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Emergency Distance Education Process from the Perspectives of Academicians

Gürhan Durak, Serkan Çankaya

Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic, which was effective all over the world in early 2020, has deeply affected educational institutions. As a result, universities in Turkey quickly began their emergency distance education applications. Faculty members are the most important executors of this process. In this respect, the purpose of this study was to examine the views of faculty members about emergency distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic. In this qualitatively designed study, the views of 18 lecturers from a state university were determined. As the data collection tool, an online questionnaire form made up of open-ended questions was used. The data were analyzed using the content analysis method, and the themes were formed. According to the results, the academicians generally expressed their high level of dissatisfaction with the distance education policies of their university and with the distance education system used in the 2019-2020 Spring Term. In the 2020-2021 Fall semester, the university took these criticisms into account, changed their distance education policy, and succeeded in gaining the satisfaction of the academicians again by choosing Microsoft Teams, a more integrated system. Although the academicians were generally satisfied with the features of Microsoft Teams, they also reported some criticisms regarding the software such as the deficiency in its exam feature, connection problems, design deficiencies and difficulties in following the students. To conclude, all the academicians participating in the study stated that they wanted to continue to use distance education tools in an integrated manner in their lessons after the pandemic.

Keywords: covid-19, distance education, emergency distance education, learning management systems, importance of live lectures

Introduction

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which was effective all over the world in early 2020, restaurants, cafes, educational institutions, and all other places where people gather were closed, and quarantine practices at various levels began (Mohmmed et al., 2020). In the summer, the measurements were eased, and normalization steps such as reopening restaurants, cafes and educational institutions were taken within the framework of certain rules. However, especially with the arrival of the winter months, the increase in the number of cases has accelerated. The number of daily cases, which was around 70,000 throughout the world in the summer, has now been over 500,000 per day as of November. This situation caused countries to revert to their quarantine practices.

Especially the education community was deeply affected by this situation (Bozkurt et al., 2020). In this process, educational institutions unable to provide face-to-face education tried to continue their activities via distance education (Durak et al., 2020). In Turkey, primary schools, secondary schools and high schools, which all belong to the Ministry of National Education, completed the Spring Term via distance education. With the Fall Term, face-to-face education started with a limited number of students at some school levels, yet with the increase in the number of cases, the Ministry of National Education announced on November 18, 2020 that education would continue entirely via distance education (Selçuk, 2020). Universities in Turkey belong to the Higher Education Council (YOK). In the press release of Yekta Saraç, the chairman of YOK, on March 18, 2020, he stated that universities would

continue their activities completely via distance education (Saraç, 2020). Universities, which completed the Spring Term via distance education, continued their distance education practices in the Fall Term, except for some departments requiring applied education. It could be stated that in this process, almost none of the universities gave face-to-face education to their students. It could also be stated that many universities, which were not prepared for distance education in the Spring Term, were more prepared for distance education applications in the Fall term. It is seen that institutions experiencing technical problems such as connection problems have made new investments especially in infrastructure. These investments include purchasing or renting new servers, purchasing software licenses and recruiting new staff in distance education units.

Studies indicate that the focus of educational institutions, especially in the Spring Term, was not on pedagogy but was limited to presenting the curriculum online using various tools (Eder, 2020). In order for online learning to be successful, it should be planned systematically and the instructional design should be developed (Branch & Dousay, 2015). These design processes have great influence on the quality of distance education (Hodges et al., 2020). Another issue related to the success of distance education is the training of teachers (Shattuck et al., 2011). Since there was not enough time and opportunities to train the teachers during the pandemic process or to plan the distance education systematically, the distance education practices carried out in the Spring Term were called "emergency distance education" (Toquero, 2020). In a study conducted, Distance Education administrators of universities mostly stated that they were not sure about the preparations of the academic staff for this process (Durak et al., 2020). In addition, the fact that the universities were not prepared for their technical infrastructures caused frequent connection and technical problems in this process. All these factors may cause a negative change in the attitudes of some teachers who have had an unsuccessful experience in distance education (Gaeth et al., 1997). The wrong preferences made by educational institutions (learning management system and live lecture software preferences, etc.) may also have caused teachers to experience these negative situations in this process.

