

# Emergency Remote Education Experiences of Teachers during the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Phenomenological Research

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine teachers' experiences of Emergency Remote Education (ERE) during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study was designed in the qualitative approach and as the research method, "phenomenology" was used. The sample of the study consists of 12 teachers selected by the criterion sampling method. The interview technique was used to collect data. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The study results showed that the ERE activity that teachers experienced the most was the online lessons. Teachers have done the ERE activities through various applications such as EİN (Education Information Network), Zoom, Whatsapp, Youtube. Teachers emphasized that ERE was ineffective due to low student participation, insufficient infrastructure, lack of responsibility and motivation for learning, low ICT competency of students and teachers, low socioeconomic status, and inappropriateness of planning and curriculums. In addition, teachers stated that education in the Covid-19 pandemic process should be done in diluted classrooms, hybrid or face to face. It is concluded that the lack of infrastructure, lack of responsibility and motivation for learning created inequality of opportunity for participation in ERE. The lack of infrastructure was mostly due to students being in the low socioeconomic group. In addition, students' learning responsibility and motivation are very important in the effectiveness of ERE.

**Keywords:** Emergency remote education, Distance education, Covid-19 pandemic, Phenomenological research

## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic that emerged in 2019 significantly has affected people's lives globally. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic forces people to a new way of life (Zhao, 2020). In this context, new practices and approaches have emerged, such as socialization, economy, and education, in which people are the main actors. The common point of applications and approaches in these areas is digitalization. Digitalization, which has become more dominant in people's lives in recent years, has become a stronger and permanent element of people's lives with the Covid-19 pandemic process. Education is one of the areas most affected by the pandemic process. With the pandemic process, face-to-face instruction was interrupted in many countries, and online and distance education was rapidly switched to (Daniel, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). Since digitalization in education has a long history, the transition from face-to-face education to online and distance education has been done rapidly (Can, 2020; Bozkurt, 2020).

However, since this transition period was too short due to necessity, the necessary arrangements regarding the courses, curriculum, infrastructure, etc., could not be made sufficiently. Due to this rapid and unprepared transition process, distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic process has been called Emergency Remote Education (ERE) (Bozkurt, et al., 2020). Also, schools at all levels (Preschool, K12, Higher Education) in Turkey have switched from face-to-face education to ERE (Can, 2020). This paper explores the effectiveness of the ERE in K-12 based on teachers' views and experiences in the Covid-19 pandemic process.

## Background

The covid-19 epidemic, which first emerged in the Wuhan region of China in 2019, spread worldwide in a short time. Shortly after the Covid-19 epidemic emerged (March 2020), it was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). To minimize the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, all places, including schools where human-to-human contact may occur, were closed (Bozkurt, 2020; Bozkurt, et al., 2020; Gupta & Goplani, 2020; Viner, et al., 2020). The Precautions taken for the Covid-19 pandemic have interrupted face-to-face education in many countries (UNESCO, 2020). The covid-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for face-to-face education at all levels (Crawford, et al., 2020; Daniel, 2020). To ensure the continuity of education during the pandemic process (Akinbadewa & Sofowora, 2020) ERE has been rapidly implemented in many countries (Bozkurt, 2020; Bozkurt et al., 2020; Schleicher, 2020).

Because of the pandemic process, about 25 million students in Turkey's face-to-face instruction have interrupted and switched to ERE (Bozkurt, 2020). Although there is little experience in distance education in Turkey, in recent years, some obligatory courses (Turkish language and literature, The History of Revolution, English, etc.) in universities have been instructed via distance education. Because there are distance education centers in most of the universities in Turkey. The infrastructure of these centers has the potential to provide distance education to a limited number of students. But distance education is very limited in K12 education in Turkey. An approach

called "open education" is used for students who cannot attend school in K12. Open education in K12 only provides access to books and communication. TV channels are broadcast to support the learning process of students in open education. Although there are no special distance education applications prepared for students attending school, there is the "Educational Information Network" (EIN) founded by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to support learning processes. EIN constitutes the educational content creation component of the "Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology" or FATİH project, which has been implemented since 2010 to provide technology integration in education in Turkey (Gürol, et al., 2012; İzci & Eroğlu, 2016).

