

Financial Policies of European Union Countries Regarding the Tourism Industry in COVID-19 Process

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: COVID-19 Finance Fiscal Policies Monetary Policies Received 7 December 2020 Revised 14 February 2021 Accepted 5 March 2021 Article Classification: Research Article	Purpose – The aim of this study is to examine the financial policies implemented by EU countries in the tourism industry during the COVID-19 process. Design/methodology/approach – The tourism industry has been studied for two reasons. First, the pandemic has significantly affected the tourism industry due to its dynamic structure, which is very quickly affected by crises. The rapid spread of the pandemic through international travel operations has deepened this situation. Second, there are a large number of new entrepreneurs and SME-level enterprises in the tourism industry mostly in need of financial support. In the study, qualitative research methods were used and document analysis was used as a data collection tool. Data on the fiscal and monetary policies implemented by EU countries for the tourism industry during the COVID-19 process were obtained from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Content analysis was used in the study. The data obtained were analyzed with the help of MAXQDA Qualitative Analysis Program. Findings – According to the results of the study, the financial and monetary policies developed by European Union countries to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry have strong relations with each other. Countries provide support for tourism enterprises to continue their activities. The support given is mainly focused on SMEs. In addition, support is provided to make employment sustainable, liquidity assistance is provided to eliminate cash shortages, especially in credit and employment support Discussion – In fiscal policy, it functions as important in banks as it does in public authorities. Credit, liquidity and tax are the financial instruments most involved in financial policies.

1. Introduction

Although COVID-19, which affects the whole world in a multidimensional way, became widespread in 2020, it first appeared in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 (Gralinski and Menachery, 2020). Different opinions and assumptions have emerged around the world about the source of the pandemic (Munster et al., 2020), which has become a global health problem (Perlman, 2020; Lam et al., 2020). Although it is actually perceived as a new type of coronavirus, it is not an alien virus to the world in terms of its character. Because this virus belongs to the same family as the viruses that cause outbreaks such as SARS and MERS that have recently been seen. But the virus has mutated over time, differentiating from them and becoming more dangerous (Backer et al., 2020).

The most important feature that distinguishes the new type of coronavirus from others is that it has a high level of contagion (Chu et al., 2020: 1). The virus, which has an incubation period of close to seven days, is transmitted from person to person through contact or droplets. It is known that the epidemic manifests itself with some symptoms in individuals. Cough, high fever and headache are some of them (Huang et al., 2020; Paules et al., 2020). COVID-19, which causes pneumonia, causes human deaths due to respiratory problems and organ failure (Chen et al., 2020). In March, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic due to the increase in the number of cases and deaths and the spread of the virus throughout the world (McCartney, 2020). In the following period, the effects of the pandemic continued to increase, although they tended to decrease slightly during the summer months. As of September 22, 2020, there were about 7.5 million

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active cases and about 970 thousand deaths worldwide. More than 31 million people have contracted the disease since the first case was detected (Worldometer, 2020).

As the pandemic became widespread, it negatively affected many different industries and human life. The tourism industry is immediately affected by crises of a different nature due to the dynamic structure it has (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010; Del Chiappa and Baggio, 2015). Health crises cause a very serious contraction in tourism demand (Chen, et al., 2004). As a health crisis, COVID-19 has affected the tourism industry, which has a dynamic structure. World, the negative interaction between Tourism and epidemics previously SARS (Pine & McKercher, 2004), avian influenza (Page et al., 2006), has experienced such outbreaks as swine flu (Haque and Haque, 2018) and Ebola (Kongoley, 2015).

Because the demand for tourism has a very elastic structure, the crises that occur negatively affect the demand for tourism in a very short period of time (Song et al., 2010; Schiff & Becken, 2011). But the supply of tourism is affected by crises in the longer term, as it is inelastic in the short term (Shi et al., 2016). The high transmission and mortality rate of COVID-19 has deepened its effects on the tourism industry, and tourism supply along with tourism demand has also been affected by the pandemic in a very short period of time. Because life stopped in a short time, and first, at the beginning of the outbreak, national and international travel was canceled to prevent transmission between different geographical regions (Depoux et al., 2020; Chinazzi et al., 2020). Although travel was provided in a controlled manner in the future, the movement in the tourism industry remained far from the pre-pandemic environment. Therefore, tourism enterprises and tourism supply providers, especially tourism employment, have become unable to continue their activities. Businesses, especially at the SME level, have experienced short-term financing problems. Because the cessation of activities in a short time has left businesses in difficulty, and the flow of cash into businesses has stopped (Goodell, 2020; Caldecott, 2020; Brown & Roche, 2020). It is believed that these problems will become even more obvious in the future. As a matter of fact, public authorities in countries are struggling to address the financial problems of tourism enterprises with financial and monetary policies to eliminate these problems (UNWTO, 2020).

