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Turkish
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for UNESCO

EFFECTS OF COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC ON INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE: EXPERIENCE OF TURKEY



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**EFFECTS OF
COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC
ON INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE:
EXPERIENCE OF TURKEY**

**Report of the Sub-Study Group Related to Intangible Cultural
Heritage in Emergency Situations**

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Coronavirus (Covid-19 – new coronavirus) disease a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Coronavirus was first found and determined in the seafood and animal market in the city of Wuhan, China, at the end of December 2019. Subsequently, by spreading from person to person to the other cities in Hubei Province, led by Wuhan, and to the other provinces in the People’s Republic of China, it spread to the other countries of the world.

Turkey detected the first coronavirus case on March 10, 2020. Preventive measures were applied with a lockdown, travel limitations, and “voluntary quarantines” for people 65 years of age and older, and also those with chronic diseases.

At this time, there is a new war with “an unseen common enemy”, which has been fought for several different goals in the world, the only known living space for humanity. Human beings, who forgot to live the “moment” of being together with those they love, and the objective/meaning of existence by trying to obtain the civilization developed; focused on their bodies and contemplated through a virus the size of a micron and became aware of its existence. Modern people comprehend that health and body form the foundation of existence. The attack/attacker called Covid-19 negatively affects body and soul, which makes transparent the criteria, such as language/religion/race/economy/geography.

The moods of people who are formed of matter and souls change in uncertain periods of time, such as global pandemics. The ambiguous future, when the most basic instinct of “remaining alive” is made a priority, may deprioritize concepts, such as race/nation/geography/civilization/ humanism/education/kindness/manners (such as the looting of the markets prior to lockdown even in the most civilized countries of the world). Human beings, who adapted to exercising their brains together with their bodies

in compliance with nature as of primitive times, also forgot to struggle with their bodies in office-style spaces by postponing their instinct to remain alive within the modern city culture. Covid-19 drew into the forefront the intuition of continuing existence against other individuals considered weak and defenseless by setting forth the primitive and suppressed impulses of humans.

Human beings, who act with the instinct of remaining alive, since it nourishes chaos, commotion, fighting, unrest, and negativity, the level of feeling and the level of pressure/stress of human beings increased. In periods of chaos, the official offices keep under control the stress levels of people, who are anxious and afraid together with uncertainty, and they activate the feelings of trust, peace, and solidarity in the societal memory. The systematic establishment, seriousness, and the sanctioning power of the official offices strengthen the feeling of confidence, coded in the societal memory. To hear the developments related to the Covid-19 global pandemic personally from the President of the Republic of Turkey and the Minister of Health supported the Turkish people to orient towards chaos in their lives. As Aristotle stated 24 hundred years ago, bravery is not to be afraid of nothing, and it is to know from what and why it is necessary to be afraid and take precautionary measures accordingly.

Nevertheless, for humans, who are formed of matter and soul, it is insufficient to take only medical, hygienic and physical precautionary measures in unusual events, such as pandemics/disasters/wars/natural disasters, etc., because while the dazzling technological and medical developments of the twenty-first century are serving the body of humans, it is cultural values and traditional knowledge, which are used in the "strength of words and traditions" that nourish the starving soul. The area of existence and application on the living and sustenance of traditional knowledge is the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The cultural values possessed by societies at the foundation in the construction of national identity in the Conventions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, having the opinion that there could not be a world without culture, form the awareness of keeping alive the shared heritage of humanity with its applications.

The cultural values and traditional knowledge, which is the societal determination kept by coding in the collective memory, is a system of norms, which acquires a totality, regulates, and makes meaningful people's lives. The structural attributes based on historical origins

and shared value judgments of these values, coded under the concept of tradition, are the cause of the feeling in the legal sanctions in the memory of people in the country living/kept alive as an indicator of identity and personal cultural values. The thought of modernism “of rejecting the tradition, which was the power of the past” and “accepting the sole power mentality as the present-day government” makes it obligatory to reject the intuitions, religious and traditional doctrines of industrialized, city-centered modern people.

