

# A Relational Framework between Survey Topic, Sponsor, and Socially Desirable Responding: An Online Survey Experiment <sup>12</sup>

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## Abstract

Research in survey methodology indicates that survey attributes, such as topic and sponsor influence survey participation and data quality. This paper primarily aims to examine whether such attributes influence socially desirable responding in an online survey setting, a setting which is less studied in the literature than face-to-face interview settings with regards to social desirability. To achieve this aim, it empirically tests the effects of survey topic, survey sponsor, introduction interest, and perceived topic sensitivity on socially desirable responding (SDR) across a range of items in a questionnaire. The survey experiment is based on a convenience sample of higher education students who filled out an online self-administered questionnaire, which also included a short version of the Marlowe-Crowne SDR scale. The findings showed that the tendency to SDR does not significantly differ by survey topic and sponsor. However, it varies by introduction interest, and intriguingly, more interested respondents demonstrated a higher tendency to SDR. Also, the tendency to SDR marginally differed by the perceived topic sensitivity.

**Keywords:** Socially Desirable Responding, Survey Topic, Sponsor, Topic Sensitivity, Introduction Interest

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## Anket Konusu, Sponsor ve Sosyal İstenirlik Arasındaki İlişkisel Çerçeve: Çevrimiçi bir Anket Deneyi

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### Öz

Nicel araştırma yöntemlili alanındaki araştırmalar, anket konusu ve anketi destekleyen kurum gibi özelliklerin anket katılımını ve veri kalitesini etkilediğini göstermektedir. Bu makale temel olarak bu gibi özelliklerin çevrimiçi ortamda sosyal istenirlik davranışını (sosyal istenirliği olan yanıtları seçme eğilimi) etkileyip etkilemediğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu konuya literatürde çevrimiçi anketlerden çok, yüzyüze anket çalışmaları için odaklanılmaktadır. Makalenin amacına uygun olarak, anket konusunun, destekleyen kurumun, katılımcıların anketin tanıtımına yönelik ilgisinin ve anket konusunu ne kadar hassas algıladıklarının sosyal istenirlik davranışına etkisi ampirik olarak bir anketteki sorulara verilen yanıtlar ile test edilmiştir. Çalışma, lisans ve lisansüstü öğrencilerinden oluşan bir örneklemden deneysel bir nicel araştırma tasarımıyla toplanan çevrimiçi bir anketin verilerine dayanmaktadır. Bu ankette ayrıca Marlowe-Crowne sosyal istenirlik ölçeğinin bir kısa versiyonu da bulunmaktadır. Bulgulara göre, sosyal istenirlik davranışı, anketin konusu ve destekleyen kuruma göre önemli ölçüde farklılaşmamaktadır. Sosyal istenirliğe yönelik eğilim anketin tanıtımına duyulan ilgiye göre farklılık göstermiştir, fakat beklenmedik bir şekilde ankete ilgisi daha yüksek olan katılımcıların sosyal istenirliğe yönelik eğilimlerinin de daha yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Son olarak, sosyal istenirlik davranışı, konunun ne kadar hassas algılandığına göre az da olsa farklılık göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal İstenirlik, Nicel Araştırma, Anket Konusu, Anketi Destekleyen Kuruluş, Anket Konusu Hassaslığı, Anket Tanıtımına Duyulan İlgi

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## Introduction

It has been shown that internet-based surveys are not immune to socially desirable responding (SDR) (Das and Leeuw, 2018; Dodou and De Winter, 2014; Näher and Krumpal, 2012). Socially desirable responding, also known as social desirability bias, is the tendency of some respondents to provide answers they consider to be socially favorable and avoid answers that might conflict with the prevailing social norms (Krumpal, 2013). SDR is a classical response bias that represents a serious measurement error concern in social survey research for its ability to influence survey results (Larson, 2019; Stocké and Hunkler, 2007; van de Mortel, 2008). SDR is a response bias that is interpreted in various ways, such as the need for social approval (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960), faking good (Furnham, 1986), presenting oneself in a positive light (Hays et al., 1989), and the disposition to give exaggerated positive self-descriptions (Paulhus, 2002). Broadly, the term SDR refers to the inclination of respondents to give answers that they consider to be desirable. This may be interpreted as the eagerness of individuals to attribute to themselves the qualities, behaviors, and attitudes they consider to be desirable in their communities.

The research on SDR shows that it differs by mode of data collection (Gnambs and Kaspar, 2014; Holbrook et al., 2003; Kelly et al., 2013; Vogl, 2013), and some respondent characteristics, such as age (Soubelet and Salthouse, 2011; Stöber, 2001; Vigil-Colet et al., 2013), sex (Caskie et al., 2014), and education (Deshields et al., 1995). The present study has a three-fold objective and examines whether a systematic tendency to SDR across a range of items differs by survey topic and sponsor<sup>7</sup>, introduction interest, and the perceived topic sensitivity, and contributes to the research on the effects of survey topic and sponsor on response behavior. Here we conceptualize systematic tendency to SDR in line with the definition by Paulhus (1991, p. 17): “A response bias is a systematic tendency to respond to a range of questionnaire items on some basis other than the specific item content”. We use this terminology throughout this paper to imply consistently selecting socially desirable answers across a range of 14 items.

## Survey Topic

The survey attributes that are made more salient in the survey introduction would have more leverage on the respondent’s survey participation decision (Groves et al., 2000). People are more cooperative and willing to participate in a survey when the survey topic interests them (Groves et al., 2004). Therefore, respondents who find the survey topic interesting show a higher response rate than less interested respondents. Moreover, the respondents who are less interested in the survey topic are more likely to produce item nonresponse as reported by Martin (1994) in a mail survey while individuals with high interest in the survey topic tended less to straight-lining in online panels (Keusch, 2013).

To examine the effect of the topic on a systematic tendency to SDR, the present study adopts the leverage-salience theory (Groves et al., 2000) which explains the potential effects of survey attributes on survey participation. In summary, the leverage-salience theory proposes that if the survey attributes (such as survey topic and sponsor, etc.) are presented salient enough in a personal interview or a self-administered questionnaire, they could influence the survey participation decision for sample members (Groves et al., 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Unlike how this usually is, the term “sponsor” in this particular study does not imply funding. The survey experiment in this study was carried out without funding, and survey sponsor here is operationally defined as the institution/person on whose behalf the survey is done.

First, as the literature indicates the influence of the survey topic is contingent on the personal interest in the survey topic (Groves et al., 2004) and whether the topic is presented salient enough (Groves et al., 2000). When the survey topic is presented salient enough in a survey introductory statement, respondents attach dissimilar interest to the survey topic as confirmed by the literature. Hence, based on the individual interest in the survey topic, the present study contends that respondents who are less interested in the topic are likely to introduce a systematic tendency to SDR.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** a systematic tendency to SDR varies by the survey topic presented in the survey introduction.

