

Factors Affecting Public Trust in Science: Case Study of The Covid-19 Pandemic in Iran

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Considering the importance of public trust in public and science policy making, this paper wants to study the influencing factors on public trust in science in two provinces of Tehran and Alborz during the risk of Covid -19 pandemic, and to determine its policy-making implications. For this, it uses Standard questionnaire of ECOM which distributed online in a period of one month between 20 April to 20 May 2020. Findings shows that the public knowledge on signs and symptoms of Covid-19 disease is appropriate. However, the public understanding of science is inadequate. Also, public trust in scientific experts is more than other institutions. People agree that scientific research is time-consuming and its results eliminate risks. 41% have a correct definition of what science is and the rest consider it the same as technology and information. 66 percent trust science, meaning they believe that scientists are qualified to make honest claims. They consider the explanations of experts to be more sufficient, more understandable, less contradictory and more reliable than other institutions. This study concludes that science experts may gain the public trust by content production individually or in cooperation with the media. By this, it is possible to increase public awareness and public understanding of science not only about the risk of covid-19 pandemic but also about other risks.

Keywords: Covid – 19 Pandemic, Public Understanding of Science, Trust in Science, Effective Communication, Media

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