Purpose and Importance

As a result of the emergency distance education practices carried out by universities in the Covid-19 process, identifying the experiences of academicians in this process could be said to be important in terms of examining the process from a different perspective and developing suggestions that might be more beneficial for institutions and students. It is important to examine especially the changes experienced in the Fall and Spring Terms from the perspectives of academicians. One of the main purposes of studies conducted on academicians or students is to provide the best-quality education for students. One important way to evaluate the distance education practices of universities in the Covid-19 process is to the get the views of academicians as well as of students. Correcting the negative processes in the distance education systems of institutions in line with the views of the academicians and providing a feedback mechanism accordingly will act as a draft in terms of the quality reports of the universities. Similarly, another problem to be addressed is that institutions should remove the deficiencies in their current distance education systems to make them more qualified and sustainable. The present study, in which the academicians reported their experiences regarding the process and expressed their views about the successful or unsuccessful practices related to educational activities in the pandemic process, is thought to constitute the basis of future research to be conducted. Besides all, in order to reveal the importance of the concepts related to recent distance education / online learning, the changes in the number of studies regarding the concepts of "online learning / online learning" included in the Web of Science database by year are presented in Figure 1.
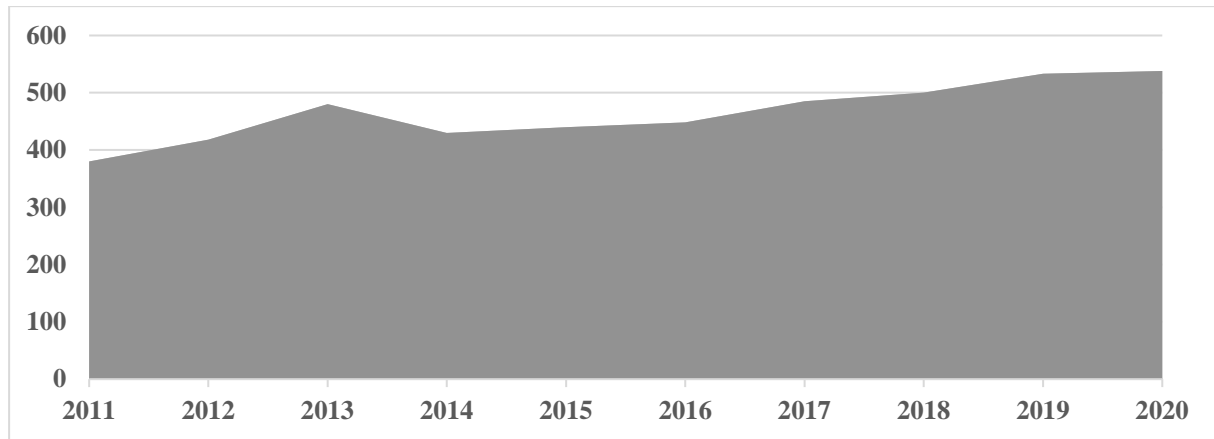
Figure 1. Number of Papers in Web of Science Database

As can be seen in Figure 1, the number of scientific studies on online learning only in the field of educational research has increased over the years. This situation could be considered to be an indication that the importance of online learning / distance education is gradually increasing and will become an indispensable part of education. Except for the graph that includes only the numbers in the field of educational research, the number of studies on online learning / distance education in almost every field has reached an incredible level in line with the impact of the Pandemic period. In this period, which has influenced the whole world, determining academicians' views, which act as a kind of feedback for the practices of higher education institutions regarding emergency distance education, could be said to contribute to the literature. In this respect, the purpose of this study was to examine the views of academicians about the distance education process experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Related Literature

One of the most important elements in emergency distance education has emerged as mutual interaction with students. It is now important to meet not only the educational needs but also the social needs of students, who have been in isolation for a long time. In this respect, the use of live lecture software is considered to be essential for effective communication with students (Rubinger et al., 2020). Considering the impact of the Covid-19 (Agormedah, Adu Henaku, Ayite, Apori Ansah, 2020; Elvis Mbiydzenyuy, 2020), this is especially important for young children with low levels of self-learning skills. It is seen that there are many studies in literature regarding live lecture software recommended by YOK (Herand & Hatipoğlu, 2014; Işık et al., 2010; İzmirli & Akyüz, 2017; Lavolette et al., 2010; Schullo et al., 2007; Yıldırım et al. , 2011). Moreover, with the Fall Term, YOK stated in its letter dated 16.09.2020 and numbered E.499534 that within the framework of the principles to be followed in relation to Extra Class Load Payment, faculty members will be paid only for the extra loads of the live lectures they will teach (Kapıcıoğlu, 2020). Consequently, live lectures could be said to be one of the most important tools for effective communication with students. At this point, it could be stated that live lectures alone are not enough and that the lecturer should integrate the elements into the lesson design to ensure interaction. In one study, a large number of students stated that they had difficulty understanding the subjects in live lectures; that the teacher passed the subjects very quickly; and that there was not enough time to ask questions, to discuss or to take notes (Babinčáková & Bernard, 2020). In a large-scale study conducted in Turkey, 51% of students reported that their teachers had 'bad' or 'very bad' distance education skills (Karadağ & Yucel, 2020). However, lack of live lectures will mean that the lecturer will face great limitations. In another study conducted in Indonesia, one of the most important problems faced by the students taking distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic process was lack of interaction due to lack of live lectures (Hidayat et al., 2020).

Another effect of the Covid-19 pandemic process on students and teachers is the psychological dimensions arising from isolation. In a study, it was revealed that staying at home negatively affected

the teaching and learning processes of teachers and students as a result of such factors as stress, anxiety, depression, domestic violence and divorce (Al Lily et al., 2020).

Another situation experienced regarding distance education in this process is related to technical problems. In a study conducted in Slovakia, 10% of the students complained about the slow Internet and poor video quality. In one other comprehensive study carried out in Turkey, 48% of the students stated that the sound and video quality of the distance education system was 'bad' or 'very bad (Karadağ & Yucel, 2020).

