

An Investigation of Universities' Public Relations and Corporate Twitter Use (Covid- 19 Process)

Üniversitelerin Halkla İlişkileri ve Kurumsal Twitter Kullanımı Üzerine Bir Araştırma (Covid-19 Süreci)

ABSTRACT

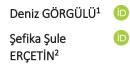
This study aimed to investigate the impact of corporate Twitter use on university public relations. The research employed a mixed design, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative aspect utilized a cross-sectional survey model, while the qualitative part involved a case study design. The study included 1245 postgraduate students selected through stratified sampling. For the qualitative part, the sample consisted of one state and one foundation university from each region with the highest number of Twitter followers, identified using the purposive sampling method. The findings indicated that postgraduate students generally perceived university public relations to be at an acceptable level. Moreover, foundation university students held a more positive view of their institutions' public relations. Analyzing universities' corporate Twitter use revealed that Atatürk University had the highest number of posts. Furthermore, the analysis showed that universities mainly shared content to promote other public relations tools. The analysis also revealed a similar number of tweets from universities before and after the pandemic.

Keywords: Public relations, corporate Twitter, university

ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı, üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerinde kurumsal Twitter kullanımının rolünü incelemektir. Araştırma eş zamanlı nicel ve nitel karma araştırma desenine göre tasarlanmıştır. Araştırmanın nicel boyutunda kesitsel tarama modeli, nitel boyutunda ise durum çalışması kullanılmıştır. Nicel boyutta katılımcılar tabakalı örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenmiş ve 1245 lisansüstü öğrenci çalışmada yer almıştır. Nitel boyutta ise örneklem amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenmiş ve her bölgeden Twitter'da en fazla takipçiye sahip bir devlet ve vakıf üniversitesi çalışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda lisansüstü öğrencilerin algılarına göre üniversitelerin halkla ilişkiler anlayışının yeterli düzeyde olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Araştırmada vakıf üniversitelerinde okuyan öğrencilerin üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerine yönelik algılarının daha yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir. Üniversitelerin kurumsal Twitter kullanımları incelendiğinde Atatürk Üniversitesi'nin en fazla paylaşımda bulunan üniversite olduğu görülmüştür. Üniversitelerin en çok diğer halkla ilişkiler araçlarını duyurmak amacıyla paylaşım yaptıkları tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca üniversitelerin pandemi öncesi ve sonrasında benzer sayılarda tweet attıkları ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Halkla ilişkiler, kurumsal Twitter, üniversite



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Introduction

The modern landscape of organizational competition is heavily influenced by the use of information. The majority of activities rely on informational resources, thus increasing the importance of information daily (Baytekin, 2012). In this dynamic paradigm, institutions engaged in knowledge production, notably universities, play a critical role. Universities are essential in generating, preserving, aggregating, and realizing knowledge (Simsek, 2018). As knowledge hubs, universities have facilitated the dissemination of knowledge by relinquishing monopolistic control over it. However, the changing expectations of the information society regarding knowledge have implications for the role of universities (Snellman, 2015). Therefore, it is imperative for universities to continuously adapt and adopt structures that align with the demands of the contemporary world.

Public relations are a crucial management function that helps organizations meet the expectations of their audiences. Organizations benefit from bilateral relationships with their audience by cultivating and sustaining satisfaction, trust, and loyalty among their target audience (Cutlip et al., 2001; Çelebi, 2019). In the field of public relations, organizations strive to establish effective and diverse communication with their target group through various media channels (Kelleher, 2018). The target group's characteristics should guide the choice of communication tools in this process. Additionally, there is a focus on ensuring that the messages conveyed are clear and unambiguous, with a preference for using communication tools that have been proven to be effective in enhancing public relations efforts (Çetintaş, 2019).

Organizations typically use three main categories of methods in public relations: written, oral, and audiovisual tools (Sabuncuoğlu, 2013). Historically, written tools have played a predominant role in the evolution of public relations (Taş & Kestellioğlu, 2011). However, with modern information technologies, internet-based tools have become increasingly important in public relations practices (Hobbs, 2016). In particular, the widespread use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has prompted organizations to actively integrate these platforms into relations their public strategies (McCorkindale & Distaso, 2014).

Public relations serve as a strategic tool for universities to showcase their strengths and offerings to the public, as well as to engage with their target group (Sing, 2019) and implement initiatives aimed at enhancing students' capabilities and securing governmental support (Bümen, 2017). As a result, universities strive to establish effective communication channels with current, alumni, and prospective students, as well as their families, leveraging social media platforms to strengthen institutional identity. This coordinated effort aims to position universities as preferred choices among students and academics, promote academic and student-oriented initiatives, and build public trust (Boumarafi, 2015; Peruta & Shields, 2017; Tanova & Amca, 2016).

Twitter, a widely observed social media platform, serves as a prominent avenue for individuals seeking news updates and expressing their opinions. The platform predominantly features posts about everyday life occurrences (Wang et. al., 2021). Public relations specialists regard Twitter as an influential communication tool (Himelboim et al., 2014). Leveraging its user-friendly interface for opinion dissemination, universities globally, alongside other organizations, extensively utilize Twitter as a cornerstone of their public relations endeavors (Köseoğlu & Köker, 2014).

Twitter's rapid news-sharing capability has been instrumental during crises, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when universities extensively used the platform to distribute crucial information to students, academics, and staff members (Kanılmaz, 2021). Research by Ferrer-Serrano et al. (2020) emphasizes the significance of institutional Twitter accounts for universities during such extraordinary times. The study highlights that these accounts attracted increased public attention amid the pandemic, underscoring their pivotal role in communication and information dissemination.

The literature suggests that universities consider public relations to be a critical managerial function (Anngreni, 2018; Harder, 2019; Şimşek, 2021). However, there are indications that universities often lack a comprehensive and systematic approach to their public relations efforts (Akyüz, 2019; Doğan, 2019; Sultana et al., 2019). Observations reveal that universities significantly prioritize the use of corporate Twitter accounts (Bista, 2015; Kandemir, 2019; Veletsianos et al., 2017). Nevertheless, there is a shortage of research examining the use of corporate Twitter by universities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic's shift toward increased online public relations activities suggests that higher education institutions should critically examine universities' public relations strategies and their use of corporate Twitter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of

corporate Twitter use on universities' public relations strategies. To achieve this goal, the study states the following research questions:

- 1. What is the level of public relations at universities during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to postgraduate students' perceptions?
- 2. Is there a significant difference in postgraduate students' perceptions of universities' public relations based on variables such as age, gender, type of university, field of research, and type of graduate education?
- 3. To what extent and for what purpose do universities use institutional Twitter as part of their public relations activities?

