

THE IMPACT OF THE DISTANCE EDUCATION ON STUDENTS DURING PANDEMIC PROCESS AND THE OPINIONS OF THE PARENTS

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the ideas of students and parents about distance education were taken. The study was conducted on 100 different students. Students and parents from different education levels (primary education, university, etc.) are included. In the study, it was asked how the students changed after the distance education process. It has been tried to find out what disadvantages and benefits it provides for students. As a result, although students have learned to use technology more beneficially, distance education has caused a serious lack of interest and concentration, especially for younger students. The lack of sufficient electronic devices or internet connection also prevented students from receiving education equally. As a result of the study, it was obvious that educators and educational institutions should organize studies and aids in order to prevent this inequality. Education life, which is the most important time in an individual's life, has been seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the quality of education has decreased. It has become clear with this study that more effective methods and systems should be found if this process is to be recovered and if it continues.

Keywords: Pandemi, distance education, students, parents

Introduction

With the start of 2020, as in the whole world, our country has suffered an unprecedented crisis with the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students and educators were the most affected in this process. While the majority of the teachers had to teach in a way they had not experienced before, the students had to go through an unfamiliar process to complete their education. Due to the difficulty of planning in this unexpected moment of great crisis and the lack of time to evaluate each method, all students of the world have been forced to distance education, which is a new education model. The process has been quite difficult for educators who have to go through a training program first for this method, which even many educators have never experienced. The continuation of the pandemic has led to the development of new tools and systems, and it has been possible to provide a more effective education. However, it is necessary to carry out studies at all levels in order to find out whether this is sufficient and to understand how the whole distance education process continues (Daniel, 2020; Karip, 2020).

At the beginning of the distance education process, difficulties and problems arose due to the fact that the educators were inexperienced and did not have sufficient knowledge and skills. Guidance has been given in order to make plans for distance education to be more effective and to ensure that both educators, students and most importantly parents have sufficient information about how the process works (Shattuck, Dubins & Zilberman, 2011). The problems and deficiencies of students and parents should be understood with the studies carried out while distance education continues. Then, according to the results, this newly formed education model should be optimized. The same education model cannot be used because the problems of each field of education (primary, secondary, university, etc.) are different. For these reasons, information from parents and students is vital important.

Aim of the Research

The aim of this study is to reveal the results of the distance education model, which has been continuing since March 2020 in our country. It is made to understand and verify what the advantages and disadvantages are to students and parents. At the same time, it will be an effective questioning method to observe whether the educators can reach enough students as a result of the study. At the end of this study, it will help us to obtain information about what kind of arrangements should be made in the distance education model, what kind of systems should be developed, and how training should be given not only to students but also to trainers. The research will be useful to understand whether the distance education model, which is one of the most important issues, is sustainable and whether it is possible to turn it into a permanent method.

Methodology

9 questions prepared by the researcher were asked to 100 different parents. The results of all the answers received were statistically recorded. As a result of the study, the questions were asked to 13 parents of primary school students, 26 parents of secondary school students, 50 parents of high school students and 11 university students and/or their parents.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Students

Education Level	Gender	Number of Siblings	Having previous distance education experience	Availability of sufficient devices and internet before
Primary school: 13	Male: 52	No siblings: 62	Yes: 14	Yes: 88
Secondary School: 26	Female: 48	Two siblings: 26	No: 86	No: 12
High School 50		Three or more siblings: 12		
Higher Education: 11				

Questions and Findings

Question 1: Do you have an internet connection at home? What do you think about internet quality? Have you regularly had problems with the internet?

Conclusion:

Students had an internet connection during the distance education period.

- 70 people said they have good connections
- 30 people stated that they regularly have problems with the connection.

Question 2: Which digital/electronic systems and devices did you use in distance education?

Conclusion:

During the distance education period, students used Moodle or Google Meet System.

- 53 people replied that they monitor distance education via their personal computers.
- 47 people stated that they follow up on a mobile device (phone or tablet).

Question 3: Distance education, what kind of changes have you observed in your children's learning motivation? What are your thoughts on this?

Conclusion:

- 70 parents think that distance education affects children's behavior negatively. According to the parents, the motivation and desire of the children towards school decreased. They stated that young people no longer have the enthusiasm to work, do not display disciplined behavior and do not want to take any responsible action.
- 18 parents stated that they are satisfied that their children can pass their classes with less effort, and that their children are less sick and have a healthier school period since they are less likely to encounter all other diseases.
- 12 parents are not sure what kind of impact and change the distance education has on their children.

Question 4: What do you think are the different benefits of distance education compared to face-to-face education in children's education life? What are your thoughts on this?

Conclusion:

A summary of the most frequently received answers is as follows;

- With the distance education model, students learned how to use the internet and technology more effectively in an instructive way.
- Students were able to receive training regardless of place and time.
- Students learned to develop themselves individually and thanks to this development, they had to learn to create a study plan and study order independently of their parents. With this teaching, there has been an improvement in the perception and skills of responsibility.
- The student learned where and how to reach the right information they wanted and they were able to do this at the desired place and time.
- The students had the opportunity to repeat the education and all the information they received.

Question 5: What disadvantages did distance education create for your children's education life? What are your thoughts on this?