The deep structure of modernism is the idolized societal formula surrounding individuality, of the tradition, which is acceptance, shared, and repeated by the political, societal, and cultural values. In the cultural history of humanity, which has evolved from primitive to modern, with the shared sociocultural elements in the cultural memory, which has tradition, formed the world view and the value judgments. Consequently, with the mission of supporting the societal order and preserving it, tradition can constitute an area of its own existence in every period and space of humans.

In this context, the Turkish culture kept alive in its geography has been the host to the most ancient civilizations in history. Turkey and its citizens, who have transformed to action the thought of raising stronger, more resistant, and solution-producing people under difficult living conditions, has set forth with a “culture of helping each other”, which exists in the cultural codes and sets down the example of being a support to people, who have lost their jobs in the period of the global pandemic.

Besides the “culture of helping each other”, another one of the effective cultural values is “respect for the culture of ancestors” in keeping under control the level of stress of the people in the period of the Covid-19 global pandemic. The “cult of ancestors”, which is one of the most basic data of the Turkish cultural codes, is not the fear, respect, and homage of idolizing the deceased ancestors coming from the lineage, but expresses the reverence, respect, and loyalty felt for the living ancestors. Even the most basic element in the modern world, which is “loneliness and becoming isolated”, the Turkish people, considered as a part of an identity that receives strength from unity, exists in a crowd and does not shelter loneliness and in the period of the global pandemic did not leave their ancestors alone. In the explanations of the lockdown for citizens 65 years of age or older is the respect felt for ancestors as a reflection of the ancient Turkish state tradition and it was explained that these preventive measures were taken with the objective of care and protection of the elderly and the value given to our elders from the Office of the President,

which is the highest office of the state. After this indispensable application on the shopping and other needs of citizens 65 years of age or older, the systematic activities of both the official institutions/organizations and the behavior patterns of the citizens who hung aid notes in the apartment buildings is an indicator of the values preserved in the memory of the ancient Turkish culture. To the people in the same age group in the European countries, which are accepted as the center of civilization, helping "in return for a fee", the statements and behaviors in the manner that there would be an easing on the subject of salaries, which were a burden to the state, together with the death of the aged population, and not accepting at hospitals those who caught the disease, is a manifestation of the difference in cultural values possessed by states.

Humans have made efforts to make life meaningful in the period extending from the archaic periods until the twenty-first century in the cultural history of humanity. Their search for "meaning" started with mythology, evolved with religion and science, and transformed into a communication system by which civilizations and generations could benefit. The reality in making meaningful the existence in the world and life of humans and the "narrative", which is a cultural production, is an indicator of the magic of words. The "types of expression" formed with the search for the meaning of humans has produced models of behavior and systems of values according to periods by taking on new meanings socially, culturally, and psychologically as presence, spaces, subjects, events, and items. Genres of expression, such as "myths, epics, stories, tales, *manis* (Turkish poems), Turkish folk songs, laments, anecdotes, etc." acquire "soul and meaning" to the community. Every person/society requires narrators and expressions, which make life meaningful, and a listening community makes meaningful expressions. We witness during the Covid-19 global pandemic, people becoming aware of the cognitive skills, such as thinking/remembering/understanding/transferring, in the formation of the "virus tales of the visible people on the "invisible virus" and the "Corona Expression Genres" collection that transfers the codes and meanings in the memories of people. Even if the global pandemic prevented our socialization and societal applications in the sharing of common spaces, humans, as social beings who think and produce through the intangible cultural heritage they possess, have continued to produce different spaces and formats, led by the virtual environment, that is, culture, in the lifestyles and the fear/anxiety/behavior stereotypes coded in the memory related to the virus, because the efforts of people to make life meaningful was transformed into forming tales through the "Covid-19", the main character of the pandemic period.