Methods

The investigation used a mixed research approach from the pragmatist paradigm as its methodology (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2020). The selection of this method was significantly influenced by the principle of complementarity (Greene et al., 1989). We employed quantitative research to evaluate the public relations practices of universities and qualitative research to clarify the complexities involved in these institutions' use of corporate Twitter. Additionally, we chose a concurrent mixed research design for this purpose due to its proven efficacy in producing robust and validated findings.

In the quantitative phase of the study, we employed the cross-sectional survey model outlined by Erçetin & Açıkalın (2020). This model involves describing a current or past situation by delineating subgroups within larger populations. On the other hand, the qualitative aspect utilized a case study design, allowing researchers to delve deeply into a specific situation, event, process, or individual (Creswell, 2017). The case study method aims to categorize the problem scenario and derive meaningful insights from it (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Population and Sample

The quantitative aspect of the research focuses on postgraduate students enrolled in Turkish universities during the 2020–2021 academic year. This population was

chosen because postgraduate education is voluntary, and students pursue academic career aspirations, personal and professional development, and enhanced economic prospects (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010). Their ability to make informed and objective judgments makes their perceptions valuable for this study. We determined the sample using a stratified sampling method, first categorizing the population based on research areas, and then selecting and combining samples using a simple random sampling approach. Table 1 presents the composition of participants in the study sample.

The data presented in Table 1 illustrates that 67% of the survey participants identified as female, with 33% identifying as male. Regarding age distribution, 27% of respondents fell within the 21–25 age range, 35% in the 26–30 age range, 23% in the 31–35 age range, 11% in the 36–40 age range, and 5% were 41 years old or older. Notably, 84% of the respondents received their education from state universities, while the remaining 16% attended foundation universities. In terms of academic fields, 9% of postgraduate students were in educational sciences, 52% in social sciences, 6% in health sciences, and 33% in scientific disciplines. Additionally, 53% of the participants were pursuing thesis-based master's programs, 12% non-thesis master's programs, and 35% doctoral programs.

The qualitative aspect of the research involved 127 public and 73 foundation Turkish universities that had institutional Twitter accounts as of December 20, 2020, when the content analysis began. The sample selection process used purposive sampling, including one state and one foundation university with the highest follower counts from each of the seven regions in Türkiye. It's important to note that, due to the absence of foundation universities in the Eastern Anatolian region, only state universities from that region participated in the research. Table 2 outlines the details of the research sample.

Gazi University, as a state university, had the highest number of followers overall, while Bilkent University had the most followers among foundation universities. In contrast, Avrasya University had the fewest followers. Additionally, Istanbul Bilgi University had the highest tweet count among the sampled universities.

Table 1.

Information	on the	Participants in	the Sample	of the Study

Variable		Ν	%
Gender	Female	832	67
Gender	Male	413	33
	21-25 age	332	27
	26-30 age	438	35
Age	31-35 age	281	23
	36-40 age	132	11
	41 age and over	832 413 332 438 281	5
	State University	1043	84
University type	Foundation University	202	16
	Education Sciences	113	9
Craduata Dragram	Social Sciences	648	52
Graduate Program	Health Sciences	76	6
	Science	408	33
	Master's degree with thesis	664	53
Type of Postgraduate Education	Master's degree without thesis	153	12
	PhD	428	35

Table 2.

Population and Sample of the Qualitative Dimension of the Study

Region	City	Туре	University	Twitter Followers	Total Number of Tweets
Mediterranean	Antalya	State	Akdeniz University	59.312	13.000
Mediterranean	Antalya	Foundation	Antalya Bilim University	16.215	4.037
Eastern Anatolia	Erzurum	State	Atatürk University	47.253	6.355
Aegean	İzmir	State	Ege University	123.126	1.919
Aegean	İzmir	Foundation	Yaşar University	14.261	9.185
Southeastern Anatolia	Gaziantep	State	Gaziantep University	42.893	12.100
Southeastern Anatolia	Gaziantep	Foundation	Hasan Kalyoncu University	14.509	8.788
Central Anatolia	Ankara	Foundation	Bilkent University	77.591	3400
Central Anatolia	Ankara	State	Gazi University	302.835	5.850
Black Sea	Düzce	State	Düzce University	18.890	8.834
Black Sea	Trabzon	Foundation	Avrasya University	1.413	174
Marmara	İstanbul	State	Boğaziçi University	114.720	5.443
Marmara	İstanbul	Foundation	İstanbul Bilgi University	71.700	13.200

Data Collection Process

In the quantitative dimension of the study, data collection commenced upon receipt of the "Ethics Commission Approval Notification Document" from the Hacettepe University Senate Ethics Commission, dated March 15, 2021, and numbered 00001499379. Afterwards, we administered the Public Relations in Postgraduate Education Scale (PRPES) online using a Google Form. The form explicitly stated the voluntary nature of research participation. Then, we invited postgraduate students to complete the form through various online platforms. The informed consent form was also attached to this form.

In the qualitative dimension of the research, the initial step was to identify and compile a list of the institutional Twitter accounts of the chosen universities for analysis. Next, we gathered tweets from each university's institutional Twitter account using NCapture, an internet browser plug-in compatible with the NVIVO application for qualitative data analysis. Later, we methodically evaluated the tweets posted between September 1, 2019, and August 31, 2020.

Data Collection Tools

Görgülü and Ercetin (2021) developed the PRPES for the quantitative aspect of the study, which evaluated universities' public relations practices from the perspective of postgraduate students. The scale sought to determine whether demographic variables influenced students' perceptions. We carried out an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to investigate the underlying factor structure of the scale before conducting the analysis. The results revealed four sub-dimensions: information, distance education, academic reputation, and communication. Then, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on a sample of 200 postgraduate students to evaluate the model's fit. The item-total correlations, which ranged from .55 to .70 for the information dimension, .45 to .60 for distance education, .69 to .80 for academic reputation, .62 to .80 for communication, and .45 to .86 for the overall scale, demonstrated satisfactory validity.