FATİH Project aims to use information technology tools in the learning-teaching process to address more sensory organs to ensure equality of opportunity in education and training and to improve technology in schools (MoNE, 2011). EIN is an important component of the FATİH project that will enable it to achieve its goals. EIN is an online social education platform offered free of charge to teachers and students in K12 education by the Ministry of Education. The EIN is a system that includes educational content and educational tools that can be used by both teachers and students. There are resources in the form of video narration and text, sound, and picture resources in EIN (Aktay and Keskin, 2016). Teachers use EIN in their lessons to reinforce, enrich or visualize the lesson (Türker & Güven, 2016), and students use it to reinforce topics, prepare for exams and repeat the topic (Tüysüz & Çümen, 2016). While EIN is a supportive factor in supporting students' learning in face-to-face education, it has become the locomotive of K12 education with the ERE process. Because with the ERE process, the education in K12 is mainly done through EIN. Many K12 training activities such as online lessons, document sharing, communication are mainly carried out through EIN in the ERE process. In addition, synchronous and asynchronous K12 lessons are instructed on EIN TV channels established during the pandemic process.

EIN is the lifeline for the ERE process in Turkey, as it creates the infrastructure of the ERE process.

EIN has enabled the ERE process to be initiated and maintained in Turkey. Although EIN has contributed significantly to this process, it is known that there are many problems regarding education in the ERE process (Başaran, et al., 2020; Bayburtlu, 2020; Hebebcı, et al., 2020). This can be considered as an expected situation because ERE is a new learning environment for teachers and students, as most teachers and students did not experience distance education before (Middleton, 2020). In addition to lack of experience, problems such as restricted interaction, lack of infrastructure, insufficient learning responsibility and motivation, lack of parents' interest and knowledge about ERE affect the quality of ERE. In the study of Bayburtlu (2020), the participating teachers stated that some students could not attend online lessons because they did not have devices such as computers and tablets. In addition, the teachers emphasized that the application of the EIN online course has various problems such as connection problems and time limitations. They stated that the participation of students in the ERE process was limited because a significant portion of the parents was indifferent and not knowledgeable about this issue. Teachers and students participating in the study of Başaran, et al. (2020) stated that ERE has shortcomings such as limited interaction, students' inability to actively participate in the course, not being suitable for individual differences, and having technical problems. They also stated that ERE should be improved in infrastructure, inequality of opportunity, content, and material. Teachers and students participating in the study of Hebebcı, et al. (2020) stated that issues such as restricted interaction, infrastructure problems, and lack of equipment are among the remarkable negative opinions regarding ERE. In the study of Can (2020), it was emphasized that the pandemic process shows that not only quantity but also quality is important in open and distance education. It was also stated that open and distance education in Turkey should be strengthened in infrastructure, access, security, content, design, implementation, quality, legislation, and pedagogical contexts. There are some studies showing that similar problems such as restricted interaction, low participation, lack of infrastructure, insufficient learning responsibility and motivation,

difficulties in balancing responsibilities experienced during the ERE process are also present in other countries (Chandasiri; Garbe et al., 2020; Greenhow et al., 2020; Middleton, 2020; Schleicher, 2020). This shows that the problems related to ERE are global.

Although there are some studies on the ERE process in Turkey, there are a limited number of studies. Because ERE is a process that most of us have just experienced (Middleton, 2020), more detailed studies are needed to evaluate the ERE process. Since teachers are the most experienced in the ERE process, their experience is very important for evaluating and improving the ERE process. Also, studies are thought to contribute significantly to increasing the quality of the ERE process. Moreover, this contribution can be realized not only at the country level but also at the global level.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine teachers' experiences of Emergency Remote Education (ERE) during the Covid-19 pandemic. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought.

- What are the ERE activities that teachers instructed during the pandemic process?
- What are the teachers' views on the effectiveness of ERE during the pandemic process?
- What are the teachers' suggestions regarding education in the pandemic process?

### **Method**

The study was designed in the qualitative approach and as the research method, "phenomenology" was used. The phenomenological study defines the common meaning of the experiences of a few individuals regarding a phenomenon or concept (Creswell, 2016). The phenomenon studied in the study was "distance education in the pandemic process."

### **Participants**

In phenomenology research, data should be collected from people who have experienced the phenomenon that is the subject of the research. Therefore, criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the study.

