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Analysis of the Faculty of Education Students' Academic Performance in Distance Education Model with Students' Opinions

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of distance learning system on academic standing of education faculty's students at Yozgat Bozok University. Education faculties are one of the leading educational institutions where students and teachers' interaction is at the highest level. The education provided in these institutions is highly important due to training the teachers who are accepted to have been the pioneer of the society in terms of its change and transformation. The study focuses on to find how there is a relationship between distance education commonly given due to pandemic and academic success of students of the educational institutions training teachers. The descriptive content techniques that are to be evaluated as parts of the qualitative research techniques have been implemented as the method of the study. Within the scope of the research, 223 pre-service teachers studying in different programs of Yozgat Bozok University Faculty of Education have been determined as the study group. 223 students participating in the study have been asked to answer the fourteen questions previously provided in interview through online. In line with the data obtained, it has been noticed that face-to-face education is more efficient compared with the distance education, in spite of the high academic success of the teacher candidates. As a general opinion, even though it is a comfortable education, it has been revealed that distance education can be an alternative rather than a choice to face-to-face education. Along with the advantages and disadvantages of distance education, the opinions of teacher candidates for the development of this system are also presented in the study.

Keywords: Distance education, education faculty, education, distance learning.

INTRODUCTION

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic that emerged in Wuhan province of China in December 2019 had negative effects on the world (Singhal, 2020). Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020 with the increase in severity of pandemic (WHO, 2020). After the first Covid-19 case in Turkey, schools and educational institutions had been temporarily closed since the 16th of March in 2020 (The Council of Higher Education, 2020a). Many countries around the world have had to implement some measures in order to prevent the spread of pandemic such as home confinement, travel bans and school closures and as a result, with the closure of schools, millions of students have not been able to go the environments where they are educated (Can, 2020). In the consequence of the worldwide effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the main idea in closing schools at all levels has been to reduce the spreading speed of the pandemic (Wikipedia, 2020). As a result of the school closure, the necessity of some innovations has emerged for the education system to survive and the reshaping of the education system has come to the agenda (Gilani, 2020). After these developments, UNESCO suggested that educational activities would be carried out remotely (UNESCO, 2020). In line with the recommendations of UNESCO, a road map including information for temporarily closed universities to continue their education with distance learning was shared by CoHE (CoHE, 2020b). The similar recommendations by The Council of Higher Education CoHE have been for the universities just before the fall and spring terms have begun since the emergence of the global pandemic.

The distance education system has been an education and training activity carried out in the digital environment since the 18th century, starting with correspondence education (documents in envelopes) then passing through various developing stages (Gömlüksiz & Pullu, 2020). Distance education activities in Turkey remained only as an idea and could not be practiced at the beginning (Kaya & Odabaşı, 1996). In 1960, The Correspondence Education Center, the first distance learning activity of Turkey, was established under the Statistics and Publication Directorate (Özarlan & Ozan, 2014). Then, to expand its scope, The Public Education Institution (PEI) was established and in 1974, around the 70 thousand students who could not be placed in any educational institution with the University Selection Examination (USE) started to enroll in the PEI (Bozkurt, 2017). Distance education practices for large masses started with the establishment of Anadolu University of Open Education Faculty in 1982 and the affiliation of PEI to this unit (Bozkurt, 2017). In the following years, Atatürk University and İstanbul University began to open their Open Education systems. A Distance Education Center (DEC) has been established

within public institutions and universities in order to apply the distance learning model during the Covid-19 pandemic process (Kaçan & Gelen, 2020).

Phipps & Merisotis (1999) defines distance education as what is actually meant by this concept, and the definition of the distance education concept will change as technology develops continuously. The United States Distance Learning Association defines the distance education concept as a transfer of knowledge and skills based on remote acquisition of technology and learning skills (Roblyer & Edwards, 2000). Newby et al. (2000), describes distance learning as a curriculum in which students and teachers are physically separated. Özarslan (2008) mentions 4 key elements to carry out the distance education process;

- Distance education is carried out through state, it enables students to be entitled to receive a diploma or certificate if they are successful.

- Distance education enables the participants and the educator to come together in a virtual environment by removing the distance between them.