The compliance values obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which included x = 1544.08, sd = 346; $x^2/sd = 4.46$; RMSEA =.065, RMR = .897; CFI =.922; and NFI =.908, indicated good construct validity (Byrne, 2012). Additionally, the reliability of the scale and its subdimensions were assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The calculated coefficients were .88 for information, .85 for distance education, .91 for academic reputation, .88 for communication, and .84 for the overall scale, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

Content analysis was applied for the qualitative part of the study to examine universities' use of corporate Twitter. Content analysis involves segmenting data into discrete units and subsequently categorizing these units (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). We thoroughly reviewed tweets posted by the relevant universities between September 1, 2019, and August 31, 2020, twice in this study, noting the themes or topics they addressed. Then, we systematically coded all posts using a deductive approach and a closed code system. This process employed a code system that included categories like Announcing Other Public Relations Tools, Informing Students and Academic Staff, Announcing the Activities Conducted, Informing Potential Candidates and Alumni, Getting Closer to Society, Publicizing Relations Established with Stakeholders, and Enhancing Academic Reputation.

During the development of the codebook, as outlined in Table 3, the researcher worked with three field experts. To ensure that the coders were consistent, we used a single institutional Twitter account for pre-coding. Each coder categorized the tweets independently. We then combined the pre-coding results to create the initial version of the codebook. Next, we examined another institutional Twitter account to find any differences in coding interpretations. We found that the 2nd and 4th categories had the most differences. To address these differences, the coders discussed and finalized the categories to ensure consistency. This iterative process helped the coders reach a consensus and improved the reliability of the coding framework.

It is crucial for coders to agree on the same interpretations in order to ensure the validity and reliability of research findings. Our research followed rigorous methodologies such as triangulation for data collection and analysis, extended participant observation, and external auditor assessments, as suggested by Creswell (2017), to strengthen the validity and reliability of the research. Additionally, the use of direct quotations and careful note-taking helped to support the transferability of the research findings.

Analysis of Data

During the quantitative phase of the research, we initially imported data from Google Forms into SPSS 24 for analysis. We computed descriptive statistics, which included minimum and maximum values, mean values, standard deviations, and ranges. We also scrutinized the dataset and found no extreme values. On the other hand, we deemed no further action necessary due to the absence of adverse substances in the PRPES. Furthermore, participants fully completed all scale items, negating the need for loss data analysis.

Following the initial assessment, we examined the Skewness-Kurtosis values to evaluate the dataset's normality. Skewness values for both sub-dimensions and the overall scale ranged from -.434 to .253, while Kurtosis values ranged from -.739 to -.363. According to Tabachnick and Fidel (2013), these values fell within acceptable ranges for a normal distribution. However, we utilized the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to further validate the normality assumption. Results from this test indicated non-compliance with the normal distribution condition, as supported by Bursal (2017). Furthermore, Bursal (2017) noted that the data failed to meet the normal distribution because it did not conform to the normal distribution across subgroups of the variables.

To address the first sub-problem of the study, we utilized descriptive statistics to analyze the data. We grouped the perceptions of postgraduate students into four categories based on their average scores: very insufficient (1.00–1.74),

insufficient (1.75-2.49), sufficient (2.50–3.24), and very sufficient (3.25–4.00). For the second sub-problem, we used non-parametric tests to identify the factors affecting graduate students' perceptions of university public relations. Specifically, we employed the Mann-Whitney U test for gender and university type, and the Kruskal-Wallis H test for age, type of postgraduate education, and research field.

To address the third sub-problem, which examines

Table 3.

Codebook Used in Content Analysis

Theme	Category	Code	
		1.1. Corporate Website	
		1.2. Corporate Facebook Account	
		1.3. Corporate Instagram Account	
		1.4. Corporate YouTube Account	
	1 Announcing Other Dublic Polations Tools	1.5. University Online Newspaper	
	1. Announcing Other Public Relations Tools	1.6. Concert	
		1.7. Panel	
		1.8. Symposium	
		1.9. Workshop	
		1.10. Promotion Days	
	2. Information Churchente and Academic Chaff	2.1. Informing Students	
	2. Informing Students and Academic Staff	2.2. Informing Academic Staff	
		3.1. Scientific Activity	
Institutional Twitter Use		3.2. Artistic Activity	
of Universities	3. Announcing the Activities Conducted	3.3. Sportive Activity	
		3.4. Cultural Activity	
		3.5. Community Service	
	4 Information Determinal Constitution and Alumani	4.1. Informing Potential Candidates	
	4. Informing Potential Candidates and Alumni	4.2. Informing Graduates	
		5.1. Celebrating Specific Days and Weeks	
	5. Getting Closer to Society	5.2. Dealing with Social Problems	
		5.3. Doing Useful Things for Society	
		6.1. Engaging in Activities with Stakeholders	
	6. Publicizing Relations Established with Stakeholders	6.2. Hosting Stakeholders as Guests	
		6.3. Visiting Stakeholders	
		7.1. University Achievements	
	7. Enhancing Academic Reputation	7.2. Achievements of Academics	
		7.3. Students' Achievements	

Results

In this section, the findings obtained from the research are discussed under sub-headings.

Findings on Universities' Understanding of Public Relations According to the Perceptions of Postgraduate Students In the first phase of the research, the primary objective was to investigate the following question: What is the level of public relations at universities during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to postgraduate students' perceptions? We calculated mean and standard deviation values as statistical measures to ascertain postgraduate students' perceptions regarding university public relations, and Table 4 details these findings.

universities' use of corporate Twitter, we used the NVIVO 12

program to analyze the data. We subjected posts from the

September 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020, to thematic

analysis within the framework of content analysis. During

the coding process, we categorized tweets to enable their

inclusion in multiple categories as needed. Afterward, we

calculated the frequency and percentage values for each category and visually represented these findings through

corporate

universities'

graphs.

Twitter accounts

between

76

Table 4.

