

Opinions of Academicians on Online Education: The Case of Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication in the COVID-19 Process

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To cite this article:

Adalı, G. & Aydın, Ő. (2023). Opinions of academicians on online education: The case of Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication in the COVID-19 process. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Education*, 34, 41-61 <https://doi.org/10.14689/enad.34.864>

Abstract: Distance education, which has become the only option for continuing education due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has become a platform that needs to be explored and used effectively for both students and faculty members. The study aims to reveal the problems experienced in the transition to online education during the COVID-19 process and search for solutions. Using a basic qualitative research design, the study was conducted with 10 faculty members who had experience with the online education process at Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication. The data collected through a semi-structured interview form created by the researcher was analyzed through content analysis. The study revealed that the online education process interrupted social relations and interaction between the student and the instructor, but technically facilitated the academics' adaptation to the process by increasing their technological skills, and that the academics were satisfied with the distance education platforms offered by their institutions. Academics who survived the acclimation period said they had adapted to the new system and suggested that face-to-face and online education should be implemented in a hybrid form in the future.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, online education, distance education, Faculty of Communication, academicians.

Article Info

Received: 21 Dec. 2021
Revised: 16 Aug. 2022
Accepted: 23.05.2023

Article Type

Research

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Introduction

Diseases can be transmitted from person to person, but there is also a risk of transmission to society because people interact with each other. When a virus or disease affects the whole world, it is called a pandemic by the World Health Organization (Çıragil, 2020). COVID-19 was first seen in Wuhan City, China, on December 31, 2019. The coronavirus, which emerged in the People's Republic of China and spread to various countries, posed a public health threat to the world. Coronavirus is transmitted through droplets; sick people spread droplets through coughing, sneezing, and other people touching their faces without washing their hands after any kind of contact (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health, 2020).

Considering the coronavirus's spread rate and its impact on human health, a pandemic has been declared to increase protective measures in general. In this sense, the world and Turkey have been struggling against COVID-19 for months. COVID-19 causes a mandatory change in daily life. While people are trying to get used to this new routine, the spread of COVID-19, which is transmitted through respiratory transmission, continues. For this reason, educational activities have started to be provided remotely, as people's contact with each other should be minimized, and certain rules should be followed. After the first coronavirus case was detected in Turkey, various measures were taken to prevent its spread. The Ministry of Health established the Coronavirus Scientific Committee, which gathered regularly and evaluated the ongoing situation (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health, 2020).

Approximately 2 billion students studying at the higher education level, which is one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 outbreak worldwide, had to switch from face-to-face education to online education suddenly and compulsorily. Although our higher education system is not fully ready for online education in the face of such a major crisis, governing bodies have expressed their opinion in favor of switching to online education to combat the pandemic (Erkut, 2020;125).

In the press release of YÖK (2020), it was reported that there are UZEM (Distance Education Application and Research Center) in 123 universities. When evaluated in terms of distance education infrastructure, it is stated that Turkey is one of the most advanced countries in this regard. It is also stated that the needs of universities with insufficient infrastructure will be met by cooperating with other universities under the coordination of YÖK. Higher education institutions that have not established an online education platform or those that have not improved the existing one and have not produced a strategy on this educational channel have had to switch to online education sharply and quickly, as in the whole world after the COVID-19 pandemic (Telli & Altun, 2020).

It is seen that the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates a transformation in educational activities all over the world. Since online education, which is frequently preferred in this process, has different requirements than face-to-face education, it requires unexpected planning for universities, either institutionally or by academics. Higher education institutions that do not have enough time for the planning process may face different

problems. At this point, knowing how institutions and individuals will use the advantages of distance education, identifying the problems experienced, and suggesting solutions will contribute to forming a healthier educational environment (Bilgiç & Tüzün, 2015).