In a study conducted by Durak (2014) to examine the delivery of an undergraduate course entirely via distance education, it was found that the following points should be taken into consideration for a good-quality online course: obeying the principles of online course design, ensuring learners' interaction with each other, content, interface and with teachers, providing direct access to course resources, providing adequate guidance and timely feedback, ensuring the ideal number of learners and the control over them, providing learners with social support, providing sufficient motivation, using environments that accommodate both synchronous and asynchronous applications rather than using environments that involve only one of both, teachers' allocating sufficient time to prepare for lessons, preparing applications for cooperation thanks to activities such as group assignments, providing the necessary equipment for the lesson, and ensuring that the lesson hours are the most appropriate hours for the learners.

Research Method

Research Model

In this study, the purpose was to determine the views of academicians about distance education in the Covid-19 process in a medium-scale university in Turkey. In line with this purpose, the early distance education practices of the university during the pandemic process were compared with the current distance education practices of the same university this academic term. Within the scope of the study, the 2019-2020 Spring Term was coded as P1, and the 2020-2021 Fall Term was coded as P2. This study, which was carried out using the qualitative design, was planned as a case study for detailed examination of the research topic.

Data Collection Tool

In this study, a semi-structured interview form was prepared to collect the research data. This form was sent to the participants online, and their responses were collected online as well. The questions directed to the participants were prepared by examining the studies in this field in literature as well as by considering the basic dimensions of distance education.

Participants

The participants of the study were academicians from Balıkesir University. While determining the research sample, the participants were selected from different departments as much as possible. The purpose of doing this was to obtain more diversity in the data. Similarly, a balance in terms of gender was ensured in order to avoid any judgment that research results represent a single gender. Consequently, the responses of a total of 18 academicians from 7 different departments were included in this study. The academicians were coded as A1, A2…A18, and the findings of the study were presented using this coding.

Data Analysis

The research data collected with the online data collection tool of Google Forms were first checked and categorized on the basis of questions. Later, the data were arranged in tables for use in qualitative data analysis. Generally, the data analysis process in qualitative research includes the stages of description, analysis and interpretation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). This process consists of determining what the participants interviewed said, establishing relationships between themes and sub-themes, and finally interpreting the findings within the context of the research.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure validity and reliability, in the interview form, there were no questions that might reveal the identities of the participants such as name and surname. In addition, the participants were informed that their answers would be used only for academic purposes. The purpose of doing this was to allow the participants to respond to the interview questions in a sincere manner.

Findings

This section presents the analysis results of the data obtained within the scope of the purpose of the study. Figure 3 shows the graph related to the number of courses taught by the academicians during the current academic term (Figure 2) and the distance education tools they used in their lessons.
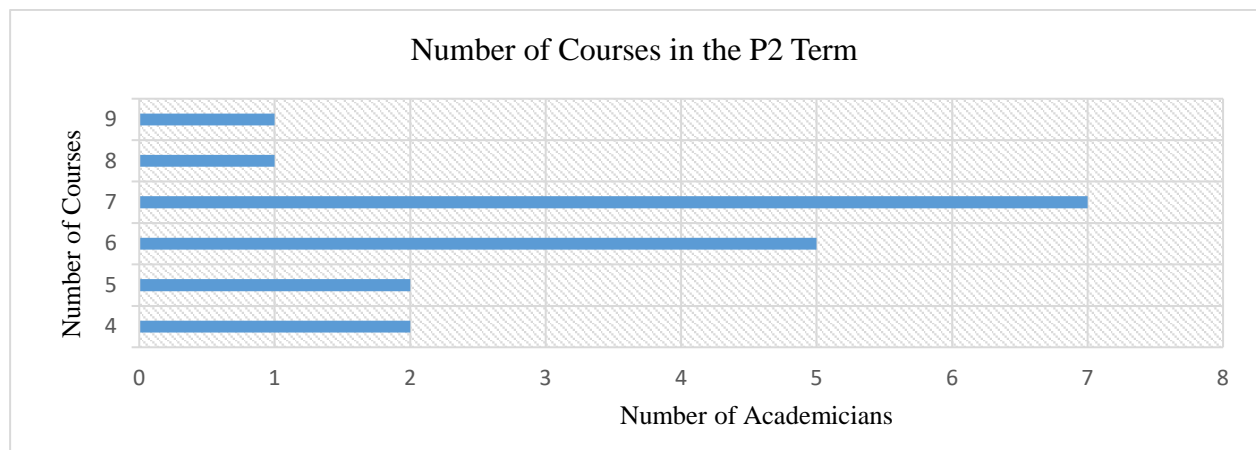
Figure 2. Number of Courses Given by the Academicians in P2 Term.

