HOW PRINTERIES IN ANKARA MAKE SENSE OF THE RISKS BROUGHT BY COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY OF RISK SENSEMAKING

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ABSTRACT

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The main objective of this study is to investigate how printeries in Ankara understand the new risks brought by pandemic and how they make sense of them. In this study, we used data collected from 20 top managers or owners of printeries located in Ankara. By using the qualitative research design, we observed how printeries approach risks and problems and how they try to make sense of them. Printeries make sense of the new risks through the existing risks. Health risks are overshadowed by the existing financial risks. Financial problems and risks are heavily caused by the constant decrease in the value of Turkish Lira that started before the pandemic. Long lasting financial depression and intense rivalry make it difficult for printeries to take precautions against the risks of pandemic.

Keywords: risk sense making, pandemic, printery, health risk, financial risk

ÖZ

ANKARA'DAKİ MATBAACILAR KOVİD-19 PANDEMİSİNİN YARATTIĞI RİSKLERİ NASIL ANLAMLANDIRIYOR: RİSK ANLAMLANDIRMAYA İLİŞKİN BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Ankara'daki matbaaların salgının getirdiği yeni riskleri nasıl anladıklarını ve bunları nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını araştırmaktır. Bu çalışmada Ankara'da bulunan matbaaların 20 üst yöneticisinden veya sahibinden toplanan veriler kullanılmıştır. Nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanarak matbaaların risklere ve sorunlara nasıl yaklaştıklarını ve bunları nasıl anlamlandırmaya çalıştıklarını gözlemledik. Matbaalar, mevcut riskler aracılığıyla yeni riskleri anlamlandırmaktadır. Sağlık riskleri, mevcut finansal risklerin gölgesinde kalmaktadır. Türk lirasının salgın öncesinden beri sürekli değer kaybetmesi finansal problemlere ve risklere büyük ölçüde neden olmaktadır. Uzun süren finansal bunalım ve yoğun rekabet, matbaaların salgın risklerine karşı önlem almasını zorlaştırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: risk anlamlandırma, salgın, matbaacılık, sağlık riski, finansal risk

To My Wife

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of Covid 19 started around the beginning of spring of 2020. In the beginning, people acted extremely diligently to prevent spread of the virus in Turkey. For example, during early times of the pandemic businesses voluntarily closed themselves around a week or two, hoping everything would be all right at the end. After two weeks that diligent behavior started to fade away slowly and businesses started to return to their normal routine. Inevitably, this sped up the spread of the virus and different rules and regulations started to be implemented by the state. For instance, schools and restaurants started to be closed, universities and offices adopted working from homes. Apart from education and restaurant sectors, many related sectors such as printeries experienced loss in revenues and customer numbers. At this point ambiguity and uncertainty started to build up within different sectors, which were important contributors of sensemaking (Weick, 1995).

In the simplest term, printery is an establishment or organization where printing books, newspapers etc. is done. Like any other establishment, printeries are open to risks. In this study we ask the question of how printeries understand risks that are introduced by Covid-19 pandemic and/or how they make sense of them. Our aim is to analyze printeries' meaning construction process by using a qualitative research design. The research involves interviews with open-ended questions answered by the owners or top managers of printeries in Ankara.

Printeries as organizations use risky technologies, make risky investments, and operating on risky procedures in their normal operations (Shirivastava, Mitroff, Miller, and Miglani, 1988; Perrow, 1999). Even before the beginning of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, printeries were dealing with especially financial risks. Recent Covid-

19 pandemic created many obstacles and crises for uncountable parts of our lives; it disturbed many sectors and changed how they would operate. Likewise, it exacerbated the existing problems and risks of the industrial printing sector of Ankara and transformed its crisis into a much bigger one than it already was. The printery sector in Ankara is highly competitive. The number of printeries far exceeds the amount of demand in Ankara, leaving little profit for firms. The environment of the sector is very dynamic, and firms are open to those changes. This makes medium-term decision making is very challenging let alone the long-term decision making. Thus, firms concentrate on day-to-day decisions. Sensemaking plays important role here because firms that are able to understand changes can adjust to those changes quicker than other firms and enjoy opportunities.

1.1. Defining Risk/Crisis Sensemaking

Sensemaking is the practice of social construction that happens when conflicting cues disturb individuals' continuing activity and requires the retrospective development of possible meanings that explain what people are doing (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). The most important element for the creation of possible meanings is relating the cues from the environment and clarifying those cues based on salient frames. Sensemaking is thus about linking cues and frames to create an account of what is going on (Maitlis and Sonenshein 2010). As Weick argued, "The basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs" (1993: 635). Therefore, sensemaking is a process of social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), in which individuals attempt to understand and explain sets of cues from their environments. It is an essential element in the construction of the intersubjective world or cultural world, the process in which people paraphrase their world to create the sense that shared meanings exist (Leither, 1980).

According to Weick (1988), crises are distinguished by low chance of probability and high consequences which put the most essential aims of an organization at risk. Due to their low probability, these events disrupt clarifications and impose serious demands on sensemaking. The less successful the sensemaking process targeted at a crisis is, the more likely that the crisis will get out of control. However, sensemaking poses a

difficult dilemma because people think or make sense by acting. Dealing with a crisis as it develops often demands actions which simultaneously create the raw material that is used for sensemaking and affect the developing crisis itself. There is a fragile balance between dangerous action which generates understanding and safe inactivity which produces confusion. Therefore, sensemaking in crisis situations or situations of realized risks is more challenging because actions that are influential for understanding the crisis and risks often deepen the crisis and realize risks. This dilemma is understood from the standpoint that people enact the environments, which restrict them, based on their commitment, capacity, and expectations as well as certain ideologies or understanding frameworks, which decrease or increase the likelihood and gravity of crisis (Weick, 1988).

In fact, industrial printer owners also thought by acting as they made sense of the pandemic and associated risks through enactment (Weick, 1988). The crisis brought by the pandemic had a significant negative impact on the demand for industrial printers. During the pandemic demand was at the lowest point of all time. In order to cope with this crisis, the owners acted to lower their prices and attract customers. However, this action led to dramatic decreases in profits and forced many companies to take loans from banks to cope with increased expenses such as inputs and prior debts. As a result, printeries saw that pressures and risks increased and many of them had to lay off employees to ease some of their especially financial burdens. Throughout the pandemic, this enactment continued with similar outcomes that highlighted the existing, long-lasting risks of the printeries and shaped their sense of the pandemic.

1.2. Contributions

This study contributes in three main areas. Firstly, this study supports the Weick's (1995, et al. 2005) claim that sensemaking occurs when conflicting signs disturb individuals' continuing activity and require the retrospective development of possible meanings that explain what people are doing. In this study we observed that printeries started to use sensemaking when the pandemic challenged the established traditions of the sector. Secondly, in contrast to prior sensemaking studies, we witnessed that printeries tried to understand and made sense of new risks through the existing risks.

To our knowledge, there is no particular study that shows organizational actors making sense of new risks through old risks. When we reviewed past studies, we observed that sensemaking activities are done through new risks. In other words, we saw that new risks become the focus point of sensemaking. Hence, this study introduces a new area of research by highlighting an unexplored part of the literature. Finally, this study contributes to the sensemaking literature by studying a crisis as it unfolds. In this study we had a chance to observe and collect data from participants during the actual process of crisis. Covid 19 let us study our topic while its crisis on printeries unfolded. Thus, we had an opportunity to study sensemaking in a rapidly changing environment rather than when the crisis was over. Christianson and Barton (2021) believe that studying the pandemic let sensemaking scholars understand sensemaking better due to this extreme context.

1.3. Study Overview

This study continues as follows. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the risk/crisis sensemaking literature as well as case study examples to develop a better understanding on what is explored and not explored on risk sensemaking. Chapter 3 talks about the methodology of the study. Chapter 4 gives information about the findings of the research. Chapter 5 discusses and elaborates on the findings. Finally, chapter 6 summarizes the research and highlights its contributions, also presenting future implications of this study.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE: RISK SENSEMAKING

Brown (2000) defines sensemaking as procedure of explanation and production of meaning through which individuals and groups explain phenomena and create intersubjective accounts (Leiter, 1980; Weick, 1995). Sensemaking is built and shown in our written and spoken explanation of the world, with 'sense' arising when people behave as if they share meanings they have bilaterally and consensually negotiated (Cicourel, 1981; Emerson, 1981; Garfinkel, 1967; Gephart, 1978; Lyman and Scott, 1970). However, lack of agreement is likely in the process of sensemaking, underlying inconsistencies between individuals' point of view. Furthermore, most organizations are fractured and hierarchical in which individuals have asymmetric power relationships; some individuals are more capable of imposing their power than others (Clegg, 1975, 1981; Pettigrew, 1992; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974). Still, individuals can choose to suppose that they share common perceptions (Gephart et. al., 1990; Leither, 1980, p.78; Lynch, 1985).

2.1. Ambiguity, Uncertainty, and Sensemaking

Ambiguity and uncertainty, generally associated with some kind of risk, are the two most common sensemaking occasions for organizations. Their effect on or "shock" to organizations are different. To speak for ambiguity, because of too many explanations, people are confused and engage in sensemaking. As for uncertainty, they engage in sensemaking because they are ignorant of any explanation. Differences are shown more openly in Daft's study with Macintosh (Daft & Macintosh, 1981), Lengel (Daft & Lengel, 1984), and Trevino (Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). Daft and Macintosh (1981) show that ignorance and confusion are different. To get rid of ignorance, we require more information. To get rid of confusion, we still need information; but it is different kind of information that is formulated in face-to-face interaction that

contributes with multiple cues. There are certain problems with ambiguity such as that people are dubious about what questions they should ask or whether there is a problem to be solved at all. These issues need to be settled through subjective opinions because no one has an idea on what objective data, if any, are relevant (Weick, 1995, p.99).

"When confronted with an equivocal -ambiguous, confusing- event, managers use language to share perceptions among themselves and gradually define or create meaning through discussion, groping, trial and error, and sounding out. Managers organize cues and messages to create meaning through their discussion and joint interpretation" (Huber & Daft, 1987, p. 151). When multiple meanings confuse and produce a shock, different quality of information will become more helpful than a greater quantity of information. In order to reduce the number of meanings, people need more diversified cues. This happens when meetings and direct contact counterbalance formal information systems and special reports. In the case ambiguity, people thus need instruments which "enable debate, clarification, and enactment more than simply provide large amounts of data" (Daft & Lengel, 1986, p. 559).

Yet again firms suffer due to uncertainty and ambiguity caused by the pandemic and associated risks. In our setting, we mostly see this problem in the printing firms that work with public offices and educational publishing houses. The reason why these firms suffered most during pandemic is that most of the public offices worked with half of their staff, which made most of the payments delayed until unclear date. Furthermore, because of the pandemic schools were closed and their re-opening date was also never clear. The firms did not have much chance to discuss these problems with the authorities and other parties. The situation made educational publishing houses held their most of the orders, which caused huge revenue loss for printing firms that they worked with. These firms experienced the "shock" due to both uncertainty and ambiguity. In response, they tried to make sense of the resulting changes around their environment.

Sensemaking permits people to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity, and risks in general, by creating coherent accounts of the world that allow action. Sensemaking therefore both leads to decision making and follows it: Risk sensemaking offers "clear

questions and clear answers" (Weick, 1993: 636) that feed decision making, and decision making stimulates the surprises and confusion that create opportunities for sensemaking (Maitlis, 2005).

Similarly, Starbuck and Milliken (1988) argue that the key incidents for sensemaking consist of "incongruous events, events that violate perceptual frameworks" (p. 52). By "violate" they mean to interrupt an ongoing flow. Mandler (1984) claims that sensemaking and cognitive change are triggered by two types of interruption. First, the new occasion is not "expected" -that does not fit into continuing explanation of the environment- and second, the "expected" occasion does not happen. These two types have the same kind of disturbing structural effects: The new event is troublesome because it occurs instead of the "expected" event, and the absence of the "expected" event means the existence of something else that is "unexpected". In both cases continuing cognitive activity is disturbed. On that moment, coping, problem solving, and "learning" actions occur (p. 188). The covid-19 pandemic can be considered as an "incongruous event"; it disturbed the ongoing flow in the industrial printing sector. It certainly triggered risk sensemaking because it was unexpected and did not fit into the existing explanation of the environment. The pandemic itself became the risk sensemaking resource due to its certain characteristics, for example, its enormous scale, unseen economic and social effects, and repeated closures.

2.2. Enactment and Sensemaking

While risk sensemaking is triggered by ambiguous, incongruous, and unexpected events, it is largely shaped by enactment. The notion of enactment is a synthesis, designed for organizational settings, of four lines of scholarship: self-fulfilling prophecies (E. E. Jones, 1986; R. A. Jones, 1977; Snyder, 1984), retrospective sensemaking (Staw, 1980; Weick, 1979), commitment (Salancik, 1977; Staw, 1982), and social information processing (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). It refers to the social process by which a 'material and symbolic record of action' (Smircich and Stubbart, 1985, p. 726) is laid down. The process happens in two steps. First, parts of the field of experience are grouped and singled out for closer care on the basis of prejudices. Second, people behave within the framework of these grouped elements, under the guidance of prejudices, and often shape these elements in the course of prejudices

(Powers, 1973). Thus, action has a tendency to verify prejudices. For example, in industrial printing sector, companies have certain prejudices towards making sense of the new pandemic conditions (Powers, 1973). These prejudices have its roots in the experiences of previous crises. They especially focus on currency rates and price of the inputs. People in the sector believe that while currency will get worse, prices of the inputs such as paper, ink, alcohol, etc. will also increase in their currency forms; this will lead to dramatic increase in the input prices. These assumptions prevent many businesses to get big orders if the time of the payment is not clear.

At the center of enactment is the belief that cognition sits in the course of the action. Action comes before cognition and concentrates cognition. The sensemaking order described in the saying that 'How can I know what I think until I see what I say?' requires the action of talking, which lays down hints that are analyzed, so that cognitions can be assumed. These assumed cognitions then turn into prejudices which to some extent affect the next period of talk. Hence, the next set of signs deposited by talk are influenced moderately by earlier labels and partly by current context. These prior conclusions also influence how the next part of talk is analyzed and what is seen. Weick's (1988) study of enactment proposes that individual actions engaged in risk sensemaking may trigger a crisis but also manage its danger to a lower degree. Actions sometimes create the causes for their own occurrence as they unfold, which means that their results are challenging to predict in advance. We can strengthen crises before we are aware what we are doing. Unknowing escalation of crises is especially possible when technologies are complicated, highly interactive, non-routine, and inadequately understood. To learn more about how attempts to make sense and develop an adequate, common understanding can be related to escalation of crisis, we concentrate on triggered events: 'a specific event that is identifiable in time and place and traceable to specific man-made causes' (Shrivastava, 1987, p. 8). Triggered events are situations where interventions can have an impact, include judgement which can weaken when pressure builds up (Staw, Sandelands and Dutton, 1981), and can grow into a crisis. Shrivastava's (1987) argues that 'the initial response to the crisis sets the tone for the rest of the effort' (p. 134). From the viewpoint of enactment, primary reactions do more than set the tone; they determine the path of the crisis. People and their actions quickly turn into part of crisis because they know what they have done only after they

do it. To turn into part of the problem implies that people enact some of the environment they face. Had they not behaved or had they behaved otherwise, they would face a different set of problems, opportunities, and restraints.

