

Descriptive Analysis of the Use of Twitter by Cinemaximum Movie Theaters During the Covid-19 Global Pandemic

Covid-19 Küresel Salgın Döneminde Cinemaximum Sinema Salonlarının Twitter Kullanımı Üzerine Betimsel Bir Analiz

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Received/Geliş tarihi: 16.01.2021

Revision Requested/Revizyon talebi:
28.01.2021

**Last revision received/Son revizyon
teslimi:** 07.06.2021

Accepted/Kabul tarihi: 16.05.2021

Citation/Atıf: Yolcu, O. (2021). Descriptive analysis of the use of twitter by cinemaximum movie theaters during the Covid-19 global pandemic. *Connectist: Istanbul University Journal of Communication Sciences*, 60, 241-280.
<https://doi.org/10.26650/CONNECTIST2021-0742>

ABSTRACT

This study looked into how movie theaters used social media during the pandemic, through the example of Cinemaximum movie theaters and Twitter. The reason for selecting Cinemaximum is that it is Turkey's largest cinema chain and its movie theaters have the largest number of followers on social media. The study used the descriptive analysis and the content analysis method to examine 1006 tweets shared by Cinemaximum on Twitter between January 1 and December 15, 2020. At the end of the study it was seen that the Cinemaximum Twitter account was used actively in line with the company's needs during the global pandemic. Differences were seen between shares posted prior to 16 March and those posted after this date. The topic codes identified in the Tweets were classified under 16 different categories. It was seen that the topics covered most in Tweets posted when movie theaters were open were "Films" (movie showtimes and information about the movie to be shown); when movie theaters were closed, "Entertainment" (competitions, games, questions, riddles, messages promoting participation (tagging your friend, etc.), humor, interesting information); and in July, when preparations were being made to reopen movie theaters, "Preparations for reopening the theaters." When viewed in general, it can be said that the Tweets shared when movie theaters were open and in July when preparations to reopen them were underway were written primarily for marketing purposes, with a focus on advertising and promotion, and that those written when movie theaters were closed were focused on public relations.

Keywords: Twitter, social media, movie theater, pandemic, Covid-19

ÖZ

Araştırmada küresel salgın döneminde sinema salonlarının sosyal medyayı nasıl kullandığı, Cinemaximum sinema salonları ve Twitter örneği üzerinden incelenmiştir. Cinemaximum'un ele alınmasının nedeni Türkiye'deki en

büyük sinema zinciri olması ve sosyal medyada en fazla takipçiye sahip sinema salonu olmasıdır. Araştırmada Cinemaximum'un Twitter hesabında 1 Ocak-15 Aralık 2020 tarihleri arasında paylaştığı 1006 tweet, betimsel analiz yöntemi ve içerik analizi tekniğinden faydalanılarak incelenmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda Cinemaximum Twitter hesabının, küresel salgın döneminde ihtiyaçlar doğrultusunda aktif bir şekilde kullanıldığı görülmüştür. 16 Mart tarihinden önce yapılan paylaşımlarla, sonra yapılan paylaşımlar arasında farklılıklar tespit edilmiştir. Tweet'lerde tespit edilen konu kodları, araştırmada 16 farklı kategori altında sınıflandırılmıştır. Sinemaların açık olduğu dönemlerde 'Filmler' (Film gösterim programı ve gösterimi yapılacak filmler hakkında bilgi), kapalı

olduğu dönemlerde 'Eğlence' (Yarışmalar, oyunlar, sorular, bilmeceler, katılım sağlama amaçlı mesajlar, mizah, ilginç bilgiler), sinema salonlarını yeniden açılma hazırlıklarının yapıldığı Temmuz ayında ise 'Sinemaları yeniden açma hazırlıkları' kategorisinde sınıflandırılan konuların, tweet'lerde en sık kullanılan konular olduğu görülmüştür. Genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde paylaşılan tweet'lerin, sinemaların açık olduğu dönemde ve sinemaların yeniden açılma hazırlıklarının yapıldığı Temmuz ayında öncelikle pazarlama çalışmaları kapsamında 'reklam ve tanıtım' amaçlı; sinemaların kapalı olduğu dönemde 'Halkla ilişkiler' amaçlı olarak hazırlandığı söylenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Twitter, sosyal medya, sinema salonu, küresel salgın, Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 first appeared in Wuhan, China, in late 2019. The first case in Turkey was seen on March 11, 2020 (Milliyet, 2020), the same day the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 to be a pandemic. As part of Covid-19 precautions, schools in Turkey were closed down on March 16 and many workplaces, including movie theaters, were temporarily closed. Spreading around the world rapidly, Covid-19 has infected 71,451,695 people worldwide and killed 1,601,452 (Aydın, 2020). Since the virus is caught through breathing and touch, the best way to prevent infection was for people to restrict their social lives and stay at home, and to introduce lockdowns. While many countries began working on a vaccine, attempts were made to reduce the impact of the virus through social distancing, hygiene, and wearing masks. 2020 was a year when many people tried not to leave home other than to meet their necessary daily needs.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a period in which many industries sustained major economic losses, but this is not the first time that people have shut themselves off fearing an epidemic, with this behavior having economic repercussions. The study conducted in Nigeria in 2016 by Bali, Stewart, and Pate, (2016, pp. 2-5) on the economic harm caused by the fear of Ebola in the private sector reported that people started shopping early in the day to avoid the crowd; they stopped going to crowded areas such as open markets, cinemas, clubs, and supermarkets; they used public transport less and went to the shops less. In the study, they named this phenomenon the

“fearonomic effect” and defined it as “the direct and indirect economic effect of avoidance behavior exhibited by individuals, organizations, or countries during an epidemic as a result of both incorrect information and fear” (Bali, Stewart, & Pate, 2016, p. 2). Based on this, the fearonomic effect may be translated into Turkish as “korkunun ekonomiyi etkilemesi,” or “the effect of fear on the economy.”

Various studies have been done investigating the change in shopping and media consumption habits during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Nielsen survey company reported that the volume of e-commerce in Turkey had grown 159% on average compared with the same period in the previous year and that 49% of Turkish consumers said they would continue to shop online in the medium and long terms. Nielsen identified nine main global trends, namely, subscription services, a rise in online fresh food, new rapid/delivery trends, social commerce, AR/VR use, live broadcast, use of AI, verbal commerce, and new payment options (Dünya, 2020). Explaining that media consumption had also increased during the pandemic, Nielsen, predicted that staying at home could lead to a rise of approximately 60% in video content watched globally. According to Nielsen (2020) as long as Covid-19 continues to spread and as long as isolation continues to be the best way to reduce this spread, the amount of time spent by individuals watching the news and entertainment will increase.

One of the industries most severely hit during the Covid-19 pandemic has been the cinema industry. The number of viewers in movie theaters fell after the first case was announced in Turkey. The week when the first Covid-19 case was announced in Turkey, a total of 167,000 people went to movie theaters between March 13 and 15. This figure is reportedly 69% smaller than the previous week (Box Office Türkiye, 2020e).

The number of moviegoers fell across the world, not just in Turkey, and as a result, movies that were expected to come to movie theaters had their launch dates postponed. A circular issued by the Interior Ministry on March 16 temporarily closed down movie theaters along with many other workplaces. Even though it was later announced that movie theaters could reopen on July 1, many movie theaters decided to keep their doors closed until a later date, taking into consideration the continuing spread of Covid-19, cinema-goers’ fear of going to movie theaters, the shortage of movies due to postponed show dates, and similar factors. Turkey’s largest movie theater chain, Cinemaximum, announced it would reopen its movie theaters as of 7 August (Box Office Türkiye, 2020c). Movie theaters were closed down a second time on November

20, 2020, due to Covid-19. It was announced that the decision would be effective until the end of the year.

