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Media Usage and News Consumption:

Trust, Verification, Political Polarizations

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SivilDüşün

The translation of this research report from Turkish into English and its printed version were produced with
the financial support of the European Union within the framework of European Union Sivil Düşün Programme.
Its contents are the sole responsibility of Teyit Media Research Association and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

January 2019

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introduction

The "Media Usage and News Consumption: "Trust, Verification, Political Polarizations" report is the output of a comprehensive research that addressed many subjects concerning the media in Turkey. This study, conducted with a scientific approach and aiming to represent the totality of the country, takes the form of an exploratory research. Its comprehensive approach to the generation of knowledge is sometimes through the visualization of data at the sample level, and sometimes based on analyses of the population as a whole.

In this report, which we believe provides significant indicators of the use of the media and news by society, we focus on general media usage trends; individual and social perceptions, such as trust and suspicion; and finally, on media engagement and behaviors, such as the verification of news.

Having been drafted with the aim of addressing every segment of society, the report inevitably becomes intricate sometimes, and may sometimes repeat itself. Here, we would like to state that we have tried to ensure balance. Although we strived to use a language that can be understood by everyone, we have also sought to provide information for the more advanced readers, especially in the sections related to the method, in the annex to the report, and in the "Limitations and Methodological Discussions" section.

This research and its report, including its strengths and weaknesses, is presented to all of our readers as an exploratory work on the usage, perception and behaviors regarding the media in Turkey. We hope with all sincerity that it will be useful for society, especially after its advancement through criticism and future studies.

Objectives of the Research

The research aims to generate knowledge on a broad range of issues, and to become one of the most comprehensive studies carried out in Turkey to date on media usage and perception. The research has sought to reveal general patterns on particular topics through descriptive approaches, while also aiming to generate higher quality information through the use, in particular, of statistical tests. The main objectives of the research are as follows:

- To generate knowledge on the usage trends of media devices and news sources in Turkey,
- To make observations on behaviors related to the following of news or the avoidance of following news,
- To measure the levels of trust placed by users in the news media, different media environments and news sources; to address social differentiations by making analyses of different levels of trust,
- To generate indicators of suspicion of the accuracy of news,
- To make observations on social media use with respect to tendencies in the sharing news, concerns about news sharing, and tendencies of enclosure,
- To generate information on verification behaviors and methods,
- To make observations as to whether or not different social uses and perceptions of the media have a political context.

methodology

Research Method

The research was prepared in line with the above objectives as a descriptive and explanatory field research with an exploratory design, and was conducted using mainly quantitative methods. A questionnaire-based research method was used for the gathering of data. The questionnaire was prepared to measure various dependent and independent variables, and was first piloted in May 2018. The 30-item questionnaire was finalized following a review of the received feedback, and was implemented across Turkey between June and July 2018. The majority (95%) of questionnaires were conducted through face-to-face interviews, while the rest were conducted through telephone interviews.

Sample

The sample was determined considering the distribution of the population in Turkey by geographical location and by age, aiming to represent the totality of Turkey. An examination of the Turkish population revealed that 54 million people were targeted by the research, and the sample number was determined as 1,500. The sample was selected randomly, although the resulting sample was somewhat different to that which was planned, due to some problems encountered in the implementation phase (see Limitations 1a). Although the distribution planned for the geographical regions is achieved approximately, deviations from the happened with respect to the planned age distribution. Furthermore, the questionnaires were conducted only in urban areas, while rural regions were left out of the study. Similarly, the weight of individuals actively following the media and news was higher than expected in the sample as a result

of the research subject. These differentiations, which are explained in detail in the Limitations section, meant that the representation of especially the young and educated population was substantially high in the research. It should thus be stated that the final sample was not in line with the initial plan, comprising mainly young people and those located in urban areas. The planned sample character is set out in Table 1.

Table 1. The Sample Character Planned for the Research

Sample 1=1500	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	TOTAL
MEDITERRANEAN - TR6	23	21	20	21	23	20	18	17	14	12	**189**
WESTERN ANATOLIA - TR5	17	17	17	17	18	16	14	13	11	9	**150**
WESTERN BLACK SEA - TR8	10	10	8	9	9	9	8	8	8	7	**85**
WESTERN MARMARA - TR2	6	7	7	7	8	7	7	6	6	5	**67**
EASTERN BLACK SEA - TR9	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	**49**
EASTERN MARMARA - TR4	16	16	16	17	18	16	14	13	11	10	**149**
AEGEAN - TR3	20	21	20	22	23	21	20	19	17	15	**197**
SOUTHEASTERN ANATOLIA - TRC	25	21	20	17	16	13	10	9	6	5	**142**
ISTANBUL - TR1	30	32	35	37	39	33	28	24	19	15	**293**
NORTHEASTERN ANATOLIA - TRA	6	6	5	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	**38**
CENTRAL ANATOLIA - TR7	9	9	8	8	8	7	7	6	4	5	**73**
TOTAL	**178**	**176**	**170**	**172**	**179**	**157**	**138**	**128**	**108**	**92**	**1500**

During the implementation phase, the weight of those aged between 20 and 24 was 2.5 times higher than expected, while the weight of the group aged over 40 was approximately half of that noted in Table 1.

While it is necessary to highlight this differentiation, it should be noted that the statistical tests were designed so as not to be affected by group sizes, and that the data presented in the tables and visuals are weighted based on the demographic distribution of Turkey without being subjected to statistical tests.

Questionnaire

The conducted questionnaire contains questions revealing the media devices used and news categories followed by media users in Turkey; the frequency at which they follow the news and the sources they use; the level of trust they have in their sources of news; as well as such factors as attitudes towards the sharing of news, suspicions of the accuracy of the news, checking the accuracy of news, etc.

The questionnaire was compiled after a review of previous researches conducted into the subject, and used a language that would be understood by the respondents.

Data Analysis and Tests Used

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. We used two main methods for the presentation of the analyzed data.

The first method consisted of descriptive presentations of sample-based data, either visually or numerically, without any scientific evidence showing that the findings of the sample were represented within the population. These presentations, which were adopted predominantly in the "Media and News Usage" section, were referred to in many parts of the report. We would like to state that the data provided through this presentation approach, which is a common sole data analysis method that has been adopted in many media researches, should not be generalized for the entire Turkish population. The second method consisted of presentations of the findings of statistical analyses.

The second method consisted of presentations of the findings of statistical analyses. Although conducted with the limitations set forth in the Limitations section (see Limitations 3a, 3b, 3c), the findings based on this method could be considered acceptable as scientific arguments about the Turkish population. As is the case with every research, this study has its methodological weaknesses. However, attempts have been made to question the significance of the findings through the use of statistical methods. It can thus be argued that stronger results were reached with respect to the empirical presence of the obtained findings within society.

Due to the obstacles in the distribution of data and the measurement of dependent variables, generally, non-parametric statistical tests were used. A Spearman's Rank Correlation test was used to determine correlations, while Chi-square, Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney U-tests, among others, were used for between-group relations. Although we tried to retain our preferences for statistical tests, our assumption controls and our reporting as transparent as possible, the technical details are presented in a restricted manner to ensure the report addresses every segment of society. The statistical significance level was accepted as 1% ($p < 0.01$) considering the number of statistical tests used. You can find a more detailed discussion of this subject and the generally adopted statistical methods in the "Limitations and Methodological Discussions" section.

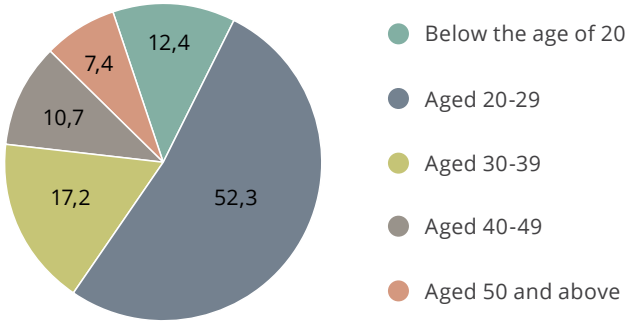
The research, in general terms, was exploratory in nature. Although the adopted statistical methods and scientific paths were all aimed at increasing the scientific value of the research and at providing more detailed information for future studies, the researchers are aware that scrupulous paths are needed, especially, for example, in cause and effect relations and between-group correlations. Our general intention was to take a step forward in increasing the scientific value of media researches, while at the same time, to prepare a preliminary database and introductory report for refined future studies that might base themselves more rigorously.

overview

Sample Character

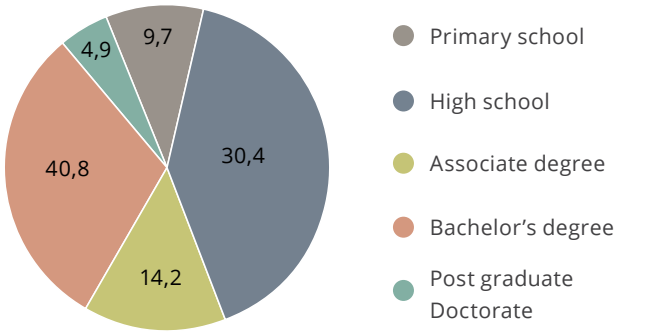
Of the respondents, 43% were women and 57% were men. The respondents were requested to write their ages as open-ended. In the presentation of descriptive information related to the research under the "Overview" heading, evaluations were made after categorizing the respondents under five age groups (below the age of 20, aged 20-29, aged 30-39, aged 40-49 and aged 50 and above (see Figure 1). The ages of the respondent sample ranged between 15 and 86: 64.7% were aged 29 and below, 27.9% were aged 30-49 and 7.4% were aged 50 and above.

Figure 1. Age distribution of respondents (%)



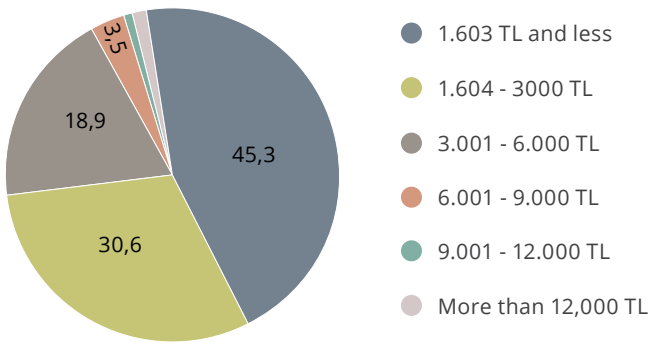
The respondents were categorized under five different groups in terms of their education level, having been requested to mark the option that was most applicable to them. Accordingly, 40% of the respondents were found to have a high school or lower education level, 14% had an associate level of education, and 46% had a bachelors or post graduate level of education (see Figure 2). The majority of the respondents were studying for, or had received, a bachelor's degree (40.8%) or high-school (30.4%) degree.

Figure 2. Educational backgrounds of the respondents (%)



Furthermore, six different income levels were presented to obtain information on the income levels of the respondents, and respondents were requested to mark the option that was most applicable to them. Based on responses, 45.3% of respondents were found to have an income corresponding to the minimum wage (1,603 TL for 2018) and less, while more than half (54.8%) stated they had an income higher than the minimum wage (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Income levels of respondents (%)

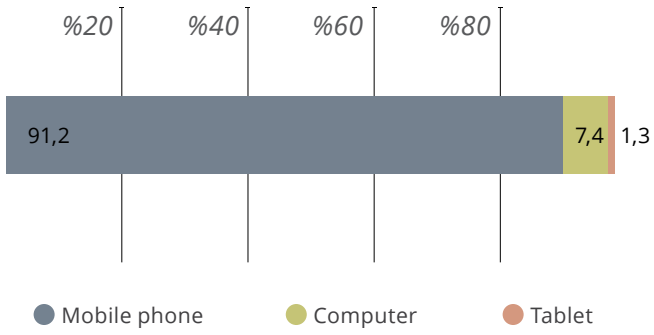


In brief, when the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents is examined, it can be seen that the number of male respondents is higher; young people aged 20-29 constitute the majority of the respondents; and the majority of respondents either have a high-school or undergraduate level of education, and have an income level corresponding to minimum wage or below. Before discussing the findings of the research related to the news media, we would like to share some indicators of the sample related to Internet usage.

Internet Usage

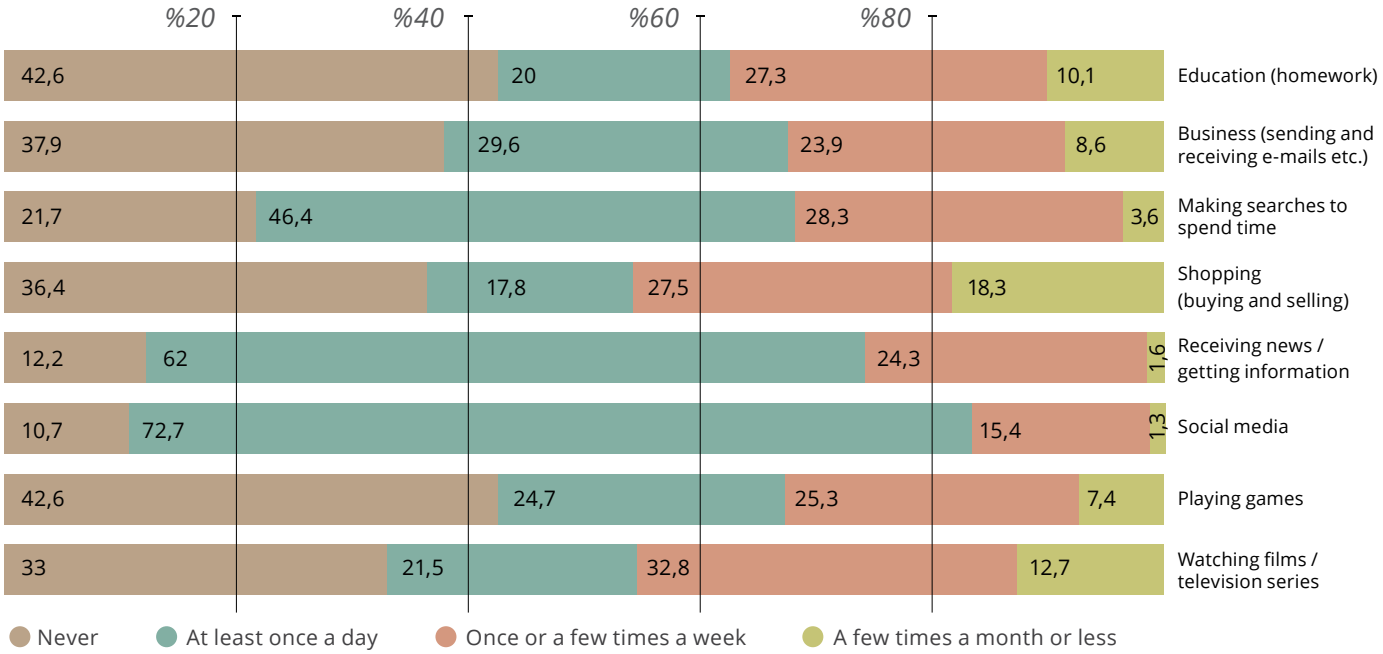
First of all, the respondents taking the questionnaire were asked whether or not they used the Internet on a daily basis, in an effort to determine their Internet usage status. 97.7% of respondents stated that they connected to the Internet on a daily basis. They were also asked to mark the device most preferred by them to connect to the Internet from among the mobile phone, computer and tablet PC options. The device most commonly used by the respondents to connect to the Internet was the mobile phone (91.2%) (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Devices used to connect to the Internet (%)



Another question asked to respondents about their Internet usage status aimed to reveal the intended purpose(s) of their Internet usage. Social media was the primary intended purpose of Internet usage of the respondents. The rate of those using the Internet at least once a day to access social media was 72.7%, followed by those who use the Internet at least once a day to receive news/get information, at a rate of 62%. The rate of respondents indicating that they never use the Internet for educational purposes (homework) or for playing games is 42.6% (see Figure 5).

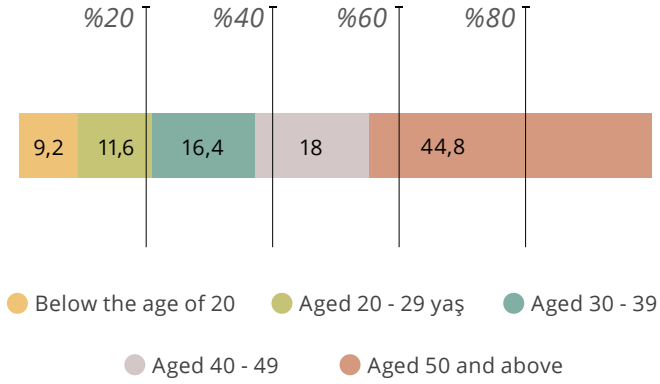
Figure 5. Intended Purposes of Internet Use (%)



An examination of how the intended purposes of Internet use is distributed per age revealed that respondents aged 20-29 use the Internet more intensely to watch films/television series (28.3%) and play games (29.3%) every day. It can be understood that those using the Internet every day for social media (aged 20-29=28.7%; aged 30-39=24.3%), receiving news / getting information (aged 20-29=26%; aged 30-39=26.1%), shopping (aged 20-29=26.1%; aged 30-39 =30.7%), spending time (aged 20-29=28.6%; aged 30-39=24.7%) and education (aged 20-29 =30.5%; aged 30-39=28.1%) are mainly the individuals aged 20-39. It was observed that the use of the Internet for business (e-mail etc.) was higher among those aged 30-39 (34.8).

It was further noted that 44.8% of the respondents aged 50 and above never use the Internet to receive news and/or get information (see Figure 6). 9.2% of respondents below the age of 20 stated that they never used the Internet to receive news and/or get information. It can be seen in Figure 6 that the tendency to not using the Internet to receive news and / or get information increases in parallel with age.

Figure 6. Age distribution of those that never use the Internet for receiving news and / or getting information (%)



media and news usage

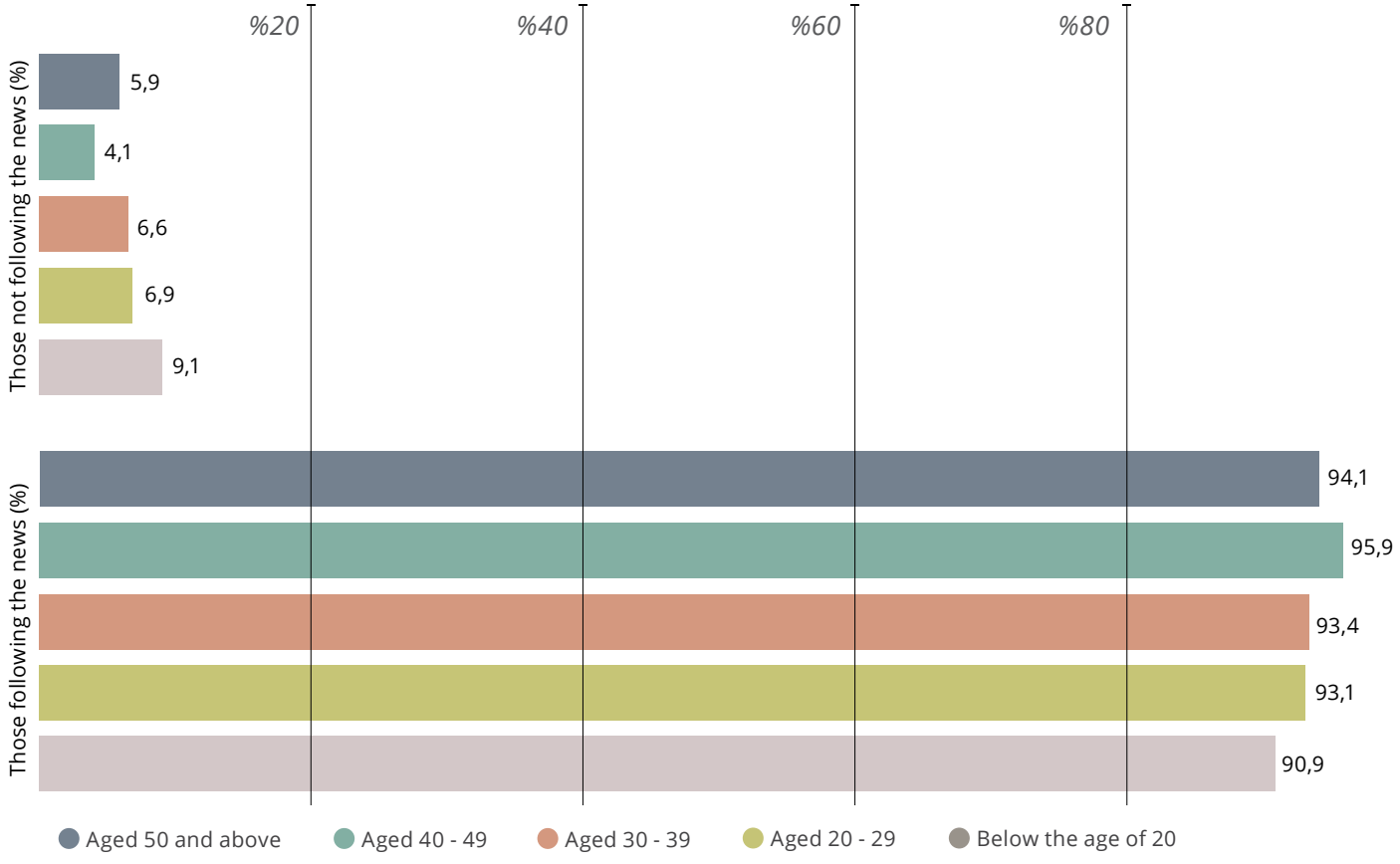
media and news usage

Following the News

Another objective of the research was to determine whether individuals habitually follow the news, and if yes, which sources and channels they use to this end. The respondents were first asked whether or not they followed the news.

91.5% (n=1,372) of the respondents stated that they were following the news / current issues. The age distribution of the respondents based on their news-following habits is presented in Figure 7, in which it can be seen that the majority of those not following the news are below the age of 20. It can further be seen that the rate of respondents that do not follow the news decreases among those aged 40-49, but increases again among those aged 50 and above.

Figure 7. Age distribution of respondents based on their news following habits (%)



Among those who do not follow the news, the main reason stated by the respondents was the lack of time (26%) (See Table 2). Other important reasons included the presence of fabricated/fake news (20.9%); suspicions of the accuracy of the news (19.2%); and being negatively affected by the news (15.3%).

When the age distribution of those not following the news is examined, it can be seen that the majority of those indicating that they do not follow the news for reasons such as being negatively affected by it (37.2%); the presence of fabricated/fake news (36.3%); and the lack of time (30.2%) were aged 20-29. The majority of those indicating that they did not follow the news as they considered it to be a waste of time were aged 30-39 (39.1%). It was observed that the majority of those who do not follow the news as they doubt its accuracy were aged 20-39 (those aged 20-29=34.5%; those aged 30-39=31.3%). The respondents indicating that they do not follow the news as they do not find it interesting were mainly in the group below the age of 29 (51.5%) and in the group aged 50 and above (48.6%).

Table 2. Reasons why Respondents Do Not Follow the News (%)

Reasons for not following the news	%
Lack of time	26,0
Presence of fabricated / fake news	20,9
Suspicions of the accuracy of the news	19,2
Being affected by the news in a negative way	15,3
Lack of interest in the news	10,7
Considering it waste of time	7,9

News Sources

In the research, the questions aimed at identifying the news usage habits of the respondents included also the questions aimed at identifying their preferred news sources. In the research, news sources were divided into five groups according to the type of media: “printed media”, “TV”, “news websites and applications”, “social media” and “messaging applications”.

The media most commonly used by the respondents to follow the news were messaging applications like WhatsApp and Messenger in the “always” frequency (38.5%) (See Table 3). These were followed by social media platforms (31.8%), news websites and applications (24%) and TV (17.5%). It is worthy of note that the readership of such printed media as newspapers and journals was quite low. The rate of respondents who stated that they never read printed media was 31.7%. The most common reasons for preferring printed media among the respondents included factors such as having developed such a habit (25.4%), being happier with the paper of printed media (13.6%) and supporting/providing solidarity (13%).

Printed media sources were used by more than half of the respondents aged 50 and above (52.1%) in the “always” frequency. It is worthy of note that the number of respondents who said “I never use” printed media sources was higher among those aged 30-39 years (29.9%). Like printed media sources, TV sources were also used more by the respondents aged 50 and above (39.4%) in the “always” frequency. It was observed that the number of respondents who said they never used TV was higher among those aged 20-29 (27.7%).

It is observed that those who said they “always” used news websites and applications (those aged 20-29=30.7% and those aged 30-39=26.9%),

social media platforms (those aged 20-29=30.5% and those aged 30-39=25%) and messaging applications (those aged 20-29=29.2% and those aged 30-39=25.8%) were aged 20-39.

On the other hand, those who said they never used such media channels were mostly aged 50 and above (news websites and applications=44.4%, "social media platforms=51.6%" and messaging applications=45.4%).

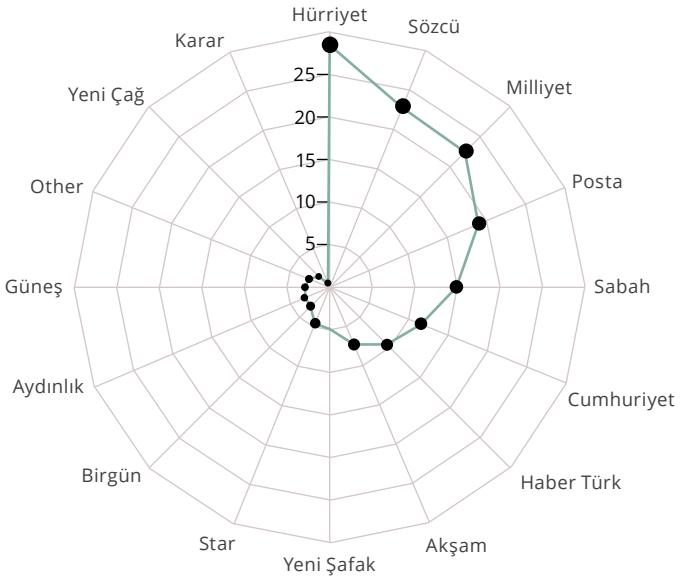
Table 3. Use Frequency of News Sources by Media Type (%)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
Printed media	31,7	29,5	22,9	10,1	5,8
TV	8,6	20,4	26,0	27,6	17,5
News websites and applications	10,7	12,3	21,8	31,2	24
Social media	7,8	10,7	16,4	33,2	31,8
Messaging applications	8,8	9,3	15,3	28	38,5

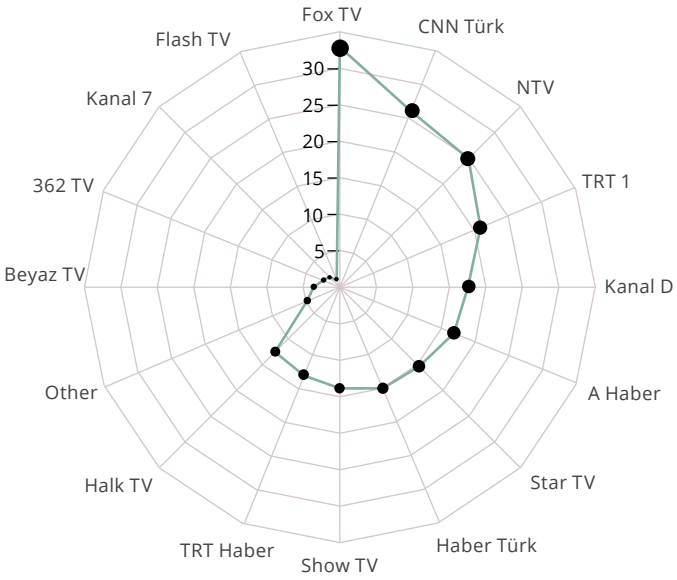
News Channels

The research also included a question asking the respondents to identify their news usage habits in terms of the news sources they use. To this end, the main news channels were listed under each news sources group based on media types such as "printed media", "TV", "news websites and applications" and "social media". The respondents were requested to tick the news channels they followed the most from among those listed in each group. The most followed news channels by media type are presented in Figure 8.