- Distance education can be conducted as synchronous and asynchronous.

- With distance education, it is possible to use resources effectively.

There are features distinguishing distance education from the traditional one (Çoban, 2013):

- Distance education enables continuous and uninterrupted education.

- Distance education is personal and time use is left to the person.

- The educator and the student do not have to be in the same environment as in traditional education.

- In distance education, the evaluation and interpretation of the student is easier.

- There are different methods to communication ways in distance education.

- Interaction in distance education increases efficiency in education.

Despite the fact that distance education implementations carried out by the digital environment is a versatile system, there are also various disadvantages of it (Kırık, 2014). These disadvantages are not having opportunity to make eye contact with students in the learning environment, being inefficient at problem solving stages arising instantaneously, facing infrastructure-related problems and financial burdens associated with it and having communication problems when the number of the students are too high (Dinçer, 2016).

When the studies in the literature are examined, studies related to distance education models are frequently encountered, especially due to the Covid-19 outbreak. To illustrate, Yalman (2013) examined the satisfaction levels of the students of the Faculty of Education about Moodle, a computer-aided distance education system. Also, Eygü and Karaman (2013) examined the relationship between the studies carried out by the Ataturk University Distance Education Center on the satisfaction levels of undergraduate and associate degree students according to personal suitability, effectiveness, learning, program evaluation, technology, material, evaluation and support services subtitles in their study. Since 2019, it has been observed that studies on the pandemic field have gained momentum with the effect of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Covid-19 virus has affected studies in the field of education as well as many other fields. In Turkey, along with many countries in the world, face-to-face education has not been a prevalent educational choice (Can, 2020). During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, education switched to the distance learning in Turkey (Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2020).

There are also studies on the functioning of open and distance education systems, the analysis of the models used, the examination of student and educator attitudes and the determination of success criteria in Turkey. Although distance education is seen as an alternative education model that emerged during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic period, it is thought to form the basis of education in the coming years (Telli & Altun, 2020). Distance Education Centers established within universities are the indicators of the foundation laid for the future of education. While universities are at the forefront in the distance education process, organizations affiliated to the Ministry of National Education also participate in distance education activities. Başaran et al. (2020) examined the limitations of the distance education model at the school level affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in their study.

The majority of the Faculty members have encountered new technologies along with distance education during the epidemic process. The attitudes of faculty members towards these new technologies have been affecting the educational activities and as well as the success and satisfaction of the students (Wingo et al., 2007). At the same time, the pedagogical and technical equipment of the instructors and the technical requirements of the environment where online education activities are carried out directly affect the quality of distance education (Bilgiç et al., 2011).

Education faculties are one of the leading educational institutions where student and teacher interaction is at the highest level. The education provided in these institutions is highly important due to training the teachers.

Providing education for them through distance education also increases the importance of this education in terms of its quality. In spite of the advantages of the distance education, there are also many disadvantages that negatively affect the quality of education in general. These disadvantages limit particularly the quality of interactive education in large groups. Hereby, revealing the academic performance of teacher candidates having distance education based on their own words will provide us important data about distance education from the students' perspectives and also reveal the relation between distance education and students' success.

METHOD

In this study, the phenomenological research design, which is one of the qualitative research techniques, was applied. The study consists of topics related to the research model, research group, data collection tools and data analysis.

The Research Model

Descriptive research tries to explain what an event, objects, institutions or groups are through description (Dulock, 1993; Lambert & Lambert, 2012). With this method, the groups can be interpreted better and the relationship among them is revealed. (Kaptan, 1998). Content analysis, on the other hand, is a systematic method that enables the creation of categories from a text that consists of more than one word, within a certain rule (Stemler, 2001).

