related topics.

In marketing studies, automated text mining techniques are widely used to gain insights about marketing communication (Farmaki et al., 2022; Mangiò et al., 2021) or consumer behavior (Naurin & Michel, 2023; Swagato et al., 2021; Yousefi et al., 2020) during the pandemic. Research demonstrates the

capabilities of automated text mining methods to detect the pandemic-related contents within the social media posts of brands (Hesse et al., 2021). However, despite the existence of numerous studies examining user-generated content on social media (Naurin & Michel, 2023; Yousefi et al., 2020), the literature still lacks sufficient comparative evidence regarding the application of text-mining techniques to analyze the evolution of brand discourses specifically across three distinct time periods: before, during, and after the pandemic. This is noteworthy due to the fact that the pandemic represents a comparatively rare form of crisis that can affect any organization, and the future is also likely to bring such kinds of crises. Therefore, the investigation of pandemic-dependent social media communication has the potential to give a guide to marketing practitioners in terms of constructing appropriate social media communication during a crisis (Hesse et al., 2021).

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Identification and comparison of the topics

STM incorporates the metadata of the complete dataset into its analysis process (Roberts et al., 2019). This procedure enables researchers to establish associations between the metadata and the data. STM assisted us in identifying the shifts in the most-discussed subjects over the course of March 2019 and March 2022. Prior to commencing STM analysis, we compiled tweets that were published on the same day across the 3-year period and classified them into distinct times, including pre-COVID, during, and post-COVID. Subsequently, we constructed two subsets: one composed of tweets published both before and during the pandemic, and the other composed of tweets published both during and after the pandemic. This format allowed us to perform binary comparisons within each subset.

3.4.2 Before and during COVID-19 pandemic

After discussing STM's results, we found seven topics that best reflect the time before and during the pandemic. This result is presented in Table 1, which displays the topic proportions, indicating how important each topic is compared to the others. The ten most repeated words in each topic represent these themes. Considering the representative words, we named the

topics as follows: communication campaigns, earthquake, online transactions, New Year celebration, national and/or religious festival celebration, International Women's Day, and commemoration of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. After establishing the topic names, we consolidated certain topics into overarching categories, including marketing messages, solidarity, digitalization, and messages covering special days.

Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between the specified topics and the examined periods. The majority of messages related to the pandemic included terms referring to online transactions. We identified that brands incorporated the messages to explain to consumers how they could manage their transactions via mobile apps or websites easily during the pandemic. During the course of the 2 years, the communication campaigns carried a comparatively light load. Furthermore, brands have consistently demonstrated sensitivity toward social events, including natural disasters as represented by the topic "Earthquake" and special day(s) as represented by the topics "International Women's Day," "New Year," "Greeting Message for the Festival," and "Commemoration of Atatürk."

3.4.3 During and post-COVID-19 pandemic

We chose 12 topics that represent all the unique topics shared in X accounts of the brands under investigation

Topic category	Topic proportions (%)	Topic label	Top ten representative words
Marketing messages	8.2	Communication campaigns	Design, practical, starting, competition, award-winning, catch, country, house, students, even
Solidarity	3.5	Earthquake	Life, earthquake, emergency, citizen, mercy, region, experienced, get well, customer, existing
Digitalization	14.5	Online transactions	COVID, house, ziraat bank, today's, transactions, digit, coronavirus, timeframe, support, social
Messages covering special day(s)	2.0	New Year celebration	December, obstacle, effective, new year, year, simple, magazine, small, sleep
	4.4	National and/or religious festival celebration	Festival, happy, relatives, wish, peaceful, success, healthy, happiness, year, full
	6.6	International women's day	World, march, violence, day, woman, women, life, women's property, today
	4.1	Commemoration of Atatürk	Kemal, commemorate, mustafa, may, respect, warveteran, respect, thankfulness, atatürk, leader

Table 1. Top topics discussed before and during COVID-19.

Source: Authors' own results.

