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# Distance Education During the Covid-19 Pandemic from the Perspective of Both Sides of Accountability: Opinions of Teachers and Parents

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## Abstract

This study, which aims to examine the distance education experiences of people who work as teachers but who are also parents during the COVID-19 pandemic uses descriptive phenomenology, an approach used in qualitative research. The analysis revealed six main themes that explain the distance education experiences of parent-teachers -- students' academic learning environment, teacher-student communication, use of EIN (education information network) and live lessons, family support, advantages and limitations of distance education, and teachers' views on distance education. The study concluded that the academic learning environment students have during distance learning is inadequate, that the quality and duration of student-teacher communication during distance learning is inadequate, that the quality of teacher-student communication favored students in private schools over teacher parent-children communication, that parent-teachers possessed negative views about distance education, and that distance learning led to unequal opportunities among students..

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Distance Education, Parent-Teachers, Pandemic, Education Information Network

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduce the Problem

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is effective on a global scale, it is more than just a deadly disease and has now become a phenomenon that affects social structures and institutions. It seems that this phenomenon will affect

societies for a long time and cause critical changes in social life. It is thought that among the most affected social structures during this pandemic now and in the future are education and training institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which was totally unexpected, suddenly changed the form of education in the world. With the spread of the pandemic, 160 countries closed schools, 1.6 billion children and young people moved away from school, and the pattern of education changed to reduce learning loss (World Bank, 2020). With education taking on a new form due to the COVID-19 pandemic, new words, new problems, and new words began entering the literature. Now, countries have had to develop new strategies to support learning and prevent mental, physical, and cultural problems for their children who are living through a period of pandemic. While countries were developing strategies and receiving help from all the stakeholders of education, it was again teachers who helped the states the most in this regard.

The education ministries of many countries around the world have made several changes and arrangements to adapt to the current situation. With these arrangements came educational resources that could be used by families starting with students, teachers, and other educational employees. In addition, states had to plan education differently. Distance education was suddenly on the agenda, but what should it be like? What could it be like? How should distance education be managed? The search began for answers to these questions. Students should be able to continue their education at their own levels before the inequalities, learning gaps, and learning injustices that exist in countries' education systems grow further.

The World Bank has announced its guidelines for distance education, including short-, medium-, and long-term interventions for student learning. While short-term interventions focus on identifying and addressing urgent needs, medium-term interventions focus on strengthening the infrastructure in distance education, developing appropriate content, reviewing curricula, the professional development of teachers, strengthening school-student-teacher and student communication, and reopening schools. Long-term interventions consist of guiding principles for maintaining the distance learning model and using hybrid learning models (World Bank, 2020).

Technology is important in distance education, the individuals that use technology are also important. Successful integration of technology depends on teachers' comfort levels and their knowledge of technology. When teachers are uncomfortable with technology and its use, technology will not have an impact on the curriculum (Hutinger, Robinson, Schneider, 2004). In addition, another dimension to be considered in distance education is the usability of the e-learning system. In this study, the quality of information is the most important element in the e-learning system. When establishing the quality of the information to be used, the three elements that make an e-learning system a quality one are system navigation, system learnability, and understandable visual design (Alshehri, Rutter, Smith, 2019).

It is important to consider the above principles when conducting distance education. This is because, according to the World Bank report, the world was already struggling with a learning crisis before the pandemic began. In low- and middle-income countries, 53% of children could not read or understand a simple book until the age of 10 (Azevado et al., 2020). Furthermore, another study revealed that students experience learning losses only during summer break. As a result of the review of 39 studies and a meta-analysis of 13 studies made in the United States, it was found that students' learning loss during the summer break was higher than their reading skills in mathematics. In addition, it was found that while the loss increases with the grade level, this rate is higher for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. It has been stated that differences in income, practice, and learning may lead to this situation (Cooper et al., 1996). How should distance education be managed in a pandemic with no end in sight when students experience learning loss over just two months of summer break? How should it be planned? Teachers and educators should consider four steps when planning a digital education. These are 1 - Analysis; 2 -- Setting goals and objectives; 3 -- Choosing teaching strategies; and 4 -- Managing assessment. While making these steps, the following should be considered. 1. What do I want my students to know? 2. What do I want my students to think? 3. What do I want my students to be able to do? 4. What do I want my students to feel? Steps should be formed by seeking answers to these questions (Ascough, 2002). What kind of place should teachers have in education? What should be the role of the stakeholders in education? What kind of role should technology play in education? What should the family's role in education be? What should the student's role in

education be? The answers to the questions were constantly sought and as the data came in, the solutions found began to change continually.

One of the findings showing that the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting society and education very quickly is the multiplicity and diversity of studies on the subject. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many studies on COVID-19 and education. Some of these studies include World Bank, 2020; Azevedo, Hasan, Goldemberg, Iqbal, and Geven, 2020; Çakın and Akyavuz, 2020; Pınar and Akgül, 2020; Yellow and Yellow, 2020; Yılmaz, Mutlu and Doğanay, 2020; Demir-Öztürk, Kuru, and Yıldız, 2020; Usta and Gökcan, 2020; Daniel, 2020; Almanthari, Maulina and Bruce 2020.

