

Opinions of postgraduate students in Northern Cyprus towards distant education during COVID-19 pandemic

Yeşim Üstün Aksoy *, Near East University, Educational Administration, Supervision, Economics and Planning, Nicosia, 99010, Northern Cyprus <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2704-7469>

Suggested Citation:

Üstün Aksoy. Y (2022). Opinions of postgraduate students in Northern Cyprus towards distant education during COVID-19 pandemic. *World Journal on Educational Technology: Current Issues*. 14(2), 329-342. <https://doi.org/10.18844/wjet.v14i2.6908>

Received from December 31, 2021; revised from February 15, 2022; accepted from March 05, 2022. Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Servet Bayram, Yeditepe University, Turkey.

©2022 Birlesik Dunya Yenilik Arastirma ve Yayıncılık Merkezi. All rights reserved

Abstract

In this research, the "case study" model was used to determine the views of university students in Northern Cyprus on distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic process. The population of this research consists of students studying in the districts of Nicosia, Famagusta, Girne and Lefke in Northern Cyprus. The study group was used as an easily accessible case sample and 20 students were studied in the study group. As a data collection tool in this study, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 6 open-ended questions was used, developed by the researchers regarding the views of higher education students in Northern Cyprus on distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic process. In the study, "content analysis" was used in the evaluation of the data. The collected data were organized within the framework of themes and concepts and presented in the findings. According to the results of the research, it has been determined that the online teaching of the courses during the pandemic process has various advantages and disadvantages that the students have some difficulties while using the online education system and some suggestions have been developed to make the system more useful by eliminating the disadvantages and difficulties.

Keywords: Online education, blended education, synchronous education, asynchronous education

* ADDRESS OF CORRESPONDENCE: Yeşim Üstün Aksoy, Near East University, Educational Administration, Supervision, Economics and Planning Nicosia, 99010, Northern Cyprus
Email address: yesim.ustunaksoy@neu.edu.tr / Tel: +90542883 3322

1. Introduction

COVID-19 disease is appeared in Wuhan, China at the end of December 2019. It is caused by the novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Carrying high risks of infection, the virus has spread across the whole world, primarily to Europe (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2020). During this process, suggestions to shut down educational institutions to reduce the high risk of spread in the communities were considered (Kawano & Kakehashi, 2015; De Luca, 2018). In this context, the decision was made to close schools temporarily, universities, and other educational institutions in many countries to minimize the incidence at which the COVID-19 pandemic was spreading. The schools and educational institutions were temporarily shut down temporarily on March 25 after the Ministry of Health announced the first rate of COVID-19 in the TRNC on March 11, 2020 (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Health Ministry, 2020).

For the management of this process and the crisis, the Higher Education Institution (YÖK) decided speedily to convert the traditioal education to distance education for the upcoming spring semester of the 2020 education year (YÖK, 2020). As a result of this announcement, all levels of traditional education were stopped; so, distance education began to be applied along with cancellation of local and central examinations, which were later replaced by web-based examinations for the assessment of the level of student efficiency. In this context, the system that had been set up, based on traditional education had to be converted into web-based distance education as a result of successful crisis management. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all systems and the education system, education systems have started to adapt many innovations, especially online education, and the applications of synchronous, asynchronous and blended education systems have become widespread. Teachers started to use these systems quickly and students met with online trainings. Some definitions and explanations about synchronous and asynchronous training are given below.

Synchronic educational platforms are class systems in which the teacher and student exist together through various methods. In general, synchronic education recalls face-to-face education which depends on time in the same place. By the means of today's developing technology and web-based educational programmes, distant education applications can be embedded within this education process which can be seen in conventional education applications. For student and teacher voices and visions can be transferred through intranets or internets, thus create a simultaneous (synchronic) educational media.

Although the synchronous learning environments created in distance education give the students the feeling of being in a virtual environment, these environments can transfer the discussion opportunity in the formal classroom atmosphere to the virtual education environment, as these environments allow the participants to interact with each other (Özkaraca, 2005).