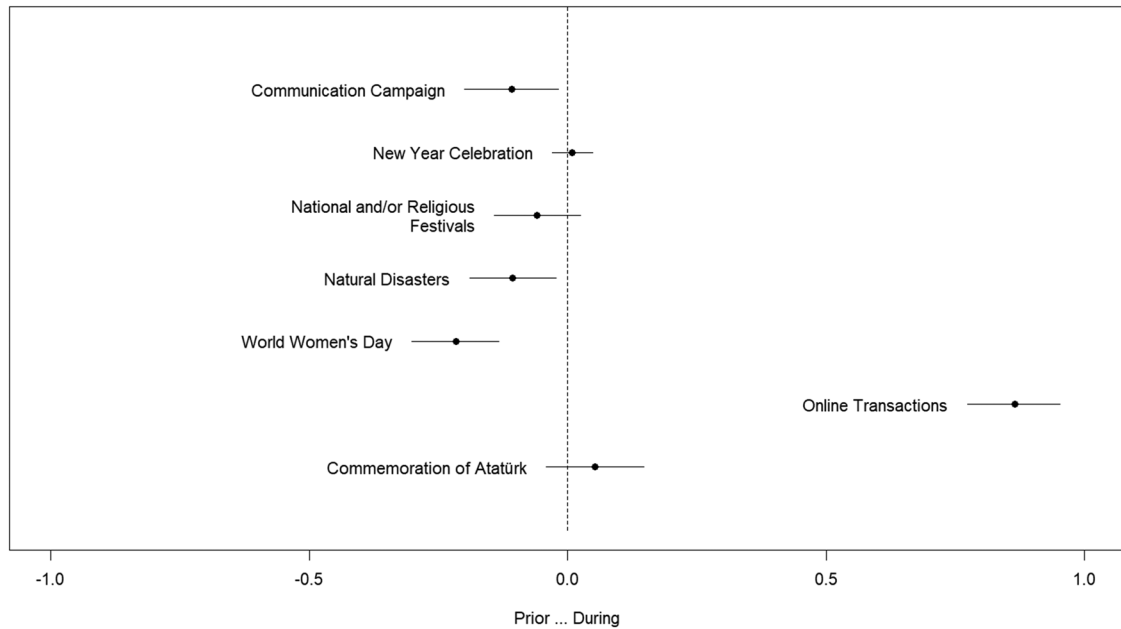


Figure 4. Metadata and topic relations prior and during COVID-19.

Source: Authors' own results.

during and after the pandemic. Table 2 depicts these topics, which we named online transactions, mobile banking, national achievements in Olympic games, seasonal communication campaigns, International Women's Day, Father's Day, New Year greeting, commemoration of Atatürk, National and/or Religious Festival Celebration, working in the Global Pandemic, earthquakes, and forest fires. These topics are later grouped under overarching categories, including digitalization, messages covering special days, solidarity, national achievement, marketing messages, and working conditions.

After labeling and categorizing the identified topics, we conducted metadata-topic relationship analysis in STM to examine the fluctuations in topic proportions in the transition from the pandemic period to the post-pandemic period. Figure 5 illustrates this association. We initially observed banks using social media platforms with greater frequency to promote online banking. The relative significance of these messages has become more pronounced after the pandemic, whereas the relative importance of online transactions has diminished. As shown in Figure 4, although the relative significance of messages, including communication campaigns, was lower during the pandemic, the significance of marketing-related messages increased again after the pandemic. In addition, companies frequently mentioned working conditions in times of the pandemic and expressed gratitude to the workers who had to keep working despite the health concerns.

3.4.4 Examination of the emotional patterns of the specific topics

In the subsequent phase, we analyzed the overall emotions of particular topics and revealed how these emotions evolved over the years under investigation. To accomplish this, we employed the Turkish version of the NRC Word-Emotion Association Lexicon (Mohammad & Turney, 2013). Since we wanted to compare the brand messages related to marketing activities under pandemic circumstances, we chose the common topics: communication campaigns and online transactions from before to during the pandemic, as presented in Table 1, and online transactions, mobile banking, and seasonal communication campaigns from during to after the pandemic, as presented in Table 2. Related to the digitalization category, we could not compare the emotive patterns of online transactions before and during the pandemic because the tweets we labeled "online transactions" based on the STM output (Table 1) were only posted during the pandemic. However, it was possible to compare the emotional patterns of online transactions and mobile banking during and after the pandemic. The comparison was possible because the brands posted these tweets, which we labeled as either "online transactions" or "mobile banking" based on the STM output (Table 2), either during or after the pandemic.

To enable the comparison, we followed specific procedures. We utilized the first *findThoughts* function in the

Topic category	Topic proportions (%)	Topic label	Top ten representative words
Digitalization	20.5	Online transactions	Money, digit, payment, hour, easy, mobile, long, Türkiye, trust, today
	13.9	Mobile banking	House, covid, banking, transactions, ziraat bank, mobile, term, days, may, payment
Messages covering special day(s)	5.4	International women's day	March, woman, women, violence, women, world, November, today, directed, generation
	3.2	National and/or religious festival celebration	Festival, happy, relatives, relative, wish, festival, healthy, full, festival, peaceful
	3	New Year celebration	December, new year, year, year, house, website, relatives, legend, relatives
	3	Father's day	June, father, love, day, today, world, happy, long, trust, future
	3	Commemoration of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk	Kemal, atatürk, mustafa, commemorate, war veteran, respect, atatürk, respect, may
Solidarity	3.2	Earthquake	Present, communication, earthquake, free, emergency, talk, need, region, customer, needs
	3.2	Forest fires	Citizen, getting well, affected, life, experienced, august, forest, sadness, coming, mercy
National achievement	9.3	National achievement	National, olympic, sponsor, Europe, athlete, being, congratulations, pride, tokio, games
Marketing messages	7.4	Seasonal communication campaigns	September, October, autumn-winter, opportunity, season, missing, autumn, you, beautiful, collection
Working in global the pandemic	3.5	Working conditions during the pandemic	Health, term, employee, vacation, April, night, days, coronavirus, daytime, pandemic

Table 2. Top topics discussed during and after COVID-19.

Source: Authors' own research.

stm package, which enables researchers to conduct in-depth investigations on the identified topics. In essence, topic analysis assigns each document to each topic with a distinct probability, meaning that each topic contains one document with a different probability (Blei & Lafferty, 2007). Therefore, we selected the documents – the tweets in our case – with posterior probabilities over 0.20 in each topic to improve the representation of each identified topic. Then, we calculated the overall sentiments of those tweets that referred to particular topics. Since the number of tweets posted and associated emotions in each period are quite distinct, we scaled the emotions by calculating the average weight of each emotion for each time to make cross-comparisons across the years possible. Using the *ggplot* package in R (Wickham et al., 2024), we finally visualized the results in Figure 6 for marketing messages and Figure 7 for digitalization categories.