For crises to have an enacted quality, a person needs to take the first action. Let's suppose that gauge shows an unusually high temperature. That is no enactment. Furthermore, suppose that in reaction to unusually high temperature people tap the gauge or call a supervisor or proceed with a tea break or go to check the tank whose temperature is being measured. Still, that is not enactment because all that happens so far is a simple stimulus and a reaction. However, all those reactions of tapping, calling, or checking the tank create a new stimulus that would not have been there if the first stimulus had been ignored. So, we can say that the 'second stimulus' is now a partly human creation. The assumptions that cause the choice of that first response provide the second stimulus. As action goes on through more cycles, the human reaction which encourages further action becomes gradually more important elements of the crisis. 'When a triggering event occurs, spontaneous reactions by different stakeholders solve some of the immediate problems, but they also create new problems - thus prolonging the crisis and making it worse' (Shrivastava, 1987, p. 24). In other words, from the standpoint of enactment, crises can have small, unforced beginnings in human action. Small events are brought forward, pile up with other events, and over time steadily create an environment that is an uncommon combination of unexpected simultaneous failures.

Economic conditions for the industrial printers in Ankara was already in shambles even before the pandemic. Some say it has been in downward slope since 2013, some say since 2016. Thus, it is not surprising that initial response (Shrivastava, 1987) was a pessimist one such as "bad days are over now there are worse days coming up". Some companies figured they would have financial problems; so they got bank loans while conditions were still "relatively better". In the context of printeries, first reactions (Shrivastava, 1987) did not seem to make things worse because those reactions were mostly rational and realistic. No company tried to invest in new machinery and hired more employees. Some of them even downsized to cope with the effects of the pandemic. Printing mask and glove boxes became a lifesaver for

companies that suffered from low demands. However, it depended on the type of their customers. One company, for example, was doing business with several banks (all kinds of printing for them), and they even experienced a hard time to catch up with demand. They did not need to produce a single box while some of them produced millions of them. The risk sensemaking of this company would thus be more or less different from others.

2.3. Commitment, Capacity, and Expectations in Sensemaking

When we apply the concepts of commitment, capacity, and expectations to crisis conditions, the enacted quality of risks and crises becomes more apparent (Weick, 1988). For instance, commitment has a dark side; it produces blind spots. Once we become committed to an action, we build a clarification that justifies that action, the clarification tends to continue and become transformed into an assumption that is taken for granted. Once this transformation has happened it is not likely that the assumption will be instantly viewed as a possible contributor to a crisis (Weick, 1988). For example, printeries are generally managed by a single person who is the owner of the printery. This situation may create "blind spots" as a single person can be committed to a harmful idea because he or she thinks that it is right thing to do. This situation could be avoided with a board of directors.

Crisis management can be influenced by capacity through perception as well (Weick, 1988). Capacity and reaction arsenal influence crisis perception because when people see those events, they believe they have the capacity to do something about them. As capacities change, perceptions and actions change too. This correlation is one of the essential leverage points to make crisis management better (Weick, 1988). The reasoning for these relationships has been explained by Jervis (1976, pp. 374-5). '(T)he predisposition to perceive a threat varies with the person's beliefs about his ability to take effective counteraction if he perceives the danger. . .. Whether they are vigilant or defensive depends in large part on whether they think they can act effectively on the undesired information'. If people believe they are capable of doing numerous things, then they can afford to pay attention to a wider variety of feedbacks because, whatever they see, they will have some way to deal with it. The more a person sees of any situation, the higher the likelihood that the person will see the certain change that

needs to be done to reduce the crisis. A developed response capacity also brings accuracy in perception. To exemplify, almost none of the printeries in the context of this study had capacity to take precautions or manage the risks. They all admitted that they had no budget to take precautions. Even when they took precautions, it only would increase their prices to a level that they would still lose customers. In other words, they had almost no capacity to manage risks (Perrow, 1984) and as a result most of them saw the pandemic as uncontrollable and tried to adapt to these new conditions.

Crisis management can also be affected by the way in which capacity is distributed in a hierarchy or centralized vs. decentralized. Perrow (1984, p. 10) says that 'operators need to be able to take independent and creative action because they are closest to the system, yet centralization, tight coupling, and prescribed steps prevent decentralized action'. Any kind of action could be blocked or slowed in a centralized system. Hermann (1963) has mentioned when crises arise, authority becomes contracted in one of three behaviors: it moves to higher levels of the hierarchy, fewer people use authority, or there is an increase in the number of cases when authority is used even though the number of units using it remain constant (p. 70). In the context of this study, for example, industrial printing companies in Ankara were heavily centralized and almost all of them had one person (owner) who would use authority on short-term and long-term decisions of the company. He or she trusted on his or her experience or instincts to deal with any problem the company faced. However, as Weick (1988) notes, 'the person in authority is not necessarily the most competent person to deal with a crisis, so a contraction of authority leads to either less action or more confusion'.

The expectations that top management has about elements within the firm often affect enactment in a manner similar to the mechanism of self-fulfilling prophecy (Weick, 1988). Many of these expectations can increase or decrease the probability that small errors will worsen into major crises. Thus, expectations are an essential source of crisis prevention. For instance, some of the printery owners had expectations that industrial printing sector would become obsolete. The pandemic reinforced this expectation because it was made sense of as an ongoing threat that would worsen the existing problems in the sector. Therefore, they were turning or considered turning their firm into a packaging company since the expectation was that demand for packages would

grow with online shopping in Turkey. The pandemic and decreasing demand were thus made sense of under the influence of expectations.

2.4. Organizational Sensemaking

Weick (1995) believes “sensemaking” is an essential organizational activity. From top managers’ point of view, sensemaking activities like environmental scanning and issue understanding are crucial tasks that drastically affect organizational decisions and strategic change (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Smircich & Stubbart, 1985; Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993). From stakeholders’ point of view, sensemaking impacts how they "construct" their identities (Pratt, 2000), conserve their organization's image (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), and react to organizational crises (Gephart, 1993). Sensemaking is especially important in dynamic and turbulent organizational contexts such as the Covid-19 pandemic, where the necessity to create and maintain rational understandings and relationships that allow joint action is particularly critical and challenging (Weick, 1993). We thus witness sensemaking actions occur in organizations when members encounter events, issues, and actions, or low-probability high-consequence yet realized risks or crises, which are by some means surprising or confusing (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Weick, 1993, 1995).

According to Weick (1995) there are different ways to talk about organizations that enable sensemaking to play a central role in the creation of both organizations themselves and environments they encounter (p.69). Similarly, Scott’s (1987) analysis of organizations explains the concept of organization in three ways. To begin with, there is organization as rational system which Scott explains as “collectivities oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting relatively highly formalized structures” (p.22). Secondly, there is organization as natural system which Scott defines as “collectivities whose participants share a common interest in the survival of the system and who engage in collective activities, informally structured, to secure this end” (p.23). Finally, there is organization as open system which Scott defines as “coalitions of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation; structure of the coalition, its activities, and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors” (p.23).

These three types are arranged according to their openness to their environment and from tighter to looser pairing among the elements that constitute the system. Organizations characterized as an open system should be concerned with sensemaking the most (Weick, 1995, p.70). This assumption comes from the fact that as their openness to input from their environment increases, they will have more diverse information to process and their looser structure indicates that entity doing the sensemaking is itself something of a puzzle. As we move from closed to open, we simultaneously move from structures, processes and environments that are less vague to those that are more so (Weick, 1995). In our case, for example, firms in the industrial printing sector were extremely open to the environment they were operating in and related risks. Thus, they collected vague information from various resources. That situation made these firms very vigilant against their environment and related risks. In other words, they were relying on sensemaking heavily before the pandemic. Pandemic turned already uncertain and vague environment into an extreme blizzard in which they could not see anything. Firms now had to rely on sensemaking even more than before.

Weick's Organizational Information Theory (OIT) offers understanding into the exchange of information within organizations and among its members. OIT focuses on the procedure of organizing in environments that have dynamic, information-rich nature. Theory claims that information processing within and between organizations is a social activity. Weick sees sharing as the key feature of organizational information processing (Weick & Daft, 1984). This means that sensemaking is a joint activity which involves numerous people to accomplish (West & Turner, 2004). During this process, organizations and its members join together to find the balance between the complexity of thoughts and the simplicity of actions (Colville 1994). In our study, we did not see direct communication between firms; but we witnessed some of them copied each other. For instance, when some firms saw certain printeries getting too many mask-box orders, they too tried to find them. Even some of the big firms were transforming themselves into packaging firms.

In a related study, Weick (1977) talks about self-design: "It's easy to spot organizations that are incapable of self-design and therefore vulnerable. They value

forecasts more than improvisation, they dwell on constraints rather than opportunities, they borrow solutions rather than invent them, they defend past actions rather than devise new ones". Weick claims that organizations that show these patterns will do too little, too late, and will fail in the face of swift changes in the environment. Organizations have to reverse these patterns in order to become self-designing organizations. Self-design requires challenging managerial actions such as management of anarchy, encouragement of doubt, fostering of inefficiency, and cultivation of superstition. Thus, it actually refers to a common understanding among organizational members. The members should be able to accomplish a common sense of critical organizational issues and reflect this sensemaking in their actions. This is more likely when managers are committed to self-design while recognizing the important role of non-managerial levels including blue-collars for organizations. This was not the case in the printery industry as we observed. The industry was dominated by a mindset of centralization; owners usually would say the last word. Thus, in this study, we focused on owners and founders rather than lower-levels.

2.5. Crisis Sensemaking Examples

2.5.1 The Mann Gulch Disaster

In one of his articles Weick (1993) analyzed collapse of sensemaking in minimal organization during the Mann Gulch Disaster. Norman Maclean's Young Man and Fire made famous the death of 13 people in the Mann Gulch fire disaster. The book analyzed interactive disintegration of role structure and sensemaking in a small organization composed of 13 smokejumpers. The ages of the smokejumpers were 17-28 (except foreman "Wag" Wagner Dodge and ranger Jim Harrison), and they were a highly select group (p.27).

The fire believed to start in a dead tree by a lightning storm which passed over the Mann Gulch area at 16.00 on August 4, 1949. The next day, August 5, 1949, the temperature was 36 Celsius and the fire danger rating was 74 out of a possible 100 (p. 42), meaning "explosive potential" (p. 79). When the fire was noticed by a forest ranger, the smokejumpers were dispatched to fight it. Sixteen of them flew out of Missoula, Montana at 14.30. The smokejumpers and their load were dropped on the

south of Mann Gulch at 16.10 from 610 meters, but it was supposed to be 365 meters, caused by the turbulence (p. 48). Their radio was pulverized when they landed because the parachute that was connected to their radio failed to open. Jim Harrison who had been fighting the fire alone for four hours (p. 62) when the crew met ranger, then collected their supplies, and ate supper. About 17.10 (p. 57) to surround the fire they started to move along the south side of the gulch (p. 62). However, Dodge and Harrison were concerned that the thick forest close to area they had landed could be a "death trap" (p. 64). They told William Hellman, the second in command, to take the crew through to the north side of the gulch and walk them in the direction of the river along the side of the hill. When Hellman were doing what told to him, Dodge and Harrison ate a quick meal. Dodge rejoined the crew at 17.40 and took his place at first place of the line moving toward the river. When he looked his left, he was able to see flames flapping back and forth on the south (p. 69).

Later Dodge saw the fire had crossed the gulch just 180 meters ahead and was coming toward them (p. 70). Dodge positioned the crew around and had them angle up the 76-percent hill toward the ridge at the top (p. 175). After that, they were moving through bunch grass that was 75-cm tall and were quickly losing ground to the 9-meter-high flames that were soon moving toward them at 810 meters per minute (p. 274). Dodge ordered at the crew to drop their tools, and then, to everyone's shock, he lit a fire in front of them and ordered them to lie down in the place he had burned. No one lied down, and they all escaped to the ridge. Only two of them, Sallee and Rumsey, made it through a crack in the ridge unburned, Hellman made it over the ridge but burned severely and died at noon the next day, Dodge survived by lying down in the ashes of his escape fire, and one more person, Joseph Sylvia, lived for a short period and then died. The hands on the Harrison's watch melted at 17.56 (p. 90), which was accepted formally as the time the 13 people died.

After the fire was gone, Dodge managed to find Rumsey and Salee and while Salee and Dodge hiked out for help Rumsey stayed to take care for Hellman. At 20.50 they arrived at the Meriwether ranger station (p. 113); after that rescue parties went out to find dead and dying. All of the dead personnel were located in the area of 90 meters to 270 meters (p. 111). To get 18.2-kilometer square the Mann Gulch fire under

control, it took 450 people and five more days. (p. 24, 33). It was classified as a class C fire, during the time crew jumped on the fire, meaning it was between 0.04 and 0.40 square kilometers.

The fundamental idea of sensemaking is that reality is a continuing construction that appears from attempts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs (Weick, 1993). Sensemaking underlines that people try to make things logically answerable to themselves and others. Thus, in the words of Morgan, Frost, and Pondy (1983: 24), "individuals are not seen as living in, and acting out their lives in relation to, a wider reality, so much as creating and sustaining images of a wider reality, in part to rationalize what they are doing. They realize their reality, by reading into their situation patterns of significant meaning."

In Mann Gulch, the smokejumpers were not able to construct a reality. When they landed at the area, they expected to find a 10:00 fire. It was a type of a fire that could be completely encircled and isolated by 10:00 the next morning. The spotters on the plane that brought the smokejumpers "figured the crew would have it under control by 10:00 the next morning" (Maclean, p. 43). As Mann Gulch lost its similarity to a. 10:00 fire, it did it in ways to make it harder and harder to socially construct reality. People could no longer pay close attention to a boss who was also unknown and whose orders made no sense whatsoever. As if these difficulties were not enough, it was nearly impossible to create a common sense when each member of the team saw something different or nothing at all because of the smoke.

As the Weick (1988) argues, there is negative side of the commitment and expectation. The smokejumpers were expected to fight against a 10:00 fire and they committed themselves to that level of threat. The crew's persistent belief that they faced a 10:00 fire is a strong reminder that positive illusions (Taylor, 1989) can cause death of people. However, the more obvious point is that organizations can be good at decision making and still fail. They fail because of flawed sensemaking. We can say that decision making is about strategic rationality. It has its foundations on clear questions and clear answers that try to remove ignorance (Daft and Macintosh, 1981). Sensemaking, however, is different. It is about relative rationality. It has its foundation

on vague questions, muddy answers, and negotiated agreements that try to decrease confusion (Weick 1993). The smokejumpers in Mann Gulch did not face questions such as when would we take a stand, where should we go, or what should our strategy be. Instead, they faced the more fundamental, the more terrifying feeling that their old labels were no longer valid. They were leaving behind their experiences from past and were not sure about either what was up or who they were. There was nothing to decide until they could develop some sense of these issues.

