Instructors' Views on Distance Education during the Pandemic Period

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ABSTRACT
In this study, it is aimed to determine the views of instructors on distance education and the reflection of the Covid 19 epidemic on their views. For this purpose, the opinions of the instructors who had not taught with distance education before the pandemic were examined both before the experience and after teaching during the pandemic process. Case study, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Data were collected with the 20 instructors who participated in the study, with an interview form containing semi-structured questions before and after the experience. At the end of the study, it was seen that positive expressions were expressed more in general thoughts and evaluations made in terms of students and instructors before the experience, but there were more teachers who thought their success would be negatively affected. It is considered that distance education is not suitable for practical courses. After the experience, most of the instructors had change of thought. It is seen that this change is both positive and negative. It is possible to say that there are nearly half of the positive changes in the changing thoughts of the instructor and student. More than half of the instructors felt themselves productive in this environment. It is seen that interaction problems before and after experience cause concern. For this reason, it is recommended to apply methods that will increase interaction in the trainings provided.
Keywords: distance education during the pandemic period, Instructor's thoughts, changes of thought in distance education

INTRODUCTION

Some studies point out that distance education, which provides any individual with educational opportunities, has become widespread in the last 20 years (Lackey, 2011), whereas others suggest that this has been the case in the last decade (Healey, 2012). The flexibility that online education provides as regards students' attendance time (Willett et al., 2019) and its positive impact on learning (Smith, 2016) are increasing the demand for online courses. Harden (2013) states that university classrooms are on the verge of becoming virtual. However, Mitchell et al. (2015) suggests that the use of online technology in higher education has not yet been fully adopted. Some researchers believe that faculty members may be reluctant as regards online teaching due to such reasons as fear of change that they may encounter in a new environment, technology- and interaction-based concerns, and the issues associated with workload (Bacow et al., 2012; Betts & Heaston, 2014; Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009).

Keegan (1996) argues that distance education is parallel and complementary to traditional education. With the Covid-19 pandemic affecting the whole world in 2020, one can argue that this view is accurate. Distance education can be suggested to have become indispensable throughout the globe during the pandemic period because students can choose distance learning not only because they really prefer this method, but also because they cannot use traditional education due to reasons such as work, family, geographical distance, and financial problems (Holmberg, 1995). According to UNESCO data (2020), a large number of countries have had to implement school closures due to the pandemic. During this period, the number of students affected by the pandemic period has constantly changed. In 2020, the highest number of students who were affected due to school closures that took place in 165 countries was 1,478,702,369 students, virtually 84.5% of all. The majority of the students whose schools are closed continue distance learning, which has increased the prevalence of it even more. As online education has been widespread, quality education and the choice of strategy to be used by the instructors have become more significant (Crawford-Ferre & Weist, 2012).

It is clear that the participants involved in the distance education process, which has become much more important today, have different roles compared to those in formal education. Faculty members, who constitute a substantial part of these participants, have many duties in the distance education environment. Unlike face-to-face education, the instructors who teach in this environment are supposed to possess the technical knowledge required to manage the course, as well as the teaching skills to meet the needs of online students (Lackey, 2011). Holmberg (1986) points out that faculty members in distance education also have a role in providing motivation, making learning enjoyable, including the subjects related to the interests and needs of students, creating a sense of mutual

understanding between learners and distance education institutions, providing access to the course content, incorporating learners into activities, discussions, and decisions and establishing useful and real communication with them in general.

During the pandemic period, many instructors have had to continue to provide education in distance education environments, which can be described as new to them. It has been argued that people, individually or as a group, initially react negatively to the change they encounter, and that this reaction depends on the degree of individuals' involvement in the change process (Lawrence, 1969). It can be suggested that individuals participating in different aspects of the change are less resistant to it (Mitchell et al., 2015). Similarly, it is evident that instructors with online teaching experience yield a more positive reaction than those without one (Alshangeeti et al., 2009; Lloyd et al., 2012). During the pandemic period, there has been a necessity for transition to distance education in many institutions, including the ones with instructors who are inexperienced. This study investigated the perspectives of the instructors who were obliged to teach in distance education both before and after their experience of distance education in order to determine their views on distance education. Determining the views of faculty members who have a variety of responsibilities in the distance education environment is crucial in terms of online course behaviors such as the realization of an effective and efficient education process in this environment (Dooley & Murphrey, 2000), learning success (Harris & Krousgrill, 2008), students' learning process, and general satisfaction (Otter et al., 2013).