3.4.5 Marketing messages

Companies have continued to release communication campaigns over the specified time. However, when examining the campaigns over the course of these 3 years, distinct patterns of emotions emerged. Figure 6 illustrates the relative importance of the emotions in brand messages in binary periods, namely, before and during the pandemic, and during and after the pandemic. The upper part of the figure demonstrates first that the dominant identified emotions were trust, anticipation, and joy, irrespective of the year investigated. However, during the pandemic, brand messages gave greater prominence to terms relating to trust. Similarly, fear-related words were more prevalent during the pandemic than they were prior to it. Conversely, during the pandemic, the use of words referring to joy, anticipation, and surprise decreased. Even though terms related to

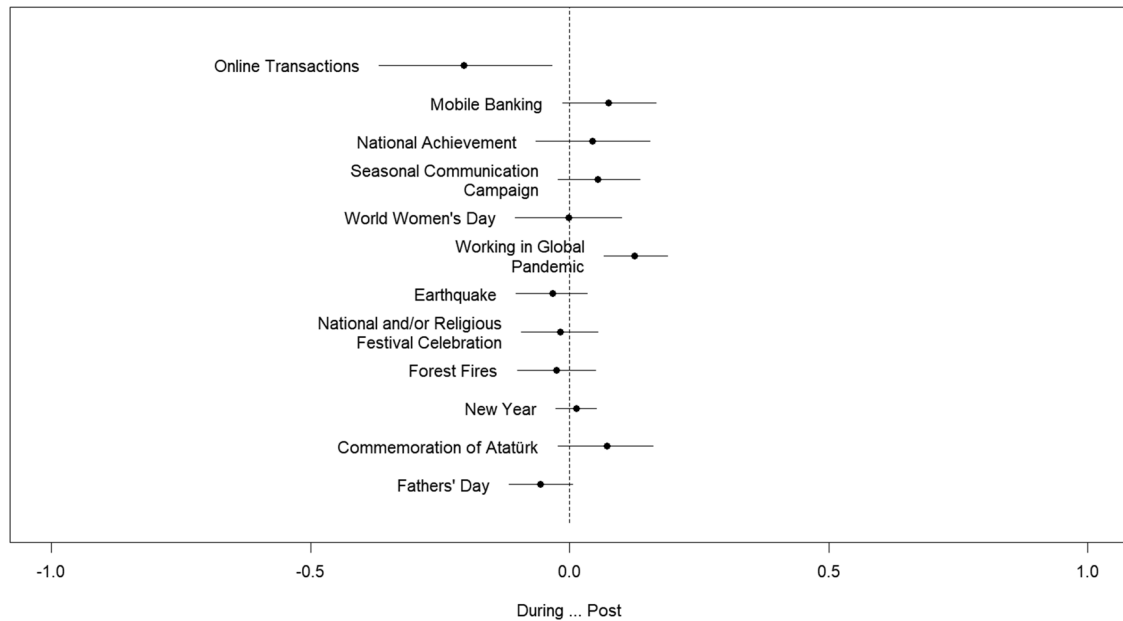


Figure 5. Metadata and topic relations during and after COVID-19.

Source: Authors' own result.

sadness, anger, and disgust were not as commonly used as the terms related to other emotions, we observed a slight increase in the relative weight of sadness in brand messages, while anger and disgust-related terms decreased. Upon examining tweets containing words related to fear, we observe the use of certain words in marketing messages during the pandemic. For example, brands incorporated the terms “pandemic” and “disease” explicitly in social media communications. Dogtas, for instance, a furniture manufacturer in Türkiye, published the tweet:

We also support our healthcare professionals who are working hard for the **Covid-19** outbreak and our people who are fighting the **disease**. We are at your service with the production of masks and daily work clothes for healthcare personnel in our Biga and Düzce factories.

Furthermore, the marketing messages included words such as *difficult*, *rules*, *bad*, or *precautions*, which can be attributed to the pandemic and signify the gloom that penetrated society. For example, Turkcell, one of the telecommunication operators in Türkiye, shared the tweet below during the pandemic:

Don't forget to watch the 14 **rules** video prepared by @saglikbakanligi against **coronavirus** on our @BiPMobil #senyapdiye channel. 📺 The first 10 thousand people who watch the video every day during the week will receive 1 GB.

We found that the dominant emotions during the pandemic and its aftermath were similar to those in the previous period. The main emotions in brands' messages during both periods were joy, anticipation, and trust, as shown in the bottom part of Figure 6. The anticipation and joy increased marginally from 1 year to the next. Similarly, the relative weights of fear-related terms increased even after the pandemic, which may indicate that the effects of the pandemic were also evident in the brands' messages in the year following the pandemic. In addition, the decline in the weights of sadness-related terms from during to after the pandemic is notable. Even though there is no change in the relative weights of trust-related terms when compared to periods with each other, it is always the most prominent emotion in both periods, as observed in previously examined timeframes.