### **Sponsor**

Studies on mail surveys have shown that survey sponsorship influences participation and data quality. A study by Doob and Freedman (1973) on a mail survey revealed that people are more eager to respond to survey requests from a university compared to survey requests from private companies. Likewise, Jones (1979), Jones and Linda (1978) reported sponsorship effects on response rates. Ladik et al. (2007) reported university sponsorship effects differed by city, where the home city of the sponsoring university had a higher response rate than out-of-state cities. Also, Tourangeau et al. (2009) indicated that respondents were less likely to approve gun control when the survey sponsor was described as “the national coalition of gun owners” compared to “the national coalition for victims of gun violence” or “the national center for the study of crime”. Following the hypotheses of the leverage-salience theory presented in the previous section, we propose that when the sponsor has leverage on the sample members that could influence their response behavior. And the greater leverage the survey sponsor has on the prospective respondents, the greater the respondents may tend to SDR.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** the greater leverage the survey sponsor has on the prospective respondents, the more tendency to a systematic SDR.

### **Introduction Interest**

In self-administered questionnaires, respondent motivation is an important determinant of data quality (Cannell and Fowler, 1963). For example, less interested respondents tend to introduce more response bias (Bach et al., 2020) and leave some questions unanswered. Respondents' interactions with the survey introductory statement are associated with their subsequent response behaviors in a survey interview. Respondents who appeared less interested in the introductory stage were found to introduce more bias during the interview in an earlier study (Couper, 1997). In this study, the topic of the survey was revealed in the title of the survey and repeated as part of the informed consent text. We assume that respondents form an overall interest in the survey based on these, and describe later how we operationally defined it under the Independent Variables section. Based on the overall interest of the respondent in a survey which forms after the survey introductory statement is presented, the present study splits respondents into optimizers and reluctant respondents (see Figure 1).

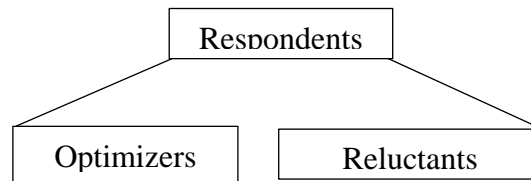


Figure 1. Categorization of Respondents Based on the Introduction Interest

Krosnick (1991) defines optimizers as those who carefully complete a four-step cognitive process (comprehension, retrieval, judgment, and reporting) necessary for the question-answer process. Here, we build on his definition and define the optimizers group as those who find the survey interesting and respond to survey questions with honesty. Also, as a result, they are less likely to introduce response biases, such as SDR. The second group is reluctant respondents and they find the survey less interesting compared to the optimizers group, hence, they may join the survey with hesitation. Bach et al. (2020) define reluctant respondents as “respondents with the lowest response propensities are reluctant respondents”. Here, we define reluctant respondents as those who are less interested in the survey but join the survey with hesitation. We assume that this group is susceptible to introducing response biases like a systematic tendency to SDR. Third, when the sponsor has leverage on the sample members that might influence their response behavior.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** the less interesting the survey introductory statement is to the respondents, the more tendency to a systematic SDR.

### Perceived Topic Sensitivity

SDR is mostly linked to sensitive topics (Tourangeau and Yan, 2007) or embarrassing and threatening topics (Bradburn et al., 2004; Cannell and Fowler, 1963). However, every topic might have some degree of sensitivity and that sensitivity might differ for sample members. In line with the literature, the current study hypothesizes that:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** the greater the perceived topic sensitivity, the greater the tendency to a systematic SDR.

### Experimental Design

This study draws on data collected through an online factorial survey experiment in which the survey topic and survey sponsor were experimentally varied (both these variables had 2 levels each). The other independent variables of interest, namely introduction interest and perceived topic sensitivity were measured with single items. The online survey experiment was prepared using Google Forms, a freely available survey tool with many experimental features. To randomly assign the respondents to the experimental treatments, birth by the day of the month was used. Respondents first picked one of 8 groups<sup>8</sup> (1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-15, 16-19, 20-23, 24-27, and 28-31), and then were presented with the experimental treatment.

<sup>8</sup> There was a third variable that was experimentally varied about question order, but has not been analysed in this particular paper. This was the reason why there were 8 experimental groups.

### Sample and Data Collection

The online questionnaire and the experimental design were approved by the Hacettepe University Ethics Commission and the consent statement was presented on the first page of the questionnaire. An adequate sample size of 272 was calculated using Minitab 17, to detect an effect size of 0.2 with a power of 0.90 and a significance level of 0.05. On 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the Hacettepe University Press and Public Relations office sent the survey link to the Hacettepe University students<sup>9</sup> (undergraduate, Master's degree, and Ph.D.). Out of 62,788 persons, 32 responded and completed the questionnaire in the first contact. A reminder contact was sent on June 22 and 37 responded. To boost the number of responses, a group of Hacettepe University academic staff was contacted who shared the link with the students in their classes. Within a month and a half 318 responded out of an estimated figure of 1336 students reached in this way. The final sample size was 387.

### Dependent Variable

Operationally, a systematic tendency to SDR was defined as the tendency to over-report socially encouraged practices and under-report or deny socially discouraged ones. This definition is in line with the widely used Marlowe-Crowne SDR scale "The need of Ss (subjects) to obtain approval by responding in a culturally appropriate and acceptable manner" (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960, p.353). We dichotomously coded the response categories of the 14 items that we intended to use for measuring the tendency to SDR into two, as desirable or not desirable (where socially desirable=1, socially not desirable=0). And then, we summed the number of socially desirable response categories reported for each respondent across 14 items. Therefore all respondents received a score between 0 and 14 ( $y=0, 1, 2, \dots, 14$ ) and a respondent whose score was above the mean was considered to demonstrate a tendency to SDR. To determine the direction of SDR, first, if the question addresses socially encouraged activity, the response category that gives the notion of over-reporting was considered a socially desirable answer. Likewise, if the question addresses a socially discouraged activity, the response category that suggests under-reporting or denial was considered a socially desirable response. Second, to get a better idea about the desirability of the response categories from the point of view of the respondents, a group of students from the Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, Department for Social Research Methodology was asked to rate the desirability of response categories.

It was kept in mind that a high number of socially desirable answers could also reflect true answers rather than a systematic tendency to SDR. To distinguish between these two explanations, at least to some extent, a Turkish short-version (7-item) of the Marlowe-Crowne SDR scale was added to the questionnaire. The Turkish short-version of the Marlowe-Crowne SDR scale was translated and tested by Ural and Özbirecikli (2006) and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78. All 7 items were truly keyed and dichotomously scored. A total score was calculated for each respondent. A respondent who scored above the average score of the Marlowe-Crowne SDR short scale and provided socially desirable answers above the average score across a range of 14 questions was considered that s/he tended to a systematic SDR.