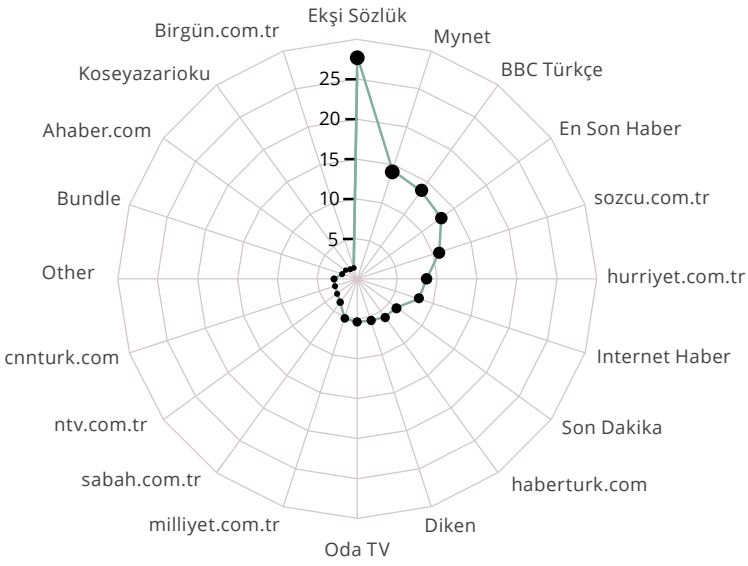
Figure 8. TV news channels followed according to media type (%)



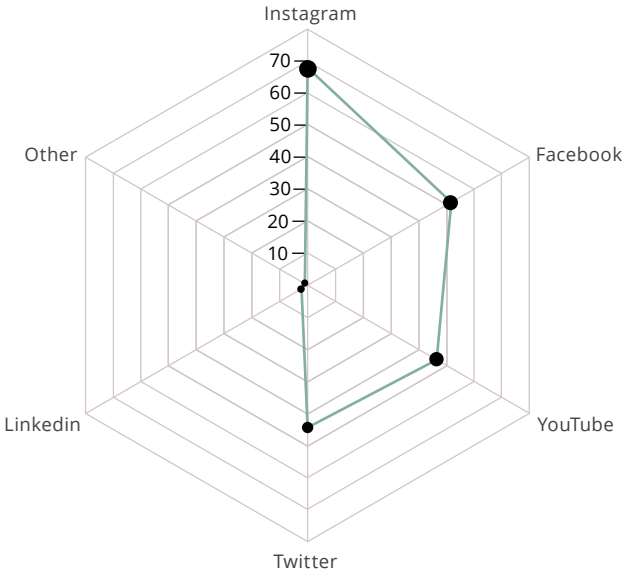
Printed Media Channels



TV Channels



News Websites and Applications



Social Media Channels

The news channels with the most followers were found to be Hürriyet (28.5%), Sözcü (22.8%) and Milliyet (22.5%), as the three highest ranking sources among the printed media channels, while FOX TV (33%), CNN Türk (26.1%) and NTV (11.2%) were the three highest ranking TV channels (see Figure 8). Ekşi Sözlük (27.9%), Mynet (14.3%) and BBC Turkish (13.6%) were the most commonly used sources among the news websites and applications. It was further observed that Instagram (67.9%), Facebook (51.8%), YouTube (46.5%) and Twitter (44.4%) were most preferred social media platforms for following the news.

Printed Media News Channels

In the questionnaire, 16 different newspaper names were presented to the respondents under the heading "printed media". The respondents were asked to mark the option "None" if they did not follow any printed media. An "Other" option was also available for those following a newspaper not listed among the presented options. Table 4 sets out which age groups mostly follow each newspaper.

Table 4. Age Profiles of those Using Printed Media News Channels (%)

	Below the age of 20	Aged 20-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	50+
Hürriyet	12,4	22,9	21,7	19,9	23,1
Milliyet	14,4	26,6	22,4	17,2	19,4
Posta	15,1	25,1	21,3	20,0	18,6
Sözcü	10,1	20,0	20,6	18,2	31,1
Sabah	14,7	23,3	18,5	21,2	22,3
Akşam	15,4	17,0	17,0	30,1	20,5
Güneş	13,4	17,8	19,4	34,9	14,5
Aydınlık	6,4	18,1	31,0	16,8	27,8
Star	8,0	22,7	21,0	22,1	26,2
Cumhuriyet	7,6	26,0	19,3	16,2	30,9
Birgün	4,6	25,9	20,0	27,0	22,4
Yeni Şafak	12,1	22,7	24,0	11,8	29,4
Habertürk	13,2	41,4	11,8	13,9	19,8
Yeni Çağ	9,0	29,5	32,5	0	29,1
Other	12,3	27,6	17,9	12,1	30,1
None	13,2	24,8	26,4	20,7	15,0

The readers of Sözcü (31.1%), Cumhuriyet (30.9%), Yeni Şafak (29.4%), Aydınlık (27.8%) and Star (%26.2) newspapers were mainly in the 50 and above age group (see Table 4). The readers of Birgün newspaper were mainly those aged 40-49 years (27%) and those aged 20-29 (25.9%). While the Habertürk newspaper was more commonly preferred by the respondents aged 20-29 years (41.4%), Güneş (34.9%) and Akşam (30.1%) were followed more by respondents aged 40-49. The fact that the Yeni Çağ newspaper has no reported followers among respondents aged 40-49 is likely an indicator of the insufficiency of the sample.

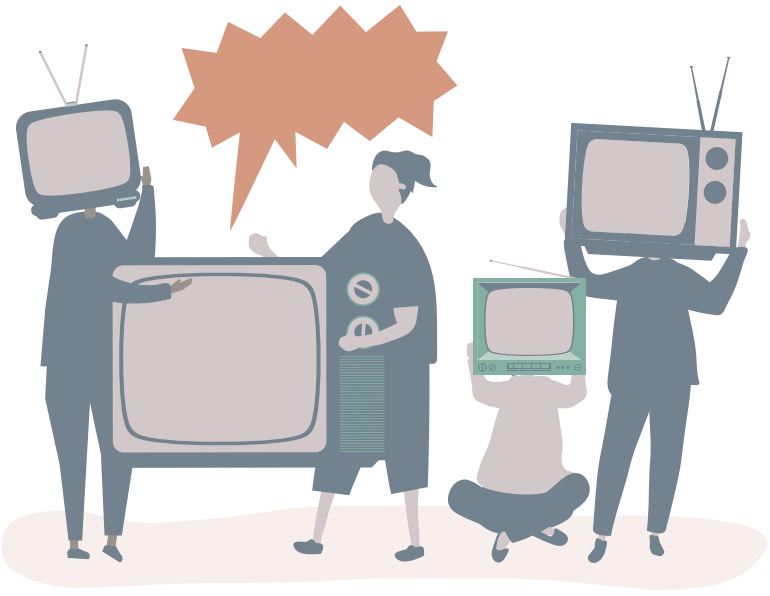
TV News Channels

In the questionnaire, 15 different channel names were presented to the respondents under the heading "TV". The respondents were requested to mark the option "None" if they did not follow any TV. An "Other" option was also available for those following a media channel not on the list. Table 5 sets out which age groups mostly follow each media channel.

Table 5. Age Profiles of those Using TV News Channels (%)

	Below the age of 20	Aged 20-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	Aged 50 and above
NTV	16,9	28,0	20,3	19,3	15,5
CNN Türk	11,4	23,3	20,1	22,3	22,9
A Haber	11,2	19,8	23,9	22,8	22,2
Habertürk	13,6	27,5	17,4	24,6	17,0
TRT 1	16,5	20,4	22,9	20,5	19,7
TRT Haber	14,8	21,2	23,1	24,8	16,1
Halk TV	8,3	17,6	24,0	15,3	34,8
Beyaz TV	17,2	22,3	28,1	25,3	7,0
360 TV	14,3	15,7	13,9	32,8	23,3
Kanal D	11,8	25,4	21,5	23,0	18,4
Show TV	10,4	26,4	21,3	17,1	24,8
Fox TV	10,5	24,3	20,7	18,9	25,6
Star TV	13,1	26,8	17,6	22,8	19,7
Kanal 7	12,3	14,4	13,3	30,1	29,9
Flash TV	16,8	15,8	16,2	32,9	18,2
None	9,3	28,4	27,1	19,3	16,0

It can be observed that from among the TV channels, NTV was mostly followed by respondents aged 20-29 (28%). The followers of Flash TV (32.9%) and 360 TV channels (32.8%) were mainly aged 40-49, and the majority of Kanal 7 followers are aged 40 and above (those aged 40-49=30.1% and those aged 50 and above=29.9%). It is seen that Beyaz TV followers are mostly aged 20-49 (those aged 20-29=22.3%, those aged 30-39=28.1% and those aged 40-49 =25.3%). Halk TV was mainly followed-up by the respondents aged 50 and above (34.8%).



News Websites and Applications

In the questionnaire, the names of 19 different online news platforms were presented to the respondents under the heading "news websites and applications". The respondents were requested to mark the option "None" if they did not use any news websites and applications. An "Other" option was also available for those following an unlisted platform.

For each listed news websites or application, we examined among which age groups it is mainly used (see Table 6).

Table 6. Age Profiles of those Using Media News Channels and News Applications (%)

	Below the age of 20	Aged 20-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	Aged 50 and above
Ekşi Sözlük	17,8	35,7	29,8	11,2	5,5
BBC Türkçe	17,1	36,9	24,7	14,7	6,7
Diken	14,7	21,4	36,2	23,0	4,8
En Son Haber	12,2	33,2	26,6	14,7	13,3
Internet Haber	16,7	28,4	18,2	16,4	20,3
Mynet	12,5	32,0	26,2	17,1	12,2
Oda TV	8,3	17,8	22,3	9,3	42,3
sozcu.com.tr	7,2	19,7	23,4	18,7	31,1
hurriyet.com.tr	10,8	26,6	23,4	15,8	23,3
milliyet.com.tr	12,6	38,1	23,5	14,1	11,7
sabah.com.tr	11,1	28,1	28,9	17,4	14,4
birgun.net	5,5	28,4	15,9	32,3	17,9
haberturk.com	19,4	34,4	13,0	8,8	24,3
ntv.com.tr	16,4	23,2	6,8	23,0	30,5
cnnturk.com	10,4	26,9	18,8	10,2	33,8
ahaber.com.tr	9,2	30,3	33,4	27,1	0
Bundle	11,6	57,3	8,4	22,7	00
Son dakika	13,9	37,0	17,9	21,2	10,0
koseyazisioku.com	4,4	25,0	12,9	0	57,70
Other	4,8	18,0	55,4	14,1	7,8
None	10,5	17,0	18,6	25,1	28,8

It was observed that news platforms such as Bundle (57.3%), milliyet.com.tr (38.1%), Son dakika (37%), BBC Turkish (36.9%), Ekşi Sözlük (35.7%), haberturk.com (34.4%), Mynet (32%) and Internet Haber (28,4%) were more frequently followed by respondents aged 20-29 years. The number of followers of platforms such as koseyazisioku.com (57.7%), Oda TV (42.3%), cnnturk.com (33.8%), sozcu.com.tr (31.1%) and ntv.com.tr (30.5%) is higher among respondents aged 50 and above. The fact that the news application "Bundle" and the website "ahaber.com.tr" appear to have no followers among the respondents aged 50 and above, and the platform "koseyazisioku.com" appears to have no followers among the respondents aged 40-49 is, in all probability, attributable to the insufficiency of the sample.

Social Media Platforms

Table 7. Use Frequencies of Social Media Platforms (%)

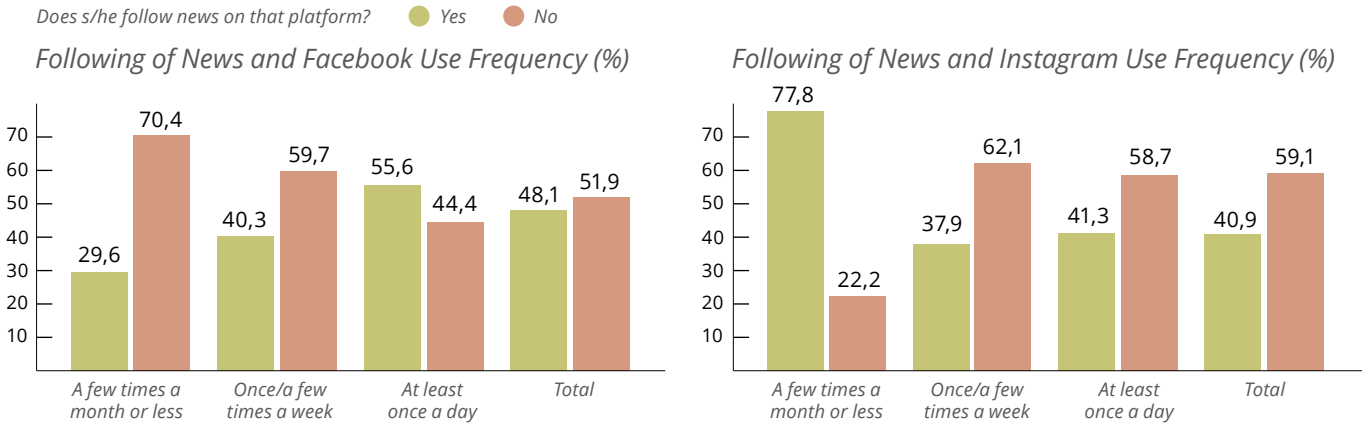
	At least once a day	Once or a few times a week	A few times a month or less	I don't have an account
Facebook	40,9	26,2	5,5	27,4
Twitter	36,3	20,3	2,9	40,6
Instagram	65,3	17,4	0,6	16,7
Snapchat	21,3	14,8	3,3	60,5
Youtube	43,4	23,6	0,7	32,2
LinkedIn	7	8,9	3,1	81

The respondents reported the following usage rates of the social media platforms they prefer at least once a day, that is to say every day: Instagram 65.3%, YouTube 43.4%, Facebook 40.9%, Twitter 36.3% and Snapchat 21.3% (see Table 7). The daily usage rate of LinkedIn is quite low (7%). 81% of respondents do not have a LinkedIn account. The usage rate of the Snapchat platform is also lower in comparison to other platforms, with 60.5% of the respondents stating that they do not have an account.

When the usage of social media platforms is examined according to age groups, those that used Facebook on a daily basis was lowest among those aged below the age of 20. The distributions are very close to each other among the other age groups (those aged 20-29=22.2%; those aged 30-39=23.1%; those aged 40-49=23.6%; those aged 50 and above=23.4%).

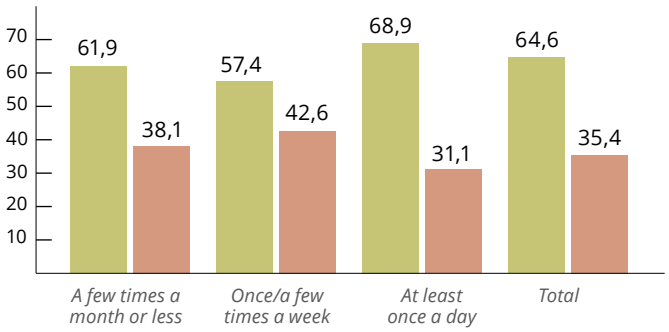
Among the respondents who stated that they use Twitter every day, the largest share was in the 20-29 age group (34.2%). This group was followed by those aged 30-39 (27.6%). The respondents who used Twitter the least on a daily basis were those aged 50 and above (10.3%). The group that used Instagram the most frequently every day were the respondents aged 20-29 (33.3%). Half of the respondents aged 50 and above stated that they did not have an Instagram account (50.5%). Snapchat (35.1%) and YouTube (35.5%) were also used on a daily basis mostly by the respondents aged 20-29. It is observed that the respondents who use LinkedIn every day are mainly aged 30-39 (37.3%).

Figure 9. Frequency of use of social media platforms and following of news (%)

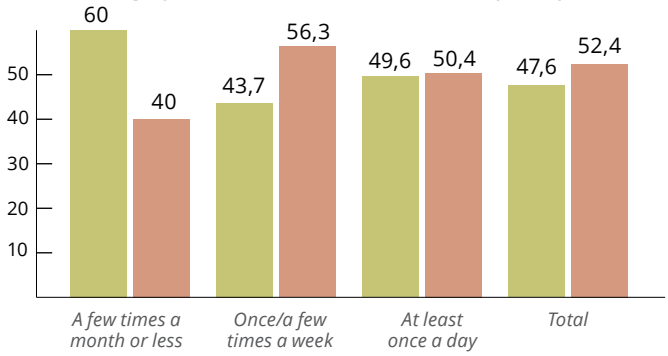


Does s/he follow news on that platform? Yes No

Following of News and Twitter Use Frequency (%)



Following of News and YouTube Use Frequency (%)



The respondents' frequency of social media use was also examined, and whether or not they follow the news on that platform. (See Figure 9). More than half (55.6%) of those using Facebook every day followed the news. Among the respondents using Instagram every day, the rate of those who did not follow the news (58.7%) was higher than those who did follow the news (41.3%). Regardless of frequency of use, tendencies to follow the news were more dominant among those that used Twitter. On the other hand, the rates are almost equal to each other's among respondents using YouTube every day.

In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about their level of use of five different social media platforms as a source of news. The respondents were requested to mark the option "None" if they did not use any social media platforms. An "Other" option was also available for those following an unlisted platform.

It was also examined which age groups follow each social media platform the most as a news source, and the results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Age Profiles of those Using Social Media Platforms as a News Source (%)

	Below the age of 20	Aged 20-29	Aged 30-39	Aged 40-49	Aged 50 and above
Facebook	10,1	19,5	23,7	23,4	23,2
Twitter	14,3	33,8	25	16,7	10,3
YouTube	19,3	34,4	20,9	19,7	5,8
Instagram	15,6	33,1	23,5	18,0	9,8
LinkedIn	3,3	24,8	33,4	6,5	32,1
None	3,5	6,8	16,0	21,6	52,1

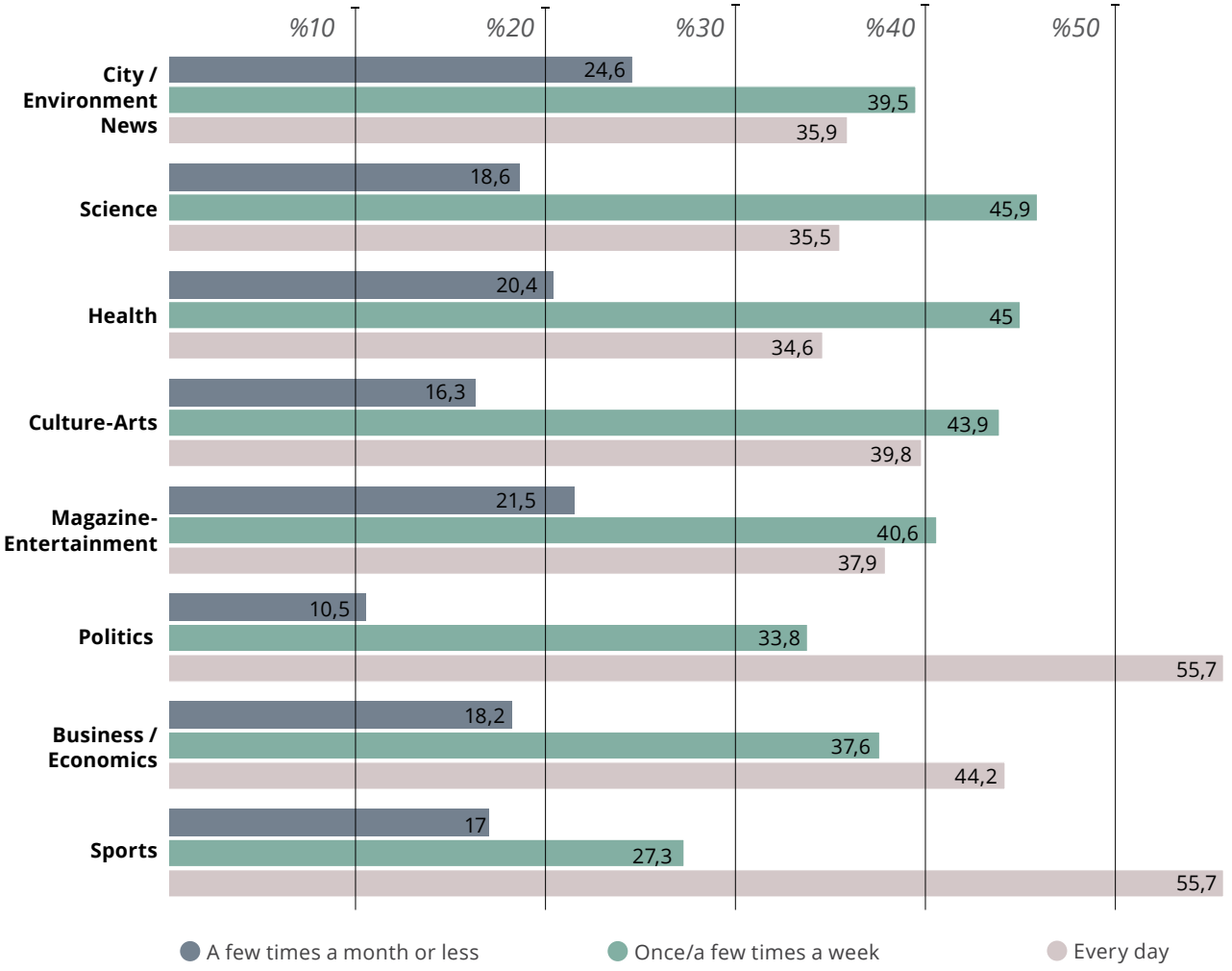
Those using Facebook as a news source from among the social media platforms were mainly aged above 30 (those aged 30-39=23.7%; those aged 40-49=23.4%; those aged 50 and above=23.2%). It was also observed that the group using YouTube (34.4%), Twitter (33.8%) and Instagram (33.1%) the most frequently as news sources was the group aged 20-29. The group that prefers LinkedIn as a news source mostly comprised respondents aged 30-39 (33.4%) and 50 and above (32.1%).

News Categories

In the research, questions were also asked to determine the news usage habits of the respondents. Some of the questions were aimed at determining which news categories are followed most frequently.

The respondents were requested to mark the three news categories they follow most from among the eight different news categories presented, and to indicate the frequency at which they follow them. Accordingly, the most followed news categories were found to be "Politics" (55.7%) and "Sports" (55.7%) (See Figure 10).

Figure 10. News categories followed and their frequencies (%)



As regards the news categories followed every day, it was observed that the "Sports" (women=23.3%; men=76.7%), "Business/ Economics" (women=33.2%; men=66.8%) and "Politics" (women=43.8%; men=56.2%) news categories were followed more by men, while the "City/Environment" (women=56.0%; men=44.0%), "Culture-Arts" (women=60.8%; men=39.2%), "Health" (women=65.7%; men=34.3%) and "Magazine/Entertainment" (women=66.7%; men=33.3%) news categories were followed more by women.

The frequency of following "Science" news based on gender was fairly balanced (women=51.3%; men=48.7%). The news followed on a daily basis with respect to the subject matter was also evaluated for each age groups.

It was observed that "City/Environment" news was followed the most by respondents aged 50 and above (31.2%), and followed least by the respondents below the age of 20 (9.6%). It can be stated that news in the "Health" category draws less interest from the respondents below the age of 20 (10.7%) in comparison to the other age groups. "Science" (32.2%), "Culture-Arts" (30.9%) and "Magazine/Entertainment" (30.9%) news are followed mainly by respondents aged 20-29, while news in the "Business/Economics" category was followed more by respondents aged 30-39 (31.5%). It was observed that the followers of "Politics" news were mainly in the group aged 50 and above (28.2%) and the group aged 30-39 (26%), while "Sports" news was followed more by respondents aged 20-39 (those aged 20-29=25.3%; those aged 30-39=24.4%).

Attitudes to Personalized News Feeds

Systems/algorithms can present automatically selected news to users based on their profiles and their search history patterns. Most of the time, this situation can establish the grounds for the formation of filter bubbles and echo chambers. Two questions were asked to respondents in the questionnaire to evaluate whether or not they considered this to be a good method. The first question aimed to determine whether the respondents considered being presented with news based on previously read news to be a good method, while the other question aimed to determine whether the respondents considered access to news selected automatically based on the news that was looked at/read by their friends as a good method.

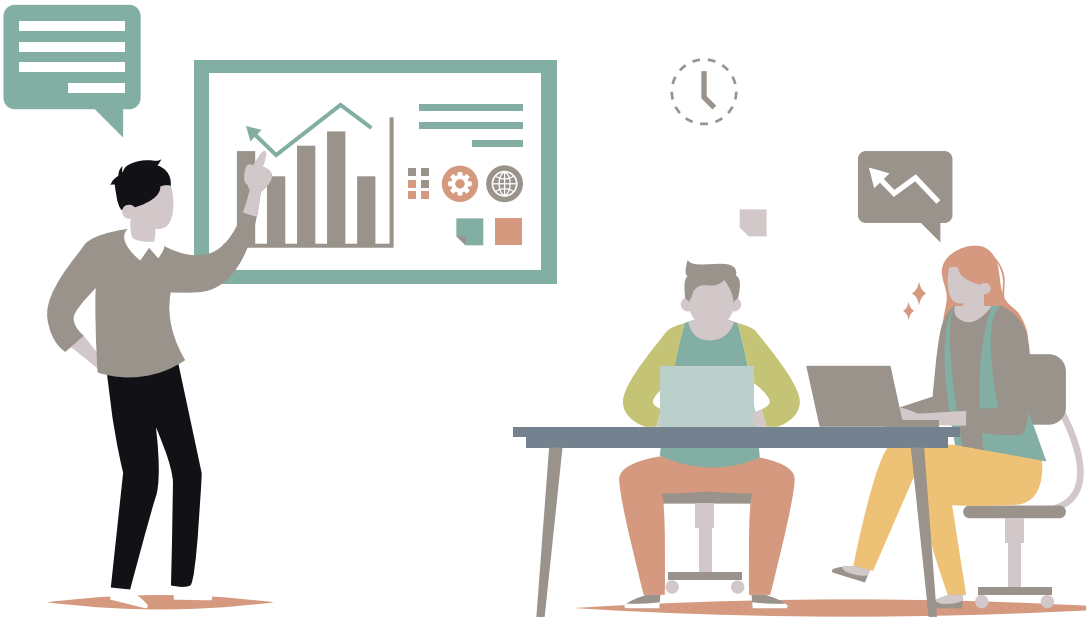
Of the total sample, 31.5% expressed a positive opinion of being presented with news automatically based on news that they had looked at previously, while 24% expressed a negative opinion, 21.4% remained undecided and 23.2% said either, "I don't know" or "I am not interested". For the second question, the rate of those who expressed a positive opinion of being presented news automatically based on the news looked at or read by their friends was 27.5%. While 26.1% of respondents expressed a negative opinion in this regard, 21.7% remained undecided and 24.7% stated either that they did not know anything about it or they were not interested.

trust in the media and news

One of the most significant and comprehensive issues in our research is trust in the media. It should be noted that trust has always been a difficult concept to define and agree upon in social sciences (Lewis and Weigert, 1985). In media studies, the challenge associated with the concept has manifested itself especially in the problem of how to measure trust. While the concept has been tried to be measured with certain standards that are open to theoretical and methodological debate, its standards of measurement are continuing to be questioned (Kohring and Matthes, 2007). In media studies, the concept of credibility has been addressed more often, although sometimes it is used as equivalent to the less common concept of trust. Although it is still a matter of opinion as to whether these two concepts differ from each other, our research is based on the concept of trust, as we believe that the concept of credibility should be measured based on objective criteria, especially on the source of news, rather than on the subjective trust of individuals. The focus of this research is predominantly the individual and social manifestations of the media and news, rather than an analysis of news agencies and organizations, journalists or media stakeholders.