3.4.6 Digitalization

As presented in Table 2, the topics online transactions and mobile banking are grouped under the digitalization category. We merged the tweets associated with these two topics and subsequently applied sentiment analysis to compare the evolution of emotion-based patterns in messages related to digitalization during and after the pandemic. It is possible to discern relative fluctuations in emotions mentioned between the periods, as illustrated in Figure 7. The figure provides initial support for the claim

that trust, anticipation, and joy remained the primary emotions incorporated by the brands into their X messages, regardless of contextual changes. After the pandemic, positive emotions have become relatively more prominent in brand messages. This improvement can be attributed to the decreased relative use of fear-, sadness-, anger-, and disgust-related terms, in contrast with the increased relative usage of trust-, anticipation-, joy-, and surprise-related terms.

4. Discussion

The pandemic engendered new communication needs, including anxiety, empathy, efficacy, fatigue, reach, and threat, and necessitated careful consideration of these

needs when crafting effective communication strategies (Coombs, 2020). However, scientific evidence indicates that organizations often opt for less optimal communication strategies during crises instead of the ones recommended in the literature (Claeys & Coombs, 2020). Even if the pandemic is an unintended, accidental, and totally exogenously driven crisis, it can still damage organizational reputation (Brewer & Imes, 2023; Macnamara, 2021). Considering this challenge, we investigated how national and international brands have changed their communication patterns to transmit their desired messages to the public appropriately. While the interviews provided us with the strategic plans of marketing professionals, the social media messages provided insights regarding the execution of the strategies.

Marketing professionals express that organizations with robust digital capabilities are more adaptive to

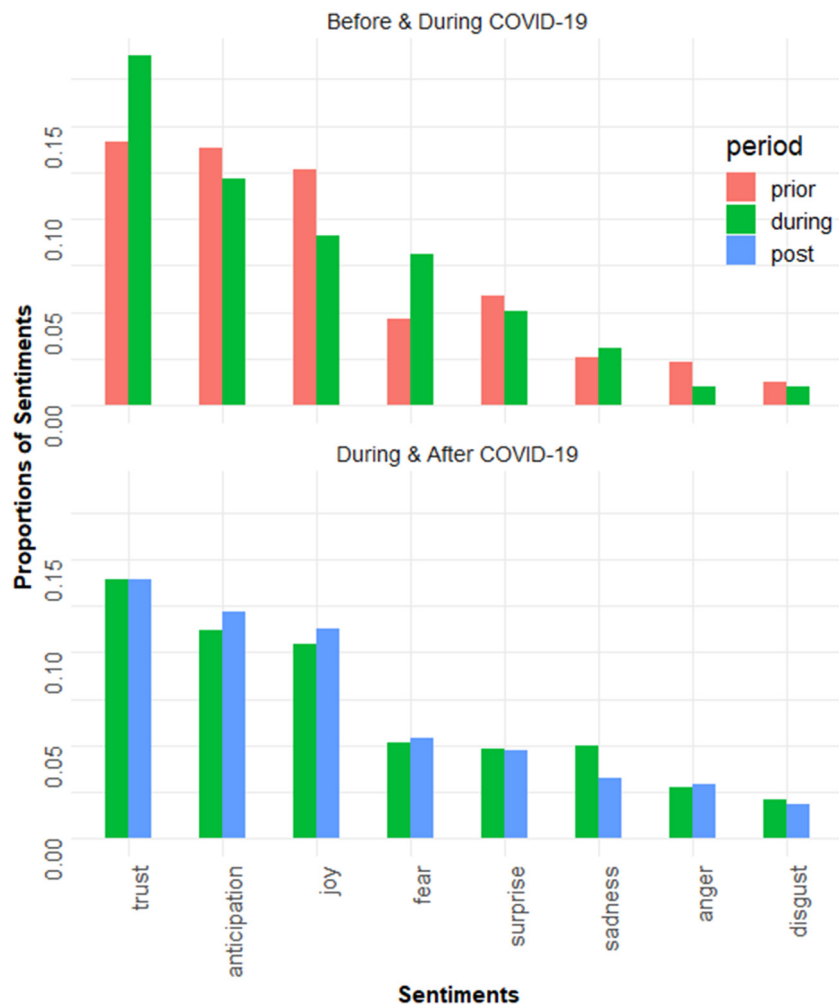


Figure 6. Relative sentiments in marketing messages.

Source: Authors' own result.

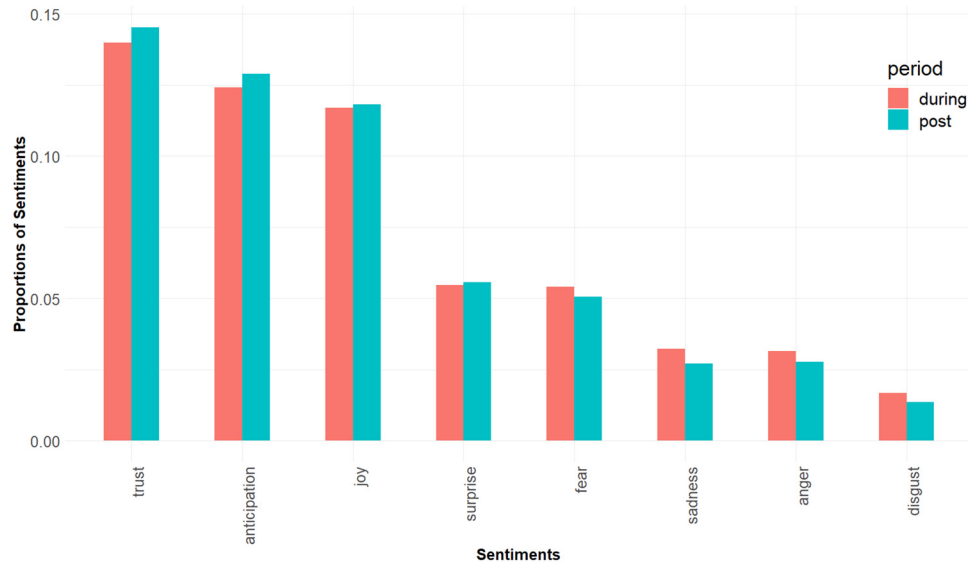


Figure 7. Relative sentiments in digitalization-related messages during and after COVID-19.