Other areas in which the world states set forth cultural differences during the global pandemic are the material products and the meanings taken on by these. The rapid spread of Covid-19 and due to an increase in needs for protective equipment, such as masks, gloves, and disinfectant, the “instinct to remain alive”, which exists in living beings in most countries, they started to confiscate the equipment orders of the other countries by returning to the codes of the primitive period. In the modern world of the twenty-first century, the countries that defended human rights also continued their existence with the “instinct to destroy for existing” and besides equipment, they also continued their existence in the production of vaccines. The Constitution of the United States of America established and formed the republic in 1787 with the objective of “creating a republic that safeguards human rights and freedoms”. The words of the President of the United States, “We are seeking to obtain the vaccination that we will produce by giving a threefold price; our only condition is that only the citizens of the United States of America can benefit from the vaccine”. It recorded in the history of humanity how the “instinct to exist” had eliminated humanism, human rights, kindness, respect, and empathy.

Considering all these data, Covid-19 took the world under its influence, and the damage produced to humanity was not only bodily, but it also affected the perceptions formed in the memory with the cultural codes. In the new normalization period, which covered controlled social life, the different decisions and sanctions taken by the states in the world against the same virus, are only transformed into actions with the recognition of the social structure and cultural codes of the society. Otherwise, they could remain as inapplicable preventive measures.

The assumption of a vital mission by forming a roadmap of remaining alive in the pandemic, coded in the cultural memory within the transfer of tradition, the belonging in group members and intangible cultural heritage products, formed with the feeling of shared solidarity, the ancient knowledge in the Turkish culture and in consequence of including experiences. The information centers, which prove the past and the present-day of intangible cultural heritage, at the same time, especially in times of uncertainty, should be one of the administrative actors of the pandemic by contributing to the identity and compliance of the society.

The Turkish people, who have a different social structure with a diversity of lifestyles, ideas, expressions and actions, unite at the point of solidarity with the ancient Turkish cultural codes kept alive in the memory against the common enemy Covid-19. Societal

renewal can emerge from this period, which is a collapse for humanity in this century. This situation determines the boundaries of countries with cultural values over the world geography and attempts to form a pacified, simulative and isolating societal order.

The transition periods of birth/going to the military/marriage/pilgrimage/death, due to uncertainty, are special periods when the anxieties and stress levels of humans increase or also due to happiness, which multiplies sharing. The violation of social distancing and wearing masks cause an increase in the case numbers in controlled social life and the performance in crowded groups in these transition periods. The purpose of such periods is to increase the happiness or ease the pain by sharing it. Exclusion from these meetings or visits in these periods is perceived as "not receiving respect, not feeling the same emotion" by the target group, which is in the position of host and is the cause of disappointments. These transition periods, which carry importance and meaning from the aspect of a person or people feeling trust and belonging, and purification from anxiety and difficulties, because they raise the risk of contagion to elevated levels, were transformed into different formats or the necessity to ban them officially. The meanings carried by the traditions, which are original in the cultural memory of the society, without recognizing the social structure, and the application of decisions taken without evaluation, requires both a difficult and a lengthy process. Consequently, in genres of narration, such as folk tales/theaters/series, which would be prepared in contents that would continue the feeling of "curiosity", the very short period and "following tomorrow" format, it should be emphasized that it should not be a reason for "disappointments of the heart" of not participating and how the risk of contagion has increased by participating in crowded groups, and it should be coded in the memories.

The shows, visits, or applications not made physically due to the pandemic, despite the conditions changing, due to the preservation of the existence of the needs of people, who are social beings, formation of new means and methods for the access to heritage resources by recording the data in a digital environment are needed. It is necessary to adopt creative/entertaining/informing and educational performances for the people within the cooperation with the heritage shareholders, such as local municipalities and/or the nongovernmental organizations, for supporting the welfare of communities. By preparing an action plan and performances through the five basic fields, which serve the carrier function in the transfer of intangible cultural heritage of "oral traditions and expressions, performance arts, societal practices, rituals and feasts, practices related to

nature and the universe and the handicrafts tradition”, and by acting from the hypothesis that entertainment is the course for the best education, more than just educational, preventive measures related to the pandemic, it would provide contributions to the societal consciousness by transforming into action in a shorter period of time and with a high yield. Connected to the safeguarding by keeping alive the cultural heritage, the societal memory approach that would form surrounding the “transfer” and “participation” concepts, would also be the cause of a decrease in the risk of contagion by acquiring function to the preventive measures and forbidden things about the pandemic.