In the literature review, the following studies were found that specifically included the opinions of faculty members; Tuncer & Tanaş, 2017; Gürer et al., 2016; İnan, 2013; Özköse et al., 2013; Yiğit et al., 2010; Tezer & Biçen, 2008; Tanyıldızı & Semerci, 2005; Horzum, 2003. It should be noted that distance / online education was not a necessity but an option at the time of the studies; however, traditional education has been replaced by online education at the university level due to the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to threaten the world. As a result of these recent developments affecting the world, it has been concluded that it is necessary to conduct an updated study on education, which is one of the most affected activities. The study evaluated views on online education along with the pandemic process and provided very timely and important data for the development of online education. Regardless of the teaching method, quality is an important element in the presentation of all courses and programs. According to the Online Learning Consortium (SLOAN Consortium, 2005), which conducts studies on distance education in the United States and works to improve the quality of online learning, teacher satisfaction is one of the most important factors determining the quality of distance education. Revealing the opinions and satisfaction of instructors who teach online courses about distance education is considered very important in terms of the quality of education. While it is emphasized that opinions should be monitored at certain intervals, the importance of instructor perspectives is mentioned to fulfill the distance education process in higher education effectively and efficiently.

Similarly, Harris and Krousgill (2008) stated that instructor views and satisfaction are important factors for the success of online learning.

According to Vesel (2005), with the use of information technologies in education, especially higher education institutions will not be dependent on encyclopedic sources of information, and online access to information will contribute to the development of universities' social change roles. Through online education, education can be planned for everyone, tuition fees will be reduced, and the quality of education will improve. The use of new forms of learning also provides an opportunity for the dissemination of new educational materials. With online education, learning is individualized, individual study plans can be created, and a one-to-one learning approach can be adopted.

Online education, which is the most accessible way for students to receive an education without being together, has assumed a redeeming role in pandemic days when social isolation is seen as essential. This situation, of course, has led to the emergence of a new understanding of education, especially discussions on the efficiency of education in a very fast and sharp transition. During the transition from traditional education to online education during the pandemic, academics and university students were affected, and they tried to cope with the difficulties of starting to teach online courses without a preparation phase. At this point, receiving the opinions of academics to make online courses more efficient is important in terms of shedding light on the problems

experienced in this field and making education more efficient by bringing new solutions. From this point of view, in this study, the opinions of academics teaching at Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication on online education in the COVID-19 process were consulted, and the problems they experienced in online education practices were addressed. The study aims to identify the problems encountered in this process and offer suggestions for solutions.. Determining lecturers' opinions about the online education process is important for improving and developing the online education system.

Method

Research Design

In this study, a basic qualitative research approach was adopted. Qualitative research is one of the forms of knowledge generation developed by human beings to understand their potential, unravel their secrets, and explore the depths of the social structures and systems they have built with their efforts. Qualitative research aims to reach a deeper perception of the event or phenomenon under investigation (Morgan, 1996). In qualitative research, it is essential to examine human perceptions and events in social reality and the natural environment in-depth, and in this respect, it has a holistic perspective that combines different disciplines (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). As a technique mostly used in qualitative research, interviewing is at the forefront. The interview method, which is used in cases where people's views on events and phenomena, their own experiences, emotional accumulation, perceptions, and values are tried to be determined, is convenient in terms of providing detailed information and ease of application (Hay & Cope, 2000; Seidman, 2006).

In this study, which was conducted to reveal the views of instructors who teach online courses directly based on their own experiences, the interview technique, which is frequently used in social sciences, was utilized as a qualitative data collection technique to convey the views in detail. When similar studies in the literature were examined, it was seen that the survey technique was mostly used in the studies (Horzum, 2003; Tanyıldızı & Semerci, 2005; Tezer & Biçen, 2008; Yiğit et al., 2010) and although there are studies designed with a quantitative research model, the limited number of studies that reveal the views of academics on online education in more detail (Tuncer & Tanaş, 2011; Gürer et al., 2016) revealed the necessity of using the interview technique in this study.

Study Group

In this study, the study group was determined using the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. Purposive sampling is a type of sampling in which the researcher determines the participants to be included in the study through various judgments (Nakip & Yaraş, 2016). The basic understanding of the criterion sampling method is to study all situations that meet a set of predetermined criteria, and the researcher can create the criteria or criteria in question or use a ready-made list of criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013; 140). The fact that the participants have experienced the event in the study is explained as criterion-based sampling (Yılmaz et al., 2021; 286).