Perceptions of Postgraduate Students on Public Relations of Universities

Items	x	S
1: keeps its website up to date.	3.38	.752
2: actively uses social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.	3.04	.879
3: places the information needed on the web address in an easily accessible and understandable way.	3.22	.863
4: personalized information.	3.13	.937
5: prepares weekly or monthly bulletins on its activities.	2.79	.953
5: makes timely announcements on its website and social media accounts.	3.20	.807
7: provides information through the mobile student application it has developed.	2.46	1.072
3: units and officials can be easily reached by phone, e-mail and social media accounts.	2.88	1.030
9: responds quickly to questions directed to its social media accounts.	2.54	.930
10: The rector, dean, heads of departments, etc. provide information through administrators such as the rector, dean, heads of departments.	2.79	.946
1: makes distance education courses accessible to anyone who wants to listen to them.	2.23	1.071
12: organizes distance courses and trainings on topics that students need.	2.53	.995
13: continues its distance education activities in multiple languages.	2.27	1.029
14: organizes live broadcasts on its social media accounts.	2.34	1.036
15: conducts studies on current issues that society needs.	2.81	.966
L6: is seen as a trusted authority in society.	2.97	.890
17: conducts scientific studies on the effects of crisis situations on society.	2.99	.871
18: academics provide information on important issues in visual, audio and written media.	2.98	.881
19: makes news in the visual, audio and print media with its work.	2.97	.859
20: increases its public prestige.	2,94	.879
21: organizes a satisfaction survey on its ongoing activities.	2.84	.965
22: announces the results of the satisfaction survey and takes steps accordingly.	2,38	.970
23: take into account student opinions on social media and develop practices accordingly.	2.49	.969
24: shares with students and stakeholders its predictions about social changes in the short and long erm.	2.59	.930
Total	2.78	.614

Table 4 clearly shows that postgraduate students perceive universities' public relations as sufficient. This finding is consistent with the results of prior studies conducted by Karaca (2009) and Güven (2014). However, it is noteworthy that this contradicts the conclusions drawn in Yıldırmaz's (2020) study. The divergent findings in the literature signify a lack of consensus regarding the comprehension and implementation of public relations within universities.

An analysis of the scale items indicates that 1 item received a "very sufficient" rating, 17 items received a "sufficient" assessment, and 6 items received an "insufficient" valuation. Notably, the item "The university where I continue my postgraduate education keeps its website up to date" received the highest mean score. This finding aligns with Koç's (2015) reported results. Conversely, the item "The university where I continue my postgraduate education makes distance education courses accessible to anyone who wants to listen to them." obtained the lowest mean score. This suggests that universities may not effectively utilize distance education as a public relations tool.

Table 5 outlines an evaluation of postgraduate students' perceptions of universities' public relations across the scale's sub-dimensions.

Table 5.

The Status of Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Public Relations of Universities in the Sub-Dimensions of the Scale

Sub Dimension	ÿ	SS
Information	2.94	.639
Distance Education	2.34	.768
Academic Reputation	2.94	.747
Communication	2.57	.823
Total	2.78	.614

The analysis of Table 5 shows that postgraduate students perceive universities as more successful in terms of information dissemination and academic reputation. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which suggests that universities prioritize public relations efforts to enhance their academic standing and provide informational resources (Doğan, 2019; Güngör, 2018; Özkanal, 2006). On the other hand, people perceive universities to be less successful in the distance education dimension than in other areas. The challenges inherent in universities' distance education initiatives may account for this difference. Genç et al. (2020) have conducted research supporting this notion, indicating that systemic issues impede the effective implementation of distance education. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the communication dimension scored below average. This observation implies that universities encounter difficulties in establishing effective communication channels with their target group during the public relations process. Several studies in the literature support this finding, emphasizing the challenges universities face in fostering meaningful communication with stakeholders (Can, 2017; Kimmons et al., 2017; Urban, 2021).

Investigation of Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Public Relations of Universities According to Some Variables

In the second sub-problem of the study, the inquiry sought to answer the question: Is there a significant difference in postgraduate students' perceptions of universities' public relations based on variables such as age, gender, type of university, field of research, and type of graduate education? We initially assessed the potential impact of the age variable on postgraduate students' perceptions of university public relations using the Kruskal-Wallis H test in this context. Table 6 presents the results of this analysis.

After reviewing Table 6, it is clear that there is no significant difference in postgraduate students' perceptions of university public relations across the dimensions of information, distance education, academic reputation, communication, and the overall scale based on the age variable. Therefore, we can infer that postgraduate students across different age groups have similar perceptions regarding university public relations.

Table 6.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results for the Examination of Postgraduate Student.	s' Perceptions of Public Relations of Universities
Depending on Age Variable	

Dimensions	Age	Ν	sd	χ ²	р	Difference
	21-25	332	4	7.764	.101	-
	26-30	438				
Information	31-35	281				
	36-40	132				
	41 and above	62				
	21-25	332	4	6.549	.162	-
	26-30	438				
Distance Education	31-35	281				
	36-40	132			0.81	
	41 and above	62				
	21-25	332	4	8.310	0.81	-
	26-30	438				
Academic Reputation	31-35	281				
	36-40	132				
	41 and above	62				
	21-25	332	4	4.753	.314	-
	26-30	438				
Communication	31-35	281				
	36-40	132				
	41 and above	62				
	21-25	332	4	4.634	.327	-
	26-30	438				
Total Scale	31-35	281				
	36-40	132				
	41 and above	62				

We also used the Mann-Whitney U test to see if the gender variable produces a significant difference in postgraduate

students' perceptions of university public relations. Table 7 presents the results of this analysis.

When reviewing Table 7, it is worth noting that there is no significant difference in postgraduate students' perceptions of university public relations based on gender in the dimensions of information, communication, and overall scale. However, we observed a significant difference in the

dimensions of distance education and academic reputation. Specifically, male students exhibited higher perceptions of university public relations in the distance education dimension, while female students demonstrated higher perceptions in the academic reputation dimension.

Table 7.

Mann-Whitney U Test Results for the Examination of Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Public Relations of Universities Depending on Gender Variable

Dimensions	Gender	Ν	x	U	Z	p	r
lafa wasati an	Female	832	2.95	177 700	000	222	020
Information	Male	413	$\begin{array}{cccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$.323	.028		
Distance Education	Female	832	2.29	155 772	2,000	007	070
	Male	413	2.43	155.772	-2.698	.007	.076
	Female	832	2.97	104 742	2.174	.030	001
Academic Reputation	Male	413	2.87	184.742			.061
	Female	832	2.58	176 707	.824	.410	000
Communication	Male	413	2.54	1/6./0/			.023
Total Scale	Female	832	2.79			.475	
	Male	413	2.76	176.074	176.074 .714		.020

We used the Mann-Whitney U test to investigate whether the university-type variable leads to a significant difference in postgraduate students' perceptions of university public relations. Table 8 displays the test's results.

Table 8.

