

**THE ONLINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING PROCESS OF THE SCHOOLS IN
TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE
TRAINING NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL MANAGERS IN THESE SCHOOLS**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to find out about the current situation of the online/distance learning, provided during the Covid-19 pandemic, in public and private primary schools, secondary schools, high schools and vocational high schools existing in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the training needs of the school managers who work in these schools. The research has been carried out with a descriptive survey model and the survey is used as data collection tool. The survey is developed with the advice of experts as well as by means of literature review and it includes 31 items, of which 15 are close-ended and 16 are open-ended questions. The sample of the research includes 42 school managers. Descriptive survey analysis is carried out for the close-ended questions whereas content analysis is carried out for the open-ended questions. According to the findings of the study, it is determined that the school managers are in need of training with regards to the online/distanced learning in the areas of scaling and evaluation, online teaching principles and methods, technologic knowledge and competencies, class management and communication where it is a problematic situation to have the families participate and to motivate the students in the online process. Additionally, the technological infrastructure is insufficient and the majority of the teachers have not taken any training about distance learning. Although the Covid-19 pandemic period led to problems in the teaching platform, these also led to new opportunities to arise. In addition, being aware of the problems led to opportunities to find solutions. The

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research revealed the fact that the study group are in need of training for measurement and evaluation and for increasing the motivation of the students. The pandemic period led to problems in the teaching platform, but the online - distance learning process can be developed by re-evaluating the current systems, by updating the methods that might be no longer in use and by solutions to problems being encountered.

Keywords: Distance education; school managers; pandemic period; covid-19

KUZEY KIBRIS TÜRK CUMHURİYETİNDE FAALİYET GÖSTEREN OKULLARDA UYGULANAN UZAKTAN EĞİTİM SÜRECİ VE BU OKULLARDA GÖREV YAPAN OKUL MÜDÜRLERİNİN EĞİTİM İHTİYAÇLARININ BELİRLENMESİ

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nde bulunan resmi ve özel ilköğretim okulları, ortaokullar, liseler ve meslek liselerinde Covid-19 pandemi sürecinde sağlanan çevrimiçi/uzaktan eğitimin durumunun incelenmesi ve bu okullarda görev yapan okul yöneticilerinin eğitim ihtiyaçlarının belirlenmesidir. Araştırma betimsel tarama modeli ile yürütülmüş olup, veri toplama aracı olarak anket kullanılmıştır. Alan yazın taramasının yanı sıra uzman görüşleri ile geliştirilen ankette 15'i kapalı, 16'sı açık uçlu olmak üzere toplam 31 madde bulunmaktadır. Araştırmanın örneklemini 42 okul yöneticisi oluşturmaktadır. Kapalı uçlu sorulardan elde edilen veriler için betimsel analiz, açık uçlu sorulardan elde edilen veriler için ise içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Araştırma bulgularına göre okul yöneticilerinin çevrimiçi/uzaktan öğrenme ile ilgili ölçeklendirme ve değerlendirme, çevrimiçi öğretim ilke ve yöntemleri, teknolojik bilgi ve yeterlilikler, sınıf yönetimi ve ailelerin katılımının sorun oluşturduğu durumlarda iletişim ve çevrimiçi öğrenme sürecinde öğrencileri motive etme konularında eğitime ihtiyaç duydukları belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca teknolojik altyapının yetersiz olduğu ve öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğunun uzaktan eğitim konusunda herhangi bir eğitim almadığı tespit edilmiştir. Covid-19 pandemi süreci öğretimsel açıdan sorunlara yol açsa da bunlar yeni fırsatların da doğmasına olanak sağlamıştır. Ayrıca sorunların farkında olmak, çözüm bulma fırsatlarını da beraberinde getirmiştir. Araştırma, çalışma grubunun ölçme ve değerlendirme ve öğrencilerin motivasyonunu artırma konusunda eğitime ihtiyaç duyduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Pandemi dönemi öğretim platformunda sorunlara yol açmıştır; ancak mevcut sistemlerin yeniden değerlendirilmesi, artık kullanılmayabilecek yöntemlerin güncellenmesi ve karşılaşılan sorunlara çözüm bulunmasıyla çevrimiçi - uzaktan eğitim süreci geliştirilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uzaktan eğitim; okul müdürleri; pandemi süreci; Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

The Problem Analysis

The coronavirus that evolved in the city of Wuhan - Hubei in China on December 31, 2019 was declared as a global pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020. According to the World Health Organization (WHO)'s statistics, the pandemic, which was diagnosed in 111,499,140 people in 222 countries/regions including TRNC in which this disease led to 2,468,799 deaths by February 20, 2021. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Health, 3,192 people were diagnosed with the pandemic and 22 people died in TRNC by February 20, 2021. The effects of the pandemic on economic, psychological and social life, especially health, continue and there is no definitive data on when it will end. The Covid-19 pandemic also affected the education sector in a negative way. The

factors which complicate the period even more are; not having equal opportunity in education, lack of experience of the governors,, deficiencies in the infrastructure and technology (Erbil & Kocabaş, 2019; Doğan, 2014).