This study focuses on the opinions of parent-teachers who are accountable to their students' parents as a teacher in the distance education process and who personally conduct distance education but who are also parents following their own children's school education and whom other teachers are accountable to. Teachers are accountable in education. A teachers' main responsibility is to ensure high quality in teaching. Parents, on the other hand, are responsible for their children's behavior. They also hold the school and teachers accountable for education (UNESCO, 2017). This being the case, parent-teachers were specially selected for this study. The findings of this study should be considered valuable in terms of constituting data that can help the Ministry of National Education and all stakeholders during this time by revealing the problems encountered in distance education in Turkey during the COVID-19 pandemic and afterward through the eyes of parent-teachers.

The main purpose of this research is to reveal the experiences of parent-teachers with respect to the distance education conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, answers were sought to the following questions: 1) What are the distance education experiences of parent-teachers as teachers? 2) What are the distance education experiences of parent-teachers as parents?

## 2. Method

This study used descriptive phenomenology, a qualitative research approach. Phenomenological approach offers researchers the opportunity to examine in more depth phenomena that they are aware of but cannot fully understand (Patton; 2002; Creswell, 2012; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The main purpose of descriptive phenomenological design is to describe the perceptions and experiences of people (Saban & Ersoy, 2016, 59). The goal of this study is to examine in depth the perceptions and experiences of parent-teachers regarding the distance education conducted by the Ministry of National Education over such networks as EİN, WhatsApp, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams during the COVID-19 pandemic as appropriate to the context and conditions in Turkey.

### 2.1 Participant (Subject) Characteristics

The study's working group consists of people who worked as teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic and were also parents. In the study, the maximum diversity and criterion sampling method, a purposive sampling method, was used to determine which parent-teachers were to be interviewed. The people to be interviewed in the study were selected based on having participated in distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 spring semester while at the same time being parent-teachers serving in various schools with students at any level of formal education. The characteristics of the study group of the study selected according to these criteria are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Study Group

Variable		n	%
Gender	Female	29	72.5
	Male	11	27.5
Education Level	Undergraduate	26	65
	Master's Degree Without Thesis	8	20
	Master's Degree	5	12.5

	Ph.D.	1	2.5
Age	30-40	21	52.5
	41-50	19	47.5
Seniority	1-6	1	2.5
	7-13	6	15
	14-20	22	52.5
	21-27	11	27.5
Management Period	None	35	87.5
	1-6	1	2.5
	7-13	4	10
School Where Employed	Primary School	16	40
	Secondary School	12	30
	High School	12	30
The School Your Child Attends	State	28	70
	Private	12	30
Your Child's Education Level	Kindergarten	1	2.5
	Primary School	23	57.5
	Secondary School	10	25
	High School	6	15
Socioeconomic Level of the School Where He/She Works	Low	11	27.5
	Moderate	22	55
	High	7	17.5

The working group of the study consists of 40 parent teachers working in various districts of Ankara. Information regarding the working group of the study is provided in Table 1. Considering this information, it is assumed that the diversity required for maximum diversity sampling has been achieved.

### 2.2 Data Collection Tool and Data Collection Time

A questionnaire and semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers were used as data collection tools. The interview form includes nine questions describing the personal characteristics of parents' teachers and 10 questions to reveal their perceptions and experiences as teachers and parents during the distance education of their children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before the semi-structured interview form was prepared, the literature was reviewed by the researchers, and 10 questions considered for inclusion on the interview form were determined by the researchers. The prepared interview form was presented to two researchers and one measurement evaluation expert in the field of educational sciences and after the necessary feedback was obtained, it was reviewed by a linguist to check if the questions were understandable. Before the prepared form was applied, it was applied to two people who were teachers and parents at the same time and the final check was made to see if the questions were clear and understandable. After all these evaluations, the semi-structured interview form was finalized.

Permission from obtained from the ethics committee to apply the data collection tool in its final form. Before it was applied, the participants were given the necessary information then they gave their consent and stated that their participation was voluntary. The interview questions were sent to the teachers via E-Mail, WhatsApp, and Zoom, or face to face, and the written responses of the parents have collected again in the same way. Research data were collected between 07 and 21 July 2020.

### 2.3. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The researchers obtained texts of the interviews by entering the data obtained from the participants using the semi-structured interview form onto a computer. The interview texts were analyzed using the descriptive and content

analysis technique with the help of the MAXQDA 20.1 qualitative data analysis program. The analysis revealed six main themes. In the presentation of these themes, the participants' opinions were quoted directly and interpreted based on the participants' remarks. While analyzing the interview texts, four steps were followed: bracketing, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesizing meaning and essences (Giorgi, 2009). In the study, codes, categories, themes, and the sub-themes making up the themes were generated by combining similarities and different expressions, and an attempt was made to ensure integrity and internal consistency by checking the relationship between the themes and sub-themes, and the relationship between each theme and the others. In determining the themes and sub-themes, the opinions of two researchers working in the field of educational sciences were consulted to ensure the reliability of the study. The parent-teachers whose opinions were consulted for the analysis of the data were given a code number (PT: 1, PT: 2, PT: 3...). Findings are presented with frequency values. Findings are given using direct quotations without comment, the point at this stage being to ensure.