Sandelowski (1995) stated that the sample size in phenomenological studies should be at least 6 participants. In this context, 12 teachers were selected by considering the criteria of experiencing for at least 1 semester during the Covid-19 pandemic period. The demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants**

| Participant Code | Gender | Branch         | Seniority |
|------------------|--------|----------------|-----------|
| T1               | Female | Science        | 4 years   |
| T2               | Male   | Science        | 3 years   |
| T3               | Female | English        | 3 years   |
| T4               | Male   | English        | 25 years  |
| T5               | Female | Math           | 13 years  |
| T6               | Female | Math           | 14 years  |
| T7               | Female | Math           | 18 years  |
| T8               | Male   | Social Science | 18 years  |
| T9               | Female | Social Science | 21 years  |
| T10              | Male   | Elementary     | 17 years  |
| T11              | Male   | Turkish        | 9 years   |
| T12              | Female | Turkish        | 10 years  |

Participants have the maximum variation in participant profile features like gender, branch, and professional seniority variables.

### Instrument

A semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers was used to collect the data in the study. The interview form included questions regarding demographic profiles of participants and three semi-structured questions regarding ERE during the Covid-19 pandemic. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the opinions of 3 experts, 2 of whom were studying in distance education, 1 of whom was working in curriculum and instruction, and a teacher among the participants were taken on the instrument. The instrument, which was revised according to the recommendations of the experts, was made ready to collect data.

### Data Collection and Ethical Issues

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview is used as the primary data collection method in phenomenological research

as it reveals the underlying gem of the experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). A semi-structured interview, on the other hand, is an interview technique that provides partial flexibility to the researcher. Ethical principles were taken into consideration throughout the data collection procedure of the study by researchers. Before the data were collected, informed consent was obtained and participants were instructed by the researchers. Setting a time for the interview with the participants and 20-minute length interviews were made with each of the participants via zoom. The interviews made via zoom were recorded.

### Data Analysis

Zoom recordings of participants were transcribed one by one. The data were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. The continuous comparison analysis method was used. In this context, the records of the participants were coded. Categories and themes were created according to the similarity of the codes. The continuous comparison was made in coding and theming processes by researchers individually (Have, 2004). The control coding was performed by encoding the data by two different encoders to ensure the reliability of the research. Control coding provides good reliability control for qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). One of the researchers defined the themes “Lack of responsibility for learning” and “Lack of motivation” as a single theme, and the other researcher defined them as 2 separate themes. As a result of the comparison, a consensus was achieved by rearranging them into 2 separate themes. The formula (Percentage of consensus = (consensus (55) / consensus+ dissidence (60))\*100) expressed by Miles & Huberman (1994) was used in the calculation of the consensus among coders. The consensus percentage is calculated as 92. This consensus percentage value is sufficient for reliability because the value of consensus must be at least 90 for research reliability Miles & Huberman (1994). Tables showing the themes that emerged as a result of the analysis were created.

Within the scope of the validity and reliability of the study, some procedures were done except for the expert opinion and control coding. The findings were

supported by direct quotations from the participants to ensure the reliability of the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The stages of the research and analysis were tried to be reported in detail. The researchers planned each stage and adhered to this plan in order not to affect the research process.

## Findings

### 1. ERE Activities Instructed by Teachers during the Covid-19 Pandemic Process

ERE activities instructed by teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic process are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: ERE Activities Instructed by Teachers**

| ERE activities   |          | f |
|------------------|----------|---|
| Online lessons   | EBA      | 8 |
|                  | Youtube  | 6 |
|                  | Zoom     | 7 |
| Document sharing | Whatsapp | 6 |
|                  | EBA      | 7 |

ERE activities instructed by teachers are grouped under two themes: the online lesson (f=21) and document sharing (f=13). Teachers stated that they instructed online lessons in this process through

EBA (f=8), Youtube (f=6), and Zoom (f=7). Teachers stated that they used different applications at different times due to easy accessibility, systemic problems, and intensity. Some of the teachers' views on this situation are as follows:

*T4: In fact in this process, we are asked to use EBA by the ministry. However, when using EBA, problems such as freezing and falling out of the system are encountered. Therefore, we have to use alternative applications such as Zoom and Youtube.*

Teachers stated that they shared lesson documents via EBA (f= 7) and Whatsapp (f= 6). Some teachers stated that they used Whatsapp to ensure more participation of parents in the ERE process. Some of the teachers' views on this situation are as follows:

*T2: Generally, I share documents via EBA. However, I realized that the students did not examine the documents shared over EBA much. For this reason, I also send the documents to parents via Whatsapp. Thus, parents can control the study of students.*