Conclusion:

A summary of the most frequently received answers is as follows;

- Sometimes it is difficult or not possible for the student to attend the lesson or training due to technical problems that occur frequently in the Internet connection.
- Failure of students to attend classes or training from time to time due to malfunctions caused by electronic devices.
- Since the distance education model is different for students, it is negatively affected and causes low attention and motivation.
- Difficulty in planning, studying and attending classes in distance education for students who cannot acquire the habit of self-study.
- Difficulties in education in applied courses such as workshops and laboratories
- Families with many children cannot attend classes at an optimum level due to insufficient number of electronic devices or insufficient internet bandwidth. In fact, this creates additional expenses for families.

Question 6: Do you think that in distance education, children can participate in classes as effectively as they do in the classroom?

Conclusion:

All of the parents responded in the same way.

- Parents stated that they think distance education is as effective as face-to-face education. Home education is not as effective and dynamic as in school and classroom environment. The fact that he cannot physically see a direction guide causes the learner to get lost much more easily and quickly. At the same time, when the student cannot establish good and close relations with the educator, he loses his love for the school. This problem is more prominent especially in primary school students. Due to the comfort in the environment, the student has difficulty in attending the lesson and does not show the necessary attention to the lesson. Losing concentration very easily and the physical absence of an educator to constantly watch and warn often lead to spending time with other activities instead of listening to the lesson carefully. This result is an issue that arises more in younger students.

Question 7: Do you think that educators prepare effective course materials in distance education? What are your thoughts on this?

Conclusion

A high percentage of parents (85%) gave the following answer in summary.

- In distance education, educators have prepared a sufficient amount of materials and presented these materials to students. Students can easily access lecture notes, lecture summaries, practice and study questions, unit slides, videos with lectures through educational software.

Question 8: Do you think distance education is an effective form of learning? What are your thoughts on this?

Conclusion

- 85 of the parents answered no. They stated that the students did not find the distance education method effective because they experienced adaptation and distraction.
- 15 of the parents answered yes. They stated that they found the distance education method effective, with the thought that the student could access the information more easily at any time.

Question 9: How do you think the education should be continued? What are your thoughts on this?

Conclusion:

- 80% of parents want face-to-face education if hygiene and preventive measures are taken.
- 15% of the parents think that both face-to-face education and distance education should be done simultaneously with diluted education.
- 5% of parents do not find it appropriate to switch to face-to-face education until the pandemic is over.

Conclusion and Discussion

Teachers, students, parents and the Ministry of National Education have accomplished great things in this process with the limited opportunities they have. With the forced change of the education system in the TRNC, each individual did their best and ensured that the students could receive adequate education. Looking at the results of the survey, parents are happy that their children are safe and healthy at home, but they think that they do not receive adequate education. The lack of sufficient infrastructure of the distance education system before the pandemic may seem to be the biggest reason for the disruption in education.

Updating the systems over time and gaining experience on both sides has been sufficient to create a more effective education system. However, at the end of this study, it seems that it is easier to receive and give face-to-face training. Especially since children in primary school age can be distracted much more easily, it is natural for them to want to see their teachers in front of them. In primary education, which is the most important step of education, it is of great importance for children to love their schools and teachers for their own future and the future of our country. For this reason, students at this age should be approached more carefully, especially for these children, who are much less social with the effect of pandemic and quarantine, the importance of distance education increases more. Educators need to have the necessary materials and use more effective effective systems so that they can get to know and love not only their school but also their friends from a distance, have a good time while looking at a device screen, and receive proper education. At the same time, with the contribution of the ministry of education or schools, it is necessary to ensure that each child has a sufficient amount of internet data quota and has electronic devices.

The biggest problem in undergraduate education, on the other hand, is that practice and workshop courses are not fully implemented, which still remains a problem today. Practical training is vital for these students who will soon enter their professional life. Therefore, these students should be prepared for face-to-face education until an optimum level of practical education model is created with the distance education model. Institutions and educators, on the other hand, need to make sure that students complete their education in a healthy way in this process. If necessary, special information programs should be made for educators.

Mostly, students and parents from all levels do not consider the distance education model sufficient. One of the biggest reasons for this is the lack of concentration. Although it is possible to reach the repetition of the education at any time, this model also reduces the perception of the student and kills the interactive education system. Although face-to-face education is more beneficial as everyone's common opinion, we have to try different systems when necessary to protect our health. Our goal should always be to ensure that better and higher quality education reaches students in these changing systems.

According to the education level, students' thoughts about the distance education system;

PRIMARY SCHOOL: Primary school students had difficulties in using the systems, connecting to the internet and following the lessons.

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Secondary school students have experienced a lack of attention and motivation in the lessons.

HIGH SCHOOL: High school students experienced a lack of attention and motivation in the lessons. In addition, some students have succeeded in getting high grades by turning online exams into opportunities.

UNIVERSITY: University students think that distance education is more inefficient than face-to-face education and that it is easier to pass the course.

Recommendations

Within the scope of this study, the following suggestions were presented to institutions, trainers and researchers providing distance education:

- It is important in terms of the “user-friendly” principle that the distance education system to be used by the institutions is simple, plain and easy to use.
- Quantitative and qualitative studies can be designed by taking the opinions of all stakeholders (instructor, student, distance education process manager) for the evaluation of emergency distance education in education centers during the pandemic period.
- Equal access to technology by each student
- Different guidelines for each age group
- Having enough information from their parents and giving their children enough support
- Receiving the necessary training in order to master all distance education systems in the training teachers
- Explaining to the public why the distance education process should be compulsory when necessary.

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