Another important matter to be taken into account in researches related to trust in media is the context in which the trust is addressed. While some researchers have focused on source credibility and medium credibility (Kiousis, 2001), others have looked at alternative dimensions such as the credibility of news and messages (Armstrong and Collins, 2009). Indeed, it is quite difficult to clearly define the concept of media in a research. While one respondent may associate the concept with TV and radio, another may think about social media when expressing his/her opinion. Similarly, another frequently encountered situation arises when there are differences between the general opinions of the media and those of individuals about the media they use personally. Accordingly, it can be aid that subjective abstractions make the measurement of trust in the media difficult.

In summary, this research addresses the problem of trust in the media taking the media environments and sources into account, and focusing on news reliability. The trust which is tried to be measured is the trust of individuals in the news media in general. It should be remembered that trust may have multiple factors, being a multidimensional concept.



method

In order to overcome the uncertainties and problems related to media credibility, trust is addressed in general terms based on two main factors: Opinions of media independence; and trust in the news in different media environments. In other words, we brought together the general opinions of individuals regarding the media sector, media environments and media journalism, and tried to fix the concept as much as possible on the "news media" in integrated approaches. In this regard, trust in the media was determined by asking the respondents separately the level of trust they placed in the news in four sources (TV, print, Internet sources and social media), while the opinions about the independence of the media were determined under two contexts, namely, the economic and the political independence of the media in Turkey. Questions about the trust in news were asked using integrated statements in order to minimize subjective abstractions. For example, the statement "News garnered from TV is reliable" forces the person to give a general opinion on the reliability of the news provided by all TV channels.

The responses to two Likert-type questions about media independence matched at a high level the responses to questions about trust in placed in the news in the context of media environments. A high consistency was observed in the reliability analysis, which measures the consistency within responses (Cronbach's Alpha=.91) In the light of the analysis, it is quite justifiable to state that the perception of media independence meets the perception of journalism in different environments under the main concept of "trust in the media and news". It is worthy of note that, as seen in Table 9, trust in the news from news websites and applications and social media is in a relatively different direction from the concept of "trust in the media and news". While there is a high correlation between the trust in news websites/applications and the trust in news on social media (.805), it is observed that the answers given to these two questions have a relatively low correlation with especially opinions about media independency (between .40 and .50).

Table 9. Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Political independence	Economic independence	Trust in printed media	Trust in TV	News websites/ applications	Social media
Political independence	1,000	,886	,619	,585	,478	,443
Economic independence	,886	1,000	,636	,591	,493	,457
Trust in printed media	,619	,636	1,000	,787	,666	,584
Trust in TV	,585	,591	,787	1,000	,715	,622
News websites/applications	,478	,493	,666	,715	1,000	,805
Social media	,443	,457	,584	,622	,805	1,000

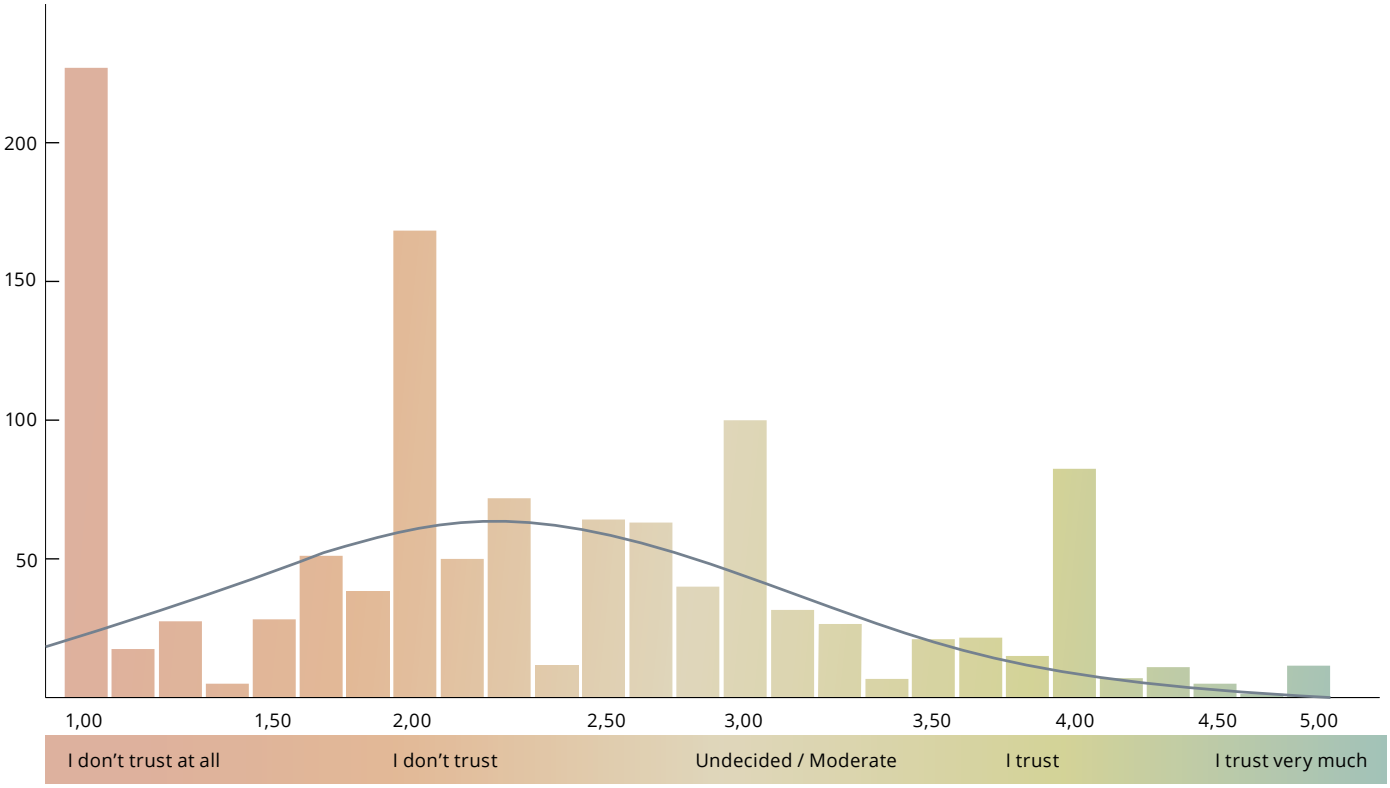
Although a correlation between the range of 0.4 and 0.5 makes it justifiable to attribute these factors to the same variable, it is perceived as necessary to make distinguish between "trust in news on Internet-based platforms" and "trust in news and media" when measuring the trust attributed by individuals to the media and news.

In fact, the debate on independence differs a lot, especially between social and traditional media. Moreover, news on Internet platforms and social media can create different perceptions in individuals, due to the fact that these environments can extend beyond the national borders. Therefore, our measurement of the "trust in the media and news in Turkey" is generally based on media independence, printed media and TV, while the "trust in news on the Internet platforms" is addressed only as a separate indicator, and is based on its own specific context. In addition to these two separate indexes obtained in the light of the conceptualization above that form the basis of this research, another set of trust questions were asked. A question that emphasized the difference between media environments, and that used a slightly different scale to the other scales, aimed to measure the level of trust in the media environments themselves (TV, printed, etc.) rather than being included in our two trust indexes. This measurement was not used aside from in descriptive presentations. In this respect, the respondents were also asked about their trust in messaging applications (such as WhatsApp and Messenger), which have been referred to as "Closed Networks".

Trust in the Media and News in Turkey

The comparative researches carried out in recent years in particular reveal that trust in the media is generally quite low in Turkey. For example, the Edelman Trust Barometer report prepared in 2013 (Edelman, 2013, p. 18) put the global level of trust in the media at 57%, while this rate was only 26% in Turkey. The 2018 Digital News Report of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism also stated in its annex on Turkey that distrust in the media is quite high in Turkey (Yanatma, 2018). The results of our research also reveal that the level of trust in media and news in Turkey is generally low. The distribution of levels of trust in the media and the news based on the responses of 1,215 individuals, which helped in the measurement of trust, are presented below.

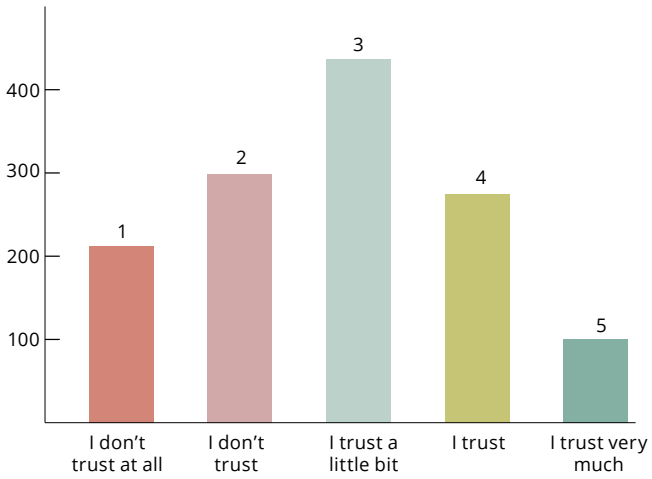
Figure 11. Distribution of trust levels within the sample



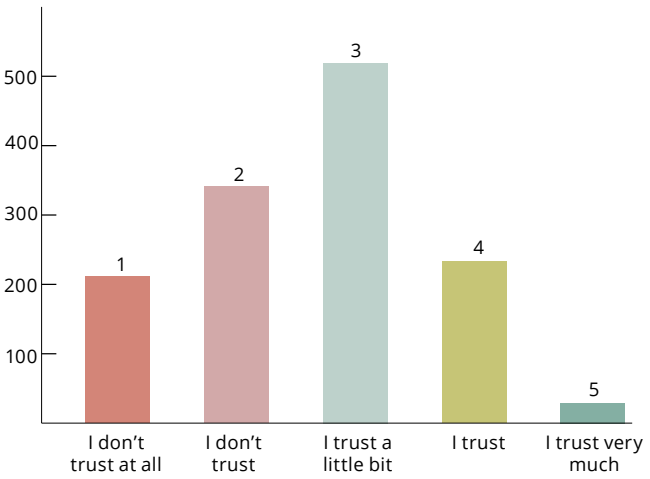
When the distribution of trust levels in media environments is examined, it can be seen that although the respondents stated a distrust in the media and news using the "I don't trust at all" (1) or "I don't trust" (2) responses are again dominant in all media environments, a considerable number of respondents stated their trust level as "I trust a little bit" (3).

Figure 12. Trust levels per media tools

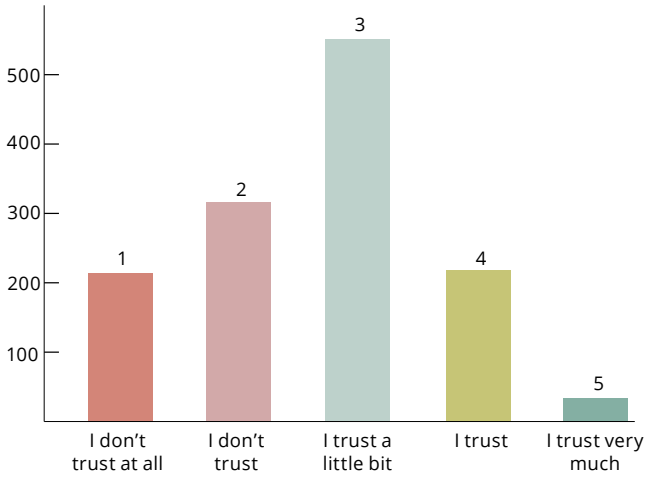
Messaging Applications (WhatsApp, Messenger)



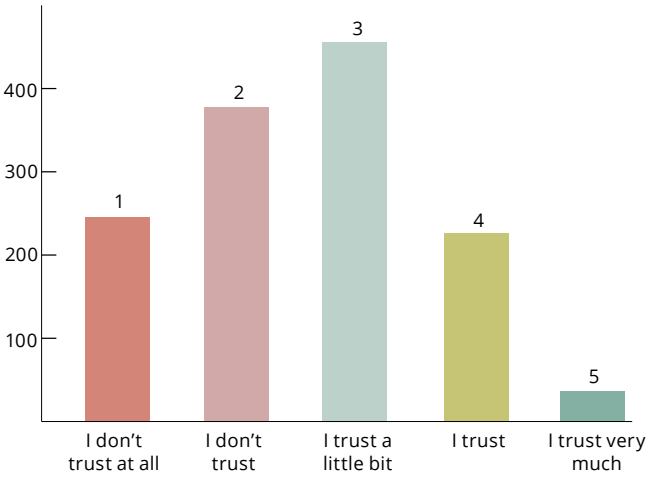
Social Media



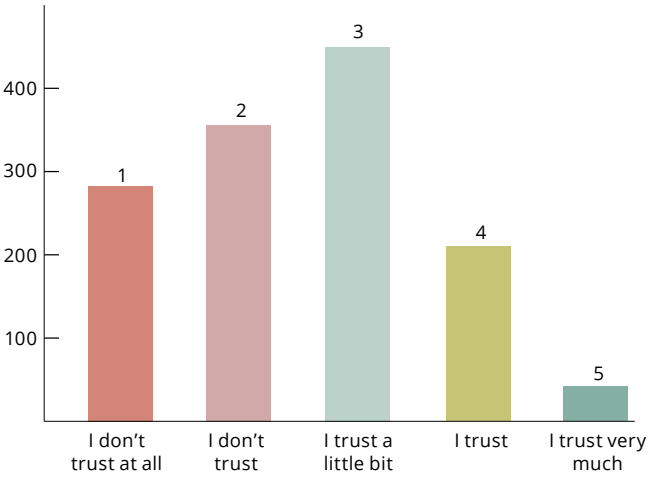
News Websites and Applications



TV Channels



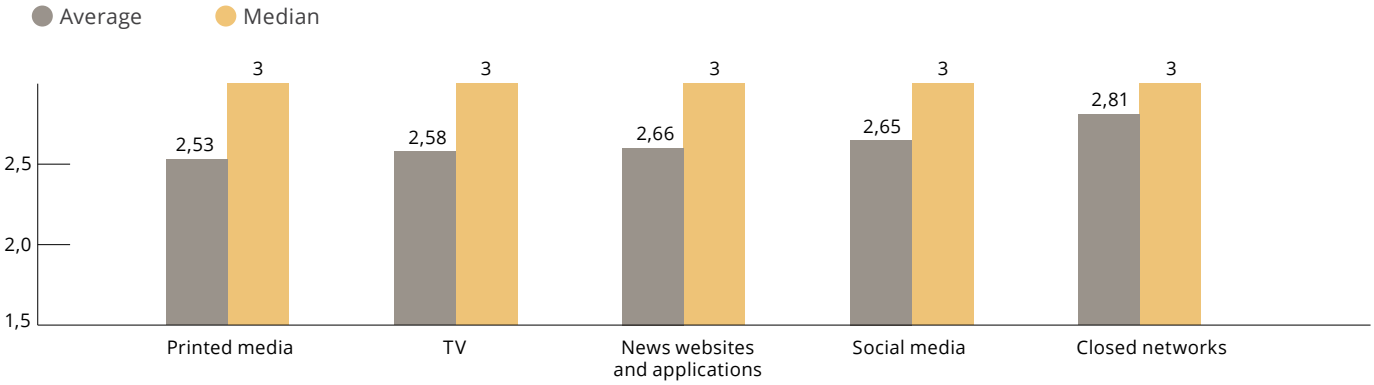
Printed Media (Newspaper, Journal)



A closer look at the graphics in Figure 12 reveals that the distribution of trust/distrust in the news is close to each other in all environments. The graphic further reveals that trust in TV-based news sources and in printed media is lower than in news websites and applications It can be stated that similar researches have found that in Turkey, trust in the news garnered from news websites and applications is relatively high in comparison to other countries (Yanatma, 2018, p. 21).

This situation is clearly apparent when a comparison is made of the average trust of individuals in conventional media news sources (visual and print), and the average trust attributed to news sources on Internet platforms (news websites/applications and social media) (see Figure 13):

Figure 13. Comparison of trust in news sources of conventional media and on Internet platforms



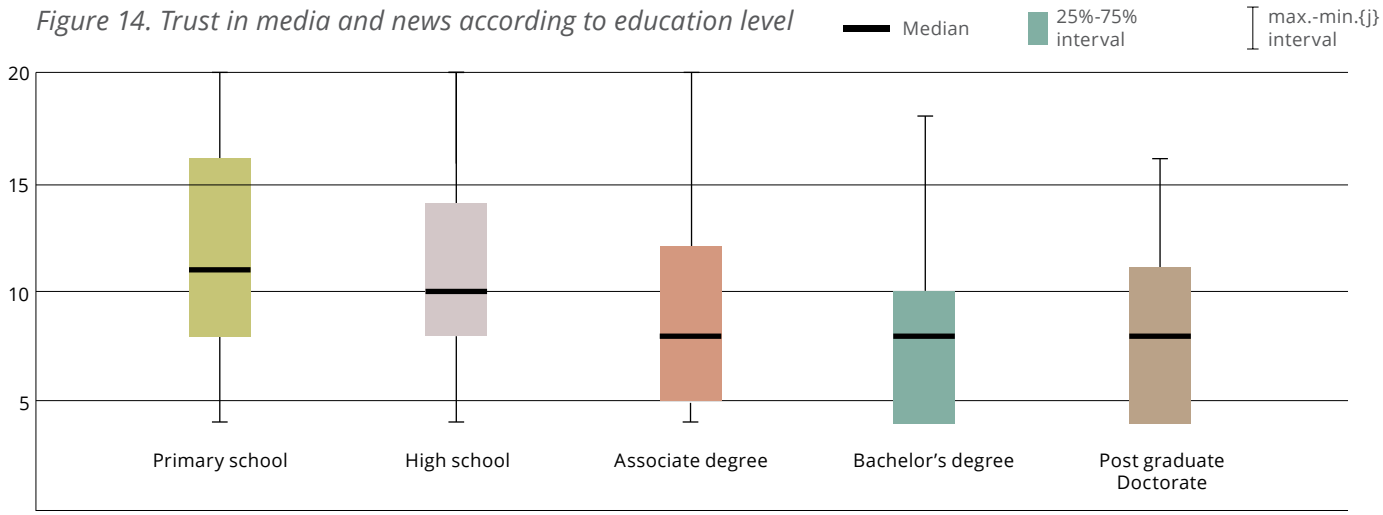
It should not be forgotten, however, that the available data is unsuitable for the calculation of the average, and that this information is only an indicator at the sample level. As a matter of fact, the medians are equal to each other. Based on our suspicion of the scientific reliability of single-scale questions, we preferred not to conduct a test to determine whether a significant difference existed between the trust levels of different media environments. We would like to state here that our measurements of trust were based mainly on the news media rather than the media environments. In brief, trust in news media using Internet-based platforms is likely to be higher than trust in conventional news media in Turkey, but this has not been scientifically tested.

In the light of the low trust levels mentioned above, we believe that it is also important to obtain some exploratory findings on trust levels, in addition to general measurements of trust in the media and news. In the observations and statistical analyses performed in the light of our hypotheses, significant correlations were identified between four basic indicators and trust in the media and news. These are, respectively, the individuals' education level, age, political leaning and media usage habits.

Education

This analysis aimed to identify whether a significant correlation exists between education level and trust in the media and news. A Spearman correlation test (Spearman's rank correlation) identified a significant correlation between education level and trust in the news (rs=-.286, p<.001). The results, which can be seen in the boxplot in Figure 14, show that the level of trust in the media and news decreases as the education level increases.

Figure 14. Trust in media and news according to education level



In brief, a correlation exists, although it is not linear. It can be observed that the decrease in trust does not continue into post-graduate education levels, and that it is similar to the level of trust at a bachelor's degree level. There is a high probability that this similarity is a result of insufficiency and uncertainty in the indication of education levels (for example, the difference between students and graduates at an undergraduate level of education has not been measured). On the other hand, it can be argued that trust in media and news does not increase in post graduate education, and that the median is preserved. It is apparent that the maximum value of trust in the media and news at post the graduate/doctorate education level is lower than at the other education levels. In order to more accurately measure linearity in the relationship, it is apparent that education levels must be measured more sensitively. The trust in the media and news of individuals at the primary school and high-school education levels is clearly higher than the trust of those at the bachelor's degree and post graduate levels.

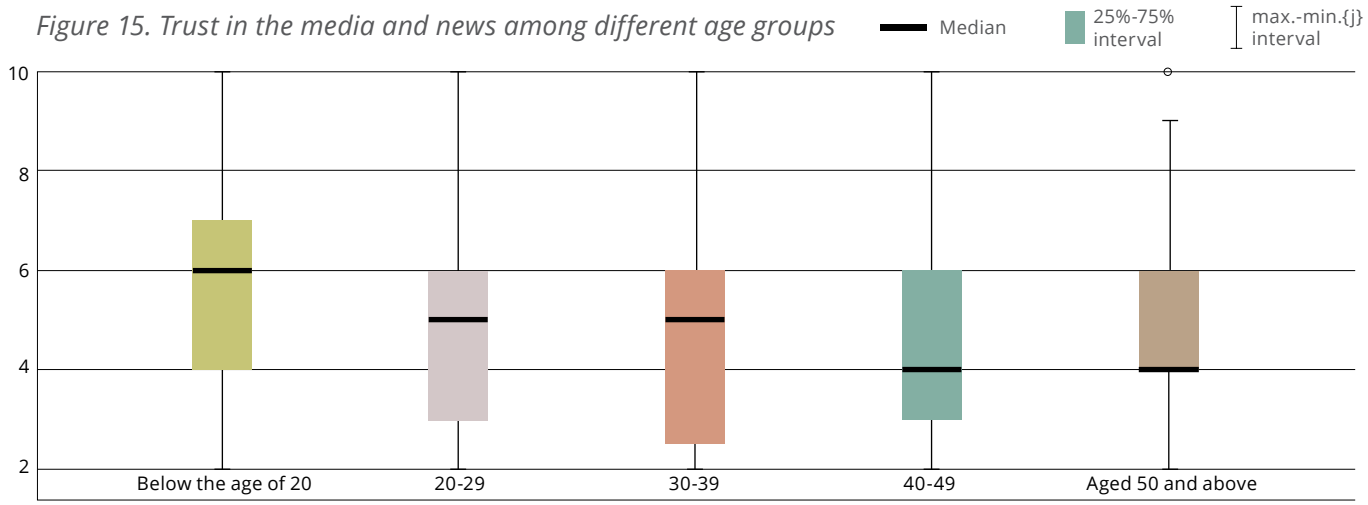
Since there is a weak correlation with respect to the classification of the effect size of the correlation value (Cohen, 1988), it is apparent that education level alone cannot reliably explain the distrust in the media and news. Nevertheless, as we evaluate this result within the Turkish society, it makes sense to argue that educated individuals have more negative opinions about media independence and visual/printed media news.

Similarly, when an analysis is made of the levels of "trust in the news on Internet platforms", it again shows a significant result (rs=-.117, p<.001), although the main difference is that the power of the correlation decreases considerably. In other words, the correlation between education level and distrust weakens considerably in the context of Internet platforms, becoming almost negligible. This situation can be explained by the fact that people with a higher level of education place more trust in the Internet. In other words, although trust in the news decreases as the level of education increases, this distrust loses its influence somewhat when it comes to the news garnered from Internet platforms.

Age

The correlation between age and trust in the media and news was also analyzed using a Spearman's rank correlation test. As sufficient evidence could not be found to argue for the presence of a linear correlation between age and trust in the media and news, this hypothesis was rejected (p=.068). When it comes to news websites/applications and social media, however, the hypothesis suggesting that there is a correlation between age and trust was verified (rs=-.117, p<.001). Although there is a very weak correlation, it has been observed that as age increases, trust in news websites/applications and social media decreases. It can be observed in Figure 15, obtained by grouping the age scale, that this situation is especially applicable to users below the age of 20 and users over the age of 40.

Figure 15. Trust in the media and news among different age groups



The trust in news websites/applications and social media of those below the age of 20 is higher than the trust of all other age groups. Similarly, the trust in news websites/applications and social media among users aged 40 and above decreases considerably.

In the light of the above findings, it is anticipated that the varying trust differentiations will not occur in a linear correlation with age, but between individuals below the age of 20 and those over the age of 40. According to the results of a Mann-Whitney U-test comparing users below the age of 20 (159 persons) and those over the age of 40 (242 persons) with a view to testing this hypothesis, no statistical evidence was found of the differentiation in trust levels of the two groups in printed and TV (p=.166 and p=.751). In contrast, the results for all Internet-based platforms are significant. a) In news websites and applications, the group below the age of 20 (median=3) reported different trust levels to those over the age of 40 (median=2) (U=11585, p<.001). b) On social media platforms, the group below the age of 20 (median=3) reported different trust levels to those over the age of 40 (median=2) (U=11535, p<.001). c) In messaging applications, the group below the age of 20 (median=3) reported different trust levels to those over the age of 40 (median=2) (U=10938, p<.001). In other words, the trust in the media and news of the group below the age of 20 was higher than the group over the age of 40 in all Internet-based platforms.

A simple effect size calculation gives a result of $\left(\frac{Z}{\sqrt{n}}\right)$ =~0.3 for the three Internet-based media tools, which, according to Cohen's (1988) effect size classification, this is a medium scaled effect. Simply put, a significant variation exists between the trust placed by individuals in the news on Internet-based platforms based on whether they belong to the group below the age of 20 or the group over the age of 40.

In conclusion, there is insufficient evidence to state that a correlation exists between age and trust in the media and news garnered from conventional media. That said, trust in news sourced from news websites and applications, social media and messaging applications decreases as the age of the individual increases. The paired comparison tests (Mann-Whitney U) performed in the light of the initial findings show that this difference becomes particularly apparent between the group below the age of 20 and the group over the age of 40. It can thus be stated that a considerable differentiation exists between the trust levels of these two groups in news sourced from Internet-based platforms.