When it began to be understood that the pandemic was not going to end soon, agreements started being made with digital platforms for some movies whose show dates at movie theaters had been announced previously. The first major studio production to come to home cinema without being shown at movie theaters was *Trolls World Tour*, which broke records the first weekend it was made available (Box Office Türkiye, 2020f). Even though the increase in movies being watched on digital platforms pleased film producers and studios, the movie theaters objected to this situation (Box Office Türkiye, 2020b).

The fact that movies were made available on digital platforms at the same time they came to movie theaters or a short time later was a contentious issue even before the pandemic. Examples of this argument in previous years are the movie *Rome* (2018) being broadcast on Netflix at the same time as it appeared in movie theaters, and the movie *Organize İşler 2: Sazan Sarmalı* (2019) being broadcast on Netflix two weeks after coming to movie theaters. These arguments flared up again with the onset of the pandemic. The movie *9 Kere Leyla* (2020) was shown first on Netflix on December 4, 2020, because movie theaters, along with many workplaces, had been temporarily closed down due to Covid-19 measures. While 2020 became one of the toughest years for movie theaters, it saw digital platforms, which were already on the rise before the pandemic, make achievements far in excess of their own goals.

Although it is thought that technological developments in recent years have damaged the leadership of movie theaters in the field of showing movies, it is said that movie theaters can be more effective during these times by using emerging technologies. In the study entitled "technological change and managerial challenges in the movie theater industry," it is emphasized that both improving the quality of the cinema experience and better adapting the experience to consumer tastes are ways to maintain or increase the market performance of movie theaters. The study says: "Future success will depend on the ability of movie theaters to use new and emerging technologies to improve the quality of the cinema experience and effectively ensure the economic viability of the industry" (Weinberg, Otten, & Orbach et al., 2021, p. 259).

Although more and more movies are being watched on digital platforms with each passing year, it is a fact underscored by many writers that going to the movies involves

more than just watching a movie. Emphasizing that cinema has started becoming independent of its unique tools (film, projector, curtain) and privileged location (movie theater), Casetti (2011, p. 87), asks, “when we watch a film or something similar or YouTube or on a cell phone, can we still call it cinema or is it now something else?” (2011, p. 82). According to Akbulut (2014, p. 14), “going to the movies is not just about watching a film; it is a social, political, and cultural experience in which one experiences being an urban, ‘modern,’ acceptable citizen and practices belonging to a place (the location), date (time), ideology, or class or ‘the classless, non-privileged, huddled masses.’ Watching a movie, discussing it, and talking about cinema is also a social process, and according to Jarvie (1970), “it is this phenomenon that makes cinema a social institution like family, religion, or school” (Erkiliç, 2009, p. 144).

The study entitled “Change in Movie Watching Experience” states that when audiences watch movies in a movie theater, they attach importance to the venues where the movies are shown and praise the collective viewing experience through the bond they form. The study says: “The venue serves as a glue for combining the content of the movie with the memories of watching the movie. The unique features of the movie theater ensure that the lived experience is also coded as a special event” (Anadolu, 2020, p. 5099). As a result of interviews with people who watched movies at the Cine Teatro Capitólio, which was established in Brazil in 1928, it was determined that although most of them did not have vivid memories of the movies they watched, they did remember their times socializing with other people and their experiences at a particular event. According to the study, “in this sense, despite the power exercised by the visible of film narratives, what remained in the interviewees’ minds were those memories related to space [venue] and people who shared that space. In other words, when the memory is focused on the movies, it demonstrates that the composition of the visual culture of a society goes beyond the expectations of a particular variety of elements of more space than the actual visual content” (de Sá Machado Jr, 2020, p. 486).

At this time when movie-watching habits are rapidly changing, influenced by the Internet and digital platforms, movie theaters are making a great effort to survive. The Covid-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019 and continued throughout 2020, has resulted in the closure of many movie theaters that were already experiencing financial difficulties. Many movie theaters, on the other hand, are trying to find ways to stay in existence. At a time when there is little to no physical means of access for movie lovers, movie theaters have seen their revenues slump or disappear completely.

Many movie theaters are finding it hard to cover their existing location and personnel overheads. When the numbers of viewers who went to the movies in 2019 and 2020 are examined, the harm caused to movie theaters by the pandemic can be more clearly seen (Table 2). A total of 622 movies, including 404 new releases, came to movie theaters in Turkey in 2019. The total number of viewers was 59,556,020, generating a total revenue of TL 980,410,567 (Box Office Türkiye, 2020g). However, in 2020 only 342 movies, including 177 new releases, came to theaters in 2020. The total number of viewers was 17,415,304, generating a total revenue of TL 299,726,220 (Box Office Türkiye, 2020a). A similar situation can be seen in box-office figures all over the world. The total global box-office revenue for 2019 came to \$42.5 billion and it is estimated that due to the effect of the pandemic, this figure will fall below the \$13 billion mark in 2020 (Box Office Türkiye, 2020d). Two studies have been found investigating the effect of Covid-19 on movie theaters in 2020. The study by Kim (2020, p. 1) examined the short-term effect of social distancing due to Covid-19 on movie demand and box-office revenue in the Korean cinema industry. Acting on the “fearonomic” concept (Bali, Stewart, & Pate, 2016), Ma, Kim, Cohen, and Neumann (2020) tried to develop a checklist to help measure the economic effect of the fear of infection and submitted a case study encompassing the losses suffered by movie theaters in China during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, movie theaters found themselves faced with not only economic hardships but also the danger of completely losing the communication they had with cinema audiences. They needed channels with which they could establish communication with movie lovers and maintain existing communication. Social media became one of the most important communication channels for struggling movie theaters at this time. This study investigates the use of social media by movie theaters during the pandemic through the example of Cinemaximum movie theaters and Twitter.

This study is unique in that through the example of Cinemaximum, it (1) shows what changes were made by institutions to the way they communicate in the Covid-19 pandemic period; (2) identifies what messages were sent by movie theaters via social media to their target audiences in the Covid -19 pandemic period; and (3) discusses the use of social media by movie theaters, a topic that has been treated only to a limited degree in the literature previously. Because of this, this study makes an important contribution to the field.

AIM AND METHODOLOGY

Twitter has approximately 326 million active users (We Are Social, 2020). As in other social media applications, users on Twitter can post the messages they have prepared for their own purposes whenever they want. The format and content features of the posts provide information about the user who posted them. This can help us to understand the topics in the content of the posts, the number of shares, the periods in which the number of posts increase and decrease, and the poster's purpose in using Twitter.

Aim

This study aimed to determine how social media, in particular Twitter, was used by movie theaters during the pandemic. This study used content analysis and descriptive analysis to examine the tweets shared by movie theaters and sought answers to these questions:

- 1) Did the number of tweets shared by Cinemaximum during the pandemic (March 16 - December 15, 2020) change by month?
- 2) What were the most common themes in the tweets shared by Cinemaximum before the pandemic (January 1 - March 15, 2020)?
- 3) When evaluated in terms of their themes, did the tweets shared by Cinemaximum on Twitter before the pandemic (January 1 - March 15, 2020) change during the pandemic (March 16 - December 15, 2020)?
- 4) For what purposes did Cinemaximum use Twitter during the pandemic (March 16 - December 15, 2020)?

Method

Cinemaximum is the movie theater chain with the most social media followers among all the movie theaters in Turkey and uses social media effectively. In a study in which they analyzed Cinemaximum's posts on its Facebook account throughout October 2017, Korver and Keskin (2019) reported that Cinemaximum movie theaters actively used their Facebook account as part of their marketing strategy.

This study first lists the movie theaters that have the highest number of followers on Twitter. In Table 3 it can be seen that the movie theater with the most followers is

Cinemaximum, Turkey's largest movie theater chain. The tweets examined were all accessed via Cinemaximum's official Twitter account (@cinemaximum). Tweets before February 2020 were accessed using Twitter's Advanced Search feature.