### 2. Teachers' Views on the Effectiveness of ERE

Teachers' views on the effectiveness of ERE activities during the Covid-19 pandemic are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Themes Regarding the Effectiveness of ERE**

| Themes      | Sub Themes  |                                     | f                                |   |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Effective   | ERE is only way out                                 |                                     | 5                                |   |
| Ineffective | Inadequate student participation                    | Due to lack of infrastructure       | Lack of tools and equipment      | 7 |
|             |   |                                     | Lack of internet infrastructure  | 6 |
|             |   |                                     | Inadequacy of EBA infrastructure | 6 |
|             |   | Lack of responsibility for learning | 8                                |   |
|             |   | Lack of learning motivation         | 6                                |   |
| Ineffective | Schedule and curriculum problems (schedule hours)   |                                     | 5                                |   |
|             | Restricted interaction and lack feedback-evaluation |                                     | 5                                |   |
|             | Low ICT competency                                  | Low ICT competency of teachers      | 5                                |   |
|             |   | Low ICT competency of students      | 4                                |   |
|             | Low socio-economic status of the family             |                                     | 4                                |   |

Some teachers (f=5) emphasized that ERE is effective because they think it is the only way out. Some of the teachers' views on this situation are as follows:

*T8: It is not as effective as face-to-face training, but better than nothing.*

Most of the teachers (f=9) emphasized that emergency distance education is ineffective.

The reasons for the ineffectiveness of ERE were "inadequate student participation," "lack of Infrastructure," "Lack of responsibility for learning," "schedule and curriculum problems," "restricted interaction and the lack of feedback-evaluation," "low ICT (Information and Communication Technology) competency" and "The low socio-economic status of the family."

The most emphasized (f=9) sub-theme about the ineffectiveness of ERE was “low student participation.” Teachers stated that the low participation of students in ERE is the main reason why ERE was ineffective. Teachers emphasized that the reason for the low participation of students was the lack of infrastructure (f=9), the lack of students’ responsibility to learn (f=8), and the lack of students’ learning motivation. Some of the teachers’ views on these sub-themes were as follows:

*T4: Of course, millions of students who tried to attend the online lessons through EBA cause problems such as freezing and not attending.*

*T10: I was able to reach a maximum of 6 students from a class of 28 people. Both the internet infrastructure and the tools that students could access the internet were very limited.*

*T1: The most important problem is that the child has the awareness of receiving education away from school and realizes that learning can occur outside of school.*

Teachers emphasized the students’ lack of equipment for ERE, lack of internet infrastructure and, the inadequacy of EBA infrastructure regarding the lack of infrastructure. Teachers’ views on these sub-themes are as follows:

*T11: I am instructing online lessons via EBA. But I think the necessary conditions are not met for the online lesson to be conducted efficiently. The first is that every student does not have internet access and tools such as computers at home. The internet provided by GSM operators is insufficient for online lessons. Turkey’s ranks are 100th out of 174 countries, with 27.95 Mbps in the Broad-based internet speed ranking countries. For this reason, most of the students cannot attend online lessons.*

*T10: As we have seen recently, the EBA system collapses due to the concentration of students and teachers at certain hours.*

Teachers emphasized that students’ lack of responsibility for learning significantly affected their participation in the lesson. They stated that students with low learning responsibility also have less participation in the lessons. Teachers’ views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T1: The most important problem is that the child has the awareness of receiving education away from school and understands that learning can occur outside of school.*

*T12: Regardless of how good the distance education lessons are, students do not have a sense of responsibility to follow them. That’s why I don’t think distance education is very efficient.*

Teachers stated that one of the reasons for their low participation in ERE was students’ lack of learning motivation to learn. The lack of motivation of students is mostly due to infrastructure problems. Students’ infrastructural problems such as intensity in distance education, falling out of the online lesson, and not entering the online lessons decrease their motivation to learn. Teachers’ views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T2: When children have infrastructure problems, their motivation to learn decreased. Most of my students lost motivation because not every student had sufficient internet access.*

One of the themes that teachers emphasize on the ineffectiveness of ERE was scheduled and curriculum problems. In this theme, teachers stated that the schedule for ERE was not appropriate in terms of time, and the curriculum or content of some courses was not suitable for distance education. Teachers’ views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T1: The schedule in the system has been prepared unplanned. For example, there is less participation in the evening or weekend online lessons. EBA support centers were established in public schools with computer labs for children without internet. These students will be able to enter EBA from EBA support centers, but how can we realize that the student in the village attends the class at 7.30 in the evening. These parts of planning are not fully thought out.*