It is an implementation where learning-teaching activity takes place among the students and the teacher as a bi-directional communication. Regarding this, there are three models as bi-directional tele-conference model, bi-directional TV, and bi-directional internet-based conference. Students and teachers can tele-conference among each other via the internet throughout the system (Olçay, 2011).

Asynchronous learning platforms are platforms where the trainee can start and finish his/her training at any time, regardless of the trainer. At this point, it takes place in the form of uploading educational materials and narration videos to the system and using this application at the desired place and time period by the student. Whether the student uses the documents or not, the time spent in the system is usually checked. With the process control, changes can be made at the point of the student's access to information. This

situation brings a fundamental change especially to the function of the trainer, and the function of the trainer is not to teach but to guide. In asynchronous education, education can be given and received in a low infrastructure or a normal internet environment. In asynchronous learning environments, a student-centered system is taken as a basis instead of an educator. All the contents of the environment are prepared and presented with a student focus (Can, 2008).

Asynchronous education is an educational activity that a person does by himself or under the direction of the teacher. For this reason, in cases where the necessary materials, equipment and materials are sufficient and the person has high motivation, learning can result in 80% success (Işık et al., 2010).

Asynchronous learning platforms are platforms in which the students can initiate and finish the education independently from the teacher. At this point, it is actualised when the materials and the informative videos are uploaded to the system and, thus, students use these anytime and anywhere. The use of the documents as well as the duration that student spends on the system are checked in general. Changes might be done for the students to access the information through process assessment. This brings a fundamental change especially, to the function of the teacher, thus turns the function of teacher from teaching into leading.

It is a learning model in which the communication is mono-directional among teacher-student and student-student groups in which the learning-teaching activities take place. Throughout this model, students and teachers cannot communicate among themselves and cannot get responses to their questions. Teaching through letters radio, television and mono-directional internet can be set as examples. In this model, teachers provide information regarding their lessons to their students through web-based pages. Students can receive these information and study anytime. In this model, an access to internet by the learners is sufficient (Olçay, 2011).

There are arrangements within distant education medias as blended learning framework, which allow synchronic and asynchronous distant education models blend with face-to-face education designs. This model is especially seen in vocational education applications (Taşpınar, 2014).

It is possible to come across different definitions in the literature on blended learning. One of them defined blended learning as a program. According to this, Blended Learning is not only the application of different knowledge transfer methods by mixing, but also the process of transferring the right talents to the right person at the right time by using technology and learning methods correctly in order to obtain the highest level of efficiency from this program (Singh & Reed, 2001).

In this study, in the light of the above, it is aimed to study how students studying at Northern Cyprus universities evaluate the online education they have received during the pandemic process and to contribute to the literature. Thus, the problem sentence of the research was determined: "What are the Opinions of University Students in Northern Cyprus on Online Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic Process?" The following sub-problems were created in order to answer the problem sentence of the research:

- 1) What are the advantages and disadvantages of using online education during the pandemic process, according to students?
- 2) Are online courses preferred to be followed live (synchronously) or by watching videos (asynchronous)?
- 3) Do students prefer face-to-face education, online education or a combination of both?

4) According to the students, what are the advantages and disadvantages of online education in terms of theoretical and applied courses?

5) How do students evaluate the adequacy and efficiency of the materials (videos, power points, etc.) presented to them during the online training they received during the pandemic?

6) How do students evaluate the difficulties they experience while using the online education system and the usefulness of the system?

2. Method

2.1. Model of the Research

In this research, "case study" model was used on the basis of depiction within the framework of the opinions of postgraduate students in North Cyprus. Case study is one of the qualitative research patterns. In the case study model, one factor or more are wholly researched and detailed search on how they affect or effect that specific case (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016).

2.2. Population and sample

In this research, students who have higher education in Nicosia, Famagusta, Girne and Lefke districts in Northern Cyprus were determined as the universe. The researcher used easily accessible case sampling, which is one of the "purposive sampling" types, which is one of the sampling methods, aiming to add speed, practicality and economy to the research. According to this, a total of 20 students, 18 girls, 2 boys, 11 students first grade, 9 of them second grade, 12 students between the ages 18-19, 5 students between the ages 20-21 and 3 students between the ages 22-23 has been reached.