Mann-Whitney U Test Results for the Examination of Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Public Relations of Universities Depending on the Variable of University Type

Dimensions	University Type	Ν	x	U	Z	p	r
Information	State	1043	2.91	127.411	4.724	.000	.133
IIIOIIIIduoii	Foundation	202	3.11	127.411	4.724	.000	.155
Distance Education	State	1043	2.3	125.098	4.244	.000	.120
	Foundation	202	2.55	125.050			.120
Academic Reputation	State	1043	2.91	124.205	4.048	.000	.114
Academic Reputation	Foundation	202	3.12	124.205	4.040		.114
Communication	State	1043	2.53	123.698	3.944	.000	.111
communication	Foundation	202	2.77	123.098	5.944		.111
Total Scale	State	1043	2.74	128.986	5.056	.000	.143
	Foundation	202	2.96	120.900	5.050	.000	.145

Based on the findings in Table 8, it is clear that postgraduate students enrolled at foundation universities have higher perceptions of university public relations across the dimensions of information, distance education, academic reputation, communication, and the overall scale. Therefore, students attending foundation universities perceive their institutions as more proficient in public relations activities. This observation is consistent with previous studies conducted by Karaca (2009) and Sultana et al. (2019). Foundation universities outperform state universities in public relations due to their proactive use of strategies like marketing, image enhancement, promotion, and advertising (Summak, 2016).

We used the Kruskal-Wallis H test to determine whether the variable in the research field causes a significant difference in postgraduate students' perceptions of university public relations. Table 9 outlines the results.

After reviewing Table 9, it is evident that the research field variable does not result in a significant difference in

postgraduate students' perceptions of university public relations across the dimensions of information, distance education, academic reputation, communication, and the overall scale. Therefore, we can infer that postgraduate students from various research fields have similar perceptions of university public relations.

Table 9.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results for the Examination of Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Public Relations of Universities Depending on the Research Area Variable

Dimensions	Research Area	Ν	sd	χ ²	p	Difference
	Education Sciences	113				-
Information	Education Sciences113Social Sciences64831.588.662Health Sciences7632.837.417Social Sciences64832.837.417Social Sciences64832.585.460Health Sciences7632.585.460Social Sciences64832.585.460Education Sciences1135050.460Science40832.585.460Education Sciences763.538.910Science4083.538.910Education Sciences763.538.910Science4083.538.910Education Sciences763.538.910Science4083.538.910Education Sciences763.538.910Science4083.538.910Education Sciences763.538.910Science4083.538.910Education Sciences113.538.910Science4083.538.910Education Sciences113.538.910Social Sciences6483.538.910Health Sciences763.467.690					
IIIOIIIIduoii	Health Sciences	76	C	1.300	.002	
	Science	408				
	Education Sciences	113				-
Distance Education	Social Sciences 648 3 2.837 417	117				
	Health Sciences	76	5	2.057	.417	
	Science	408				
	Education Sciences	113	3	2.585	.460	-
Academic Reputation	Social Sciences	648				
Academic Reputation	Health Sciences	76				
	Science	408				
	Education Sciences	113		.538	010	-
Communication	Social Sciences	648	2			
Communication	Health Sciences	76	C		.910	
	Science	408				
	Education Sciences	113			.690	-
Total Coolo	Social Sciences	648	С	1 4 6 7		
Total Scale	Health Sciences	76	3	1.467		
	Science	408				

Additionally, we used the Kruskal-Wallis H test to investigate whether the variable of postgraduate education type significantly influences postgraduate students' perceptions of university public relations. Table 10 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 10.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results for the Examination of Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Public Relations of Universities Depending on the type of Postgraduate Education Variable

Dimensions	Type of Postgraduate Education	N	sd	χ²	p	Difference
	PhD	428				
Information	Master's degree with thesis	664	2	2.144	.342	
	Master's degree without thesis	153				
	PhD	428				1<3
Distance Education	Master's degree with thesis	664	2	6.781	.034	2<3
	Master's degree without thesis	153				2<1
	PhD	428				
Academic Reputation	Master's degree with thesis	664	2	2.460	.292	
	Master's degree without thesis	153				
	PhD	428				
Communication	Master's degree with thesis	664	2	1.161	.560	
	Master's degree without thesis	153				
	PhD	428				
Total Scale	Master's degree with thesis	664	2	1.716	.424	
	Master's degree without thesis	153				

After reviewing Table 10, it is apparent that the type of education variable does not result in a significant difference

in postgraduate students' perceptions of university public relations across the combined dimensions of information,

academic reputation, communication, and the overall scale. However, it is worth noting that non-thesis master's students exhibit higher perceptions of university public relations in the context of distance education compared to master's and doctoral students with a thesis. Therefore, we can infer that students pursuing a non-thesis master's degree under pandemic conditions perceive distance education activities within the realm of public relations as more successful.

Findings on Universities' Institutional Use of Twitter

The research investigated the question, "To what extent and for what purpose do universities use institutional Twitter as part of their public relations activities?" to address the third sub-problem. Figure 1 presents numerical data regarding the tweets shared by the respective universities between September 1, 2019, and August 31, 2020.

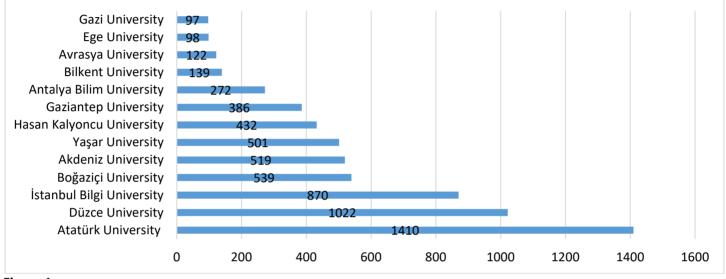


Figure 1.

Institutional Twitter Use by Universities (September 1, 2019-August 31, 2020)

Figure 1 reveals that 13 universities posted a total of 6407 tweets within the specified timeframe. Notably, Atatürk University emerges as the most prolific contributor, followed by Düzce University, Istanbul Bilgi University, and Boğaziçi University. In contrast, Gazi University demonstrated comparatively minimal activity in terms of tweet frequency. This finding contradicts conclusions drawn in prior studies (Bingöl & Tahtaloğlu, 2017; Can, 2017; Yılmaz, 2015), which indicated Gazi University's active utilization of its corporate Twitter account.

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of tweets posted by universities during the specified period, segmented by state and foundation universities.

As shown in Figure 2, the majority of tweets originated from state universities. While this observation aligns with findings from certain studies (Akyüz, 2019; Kandemir, 2019; Salur & Aydın, 2017), it differs from results obtained in other investigations (Çakaröz, 2018; Okmeydan, 2018; Yolcu, 2013). This discrepancy may be due to variations in university institutional Twitter use. Figure 3 depicts the current breakdown resulting from the categorization of tweets shared by universities between September 1, 2019,

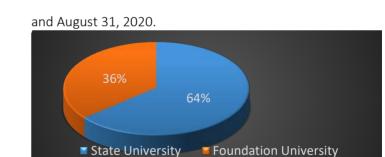


Figure 2.