Research Group

Within the scope of the study, 223 students studying and participating distance education lessons in Yozgat Bozok University Faculty of Education Classroom Teaching, Mathematics Teaching, Psychological Counseling and Guidance Teaching, English Language Teaching, Preschool Teaching and Social Studies Teaching programs have been determined as the study group. The selected study group has been defined by convenience sampling method. The convenience sampling method includes the participants that the researcher easily reach (Oğuz, 2016). Since it is easier and better to reach the study group during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic period, this method has been preferred. As it is understood from Table 1, the study group varies in terms of gender, department, technological competencies and socioeconomic status.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Study Group

| Features | | <i>f</i> | % |
|--|--|----------|------|
| Gender | Male | 56 | 25,1 |
| | Female | 167 | 74,9 |
| Age | Under 18 years | 1 | 0,4 |
| | 18-23 years | 213 | 95,5 |
| | Over 23 years | 9 | 4 |
| Department | Classroom Teaching | 54 | 24,2 |
| | Mathematics Teaching | 44 | 19,7 |
| | Psychological Counseling and Guidance Teaching | 39 | 17,5 |
| | English Language Teaching | 38 | 17 |
| | Preschool Teaching | 37 | 16,6 |
| Do you have your own room? | Yes | 163 | 73,1 |
| | No | 60 | 26,9 |
| | Do you have your own computer? | Yes | 116 |
| No | | 107 | 48 |
| Internet Access situation? | Regular | 117 | 52,5 |
| | Partly Regular | 92 | 41,3 |
| | Irregular | 14 | 6,3 |
| The socio-economic status of your family? | Very Good | 1 | 0,4 |
| | Good | 50 | 22,4 |
| | Normal | 164 | 73,5 |

| | | | |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | Bad | 8 | 3,6 |
| Total | | 223 | 100 |

Data Collection Tools

For the study, a semi-structured interview form has been prepared and the final version of it has been determined according to the opinions of two experts in the field. Afterwards, the prepared interview form has been directed to the study group via digital platforms (Google Forms, Moodle) and the answers given by them have been recorded in writing. The interviews include the questions about the effects of subjects such as preliminary information on distance education and perspectives on distance education, limitations of distance education, development and effective use of distance education and student-teacher relations on individual success.

Data Analysis

The obtained data have been analyzed with the content descriptive technique. The raw data acquired from the interviews have been encoded by converting them into standard formats with content analysis. The acquise data as a result of the codings have been also transformed into themes and sub-themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

FINDINGS

Themes were created in line with the findings obtained in this section. The analysis of the findings consists of the themes like distance education knowledge, perspective on distance education, preparation in distance education, understanding the lesson in distance education, teaching the lesson in distance education, technological limitations in distance education, interactive video use in distance education, evaluation in distance education, active participation in distance education, working methods in distance education, distance education, individual success in education, teacher-student relationship in distance education, development of distance education and the effect of distance education on social life.

Theme 1: Distance Education Information

In line with the interviews with the study group, the first question was about *what they had known about distance education before taking their lessons online*. The data obtained are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Distance Education Information

| Category | Subcategory | <i>f</i> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| No information | I had no information | 53 |
| | I did not know much | 62 |
| There is information | I knew how it would be before | 52 |
| | I had the wrong information before | 24 |
| | I knew by definition | 32 |

In the study, it is understood from the answers of the students that while some of them have had knowledge about the distance education, some have had knowledge just about its definition. 24 of the students who have had knowledge about distance education has stated that their knowledge of distance education is different with the application of it they have experienced so far. But, 32 of them have asserted that they know distance education only as a definition.

"I did not know much about distance education, but because of my friends who went to university before me, something more or less occurred in my mind about this system. This year, I gained more knowledge and experience about this subject by taking distance education, so I learned the main purpose of distance education.."

"Frankly, I did not know about distance education before online classes. I was just making assumptions in my mind when it came to distance education; I had thoughts as "inefficient education given in general, since it is remote"."

Theme 2: Perspective on Distance Education

The second question asked to the students during the interviews was about *what they think about the post-epidemic lessons being held online in whole or in part*. The data related with the question are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Perspective on Distance Education

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|----------|---|-----|
| Positive | Applicable for some courses. | 12 |
| | Comfortable education. | 32 |
| Negative | The lessons are inefficient. | 137 |
| | Distance education is very challenging. | 36 |

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the view that distance education is an inefficient and challenging system is a dominant view for most of the students. Therefore, it is understood that there is a negative perspective towards transition to hybrid education after the epidemic.