2.3. Data collecting tool

In this research, a semi-structured interview form was developed by the researcher regarding the postgraduate students' opinions on distant education during the pandemic. The interview form is composed of 6 open-ended questions, that are related with the advantages and the disadvantages of online education during pandemic, students' reasons why they follow the online education synchronically or asynchronously, students' reasons why they would prefer face-to-face education, online education or mixed education, the advantages and disadvantages of online education regarding the theoretical and applied courses, the sufficiency and effectiveness of the materials provided with the online education, the difficulties while using the online education system and the usefulness of the system. During the interviews, the questions prepared in advance were asked in a face-to-face fashion in conversation format.

2.4. Data Analysis

"Content analysis" was used in the evaluation of the qualitative data. The main event in the content analysis is to gather similar data next to themes and notions and organise them as in a manner where reader will be able to comprehend (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016).

3. Findings

The findings of the research have been presented on the basis of sub-problems. Findings are given as tables with explanations underneath.

Table 1. Student opinions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the online education during the pandemic

Advantages		Disadvantages	
Theme	F	Theme	F
Staying home and staying safe while reducing the infection risk	6	Inability to take applied courses	10
Theoretical lessons are adaptable to online education	3	Technological problems	3
Re-accessing opportunities to the classes	2	Less productivity on courses	3
No disruption in online classes and continuity	2	Not as effective as face-to-face education	3
Not wasting time and money	2	Inability to allocate time for the courses and follow the lessons	1
No advantages at all	2	Less seriousness during the lessons	1
Developments in the field of informatics	2	Experiencing difficulties	1
Calmer atmosphere at homes	1		
High productivity by the means of the tools	1		
	1		

In Table 1, when the student opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of online education during the pandemic, 6 participants indicated that they protected their health by staying home and staying safe while reducing the risk of, 3 participants indicated that the theoretical courses are more adaptable to online education, 2 participants stated that they have opportunities to re-access the classes, 2 participants stated that the online courses have no disruptions and carry on, 2 participants indicated that online courses have no advantages at all, 2 participants stated that there is no money or time waste through online courses while other remaining participants stated that there is a development in the field of informatics, there is a calmer atmosphere at homes and they receive high productivity by the means of the tools. On the other hand, considering the students' opinions on disadvantages of the online courses during the pandemic, 10 students stated that applied courses should not be carried out through online education, 3 participants expressed that it is not as effective as the face-to-face-education while remaining participants stated that they are not able to allocate time and attend to classes, there is less seriousness during the courses, and they have difficulties.

Table 2. Student opinions regarding the reasons to follow the online courses synchronously and asynchronously

Synchronously		Asynchronously	
Theme	F	Theme	F
Simultaneously asking questions in case of lack of comprehension	7	Opportunities to re-watch the videos	5
Easier way of communication	2	Being easier	
Being better in theoretical courses	2	Being easier to remember	1
Better comprehension of the course		Easier way for working students to follow the courses	1

In Table 2, considering the students' opinions on their reasons to follow the courses synchronously, it is indicated that 7 participants stated that they have opportunities to ask immediate questions in case there is something they do not fully comprehend, 2 participants stated that it has an easier way of communication, 2 participants indicated that it is better in terms of theoretical courses and 1 participant stated that better comprehension is possible through the online courses. On the other hand, considering the students' opinions on their reasons to follow the courses asynchronously, it is indicated that 5 participants stated that they have the opportunities to re-watch the course videos while remaining participants stated that it is easier for them to keep the information in their minds, and it is easier for working students to follow the courses through online education.

Table 3: Student opinions regarding their tendencies towards the face-to-face education, online Education or blended education

Theme	F
Face-to-face	11
Blended	7
Online	2

Table 3 indicated that 11 participants tend to prefer face-to-face-education while 7 tend to prefer online education as 2 participants tend to prefer online education in their future academic lives.