For reliability, the themes obtained as a result of the data and the analysis process were compared with expert opinion and the findings of the literature. An attempt was made to provide first coder reliability then consensus percentage by recalling the answers given by the parents during the interviews on the data analysis program, then the consensus percentages recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) were either added to another code/category/theme or renamed for the codes, categories, and themes under the percentages.

External reliability was provided by trying to make the necessary explanations in detail so that the study could be tested with other studies. In the study, at the stage of providing validity and reliability, an attempt was made to present the data obtained in the study in detail without any comments (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### 3. Results

The data obtained from the interview questions prepared in line with the purpose of the study were analyzed using the MAXQDA 20.1 qualitative data analysis program and the results yielded six main themes. These themes are academic learning environment, teacher-student communication, use of EIN and live lessons, family support, the advantages and limitations of distance education, and opinions about distance education, respectively, and Figure 1 explains the main themes and associated sub-themes.

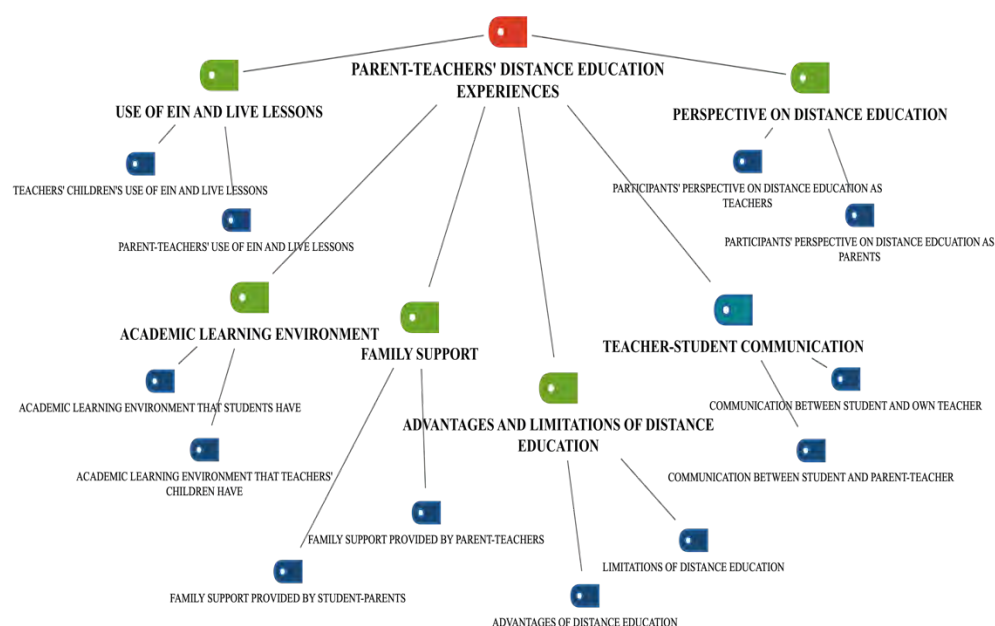


Figure 1: Themes and Sub-Themes Obtained From the MAXQDA Data Analysis Program

### 3.1. Academic Learning Environment

The theme of the academic learning environment is examined under two sub-themes: the academic learning environment that children of teachers have and the academic learning environment that students have.

“Do you think your home environment is suitable for your child to benefit from distance education? Please explain.” The answers given by the parent-teachers to the question are explained in Table 2. Accordingly, all parent-teachers (n=40) stated that their children's academic learning environment is satisfactory in terms of distance education materials/equipment and internet access.

“Do you think your students' home environment is satisfactory for distance education? Please explain.” The answers given by the parent-teachers to the question are explained in Table 2. Accordingly, regarding their students' academic learning environment, 55% of the teachers stated that their students' home environment was satisfactory in terms of access to distance education materials/equipment (n=22) and 42.5% for access to the internet (n=17).

Table 2: What Teachers and Parents Said About Students' Academic Learning Environment During Distance Education

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Code	F	%
ACADEMIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	The Academic Learning Environment of Teachers' Children	Access to distance education materials (computer, tablet, smartphone, etc.)	Satisfactory	40	100%
			Not Satisfactory	0	
		Access to Internet	Satisfactory	40	100%
			Not Satisfactory	0	
	Students' Academic Learning Environment	Access to distance education materials (computer, tablet, smartphone, etc.)	Satisfactory	22	55%
			Not Satisfactory	18	45%
		Access to Internet	Satisfactory	17	42.5%
			Not Satisfactory	23	57.5%

All parent-teachers can provide the academic learning environment their children need as students during distance education. On the other hand, it can be said that more than half of the students do not have the academic learning environment they need. Parent teachers attribute this situation to their students' socio-economic level.

“.....Definitely Not -- Half of my students are refugees and the socioeconomic status of 4 to 6 of them is not good.” PT: 27

“... Most of them are not satisfactory. In particular, very few use home internet. Everyone has a smartphone, but if there is a sibling, this is also a problem.” PT: 34

“Most of my students' home environment is not satisfactory. Some do not have internet access; some do not have a computer.” PT: 25

“It is not satisfactory for all my students. We even have students who don't have a television set.” PT: 11

### 3.2. Teacher-Student Communication

The theme of teacher-student communication is examined under two sub-themes: communication between teachers' children and their own teachers and communication between parent-teachers and their students.