2.5.2. The Allitt Inquiry

Brown (2000) written a paper about the Allitt Inquiry into attacks on children on Ward 4 at Grantham and Kesteven Hospital in the UK. Based on the theory of sensemaking as narrative process, his paper shows how authorial blueprints focused on issues of normalization, observation and absolution are used to build a rhetorical and verisimilitudinous output. Brown argues that narrative process is the most practical way to comprehend sensemaking (Bruner, 1990; Fisher, 1984; MacIntyre, 1981; Weick, 1995). Gephart (1991, p.37) defined narratives as "a tool or program for making sense of event"; Martin (1992, p.282) defined them as "a blueprint that can be used to predict future organizational behavior". There is a sufficient agreement that sensemaking is achieved through narratives which "make the unexpected expectable" (Robinson, 1981, p. 60), enable us to grasp causal interactions such that they can be "predicted, understood, and possibly controlled" (Sutton and Kahn, 1987) and which aid organizational "participants to map their reality" (Wilkins and Thompson, 1991, p. 20).

The Allitt Inquiry was an autonomous tribunal of inquiry initiated in May 1993 by the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Health to "enquire into the circumstances leading to the deaths of four children and injuries to nine others on Ward 4 at GKGH (Grantham and Kesteven General Hospital) during the months of February to April 1991" (AR, 1994, p. 6). The Allitt Inquiry report described how the child death and collapses happened, and how the doctors and nurses responded to these incidents. The report showed how it appeared to clinics that what had happened could nonetheless be clarified based on each child's medical history. As the time passed, more children got worse and died unexpectedly. In order to find out reason behind their collapse and

death post-mortem tests were done on children who died. Unfortunately, the results of the most of these examinations were negative. However, on 12 April 1991, the result of a blood test illustrated that a child had been incorrectly injected with insulin. This finding with the further incidents at the ward created a suspicion that someone was purposely harming the children. On 30 April 1991, police investigation began and after several months they spotted an enrolled nurse called Beverly Allitt as the possible perpetrator. In May 1993 Allitt was found guilty of four murders, three attempted murders and causing severe bodily damage to six other children.

Brown's argument is that report deliberately characterizes Allitt as seemingly normal (normalizing rather than demonizing), and that this subsequently allows the description of overall failure to distinguish Allitt's activities sooner (observing without discerning) as plausible, and that this is also used to lessen criticism of the doctors, nurses and administrators who worked with her (absolving more than blaming). The inquiry team's efforts to normalize Allitt's personality and behavior concentrate on three groups of activity that can be characterized as probable evidence of dysfunctionality: (1) her inclination to wear her arm in a sling and reputation as accident prone; (2) personality alteration from someone who is friendly and related well to people into a person who is shy, quiet and who has some problems dealing with elderly and handicapped; (3) her questionable attendance record at Graham College and South Lincolnshire School of Nursing. In each case, arguments are made to imply that Allitt's behavior is inside the boundaries of normal expectations. Inquiry team creates the plotline that illustrates the medical staff in each single event who fail to recognize the emerging pattern (AR, 4.1.5). The usual pattern the inquiry team assume evident is like this:

1. Allitt is alone with a child.
2. Allitt reports unusual symptoms relating to the child.
3. Staff react to Allitt's alarm.
4. The child is found to have collapsed.
5. The collapse is diagnosed as "unusual" by the doctors.
6. The child dies or is transferred to another hospital where he or she recovers.

Interestingly, this pattern is discovered after a long police investigation.

2.5.3. The Pit Sense of Tunnellers

Kamoche and Maguire (2010) studied the usage of practice-based knowledge as a risk aversion mechanism in a UK coalmine. The technic they study is called “pit sense”, which is knowledge formed by tunnellers to move and evaluate risk. It is a form of tacit knowledge that is established in everyday practices as more bureaucratic practices rationalized on the sake of commercial outcomes and regulations of health and safety. Pit sense is a craft-based awareness that pit workers or coalminers regard essential for operating subterranean environment. Somerville and Abrahamson (2003: 26) define it as intuitive knowledge or “embodied learning involving all the sense”. Sauer (1998: 134) similarly defines it, saying that “in risky environments, observers may articulate what is past, but not what is to come”, and thus the miner has greater reliance on this “sensory knowledge”. Theoretically, pit sense is similar to what Gherardi and Nicolini (2002) define as “safety and danger competence”, a form of knowledge among building site workers that “can be practiced but not thought”. Pit sense is not something that one can develop through formal training, but through close social collaboration and use of language, and based on the very explicit norm of safety.

By definition, risks are vague; therefore, tunnellers or miners used pit sense as a flexible buffer for dealing with characteristic ambiguities in coalmining. Both tunnellers and managers acknowledged that risk can never be completely removed. This means that risk assessment may well require a mixture of formalized procedures and a tacit knowledge implanted in everyday practices. Over time series of changes in terms of formal procedures were introduced for tunnellers. For example, tunnellers were expected to wear breathing and hearing protection. For the risk management side, management initiated to exchange pit sense with a more formal approach that required tunnellers to study and obey with a standard method statement, which explained the task in the hand, necessary work practices and the equipment as well as the suitable procedures for dealing with the related hazards and health and safety risks. Since this method was directive and allowed little room for negotiation, it left tunnellers with very little of choice. Rather than relying on pit sense which management considered

unscientific, tunnellers were required to comply with the standard procedures written in the method statement.

Ironically, new safety measures, while seemed mandatory in a modern mining context, in reality put tunnellers or miners at risk. Miners thus maintained their traditional risk assessment knowledge, which demonstrated how knowledge established in practice would be held within the community because of ongoing shared practice (Brown and Duguid, 2001). By choosing to disregard modern safety measures and seeing that management could turn a blind eye to "acceptable" risks, the miners made sure that pit sense kept a residual credibility. Hence, managers faced difficulty when trying to adjust work practices over which they did not have full control. There was also a situation of "double bind" caused by management's performance evaluations. To be more specific, tunnellers were expected to be good workers by taking risks and getting yardage in the underground yet they still got safety messages as result of bureaucratic changes. They described their dilemma by blaming managers being "two-faced". According to tunnellers when they took shortcuts to make additional money, managers evaluated them as good and safe workers as long as they did not have a collision. Apparently, pit sense was allowed and actually encouraged as long as risks created yardage. However, if it created any trouble, the excuse for bureaucratic procedures was reasserted, and the tunnellers was accused for their "foolishness". Hence, management seemed to resort to a legal obligation (health and safety) to excuse the extermination of pit sense but to the point that implementation was both piecemeal and opportunistic. In another words, health and safety was used as a rhetorical tool.

2.6. Summary

Past research identifies ambiguity and uncertainty as two occasions when sensemaking is triggered. We can see their differences by looking prior studies (Daft & Macintosh, 1981; Daft & Lengel, 1984; Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987). In ambiguous situations there are too many explanations, people are confused and therefore engage in sensemaking. For the case of uncertainty, they are ignorant of any explanations and therefore they engage in sensemaking. The research also indicates that strange events not in line with established perceptions (Starbuck and Milliken, 1988) result in sensemaking attempts. Such events are generally unexpected, creating ambiguity,

confusion, and uncertainty. Thus, low-probability high-consequence risks lead to sensemaking activity especially when realized as a crisis or disaster. Sensemaking lets people to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty by creating coherent accounts of crises and disasters. As Weick puts it (1993: 636), sensemaking offers the "clear questions and clear answers" that feed decision making during crises.

Another finding of past studies is that enactment is a way to make sense of risks and crises. Accordingly, people make sense of risks by acting towards the same risks based on their prejudices. So, action or reaction to risks and resulting information are an important source of risk meanings. Weick's (1988) study of enactment proposes that individual actions engaged in sensemaking may trigger a crisis but also manage its danger to a lower degree as generating information. Risk or crisis actions sometimes create the causes for their own occurrence and understanding as they unfold.

Past studies further shows that commitment, capacity, and expectation are especially important to make sense of risks. We can get enacted quality of crises more apparent by applying the concepts of commitment, capacity, and expectations to crisis conditions (Weick, 1988). Individuals committed to a specific action, for example a risk measure, are likely to see risks as less than they actually are. Similarly, when individuals think they have the capacity to deal with risks, risks seem more manageable than they actually are. Lastly, individuals' expectations shape actions towards risks; if expectations are negative, risks seem more serious than they are.

The research also implies sensemaking mostly occurs in an organizational context (Weick, 1993, 1995). It is actually much common in organizations, which are generally open environments with associated uncertainty and risks (Scott, 1987). General context is then a source or reason for ongoing risk sensemaking. When the context is more or less stable, organizational sensemaking is limited as routines are not disrupted. In contrast, organizational accidents, crises, and disasters as well as risky working conditions are typical occasions for sensemaking (Brown, 2000; Kamoche and Maguire, 2010; Weick, 1993, 1995). Furthermore, this study talks about sensemaking as a joint activity which involves numerous people to accomplish (West & Turner, 2004). During this process, organizations and its members join together to

find the balance between complexity and simplicity (Colville 1994). Moreover, we also pointed out that organizations that do not achieve self-design through common sensemaking will be vulnerable to sudden changes in their environment (Weick, 1977).

In sum, past research analyzes risks as unexpected events creating ambiguity and uncertainty and thus leading to sensemaking attempts. Included as part of those attempts are actions towards risks to enact and make sense of risks while the characteristics of commitment, capacity and expectation are effective in risk sensemaking. Building on the existing research findings, our study actually identifies similar points in the context of printeries in Ankara: when the Covid-19 pandemic first appeared within the printery sector, it created ambiguity and uncertainty, which resulted in sensemaking actions in printeries. The printeries enacted the pandemic crises through their various response to make sense of the crisis and associated risks. Furthermore, the sector's commitment, capacity, and expectation had an impact on its actors' sensemaking attempts. However, we also highlight something different from the existing literature as to how the printeries made sense of the new pandemic risks. We observe that instead of handling these risks as new or in a new category, they made sense of the risks through the existing risks. They understood the Covid-19 risk through the existing risks of the sector as the existing risks were dominant despite the highly extraordinary nature of the pandemic as emerging once in a century.

There are 4 specific questions the study addresses in order to understand what risk for the printeries is, how they understand risks and how they make sense of new risks brought by the Covid-19 pandemic:

1. What risks existed for the printeries before the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. What were the causes of those risks?
3. What changed with the pandemic, do old risks still exist, and have new risks emerged?
4. How the printeries make sense of the pandemic in general?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter methodology used in this study is explained. The chapter aims to create an understanding for the chosen methodology, research site, data sources, methods used, and the limitations.

3.1. Research Design

This thesis used qualitative research design for several reasons. To begin with, it is appropriate for the focus of this thesis – the sense making process related to risks that is brought by pandemic conditions. Focus of this thesis is to understand how printer owners and employees in Ankara understand risks and how they make sense of them. Qualitative research is suitable because it focuses on social processes and meanings as they appear or happen in their natural settings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Gephart, 2004a; Silverman, 2000). Furthermore, it observes social actors' experiences and views of the world and discovers how social actors give meaning to social phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000); in my thesis this phenomenon is covid-19 pandemic. In another study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) it is stated that, qualitative research aims to understand the actions of the actors in a real-world situation with the help of empirical materials. This perspective proves that qualitative research design aligns with the aim of this thesis.

Finally, grasping a social process and actors' meanings necessitates a flexible and evolving research design - an emergent development that grows and changes with the analysis of the data. Qualitative research offers flexibility to fit in with the changes (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Van Maanen, 1998) since it "is often designed at the same time it is being done" (Gephart, 2004a: 455). Thus, a qualitative design is open to new

opportunities in the analysis and lets their integration into the results, leading to deep descriptions and insights.

3.2. Research Site

We decided to collect qualitative data after deciding on research question and choosing research design. We decided to focus on printeries in Ankara as our research site. It is a vast sector; so we narrowed it down to industrial printeries to gather necessary data. Limiting the site in this way helps to gather more detailed data and develop better insights into the research site.

We generated the certain criteria to select firms that relevant data are collected in line with our research question and goals:

1) Firms in Ankara: Main reason on this criterion is convenience. Since the researcher lives in Ankara and participants choose to speak face to face it was not easy to gather data in other cities while pandemic still continues.
2) Industrial Printers: Printing sector is a vast sector that constitutes different printeries such as digital printeries, packaging printeries, and advertisement agencies. We focused on industrial printers because they are the most common and oldest ones.
3) Established Firms: In order to do a healthy comparison of periods before and during the pandemic we had to choose firms that are at least 5 years old. Firms that are older 5 years can make deep comparisons of the pandemic and even way before that.

Since the researcher have been working in the printing sector since 2016, he was already familiar with some printeries in Ankara. 20 interviews were done with owners or decision makers in those printeries.

Table 1. Table of Interviewees

Firm Name	Years	Employee Number	Types of Customers	Number of Covid Cases
Atalay	20	15	General Public Sector and Public Offices	4-5 (separate times)
Atlas	15	46	Mainly Banks	10 (separate times)
Cem Web	40	50	Mainly Publishers and Public Offices	3-4 (separate times)
Çağhan	40	8	General Public Sector	All employees. Firm quarantined for 3 weeks.
Çubuk	20	9	General Public Sector	None
Elma	20	6	General Public Sector	None
EpaMat	35	25	General Public Sector and Public Offices	None
Eryılmaz	19	8	General Public Sector	2
Evos	22	15	General Public Sector and Public Offices	8-9
Girişim	20	8	General Public Sector	0
Gökçe	25	12	General Public Sector and Public Offices	2
Göktuğ	18	7	General Public Sector and Publishers	unknown
Grupçağ	28	55	Mainly Publishers and Public Offices	4-5 (separate times)
Grup Matbaa	37	23	Other Printeries (After printing services)	5 (separate times)
Hermes	22	15	General Public Sector and Unions	3 (separate times)
Matsan	16	20	General Public Sector and Public Offices	0
Matus	18	9	General Public Sector	1
Özkutsan	15	35	General Public Sector	1
Özyurt	35	160	Mainly Publishers and Public Offices	20 employees. Firm quarantined for 3 weeks.
Uzman	45	12	General Public Sector and Public Offices	1

3.3. Data Sources

In this section, data used in this thesis is discussed. Data mainly comes from interviews with company officials. Most of the interviewees are the owner of the firms and some of them are the right-hand men (all of them are male). A total of 20 interviews were conducted between April 2021 and October 2021.

All interviews were conducted by the researcher. Interviews lasted 30 minutes on average. All interviews occurred face to face and, with the consent of participants, were recorded in order to transcribe later. Transcription of all interviews were done manually by the researcher. Interviews had to occur face to face because interviewees did not want to participate on video or telephone call due to their busy schedule.
All interview questions were intended to be open-ended since our aim is to grasp the thought process of actors. Interviewees were chosen based on their positions in the firms. Owners and top managers were selected as interviewees as they had insight into the company's decisions and problems that companies face. Interview questions were about:

- Basic information about the company
- General problems of the company before the pandemic
- Relations of that company with other actors of the sector
- Changes due to the pandemic
- Effect of those changes on printeries
- Their general precautions against the pandemic

3.4. Data Analysis

This section describes which qualitative method is used in the data analysis process. Methods based on grounded theory approaches (Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) were used to understand how printeries approach risks that are brought by the pandemic. Before we began to analyze the data, we checked if the answers to interview questions had enough information for our research question. After transcribing all interviews, we started to get familiar with the data and roughly categorize the data.

