

THE EXAMINING OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHERS ABOUT THE READINESS OF STUDENTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to examine the readiness levels of primary school students studying in primary schools for distance education from the perspective of teachers. In the research, the deficiencies and inadequacies related to the readiness of the students in the distance education process were emphasized as the main problem. In this study, interview technique was used within the qualitative research method approach. The research data were collected by the interview form, which included personal information and semi-structured research questions, which was prepared by the researcher after receiving expert opinion and approval. The sample of the study consisted of teachers (n=73) who worked in the Primary Education Department of the Ministry of National Education and Culture in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the 2020-2021 academic year. The data obtained from the research were analyzed by content analysis. In line with the data obtained in the research, it was concluded that the teachers who participated in the research mostly (42.5%) used the synchronous (online) distance education model. In the results of the distance education model used by gender in line with the data obtained from the research, it was concluded that 52.2% of the male teachers participating in the research used the synchronous (online) distance education model, whereas 38% of the female teachers used the synchronous (online) distance education model. In the data of the research, it was concluded that the biggest deficiencies and inadequacies that teachers see in the distance education process are the equipment (device). 26.5% of the participants of the study stated that there is a lack and inadequacy of equipment (device). According to gender, when the data obtained from the research regarding the lack and inadequacy experienced by the teachers in the distance education process are analyzed, 27.9% of the female teachers participating in the research and 24% of the male teachers participating in the research stated that there is a lack or inadequacy of equipment (device). Considering the suggestions of the teachers participating in the research for the deficiencies and inadequacies observed by the teachers in the distance education process, they made a suggestion of "Rearrangement of Education Programs" with a rate of 35.1% according to the data obtained from the research. In the light of the data obtained in the research, when the suggestions made for the deficiencies and inadequacies seen by the teachers in the distance education process are examined according to gender, 36.5% of the female teachers and 32.3% of the male teachers who participated in the research came to the conclusion that the suggestion of "Rearrangement of Education Programs" is in the first place. has been reached. In the data of the study, it was concluded that the recommendation for aid or contribution for the supply of equipment regarding the lack of tools and equipment (device), which is in the first place with a rate of 26.5%, has a rate of 17.3%.

Keywords: Distance education, Readiness, Primary education

Introduction

The first case of Covid-19, which was declared a global epidemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) on March 11, 2020, was also seen in our country on the same dates. The increase in the cases that followed brought along some problems not only in health but also in education. Measures and practices taken to reduce the rate of spread of the disease caused not only restrictions in social activities, but also some limitations and interruptions in educational activities (Soylu, 2020). Depending on the measures taken, there has been a change in the education-teaching methods, and a sudden transition from traditional formal face-to-face education to distance education has been made due to compulsory reasons (Can, 2020).

The suspension of education in schools for a while due to the epidemic caused concern both for educators and for many stakeholders affected by education. However, it also caused some problems in adapting to the new process. The fact that such a process has not been experienced before and the lack of any experience can be considered the main reason for the problems (Huber and Helm, 2020).

Distance education, which has been developed with the change created by innovations and developments in science and technology in education, is used as an alternative to face-to-face education (Ateş, 2010). Distance education, which has been mentioned a lot with the epidemic, is not a new concept, but has been used in letters, newspapers, radio, etc. since ancient times. It has been carried out somehow with interaction tools (Clark, 2020), and nowadays, it has been shaped with the developments in information and technology.

Distance Learning; It is a system that supports individual teaching and requires the learner to be responsible for their own learning process. According to Yurdakul (2015), students in the distance education system need to develop their learning to learn skills, plan and control their own learning process.

İşman (2011) defined distance education as a system in which educational activities are carried out thanks to technology, without the need for students and teachers to be in the same environment. Uşun (2006) distance education; the source and the receiver, which are far from each other and in different places; researcher stated that materials, tools, technologies and methods such as written and printed materials, audio-visual technologies (television, video) and face-to-face education (academic consultancy) are used in learning-teaching processes. Thus, it defines it as a planned and systematic application of educational technology that provides "individuality", "flexibility" and "independence" to its recipients in "teaching age, goals, time, place and management". It also states that the communication and interaction between the source and the receivers is provided by computer-based interactive technologies.

Toğacar (2007) defined that distance education as an educational environment in which teachers and students from different places and distances carry out educational activities with technology (audio, video, data and written text).