“Did the teacher establish communication with your child during distance education? How often did the teacher establish communication?” The answers given by the parents to these questions are explained in Table 3.

Accordingly, 97.5% of parent-teachers stated that their children's teacher established communication (n=39) while 2.5% said the teacher did not (n=1). Those students with whom communication was not established are 6th- Grade students studying in state schools.

A total of 42.5% of parent-teachers stated that communication between their children and their teachers took place daily (n=17), 37.5% frequently (n=15), and 17.5% rarely (n=7). According to the cross tables obtained from the data analysis program, while children of families whose children attended a private school were able to communicate with their teachers every day, only 18% of the children (n=28) studying at public schools were able to talk with their teachers every day (n=5).

Table 3: What Parent Teachers Said About Teacher-Student Communication During Distance Education

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Code	n	%
Teacher-Student Communication	Communication Between Teachers' Children and Their Own Teachers	Communication not established/partially established		1	2.5
		Communication was established		39	97.5
		Communication frequency	Every Day	17	42.5
			Frequently	15	37.5
			Rarely	7	17.5
	No communication was established		1	2.5	
	Communication Between Parent Teachers and Their Students	Communication not/partially established		7	17.5
		Communication was established		33	82.5
		Communication frequency	Every Day	8	20
			Frequently	27	67.5
Rarely			5	12.5	

“Did you establish communication with your students during distance education? How often did you establish communication?” The answers given by the parents to these questions are given in Table 3. Accordingly, 82.5% of teachers' parents stated that they established communication with their students (n=33), and 17.5% stated that they could not establish or only partially establish communication. Teachers who did not establish communication or could only partially establish communication stated they tried to establish communication but it was not possible to reach the students.

*“I tried to establish communication. I made phone calls. We chatted on WhatsApp. I had many students that I couldn't reach...” PT: 18*

*“I had students with whom I couldn't establish communications because the channels of communication were closed” PT: 12*

### 3.3 Using EIN and Live Lessons

The theme of the use of EIN and live lessons is examined in two sub-themes: teachers' children's use of EIN and live lessons and parent-teachers' use of EIN and live lessons.

“Did you ever use EIN in your child's education during distance education? Did your child ever attend live lessons? How often did your child's teacher/teachers give live lessons? Did your child ever watch the lessons of his/her grade on EIN TV? How often was your child able to watch EIN?” The answers given by the parents to these questions are given in Table 4.

Parent teachers stated that 67.5% of their children's teachers used EIN (n=27), and 32.5% did not use EIN (n=13). Of those teachers who did not use EIN, 77% work in a private school (n=11), and 23% in a state school (n=2). In this context, it can be thought that private schools do not prefer EIN because they have their own distance education



infrastructure, different networks, and applications. When the opinions about the live lesson experiences of teachers' children are examined, 67.5% of them stated that live lessons were given (n=27), and 32.5% of them stated that live lessons were not (n=13). When the crosstables are examined, 83% (n=12) of the parents whose children attend private school stated that their children did not use EIN, and 17% of them said they did take live lessons regularly (n=1). Remarkably, three of the parent-teachers whose children study at private schools and whose children regularly take live lessons do not give live lessons.

Table 4: What Parent Teachers Said About the Use of EIN and Live Lessons During Distance Education

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Code	n	%
Use of EIN and Live Lessons	Teachers' Children's Use of EIN and Live Lessons	Teacher's EIN experience	Teacher used EIN	27	67.5
			Teacher did not use EIN	13	32.5
		Teacher's Live Lesson Experience (EIN, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.)	His/her teacher gave live lessons	27	67.5
			His/her teacher did not give live lessons	13	32.5
			No lessons were given	1	2.5
		Frequency of teacher's live lesson	Frequently	15	37.5
			Rarely	7	17.5
			Every Day/Regularly	17	42.5
		Student watched EIN TV	Student did not watch EIN TV	14	35
			Student watched EIN	26	65
			Never watched	14	35
		Frequency of student's watching EIN TV	Rarely	3	7.5
			Every Day	23	57.5
	Parent Teachers' Experience of EIN and Live Lessons	Parent Teachers' Experience of EIN	Used EIN	39	97.5
			Did not use EIN	1	2.5
		Parent teachers' experience of live lessons (EIN, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.)	Gave live lessons regularly	28	70
			Stopped giving live lessons	4	10
			Never gave live lessons	8	20
		Parent teachers' live lesson frequency	No lessons were given	8	20
			Rarely	4	10
			Every Day/Regularly	28	70
		Students watched EIN TV	Students did not watch EIN	4	10
Their students watched EIN			36	90	
Never watched			4	10	
Frequency of students watching EIN TV		Rarely	20	50	
		Every Day/Regularly	13	32.5	
		I don't know	3	7.5	

“Did you use EIN? What do you think about EIN? Did you ever give lessons to your students? How often did you do this? Did your students ever watch lessons of their own grade on EIN TV? How often were they able to watch?” The answers given by the parents to these questions are given in Table 4. Accordingly, it is stated that 97.5% of parent-teachers used EIN (n=39), and 2.5% did not. When the opinions of parent-teachers regarding their live lesson experiences are examined, it can be seen that 60% regularly gave live lessons (n=28), 10% rarely gave live lessons, and 20% never gave live lessons. Parent teachers stated that 90% of their students watch EIN (n=36), while 10% do not watch EIN (n=4). While 32.5% of the students watched EIN every day (n=13), 50% rarely (n=20), watched EIN, and 10% did not watch EIN at all. Some 7.5% of the teachers could not give information about how frequently their students watched EIN.