Since the sample size will have a significant impact on the final quality of the research (Coyne, 1997 & Saunders, 2012); 10 academics who are conducting their courses with online education at Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication and who volunteered to participate in the study were included in the study. Since the important component of participation size in qualitative research is the "depth" of the data rather than the frequency of the data, the study was completed with participants who were considered to be representative of the research topic (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). According to Cresswell and Poth (2016) and Saunders (2012), 5 to 25 participants are sufficient to obtain a heterogeneous population in a study designed using semi-structured interviews or in-depth interviews. However, the possibility of continuing the data collection process until data or theme saturation is reached is also foreseen. In this study, it was observed that the desired saturation was reached with 10 participants. When the participants are analyzed demographically, it is seen that the majority (70%) are female academics, and the majority of them are 35 years of age or older (90%). It can be said that there is a balanced distribution among the participants in terms of academic titles. Since 80% of the participants are academics who have been working for more than 15 years, they can compare the current situation to what it was like before the pandemic. Their long careers are considered important when judging the current situation.

Data Collection

The research data were obtained through a semi-structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions prepared by the researcher. The form consists of two parts. The first part includes demographic information about academics and two-choice (Yes / No) questions, while the second part includes open-ended questions about online education studies. In the interviews, a pre-prepared semi-structured interview form was used to keep the research focused.. Each interview, conducted between February 12, 2021, and March 15, 2021, lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. An appointment was made with the participants who agreed to participate in the research before the interview, and the interviews were digitally recorded with a voice recorder with the permission of the participants to analyze the responses in a healthy way.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the participants were first transcribed and transferred to the computer environment as written texts. The researcher and the other coder read the transcripts from beginning to end. In the second stage, categories were created by re-reading for coding. The data obtained were interpreted and analyzed by dividing them into various dimensions and sub-dimensions in the analysis phase. The data obtained were grouped under ten categories in total, and the analysis was completed by interpreting the data under each heading. The 10 participants who participated in the study were numbered between K-1 and K-10 according to the order of the interview, and this numbering system was used in the analysis. To make sense of the participants' views under themes and sub-themes, direct quotations were made from the answers given to each question and presented under the relevant headings. Both the raw data of the study and the findings obtained from the analysis results were presented to an

independent researcher who is an expert in qualitative research to ensure the reliability of the results, and the findings were reported in line with the feedback received.

Another factor that ensures the validity and reliability of the findings obtained in qualitative research is the researcher himself/herself. It is accepted that an experienced, knowledgeable, and careful researcher conducting the research increases the validity and reliability of qualitative research (Pyett, 2003). It is seen that the researcher met these conditions for this study. On the other hand, considering the possibility that each researcher's interpretation of events may be different in qualitative research and that the same data examined by two researchers may be perceived and interpreted differently (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013; 255), the double coding method proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to eliminate the individual effects that may be encountered in the coding of the data to ensure the reliability of the research. The inter-rater reliability was calculated as .90 using Miles and Huberman's formula ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Agreement}}{\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}}$). The reliability coefficient calculated using the relevant formula is expected to be at least 80% (Miles & Huberman, 1994; 64).

Ethical Considerations

Before starting the study, approval numbered E-55578142-050.01.04-18086 was obtained from the Akdeniz University Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee.

Findings

In this section of the study, the data obtained from the interviews with the participants are thematized and presented under subheadings.

Status of Academicians in Terms of Online Education Activities

First, the participants were asked whether they had any experience with online education before the pandemic. At this stage, short-answer questions were preferred to analyze the situation before and after the pandemic, and the responses are summarized and presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Status of Academics in Terms of Online Education Activities

Question	Answer	Participant
Did you first use online education during the pandemic?	Yes	8
	No	2
Did you have any experience with online education before the pandemic?	Yes	4

	No	6
Have you done any individual work on online education?	Yes	1
	No	9
Has training on online education been organized in your organization?	Yes	10
	No	-
Have you participated in training to be more efficient in online education?	Yes	8
	No	2
Do you want your online training to last for a long time?	Yes	3
	No	7
Do you think that in the future online education will become permanent and replace traditional education?	Yes	6
	No	4
Are you satisfied with the applications used in online education?	Yes	10
	No	-
Do you need technical support for the difficulties you experience with online education?	Yes	9
	No	1
Do you have access to support when you need it?	Yes	9
	No	1
Are you satisfied with the support services?	Yes	9
	No	1