Table 4. Student opinions regarding the reasons for their tendencies towards the face-to-face education, online education or blended education

Face-to-face Education		Online Education		Blended Education	
Theme	F	Theme	F	Theme	F
More productive Manual skill is required in our department	4	It is better in terms of health during the pandemic	2	Not missing the classes due to the mass- transportation delays in addition to time-effective feature of the online courses	3
Our department is not convenient for online education	1	Time-effective	1	It is not correct to perform all courses only as face-to-face or online because of the pandemic.	1
Full knowledge of the topics	1			I both work and study	1
Technical problems may arise	1			Online education for theoretical courses and face-to-face education for the applied courses	1
I do not think that I can learn through online education	1				

In Table 4, when the student opinions regarding the reasons for their tendencies to prefer face-to-face education in their future academic lives are taken into consideration, it can be seen that 4 participants stated that face-to-face education is more productive, 1 student indicated that manual skill is required for the department, 1 participant stated that it will be better in terms of full knowledge of the lectures as 1 participant stated that technical problems may arise and 1 participant indicated that s/he does not think that s/he can learn through online education.

When the student opinions regarding the reasons for their tendencies to prefer online education in their future academic lives are taken into consideration, 2 participants stated that online education is better in terms of health due to the pandemic and 1 participant expressed that it is more time effective.

When the student opinions regarding the reasons for their tendencies to prefer blended education in their future academic lives are taken into consideration, 3 participants stated that they do not miss the classes due to mass-transportation delays as well as the online course are time effective, 1 participant indicated that it is not correct to perform all classes merely through face-to-face education or online education, 1 participant stated that s/he prefers blended education because s/he both works and studies and remaining 1 participant indicated that theoretical courses are online while the applied courses are face-to-face education.

Table 5. Students' opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of online education in terms of theoretical and applied courses

Advantages		Disadvantages	
Theme	F	Theme	F
It is more convenient to receive online education theoretically	7	Not being able to perform one-to-one application in applied courses	9
Concentrating and attending the course at home at a calmer atmosphere	2	Insufficient productivity of the courses	3
Saving time	2	Lacking the comprehension of the topics due to material insufficiency	1
Applied courses are more productive in face-to-face education	2	Less opportunities to correct the mistakes in case of false application	1
Education opportunities for disabled individuals	1		
Self-improvement in the field of informatics			
Full knowledge in all topics in online education	1		
Being able to check during online courses	1		
Easy connection to the education through technological tools in distant education platform	1		

Considering the students' opinion on the advantages of the online education in terms of theoretical and applied courses, Table 5 indicated that 7 participants stated that it is more convenient to take online education in terms of theoretical courses, 2 participants stated that they concentrate on the courses in a calmer atmosphere at home while attending the courses, 2 participants stated that they save time, 2 participants indicated that applied courses are more productive in face-to-face education while remaining participants stated

that there is more opportunity for the disabled individuals to access education as well as self-development in the field of informatics, being able to make checking during the online courses and easily connect to education through technological tools on distant education platform. On the other hand, considering the students' opinion on the disadvantages of the online education in terms of theoretical and applied courses, 9 participants stated that there is not any opportunity to be able to perform one-to-one application in applied courses, 3 participants stated that the online courses are insufficiently productive, 1 participant stated that there is less comprehension due to the lack of materials and 1 participant stated that there is less chance to correct the mistakes in case of any false application

Table 6. Students' opinions on the adequacy and efficiency of the materials presented in the courses in the online education they received during the pandemic

Theme	F
The materials presented in the courses are productive, explanatory, and sufficient	11
Materials are not sufficient for each course	5
Insufficient for applied courses	1
Lack of technological information	1

In Table 6, considering the students' opinions on the adequacy and efficiency of the materials presented in the courses in the Online Education they received during the pandemic, it is indicated that 11 participants stated that the materials presented in the courses are productive, explanatory and sufficient, 5 participants stated that materials are not sufficient for each course, 1 participant stated that it is insufficient for applied courses and 1 participant stated that there is lack of technological information.

