

# Views of education faculty students on emergency remote teaching

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to try to understand in depth what the students studying at the Faculty of Education in the 2020-2021 emergency remote teaching (ERT) period experience during the theoretical and applied courses and their views on distance education. For this purpose, this study was conducted with the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs. The research was conducted with 455 students studying at the Faculty of Education of a state university in the Black Sea region of Turkey. Ethics Committee approval (Number E-45428382-050.99-109541) was first obtained from a State University to collect the study data. The data were collected using the online interview form developed by the researcher. Qualitative data were analyzed by subjecting them to semantic content analysis with content analysis. While the researchers analyzed the data, it was analyzed according to member control, credibility, transferability, and verifiability/confirmability criteria for validity and reliability. In addition, students' opinions were analyzed by Hofstede's descriptive analysis according to their cultural dimensions according to countries. The data obtained from the findings were analyzed in the themes of positive, negative, and solution suggestions in emergency remote teaching. The positive features of distance education are divided into categories under the headings of the courses' teaching, the instructor's attitude, and resource access. The negative features of emergency remote teaching are categorized under the education and training process, communication, technological deficiencies, and personal situation.

**Keywords:** Emergency remote teaching, faculty of education, student opinion.

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## INTRODUCTION

As a result of the rapid spread of the coronavirus disease all over the world, emergency remote teaching has become the center of educational activities. Miks and McIlwaine (2020) announced that schools were closed in many countries due to the epidemic, and they reported that 1.6 billion students were affected by this process. From preschool education institutions to the graduate level, compulsory distance education has suddenly been introduced. One of the countries affected by this process is Turkey. In this process, Turkey has started to conduct the courses online through EBA (Education Information Network) system and TV channels from preschool to high school. Universities, on the other hand, have switched to distance education with remote infrastructure systems.

While universities with a strong and ready distance education infrastructure are glorious, universities have experienced problems. According to Mulenga and Marbán (2020), web tools such as digital competencies and devices, online resources, and e-learning environments have gained significant importance. Agnoletto and Queiroz (2020) stated that beyond the definition of distance education for COVID-19, it represents a structure that contains many problems and difficulties. It is thought to contribute to education during the epidemic period when it is not clear whether the problems or advantages experienced by students will continue to be determined during this epidemic period, especially since it is passed suddenly and compulsory.

## Education and Covid-19

The main goal of education is to prepare students for future challenges. Therefore, these conditions also affect educational environments, as they show constant change and development in the flow of life. With the increase in technology, concepts such as distance education and online learning have come to the fore in recent years. Naturally, educational environments, as well as curricula, are constantly changing and updated curricula. Fundamental changes are made in learning environments and the processes to respond to them (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019). As mentioned before, COVID-19 has caused a rapid and unpredictable change in learning and teaching environments. Due to COVID-19, which has affected the world, formal education has been suspended in many countries, and a pandemic disease has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO). As a result, many countries (e.g., Turkey and China) have decided to switch to emergency remote teaching at all education levels (Serçemeli and Kurnaz, 2020; Yılmaz, 2020; Dede et al., 2021).

## Distance education and culture

According to Scollon and Scollon (1995), culture is expressed as "the ideas, communication or behaviors that give a unique identity to a group of people and are used to organize their inner bonds of harmony and membership" (p. 127). In this context, education is not independent of culture in all societies (Powe, 1993). Hofstede (1980, 2009) stated that cultural dimensions are five in terms of countries: power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence. The power gap index is stated as the members of the society do not have expectations and desires for the equal and fair distribution of power. Moreover, it is stated as the low level of integration of individuals towards institutions/organizations in the individualism dimension. On the one hand, the masculinity dimension points to the main problems arising from gender inequality in societies.

On the other hand, the uncertainty avoidance index expresses a society's reactions to certain, customary, and unclear situations/situations. The long-term trend dimension points to values such as protecting the rights and dignity of every individual in society, respecting culture and tradition, and expressing social responsibilities. On the other hand, Cooper et al. (2007) made some determinations regarding the transfer and impact of Hofstede's five cultural value dimensions mentioned above on classroom teaching practices. Accordingly, in societies with high social, power range

index and uncertainty avoidance, teacher-centered teaching approaches are adopted, questioning the teacher's teaching is seen as disrespectful, individuals must make sacrifices for the society, and situations such as avoidance of ambiguous and unclear teaching are highlighted. In this context, as mentioned above, it is considered essential to determine the status of students according to Turkish culture in the distance education process and to determine what possible solutions are.

## Emergency remote teaching (ERT) during the COVID-19 in Turkey

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Turkey, ERT started on March 23, 2020 (Serçemeli & Kurnaz, 2020). Bakker and Wagner (2020) stated that many students did not have online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. To solve this problem in Turkey, after the 3-week ERT decision, three new state televisions (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) - Education Information Network [EBA in Turkish] TV secondary school and TRT EBA TV high school) started distance education for more than 18 million students at primary, secondary and high school levels. ERT has started for many students. While it was expected that schools would continue remotely until April 30, 2020, with the continuation of the epidemic and the increase in the number of cases, the Ministry of National Education decided to continue the distance education process until June 1, 2020. The COVID-19 Scientific Committee of the Ministry of Health recommended extending this period until June 19, 2020. If everything returned to normal, the Ministry of National Education announced that schools would start face-to-face education on August 31, 2020. However, schools opened due to the increase in the number of cases. Since November 2020, schools have switched to hybrid models for various education levels. In this process, students tried to follow the lessons from their homes for a long time. Investments in primary, secondary, and high school have not progressed similarly in universities. Those who could not strengthen their infrastructure at each university completed their programs incompletely. Some universities (for example, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Mersin University, Sakarya University, etc.) have provided their students with an 8GB-10GB free internet connection. Even though students can get the internet to a certain extent, students who do not have a computer or smartphone or have infrastructure problems could not follow the lessons and stop their registration.