After analyzing Figure 3, it is evident that universities primarily use Twitter to share announcements about public relations activities, followed closely by using Twitter to inform students and academic staff about various activities. Therefore, we can conclude that universities mainly use their official Twitter accounts to provide information. This conclusion is supported by several studies (Çiftçi et al., 2014; Kandemir, 2019; Kimmons et al., 2017; Köseoğlu & Köker, 2014; Yılmaz, 2015). Furthermore, it is worth noting that universities engage less in sharing content aimed at enhancing their academic reputation.



We divided the timeframe from September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020, into two distinct periods: pre-COVID-19 and post-COVID-19, to evaluate the social media activity of universities before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pre-COVID-19 period covers the duration from September 1, 2019, to February 29, 2020, while the post-COVID-19 period extends from March 1, 2020, to August 31, 2020. Figure 4 provides insights into the sharing activities undertaken by universities during these delineated timeframes.

Figure 3.

Categories Created from Tweets from Universities

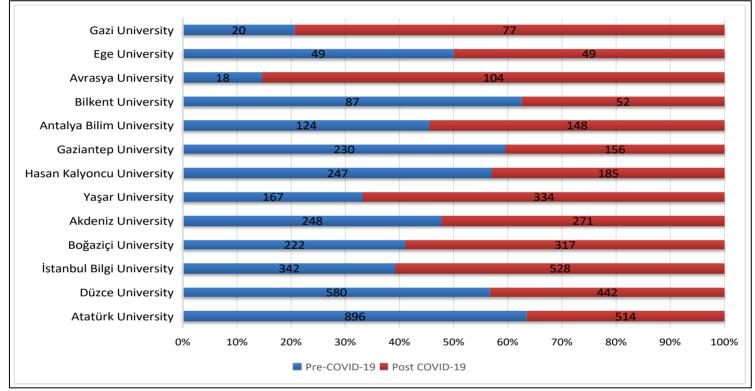


Figure 4.

Distribution of Tweets by Universities Pre- and Post-COVID-19

The analysis of the data presented in Figure 4 revealed that universities demonstrated a comparable level of tweet activity before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, upon further examination of the tweet distribution, it became apparent that certain universities, such as Atatürk University, Düzce University, Hasan Kalyoncu University, Gaziantep University, and Bilkent University, displayed higher tweet volumes before the onset of the pandemic. Conversely, Istanbul Bilgi University, Boğaziçi University, Akdeniz University, Yaşar University, Antalya Bilim University, Avrasya University, and Gazi University demonstrated increased tweet activity post-COVID-19. Notably, Ege University maintained an equal number of tweets before and after the pandemic. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Atatürk University exhibited the highest tweet frequency pre-COVID-19, while Istanbul Bilgi University emerged as the most active tweeting university post-COVID-19. Additionally, we identified Avrasya University and Ege University as the universities with the lowest tweet activity pre- and post-COVID-19, respectively.

Figure 5 provides further insights into the distribution of tweets among state and foundation universities before and after the pandemic.

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Based on the analysis of Figure 5, it is evident that state universities had higher tweet activity before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there was a noticeable decrease in tweet frequency among state universities during the pandemic period. In contrast, foundation universities saw an increase in Twitter activity during the pandemic. This shift demonstrates a significant trend in social media engagement strategies between the two types of universities during the pandemic era.

Figure 6 illustrates the current distribution of tweets categorized through content analysis, segmented by the pre- and post-pandemic periods.

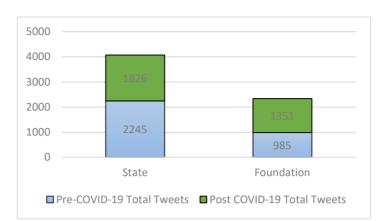


Figure 5.

Distribution of State and Foundation Universities' Shares Preand Post-COVID-19

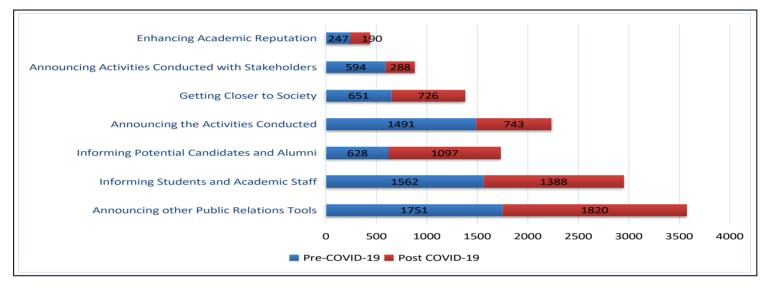


Figure 6.

Distribution of Categories Pre- and Post-COVID-19

Based on the findings presented in Figure 6, an analysis of the current status resulting from the categorization of tweets by universities reveals several trends. Both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, universities predominantly utilized their tweets to promote other public relations initiatives. Following this, there is a notable emphasis on disseminating information to students and academic staff. Furthermore, a consistent pattern emerges wherein universities allocate fewer tweets to enhance their academic reputation during both periods. However, during the pandemic, there has been a discernible increase in tweets aimed at promoting other public relations endeavors, informing prospective candidates and alumni, engaging with the community, and bolstering academic reputation. Remarkably, there is a significant decrease in the dissemination of tweets about activities during this period, likely attributed to the constraints imposed by the pandemic.

Discussion

This study, which examined universities' public relations strategies and corporate Twitter use during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealed that postgraduate students found universities' public relations efforts adequate. However, a closer examination of the sub-dimensions reveals that postgraduate students primarily perceive universities as excelling in information dissemination and bolstering their academic reputation. The uniting of quantitative and qualitative data indicates a frequent emphasis on information dissemination by universities, a responsible strategy, particularly during tumultuous events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Özen, 2021). Nonetheless, while such an approach is crucial for effective crisis communication, it is imperative to avoid its transformation into a prevailing corporate culture within the realm of public relations. Notably, the quantitative data revealed a subpar performance by universities in fostering communication

within the context of public relations, as well as a tendency for one-way information transmission in their institutional Twitter use. These findings underscore the importance for universities to embrace a dialogue-oriented approach in their public relations planning (Özkanal, 2006) and to adopt a bidirectional communication paradigm in their corporate utilization of Twitter (Veletsianos et al., 2017).