This study used descriptive and content analysis to analyze the data from all tweets shared on Cinemaximum's Twitter account between January 1 and December 15, 2020. Using the descriptive analysis method, "the obtained data are summarized and interpreted according to previously determined themes" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 239). "The aim of this type of analysis is to present the findings to the reader in an organized and interpreted way. Later, these descriptions are explained and interpreted, cause-effect relationships are examined and some conclusions are reached" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 240). The basic aim of content analysis is to find concepts and relationships that can explain the gathered data. "The data summarized and interpreted in descriptive analysis are subjected to a deeper process in content analysis, and concepts and themes that cannot be noticed using a descriptive approach can be discovered as a result of this analysis" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 240).

The reason for examining tweets posted between January 1 and December 15, 2020, is that movie theaters in Turkey were temporarily closed on March 15 due to Covid-19 measures. An attempt was made to determine what changes took place in the posts on Twitter made after March 16. All the posts made on Twitter up to December 15, the last date covered by the study, were examined. To determine the changes that took place after March 16, it is necessary to look at the posts made before this date. To that end, the tweets shared in the two and a half months from the start of 2020 to March 16 were included in the review. A total of 1,006 (n=1,006) tweets were examined as part of the study - 300 from January 1 to March 15, 2020, and 676 from March 16 to December 15, 2020 - to determine whether or not there were any changes between the tweets for both periods.

To answer questions 2, 3, and 4, a code list containing the topic content of the tweets was first determined. Then, each examined tweet was coded according to its content. It was seen that a tweet could include multiple topics.

The author, with the help of a researcher, created the code list and coded the data. The author and another researcher gave separate preliminary codes to a specific set of data by deliberately working apart. Later, the created code lists were compared and

it was seen that their results overlapped. In Table 5, all the tweets in the sample have been coded using the created code list. "The reliability of the coding made this way was calculated using the formula $[\text{Consensus}/(\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}) \times 100]$ " (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Kutluca, Birgin, & Gündüz, 2018, p. 395). According to this, the average reliability coefficient between the coders throughout the study was calculated to be 91%.

This study is limited to the messages posted by movie theaters. The interaction rates of the shared messages and the comments on the messages made by followers were left out of the study. By focusing on the form and content of the messages, an attempt was made to understand what messages the movie theaters wanted to transmit to their followers.

Cinemaximum Movie Theaters

The number of movie theaters in Turkey was 2,424 in 1970, 755 in 1980, 354 in 1990, 606 in 2000, and 1,834 in 2010 (Öz & Özkaracalar, 2020, pp. 4-6). It is seen that the number of movie theaters in Turkey, which started to decrease in the 1980s, started to increase again in the 2000s. According to TUIK 2019 Cinema and Theater Statistics, this number was 2,826 as of 2019 (TÜİK, 2020).

Cinemaximum movie theaters is Turkey's largest cinema chain and operates as part of the CGV Mars Entertainment Group (Cinemaximum, 2020). Founded in 2001 by Menderes Utku and Muzaffer Yıldırım, Mars Cinema acquired the Tepe Cinemaxx Group in 2005 and AFM Cinemas in 2010 (Kuburlu, 2016). The merger of the Mars and AFM groups was criticized for making the market oligopolistic (Özdurak, 2020, p. 16) and for strengthening monopolistic tendencies in the sector (Tüzün, 2013, p. 105). The company was sold to the South Korean CJ CGV Group for \$800 million in 2016 (Kuburlu, 2016). Today, Cinemaximum operates 848 movie theaters and 97 cinema complexes in 36 cities (Cinemaximum, 2020). Considering that according to Turkish Statistics Authority figures for Cinema and Theater in 2019, there were 2,826 movie theaters in Turkey in 2019, Cinemaximum's weight among movie theaters in Turkey becomes evident (Table 1).

The CGV Mars Entertainment Group (Cinemaximum, 2020) is criticized for being active in three separate fields at the same time, operating in the cinema advertising

sector with its own Mars Media and in the film distribution sector with Mars Distribution, in addition to its cinema business operations. Stating that the company has, through vertical integration, come to dominate the cinema sector's entire value chain, Özdurak said, "with its strength in the show market, the CGV Mars Group can provide advantages in terms of show dates and the number of weeks on show in its movie theaters for the movies it distributes, produces, or imports" (2020, p. 16).

According to General Directorate of Cinemas figures, 19 firms distributed the movies that were shown in 2019. Distribution for 2019 was shared as follows: CJNET, 36.79%; UIP, 22.63%; CGV Mars Distribution, 16.84%; Warner Bros. International, 11.59%; and TME, 5.7% (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2020). Özdurak (2020, p. 13) reports that "CJNET is controlled by CJ CGV's owner, the Korean CJ Group. Therefore, it may be seen as the same enterprise."

The largest movie theatre chain operator in Turkey, Mars Entertainment Group, made the news in 2019 with allegations that it was using popcorn to keep ticket prices high and giving movie producers a small cut (Sabah, 2009). The crisis that erupted with postponing the showing of BKM's *Organize İşler 2 - Sazan Sarmalı*, scheduled for January 1, 2019, turned the promotional ticket campaign problem between producers and movie theater owners into a heated argument. To protest the sale of promotional tickets, the producers of movies that brought the highest audiences to movie theaters in Turkey postponed the show dates of their new movies. Show dates for the movies *Organize İşler 2 - Sazan Sarmalı* (BKM), *Recep İvedik 6* (Çamaşırhane Film), *Karakomik Filmler: 2 Arada* (CMYLMZ Fikir Sanat & NuLook Production), and *Mucize 2: Aşk* (Boyut Film) were postponed by their producers. The crisis ended when Law No. 5224 on the Evaluation, Classification, and Support of Cinema Films was amended and movies started being shown (Habertürk, 2019). The law states: "Movie theater operators will not be able to carry out subscription, promotion, campaign, and bulk sales activities involving cinema tickets, except for discounted ticket pricing, which will be determined by the contract to be made with the film's producer and, if any, the distributor" (Resmi Gazete, 2019). "Thus, all the campaigns related to cinema tickets were banned and the sale of promotional tickets was prevented without the permission of the film production company. Also, restrictions were placed on the long commercials shown before the film, which is a subject that attracts public reaction" (Baykal, 2020, p. 101).

Although the movie theaters that opened in shopping malls received various criticisms, it has also been claimed that shopping malls had an impact on the growth experienced in the movie sector in Turkey since the early 2000s. The study says, "...without the mall boom, the recent fast expansion in the movie sector in Turkey would not be possible" (Yurtseven, 2020, p. 120).

FINDINGS

The study separately discusses the periods before and after March 16, 2020, when movie theaters were closed down due to Covid-19. An attempt has been made to determine how Cinemaximum's posts on Twitter before March 16, 2020, changed after this date. An attempt has also been made to determine the purpose of Cinemaximum's use of Twitter by identifying the topics in the content of the posts, the number of shares, and the periods in which the number of posts increased and decreased.

Tweets Posted by Cinemaximum Movie Theaters Before the Pandemic

When the posts made on Cinemaximum's official Twitter account, @cinemaximum, are examined in terms of topic, differences can be seen between those made before March 16, when movie theaters in Turkey were closed down due to Covid-19, and those made after this date. Nine different topics were detected in posts made between January 1 and March 15, 2020. They are: 1- Movie showtimes and information about the movie; 2- Links to purchase tickets; 3- Ticket prices, campaigns, discounts, gifts, perks; 4-Special events taking place at the physical location; 5-Buffer shopping and the popcorn menu; 6-Promotion of and links to other digital channels, announcements of new communication channels and programs; 7-Contests, games, questions, puzzles, messages promoting participation (tag your friend), humor, interesting information; 8-Movie theater technical features and amenities; 9-Holiday and other special occasion messages, remembrance messages.

When Table 6 is examined, it can be seen that the topic covered the most in posts made before the pandemic was "showtimes and information about the movie." This topic was seen in 84% of posts in January, 80% of posts in February, and 89% of posts made between March 1 and March 15.