“In order to prevent interruption of education during the epidemic period, it was in my mind that it was initially continued as an alternative and was temporary. However, it is obvious that the prolongation of this epidemic process and the continuation of the lessons with distance education affects our education life in many ways. Distance education is a much more demanding and demanding system than formal education. I think it has more disadvantages than formal education. Limited possibilities, unwanted technical malfunctions etc. It is very challenging to education. And I think it is a process where education is in the home, intertwined with the family and efficiency is not received much.”

“I think it makes sense, since there is not much extra to be done because our department is verbal, we were examining the slide with the professors in the face-to-face lessons and we go through the slide in the online education, I can say that I love online education.”

“It is a situation caused by necessity. But with the end of the disease, I do not think such an education will be beneficial. Because in face-to-face education, we learn a lot about not only education but also life.”

Theme 3: Preparation in Distance Education

The third question was about whether they have made preparations before the lesson in the distance education system and how this has affected their success. The answers given to this question are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Preparation for Distance Education

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|----------|--|-----|
| I do | I do pre-class research and it positively affects my success. | 114 |
| | I do it sometimes in the lessons I am missing and I see the effect | 61 |
| I don't | I don't make any preparations it would be better if I did it | 47 |

As it can be grasped from the interviews that 114 of the students they have made preparations in the form of research or lesson repetition before just before the lesson starts. It is clear that this preparation has positively affected their success in the course. However, 61 students have expressed that they have prepared just for the subjects about which they have had insufficient knowledge or when they have had time, they have made pre-lesson preparations. 47 of the students have said that they have not made preparations due to different reasons such as not having enough time and thinking that the preparation for the lesson has not been necessary. They have also emphasized that this, mostly has negatively affected their success.

“Yes I do. Before entering the lesson, by examining the materials shared by the teacher on the topics to be covered that week, I am prepared for the lesson and I am comfortable in the forum activities after the lesson. At the same time, I work week by week in terms of the finals. Thus, I do not experience accumulation in lecture repetitions.”

“Of course I do. Since the education was remote, I was experiencing frequent sound interruptions or disruptions due to my own internet. For this reason, when I study the subjects myself beforehand, I can complete the gap that occurs in between myself. I think this method has helped me.”

“I cannot always prepare before class. Whether homework, forums or preparation for quizzes, etc., when these are the priority, there is not much time for preparation.”

Theme 4: Understanding the Lesson in Distance Education

As the 4th question to the students, they were asked how the online taught lessons have affected their understanding of the lessons and their answers for the relevant question are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Understanding the Lesson in Distance Education

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|-----------------|---|----|
| Positive | I can repeat the lesson. | 42 |
| Negative | It is inefficient compared to face-to-face education | 94 |
| | There is no interaction for the lessons. | 23 |
| | I cannot understand the lesson due to technical problems. | 28 |
| Neutral | Same with face-to-face training. | 31 |

As it can be understood from the Table 5, it is seen that the participants put forward 3 different views in understanding the lesson via distance education. The 42 students have considered it positive due to its advantages such as being able to repeat the lesson and thus making up for the lessons that they have not been able to attend. 145 students reveal that they have had difficulties in understanding the lessons because of the lack of interaction technological problems. They have found the the lessons infertile due to the reasons mentioned. 31 students have revealed that they do not find any differences when compared with the face-to-face education.

“Due to the lack of communication and the inadequacy of technological devices (especially the internet), I cannot get the efficiency I want. Of course, online education has positive aspects in understanding the lessons, but I cannot understand it as easily as I learned in face-to-face education.”

Theme 5: Course Processing in Distance Education

During the interviews, the 5th question to the students was about what they have thought about the way the lessons have been taught and whether it has affected their success. The data linked to the question are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Teaching Lessons in Distance Education

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|-----------------|--|----|
| Positive | The teaching of the lessons is very good and affects my success positively. | 74 |
| | It could not be better, in terms of possibilities. | 54 |
| Negative | I do not like the way lessons are taught and it negatively affects my performance. | 35 |
| | Distance education has its limitations and negatively affects my success. | 60 |

As a result of the interviews, based on the data in Table 6, 74 students have enunciated that they have been very satisfied with the teaching of the lessons. 54 students have said that they have also satisfied with the system despite some problems. However, 35 students have claimed that they have not enjoyed the ways the lessons have been taught and 60 students also have claimed that this form of education is providing limited education which has negatively affected their success.