### Independent Variables

In the online survey experiment, the survey topic and sponsor were experimentally varied and each variable had two levels. Respondents were assigned to questionnaires with the same questions, but different

<sup>9</sup> We were notified that that the email list (62,788) may have contained some graduates, but do not have information on the extent of this.

combinations of survey topic and sponsor. Compared to the “social life of students during the distance education process of COVID-19 pandemic”, we assume that the “focus during online classes” to be more sensitive and subsequently produces a higher tendency to a systematic SDR. These were selected that they could attract the interest of the target population during the pandemic, and at the same time have some degree of sensitivity. Both topics were meant to relate to the educational situation during the pandemic, a period when schools and universities around the world were partially or fully closed at times and traditional education was replaced by online education. On the other hand, approval was gained from the Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies Department of Social Research Methodology to use the name of the department as a treatment in the survey. Considering the relationship between the University and the respondents, we expect that the “Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies Department of Social Research Methodology” would have more leverage on respondents and that will result in a higher tendency to SDR compared to “Ph.D. thesis” as a sponsor assuming a relatively vertical relationship as opposed to a relatively horizontal one, respectively.

To measure the introduction interest, respondents were asked “What was your impression of the survey after you read the introduction?” with the scaling points “not interesting at all”, “somewhat interesting”, “interesting“, and “very interesting”. Also, another question that measured the perceived topic sensitivity was included in the questionnaire. Respondents were first reminded of the survey topic and thereafter asked to rate the topic sensitivity, for example, one version reading “As you may remember, this survey was about the social life of students during the distance education process of the COVID-19 pandemic, which statement below best describes this topic?” with the scaling points “not sensitive at all”, “sensitive”, and “very sensitive”. Finally, to control fatigue and boredom, the questionnaire was kept relatively short, it consisted of only 34 items in total, and an attention check item was disguised in the questions to screen inattentive responding.

## Results

Overall, 387 respondents joined the online survey experiment and completed the questionnaire. A duplicate case was dropped from the analysis and the final sample size was 386 cases. As shown in Table 1, the sample was predominantly female 67%, which is consistent with the literature. Traditionally, women participate more than men in face-to-face interviews (Leeuw, 1992). However, as in the current case, Smith (2008), and Underwood et al. (2000) reported that women are more inclined to participate in online surveys and also Larson (2019) reported that in a web-based survey of U.S. adults, about 67% of the respondents were women. The average age of the respondents was 22 years old with (a standard deviation of 3) and 83% were undergraduate students, 7% were master’s degree students, and 2% were Ph.D. students. Due to a technical error that occurred during the data collection 8% did not report their level of education<sup>10</sup>. The respondents were from different fields, but they were mainly from health and social sciences. For the type of device used to connect online classes, the majority 86% were using a laptop/desktop computer, 4% tablet, 10% mobile phone, and only 0.3% could not connect to online classes.

<sup>10</sup> The level of education question was mistakenly not included in the first version questionnaire and it was added to the questionnaire after 32 questionnaires were received.

Table 1  
Background Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Number	Percentage
Sex		
Female	260	67.36
Male	119	30.83
Prefer not to say	7	1.81
Age		
17-21 yrs. old	178	46.11
22-26 yrs. old	184	47.67
27 yrs. old and above	24	6.22
Field of study		
Education sciences	18	4.66
Engineering sciences	36	9.33
Health sciences	95	24.61
Social sciences	125	32.38
Sport sciences	41	10.62
Art sciences	3	0.78
Other	68	17.62
Level of education		
Bachelor	319	82.64
Master	27	6.99
PhD	8	2.07
Missing	32	8.29
Type of device used for online classes		
I cannot connect to online classes	1	0.30
Mobile	38	9.80
Tablet	17	4.40
Desktop computer/laptop	330	85.50
Total	386	100.00

### Systematic Tendency to SDR across a Range of Items

To gauge a systematic tendency to SDR, 14 items were placed in the experimental questionnaire. The items were selected, primarily, on the premise that they are susceptible to SDR and it is easier to determine the direction of socially desirable responding. For each item, the response category that hinted at the over-reporting of socially encouraged behaviors and attitudes was coded 1, and the other response options were coded 0. For example, when asked “During the 2020-2021 fall semester, how many hours a day do you read for academic purposes?” the response option “5 hours and above” was coded 1 and all other response categories were coded 0. Likewise, the response category that hinted at under-reporting or denial of socially undesirable behaviors and attitudes was coded 1 and the other response options were coded 0. For instance, when asked the “In general, do you browse social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter during online class?” the response option “No” was coded 1, and “Yes” was coded 0. Items were summed and a total score indicates the number of socially desirable responses out of 14 items. For the item “Are you currently in a



romantic relationship?” determining the direction of a socially desirable responding was complex compared to the other items. The complexity comes from the differences in the direction of socially desirable responses by sex. As an example of related literature, Tourangeau and Smith (1996) found that women tend to under-report the number of sexual partners while men are inclined to over-report. Findings from Smith (1992) were similar. From a cultural perspective, this might be because women receive more negative judgment than men in terms of romantic relationships (England and Bearak, 2014; Smith, 1992) As a result, the direction of socially desirable responding should be evaluated from the point of view of both sexes. In this study, respondents were asked to report their lifetime number of romantic relationships. Table 2 shows that women reported not having any romantic relationships more often and men more frequently reported 3 and above romantic relationships. Though the differences between men and women in reporting lifetime romantic relationship is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 4.23$ ,  $p = 0.238$ ). This variable has been still coded for socially desirable direction separately by sex because of differences in point estimates.

Table 2  
Number of Reported Lifetime Romantic Relationships by Sex

Sex	Number of lifetime romantic relationships								Total	
	0		1		2		3 and above			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Female	65	25.1	74	28.6	52	20.1	68	26.3	259	100.0
Male	23	19.7	28	23.9	24	20.5	42	35.9	117	100.0
Total	88	23.4	102	27.1	76	20.2	110	29.3	376	100.0

$\chi^2_{(3)} = 4.23$   $p = 0.238$

Table 3 shows that the proportion of desirable answers differs by item and respondents responded to the socially desirable direction when asked, “During the distance education process of the current COVID-19 pandemic, have you ever searched for answers to questions during an online exam from a written source or on the internet?” About 54 % reported negative answers but the intriguing result is that 46 % of the respondents confirmed that they looked up answers to questions while taking an online exam. The high proportion of positive responses to this question is probably because self-administered modes give respondents more privacy and anonymity.

Table 3

## Proportions of Respondents who responded in the Socially Desirable Direction by Item

No	Item	Socially desirable Response option	%	cases
1	What is the main reason you chose your field of study?	To help the community I live within	18.0	69
2	On average, how much time do you allocate for distance education per day?	5 hours and above	27.7	106
3	In general, how would you evaluate your time management during the distance education process?	Very good	12.5	48
4	In the 2020-2021 fall semester, how would you rate your academic cumulative GPA?	Very good / Excellent	34.5	132
5	During online classes, how often do you join classroom discussions?	Every time	12.5	48
6	In general, how attentive are you during online classes?	Every time	4.2	16
7	During the 2020-21 Fall semester, how many hours a day do you spend reading for academic purposes?	5 hours and above	24.5	94
8	In general, do you browse social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter during an online class?	No	35.5	136
9	During the distance education process of the current COVID-19 pandemic, have you ever looked up answers to questions in an online exam from a written source or the internet, even though you should not?	No	53.8	206
10	In the last 24 hours, have you spent time without wearing a mask with someone who is not currently living in the same home or dormitory as you?	No	50.9	195
11	In the last month, how many days a week did you do physical activity on average to stay healthy and fit?	3 days and above	40.7	156
12	Have you ever smoked cigarettes, even once?	No	36.3	139
13	Have you ever drank alcohol, even once?	No	38.9	149
14	Are you currently in a romantic relationship?			
	Female	No	67.6	175
	Male	Yes	58.1	68
			n	383