Political View

Another important finding of the research is that one of the leading factors explaining trust in the media and news is the political orientation of the respondent. After having discovered that political orientation is a determinant not only of trust, but also many other important issues, it was been decided to address the findings on this issue in details in the "Political Views and Polarization" section.

Media Usage Habits and Trust in News

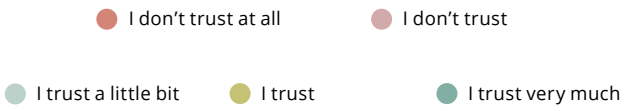
There have been many previous researches attempting to determine the correlation between the trust in the media and the media usage habits (Algül, 2015). A correlation may exist between the trust levels of individuals and the media tools and sources they use. Additionally, the possibility of a relationship between media trust and the news categories followed by individuals was considered. Some descriptive visuals and analyses of these three indicators are presented below.

Correlation between the Use of Media Tools and Trust in the News

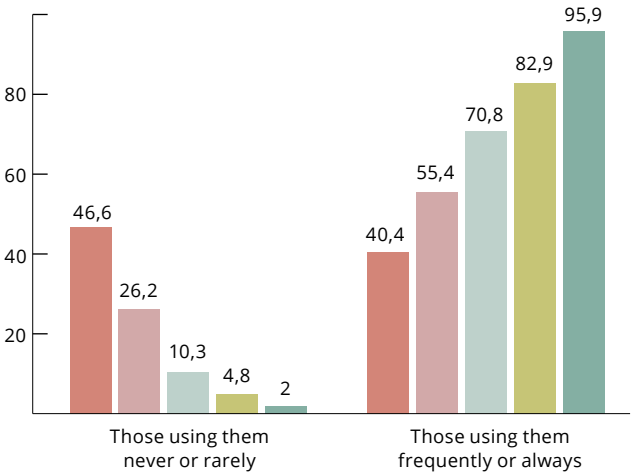
The assumption that a positive correlation will exist between the frequency of media usage of individuals and their trust in the news was our initial hypothesis. This correlation was addressed with respect to the general trust levels, as well as the trust levels based on media tools. The graphics in Figure 16 show the usage frequencies of different media tools and the level of trust attributed to these tools.

In brief, it would seem that a linear correlation exists between usage and trust in all media tools. It can be understood from this that the more an individual uses a particular media tool, the more trust they place in it; or that individuals tend to use the media tools that they trust more frequently.

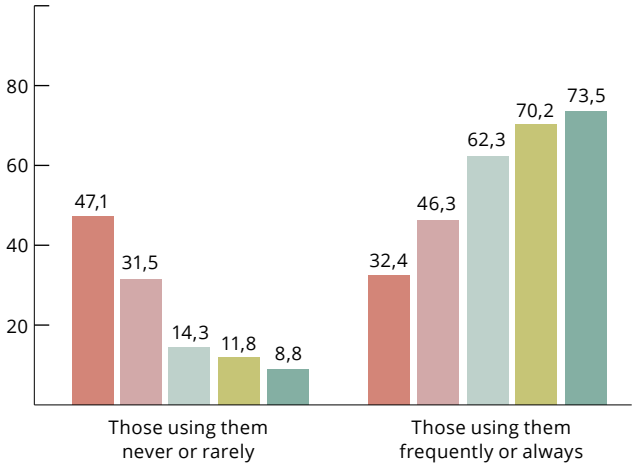
Figure 16. Trust levels according to use frequency (%)



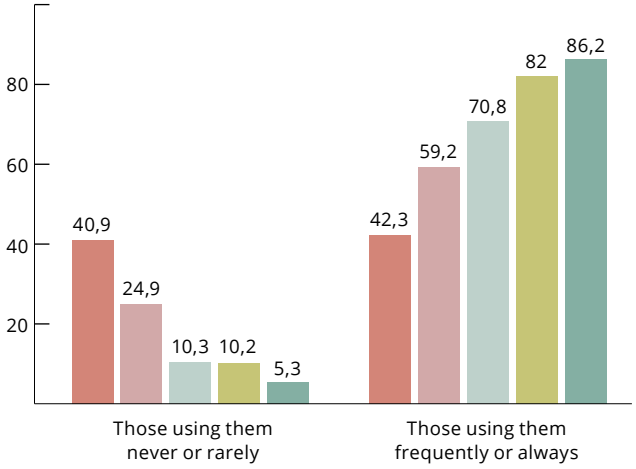
Use frequency of messaging applications (WhatsApp, Messenger) and trust (%)



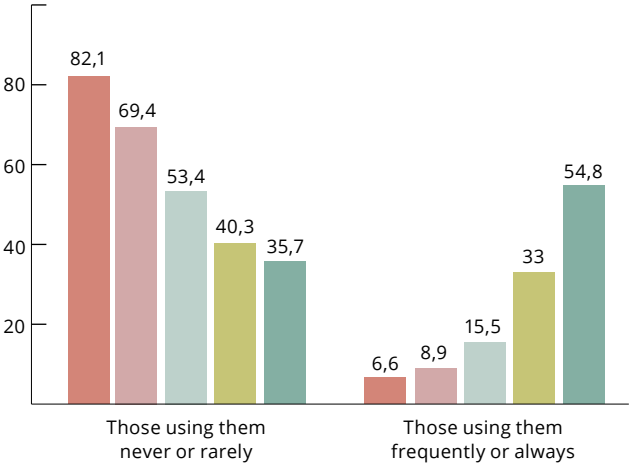
Use frequency of news websites/applications (Internet) and news applications and trust (%)



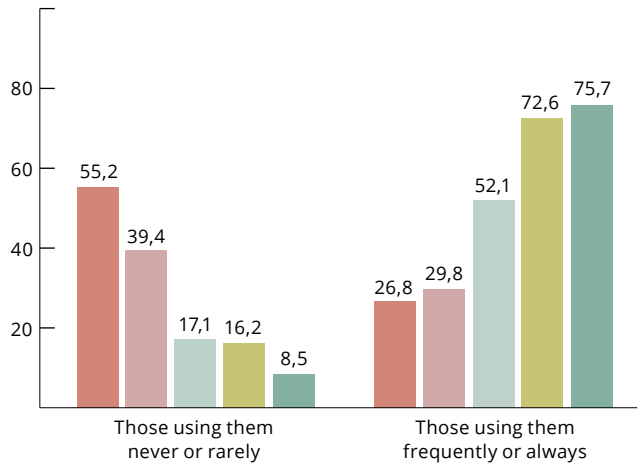
Use frequency of social media and trust (%)



Use frequency of printed media (Newspaper, Journal) and trust



Use frequency of TV channels and trust (%)

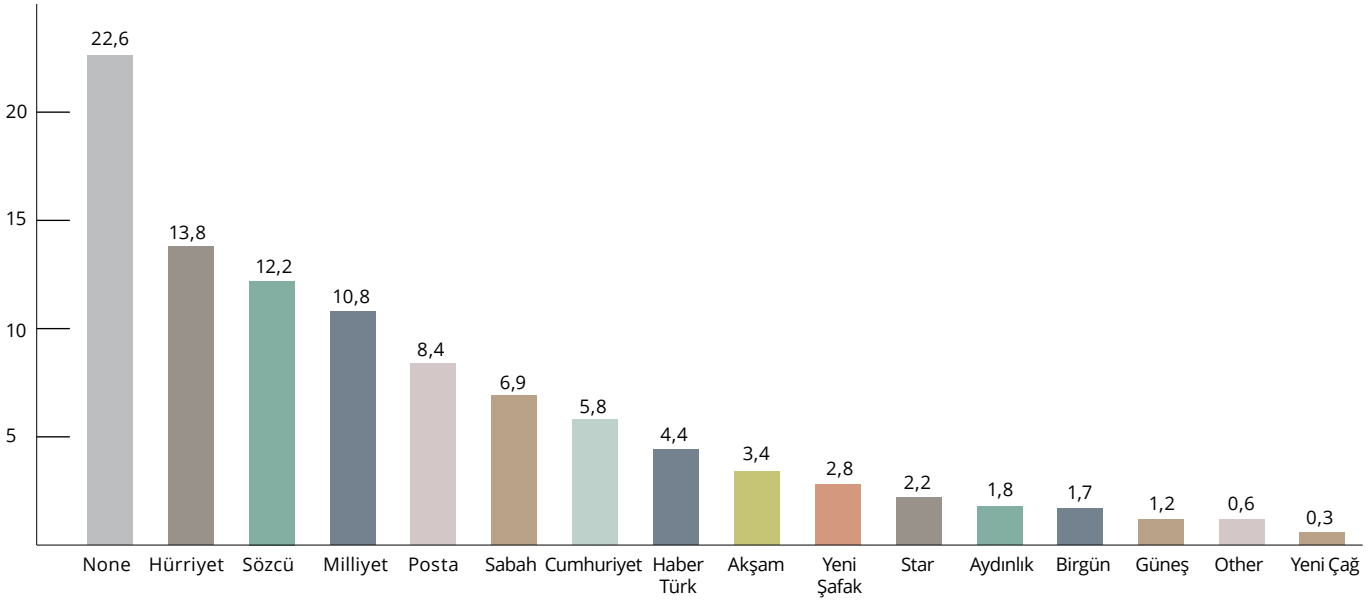


Relationship between the Use of Different Media Channels and Trust in the News

The respondents were asked which media sources they trusted after being given multiple alternatives. For printed media, 1,330 respondents chose a total of 2,321 sources; while for TV, 1,341 respondents chose 2,719 sources. The most trusted printed and TV sources are shown in Figures 17 and 18, based on their responses. We should note that these figures do not show to what extent users trust these sources, but only to what extent these sources are trusted across Turkey. These measurements, which may be referred to as "trust prevalence", constitute a starting point for future researches on trust levels based on media sources.

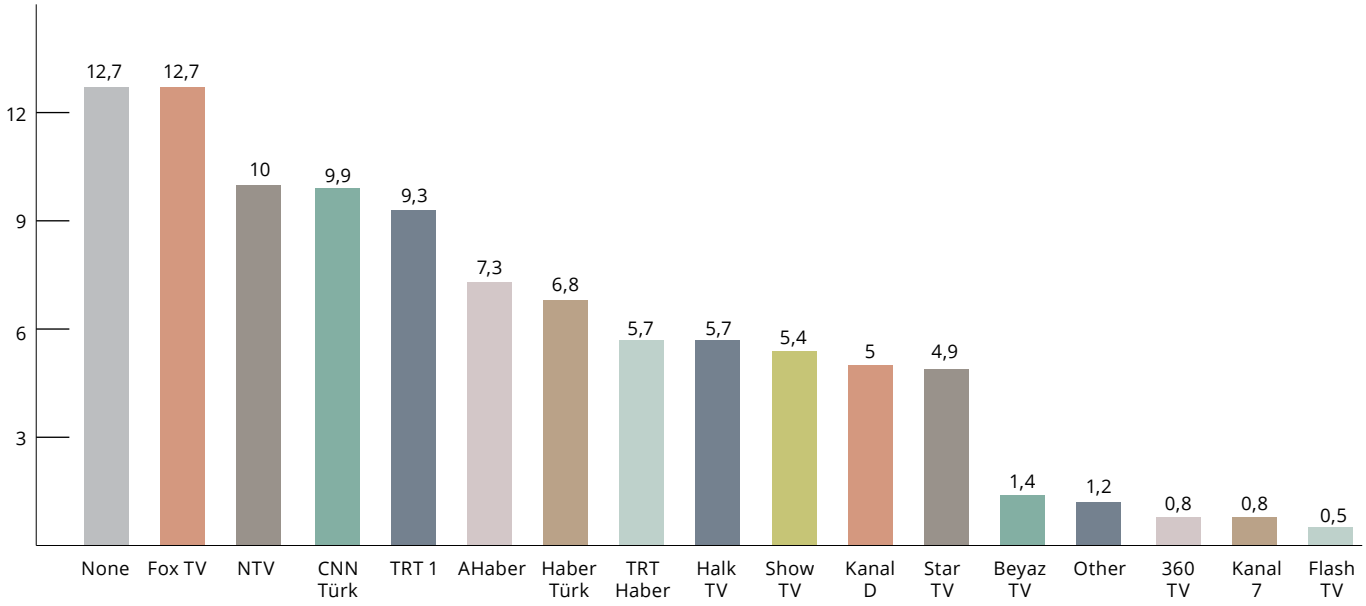
Conventional Media

Figure 17. Printed media channels according to their trust prevalence (%)



According to Figure 17, a considerable number of respondents (22.6%) have no trust in any of the sources in the printed media. This may be associated with the general indifference and distrust placed in printed media. The most trusted printed media sources were Hürriyet (13.8%), Sözcü (12.2%) and Milliyet (10.8%).

Figure 18. TV channels according to their trust prevalence (%)

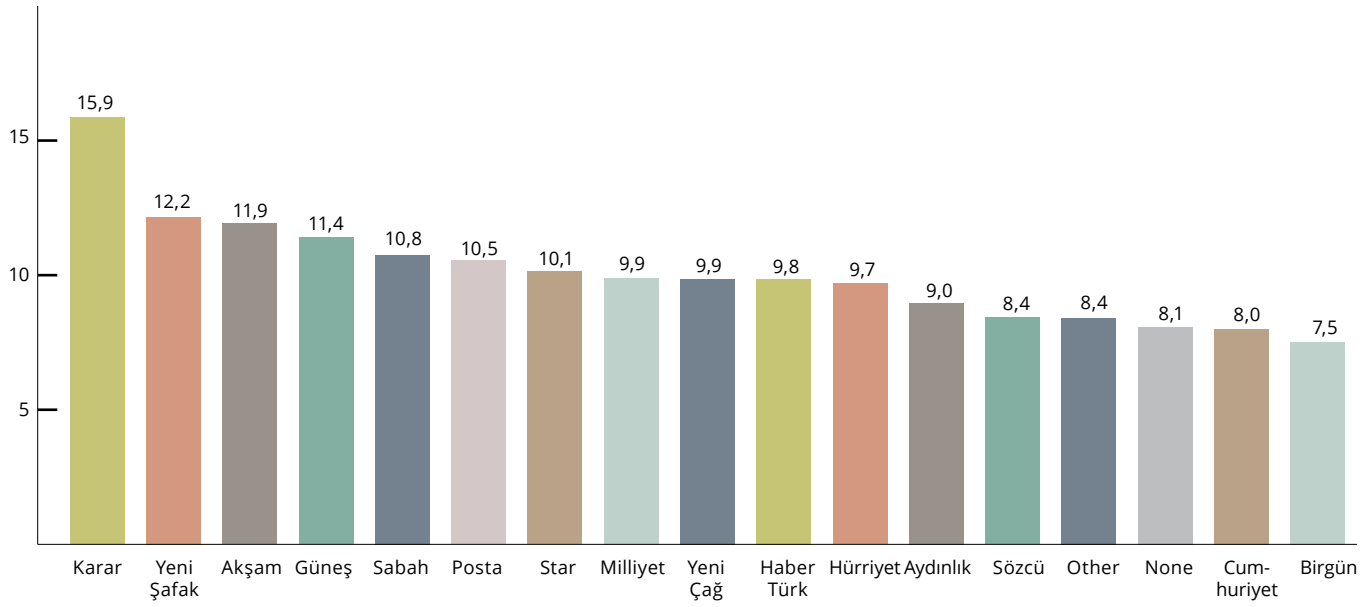


Similar to printed media, the tendency is to not trust any source in the TV (12.7%) (See Figure 18). The most trusted sources were Fox TV (12.7%), NTV (10%), CNN Türk (9.9%) and TRT 1 (9.3%).

It is worthy of note that for both printed media and TV, the distribution of trust frequency parallels that of the news sources presented in the "Media and News Usage" section.

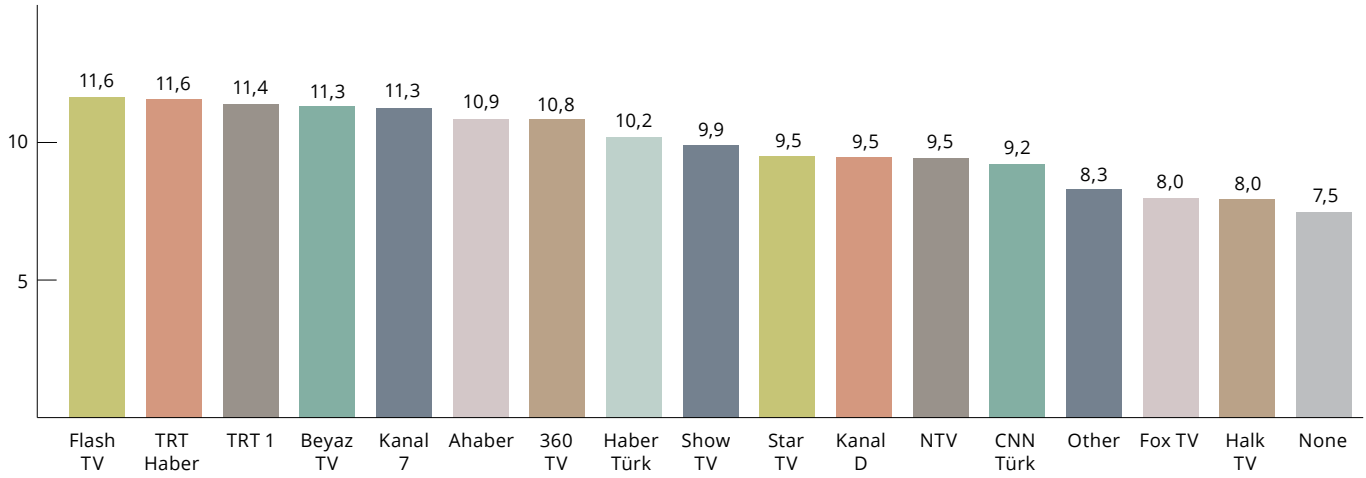
In addition to trust prevalence, data was also obtained on the differences in the general trust levels attributed to conventional news media among the followers of different sources (see Figures 19 and 20). This indicator reveals the differentiations in the opinions of the followers of different sources about the media and journalism in Turkey.

Figure 19. Trust levels of printed media followers in the media and news in Turkey (%)



As regards to printed media, the followers of Karar and Yeni Şafak in particular, and the followers of Güneş and Akşam have a high trust in news media in Turkey (see Figure 19). On the other hand, individuals with the lowest level of trust in media and news in Turkey prefer sources such as Birgün, Cumhuriyet and Sözcü, and avoid the printed media or tend to use alternative sources.

Figure 20. Trust levels among the TV audience in media and news in Turkey (%)

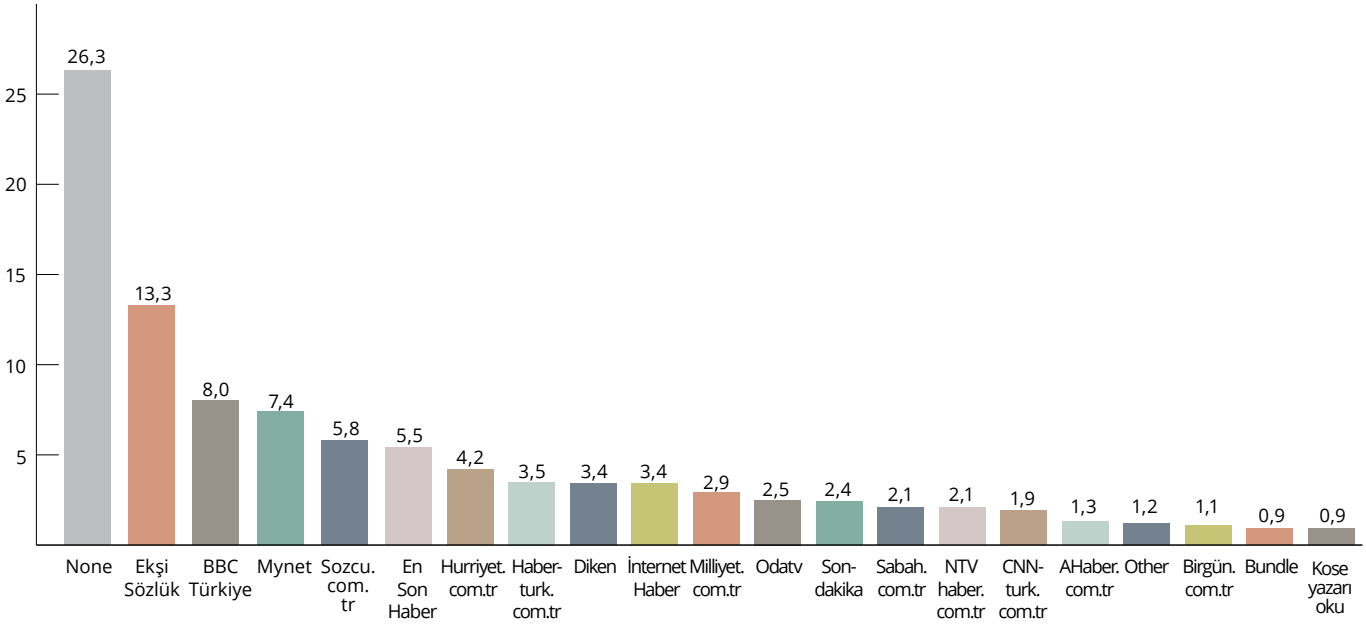


As regards to TV, Flash TV, Beyaz TV, TRT Haber, TRT 1 and Kanal 7 have the followers with the highest trust in the media and news in Turkey (see Figure 20). On the other hand, Fox TV and Halk TV are the channels preferred by individuals with the lowest level of trust in the media and news. Among the individuals with a low level of trust, there are also those that do not rely on any sources, or that use alternative sources.

Internet-Based Media Platforms

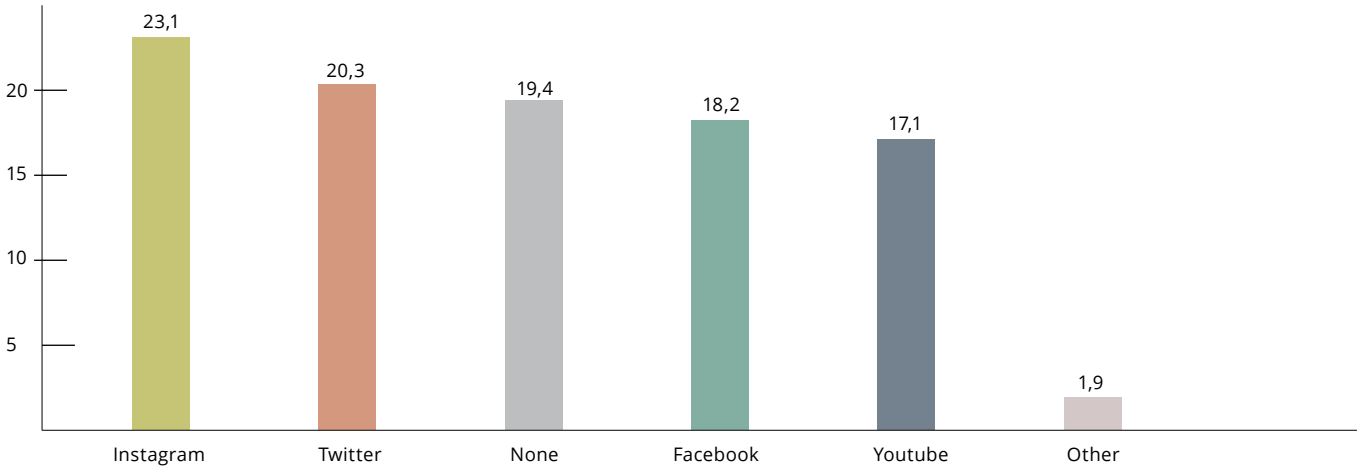
For the section on Internet-based media platforms, in addition to conventional media, the trust prevalence was measured for news from social media and Internet-based news sources. To remind, these levels show which media sources are considered more trustworthy in Turkey.

Figure 21. News websites and applications and their trust prevalence (%)



As it can be seen, although the majority of respondents do not trust any sources, news sources such as Ekşi Sözlük, BBC Turkish and Mynet can be counted among those considered most trustworthy as news sources that are articulated to conventional media.

Figure 22. Social media platforms and their trust prevalence (%)



When social media is considered as a news source, it would appear that little or no difference exists in the level of trust afforded to different social media platforms. That said, the respondents cited Instagram as a more trusted platform, while YouTube and Facebook had relatively lower prevalence.

The Relationship between the Use Frequency of Different News Categories and the Trust in News

It was stated earlier that another aspect of media consumption is the differentiations between the news topics that are of interest to individual users. Details of the results of the research regarding the consumption frequencies of news topics can be found in the "Media and News Usage" section of the report. Nevertheless, some other findings in this regard are particularly interesting. For example, it has been observed that the frequency at which an individual prefers a news topic is correlated with their level of trust in the media and news, and such behaviors and thoughts as the frequency of suspicion of the news and verification of the news.

This correlation related to trust in the media and news was significant for three news categories. According to the results of the Spearman test, individuals following political news (rs=- .134, p<.001), culture/arts news (rs=-.154, p<.001) and science news (rs=-.179, p<.001) frequently had a lower level of trust in the news media. Here, it should be noted that the mentioned correlations are quite weak, although the fact that no significant correlation exists in any of the other news categories when compared to these three shows that although they are weak, these correlations are worth being reported.

Here, another important point is that these correlations should not be evaluated as a cause and effect relationship. The best interpretation of the situation would be to say that those who follow news on politics, culture/arts and science are more likely to have a lower level of trust in the media and news than those who follow these topics less. It is likely that this situation is related with a critical thinking performance. Indeed, these results are very close to those obtained under the subheading of suspicion.

Being Suspicious of News

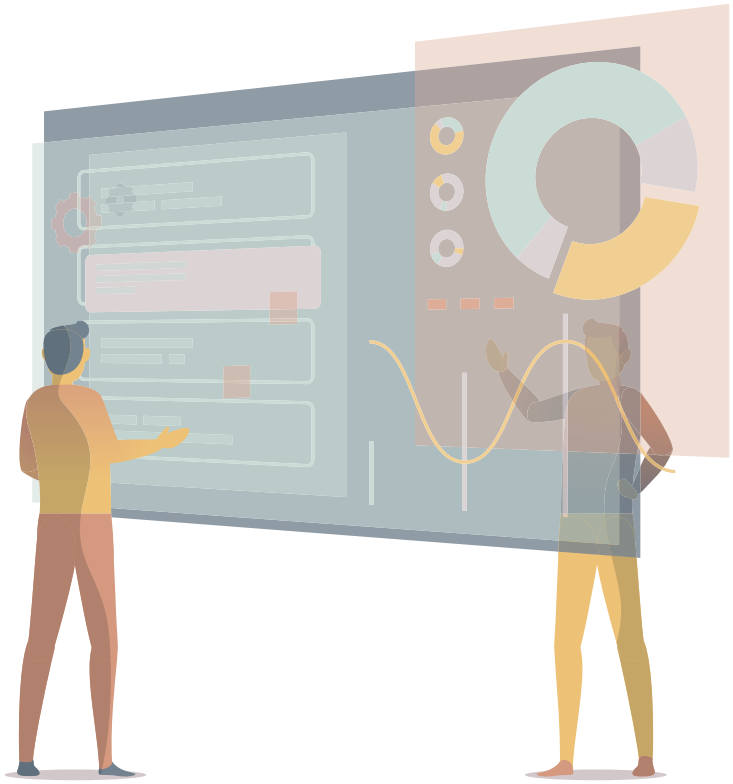
One subtopic related to trust in the media and news relates to suspicion of the news encountered by individuals. To what extent individuals are suspicious of news that they come across may differ based on a number variables related to the source or the receiver. Bakir and Barlow (2007, p. 210) stated that in the light of changing social dynamics, suspicion is a justifiable behavior that needs to be encouraged.