There are other studies as regards the perceptions of instructors on distance education. Some of these studies investigated solely the opinions of instructors who teach in distance education (Conrad, 2004; Morgan et al., 2014; Otter et al., 2013; Walters et al., 2017; Ward et al., 2010), while some of them studied the views of those both experienced and inexperienced in this field (Alshangeeti et al., 2009). Some other studies analyzed the views of instructors who had not taught in the distance education environment (Gürer et al., 2016; Tuncer & Tanaş, 2011; Willett et al., 2019), the opinions of teacher candidates (Gündüz & İşman, 2018; Paydar & Doğan, 2019; Uzoğlu, 2017), and the previous studies regarding the views of instructors (Wingo et al., 2017). This study examined the views of the instructors who had to teach in a distance education environment on account of the pandemic. During the pandemic period, other studies have been conducted in order to examine the views of instructors (Dolmacı & Dolmacı, 2020; Kaya, 2020; Şeren et al., 2020) and the opinions of teacher candidates about distance education (Karakuş et al., 2020; Karatepe et al., 2020). However, this study examined the views of the instructors before and after the experience of distance education, which makes it more comprehensive. The following questions were sought to answer in order to realize the aim of the study:

- Before their experience, what are the views of the instructors who have had to teach in the distance education environment during the pandemic period about distance education?
- After their experience, what are the views of the instructors who taught in the distance education environment for the first time during the pandemic period, and have their opinions changed?

METHOD

Research Pattern

In this study, a case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in order to determine the views of the instructors on distance education who had to teach with distance education during the pandemic period. A case study analyzes an event or phenomenon by focusing on the questions of how and why (Yin, 1984). In these studies, in order to evaluate a specific situation or event in a certain period of time, it is defined and examined in-depth via data collection tools such as interviews and observations (Creswell, 2007).

Working Group

The study included 20 instructors teaching in the Department of Anthropology (2 participants), Department of Computer Engineering (6 participants), Department of Business Administration (5 participants), Department of Fine Arts (4 participants), Department of Mathematics (2 participants), and Department of Atatürk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution (1 participant) in a state university in the Spring Semester 2021. 60% of the participants were women and 40% were men. The age range varied between 30-35 (6 participants), 36-40 (11 participants), and 41-50 (3 participants).

Data Collection Tool and Data Collection Process

Semi-structured interview forms prepared by the researcher were used to collect the data. There were eight questions in the interview forms used both before and after the experience. After the interview forms were prepared, the opinions of 3 experts in the field of distance education were received and the forms were finalized. The finalized questions were shared with the instructors via Google Forms. Pre-experience questions were directed

to the instructors who had never taught in the distance education environment before the Fall semester 2020. Following online teaching during the specified period, the post-experience interview forms were shared.

Data Analysis

Qualitative method was used to analyze the interview forms filled out before and after the instructors' experience. For this purpose, the qualitative data analysis, which involves the basic stages of "data reduction", "data display", and "conclusion drawing/verification" was conducted (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Firstly, the data were analyzed and coded in the analysis process. Afterwards, the categories and subcategories were created for the codes. After this process, the data were re-examined; codings and categories were organized, and eventually thematic codings were created. In the study, the agreement percentage between coders was used for the purpose of reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and for this purpose a comparison was made with the coding made by another expert. The percent agreement was calculated 82%. The codings that produced the difference were examined and then finalized by consensus.

Findings

This section covers the general views of the instructors before and after their experience as well as the changes in their opinions. Table 1 includes the general views of the instructors about distance education before teaching.