To begin with, we got familiar with the data by reading it thoroughly and repeatedly. During the interviews, participants used a lot of technical lingo from the printery sector. The researcher's experience in the printery sector helped understand those technical lingos and create easy-to-understand questions for participants. Interview questions were not written to create categories; the questions were written to develop a rich data pool about printeries' risks. Therefore, common topics that were talked in different questions could be merged into a single category as explained in the following paragraphs.

Once familiarized with the data, we tried to create categories by grouping each answer by each interview question. However, as we checked the answers, we realized that there were patterns in the answers across different questions. In other words, different interviewees gave similar answers to different questions, addressing certain common issues in different questions. Furthermore, firm size did not affect the answers. Small firms with 6-10 employees and big firms with over 100 employees gave very similar answers to many questions. Firms' different characteristics such as size did not seem to affect their answers. This shows that there is a shared perspective among almost all printeries about what the problems are and what their causes are. We also did not group answers based on questions because it would limit the deductions and interpretations in our case. We observed patterns across different questions. Hence, in line with those patterns, we grouped the interview answers into three: what are the risks and problems for printeries, what was the effect of pandemic on those risks and problems, and finally, did pandemic bring new problems.

Throughout the process, the researcher consulted his supervisor about analysis of the data and emerging results. When the supervisor red the data and became familiar with it, a common interpretation started to emerge as well. The topics that are talked about were noted and we realized that some topics repeated in numerous interviews. For example, we noted the topics of prices of inputs, prices of machinery, all these prices based on US dollar, instability of currencies that caused by pandemic, all income based on lira when all payments based on foreign currencies. We could say that the effect of

foreign currency or exchange rate was mentioned in all these topics discussed in different interviews.

After establishing general categories over common topics, all interviews were red again, based on those categories. For example, when we established the currency as a category, we looked closely to the data that talked about currency. Then, the categories were written in detail with their different components based on participants' discussions in different interviews. Next, the supervisor, who already red the transcriptions of all interviews, reviewed the analyses of the categories.

3.5. Limitatons

First limitation was an obvious one, the pandemic itself. Most printeries did not want to do interviews on phone or skype, they wanted to do it face to face and usually on weekends. However, because of the pandemic talking face to face was hard and there were lock downs during weekends. I had to wait for lock downs to be over so I could start my interviews. When the lock downs were over, people became more relaxed, and this allowed me to do face to face interviews easier.

Another limitation was to find appropriate printery to do interviews. Although, there are many printeries in Ankara, not all of them wanted to do interview and when they agreed to do it, they did not understand questions and gave totally unrelated answers. For instance, I was mistaken for a beggar or a salesman that went door to door more than once by the owners of printeries. That was why I had a hard time conducting interviews. In order to find applicable interviewees, I had to use old fashioned ways and used my network. Because I have been working in this sector since 2016, I became acquaintances with several owners. I started with them and asked whom I could speak to. They also called their friends and asked for appointment for me. I also asked a paper seller company to help me, and they also called suitable owners for these interviews. Thanks to them, I was able to collect information I needed.

Final limitation was time. Even though, I managed to get an appointment for an interview, printeries busy schedule caused some delays on my plans. Most of these companies are boss oriented and therefore, being able to speak with the boss for around

30 minutes without an interruption was difficult. Most of the owners asked me to reschedule our appointment for another time. With the effects of the pandemic, this caused my data collection time longer than its originally planned.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1. Financial Risks and the Pandemic

4.1.1. Currency Rates

Industrial printers in Turkey have to follow currency rates constantly because all their procurements are based on those rates. Prices of paper, alcohol, inks etc. are based on either euro or American dollar. All of these are imported, and this makes their prices unstable. On the other hand, selling those finished products and public bids are agreed based on Turkish lira. It was not a problem in early 2010s when lira was stronger than now. Since then, costs of printeries are increasing due to decrease in value of lira in comparison to euro and American dollar. However, increase in prices of inputs is not equal to increase in price of the outputs. Industrial printers cannot reflect fully the increase in input in output price due to heavy competition between printers. That is why profits in the sector have suffered heavily and decreased since 2018.

When I ask what their biggest problem is; almost all of them answered as our input goods are all imported, which makes their prices unstable and leave no control to them over their prices. One owner says, “Biggest one is our inputs are imported, and currency is high. We cannot have a say in our prices, inputs suppliers have”.

All this situation left these companies powerless to changes. They have almost no control on the prices of goods they produce. Big companies suffered most, especially the ones entering with big bids from Ministry of Education. Every year Ministry of Education opens a bid for next year’s books to be used in schools, and this bid is bigger than for one firm to complete so generally 8-9 big printers (firms that have around 50 employees) share the bid. Bid is done around April and payment is done around

October. The amount of paper used for these bids is immense and its cost needs to be calculated in very delicate manner, a slight miscalculation can cause huge loss for the firms. I had a chance to speak 2 of these 8-9 firms that were producing these books and they both talked about for the year of 2018. It was very natural because in that year around the bid time was happening, 1 lira was equivalent to 4.0859 American dollars according to data of Central Bank of Turkey (Indicative Exchange Rates Announced at 15:30 on 04/13/2018 by the Central Bank of Turkey). However, in October it was around 5.6235 American dollars (Indicative Exchange Rates Announced at 15:30 on 10/19/2018 by the Central Bank of Turkey). Owners of one of these firms said that "There are also financial problems which are mostly caused by currency rates. For example, we have not been producing Ministry of Education's free course books for 3 years. Since 2018, lira always loses its value. For example, in 2018 we were producing these books. Dollar was equal to 4 TL first, then became 4.5 TL. Later that summer, it reached to 6.5 TL. We made a huge loss that year. To add that, we got our payment later than originally promised". Owner of the other firm also mentions the same thing: "That year (2018) the money they paid after 6 months was not even enough to cover paper costs due to sudden dramatic increase in paper currency rates". He also added "Our costs increased 100% in 2 years".

Currency rates not only affect the input prices but the machine prices as well. Like the materials used in printery production, machines are also imported, especially from Germany. While brand new machines cost about 1,500,000 €, machines that are 20 years old cost around 150,000 to 200,000 €. Current rates make it almost impossible to make an investment for industrial firms without a loan from the bank. Even though they buy the machine, low profits make it really hard to pay the debt. That is why most of the owners use 20 to 30 years old machines and hesitate to buy a newer model.

Of course, currency rates have been constantly raising since 2013, but with the beginning of pandemic the acceleration of it has increased. For instance, in March 2020 (beginning of pandemic) USD/TRY ratio was 6.16 and EUR/TRY ratio was 6.97 according to data from Central Bank of Turkey. However, as I ride this today (12.11.2021) USD/TRY ratio is 9.91 and EUR/TRY ratio is 11.34. This situation creates problems for printeries because almost all investments and procurements they

make is based on currency and it takes years to pay it back. If they cannot see the direction of which currency is heading, they cannot make investments or calculate cost. Printeries interviewed are saying that they cannot see in front of them; one of them said that managing a printery during the pandemic is like trying to steer a ship with a broken steering in the storm.

Pandemic made the vagueness of the current situation in printery sector (mainly caused by unstable currency rates) is even worse than before as printeries said. During the pandemic many of printeries' customers were closed or had to stop their orders. When the schools are closed and relied on online education, most of the educational book publishers stopped their orders. There are dozens of printeries were relying on those orders. Those printeries had their debts, monthly payments, which are based on currency not the lira. Many printeries followed the news about schools if they are going to open or not through the 2020. That vagueness pushed them to look for other customers which made the rivalry in the printing sector even worse situation than before the pandemic.

4.1.2. Inflation on Input Prices

With the start of pandemic, logistics on global trade began to slow down. As I mentioned earlier all goods that industrial printers use are imported. For example, before the pandemic American Bristol paper was about 600$ per ton. However, in the summer of 2021 it was around 1,600$ per ton. Although, not as dramatic as Bristol paper, prices of other paper types have also increased since the beginning of the pandemic. Furthermore, prices on other goods such as alcohol and ink have increased as well.

When both currency rates and input prices are increasing constantly, entering big bids is getting more and more risky. There is risk of losing a lot of money if the price of the paper suddenly increases after the calculation of the cost and entering the bid. Owners try to pay for the paper at once to minimize. During the pandemic printeries had this "unable to find the paper" problem with high-grade paper pulp and in November of 2021 they had same issue with glossy paper. For instance, price of the glossy paper has gone from 950 € per ton to 1,250 € per ton in one month (from October to

November 2021). To clarify this issue one owner said, “Prices are always rising. We can say it is related with currency. Price of the paper rises in both ways: In its own currency (euro) and due to our currency deficit. No input is with lira, but we are bidding in bids with lira”.

Cost of paper is extremely crucial for industrial printers; one of the owners says “Generally, around 60-80% of the cost is paper depending on the type of job. It could even be 90%”. This situation has been always like this. However, with the beginning of pandemic it has become more intense than before because profit margins are a lot thinner for the firms, and that is why it is hard to create a pool of cash to make purchases.

4.2. Technological Risks and the Pandemic

4.2.1. Digitalization

As we witnessed many times before, improvement in technology makes some businesses obsolete, especially digitalization is a perfect example for this trend. Before the introduction of websites, social media and digital marketing, firms mainly relied on printed media. When firms decided to enter fairs to introduce themselves to customers they would print thousands of product catalogs, and brochures with a considerable amount of cost to them. Furthermore, newspapers and magazines regularly print hundreds of thousands of copies. One owner says, “Sector is not dead but it’s in the slowing phase. Also, it is the way of life, you can’t change it. For example, some sectors are gone by the improvement in the technology. This sector is also like that”. Today, industrial printers claim that no one would order that amount of catalogs or magazines anymore. In fact, there are few companies that still produces catalogs, and their copy numbers are a lot lower than they used to be. People interviewed for this study claim that firms choose to make digital versions of their catalogs and use digital marketing to increase their brand recognition. Those firms also realized that with digitalized method they can reach to broader audience with a lot less money. This situation creates a huge profit problem for printeries because as the number of copies goes up, profit of printeries goes up with it.

Furthermore, market for industrial printers had been shrinking for many years before the pandemic due to constant new entries. One of the owners talked about it and said, “Digitalization makes our market shrink. However, there are still new entries and investment to this sector. This makes everything worse. State needs control this, but it is free market”. When asked why there are new entries if this sector is suffering that bad and they answered, “It is because it was a profitable business during 90s and early 2000s if you had the right machines. Many people saw that and decided to open their own printeries with cheap bank loans”. It is not a surprise that it was a profitable business in 90s and early 2000s, when technology was nowhere near to today and competition was not as intense as today. Another reason to shrinking is that machines are more efficient today than before. As one of the owners who has around 150 employees says, “Machines are getting more efficient. When you compare with 10-15 years ago, we produce the same amount of product that took 40-50 companies to produce 15 years ago. We need a lot of demand”.

With the start of the pandemic digitalization in Turkey picked its paced. When many firms started to work from home, they realized that many paper works were unnecessary; similarly, when fairs were cancelled, they realized that brochures and catalogs were unnecessary. One of the owners I spoke to had a chance to witness this closer than other printeries. She said, “As for the technology, this sector is dying. Everything is becoming digital. For example, Denizbank is very rapidly doing it (digitalization). We used to do 500.000 TL worth of order (monthly) but now it is down to 200.000 TL. Maybe after 5-6 years they will not use any written document”. Another owner says, “. Everything is getting digitalized. For example, when was the last time anyone purchase a newspaper, a magazine? It is very rare now”.

4.2.2. A new method in Printing

When you calculate a cost on printing you consider two kinds of costs: variable costs and stable costs. Variable costs are costs that depends on number of copies you are going to produce such as paper and workmanship. Stable cost is the actual printing cost which consists of aluminum plates (one for every color, there are four colors in printing), inks, and alcohols. Even if you are going to need one copy of magazine you have to bear all that stable cost which makes that one copy worth thousands of liras.

That is why principle of economies of scale is binding in industrial printing business. The more you produce the more your stable cost decreases per unit; cost for one copy become less until a certain point. That was the unbreakable principle until couple of years ago.

A new method of printing is getting more and more popular with a new type of machine which does not need aluminum plates for every color, or alcohol. This new machine is perfect for meeting low demands and because it is relatively a new technology very few firms have it professionally (Only one firm had that machine among 20 industrial printers that I spoke to). Customers also becoming more aware of this new and more free method of printing and begin to choose it over heavy industrial printing. They no longer order 500 of catalogs when they only need 200; because this new "digital machine" can produce one or 200 copies with the same per-unit cost.
Pandemic caused problem of liquidity of cash for many sectors which affected purchase power of those sectors. Most of the firms are no longer able to afford costs of ordering thousands of printed goods; they could or want to afford 100 or 150 of copies. Thus, they choose to take their orders to places that have these new digital printery machines. This puts another nail to coffin for demand to industrial printers. One owner says, "Technology is killing our sector, especially social media. We nearly do not produce brochure, catalogs. We still produce in very little amount for people who cannot use technology, but since our machines are very big, customers go to firms with digital machines. As I see it, this sector will die in 10 years".

4.3. Market Risks and the Pandemic

4.3.1. Rivalry

The characteristics of Turkey's industrial printing sector are similar to a perfect competition. As in perfect competition, this sector has no monopoly, all firms sell similar products, they are price takers, and they can enter the market without any obstacle. Because it is easy to enter, there are a very high number of industrial printers. Unfortunately, I could not find a source that clarifies the exact number of printers. However, firms I spoke to claim that there are too many printers in Ankara.

Due to intense rivalry, firms are left with very little profit margins. Some of them bend the rules to create a bigger profit or offer customers a cheaper price. One owner was complaining about it: “State is not checking what companies do. They don’t check. Some firms employ only foreigners and make them work under minimum wage; they save tons of money with insurance. We cannot compete with these guys. If state would check these firms properly it wouldn’t be that bad”. Another one complains about the same issue: “…some of the rivals don’t even pay insurance for their workers or pay taxes. These firms are impossible to compete with in bids”.

Many other owners are complaining about pricing policy of other printeries. One owner said that some firms deliberately offer prices that is lower than total cost just to start doing business with a certain customer. Another one says, “Other firms keep the prices too low. You calculate and send an offer to customer; another firm also does that and send an offer of 50.000 TL to customer. When you calculate it; it is what you are paying to its papers. How can it be that low?”. One owner literally admits doing it by saying, “Rivalry is intense. Prices in the biddings are unbelievable. For example, sometimes you offer just a paper money; only to start working with that bank and with the hope to do profit in the future”. This is a very weird and wishful logic because most of the customers are aware of that. That is why; they generally change printeries they use regularly or threaten to change printery by showing other prices. So, it can be said that no printeries get the profit they are dreaming for. What happens at the end of it is that printeries lower sector’s prices altogether. They do that for a really long time and now they are suffering because of it. Today, there are few printeries that actually have a healthy profit because they have differentiated themselves by focusing on quality and doing niche works.