### 3.4. Family Support

The theme of family support is examined under two sub-themes: the support that parent-teachers give to their children and the communication between their children's own teachers.

*“Did you support your child during this time? How did you support your child?”* The answers given by the parents to these questions are given in Table 5. Accordingly, 97.5% of parent-teachers stated they supported their children (n=39) and 2.5% stated that they did not feel the need to support their children (n=1). The student of the parent-teacher who said there was no need for family support was a 1st Grade student at a private school. During distance education, parent-teachers support their children by encouraging them to keep up with their homework/lessons (n=23), to do activities/solve problems/read books (n=10); lecturing (n=10), motivating them (n=10), organizing their learning environment (n=2), and being aware of their psychosocial needs.

*“... I provided support with such methods as extrinsic motivation, communication enhancement, and rewards.”*  
PT: 2

*“I checked his WhatsApp groups and EIN page frequently to see if he was doing his homework.”* PT: 6

*“...I often helped with my child's homework. He watched EIN TV and we provided support using videos from EIN. We also made him read test books and storybooks at home.”* PT: 7

*“I had him do his homework at the times I set after the live broadcast. I checked. I went over the missing topics.”*  
PT: 21

*“I personally did the checks. I did not share with him the information that he had moved up a class. He thought that his performance in live lessons would affect his report card positively. I never confused him.”* PT: 39

*“...He needed his friends. So, I contacted other parents so he could video chat with them.”* PT: 40

Table 5: What Parent Teachers Said About Family Support Provided During Distance Education

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Code	n	%
Family Support	Family Support Provided by Parent Teachers	Family Support Given		39	97.5
		Support provided	Following Homework/Lessons	23	57.5%
			Doing activities/Solving problems/Encouraging book reading	10	25
			Lecturing	10	25
			Motivating	10	25
			Organizing the learning environment	2	5
			Being sensitive to psychosocial needs	1	2.5
		Family support not provided		1	2.5
		Reasons for lack of support	The school provided all the support for the student	1	2.5
		Family Support Provided by Student Parents	Family Support Given		15
	Support provided		Following homework	8	53
			Motivating	6	40
			Organizing the learning environment	1	6.7
	Reference book support		1	6.7	
	Family support not provided		25	67.5	
Reasons for lack of support	Socioeconomic level/Education level	11	44		
	Not feeling responsible for the student's education	6	24		
	Family conflicts/Communication problems	3	12		

Low motivation following direct grade passing system	2	8
Failure to establish teacher-parent communication/language problem	2	8
Working parents not being able to keep track of the student	1	4

“Did your students' families give sufficient support at this time? How did the students' families support them? Do you think families give sufficient help with their children's homework?” The answers given by the parents to these questions are given in Table 5. Accordingly, while parents of teachers stated that 32.5% of their students received family support (n=15), 67.5% of them thought that they were deprived of family support (n=25). Parent teachers said that during distance education, their students received support from their families in the areas of following their homework/lessons (n=8), motivation (n=6), organizing the learning environment (n=2), and providing reference books (n=1). Parent teachers attributed the lack of family support during distance education to socioeconomic level/education level (n=11), not feeling responsible for the child's education (n=6), inner family conflicts/communication problems (n=3), poor motivation following the direct grade passing system (n=2), lack of parent-teacher communication/language problem (n=2), and working parents being unable to keep track of the student (n=1).

“My parents gave adequate support given their means. Most of my parents cannot provide sufficient help with their children's homework. I contacted the parents of students who did not do their homework.” PT: 25

“The majority of families were not interested in their children's academic development before distance education. Nothing changed during distance education. Families cannot give satisfactory support due to the low level of education and poor socioeconomic status.” PT: 4

“Since most of our parents were unaware, they did not provide enough support. Most of them did not do homework, especially after learning that there would be no failing.” PT: 6

“It all depends on the family's idea of education those who wanted education took an interest those who said it's the teacher's job did not.” PT: 32

### 3.5. Advantages and Limitations of Distance Education

The theme of advantages and limitations of distance education is examined under two sub-themes, namely, advantages and limitations. “How would you explain the advantages and limitations of distance education?” The answers given by the parents to this question are given in Table 6.

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that parents of teachers generated 18 codes regarding the advantages of distance education, whereas they produced 40 codes regarding its limitations. Accordingly, it can be said that parent-teachers emphasized the limitations of distance education more often and considered distance education to be limited.

According to the opinions of parent-teachers, the advantages of distance education over face-to-face education are: distance education ensures continuity of education in extraordinary situations (n=10), provides supportive education that students can benefit from when they need it (n=3), enables parents to be included (n=2), eliminates time and space limits (n=1), develops skills in using technology (n=1), and makes students responsible for their own learning (n=1).