The aim of this study is to analyze the financial policies applied by the European Union countries towards the tourism industry during the pandemic. As a matter of fact, the extent of the epidemic has affected the whole world in almost every aspect of life. Tourism is one of the areas where the effects of the pandemic are most felt. The structure of tourism due to human mobility and the structure of the pandemic limiting the field of human movement further increase the interaction between these two phenomena in a negative sense. Due to the effects of the pandemic on the tourism industry, there has been a significant reduction in national tourism movements and international arrivals around the world. All this has caused many tourism businesses to cease operations. Tourism enterprises, especially at the SME level, faced very serious problems in this process. Countries have to implement some financial policies to minimize these problems in the tourism industry. In this study, the financial policies implemented by countries to solve the problems experienced in the tourism industry of the global epidemic were examined in the context of the European Union countries.

2. Literature Review and Research Questions

There are close relationships between economic and financial activities and epidemics that have turned into a serious crisis worldwide. The relationships between these concepts have clearly manifested themselves in the Spanish flu of 1918, which took place nearly a hundred years ago (Ersoy, et al., 2020). At the end of the COVID-19 crisis, many countries have experienced different economic and social problems. One of the clearest indicators of the impact of pandemics on financial systems is their economic costs that have a heavy impact on societies. It is known that there are many academic studies on these costs. While Haacker (2004) examines the economic costs of the HIV / AIDS pandemic, Santaaulalia-Llopis (2008) discusses the effects of this pandemic on development. Yach et al. (2006) address the costs of obesity and diabetes, a global health problem based on nutrition. Studies on epidemic crises similar to COVID-19 (SARS etc.) also provide information on the economic costs of epidemic diseases (Blomm et al., 2018).

In an environment where one of the strongest sides of the phenomenon of globalization is trade and global value chains, it is impossible that any decline or crisis that may occur in the world will not affect trade or the financial structure. The COVID-19 pandemic, which turned into a major global crisis, is also expected to negatively affect commercial and financial life. For many countries around the world, there is a serious decline in export rates in 2020. It can be said that this decline in particular is felt more strongly in the Euro zone.

Compared to the downward trend in the pre-pandemic period, this conclusion is reached. It can be said that international trade has started to decline with the decrease in demand in some sectors (Demir & Javorcik, 2020). In addition, it can be stated that the negative effects of restrictions imposed due to the pandemic on production have a significant share in this decrease.

The financial negative effects of crises affecting the world are first felt by SMEs. It can be said that a similar situation occurred in the COVID-19 crisis. SMEs experienced problems during the pandemic, especially in financial issues such as employment and cash flow. Public authorities should follow policies aimed at solving these problems. Otherwise, bankruptcy may occur widely in different business lines (Brown et al., 2020). Empirical studies provide evidence that reveals this situation. Almost half of SMEs temporarily stop their business activities before they completely terminate them. In the absence of the necessary support, SMEs that cannot withstand the destructive effects of crises can make bankruptcy decisions (Cassar, 2004; Bartik et al., 2020).

Another business group where COVID-19 may pose a financial risk is businesses that have just started their activities. Since these businesses do not have a long history and strong financial capabilities, they are viewed as risky due to lack of collateral and unstable cash flows. In fact, such firms are not considered appropriate in terms of bank financing, too (Berger and Udell, 1998). These firms are quickly affected by crises as they are more likely to use equity financing than those with deep roots and high growth rates (Brown and Lee, 2019). Therefore, it can be said that the newly established companies were negatively affected financially by the crisis.