It turns out that the majority of academics had no experience with online education before the pandemic, and the number of academics who engaged in online education was only 1. In addition, it was concluded that informative meetings were held at the institution regarding online education and that academics participated in these meetings and received efficiency. While the level of satisfaction with the application used in online education was found to be 100%, one factor in the high level of this result is that the participants cannot make comparisons because they do not use another program for online education. The participants expressed this situation and emphasized that the program used was user-friendly by standing out with its functional and easy-to-use aspects. When asked about the future of online education, most participants stated that they think that nothing will be the same anymore and that online education and face-to-face education will be used eclectically. In addition, the rate of academics who want online education to continue for a long time is 30%. It is understood that academics want to continue face-to-face education; this situation also coincides with the results given to the professional satisfaction questions in the following part of the research. While it was concluded that the technical support needs of the participants in online education were

relatively high and that they were satisfied with the technical support provided in this sense to a great extent (90%), another important piece of data is that academics tried to overcome the new situation by helping each other in this process. The participants in the study stated that with the transition to online education, they learned the application and tricks of online education by getting involved together.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Education According to Academics

The advantages and disadvantages are summarized in Table 2 to be able to compare the strengths and weaknesses of online education more easily,

Table 2.

Advantages and Disadvantages Experienced by Academics in Online Education

Advantage	Disadvantage
Independence from space.	Difficulties in communicating.
Time-saving	Failure to fulfill the socialization function of the university.
Elimination of course quotas.	Turning the course into a monologue.
There are an infinite number of opportunities for multiple viewings of the lessons.	Inadequacy of technological infrastructure.
It progresses in a systematic way. Lessons are more disciplined.	Lack of attendance obligation.
Access to lecture notes is quick and simple.	The time allotted for the course is insufficient.
	Decrease the discussion environment in the classroom.

The biggest advantage is that online education can be realized independently of location. While the participants stated that teaching without leaving their homes under pandemic conditions is the most important advantage, they also stated that they save time. The fact that the limits of course quotas are eliminated and that every student can take every course offered without being limited by the number of courses is an important advantage of online education. The fact that the courses can be repeated and progressed systematically and that the course's lecture notes can be accessed collectively is also considered a positive situation for the students. First, it can be said that most of the participants agree that the disadvantages of online education outweigh the advantages. Almost all the participants mentioned the lack of one-to-one communication as the biggest disadvantage. In this environment where it is impossible to decipher the two sides' body language and communication codes, academics stated that it is quite boring and tiresome to listen to the lecture by looking at the screen. The dialog that should be established in the lessons has been replaced by monologue, which has negatively affected the academics' course motivation. On the other hand, one of the biggest disadvantages for students is the lack of socialization opportunities. Away from the opportunities of the university and the campus, students are on their way to graduation without being able to experience being a student; this is also accepted as a major disadvantage by the participants. The fact that not all students

have the same opportunities deepens the inequality of opportunity between individuals, while technological and infrastructural inadequacies are also one of the disadvantages of online education. Considering that the time allocated for the course is half the time of face-to-face teaching, almost half of the participants think that this time is not enough to explain the course content. Another disadvantage is that there is no attendance requirement, which decreases attendance and hinders the formation of a discussion environment in the course.

Professional Satisfaction in Online Education

One of the factors affecting the quality of education is that faculty members love what they do and are satisfied with their professions. From this point of view, the participants were asked questions about their professional satisfaction, and the answers are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3.

Academics' Satisfaction with Their Professions in Online Education

Questions on Occupational Satisfaction	Answer	Participant
If you personally had a choice, would you prefer face-to-face or online education during the pandemic?	Online	8
	Face to face	2
As an instructor, do you get more professional satisfaction from face-to-face or online education?	Face to face	9
	Doesn't matter	1
Do you think that not being face-to-face with students affects your performance?	Yes	7
	No	3
Has there been any change in your lecturing with the transition to online education?	Yes	5
	No	5

Although almost all the participants stated that they gained more professional satisfaction from face-to-face lectures, they found it right to switch to online education under pandemic conditions. The rate of those who think that their lecture performance is affected by online education (70%) is also quite high. The participants, who stated that they had difficulty staying motivated and keeping their performance at the highest level, answered yes and no to the question of whether there was a change in their lectures.