A. Participation

Also affected significantly in this period were weddings and henna night applications, which require mass participation. When two people unite their lives by wedding ceremonies, where those come together around the couple to smooth the way to them, celebrate, and support people who take a step to a new life, they have behaved shyly in the realization of various customs and practices on behalf of avoiding the negative effects of the global pandemic. Moreover, due to the severity of the pandemic, the central and local administrations took the path of restrictive, inhibitive, and prohibitive precautionary measures when it was observed that the intensity of spread of the disease increased – despite everything – and individuals and families felt themselves under intensive societal pressure due to the participatory behaviors set forth on behalf of keeping the tradition alive.

It was requested that weddings be held outdoors to the extent possible and kept short, that the rules of cleanliness, masks, and social distancing be complied with, that behaviors should be avoided that require close contact, such as welcoming, farewell, shaking hands at the jewelry presenting ceremonies and embracing/hugging, which are included among the indispensable applications at wedding ceremonies, not to take group photographs, not to have games, dances, *halay* (Anatolian folk dance), performances (excluding the bride and groom) at the places where the wedding ceremony would be held, which are contrary to the social distancing rules in the regulations published at various intervals by the Ministry of Internal Affairs related to the subject. The Ministry only gave permission for the broadcast of music (including live music) for the listening of guests.

There was a decrease in the number of participants at funerals; the condolence home

application ended or with a limited number of people for a limited period. Other than the first-degree relatives, mostly the wishes of condolence were by telephone.

The religious holiday congratulations were mostly by telephone conversations, text messages, or e-mails. A sizable part of the messages was in writing or with audiovisual materials. Whereas, applications, such as kissing the hand, handshaking, and hugging, ended at the face-to-face congratulations observed as obligatory for first-degree relatives.

There was an obligation to comply with the mask and social distancing rules at the protocol applications on official holidays. There was a decrease to a minimum in performances realized with mass participation or presented superficially by complying with the social distancing rules.

The ceremonies and performances related to the seasonal holidays were canceled, such as *Nevruz* (holiday celebrated at the vernal equinox) and *Hıdırellez* (celebrated as the day on which the Prophets Al-Khidr (*Hızır*) and Elijah (*İlyas*) met on Earth, which starts on the night of May 5 and falls on May 6 in the Gregorian calendar and April 23, known as St. George's day, for the Christians in the Julian calendar, which celebrates the arrival of summer). At the same time, celebrations were performed via electronic equipment among individuals in a limited number, which preserved the sensitivity related to the subject.

The conversation meetings, feasts, *cem* (the central Alevi communal worship service), and the *zikir* (invocation) ceremonies were suspended or became symbolical applications with a few participants.

The nuclear family was forced to spend time together for long hours during the days of the lockdown. On the days when there were no restrictions, connected to the warning of "stay at home" set forth intensively, family members obtained the opportunity to spend time together. Especially, since this was an unaccustomed situation in city life, just as it contributed to strengthening the reciprocal ties of love, it also brought together with its events of tension among people. Especially the traditional cuisine culture applications came onto the agenda again in this period; traditional foods were rediscovered, and people once again entered the kitchen. Certain people chose to make their bread at home during this period. A new foundation emerged for the transfer of culture among family members with all these aspects.

The “social distancing” concept became safe with the prevention of being together with the relationships and dialogues. Actions, such as face-to-face greetings, asking about each other, giving advice, and showing the way decreased, and these applications started to through various electronic equipment, led by the telephone.

There were postponements and cancellations of scientific meetings, symposia, congresses, and conferences or their realization in a virtual environment. There were interruptions in the scientific studies having the attribute of collection and area research. Cultural element research, collection and examination methods for folklorists developed in a virtual environment.

The production of musical works, cinema films, series films, and theater activities decreased. Online live broadcasts started as a solution to the canceling of live concerts in the music sector. There were interruptions in the face-to-face programs of the representatives of the wandering minstrel tradition. Thus, these programs became concentrated in the electronic/virtual environment.

There were interruptions in the various professional activities. First, barbershops/hairdressers, restaurants, cafes, and coffeehouses closed, and later, they opened connected to certain rules.