Tweets Posted by Cinemaximum Movie Theaters During the Pandemic

In posts made after March 16, it can be seen that different topics came to the fore on different dates. Information about Covid-19 learned over time and the change in the number of cases led to different topics coming to the fore in social media posts on different dates. The review detected 16 different topics in the tweets posted on the Cinemaximum account between March 16 and December 15 during the pandemic. When evaluated according to the date they first appeared in tweets, they are, respectively:

Official Announcements Relating to Covid-19 Preventative Measures

The Cinemaximum account posted its first tweet about Covid-19 on March 16. Opening with "Important announcement!," the message read: "We are closing down our movie theaters for a while as part of the measures being taken to counter the risk of the spread of the coronavirus being seen throughout the world. Your health matters a lot to us. We believe that we shall continue the film fun in our theaters where we left off as soon as possible." Similarly, three different posts were made on subsequent dates (November 6, 18, and 20) explaining Interior Ministry precautionary decisions. These posts support the organization's public relations work.

Holiday, Special Occasion, and Remembrance Messages

The first tweet posted by Cinemaximum following the official announcement about the pandemic that it made on Twitter on March 16, was the message it posted on March 18 on the occasion of March 18 Çanakkale (Dardanelles) Victory and Martyrs Remembrance Day.

A total of 32 "holiday and special occasion celebration and remembrance messages" were posted between March 16 and December 15, 2020. Tweets about the birthdays of many cinema celebrities and the anniversaries of their deaths were posted. Many tweets were posted for special occasions widely celebrated in Turkey, such as Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day. Tweets were also posted about special occasions that are not so well known in Turkey, such as Laughter Day, World Running Day, Social Media Day, Best Friends Day, and Story Telling Day, as well as days relating to cult cinema movies such as Star Wars Day, Dinosaur Day, Superman Day, and Hobbit Day. The special occasion,

death, and remembrance messages include the birthdays, the announcements of deaths, and anniversaries of deaths of Turkish and world cinema celebrities such as Türkan Şoray, Ayhan Işık, Tarık Akan, Kemal Sunal, Adile Naşit, Daniel Radcliffe, Tom Hanks, and Chadwick Boseman.

Another element that stood out in the holiday and special occasion messages, as well as the death and remembrance messages, was that cinema movies were utilized in the design of most of the messages. Of the 32 tweets in total posted after March 16, 11 of them were about cinema. Although 17 of them were not directly related to cinema, they utilized movies. For instance, on Teachers' Day (November 24), a video was posted showing photographs of key teacher characters from the movies, such as the teacher Mr. Mahmut from *Hababam Sınıfı*. Just four tweets had nothing to do with the cinema in either form or content.

It can be seen that special occasion messages increased after March 16, when the movie theaters closed, then began to fall again in July when preparations were being made to reopen them.

Special occasion messages made up just 1% of tweets in January and February and 0.5% over March 1-15, but this rate increased to 14% over March 16-30, 26% in April, 19% in May, and 15% in June. This rate was seen to fall to 7% in July, 2% in August, 1% in September, 3% in October, and 3% in November. An increase is clearly seen in special occasion messages during the period the movie theaters were closed.

Furthermore, it was seen that of the 32 holidays and special occasions seen in tweets posted between March 16 and December 15, only 10 were celebrated in 2019.

Special occasion messages emphasize that the organization and the target audience are parts of the same society and share the same cultural codes. In days when health problems that threaten all of mankind, such as coronavirus, emerge, messages that emphasize the sense of togetherness are much more important than those for other days. That the majority of the messages were about cinema shows that as a means of communication the "Holiday and special occasion celebration and remembrance messages" were designed in a way that fit the followers' areas of interest. These posts support the organization's public relations work.

Contests, Games, Questions, Puzzles, Messages Promoting Participation (tag your friend, etc.), Humor, Interesting Information

Some of the tweets posted on the Cinemaximum account after the pandemic were written using information and images from movies shown in the past. It was noticed that game-making techniques were used and that they contained contests, games, questions, puzzles, messages promoting participation, humor, and interesting information. As it was seen that the fun element came to the fore in these posts, they were placed in the "Fun" category. It is noteworthy that cinema, which forms the most fundamental connection between Cinemaximum and its followers, was utilized when the messages were created. In addition, the style used in these posts differs from that used before the pandemic. Unlike most of the tweets posted before the pandemic that contained news and/or sentences providing information, these tweets are seen to ask questions and invite followers to share their comments and participate. For instance, one tweet posted on March 30 says, "Write the first line that comes to mind when you see this scene!"

A large proportion of the posts made before March 16 provide information about the movies being shown (varies between 80 and 89%), links to facilitate ticket purchases (varies between 33 and 54%), and posts in support of sales and marketing activities. It became impossible to make such posts during the pandemic. The goal was seen to shift to establishing communication and continuing existing communication with followers.

Posts under the "Fun" category made up 1% of the tweets in January, 4% in February, 0.5% over March 1-15 but increased to 71% over March 16-30, 79% in April, 52% in May, 54% in June, and 40% in July. This rate was seen to fall to 2% in August, 5% in September, 8% in October, and 6% in November. It suddenly rose again to 77% in the first 15 days of December when theaters were closed down again. A clear increase is observed in posts made under the Fun category when movie theaters were closed.

Posts made during these stressful days when people need good morale more than ever utilize the shared interest in movies when they are created and aim to establish communication, continue previously established communication, and have fun together. These posts support the organization's public relations work.

The Importance of Movie Theaters, The Privilege of Watching Movies in Theaters, The Longing for Movie Theaters

It can be seen that posts emphasizing the importance of movie theaters and the privilege of watching movies in theaters began being made during the pandemic. A tweet posted on June 5 said that “watching a movie in a movie theater” is a “privilege,” and expressed this using the verb “to miss:” “Even though we have taken a break from watching movies in theaters, we have not forgotten the privilege of watching movies in theaters. We will be together again soon. #ÖzlediyeSebebiVar (There is a reason we miss it) #Cinemaximum.”

Messages about the importance of movie theaters, not seen until April, are observed to make up 16% of posts in April, 19% in May, 11% in June, and 2% in July. These posts, which were made over April-July when movie theaters were closed and not used after August, support the organization’s public relations work. It is also noted that elements evoking nostalgia are emphasized in these posts.

Movie Showings and Events Held by Cinemaximum Movie Theaters Before the Pandemic

Tweets about past movie showings and events held by Cinemaximum were also posted. The first tweet of this kind was posted on April 23. Stating “With our Cinema for Everyone Project, we helped introduce thousands of our children to the movies,” the tweet included photographs showing children who had come to a movie theater for the first time as part of this social responsibility project in crowded groups inside the theater and the foyer area.

Posts made under the category “Past Cinemaximum Events” were seen in April (11%), May (11%), June (7%), July (7%), and August (1%). These posts, which are clearly seen to have intensified when the movie theaters were closed, support the organization’s public relations work.

Movie Theater Technical Features and Amenities

The fall in the number of coronavirus cases in May was accompanied by talk about reopening the movie theaters soon. In parallel with this, tweets began to be seen in

May aimed at fulfilling market objectives. Emphasis began being placed again on Cinemaximum movie theaters' technical features and amenities. A tweet posted on May 6, together with photographs of comfortable seats in the Gold Class, 4DX, Premium Cinema, and Sky Auditorium theaters said this: "The seats I need when working from home. Which one would you like to sit in with a laptop?"

These kinds of posts made up between 0.5 and 9% of the tweets made in January, February, March 1-15, May, June, and July. No posts of this kind were seen in the period March 16-30, immediately after the decision to close down movie theaters was made, in April and May, or between December 1 and 15. It can be seen that these kinds of posts peaked between August and November when the movie theaters reopened after the pandemic. The proportion of these posts was seen to be 22% in August, 15% in September, 13% in October, and 10% in November.

It can be said that the purpose of posts focusing on the technical features and amenities that can only be found in movie theaters was to attract movie audiences back to movie theaters at this time when moviegoers were still afraid to go to the movies for fear of the disease, even though the theaters had reopened. These posts support the organization's advertising and promotional activities as part of its marketing work.