Table 1. General views before the experience

Category	Subcategory	Code	n	f
Advantage (%63,15)	Flexibility	Location independence	9	23.68
		Time independence	5	13.16
		Freedom	1	2.63
	Accessibility	Equality of opportunity	4	10.53
		Easy Accessibility	1	2.63
	Opportunity	Learning fast	2	5.26
		Solution during a crisis	2	5.26
Disadvantage (%36.83)	Interaction	Lack of communication	4	10.53
	Before lectures	Preparation for a long time	2	5.26
		Distressful method	1	2.63
		Obligation to upload files	1	2.63
	Discipline	Not taking the lecture seriously	1	2.63
	During lectures	Being dependent on the computer	2	5.26
		Not being suitable for practical courses	1	2.63
		Insufficient training	2	5.26

The views of the instructors, who had not yet taught in the distance education environment, were grouped into two categories: positive views as "advantage" and negative views as "disadvantage". The study revealed that, among the codes created in this category, the expressions regarding "advantage" were used the most, and that they constituted 63.15% of all expressions. The category of "advantage" consists of the sub-categories of "flexibility", regarding the independence of individuals, "accessibility", about the opportunity to access courses, and "opportunity" as regards the opportunities that students have. The codes mostly mentioned were "location independence" (23.68%), "time independence" (13.16%) and "equality of opportunity" (10.53%). The codes in the category of "disadvantage" were divided into four sub-categories; that is, "interaction" regarding the lack of mutual communication, "before lectures", "during lectures", and "disciplinary issues". The code of lack of communication (10.53%) was mentioned the most.

The instructors had various views in terms of how teaching in the distance education environment would affect their own success. Three participants stated that there would be no change in their success as they believed education environment does not affect the level of success. Five participants believed that this environment would have a positive impact on their success. All the five instructors, thinking that they would be affected positively, suggested that their success would increase since they would be able to spend more time for their scientific studies. 12 instructors, 60% of all participants, argued that this environment would affect their success adversely. The reasons for the instructors' thinking that it would affect them negatively are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Reasons why the instructors thought they would fail

Category	Subcategory	Code	n	f
Individual	Personal	Not being able to use body language	1	5.26
		Having to teach the subjects too quickly	1	5.26
		Lack of technology	1	5.26
	Discipline	Not taking the lecture seriously	1	5.26
Lecture process	Practice	Not suitable for practical courses	2	10.53
		Not being able to access the instructional materials physically	3	15.79
		Not being able to use the whiteboard	1	5.26
		Inefficient education	2	10.53
	Interaction	Lack of communication	4	21,05
		Feeling of being in the virtual environment	1	5.26
		Not being able to give feedback	1	5.26
		Not being able to see the student who is not paying attention	1	5.26

The reasons for failure in the distance education environment is categorized as "individual", which includes the issues related to the instructors, and "lecture process", involving the problems that are likely to be experienced during the lecture. The category of “individual” consists of the sub-category of "personal", which includes the lecturer's not being able to use body language, the belief that he/she will have to teach the subjects too quickly, and the possibility of experiencing technological difficulties, as well as the sub-category of "discipline", which involves the belief that he/she will not take the lecture seriously. “Lecture process”, on the other hand, contains two sub-categories, one of which includes the problems that may occur during the practicing process in the lecture. The other one, “interaction”, involves the issues that may arise during the mutual communication process. In their statements, the instructors mostly mentioned the codes of the lack of communication, the feeling caused by not being able to touch the educational material physically, and the inefficient education. For instance, the statement of the participant coded with K8 which includes the codes of “lack of communication”, “not being able to give feedback”, and “not taking the lecture seriously” was as follows:

K8: “I don't think I will be very successful in this environment; there may be a decrease in my success when compared to in regular education because there’ll be only one-way communication during the practical courses and also it won’t be possible to see the students. We might behave indifferently due to the lack of feedback to the message provided."
The statement of the participant coded with K13 with regard to “not being able to use the whiteboard” and “not being able to see the student who is not paying attention” was as follows:

K13: “The lectures I deliver requires me to use the board frequently. I believe that using the board in science courses can bring about more success, but I will not be able to use it in this environment. Also, it is easier to notice a student who has difficulty in understanding the subject in the classroom environment."
The aspects that the instructors considered positive and negative as regards themselves before experiencing distance education were categorized in Table 3.