On the other hand Bakioğlu and Can (2014) described that distance education as a planned form of education in which students and teachers teach in different ways, synchronously or non-synchronously, in an internet environment by making use of current communication technologies, without requiring students to be physically in a certain place.

Before the implementation process of distance education activities, the education model should be determined and developed; It is also necessary to prepare the technological infrastructure for the determined education model. Romiszowski (2004) divided the models used in distance education into two groups as synchronous and asynchronous.

Table 1. Distance Education Models and Features (Midkiff & Da Silva, 2011).

Synchronous	It is live or real time. Students be online and attend the class at the same time. Example: Webinar communication, online, chat, etc.
Asynchronous	It is not live or real time. The students be online at the most convenient time and attends the lesson. Example: Individual online, team or whole group work.

In Table 1 examined that Synchronous and Asynchronous distance education models and their features. Students cannot be expected to switch from traditional face-to-face education to a distance education model that they have never experienced before, and to adapt to this new education model immediately (Sakal, 2017).

In order for the distance education process to continue without interruption and efficiently, of course, students must have some prerequisite behaviors; acquiring these prerequisite behaviors can be defined as readiness (Ülgen, 1997).

Topses (2003) defined that readiness as having the physical and psychological skills, knowledge and abilities necessary for the student to demonstrate certain skills. Readiness is defined by Kaya (2017) as the student's readiness to perform a skill as cognitive, affective, social and psychomotor. Aydın (2000) defined that readiness is "all of the personal competences and characteristics suitable for the requirements of a new learning experience".

Methodology

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the opinions of teachers about the level of readiness for distance education of primary school students who received face-to-face education but had to take distance education due to the epidemic, the deficiencies in students' readiness for distance education and suggestions for eliminating these deficiencies.

- 1) What is the distance education model used by primary school teachers?
- 2) What is the distance education model used by female teachers in primary schools?
- 3) What is the distance education model used by male teachers in primary schools?
- 4) What are the deficiencies in students' readiness for distance education from the perspective of teachers in primary schools?
- 5) What are the deficiencies in students' readiness for distance education from the perspective of female teachers in primary schools?
- 6) What are the deficiencies in students' readiness for distance education from the perspective of male teachers in primary schools?
- 7) What are the suggestions of teachers in primary schools for the deficiencies in students' readiness for distance education?
- 8) What are the suggestions of female teachers in primary schools to overcome the deficiencies of students' readiness for distance education?
- 9) What are the suggestions of male teachers in primary schools to overcome the deficiencies of students' readiness for distance education?

In the TRNC, due to the detection of the first Covid-19 case in March 2020 and the increase in the number of cases, the transition to distance education instead of face-to-face education in schools in the 2020-2021 academic years has become mandatory and inevitable. Although the developing technology has begun to be used effectively and efficiently in education, it has been observed that more teachers are active users, especially in classroom education and training in primary schools, so students who have to use technology actively and appropriately through distance education have faced some difficulties.

The interview form prepared for the research includes questions that reveal the problems faced by the students through the opinions of the teachers who interact and communicate with them the most, and offer solutions. With the findings and results to be obtained from the research, it is predicted that it will be helpful and beneficial both to reveal the situation in the current process and to the problems that may be experienced in the future distance education process.

It is necessary to plan, implement and evaluate very well in the distance education process in order to complete both the student, the teacher and the learning-teaching processes successfully and with less loss (Yurdakul, 2015). For this reason, it is thought that determining the problems of students, which is the most important element of education, and reducing these problems in the light of solution suggestions will contribute positively not only to the development of distance education activities, but also to increase the quality of education.

In the research conducted by Fidan (2020) with the aim of "examining the opinions of teachers regarding compulsory distance education that took place as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic", the opinions of teachers on compulsory distance education were analyzed with a total of 9 codes on the themes of individual and general negativities. In the research findings, while the problem of access or infrastructure was expressed as the general negativity theme most frequently expressed by the teachers with 20.3%, readiness was revealed as the most frequently mentioned individual negativity theme by the teachers with 13.5%.