According to Figure 2, the academicians gave 4 to 9 courses via distance education this term. The academicians were asked about the distance education tools they used in their lessons during P2, and the visual in Figure 3 shows the data obtained.
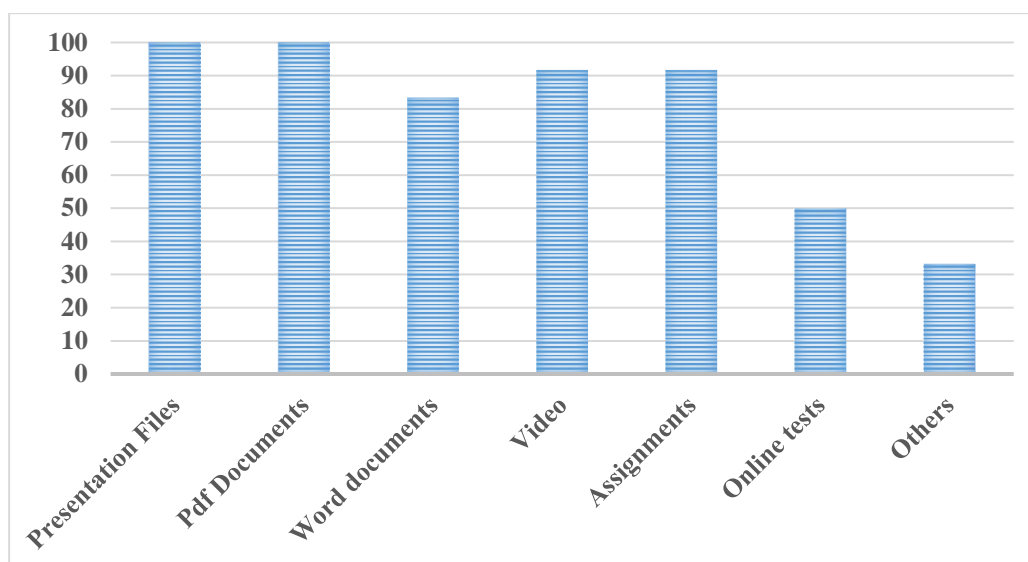
Figure 3. The Educational Tools Most Frequently Used in Distance Education (Percentages)

In Figure 3, the distance education tools offered at universities during the pandemic process can be seen in line with the answers given by the academicians. All of the academicians stated that they used presentation files and pdf documents in their classes. These tools were followed by videos and assignments.

The academicians were asked to compare the distance education systems used in P1 and P2. Based on the data analyzed, the findings in Table 1 were obtained.

Table 1. Comparison of the distance education systems in P1 and P2

Themes	Frequency (f)
The system preferred	
P1 (Moodle)	0
P2 (MSTeams)	18
Reasons for preferring MSTeams	
Being an integrated system	11
Allowing live lectures	9
Providing interaction	8
Providing ease of use	8
Reasons for Not Preferring Moodle	
Being inconvenient	14
Having a complex structure	13
Providing insufficient resources	14
Being an inefficient system	9

When Table 1 was examined, it was seen that all the academicians preferred the MSTeams software used in P2. Among the reasons for this choice is primarily the fact that the software has an integrated structure offering many environments together. The software's hosting of live lectures and options for interacting with it are among the other reasons that come to the fore. Among the other prominent reasons was its allowing live lectures and providing other options for interaction. Most of the academicians found MSTeams software useful and compared this feature with Moodle used in P1. The criticisms for P1, which involved the use of Moodle, were related to insufficiency due to system resources, complexity and uselessness. In relation to this, the participant A7 said, "*There was a system called Moodle in the Spring Term. However, this system was quite useless. We were getting a lot of complaints from our students. There was no interaction element, and there was just a structure designed for us to share only pdf. We spent the whole academic term through pdf files and assignments. To be honest, we were not productive*

at all…" Another participant A3 reported for P2, in which MsTeams software was used, that "… *with the MsTeams software, discussion environments can be created, and assignments can be given as desired It also provides the opportunity to watch again the video-recorded lessons for those who do not have access to the live lectures."*

The participants were asked about their positive and negative views as a result of their experience in P1, and the findings presented in Table 2 were obtained from their responses.

Table 2. The Academicians' Views about the Distance Education Applications in P1

Themes	Frequency (f)
Criticism regarding P1	
Lack of live lectures in the system	16
Lack of preparation for assessment and evaluation	14
Student complaints	13
Unplanned Transition to Distance Education	11
Technical problems experienced	11
Limited capacity	10

According to Table 2, it is a striking finding that none of the academicians participating in the study had a positive view about the Moodle software used in P1. All of the academicians gave negative responses to this question. It was also seen that according to all the participants, the absence of live lectures in the distance education system in P1 was quite a serious deficiency. Moreover, the fact that their institutions did not make any preparations in terms of assessment and evaluation also emerged as an important deficiency. In relation to this, A2 said *"It did nothing but allowing the students to upload documents, it was not a complete education, the assessment and evaluation did not happen at all. I cannot say the education process was efficient for our students or say we conducted a productive assessment and evaluation process. There was no sanction imposed on the students due to lack of a regulation related to plagiarism …"* Among the other criticisms were the complaints from students, unplanned transition to distance education and the technical problems and limited capacity associated with the overall Moodle system. In relation to these, the participant A5 said *"There was clearly nothing positive about it. The system collapsed even on the first day. It was a complete chaos. I think it is a system that was established carelessly and without enough care."* With regard to the MsTeams software used in P2, the purpose was to determine the positive and negative views of the academicians about the distance education activities. The related findings can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. The Academicians' Views about the Distance Education Applications in P2