Table 3. Positive and negative aspects of distance education as regards the instructor

Category	Subcategory	Code	n	f
Positive (%58.93)	Environment	Not having situations that might hinder the lecture	6	10.71
		Location independence	3	5.36
		Recording lectures	1	1.79
	Physical	Feeling of comfort	4	7.14
		Requiring less energy	4	7.14
	Opportunity	Access to plenty of instructional materials	4	7.14
		Opportunity to prepare instructional materials	1	1.79
		Opportunity to improve yourself	1	1.79
	Saving	Saving time	7	12.50
		Saving money	2	3.57
Negative (%41.07)	Classroom Management	Fear of not being able to convey the content	3	5.36
		Not being able to monitor the student	3	5.36
		Distressful method	2	3.57
		Difficulty in time management	1	1.79

		Using only lecture method	1	1.79
	Before lectures	Obligation to prepare instructional materials	3	5.36
		Preparation for a long time	2	3.57
	Interaction	Lack of interaction	8	14.29

Before having distance education experience, the instructors mostly mentioned the positive aspects regarding themselves with a rate of 58.93%. Four sub-categories were created in the category of "positive": "positive aspects of distance education environment", "positive situations which the instructors will experience physically", "opportunities", and "saving". The instructors mostly mentioned "saving time" (12.50%) and "not having situations that might hinder the lecture (10.71%). The difficulties that may arise in the classroom management process, the tasks to be done before the lecture, and the interaction problems constitute the category of "negative" and include 41.07% of the statements. Lack of interaction (14.29%) took the first place among all the negative aspects the instructors believed they would suffer from. The statement of the participant coded with K5 about "not having situations that might hinder the lecture", and that of the participant coded with K10 about "opportunity to prepare instructional materials" were as follows:

K5: "I think the best thing in this environment will be that, as there will be no factors that hinder the lecture, caused by the classroom environment, I won't constantly have to say such things as "Behave!" or "Stop talking!".

K10: "I think it will be an important opportunity for us to compile knowledge and make it more efficient. We have few official resources for the course content. In this way, we will have the opportunity to convey our own resources to the student in written form. "

The aspects that the instructors considered positive and negative for students before experiencing distance education were categorized in Table 4.

Table 4. Positive and negative aspects of distance education for students

Category	Subcategory	Code	n	f
Positive (%56)	Flexibility	Location independence	10	13.33
		Time independence	8	10.67
		Individual study	2	2.67
	Accessibility	Equality of opportunity	3	4.00
		Opportunity to revise	3	4.00
		Easy Accessibility	2	2.67
	Opportunity	Physical comfort	3	4.00
		Understanding better	1	1.33
		Being able to receive good education	1	1.33
		Access to quality material	1	1.33
	Saving	Saving time	4	5.33
		Saving money	4	5.33
Negative (%44)	Interaction	Lack of interaction	7	9.33
		Lack of socialization	7	9.33
	Individual	Need for additional effort to learn	1	1.33
		Technical inadequacy	2	2.67
		Lack of technical equipment (pc, internet, etc.)	1	1.33
	Discipline	Lack of self-discipline	4	5.33
		Increase in lack of attention to the content	5	6.67
	Lecture process	Inefficient lecture	2	2.67
		Not being able to do hands-on activities	2	2.67
		Problems regarding the place where the instructor physically is	2	2.67

Before their distance education experience, the instructors mentioned the positive aspects for students, with a rate of 56%, and negative situations, with a rate of 44%. The positive aspects that distance education can offer to students consist of four sub-categories: "flexibility", as regards the independence of individuals, "accessibility", about the opportunity to access classes, **"**opportunity**",** regarding opportunities students have, and "saving". In the category of "positive", the participants mostly mentioned the "location independence" and "time independence", which are included in the sub-category of "flexibility". The aspects that were considered to be negative for students involve four sub-categories: "interaction" regarding mutual communication, "individual" associated with the

situations based on individuals, "discipline", and "lecture process" as regards the disruptions that may occur during the lecture. While the participants mostly mentioned about interaction, the concerns about the fact that some students would not have enough technical equipment and would need additional effort in distance learning were also among the negative codes. The statement of the participant coded with K5 about "the opportunity to revise", "saving money", "saving time", that of the participant coded with K10 about "time and location independence", and that of the participant coded with K11 about "lack of socialization" were as follows:

K5: "Students may have the opportunity to re-watch their lectures whenever they want; they can attend classes from home without having any financial difficulties. It will save both time and money spent on travelling."
K10: "There were times when students were absent from class . They sometimes didn't make an effort to catch up with the missed classes. Now, there won't be such situations during this process. They can attend classes in their own conditions and comfort zone at any time."
K10: "School is also an area where students socialize. Considering the process we are in, isolation is necessary. But I think that, when the conditions become normal, the school environment will provide students with positive contributions in terms of socialization and development. I think their being deprived of this could affect them negatively. "

Only 2 of the instructors had positive opinions on whether distance education is suitable for every course. 18 instructors thought that this environment is not suitable especially for practical courses at all. The statement of the participant coded with K4, who mentioned that distance education is not applicable in terms of both courses requiring practical applications and the needs of students, was as follows:
K4: "No, I don't think it will be an appropriate method, for example, for the courses in which practical applications are necessary. Rather, it will take more attention in the courses in the humanities if they are supported with visual materials. Apart from that, it can work for groups that are really willing to learn ... "

While only 2 instructors favored students' taking all their courses with distance education, 3 instructors argued that this approach is only for students who have the necessary skills for distance learning. 7 instructors thought that, while theoretical courses should continue through distance education, practical courses through formal education; however, 6 instructors, 30% of the participants, stated that they were absolutely against distance education.

Instructors' views following the distance education experience
The instructors who had not taught in the distance education environment previously were interviewed again after delivering lectures for a semester during the pandemic period. The study revealed that 80% of them changed their views after the experience. Table 5 shows the views which changed regarding students.

Table 5. Views which changed in terms of students studying in the distance education environment

Category	Subcategory	Code	n	f
Positive changes (%47.83)	Flexibility	Time independence	3	6.52
		Location independence	2	4.35
	Accessibility	Uninterrupted continuity of education	4	8.70
		Equality of opportunity	1	2.17
	Opportunity	Opportunity to revise	6	13.04
		Rich course content	2	4.35
		Comfort	1	2.17
		Rich communication tools	1	2.17
	Saving	Saving time	1	2.17
		Saving money	1	2.17
Negative changes (%52.17)	Interaction	Lack of communication	7	15.22
		Too many documentary materials	1	2.17
	Discipline	Not taking the lecture seriously	5	10.87
		No obligation to attend classes	4	8.70
		Increase in apathy	2	4.35
		Students' lack of active participation	1	2.17
	Inequality	Limited internet access	3	6.52
		Students' inequality of educational opportunities	1	2.17

After their distance education experience, the instructors stated that there were some changes in their views about

the positive and negative effects that this method would have on students. The study indicated that negative changes (52.17%) were slightly higher. The changes in the views regarding the positive aspects consist of four subcategories: "flexibility", "accessibility", "opportunity", and "saving", as in the previous tables. The instructors mostly mentioned "the opportunity to revise" in the sub-category of "opportunity" as a positive perspective change. "Uninterrupted continuity of education" ranked the second. Among the changes in the views regarding the negative aspects, instructors mostly mentioned the problems experienced in interaction. The views of the participant coded with K6 about "uninterrupted continuity of education", those of the participant coded with K2 about "attendance" and "discipline", and those of the participant coded with K14 about "increase in apathy" were as follows:

K6: "Being able to answer the questions of my students, even from a distance, and the fact that the education always continues is a feature that I did not think of before but I realized when I taught in distance education."
K2: ".. listening to the lectures arbitrarily and not failing due to absence couldn't provide the serious atmosphere and concentration available in the classroom environment. I think a serious discipline problem has arisen."

K14: "Even when formal education was available, these students weren't interested in learning sufficiently. They didn't have the faintest idea what studying is. However, with distance education, students' interest in learning and the act of studying is about to vanish entirely."
The opinions of the instructors which changed in terms of themselves after their experience are indicated in Table 6. In addition to positive views, there are also negative views.