The efficiency of Online Education Courses

One of the aims of the research is to learn the opinions of faculty members about the efficiency of online education courses. Sharing these opinions is important for improving the quality of online education. The opinions of the participants are summarized and presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Opinions on the Efficiency of Courses in Online Education

Questions Regarding the Efficiency of the Courses	Answer	Participant
Do you think online education can be used effectively in vocational education?	Yes	2
	No	8
Do you think face-to-face education or online education contributes to students' learning more effectively?	Face to face	7
	Online	3
Do you think there is a difference between face-to-face education and online education in gaining professional formation?	Yes	7
	No	3
Do you think that applied courses can be given effectively with online education?	Yes	2
	No	8
Do you think traditional education and online education practices can be used eclectically?	Yes	9
	No	1
Has your homework submission frequency changed in online education?	Yes	7
	No	3

Table 7, which aims to reveal the efficiency of courses in online education, shows that the majority of the respondents (80%) believe that online education cannot be effective in gaining professional formation. While there is a consensus that applied courses cannot be carried out efficiently through online education, it is observed that the view that face-to-face education and online education will continue in a hybrid way in the future is dominant. Another change in the courses is that the frequency of assigning homework has decreased with the transition to online education. When asked about the reason for this, academics remarked that they avoided giving homework due to low participation of students in the course, insufficient interest and curiosity in the course, and a loss of motivation.

Opinions on Exams Applied in Online Education

In the online education system, exams were also conducted over the internet, like the courses. The following questions were asked to the academicians regarding the exams, which are a subject of debate around the world and where each university goes to different applications in terms of security: "What are your opinions about the success evaluations of students with online systems?", "Have you experienced any problems in online exams?" and "How do you think exams should be conducted?". Some of the answers given to these questions are as follows:

"It is neither safe nor sufficient. You don't even know who is taking the exam in front of you." (P-3)

When the answers given to the first question under this heading were analyzed, it was seen that all the participants did not find the exam system safe and sufficient. While the opinion that the exams conducted over the online system are not real exams was also expressed, half of the participants stated that they had no opinion on the question of how the exams should be conducted, while the other half stated the following:

"I can't say anything about it right now, but after the law changes, it might be better if the exam is held with the microphone and camera open." (P-5)

"I think exams should be face-to-face. Or, if it will be online, such a system should be developed so that the student should not be able to go backward in the questions, the student should read each question and move on to the next one." (P-1)

"I think it should be in the form of a project; the student should make an effort. They should come up with something themselves." (P-3)

"I have no idea. I think it would be better not to have an exam." (P-2)

Another question asked about the exams was, "Did you have any problems with the online exams?". Half of the participants said that they did not encounter any problems in their exams, while the other half stated that they faced problems as follows:

"I have not experienced any problems, but problems can happen at any time. It is very difficult to prevent cheating." (P-4)

"I haven't experienced it; I just have to do tests. There is a lack of measurement." (P-7)

"It didn't happen to me, but to the teachers. Among the problems is that the exam does not appear on the screen on time. Students forget their password and cannot take the exam, but it was somehow solved with make-up exams." (P-9)

"I had a problem like this; my exam was dropped in front of the children ahead of time. We had a crisis." (P-3)

"I experienced it in the first mock exams; my exam was not uploaded on time. There were students who did not upload their exams on time." (P-10)

Opinions on Students' Interest in the Course in Online Education

Under this heading, which focuses on the effects of online education on students, answers to the following questions were sought by utilizing the observations of the participants:

"How is your students' attendance? What would you say if you were to compare the attendance in online education compared to traditional education?" "Do you think online education affects the classroom discussion environment?" "Do you think online education affects the interaction between the instructor and the student?" "Do your students experience any loss of motivation due to online education?" "What kind of feedback do you get from your students about the online education method?"

First, every participant stated that the rate of attendance was quite low. When asked to compare with traditional education, they stated that their attendance rate was one-third

and that they lectured to very small groups of students every week. They also stated that this low attendance rate automatically affects the classroom's atmosphere of dialog and discussion. Only one of the participants emphasized that attendance is high because their courses are practical - and students are required to do projects to graduate. In addition, some of the responses can be listed as follows:

"They lose motivation. It is not possible to measure, but it is obvious that their motivation is low." (P-1)

"There is a lot of loss of motivation. Listening to something on the screen all the time is very boring and demotivating." (P-3)

"Of course, the loss of motivation is very high. They feel sad because they cannot be on campus and have no opportunity to socialize. They actually miss the beauty of being a student. Questions keep coming up, and they want to return to school." (P-4)