Nowadays, exercising seems to be a desirable activity as the reasons and benefits of exercising became ubiquitous. Individuals who do not do socially encouraged activities may feel uneasiness and give positive answers to avoid discomfort and tend to promote their picture. For example, a validation study by Brenner and DeLamater, (2014) indicated that respondents tend to exaggerate on reporting exercise activity in a web-based questionnaire. In the present sample, a percentage of 41% reported that they do physical activity for health and fitness purposes “3 days and above” when respondents were asked, “In the last month, on average, how many days a week did you do physical activity to stay healthy and fit?” Regarding cumulative grade point

average (CGPA), 34% of the respondents reported very good or excellent CGPA and 27.5% reported that they read “5 hours and above per day” for academic purposes. Proportions of respondents who responded in the desirable direction was not high in smoking and alcohol consumption 37%, and 39% respectively, and for the rest of the items, the proportions was quite low. Regarding the item addressing spending time with someone without masks, 51% of the respondents said no and this might be reflective as the data were collected at a time when Turkey was in a 17-day lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The frequency distribution of socially desirable answers is provided in Table 4. Overall, the results show a low tendency to a systematic SDR, and the majority of the respondents provided 2 to 5 socially desirable answers across a range of 14 items.

Table 4  
Frequency Distribution of Reported Socially Desirable Answers across 14 Items

Reported number of socially desirable answers across 14 items	Number of respondents	Percentage
0	6	1.6
1	20	5.2
2	49	12.7
3	72	18.8
4	66	17
5	59	15.4
6	38	9.8
7	28	7.3
8	16	4.1
9	20	5.2
10	7	1.8
11	1	0.3
12	1	0.3
13	0	0
14	0	0
Total	383	100.0

As mentioned before, the Marlowe-Crowne SDR short scale was also used to classify respondents who demonstrated a systematic tendency to SDR and those who did not. The expectation is that respondents who score high on the Marlowe-Crowne short scale will also tend to systematic SDR and vice versa. When those who scored above the mean on the Marlowe-Crowne SDR short scale is compared to those who scored below the mean, on average the former reported 5 socially desirable answers compared to the latter who provided 4 desirable answers on average. Also, as Figure 2 demonstrates, the observations of those who scored high on the Marlowe-Crowne SDR short-scale were more dispersed than the latter group.

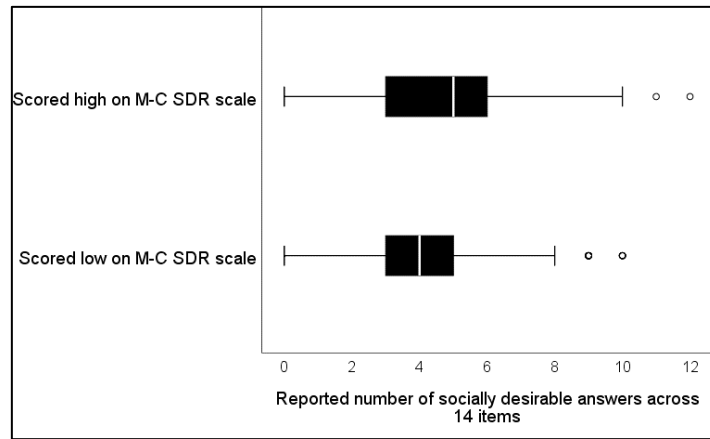


Figure 2. Systematic Tendency to SDR across 14 Items by the Marlowe-Crowne SDR Short Scale

To test whether the systematic tendency to SDR across a range of 14 items significantly differs by the score on the Marlowe-Crowne SDR short scale, a t-test was run, and Levene’s test of equality of variance was accepted ( $p=0.981$ ). The mean difference is significant at  $t(381) = 2.74$   $p=0.006$  and the t-test results were still statistically significant at  $t(375) = 2.84$   $p=0.005$  after outliers were controlled for. This result confirms that respondents who scored high on the Marlowe-Crowne SDR short scale also provided more socially desirable response categories across 14 items on average.

Table 5

Average Reported Number of Socially Desirable Responses by the Scores on the M-C SDR Scale

		With outliers			Without outliers				
t value	Degrees of freedom	P value	Mean difference	Std. error	t value	Degrees of freedom	p value	Mean difference	Std. error
2.74	381	0.006	0.64**	0.23	2.84	375	0.005	0.63**	0.22

Note: n= 383

**Interest in the Introductory Statement**

Now, we examine whether the tendency to SDR confirmed by Table 5 differs by the introduction interest. We expected that compared to respondents who found the survey interesting (optimizers), respondents who found the survey less interesting (reluctant respondents) will demonstrate a higher systematic tendency to SDR. Contrary to the expectations, respondents who found the survey interesting tended to report more socially desirable responses (not interesting at all has an average of 3.42 SDR responses, somewhat interesting 3.91, interesting 5.04, and very interesting 5.63, not shown in Tables). A one-way ANOVA that tests whether these four means are all equal was found significant (Welch’s statistic=15.504,  $p<0.000$ , not shown in tables). The Games-Howell’s post-hoc multiple comparisons indicate that the mean values of the first two groups were significantly ( $p<0.000$ ) different from the mean values of the last two groups (see Table 6). A similar association between interest in the survey and the Marlowe-Crowne SDR short-scale was also observed, where those who found the survey interesting scored higher on this scale (findings not shown here).

Table 6

Systematic Tendency to SDR by the Introduction Interest (Post-Hoc Multiple Comparisons)

	Mean value	Pairwise comparisons	Mean difference	Std. error	p-value
Not interesting at all	3.42	Somewhat interesting	-0.50	0.31	0.381
		Interesting	-1.62***	0.31	0.000
		Very interesting	-2.21***	0.42	0.000
Somewhat interesting	3.91	Interesting	-1.13***	0.26	0.000
		Very interesting	-1.71***	0.38	0.000
Interesting	5.04	Very interesting	-0.59	0.39	0.436
Very interesting	5.63				

Note. n = 383. \*\*\*p<0.001.

**Perceived Topic Sensitivity**

Even though neither of the experimental topics seems to be sensitive, the majority of the respondents rated them both as either sensitive or very sensitive. However, it is important to mention that the perceived topic sensitivity question was in the last section of the questionnaire. Even though respondents were reminded of the survey topic when this perceived topic sensitivity was asked, they may have been affected by the sensitivity of the items towards the end of the questionnaire.

Table 7

Perceived Topic Sensitivity

Topic	Perceived topic sensitivity						Total	Total
	Not sensitivity at all		Sensitive		Very sensitive			
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Focus during online classes	30	15.3	72	36.7	94	48.0	196	100
Social life of students during the distance education process of corvid 19	31	16.6	60	32.1	96	51.3	187	100
Total	61	16.3	132	34.5	190	49.6	383	100

$\chi^2_{(2)} = 0.92$ . p = 0.632.