“When we comment on the lesson topics, I am more enthusiastic towards the lesson when our teachers give feedback. Some of our professors did not give feedback when we shared our knowledge on the subject. Some of our professors read what they wrote one by one and added anything to add. The lectures of the teachers who gave feedback were much more productive and enjoyable for me.”

“It affects my success negatively only when the aim is to finish the subject and fill the course time. In distance education, it only appeals to the sense of hearing, and to a limited extent, to the sense of sight. And it is not possible for me to learn effectively and permanently. In fact, I often find it difficult to remember the content of the lesson.”

“It provides comfort, but I still prefer face-to-face training.”

Theme 6: Technology Limitations in Distance Education

The 6th question asked to the students was about what they could say about the effects of the equipment and technical infrastructure used during online education and their impacts on their course success. The relevant answers for question are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7*Technology Limitations in Distance Education*

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|-----------------|--|----|
| Positive | I did not have any difficulties as I had the necessary tools. | 42 |
| Negative | I am having audio and video related problems. | 13 |
| | I didn't have a computer, it negatively affected my performance. | 46 |
| | I am having problems arising from the internet infrastructure. | 56 |
| | Other problems caused by the system. | 54 |
| | I had problems due to power cuts. | 8 |

In the expressions of the majority of the interviewed students, we understand that they have experienced several problems related to technology used during this process. When Table 7 is examined, problems such as audio and video related problems, not having a computer, insufficient internet infrastructure and technical problems arising from the distance education system used come to the fore.

“In the beginning, we were subjected to a very inconsiderate management and educational attitude. It was ruled out that people who do not have an internet connection, computer or phone could be. It was said to those who have problems, what to find a solution, it is not our concern, stay away from the lesson. So much so that I have a friend who has to go to his relative's house, who is miles away, every morning, go to class, and then return home. Another classmate who does not have a computer was told that there is nothing to do. We have encountered many examples like this. It was approached very unsympathetic. Our 1 week was already wasted due to the crash of the system. Some instructors couldn't even adapt. During the process, we constantly experienced problems. These were also among the factors that negatively affected the success in some way.”

“Our university has enabled us to teach courses through a new system. Of course, there were problems because it was a new system. I cannot deny that we are stuck at times. I cannot argue that it constitutes a large part of our course success percentage, but it is still obvious that it affects a lot.”

Theme 7: Using Interactive Video in Distance Education

The 7th question to the interviewees was about if interactive videos are used in their lessons, what they would think about the effects them on their lesson success. The data obtained about the question are shown in Table 8.

Table 8*Using Interactive Video in Distance Education*

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|-----------------|--|----|
| In use | It provides permanent learning. | 68 |
| | It is easier to understand the lessons used. | 94 |
| Not used | Usually not used. | 64 |

In the interviews, it is comprehended that the individual success of the students have increased during the lessons where interactive videos are used, but some deficiencies related to learning have also been observed during the lessons.

“Yes I'm using. Our teachers cannot talk about the issues 100%. Already 30 percent is left to the student. The student searches, but in online education, this situation was 50 percent. For this reason, I watch interactive videos before and after the lesson. I'm trying to make up for my shortcomings.”

“Interactive videos were not used much. Since it was an online education, the information remained in the air, thanks to the videos used (even if it was a little), it had a partial effect on the memorability.”

Theme 8: Assessment in Distance Education

The 8th question asked to the students was about what they have thought about the distance education system being determined as an important criterion of process evaluation. They were also asked whether there is a relation between this case and their success in their lessons. The data obtained based on the statements of the participants are presented in Table 9.

Table 9*Assessment in Distance Education*

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|----------|--|-----|
| Positive | It is a correct application and it affects my success. | 95 |
| Negative | I don't think it has any effect on my success. | 108 |
| Neutral | No comment. | 13 |

As it can be found out in Table 9, 95 of the students has indicated that the process evaluation has affected their success positively and this type of assessment has led them to be more disciplined while studying for the subjects taught. Despite this assertion, 108 of them have revealed that the process assessment has been tiring and difficult for them and this has been a reason for their failure.