Table 6. Views which changed in terms of instructors after the experience

Category	Subcategory	Code	n	f
Positive changes (%45)	Flexibility	Time independence	1	2.5
		Location independence	2	5
	Accessibility	Uninterrupted continuity of education	3	7.5
	Opportunity	Sharing rich content	1	2.5
		Comfort of home	1	2.5
		Time for researches	3	7.5
	Saving	Saving time	3	7.5
	Personal	Less fatigue	2	5
		No classroom management anxiety	2	5
Negative changes (%55)	Interaction	Lack of interaction	5	12.5
		Not being able to control whether the student understands	5	12.5
		Lack of instant feedback	2	5
		Not being able to control whether the student is paying attention	2	5
		Classes' being dull due to students' lack of participation	1	2.5
	Anxiety	Anxiety due to being recorded	2	5
		Not being able to concentrate	1	2.5
	Technical	Technical problems	4	10

The analysis of the statements revealed that 45% of the instructors' opinions were about positive changes and 55% of them were about negative changes. The mostly mentioned codes were in the subcategory of "interaction" which belongs to "negative views". The changes in the views regarding the positive aspects contain the subcategories of "flexibility", "accessibility", "opportunity", "saving", and "personal" which includes the codes of "less fatigue" and "less anxiety in classroom management". The changes in the views regarding the negative aspects are grouped into the subcategories of "interaction", "anxiety", which includes mental issues the instructors suffered from, and "technical problems". The codes mostly mentioned were "lack of interaction" and "not being able to control whether the student understands". The statements of the participant coded with K2 about "saving time", "time for researches", "less fatigue", and those of the participant coded with K5 about "lack of interaction", "not being able to control whether the student can understand the subject" were as follows:
K2: "As distance education saves time, I have more time for myself, and it is possible for me to devote more time to researches, and also I feel less tired and more dynamic."
K5: "The most obvious problems I had were the lack of communication due to not being in the same physical environment with my students, not being able to ask and answer questions instantly, and therefore not being able to shape lecture contents according to those questions and reinforce them with examples, and thus not being able to determine whether students have comprehended the subjects or not."

The instructor coded with K18 expressed his satisfaction for focusing only on his lecture without worrying about classroom management as follows:

K18: "There are fewer question marks, which means less anxiety, in my mind over the efficiency of my lectures and now I think that I can shift my time and effort to the areas with higher marginal benefits."
While 9 of the instructors gave a positive answer to the question asked about their views as regards the sense of productivity that the instructors felt after the experience, 3 of them felt that they were partially productive, and 8 instructors, 40% of the participants, did not find themselves efficient at all. All of the instructors who thought they were not productive stated that the reason lying behind this was "not being able to communicate". The instructors who believed that they taught efficiently in this environment attributed it to the fact that they did their best. The instructor coded with K13 emphasized the contribution of preparing materials and stated:

K13: "I felt efficient. The presentations I prepared for the lecture enabled me to have some opportunities that I hadn't been able to obtain in the classroom environment. In this respect, I was able to explain more effectively what I had to tell."
55% of the instructors wanted to teach in the distance education environment again, whereas 25% did not. 20% of them stated that they could teach online if they had to because of the pandemic. The reasons why the instructors did or did not want to teach in the distance education environment again are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Reasons for wanting and not wanting to teach in distance education again

Category	Subcategory	Code	n	f
Positive views	Flexibility	Being able to work from home	3	16.67
	Opportunity	Time for researches	1	5.56
		Recorded lectures	1	5.56
	Personal	No classroom management anxiety	4	22.22
		Less fatigue	1	5.56
	Saving	Saving time	2	11.11
Negative views	Interaction	Lack of interaction	3	16.67
	Lecture process	Inefficient lecture	3	16.67

Only 25% of the instructors had definitely negative opinions ("lack of interaction" and "inefficient lecture") about delivering lectures in distance education again. The statements of the instructors who wanted to teach in distance education again are grouped in the sub-categories of "flexibility", **"**opportunity**"**, "personal", and "saving". The instructors mostly mentioned "not having classroom management anxiety in the distance education environment" and "being able to work from home" as positive views. The opinion of the instructor coded with K3 about the codes of "ease of classroom management" and "recorded lectures" was as follows:

K3: "Yes. I would like to teach in the distance education environment again owing to several positive aspects. For example, it doesn't involve any negative external factors such as the lecture's being interrupted by a latecomer, which helps you staying focused. Besides, you can record the lectures so that students can watch them again."