In their research, Demir Öztürk and Eren (2021) aimed to "examine the level of readiness for online learning of students studying at vocational schools" and it was concluded that students' general readiness for online learning was high. When the sub-dimensions of the same study are examined, the students' "internet self-efficacy" dimension is very high, "online communication self-efficacy", "computer self-efficacy", "self-learning" and "learner control" dimensions are high, "motivation for e-learning" is low level of readiness in the dimension. While the readiness for online learning did not differ by gender, in the dimensions of "computer self-efficacy", "internet self-efficacy" and "online communication self-efficacy"; In the "self-learning" sub-dimension, it is revealed that there is a significant difference in favor of women.

Uyar and Karakuyu (2020) to determine the readiness of vocational school students for e-learning and to reveal whether there is a significant difference according to the variables of department, class, gender, e-learning experience, presence of home internet, computer presence, and parental education level. for the purpose of

research. In the research, it is concluded that the readiness of vocational school students for e-learning is at a high level.

In the study conducted by Ünal, Şanlıer and Şengil (2020), it was concluded that students' online learning readiness levels are good. In addition, in the same study, it was determined that the online learning readiness levels of those who have uninterrupted and problem-free access to all technological devices and internet connection are higher.

As a result of the research conducted by Salar (2013) with the aim of “examining the readiness of the students and lecturers studying at universities in Turkey towards ODL (Open and Distance Learning)”, “In line with the analysis of the collected data, it can be said that the students are generally ready for ODL.” was expressed as.

According to the results obtained from another study by Kuzu (2020), it is stated that the readiness levels of the students are generally medium and high. Sarıtaş and Barutçu (2020) reveal that students have readiness for online learning.

In this study, which was conducted to examine the readiness levels of primary school students for online learning with the view of teachers, a qualitative research approach was used, in which individuals sought answers about situation assessments (Dey, 1993) and aimed to reveal their personal thoughts (Storey, 2007). The interview technique in which the research participant answered the questions previously prepared by the researcher (Kuş, 2003).

The population of the research consists of 1634 teachers working in primary schools affiliated to the TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture in the 2020-2021 academic year. 73 teachers who participated in the study with the principle of volunteering and answered the questions constitute the sample of the research.

An interview form was created as a data tool for this research, which was conducted to examine the online learning readiness levels of primary school students with the perspective of teachers. The interview form prepared by the researcher was approved by taking expert opinion and applied.

The interview form consists of two parts. In the first part of the interview form, there are questions about the demographic profiles (gender, age, seniority and task regions) of the participants participating in the research. In the second part, there are semi-structured research questions. Research questions are;

1. Which distance education model do you use in the distance education process?
2. What are the inadequacies and deficiencies in students' readiness for distance education?
3. What are your suggestions to increase the readiness level of students in distance education?

Participants participated in the research on a voluntary basis. The data obtained from the research were analyzed by content analysis. The main goal in content analysis is to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the data obtained (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The data is analyzed in four steps: 1) coding the data 2) creating a theme 3) organizing the codes and themes, 4) defining and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

In order to reveal the opinions in the research, the data were divided into meaningful sections after the transcripts were taken. After the data of these sections were coded, themes were created. After examining and evaluating the data through codes and themes, it was interpreted. It is the method used to characterize and compare documents, interview data or records taken in interviews with content analysis, which is the most widely used in qualitative research (Altunışık, Coşkun, Bayraktaroğlu, & Yıldırım, 2005).

Findings

Table 2. Distribution of Teachers by Gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	50	68.5
Male	23	31.5
Total	73	100

68.5% of the participants in the study were female and 31.5% were male.

Table 3. Distribution of Teachers by Age

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
21-30 years	13	17.8
31-40 years	27	37
41-50 years	32	43.8
51 years and above	1	1.4
Total	73	100

17.8% of the participants in the study are in the age range of 21-30, 37% are in the age range of 31-40, 43.8% are in the age range of 41-50 and 1.4% are in the age range of 51 and over.

Table 4. Distribution of Teachers by Seniority in the Occupational

Seniority	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1-10	18	24.7
11- 20	34	46.6
21 and above	21	28.7
Total	73	100

24.7% of the participants in the research have occupational seniority between 1-10 years, 26.6% have occupational seniority between 11-20 years and 28.7% have occupational seniority of 21 years and above.