Source: Authors' own result.

pandemic conditions. Indeed, it is evident that organizations recognizing the advantages of technical developments exhibit enhanced resilience in times of crisis (Tiwari et al., 2023). The brands' social media messages also show this trend, as online transactions were more important than other topics during the pandemic. Moreover, we identified that companies incorporated specific communication campaigns to promote certain products suited to the pandemic conditions. This finding aligns with previous studies, which discuss that people may not always view companies' promotional activities as opportunistic during a crisis (Brewer & Imes, 2023). This result demonstrates that companies, as one of the victims of the pandemic, arrange their communication to promote specific products or services during prolonged crises, and hence, they *benefit from the COVID-19-driven circumstances*. Therefore, we also note that when creating communication during long-lasting externally driven crises that fall under the victim cluster, marketing professionals should consider the specific needs such as digitalization or the production of suitable products.

In relation to the contextual dynamics, the pandemic heightened individuals' consciousness regarding sustainability, societal issues, and the viability of the future. In response to this perception, companies have communicated their efforts, such as participating in corporate social responsibility activities to demonstrate solidarity (Hesse et al., 2021), ensuring strong support for consumers and communities (Păunescu & Mátyus, 2020), and promoting pro-social behavior through their corporate messages

(Hoang et al., 2023). In accordance with previous research, our results collected under the theme of *societal benefit* demonstrate that marketing professionals carried out comparable transactions as well, and they tried to craft communications properly to share their efforts with the public during the pandemic. However, while brands are concerned about positive or negative occurrences affecting society, there is a notable lack of emphasis on sustainability-related communications in social media. This trend is also evident in the research revealing inadequate promotion of socially responsible behaviors in brand messages, especially after the pandemic-driven initial shock (Deutsch & Mouton, 2022).

The pandemic compelled marketing professionals to construct their messages at the right time in the appropriate manner (Jacobson et al., 2023) and to be as cautious as possible while designing these messages (Hoang et al., 2023). Moreover, studies have asserted that consumers have preferred emotionally oriented messages over rationally oriented ones (Wang et al., 2021) and exhibited greater interest in messages that convey optimism (Hesse et al., 2021) and hope during the pandemic (Arora et al., 2022). Therefore, formulating brand messages with only informative content would be insufficient during a socially disruptive and prolonged crisis like the pandemic. In particular, we present that the emotive pattern in communication materials varied according to the phase of the pandemic. For instance, we observed an increase in terms related to trust and fear during the pandemic compared to the previous period, while terms related to surprise,

anticipation, and joy decreased (Figure 6, upper panel). Moreover, while the use of anticipation and joy-related terms rises, the ones related to sadness decrease (Figure 6, lower panel) after the pandemic. Similarly, the use of positive emotions like trust, anticipation, joy, and surprise increases in the messages related to digitalization from during to post-pandemic, whereas the negative ones like fear, sadness, and anger decrease (Figure 7). Thus, the theme of *circumspect and peaceful communication* aligns with the previous research and reflects how the companies used adjusting information emotionally in their communications during the crisis. This helps individuals to cope with the crisis' psychological effects, which complies with the SCCT suggestion.

Previous research suggests that companies should inform consumers about the pandemic-related precautions taken within the organization (Palakshappa et al., 2022) and prioritize the safety of both consumers and employees (Jacobson et al., 2023; Mele et al., 2023; Scheiwiller & Zizka, 2021). The theme of *COVID-19-related precautions* also emphasized health- and hygiene-related topics as a major focus during the pandemic. The results highlight the importance of keeping consumers informed about the crisis developments. Considering this issue, Kwork et al. (2022) expand the SCCT by including the *prevention* dimension as a sub-dimension of the rebuilding posture. These findings support the key idea of SCCT, which posits that providing instructive information can protect stakeholders from possible physical harm during a crisis (Coombs, 2015; Parmelee & Greer, 2023). However, even though the marketing professionals frequently expressed their efforts regarding pandemic-related precautions, we were unable to observe signals of these precautions as much as expected among the dominant topics identified in social media messages.

Customer centricity emerged as a crucial strategy to address the rapidly evolving consumer demands during the pandemic (Chaturvedi & Karri, 2022). Thanks to the digital advancements, not only were companies able to provide alternative services to customers (Juliana et al., 2023), but personalization also exerted a substantial influence on the customer experience during the pandemic (Girija et al., 2023). Consistent with the aforementioned research, the theme of *consumer orientation* highlights how companies have devised specific strategies to prioritize customer benefits and experiences during the pandemic with the aim of preventing potential disruptions caused by the conditions. Yu et al.'s (2022) research also reveals that companies should focus on not only company reputation but also customer expectations during the pandemic, thereby extending SCCT suggestions.