The exams conducted after the distance education process are also critical. However, none of the instructors who participated in the study had a positive opinion about exams. 50% of the instructors stated that students cheated during the exams, 50% of them expressed that exams could not measure or evaluate students' success, and 60% of them argued that it was not possible to provide control. 40% of the instructors stated that they evaluated their students by using assignments containing comments because of their negative opinions about exams.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study which involved the instructors who had not taught in distance education before the Covid-19 pandemic period determined the faculty members' views on this environment both before and after teaching in distance learning for a semester in the pandemic period. For this purpose, interviews were made with a total of 20 instructors from various departments and the following results were obtained through qualitative analysis.

The opinions of the instructors before teaching in distance education were as follows:
While 63.15% of the general opinions about distance education were in the category of "advantage", which included the codes of positive views, 36.83% were in the category of "disadvantage", which involved negative codes. Similarly, Alshangeeti et al. (2009) examined instructors' views on distance education in terms diffusion of innovations and determined that it was regarded as positive in terms of each factor. The survey conducted by the National Education Association (NEA, 2000) demonstrated that approximately 75% of the instructors felt

positive about distance education. According to the opinions of the instructors, three subcategories were created in the category of "advantage": "flexibility", regarding the independence of individuals, "accessibility" regarding the opportunity to access classes, and "opportunity" about the opportunities that the student has. Walters et al. (2017) determined that the instructors regarded "flexibility" and "accessibility" as important components in distance education. The study of Tuncer & Tanaş (2011) emphasized the educational opportunity for instructors. The category of "disadvantage" includes four sub-categories: "interaction" regarding the lack of mutual communication, "before lectures", "during lectures", and "disciplinary issues". Hogan & McKnight (2007) stated that distance education can be considered as complicated and troublesome as there are many components such as interaction and solution of technical problems in the online environment. Tuncer & Tanaş, (2011) and Dolmacı & Dolmacı (2020) emphasized the negative impacts of the issues associated with interaction. The current study determined that the most positive aspects expressed by the instructors were related to the location independence and time independence, while the negative aspects were about the lack of communication. Dolmacı & Dolmacı (2020) and Şeren et al., (2020) also emphasized the significance of time and location independence.

60% of the instructors thought that their success would be affected negatively in the distance education environment where they had no previous experience. The reasons for this were grouped in the categories of "lecture process", which included the reasons depending on the instructor, and "lecture process", which involved the problems that might be encountered during the lecture. The most common reasons for failure were lack of communication and concerns about not being able to access the instructional materials physically. 25% of the participants stated that distance education would not take much time, and therefore they could devote more time to academic studies, which would increase their success. Contrary to this opinion, Tomei (2006) argued that teaching content, counseling, and student assessment take more time in distance education than in the traditional environment.

The study indicated that the participants mentioned positive aspects of distance education in terms of the instructor (58.93%) more than negative aspects (41.07%). Positive aspects were categorized under four sub-categories: benefits provided by the "environment", "physical" comfort, "opportunities" offered by distance education, and "saving". Saving time took the first place among all the positive aspects. Other studies, contrary to this, mostly maintain that teaching online will take more time than the traditional environment (McQuiggan, 2012; Otter et al., 2013). The negative aspects in terms of the instructors were grouped under three sub-categories: "classroom management", requirements "before lectures", and "interaction". Among them, the lack of interaction was mentioned the most. Similarly, Willett et al. (2019) also mentioned the concerns about interaction. According to the current study, while the instructors found it positive to be able to access a wide range of materials in this environment, they considered the obligation to prepare materials as negative. However, the effort to prepare materials in the distance education environment is extremely important because the quality of the materials used in online education affects the quality of education (Chao et al., 2006).

The study also demonstrated that the participants mentioned the positive aspects of distance education in terms of students (56%) more than its adverse aspects (44%). "Flexibility", "accessibility", "opportunity", and "saving" were the subcategories of the positive effects. The study revealed that the instructors mostly mentioned "time independence" and "location independence" as the positive aspects for the student, which were followed by "saving time" and "saving money". Negative aspects, on the other hand, were grouped under four sub-categories: "individual", "discipline", "lecture process", as well as "interaction", which took the first place. The study by Otter et al. (2013) indicated that, while the students felt more disconnected from both their friends and instructors in the online environment, the instructors also agreed with this idea but emphasized it less. Morgan et al. (2014) showed that the instructors emphasized the importance of online group work. One can argue that group work is extremely important in distance education as it provides an increase in interaction.