"Everyone has accepted the situation. It is an obligatory process. Children who will graduate without seeing a university—I think it is a big deficiency. Where will they live university life?" (P-6)

"The feedback is always that they miss face-to-face education. They say they have difficulty being mentally present in a place where they are not physically present. They say they miss being on campus and socializing." (P-7)

"I think they are alive. Attendance at classes is very low; I feel that their curiosity has decreased. They talk to me; they send me e-mails as if they were writing letters. They are waiting for good news from me to switch to face-to-face education. Most of all, they say they want to return to their students' homes from their parents' homes. They also say that their families do not consider online education to be education. They also make an effort to convince their families." (P-4)

Opinions on the Use of Online Education in Graduate Education Activities

How online education affects graduate studies is one of the study's research questions. In this sense, the participants were asked the following two questions: "With the transition to online education, how has your communication with the students you advise been affected?" and "Do you feel a lack of guidance in the thesis writing process while advising?" It was seen that the answers received were largely similar. With the transition to online education, supervisors did not encounter any difficulties. Even the courses were more productive due to the low number of students in the graduate school, and the groups were more boutique, and at the same time, the thesis writing processes were not disrupted. Some of the responses are as follows:

"Our individual meetings continued; since they were limited in number, we came together and improved our face-to-face meetings. I think the graduate program was not affected by this situation." (P-3)

"It has gotten better. We set a suitable time whenever we want and do online interviews." (P-4)

"I did not feel any deficiency in terms of consultancy since my graduate students were out of the city; we were able to meet via video call before, and we continued in the same way during the pandemic process." (P-6)

"We broke up with some of them completely; some of them we improved their thesis by meeting frequently, the process was shaped according to the student's attitude." (P-10)

Views on the Future of Online Education

In this study, which includes the opinions of academics on online education, questions about the future were also asked, and the participants were asked to make predictions. In the answers to the questions "What are your thoughts on the future of online education?" and "What are your suggestions for improving online education?" asked for this purpose, almost all of the participants gathered on a common denominator and stated that online education is now a part of our lives, that there is no going back from here, and that even if the pandemic ends, face-to-face education and online education will continue in a hybrid form. Some of the opinions are as follows:

"The pandemic accelerated the process of transitioning to online education. I do not see the developments as sufficient. More investment is needed. Deficiencies in the systems should be eliminated. Academic studies on online education should be conducted more, and the results obtained from their outputs should be evaluated." (P-3)

"It is an area that will develop a lot. We will get used to it over time. We will adapt to move forward in this irreversible way." (P-5)

"There is a lot of investment in this field, and I think it will continue in an eclectic way in the future. Improvements can be made in terms of measurement and evaluation. Experts should assist us in this matter. The lesson atmosphere should be dynamic. Efforts should be made to increase motivation." (P-6)

"Online education will become widespread day by day. It is a part of our lives now. I do not think there should be a 20-minute limit. The lecturer should be left alone; if he/she wants, he/she should block or extend it. This time is not enough for the student to ask questions. We should be more free. Problems arising from copyrights should be eliminated; for example, as a cinema lecturer, I want to show frames from the movie. It would be better if these limitations were eliminated." (P-8)

"I think participation should be increased. Absenteeism must be restricted. I believe that sharing pre-made notes has a negative impact on students' note-taking and that this should be discouraged. Both listening and taking notes are features that a good communicator should have." (P-9)

Opinions on the Effects of Online Education on Academics

Due to the pandemic that has affected the whole world, the transition to online education has been very fast and unprepared for both sides. While students have struggled to cope with the stress of being away from their schools, academics have struggled to adapt to and exist in this new field. Academics, who were looking for ways to reach students effectively, tried to keep up with online education and experienced the distress of being away from their students and unable to communicate in person. In the midst of all these issues, they attempted to understand the language of the digital world and discovered by trial and error how to use the programs used in online learning. Under this heading, answers to the following questions were sought to understand how academics were affected by the online education process: The answers to the question "Is there any pressure / negative aspect of online education on you as an instructor?" are diverse:

"It creates pressure. It is boring to be monitored and constantly controlled. I have to keep my self-control high, it makes me feel anxious. It causes stress and tension and affects my concentration. Giving online training is like constantly giving statements to the press." (P-1)

"No problem. Our lives are digital now, but the fact that the camera was not turned on and the students did not attend the class made these difficult for me. It was very difficult for me to lecture on their initials. I suffered in this process. Personally, I would like all students to participate and cameras to be turned on." (P-2)