Concerning perceived topic sensitivity, the respondents perceived the “the social life of students during distance education process of the COVID-19 pandemic” to be slightly more sensitive (see Table 7). To test whether the reported number of socially desirable responses across 14 items vary by the degree of perceived topic sensitivity (not sensitive at all, sensitive, and very sensitive), a one-way ANOVA test was performed. The result shows that the average reported number of socially desirable responses marginally differ by the degree of perceived topic sensitivity (F= 3.121, p=0.045, not shown in tables). Furthermore, Tukey’s post-hoc tests show that those who perceived the survey topic as very sensitive tended more to a systematic SDR (p-value=0.052) (see Table 8).

Table 8

Systematic Tendency to SDR by the Perceived Topic Sensitivity (Post-Hoc Multiple Comparisons)

	Mean value	Pairwise comparisons	Mean difference	Std. error	p-value
Not sensitive at all	3.97	Sensitive	-0.38	0.36	0.532
		Very sensitive	-0.78	0.34	<b>0.052</b>
Sensitive	4.35	Very sensitive	-0.39	0.26	0.277
Very sensitive	4.75				

### Topic and Sponsor Effects

At the item level, the tendency to SDR differs by the topic revealed in the introduction in terms of point estimates which were higher under the topic “social life of students during the distance education process of the COVID-19 pandemic”. Only four items are significant and they are addressing different issues and did not have a common denominator. One item was addressing the reason for the joined field of study and the other two items were related to online learning activities and whether one looked up answers to questions in online exams. The fourth item is about current romantic status and when controlled for sex, it is statistically significant for females.

None of the items showed significant differences by the sponsor, but the point estimates for the number of socially desirable responses were usually higher under the “HUIPS DSRM” compared to Ph.D. as the survey sponsor (see Table 9).

Table 9

Proportions of Respondents who responded in the Desirable Direction at the item level by Topic and Sponsor

Item	Desirable response option	Topic		$\chi^2$	Sponsor		$\chi^2$
		Topic 1 %	Topic 2 %		Ph.D. thesis %	HUIPS RMD %	
Reason for the joined field of study	To help the community I live within	14.3	21.9	3.881*	15.9	20.7	1.487
Number of hours allocated for online classes per day during the fall term 2020-2021	5 hours and above	24.5	31.0	2.036	27.6	27.8	0.003
Time management during the distance education process	Very good	12.2	12.8	0.030	12.1	13.0	0.065
Cumulative GPA in the fall term 2020-2021	Very good/Excellent	34.2	34.8	0.014	34.1	34.9	0.027
Joins online class discussions	Every time	8.2	17.1	6.991**	11.7	13.6	0.320
Attention during online classes	Every time	4.1	4.3	0.009	5.6	2.4	2.477
Uses social media during online classes	No	37.8	33.2	0.884	37.4	33.1	0.744
Looked up answers to questions in an online exam	No	48.5	59.4	4.565*	50.5	58.0	2.149
Number of reading hours for academic purposes per day during fall term 2020-2021	5 hours and above	22.4	26.7	0.951	21.5	28.4	2.433
Spent time with someone without masks in the last 24 hrs.	No	50.0	51.9	0.134	51.4	50.3	0.046
Days for physical activity for health and fitness purposes per week in the last month	3 days and above	40.8	40.6	0.001	39.7	42.0	0.206
Ever smoked cigarettes	No	39.8	32.6	2.131	37.9	34.3	0.509
Ever drank alcoholic drinks	No	38.8	39.0	0.003	36.4	42.0	1.230
Currently in a romantic relationship	No	25.6	39.2	5.51*	29.5	36.4	0.02
	Yes	61.5	53.8	0.702	58.7	57.4	1.35
	Female						
	Male						
Total		196	187		214	169	

Note. Topic1 (focus during online classes) Topic 2 (social life of students during the distance education process of the COVID-19 pandemic). HUIPS DSRM = Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies Department of Social Research Methodology. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01.

The study proposed that the tendency to SDR would be greater under the “focus during online classes” topic and under the “Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies Department of Social Research Methodology” as a sponsor. However, the sample estimates indicate the opposite and the systematic tendency to SDR was relatively higher under the “social life of students during the distance education process of the COVID-19 pandemic” topic. For the sponsor, the result supported the hypothesis and the systematic tendency to SDR was higher under “HUIPS DSRM” compared to a Ph.D. thesis as the sponsor. Overall, Table 10 shows that systematic tendency to SDR slightly differs by topic and sponsor.

Table 10

Mean Reported Number of Socially Desirable Responses by Topic and Sponsor

Topic		Sponsor	
Focus during online classes	social life of students during the distance education process of the COVID-19 pandemic	Ph.D. thesis	HUIPS DSRM
4.37	4.60	4.42	4.56

Note. HUIPS DSRM = Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies Department of Social Research Methodology.

To see whether the bivariate relationships we observed hold under a multivariable setting to explain the systematic tendency to SDR, a Poisson regression model was run including topic, sponsor, the Marlowe-Crowne short-scale, introduction interest, and perceived topic sensitivity, controlling for sex, education level, the field of study, and age. Regarding the attention check item, three respondents failed to pay attention to the item instructions and they were excluded from the analysis.

The deviance for the fitted model is 348.91 and the intercept-only model deviance is 439.19 (Table 11). The pseudo  $R^2$  of the Poisson regression model is equal to 20.6%, implying that the model has almost reduced 21% of the deviance compared to the intercept-only model.

As shown in Table 9, at an item level, the tendency to SDR differs by topic in three items but Poisson model outputs show that neither the topic nor the sponsor coefficients are significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) ( see Table 11). The Marlowe-Crowne SD short-scale is significant, and the model predicts that respondents who scored low on the M-C SD short-scale were less likely to demonstrate a systematic tendency to socially desirable responding compared to those who scored high on the scale. The rate of socially desirable responding for a respondent who scored 1 on the M-C SD short-scale was 0.59 times lower compared to a respondent who scored 7 on the M-C SDR short scale. The introduction interest variable was significant ( $p\text{-value} < 0.001$ ), and contrary to our expectations, the reported number of socially desirable answers decreased as the level of interest dropped. Respondents who found the survey not interesting at all (reluctant respondents) are 0.68 times less likely to provide desirable answers than respondents who found the survey “very interesting” those we defined as optimizers (see Table 11).