The economic effects of the pandemic are like a systematic shock. In addition, due to its negative economic effects, it has made a greater impact than the previous different types of crisis. For example, the effects of the pandemic outpaced the recent 2008 economic crisis (Baker et al., 2020). Some peculiar features of the economic effects of the pandemic distinguish the pandemic from previous crises. Even though previous crises were global, their effects are more pronounced in certain regions or countries. It is generally observed that underdeveloped or developing countries are more affected by pre-pandemic crises. However, the economic effects of COVID-19 have been completely global and have also affected developed regions, especially the UK, USA, China and EU (Brown & Rocha, 2020; Howell et al., 2020). However, while the effects of pre-pandemic crises were more felt in major sectors or industries, COVID-19 affected almost all sectors and Industries financially.

COVID - 19 has affected 'dash for cash ' due to increased demand for liquidity in financial markets or the conversion of risky resources into cash and investments with little risk (Gros, 2020). The reflection of this development in the international market was the appreciation of the US dollar. As a matter of fact, the currencies of many countries have depreciated against the US dollar during 2020. For example, GBP traded at \$ 1.15 on March 20. This is the lowest value for GBP against the US dollar since 1985 (Wojcik & Ioannou, 2020).

Pandemic has an important feature that it has to prevent its possible financial effects. Since the epidemic is an internal crisis, its consequences are expected. Animal, farm or meat market crises have a structure that is affected by human relations and interventions in nature. Therefore, it has been stated by experts that the increasing travel movements are effective in spreading the pandemic all over the world in a very short time. However, given its Basics, the 2008 economic crisis is external and the spread of the crisis takes place through financial and economic connections. Therefore, as it is more difficult to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and similar crises, taking economic and financial measures from the period when the virus emerges can provide significant advantages (Wojcik & Ioannou, 2020).

For COVID-19, it is essential to take some financial measures. So, how are these measures taken? The answer to this question is manifested in fiscal and monetary policies. Financial markets have had a significant impact, especially on the timing and size of economic policy interventions. Monetary policy measures provide assistance to the financial sector and, in some cases, non-financial sector or companies with quantitative expansion through large injections of liquidity. This mediation in helping the financial sector and the prices of its financial assets affects the policies of the central bank and reflects the close relations between central banks, financial market investors, central government and financial units (Engelen et al. 2011).

In this study, financial policies were examined in the context of fiscal and monetary policies. For this reason, it is believed that the study will contribute to the literature on financial policies during crisis periods. This study looked for answers to the following two research questions;

Q₁: What kind of financial policies have the European Union countries implemented regarding the tourism industry in the COVID-19 process?

Q₂: How is the relationship between these policies?

3. Method

Qualitative research techniques and content analysis are used. Content analysis is a method in which a wide range of data is systematized with created categories. Categorization takes place within certain rules based on expert opinion and literature review. Content analysis is a method that refers to inferences and estimates that have an experimental and descriptive aspects. Basic and large-scale data are systematically simplified with the help of analysis. For content analysis, expectations in six basic categories must be met (Stemler, 2000; Krippendorff, 2004). The answers to the expectations in this study are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Expectations from Content Analysis and Their Responses in the Study

Expectation from Content Analysis	This Study
<i>What data will be analyzed?</i>	Weekly news contents between 5-12 March 2020
<i>How is the data defined?</i>	Fiscal and monetary policies implemented by the European Union countries during the COVID-19 process
<i>What is the group where the data are collected?</i>	Both Fiscal policies and monetary policies
<i>What is the context in which to analyze the data?</i>	Defining relationships between determined themes (fiscal policy and monetary policy instruments)
<i>What are the limits of Analysis?</i>	Word cloud of codes, relationship scanners, relationship code map, and code interoperability model
<i>What is the aim of the results?</i>	Determining the financial policies implemented by EU countries for the tourism industry during the pandemic and relations between these policies