Some of the practices that required mass participation related to religious life were canceled or limited. Mass prayers in the mosques were suspended for a period, and as of the summer months, prayers started with the stipulation of wearing masks and applying social distancing rules. There were cancellations in the pilgrimage and *umre* (lesser pilgrimage) visits and limitation of tomb and *yatır* (entombed saint) visits.

First, there was the cancellation of all the sportive activities, such as soccer, volleyball, and basketball, and later they became realized in the form of competitions without viewers or with a limited number of viewers. The “Traditional Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Matches”, which should have been conducted in 2020, were also canceled. Every occasion and cultural need, which was not held together in this period, were resolved through social media.

There was an increase in the prices of houses and automobiles during the global pandemic period because people realized how difficult it was to reconstruct the spaces in which they lived and how important it was to be able to go from place to place.

There were limitations in the habits of being together in mass use areas in apartment living. Especially, elevators were not used or used in a certain way within the framework of limited and certain rules with the fear of catching the virus. People confronted with these types of difficulties in city and apartment life in the pandemic period experienced "I wish that I had a home where I could take a couple of steps, and even if it is a hand span, I would be able to work the soil".

B. Education

First, formal and informal educational activities stopped during the global pandemic. They were completely in a virtual environment in this period. Subsequently, they started to continue in a manner connected to specific rules.

Whereas in non-formal education, rather limited face-to-face activities remained, and the cultural activities were held in the virtual environment.

Since people remained closed inside for a long time in this period, they started to narrate their pasts and folk cultures by establishing groups in social media, and from these environments, they found the opportunity to acquire information about cultural heritage.

The instructors in the field of music education started to upload educational videos to social media.

In this period, some of the activities of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO were reproduced concerning the intangible cultural heritage elements or acquired an attribute that would contribute to their safeguarding. In the virtual program titled "Corona Improvisation" the representatives of four different wandering minstrel traditions came together and presented poems about coronavirus and realized a competition among themselves. Whereas in another program by the National Commission, the tale of Âşık Mustafa Aydın, Seyfet Çavuş, and Filiz Hanım was brought to the listeners in a virtual environment. Whereas another activity of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO has the name of the "Virtual Summer School". This time, the educational model started previously as the "Winter School" together with the stakeholders of the same institution, brought it to the summer period. However, since the global pandemic did not allow face-to-face education and teaching, it was on digital platforms.

C. Safeguarding

There were a few oral cultural elements produced during the global pandemic. Especially in this period, the representatives of the wandering minstrel tradition came into the forefront when the products written in verse acquired intensity. These products written in verse that treated the negative effects of the coronavirus on people and community life were presented in a virtual environment and mostly to the accompaniment of the saz (a long-necked stringed instrument like a lute).

Similarly various proverbs and idioms were produced and spread on social media, which brought to the center the negative dimensions of the virus in the community life and on the agenda.

In this period, the narrations produced from the myth, anecdote, and conspiracy theory genres spread rapidly through social media.

The storytelling tradition during the global pandemic period encountered changes for the environment performed the most. The narrator and listener groups could not come together to safeguard social distancing. Tales, such as "Cavit 19, the son of the blind mother from Çorum" formed related to the Covid-19 global pandemic and spread, especially through social media.

On behalf of acquiring an esthetic attribute to masks, there were assorted designs realized, and especially the skills of women appeared in these designs.

With the efforts of the immigrants who came to Turkey from abroad in the recent past, the *nargile* (waterpipe) café and the *nargile* culture developed considerably. In this period, the immigrants who did not comply with the bans from place to place and would bring out their chairs in the neighborhoods and smoke the *nargiles*.

During the global pandemic period, the practices related to nature and the universe remained limited to a home environment. People felt obliged on their balconies to learn information about the agricultural community and information about their grandfathers and fathers.

There were Changes and transformations experienced related to the reflection to various

cultural industry fields of rituals. For example, the *keşkek* (a dish of mutton or chicken and coarsely ground wheat) food made at *Hıdırellez*, rather than eating in a group, started to be eaten in homes.