Examining universities' public relations approaches and their use of corporate Twitter reveals that the process relies heavily on information. On the other hand, research in the literature reveals that universities can also use their corporate Twitter accounts for purposes such as supporting education and training processes, branding, and marketing activities (Alhadid & Qaddami, 2016; Fomunyam, 2020; Junco et al., 2011; Mollett et al., 2011; Veletsianos et al., 2017). According to the findings of these studies, it is important for universities to use their institutional Twitter accounts to serve different purposes within higher education institutions.

In the quantitative phase of the study, as mentioned earlier, the academic reputation dimension emerged as one of the most positively perceived dimensions by postgraduate students. However, qualitative content analysis revealed that universities do not use their institutional Twitter accounts sufficiently to enhance their academic reputation. This suggests that factors other than social media presence can also significantly contribute to a university's academic reputation. For example, research shows that universities that have effective communication strategies, engage in social responsibility initiatives, and provide high-quality educational services tend to have positive academic reputations (Ensign & Woods, 2014; Güngör, 2018; Karaköse, 2007). Therefore, enhancing public relations efforts by increasing the dissemination of academic achievements and other relevant content through institutional Twitter accounts can potentially strengthen the academic reputation of universities.

According to postgraduate students' perceptions, distance education activities are generally not easily accessible to potential students. Moreover, students note live broadcasts from universities' social media accounts as attention-grabbing endeavors. However, in the qualitative aspect of the research, it is evident that universities, apart from Istanbul Bilgi University, Boğaziçi University, and Yaşar University, do not organize such educational activities or promote them via their corporate Twitter accounts. Consequently, it can be argued that the dissemination of open-access course applications, a practice commonly utilized in the United States and adopted by some universities in Türkiye (Haymana & Dağhan, 2020; Tepgeç et. al., 2021), may also prove beneficial in terms of enhancing public relations.

The study found that postgraduate students enrolled in foundation universities have more positive perceptions compared to those attending state universities. However, the qualitative analysis revealed that state universities are more active in using corporate Twitter accounts. Therefore, it is important to examine the factors that contribute to the positive perceptions of postgraduate students in foundation universities and to evaluate the impact of institutional Twitter use on university public relations.

Postgraduate students believe that universities effectively use their official social media accounts, but there is a noticeable difference in the use of institutional Twitter accounts. It's worth noting that Atatürk University, Düzce University, and Istanbul Bilgi University are actively engaged on their official Twitter accounts, while Gazi University, Ege University, and Bilkent University have minimal activity on their official Twitter accounts. This situation requires further investigation to understand the reasons for the varying use of institutional Twitter accounts by universities.

Upon examination of universities' institutional Twitter use, it is evident that there are comparable levels of activity both before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that all activities shifted to online platforms during the pandemic, it is notable that universities did not demonstrate an increase in their social media presence during this period. We presume that the pandemic's disruptions are responsible for this phenomenon. Hence, universities need to develop a crisis communication plan in advance of similar events to ensure effective communication strategies (Mavnacioğlu, 2018).

This research is based on the PRPES, which examines the public relations of universities based on information, distance education, academic reputation, and communication during the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as the public relations of two universities selected from each region. Moreover, the study restricts its scope to the data shared from institutional Twitter accounts between September 1, 2019, and August 30, 2020. In this context, the research results suggest the following recommendations:

1. In public relations, universities can implement policies to develop distance education and communication dimensions.

- 2. Through distance education, universities can carry out effective public relations activities.
- 3. The research can be conducted in a more limited population of specific universities.
- 4. Examining the current situation following the COVID-19 pandemic allows for comparison.
- 5. The reasons for the differences in the use of corporate Twitter by universities can be investigated.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Halkla ilişkiler, kuruluşların hitap ettikleri kitlenin beklentilerini karşılamalarını sağlayan önemli bir yönetim fonksiyonudur. Halkla ilişkiler aracılığıyla kuruluşlar, hedef kitlenin memnuniyetinin, güveninin ve sadakatinin geliştirilmesini ve sürdürülmesini sağlar (Çelebi, 2019). Bu sayede kuruluş ile hedef kitle arasında karşılıklı fayda sağlayan ilişkiler kurulur ve sürdürülür (Cutlip et al., 2001). Halkla ilişkiler aracılığıyla üniversiteler mevcut potansiyellerini belirleyebilir ve sunduklarını kamuoyuna sunabilir. Ayrıca, üniversiteler halkla ilişkileri hedef kitleleriyle iletişim kurmak (Sing, 2019), öğrenci potansiyelini ve devlet yardımlarını artırmaya yönelik faaliyetler düzenlemek için kullanabilir (Bümen, 2017). Bu vesileyle üniversiteler sosyal medya aracılığıyla mevcut, mezun ve aday öğrencileri ve aileleriyle etkili iletişim kurmayı, kurumsal kimliklerini geliştirmeyi, öğrenciler ve akademisyenler tarafından daha fazla tercih edilmelerine katkı sağlamayı akademik bağlamda öğrenci ve akademisyenlere katkı sağlamayı ve kamuoyunun güvenini kazanmayı amaçlarlar (Boumarafi, 2015; Peruta ve Shields, 2017; Tanova & Amca, 2016). Twitter, kriz durumlarında güncel haberlerin hızlı bir şekilde paylaşılmasına olanak tanıyan bir özelliğe sahiptir. Bu özelliği nedeniyle Twitter, COVID-19 salgını sırasında üniversiteler tarafından öğrencilere, akademisyenlere ve diğer personele ulaşmak

için yoğun bir şekilde kullanılmıştır (Kanılmaz, 2021). Ferrer-Serrano vd. (2020) tarafından yapılan araştırmada, pandemi döneminde üniversitelerin kurumsal Twitter hesaplarının kullanımının çok önemli olduğu vurgulanmış ve bu dönemde üniversitelerin kurumsal Twitter hesaplarının kamuoyu tarafından daha yakından takip edildiği belirtilmiştir.

Bu araştırma, kurumsal Twitter kullanımının üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerindeki rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla aşağıdaki sorulara yanıt aranmıştır:

- 1) Lisansüstü öğrencilerin algılarına göre COVID-19 pandemisinde üniversitelerin halkla ilişkileri ne düzeydedir?
- 2) Lisansüstü öğrencilerin üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerine yönelik algılarında yaş, cinsiyet, üniversite türü, araştırma alanı ve lisansüstü eğitim türü değişkenlerine bağlı olarak anlamlı bir farklılık var mıdır?
- 3) Üniversiteler kurumsal Twitter'ı halkla ilişkiler faaliyetlerinin bir parçası olarak ne ölçüde ve hangi amaçla kullanmaktadır?