*T11: In families with more than one child, children’s online lessons may conflict with each other. This reduces the productivity of live lessons ..... Since the lessons in distance education are not reduced, we had difficulties in training subjects in online lessons.*

One of the themes that teachers emphasize on the ineffectiveness of ERE was the restricted interaction and lack of feedback-evaluation. Teachers stated that student passive in lessons and feedback and evaluation activities in distance education could not be done adequately and this reduced the quality of ERE. Teachers’ views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T3: Students are very passive in live lessons. It is almost impossible to get feedback, we don’t know what and how much students learned*

One of the themes that teachers emphasize on the ineffectiveness of ERE was the low ICT competency. Teachers stated that low ICT competency of both teachers and students reduced the effect of ERE. Teachers' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T10: Although the new generation teachers do not have much difficulty, older generation teachers have difficulties in distance education. I think that the Ministry of National Education is insufficient to follow the professional development of teachers during their profession in terms of technology usage. This process enabled us to see this reality with the naked eye.*

*T5: The process of participating in online lessons is quite troublesome. Because most of the students still do not know exactly how to enter the online lesson, how to speak, how to turn the camera or microphone on or off. These problems are more common, especially for students living in rural areas.*

One of the themes that teachers emphasized on the ineffectiveness of ERE was the low socio-economic status of families. Teachers emphasized that the low socio-economic status of families created disadvantages in terms of both infrastructure and school-family communication. Teachers' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T1: Although parents in the city center support teachers a lot at school, in more rural areas, parents do not pay enough attention to their children's education due to financial difficulties and the high number of children.*

*T6: The education level and socio-economic level of each family are very different. This differentiates families' approach to children and education.*

*T10: Both the education level of the children's families, the family's interest in the education and training process of the child, and the socioeconomic level, which is also a very important factor, cause us to face an enormous inequality of opportunity.*

### 3. Teachers' Suggestions Regarding Education in the Covid-19 Pandemic Process

Themes containing teachers' opinions on how education should be in the Covid-19 pandemic process are given in table 4.

| Themes  | f |
|---|---|
| Face to face education in diluted classrooms          | 5 |
| Hybrid in diluted classrooms                          | 4 |
| Only distance education                               | 1 |
| Schools should be suspended and no distance education | 2 |

Teachers' suggestions on how education should be during the pandemic process consist of themes that face to face and diluted, hybrid and diluted, only distance education, schools should be suspended and no distance education. Most teachers (f=5) emphasized that it was necessary to switch to face-to-face education in diluted classrooms because distance education caused quality problems in education and created inequality of opportunity. Teachers' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T5: Schools can be opened gradually. Face-to-face training can be applied in diluted classrooms. The bond established with students in face-to-face education is stronger, sincere, and effective. This ensures that students participate in the lesson, follow the lesson and receive immediate feedback. The number of cleaning staff working only in schools is very small. Cleaning personnel should be recruited to schools.*

*T6: Must be face to face in diluted classrooms. Distance education creates inequality and extreme anxiety in everyone. Distance education, unfortunately, makes our children addicted to the internet and did not serve its purpose in every student.*

Some teachers (f=4) emphasized that distance education should be supported by face-to-face education in diluted classrooms. Because they stated that face-to-face training would reduce the inequality of opportunity in education. Teachers' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T4: I think the training in this process should be done with the Hybrid model. First of all, distance education causes inequality of opportunity and there is a serious gap between disadvantaged children, especially in rural areas and children in central regions. The children who were not educated under fair conditions were directly exposed to a concrete inadequacy in this process and they felt this situation very much. I also see the psychological dimension it creates in children worth researching.*

Some teachers (f=1) emphasized that education should continue in distance education due to health concerns. Teachers' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T1: Even if distance education is not effective, I think it is the best solution for this process. If schools are opened, the epidemic becomes uncontrollable and we may stay away from our schools longer.*

Some teachers (f=2) emphasized that distance education did not be continued as it was ineffective

and created inequality of opportunity in education. They also stated that opening schools were risky in terms of health. For this reason, they stated that both schools and distance education should be suspended until the epidemic was over. Teachers' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

*T8: Education cannot be remote. Because an education that we cannot provide everyone with the same conditions creates a feeling of failure, insecurity, and abandonment. This process has widened the gap in equal opportunities (inequality) in education. My personal opinion is that education is suspended at all levels until a permanent solution is found (at least one school year).*