## Purpose and importance of the study

The rapidly developing events and the suddenly changing

education-teaching approach have made the studies on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on education and distance education necessary. This study aims to reveal the students who took theoretically and applied for courses at the Faculty of Education in the 2020-2021 distance education period experienced and their views on distance education. It is thought that it is important to have solution suggestions when students studying in these faculties encounter problems in the transition to professional life. At the same time, students' thoughts regarding power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence were analyzed. For this purpose, it is thought that this study will contribute to the field. With this study, students will know how they expect courses in the distance education process and the processes they are satisfied with. Once you have an idea of this process, you can help shape the lessons planned for the future. It is thought that the results of the study can make an essential contribution to the relevant literature in terms of discussing the possible differences and similarities with the results in the existing literature by discussing them from points such as culture and education system. In this context, an answer to the following problem was sought in this study:

- 1) What are the situations in which the students of the Faculty of Education studying in Turkey are satisfied with the ERT process?
- 2) What problems are experienced by the Faculty of Education students studying in Turkey during the ERT process?
- 3) What are the solutions for the problems in the ERT process of the Faculty of education students studying in Turkey?
- 4) What are the students' thoughts on cultural dimensions (power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence)? Answers to the questions were sought.

## METHOD

### Research design

The study was carried out with the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs, to understand in depth what the students who took theoretically and applied for courses in the Faculty of Education experienced and their views on distance education. Phenomenological studies reveal individuals' experiences, perceptions, and meanings about a phenomenon (Baker et al., 1992). For this purpose, it is aimed to reveal what the students of the Faculty of Education experience during the distance education

process.

### Research population

The research population consists of students who continue their education in the Faculty of Education of a state university in the Black Sea region of Turkey. The data were collected by easily accessible sampling method. Students who took the researcher's elective course were included in the research. The sample consists of 511 students in total who take four different elective courses in 4 groups (Table 1).

Students from 8 departments in the Faculty of education took part in the study. In this way, the opinions of students who took theoretical and applied courses in different disciplines such as music, guidance, painting, preschool, and science teaching were included. There are 138 male and 373 female students in the sample group.

**Table 1.** Research population.

Departments	N	N	Total
Music	18	52	70
Guidance	18	51	69
Preschool	16	52	68
Primary School	17	43	60
Mathematic	18	50	68
Turkish	19	44	63
Social Information	15	39	54
Science Teaching	17	42	59
	138	373	511

### Data collection

In phenomenological studies, information about the content and meaning of their experiences is obtained by getting the opinions of individuals from verbal or written texts (Baker et al., 1992). For this reason, the "opinion form for distance education" developed by the researcher (Bal Incebacak, 2021) and online course recording videos were used as data collection tools. This form has developed this form by taking the expert opinion. The interview form consists of 5 questions. The data were transferred to a word file as S<sup>1</sup>, S<sup>2</sup> and an excel table with 511 lines were obtained. Students' opinions were deciphered from the video recordings, and the processes in which they shared their experiences of the distance education process were recorded and recorded with the name of the week and student.

As shown in Table 2, while citations were given, the

**Table 2.** Student Nomenclature.

Video recording list		Student comments list	
Week 3	A... D....	A...D...	S1
Week 4	B... Y...	B... Y...	S2
Week 5	C... T...	C... T...	S3

citations recorded in the third week as Ali Demir (not a real name) were listed, and the opinions of the students were combined, compared, and analyzed by matching them with the names of the people in the nomenclature in the excel table where their opinions were taken. For example, since the student named Ali Demir for three weeks was the 1st in the ranking in the other table, his views were included in the text as 3WS<sup>1</sup> on the video recording. The video recordings and the information of the people who filled out the interview form were sorted and named.

### Data analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed by subjecting them to content analysis, semantic content analysis, and descriptive analysis. All the data were analyzed by semantic content analysis. Then, Hofstede (1980, 2009) made a descriptive analysis according to the cultural dimensions of the countries. To increase the reliability of the study, analyses should be performed according to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria. The steps of the process are listed below.

### Reliability and validity of the study

#### a) For credibility

1) *It is recommended to use well-known research methods* (Yin, 2009). For this purpose, an interview form developed by the researcher was used in this study.

2) *Long-term contact*; Shenton (2004) establishes contact with the participants for a long time before the application starts, enabling the participants to express themselves more quickly in the interviews. For this purpose, the participants are composed of the student group the researcher has been attending for 15 weeks at the Faculty of education. In the courses, the participants communicated well with the researcher and expressed this in their written statements.

3) *Continuous observation* and long-term interaction can enable researchers to grasp the basic features of the case or context (Lincoln and Guba, 1986). For this purpose, the researcher asked the students their

thoughts about the process at the end of the 15-week course. The online lessons were recorded, and quotations from the students' statements in the course records were included.

4) *Selection of the participants by random sampling*; Shenton (2004) stated that choosing the participants by random sampling method rather than purposive sampling will reduce the risk of bias in the research. For this purpose, the participant group consisted of 511 students from the Faculty of education who chose the researcher's course. 5000 students enrolled in the Faculty of education are randomly selected and distributed to elective courses. The participant group randomly chose the course.

5) *Diversification*, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stated that it would be appropriate to cross-check the data with different data sources. The data were collected with an interview form, and at the same time, they were supported by the student's comments about the process in the online lessons.

6) *Using tactics that support participant honesty*, Shenton (2004) stated that participants should be asked to be frank, intimacy should be established, and it should be stated that there is no correct answer to the questions. For this purpose, questions were given to the participants, and it was stated that they were asked to answer sincerely, that their answers would be used for the researcher to publish about the process, and that there was no concern for grades or correct answers.

7) *Repeated inquiries*, Shenton (2004) recommended asking similar questions to people in the process and comparing their answers. For this purpose, the researcher asked similar questions to the students at the end of their lessons and got their answers.

8) *In Adverse situation analysis*, Lincoln and Guba (1986) argued that the researcher needs to create categories and themes and then reveal the compatible and incompatible data with these themes. For this purpose, after the data were analyzed semantically, a re-analysis was made, and they were read and compared once again to determine whether there were expressions that differed from the themes.