"I miss face-to-face education. I don't enjoy online education at all." (P-3)

"There is definitely a negative feature; we moved away from the book in this process. I could not get any efficiency from the online library. I tried audiobooks, but I did not understand them at all. I knew the students one-on-one; there is no such thing online. Not being able to recognize the students and lecturing to the initials of the students makes it difficult for me." (P-5)

"My communication with the students has changed; the context has been broken. I can't see their faces; I feel like I'm talking to a wall. What tires me is the students' lack of interest and their lack of participation in the lesson. I wish they were more interested on my behalf." (P-7)

"The problems that may arise with copyrights were challenging for me. In face-to-face education, we have prepared presentations regardless of the bibliography; we are used to using any source we want. But in the online system, everything falls under copyright. It is very difficult to prepare separate lecture notes for each week and upload them to the system. It is also very annoying to talk while looking at a blank screen. I think the minute limit is very unnecessary. University lecturers should not be restricted." (P-8)

"Have you made any changes in the course content? Has your material sharing rate changed?", It was observed that some participants abstained from sharing materials because they thought that they might have problems due to copyrights. In this sense, it is clear that there is confusion in terms of copyrights.

"I went. When distance education was introduced, I gave up the practice of making presentations. I always focused on explaining myself. My material sharing increased." (P-1)

"Yes, I shared more materials." (P-5)

"I minimized the course content a little more and limited the titles. I have problems sharing materials due to copyrights." (P-6)

"I uploaded more materials now. I also share my lesson presentations." (P-8)

"My sharing rate decreased because of copyrights." (K-9)

"I used to share before, and I continue to share online. It didn't make a difference to me either." (P-10)

With the transition to online education, the working conditions of academics have changed. The fact that both space-independent courses can be taught and course durations are limited to 20 minutes, suggests the question of whether academics have faced a change in time management. The answers given to the question "Does the total time you spend for a course in online education differ from the total time you spend for the course you give in face-to-face education?" were generally in the direction that there was no change when evaluated together with the preparation stages of the course, although the course durations shortened:

"I spend more time on preparation, to be honest, and it comes to the same account." (P-2)

"For me, the class time has decreased. There are no things like preparation for the lesson, time spent on the road." (P-4)

"There is no change in class preparation, it is still necessary to prepare. Instructor performance becomes more important in distance education." (P-6)

"I spent much more time for online courses. Preparing lecture notes took a lot of time this semester." (P-7)

"I spent more time in face-to-face education, but I wasn't as tired as in online education. I don't understand how it happens." (P-8)

With the introduction of online education into our lives, it can be said that there have been significant changes in technology usage habits. Although academics with a certain competence in using technology have certain skills, they need to improve themselves in this sense for online education. A considerable amount of academics are digital immigrants, hence it is common for them to have challenges in this process, especially when viewed as a generation. Only 10% of the individuals in the survey are digital natives, while 90% are digital immigrants. The answers to the question "Have you experienced a change in your technology usage habits with the transition to online education?" are as follows:

"It contributed a lot to my technological literacy. Thanks to this, I learned about many programs and platforms. I improved myself in these areas. I bought equipment in this process. We came closer to becoming digital natives." (P-3)

"Of course, it improved our technological literacy. I now carry my computer with me wherever I go. This process has exhausted me both mentally and physically. Sitting in a room and being sedentary until the evening and being exposed to radiation can cause health problems in the future." (P-6)

"It made a positive contribution in terms of technological literacy. Before I used to use the computer only for writing articles and doing research; now, it has completely become my work's focus. I feel like I have been promoted from digital immigrant to native with this process." (P-8)

"I was not far from technology before, but of course, with the transition to online education, especially the computer has become like a limb, it has become a tool that completes me. I learned new programs and platforms I had never heard of entered my daily life; in short, I can say that online education contributed to us in this regard." (P-10)

Discussion and Conclusion

In this new process experienced in the transition from traditional education to online education, it has been observed that academics are trying to cope with the difficulties of starting to give online courses without an adequate preparation phase and are affected by this sharp change. At this point, it is important to take the opinions of academics to make online courses more efficient, shed light on the problems experienced in this field, and make education more efficient by bringing new solutions. From this point of view, in this study, the opinions of academics teaching at Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication on online education in the COVID-19 process were consulted, and the problems they experienced in online education practices were addressed. This study

identified the problems encountered in this process, and solution suggestions were presented. Determining lecturers' opinions about the online education process is important for developing the online education system in the future and for the ongoing distance education activities to be more efficient.