Another problem related to existence of having too many printeries is that it is extremely challenging to find a middle ground with the customer. First rule of the negotiation is having minimum need and maximum alternative before sitting at the negotiation table. Unfortunately, for almost every printery this situation is maximum need and minimum alternative due to high number of printeries. This puts printeries in a weak position during negotiation. One owner summarizes this issue by saying, “Prices are too low. Because there are too many print offices. Also, if you cannot be

able to meet the nearly impossible deadlines customers look for another printery until someone accepts it. Because there are too many printeries".

Pandemic affected this problem as well. There was an excess supply already in the sector and pandemic conditions nearly stopped the demand for printeries. The firms (exporting firms) that would not usually enter union or foundation bids started to enter those bids to make up for loss due to sudden stop in exports. Many of the customers decided to cancel their print orders or decrease the number of copies to save money. When the demand got lower rivalry became even fiercer than before. As a result, many printers stopped working. I saw many printeries that were as silent as libraries when I walked in them to make interview because machines were not working. In normal conditions machines are quite loud. One owner says, "Before the pandemic we were working 2 shifts, now we are fulling 1 shift barely". Another owner had to fire 6 of his employees (had 17 employees before the pandemic) due to very low demand.

In order to bypass this pandemic time's high inflation level firms deliberately offer prices that are slightly lower than the cost to firms that pay cash and in a quick manner. One owner confirms this by saying, "Sometimes people calculate costs according to situation not the actual cost. They know if they take 10 liras from bank, they return it as 13 liras; so they see some fast-paying jobs as cheap loan and offer 9 liras to 10 liras costing job".

4.3.2. New Generation Labor

While improvement in technology lowers demand for printeries, new generation does not want to work in printeries. Almost all the owners I have talked to claim that there is no new generation coming to take the torch from them. They believe they are the last generation doing this business. They are not wrong to think this way. Young workers (in early 20s) are not very common in printeries; even when they work, they tend to resign after couple of months. Main reason is that, working in printery is not easy; it is physically challenging, it is unsanitary, you are expected to be an errand boy, you have to perform the dirtiest tasks such as cleaning toilets, you always get treated in disrespectful manner, and all for those is a minimum wage. Young workers choose to work somewhere easier like a mall or supermarket and get minimum wage.

One owner confirms this by saying, “This is a hard business; everybody wants a comfortable job”. Another one says, “We cannot find new workers to work with minimum wage”. When I asked if they ever try to find young employees with a higher pay, I had two answers. One of them was it is impossible to pay a high wage due to low profits; the other one is, “Everybody wants to be a white-collar worker. It is not possible in our work line. They should first learn this work and then think about conditions and wage”.

Some of the owners even complain that apprentices come to printeries too old: “We also have problems to find apprentices. Now everybody is graduating from college, and they come here at 20-22 years old, that’s why they don’t learn and don’t want to be here”. There is another owner saying similar things, “…young students who do not want to be educated are forced to be educated. To clarify, normally a student who does not wish to go to school is a possible apprentice for us. They say it child labor, but child labor is a future qualified worker for us. However, now a student graduates from high school at 18 years old, tries to go to university 2 times and at 20 years old he wants to start working here; at this moment he is no longer a potentially qualified worker for us. This is the biggest problem”.

When I ask about this issue to printer owners, they did not speak about pandemic situation specifically; it was for a broader time zone. However, when I observed their crew, I rarely saw an apprentice. Employee ages generally differentiate between 30s and 60s. Thus, it can be said that situation has not changed in a positive way. In fact, given the conditions of the sector, which has got worse with pandemic, even if an apprentice wants to work in a printery, it is not likely that any printery wants to hire him or her with a minimum wage. They most probably will offer even lower than that.

4.3.3. Relations with Customers

As in every business, relations with customers play important role in the industrial printing sector. To lessen the mistakes to a lowest possible point, clear and open communication with customers is required for printers. Main reason is that every order that printeries receive is an extremely personalized or customized order; in other words, it is not like producing a spare part over and over again. That is why

communication must be clear and mutual agreement must be present before the start of the production. Even single misunderstood element such as a grammar mistake, wrong usage of paper thickness, or wrong tone in the colors will ruin the entire order. This would result in reproduction of the entire order if the mistake were caused by the printery. This causes huge financial problems for printeries depending on the size of the order due to low profit margins. Owners complain that every customer wants their order as soon as possible and it make hard to create a stable working program to lessen the errors. They also add that they are racing against time; yet there are no room for error. An error may end a healthy relation with a customer.

According to my findings, all printeries communicate openly and very cleanly to prevent misunderstandings and try to find a common ground when a problem occurs. Printers think that openly communicating with their customers help them to find solutions for a problem. Moreover, they believe that hiding some issues about order (lying about number of copies etc.) would only result in losing the customer at some point in the future. To develop reciprocal agreement, some of them also prepare couple of hard copies (so customers can see the hard copy instead of seeing it in digital platform) by using digital printing methods to get all kinds of approvals (color, size, paper thickness, grammar, and coating in the cover, etc.) before production. This method is getting a norm in industry because it helps both sides to understand each other.

During my interviews, I observed that constant open communications and being honest about issues in production create strong bonds between printeries and customers. When customers in private sector establish a bond with a printery, they tend to work with them without communicating with other printeries. There are couple of reasons behind it. Firstly, like I mentioned earlier, orders that printers receive are personalized and special to that customer. That is why understanding customer needs is essential. Customers feel that printeries they worked regularly with is now familiar with them and that is why communicating will be more effortless and easier than before. For instance, they can just order “same order from last time” and skip all the bureaucracy that happened before. Secondly, customers believe they become regulars and have even more power on the prices. It is especially true if the customer is a big one and

constitutes a significant ratio on the printery's revenues. Printeries do not want to risk losing a big part of their revenue and that is why they become less forceful when pricing the orders. Thirdly, after a while customers become lazy to look for another alternative even though their usual printery makes mistakes with orders. This reason is common in Turkish private sector; their relation becomes so close that customers do not want to work with a stranger, customers even tell their rival's price offers to their usual printery so they can get the order.

During pandemic I observed that printeries that have long lasting relations with customers were able to resist hardships a little bit better than other printeries. These printeries were able to lessen the problems by communicating with customers. Also, they did not try to find new customers because they already had an established network. One owner says, "We are an old firm and we have been working with almost same companies for a long time. That is why our communication is open and direct. When it is easy to find a common ground, this situation helps to lessen some problems". Another owner says, "We openly explain them the necessities about the job. We do not hide anything. When they see that, they do not leave us. Our communication helps us to fight against problems and risks". Most owners say that customers try to be more understanding during pandemic since everyone have similar problems even though they are at different sectors. On the other hand, some owners claim that pandemic made customers selfish, and they do not want to listen issues or find a common ground, they just want their order done and that is it.

4.4. The State and the Pandemic

4.4.1. The State as a Customer

Like unions and chambers state is also another important customer of printeries. However, working with state is different, according to many printeries. Many printeries interviewed said that they do not work with state or follow public bids; they all said that they do not trust honesty and professionality of the procurement officer. One owner openly said, "We generally do not work with public offices, because they are generally corrupt".

Constant changes in bidding law also causes obstacles for fair competition. Direct procurement limit used to be low so that public offices had to do bids. However, that limit constantly increased up to 121.405 lira in 2021 (data taken from Resmi Gazete Tarih / Sayı: 26.01.2021 / 31376). It was 35.037 lira in 2010 (Resmi Gazete Tarih / Sayı: 21.01.2010 /27469), 50.385 lira in 2015 (Resmi Gazete Tarih / Sayı: 29.01.2015 /29251), 67.613 lira in 2018 (Resmi Gazete Tarih / Sayı: 19.01.2018 /30306). That means a procurement officer can inform an acquaintance printery about an order that costs under 121.405 lira, and no one would know about it; all printery needs to do is to bring two other price offers (three, including his offer) from other printeries. To clarify, this is legal. One owner talked about this problem by saying "…state changed bidding law too much. They increased the limits of direct procurement too high, up to 110.000 I think; or 300.000 in bargain style of procurements". (Bargain style procurement has a limit of 404.732 lira in 2021 according to Resmi Gazete Tarih / Sayı: 26.01.2021 / 31376) This situation hurts trust between printeries and public offices. One owner explains "We do not work with public offices because we do not want to enter public bids anymore. The reason is that we never get the job which is very weird. One time I only offered the cost of paper and still could not get the job. I do not want to become another side offer". Owners are suspicious about some procurement officers giving prices of other printeries to their acquaintance printery so they can get the job.

It is not always like this; some procurements officers are still collecting offers from numerous printeries to find the lowest one possible. However, this time printeries complain that some printeries offering prices without thinking about the risks and offering prices too low. Even when you win an open bid you cannot make any profit from it as they claim.

During the pandemic public works slowed down due to limited number of employees in the office. This is not ideal for public offices and their printeries; because to get a payment from an office, an officer in charge needs to sign a certain document. In normal conditions it may take a few days, but during pandemic public office workers worked with shifts and this resulted in delays in needed signatures and payments as a result. In addition to that, number of orders decreased as well. Due to lower number of

employees and working hours in the office, public offices did not need printeries as much as they used to before the pandemic. Also, with the beginning of the pandemic public offices prioritize cost saving policies.

Furthermore, public offices started to buy their own printery machines. Most of them buy new digital machines. There are even some ministries that have their own industrial printing machines; so they do not give any orders to printing sector. This trend started way before the pandemic, but it is related with decreasing demand for printeries in the public offices. One owner criticizes this trend by saying they are becoming more wasteful by managing a printery department than giving orders to printeries.

In addition to that, printeries have another complaint about state, which is lack of control on printeries. As I mentioned earlier, there are some printeries that use refugee work force without registering and paying insurance as most printeries claim. This lowers the production cost and creates unfair advantage for them. One owner says, "State needs to monitor these firms and give them monetary punishments. Otherwise, all firms would have to follow the same route to compete with these firms and this will result in state losing its income". Another owner says, "It is like we are being punished for being honest and following the rules". It became a more crucial issue in pandemic because numerous printeries had to fire some of their employees. Also, keeping costs down became much more important during the pandemic due to decreasing demands and revenues and labor cost is a major cost item.

4.4.2. The State as a Regulator and Lockdowns

Industrial printing sector was able to continue to work during lockdowns. Printeries wanting to work needed to take permits from chamber they are member of. When weekend lockdowns were first introduced, printeries said they had problems because their suppliers were closed. After the first weekend, supplier started to take permits to be able to work.

One problem printeries had during lockdown is that they could not find someone to communicate on the other side because they were closed. Because one side is operated

normally and the other side operated partly, communication really slowed down as most printeries expressed.

Biggest problem was decrease in number of orders. Almost all the orders stopped suddenly when the lockdown was first introduced. Through the lockdown times orders were generally all time low said the printeries. When I asked if they had any organizational problems during lockdowns none of them said yes. Most of them said there were so few orders during that time, so they did not have organizational problems.

The effect of lockdowns is indirect. Printeries were able to operate during lockdowns. But many related sectors did not and lockdowns further decreased the already decreased demand.

4.5. Health Risks

During the interviews I also questioned about the precautions printeries take. According to interviews, they take the matter seriously enough. All of them forced employees to wear masks and some of them forbid the visitors to enter production area of the facilities. Since the printeries generally have lots of physical space social distancing was not a problem for them. In addition to that, printeries that have a cafeteria or a kitchen part divide employees in several groups during launch times so employees can have space between them. Also, they asked employees to be honest about their health situations and if they have slight signs of covid. Most of the printeries asked for covid tests for the employees they suspected.

Most of the printeries that I spoke have successfully contained the covid spread in their printery. Most of them have 2 or 3 cases, but not at the same time. However, couple of them utterly failed to do so. In the most dramatic case, one employee hid his situation (being covid positive) from everybody in the company and spread the virus everyone (there are 8 employees in that company). Owner who is over 50 years old said, "…one employee didn't tell us he had the virus and infected us all including me. I hardly survived that. So, we can say there are health risks now". He also added, he had to go to a countryside for couple of months to ease his lungs. In another example of failure (this printery has 150 employees), one employee spread the virus to 20

employees in a very short time and owner had to shut down operations for around 20 days. He said, “20 of our employees were affected by the virus. As precaution we followed science board advises. Between the dates of May 1st and May 21 we closed the company”.

This seems to be a rather manageable risk as opposed to other risks. Printeries followed the guidelines of state as much as possible and protected the health of employees as much as possible. They have relatively more control on health risks.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter aims to answer the research questions and discuss the findings of this thesis. We are aiming to expand the results of the findings chapter and develop additional insights.

Printeries made sense of the pandemic risk through the existing risks of their industry.

As we saw in the past studies sensemaking is oriented to emerging risks considered novel. However, in our case we observed that printeries in Ankara made sense of the pandemic risk, which is a new emerging risk, through the existing risks of their industry. In other words, new health risks were mostly ignored; instead, financial and survival risks were the focus of the printeries. I believe this is caused by the industry already being in a bad shape financially before the pandemic. Financial health affected the survival of the printeries. When the pandemic made the financial conditions even more challenging than before, printeries had to focus even more on financial risks rather than health risks to survive. Furthermore, Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) claims that sensemaking is about linking cues and frames to create an account of what is going on. Pandemic's damage to an already fragile financial condition may have caused printeries to create a link between worsening financial state of the printeries and pandemic and thus printeries seemed to choose to make sense of the pandemic through the existing risks of their industry. We saw this very clearly in our interviews; when we asked what are the problems and risks that they are facing, first things they say are currency rates and inflation on input prices. Later, when we asked what changed with pandemic, they say financial situation has gone worse than before.