Themes	Frequency (f)
Positive Views	
It includes a number of tools	16
Live lectures	15
Allowing interaction	13
Its communication feature is very useful	12
Ease of use	9
Recording the lessons	11
Office 365 support	6
Negative Views	
Connection related problems	3
Its exam feature should be improved	9
Its design can be improved in terms of ease of use	4
Difficulty in keeping track of all students	8

When the findings in Table 3 are evaluated under the theme of positive opinions, it is seen that such features of the MSteams software as allowing live lectures and providing a number of tools were prominent. One of the participants, A14, said *"It is very nice to be able to do lecture, homework, announcements and live lectures with MsTeams. The software offers many features…"*, while another participant, A16, said *"…Live lectures are indispensable in distance education. This program allowed us to use the live lectures without any time limitation and in a very comfortable way."* The majority of the participants stated that they liked the MsTeams software and that they found it useful. Despite these positive views, there were a few criticisms about the MsTeams software. Among these criticisms were various connection-related problems, the difficulty in following all the students and the need for developing the exam feature. In relation to this, the participant, A6, said *"MSTeams is a very good program in general. However, the fact that we can only see 9 people on the screen may cause us not to control all the students…"*. In addition, another participant, A10, said *"Teams is a software easy to understand and use, but it is a negative feature that the screen cannot be recorded while writing on the whiteboard."*

The findings in Table 4 were obtained via the questions directed to the academicians in relation to socialization.

Table 4. Examining Distance Education in Terms of Socialization

Themes	Frequency (f)
Though partly, socialization is possible thanks to …	
the live lectures	9
the seminars given	4
the communication established via MsTeams	8
counselling lessons	3
the lessons handled in a sincere atmosphere	4
Socialization is not possible because	
there is no physical intimacy	4
students cannot open their cameras simultaneously	3
there are interfering sounds in live lectures	2

Table 5 presents the academicians' evaluations regarding the dimension of socialization within the scope of distance education activities in P1 and P2. The academicians' responses revealed that socialization was not fully achieved. In line with their responses, this dimension was evaluated under the theme of "socialization will not be possible" and the theme of "socialization will take place partially." In this respect, according to those who thought that socialization was possible, though partially, the most common reasons for this situation were existence of the live lectures and availability of the chat tool included in the MsTeams software. About this situation, the participant A8 said "*Live lectures are our most important activity. Students are constantly writing to me via the Teams chat, and I reply to them day and night. We always have a chat with each other regardless of whether it is related to the lessons or not …"* Other reasons included counseling lessons, the lessons being taught in a friendly atmosphere and various webinars given at the faculty. As examples of these reasons, the participant A12 said *"We transferred our Green Crescent activities, student consultancy services and social projects into Teams. We are trying to continue our activities…"* Under the theme of "socialization will not be possible", the following reasons emerged from the responses: lack of physical intimacy, inability to open the cameras of all students at the same time, and the overlap of sounds during live lectures. In relation to this, the participant A14 said *"... It is hard to say that it was very useful for socializing. Socialization is a natural need due to the nature of human beings. School is not just a place where education is given. It is also a place where people mingle and interact with their like-minded peers. Now, I think that especially last Spring, students' ties with the school weakened a lot",* and another participant, A1, said *"I do not think that a computer-oriented life allows socialization."*

The academicians were asked to compare distance education with traditional education from various perspectives, and they were asked for their views about whether the students understood the lessons via distance education or not. The research data helped obtain the findings in Table 6.

Table 5. Effectiveness of Distance Education Activities

Themes	Frequency (f)
Comparison with Face-to-Face Education	
Negative aspects of distance education	
Serious deficiencies in the assessment dimension	13
Limited use of body language	7
Limited interaction	9
Difficulties in understanding the subjects	8
Can negatively affect motivation	5
Possibility of interrupting education due to infrastructure problems	4
Difficulties in socialization	3
Positive aspects of distance education	
Could be useful for students taking their own responsibility	11
Provides flexibility in terms of place	9
Effective use of time	8
Encourages individual learning	7
Leads to more research	4
Levels of understanding the lessons	
Positive situations	
Fewer distractions	9
Home comfort	6
Active use of live lectures	11
Lesson recorded for students to watch again	13
Introverted students can become more active	7
Negative situations	
Not suitable for applied courses	6
It is not clear whether they understand or not because of lack of eye contact	5
Interaction problems	6
Discipline problems	5
Criticisms about assessment	
Problems regarding reliable assessment	15
The need to use different measurement tools	5
No useful assessment tool yet	8
Insufficiency of the current technology	3