We evaluate suspicion also within this positive context. Although suspicion takes different forms, based on the underlying reasons, it is an important indicator of whether or not individuals have a critical perspective of the news. Accordingly, the frequencies and factors of suspicion will be given, and suspicion will be correlated with news usage in the context of this research.

Relationship between Trust and Suspicion

Another important issue that needs to be mentioned is that suspicion and trust in the news are conceptualized separately in this research. Some researches into trust in the media consider the sceptical/ critical approaches of individuals as a factor affecting trust in the news rather taking suspicion as a separate variable. Moreover, suspicion can also be conceptualized as an inverse projection of trust.

For the present study, it was necessary to differentiate between these two concepts rather than assuming that they were inclusive of each other, or that they were inversely equal, and the research design was based on this understanding. While trust was measured by focusing on “how much” the individuals trust, suspicion was measured based on “the frequency at which” individuals suspect the news they come across. In other words, what we were trying to measure with our definition of suspicion was not a general mood, as opposed to trust, but rather an action of individuals during their encounters with news.



However, in the light of the obtained data, we observed that our suspicion variable could not be sufficiently differentiated from the trust variable, probably due to insufficiencies in the conceptualization and measurement approaches (see Limitations 3a). Thus, a limited number of analyses and indicators will be discussed under this subheading. Although these results are largely similar to those obtained in the section on trust in the media and news, they may be valuable in guiding future researches.

In this context, the frequency of suspicion of the accuracy of the news was measured on a single scale by asking about the news followed / read by the individual. The scale, which consisted of 5 levels: "never", "rarely", "sometimes", "frequently" and "always", aimed to measure the frequency at which the accuracy of news was doubted. An important limitation here is that only the statements of individuals are taken into consideration due to the difficulty in measuring behaviors.

Frequency of Suspicion and Circumstances of Suspicious

According to the findings of the research, it is possible to say that the majority of individuals tend to suspect the news they follow/read at least on some occasions (see Figure 23). Nevertheless, individuals that are highly suspicious (frequently or always) constitute only 36.4% of the total.

Figure 23. Frequency at which individuals suspect the accuracy of the news they follow / read (%)

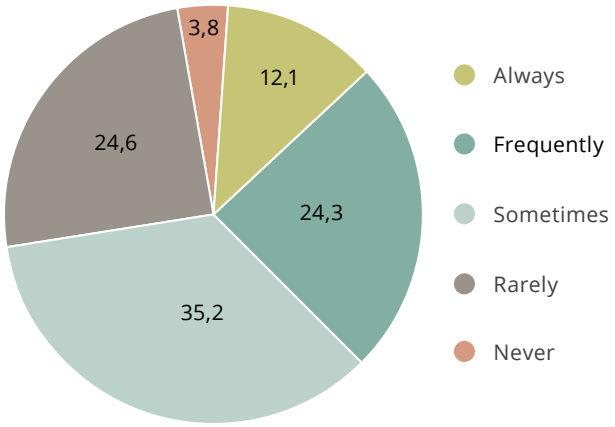
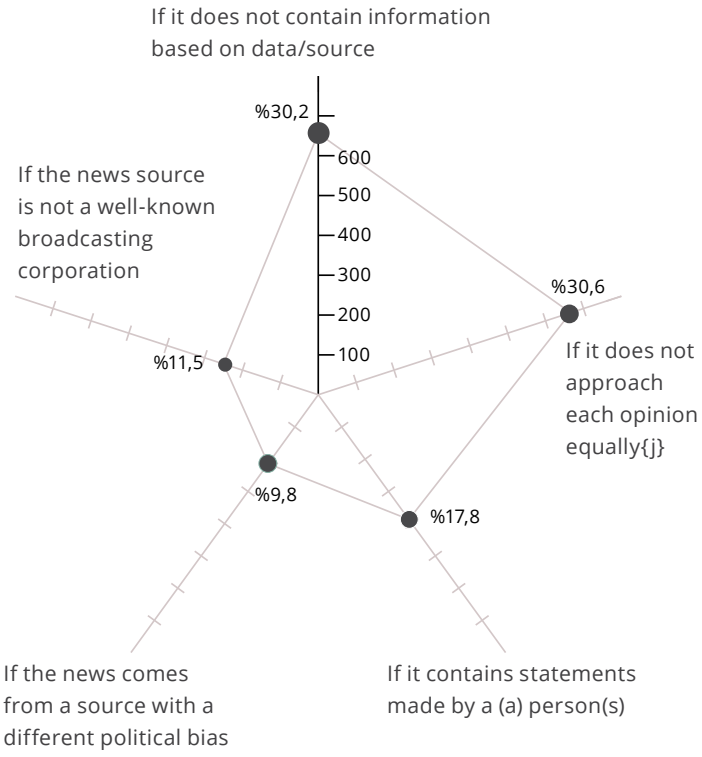


Figure 24. Reasons for being suspicious



When the reasons for suspicion are examined, the most common responses were that the news "does not approach each opinion equally" and "does not contain information based on data/sources".

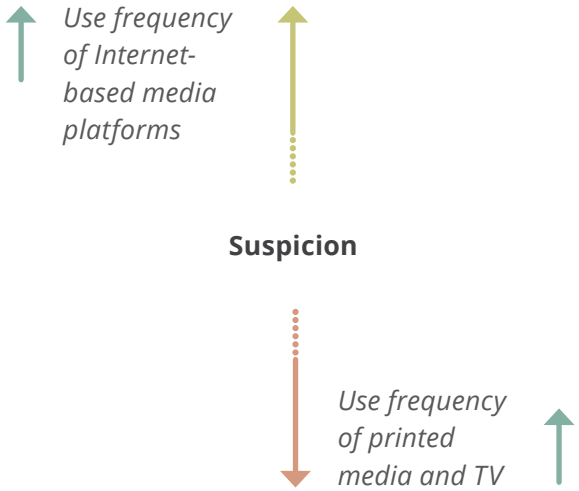
Suspicion According to Media Platforms

According to the results of the Spearman test performed to identify the media platforms in which a skeptical approach is more valid or widespread, it can be said that suspicion decreases as the frequency of using printed media and TV increases, and that the suspicion increases as the frequency of using Internet platforms increases. Although there are quite weak correlations, it should be noted that this is a valuable indicator establishing the differences between the users of conventional media and the users of the Internet. The results are presented in Table 10:

Table 10. Test Results

	Printed media (Newspaper, Journal)	**TV channels**	**News websites and applications**	**Social media**	**Messaging applications** (Whatsapp, Messenger)
Correlation Coefficient	-,083**	-,104**	,146**	,063*	,091**
p	,003	,000	,000	,022	,001
N	1315	1328	1326	1335	1321

It is currently not possible to determine whether or not these correlations indicate a cause and effect relation. Although the correlations are weak, the above findings seem to indicate an important matter. It could be that individuals keep their suspicions in the background in the usage of conventional media and/or suspect them less, as they prefer these tools more. In contrast, it can be said that suspicion is more widespread with Internet platforms and/or that skeptical behavior increases as these platforms are used more frequently.

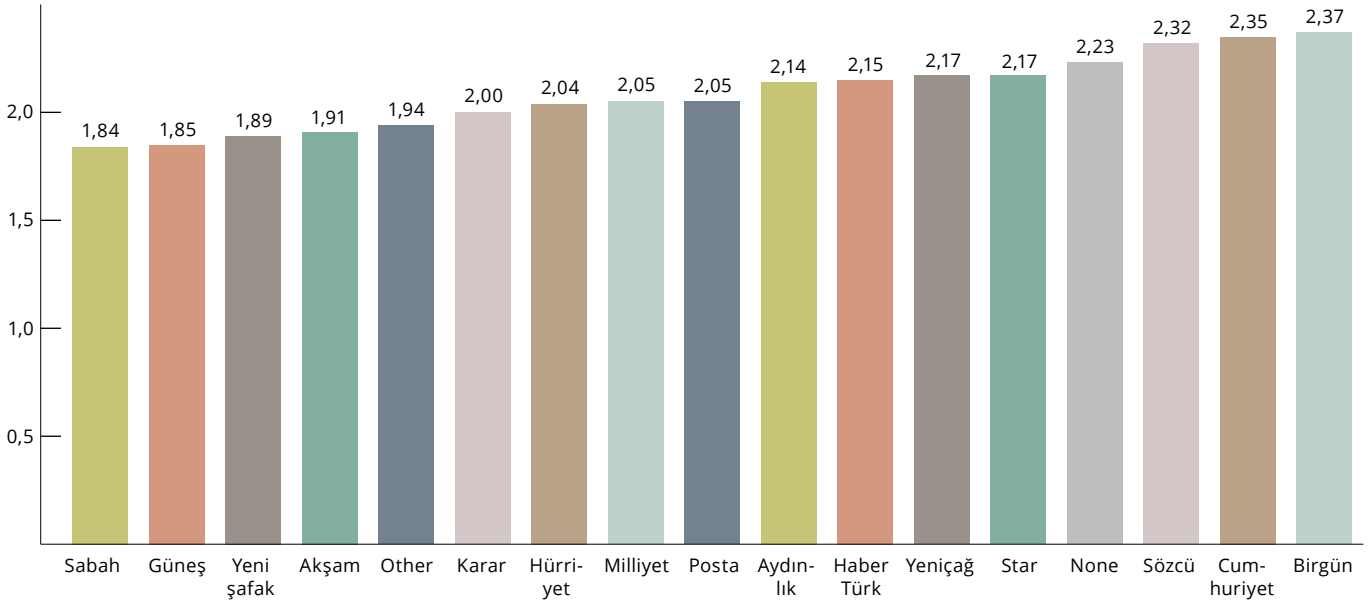


Suspicion According to the Sources Used

The objective was to determine with which sources followers develop a suspicion about the news they come across, and at what frequency they do so, by measuring the frequencies at which individuals who stated that they follow a certain source are suspicious. The following graphics show the results for four different media environments.

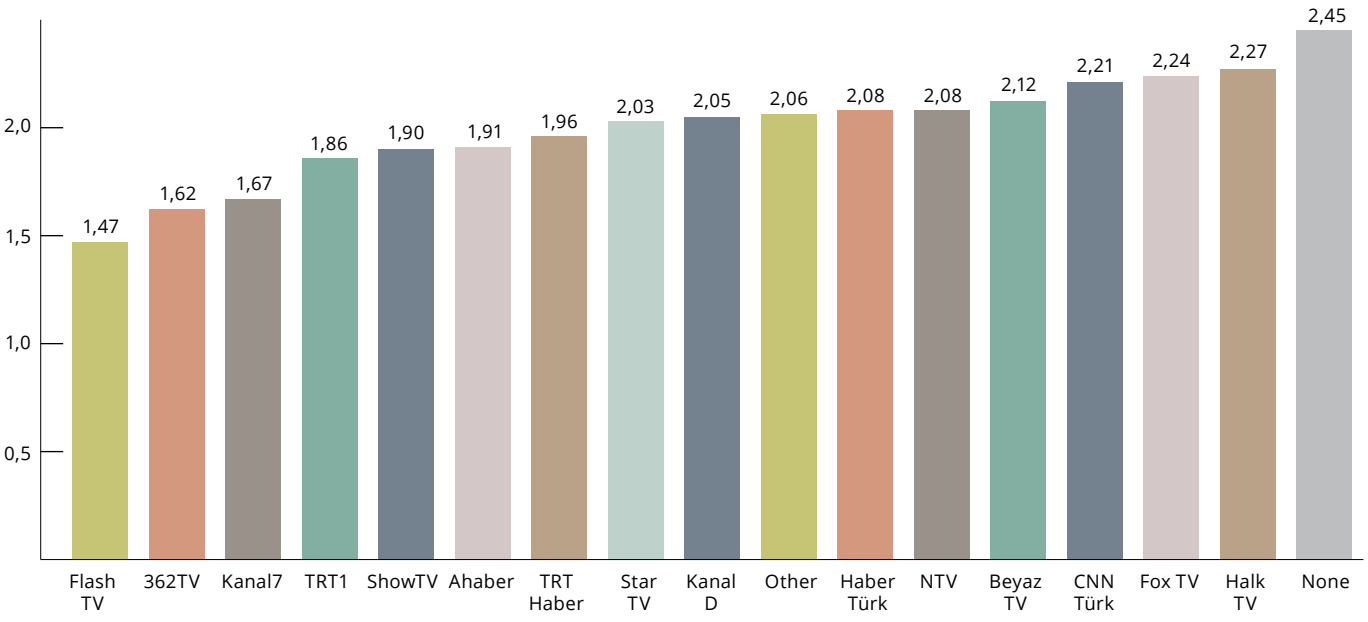
[1] As can be seen in the Table, the test results could not reach a significant finding at the level of p <.01 for social media. However, we prefer to use vague expressions here, as we think this rejection is open to discussion.

Figure 25. Suspicion levels of different printed media followers



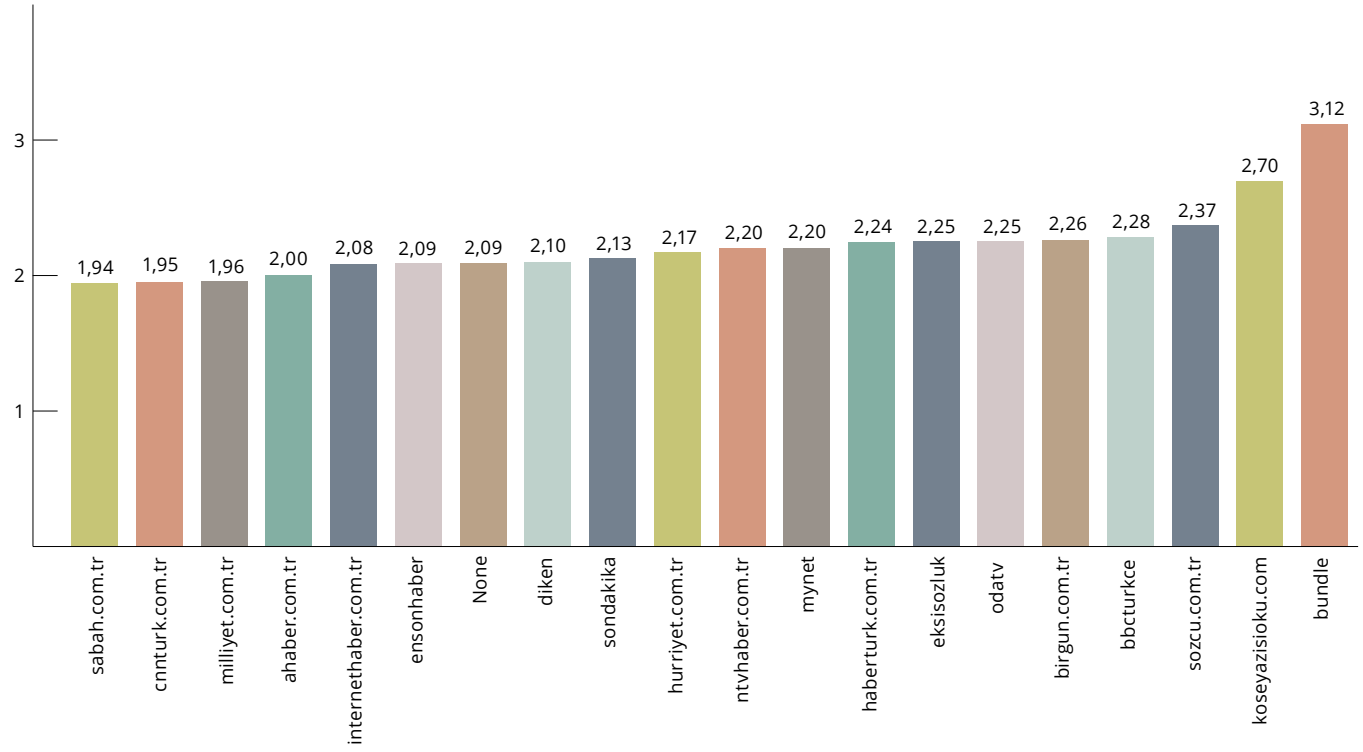
According to this, the followers of Birgün, Cumhuriyet and Sözcü are more suspicious, while the followers of Sabah, Güneş, Yeni Şafak and Akşam are relatively less suspicious about the news they come across. Nevertheless, it can be observed that, aside from the readers of Sözcü, Cumhuriyet and Birgün, the suspicion levels of the followers of all sources in the printed media environment are close to one another.

Figure 26. Suspicion levels of different followers of TV



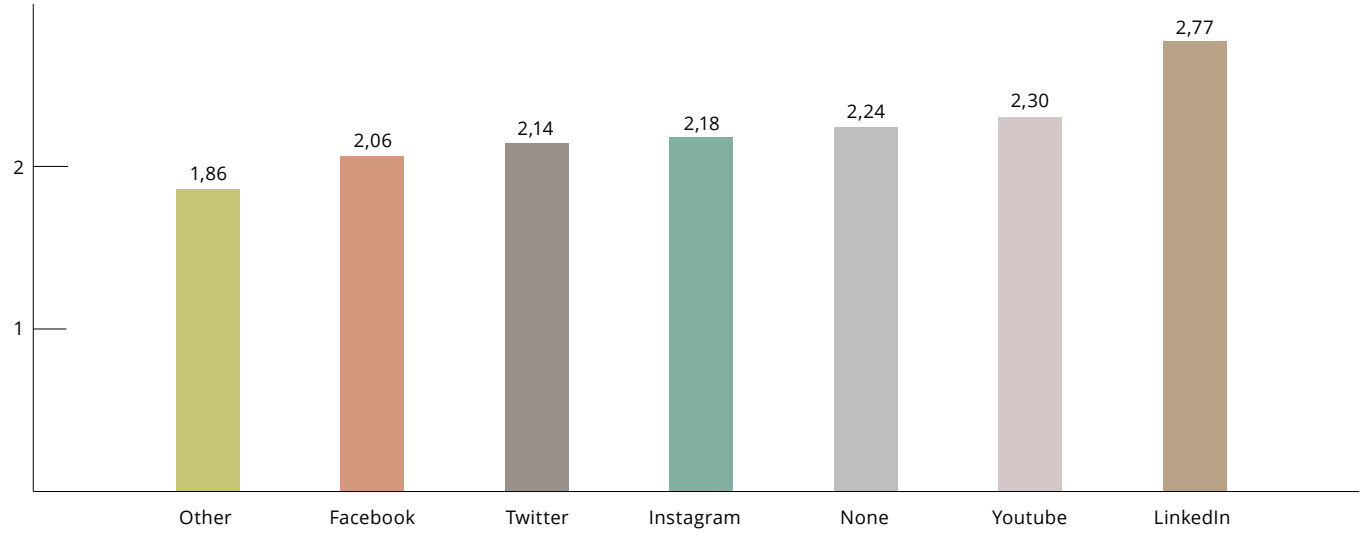
As regards to TV, it has been observed that especially those who prefer not to follow TV and the followers of Halk TV, Fox TV and CNN Türk are more frequently suspicious. On the other hand, the suspicion levels of the followers of Flash TV, 360 TV and Kanal 7 are low.

Figure 27. Suspicion levels of the followers of different news website and applications



As regards to online media, especially the high suspicion reflexes of the followers of Bundle and koseyazisioku.com warrant particular attention, while the readers of many news sites, including sabah.com.tr, CNNturk.com.tr, milliyet.com.tr and ahaber.com.tr have relatively lower suspicion values.

Figure 28. Suspicion levels of different social media followers



On social media, the suspicion value of LinkedIn followers is quite high. In contrast, the suspicion levels are relatively low in many frequently used platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

conclusion

In the section on trust in the media and news, the subject has been discussed with particular focus on the news. In a context in which especially low trust levels constitute a background of the perception of the media in Turkey, we can mention some important findings.

Firstly, it is apparent that the majority of individuals in Turkey do not trust the news media. In this context, it has been revealed that similar distrust exists in the various media environments, and hinted that there is a possibility that such distrust is likely to undergo a relative decrease on Internet-based platforms.

Secondly, some relationships have been observed between the education levels and ages of individuals and their trust in the news media. In particular, the finding on education levels has shown that trust in the media and news in Turkey decreases as the level of education increases. It has been observed that this differentiation occurs especially at the bachelor's degree threshold. Although there is a lack of sufficient evidence of a linear correlation with respect to age, there are findings indicating the presence of differentiations in the context of trust in Internet-based platforms, especially between individuals below the age of 20 and those over the age of 40.

The findings related to political views are discussed in the "Political Views and Polarizations" section, where some inferences are made related to media usage trends and trust in the media and news. All in all, this chapter offers some indicators of the relationships between different media tools, media channels and news topics and feelings of trust/distrust and suspicion.

Also there are two main conclusions that can be drawn from our findings related to suspicion behaviors. Firstly, the frequency of suspicion is largely inversely related to the level of trust in the media and news, and many findings in this regard are similar to those in the section on trust in the media and news. Here, we would like to note that repeated tests on suspicion identify a statistical weakness (see Limitations 3a, 3b). Secondly, in spite of this convergence, some findings have shown that it is possible to conceptualize the suspicion behavior as a kind of critical thinking skill, and that in this context, it may differ from trust in the media. For example, as the relations between the media tools and suspicion are examined, it is possible to identify several results that could not be obtained within the context of the trust in the media and news. Our evaluations have identified insufficiencies in this matter, and have provided important hints as to how we can conceptualize suspicion and improve our measurements.

political views and polarizations

One of the important findings of the research is certainly the convergences and differentiations between groups with different political leanings. As anticipated in the process of the research design, differentiations in terms of perceptions and practices in Turkish society seem to originate, to a certain extent, from differences in political views. In fact, in line with such strong separations as right and left in politics, which are often conceptualized and used in the context of Turkey, these differences tend to manifest themselves as a polarization.

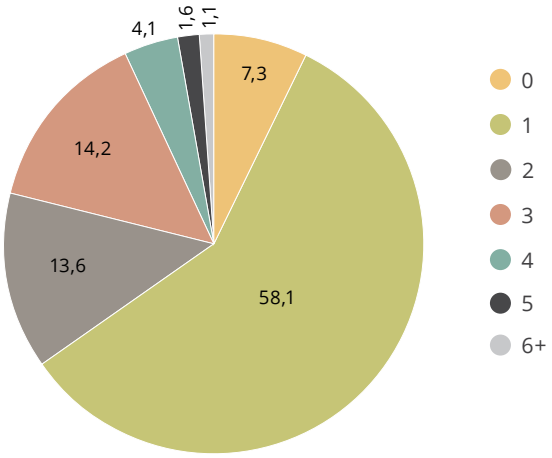
metod

We determined a radical method to include political allegiances in our research. Firstly, rather than restricting the respondents to a limited number of political views and forcing them to select from among them, we presented them with 14 different political options, including an "other" option, based on our pilot study. Furthermore, rather than forcing the respondents to make a single choice, we allowed them to select as many opinions as they wished from among these options in any combination.

The reasons and consequences of this decision should be explained. Firstly, we wanted to approach political leanings in a more comprehensive manner by giving individuals the chance to express themselves as they wished. If given the choice to obtain the political views of the respondents based on their own expressions rather than acquiring them in an objective manner based on the conceptualization of the researcher, we believe that the decision should mainly be left to the individual. Political views may differ significantly with respect to reflections and subjective ideas, and there may also be huge gaps between the ideas of individuals laid out at the level of discourse and practices objectified by the researchers. Secondly, the transitivity of political concepts in Turkish politics makes it quite difficult to place these concepts on any single plane in an analytical manner. Similarly, the discursive and populist power of some particular political concepts and ideologies have come to prominence in the social arena, but at the cost of having been emptied in conceptual terms. Due to this and similar reasons, our objective was to obtain the opinions of individuals in a transparent and unprejudiced manner as much as possible rather than imposing a political plane. If an individual defined himself/herself as "Islamist, Secular, Ataturkist and Turkish Nationalist", the raw data has been handled in this way, although it can be claimed that it contains an oxymoron, or contradictory statements. We believe the fact that such a conceptualization is not allowed in many research designs actually means that there is an unwarranted confidence in the objectivity of the political standpoints of individuals.

On the other hand, while this openness we achieved when obtaining raw data minimized the loss of data on subjective political views, it inevitably created some difficulties in the phases following the gathering of data. Firstly, 200 different political views combinations were obtained from the responses given for the remaining 13 political view groups once the "other" option has been excluded. We can state briefly that this made the data analysis quite difficult. Secondly, the number of "oxymoron" cases, as explained above, and the number of opinions that are hard to conceptualize with singular concepts were quite high in number. Apart from the 100 respondents who declined to state a political view, 797 respondents expressed themselves clearly with one single political view. The remaining 475 respondents selected a number of political views, varying between 2 and 9, to express their political standpoint (see Figure 29). Accordingly, the method of handling each political view response as a group became impossible for 475 people, in that it contradicted the principle of independence of observations.

Figure 29. The number of marked political views



The methods used to overcome these challenges are presented below in the relevant sections. Our approach was basically to improve the reliability of the analyses and to ensure that the findings could be understood by handling the sample within the framework of multiple abstractions. Thus, following the examination of raw data, we attempted to convey both the tendencies that could be conveyed directly, remaining faithful to the actual statements of the individuals, and the tendencies inferred through the conceptualization of visible/salient tendencies according to political literature.

Table 11. Political Tendencies of the Respondents

Political Views	Number of Responses	Adjusted Ratios
Conservative	256	10,4%
Liberal	93	3,8%
Secular	348	14,1%
Islamist	157	6,4%
Turkish Nationalist	383	15,5%
Socialist	121	4,9%
Democrat	131	5,3%
Kurdish Nationalist	20	0,8%
Ataturkist	462	18,7%
Idealist Nationalism	123	5,0%
Kemalist	105	4,3%
Nationalist	57	2,3%
Social Democrat	66	2,7%
Other	28	1,1%
TOTAL	2468	100,0%

Table 11 shows the responses given to the question on political view. Given the opportunity to make multiple selections, the 1,500 people who took the questionnaire marked a total of 2,468 political views. The most frequently marked political view was “Ataturkist” (30.8%), followed by “Turkish Nationalist” (25.5%), while 7.9% of the respondents stated that they did not want to give their political view.

Group of People who Define their Political Standing with a Single Statement

As mentioned earlier, 797 of the respondents (approximately 60% of the relevant sample) defined their political standpoint by selecting only one of the 13 options. Along with those who did not want to respond to the question on political view, approximately 900 members of the sample helped us to answer our research questions on political views. It is possible to say that the individuals who clearly and openly defined themselves with a single political view understood their political standing relatively better, and/or internalized these views more strongly. It seems quite justifiable, therefore, to analyze these respondents based on their stated political view, and such analysis can be expected to provide better results from a scientific standpoint.

In this section, Kruskal Wallis test was used as the main mean of analysis. In brief, the Kruskal Wallis test is the non-parametric equivalent of the Anova test. Both tests attempt to measure the differences among multiple groups (Conservative, Islamist, Turkish Nationalist etc.) that are fundamentally linked to a single independent variable (political view) on an ordinal categorical dependent variable (media independence, trust in news, etc.). Regarding the variables of concern about news sharing, enclosure and verification behavior, which we think lack the power to measure the 13 political view groups, no statistical tests were performed, and only descriptive graphs were formed based on median values.