The data obtained consists of the financial and monetary policies of the European Union countries for the tourism industry in the post-COVID-19 process. The data is from the current data of UNWTO (2020) on September 10, 2020. UNWTO was preferred because it included reports on the financial profit of all countries. Both fiscal policies and monetary policies data were obtained for all 27 European Union countries. The rapid spread of the epidemic has affected the tourism industry and its associated sub-sectors, which have a dynamic structure. Businesses serving in the field of Tourism faced a very serious financial crisis. The effective financial resources that states will receive to overcome this crisis have a significant impact. The current version of the MAXQDA qualitative analysis program was used to analyze Online data (Kuckartz & Radiker, 2019). MAXQDA is used to clarify ideas with the help of maps and to understand hypothetical relationships between categories and properties (Azzopardi and Nash, 2016). All data including the fiscal and monetary decisions that countries have implemented in the tourism industry during the COVID-19 process are included in the analysis. During the analysis process, a large pool of themes and codes were first created by the researchers, in which fiscal and monetary policy instruments were at the forefront. Later, as can be seen from Table 2, the codes were reduced by using literature and expert opinions. As a result of the literature review, a list of financial and monetary policy instruments affected by the crises was created. This list is then presented to experts. Experts have narrowed the list, taking into account the financial and monetary policies of tourism enterprises that may be affected by COVID-19. Thus, the codes given in Table 2 are obtained. The final theme list was encoded in the MAXQDA program, and in the continuation, the data obtained was transferred to the themes and codes to which they are associated in sentences, and the analysis was performed.

Table 2: Themes and Codes for Analysis

Steps	Themes	CODES
<i>First</i>	Fiscal Policy, Monetary Policy	Bank, Investment, Tax, employment, Interest, SME, Country, Subvention, Currency Loan, Liquidity, Customs
<i>Second</i>	Fiscal Policy, Monetary Policy	Bank, Investment, Tax, employment, Interest, SME, Country, Subvention, Loan, Liquidity,

For the study, September, 2020 was consciously selected as a requirement of the research strategy. Because the summer period is the most intense period of tourism movements for Europe. For this reason, more financial decisions were taken by states to reduce the effects of COVID-19, and data was obtained immediately after the summer period (September). In this way, support can be provided for both the solution of the problems of SMEs and the revival of tourism activities. By the first quarter of 2020, when COVID - 19 had spread almost all over the world, countries had to introduce flight and border bans. Towards the summer period, these bans were reopened, although not as before. Although the pandemic affected the whole world, the European Union was especially preferred for the study. Because the EU, as a union with a political and economic aspect at the forefront, provides support for the financial policies of the member states. This information shows that in the research plan of the study, special attention is paid to elements such as the research subject, the region and Time analyzed. The results of the analyses according to the research questions are reported in the findings section.

4. Findings

In the study, a database was created by examining the fiscal and monetary policies implemented by EU countries in the COVID-19 process related to the tourism industry. Codes and themes were first created by researchers. At the next stage, the theme and codes were narrowed as a result of expert opinions. At the first stage of the analysis, a word cloud was obtained, which is formed depending on the frequency of words passing through financial policies. In the second stage, a relationship map was created showing the relationships of the codes to provide a holistic perspective. In this context, the qualities of the lines on the map were evaluated and the relations between the codes and their reasons were interpreted. Within the scope of the analysis, the findings of each category are given in graphical form with the help of MAXQDA.

Table 3. Frequency of Themes And Codes in Policies According to Content Analysis

Themes / Codes	Frequency	Themes / Codes	Frequency
<i>Fiscal Policies</i>	294	<i>Monetary Policies</i>	194
SME	99	Bank	105
Country	84	Investment	10
Subvention	203	Employment	46
Loan	167	Interest	51
Liquidity	117	Tax	83

Table 3 contains information on the theme and frequency of passing codes in countries ' financial policies. Financial policies are more involved in financial decisions than monetary policies. However, government subsidies (aid) are the code with the largest frequency (203). The European Union offers support to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on tourism. It can be interpreted that these supports are mostly provided in the form of credit and liquidity. In addition, financial policies include important support for SMEs. In addition, it can be said that private and public Ministers support tourism with their interest rate reduction decisions in this process. However, public authorities have also provided significant support for tax and employment issues. From Table 3, it is clear that decisions about investment in financial policies (10) remain low. This finding is not surprising. Because the tourism supply has an inelastic character in short periods. Therefore, the pandemic does not have a long history, it is difficult to determine the effects of the crisis on investments, which are an important measure for tourism supply, in the short term and to see the support associated with it. In addition, because the pandemic caused a very sudden crisis, it caught existing operations unprepared. For this reason, public authorities are more supportive of the survival of existing businesses than of new investments.