Table 7. Students' opinions on the usefulness of the online education system and the difficulties they experienced while using the system

Theme	F
Technological problems	15
System was useful and explanatory, not complex	4
It is hard to use the system	3
Lack of concentration	2

Regarding the consideration of the students' opinions on the usefulness of the online education system and the difficulties they experienced while using the system, it is seen that 15 participants stated that they experienced technological problems, 4 participants commented that the system was useful and explanatory rather than being complex, 3 participants indicated that it is hard to use the system and 2 participants stated that they experienced lack of concentration.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

According to the qualitative results of the research, it is determined that there are advantages and disadvantages of online education during the pandemic. According to the

opinions obtained by the participant students, the advantages of the online education include the health protection through staying home and staying safe, thus online courses are convenient, they have the opportunity to re-access the courses, there is no disruption in the online courses, online courses are time and cost effective, it is a development in the field of informatics, they study in a calmer atmosphere at homes and high productivity due to the usefulness of the tools. Through the evaluation of the researches according to the topics, Almaghashas and Alsayari (2020), suggest that distant education create an important advantage in terms of meeting the educational needs, and Kaden (2020), suggest similarly that the most important advantage of the distant education during COVID-19 pandemic creates a support for learning. In their study on the university students regarding the evaluation of distant education, Andoh et al. (2020), suggest that the opinion obtained is that it is more effective way of using the technological means. In another study De Paepe et al. (2018) suggest that the advantages of the distant education are the use of technology and awareness that are raised along with the skills in this manner. Horspool and Lange (2012), on the other hand, suggest that the most important advantage of the distant education is the spatial facilitation and also, time-effectiveness considering the reach of school buildings along with high quality communication facilitation through online platforms as well as learning easiness in terms of space. In a study conducted by Chan et al. (2007) during the Sars pandemic period, they revealed that thanks to the platforms that provide distance education during the epidemic period, information can be shared and multiplied and educational needs can be met by providing education in this way. Yolcu (2020) suggests that the participant students of the study deem the advantageous parts of the distant education as re-accessibility of the courses and following them in a rather calmer atmosphere. When the study findings are evaluated, it is determined that literature findings and the results of this study show consistency.

Often expressed disadvantages of the online education according to this study, are online education is not adaptable on applied courses, technological problems, online education is not as effective as face-to-face education, less seriousness during the classes and having difficulties. Keskin and Kaya (2020), suggest by their study according to the evaluation of the distant education that students feel failure in terms of communication and experience technical problems during the education. DePaepe et al (2018) suggest the disadvantages of online education arise from the technical support incompetence while Horspool and Lange (2012) suggest that student perceptions towards the disadvantages are seen as the less opportunities to socialisation. Through a study conducted on students, Serçemeli and Kurnaz (2020) suggest that one of the disadvantages of distant education is identified as the interaction insufficiency among the teachers and the students. By the findings of this study, it can be suggested that the sudden emergence and rapid spread of the disease, thus, rapid, and sudden transition to the distant education process can be a factor for not being able to be ready for this process.

As per to the first case by March 11 in TRNC, National Education Ministry and YÖK announced that distant education is in force by March 23. Therefore, short period of time for the transition from classical face-to-face education to distant education can be related with unreadiness to this process.

Another finding obtained from the students by this study is that they tend to follow the online courses synchronously and asynchronously. The findings by the synchronous following of the courses indicate that students can convey instant questions if there is something they do not fully understand, communication can be produced easier, it is better in terms of theoretical courses and fully comprehension of the courses. On the other hand, for the asynchronous following of the courses, the findings indicated that the videos are available for re-watching, it is better for keeping the course contents in their minds and it is

easier for working students to attend courses. While Yorgancı (2014) defines the synchronous education as a bipartite environment where students and teachers are in different places and interact with each other simultaneously, asynchronous education is defined as an education system where there is no communication between the students and teachers and the necessary materials and documents are shared with students on internet platforms independent of the space and time. Synchronous education enables interaction between teachers and students through various ways and along with eliminating the necessity to exist in the same place, it also enables to benefit from the advantages of the face-to-face education. Asynchronous education, however, enables the learner to learn on him/herself without depending on the teacher. Some studies conducted in China specifically concentrated on the applications in secondary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. When these applications are evaluated, it is seen that teachers send students a studying plan and share the course materials with the students through various platforms. It is determined that teachers, students, and parents are connected through QQ, WeChat and DingTalk online platforms. It can be suggested that the courses are asynchronous, in general, however the communication process is synchronous (Cai and Wand, 2020; Dai and Lin, 2020; Xia, 2020; Xie and Yang, 2020).