Trust in the Media and News

As mentioned in the relevant section, opinions on trust were measured using a variable formed by 4-point Likert-type items. It needs to be reiterated here that web platforms remain outside the scope of this scale. The scale of trust in news sourced from TV and printed media in Turkey was developed based on opinions of the economic and political independence of the media and the general trust attributed to the news in TV and printed media.

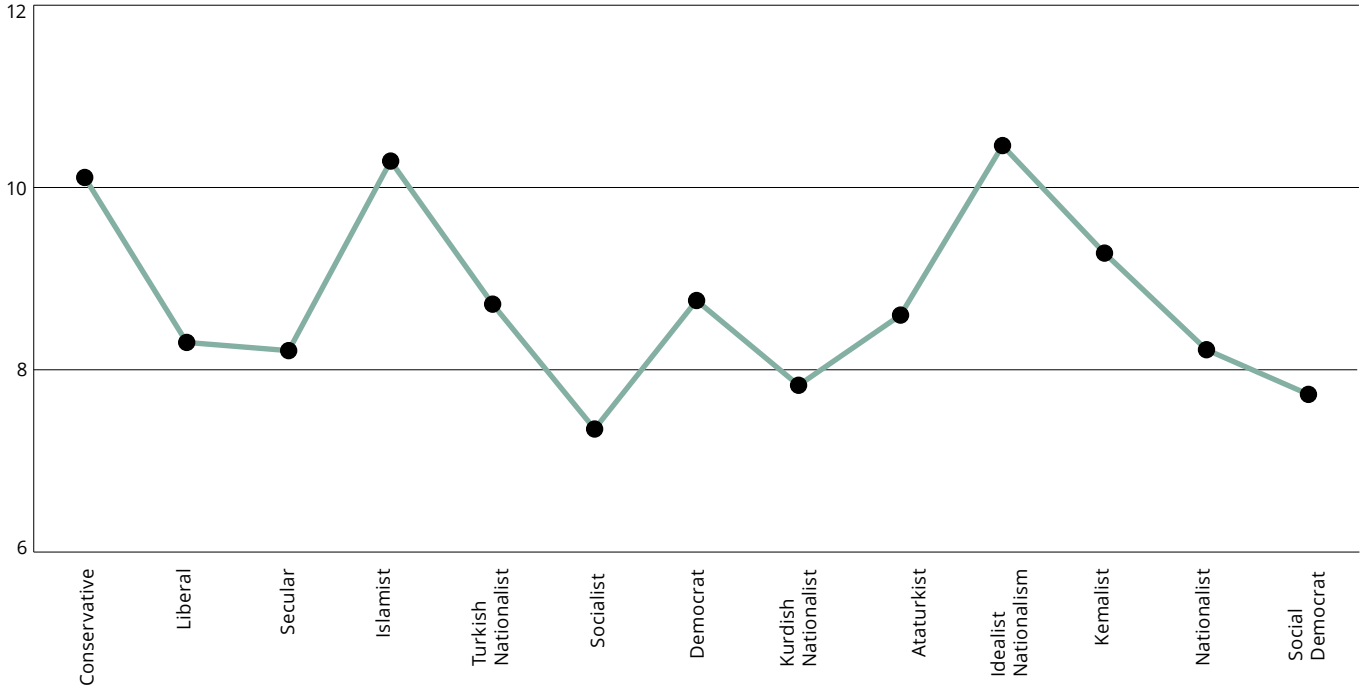
Tablo 12. Test Results

Group	p	Adjusted p
Conservative - Secular	.000	.037
Conservative - Socialist	.000	.000
Conservative - Ataturkist	.000	.002
Islamist - Socialist	.000	.002
Islamist - Ataturkist	.001	.045
Socialist - Idealist	.000	.014

The results of the Kruskal Wallis test, performed to identify the relationship between trust variable and the political view groups of respondents indicating a single political view, identified statistically significant differences between the levels of trust in the media and news of different political view groups. $X2(12)=49,468$, $p<.001$. According to the results of post hoc tests, a differentiation exists between six of the groups. These groups are detailed in Table 12.

Considering that the test makes 78 between-groups comparisons in total, it is possible to argue that these 6 results are quite reliable. Moreover, more differentiation among political view groups could be found through the use of looser procedures. That said, we shall limit our findings to the six between-group differences in order to minimize the erroneous findings. The graphic below shows how the levels of trust in the media and news change according to political views:

Figure 30. Levels of trust in the media and news according to political views



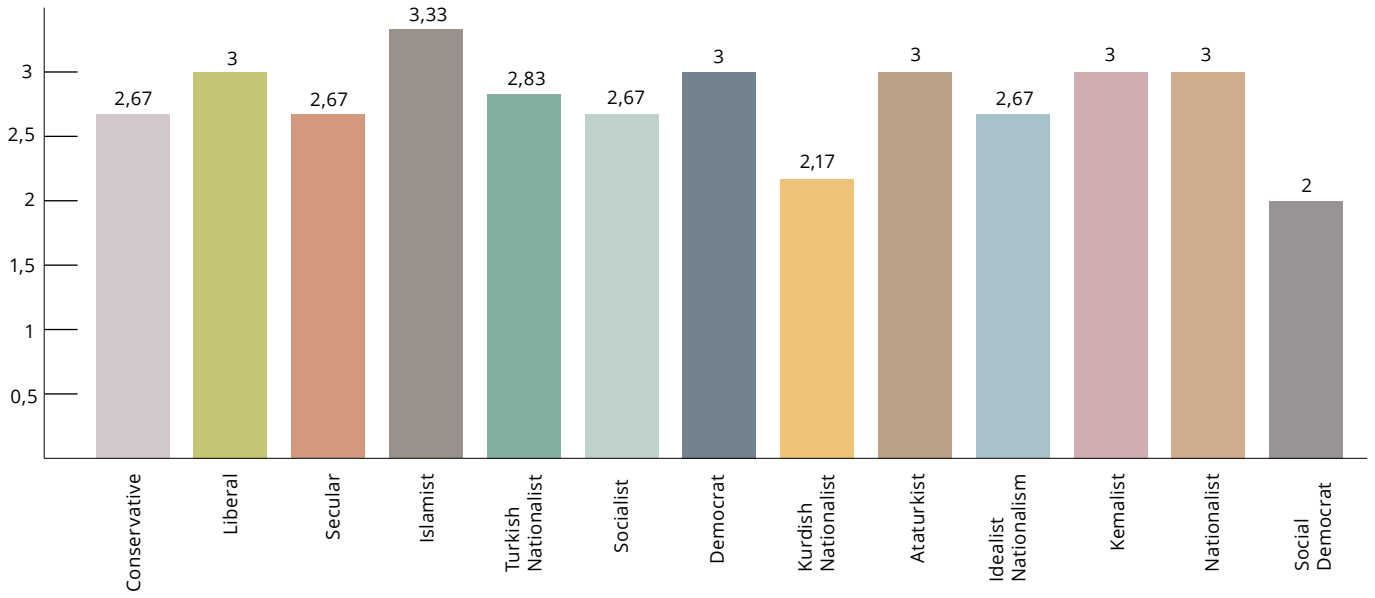
In addition to the six between-group differences identified through the statistical tests, it can be said that trust in the media and news among the respondents who stated their political view as Socialist, Kurdish Nationalist, Social Democrat, Nationalist, Liberal or Secular was lower than in the other groups. On the other hand, individuals who associated themselves with Conservative, Islamist and Nationalist political views has a higher level of trust than all the other groups.

With respect to individuals who select a single political view, the evaluations on sharing news on social media, concerns about news sharing, enclosure and verification behaviors will only be presented as exploratory indicators, and will not be subject to statistical tests.

Sharing News on Social Media

It should be reminded that the measurement of sharing news on social media does not measure the frequency of the direct posts made by individuals, but rather the willingness of individuals to share news they like or see from family / friends or politicians / celebrities on social media. In other words, it measures how comfortable individuals are with the sharing of news they come across, and how easily they take the decision to disseminate it on social media. In Figure 31, the measurements of different political view groups in this context are presented, based on median values.

Figure 31. Sharing News and Political Views

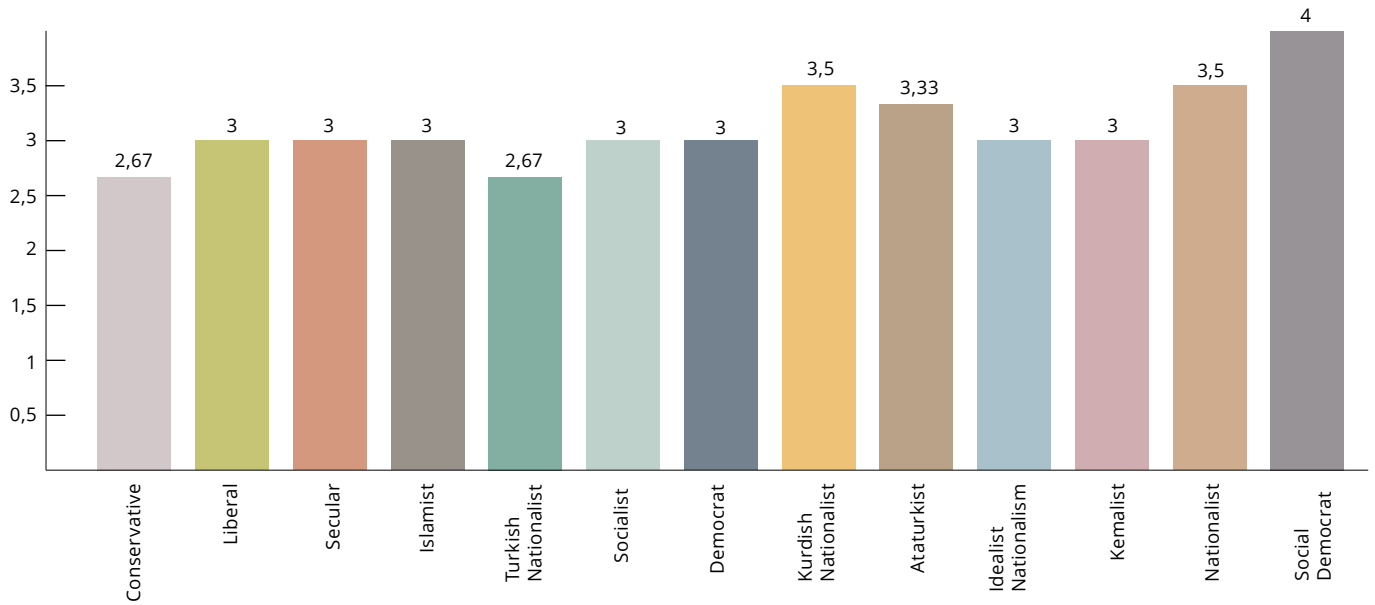


According to the graph, the groups that are most reluctant to sharing news are those that define their political views as Kurdish Nationalist and Social Democrat. It is worthy of note that those who defined their political views as Islamist are more open to sharing news on social media than all other groups. The remaining groups have approximately the same values.

Concern About News Sharing

In addition to sharing news on social media, concerns about such actions was also examined in the context of political view. Figure 32 presents the distribution of political groups according to their general level of concern, based on median values.

Figure 32. Concerns About News Sharing and Political Views

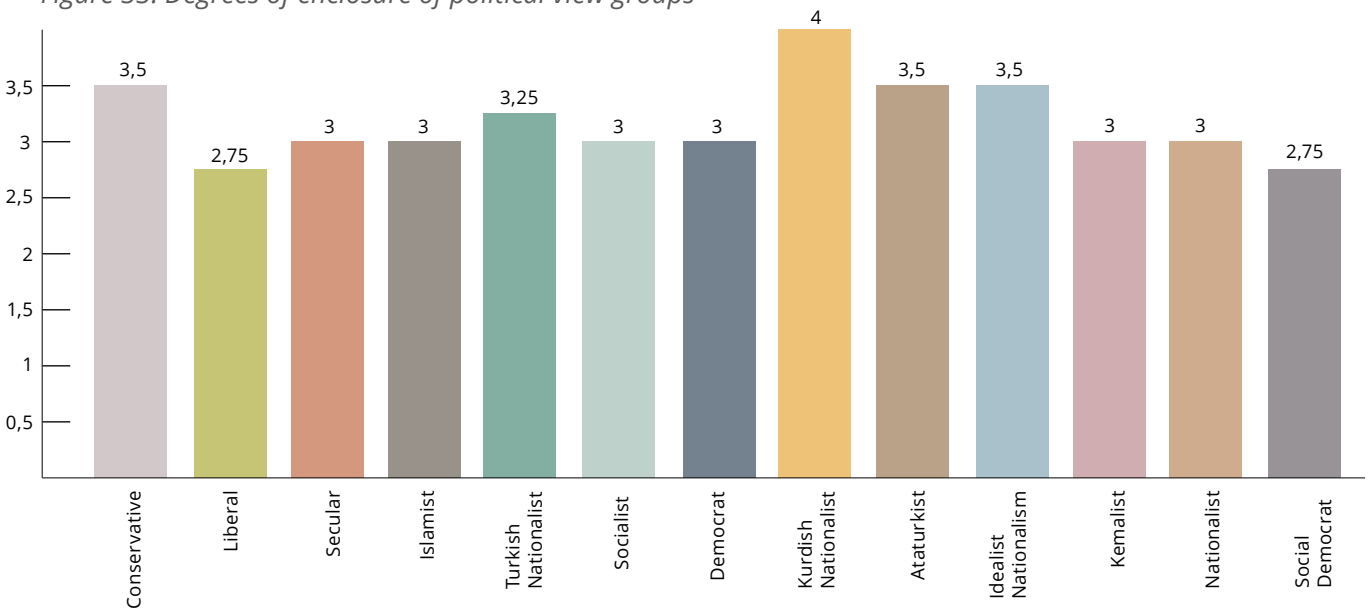


It can be understood from this data that those who defined themselves as conservative and Turkish Nationalist have lowest levels of anxiety about sharing news, and that many groups stated a level of concern close to these levels. It can be observed further that those declaring Social Democrat, Nationalist and Kurdish Nationalist, and Ataturkist political view have relatively greater concerns regarding the sharing news.

Enclosure

Another exploratory finding obtained from the data is about individuals' reluctance of interaction with other people. Figure 33 shows the median values given to the different political view groups according to their level of enclosure.

Figure 33. Degrees of enclosure of political view groups



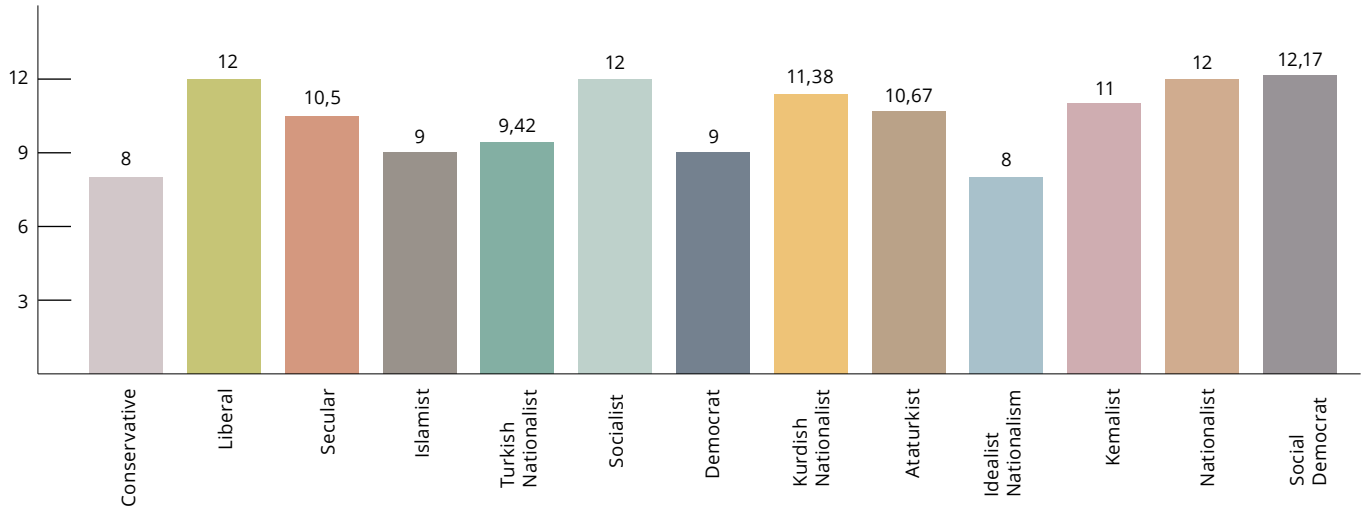
Accordingly, compared to other groups, individuals who defined their political view as “Kurdish Nationalist” in particular were more closed to social media interaction with people holding different views. This group is followed by those who defined their political views as “Ataturkist”, “Idealist Nationalism” and “Conservative”.

In fact, the degrees of enclosure of these groups are also high. Additionally, those who define themselves as "Turkish Nationalist" are also more closed than many other groups. On the other hand, the groups that are the most open to communication with people of different opinions on social media comprised individuals who defined themselves as “Social Democrat” and “Liberal”.

The Behavior of News Verification

Investigations have shown that the verification behavior variable is one of greatest sources of differentiation among political view groups as well as the trust in the media and news. It is also observed, using comparisons made on median values, significant differentiation exists among verification behaviors of different political view groups.

Figure 34. Verification behavior levels among political view groups



According to the graphic, those who defined their political views as "Kurdish Nationalist" and those who defined themselves as Islamist, Democrat and Turkish Nationalist verify less frequently in comparison to the other groups. It can be observed that especially those who defined themselves as Social Democrat, Liberal, Socialist and Nationalist form the groups that verify most frequently. Those with Secular, Ataturkist a Kemalist political views verify the news they read at medium level frequencies.

Groups Formed According to Political Conceptualizations

The above findings and indicators provide a number pointers to the fact that the differentiations between different political views are suitable to be expressed on different grounds. For example, rightist opinions, such as Islamism and nationalism, seem to be grouped in a certain direction for each variable. On the other hand, groups that we can refer to as the Turkish left have levels closer to each other. In this context, when we consider that 13 political views form a quite crowded grouping, and that some political views are similar to each other, it is natural that only a handful of significant relations could be found in the above section. Accordingly, we saw it necessary to reduce the number of groupings and to analyze political views on other grounds.

That said, it should be noted that it is quite difficult to base these conceptualizations on completely objective criteria, as each design will have its own strengths and weaknesses. Here, the important thing is to define a valid political ground and then to reflect the data at hand to this ground in order to carry out news assessments.

Right-Left-Center

One of the most widespread conceptualizations in Turkish political literature, as well as in popular politics, demands that the political views of individuals or political parties are shown according to right-left political spectrum. The power of such a conceptualization in describing the polarizations in Turkish politics can also be observed from the findings of the present research. In fact, such differentiations can be perceived within the findings of the previous sections. In the light of this situation, we have defined a function that will subject our experimental data to a right-left-center conceptualization. Although this function cannot determine the depth and strength of a position, it can roundly determine the positions of the individuals in the right-left spectrum based on their political views.

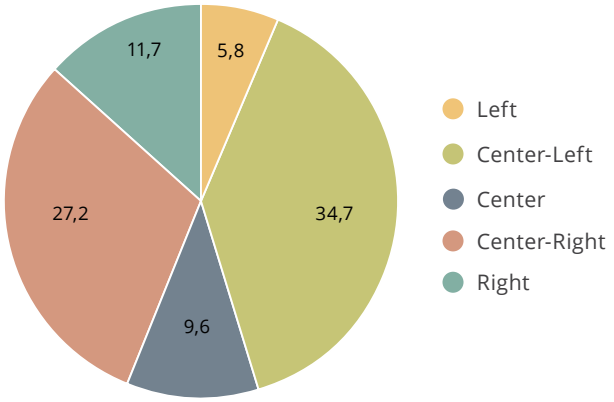
In this context, each political view takes one of the (left) -2, -1, 0, +1, +2 (right) values and appoints respondents to one of the "Left", "Center-Left", "Center", "Center-Right" or "Right" positions. In brief, this function assigns values between -2 and +2 to the political views stated by individuals, and divides the sum of values with the number of political views stated by them. Here, there are two important points that we deem worthy of attention. First of all, the defined scale, for example, is different in many ways from the common scales that are frequently used in Western political science literature. One of the main indicators of this is that during recent periods in Turkish history, the right-left differentiation has had its own dynamics with center-right and center-left tendencies rather than extreme rightist and extreme leftist opinions. Aydoğan and Slapin (2015) stated that the right-left politics in Turkey has certain differences compared to Western democracies and added that a right-left conceptualization in the context of party ideologies could for example be explained over a religious-secular differentiation. In this context, which opinions are defined as being in a right or left position at a level of 1 or 2 has been determined, as shown in Table 13, considering current and actual politics in Turkey. For example, on the liberal side, there are differences between social liberalism, which emphasizes concepts such as individual freedom, democratic participation and pluralism, and the neo-liberalism, that emphasizes the effort of the state in bringing into force processes such as the market economy and capital accumulation (Tayyar and Çetin, 2013). These two types of liberalism hold quite different positions in the current politics of Turkey. Indeed, when our data is examined, a high number of respondents coupled a liberalism opinion together with Turkish nationalism, Islamism and conservatism opinions. It seems clear that such choices are connected to tendencies of economic liberalism rather than social liberalism. Similarly, it is also difficult to determine the positions of "democrat" and "nationalist" responses on the right-left scale in the Turkish context.

Table 13. Function Values

Political Views Response	Value	Position in the Scale
Idealist Nationalism	+2	Right
Islamist	+2	Right
Conservative	+1	Right-leaning
Turkish Nationalist	+1	Right-leaning
Socialist	- 2	Left
Secular	-1	Left-leaning
Social Democrat	-1	Left-leaning
Ataturkist	-1	Left-leaning
Kemalist	-1	Left-leaning
Liberal, Democrat, Kurdish Nationalist, Nationalist	0	Neutral

When the values obtained as a result of the function were mapped using equal intervals, the following graphic was obtained.

Figure 35. Political view scale



In this context, we have given a value of 0 to the liberal, democrat and nationalist responses so as to neutralize their effects on the positions of individuals on the right-left scale. In other words, the closeness of individuals to the Turkish right and left is not affected by their liberal, democrat or nationalist political views.

While the weight is on center rightist and center leftist political views, extreme leftist views has very limited representation. However, the variations in rightist opinions, which may differ from the center, are more widespread.

In the final phase of the conceptualization, the Kruskal Wallis statistics test is applied to five groups, depicting differences in trust in the media and news, social media interaction and verification behavior.

No statistical evidence could be found of a difference between groups with respect to degrees of enclosure ($X^2(4)=8,738$, p=.068). For the variables of sharing news and concern about sharing news, we either didn't get a p<.01 level, or no between-group differentiation has been found with the post hoc tests.

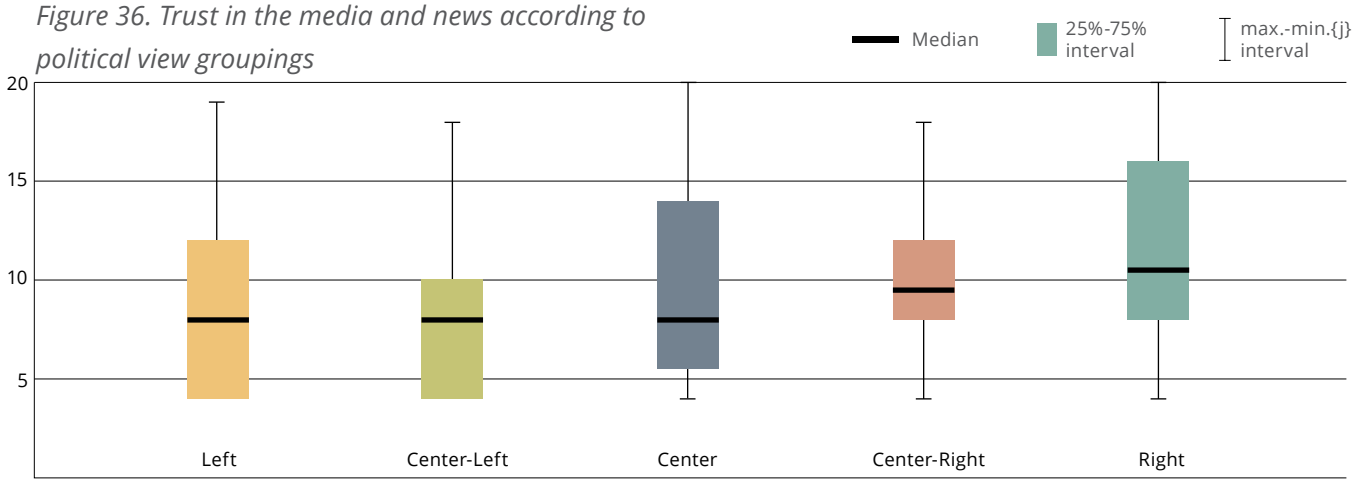
However, a statistically significant differentiation was obtained in the context of trust in the media and news, as in the sample of those who stated a single political view ($X^2(4)=61,752$, p=<.001). The continuation tests performed revealed that the right-left conceptualization is indeed quite significant in the context of the differentiation of trust in the media and news. Table 14 shows five out of ten pairwise comparisons that are statistically significant.

Table 14. Groups with different trust levels

Opinions	p	Adjusted p
Left - Right	,000	,000
Left - Center right	,003	,031
Center left - Center	,001	,015
Center right - Center left	,000	,000
Right - Center left	,000	,000

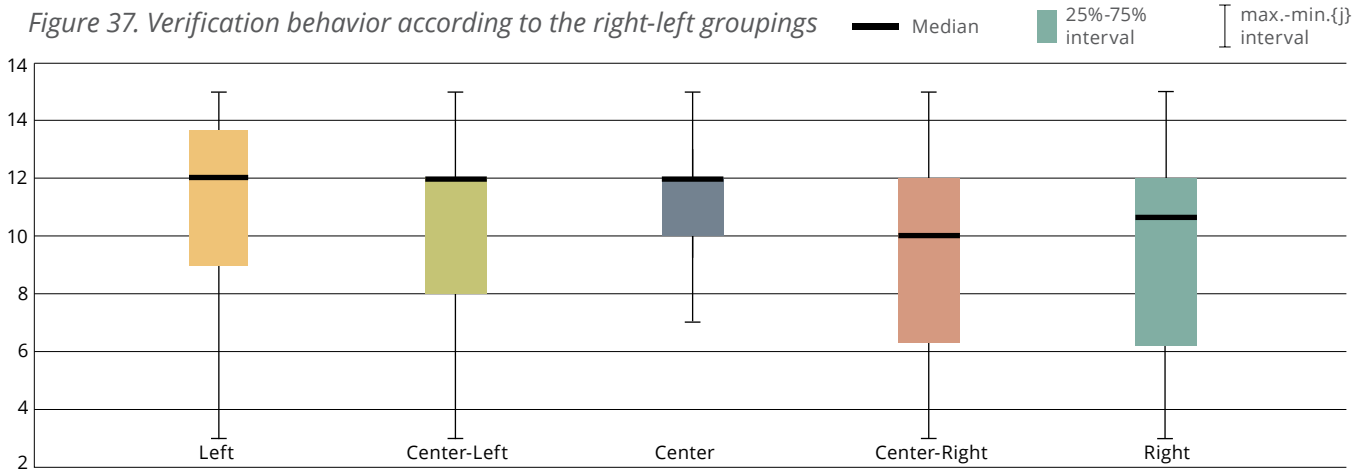
While all of the right and left groups differ from each other in terms of their trust in the media and news, it has also been observed that a differentiation exists between the center left and the center. The finding that those with leftist views generally have less trust in the media and news in comparison to those with rightist views can be observed from the trust level variation in Figure 36.