When the lack of face-to-face communication in online education cannot be supported properly with the existing technology opportunities, students' expectations cannot be met, and they feel pushed out of the system. In this respect, research shows that managing the lack of face-to-face interaction in online education programs is of great importance. To overcome this deficiency, it is necessary to use current technologies with the right strategies and to use communication and support systems effectively both on the instructor and distance education unit sides. In addition, academics' desire and motivation greatly impact problems (Bilgiç & Tüzün, 2015, p. 46).

According to Yamamoto and Altun's (2020) research, online education, or digital learning, will become the primary option for education in the near future, rather than a secondary option or a support function for face-to-face learning. A similar finding that supports these findings is the prediction that the hybrid education model, which academics in this study stated as a common opinion, will become widespread in the coming days and that online education will become a part of our lives.

Bozkurt (2020) suggests that the coronavirus pandemic has closely affected educational activities and that radical changes and strategic planning are needed to ensure continuity in education under all conditions. It can be said that this is in line with the results of our research, as most of the participants in this study similarly emphasized the need for more strategic planning in online education.

In the study by Jaschik & Lederman (2018), faculty members' opinions that online learning is weaker than learning in a traditional classroom were revealed, and a similar finding was reached in this study. The participants stated that ' participation in the courses decreased considerably during the online education process and that they thought that students' gains were higher in face-to-face education.

Different studies conducted by Tanyıldızı and Semerci (2005), İnan (2013), and Sayan and Yıldız (2021) show that in this process, educators and those involved in the education process should be taught how to use technology more effectively so that they can prepare more appropriate materials for online education to be efficient. It is one of the common conclusions of the research that educators need extra time, especially in preparing course materials in the transition from traditional education environments to online education platforms, which supports the results of our research.

As a result of the research of Tuncer and Tanaş (2011) and Gürer et al. (2016), it is believed that in-service training on technological literacy for online education instructors will affect the development of academicians and the effectiveness of their courses. In this study, the participants mentioned that they needed and benefited from in-service training, so it can be said that the studies are consistent in this respect.

Throughout the study, a framework for online education was tried to be drawn by referring to theoretical and participant opinions. In summary, the goal of online education is to provide people with the opportunity to receive education and training through systems that can keep up with developing technology and contribute to educational activities without being affected by time and space by eliminating time and geographical barriers that disrupt education. When people must comply with social isolation rules such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to express more opinions on online education, which is the only alternative available for education, and to carry out studies to develop online education. In particular, the fact that there has been no study undertaken in this subject in Turkey relevant to faculties of communication has been considered an essential deficiency and has been the starting point of the research. As a result of the research, the following recommendations for online education in the near future can be made:

-Orientation programs should be organized for students to be efficient in online education. In this way, students can become more competent in using the online education system; they can produce solutions themselves when they encounter any problems. Orientation programs should be carefully prepared and systematically progressed, so that new students who join the higher education program every year do not become isolated.

-Academics should be oriented toward preparing content appropriate to the nature of online education. The educational materials used in online education, which has moved from traditional education to a different platform, should also be updated and designed to attract the student's interest. This should be an ongoing ritual that involves interaction with the student rather than a one-time event.

-Interactive materials and activities to be used in online education programs for academics should be developed in a collective effort with field experts and distance education experts, and materials that students can use with the highest efficiency should be designed.

-The instructor needs more time to develop and present the course. Although the duration of the courses taught in online education is shorter than in face-to-face education, it is an effort-demanding job that tires the instructor and may cause frustration after a certain period. Therefore, it would be appropriate for instructors to have a balanced distribution of course loads. Arrangements in course loads should be made in a way to motivate academics.

This study is valuable in terms of evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of online education, which is preferred as an alternative solution to face-to-face instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic process, according to the feedback of academics and seeing the reflections of the process; it is also thought that the research will provide ideas for the development of online education and contribute to future studies.



Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the esteemed lecturers working at the Faculty of Communication at Akdeniz University for their assistance and for having participated in the study that was conducted in order to contribute to this article.

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