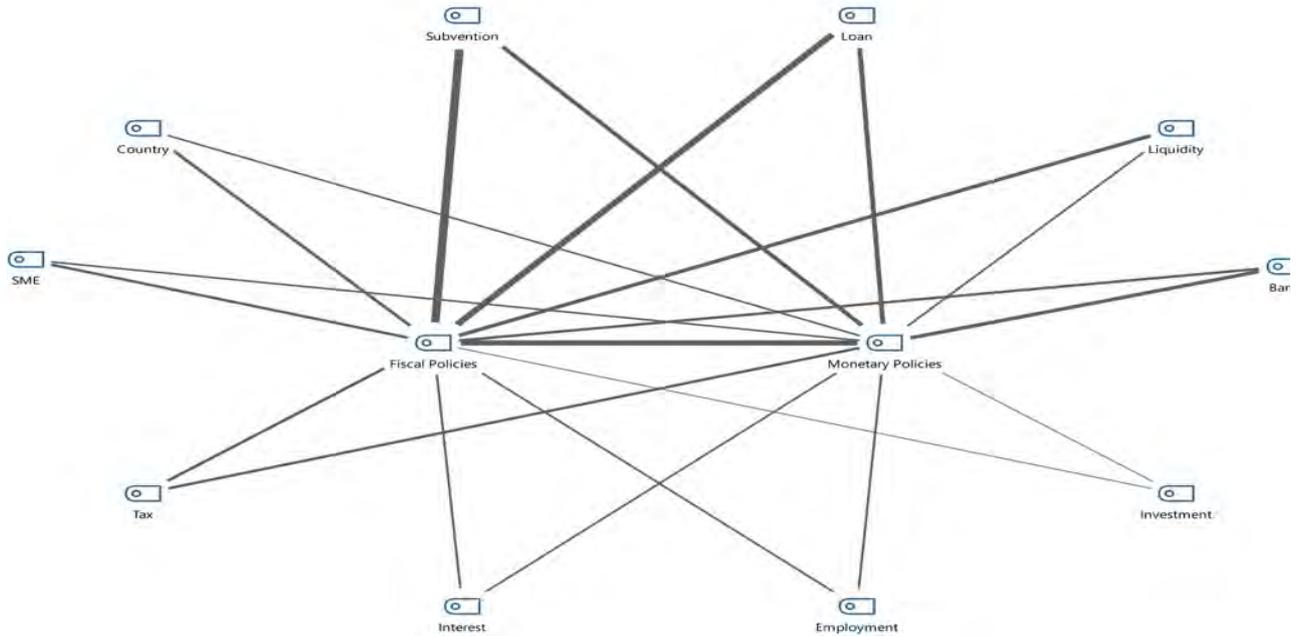


Figure 4. Relationship Scanners for Codes

Figure 4 shows model for Code relationship browsers. In this model, the two main themes that make up these codes are included, as well as the codes whose relationships were tested in the research. As expected, the most important finding reflected in Figure 4 is that a strong relationship between fiscal and monetary policy themes has been identified. The fiscal policies theme is most commonly associated with the subvention code. On the other hand, the monetary policies theme is most associated with the bank code. However, the theme of fiscal policy has been more and more strongly associated with codes than monetary policy.

5. Discussion

Countries have and continue to take various measures to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. In particular, strategies involving financial measures are being developed to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic on businesses. Because, as in many epidemic crises, there have been declines in the GDP of countries (Barro, et al., 2020). Reducing these declines and achieving economic success in the long term is possible with successful financial policies. As a matter of fact, a study conducted by Brainerd and Siegler (2003) on Spanish flu found that in areas where deaths were high, higher national income growth was achieved after the outbreak. In addition, in the same study, it is stated that this is a result in line with growth models in which the labor capital ratio falls.

As the pandemic spread all over the world, travel movements were restricted and tourism activities came to a standstill. Thus, tourism enterprises that went to restrict their activities began to have cash problems and laid off their employees. It is expected that there will be reductions in the workforce after the outbreak. A similar problem was noted by Garret (2009) in the Spanish Flu of 1918. By providing financial support such as liquidity assistance, EU countries have contributed to the maintenance of employment and business activities during the pandemic period.

It is important to maintain tourism activities during the pandemic period and to have support on issues such as interest and tax so that tourism enterprises, especially SMEs, can continue their activities. Here, important responsibilities fall on public banks and private banks. Correia et al. (1918) emphasizes that economic and financial performance can improve after the pandemic with intensive and stable practice of the banking sectors along with production.