As a principle of the Republic of Turkey, the production of masks applied meticulously in this period and the activities of the sending of produced masks to many countries gave essential messages to the international community to reflect Turkey's helping and solidarity culture as a nation.

Asking for a girl's hand in marriage, weddings, henna, and other applications were encountered related to the transition periods on social media channels, such as Instagram and Facebook.

Many applications remained in the background due to the necessity of safeguarding social distancing in the rituals during and after birth and funerals.

Especially, the visits made by families to tombs for children during exam periods decreased to a significant extent during the global pandemic.

Human communities, not found together, were isolated from crowded applications.

Especially the masks of brides and grooms, which appeared in clothing, forced designers to make new productions. The various products that appeared in this period presented new work subjects to researchers.

Natural medicines acquired importance in folk medicine applications.

Humorous name suggestions appeared especially related to the name-giving tradition through social media.

The necessity of safeguarding social distancing acquired different dimensions to home visits and sitting arrangements. Especially, homemakers continued their conversations by sitting on their balconies or in front of their doors.

There were preferences for open areas, such as squares and parks, which were safer for meetings and conversations during this period. However, since it was contrary to the social and psychological habits, this approach style did not acquire a sustainable attribute. In this period, individuals and families, who lived in cities and especially in apartment life, felt a yearning for rural life.

There was a greater need felt to use technology in the field studies made during the global pandemic period.

D. Transfer

The transfer of culture in the narrow sense was under consideration during the global pandemic period. The recollection and application of the traditional games for children occurred at home, and the narrating of tales acquired functionality once again.

The habits in music and dance, entertainment culture, rather than in the open area and closed spaces in the society, were in a narrow framework in homes. Sharing of a part of these activities was on social media. Thus, it had a directing effect on the continuation of similar activities by others. Furthermore, with this method, presentation of the importance of transferring the intangible cultural heritage was made for attention in the media.

The groups who played digital games during the global pandemic period continued the same habits. Warnings were in the direction of putting the games included in the national cultural elements into the forefront by emphasizing the drawbacks of setting aside excessive time for digital games in the media and social media.

There was an evaluation of the Internet environment as a foundation for transferring an intensive cultural heritage during the global pandemic period. The differences among generations also decreased due to the prevalence of the use of the Internet. When these generations are blended in a manner, the generations that were born before 1984 have become rapidly adapted to technology, and the performance of a few rituals in an Internet environment.

A part of the wedding ceremonies canceled during the lockdown continued for a few months, and then transferred to a digital environment. Many cultural heritage components appeared on the Internet, such as online henna nights, visits to virtual museums, sessions narrating tales, wandering minstrel competitions, and *Hidirellez* celebrations, and it paved the way for the transformation to new forms from the aspect of shape and contents of these components.

During this period, the World Memory Program, which UNESCO started in 1994, acquired meaning. The transferring to future generations by safeguarding the world memory and

by transferring to a digital environment the important documents, which form our memory, would provide for the difficulty of various accesses in fires, floods, and disasters.

Even though the face-to-face collection activities during the global pandemic became more complicated and decreased, a new collection area appeared in an electronic environment. It has become an area where the data can be easily reached for an expert collector in electronic environments and who is competent in virtual environments and for a researcher who knows the virtual environments well. The virtual environment appears as a rapid, simple, and low-cost method for obtaining materials briefly by avoiding both the time and the costs, especially for participants.

Significant changes appeared in the definition and classification of area terms and informants during the global pandemic. This change was eliminated from being a choice in the digital environment and, due to this process, it was transformed into an obligation, because digital platforms that carry and transmit the tradition were transformed into an area where they could express themselves and their identities. However, there is an extensive group of people that transmit the tradition who still do not have the opportunity to access the digital environment. Of course, the most correct and most sustainable route of cultural heritage is in natural, face-to-face, and oral environments.

In the meantime, it was understood that it is crucial to be in the field and be able to make observations to determine the intangible cultural heritage. Connected to the grouping together of the intangible cultural heritage elements in a digital environment and the Internet, researchers, by developing proposals of change in their collection methods, have made these the subject of scientific publications.