In this study, students expressed whether they tend to prefer face-to-face education, blended education, or online education for their future academic lives. The reasons that the students tend to prefer face-to-face education in their future lives can be listed as they express that the face-to-face education is more productive, their departments require manual skills, it is better to grasp the essence of the knowledge, technical problems may arise in online education, and they think that they cannot learn anything from online education. The reasons that the students tend to prefer online education for their future academic lives can be indicated as online education is better in terms of health during the pandemic as well as it is time saving. On the other hand, the reasons that students tend to prefer blended education in their future academic lives can be suggested as that they do not miss the classes because of the delays they might be exposed to by the mass transportation, the online classes save more time and it is not correct to perform classes merely through face-to-face education or online education because of the pandemic, they tend to prefer blended education since working and studying at the same time and theoretical courses can be conducted as online and applied courses can be conducted as face-to-face education system. Serçemeli and Kurnaz (2020) suggested in their study towards distant education that the courses performed through distant education are convenient to carry on synchronously or asynchronously. In synchronous courses, students and teacher can communicate with each other in a virtual class medium during the class. Through this method, students can direct simultaneous questions, make demands regarding the miscomprehended information, and have the opportunity to discuss with each other. In asynchronous courses students can access to the course whenever or wherever through the internet and follow the courses through materials such as videos and voice records that are pre-uploaded to the system. In this method, students cannot convey their questions and make immediate connections to their teachers.

The advantages and disadvantages of the online education in terms of theoretical and applied courses by the students are another finding aspect of this study. The advantages of the online education in terms of theoretical and applied courses can be listed as the online education is more convenient to be received theoretically, more concentration and following to the course in a calmer atmosphere, time saving, applied courses are more productive in face-to-face education, education opportunities for disabled individuals, self-development opportunities in the field of informatics, full knowledge of the topics in online education, opportunities to make checking during the online education and easy connection through technological means on distant education platforms. Deneui and Dodge (2006) and

Şenol, Lesinger and Çağlar (2021,a) stated that the biggest advantage of distance education is its independence from time and place. The disadvantages of online education in terms of students' theoretical and applied courses can be stated as not being able to make one-to-one applications in practical lessons, not being able to fully understand the subject due to the lack of materials, the lessons are not efficient enough, and the chance of correcting when wrong application is made is low. In the study, distant education that was written by Demirel, Ö. & Kaya, Z. (2017), the disadvantages of the distant education are considered as the insufficient benefitting from the applied parts of the courses.

Another finding obtained from the students through this study is that the competency and productivity of the materials presented in the online courses during the pandemic. The findings indicate that the materials presented in the courses are productive, explanatory, and sufficient, however not for all courses, especially for applied courses and there is lack of technological information. In their studies towards distant education Genç and Gümrükçüoğlu (2020) suggest that 3.1 per cent of their participant students indicated that they “fully benefitted” from the materials that the teachers uploaded to the system while 25.2 per cent indicated they “benefitted”. While 12.8 per cent of the participants indicated that they “fully unbenefitted”, 39.6 per cent indicated that they “could not benefit” as 19.3 per cent indicated that they are “not sure whether benefitted or not” from the materials. According to these results, 52.4 per cent of the participant students indicated that they could not have benefitted from the course materials while 28.3 could have benefitted. According to these, students substantially could not benefit from the course materials used in the distant education.

The last findings of this research are the usefulness of the system and the difficulties while using the system. Students expressed that they have encountered technological problems while using the online education system, the system is useful and explanatory, not complex; it is difficult to use the system and they have concentration loss problems. In a similar study, Koç (2020), Şenol, H., Lesinger, Y. F. and Çağlar, M. (2021,a; 2021,b) suggest that due to the technical problems in the distant education there are interaction discrepancies between teachers and students, irregular attendance of the students to the classes and concentration loss by the students.

5. Recommendations

Following recommendations can be listed according to the results of this study:

In this study, the advantages, and disadvantages of online courses during the pandemic are emphasised. According to this, students expressed that protecting their health by staying home and staying safe as well as reducing the spread risk are advantages. On the other hand, students also expressed the disadvantages of the online education are the failure to adapt the applied courses. In this context, theoretical courses may carry on online s applied course can be performed as face-to-face education in accordance with social distancing and general hygiene rules.