90% of the instructors stated that distance education was not suitable to use in practical courses, and 30% of them did not find it appropriate for students to take all their courses with distance education. 15% of the participants thought that courses can be taken entirely in distance education, depending on the qualification of the student. Similarly, Willett et al. (2019) determined that the instructors who thought that distance education was not suitable for the department of sports management was in the majority. However, there were also those who found it suitable if the instructor was willing.

The following conclusions were reached about the opinions of the instructors after the experience:
Most of the instructors (80%) changed their views after they taught in distance education. The changes of perception were examined in different categories in terms of the student and the instructor. The study revealed that the changes in the views about negative aspects were more than about positive aspects regarding both the student

and the instructor. The study by Şeren et al. (2020) demonstrated that the instructors mentioned the negative aspects of distance education more than its positive aspects. However, one can argue that the changes in the views about positive aspects in this study were nearly 50% in terms of both students (47.83%) and instructors (45%). Lloyd et al. (2012) indicated in their study that the instructors with distance education experience approached it more positively than those without experience. A 2001 study by Grenzky & Maitland demonstrated that, while the majority (72%) of distance education instructors' views about distance education were positive, 14% of them were negative.

The study indicated that 52.17% of the changes in the views were about negative aspects in terms of students, while 47.83% of those were about positive aspects. After their experience in distance education, the instructors frequently mentioned "students' opportunity to revise", and "ensuring uninterrupted continuity of education" among the positive aspects of distance education. Similarly, in the Grenzky & Maitland (2001) study, the first reason for the instructors' positive attitude to distance learning was that it could increase students' access to education. In addition, they emphasized the importance of being able to learn at a place of their choice (location independence). The instructors who had not mentioned "interaction" before the experience in terms of the negative aspects of distance education also stated that interaction was a huge problem. Likewise, Grenzky & Maitland (2001) determined that the instructors were concerned about the lack of interaction. In this study, the negative effects of the fact that the students were under no obligation to attend classes were also felt. Contrary to the study, Ulmer et al. (2007) determined that the instructors experienced in distance education found it effective in terms of student performance and teacher-student interactions. This study indicated that "disciplinary problems" were among the changes in the views about negative aspects. Similarly, the instructors participating Otter et al. study (2013) stated that students are supposed to become more disciplined in the online environment.

The study determined that the changes in the views about the negative aspects in terms of instructors were 55%, those about the positive aspects were 45%. The changes in the views about the positive aspects were also grouped in the categories of "flexibility", "accessibility", "opportunity", "saving", and "individual". Ensuring uninterrupted continuity of education, the increase in time for researches, and saving time were the most frequently mentioned codes. As regards the changes about the negative aspects, three sub-categories were formed, including "interaction", "anxiety of the instructor", and "technical problems". The instructors stated that they suffered from technical problems that they had not mentioned before. In addition, the study revealed that problems related to "interaction" took the first place. Similarly, in Lloyd et al. (2012) study, lack of communication and technological problems are defined as barriers.

It was determined that 60% of the instructors felt themselves partially or completely productive while teaching with distance education. The study demonstrated that "not being able to communicate" was on the basis of the views of all the instructors who thought they were inefficient. Similarly, Conrad (2004) examined the views of instructors before and after their experience in distance education and determined, from the views expressed by the lecturers about their own performance, that their awareness of cooperative learning, social presence or community role related to "interaction" was low.

The present study revealed that, while more than half of the participants (55%) in the study wanted to teach in distance education again, 25% were not in favor of teaching in this environment under any circumstances because of interaction problems and inefficiency. The study by Gürer et al. (2016) indicated that the participants were against teaching online. However, in Hartman et al. (2000) study, it was determined that 93.6% of the instructors wanted to continue teaching online.

The current study concluded that interaction was considered as a critical issue for all the instructors, whether they were experienced or inexperienced in distance education. Thus, instructors can be trained as regards the methods that will enhance interaction and can be encouraged to employ such methods. The study demonstrated that, for some of the instructors, teaching in the distance education environment was considered as timesaving. However, various studies indicate that an effective learning process in this environment requires more time and effort than in the traditional environment. Awareness can be raised about this subject among the instructors.

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