

A Study on the Effect of Government Capabilities on COVID-19 Response: Focusing on the Control Effect of Information

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Abstract

COVID-19 was an event that reaffirmed the complexity and dynamism of information, but also recognized the importance and necessity of government capabilities. Therefore, in the face of a disaster with high uncertainty, it is necessary to manage government management capabilities, agility, and political capabilities. The outbreak of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 is causing social, political, and economic problems. Therefore, the capacity of the government should be considered in terms of management, political capacity, and agility. Various types of information provided by the government during the COVID-19 response and citizens' satisfaction with it can affect the performance and effectiveness of COVID-19 policies and the response of administrative agencies.

Key words: covid-19, managerial capacity, political capacity, government agility

I. Introduction

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has prompted a review of the debate on the function and role of government in society, economy, politics, etc. The extent of the impact of the pandemic is not just limited to health, but can paralyze a country's system. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the role, function, and capacity of government in a highly uncertain disaster situation such as COVID-19, and analyze the impact of citizens' perceived satisfaction with new, important, and appropriate information.

COVID-19 was an event that reaffirmed the complexity and dynamism of information and highlighted the importance and need for government capabilities in information management. Considering this, it is necessary to manage the government's management capabilities, agility, and political capabilities in an uncertain disaster situation such as COVID-19, which have been emphasized recently. In other words, since the outbreak of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 is causing complex problems in various fields such as social, political, and economic, the government's capabilities to respond and take action need to be formed in terms of management capabilities, political capabilities, and agility. In particular, various types of information provided by the government in the COVID-19 response process and citizens' satisfaction with them are likely to affect the performance and effectiveness of COVID-19-related policies and the response of administrative agencies.

Focusing on the government's role and function in the COVID-19 situation, this study analyzed the effects of managerial competence, political competence, and government agility on government performance and institutional responses to COVID-19 and the public's satisfaction with COVID-19-related policies. It also analyzed the moderating effect of public satisfaction with COVID-19-related information.

II. Theoretical Discussions

In the event of a disaster, governments typically manage a variety of factors that can cause damage in an effort to minimize the potential risks and collateral damage associated with the disaster. There is a tendency to systematically manage information related to these various government activities, and information provided by administrative agencies such as governments can have a strong impact in disaster situations. Therefore, various disaster management efforts are being made to establish a crisis management system and to secure public trust in the information provided.

It is important to note that the concepts and functions of disaster-related information in disaster situations are defined variously depending on the nature of the information and who is utilizing it. When the government provides and shares information in relation to disaster situations, information can be utilized in the process of solving common problems by sharing information among various actors in the process and stages of preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters internally, and externally, there are cases where administrative agencies provide information to the public in the process of disaster management. In addition, in the process of providing and utilizing information, there is a possibility of creating other social problems due to problems in the information provision system as well as the nature of information.

To be more specific, prior research on disaster management and information has identified one factor of government failure in disaster management in terms of internal and external information sharing. However, with the outbreak of COVID-19, problems with the nature of disaster-related information and information sharing have been presented in various dimensions, such as problems with internal and external information sharing and provision, information gaps, and privacy violations due to the provision of information; problems with the creation, provision, and utilization of COVID-19-related information, which is one of the most important resources for responding to and overcoming the COVID-19 situation, such as the active creation and situation-appropriate utilization of information resources, intergovernmental information sharing, and poor performance due to insufficient input of relevant information in the implementation of COVID-19 response policies.

In addition, in the process of implementing various policies to respond to the COVID-19 situation, the problem of information gap has arisen due to the failure to consider the disaster vulnerable groups or the generation that is not familiar with digital devices. In other words, the emerge

nance of marginalized groups such as the information gap or information vulnerable groups has emerged as a social problem. Therefore, the situation of COVID-19 may accelerate digital transformation to alleviate the information gap, but on the contrary, it poses a problem that will deepen it. On the other hand, the conflict between privacy and public interest in the disclosure of information under the COVID-19 situation has raised new issues related to COVID-19 information. In particular, the disclosure of movements and exposure of personal information has led to privacy concerns.