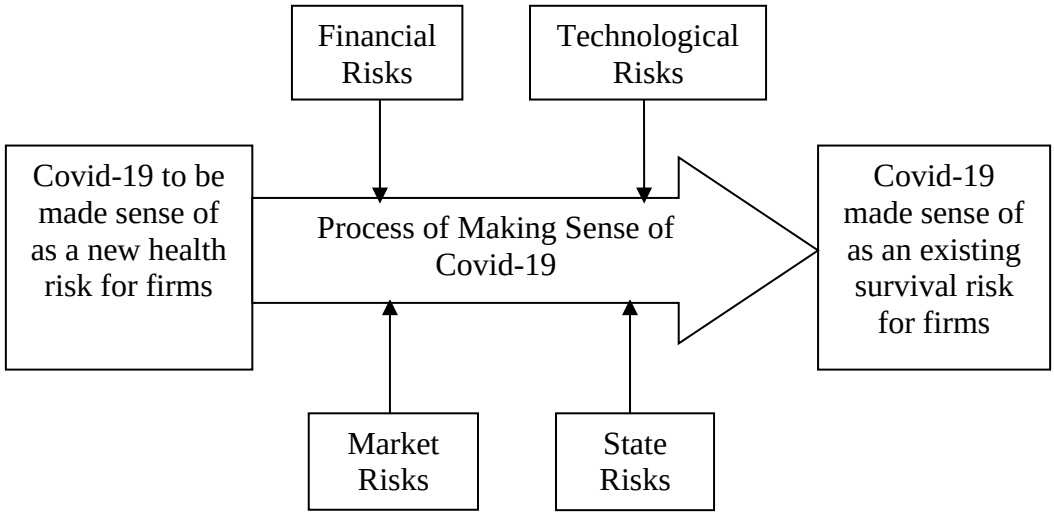
Another reason on why printeries making sense of the pandemic risk through the existing risks can be explained by looking at their "crisis experiences". In the printery

industry the word of risk is associated with financial problems due to past economic crises that Turkey faced. On top of that, most of printeries I interviewed were in this sector more than 20 years if not around 20 years. This creates a prejudice towards crises in that they should be approached with a financial view because their experiences are shaped in that way. Powers (1973) indicates that people may behave under guidance of prejudices and even they can shape some elements in the course of prejudices.

Focusing on financial risks rather than individual health risks prioritized the short-term organizational survival for the printeries. From the interviews, we can see that printeries took actions in line with organizational survival. For example, they laid off employees in order to reduce the costs and made investments to switch to packaging industry or digital printer. Some of them stayed away from big orders that required big capitals. However, we did not see any action against individual health risks apart from standardized mandatory mask usage and hand sanitizers. If one or two employees got positive, they did not send "contacted" employees to quarantine with the positive employees. In fact, most of them did not have their employees tested to understand whether or not they were positive. That is why we saw dramatical examples in the interviews. One printery (having about 125 employees) was forced to close down all its operations because suddenly 20-25 employees got positive and in other printery, one employee hid that he was positive and he spread the virus every other employee including his boss who hardly survived. Here we see again how expectation plays a crucial role in crisis management (Weick, 1988). Printeries' past experiences influenced their risk sense making perspectives to focus them on financial survival of the organization and almost forget about actual health risks.

To sum up based on our findings there are 4 key areas of risks in addition to health risk. Those risks are finance, technology, market and the state. Printeries make sense of Covid-19 or the pandemic as financial, technological, and market risk rather than health risk. Financial risks, which are related to general economic conditions, include exchange and inflation rates, which significantly affect input prices. Printeries are vulnerable to inflation and change in currency rates because almost all input materials are imported. With the start of the pandemic, we witnessed a dramatic drop in the value

of the Turkish lira, which in return increased the input prices of printeries. Risks related to technology are digitalization and introduction of new and more flexible ways of printing. Since the introduction of internet and social media, the demand for printeries has been steadily diminishing due to their convenience and cost effectiveness. In addition to that, new methods in printing has made the low amount of orders to be a lot cheaper and faster than they used to be. Advancements in technology thus speed up the process of shrinking market for printeries. Market-related risks refer to the activities of competitors, customers, and employees. Today, in the printery market supply exceeds demand because of the high number of printeries. This situation empowers customers against printeries; as a result, printeries suffer in their profits. There is also a scarcity of labor in the market due to low pays from printeries. Young employees do not want to work in printeries with minimal wages and experienced operators ask for higher wages and benefits than printeries are willing to offer. Final area is the state. During the pandemic we saw conflicting decisions from the state, especially about the schools and working life. During analyzing the interviews, we spotted so many complaints about unplanned lockdowns, situation of the schools, delayed payments, unfair bids, lack of monitoring on unregistered employment, and working capacities of state offices. Overall, state created ambiguity and uncertainty during pandemic not just for printeries but for many different sectors as well. Therefore, the Covid-19 pandemic disturbed the already crumbling situation and made printeries even more vigilant towards those factors rather than health risks. Paradoxically, it made the existing risks in the areas of finance, technology, market, and the state more visible than the new risks in the area of health. That is why printeries tried to make sense of the pandemic risks through those factors, in other words through the existing risks. The pandemic poses mainly a risk of firm survival for printeries while health seems to be a secondary risk. This argument can be depicted with the following model:



Printing sector was suitable for risk sensemaking and pandemic increased this factor.

According to Weick (1995), environment can be decisive on the role of sensemaking in the organizations. Scott's analysis (1987) explains organizations in three ways: organization as rational system, organization as natural system, and organization as open system. In open systems organizations' operations and decisions are strongly influenced by environmental factors. These three ways are arranged according to their openness to their environment. Weick (1995) argues that if it is an open system organization, the organization should be concerned about sensemaking more. This is because incongruous changes in environment affect how organizations work in open systems more than any other systems. As an organization becomes more open and looser, it becomes more dependent on environment. According to Mandler (1984), situations in which the new occasion is not "expected" or an "expected" occasion does not happen effectively triggers the sensemaking in organizations. In other words, when continuing cognitive activity is disturbed, coping, problem solving, and learning begins (p. 188).

The findings in this thesis back the arguments of Weick (1995) because being open to environment is giving sensemaking a central role in organizations. In this thesis we observe that printeries are open system organizations that are affected by environmental factors too much. For instance, as we discussed before, they are vulnerable against changes in currency rates, inflation rates and competitive rivalry.

They cannot do much about the problems emerging from these factors. Even before the pandemic printeries in Ankara tried to understand and make sense of the environment around them. Since they cannot control events in their environment, they used sensemaking to locate risks and opportunities in the market. For example, all printeries have already located the pandemic risks and upcoming ones by using sensemaking; some of them made sense of new digital printing technology as an opportunity to seize higher profits. Almost all of them did this without realizing it, because during vague situations using sensemaking to understand what is going on is the most rational thing to do for most individuals. In addition to that, pandemic was an "unexpected" event that changed dynamics of the printeries' environment and disturbed the continuing cognitive activity in a negative way. We also observed that as Mandler (1984) suggested the moment pandemic disturbed the continuing cognitive activity in the printery market, most firms immediately tried to cope with it and learn the new ways of making profits. Some examples of finding new ways of profit are transforming themselves from offset printing to package printing and -as I mentioned briefly- using new digital machines to get low copy number orders. We also saw firms that downsized and laid off some of their employees.

Risk sensemaking was affected by level of ambiguity and uncertainty both brought by pandemic and dependent on customers.

According to Weick (1995) the two most common sensemaking occasions for organizations are ambiguity and uncertainty. Their effect on organizations is different. Ambiguity is caused by too many explanations leaving people confused, which leads them to sensemaking. On the other hand, uncertainty leads people to sensemaking because they are ignorant of explanations.

It is obvious that pandemic created ambiguity and uncertainty in the printery sector. We observed sharp decrease in demand, increasing input prices, lira losing its value against foreign currencies, firms closing their offices, health risks, and finally lockdowns. All these elements created a "shock" in the printery sector. However, it was not the case for every printery. During the analysis of interviews, we realized that some printeries had no big issues while some of them were near bankruptcy. This

situation was caused by their customers. For instance, printeries that mostly worked with publishers had a really hard time due to schools being closed all year because publishers did not order books. Furthermore, printeries that worked with public offices were also severely affected. As we discussed in findings during pandemic it became nearly impossible to win a bid due to desperate printeries that bid under their cost. However, printeries that worked with medical sector had a hard time to catch up with orders and relatively increased their revenues. This resulted in differences on their approach to sensemaking. As expected, printeries that were "shocked" experienced higher levels of ambiguity and uncertainty. On the contrary, printeries that worked with booming sectors such as banking and medical had lower level of ambiguity and uncertainty. Thus, the latter printeries did not rely on risk sensemaking as much as the former "shocked" printeries.

Centralized management style created blind spots in sensemaking.

Almost all printeries that I interviewed were managed by an owner; single manager manages the whole company. While this management style may speed the process by eliminating bureaucracy it has its downsides.

To begin with, one boss creates a commitment to actions because there is no one to give a second opinion. This in return creates blind spots. Weick (1988) explains that when a person is committed to an action or idea, he or she creates an explanation that justifies his or her action, the explanation has a tendency to go on and turns into an assumption that is taken for granted. When the transformation has been completed, it is questionable that the assumption will be seen as a likely contributor to the crisis. We saw the danger of commitment in the Bhopal case in which they kept the dangerous process of MIC production secret; it was justified in terms of prevention of unnecessary alarm and competitive advantage. The siren at Bhopal was not turned on until gas began to mix into the atmosphere. After turned on it was turned off after 5 minutes and stayed off until gas was mixed with atmosphere for 90 minutes. In short, their commitment to secrecy created a blind spot against a partial solution, necessary alarm (Weick, 1988).

One owner told that during the early times of the pandemic he was scared of the virus and affected too much by stay-home campaigns. He thought closing printery and staying off from big orders (so he could work with half of his work force) was a good idea for him. He admitted that it was a big mistake and added that he lost 70% of his revenue in comparison to prior year and made a big loss. His commitment to prevention of the virus created a blind spot toward a contribution to crisis, loss of revenue.

Furthermore, capacity of the owner is another issue. Weick (1988) speaks about correlation between capacity and perception. He says when capacity changes, perception and action change with it. He adds that this correlation is a crucial point to make crisis management easier. As I mentioned earlier, most printeries are tightly centralized and bound to one person's capacity on sensemaking on what is going on. This significantly limits perception. During the analysis of interviews, we observed that capacity of most owners on sensemaking new emerging risks is not strong. We observed that they treat these new risks as an extension of the existing ones. They think new risks as just another phase. Main reason is that they compare them with old financial crises. Financial problems play important role right now but there are more dangerous and permanent catalysts. As I mentioned in findings, they are digitalization that lowers demand for classic offset printing and new generation that demands higher payments or does not want to work in printeries at all. Most owners focus on financial problems such as input prices and currency rates while they overlook the problems that will permanently change the offset printery industry. It is as Weick (1988) says: 'The person in authority is not necessarily the most competent person to deal with a crisis…'

To sum up, heavily centralized printeries may increase the effect of this crisis without realizing due to lack of perception and capacity. To overcome this, owners may use consultancy services or hire employees that are expert on risk management and sensemaking. Unfortunately, most of the printeries in Ankara have very limited financial power to employ such experts. If they do not have enough financial power for such services, they might communicate with other owners that they can trust. However, it is against the nature of rivalry which is extremely fierce in the printery

sector. That is why most of the printeries in Ankara have limited capacity to manage risks.

State is a source of risk during the pandemic.

We realized that during pandemic (even some time before pandemic), printeries started to see the public offices as unreliable and even untrustworthy. As we saw in the findings section of the thesis, they are not wrong to think that way. Since the 2018 public offices started to retard their payments while the profit of the printeries was already decreasing more and more. This situation created financial problems for printeries because they would pay for their inputs at the moment of purchase, but they had to wait couple of weeks sometimes a month to get their payment. Not knowing when to get payment created huge uncertainty for printeries. As I mentioned briefly uncertainty is a trigger for sensemaking (Weick, 1995) because it comes with a risk.

Moreover, state's decisions of closing schools, lockdowns, or even working schedule of public offices (from home or office) affected numerous different industries which in return affected printeries. Unlike most industries, printeries work for almost all industries, any company can become a customer for a printery. That is why general economic well-being of private companies is important for printeries. When private sector suffers financially, they focus on their survival naturally. This means delaying printery orders if it is not that urgent. During pandemic we observed several state decisions to fight against the spread of the virus created confusion on related sectors such as lockdown on certain days or hours (sometimes without an announcement), reopening and closing schools, reopening and closing restaurants, etc. All these decisions created uncertainty for the related sectors. When would they be open again and for how long? Like in the printery sector this uncertainty triggered sensemaking for these industries as well (Weick, 1995).

In summary, state created risk by creating uncertainty for printeries and different sectors by its pandemic-related precautions, actions, and decisions.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSSION

The aim of this study is to show how printeries in Ankara understand the new risks brought by pandemic and how they make sense of them. Sensemaking is used to understand sudden changes that disturb the ongoing cognitive flow (Weick, 1988). In the literature we generally see sensemaking process after a crisis event. In this study, we observe printeries trying to make sense of their environment at the moment of the pandemic crisis. In order to shed light on how printeries in Ankara understand risks and how they make sense of them, we focused on 20 printeries located in Ankara. We interviewed owners or top managers who have authority over decision making or managing the company. To analyze the collected data, we followed qualitative research design.

Our first research question aimed to learn what risks existed for printeries before the Covid-19 pandemic. Firstly, the analysis showed that printeries had financial risks even before the pandemic. These risks were mainly foreign currency rates and, as a result, unstable input prices. Due to printery inputs being imported, their prices were based on foreign currencies, mainly on American dollar and euro. Second, we observed that fierce rivalry was and still is a problem for printeries. Third, we also see printeries' mistrust of public offices' procurement actions.

Our second research question is to find what the causes of those risks were. First, since 2013 lira have been losing value against these two currencies; this resulted in constant increase in input prices. This trend became more visible after 2018 before the pandemic. Second, apart from financial problems, general demand for offset printing was decreasing. This situation was mainly caused by two factors: general financial situation of Turkey and technology. As financial situation suffered notably since 2016, printeries had smaller and smaller profit margins. Although higher revenues were

observed due to inflation, overall profits were suffering. As digital media expanded its reach, a decrease occurred in the demand for offset printer as well. Firms started to choose to use digital media over traditional printing methods because it was a lot cheaper and easier to distribute than traditional printing. In addition to that, worsening financial situation made easier to make the decision for firms to use digital media over traditional printing. Third, printeries claim that there are way too many printeries than market really needs. Therefore, in order to compete with rival firms, printeries lowered their profits constantly. This caused big problems for the printeries when it was combined with decreasing demand. Lastly, general mistrust towards state offices causes from actions of those offices. Printeries claimed that some procurement officers do not act professionally and favor certain firms that they have relation with. Even when those officers act professionally and collect bids openly, printeries claim that they cannot make profits with those prices.

Our third research question is to find what changed with the pandemic, do old risks still exist, and have new risks emerged. To begin with, when the pandemic started, already low demand for printeries got drastically decreased even more. Some printeries completely stopped for a while. This caused rivalry to be fiercer with lower profit margins than before. During the interviews we witnessed that almost all printeries blamed other printeries for lowering the prices constantly. Second, before the pandemic, public offices were a big market for printeries; many offices had constant printery needs. During pandemic this situation was disturbed because public offices were partially closed, and employees started to work from home. This resulted in decrease in need for printeries as well as delay in paperwork and communications. Printeries that work manly with public offices had hard time communicating with the offices and this resulted in orders taking more time than usual and in return delays in the payment. Some firms even admit that they do not wish to work with public offices anymore because of numerous ambiguities. That was not the only way state's action that causes ambiguity. State's decisions and actions to fight spread of virus created uncertainty within numerous sectors in Turkey; especially decisions on restaurants and schools severely affected printeries. Third, printeries also mentioned that old, financial risks become stronger and clearer than ever before with the pandemic. Most of the printeries commented that the pandemic made everything worse. As we discussed

earlier, closed sectors and businesses heavily impacted revenue and profits of the printeries. Many of them suffered losses during the pandemic. In addition, they had to deal with health risks too.