9) *Short-term meetings* Shenton (2004) stated that meeting more frequently will improve the researcher's vision in data collection while collecting data. The researcher obtained the data from the process by taking

opinions about the problems experienced by the students in distance education at the end of each week.

10) *Colleague Evaluation* Lincoln and Guba (1986) suggested that the opinions of different researchers be taken after analyzing the data. For this purpose, the results of the data analysis were presented to a professor at the Faculty of education, and his opinions about the naming of codes and themes were requested.

11) *Reflective interpretations of the researcher*, Reflective interpretation is the way of self-expression stemming from the researcher's vocabulary and self-awareness Patton (2002). For this purpose, the themes and codes named jointly by two researchers were examined by one researcher, and it was checked whether the third person clearly expressed the theme names.

12) *The researcher's background, qualifications, and experiences*, Patton (2002) stated that in qualitative studies, data collection and analysis effectively ensure the people's credibility.

13) *Participant control* is seen as an essential criterion in ensuring credibility and direct testing of data and interpretations by participants. The aim here is to test whether what the participants say determines the situations they want to express (Guba, 1981). For this purpose, the data and comments were shown to 5 of the people quoted after the interview, and it was ensured whether they were expressed correctly or not.

14) *Inter-coder reliability* According to Miles and Huberman (1994), two researchers stated that they obtained more accurate results when they analyzed the same data set and coded. For this purpose, two different researchers simultaneously read the data independently for the semantic content, and the answers to the questions were divided into codes. Similar codes were named under a common theme. Then, by coming together and reaching a consensus on standard and non-common codes, Miles and Huberman (1994) calculated the percentage of agreement. Since a consensus was reached, the percentage of agreement was calculated as 100%.

b) *For transferability*, Before making the transfer, Shenton (2004) provides information about:

- definition of the study group
- the limitations of the study group,
- the data collection method,
- the number of people participating in the study,
- the data collection process and the elapsed time.

For this purpose, the data collection process was explained in detail in light of these findings.

c) *For dependability*, Shenton (2004) stated that the research processes should be reported in detail to allow future researchers to repeat the study. For this purpose,

the data collection and analysis process was given in detail.

d) *For confirmability*, Morrow (2005) stated that the integrity of the findings lies in the data collected. The reliability and validity of the data were ensured by supporting the collected data with citations.

## Ethical procedures

Ethics committee approval was received for this study.

The Title of The Ethics Committee: Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Approval Date: 27.08.2021

Ethics Document's Number: 2021/660

## FINDINGS

In this section, it has been revealed that the views of the education faculty students about ERT are divided into positive, negative, and solution suggestions after continuing their education with ERT for more than one year as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic. The details of the analysis of students' opinions are expressed by supporting the quotations as shown in Figure 1.

When the students' opinions about ERT are examined, it is seen that they are grouped under three themes positive, negative, and solution suggestions. Among these themes, the positive theme is divided into categories: the teaching of the lessons, the instructor's attitude, access to resources, and financial advantages. The negative theme is categorized as education and training process, communication, technological deficiencies, and personal situation. Suggestions for solutions to the problems experienced in ERT are divided into categories under the headings of infrastructure problems, distance education guidance, and learning content (Figure 2).

Regarding distance education, student citations related to these dimensions were also included in the analysis.

## Opinions on the positive features of the distance education process

What are the situations in which the students of the Faculty of Education studying in Turkey are satisfied with the distance education process? The positive opinions of the students in the question are given in Table 3. The positive features of distance education are divided into categories under the students' headings, the lessons' teaching, the instructor's attitude, and the access to

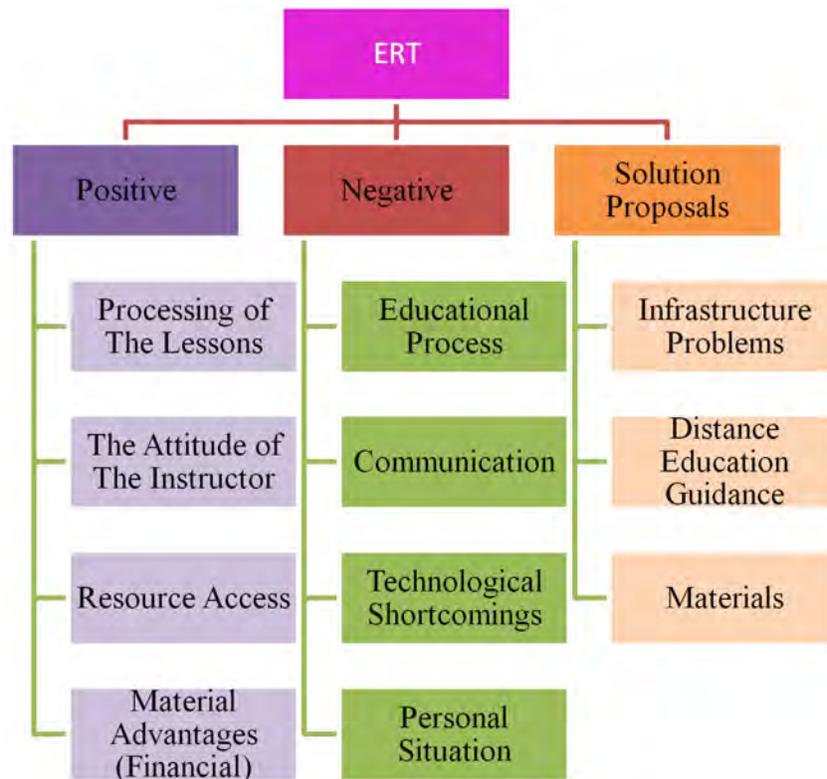


Figure 1. Themes and categories related to ERT.