Brands were uncertain about whether to communicate crisis- or non-crisis-related messages to consumers at the beginning of the crisis (Jacobson et al., 2023). This concern led to the temporary suspension of marketing-based transactions (Mangiò et al., 2021). Brands shifted their focus toward people-driven and socially-oriented messages by highlighting safety and community (Deutsch & Mouton, 2022). Similarly, our analysis reveals a postponement of marketing activities, especially during the pandemic's onset, as reflected in the theme of *suspension of marketing campaigns*. However, we also demonstrate that companies pursue their marketing-based campaigns after some time, particularly if the crisis exhibits long-lasting characteristics. A similar pattern is evident in text-mining results, because communication campaigns lost their relative importance compared to the other topics during the pandemic. However, this trend reverses after the global pandemic, which indicates the importance of the temporal dimension in crisis communication (Atasoy et al., 2022).

The pandemic hindered promotional activities like outdoor or studio photoshoots. However, brands had to maintain their presence by communicating with consumers as appropriately and sensitively as possible. At this stage, the adoption of digital communication tools became crucial for diversifying communication channels (Hu & Olivieri, 2023). The theme of *diversification of communication channels* underscores how corporations effectively communicated their messages to consumers across various media platforms during the challenging pandemic times. For instance, sectoral groups collaborated with influencers to encourage responsible behavior among the public, thereby mitigating the pandemic's impact (Mele et al., 2023), a finding that aligns with our research. Even the investment in influencer marketing has risen during the pandemic (Sheth, 2022).

5. Practical implications

This research offers insights for marketing professionals regarding communication strategies during long-lasting crises. We recommend that professionals enhance organizations' digital capabilities in advance to effectively respond to potential external crises and that the organizations can provide specific products and/or services that meet the demands of the situation. We emphasize the importance of diversifying communication channels, particularly digital ones, to engage a broad spectrum of consumers during socially disruptive times. We also suggest that companies should prioritize social benefits during these times and clearly reflect this issue in their

communication materials by utilizing diverse communication channels. Furthermore, our findings indicated a partial inconsistency between strategy formulation and its implementation regarding certain topics. For instance, despite the significant emphasis placed on sustainability by companies, this topic does not appear to be a prevalent theme in social media communications. This point is significant, emphasizing the necessity for consistency between strategy construction and execution in conveying intended messages to the public. SCCT advises safeguarding the company's reputation through the implementation of crisis communication strategies. However, we demonstrate that it is also crucial to incorporate concepts related to customer orientation, such as customer experience and customer benefit, as highlighted in prior research (Yu et al., 2022). Finally, it is critical to consider the temporal dimension of a crisis. Organizations should structure their communications in alignment with the stages of the crisis. For example, companies are advised to suspend promotion-oriented messages, especially at the onset of a crisis; however, they may resume promotional activities as the crisis's impact lessens or as the public adapts to the circumstances. However, it is vital to note that the severity of the crisis affects societal anxiety levels. Therefore, to mitigate crisis-related anxiety, brand messages should include peaceful discourse addressing social welfare. Specifically, emotional communication plays a significant role in executing this strategy. Our results underscore the importance of aligning the sentiment of brand messages with the overall emotional state of the public. For instance, during crisis times, brand messages might incorporate trust, an essential emotion, by adding related terms. As anxiety spreads throughout society, circumspect and cautious communication becomes appropriate, rather than creative promotional activities.

6. Research limitations and further research

This research, while providing insights into crisis communication during turbulent periods and extending SCCT by highlighting aspects such as the temporal course of a crisis, emotive communication, and customer centricity, is not free of limitations. First, we conducted this research in Türkiye, as a representative of an emerging market. Other scholars may employ a comparable research framework to investigate studies in other emerging regions. Second, even if our quantitative research is exclusively conducted in Turkish, another researcher can evaluate

our findings using the same data set translated into English. Third, we did not distinguish between national and international brands in our dataset. Consequently, comparative research that examines national and international brands independently may yield valuable insights. Fourth, we conducted interviews with 11 professionals to obtain ideas on crisis communication prior to initiating quantitative study. Conducting interviews with a greater number of professionals could produce more substantial results and a deeper comprehension of the strategies utilized during crises. Fifth, we are expected to encounter diverse crises in the future, including political, economic, or social problems. Future research may utilize a crisis other than the COVID-19 pandemic as a reference event and employ a similar research strategy to assess the comparability of the outcomes. Sixth, we designed our research as purely exploratory. Therefore, further research can be designed as a confirmatory one by adding the consumer perspective into the research to test how consumers react to communication strategies recommended in this research during a crisis. Finally, this study has not investigated industrial variances. Consequently, undertaking additional research to analyze communication variations across different sectors may prove beneficial.