Table 11

## Poisson Regression Model for the Number of Socially Desirable Responses across 14 Items

	B	Standard error	Wald Chi-square	p-value	Exp(B)
Intercept	2.71	0.31	77.41	0.000	15.04
<b>Topic</b>					
Focus during online classes	-0.05	0.05	1.10	0.294	0.95
The social life of students during the distance education process of the COVID-19 pandemic (ref)					1
<b>Sponsor</b>					
Ph.D. thesis	-0.05	0.05	1.10	0.294	0.95
HUIPS DSRM (ref)					1
<b>M-C SD short-scale</b>					
0	-0.53	0.33	3.39	0.066	0.55
1	-0.53	0.23	5.16	0.023	0.59*
2	-0.31	0.15	4.55	0.033	0.73*
3	-0.18	0.11	3.03	0.081	0.83
4	-0.17	0.09	3.39	0.066	0.84
5	-0.19	0.10	4.01	0.045	0.83*
6	-0.07	0.09	0.540	0.467	0.93
7 (ref)					1
<b>Introduction interest</b>					
Not interesting at all	-0.39	0.11	13.38	0.000	0.68***
Somewhat interesting	-0.24	0.08	9.93	0.002	0.78**
Interesting	-0.07	0.07	0.91	0.340	0.93
Very interesting (ref)					1
<b>Perceived topic sensitivity</b>					
not sensitive at all	-0.11	0.08	1.70	0.192	0.89
Sensitive	-0.02	0.06	0.09	0.770	0.98
very sensitive (ref)					1
<b>Sex</b>					
Prefer not to say	-0.52	0.24	4.54	0.033	0.60*
Male	-0.10	0.06	2.69	0.101	0.90
Female (ref)					1
<b>Education</b>					
Education (Undergraduate)	-0.32	0.09	11.99	0.001	0.73***
Master or Ph.D. (ref)					1
<b>Field of study</b>					
Education sciences	0.04	0.12	0.12	0.735	1.04
Engineering sciences	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.995	0.99
Health sciences	-0.01	0.08	0.02	0.881	0.99
Sport sciences	-0.17	0.07	5.18	0.023	0.84*
Arts and other sciences	-0.23	0.10	5.01	0.025	0.80*
Social sciences (ref)					1
<b>Age</b>	-0.02	0.01	3.03	0.082	0.98
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> 20.6%					
Intercept-only model			Deviance=439.19	Value/df=1.251	
Predictor model			Deviance=348.91	Value/df=1.064	

HUIP DSRM = Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies Department of Social Research Methodology. SE = standard error. \*p<0.05

\*\*p<0.01\*\*\*p<0.001.

According to the model, males were not significantly different than females in terms of the rate of reporting more socially desirable responses. Prefer not to say group does seem to be significantly different than the reference category, but it is worth underlining that this group consists of only 7 cases. The undergraduate students reported 0.73 times fewer socially desirable answers compared to master and Ph.D. students. Also, students from sports sciences reported 0.84 times fewer and arts and other sciences category 0.80 times fewer socially desirable answers compared to social sciences (Table 11).

## Conclusion

This study is among the few to focus on the effects of survey topic and sponsor on SDR in a self-administered setting. Overall, the study found no significant effects of the survey topic and sponsor on the tendency to SDR. However, intriguingly, it was seen that respondents who found the survey interesting demonstrated a higher disposition to systematic SDR. The study suggests that respondents who thought the survey topic was interesting might tend to a systematic SDR. Also, it was seen that sensitive topics might result in a systematic tendency to SDR, as respondents who perceived the survey topic to be very sensitive demonstrated a higher tendency to a systematic SDR.

The current results might support the notion that respondents do not give more attention to survey invitations that come from well-known sponsors to them (Tourangeau et al., 2009). This argument suggests that when respondents frequently receive survey requests from a specific sponsor, they might give less attention to some parts of the survey request. Also the result regarding topic and sponsor effects is concordant with the survey research on survey topic and sponsor which shows that topic and sponsor have little effect on response rates and survey estimates. The sponsor results are in agreement with previous studies (Boulianne et al., 2010; Crabtree et al., 2020; Etter et al., 1996) that reported null effects of sponsor on data quality. However, some other studies reported significant sponsor effects on response rate and data quality (Jones, 1979; Ladik et al., 2007; Tourangeau et al., 2009). For the survey topic, Keusch (2013) reported null effects of survey topic salience on survey participation and data quality in an online panel experiment.

There could be a variety of reasons for the null effects of the survey topic and the sponsor in the present study. Respondents might not have read the survey introduction well and may have started directly filling out the questionnaire. Besides, when the survey topic and sponsor are revealed inside the survey introduction, they might not appear salient enough. Alternatively, the topic and the sponsor effects on SDR may be dependent upon the degree of topic sensitivity and the sponsor-respondent relation. For instance, sponsor effects on SDR could be more salient if the respondents receive the survey link from two sponsors that greatly differ. In the current study, all respondents received the survey link from Hacettepe University and some from their instructors, so that the differences between the two different sponsors may not have been emphasized enough. In sum, survey topic and sponsor might not affect SDR, and even if they do, the effect might be small.

Also, the results indicate that some respondents are more likely to respond in a socially desirable manner than others as the Poisson regression model indicated. For example, SDR differs by respondents' background characteristics and is positively correlated with age in the literature (Soubelet and Salthouse, 2011; Stöber, 2001; Vigil-Colet et al., 2013). In the present findings, age was not found significant, and this might be related to the

fact that the age range of the respondents in this study was relatively homogeneous, with most respondents being in their early 20s. Similarly, there have been studies showing that educated people usually demonstrate more tendency to SDR (Deshields et al., 1995; Karp and Brockington, 2005) In the current results, postgraduate respondents reported more desirable response categories compared to undergraduate respondents.

Finally, the present investigation has some limitations that need to be addressed. Firstly, the data were collected from a convenience sample of undergraduate and postgraduate students. The use of such samples is common in experimental research and the results cannot be generalized beyond the sample. The levels of experimental factors were not very distinct enough, and we believe that this could be a reason why we have not observed a significant effect. This was evident by the explicit question to respondents asking them to rate their sensitivity, where we observed similar degrees of perceived sensitivity. Also, introducing the survey topic and the sponsor inside the introductory statement may not make them appear salient enough.

For future research, the levels of experimental factors should be discernible. It would be very useful to investigate how a systematic tendency to SDR may vary between two sponsors that greatly differ. Likewise, when introducing the survey topic and sponsor inside the introductory statement, the survey topic and the sponsor should stand out from the rest of the writing. For example, the font size of the topic and the sponsor could be bigger or in bold. For sponsor, using sponsor logo may make it more salient. Finally, it would be interesting to examine a systematic tendency to SDR in situations where incentives are provided and not provided both in self-administered and personal interviews.

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## Genişletilmiş Özet

### Amaç

Bu çalışmanın üç ana amacı bulunmaktadır. Bunlar bir dizi anket sorusunda sosyal istenirlik etkileri gösteren yanıtlara yönelik olası sistematik bir eğilimin anket konusu ve anketi destekleyen kuruluş, anket tanıtımına duyulan ilgi ve konunun ne kadar hassas algılandığına göre farklılık gösterip göstermediğidir. Sosyal istenirlik yanlılığı farklı şekillerde tanımlanmaktadır. Örneğin sosyal olarak onaylanma isteği (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960), yapmacık iyilik hali (Furnham, 1986), kişinin kendisini iyi göstermek istemesi (Hays et al., 1989), veya kişinin kendisini abartılı şekilde olumlu tanımlaması gibi (Paulhus, 2002). Bu çalışmada sosyal istenirliğe yönelik sistematik eğilim Paulhus'un (1991, s. 17) tanımına uygun olarak kavramsallaştırılmaktadır: "Yanıt yanlılığı, bir dizi anket ögesine (sorularına) bu ögelerin içeriğinden başka bir temelde yanıt vermeye yönelik sistematik bir eğilimdir". 'Sistematik eğilim' terminolojisi bu makale boyunca 14 maddelik bir dizi öge arasında tekrarlayan biçimde sosyal olarak istenen yanıtların seçilmesini ima edecek şekilde kullanılmıştır. Bu yanıtların sayısı teorik olarak 0 ve 14 arasında değişmektedir.