In this study, students expressed their reasons to follow their courses synchronously and asynchronously. According to this, students stated that they synchronously follow the courses for they can ask immediate questions in case they do not understand something, they can communicate in an easier way, it is better in terms of theoretical courses and better grasp of the content of the courses. On the other hand, students stated that they asynchronously follow the courses for they have the opportunity to re-watch the videos, it is easier, is it better to hold it in mind and it is better for working students to follow the classes. In distant education programmes, the contents from synchronous education should not be provided merely, but also the sources towards the classes should be prepared and asynchronous education should be provided to the students.

Most of the students tend to prefer face-to-face education in their future academic lives. They expressed that face-to-face education is more productive when compared to online and blended education system. It can be suggested that the competences of the students can be increased in order to enhance the productivity of the online education along with the face-to-face education. Especially, programme configurations for the transition into blended education and the existence of the teachers can be enhanced.

In this research, students expressed the advantages and the disadvantages of the online education in terms of theoretical and applied courses. According to this, students stated that it is more convenient for the theoretical courses to be performed online, on the other hand, they expressed that one-to-one application is not possible in applied courses. In this context, the classes can be face-to-face in applied courses and online in theoretical courses.

Students determined that the materials presented in the online courses presented during the pandemic are productive, explanatory, and sufficient however not for all courses, especially they are insufficient for applied courses and there are several technological information lacks. At this point, the course contents and course materials should be prepared in order to enable them to follow their very process on their own and correct their mistakes. Additionally, pre-courses on computing skills can be provided to the students.

Students expressed that they experience technological problems in the online education system, and the system is not useful and explanatory, it is difficult to use the system and they experience loss of concentration. With this context, while selecting the education administration systems that would be used while presenting the contexts to the student, a system that works unproblematically can be preferred. Also, motivational regression due to constant studying alone should also be taken into consideration and measures towards this should be taken.

References

- Almaghaslah D., & Alsayari, A. (2020). The effects of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak on academic staff members: A case study of a Pharmacy School in Saudi Arabia. *Risk Management and Healthcare Policy*, 13, 795-802. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2147/RMHP.S260918>
- Can, Ş. (2008). Fen eğitiminde web tabanlı eğitim, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Celal Bayar Üniversitesi, Manisa.
- Chan, S. S., So, W. K., Wong, D. C., Lee, A. C., & Tiwari, A. (2007). Improving older adults' knowledge and practice of preventive measures through a telephone health education during the SARS epidemic in Hong Kong: a pilot study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 244(7), 1120-1127. DOI: DOI: [10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2006.04.019](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2006.04.019)
- Dai, D., & Lin, G. (2020), L., Li, F., Wu, S. and Zhou, M. (2020). Online home study plan for postponed 2020 spring semester during the COVID-19 epidemic: A case study of Tangquan Middle School in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, China. *Best Evidence of Chinese Education*, 4 (2), 543-547. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3555539>
- Deneui, D., & Dodge, T. (2006). Asynchronous Learning Networks and Student Outcomes: The Utility of Online Learning Components in Hybrid Courses. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 33(4), 256-259.
- De Paepe, L., Zhu, C., & DePryck, K. (2018). Drop-out, retention, satisfaction, and attainment of online learners of Dutch in adult education. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 17(3), 303-323.
- Demirel, Ö. & Kaya, Z. (2017). Eğitim ile ilgili temel kavramlar. Ankara: Pegama Yayıncılık.