Our final research question is to find how printeries make sense of the pandemic in general. We observed that printeries made sense of the pandemic through the existing risks rather than concentrating on new risks brought by the pandemic. This maybe occurred because printeries were focused on issues such as currency and inflation rates too long before the pandemic. In addition to that, when the first effect of the pandemic was experienced on those elements greatly, printeries became even more focused on those issues and almost completely ignored new risks such as health risks. This was contradicting with prior studies in which sensemaking was done through new risks not old, existing risks.

Furthermore, we learned that printeries that have long lasting relations with their customers have advantage over their rivals because many firms do not like to change their printery supplier due to the nature of the printery work. As I mentioned in the findings chapter, orders to printeries are completely special and there is no room for production error. These orders demand clear and efficient communication which might be hard to establish during every new order. These challenges push firms to become regulars for printeries. During the analysis of interviews, we saw that printeries that have many "regulars" were more resistant than those who have very little. Also, this close relation between printery and customer firm allows the firms to understand each other's problem better during the pandemic. In addition to that, we saw that relation between printeries and non-regular firms grew more selfish and less understanding with the pandemic.

After analyzing the findings, we conclude that this study makes two major contributions to the sensemaking literature. Firstly, this study supports the Weick's (1995, et al. 2005) claim that sensemaking is a practice of social construction which occurs when conflicting signs disturb individuals' continuing activity and requires the retrospective development of possible meanings that explain what people are doing. When the pandemic first started in the spring of 2020, printeries started to make sense

of what is going on and soon after they changed some of their actions. We see this change in the most obvious way in the terms of payment acceptance. We observed that printeries collected and linked clues to create an understanding on what is going on (Maitlis and Sonenshein 2010).

Second, while analyzing the risk sensemaking literature we saw these new changes or disturbances are elaborated and made sense as a separate new risk. On the contrary to that, in this study we observed that printeries try to make sense of these new risks through old existing risks. When the pandemic started printeries automatically focused on financial risks and merged them into old existing financial problems. New health risks, risk of survival of the industry, risk of lockdowns etc. were overshadowed by the change in currency rates and input prices. One reason could be printeries became too much focused on short term changes due to currency and inflation problems since early 2010s; they may no longer have any resources or energy to focus on long term changes. Although, most of the printeries are aware of the long-term changes such as decreasing demand due to advancement in digital media, they admit that they cannot do anything about it.

Moreover, this second contribution may be a new direction in terms of future research. Researchers could follow similar strategies to investigate other industries to find out whether same phenomenon occurs in those industries too. Researchers could use a similar approach to this topic with more printeries bigger in size and effect on the industry. There are enormous printeries in İstanbul and outside the region of Ankara; I could only contact with a few big printeries in Ankara (because big majority of them are in İstanbul) and only one of them agree to participate in research. Bigger companies have experts on different areas and thus they might approach new risks different than these small and medium size printeries. Also, scale of this study can be expanded by studying same industry in other countries. There are big printeries in countries like India and China in which pandemic had a strong effect. Their experiences could provide additional information.

Finally, a survey from "matbaa haber magazine" supports our findings (Matbaa Haber, 2021). The survey conducted with 61 printeries (52.5% from industrial printeries,

31.1% from packaging industry, 9.8% from sticker industry and 6.6% from digital printeries) found that every 3 out of 4 printeries reported lower number of orders; every 2 out of 3 printeries reported loss in revenues in comparison to pre-pandemic. Those who were not suffering any loss were either in packaging industry or exporter printery. Furthermore, printeries reporting increase in revenues also claimed that profitability was less than pre-pandemic.

Future researchers might face certain limitations. Main findings of this study were result of the analysis of interviews with the top officials of the printeries in Ankara. It is also clear that printery industry in Ankara is as not professional as in the Europe or USA. Culture also could play role in making sense of the risks. Turkish business culture generally is not known for its awareness of risks, different cultures might produce different results. Also, it is fair to say that majority of interviewed firms were relatively small in terms of size, revenue, and market share when it is compared to the whole printing industry in Turkey.

We did not examine the sensemaking of blue-collar workers in this study even though they were the main risk group of the Covid-19 because our study's focus is firms' general risk sensemaking and understanding of Covid-19. In other words, our study involved environmental scanning and decision making which were dealt by the firm owner or the board of directors within printery firms. Since blue-collars were not involved in decision making, we did not involve them in the study. Moreover, owners would not allow me to perform interviews with their employees because of ongoing work requirements and associated time constraints. This would cause a big limitation for the study. However, blue-collar workers and sensemaking can be further studied in future studies. Due to interaction between workers as well as between workers and owners, risk sensemaking might change. Future studies might look into differences between blue-collar workers and decision makers or business owners and how this difference affects risk sensemaking.

The question of how different characteristics of firms affects risk sensemaking or making sense of the Covid-19 risks is also an important question. However, our sample

size is not comprehensive enough to answer that question. This question might be answered in future studies with a larger sample size.

This study has also some practical implications. To begin with, firms can employ people who are expert at decision making and environmental scanning to prevent blind-spots caused by too much commitment of the owner. Furthermore, this study shows that relying one type of customer such as public offices, publishers, private sector, etc., can be a gamble. Printeries should diversify their customer base better so they will be affected less if certain sectors suffer financially. Printeries can take these notes to strengthen themselves against ambiguous situations and environments. Finally, industrial printeries should consider changing their industry to packaging industry since it is constantly growing due to increase in consumption. Packaging industry is more fruitful in comparison to traditional industrial printing.

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APPENDICES

A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many years have you been in printery industry?
2. Can you tell us about the works of your company in this sector?
3. Considering the pre-pandemic period, what are the risks and/or problems faced by your company in general?
4. Do these risks and/or problems apply to other companies in the industry?
5. How do these risks and/or problems faced by your company arise?
6. What are the risks and/or problems arise due to inner mechanisms of your company? How do these risks and/or problems arise?
7. What are the risks and/or problems arise outside of your company? How do these risks and/or problems arise?
8. Which institutions, organizations and individuals does your company have business relations with? What are the risks and/or problems arising from these relationships and how do they arise?
9. How do these institutions, organizations and individuals approach the risks and/or problems faced by your company? How have these approaches changed with the epidemic?
10. How does your company communicate with the institutions, organizations and individuals it has business relations with? What effect does this communication have on your company's ability to cope with the risks and/or problems it faces?
11. How did the epidemic affect your company? Do existing risks and/or problems persist? Have new risks and/or problems emerged?
12. What issues should be look at to understand the risks and/or issues your company is facing? What changes have occurred in these issues and issues with the epidemic?

13. What measures do you take to deal with the risks and/or problems faced by your company? What changes have occurred in the measures you have taken with the epidemic?

14. What are the general economic, social, cultural, technological and political issues that affect your company and your industry positively or negatively? How have these issues changed with the epidemic?

15. Have any of your employees caught this epidemic in this process? If caught, how much did this affect your production capacity? What precautions have you taken to prevent the virus from spreading among your employees?

16. How much did the curfews implemented during the epidemic affect your company's production plans?

17. Have there been any changes in the types of orders you receive and the products you produce during the epidemic?

B. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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Konu : Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi : İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Çağrı TOPAL

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Yiğit Dağlar ÜÇPINAR'ın "Risk Sensamaking in the Printing Intustry During the Pandemic" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **014-ODTU-2021** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Prof. Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY
İAEK Başkanı

C. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Covid 19 salgını 2020 baharının başlarında başladı. Başlangıçta insanlar virüsün Türkiye'de yayılmasını önlemek için son derece titiz davrandılar. Birkaç hafta sonra bu titiz davranış yavaş yavaş kaybolmaya ve işletmeler normal rutinlerine dönmeye başladı. Bu ister istemez virüsün yayılmasını hızlandırdı ve devlet tarafından farklı kural ve düzenlemeler uygulanmaya başlandı. Bu noktada farklı sektörlerde belirsizlik ve bilinmezlik artmaya başladı ki bu iki faktör de anlamlandırmaya önemli ölçüde katkı sağlamaktadır (Weick, 1995).

Matbaa, en basit tabirle kitap, gazete vb. basım işlemlerinin yapıldığı bir kurum veya kuruluştur. Bu çalışmada matbaaların Covid-19 salgınının getirdiği riskleri nasıl anladıkları ve/veya bunları nasıl anlamlandırdıkları sorulmaktadır. Amacımız, nitel bir araştırma tasarımı kullanarak matbaaların anlam oluşturma sürecini analiz etmektir.
Kuruluş olarak matbaalar, normal operasyonlarında riskli teknolojiler kullanır, riskli yatırımlar yapar ve riskli prosedürler üzerinde çalışır (Shirivastava, Mitroff, Miller ve Miglani, 1988; Perrow, 1999). 2020 baharında salgının başlamasından önce bile matbaalar birçok riskle uğraşıyorlardı özellikle de finansal risklerle. Son dönemde yaşanan Covid-19 salgını hayatımızın sayılamayacak kadar çok bölümünde birçok engel ve kriz yarattı; birçok sektörü rahatsız etti ve çalışma şeklini değiştirdi.

Matbaalar için riskin ne olduğunu, matbaaların riskleri nasıl anladığını ve Covid-19 salgınının getirdiği yeni riskleri nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını anlamak için çalışmanın ele aldığı 4 soru var:

1. Covid-19 salgınından önce matbaalar için ne gibi riskler vardı?
2. Bu risklerin nedenleri nelerdi?
3. Salgın ile neler değişti, eski riskler hala var mı ve yeni riskler ortaya çıktı mı?
4. Matbaalar genel olarak salgını nasıl anlamlandırıyor?

Literatür taraması bize gösterdi ki anlamlandırma üzerine çalışmalar yaşanan problem veya felaketlerden sonra ele alınmıştır. Problemli veya riskli olayların gelişimi sırasında ele alınan bir anlamlandırma çalışması yaptığımız literatür taramalarında gözümüze çarpmamıştır. Bu anlamda bu konuda bir boşluktan söz edebiliriz.

Anlamlandırma, çatışan ipuçları bireylerin devam eden aktivitelerini bozduğunda gerçekleşen ve insanların ne yaptığını açıklayan olası anlamların geriye dönük olarak geliştirilmesini gerektiren sosyal inşa pratiğidir (Weick, 1995; Weick ve diğerleri, 2005). Anlamlandırma, neler olup bittiğine dair bir hesap oluşturmak için ipuçlarını ve çerçeveleri birbirine bağlamakla ilgilidir (Maitlis ve Sonenshein 2010). Weick'in öne sürdüğü gibi, "anlam oluşturmanın temel fikri, gerçekliğin, düzen yaratma ve olup bitenlere geriye dönük anlamlandırma çabalarından ortaya çıkan süregiden bir başarı olduğudur" (1993: 635). Bu nedenle anlamlandırma, bireylerin çevrelerinden gelen ipuçlarını anlamaya ve açıklamaya çalıştıkları bir sosyal inşa sürecidir (Berger ve Luckmann, 1967).

Weick'e (1988) göre, krizler, bir organizasyonun en temel amaçlarını riske atan gerçekleşmesi düşük olasılıklı ve ciddi sonuçlara yol açmasıyla ayırt edilir. Düşük olasılıkları nedeniyle bu olaylar açıklamaları bozar ve anlamlandırmaya ciddi ihtiyaç gerektirir. Bir krizi hedef alan anlamlandırma süreci ne kadar başarısız olursa, krizin kontrolden çıkması o kadar olasıdır.

Genellikle bir tür riskle ilişkilendirilen belirsizlik ve bilinmezlik, kuruluşlar için en yaygın iki anlamlandırma olayıdır. Kuruluşlar üzerindeki etkileri veya “şok”ları farklıdır. Belirsizlik için konuşmak gerekirse, çok fazla açıklama nedeniyle, insanların kafası karışır ve anlamlandırma faaliyetlerine yönelir. Bilinmezliğe gelince, onlar herhangi bir açıklamadan habersiz oldukları için anlamlandırmaya girişirler. Daft'ın Macintosh (Daft ve Macintosh, 1981), Lengel (Daft ve Lengel, 1984) ve Trevino (Daft, Lengel ve Trevino, 1987) ile yaptığı çalışmada farklılıklar daha açık bir şekilde gösterilmektedir. Habersizlikten kurtulmak için daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyacımız var. Kafa karışıklığından kurtulmak için hala bilgiye ihtiyacımız var; ancak bu bilgi yüz yüze etkileşimde formüle edilen ve birden çok ipucuyla katkıda bulunan farklı türde bilgidir. Firmalar salgın ve ilişkili risklerin neden olduğu belirsizlik ve bilinmezlik

nedeniyle zarar görmektedir. Anlamlandırma, eyleme izin veren tutarlı bir ortam yaratarak, insanların belirsizlik, bilinmezlikle ve genel olarak risklerle başa çıkmalarına izin verir. Dolayısıyla, anlamlandırma hem karar vermeye yol açar hem de onu takip eder: Risk algılama, karar vermenin ihtiyacı "net sorular ve net cevaplar" sunar (Weick, 1993: 636) ve karar verme, anlamlandırma için fırsatlar yaratan sürprizleri ve kafa karışıklığını yaratır (Maitlis, 2005).

Bu tez, çeşitli nedenlerle nitel araştırma tasarımını kullanmıştır. Başlangıç olarak, nitel araştırma bu tezin odak noktası için uygundur. Nitel araştırma sosyal süreçlere ve anlamlara, doğal ortamlarında göründükleri veya meydana geldikleri şekliyle odaklanır (Denzin ve Lincoln, 2000; Gephart, 2004a; Silverman, 2000). Ayrıca, sosyal aktörlerin dünya hakkındaki deneyimlerini ve görüşlerini gözlemler ve sosyal aktörlerin sosyal fenomenlere nasıl anlam kattığını keşfeder (Denzin ve Lincoln, 2000); bu tezde bu fenomen covid-19 pandemisidir. Son olarak, bir sosyal süreci ve aktörlerin anlamlarını kavramak, esnek ve gelişen bir araştırma tasarımı gerektirir. Nitel araştırma, "çoğunlukla yapılırken tasarlandığından" (Gephart, 2004a: 455) değişikliklere uyum sağlama esnekliği sunar (Glaser ve Strauss, 1967; Van Maanen, 1998).

Araştırma sitemiz olarak Ankara'daki matbaalara odaklanmaya karar verdik. Matbaacılık geniş bir sektördür; bu yüzden de gerekli verileri toplamak için odağımızı endüstriyel matbaalara indirgedik. Araştırma sorumuz ve hedeflerimiz doğrultusunda ilgili verilerin toplandığı firmaları seçmek için belirli kriterler oluşturduk, bunlar: firmalar Ankara'dan seçildi, firmalar endüstriyel matbaalardı, firmalar 5 yaş ve üzeri olarak seçildi.