## Results and Discussion

The study results showed that although teachers mostly use EIN for online lessons and document sharing, they also use applications such as Whatsapp, Youtube, and Zoom. Teachers' use of these applications also arose from some obligations such as infrastructure problems, connection problems, sharing the responsibility of learning with parents and enriching the ERE process. Findings regarding the infrastructure problems in the ERE process were obtained in the other studies (Başaran, et al., 2020; Bayburtlu, 2020; Garbe, et al., 2020; Hebebcı, et al., 2020; Hiçyılmaz, 2021). In these studies, it was stated that the EIN infrastructure was insufficient, the internet was disconnected in online lessons, and sometimes students could not connect to EIN. Because of these infrastructure problems, teachers prefer alternative practices for ERE. This study determined that the lack of responsibility for students' learning led teachers to alternative practices. In this context, teachers aimed to engage students in the ERE process by communicating with parents using WhatsApp. There were studies showing that students lack the responsibility for learning in the ERE process (Bayburtlu, 2020; Garbe, et al., 2020). In other words, teacher-parent collaboration is seen as a solution in increasing students' learning responsibility in the ERE process.

Although some of the teachers stated that ERE was effective because they thought that ERE was the only way, most teachers emphasized that ERE was ineffective. One of the most important reasons why ERE was ineffective was the low student

participation. Teachers stated that the most important reason for the low student participation was the lack of infrastructure. It was emphasized that the students' lack of necessary tools and internet infrastructure for ERE, insufficient EIN infrastructure, and insufficient internet speed negatively affect students' participation in the ERE process. There were studies showing that ERE was effective as it ensures the continuation of education during the pandemic process (Aydın, 2021; Başaran, et al., 2020; Hebebcı, et al., 2020; Yurtbakan & Akyıldız). There were even studies emphasizing that ERE offers important opportunities for the development and innovation of education (Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2020; Sarı & Nayır, 2020). However, it is possible to come across many studies showing that ERE has limitations. Infrastructure problems in the ERE process were among the most repeated limitations in the studies (Başaran, et al., 2020; Bayburtlu, 2020; Hiçyılmaz, 2021). In these studies, the insufficiency of EIN infrastructure, low internet speed, lack of tools such as computer tablets and internet connections cause students not to participate in ERE. The fact that distance education opportunities during the pandemic period in Turkey were below the OECD average also supports these results (Yılmaz, et al., 2020).

One of the important reason teachers emphasized the lack of student participation was the lack of students' responsibility to learn. Many studies also showed that students' lack of responsibility for learning reduced their participation in the ERE process and reduced the quality of education in the ERE process (Bayburtlu, 2020; Garbe, et al., 2020). In this context, it is emphasized that self-directed learning skills are very important in the ERE and distance education process (Bozkurt, 2020; Mintz, 2020). Because self-directed learning is an approach where learners take responsibility for their learning (Knowles, 1975), it is also important for achievement in online and distance education (Haron, 2003). One of the other important reasons teachers emphasized the lack of student participation was the lack of students' motivation to learn. The low learning motivation of students during the ERE process was also emphasized in the studies (Çakın & Akyavuz; Garbe et al., 2020). Low students' motivation to learn is also thought to be related to their low learning

responsibilities. Because the learning motivation of learners with high learning responsibility is also high (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Candy, 1991), however, the low motivation of students to learn may also be related to the infrastructure problems, limited interaction, and the attitude of their parents.

The fact that there were schedule problems and the curriculums are not suitable for distance education are considered as one of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of ERE. In this context, it was emphasized that the hours of the lessons constitute a problem for students to participate. Having more than one child having online lessons at the same time in a family caused students did not participate in the lesson. The main reason for this was the insufficient number of computer tablets and internet. In addition, since rural students can attend online lessons at certain points (schools, libraries, computer labs, etc.), the schedule of the lessons can make it difficult for them to attend the lesson. Of course, this situation is mainly related to the socioeconomic status of the students. In this study, it was also emphasized that some courses are not suitable for distance education. In some studies, problems related to the curriculum, such as insufficient course time in ERE, lack of activities in the practiced curriculum, were emphasized (Aydın, 2021; Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2020). Considering that ERE is a compulsory process (Bozkurt, et al., 2020; Bozkurt, 2020), it is inevitable to encounter time and schedule problems. These problems can be resolved in the ERE process. Effective communication between stakeholders is required to resolve these problems.