“...It contributes to the individual development of students as we put more responsibility on students (keeping track of class times and attendance, use of technology, assignment following and checking...) We will include parents more actively in education activities...” PT: 24

“School education is very valuable and very important. If schools are opened and education starts, I would like distance education to take place on specific days of the week. It could be useful as some kind of repeat lesson or as if taking a private course.” PT: 29

*“The greatest advantage is that it lets education continue and children can do their lessons at home. Being able to attend classes with their own teacher and friends through live lessons is very valuable.” PT: 30*

Table 6: What Parent Teachers Said About the Advantages and Limitations of Distance Education

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Code	n	%	
Advantages and Limitations of Distance Education	Advantages of Distance Education (n=18)		Ensuring continuity of education in extraordinary situations	10	25	
			Providing support training that students can benefit from when needed	3	7.5	
			Ensuring that parents are involved in the process	2	5	
			It eliminates time and space constraints	1	2.5	
			Develops technology usage skills	1	2.5	
			Makes students responsible for their own learning	1	2.5	
		Creates unequal opportunities			18	45
	Limitations of Distance Education (n=40)	Limitations due to system features (n=31)	Mandatory attendance not a requirement (n=12)	Students not obligated to attend	7	17.5
				Teachers not obligated to attend	5	12.5
			Lack of assessment and grade passing system	7	17.5	
			Poor interaction	5	12.5	
			Weak technical infrastructure	3	7.5	
			Insufficient content	2	5	
			Inability to meet students' psychosocial needs	2	5	
		Limitations arising from teacher characteristics (n=4)	Teachers' poor distance education skills	Teachers are poorly skilled in using educational technologies	1	2.5
				Teachers do not give live lessons/students not being taught by their own teachers	1	2.5
				Teachers' poor distance education skills	2	5
		Limitations arising from family characteristics (n=5)	Parents' indifference to distance education	Parents' shortcomings/level of education	2	5
Parents' indifference to distance education				3	7.5	
Having more than one student in the family benefiting from distance education	1			2.5		

According to what the parent-teachers said, the limitations of distance education are explained as creating unequal opportunities (n=18), inability to make it mandatory for students or teachers to attend lessons (n=12), the lack of an assessment and grade pass system (n=7), poor interaction (n=5), poor technical infrastructure (n=3), insufficient content (n=2), not meeting students' psychosocial needs (n=2), teachers' poor distance education skills (n=2), teachers' poor skills in using education technologies (n=1), teachers not giving live lessons and students not being taught by their own teachers (n=1), parents' indifference to distance education (n=3), parents not having a level of education sufficient to support their children in distance education (n=2), and there being more than one student in the family benefiting from distance education (n=1).

*“EIN TV has gained an important place in the world; the fact that it was so successful in such a short time was a stroke of luck for our country but if you ask me, distance education contains incredible shortcomings in capturing the spirit of education. Friendly relations and the use of body language, gestures, and mimicry are very valuable when giving lessons, especially for primary school students.” PT: 7*

*“...Our biggest limitation is that our children, who cannot live under equal conditions with the country being so large, have limited access to education.” PT: 22*

*“In my opinion, measurement and assessment in distance education should be done more effectively and frequently; in fact, checks should be made each week using the artificial intelligence logic in academic support to see if achievements are being made or not.” PT: 30*

*“It should be mandatory and not optional for teachers to give lessons. Students should be penalized and those students who do not fulfill their responsibilities should get what they deserve and students that don't make an effort should be distinguished even in distance education...” PT: 32*

### 3.6. Perspective on Distance Education

The theme of perspective on distance education is examined under two sub-themes: the perspective of the participants as parents and the perspective of the participants as teachers.

“As a parent during distance education, what are its good points and bad points?” The answers given by the parent-teachers to this question are given in Table 7. From this table, it can be seen that 65 codes were generated for what the parent-teachers called the bad points of distance education, while the number of codes for what they called the good points was limited to just 17. The parent-teachers described what they saw as the good points of distance education as the ability to continue education in a safe environment, making it possible to spend more time with their child, and preserving the sense of belonging to the school.

*“...The only good thing was that it made it possible to spend more time with my child.” PT: 4*

*“...As a parent, the good points were my child being able to see his friends and teacher albeit from afar and the continuation of his sense of belonging and commitment.” PT: 5*

*“...The most positive aspect is that they can continue in a safe environment without leaving school.” PT: 26*

Parent teachers describe the negative aspects of distance education as difficulty in motivating the student (n=14), difficulty in establishing regular study discipline (n=14), making student learning the responsibility of the parent (n=7), not meeting the psychosocial needs of students (n=6), poor interaction (n=6), not planning the lesson times correctly (n=4), not having a live lesson calendar (n=3), everything (n=3), the teacher in EIN not being constant (n=2), giving too much homework (n=2), lack of an assessment and grade passing system (n=2), increased exposure to the screen (n=1), and changes in the student's routine (n=1).