### Tasarım ve Yöntem

Bu çalışma, 2x2x2 deneysel tasarımı olan bir çevrimiçi anketin verilerinden yararlanmaktadır. Deneysel faktörler, anketin konusu, destekleyen kuruluş ve sosyal olarak istenen yanıtın seçenekler arasındaki konumudur. Bu çalışma, ilk iki deneysel faktörle ilgilidir. Anket konusunun ve destekleyen kuruluşun sosyal istenirliğe sistematik eğilim üzerindeki etkisini ampirik olarak test etmek için Google Formlar kullanılarak bir anketin sekiz farklı versiyonu hazırlanmıştır. Deneysel konular "çevrimiçi derslerde odaklanma" ve "COVID-19 pandemisi uzaktan eğitim sürecinde öğrencilerin sosyal hayatı" olurken, deneysel destekleyici kuruluşlar "Doktora tezi" ve "Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü Sosyal Araştırmalar Metodolojisi Anabilim Dalı" olarak belirlenmiştir. Minitab 17 kullanılarak 0.90'lık bir güç ve 0.05'lik bir anlamlılık düzeyi ile 0.2'lik bir etki büyüklüğünü tespit etmek için 272'lik yeterli bir örneklem büyüklüğü hesaplanmıştır.

Katılımcıları 8 deneysel versiyona rastgele atamak için kendilerine ilk soru olarak ayın hangi gününde doğdukları sorulmuştur. Katılımcılar sekiz gün aralığından (1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-15, 16-19, 20-23, 24-27 ve 28-31) uygun olanı seçtikten sonra ilgili anket versiyonuna atanmışlardır.

### Bağımlı değişken

Operasyonel olarak, sosyal istenirliğe sistematik eğilim, sosyal olarak teşvik edilen faaliyetleri olağandan fazla bildirme, sosyal olarak iyi bakılmayanları ise eksik bildirme veya reddetme eğilimi olarak tanımlanmıştır. Bu tanım, yaygın olarak kullanılan Marlowe-Crowne sosyal istenirlik ölçeği "Kişilerin kültürel olarak uygun ve kabul edilebilir bir şekilde yanıt vererek onay alma ihtiyacı" (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960, s.353) tanımı ile uyumludur.

Toplam 14 sorunun her birinin yanıt kategorileri ikili olarak kodlanmıştır (sosyal istenirliği olan ve olmayan yanıtlar). Sosyal olarak istenen yanıtın yönünü belirlemek için, ilk olarak, soru sosyal olarak teşvik edilen bir faaliyet ile ilgiliyse abartılı olabilecek yanıt kategorisi sosyal olarak istenen kategori olarak tanımlanmıştır. Benzer şekilde, soru sosyal iyi bakılmayan bir faaliyet ile ilgili ise, eksik bildirim veya inkarı işaret edebilecek yanıt kategorisi, sosyal olarak istenen yanıt seçeneği olarak kabul edilmiştir. Ayrıca, yanıtlayıcıların bakış açısından yanıt kategorilerinin istenirliği hakkında daha iyi fikir edinmek için, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus

Etütleri Enstitüsü Sosyal Araştırmalar Metodolojisi Bölümü'nden bir grup öğrenciden yanıt kategorilerinin tercih edilebilirliğini derecelendirmeleri istenmiştir.

Bu kodlama işlemi sonucunda her katılımcı için 14 üzerinden bir toplam puan hesaplanmıştır ve ortalamanın üzerinde toplam puanın sistematik sosyal istenirlik eğilim gösteriyor olabileceği düşünülmüştür. Bununla birlikte, yüksek sayıda sosyal istenirliğe uygun yanıtın, sosyal istenirliğe sistematik bir eğilimden ziyade gerçek yanıtları da yansıtıyor olabileceği de dikkate alınmıştır. Bu iki açıklama arasında bir nebze ayırım yapmak için, ankete Marlowe-Crowne sosyal istenirlik ölçeğinin Türkçe kısa versiyonu (7 maddelik) eklenmiştir. Marlowe-Crowne sosyal istenirlik ölçeğinin Türkçe kısa versiyonu Ural ve Özbirecikli (2006) tarafından çevrilmiş ve test edilmiştir, Cronbach alfa değeri 0.78'dir. 7 ögenin tümü 'doğru' yanıtları 1 puan alacak şekilde kodlanmış, her katılımcı için toplam puan hesaplanmıştır. Hem Marlowe-Crowne sosyal istenirlik kısa ölçeğinin ortalama puanının üzerinde puan alan hem de 14 soru aralığında sosyal olarak arzu edilen yanıtları ortalama puanın üzerinde veren katılımcılar, sistematik şekilde sosyal istenirliğe eğilimli yanıt veren katılımcılar olarak tanımlanmıştır.

#### *Bağımsız değişkenler*

"Öğrencilerin uzaktan eğitim sürecinde sosyal yaşamları" ile karşılaştırıldığında, "çevrimiçi derslerde odaklanma"nın daha hassas bir konu olduğu ve sistematik sosyal istenirlik eğilimini daha çok ürettiğini varsayılmıştır. Anket içeriklerinin aynı olması nedeniyle her iki konunun da pandemi ve eğitim çağrıştırmasına dikkat edilmiştir. Bu iki konu pandemi sırasında hedef kitlenin ilgisini çekebilecek ve aynı zamanda bir nebze hassas olacak şekilde seçilmiştir.

Öte yandan, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü Sosyal Araştırma Yöntemleri Anabilim Dalı'ndan ankette bölüm adının deneysel faktör düzeylerinden biri olarak kullanılması için onay alınmıştır. Üniversite ile anket hedef kitlesi arasındaki ilişki göz önüne alındığında, "Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü Sosyal Araştırmalar Metodolojisi Anabilim Dalı"nın katılımcılar ile görece dikey bir ilişkiyi, "Doktora tezi"nin ise görece yatay bir ilişkiyi düşündürmesi, bu durumun Enstitü isminin daha fazla sosyal istenirlik eğilimine yol açması beklenmiştir.