When the responses given by the academicians were examined, it was seen that emphasis was on the positive and negative aspects of distance education compared to face-to-face (traditional) education Accordingly, among the positive aspects of distance education compared to traditional education was that distance education can be useful for students who take their own responsibility; that it offers flexibility in terms of place; and that it allows effective use of time. In relation to all these issues, the participant A9 said *"the most important advantage of distance education is that one can connect anywhere, in a comfortable environment at home"*. Another participant, A2, said *"… assignments to be given to students can encourage them more to learn by themselves. This helps them do more research."* In relation to the limited aspects of distance education compared to traditional education, the academicians mostly mentioned difficulties in assessment, limited interaction, difficulties in understanding the subjects, and limited use of body language. Other factors emphasized were the probable negative effects on motivation, situations caused by infrastructure problems and lack of

socialization. In relation to these factors, the participant A15 said *"… However, it is not sufficient in terms of socialization and interaction as in traditional education. Of course, the biggest problem here is the assessment problem. Reliable exams cannot yet be conducted in distance education as in traditional education"*, while another participant, A17, said *"… However, the subjects that students fail to understand can be detected and intervened more easily in the classroom even if students do not express them, but this becomes more difficult in distance education."*

When the responses of the participants in relation to understanding the lessons in distance education were examined, it was seen that their responses were again gathered under positive and negative dimensions. The positive dimension included lesson recordings that can be watched again and again, active use of live lectures and fewer distractions. In relation to this, the participant A10 said *"There are not too many distractors around students in distance education. They can learn better when they are aware of this situation."* Another participant, A4, said *"The best part of this application is recording the lessons. Students can watch those recordings as many times as they want …"* In addition to these positive views, there were also negative criticisms. As an important criticism, the participants reported that it was not clear whether the students understood the subject or not because eye contact was not enough. This criticism was followed by be inappropriate to applied courses and problems related to interaction and discipline. In relation to these, the participant A1 said *"My classes are usually in the computer lab. That's why I prefer face-to-face classes. I'm teaching the subject in the lab. I'm doing examples and then say let's now do it. Later, I can see who did it and who did not. I show their mistakes. It is much better. It is a lot more difficult for me to do this in live lectures."*

The academicians' responses regarding the assessment dimension, which was considered to be one of the greatest limitations of distance education, were gathered under the following headings: the problem of reliable assessment, the need for using different measurement tools, lack of a useful assessment tool and inadequacy of current technologies. In relation to the assessment dimension, the participant A3 said *"This part is the biggest problem. There is not much we can do due to the absence of a reliable assessment method. In such a case, an appropriate type of assessment could be video recordings or research project assignments in which students can explain their opinions on the relevant subject. I mean traditional exams in which the same questions are asked to students in traditional education should not be favored."* Another participant, A7, said *"I think the most important problem is the exam security. Other measurement tools should be developed instead of exams …"* The participants were asked whether they would make use of distance education opportunities after the pandemic process, and the findings obtained via their responses can be seen in Table 7.

Table 6. Participants' Willingness to Use Distance Education After the Pandemic

Themes	Frequency (f)
I think I would use it because …	
I can use it to supplement traditional education	*9*
It is suitable for theoretical lessons	*6*
I can use it for assignment submission and collection	*8*
It allows watching difficult subjects over and over again	*5*

All of the academicians gave positive answers to this question. Their responses were gathered under the category of "I think I would use it because…" Among the prominent reasons mentioned by most of the academicians was using it as a support for traditional education. This reason was followed by homework submission and collection. In relation to this, the participant A10 said *"It will be very useful to include distance education to supplement traditional education. In this way, our students will be able to continue their education and learning outside of school"*, while another participant, A6, said "*I have been using a system called Edmodo for years. I collect homework and make announcements. I even gave an exam via this application. In future, I will continue to use it to support my teaching processes."*

Lastly, the participants were asked to determine their levels of satisfaction with P1 and P2, and the visual in Figure 4 was formed with the help of the data obtained.
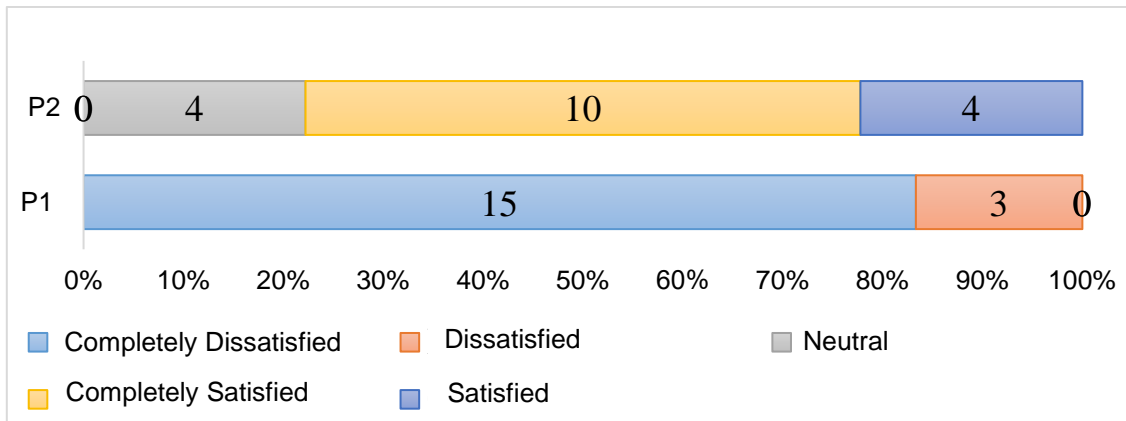
Figure 4. Academicians' Levels of Satisfaction with Distance Education During P1 and P2