Table 7: Parent Teachers' Perspectives on Distance Education

Theme	Sub-theme	Category	Code	n	%
Perspective on Distance Education	Participants' Perspective on Distance Education as Parents	Positive perspective on distance education (n=17)	Being able to continue education in a safe environment	7	17.5
			Spending more time with your child	5	12.5
			Ensuring/maintaining a sense of belonging to the school	5	12.5
		Negative perspective on distance education (n=65)	Difficulty in motivating the student	14	35
			Difficulty in establishing a regular study discipline in students	14	35
			Making student learning the responsibility of parents	7	17.5
			Failure to meet students' psychosocial needs	6	15
			Poor interaction	5	12.5
			Lessons times are not planned correctly	4	10
			Lack of a live lesson calendar	3	7.5
			Everything	3	7.5
			The teacher in EIN not being constant	2	5

Participants' Perspective on Distance Education as Teachers		Too much homework	2	5
		Lack of assessment and grade passing system	2	5
		Increased screen exposure time	2	5
		Change of students' routine (sleep, lessons, meals, play, etc.)	1	2.5
		Flexible Working	6	15
	Positive perspective on distance education (n=22)	Being able to continue education in a safe environment	5	12.5
		Monitoring students	5	12.5
		Creating the opportunity to be together with students	3	7.5
		Ensuring a sense of school belonging	2	5
		Enabling students to benefit from educational technologies	1	2.5
	Negative perspective on distance education (n=79)	Little interaction	12	30
		Communication/not able to reach students	11	27.5
		Students' access to distance learning materials	10	25
		Lack of assessment and grade passing system	9	22.5
		Monitoring students	8	20
		Inability to provide student motivation	7	17.5
		Student learning being the parent's responsibility	5	12.5
		Lack of low attendance/absence system	4	10
		Technical difficulties	3	7.5
		Adapting to distance education	3	7.5
		Mixing home- and work-life	2	5
		No overtime concept	2	5
Students experiencing stress	1	2.5		
Difficulties experienced by students in home life	1	2.5		
Lack of teacher motivation	1	2.5		

“As a teacher during distance education, what are its good points and bad points?” The answers given by the parent-teachers to this question are given in Table 7. From this table, it can be seen that 79 codes were generated for what the parent-teachers called the bad points of distance education, while the number of codes for what they called the good points was limited to just 22. As parent-teachers, teachers explain the positive aspects of distance education as flexible working, being able to continue education in a safe environment, student monitoring, ensuring school belonging, and enabling students to benefit from educational technologies.

“...The most difficult part is that the working hours are not clear. (Due to the students going to bed late and getting up late) I even had meetings at midnight. I think the best part is that the working hours are flexible :) (both difficult and nice).” PT: 3

“..The best part is that during the pandemic, our students and children stayed in lessons, albeit not face-to-face, by staying safe in their homes.” PT: 26

As teachers, the parent-teachers explained the negative aspects of distance education are communication/inability to reach students (n=11), students' difficulty in accessing distance education materials (n=10), lack of assessment and grade passing system (n=9), student monitoring (n=8), inability to provide student motivation (n=7), parents being responsible for student learning (n=5), low attendance/absence tracking (n=4), technical problems (n=3), adaptation to distance education system (n=3), mixing home and work life (n=2), lack of overtime concept (n=2), students' stress (n=1), lack of teacher motivation (n=1), problems experienced by students in home life (n=1).

“...Teaching can't be done without eye contact or feeling emotions. So the hardest part was not being able to get a sense of the mood in class; it really demotivated me and my colleagues. It made me feel insignificant...” PT: 6

“The students' poor financial situation made it difficult to reach them at times. In my opinion, there were not many beneficial aspects.” PT: 8

“It is never as efficient as face-to-face teaching. It was difficult to find interesting resources, to get the children involved, not to bore the participants, and to check homework.” PT: 17

“Managing my home and school responsibilities from the same location was a new experience. In this sense, I had difficulty managing my time. I thought I was working harder and making an effort” PT: 20

“...participation and follow-up being entirely at the parent's initiative made it difficult for me.” PT: 3