Table 5. Distribution of Teachers by Task Regions

Region	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Nicosia	26	35.6
Kyrenia	14	19.2
Famagusta	16	21.9
Iskele	3	4.1
Guzelyurt	10	13.7
Lefke	4	5.5
Total	73	100

When the task regions of the study participants are examined, 35.6% in Nicosia, 19.2% in Kyrenia, 21.9% in Famagusta, 4.1% in Iskele, 13.7% in Güzelyurt and 5.5% in Lefke.

Table 6. Distance Education Model Used by Teachers

Distance Education Model	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Synchronous	31	42.5
Asynchronous	20	27.4
Synchronous + Asynchronous	22	30.1
Total	73	100

42.5% of the research participants apply Synchronous, 27.4% Asynchronous, and 30.1% both Synchronous and Asynchronous distance education models.

Table 7. Distance Education Model Used by Teachers by Gender

Distance Education Model	Female		Male	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Synchronous	19	38	12	52.2
Asynchronous	17	34	3	13
Synchronous + Asynchronous	14	28	8	34.8
Total	50	100	23	100

38% of the female participants participating in the research apply Synchronous, 34% Asynchronous, and 28% both Synchronous and Asynchronous education models.

52.2% of the male participants participating in the research apply Synchronous, 13% Asynchronous and 34.8% both Synchronous and Asynchronous education models.

Table 8. Deficiencies and Inadequacies of Teachers in the Distance Education Process

Deficiencies, Inadequacies	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Tool-equipment (Device)	42	26.5
Infrastructure (Internet)	33	20.9
Motivation, Concentration	22	14
Technology Literacy	19	12
Family	18	11.4
Contents	17	10.8
Student self-control	7	4.4
Total	158	100

According to the research participants, the most important deficiencies observed in the distance education process are the equipment (devices) with 26.5%, the infrastructure experienced on the internet 20.9%, the motivation of the students 14%, the technology literacy of the students 12%, the family 11.4%, course content 10.8% and student self-control 4.4%

Table 9. Deficiencies and Inadequacies of the Teachers in the Distance Education Process by Gender

Gender	Female		Male	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Deficiencies, Inadequacies				
Tool-equipment (Device)	29	27.9	13	24
Infrastructure (Internet)	23	22.1	10	19
Motivation, Concentration	16	15.4	6	11
Technology Literacy	12	11.5	7	13
Family	12	11.5	6	11
Contents	9	8.7	8	15
Student self-control	3	2.9	4	7
Total	104	100	54	100

According to the female participants of the research, the deficiencies and inadequacies observed in the distance education process are 27.9% of the device, 22.1% of the infrastructure experienced on the internet, 15.4% of the student motivation, 11.5% of the students' technology literacy, 11.5% of the family, 8.7% of the course content and 2.9% as student self-control.

According to the male participants of the research, the deficiencies and inadequacies observed in the distance education process are 24% device, 19% infrastructure experienced on the internet, 15% course content, 13% students' technology literacy, 11% student motivation and 11% family and 7% as student self-control.

Table 10. Teachers' Suggestions for Deficiencies and Inadequacies Observed in the Distance Education Process

Deficiencies, Inadequacies	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Educational program	53	35.1
Device	26	17.3
Technology Literacy	24	16
Family	23	15.2
Internet	19	13
Number of Students	6	3.4
Total	151	100

According to the research participants, for the deficiencies and inadequacies they see in the distance education process; The highest rate of development and reorganization of education programs at the rate of 35.1%, 17.3% for the supply of devices, 16% for the development of the literacy of students regarding the use of technology, 15.2% for the contribution and participation of the families in the process, 13% for the strengthening of the internet infrastructure and 3.4% of them made suggestions to reduce the number of students.

Table 11. Teachers' Suggestions for Deficiencies and Inadequacies Observed in the Distance Education Process by Gender

Gender	Female		Male	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Educational program	35	36.5	18	32.3
Device	19	19.7	7	12.8
Technology Literacy	13	13.6	11	20
Family	14	14.6	9	16.3
Internet	11	11.5	8	15
Number of Students	4	3.9	2	3.6
Total	96	100	55	100

According to the female participants of the research, for the deficiencies and inadequacies observed in the distance education process; 36.5% re-development and reorganization of education programs, 19.7% device supply, 14.6% contribution and participation of families in the process, 13.6% improving students' literacy on technology use, 11.5% strengthening internet infrastructure and 3.9% reduce the number of students made suggestions.