Restricted interaction and lack of feedback-evaluation were considered to be some of the reasons why ERE is ineffective. Restricted interaction is a frequently emphasized disadvantage in many studies on ERE (Başaran, et al. 2020; Hebebcı, et al., 2020). It is thought that there were many reasons for the limited interaction in the ERE process. These reasons were infrastructure problems, low learning responsibility and motivation of students, limited ICT literacy of students and teachers. In addition, the lack of measurement and evaluation during the ERE process in Turkey may be a factor that negatively affects students' motivation for active participation in online lessons. The lack of continuity of students'

participation in live lessons was another factor that causes limited interaction. It should not be forgotten that the emergence of these possible reasons is due to the unplanned and rapid transition to the ERE process (Bozkurt, 2020; Bozkurt, et al., 2020).

The low ICT competency of teachers and students was considered as one of the reasons why ERE was ineffective. The technological and pedagogical competencies of teachers in the pandemic process in Turkey are ranked 36th in the OECD list (Yılmaz, et al., 2020). This confirms that teachers' ICT competencies in Turkey are partially low. The fact that the students in K12, known as digital natives, have not experienced distance education before negatively affects their active participation in the ERE process. The low digital competence of both teachers and students in the ERE process results in restricted participation and interaction.

According to the results of the research, the low socioeconomic status of the parents was one of the reasons why ERE is ineffective. The low socioeconomic status of families affected the ERE process negatively in two ways. The first is the disadvantage that the low socio-economic status created in students' access to the necessary tools and internet connection for ERE. This disadvantage directly affected students' participation in the ERE process. The second was that it causes communication problems between teachers, schools, and parents in the ERE process. The ERE process has increased parents' responsibilities in providing access to students, motivating, and sharing responsibility for learning. (Bayburtlu, 2020; Garbe, et al., 2020; Yurtbakan & Akyıldız, 2020). To fulfill these responsibilities, teacher-parent collaboration and communication must be good. However, the ignorance and insensitivity of some families with low socioeconomic status made communication and cooperation difficult (Bayburtlu, 2020). This reduces the quality of the ERE process.

Another result of the research showed that during the pandemic process, teaching should be practiced face-to-face or hybrid model (Face-to-face and distance education) in diluted classrooms. In other words, teachers emphasized that face-to-face education should be continued during the pandemic process. The main reason teachers emphasize diluted

classroom practice is the excess of classroom sizes. This result can also be considered as an important indicator that ERE is insufficient. The insufficiency of ERE and the preference for face-to-face training have been emphasized in some studies (Yurtbakan and Akyıldız, 2020).

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The research showed that the ERE process was generally ineffective due to the lack of student participation. The main reasons for this situation were the lack of infrastructure, responsibility and motivation to learn. In the context of infrastructure, the insufficiency of tools and materials for students to participate in the ERE process was due to the low socioeconomic status of the families. Therefore, lack of infrastructure, lack of learning responsibility and motivation, and low socioeconomic status created inequality of opportunity for participation in the ERE process. Although teachers and students have recently experienced the ERE process creates problems regarding ICT competencies, these problems can be overcome over time. In addition, the existing curriculums not being suitable for the ERE process (in terms of time, content and activities, etc.) also reduced the quality of the ERE process. Although the ERE process was considered ineffective, it offers important opportunities for the transformation of education. However, to take advantage of these opportunities, it is necessary to improve the infrastructure of distance education, develop students' learning responsibility, increase their motivation to learn, and develop a curriculum for distance education. To ensure equality of opportunity in the ERE process, especially students with low socioeconomic status should be supported in terms of equipment and internet connection. Curriculum development studies should be focused on distance education. It is essential to include self-directed learning activities in which students take their learning responsibilities in the curriculums to be developed. The improvement of infrastructure and the development of distance education curriculums based on self-directed learning is very important for the current ERE process to be an effective and alternative teaching practice for the future.

### Limitation and Further Studies

The fact that the participants are only teachers in this study is the limitation of the study. Because students and their parents have important responsibilities in the ERE process, it is necessary to reveal their experiences to evaluate the ERE process holistically. Quantitative studies in larger samples can be conducted to evaluate the ERE process based on the results of this research. Studies should be conducted to reveal the relationship between students' participation in the ERE process and their learning responsibilities. Also, studies should be conducted to determine the factors that affect students' motivation to learn in the ERE process.

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