Anketin tanıtım yazısından sonra ankete dair oluşan olan ilgiyi ölçmek için katılımcılara "Giriş bölümünü okuduktan sonra anket hakkındaki izleniminiz nasıldı?" diye sorulmuştur ("hiç ilginç değil", "biraz ilginç", "ilginç" ve "çok ilginç" yanıt seçenekleri ile). Ayrıca, konunun ne kadar hassas olarak algılandığını ölçen bir soru da ankete dahil edilmiştir. Katılımcılara önce anket konusu hatırlatılmıştır, ardından da bu konuyu ne kadar hassas buldukları sorulmuştur, örneğin: "Hatırlayacağınız gibi, bu anket öğrencilerin uzaktan eğitim sürecindeki sosyal yaşamlarıyla ilgiliydi, aşağıdaki hangi ifade bunu en iyi tanımlamaktadır?" ("hiç hassas değil", "hassas" ve "çok hassas" seçenekleri ile). Son olarak, yorgunluğu ve dikkatsiz yanıtlamayı kontrol etmek için anket görece kısa tutulmuştur. Toplamda sadece 34 soru sorulmuştur. Bir yanıtlama davranışı olan ardısıra aynı yanıt seçeneklerini seçme durumunun varlığını kontrol etmek için araya bir dikkat kontrol sorusu gizlenmiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcılardan ankete ne kadar zaman ayırdıklarını "beklediğimden daha az zaman", "makul süre" ve "çok zaman" seçenekleri ile değerlendirilmeleri istenmiştir.

### *Veri toplama*

Çevrimiçi anket ve deney tasarımı Hacettepe Üniversitesi etik komisyonu tarafından onaylanmıştır ve her anket versiyonun ilk sayfasında onam formu sunulmuştur. 5 Mayıs 2021 tarihinde Hacettepe Üniversitesi Basın ve Halkla İlişkiler Ofisi tarafından Hacettepe Üniversitesi öğrencilerine (lisans, yüksek lisans ve doktora) anket linki gönderilmiştir. 62.788 kişiden 32'si ilk temasta anketi yanıtlamıştır ve hatırlatma gönderildikten sonra ise 15 kişi daha eklenmiştir. Yanıt sayısını artırmak için Hacettepe Üniversitesi akademik personeli olan bazı öğretim elemanları ile iletişime geçilmiş ve derslerini alan öğrencilerle anket bağlantısını paylaşmaları rica edilmiştir. Bir buçuk ay içinde bu şekilde ulaşılan kabaca 1336 öğrenciden 340'ı ankete katılmıştır. Nihai örneklem büyüklüğü 387'dir.

### **Bulgular**

#### *Temel özellikler*

Toplamda 386 katılımcı çevrimiçi anketi tamamlamıştır. Tablo 1'de gösterildiği gibi, örneklem ağırlıklı olarak (%67) kadınlardan oluşmaktadır. Ankete katılanların yaş ortalaması 22'dir ve %83'ü lisans, %7'si yüksek lisans ve %2'si doktora öğrencisidir. Ankete katılanlar ağırlıklı olarak sağlık ve sosyal bilimler alanlarında çalışmalarını sürdürmektedirler.

### **Ana Bulgular**

#### *Anket tanıtımına duyulan ilgi*

İlgi sorusunun dört farklı yanıt kategorisini seçen katılımcıların verdiği ortalama sosyal istenirlik gösteren yanıt sayısı tek yönlü ANOVA testi ile karşılaştırılmış, buna göre farklar istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur ( $F=15.169, p<0.001$ ). İkili testlere göre (Tablo 6), beklenenin aksine, anketi çok ilginç bulan katılımcılar, daha fazla sayıda sosyal açıdan istenen yanıt verme eğilimindedir. Bu katılımcılar ayrıca Marlowe-Crowne kısa ölçeğinde de daha yüksek puan almıştır (Şekil 3).

#### *Konunun ne kadar hassas algılandığı*

Katılımcılar "öğrencilerin uzaktan eğitim sürecinde sosyal yaşamları" konusunu ortalama biraz daha hassas olarak algılamışlardır (Tablo 7). Konu hassasiyetine verilen yanıtlar bazında ortalama sosyal istenirlik etkisi gösteren yanıt sayısı tek yönlü ANOVA testi ile değerlendirildiğinde anlamlılık sınırında bir farklılık görülmüştür ( $p$ -değeri=0.052) (Tablo 8).

#### *Konu ve destekleyici kurum etkileri*

Konu ve destekleyici kurumun bağımlı değişken üzerindeki etkileri Poisson regresyon ile incelenmiştir. Buna göre bu iki deneysel faktörden hiçbiri istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmamıştır ( $p>0.05$ ) (Tablo 11). Bu çalışmada bu iki faktörün sosyal istenirlik gösteren yanıtlara sistematik bir eğilime yol açacağına dair bir kanıt bulunmamıştır. Aynı regresyon modelinde kontrol edilen diğer değişkenlerden ise Marlowe-Crowne kısa ölçeği, anketin tanıtımına duyulan ilgi, lisans öğrencisi olup olmama ve çalışılan alan anlamlı bulunmuştur.

### **Sonuçlar ve Sınırlılıklar**

Bu çalışma, kendi kendine doldurulan bir ankette anket konusunun ve destekleyen kuruluşun sosyal istenirliğe uygun yanıt verme eğiliminin üzerindeki etkilerine odaklanan az sayıdaki çalışma arasındadır. Genel olarak, çalışma, anket konusunun ve destekleyici kuruluşun sosyal istenirliğe uygun yanıt verme eğilimi üzerinde

anlamli bir etkisi bulunamamıştır. Bununla birlikte, ilginç bir şekilde, anketi ilginç bulan katılımcıların sistematik sosyal istenirliđi olan yanıtla daha yüksek bir eğilim gösterdiđi görülmüştür. Çalışma anket konusunu ilginç olarak deđerlendiren katılımcıların sistematik olarak sosyal istenirliđe uygun yanıt vermeye eğilimli olabileceđini göstermiştir. Ayrıca, anket konusunu çok hassas olarak algılayan katılımcılar sistematik olarak bu tip yanıtla daha fazla eğilim gösterdiđinden, hassas anket konularının genel olarak sistematik şekilde sosyal istenirliđi olan yanıtla yol açabileceđi görülmüştür. Çalışmanın kısıtlılıklarından biri bir elverişlilik/uygunluk örnekleme dayanaası, sonuçların örnekleme dışına genellenebilmesinin mümkün olmamasıdır. Bir başka kısıtlılık deneysel faktörlerin düzeylerine ilişkindir. Bu düzeylerdeki farklılıklar yeterli olmamış, bu da olası konu ve destekleyen kurum etkilerinin gözlemlenebilmesini engellemiş olabilir. Katılımcılara konuların hassasiyetinin sorulduđu soruya her iki konu için de benzer yanıtla gelmesi bu şüpheyi güçlendirmektedir. Gelecekte sistematik şekilde sosyal istenirlik yanıt verme eğiliminin birbirinden büyük ölçüde farklı olan destekleyici kurumlar arasında nasıl deđişebileceđini araştırmak yararlı olacaktır. Görsel olarak da, çevrimiçi anketlerde anket konusu ve destekleyen kuruluş öne çıkarılabilir.

**Araştırmacı Katkısı:** Abdirahman Saeed MOHAMED (%65), Tuđba Adalı (%35).