7. Conclusion

The pandemic represents a unique case of externally driven crises, characterized by its extensive impact and prolonged duration. It required institutions to implement new communication strategies to address the challenges posed by pandemic-related conditions (Coombs, 2020; Reber et al., 2020; Wenzel et al., 2020; Whitley et al., 2021 in Coombs & Tachkova, 2024, p. 9). Based on this necessity and utilizing SCCT, this research examines the extent to which companies have altered their communication strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Seven critical themes emerged from the interviews with the marketing professionals: the benefits of the COVID-19 pandemic, the societal benefits, the importance of circumspect and peaceful communication, the precautions related to COVID-19, consumer orientation, the suspension of marketing campaigns, and the need to diversify communication channels. Additionally, social media post analysis reveals that companies structure their message content in alignment with the progression of crises. Certain topics diminish in significance, such as marketing communication, while others, like online transactions, gain prominence during the crisis. Moreover, brands are sensitive

to the public's emotional fluctuations and tailor their social media messages accordingly. Therefore, we demonstrate that in addition to organizational reputation and responsibility attribution as suggested by SCCT, it is essential to consider emotional, contextual, and temporal variations to construct effective crisis communication, particularly during long-lasting and extensive crises like the pandemic.

Acknowledgments

We wish to express our gratitude to reviewers for their valuable comments throughout the review process and Prof. Dr. Zeynep İrem Erdoğan and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Umut Asan for their theoretical and methodological insights throughout the article's development.

Funding information

Authors state no funding involved.

Author contributions

Mustafa Murat Cerit: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Writing – Original Draft Preparation. Elif Karaosmanoğlu: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing.

Conflict of interest statement

Authors state no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

Theme	Quote	Participant	Industry
Benefiting from the COVID-19-driven circumstances	<i>we are aware of the fact that digitalization increases marginally</i>	Participant A	Participation banking
	<i>As a corollary of a significant increase in individualization in the last 15-20 years, consumers had expectations such as “show me the things in which I might have interest, which are special for me, which I need.” The pandemic has accelerated this</i>	Participant I	Banking
	<i>In addition to the products, services and transactions of banks, customer acquisition has now been moved to digital channels with the regulation implemented on May 1, 2021. In the next period, we will talk about the innovations that will enable us to provide services and consultancy only through our mobile application to our customers who have never seen a bank branch</i>	Participant B	Home decoration and furniture
	<i>For example, when implementing a kitchenware campaign, we apply filters to ensure that the campaign is exclusively visible to our female customers within particular age range</i>	Participant C	FMCG
	<i>[...] typically, a furniture sale necessitates greater energy and a greater number of announcements. However, as individuals began to stay at home, they began to contemplate “whether I should replace that sofa... Consequently, we redirected our marketing campaigns towards promoting the message of “Stay at Home! Life is better at home; Comfort at home is better</i>	Participant F	Discount market
Societal benefit	<i>[...] we made an effort to effectively utilize the time spent at home. People were at home and we thought, “What should we do ? We need to make them drink coffee!” and we proceeded. It can be asserted that the coffee business has experienced a favorable impact as a result of the pandemic</i>	Participant J	Ready wear and textile
	<i>the pandemic – it might be wrong to say that but – presented a favorable situation for the food industry. This is because the increased time spent at home during the pandemic led to growth in the FMCG industry</i>		
	<i>individuals ... are inclined to pay a higher price for environmentally friendly products due to their organic nature... we will actually promote this value in this period. we will evolve our communication language towards this point (implying the promotion of organic products and production)</i>		

Circumspect and peaceful communication	sustainability-related works have emerged recently and increased with the pandemic . to be more sensitive to the environment. I am not solely referring to a product that poses no harm to the environment, but rather to the elimination of potentially detrimental procedures ... during production processes... Our organization has made significant efforts in the areas of sustainability ... and we consistently strive to effectively communicate these initiatives	Participant G	Laundry and home care
	individuals had exhibited heightened sensitivity towards the natural environment during the pandemic. From now on, sustainability topics like as water saving, green areas, and electricity saving are not something “nice-to-have” for brands, but rather a “must”. it may be argued that sustainability, when employed as both a sales tool and a marketing strategy, is an irreversible phenomenon	Participant H	FMCG
	consumers' awareness of social responsibility campaigns and purpose-oriented business has grown we had a theater for children ... we converted this work into the digital format. We were taking children to theater performances before the pandemic but we subsequently transitioned to online broadcasting. We have adapted our current social responsibility initiatives to align with the prevailing trends of this era we have segregated our corporate social responsibility initiatives. prior to the pandemic, we supported the foundation (the participant talked about a foundation that aids children affected by cancer) by constructing new facilities. During the pandemic, our focus shifted towards fundamental needs like hygiene requirements. In other words, our communication around CSR exhibited variations following the epidemic	Participant A	Participation banking
	during short-term crises, we tend to exhibit heightened awareness and consciousness in our transactions. For instance, the cessation of campaigns is promptly implemented in response to disasters such as extensive forest fires or instances of martyrdom resulting from acts of terrorism [...] we see that brand discourses and tones have changed since consumers expected brands to be more sincere	Participant C	FMCG
	this sensitivity also comes to the fore here. There is a disease, people are trying to protect themselves from something, and on the other hand, some people are trying to sell something and acquire customers. The	Participant A	Participation banking