The technological developments of the age, such as access, communication, and transportation, have formed at the same time "deadly companions". Technology, which is close to elimination in the context of both distance and space and time, is the cause of the more rapid spread and mutation of the invisible thing called "virus" and this has prepared the foundations for reaching riskier and more threatening dimensions of the pandemic diseases. In a sense, eliminating distance has also forced people to establish "deadly companions" with viruses. To be saved from the virus or not to catch it at all, it is necessary for hosts, or people, to set forth "social distancing" from each other and approach from behind a "mask". In other words, with the claim of eliminating the distance, technology is struck from its own claim with "contagious diseases". Whereas this

situation brings one to disintegration, weakening, and moreover to the period of history in extinction, such as sometimes in the history of culture, which is produced and transferred with societal togetherness. Just as it is also understood from the definition of intangible cultural heritage, it is a fact, which gives the feeling of identity and continuity to individuals with the transfer from generation to generation. No doubt, when the lives of humans are in danger, then culture would fall into second place. In this context, pandemic diseases negatively influence the production and transfer of cultural elements and, consequently, the feeling of identity and continuity of individuals. Especially, there were interruptions in the performances of the oral traditions and narrations, which are in the position of the carriers of cultural heritage. In that case, in the struggle against global pandemics, while “physical distance” comes into the forefront as a preventive measure related to health, it is also possible to code the concept of “cultural proximity” in the part of the struggle related to the emotions and moods of people that arises with the pandemic. Furthermore, in the present day, the spread to all humanity of pandemics rapidly and effectively, which is in response to the global occurrence, it should not be ignored that the concepts of “nature” and “tradition” could be keywords.

In this framework, there is a bidirectional structure. The first of these is to make use of the intangible cultural heritage elements in the struggle against the pandemic. The second is the situation of safeguarding, executing, educating, transferring, and researching the periods of the intangible cultural heritage elements affected by the pandemic. Firstly, we want to present our foresight and suggestions on the function of cultural heritage in the struggle against the pandemic:

1. The line of technological development, which directs to a result, such as taking the universe under control, also means occupying the area of viruses and upsetting the natural cycles. In that case, it is beneficial to remember again and remind of the knowledge and applications related to nature and the universe, included in the traditional cultural codes and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In this framework, we should benefit from traditional knowledge and applications to revive the interest towards the love of nature, natural facts, and events. However, this interest and love is not a romantic affectation; it should be realized at a level of consciousness. For example, the traditional knowledge codes, language, and style characteristics related to nature and the universe should be used together in the communication organs and in the other environments that the society could reach.

2. In accordance with the preventive measures taken in response to the pandemic disease, the need arises for a reorganization of the social life and habits by the restrictions brought on issues, such as masks, contact, and circulation. On this issue, by determining model behavior stereotypes of recognized, known, or accepted people by the public, to present them to the society. To illustrate, making studies to correct perceptions, such as "cowardice" and "weakness", are followed in certain segments of society by wearing masks during the coronavirus pandemic. In other words, making preventive and transformative notifications in response to societal emotional situations that could have a negative effect on the supervision of the pandemic, and in these notifications, attitudes should be determined that are suitable to the diversity of the societal segments, and in this context, traditional cultural codes can also be used. Precaution is a part of appreciation, and the information should be emphasized that a mistake, a sin, and committing a crime are under consideration, such as for people to put in jeopardy the health of themselves and those surrounding them.

3. Presentation of values, such as patience, tolerance, hope, the value of human life, respect for the elderly, love of life, which exist in our traditional cultural codes, should be made with various means to the society by taking from the traditional knowledge heritage. Especially, people in the lead in society should raise the psychology of the society through these values so that the society does not become defeated by lethargy, frustration, and tiredness.

4. Connected to the situation of the societal segments of the pandemic, it has been met with different reactions and it is observed that in time, these reactions have evolved to the point of indifference and tiredness. It is necessary to transfer to the society with a balanced and transparent notification of values, such as patience, reliance, and tolerance of our traditional culture to keep the society distant from these types of behavior stereotypes, such as indifference, tiredness, and weariness.

5. The Board of Social Sciences of the Ministry of Health should make a rapid and influential interdisciplinary research on the subjects we determined with general guidelines above and by acting from the results, should be the innovator on these subjects with the production of public spots, short films, etc.