Veriler esas olarak şirket yetkilileriyle yapılan görüşmelerden gelmektedir. Görüşülen kişilerin çoğu firmaların sahibi ve bazıları sağ koludur. Nisan 2021 ile Ekim 2021 arasında toplam 20 görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Amacımız aktörlerin düşünce sürecini kavramak olduğu için tüm görüşme soruları açık uçlu olarak hazırlanmıştır. Tüm görüşmeler yüz yüze gerçekleştirilmiş ve daha sonra yazıya dökülebilmek için katılımcıların onayı ile kayıt altına alınmıştır.

Matbaaların pandeminin getirdiği risklere nasıl yaklaştığını anlamak için "grounded" teori yaklaşımlarına dayalı yöntemler (Glaser, 1978; Glaser ve Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss ve Corbin, 1990) kullanıldı.
Bu araştırmada bazı sınırlamalar oldu. İlk sınırlama pandeminin kendisi. Çoğu matbaacı, telefon veya skype üzerinden röportaj yapmak istemedi, yüz yüze ve genellikle hafta sonları yapmak istedi.

Diğer bir sınırlama ise görüşme yapmak için uygun matbaa bulmaktı. Ankara'da çok sayıda matbaa olmasına rağmen hepsi röportaj yapmak istemedi ve yapmayı kabul ettiklerinde de soruları anlamadılar ve tamamen alakasız cevaplar verdiler. Son sınırlama zamandı. Mülakat için randevu alabilsem de matbaaların yoğun temposu planlarımda aksamalara neden oldu. Bu şirketlerin çoğu patron odaklı olduğundan dolayı patronlarla yaklaşık 30 dakika kesintisiz konuşabilmek zordu.

Veri analizleri sonucunda pandeminin matbaacılığı etkileyen 5 faktör tespit ettik. Bunlar; finansal riskler, teknolojik riskler, pazar riskleri, devlet ve sağlık riskleri. Finansal riskler genel olarak kur ve enflasyon risklerinden oluşmaktadır. Türkiye'deki endüstriyel matbaacılar, tüm alımları döviz kurlarına dayandığı için döviz kurlarını sürekli takip etmek zorunda kalmaktadırlar. Kâğıt, alkol, mürekkep vb. fiyatları Euro veya Amerikan doları bazındadır. Bunların hepsi ithal edilmekte ve bu da fiyatları istikrarsız hale getirmektedir. Öte yandan, bu ürünlerin satışı Türk lirası üzerinden anlaşma sağlanmaktadır.

Pandeminin başlamasıyla birlikte küresel ticarette lojistik yavaşlamaya başladı. Bu da bazı ürünlerin fiyatlarında artışlara sebep oldu. Daha önce de belirttiğim gibi endüstriyel matbaacıların kullandığı tüm mallar ithaldir. Örneğin pandemi öncesi Amerikan Bristol kâğıdı ton başına 600$ civarındaydı. Ancak 2021 yazında ton başına 1.600$ civarındaydı. Hem döviz kurları hem de girdi fiyatları sürekli arttığından dolayı büyük ihalelere girmek giderek daha riskli hale geldi.

Teknolojik riskler genel olarak dijitalleşme ve baskı alanındaki yeniliklerden kaynaklanmaktadır. Web sitelerinin, sosyal medya ve dijital pazarlama firmalarının ortaya çıkmasından önce, firmalar ağırlıklı olarak basılı medyaya güveniyordu.

Firmalar kendilerini müşterilerine tanıtmak için fuarlara girmeye karar verdiklerinde binlerce ürün kataloğu ve broşürü kendilerine ciddi bir maliyetle de olsa bastırırlardı. Ayrıca, gazeteler ve dergiler için de düzenli olarak yüz binlerce kopya basılmaktaydı. Bugün firmalar dijitalleşme ile çok daha az parayla daha geniş kitlelere ulaşabileceklerini fark ettiler. Bu da endüstriyel matbaaların öneminin yavaş yavaş azalmasına sebep oldu.

Baskı teknolojisindeki ilerlemeler geleneksel baskı tekniklerinin dışında daha esnek ve daha ucuz yöntemlerin gelişmesinde de rol oynadı. Bugün dijital baskı makinaları geleneksel makinelerin aksine alüminyum kalıp kullanmadan baskı yapabilmektedir. Dijital baskı makinaları istenilen baskı sayısının az olduğu siparişler için geleneksel baskı makinalarına göre çok daha ucuza aynı işi yapabilmektedir. Zaten azalan baskı adeti ihtiyacı düşünüldüğünde bu geleneksel endüstriyel matbaalar için ciddi sorunlar yaratmaktadır.

Pazar riskleri genel olarak rekabet, yeni nesil iş gücü ve müşteriler ile ilişkilerden etkilenmektedir. Yoğun rekabet nedeniyle firmalar çok az kâr marjı ile çalışmaktadır. Bazıları daha büyük bir kâr yaratmak veya müşterilere daha ucuz bir fiyat sunmak için kuralları esnetmektedir. Diğer birçok matbaa sahibi, diğer matbaaların fiyat politikasından şikayetçi. Bir işletme sahibi, bazı firmaların yalnızca belirli bir müşteriyle iş yapmaya başlamak için kasıtlı olarak toplam maliyetin altında fiyatlar sunduğunu söyledi. Pandemi bu sorunu da etkiledi. Sektörde zaten arz fazlası vardı ve pandemi koşulları matbaa talebini neredeyse durdurdu. İhracat yapan dev firmalar normalde ilgilenmedikleri yurtiçi ihaleleri ile ilgilenmeye başladı.

Teknolojideki gelişmeler matbaalara olan talebi azaltırken, yeni nesil matbaalarda çalışmak istemiyor. Konuştuğum hemen hemen tüm matbaa sahipleri, meşaleyi ellerinden alacak yeni bir neslin gelmediğini iddia ediyor. Bu işi yapan son nesil olduklarına inanıyorlar.

Görüşmelerim sırasında, sürekli açık iletişimin ve üretimdeki konularda dürüst olmanın matbaalar ve müşteriler arasında güçlü bağlar oluşturduğunu gözlemledim. Özel sektördeki müşteriler bir matbaa ile bağ kurduklarında, diğer matbaalarla iletişim

kurmadan onlarla çalışma eğilimindedir. Pandemi döneminde müşterilerle uzun süreli ilişkileri olan matbaaların zorluklara diğer matbaalardan biraz daha iyi dayanabildiğini gözlemledim.

Devletin matbaalar üzerinde etkisini iki yönlü olarak gözlemledik; müşteri ve düzenleyici olarak. Devlet matbaalar için çok büyük bir müşteri olduğu çok açık. Fakat, görüşülen birçok matbaa, devletle çalışmadıklarını veya kamu ihalelerini takip etmediklerini söyledi; hepsi satın alma görevlisinin dürüstlüğüne ve profesyonelliğine güvenmediklerini belirttiler. Bir mal sahibi açıkça, "Genel olarak kamu daireleriyle çalışmıyoruz, çünkü genellikle yozlaşmışlar" dedi. Buna ek olarak, matbaaların devletle ilgili başka bir şikâyeti daha var, bu da matbaalar üzerindeki kontrol eksikliği. Çoğu matbaacının iddia ettiği gibi, kayıt yaptırmadan ve sigorta ödemeden mülteci iş gücünü kullanan bazı matbaalar var. Bu, üretim maliyetini düşürmekte ve onlar için haksız avantaj yaratmakta.

Hafta sonu sokağa çıkma kısıtlamaları ilk kez uygulamaya konulduğu zamanlarda matbaalar, tedarikçileri kapalı olduğu için sorun yaşadıklarını söylediler. İlk hafta sonundan sonra tedarikçiler çalışabilmek için izin almaya başladı. Kapanmalar sırasında matbaaların yaşadığı bir diğer sorun, kapalı oldukları için diğer tarafta iletişim kuracak birini bulamamalarıydı. Bir taraf normal olarak ve diğer taraf kısmen çalıştığı için, çoğu matbaanın ifade ettiği gibi iletişim gerçekten de yavaşladı.

Tespit ettiğimiz son faktör sağlık riskidir. Görüşmeler sırasında matbaaların aldığı önlemleri de sorguladım. Röportajlara göre konuyu yeterince ciddiye almışlar. Hepsi çalışanları maske takmaya zorlamış ve bazıları ziyaretçilerin tesislerin üretim alanına girmesini yasaklamış. Konuştuğum matbaaların çoğu, covid-19 yayılımını matbaalarında başarıyla durdurmuşlar. Çoğunun 2 veya 3 vakası olmuş ama bu vakalar farklı zamanlarda ortaya çıkmış. Ancak, birkaç tanesi bu konuda büyük başarısızlık yaşamış.

Bu bulgular ışığında, bu çalışma, literatüre dört farklı alanda katkı sağlamaktadır. İlk olarak, bu çalışma gösteriyor ki; matbaalar salgının riskini salgın üzerinden değil, var olan eski riskler üzerinden anlamlandırdı. Başka bir deyişle, yeni sağlık riskleri çoğunlukla göz ardı edildi; bunun yerine matbaalar finansal ve hayatta kalma risklerine

odaklandı. Bunun, salgından önce endüstrinin finansal olarak zaten kötü durumda olmasından kaynaklandığına inanıyorum. Matbaaların finansal durumları onların hayatta kalmasını etkiledi. Salgın finansal koşulları eskisinden daha da zorlaştırdığında matbaalar ayakta kalabilmek için sağlık risklerinden çok finansal risklere odaklanmak zorunda kaldı.

Matbaaların salgın riskini mevcut riskler üzerinden anlamlandırmasının bir başka nedeni de "kriz deneyimlerine" bakarak açıklanabilir. Matbaacılık sektöründe risk kelimesi, Türkiye'nin geçmişte yaşadığı ekonomik krizler nedeniyle finansal sorunlarla ilişkilendiriliyor. Üstüne üstlük görüştüğüm matbaaların çoğu ortalama 20 yıldır bu sektördeydi. Bir diğer deyişle tecrübeleri bu şekilde şekillendiği için krizlere finansal bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşılması şeklinde bir önyargı oluşturulmuş durumda.

İkinci olarak, çalışmamız gösteriyor ki; matbaacılık sektörü risk algılamaya uygundu ve salgın bu faktörü güçlendirdi. Scott'ın analizi (1987) organizasyonları üç şekilde açıklar: rasyonel sistem olarak organizasyon, doğal sistem olarak organizasyon ve açık sistem olarak organizasyon. Açık sistemlerde organizasyonların operasyonları ve kararları çevresel faktörlerden güçlü bir şekilde etkilenir. Bu üç yol, bulundukları ortama açıklıklarına göre düzenlenmiştir. Weick (1995), açık sistemli organizasyonun anlamlandırmayla daha fazla ilgilenmesi gerektiğini savunur. Bunun nedeni, ortamdaki uyumsuz değişikliklerin, açık sistemlerde çalışan organizasyonları diğer sistemlerdeki organizasyonlardan daha fazla etkilemesidir. Bir organizasyon daha açık ve hale geldikçe, çevreye daha fazla bağımlı hale gelir. Bu tezdeki bulgular, Weick'in (1995) argümanlarını desteklemektedir, çünkü çevreye açık olmak, organizasyonlarda anlamlandırmaya merkezi bir rol vermektedir. Bu tezde matbaaların çevresel faktörlerden çok fazla etkilenen açık sistem organizasyonları olduğunu gözlemliyoruz.

Üçüncü olarak, çalışmamız gösteriyor ki; risk anlamlandırma hem salgının getirdiği hem de müşterilere bağlı olan belirsizlik ve bilinmezlik seviyesinden etkilenmiştir. Salgının matbaacılık sektöründe belirsizlik ve bilinmezlik yarattığı aşikâr. Talepte keskin düşüş, girdi fiyatlarında artış, liranın yabancı paralar karşısında değer kaybetmesi, firmaların ofislerini kapatması, sağlık riskleri ve nihayetinde karantinalar gözlemledik. Tüm bu unsurlar matbaa sektöründe bir "şok" yarattı. Ancak, her matbaa

için durum böyle değildi. Görüşmelerin analizi sırasında, bazı matbaaların büyük bir sorun yaşamadığını, bazılarının ise iflasın eşiğine geldiğini gördük. Matbaaların müşterileri bu durumda önemli rol oynamıştır. Örneğin, daha çok yayıncılarla çalışan matbaalar, okulların tüm yıl kapalı olması nedeniyle yayıncıların kitap sipariş etmemesi nedeniyle gerçekten zor zamanlar geçirdi. Buna karşın, medikal sektörü ile çalışan matbaalar normal yıllara göre daha fazla sipariş almışlardır. Bu, anlamlandırmaya yaklaşımlarında farklılıklara neden oldu.

Dördüncü olarak, bu çalışma gösteriyor ki; merkezi yönetim tarzı, anlamlandırmada kör noktalar yarattı. Matbaalar genel olarak patron odaklı merkezi yönetimin yağın olduğu şirketlerdir. Patron eylemlere bağlılık yaratır çünkü ikinci bir görüş verecek kimse yoktur. Bu da karşılığında kör noktalar oluşturur. Weick (1988), bir kişi bir eyleme veya fikre bağlı olduğunda, eylemini haklı çıkaran bir açıklama oluşturduğunu, bu açıklamanın kabul edilen bir varsayıma dönüştüğünü açıklar. Dönüşüm tamamlandığında, varsayımın krize olası bir katkıda bulunacağının düşünüldüğü şüphelidir. Bir diğer deyişle, yoğun olarak merkezileştirilmiş matbaalar, algı ve kapasite eksikliğinden dolayı farkına varmadan bu krizin etkisini artırabilir.

Bulgulardan yaptığımız son çıkarım göstermiştir ki; devlet salgın sırasında bir risk kaynağı haline gelmiştir. Devletin okulları kapatması, sokağa çıkma kısıtlamaları ve hatta kamu ofislerinin (evden veya ofisten) çalışma takvimindeki değişimler çok sayıda farklı sektörü etkiledi. Çoğu endüstrinin aksine, matbaalar neredeyse tüm endüstriler için çalışır. Bu sebepten ötürü birçok sektörün etkilenmesi matbaacıları da etkiledi. Bu nedenle matbaalar için özel şirketlerin genel ekonomik refahı önemlidir. Özel sektör maddi sıkıntıya düştüğünde doğal olarak hayatta kalmaya odaklanır. Bu, o kadar acil değilse matbaa siparişlerinden vazgeçmek anlamına gelir. Salgın sırasında, virüsün yayılmasına karşı savaşmak için alınan bazı devlet kararlarının, (belirli gün veya saatlerde sokağa çıkma yasağı (bazen duyuru yapılmadan), okulların yeniden açılıp kapanması, restoranların yeniden açılıp kapanması gibi) ilgili sektörlerde kafa karışıklığı yarattığını gözlemledik. Tüm bu kararlar ilgili sektörler için belirsizlik yarattı. Tekrar ne zaman ve ne kadar süreyle açık kalacaklardı? Matbaacılık sektöründe olduğu gibi, bu belirsizlikler alakalı endüstriler için de anlamlandırmayı tetikledi (Weick, 1995).

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