"I think it has a positive impact on success, as process evaluation keeps us active all the time. It is efficient because it provides the repetition of the information, but the process is quite challenging and I can say that it is difficult in some cases. It was not good for me that it was process oriented."

"The system in the form of quizzes, forums and homework, which is meant by process evaluation, is a system that works completely against the student. So much so that it constantly stresses the student and leaves almost no free time, I think it dulls the student and lowers his average."

Theme 9: Active Participation in Distance Education

The 9th question was about if they have had difficulty in participating the lessons during online lessons and whether it has affected their success in their lessons. The responses of the interviews are revealed in Table 10.

Table 10*Active Participation in Distance Education*

| Category | f |
|---|-----|
| I am having difficulties and it negatively affects my success. | 107 |
| I am not forced. | 116 |

When the table is examined, almost half of the students has said that they have had difficulty in actively participating the lessons and this situation has negatively affected their success.

"Active participation is also difficult because there can be problems on the internet or it may be due to problems at home, sometimes we may not enter because we are really bored with these situations, which of course affects my lessons, it can be different when we listen, we can keep our own notes, when I miss exams or forums, I can miss exams or forums, which affects my grades."

"No, I have no difficulty in actively participating in the lesson, but since there is a course enrollment, why can't anyone who follows the lesson later or not mark the attendance? This is a bit out of the "online course" thing. Yes, we know we should be there during school time, but there may be those who cannot or have problems."

Theme 10: Working Methods in Distance Education

The 10th question was about what they have made to be successful in the distance education system. The answers of the students are shown in Table 11.

Table 11*Working Methods in Distance Education*

| Category | f |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Course Repetition | 103 |
| Nothing | 2 |
| Video | 23 |
| Homework | 19 |
| Note taking | 63 |

When Table 11 is examined, it is understood that students have used many study methods related to distance education. The methods and their numbers they have used while studying the course subjects are as in the followings. 103 students have been repeating the lessons and making research about the lesson. 63 students have been taking notes during the lessons. 19 students have been preparing by doing homeworks and 23 students have been studying the lesson by watching extra videos. Only 2 students emphasize that they have not made any extra studies.

“I think there is no way you can be really successful in distance education. I pay a lot of money to provide quality internet access, but it is not effective because even if we access the course, we cannot add anything to ourselves because there is no face-to-face interaction.”

“Believe me, I work hard. I even have to compromise the time I spend with my family. It is thought that students do not work because of distance education. This is the opposite now when I was at school I was studying less, getting more tired and less stressed.”

Theme 11: Individual Success in Distance Education

The 11th question asked to the students was about how successful they have considered themselves during the online education. The data gathered from the answers are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Individual Success in Distance Education

| Category | f |
|--------------|-----|
| Successful | 103 |
| Normal | 96 |
| Unsuccessful | 19 |

When Table 12 is taken in consideration, it is understood that the rate of students seeing themselves as successful in the distance education process is high. The number of students who find themselves as completely unsuccessful seems to be quite low considering the successful ones.

“I think I am too successful in face-to-face training. Since I have a lot of time at home, I can spare a lot of time for lectures, exams, homework. In addition, as a person who is easily distracted, it is very important for me to benefit from course records..”

“Actually, I think I am less successful than face-to-face training. Of course, I take the necessary grades to pass a course, but I cannot say that I have learned every detail in any lesson, no matter how much I want.”

Theme 12: Relationship Between Instructors and Students in Distance Education

The 12th question asked to the students was about what they have thought about the relationship between the attitudes of the instructors during online education and their course success. Their answers are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Relationship Between Instructors and Students in Distance Education

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|----------|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Positive | It had a direct impact on my success. | 71 |
| | It negatively impacted my success. | 7 |
| Negative | It differed from teacher to teacher. | 145 |

As it can be understood in Table 13, the relationship between the instructor and the student varies. While 71 students have indicated that the positive attitudes of the lecturers affect their success positively, the 145 students have stated that this situation may differ from one lecturer to another. They believe their success and failure situation has changed accordingly.