Figure 36. Trust in the media and news according to political view groupings



Another significant differentiation has been found in the context of verification behavior ($X^2(4)=435,143$, p=<.001). The performed continuation tests revealed again that a differentiation generally occurs in the right-left differentiation. As it can be seen also in the below graphic, those with leftist or centrist opinions verify news more than the individuals with rightist tendencies.

Figure 37. Verification behavior according to the right-left groupings



conclusion

In this section, we discussed in general to what extent differences in political views affect variables such as trust in the media and news, social media engagement and verification behaviors. Although discussing the same sample two separate conceptualizations is not an ideal situation for the analysis, the group which defined their political views with one political concept made it possible to make better inferences on the differences between political views. No statistical test has been performed on social media interaction and verification, as only the exploratory hints provided by the differentiation are set out with descriptive visuals. As regards to trust in the media and news, it has been found out that the six different political view groups differ statistically from each other.

Approximately 1,300 individuals – including those who stated multiple political views – are assigned to positions on the Turkish right-left spectrum in the light of their political view responses using the defined function. Accordingly, the findings give some hints that differences in political views might indicate a right-left polarization in the context of media in Turkey. In line with this, it has been observed that trust in the media and news was lower among the left and center-left groups than in the right and center-right groups. As regards to verification behavior, it has been concluded that left, center-left and center groups make verifications for the news they come across more frequently. Although no statistical differentiations could be identified on social media Engagement, we believe that the existing results present strong hints of a right-left polarization in Turkey, especially in the perception of the media and quality of news usage.

social media engagement

As the Internet has become more widespread, one of the most important media tools that has entered our lives has been social media. We earlier presented some indicators in the "Media and News Usage" section concerning the usage of social media as a source of news. In this section, we discuss a number of issues concerning interactions with social media. In the light of the research findings, we will examine the issue under three main headings: Social media usage, sharing news on social media, concerns about news sharing, and enclosure in social media.

method

Our findings on social media use are on rather descriptive plane. However, knowledge production related to concerns about news sharing, and the state of keeping away from the input of different views -which we call enclosure, will draw on the measurements we made for these concepts.

In order to measure the respondents' use of social media, individuals were asked about the likelihood of them sharing news they come across in three different situations (in news sources, on the accounts of friends/family members they follow, and on the accounts of politicians and celebrities they follow), and a spectrum was developed based on an average calculation method (Cronbach's Alpha = .92). On the other hand, concerns over sharing news on social media was measured based on a scale developed after asking the respondents about the level of their concerns about the sharing news on three different social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) (Cronbach's Alpha=.95).

Finally, the concept we called enclosure aimed to measure the degree of keeping away from people with different opinions in social media engagement; in other words, the extent to which individuals close themselves in a chamber (see echo chamber) formed by their own opinions. In this context, two questions were asked to the respondents: one about following/friending people with different opinions in social media, the other about liking the comments made by these people; and liking the comments made by these people (Cronbach's Alpha = .87). As it can be seen, all three measurement had inadequate Likert-type items, and in this context, again, a limited number of nonparametric statistical tests were made (see Limitations 1b). We wanted to address the variables of sharing news and concerns related to the sharing of news, as each of these represents a duality; thus, the relevant scales were converted into dual groups. In this context, the "undecided" response density of the sample, which was at the most moderate levels in the scale, was removed so that analyses regarding sharing and concerns about news sharing could be performed. The method of using measurements to form opposition groups allowed us to obtain reliable differentiation. In fact, the grouping made through the selection of critical points revealed a relatively limited number of individuals at the "undecided" level.

Social Media Usage

Some of the information obtained in accordance with the objectives of the research is aimed at determining the social media usage statuses of the respondents. In this context, first they were asked about their social media use frequency (see Table 15).

Table 15. Use Frequencies of Social Media Platforms (%)

	At least once a day	Once or a few times a week	A few times a month or less	I don't have an account
Facebook	40,9	26,2	5,5	27,4
Twitter	36,3	20,3	2,9	40,6
Instagram	65,3	17,4	0,6	16,7
Snapchat	21,3	14,8	3,3	60,5
Youtube	43,4	23,6	0,7	32,2
LinkedIn	7,0	8,9	3,1	81,0

The respondents reported the following usage rates of their preferred social media platforms that they use at least once a day: Instagram 65.3%, YouTube 43.4%, Facebook 40.9%, Twitter 36.3% and Snapchat 21.3% (see Table 15). The daily usage rate of LinkedIn is quite low (7%). 81% of respondents do not have a LinkedIn account. The usage rate of the Snapchat platform is also lower in comparison to other platforms, with 60.5% of the sample stating that they have no account.

When the usage statuses of the social media platforms were examined, it was observed that the usage rate of Facebook at the "daily" frequency among the respondents below the age of 20 was lower than the other age groups. The distributions were very close to each other in the other age groups (those aged 20-29=%22.2; those aged 30-39=23.1%; those aged 40-49=23.6%; those aged 50 and above=23.4%). The respondents who stated that they use Twitter most often under an "every day" frequency were aged 20-29 years (34.2%). This group was followed by those aged 30-39 (27.6%).

The respondents who used Twitter the least on a daily basis were those aged 50 and above (10.3%). The group that used Instagram the most frequently every day were the respondents aged 20-29 (33.3%). This group is followed by those aged 30-39 (22.9%). Half of the respondents aged 50 and above stated that they did not have an Instagram account (50.5%). Snapchat (35.1%) and YouTube (35.5%) were also used more by the respondents aged 20-29 every day. On the other hand, it was observed that the respondents who use LinkedIn every day are mainly aged 30-39 years (37.3%) Individuals over the age of 50 form the majority in all platforms among the individuals who said "I don't have an account".

In order to gather detailed information on social media usage, the respondents were also asked for what purposes they use social media platforms. The intended purposes presented in Table 16 were given to the respondents, who were informed that only those with social media accounts should mark these options. The respondents were allowed to mark multiple options.

Table 16. Intended Purposes of Social Media Platform Use (%)

	Following friends	Sharing	Following news/current affairs	Spending time	Following celebrities	Following brands that I am interested in	Shopping
Facebook	28,7	20,2	23,0	19,4	3,9	3,4	1,4
Instagram	25,0	23,4	16,9	19,2	7,4	6,0	2,3
Twitter	19,0	20,3	34,3	16,8	6,4	2,5	0,7
Youtube	9,8	7,6	30,8	41,5	6,9	2,8	0,6

From Table 16 it can be seen that the respondents mostly use Facebook to follow friends (28.7%); Instagram to follow friends (25%) and share posts (23.4%); Twitter to follow news and current affairs (34.3%) and YouTube to spend time (41.5%).

When the intended purposes of social media platform use are examined, it is observed that the most important reason for using Facebook is to follow friends among the respondents of all age groups (those below the age of 20=27.2%; those aged 20-29=28.8%; those aged 30-39=29.7%; those aged 40-49=28.2%; those aged 50 and above=29.2%). While the second most important intended purpose for respondents below the age of 20 (22.4%) and those aged 20-29 (23.9%) is to follow news and current affairs, the second most important purpose for the respondents aged 50 and above (26.2%) was to share posts. The second most important intended purpose for respondents aged 30-49 (those aged 30-39=22.8%; those aged 40-49=23.9%) is to share posts, and these rates are very close to the rates for following news/current affairs (those aged 30-39=22.2%; those aged 40-49=22.2%).

When the intended purposes of Instagram use are examined, it is observed that respondents aged between 40 and 49 mainly use Instagram for sharing news (26.5%). As for other age groups, following friends ranks first among the intended purposes of Instagram (those below the age of 20= 23.1%; those aged 20-29=24.6%; those aged 30-39=26.6%; those aged 50 and above=31.3%). It is observed that all age groups use Twitter mainly to follow the news and current affairs (those below the age of 20=29.3%; those aged 20-29=34.9%; those aged 30-39=34.1%; those aged 40-49=35%; those aged 50 and above=40%). The respondents aged 50 and above use YouTube mainly to follow the news and current affairs (34.2%) and for spending time (34.2%). The situation is similar for the respondents aged 30-39. The usage rates of the respondents in this group for following the news and current affairs (33.7%) and for spending time (34.6%) are very close to each other. The respondents aged 40-49 use YouTube mainly to follow the news and current affairs, while users below the age of 29 use YouTube mainly for spending time (those below the age of 20=38.4%; those aged 20-29=46.2%).

Sharing News on Social Media

When the responses of the individuals who participated in the questionnaire on sharing news are examined (see Figure 38), it can be observed that the results are almost the same, with approximately one-third of answers being positive while two-thirds negative. 20% of respondents preferred not to provide information on this issue.

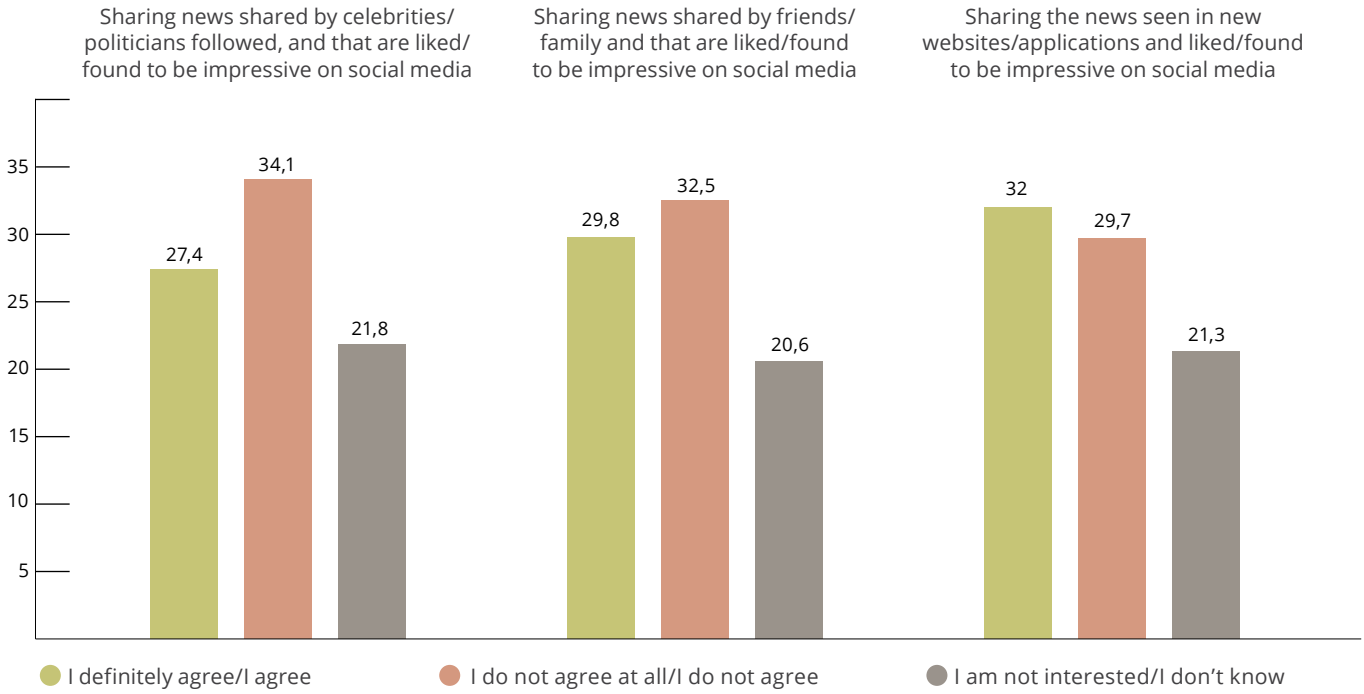
The frequency at which individuals share the news they come across is also an important issue in regards to dissemination speed and scope/ reach of the news (including fabricated ones and fake news) on social media. In this context, information should be gathered on issues such as the segments of society that post more on social media, as well as the sources of these posts.

In the "Political Views and Polarizations" section we presented findings on the relation between political view groups and news sharing based on our analyses. In this section we will attempt to clarify the change in sharing habits in the light of socio-economic and demographic indicators.

The results of the tests we performed to this end were generally close to each other. Sufficient statistical evidence could not be obtained to argue that the frequency of sharing news differs among those with different levels of education (X^2=8.73, df=4, p=.068). Chi-square tests performed using gender, age and income level data did not indicate a significant difference at the $p < 0.01$ level.

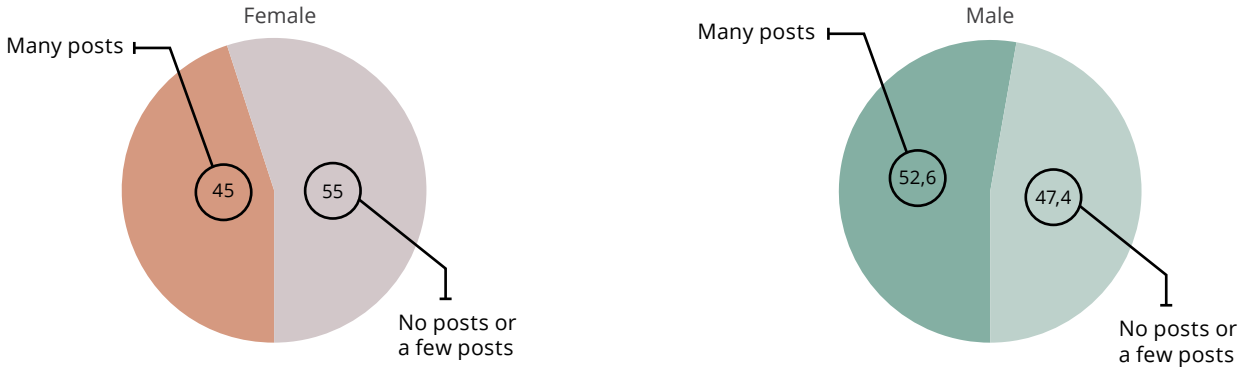
[1] For sex (X^2=4.89, df=1, p=.027); For age (X^2=12,67, df=4, p=.013); For income level (X^2=7,86, df=3, p=.049)

Figure 38. Opinions on sharing news (%)



Although it presents significant findings at the 1 $p<0.05$ level, the hypothesis concerning differentiations especially in the age and income variables has been categorically rejected in the light of post hoc tests performed for the analysis. In fact, the correlations between these variables reveal themselves in a very limited number of matches, and these matches seem to be insignificant with respect to general trends. This situation leads us to abandon our hypotheses that suggested that behaviors of sharing a limited or a high number of posts differs with age and income level. On the other hand, the results on the relation between gender and the sharing of a limited or high number of posts seem to be more consistent. In order to open this relation to discussion, we chose to present them in Figure 39 together with the relevant data.

Figure 39. Relation between sharing news on social media and gender (%)

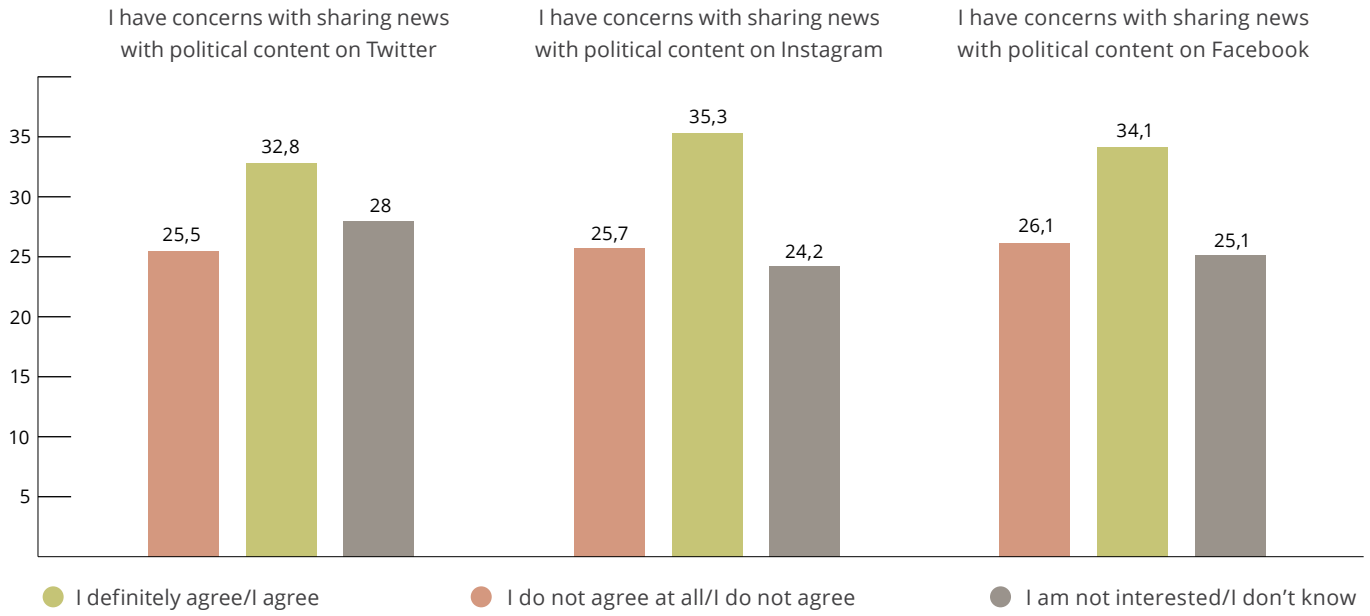


Therefore, concerning the relation between gender and news sharing, it would be appropriate to say that the results indicate women have a lower tendency to share news, although this indication should be evaluated in a prudent manner. It is possible that such uncertainty originates from inadequacies in the research design.

Concerns about News Sharing

When responses of the concerns about news sharing on social media are examined, it can be observed that most of the individuals stated they generally have concerns. According to Figure 40, about one quarter of the respondents stated that they had no concerns, while around one third stated that they had concerns. The high number of users who declined to give information on this issue is worthy of note (approximately 25%).

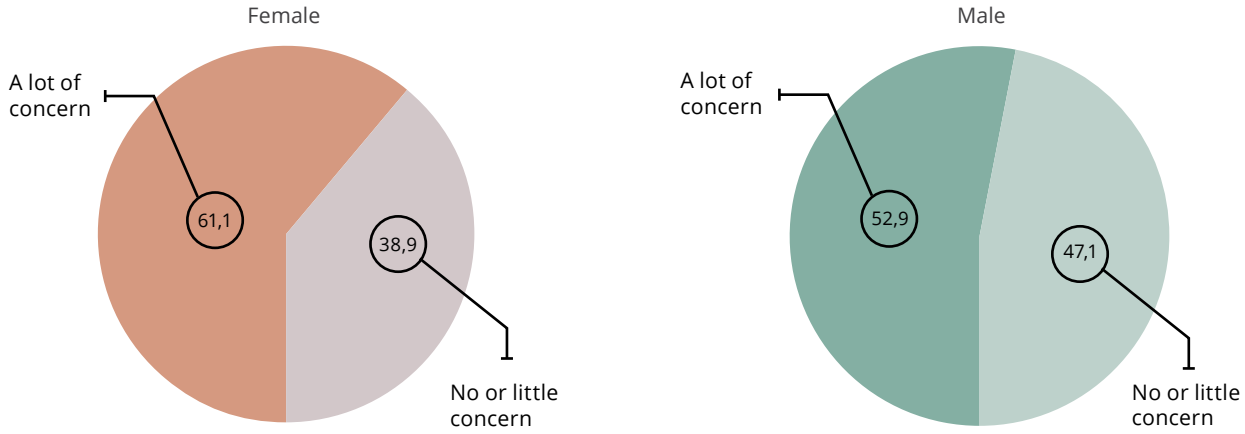
Figure 40. Opinions of concern about news sharing (%)



In parallel with frequency of news sharing, another important issue is to identify which segments of society have concerns about sharing news on social media. In addition to the findings presented in the "Political Views and Polarizations" section, we will try to observe once again how socio-economic and demographic indicators influence concern about news sharing on social media.

Our analyses into concern about news sharing reveal more significant findings than those related to the sharing news. First of all, the Chi-square test based on gender and concern about news sharing shows that women are concerned than men over the sharing news (X^2=5,67, df=1, p=.017).

Figure 41. Concern about news sharing on social media by gender (%)

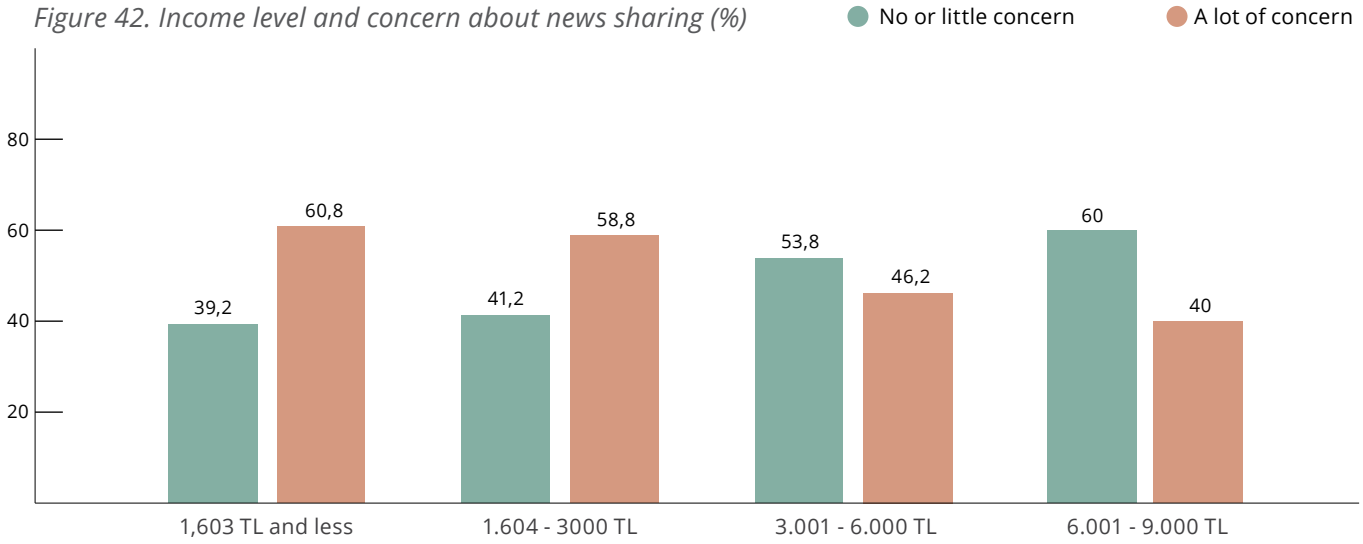


Although it remained outside by a small margin of the p <0.01 level we took as basis, this correlation, which we considered worth evaluating, was found to be significant for all matching groups, especially in the continuation tests. In this context, we would like to underline the indication that women have more concerns about news sharing than men, although there is a small deviation from the p value.

The analyses related to income level and concerns about news sharing revealed a significant correlation between the two variables (X^2=14.68, df=1, p=.002).

According to the performed continuation tests, people with an income level of between 3,000 TL and 6,000 TL have less concern about sharing news than people with a lower income level. Moreover, as a result of the detailed examinations, it was observed that the correlation between the income level and concern about news sharing reveals a significant trend at all income groups. This trend, which is readily apparent in Figure 42, indicates that as the income level increases, the individuals' level of concern about news sharing decreases.

Figure 42. Income level and concern about news sharing (%)



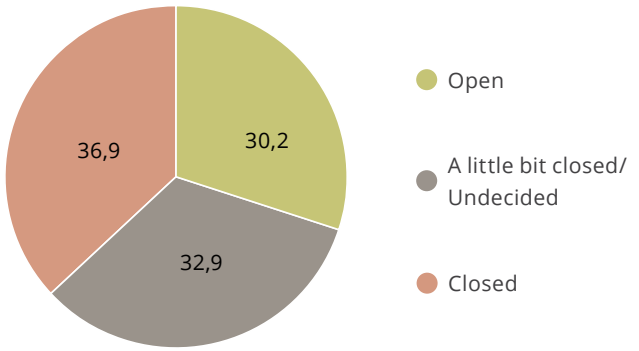
On the other hand, the correlation between education level and concern about news sharing did not produce a significant result at the level of p< 0.01 in the Chi-square test (X^2=9.51, df=4, p=.049). Again, although significant at the p <0.05 level, when the matches and the general trends are examined, it would seem to be more reasonable to draw a negative conclusion from the existence of such a correlation. Similarly, sufficient statistical evidence could not be obtained to argue that a relation exists between age and concern about news sharing (X^2=4.67, df=4, p=.32).

Enclosure in Social Media Engagement

No statistical test has been carried out to discover how closed individuals are to different opinions on social media. This is because we projected that enclosure cannot be explained by variables such as age, gender, education level and income; and that individuals in echo chambers are disperse among all groups covered by these variables. In fact, when the data is examined without a statistical test, it can be observed that enclosure is distributed almost equally among all the groups of these variables.

When the data obtained on the phenomenon of enclosure is examined generally, however, some conclusions can be made. Figure 43 provides general observations on how open individuals are to social media communication with people with different opinions based on their responses to the relevant questions. According to this, the number of individuals that are closed to interaction with people with different opinions on social media is the highest (36.9%).

Figure 43. Degrees of Enclosure (%)



In our report entitled “Insight Report: What Do We Suspect on the Internet?”, we address the concept of the echo chamber (Foça, 2017). A hypothesis was established on the idea that impermeable echo chambers are more vulnerable to fabricated/fake news, and that they contribute to the circulation of such news, suggesting that as the degree of enclosure increases, the frequency of news verification behavior decreases. The results of the Spearman test indeed point to a statistically significant correlation rs=.407, p<.001. According to this finding which indicates a medium effect size, as the degree of enclosure increases, individuals' frequency of news verification decreases considerably.

conclusion

This section first provides general information about the use of social media. In this section, inferences are made especially as to which platforms are used by different age groups and their intended purposes.

In order to apply statistical tests, some groups were formed using the frequency of sharing news, the level of concern about news sharing, and the degree of social media enclosure. The tests performed on sharing news generally gave negative results. The last inferences made together with the comments and post hoc tests presented no statistically significant evidence on news sharing trends. Only on the variable of gender did some findings suggest that men have a higher tendency to share news than women.

On the other hand, relatively stronger results were reached on the dimension of concerns about news sharing. For example, one particular finding states that women have more concerns about sharing news than men. It should be noted that this finding is consistent with the feasible finding suggesting men share more news than women. Furthermore, when the correlation between income level and concern about news sharing was examined in terms of general trends, there are hints suggesting that individuals at a high income level generally have less concerns about sharing news than those at a low income level -especially with a leverage at 3,000 TL - 6,000 TL level.