According to the male participants of the research, for the deficiencies and inadequacies they see in the distance education process; 32.3% rearrangement of education programs, 20% development of students' literacy on technology use, 16.3% contribution and participation of families in the process, 15% strengthening internet infrastructure, 12.8% device supply and 3.6% reduce the number of students made suggestions.

The Covid-19 outbreak has affected not only the health field, but also many fields and of course education. So much so that 770 million people were affected by the pause in education during the epidemic period (Zhong et al. 2020). The transition from traditional face-to-face education to distance education due to compulsory reasons has brought students face to face with a situation that has not been experienced and experienced before. Therefore, in this process, the lack of readiness of the students and the inadequacies brought with it the difficulty of adapting to the process. According to Sakal (2017), it is natural for those who do not have knowledge and experience to adapt to the new and different online learning environment immediately.

26.5% of the participants who participated in the research emphasized the lack of readiness of the students, the inadequacy of the device, which is coded as equipment, as inadequacy. It is normal for the lack and inadequacy in this aspect to have a negative impact on the student's readiness. It is said that if quality (Uysal & Kuzu, 2011) and success (Volery & Lord, 2000) are aimed in the distance education process, it is important to develop and improve technological opportunities (Rose & Blomeyer, 2007). According to the data obtained from the research, the participants who participated in the research also offer suggestions (17.3%) in the direction of aid and contribution of equipment (device). Christopher (2014) and Johnson (2020) also point out the importance of having access to the necessary equipment.

According to the opinions of the teachers participating in the research, the inadequacy of the internet, which is coded as an infrastructure, is stated as the inadequacy that the students see in their readiness. The inadequacies in infrastructure and the inadequacy of the internet not only cause problems in distance education, but also negatively affect the readiness of students. Demir Öztürk and Eren (2021) found a significant difference for students who have more internet access as a result of their research and interpreted it as "It is expected that the online readiness levels of students with increased access to technology are expected to increase".

The fact that students have to participate in distance education through a program that requires technological knowledge and skills, which they did not use before, did not have sufficient knowledge and skills, again appeared as a deficiency in the data obtained. Christopher (2014) and Johnson (2020) point out the importance of knowing the program used by the user and having skills and experience in this regard.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the findings obtained in the study, it is concluded that the teachers working in primary schools, which are connected to primary education, mainly use synchronous (online) distance education model in distance education applied for compulsory reasons. According to the opinions of the teachers participating in the research, the lack of equipment (device) is stated as the most important deficiency regarding the readiness of the students in the distance education process being implemented. Among the findings, the lack of equipment (device) is expressed as the deficiency seen with the highest rate by both female and male teachers when evaluated according to gender.

When the results obtained from the research are examined, it is seen that although the lack of equipment (device) is the most expressed inadequacy in terms of student readiness according to the opinions of the teachers, according to the opinions of the teachers who participated in the research, it is seen that they present a suggestion that the arrangements to be made in the education programs will increase the readiness of the students by positively affecting them.

The teachers stated that the arrangements to be made for the following issues while organizing the education programs will contribute positively to the readiness of the students in distance education. These suggestions are as follows;

- Reducing course content.
- Planning and arranging course contents in an applicable way in online education.
- Planning and arranging course content by taking into account the time spent by teachers in computer programs during the distance education process.
- Include activities where the student can practice while the course contents are planned and organized.
- Planning and arranging the course contents considering the age and attention span of the students.
- Adding a course for the use of computer programs to be used in the distance education process to the education programs.
- Including the activities and studies that will increase the motivation of the students in the course content.

Recommendations

- In this study, which was conducted to examine the readiness levels of primary school students for online learning with the view of teachers, a sample of 73 teachers was used. Conducting a research in which the number of samples is increased in order to obtain more participant views;
- In this study, the readiness levels of the students were examined with the view of the teacher. Examining the readiness level of the student according to the student's or family's view; examining the readiness levels of teachers who are effective practitioners of distance education;
- Comparison of the readiness levels of a group with a lack of equipment and another group without equipment (equipment);
- Comparing the readiness levels of a group that has knowledge about the computer program used and another group that is not aware of the computer program used;
- It is recommended to examine the student levels before and after the implementation of a education program that will be prepared by taking into account distance education.

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