“It has a huge impact, sometimes we don't even want to attend classes because of the attitudes of some teachers towards us, or we had some teachers who couldn't keep the lessons alive because of their relationship with us and we had a hard time listening to those lessons. For sincere teachers who have good communication, we listen to the end when we enter the lesson, we take notes and it is good for us.”

“Of course, it is very difficult to tell the academic staff about our problem in online education when we encounter a problem, as in the face to face. But the lecturers' assistance in this difficult process enables us to spend this process more efficiently.”

Theme 13: Improving Distance Education

The 13th question asked to the students was about what the things that they deem appropriate to be done in the distance education process and if these are done, their course success may increase. The data regarding the answers to the relevant question are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Improving Distance Education

| Category | Subcategory | f |
|--------------------------|---|----|
| Materiel | More diverse and material should be shared for each course. | 19 |
| Homework | Too many assignments given. | 31 |
| Course Processing | The lecturer must have the image of the lecturer and the microphones must be used actively. | 23 |
| Evaluation | Faculty members using different techniques | 39 |
| | Format and number of exams should be corrected | |
| I do not know | I have no idea | 29 |

The interviewees have expressed different views on the development of distance education. 19 students have claimed that the material should be developed and diversified. 31 students have recommended the reduction of the number of homework. 23 students have revealed that the lecturers should be taught with the course with video and 59 students have stressed that the lecturers are to implement different methods, techniques and exam forms in the evaluation process. However, 23 students have stated that they do not have any opinions about the relevant question.

“Course duration should be kept long. Because the places to be covered are certain, but the course time is limited, so what is explained cannot be expressed clearly. Speaking for myself, I didn't understand. Some of our professors, on the other hand, studied for about 2.30 hours and did not take any breaks. As such, there was a distraction and it affected my listening to the lesson.”

“In my opinion, activities that do not benefit the student and only waste time should be stopped. I don't think too much burden should be placed on the student during this period. After all, a healthy and happy student means a successful student.”

“It helps us not to postpone the lessons at the last minute and to share the lecture slides with us. If the quiz applications continue, my knowledge will remain fresh as in this period.”

Theme 14: The Effect of Distance Education on Social Life

The last question was about how the online education process have affect their social relations and there can be any relations between this situation and their successes in their lessons. The answers of the question are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

The Effect of Distance Education on Social Life

| Category | f |
|----------------------|-----|
| Positive | 11 |
| Negative | 198 |
| Didn't affect | 14 |

When Table 15 is taken into consideration, the majority of the students interviewed argued that their social relations in the distance education process have negatively been affected and they have also revealed how this has negatively affected their achievements. Despite this, 11 students have indicated that the decrease in their social relations has provided them more time, so that they have been able to devote more time to their lessons. As a result of this, and their success has risen. In addition, 14 students gave stressed that there has been change in their social life when compared to the past.

“It negatively affected. I don't have much time to go out because I stay at my desk for a long time. When the bans got on, I always had to stay at home. Although this process is important and necessary, it was a process that exhausted me. Not being able to spend smart time with my friends and family took me a lot at times. There have been so many days that I attended classes in tiredness. Without any time for myself, it was evening suddenly. Very sad.”

“I run out of social relationships. I suffered completely psychological ailments. I had a hard time communicating. Distance education has negatively affected my social relationships. It is all about success in my lessons. Human beings are social creatures, but distance education prevents this and causes psychological problems and course failures.”

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Distance education is a system that has both advantages and disadvantages in terms of its implementation. In this system where individual learning is more prominent and the effect of the system varies due to individual differences. In this study, the effect of distance education on students' individual achievement has been researched taking into consideration the individual differences. Students' statements have revealed that they have had a lack of prior knowledge about distance education and a negative attitude towards it. Also they have thought that distance education is a less efficient form of education when it is compared with face-to-face education. Moreover, they believe that they have found themselves more successful at distance education despite the limitations and deprivations of its technological tools.