Promotion of and Links to Other Digital Channels, Announcement of New Communication Channels and New Programs

It was announced on Instagram on May 8 that a new live program was about to be made called '*Film Gibi Muhabbetler*' (Movie Talk). The videos for all these live broadcasts were uploaded to YouTube with links posted on Twitter. It is noteworthy that all the guests on the program were leading actors in movies that came to the theater in 2019 or 2020 or their directors. Guests included İbrahim Büyükak and Onur Buldu from *Bayi Toplantısı*, Cem Gelinoğlu from *Aykut Enişte*, Caner Özyurtlu from *Biz Böyleyiz*, İlker Ayryk from *Müstakbel Damat*, Murat Cemcir from *Baba Parası*, Toygan Avanoğlu from *Hababam Sınıfı-Yaz Oyunları*, and Yasemin Sakalioğlu from *Zengo*. It can be seen that the aim of these programs was promoting the films that were expected to come to movie theaters first when they reopened.

Furthermore, movies were shown for free on YouTube over Ramadan when the movie theaters were closed.

It is also seen that the channels used by Cinemaximum before the pandemic continued to be used, albeit with different features and means during the pandemic. In addition to this, Cinemaximum opened two new digital channels during the pandemic. These are the Cinemaximum Blog and Cinemaximum TikTok account.

An increase was also seen in Cinemaximum's posts to different digital channels other than Twitter, particularly in May (21%), June (26%), and December 1-15 (15%) when movie theaters were closed. These posts support the organization's public relations work.

Movie Showtimes and Information About The Movie

With the fall in the number of coronavirus cases in May, people hoped that life was going to return to normal and that movie theaters were going to reopen soon. The first tweet about movies planned to come to movie theaters after the epidemic was posted on May 12.

It can be seen that the topic most tweeted when the movie theaters were open was information about films being shown or coming to theaters. Movies were the topic covered most in tweets in January (84%), February (80%), March 1-15 (89%), August (61%), September (75%), October (74%), and November (81%) (Table 6). These posts support Cinemaximum's advertising and promotional activities as part of marketing work for movies for which tickets were being sold.

Ticket Prices, Campaigns, Discounts, Gifts, Perks

In the tweet about the live broadcasts on Instagram, it was announced that a campaign was being prepared in cooperation with a fizzy drink brand. The message said that surprise gifts would be given to 10 people who correctly answered the questions asked by the moderator.

It can be seen that similar campaigns and other marketing work intensified when the movie theaters were open. These posts were made at a rate of 38% in January, 36% in February, and 15% over March 1-15, but not at all over March 16-30, in April, or in May. They went back up to 13% in June but back down to zero in July. When the movie theaters reopened after the pandemic, they reached 46% in August, 48% in September, and 25%

in October, peaking at 55% in November but falling back to zero over December 1-15 when the theaters were closed again. These posts support the organization's marketing work.

Latest News from The Movie Industry

Tweets on the latest developments in the movie industry were also posted. One tweet, posted on June 8, said: "We have great news for fans of this series! Plans are under way to restart filming of Mission Impossible 7 in September 2020!"

It can be seen that these posts began in June (5%) when the reopening of movie theaters was being discussed and when preparations for reopening had begun, they continued in July (9%) and August (1%), none at all were made between September and November, and they resumed over December 1-15 (23%). These posts take their cue from the movie industry, send the message that life has started returning to normal, and support the idea that movie theaters are going to reopen. These posts support the organization's marketing work.

Buffet Shopping and The Popcorn Menu

With the onset of summer and a perceived fall in Covid-19 cases, expectations grew that movie theaters were going to reopen. During this time, preparations began to reopen movie theaters and various campaigns mentioned gifts that could be given once theaters were open. A tweet posted on 9 June said: "Cinemaximum is giving away large popcorn menus to 10 lucky followers of the Movie Talk program!" It can be seen that these posts intensified when the movie theaters were open, peaking in August (16%) and September (21%). These posts support the organization's marketing work.

Preparations for Reopening Movie Theaters and Announcements

A tweet posted on June 11 said: "We are going to see each other again soon at the movies where popcorn meets Coca-Cola, science fiction meets adventure, and movie lovers meet people in love! #ÖzlediyeSebebiVar #Cinemaximum." A tweet posted on July 3 announced the Cinemaximum movie theaters were going to open on August 7. The tweet said: "We miss each other so much. The longing is over. We meet on August 7. We can't wait to meet you again with that same thrill in our movie theaters! #ÖzlediyeSebebiVar #AğustostaKavuşuyoruz (*Back in August*) #Cinemaximum."

It can be seen that these posts began in June (11%) when talk about the reopening of movie theaters was at its highest and when preparations were being made, peaking in July (82%). At the same time, the topic covered the most in posts in July was "Preparations for reopening movie theaters and announcements." These posts continued in August (12%) and September (1%). These posts support the organization's marketing work.

Online Survey

An online survey was held on June 23. The posted tweet said, "Not long now, waiting for July! We invite you to take part in our survey on movie-going habits! Your ideas matter to us! To take part in the survey: Go to <https://bit.ly/319pFgL> #ÖzlediysekSebebiVar #AğustostaKavuşuyoruz #Cinemaximum" A total of five tweets were found using similar expressions: one in June, two in July, and two in September. As was clearly stated in the tweet, the goal of the online surveys posted by Cinemaximum movie theaters on social media was to gather information about audiences' movie-going habits. These posts support the organization's public relations work.

Hygiene Measures

When it became certain that movie theaters were going to open on August 7, tweets began being posted mentioning the hygiene measures being taken so that movie lovers could go to movie theaters without worrying about Covid-19. A tweet posted on August 2 said: "We frequently disinfect our theaters so your movie enjoyment can get off to a good start. We took all hygiene precautions when we opened, and we're waiting for you." Tweets emphasizing contact-free payment technologies were also posted.

It can be seen that these posts were made only in August (19%), September (10%), October (12%), and November (9%), when the theaters reopened after the pandemic. These posts support the organization's marketing work.

Links to Purchase Tickets

Links directing Twitter users to the ticket purchase page on Cinemaximum's official website began being embedded in tweets again in August. With the ticket purchase links coming back into use on August 7, Twitter started being used for sales purposes just as it had before the pandemic. It can be seen that these posts were only made in

January (54%), February (33%), March 1-15 (38%), August (20%), September (25%), October (39%), and November (46%) when movie theaters were open. These posts support the organization's marketing and sales work.

Latest Events Organized at The Physical Location

These posts made in January (17%), February (7%), and March 1-15 (9%) were not made at all after March 16 except for the tweet made on October 7 announcing the first movie gala to take place after the pandemic. The tweet said: "Our first gala at Cinemaximum in a long time was both hygienic and with social distancing! The fun comedy *Aile Hükümeti* comes to theaters on Friday. Don't miss it! Purchase tickets at: <https://bit.ly/3deFhDR> #AileHükümeti #cinemaximum." Another movie gala that took place at a physical location was also found between March 16 and December 15, 2020. These posts support the organization's advertising and promotional activities as part of its marketing work.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The first research question was, "Did the number of tweets posted by Cinemaximum movie theaters during the pandemic (March 16 to December 15, 2020) change by month?" According to the study, the number of tweets posted by Cinemaximum movie theaters during the pandemic (March 16 to December 15, 2020) did change by month. The number of tweets on Cinemaximum's official account in March was 63% less than in February. To be able to continue posting on social media after the pandemic is the first step in ensuring continuity of communication with social media users. Communication at this time, when opportunities for people to get together in a physical location had dwindled or gone away altogether in some situations, continued via social media. When looking at the change in the numbers of monthly tweets posted compared with the previous month, it can be seen that they fell by 65% in April and increased by 226% in May, when expectations of reopening movie theaters began to rise. It was seen that the number of tweets fell by 2% in June and by 26% in July, then increased by 187% in August when Cinemaximum movie theaters reopened. It was determined that the number of tweets continued to rise in September (13% increase), reaching the pre-pandemic level before falling again after October. The number of tweets was seen to fall by 14% in October, by 45% in November when theaters were closed for a second time, and by 73% in the first 15 days of December (Table 4). The fact that the number

of tweets posted fell when movie theaters were closed, rose during the month when there was a possibility of them reopening (May), reached pre-pandemic levels in the months when they were open again (August, September, and October), then fell suddenly in the month when they were closed down again (November) supports the idea that Cinemaximum used its Twitter account primarily for sales and marketing purposes (Figure 11).