COVID-19 related precautions	balance we try to maintain here is to avoid creating antipathy		
	from the start of the term, we consistently progressed with the appropriate messages. In the stores, we implemented the requisite precautions. We actively watched our competitors. We made a conscious effort to avoid engaging in any actions that could potentially provoke raise consumers' eyebrows. We were always cautious [...] we communicated more calmly without disturbing people	Participant B	Home decoration and furniture
	[...] we also created messaging that is discreet, calmer, and cooler	Participant D	Online platform
	the communication model has evolved from being more entertaining and pleasurable to becoming more discreet, more capable, and more dignified		
	I observe that brands that persist in their communication in times of crisis by employing appropriate tone and that continue to express more strongly and sincerely what their commitment is come out of this period even stronger	Participant H	FMCG
	we preferred communication that would reduce the fears and concerns of our customers	Participant J	Ready wear and textile
	An anxious consumer wants the feeling of control back ... we advised all brands to modify your communication strategies in order to enhance the perception of control... Consequently, all brands (the ones that the company provides consultancy services), began to communicate a sense of control and endeavored to alleviate anxiety	Participant E	Brand consultancy
	the prompt communication decisions made during the initial stages of the pandemic led to the implementation of a procedure primarily centered around three domains: moral, hopeful, and emotional communication	Participant I	Banking
	it is now necessary to produce things that can touch people emotionally	Participant G	Laundry and home care
	we tried to make prominent hygiene and health-related themes in response to the widespread spread of the pandemic	Participant D	Online platform
	we prioritized health, hygiene, and quality, emphasizing, "we have taken measures to protect your health." as the pandemic spread, we communicated expressions such as "we possess the high-quality product," "we offer the healthy product," "we conduct 100 s of tests to ensure this quality." We reflected this communication in our stores and in TV ads...	Participant C	FMCG

Consumer orientation	Consequently customers realized that there was a serious effort to ensure quality and produce safe products As the hygiene concern gained prominence, we engaged in extensive promotion centered around hygiene and prominently featured our hygiene items Given our assortment of items that align with hygiene, we adopted a strategy that specifically targeted the marketing of those products	Participant K	FMCG and consumer goods
	since people attach more importance to hygiene and cleanliness than ever before, we highlighted the performance of these products. There has been a rise in communications that emphasize hygiene and cleanliness[...]"	Participant G	Laundry and home care
	During the pandemic period,. personalized content. increased. the axis the world is heading towards is this: "benefit-oriented"; consumers say, "I don't have time; tell me clearly what is useful for me ... There was brand loyalty. but now there is benefit loyalty. Specifically, young individuals tend to gravitate towards where benefits are existing, independent from the brand itself." there is a growing appreciation for activities that prioritize the comfort of customers. It is anticipated that these activities will not revert to their pre-pandemic state. In the previous period, customer-focus was one of the most fundamental approaches. However, we added to this the concept of "customer experience" in the aftermath of the pandemic... "customer-focus" (or) "customer satisfaction" is nice, but "customer experience" is just a little different. due to factors such as constantly improving customer experience procedures. creating customer loyalty...	Participant A	Participation banking
Suspension of marketing campaigns	We have simplified our communications pertaining to our products and services to cater to consumer benefits and needs, and we have provided messages on how consumers can satisfy their fundamental banking necessities without the need to physically visit a bank	Participant I	Banking
	we consistently emphasize "health" and have temporarily stopped our marketing campaigns	Participant B	Home decoration and furniture
	as you know, during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, strict restrictions were implemented. Naturally, as a multinational corporation, these requirements were 2-3 times stricter for us... we were unable to engage in commercial broadcasting,	Participant K	FMCG and consumer goods

Diversification of communication channels	production, and creative marketing activities for an extended period		
	What actions do you take during those periods (referred to crisis periods) – as numerous brands did – ? You take a break from your communications. They avoid making assertive statements. If there are any, the launch and new campaigns are postponed, because the consumer is not ready to receive new information at that particular moment...regardless of the amount of budget you spent	Participant C	FMCG
	we prioritized specific actions through which we made consumers feel that we support them... During that period, numerous brands released new communication content that implied “how can we navigate this period more effortlessly together?”		
	instead of focusing on product-based advertising ... we aimed to address issues that would foster greater trust	Participant F	Discount market
	the pandemic has revealed new channels... digital has become much more important. You know about “influencer marketing.”	Participant C	FMCG
	you know “influencer marketing”! They are the prominent figures whom the brands are positioning as brand ambassadors. The significance lies in the fact that customers perceive influencers as sincere		
	there exists an influencer impact. We want influencers to experience our product...we are shooting, for instance, Food Style short videos...Due to the fact that we conducted these shoots with authentic products, without any promotional elements, and with a genuine experience, we received favorable responses	Participant B	Home decoration and furniture
	brand’s approach has transitioned from focusing on streaming, production, and shooting to prioritizing influencer communication and digital content communication. These phenomena persisted until the resumption of the production era, which I posit is the underlying cause for the current surge in influencer marketing	Participant K	FMCG and consumer goods
	one of the channels we want to increase our focus on is digital ones... both social media platforms and digital activities While maintain our presence in conventional channels... we are striving to strengthen our digital capabilities	Participant G	Laundry and home care
	You see us often on TV... and we also endorse all our brands digitally. The digital platforms that we use ... include Google, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and	Participant H	FMCG

	<i>TikTok. We support our 23–24 brands of each year with TV ads</i>		
	<i>[...] (we) focused more on digital, TV, and radio</i>	Participant A	Participation banking
	<i>television remains the most important medium in Türkiye and globally, particularly in the realm of “mass media.” Considering the cost per person, it remains the cheapest channel. In Türkiye, television is also associated with the concept of “trust.”</i>	Participant D	Online platform