Secondly, we want to list our foresight and suggestions related to the subject in response to the pandemic of the intangible cultural heritage elements:

1. While digital technology has, on the one hand, narrowed the field of cultural heritage in daily life, on the other hand, it has created new opportunities and possibilities on points such as documentation, research, and preservation. The performance arts, such as the *Karagöz* (shadow puppet), *meddah* (storyteller), *seyirlik* (spectator), games, and the wandering minstrel tradition, which are possible to perform through the digital technology and the communications media, should be reproduced and performed, both to keep the morale of the society high and to keep the heritage elements alive and should be transferred. In this period, just as new performances can be developed connected to new environments, the traditional performances can also be presented repeatedly.

2. Oral narrations, such as tales, anecdotes, and folk tales, which carry the joint hearing and thought codes of the society, can continue through the digital communications media and the education-teaching techniques. Especially, there should be an emphasis on the performance and transfer in environments, such as educational institutions, of the mass communications media of the tale narration tradition. The "Anatolian Tales" and the "Children's Games" projects, which were applied as the result of the cooperation made with the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO by the Ministry of National Education, should draw attention as a widespread and effective model.

3. The scientific institutions and organizations should intensify their studies about safeguarding and keeping alive the cultural heritage during the Covid-19 global pandemic. Especially, there should be an encouragement of the research, archiving, making a museum, safeguarding, and making more studies with digital opportunities by scientists in the fields of education.

4. More place should be given to cultural heritage elements in the communications media, which reaches extensive groups led by the television and film sectors. Studies should be made on the continuity of the societal unity to eliminate or lessen the negative effects of not holding or restricting societal participation and meetings having ceremonial attributes, such as weddings, associations, conversation meetings, charity, *Mevlut*, *hıdırellez*, and *nevruz*. Programs should be organized to keep the society together, and that would equate the individual with the society.

5. Areas of occupation should be created on subjects, such as games at home, handicrafts, and traditional food preparation and on these subjects, informing and incentives should be made from different channels for people not to be under the illusion of loneliness and

abandonment and to be able to evaluate their remaining times productively, It is expected that these fields, especially handicrafts, would acquire importance. The distance education method can be developed by establishing online workshops in the transfer and teaching of handicrafts during the pandemic period, while the electronic trade methods can be used in the marketing of the products.

6. The intangible cultural heritage museums, which have newly started to be established and made widespread in Turkey, can be displayed by being digitalized, even if partial. Museum activities, such as display, transfer, and sales, can also be treated in this scope.

7. Elderly people are in the lead of the societal segments affected by the global pandemic. The importance of collecting and keeping alive the traditional culture should not be ignored, especially for the elderly, subjected to a qualitative and concrete separation as of 65 years of age or older. It would prevent both the exclusion of elderly people and for them not to feel that they have encountered a loss in value, and it is necessary to make studies in the context of knowing their values in the transfer of cultural heritage. In any case, awareness should be created by considering the fact that the elderly segments are the cultural carriers; that is, they are negatively affected by events such as urbanization, modernization, and globalization.

8. It would be a suitable attitude to support the wandering minstrels, who are sensitive to the traditional requirements on societal problems and subjects from the material and spiritual aspects for addressing extensive groups with the production and transfers in an electronic environment during the pandemic.

9. Publications were made and continue to be made, which present solution suggestions and determine, research and collect the intangible cultural heritage during the pandemic. There should be an encouragement of the publications related to safeguarding and transferring the intangible cultural heritage during the pandemic.

10. Acting from the question, "What can be done for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in emergencies, such as pandemics and disasters," the emergency safeguarding methods, policies, and projects should be developed.

Finally, the Coronavirus Health Sciences Board, established in the framework of the struggle against the pandemic, together with the Board of Social Sciences, by benefiting from the traditional cultural heritage, we want to share our thoughts that it is necessary

to provide new contributions in the development of ways and methods in the struggle against the pandemic. This would both present positive contributions to the safeguarding from the effects of the pandemic and keeping alive the elements of the cultural heritage.