The second research question was, “What were the most common themes in the tweets posted by Cinemaximum before the pandemic?” The study identified nine topics in posts made between January 1 and March 15, 2020. These were: 1-Movie showtimes and information about the movie; 2-Ticket purchase link; 3-Ticket prices, campaigns, discounts, gifts, perks; 4-Special events organized at the physical location; 5-Buffer shopping and the popcorn menu; 6-Promotion of and links to other digital channels, announcement of new communication channels and programs; 7-Competitions, games, questions, riddles, messages promoting participation (tag your friend, etc.), humor, interesting information (prepared using information about movies and images of movies); 8-Movie theater technical features and amenities; 9- Holiday and special occasion celebrations and remembrance messages. The topic covered the most in the tweets posted by Cinemaximum movie theaters, at 83%, was seen to be “Movie showtimes and information about the movie.” The other topics covered the most in posts were seen to be “Ticket purchase link” and “Ticket prices, campaigns, discounts, gifts, and perks.” These results support the idea that before the pandemic, Cinemaximum used its Twitter account primarily for sales and marketing purposes.

The third research question was, “When evaluated in terms of their themes, was there any change in the tweets posted by Cinemaximum on Twitter before the pandemic (January 1 - March 15, 2020) and those posted during the pandemic (March 16 - December 15, 2020)?” The study found that when investigated on a topic basis, there was a change between the tweets posted on Cinemaximum’s Twitter account before the pandemic (January 1 - March 15, 2020) and those posted during the pandemic (March 16 - December 15, 2020). It was also seen that seven other topics were added to the topics in tweets posted during the pandemic. These were: 1-Official announcements about coronavirus measures, 2-The importance of movie theaters, the privilege of watching movies in theaters, the longing for movie theaters, 3-Past movie showings and events at Cinemaximum movie theaters, 4-Current developments in the movie industry, 5-Preparations for reopening the movie theaters and announcements, 6-Online

survey, 7-Hygiene measures taken due to the coronavirus. The topics covered most during the pandemic were “Contests, games, questions, puzzles, messages promoting participation (tag your friend, etc.), humor, interesting information” in March (16-30) (71%), April (79%), May (52%), and June (54%); “Preparations for reopening the movie theaters and announcements” in July (82%); “Movie showtimes and information about the movie” in August (61%), September (75%), October (74%), and November (81%) when movie theaters reopened; and “Contests, games, questions, puzzles, messages promoting participation (tag your friend, etc.), humor, interesting information” in December (1-15) (77%), when the theaters were closed down again. These results support the idea the Cinemaximum used its Twitter account primarily for sales and marketing purposes. When movie theaters were closed, the purpose changed from sales and marketing to establishing communication or continuing existing communication.

The element of nostalgia comes to the fore in posts under the topics “The importance of movie theaters, the privilege of watching movies in theaters, the longing for movie theaters” and “Past movie showings and events at Cinemaximum movie theaters.” Many of the tweets under the topic “Contests, games, questions, puzzles, messages promoting participation (tag your friend, etc.), humor, interesting information” were made using images from movies that were shown in the past. In short, it was seen that nostalgia was used in the tweets.

In the Turkish Language Institute Dictionary of Current Turkish, the word “nostalgia” has two meanings (TDK, 2020): 1. The sense of longing for fine things that remained in the past and being overwhelmed by this feeling; a love of the past; living the past today. 2. The sense of seeking refuge in the past; a love of the past; living the past today due to the fear of change.

Watching movies in movie theaters together with other people used to be a natural part of our lives, just like many other activities, but with the pandemic, it suddenly became unattainable. At this time, when what was natural has become impossible, going to the movies has become a treasured activity remembered with longing just like anything else that is lost. What was lost here is not just going to the movie theater. What was suddenly lost is one of the symbols of living in a society and socializing. Tweets about “The importance of movie theaters, the privilege of watching movies in movie theaters, and the longing for movie theaters” and “Movie showings and events

that took place in Cinemaximum movie theaters in the past” began being posted during the pandemic with the purpose of emphasizing the importance of movie theaters for society.

Furthermore, attempts were made to instill confidence in followers by emphasizing in tweets that the risks posed to society by the Covid-19 pandemic were known and that the necessary precautions were being taken and work done. Tweets about “Official announcements regarding coronavirus precautions;” “Preparations to reopen movie theaters and their announcements;” “Online survey;” and “Hygiene measures taken due to the coronavirus” began being posted during the pandemic with the purpose of explaining to target audiences what Cinemax was doing to adapt to the sudden change in circumstances and to ensure they would come back to Cinemaximum with peace of mind when the movie theaters reopened.

The fourth research question was, “For what purposes did Cinemaximum use Twitter during the pandemic (March 16 - December 5, 2020)?” The study showed that in the second half of March and in April, May, and June, when communication was rapidly transitioning from physical locations to the digital realm, Cinemaximum’s Twitter account was used first to continue the communication that had been established with the target audience in the past. This is why it was seen that the tweets posted at this time were mostly in support of the organization’s public relations work. Starting in May, when expectations of reopening began to rise, messages in support of marketing work, just like before the pandemic, began being posted again. Twitter was seen to be used for ticket sales in that tweets posted over August-November, when Cinemaximum movie theaters were open again, contained links for purchasing tickets. The number of tweets fell after November 21, when theaters were closed down a second time, but did not go away completely. Thanks to this, Twitter continued to be one of the most important tools providing communication between Cinemaximum and its followers.

Also worthy of note is the fact that topics not seen before the pandemic appeared in tweets posted during the pandemic. Tweets began being posted that emphasized the importance for society of movie theaters, which had been engaged in fierce competition with digital platforms due to technological developments in recent years, were struggling to survive, and had to close their doors due to the global pandemic. These tweets also recalled the memorable moments experienced in movie theaters in the past. Furthermore, the tweets carried messages emphasizing that Cinemaximum

was aware of the seriousness of the pandemic and was taking the necessary precautions, and that movie-lovers could return to Cinemaximum with peace of mind when the theaters were open.

The study "A Descriptive Analysis of the Use of Twitter by Cinemaximum Movie Theaters During the Covid-19 Global Pandemic" reveals that social media can acquire new functions by adapting to new conditions emerging in different periods. Organizations use social media for their primary purposes. When the conditions change, the primary objectives of the organizations also change, and in this regard, they continue to use social media in line with the new conditions and new purposes. When considered from this perspective, it is seen that social media can offer flexibility in use and serves different purposes under different conditions. Social media, which is one of the fastest and most economical means of interacting with the target audience, allowing direct communication between the organization and its target audience without time and place restrictions, also became one of the most important tools for communication during the global pandemic. The most important benefit of social media for movie theaters during the pandemic was that it allowed them to communicate with their target audience 24 hours a day, despite having to close their doors. Thanks to social media, movie theaters were able to continue conveying their messages to moviegoers during the pandemic. Cinemaximum emphasized the beauty of the days when movie theaters were open with its messages on social media during the pandemic, tried to revive the memories of movie theaters, which have a great importance in our collective memory, and reminded people of the importance of movie theaters and the services they provided in the past. Another important benefit of social media is that it provides reassuring messages to ensure that moviegoers come back to movie theaters without fear when the theaters open. In addition, it is known that social media is a tool with which a lot of information about the target audience can be obtained. The number of likes, retweets, and comments and the content of the comments provide organizations with much important information about the target audience. Aside from this, Cinemaximum tried to understand the effects of the global pandemic on movie lovers with the online survey it posted on Twitter. Therefore, it is seen that during the pandemic, Cinemaximum used social media to obtain information about its target audience. It is also seen that social media plays a very important role in the communication work of movie theaters that have had to close their doors during the pandemic. However, although it is free to open an account in social media applications, the fact that a professional staff and budget are needed to use these accounts effectively should not be overlooked. It is

not easy for independent movie theaters to use social media as effectively as Cinemaximum. This situation can be understood more clearly when it is considered that Cinemaximum, Turkey's largest movie theater chain, has the most followers on social media. However, for independent movie theaters to overcome these difficult times, it will be important for them to make effective use of social media, which is much more economical compared with other communication tools and provides direct communication with the target audience 24 hours a day.