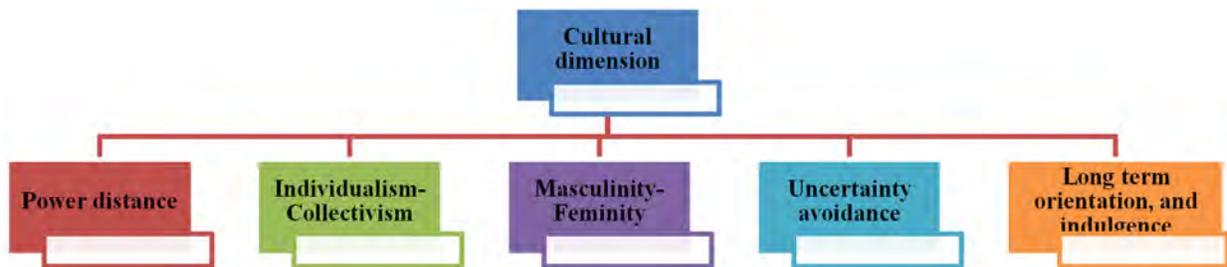


Figure 2. Cultural Dimensions of Hofstede (1980, 2009).

Table 3. Positive.

Departments	Processing of the lessons	The attitude of the instructor	Resource access	Material advantages
Music	12	5	52	62
Guidance	15	18	62	69
Preschool	8	15	52	68
Primary school	10	16	45	42
Mathematic	18	17	52	19
Turkish	25	25	38	25
Social information	25	26	24	56
Science teaching	23	18	50	38

resources.

### **Processing of the lessons**

In the ERT process, it was seen that the students stated that they were efficient in some courses and that they did not get any efficiency in some courses. When the students' opinions about the courses they took were examined, Many students also stated that the lessons were productive when the students were active. 3WS<sup>1</sup>: *"It is entertaining to teach with you because, rather than the atmosphere of the lesson, you teach the lesson with our opinions by presenting your views. I feel as if it is a face-to-face classroom environment. I can have the feeling of being in the classroom because you require the camera to be turned on,"* S<sup>87</sup>: *"The lessons of our teachers who use different web tools were perfect" In the process, students open cameras, take the floor, and actively participating in the lesson contribute to the students' efficiency from the lessons".* S<sup>452</sup>: *"some of our teachers teach with such a cynical and flat tone of voice, so I felt that I had difficulty in adapting to the lesson*

### **The attitude of the instructor**

It is seen that the attitudes of the instructors who teach in the ERT process play a very effective role in the efficiency and productivity of the lessons. When the students' views on this process are examined, S<sup>311</sup>: *"The teacher's attitude in distance education affects my ability to follow the course. Your lessons were delightful because you motivated us and made us see the positive aspects of the process in our stressful times..."*, S<sup>159</sup>: *"The lessons of the teachers who had high energy, were motivating, had fun and gave lessons in a conversational atmosphere were productive..."*, S<sup>6</sup>: *"I would like to state that I especially enjoyed the elective courses because the instructor of the course made us active and gave us the right to speak..."* S<sup>1</sup>: *"I listened to the field lessons with interest because our teachers put much effort into these lessons and used a lot of videos and materials..."*, S<sup>19</sup>: *"It is essential that the teacher motivates us in distance education and teaches the lesson lively and energetically, we have very few teachers who do this. Our elective and field courses with our instructors were excellent. The others were rather inefficient."* 14WS<sup>12</sup>: *"My teacher, the lesson is effective with you. At the end of the lesson, your questions such as what I learned, what did I notice encourage us to listen to the lesson",* TWS<sup>56</sup>: *"My teacher, you have such a high energy level that I cannot sit in front of you with a low energy level, and I want to attend the lesson and speak. I am looking for an opportunity".* The fact that the students talk and share

their ideas in the lesson and that the instructor teaches the lesson in a lively and assertive way increase the adaptation of the students to the lesson.

### **Resource access**

In the ERT process, students stated that they are presented with rich content in terms of resource access. S<sup>16</sup>: *"Some of our teachers provided us with much information in terms of material."* S<sup>250</sup>: *"Uploading lecture videos to the system is very nice because we can repeat the course whenever we want".* S<sup>500</sup>: *"I can say that it was a productive period in terms of making the resources of the libraries accessible, uploading the slides of the lecturers to the system, being aware of the existence of different web tools, and sharing the resources about them with us, and being able to reach the lecturers whenever we want."* It is seen that ERT has positive features in terms of opening access to resources from students' statements and providing rich material.

### **Material advantages (financial)**

It has been determined that students have statements that they have financial advantages in the ERT process. S<sup>111</sup>: *"We did not become a burden on our family because we did not stay in the dormitory and did not pay for food and drink",* S<sup>199</sup>: *"We got rid of many expenses such as travel, food, and drink while commuting to school",* S<sup>259</sup>: *"We made fewer expenses at home, if we go to school, we can pay for travel, house rent, shopping, clothes, etc. We would have needed many things like this, and we lived for a year without spending any money on them."* Students stated that they have an advantage in ERT because they do not spend extra money on food, shelter, clothing, and transportation.

### **Opinions on the negative features of the distance education process**

What are the problems experienced by the Faculty of Education students studying in Turkey during the ERT? The analysis of the negative opinions given to the question is included. The negative features of distance education are categorized under the education and training process, communication, technological deficiencies, and personal situation (Table 4).