While the COVID-19 situation has presented a number of challenges for infectious disease information, there are also clear benefits in terms of enhancing the prevention, preparedness, and response capabilities of the public by providing information about the COVID-19 situation and related information to the public through various channels. The provision of COVID-19-related public services using ICTs has consequently improved efficiency and effectiveness. In the process of policy implementation and public service delivery, public information can have a positive impact on the efficiency, effectiveness, equity, or performance of policies and public services, and can improve the satisfaction of policy and public service recipients. Considering these points, it can be said that despite the two-sided nature of COVID-19 information provision and sharing in the COVID-19 situation, COVID-19-related information has performed effective functions in terms of the spread of COVID-19, COVID-19-related public services, implementation of COVID-19-related policies, and feedback of government actions on the COVID-19 situation. Considering that Korea has established e-government infrastructure and services, and that the public's understanding of digital technology is high, it can be assessed that it is possible to quickly provide specific and accurate information related to the COVID-19 situation. In particular, it is worth noting that the COVID-19-related services provided by the government were not limited to emergency text messages, but were provided through various channels and means, including social media, homepages, apps, services, etc. These various attempts can be seen as a type of policy implemented to ensure the promptness and accuracy of COVID-19-related information, such as the spread of COVID-19, the daily situation in the region, the status of each region, and related statistics. Above all, in disaster situations, people seek information in an effort to overcome risks and threats, and emotions, credibility, and sufficiency of information affect information seeking behavior. This information seeking behavior, or demand for information, came into play during the COVID-19 outbreak, when the general public actively sought and utilized disaster information and health information. Taken together, the characteristics of COVID-19-related information suggest that government performance, institutional responses, and satisfaction with policies to respond to COVID-19 may differ depending on how people seek and utilize information about COVID-19.

III. Problems and Challenges

1. Problems

COVID-19 was an event that reaffirmed the complexity and dynamism of information and highlighted the importance and need for government capabilities in information management. Considering this, it is necessary to manage the government's management capabilities, agility, and political capabilities in an uncertain disaster situation such as COVID-19, which have been emphasized recently. In other words, since the outbreak of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 is causing complex problems in various fields such as social, political, and economic, the government's capabilities to respond and take action need to be formed in terms of management capabilities, political capabilities, and agility. In particular, various types of information provided by the government in the COVID-19 response process and citizens' satisfaction with them are likely to affect the performance and effectiveness of COVID-19-related policies and the response of administrative agencies.

2. Challenges

Focusing on the government's role and function in the COVID-19 situation, this study analyzed the effects of managerial competence, political competence, and government agility on government performance and institutional responses to COVID-19 and the public's satisfaction with COVID-19-related policies. It also analyzed the moderating effect of public satisfaction with COVID-19-related information.

First, we analyze the direct effects of managerial capacity, political capacity, government agility, and the moderator variable, information satisfaction, and find that managerial capacity has a statistically significant negative effect on government performance against COVID-19. However, there was no statistically significant effect on satisfaction with institutional response to COVID-19 and satisfaction with policies. Thus, higher public satisfaction with management capacity had a negative effect on government performance during COVID-19. On the other hand, citizens' satisfaction with political competence, government agility, and information about COVID-19 had a positive effect on government performance, institutional response to COVID-19, and satisfaction with COVID-19 policies.

Next, we examine the direct effect of the moderator variable, information satisfaction, and find that positive satisfaction with the reliability, promptness, and accuracy of information provided by the government during the COVID-19 outbreak is associated with positive perceptions of COVID-19 response performance, institutional response, and satisfaction with COVID-19-related policies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, satisfaction with the reliability, promptness, and accuracy of various dimensions of information provided by the government has been utilized as a means to improve the effectiveness of government policies and increase responsiveness. Given this, the finding of a positive impact of satisfaction with COVID-19 information on satisfaction with government response has significant implications. It is not limited to the level of information provision related to COVID-19, but rather satisfaction with the qualitative characteristics of the information, which in turn can be seen to have a positive impact on a range of government activities.

In the moderating effect of information satisfaction, managerial competence reduces the positive effects of government performance on COVID-19 and COVID-19 policy satisfaction; political competence reduces the negative effects of government performance, institutional response, and policy satisfaction on COVID-19; and information satisfaction reduces the positive effects of government agility on institutional response. These findings suggest that the public's satisfaction with COVID-19-related information provided by the government differentially moderates the effects of managerial competence, political competence, and government agility on the public's satisfaction with various government activities. In other words, while satisfaction with COVID-19 information has a direct positive effect on perceptions of government activities, the effects of managerial competence, political competence, and government agility on government activities are complex. This means that the public's satisfaction with COVID-19 information has different effects on government performance, institutional response to COVID-19, and policy satisfaction through management capacity, political capacity, and government agility. Therefore, it is necessary to manage citizens' information satisfaction as their utilization and satisfaction with COVID-19-related information may have different effects on government activities and policy effectiveness depending on variables and circumstances.

IV. Conclusion

In the case of a disaster such as COVID-19, it was confirmed that not only administrative capacity but also political capacity and government agility need to be considered as administrative means, and that information and information satisfaction management are necessary in the process of providing quality disaster information. In other words, the capacity, role, function, and performance of the government in response to disasters suggest that a complex response is needed in political, social, and economic dimensions beyond mitigating and eliminating the damage caused by disasters.

Although the government's capacity to respond to COVID-19 is presented in various dimensions, considering that the government's management capacity is performing core functions in the ad

ministrative aspect, i.e., management capacity consists of the expertise and skills of public officials, policy evaluation system, and policy consistency, further research on the negative impact and lack of statistical significance of the analysis results is needed.

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