In a study that aimed to compile and evaluate the literature covering national research, studies, articles, and publications on movie theaters, viewing experiences, and audiences, increasing interest in the field was seen (Çam & Yüksel, 2020, p. 617). It has been determined that many studies on movie theaters during the Covid-19 global pandemic period have been made. These studies discussed the movie watching experience (de Sá Machado Jr, 2020), "historical economic geographies of film exhibition in Turkey and Istanbul since 1970" (Öz & Özkaraçalar, 2020), "enlargement and transformation of the movie theater industry in Turkey after 2000" (Yurtseven, 2020), "the oligopolistic structure of the Turkish cinema industry after mergers and acquisitions" (Özdurak, 2020), "the latest amendments on Cinema Law No. 5224" (Baykal, 2020), "technological change and managerial challenges in the movie theater industry" (Weinberg, Otten, Orbach, et al., 2021), and "the change in the movie watching experience" (Anadolu, 2020) .

Two studies on Covid-19's impact on movie theaters have been identified. These studies examined the effects of Covid-19 on the Korean movie industry (Kim, 2020) and the Chinese movie industry (Ma, Kim, Cohen, & Neumann, 2020).

The study entitled "A Descriptive Analysis of the Use of Twitter by Cinemaximum Movie Theaters During the Covid-19 Global Pandemic," on the other hand, examines movie theaters in terms of social media use during the Covid-19 global pandemic, and draws attention to a dimension not covered in previous studies. Although movie theaters have been studied in many different aspects so far, only one study examining their use of social media has been found. No source has been found other than the study in which the posts on Cinemaximum's Facebook account were analyzed (Korver & Keskin, 2019). Social media is also an important communication tool for movie theater operators. Creating a profile and sharing messages on social media, which is one of the most important communication tools during the global pandemic, when face-to-

face communication with the target audience is no longer possible, is free and can be used by small businesses as well. For this reason, how social media is used by movie theaters is one of the issues that need to be investigated.

The results of this study are significant in three ways:

- 1) Huge changes took place during the Covid-19 pandemic in the way people communicate. The study shows what changes were made during the Covid-19 pandemic by organizations in the way they communicate, using Cinemaximum movie theaters as an example. While people and organizations continued to use the digital communication channels they had used before the pandemic, they also started using different digital communication channels.
- 2) The study is also important in that it shows how movie theaters, already experiencing hardships despite occupying an important place in our social memory, coped with the pandemic and identifies what messages they tried to convey to the target audiences at this time via the social media app known as Twitter. Apart from being places where movie lovers can watch current or specially selected movies at high quality, and where the movie industry can make its highest income by showing movies to audiences, movie theaters are places where people socialize and communicate with one another thanks to movies. The future of movie theaters has begun being debated due to the rapid spread in recent years of the Internet and digital platforms, and the increasing ease of access to movies outside movie theaters. Already fighting the adverse effects of digital platforms, movie theaters have also started to combat the adverse effect of the pandemic. In 2020, when people were totally unable to go to movie theaters because of the pandemic, or if they could it was only with many restrictions, box-office earnings in Turkey fell by 70% compared with 2019. Their physical locations now unusable or usable only in a very restricted fashion, movie theaters have had to use the Internet and social media more than ever to communicate with their target audiences. The messages posted on social media at this time have been treated as documents reflecting how movie theaters coped with the pandemic.

The topic codes identified in the tweets were classified under 16 different categories in the study. It was seen that three different topics came to the fore

at different times. It was seen that the topics tweeted the most were those under the category “Movies” when theaters were open, “Fun” when they were closed, and “Preparations to reopen movie theaters” in July when preparations to reopen theaters were being made (Figure 12). Even though every tweet can fulfill more than one function, it can be said that the tweets in the “Movies” and “Preparations to reopen movie theaters” categories were mainly for advertising and promotional purposes as part of marketing work and that tweets in the “Fun” category were for public relations to maintain communication previously established with the target audience (Table 6).

- 3) Although many scientific studies involving movie theaters have been made, studies examining movie theaters’ use of social media are limited. No studies were found on movie theaters’ use of social media during the Covid-19 pandemic. Analysis of how movie theater operators, which rank among those organizations that are using social media with its rapidly increasing number of users, has the potential to yield important information regarding their activities and their goals. This study draws attention to this potential and sets an example.

The descriptive analysis method and content analysis technique were used to examine the posts made by Cinemaximum movie theaters on Twitter. In future studies, holding interviews with movie theater operators regarding the purposes for which social media was used by movie theaters during the pandemic and what functions it fulfilled during this period compared with previous periods will help provide a clearer understanding of the importance of social media for movie theaters.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

Grant Support: The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Number of Movie Theaters in Turkey, Movies Shown, and Viewers, 2019

Year	Number of movie theaters	Number of seats	Number of movies shown			Number of viewers		
			Total	Turkish movie	Foreign movie	Total	Turkish movie	Foreign movie
2019	2 826	337 914	68 386	29 064	39 322	56 479 209	32 331 764	24 147 445

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), <https://data.tuik.gov.tr>, 2020, June 16

Table 2: Total Number of Movies Shown in Movie Theaters in Turkey in 2019 and 2020, Total Number of Viewers, Total Revenue

Year	Total number of movies that came to movie theaters	Number of new movies that came to movie theaters	Total number of viewers	Total revenue
2019	622	404	59.556.020	980.410.567 TL
2020	342	177	17.415.304	299.726.220 TL

Source: boxofficeturkiye.com, boxofficeturkiye.com/yillik, Access Date:2020, December 1

Table 3: Social Media Apps Used by The Top Five Movie Theaters in Turkey With The Highest Number of Followers on Twitter and The Number of Followers

	Account Name	Cinemaximum	Beyoğlu Sinemasi	Kadıköy Sinemasi	Sinebu	Büyüü Fener Sinemasi
TWITTER		@cinemaximum	@BeyogluSinemasi	@kadikoySinemasi	@sinebuboun	@Buyulu_Fener
	Number of Followers	69.006	26.955	8.224	5.717	3.074
	Number of Tweets	36.896	3.732	1.787	1.409	3.639
	Start Date	February 29, 2012	January 1, 2013	December 30, 2017	April 29, 2015	May 22, 2013
INSTAGRAM		@cinemaximum	@beyoglusinemasi	-	@sinebuboun	@buyulufenersinemalari
	Number of Followers	111.029	45.617	-	6.253	5.319
	Number of Posts	7.168	1.256	-	338	1.183
FACEBOOK		@cinemaximum	@BeyogluSinemasi	@kadikoySinemasi	@sinebu	@sinemabuyulufener
	Number of Followers	1.214.727	9.103	5.006	9.713	16.568
	Start Date	July 19, 2010	October 10, 2012	December 1, 2017	May 5, 2015	January 22, 2009
YOUTUBE		cinemaximum	-	-	-	-
	Number of Followers	9.940 (subscriber)	-	-	-	-
	Number of Posts	530	-	-	-	-
	Number of Views	5.335.384	-	-	-	-
	Start Date	February 25, 2015	-	-	-	-
TikTok		@CinemaximumOfficial	-	-	-	-
	Start Date	August 2020	-	-	-	-
	Number of Followers	220	-	-	-	-
	Likes	700	-	-	-	-
	Number of Posts	21	-	-	-	-