#### 4. Discussion

While it was thought that the role of the teacher in distance education would decrease, on the contrary, the biggest duty and responsibility in distance education again lay with the teachers. Teachers' efforts have been crucial and paramount in the success of distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, parent-teachers were asked their thoughts on distance education as both parents and teachers. The findings of the study revealed six main themes, namely, the academic learning environment, teacher-student communication, use of EIN and live lessons, family support, the advantages and limitations of distance education, and perspectives on distance education. Under the academic learning environment theme, the parents stated that their children's home environment and equipment were satisfactory for distance education, but the home environment and home equipment of more than half of the students they taught were not satisfactory for distance education. This finding matches the research findings consisting of 330 responses given in a study conducted by the OECD in 98 countries, and the PISA 2018 findings. In the OECD study, 139 people found it difficult to access technological infrastructure. 118 people found it somewhat difficult. 120 found it very difficult to manage the technological infrastructure, while 126 stated it was somewhat difficult. Even in OECD member countries, an average of 9 percent of 15-yo students said they do not have a quiet place of their own where they can study at home. In Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, this rate was more than 30 percent. Even in Korea, it was reported that one out of every five students studying at socioeconomically disadvantaged schools does not have a place at home where they can study. According to PISA 2018 data on students' access to technology, 95 percent of students in Denmark, Slovenia, Norway, Poland, Lithuania, Iceland, Austria, Switzerland, and the Netherlands had a computer for study at home while only 34 percent of students in Indonesia had a computer. Almost all students studying at socioeconomically advantageous schools in America have a computer for study at home. However, it has been stated that only three-quarters of the students studying at socioeconomically disadvantaged schools have computers (OECD, 2020). In the EIN and live lesson use theme, the majority of the participants stated that they used EIN and gave live lessons. In addition, most of the participants stated that their own children's teachers also used EIN and gave live lessons. This finding coincides with UNICEF's research findings in 127 countries. In the study, 68% of 127 countries were found to use a combination of digital and non-digital approaches (TV, radio, and take-home packages) in distance education (Dreeseni, Akseeri, Brossardi, Dewanii, Giraldoii, Kameii, Mizunoyaiiii, Ortizi, JS., 2020). Under the family support theme, the participants stated that they supported their students in such areas as organizing the learning environment, encouraging them to do activities/solve problems/read books, following homework/lessons, giving lectures, and providing motivation. The least supported area was “being aware of their psychosocial needs” with only one participant stating that they supported the child in this area. Most of the participants stated that their students were not supported by their parents, with the reasons for the lack of support being the socioeconomic level and education level. Under the advantages and limitations of distance education theme, the participants considered “continuation of education under extraordinary situations” to be an advantage while stating that at the same time it led to unequal opportunities in education. In addition, the participants stated that the distance education system has limitations arising from its features, with the lack of mandatory attendance being one of the system's limitations. Under the perspective on distance education theme, the participants stated that distance education is difficult both as a teacher and as a parent. According to the findings, as parents, in particular, they found distance education to be negative due to such reasons as difficulty in motivating the student, difficulty in establishing a regular study discipline in the student, leaving responsibility for student learning to the parents, and failing to meet the students' psychosocial needs. The teacher stated that as

a parent, the positive aspects of distance education are being able to continue education in a safe environment and spend more time with their child. As a teacher, the participant listed the negative points of distance education as communication/inability to reach students, students' inability to access distance education materials, lack of an evaluation and grade passing system, student monitoring, inability to provide student motivation, and student learning being the parent's responsibility. The participant listed the positive aspects of distance education as flexible working and being able to continue education in a safe environment. The finding that flexibility is a positive aspect of distance education is in line with studies previously made by Yang and Cornelious, 2004; Vonderwell, 2003; and Hilton, 2012. Participants, both as parents and teachers, saw distance education as a difficult educational process. In addition, in both their identities, the participants regarded the fact that distance education places the burden of responsibility on the parents as a problem and while this is seen as a dilemma in distance education, it is also a contradiction in that all teachers want their students to be supported by their parents but regard this as a problem when it is expected of them. Similarly, both as teachers and parents, they stated that distance education is unable to meet the psychosocial needs of their students and children and that it needs to be emphasized that schools are not only places of learning, but also places where their students' psychosocial needs are met. This is because schools are an institution where children socialize and their characters are shaped.

Politicians and educators need to develop new strategies for distance education to reduce inequalities among students. When developing these strategies they need to consider through what channels lessons should be carried out, how to increase the efficiency of live lessons, and how to make the content of EIN more beneficial in light of the feedback given regarding distance education with respect to technology, students' emotional and social development, and how to apply the curriculum depending on class and time. Technological infrastructure needs to be improved. The technological shortcomings in access to education need to be reduced to a minimum. If necessary, families of students with technological deficiencies should be provided with computers, tablets, and technical support by contacting non-governmental organizations and industrial organizations. The processes of student-, teacher-, and lesson-assessment in distance education need to be improved. Regardless of the family's socioeconomic status, the academic and social development of the students should be handled with the philosophy that "every student is unique and can learn at their own level." The process should be evaluated each time and feedback mechanisms should be developed. The curriculum should be followed constantly and both online and offline assessment should be made. Planning should be made for students to develop at the level of their class with their peers. Separate plans should be made for students who fall behind academically from their peers. EIN live lesson applications should be made for each class and the number of live lessons should be increased. A system to keep track of lessons and homework should be developed and the amount of online and offline material appropriate to each class should be increased. Live lesson applications should be made mandatory for teachers. Families should also be legally obliged to ensure their children attend live lessons. Along with online education, methods of education should be developed that make use of different television, radio, and social media. Methods for communicating with students and families need to be developed. Free communication channels should be provided to teachers and students to improve and sustain mobile communication and internet communication. For distance education to survive, the right questions need to be asked, cost-effective alternatives to traditional educational methods need to be developed, and activities to reveal active and interested students need to be designed. It should not be forgotten that "people not technology change education" (Ely, 1996). Efforts should be accelerated to improve the competencies of the teacher, the most fundamental element of education.

In light of the findings of this study, researchers can conduct studies aimed at a) making student's current learning environments suitable for distance education, b) applications that strengthen teacher-student communication, c) the arrangements that need to be made to make EIN use and live lessons widespread, d) the policy steps to determine how best to conduct student monitoring and assessment, e) developing activities such as booklets, brochures, videos, and broadcasts that can help ensure family support, f) applications that minimize the limitations in distance education, and g) applications that minimize the challenging and negative aspects of distance education for parents and teachers.

EIN (Educational Information Network): An online social education platform developed by the Ministry of National Education. This platform and EIN TV were used in distance education.



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