According to Figure 4, approximately 83% of the academicians stated that during P1, they were completely dissatisfied with the services provided (infrastructure, information, overall design of the distance education system and so on). The remaining 17% marked the option of 'I am dissatisfied". For P2, approximately 22% of the participants were very satisfied; approximately 56% of them were satisfied; and the remaining 22% were neutral. It could be concluded that not all of the academicians were satisfied for P1 while most of the academicians (78%) were satisfied for P2.

Conclusions, Discussion and Suggestions

This study was carried out with a total of 18 participants to make an overall evaluation of the distance education experienced by academicians at Balıkesir University during the pandemic process. In this study, the results were compared as the academic terms of P1 and P2. When the distance education tools used by the academicians in their lessons were examined, it was seen that all of them used presentation files and also Pdf documents. This situation could be said to be expected in the period of transition from traditional education to distance education. When the in-depth responses of the participants to the qualitative questions were evaluated together, it was easily seen that they were not satisfied with the applications during P1. The participants' high levels of satisfaction during P2 could be considered to be related to the increase in the number of tools they used in their lessons. In a study conducted on university students in literature, the views of students attending the same university were determined, and it was revealed that these university students were not satisfied with the practices in P1 at all (Durak & Cankaya, 2020). The views of the students in the related study and the views of the academicians from the same university in the present study were highly similar. Therefore, based on this situation, it could be stated that the academic term of P1 was quite unsuccessful for Balıkesir University.

When the findings related to the comparison of the distance education systems in P1 and P2 were considered together, it was seen that the academicians preferred the MsTeams software, which began to be used in P2. The reasons for this preference of the academicians were live lectures, a number of tools, interaction and ease of use. Regarding the Moodle software used in P1, the criticisms were related to its uselessness, complex structure and insufficient system resources. In a study conducted by Durak and Çankaya (2020), the researchers reported that the Balıkesir University students using Moodle were not satisfied with the system. This finding could be considered to be confirmed by the views of the academicians in the present study. In the same study, it was revealed that the university students using MsTeams were very satisfied with this system. This finding could be said to be supported by the views of the academicians in P2. The academicians perceived the absence of live lectures as a major

deficiency for the whole academic term of P1 in general, and they were also dissatisfied with the institutional planning and implementations in terms of assessment and transition to distance education. Considering the dimensions of distance education, it is important for universities to employ more professionals and experts in the planning and execution of all these works. Bozkurt et al. (2020) published a collaborative reflection article covering the distance education applications of 31 countries across the world in covid-19 pandemic. It can be said that these reflections state that initial reactions of K12 and higher education systems in these countries to this unprecedented situation were generally unsuccessful like Balıkesir University. Similarly, Kerres (2020) argued that Germany's education system did not reacted well to this situation in despite of Germany's economic strength, because of complex bureaucratic procedures and negative attitudes that computers in schools lead to poorer performances.

Based on the results obtained in the present study, it could be stated that the academicians generally provided positive feedback regarding the MsTeams application in P2. The most important feedbacks were related to allowing live lectures, being an integrated software and allowing interaction and communication. Especially the live lectures appeared to be a result Simonson's Equivalency Theory (Simonson, Schlosser, & Hanson, 1999), which is one of the basic theories of Distance Education. Live lectures, which can provide an equal opportunity in distance education with the developing technologies and Internet infrastructures, should now become an indispensable part of all distance education systems. These findings are supported with those obtained in a study carried out by Durak and Çankaya (2020), who reported that the university students using MsTeams studies were quite satisfied with integrated systems and live lectures. Similarly, the findings obtained in the present study were also consistent with those reported by Durak (2016), who found that the platforms presenting many environments together were considered to be positive by the students. The fact that the emphasis on the elements of interaction in P2 was considered to be positive is a finding that draws special attention Interaction is one of the basic dimensions of distance education and providing learner-teacher interaction will be an important factor in allowing students and teachers to have satisfaction. At the same time, interaction should constitute the basis of communication between students and teachers. According to Holmberg, ensuring interaction on the basis of this communication will bring a sense of satisfaction, increase motivation, and facilitate learning in motivation. Therefore, it is important to benefit from the elements of good-quality and constant interaction in distance education systems. When this is not achieved, students' levels of satisfaction could be predicted to decrease. As a support for this prediction, Babinčáková & Bernard (2020) revealed in their study that a big majority of the students had dissatisfaction with the live lectures in which sufficient interaction elements were not used, as they failed to understand the subjects well.