### **Educational process**

It has been observed that there are some problems in

**Table 4.** Negative.

Departments	Educational process	Communication	Technological shortcomings	Personal situation
Music	62	25	70	58
Guidance	69	38	69	25
Preschool	68	19	68	54
Primary school	42	36	60	35
Mathematic	19	27	68	19
Turkish	25	45	63	20
Social information	56	26	54	55
Science teaching	38	19	59	19

ERT during the education period. S<sup>279</sup>: “Our applied and field courses in distance education were rather inefficient, and I think the teachers were unprepared for this process.” S<sup>98</sup>: “As a person who learns by doing and living, I felt as if I had a fruitless year and realized that when everything is remote, it becomes very unproductive”, S<sup>45</sup>: “Homework, our responsibilities at home was an unproductive period in my opinion”, S<sup>503</sup>: “I can say that distance education is equal to a very boring education. I do not remember listening to such boring lectures in my education life”, S<sup>66</sup>: “I listened to the field lessons with interest” S<sup>1</sup>: “... for example, the teacher of one of our courses was saying that he was not constantly adapting to the distance education process, and the lesson was inefficient, so we could not adapt to this teacher's lesson and get efficiency. We did not want to go to class. I even followed his lectures by watching the videos he uploaded. I did not attend his class alive”, W9S<sup>89</sup>: “Sir, we did not have any problems in the exams because you asked what you were talking about, but some of our teachers briefly gave lectures and shared many materials and held us responsible for everything they did not tell. Isn't this a rote-learning attitude?” In the process, it was determined that the students could not get the efficiency they wanted from the presentation-based, rote-based, lecture-based lectures. It was stated that the period was unproductive due to the old age of learning by doing and living in the process.

### Communication

During the ERT process, students stated that they had problems with communication. The views on these problems are expressed as follows. S<sup>65</sup>: “I think the professors were not efficient in distance education. They think that they will provide distance education only by making presentations. In contrast, the communication, speech, and involvement of our teachers in the lessons in which we were efficient in distance education were different, if only they could get a little inspiration from

them”, S<sup>489</sup>: “One of our instructors did not turn on the camera because we did not open the camera in the lesson, and we were listening to the lesson as if we were listening to a sound from the void. Do you think this lesson can be effective?”, S<sup>508</sup>: “The lessons of the teachers with high communication were also productive. However, the lessons of the teachers who did not have good communication were a complete disaster”, S<sup>88</sup>: “We have officially understood the importance of mutual communication through distance education, and it was inefficient when the teachers taught us as presentations without making any promises.”, In the statements of the students, it is seen that they experienced some communication problems in the process. Students expressed what needs to be done to overcome communication problems. W8S<sup>300</sup>: “When there was no obligation to open the camera, the friends did not turn on their cameras, so there is a disconnection when the lessons are taught without anyone seeing anyone.” It is thought that teachers and lecturers opening the camera during the ERT process and making a promise to the student will effectively turn the negative feature of distance education into a positive one.

### Technological shortcomings

It has been determined that one of the essential deficiencies in ERT is a technological deficiency. S<sup>22</sup>: “ERT means technology, and I know that many students, including myself, have problems with the internet, computer, or phone. How can we get efficiency from the process that we so lack in technology?”, S<sup>45</sup>: “Because I live in a village, I often had internet and connection problems because I do not live in a place with fiber infrastructure”, S<sup>322</sup>: “We had internet connection problems, and I did not have enough technological knowledge. I had to constantly ask neighbors for help,” S<sup>400</sup>: “I had a computer problem because there is only one computer in our house and we used it with my brother sometimes, our lessons overlapped, so one of us

could not attend the lesson" W3S<sup>55</sup>: "To avoid a disconnection in your lesson, I go to our neighbor and use his internet. Because the internet speed in our house is low, I have a connection problem". It is seen that students are exposed to problems such as the internet, connection problems, and lack of computers in the process.

### **Personal situation**

It has been determined that students are not efficient in ERT due to their personal problems and attitudes toward the distance education process. S<sup>59</sup>: "Studying at home has always been difficult for me, and I had adaptation problems because I was at home in distance education." S<sup>456</sup>: "Since my brothers and my mother were teachers at the same time, we were going to class, and we heard each other's voices, so it was a very fruitless year for me because our house was small", S<sup>466</sup>: "Living with the people of the house, it is challenging to attend the course because there is always a happening at home and I had much trouble adapting to the course.", S<sup>58</sup>: "I was overwhelmed by constantly looking at the screen, sometimes I had a hard time following the lessons.", S<sup>369</sup>: "Being at home has worn me out psychologically, I do not

think I got the best out of the period because I was depressed.", S<sup>256</sup>: "I was too reluctant to follow the lessons because my motivation was shallow.", S<sup>478</sup>: "My mothers had COVID-19, and I entered the class week with this psychology, of course, I had to look after them so that I could not study for the exams. I think it was an unproductive period". It has been determined that the students have problems being at home and living with the household, the difficulty of being in front of the screen, the stress and distress caused by COVID-19, low motivation, being sick at home or nearby, and needing care.

### **Opinions on solution suggestions for the distance education process**

What are the solutions for the problems in the ERT process of the Faculty of Education students studying in Turkey? The analyzes of their answers to the question are given below. Suggestions for solutions to the problems experienced in distance education are divided into categories under the headings of infrastructure problems, distance education guidance, and learning contents (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Solution proposals.

<b>Departments</b>	<b>Infrastructure problems</b>	<b>Distance education guidance</b>	<b>Learning contents</b>
Music	62	25	70
Guidance	69	38	69
Preschool	68	19	68
Primary school	42	36	60
Mathematic	19	27	68
Turkish	25	45	63
Social information	56	26	54
Science teaching	38	19	59

### **Infrastructure problems**

The solution suggestions for the students' infrastructure problems were as follows. S12: "We are experiencing connection problems, so the government should work on the infrastructure that will provide equal connection speed to all parts of Turkey. Because we do not cause this problem, it is a problem that the government should solve", S<sup>59</sup>: "The government should establish the centers that centers that will provide internet access to villages and districts with connection problems and rooms, where individuals can connect to the internet individually, can be a solution for those who have connection problems.", S<sup>385</sup>: "The government should make campaigns to help

families who do not have a phone.