Source: Official social media accounts, Twitter (@cinemaximum, @BeyogluSinemasi, @kadikoySinemasi, @sinebuboun, @Buyulu_Fener), Instagram (@cinemaximum, @beyoglusinemasi, @sinebuboun, @buyulufenersinemalari), Facebook (@cinemaximum, @BeyogluSinemasi, @kadikoySinemasi, @sinebu, @sinemabuyulufener), Youtube (cinemaximum), TikTok (@CinemaximumOfficial), Access Date: 2020, December 25

Table 4: Distribution of Tweets Posted on Cinemaximum's @cinemaximum Official Twitter Account in 2020 (January 1- December 15) by Month

Date	Total Number of Tweets
January	136
February	147
March, 1-15	47
March, 16-31	7
April	19
May	62
June	61
July	45
August	129
September	146
October	125
November	69
December, 1-15	13
Total	1006

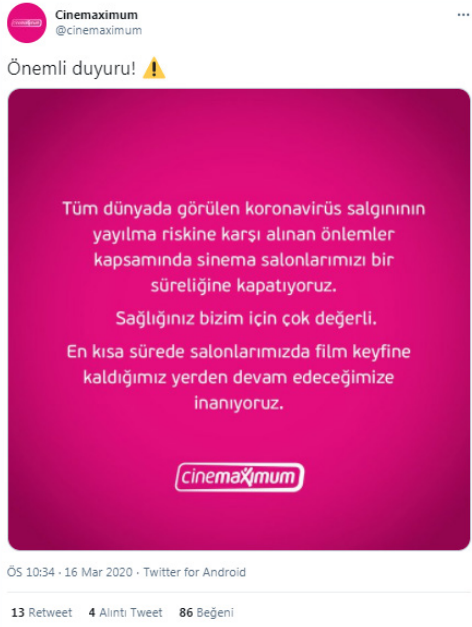
Source: Cinemaximum's official Twitter account @cinemaximum, Access Date: December 16, 2020

Table 5: Descriptive Code Data for Tweets Posted on Cinemaximum's Official Twitter Account @cinemaximum between January 1 and December 15, 2020.

	CATEGORY	TOPICS' DESCRIPTIVE CODE TYPE
1	Movies	Movie showtimes and information about the movie
2	Ticket Sales	Ticket Sales link
3	Discounts and Campaigns	Ticket prices, campaigns, discounts, gifts, perks
4	Latest Events	The latest events arranged at the physical location
5	Buffet Shopping	Buffet shopping and the popcorn menu
6	Digital Channels	Promotion of and links to other digital channels, announcements of new communication channels and programs
7	Online Survey	Online Survey
8	Fun	Contests, games, questions, puzzles, messages aimed at participation (tag your friend, etc.), humor, interesting informations
9	Theater features	The movie theater's technical features and amenities.
10	Special Occasion Message	Holiday and special occasion celebration and remembrance messages
11	Official COVID-19 Announcement	The official COVID-19 announcement
12	Importance of Movie Theaters	The importance of movie theaters, the privilege of watching movies in theaters, the longing for movie theaters
13	Past Cinemaximum Events	Past movie showings and events at Cinemaximum movie theaters.
14	Movie Industry Agenda	Latest news from the movie industry
15	Theater Opening Preparations	Preparations for reopening movie theaters and announcements
16	Hygiene Measures	Hygiene measures taken due to the coronavirus

Table 6: Distribution by Topic and Month of Tweets Posted on Cinemaximum's Official Twitter Account @cinemaximum Between January 1 and December 15, 2020 (Note: One tweet may cover multiple topics.)(F=Frequency, %=Percentage) (n = 1,006)

Number of Tweets	January		February		March, 1-15		March, 16-31		April		May		June		July		August		September		October		November		December, 1-15		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Movies	136	100	147	100	47	100	7	100	19	100	62	100	61	100	45	100	129	100	146	100	125	100	69	100	13	100	1006	100
Ticket Sales	74	54	48	33	18	38	-	-	-	-	9	15	4	7	8	18	79	61	110	75	92	74	56	81	3	23	634	63
Discounts and Campaigns	51	38	53	36	7	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	13	-	-	59	46	70	48	31	25	38	55	-	-	284	28
Latest Events	23	17	10	7	4	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	37	4
Buffet Shopping	-	-	7	5	2	4	-	-	-	-	6	10	2	3	-	-	20	16	30	21	5	4	3	4	-	-	75	7
Digital Channels	3	2	8	5	3	6	-	-	-	-	13	21	16	26	1	2	6	5	8	5	9	7	1	1	2	15	75	7
Online Survey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	1	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fun	1	1	6	4	1	0,5	5	71	15	79	32	52	33	54	18	40	3	2	8	5	10	8	4	6	10	77	146	15
Theater features	2	1	6	4	1	0,5	-	-	-	-	1	2	5	8	4	9	29	22	22	15	13	10	23	33	-	-	106	11
Special Occasion Message	1	1	2	1	1	0,5	1	14	5	26	12	19	9	15	3	7	2	2	2	1	4	3	2	3	-	-	44	4
Official COVID-19 Announcement	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	-	-	4	0,5
Importance of Movie Theaters	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	16	6	19	7	11	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	2
Past Cinemaximum Events	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	11	7	11	4	7	3	7	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	2
Movie Industry Agenda	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	4	9	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	23	11	1
Theater Opening Preparations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	11	37	82	16	12	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	62	6
Hygiene Measures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	19	14	10	15	12	6	9	-	-	60	6
Toplam	269	14	257	14	79	4	7	0,5	25	1	86	5	100	5	80	4	267	14	305	16	228	12	168	9	18	1	1889	100

Figure 1: Tweet Posted on March 16, 2020

Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 2: Tweet Posted on April 1, 2020

Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 3: Tweet Posted on May 28, 2020



Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 4: Tweet Posted on June 3, 2020



Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 5: Tweet Posted on June 28, 2020

Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 6: Tweet Posted on July 20, 2020

Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 7: Tweet Posted on August 12, 2020



Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 8: Tweet Posted on October 7, 2020



Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 9: Tweet Posted on November 24, 2020

Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date: 2020, December 1

Figure 10: Tweet Posted on December 22, 2020

Source: Twitter/cinemaximum, Access Date:2020, December 1

Figure 11: Distribution of Tweets Posted on Cinemaximum’s @cinemaximum Official Twitter Account in 2020 (January 1- December 15) by Month

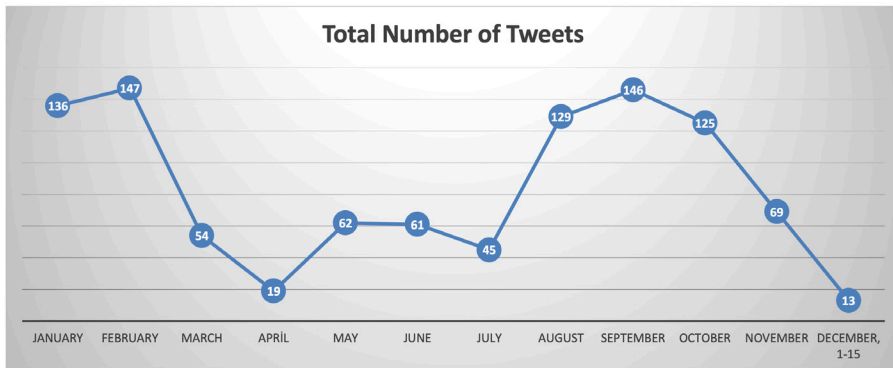


Figure 12: Total Number of Tweets Posted on Cinemaximum’s Official Twitter Account @Cinemaximum Between January 1 and December 15, 2020, and Distribution of The Three Topics Covered Most Proportionally in The Tweets by Months