Socialization, which is among the limitations of distance education, emerged as a major limitation in this study. None of the academicians said that socialization was achieved in their classes. The academicians who gave the answer that they could partially socialize emphasized that the lessons were handled in the atmosphere of conversation and that they used live lectures for this purpose. Some of the academicians stated that socialization would not be possible with this kind of distance education. According to them, physical intimacy was considered as the basis of socialization. It should be remembered that socialization in distance education may never be the same as in traditional education, yet it will be useful to plan activities that can be done in such pandemic periods will be useful. In this respect, it is important that the administrators responsible for distance education should not only support not with lessons but also consider and plan how to provide the teaching staff with social support.

In this study, the academicians were asked for their views about the comparison of distance education with traditional education, which the related literature also generally focused on. Some of the studies (Wilson & Allen, 2011; Watters & Robertson, 2009; Köse et al., 2013; Feintuch, 2010) revealed results in favor of traditional education, while some others reported that there was no difference between them (Zhao et al., 2005; Huh et al., 2008; Rich & Dereshiwsky, 2011; Roseth et al., 2011). In this study, it was seen that some flexibilities provided by distance education had an advantage over traditional education.

The features considered to be negative by the academicians were related to the dimension of assessment, and this dimension could be regarded as one of the biggest limitations of distance education. In this study, the subject of assessment was specifically asked to the academicians, and their responses revealed that there were no reliable assessment tools. In addition, the development of different assessment tools was emphasized as well.

In response to the question regarding the level of understanding the lessons, positive and negative situations were mentioned. In relation to understanding the lessons, the most popular features of MsTeams were reported by the academicians to include recording the lessons and watching them again and again. These features were followed by the comfort of home environment and fewer distractions. While the comfort of home environment was emphasized as a positive feature, the resulting discipline and complacency problems were considered to be a negative situation. These factors have been examined in many studies in literature (Alexander et al., 2012; Durak, 2016; Roseth et al., 2011) and considered to be among the factors that need attention.

Lastly, the participants were asked for their views about whether after their distance education experiences during the pandemic period, they would benefit from distance education in the future. It was seen that a majority of the participants would make use of distance education in some way after the pandemic. It was revealed that there would be those who would use it as support for traditional education as well as those who would use it for the processes of homework submission and collection. This situation evokes the blended learning method, in which traditional education and distance education are executed together. The clearest conclusion drawn in this study is that the academicians of Balıkesir University were certainly not satisfied with the academic term of P1, while the majority of them were satisfied with P2. In their study conducted by Durak & Cankaya (2020), the result that the Balıkesir University students were not satisfied with the 2019-2020 Spring Term was also expressed by the academicians. At the same time, almost all of these students stated that their universities did not make enough professional preparation for this process. Based on this, it has been a positive policy that the distance education administration realized the mistakes made in P1 and made a partial change in line with the experiences of other universities in P2.

Suggestions

The suggestions within the scope of the study were grouped in 3 sections: suggestions for researchers, suggestions for institution administrators, and suggestions for academicians. These suggestions are intended to guide future research and to provide educational institutions with constructive views about distance education systems during the pandemic process.

Suggestions for researchers:
- This study was carried out with academicians from Balıkesir University. Future studies could be conducted at different universities.
- Researchers could carry out comparison studies in order to see the changes between the academic terms of P1 and P2 and to examine the related developments at universities.
- In this study, the participants were reached through interview questions, and in this way, the purpose was to do in-depth examination of the research topic. Studies could be conducted with a wider group of participants by using quantitative methods to measure parameters such as satisfaction, motivation and social welfare and to compare universities in terms of these parameters.

Suggestions for institution administrators:
- Balıkesir University preferred a non-integrated system without live lectures in the academic term of P1. As a result of this situation, both students and academicians were not satisfied with the applications. The integrated system used during P2 satisfied the students and academicians. In this respect, institution administrators are suggested to use integrated systems.

- The results obtained in this study revealed that distance education activities should be planned meticulously and that every dimension should be carefully examined. In this respect, institution administrators are recommended to take the opinions of their students and lecturers in order to provide good-quality distance education.
- Considering the fact that the dimension of social support in distance education is extremely important, academicians could be provided with training in order to give social support to students.
- Distance education is a discipline requiring expertise. Therefore, in their distance education centers, universities could employ people who have specialized in this field.

Suggestions for academicians:

- Academicians should pay attention to the timely feedback mechanism, which is among the limitations of distance education.
- Interaction is an important element in distance education. Academicians could make plans that will increase the interaction in live lectures.
- Academicians should seek more creative and more original methods in terms of assessment tools in distance education. In this way, they can increase the reliability of the assessment dimension.
- This study revealed the importance of live lectures. In this respect, academicians should give live lectures as much as possible in addition to asynchronous contents and should pay attention to the interaction elements in these lessons.

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About the Author(s)

- Gürhan Durak; gurhandurak@balikesir.edu.tr; Balıkesir University, Turkey; https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2944-3713 (Corresponding Author)
- Serkan Çankaya; serkan.cankaya@idu.edu.tr; İzmir Demokrasi University, Turkey; https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3951-9809