- Üstün Aksoy, Y. (2022). Opinions of postgraduate students in Northern Cyprus towards distant education during COVID-19 pandemic. *World Journal on Educational Technology: Current Issues*, 14(2), 329-342. <https://doi.org/10.18844/wjet.v14i2.6908>
- Genç, M , Ay, M , Gümrükçüoğlu, S . (2021). The Views of Postgraduate Education Students in the Field of Theology on Distance Education in the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Process. *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* , 21 (1) , 71-97. DOI: 10.33415/daad.840675.
- Horspool, A., & Lange, C. (2012). Applying the scholarship of teaching and learning: Student perceptions, behaviours and success online and face-to-face. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37(1), 73-88.
- Işık, A. H., Karacı, A., Özkaraca, O., ve Biroğul, S. (2010). Web tabanlı eş zamanlı (senkron) uzaktan eğitim sistemlerinin karşılaştırmalı analizi. *Akademik Bilişim*, 10-12.
- Kaden, U. (2020). COVID-19 school closure-related changes to the professional life of a k-12 teacher. *Education Sciences*, 10(6), 165. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10060165>
- Kaya, Z. (2002). Uzaktan eğitim. Ankara: Pegama Yayıncılık.
- Kawano, S., & Kakehashi, M. (2015). Substantial impact of school closure on the transmission dynamics during the pandemic flu H1N1-2009 in Oita, Japan. *PloS one*, 10(12). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0144839>
- Keskin, M, & Özer-Kaya, D. (2020). Evaluation of Students' Feedbacks on Web-Based Distance Education in the COVID-19 Process. *İzmir Kâtip Çelebi Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi*, 5(2), 59-67.
- Koç, E. (2020). An evaluation of distance learning in higher education through the eyes of course instructors. *Akdeniz Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(1), 25-39.
- Olçay, A. (2011). Turizm Eğitiminde Web Tabanlı Öğretimin Öğrenci Başarısına Etkisi "Gaziantep Üniversitesi Turizm ve Otelcilik Meslek Yüksekokulu Örneği". Unpublished PhD Thesis Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Ana Bilim Dalı, Elazığ.
- Özkaraca, O. (2005). İnternet tabanlı güç elektroniği eğitimi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
- Serçemeli, M., & Kurnaz, E. (2020). A Research on Students' Perspectives to Distance Education and Distance Accounting Education in The COVID-19 Pandemia Period. *Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 4(1), 40-53.
- Şenol, H., Lesinger, Y. F. & Çağlar, M. (2021,a). Pros and Cons of Online Education: Perceptions of Higher Education Students During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies*, Cilt No: 694, sayı no:1, s.46-59.
- Şenol, H., Lesinger, F.Y., Çağlar, M. (2021,b). Evaluation of Online Education Delivered by the Universities During Pandemic COVID-19: A Case of North Cyprus. *TOJET: Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, April 2021, volume 20, issue 2. P.51-61.
- Singh, H., and Reed, C. (2001). A white paper: Achieving success with blended learning. Centra software, 1, 1-11.
- Taşpınar, M. (2014). Distance Education in Vocational Training and Societal Perception, *Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 3(4), 1.
- TRNC Health Ministry (2020). COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2 Infection) accessed through <https://saglik.gov.ct.tr> . Access Date: 26.01.22.
- World Health Organization (WHO). Q&As on COVID-19 and related health topics, Retrieved May 12, 2020, from <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub>.
- Xia, J. (2020). Practical exploration of school-family cooperative education during the COVID- 19 epidemic: A case study of Zhenjiang Experimental School in Jiangsu Province, China. *Best Evidence of Chinese Education*, 4 (2), 521-528. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3555523>
- Xie, Z., & Yang, J. (2020). Autonomous learning of elementary students at home during the COVID-19 epidemic: A case study of the Second Elementary School in Daxie, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province,

- Üstün Aksoy, Y (2022). Opinions of postgraduate students in Northern Cyprus towards distant education during COVID-19 pandemic. *World Journal on Educational Technology: Current Issues*, 14(2), 329-342. <https://doi.org/10.18844/wjet.v14i2.6908>
- China. *Best Evidence of Chinese Education*, 4 (2), 535-541. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3555537>
- Yıldırım, A., Şimşek, H. (2016). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*, (6.baskı). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Yolcu, H. (2020). Preservice elementary teachers' distance education experiences at the time of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. *Açıköğretim Uygulamaları ve Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(4), 237-250.
- Yorgancı, S. (2014). The Effects of Web Based Distance Education Method on Students' Mathematics Achievements. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 23 (3), 1401-1420.
- Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) (2020). Basın açıklaması, <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Sayfalar/Haberler/2020/>, Erişim tarihi: 26.01.22.