### **Distance education guidance**

In the ERT process, the students offered suggestions for themselves and the instructors. Students' thoughts about the process, and expressed their opinions. S<sup>505</sup>: "All responsibility in distance education fell on us. It was difficult to manage all of these, following the lessons, taking the notes, writing, doing the homework on time, and taking responsibility. If only there were a lesson in taking responsibility from afar.", S<sup>422</sup>: "I think they should have given teachers training on how to teach in distance

education. Because the lessons of some of our teachers were very productive, some were not efficient at all. Because the teacher did not have enough knowledge and he was constantly expressing that he was not enough.", S<sup>56</sup>: "It would be great if the training were given on how to deal with stress in distance education, I was apprehensive during this process, and I had a challenging time coping with my anxiety", S<sup>366</sup>: "Training such as Will Training should be given in distance education. It was challenging for me to do things alone." S<sup>387</sup>: "There should be lessons in which more use of digital world tools should be taught. We learned many webs 2.0 tools from some of our teachers when we switched to distance education, there should be lessons about this, and even the use of these tools should be taught to all instructors." In this process, they stated that it was appropriate for the students to study individually, create a study routine, learn the methods and strategies of self-monitoring, learn the use of web tools, and give pieces of training both personally and for trainers.

### **Materials**

The students stated that there are some deficiencies regarding the learning contents in ERT. When the students' opinions about the materials are examined; S<sup>29</sup>: "In distance education, our instructors shared the course contents in the system, but some of the instructors put short presentation videos. Because of this, we could not reach the entire course.", S<sup>58</sup>: "It is necessary to share better quality course notes related to lecture notes. Because the professors shared the grades of other universities or institutions such as secondary schools with us", S<sup>98</sup>: "In distance education, it would be better to share all the teachers' lectures in the lesson. We had instructors who did it, and we did not have any problems in their lessons", S<sup>56</sup>: "The creative drama course is effective, I wish the teachers of other courses had learned this method too.", S<sup>101</sup>: "Lecture notes with richer content should be shared", S<sup>255</sup>: "I wish we could access the course grades at other universities, and if everyone could take courses from any university after this semester, it would be great if every university had a common pool because I wanted to take courses from a more equipped teacher at my own university rather than a well-equipped teacher". S<sup>78</sup>: "I think there should be more lecture notes and videos, paid education videos could be provided free of charge during the distance education process, the state could provide this", S<sup>509</sup>: "The duration of lectures should be short should be short because we cannot pay attention and listen to the lecture for that long anyway." In the process, while the students could access the course content for the repetition of many courses, it was seen that not every teacher offered

video content as well. It is seen that it is essential to give more course content and to train trainers on this subject. In addition, they suggested that the lesson methods with which the students were satisfied should be learned by other teachers and applied in their classrooms.

### **Students' thoughts according to cultural dimensions (power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence)**

The opinions of the students regarding these situations are given below.

#### **Power distance**

The power range index means that the members of the society do not have expectations and desires for the equal and fair distribution of power. In this sense, students; S<sup>65</sup>: "The state did not intervene and did not provide sufficient support to universities while taking initiatives such as opening a TV channel for primary, secondary, and high schools. It is left to the initiative of the rectors.", S<sup>455</sup>: "Not everyone has equal conditions in our society, there were some of my classmates who lived in the village and had infrastructure problems, and most of them could not attend the classes; there were even those who froze their enrollment."

It is understood from the students' statements that all segments of society cannot receive education with equal and fair conditions.

#### **Individualism**

It is stated as the low integration of individuals towards institutions/organizations. S<sup>45</sup>: "We have friends who believe that there is no pandemic even though there is a pandemic, and this causes the numbers to increase", S<sup>368</sup>: "The government imposes many prohibitions. It closed schools and some workplaces and brought restrictions, but there are still people who do not comply with these bans. I think that the pandemic will continue for a long time because of them.", S<sup>256</sup>: "People who do not It closed schools and some workplaces, are not vaccinated and ignore the closures made to end the pandemic. In addition, some still get married, have weddings, and go on vacation. As long as this situation continues, we will not be able to reach our schools." S<sup>59</sup>: "I get furious when I see people who still do not obey the prohibitions while I am waiting to follow all the prohibitions and return to my school as soon as possible." From the statements, it is seen that the community did

not fulfill the necessary sensitivity in the process.

**Masculinity** points to the main problems that arise due to masculinity and gender inequality in societies. It is seen that the problems experienced by female and male students differ in the COVID-19 pandemic. S<sup>78</sup>: *"Being at home during the pandemic has disrupted our eating and sleeping patterns. However, most importantly, when we were at home, we always had to help with things. While the men were just listening to lectures, we had to help with the housework."*, S<sup>45</sup>: *"It is not good for mothers and daughters to be at home during the pandemic, because house responsibilities are always for girls, while boys and fathers do not work and just go to bed. Even if schools are open, we can relax"*, S<sup>89</sup>: *"I can say that our responsibilities have increased by two times in the pandemic since there is a logic in Turkish society that girls will always work and boys will sleep"*. These statements indicate that gender inequality in societies still occurs. It is seen that it is not culturally suitable for distance education. Since they live in a male-dominated community, female students have suffered in this process.

**Uncertainty avoidance:** the uncertainty avoidance index expresses a society's reactions to certain, customary, and unclear situations. These reactions seem to increase with the pandemic. S<sup>412</sup>: *"When the first ban came on during the pandemic, we immediately ran to the markets and stocked up on food and took the risk of contagion"*, S<sup>91</sup>: *"We started to hoard everything with the pandemic, and we did not attend weddings and funerals for fear of disease"*, S<sup>101</sup>: *"We postponed many things because it is not clear when the pandemic will end, there are many things we did not learn at school, and I think we will learn this from the people there when we are appointed to our professional life"*. It is seen that the pandemic affects the uncertainty avoidance index. Many people's habits have changed with the pandemic.