According to the research findings, it is stated by the students that the individual success of the student is high despite all the limitations. In this case, Yagci et al. (2011). Their research shows that online exams contribute positively to student success. In addition, this situation is supported by studies by Liao (2007), Dockery (2006), Yenice (2003), Güven and Sülün (2012) showing that the computer assisted learning model used in distance education has positive effects on student achievement. It is seen that there is a positive relationship between students' pre-course preparations and their individual achievements. In addition, it is understood that the use of interactive videos in lessons has a positive effect on individual success. The use of interactive videos causes students' permanent learning demands to emerge. It is seen in their own statements that students see themselves more successful in lessons where interactive videos are used, as they reinforce the learning situation by appealing to more than one sensory organ. In his study, Karadüz (2010) states that the use of materials that appeal to different sensory organs in educational activities arouses students' curiosity and that this positively affects their preparation for the lesson.

Equipments like microphone and camera are to be used actively for the interaction between instructor and students. The study indicates that it has positive effects on the students' achievements. However, while student-teacher interaction is possible for a small number of groups, this is not possible for large groups with the current system and it is actually understood as a kind of disadvantage of distance education. Kurnaz & Ergün (2019) have examined the relationship between the learning styles of students in electronic environments and their academic achievement with the variables of technological equipment and revealed the effect of technology. The research conducted by Karadağ & Yücel (2020) has revealed that 23% of the students do not voluntarily participate in online classes and 75% of them have difficulty in accessing the necessary tools and equipment for distance lessons. Instructors have also encountered unfamiliar technologies during the pandemic process. The attitude of instructors towards these new technologies affects the educational activities and thus the satisfaction of student about their achievement (Wingo et al., 2007). Besides, the pedagogical and technical equipment of the instructors and the technical requirements of the environment where online education activities are carried out directly affect the quality of distance education (Bilgiç et al., 2011). Grenzky & Maitland (2001) have reached the conclusion that 72% positive and 14% negative and the remaining 14% of the lecturers working in distance education by telephone have unbiased opinions about the distance education process.

One of the important results of the study is that the lessons must be taught interactively in order for students to understand the lessons better in distance education. Thompson & Flecknoe (2003) have showed in their study that there is a positive relationship between interactive teaching and the academic achievement of the student. Moreover, in the findings of the present study, differences of opinion have emerged at the point of determining success with process assessment. While some students have indicated that having homework and exams regularly every week is a difficult process and this negatively affects their success, some emphasize that having a continuity in studying the lessons keeps their minds energetic and as a result of this, it brings them success. Some studies on this subject also endorse the diversities related with the study results. For instance, Walberg et al. (1985) has talked about the positive effects of homework on students' academic achievement, Check & Ziebell (1980) ve Heller et al. (1988) have stated in their studies that there is not enough data to show that homework has a positive effect on academic achievement.

According to the results of the study, it is understood that the instructor has a direct impact on positive or negative perspective towards the course. According to Balcı (1993), Sönmez (2003) and Kumral (2009) the characteristics expected from instructors are using the mother tongue effectively, making preparation for the lesson, having voice intonation, the usage of gestures and facial expressions, coming to the lesson on time, establishing good relationships with students and using tools for the lesson effectively. Not being able to present these features at the expected level in online course environments can be considered among the reasons for the low efficiency in lessons.

According to the results of the study, the students mostly have a negative attitude towards the distance education. It has been determined that there is a direct relationship between the student attitudes towards the course and academic achievement by many studies (Evans, 2007; Zan & Martino, 2007; Ogunniyi, 2015; Mohammed & Waheed, 2011; Etlioglu & Tekin, 2020). However, in the present study, students consider themselves successful individually although they have negative thoughts about distance education, One of the important results of the study is that distance education is a comfortable system. Although most of the students consider themselves successful in this process, we understand that they prefer face-to-face education. In spite of being an advantageous system, the limitations of distance education cause students to regard the process as inefficient. Within this framework students' views and suggestions on the development of distance education can be listed as follows:

- Material diversity is needed for distance education to be more successful and effective.
- The quality and quantity of homework given in distance education are to be adjusted by considering the limitations of the process.
- Process assessment in distance education must be done in accordance with the assessment and evaluation rules.
- In distance education, all participants must have the tools and equipment for instant interaction.
- In order to achieve efficiency in distance education, it is necessary to divide large groups into sections and teach the lesson in smaller groups (20 people on average).
- There is no time limitation in distance education, but the instructors are to be prevented from changing the course hours or days at the last moment.

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