On the other hand, the findings on enclosure revealed that the individuals that are generally open to communication with people with different opinions on social media represent only one-third of the total. Another important finding on this section suggests that as the level of enclosure increases, the frequency of verification behavior in the internet platforms decreases considerably.

verification behavior and verification methods

One of the most original topics of this research is certainly with regards to the behavior of news verification and verification methods. We expected that this dimension, which we consider to have been ignored in media researches until now, provides important findings, related especially to individuals' quality of media usage. In fact, the behavior of making checks on news signifies developing of an active relationship with the news media. At the heart of media's important discussions, such as increasing the quality of media and preventing the dissemination of fabricated/fake news, there is the issue of counter-actions taken by the audience.

The concept that we refer to as news verification defines, briefly, the actions taken by individuals to check the accuracy of the news they come across. Another important topic in this context is the type of action. The concept that we define as verification method points out the means of verification preferred by the individuals. It is important to note that not every verification method has the same quality. As our conceptualization efforts related to this topic are continuing, for the time being we examined the different verification methods that emerged during the initial field research without establishing a hierarchy among them.

Our measurements and presentations on news verification and verification methods are progressing at three separate levels: Verification behavior in the Internet environment, verification differentiation according to news categories and verification methods.

method

It is obvious that there is no easy means of measuring verification. In particular, it would appear to be quite difficult to evaluate verification behavior and reactions to conventional media without making direct observations. With this understanding, for this research, we restricted our measurement of verification behaviors to Internet platforms. In other words, we measured only the verification behaviors of individuals related to the news they come across in the Internet environment. This measurement based on a combination of two separate Likert-type items for, individually, social media and news sources (Cronbach's Alpha=.89). As no appropriate Likert items could be provided, a number of non-parametric tests were also used in this section (see Limitations 1b).

Verification in the Internet Environment

In this research, our objectives with respect to verification behaviors were aimed mainly at revealing the reasons why individuals developed or did not develop such behaviors. We thus used our indicators and analyses in this section to obtain data on models that could be used in the future to explain this behavior. One of the most important approaches in this regard was to reveal which other variables were correlated with such behaviors.

To this end, we first measured the correlations between some of our demographic and socio-economic variables and the frequency of or tendency for verification behavior. It was observed that only education level was significant correlated with verification behavior ($p < 0.01$).

Based on this finding, although the correlation was weak, it was determined that as the education level of individuals increases, the number of verification behaviors in which they engage increases.

The frequency of verification behavior on Internet platforms can be expected to be related to use quantity and the quality of the Internet and Internet-based news platforms. Using a Spearman's test, we first made a comparison of verification behaviors with respect to the frequencies at which the Internet is used for receiving news / being informed, and the frequencies at which Internet-based news platforms are used. It was thus found that as the use of the Internet for receiving news and/getting information and the use of Internet-based news platforms increased, verification behavior also increases (see Table 17).

Table 17. Test Results

	The Behavior of News Verification	Receiving news / getting information	News Usage News Websites and Applications	News Usage Social media
Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,194**	,209**	,237**
p	.	,000	,000	,000
N	1100	1100	1083	1088

Although it is clear that these three variables are parallel to each other as indicators, we opted to repeat the test in general for all variables concerning news usage in the Internet environment. In the light of the significance of the findings, although it is a vague statement, it is an important to state at the outset that the frequency of news usage and the frequency of verification behavior are parallel to each other.

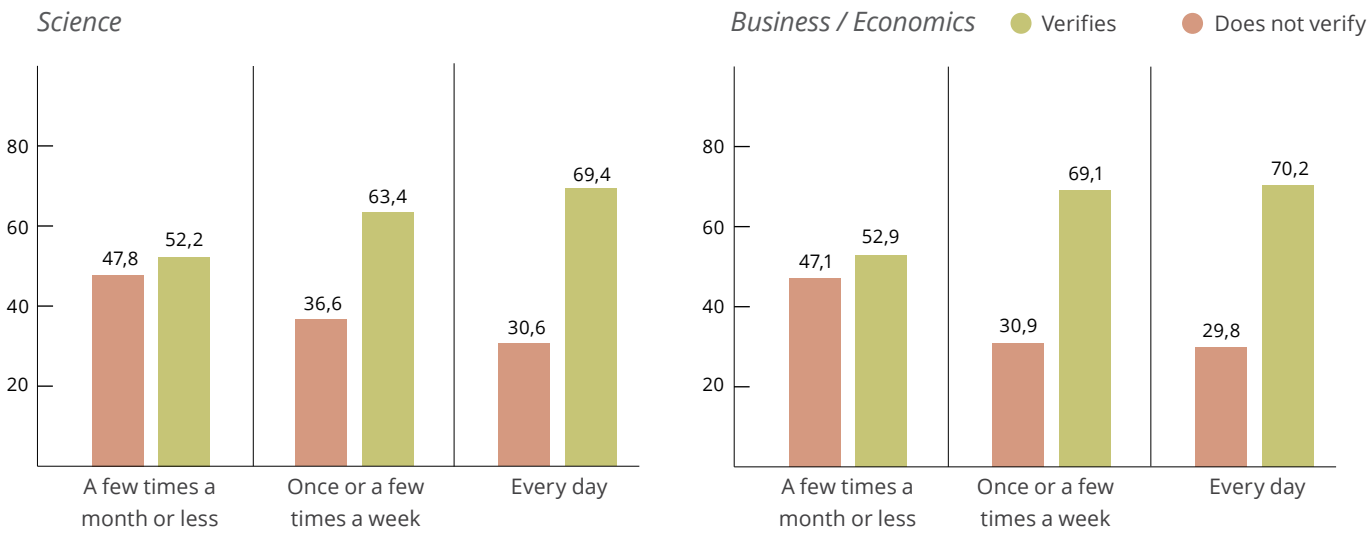
For the time being, we limit ourselves to leaving our findings about verification behavior levels at this stage. This section was prepared with a view to making an introduction to the verification topic based on a review of Turkish media literature, and sets out the initial findings suggesting that education level in socio-economic terms – although only in the context of the Internet – and news usage frequency on Internet-based platforms – in the context of the media – may have positive correlations with verification behaviors.

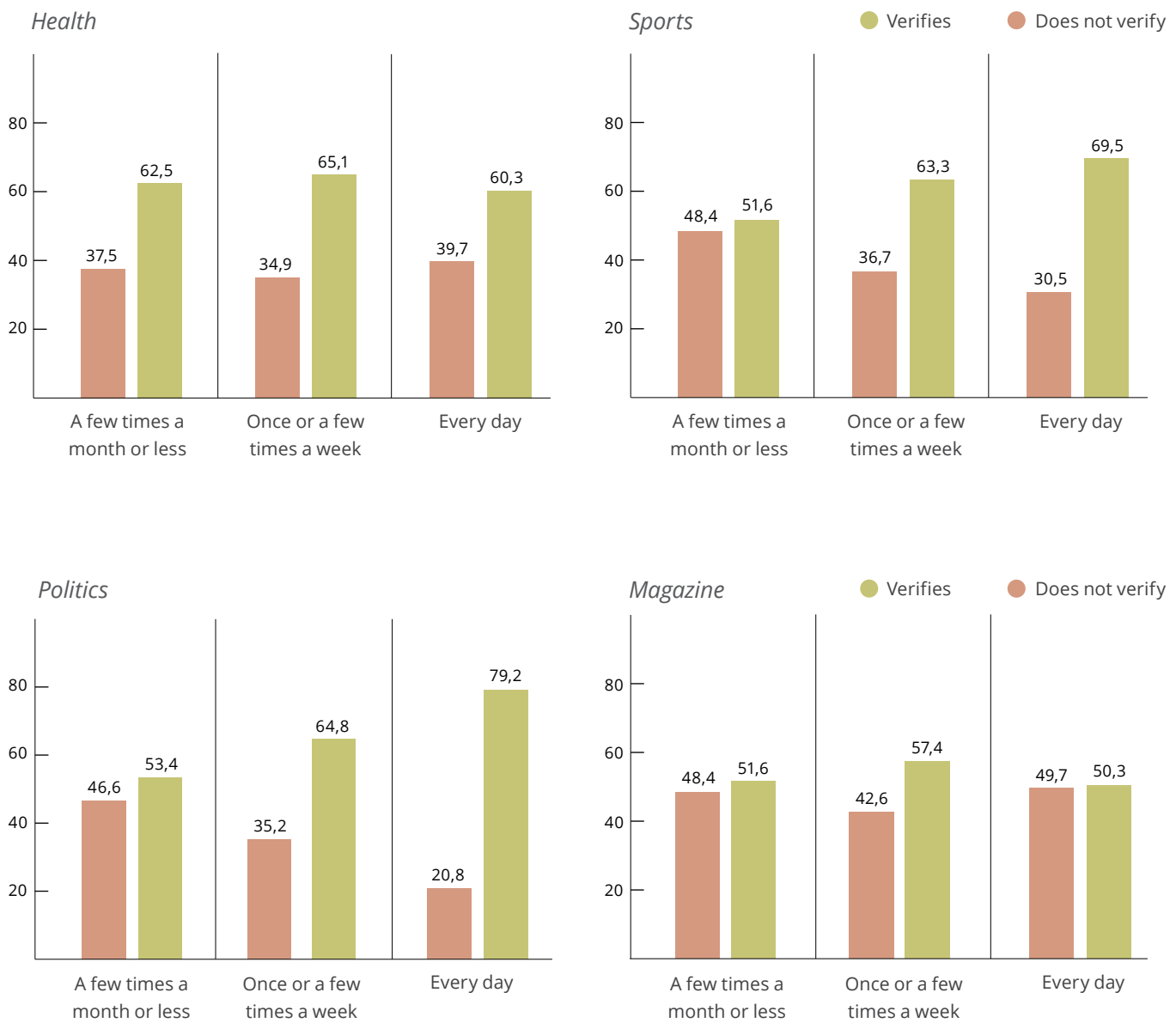
Verification Indicators According to News Categories

We stated earlier that verification behaviors may vary from individual to individual, as well as according to the news topics that are followed. In this regard, one of the most significant indicators of this differentiation is revealed in a comparison of the number of verification behaviors displayed by individuals when following a specific news topic, based on the frequency at which they follow the news topic.

Verification levels in this context were obtained from the responses of the individuals to Likert-type questions by forming two groups, being those who do and those who do not attempt to verify news topics. Figure 44 shows the news topics to which users display more verification behaviors, on condition that they are questioned only regarding the news topics they follow the most.

Figure 44. Verification according to topics (%)



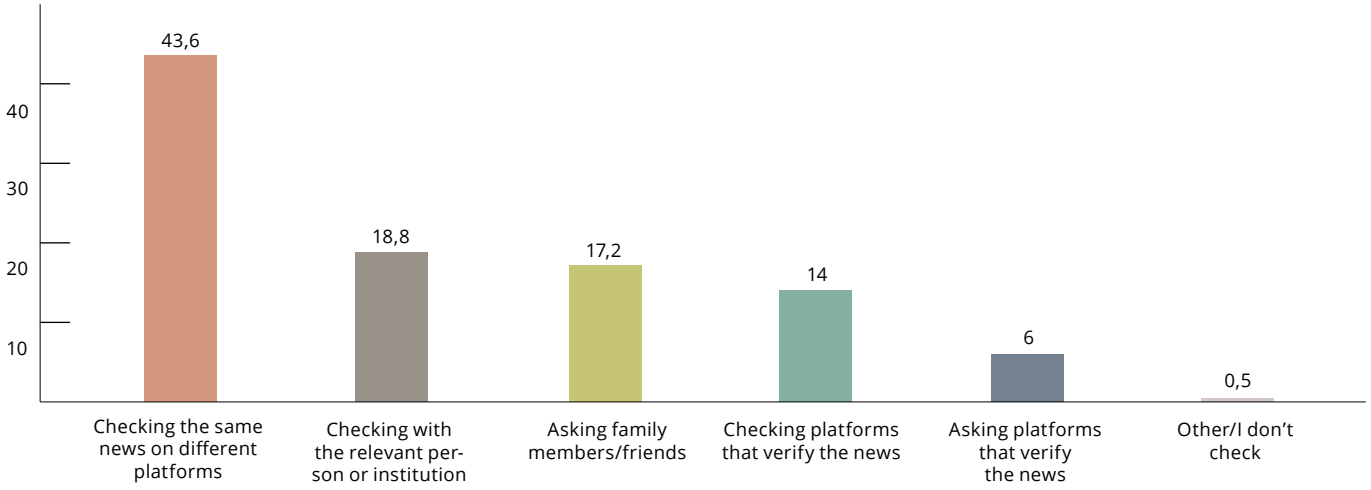


These findings show that especially followers of "Politics" make frequent verifications, followed by users following news on "Business/economics", "Sports" and "Science", which see almost the same verification levels. It is observed that while those following "Health" news engage in less verification behaviors when compared to these groups, verification behaviors decrease considerably among the "Magazine/ entertainment" followers.

Indicators for Verification Methods

We tried to determine the frequencies of some of the more commonly used methods by allowing the respondents to select from multiple verification methods. As can be seen in Figure 45, the method said to be used the most commonly checking the same news from different platforms (43.6%). This method is followed by "checking with the relevant person or institution" (18.8%); asking family members/friends (17.2%); and "checking platforms that verify the news" (14%). Although the method "checking platforms which verify the news" is used by a number of respondents, it is the least used method of verification.

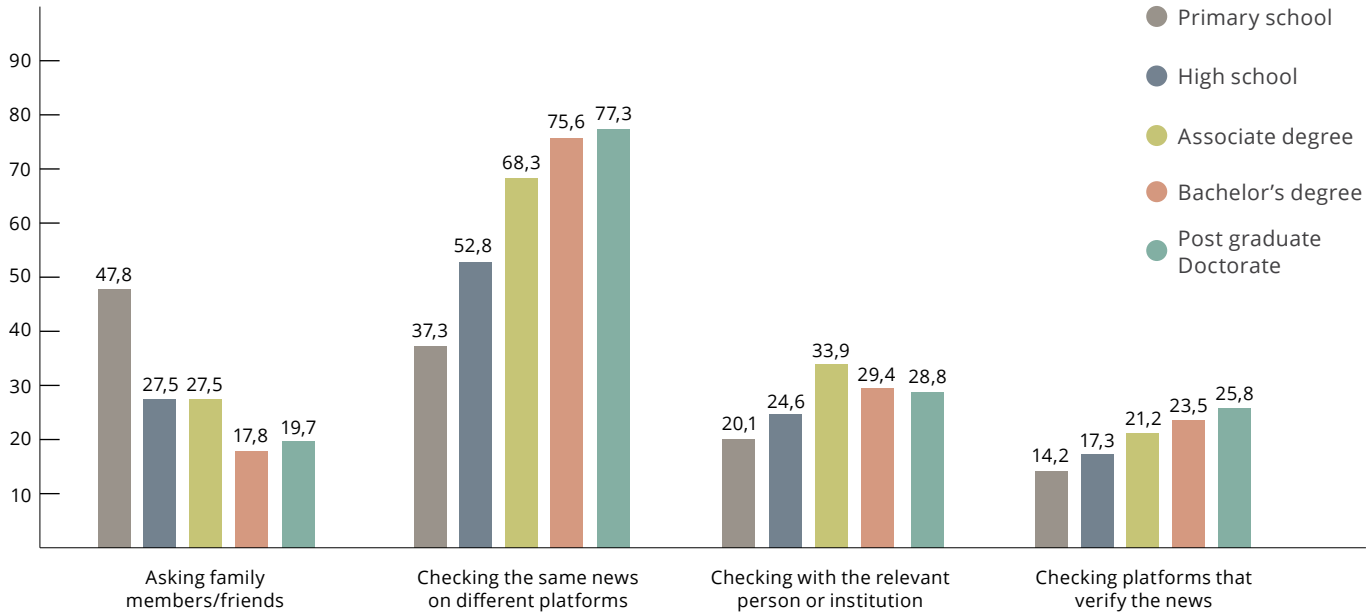
Figure 45. Verification methods (%)



Although there is a need for more information on the definitions and details of these methods, there are some hints about the different methods employed by individuals depending on their demographic and socio-economic statuses. For example, the educational level variable, which was proven to be an important variable in previous sections, is also an indicator of certain tendencies in this context.

As can be seen in Figure 46, while the method of asking family members/friends is quite common at lower education levels (especially at a primary education level), it becomes a less preferred method as the level of education increases. In contrast, the method of checking the same news from different platforms increases linearly as the level of education increases, and becomes a preferred method. Although not that strong, the methods of checking with the relevant person and institution and checking platforms that verify the news are also among the methods that are preferred at higher education levels.

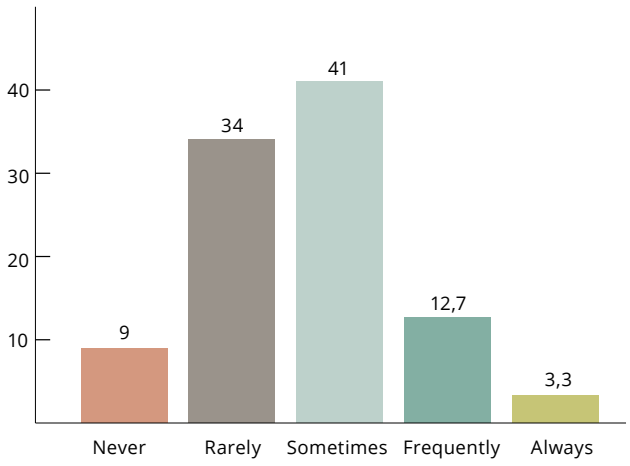
Figure 46. Correlation between verification methods and education levels (%)



After the Verification

Another indicator that we consider to be important with respect to the verification behaviors is the extent to which a change occurs in the opinions of individuals after carrying out a verification. In this regard, individuals were asked how often their opinions change. The responses given were, to a large extent, accumulated in the "sometimes" and "rarely" frequencies (see Figure 47).

Figure 47. Is there any change or any difference in your opinions at the end of this process? (%)



A correlation that we consider to be important with regard to the impact of verification on the opinions of individuals was related to how often their opinions change due to critical thinking, in other words, their levels of skepticism. A Chi-square test made to test our hypothesis revealed a significant correlation between the levels at which respondents were suspicious and the levels at which a change occurred in their ideas after carrying out a verification (X^2=177, df=8, p=.001). Post hoc tests performed with the necessary Bonferroni corrections (Beasley and Schumacker, 1995) led to the following observations being made:

- Those who are never suspicious are more inclined to never change their opinions,
- Those who are rarely suspicious are more inclined to rarely change their opinions,
- Those who are sometimes and frequently suspicious are more inclined to sometimes change their opinions,
- Those who are always suspicious are more inclined to frequently or always change their opinions.

conclusion

In this section, verification behaviors and methods are generally addressed in Internet platform context. First of all, findings have been obtained suggesting that a positive correlation between the frequency of verification behaviors and education level, as well as the frequency at which news is consumed in the Internet environment.

Verification behaviors were then evaluated according to the news topics. The findings suggested that especially followers of news on "Politics" more frequently engage in verification behaviors than followers of other news topics; and that "Magazine/Entertainment" followers less frequently engage in verification behaviors than the other groups.

After evaluating the frequencies at which respondents display verification tendencies, it is revealed that the verification methods engaged in by respondents change with educational level.

After presenting some indicators of how often the opinions of individuals change after verifications, it was found that a correlation exists between skepticism (critical thinking ability) and being open to a change of opinion after verification.

Limitations and methodological discussions

Unfortunately, research procedures and scientific processes, especially those carried out in the media sector, often remain in the background, and results based on samples are presented as factual evidence of social situations (Lane, 2013). Although we attempted to provide detailed information in the report, especially under the method headings, we believe that it is important to separately present the limitations of the research in accordance with the principles followed. To this end, all of the limitations and the related methodological discussions, which are organized analytically, can be examined below. It should be reminded that some headings are addressed to advance the knowledge of users in these methodological fields.

1. Limitations Concerning the Research Design

1.a. Sample problems and design errors are major obstacles, preventing a research from making conclusions about the population. We mentioned earlier that the sample designed during the planning of the research underwent changes due to problems in the implementation phase. In addition to working solely at an urban scale, and disregarding the rural population in the sample, the share of young and educated population aged 20-29 in particular was more than expected. As mentioned above, our statistical tests were presented in a way that would not be affected by group sizes, while our data on age groups was presented by using the technique of weighting according to the proportion of the first sample plan.

1.b. Many of the Likert-type scales established in the design phase were later modified after being found to be insufficient enough, or were removed altogether so as to increase the scientific value of the research. Accordingly, many of the generated dependent variables lack the appropriate scales for the application of parametric tests. To resolve this problem, we opted to use median values instead of mean values, and to use only non-parametric tests throughout the research (Clason and Dormody, 1994).

2. Limitations Related to Data and Presentation

2.a. Due to some discrepancies within the design chain, the gathered data caused some problems during the analysis process. For example, the use of multiple choice questions in the questionnaire led to the generation of data that contradicted the independence principle in observations, which is one of the basic assumptions in many statistical analyses. We would like to state, however, that we have not violated this assumption in any way. In fact, this data is presented only in a descriptive manner, and has not been used in statistical analyses, although some relatively minor limitations were created by the solutions we defined for these problems. For example, some analyses saw data losses at unexpected levels, with data falling below the sample number. Another example of sample-based data loss is the data lost as a result of the excessive use of the "I am not interested/I don't know" option given in the Likert-type measurement items. This situation has been alleviated somewhat through such methods as calculating the average when establishing dependent variables. We believe that these losses, which reached 40% in some political view analyses and 20%-30% in some dependent variable analyses, still left a sufficiently large sample size.

2.b. Especially in the statistical tests, the results have been reported only briefly due to space limitations and our intention to address a higher number of readers. Accordingly, sufficient information could not be presented on data distribution and on whether or not our assumptions have been satisfied. Instead, we opted to specify it only when an assumption was violated. Furthermore, almost all of our tests were non-parametric in nature, and the assumptions of these tests were relatively light and low.

3. Limitations Related to Statistical Methods

Although the scientific methods adopted in this research were generally based on statistical science, the research violates or pushes the limits of the rigor and precision expected from the nature of statistical science on a few planes.

First, we would like to remind that this is an exploratory research. Studies aimed at proving a theory require tighter designs and more focused studies. This research, however, attempts to put forth a knowledge production process by progressing in line with relatively flexible procedures, rather than proving theories. We have developed a report that is based on exploration, but that still uses statistical methods, and that also presents certain scientific data, such as trust interval and effect size. Accordingly, it is necessary to consider this research as an attempt to reveal scientific hints to theories that can be put forward in the future when backed by stronger evidence. This situation arises specifically from the following limitations in its statistical methods approach:

3.a. This research contains many dependent variables. Although this can strengthen exploratory researches, it creates problems in the implementation of statistical tests. One of the problems is that the dependent variables frequently correlated with each other. For example, many dependent variables such as suspicion frequency and the level of trust placed in the news, frequency of sharing news and verification frequency were correlated with each other at varying levels (weak-medium). This situation creates non-ideal situations in terms of the production of scientific information, especially for correlation analyses and analyses of between-group differences. As a justification, here, we would like to state that our objective is to determine precisely the concepts that should be followed. This method also produces information on which dependent variable should be measured and how it should be measured.

Another problem is the possibility that findings based on the dependent variables that were correlated with each other may, in many cases, may over-emphasize the findings by repeating them. Accordingly, we preferred to progress by sticking to our hypotheses rather than making choices between concepts. We leave it to our readers and future researches to decide whether a finding is a repetition, and which finding related to a variable is more significant.

3.b. This research includes many statistical tests. This is a situation that is often disregarded, but which may have destructive consequences. In brief, when multiple statistical tests are performed in a study based on the same data, the possibility of a false positive finding (Type 1 error) increases. Although the study is an extensive one, and its sample size is large, protections such as the Bonferroni method were required for the statistical tests that repeat but disregard repetitions. Although we attempted to apply such corrections frequently in some sections of the research or on post hoc tests, the fact that we did not make an error rate correction for the entire research points out to a limitation. Stating that the best means of solving such a problem is to try to balance the positive and negative false finding rates as much as possible (Ranganathan, Pramesh and Buyse, 2016), we would like to present two justifications for this situation. First, we preferred to take the significance level as 1% rather than 5%. Furthermore, many of the analysis results we presented in our findings had a $p<0.001$.

[1] It remains at 5% only in a single test that measured the change in the trust in media and news according to the political view groups. However, we believe that the Bonferroni corrections for multiple tests implemented on the 13 groups provided a strong protection.

Secondly, as mentioned in the previous item, many variables (dependent or independent) were highly correlated with each other. As a result of this situation, it is certain that some error rate corrections which are based on the assumption that these hypothesis tests are independent of each other (such as the Bonferroni correction) would be too conservative (Goldman, 2008). In reality, however, the hypotheses are rarely completely independent of each other. Particularly in researches in which the correlation level of the variables is high, such a conservative correction will only lead to the incorrect rejections of relevant findings. Thus, considering in particular the $p<0.01$ statistical significance level that we preserve, it would seem justifiable to apply a much higher number of tests than the correction allows.

In the same context, the number of independent variables can also be considered high, although no hypothesis was put forward and no test was made on many of the independent variables. For example, the independent variable of gender was tested only in its relationship to sharing news and concern about news sharing. Considering the sample size, we believe that our sub-group independent variables based on gender, age, educational level and income level presented no problems. In the analysis of political view groups, however, Bonferroni corrections were made in a very strict manner.

3.c. In the analyses based on correlations, results at weak correlation levels were frequently presented as findings. We believe that it is still early to provide sufficient information on the real values of these correlations. As a matter of fact, these weak correlations have the ability to point to very strong findings in terms of the research topic. In that context, varying correlation powers from weak to medium have been presented especially to determine different orientations and to guide the more serious measurements of correlation powers in the future.

epilogue

In our report entitled "Media Usage and News Consumption: Trust, Verification, Political Polarizations", we have addressed many issues related to the media in Turkey. While progressing on an exploratory plane, this media research, in which we have focused especially on the news subheading, has presented to its readers data obtained at the sample level, and has tried to produce scientific findings through the use of statistical methods. We would like to mention especially some aspects of the research that we believe provide strong hints of the media usage, perception and behaviors of Turkish society.

The findings of the report in the demographic context indicate that especially age is a significant factor in terms of media usage. This differentiation, referring to the usage of media tools, the following of sources, the intended purposes and perception, shows that differentiations exist especially between the young and elderly segments of society.

One of the findings that is frequently repeated in the research is that education level is one of the most important factors in terms of media usage, perception and behaviors. It is thus observed that in especially verification behaviors and methods, as well as the trust in media, educational levels may have a strong influence on the perception and behaviors of individuals.

In our report, which evaluates many media sources and platforms in different contexts, we have stated that trust in the media and news are especially low in Turkey. We have shown that some socio-economic and demographic differentiations could affect the trust placed by individuals in the media. In particular, we have examined the correlation between media usage habits and trust in the media by also including the ability to display skeptical behavior on that which we have positive opinions. Again in this context, we have sought to identify changing perceptions and behaviors of the followers of different news topics.

Another important finding of the research is that political view leads to significant differences especially in terms of news media perception. In the light of the initial examinations, it was observed that different political leanings create certain groupings in media perception, and a right-left scale within a Turkish context has been developed to determine these groupings. Especially by means of this scale, it has been established that significant differences exist in the perception of news between those of right-left scale political tendencies in Turkey, and that these differences may indicate significant polarizations at even large social levels.

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