**Long-term orientation and indulgence:** Long-term tendency points to values such as protecting the rights and dignity of every individual in society, respecting culture and tradition, and expressing social responsibilities. S<sup>157</sup>: *"I was in the 2nd grade when the pandemic started, and I thought the process would take a short time. However, the process is long, and I will have to take the exam to be appointed by working at home, which increases my anxiety because I think we cannot get the desired level of distance education. Not all of our teachers teach at least the same efficiency."*, S<sup>328</sup>: *"It is complicated to study at home in a planned way. Frankly, it is very frustrating that the time to take the exam is like this, and even the exam dates have changed constantly;"* S<sup>49</sup>: *"I think that the pandemic has great effects in the*

*long term because we have been away from school for a long time, and it seems like we had a lost time, which affected our education, and I think it affected our future."* S<sup>154</sup>: *"I am not one to shop online that much in normal times, but during the pandemic, we even did the kitchen shopping online with my family"*, S<sup>325</sup>: *"The uncertainty of when schools will open breaks my psychology, I want schools to be opened."* S<sup>489</sup>: *"We learned to communicate with the pandemic on many platforms. We have been unaware of the existence of these programs before. Our university started to use Classroom, and some of our professors also used programs such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, etc."* From the students' statements, it is seen that anxiety about the future in my society has increased.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It can be said that ERT activities have become popular in scientific circles in many countries of the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Jowsey et al., 2020). This study was conducted to reveal the situations in which the students of the Faculty of Education studying in Turkey are satisfied or not satisfied with the ERT process and the solutions to these situations. When the students' opinions are examined, it is seen that they are grouped under three themes positive, negative, and solution suggestions about ERT.

Among these themes, it was determined that the students could not get efficiency except for some lessons related to the teaching of the lessons under the positive theme. When students' opinions about online courses were examined, it was stated that they found simultaneous courses insufficient (Ayдын and Erol, 2021). In addition, students emphasized that the teaching of the lessons was insufficient. In this part, they think that some trainers are inadequate in the process. Face-to-face education strengthens students' sense of belonging to the learning environment and process (Luo et al., 2017). The transactional distance perception weakens the communication between the student and the teacher in different environments and causes a psychological gap (Moore and Kearsley, 2012). In this process, the students stated that they did not belong to the process and were not satisfied with it. Under the theme of the instructor's attitude, the changes that educators expect from educational practices in the post-COVID-19 world reshape educators' competencies, experience a paradigm shift in education, support educators' ability to provide online teaching practices, and integrate more courses related to online teaching into education (Korkmaz and Toraman, 2020). Students stated that the attitudes of some instructors were good, and some of them lowered their motivation.

One of the most critical factors affecting ERT quality is related to the quantity and quality of learning and teaching resources and materials (Chao et al., 2006). According to Lloyd et al. (2012), the effectiveness of ERT is closely related to the pedagogical and material content of the process. Similarly, students stated that they experienced a lack of qualified resources. Al-Samarraie et al. (2017) stated that interesting materials in distance education increased students' interest in the lesson. Seaman (2009) similarly stated that unqualified materials form the basis of negative opinions about distance education. The students' statements stated that they did not have sufficient and qualified resources, except for some courses. They stated that in this situation, they reduced their interest in the lessons, and they listened to the lessons that offered quality and rich material with the referral. Besides, according to Gregory and Lodge (2015), one of the most essential advantages of distance education is that the lessons can be watched again. In addition, research is one of the positive features of distance education because it offers enriched content and visual course materials. Similarly, it is seen that the favorable situation for the students in this process is that they can watch the lessons again whenever they want. The students stated that being at home is positive due to decreased food and shelter needs.

The negative theme, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of communication in the education process. In a study by Lall and Singh (2020), it was concluded that they were not satisfied with ERT due to the lack of communication. In the process, students stated that they could not communicate because they thought there was a lack of communication in the lessons and that some faculty members were also inadequate. Dougiamas (2000) emphasized that interaction is significant in distance education. In the process, the students got more efficiency from the lessons in they communicated and expressed themselves. Cheng and Chau (2016) stated that social interaction is essential in distance education and can reduce students' social interactions and cause them to perform poorly. In the process, it is seen that the students stated that they had problems due to the instructors' attitudes in ERT and could not communicate with the class, and this reduced their performance in ERT.

It is also clearly stated in the literature that technological deficiencies are at the forefront of essential negativities. Arora and Srinivasan (2020) point out that lack of interaction in ERT is associated with low participation, lack of communication, and connection problems. Lau et al. (2020) states that the successful implementation of ERT brings along infrastructure and equipment needs and causes problems for individuals with low socioeconomic status. Mohalik and Sahoo (2020) conducted a study in India and determined that

power outages and internet connection problems were among the problems pre-service teachers experienced in ERT. Similarly, it has been determined that students experience problems due to technological deficiencies, and students with low socioeconomic status have problems with their technological infrastructure and course environments.

In addition to these external problems, it is thought that personal situations also affect individuals in the process. In a study by Hobson and Puruhito (2018), it was emphasized that motivation is an essential requirement in online education. They also stated that the students emphasized most the loss of motivation in the process. It is seen that they give more positive opinions to the instructors who motivate them in the lessons. In addition, it is noteworthy that more students are not satisfied with ERT. These results are similar to the research conducted in Turkey regarding the COVID-19 pandemic by University and Research Laboratory Assessments (UNIAR) (UNIAR, 2020).

Students offered solutions to the problems experienced in ERT. Students think that the explanations of The Council of Higher Education during the pandemic process, the way the lessons are taught in general, the ability of educators to use technology, and the preparations of universities during ERT are not sufficient (Çiçekçisoğ Kaya, 2021). The study shows that students suffer from similar problems. They stated that solutions to these problems should be found. Then, the most common deficiency is that ERT guidance is not provided or is done insufficiently. In addition, with the brand new educational context brought on via the pandemic, the recognition of online studying must be sustainable. Because this pandemic has also proven to us that having digital literacy abilities and era use in schooling is not a choice anymore but a necessity.

Consequently, all educators need to revise their pedagogical information to deal with demanding situations. They should always keep in mind that "to teach is not to transfer contents to anyone, just as to learn is not to memorize the outline of some content that has been transferred by the teacher, but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge" (Freire, 2000). The literature states that education should be provided on pedagogical knowledge and skills as well as ERT systems (technical knowledge and skills) (Vlachopoulos, 2020). HEC should develop a manual that covers effective online learning principles and take steps to minimize the undesirable effects of the process on the students (Wang et al., 2020b). Another problem is related to learning content. Bao (2020) stated that he could increase success by using audio, visual materials, or techniques with audio content such as animation for successful ERT during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, using technology-supported

teaching techniques will enable students to develop their knowledge and skills.