Yöntem

Çalışmada yöntem olarak pragmatist paradigmanın bir ürünü olan karma araştırma yöntemi tercih edilmiştir (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2020). Karma yöntemin tercih edilmesinde tamamlayıcılık ilkesi belirleyici rol oynamıştır (Greene ve ark., 1989). Üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerinin ortaya çıkarılmasında nicel araştırma; üniversitelerin kurumsal Twitter kullanımının incelenmesinde ise nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak problem durumu açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırmanın nicel boyutunun evrenini 2020-2021 akademik yılında Türkiye'de lisansüstü eğitimlerine devam eden öğrenciler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın nitel boyutunun evrenini ise içerik analizinin başladığı 20 Aralık 2020 tarihinde Türkiye'de kurumsal Twitter hesabı bulunan 127 devlet ve 73 vakıf üniversitesi oluşturmaktadır. Örneklemin belirlenmesinde amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmış ve Türkiye'nin 7 bölgesinden en fazla takipçi sayısına sahip birer devlet ve vakıf üniversitesi çalışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Doğu Anadolu bölgesinde vakıf üniversitesi bulunmadığı için araştırmada sadece devlet üniversitesi yer almıştır. Çalışmanın nicel boyutunda lisansüstü öğrencilerin algılarına göre üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerini incelemek ve öğrencilerin algılarının demografik değişkenlere bağlı olarak anlamlı bir farklılık gösterip göstermediğini tespit etmek amacıyla Görgülü ve Erçetin (2021) tarafından geliştirilen Lisansüstü Eğitimde Halkla İlişkiler Ölçeği (LEHİÖ) kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada üniversitelerin kurumsal Twitter kullanımını analiz etmek için nitel araştırma kapsamında kullanılan içerik analizi tekniği tercih edilmiştir.

Bulgular

Araştırma sonucunda lisansüstü öğrencilerin algılarına göre üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerinin yeterli düzeyde olduğu görülmektedir. Lisansüstü öğrencilerin algılarına göre üniversitelerin bilgilendirme ve akademik itibar boyutlarında daha başarılı görüldüğü dikkat çekmektedir. Lisansüstü öğrencilerin üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerine yönelik algılarında yaş ve araştırma alanı değişkenlerine bağlı olarak bilgilendirme, uzaktan eğitim, akademik itibar, iletişim boyutlarında ve ölçeğin tamamında anlamlı bir farklılık olmadığı görülmektedir. Diğer yandan lisansüstü öğrencilerin üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerine yönelik algılarında cinsiyete bağlı olarak bilgi, iletişim ve toplam ölçekte anlamlı bir farklılık olmadığı dikkat çekmektedir. Buna karşın uzaktan eğitim ve akademik itibar boyutlarında anlamlı bir farklılık söz konusudur. Bu bağlamda uzaktan eğitim boyutunda erkek öğrencilerin akademik itibar boyutunda ise kadın öğrencilerin üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerine yönelik algılarının daha yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Buna ek olarak vakıf üniversitelerinde okuyan öğrencilerin üniversitelerini halkla ilişkiler faaliyetleri açısından daha başarılı buldukları tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca eğitim türü değişkeninin lisansüstü öğrencilerin üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerine halkla ilişkilerine halkla ilişkilerine halkla ilişkilerine başarılı buldukları tespit edilmiştir.

yönelik algılarında bilgi, akademik itibar, iletişim ve ölçek toplamında anlamlı bir farklılık yaratmadığı belirlenmiştir. Buna karşın uzaktan eğitim bağlamında üniversitelerin halkla ilişkiler faaliyetlerini tezsiz yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin, tezli yüksek lisans ve doktora öğrencilerine göre daha başarılı buldukları tespit edilmiştir.

Araştırmanın nitel boyutundaki veriler incelendiğinde 1 Eylül 2019-31 Ağustos 2020 tarihleri arasında 13 üniversitenin 6407 tweet gönderdiği görülmektedir. Bunun yanında en çok paylaşım yapan üniversitenin Atatürk Üniversitesi olduğu dikkat çekmektedir. Bu üniversiteyi Düzce Üniversitesi, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi ve Boğaziçi Üniversitesi takip etmektedir. Buna karşın Gazi Üniversitesi en az paylaşım yapan üniversite konumundadır. Diğer yandan üniversiteler tarafından gönderilen tweetlerin çoğunluğunun devlet üniversitelerine ait olduğu görülmektedir. Aynı zamanda üniversitelerin diğer halkla ilişkiler araçlarını duyurmak için daha fazla tweet attığı dikkat çekmektedir. Üniversitelerin COVID-19 öncesi ve sonrası benzer sayıda paylaşım yaptığı tespit edilmiştir. Buna ek olarak devlet üniversitelerinin COVID-19 öncesi ve sonrasında daha fazla paylaşım yaptığı belirlenmiştir. Ancak pandemi döneminde devlet üniversitelerinin tweetlerinin azaldığı ve vakıf üniversitelerinin tweetlerinin pandemi döneminde artış gösterdiği dikkat çekmiştir.

Sonuç

COVID-19 pandemisinde üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerini ve kurumsal Twitter kullanımlarını incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilen bu araştırma sonucunda, lisansüstü öğrencilerin algılarına göre üniversitelerin halkla ilişkilerinin yeterli düzeyde olduğu görülmektedir. Ancak alt boyutlar incelendiğinde, lisansüstü öğrencilerin algılarına göre üniversitelerin bilgilendirme ve akademik itibar açısından daha başarılı olduğu görülmektedir.

Nicel ve nitel veriler birlikte değerlendirildiğinde üniversitelerin genel olarak bilgilendirmeye gereken önemi verdiği görülmektedir. Bu durum özellikle COVID-19 pandemisi gibi kaotik olaylarda kriz iletişimi açısından doğru bir yaklaşım olarak değerlendirilebilir (Özen, 2021). Ancak bu uygulamanın halkla ilişkiler açısından bir kurum kültürü hâline gelmesi istenen bir durum olarak görülmemektedir. Araştırmada üniversitelerin halkla ilişkiler bağlamında iletişim boyutunda ortalamanın altında bir seviyede olması ve üniversitelerin kurumsal Twitter kullanımının çoğunlukla tek yönlü bir bilgi aktarımından ibaret olması bu konunun yeterince ele alınmadığını gözler önüne sermektedir.