Despite financial assistance and incentives, tourism-related sub-sectors are suffering financially from the pandemic, and it seems that this will continue for some time (Polyzos, et al., 2020). At the household and SME level, some temporary benefits, such as incentive checks or salaries, have provided relief. For large companies, however, government interventions are required in the form of corporate aid, reminiscent of the 2008

economic crisis, which particularly severely affected the financial industry (Sharma & Nicolau, 2020). In particular, large hospitality and travel companies need to be financially supported (Li et al., 2020).

The tourism industry and its associated sub-sectors are each negatively affected by restrictions due to the human-to-human contaminant nature of the pandemic (Reddy et al., 2020). The role of governments in fiscal and monetary decisions is critical to the recovery of these sectors. Rescue funds made in this context can help businesses succeed in combating the crisis (Fong et al., 2020). In this context, Yang, et al. (2020) argue that welfare policies that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic should be designed to provide financial support to all sectors, including tourism, healthcare and other public and private sectors, to ensure the balanced recovery of cities and regions affected by the pandemic. These evaluations prove that the fiscal and monetary supports subject to the study are appropriate steps.

6. Conclusions and Implications

Financial strategies are one of the key factors countries are making to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry. In this context, both fiscal and monetary policies are developed and implemented. The financial and monetary policies developed by European Union countries to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry have strong relations with each other. Caldecott (2020) emphasizes that with post-pandemic appropriate policies and financial recovery packages, COVID-19 can be 'transition finance' that serves UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Countries provide some subsidies for the revival of the tourism industry in the COVID-19 process. In particular, SMEs are supported in a significant way so that they can maintain their assets. Brown et al. (2020) emphasize that policymakers and decision-makers need to make decisions that prevent the instant impact of such crises on SMEs. Short, medium and long term loans are provided for the revival of the sectors. In addition, support is provided to make employment sustainable, liquidity assistance is provided to eliminate cash shortages, especially in credit and employment support. Ersoy et al. (2020) state that the need for intermediate liquidity should be eliminated due to the fact that COVID-19 is a temporary crisis. In this way, in the long term, the financial effects of the crisis can be helped to be less. Policies are being developed to interest discount on companies for tax debts or to configure or defer on debts

In addition to public support, some assistance related to the private sector is also available. In this sense, it is seen that private banks come to the fore. Private banks are restructuring the investment loans of companies and the loans that people need. Because during crises, the environment becomes challenging for entrepreneurs and consumers as uncertainty levels rise (McMullen and Shepherd, 2006; Packard et al., 2017; Conti et al., 2019). In this sense, it is seen that some facilitating support is provided, especially interest rate cuts or postponements. Because of the pandemic, companies have suspended their activities and employees have lost a large proportion of their jobs, making the incentives provided by the private sector important. The summer holiday also to meet the needs of people in public or private banks, operating in the field of Tourism and to continue their activities even if at a minimum level of loans under favorable conditions provided for.

In developed policies and strategies, financial instruments or organizations such as subsidies, loans, liquidity, small and medium-sized businesses and banks are heavily associated. Here, it has been found that SMEs are often associated with financial instruments such as Credit, Bank and liquidity. Because these businesses are the most disadvantaged in times of crisis (Doshi et al., 2018). Limited research on the impact of crises on SMEs (Herbane, 2013; Wishart, 2018) makes this study important. In addition, although they are not as dense as these, banks, taxes, small and medium-sized businesses, such as loans and subsidies also have a strong relationship.

7. Limitations and Future Studies

Although the study provided important and up-to-date information about financial support for the tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be said that there are some important limitations on the study. In studies on financial policies, quantitative studies using financial reports and official statistics of countries are generally carried out. Therefore, the use of qualitative research methods in this study can be stated as an important limitation. However, it is believed that this study will also contribute to the literature in terms of making a general assessment of the issue and revealing the relationship of the financial policies received with

each other. Despite the importance of this study in the context of its contribution to the literature, academic research can also be carried out in the future, which highlights the quantitative aspect of EU financial reports.

Despite the current informative aspect of the study, the fact that only the EU has been examined can be expressed as an important constraint. As a matter of fact, the policies of different regions or the world in this regard are also important. Therefore, similar research can be done for other regions or the world in general.

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