Based on students' opinions, among the prominent findings regarding the implementation of ERT in Turkey during the pandemic process, there are findings regarding the measures to be taken to improve distance education. These suggestions, infrastructure problems in distance education, guidance in distance education, and enriching the teaching content are recommended. Koçoğlu and Tekdal (2020) stated that face-to-face live lessons, technology-supported education, improved content teaching, communication between education components, and activities that increase student motivation should be given importance. *Are We Ready for the Post-COVID-19 Educational Practice?* The study named after the pandemic suggested solving internet problems, increasing information technology, providing ERT support to educators, each student having the same amount of internet and necessary equipment, adding courses on health and hygiene issues against different epidemic situations, and revising education programs. (Korkmaz and Toraman, 2020).

Similarly, the students stated that both they and the educators should receive training on the technological infrastructure that they will use in the ERT process, the educators should learn different method techniques to make ERT more effective, and the use of various web tools should be taught, and the deficiencies should be eliminated. They stated that Turkey has many shortcomings and that ERT cannot be an education model on its own. Similarly, to the results of Aydın and Erol (2021), ERT is thought to be inadequate as an independent education model. Therefore, education faculty students stated that they prefer face-to-face education. In particular, they stated that the deficiency stemmed from the lack of digital competence of students and teachers and the inability to use their digital literacy skills adequately. In studies conducted in other countries in the literature (see: Indonesia, Ireland, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq, Nigeria, UK, and Ukraine), they emphasized the digital competence of students or teachers, the lack of digital infrastructure and course materials (Almanthari et al., 2020; Burke and Dempsey, 2020; Doghonadze et al., 2020). Online training activities could be conducted to improve the academics' knowledge and skills in using information technologies in education (Wang, et al., 2020a).

The power range index draws attention to the other dimension of the study of Hofstede (1980, 2009), in which the cultural dimensions of the students were investigated. Individuals from cultures with a high power range are accustomed to working in centralized environments where they are not knowledgeable and expect to be told what to do (Hofstede, 1980). Although university students did not have equal rights in this process, they did not

seek their rights during the pandemic period and did not make any breakthroughs for similar conditions. It seems that they were subject to the situations given to them and did not attempt to make any changes. The COVID-19 pandemic is not just a pandemic for the individual. It is a pandemic for the community (universal) or all people. At this point, the individual's actions for the benefit of the universe seem more ethical (Çelebi and İnal, 2020). Individualism is a behavioral type that does not feel any obligation to do its part for the health of society (Çolak et al., 2020). While the individual is responsible for society, he does not fulfill his responsibilities. Here, by not taking the quarantine process seriously, going out when they should not be going out, not following the social distance rule against people [etc.], the individual acts only by thinking of himself without thinking about the health of the society.

In the dimension of masculinity, Ardıç Çobaner and Dural Tasouji (2021) state that the experience of being at home in the COVID-19 epidemic is a transformation in gender relations along with many aspects that change daily life such as eating, shopping, sleeping patterns, and cleaning. In the process, it was observed that the students stated that their eating patterns, shopping habits, sleeping patterns, and cleaning habits had changed. In the Uncertainty dimension, while the uncertainty created by COVID-19 continues worldwide, its impact has been felt in different ways among countries. Statistical studies (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/>), which are frequently updated and made in terms of countries' cultural dimensions, show that uncertainty avoidance is very high (85%) in Turkey. Considering that this rate is determined as 35% for the UK, 46% for the USA, and 65% for Germany, it is understood that the tendency of Turkish people to feel safe, avoid uncertainties, and avoid change is at a high level. In Turkey, there have been differences in many situations, such as eating and drinking, hoarding, and shopping routine. It is seen that the use of collaborative interviewing environments such as Zoom, Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Cisco Webex has increased, regardless of age. The rate of online shopping has increased, and uncertainty has caused a decrease in the motivation of people.

Also defined as Confucian Dynamism (Şanal and Kaya, 2018), long-term harmony or orientation deals with society's decision-making periods and forms (Öncül et al., 2016). Societies with long-term cohesion are societies that set long-term goals. People have strong positions in society. Achievements and acquisitions are not accidental but come after working in a planned and programmed way. In this period, the students stated that they did not fully fulfill their planned studies since they continued their education from a distance, and they thought that this situation hindered their success.

When the process is interpreted in general, Karademir et al. (2020) Dimensions of ERT processes determined as Infrastructure (Computer the Internet LMS Digital Tools), Process (Standard), Content (Instructional Design Instructional Methods Multimedia), Competency (Digital Literacy Pedagogy) Evaluation (Process Evaluation Grading). Yıldırım (2021) stated challenges, target skills, target concepts, activities, and responsibilities problems in the ERT. The content should consist of educational activities, materials, and games available to all. The educators have to attend expert improvement events frequently, webinars and big open online publications (MOOCs) to enhance their virtual literacy talents, research more significant about special learning management systems (LMS), online collaboration structures, equipment to layout online mastering content, etc., and upon returning to formal training, educators must undertake a broader academic philosophy which targets to beautify the scholars' understanding and abilities along with real-life problem fixing, selection-making, self-control, gaining knowledge of the way to examine, important and creative wondering, duty. Faculty of education students suggest that students should be provided with free and high-speed Internet access, guidebooks, and training in sustainable ERT during outbreaks. In the short term, it may be advisable for educators to learn methods that will make their lessons more effective. In the long term, the internet infrastructure problem should be overcome and every student should be provided with equal opportunities. Although this is a situation that takes a long time, it is thought to be a situation that can be overcome with various alternatives.

## Limitations

This study had three limitations. Although education during the COVID-19 pandemic varies from country to country, this study investigated the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on only university education in Turkey, and therefore, the results cannot be generalized, which is the first limitation. Second, the sample consisted only of the Faculty of education in Turkey. Third, the assessment was based on self-report.

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