In order for the children to complete their development stages in a healthy way; the government, families and teachers, which are the stakeholders of the education sector, have certain responsibilities (Çaykuş & Çaykuş, 2020). Fulfilling these responsibilities will contribute to the continuation of the learning process which is an indispensable part of human's life and is required for the healthy development period. For this reason, it is crucial to identify a roadmap and take quick actions to overcome the shortcomings that might arise in the education of the children and youngsters during the Covid-19 pandemic period (Gündüz, Türker, Karabekir & Altun, 2020). Accordingly, one of the most important and prioritized goals of the countries with the pandemic is to provide uninterrupted education system. It has been found that, during this period the countries use current distance learning opportunities that are supported by different technological infrastructures.

With the Covid-19 pandemic arising, the local governments has set up coordination platforms and online classes within a short period of time. Studies have also been carried out about which learning platforms should be used, how to assist the teachers in online teaching applications, how to reach the ones with little or no internet access and how to monitor and evaluate the learning outputs (Atchoarena, 2020). As a result, the need and approach for online and distance - learning became globally important with important changes and effects on education system. According to Ağaoğlu, İmer and Kurubacak (2002) *'the distance learning is the condition providing learning opportunities to everyone at any place, time and age, where the ones who are being taught and the ones who are teaching are far away from each other'*. The online and distance learning applications are taken into account by the education managers not only with the purpose to support the face-to-face education as it was in the pre-pandemic time but also due to the fact that in certain crisis situations (epidemic diseases, wars, disasters, forced migration, etc.) it has important advantages (Can, 2020). With this progression, the strategies and methods used in education are changed and new teaching methods and applications are started to be used widely. In addition, the research is carried out to find out the contribution of these strategies in developing high quality teaching opportunities and ensuring equal access to everyone. It has been observed that the distance learning platform is not convenient for the ones with no accessibility and network connection. This situation leads to decrease in economic opportunities in the human capital (Azzi-Huck & Shmis, 2020). Therefore, the pandemic has forced the educators, parents and students to think more critically, to be a problem solver, to be creative, to set up communication, to coordinate and to be more active (Anderson, 2020). During the pandemic period, the teachers, students and parents were in an effort to get used to the digitized education. There have been important improvements in the knowledge and experiences of the teachers in the areas of technology and pedagogy (Kırmızıgül, 2020) and an increased demand for online and distance learning. In addition, the community's awareness towards the importance of online and distance learning has increased as well. This pandemic has shown

that, in open and distance learning, not only quantity but also quality is important (Can, 2020). Some students have indicated that, distance learning was not sufficient in consolidating applied courses and that they had difficulties in obtaining the necessary materials (Kahraman, 2020, p. 52; Keskin & Özer Kaya, 2020, p. 65; Tanhan, 2020, p. 12). The World Health Organization (2020) announced that during the crisis period, children need an environment that they can feel safe and which they are aware of the presence of people that can support them. In expected and unexpected crisis situations, it is anticipated by all the related parties from the education management to make a sufficient/effective intervention, to ensure the education institutions and for the members to take the minimum damage possible from the crises. In other words, it is expected that they manage the crisis in a successful way (Aksoy & Aksoy, 2003). It was seen that in the crisis period, , some negative circumstances are experienced such as not having equal learning opportunities due to the lack of technological supplies, difficulties encountered by the teachers and the students in using the technology (Education Reform Initiative, 2020).

There are more questions to be answered regarding the reflection of the distance learning from the learning environment such as the teachers, parents and school managers readiness, their position to manage the period, and whether the current technical infrastructure is suitable or not. During this pandemic period, it has been found necessary that the problems encountered are identified and solutions are proposed in order to maintain educational activities. Since such studies change from country to country, it is important that it is done separately for each region. Accordingly, in the current study it is aimed to find the current situation of the distance learning applied in the schools which exist in TRNC and identify the training needs of the school managers. Based on this general purpose, the sub - problems of the research are identified as follows;

1. What is the current situation in distance online learning?
2. What are the training needs of the school managers that manage the distance online learning in TRNC?

METHOD

This study aims to identify the current situation of the distance online learning applied in the schools existing in the TRNC and identify the training needs of the school managers in distance learning. The study is based on descriptive survey model.

Descriptive survey model is: *“a research model which aims to describe a situation, which existed in the past or still exist in the present, in the form that it exists and tries to describe the person, incident or a thing, which is the subject of the research, in its own form and condition”* (Karasar, 2008).

Study Group

The sample of this research consists of the managers that work in the public and private primary schools, secondary schools and high schools in TRNC. During this research, all the school managers (f: 200) that work in TRNC have been reached and 42 feedbacks has been received. Information about these participants are shown in the following table.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics about the Demographic Information of the Participants

Properties	f	%
Service Year		
1-5	17	40,5
6-10	8	42,9
11-15	4	9,5
15 and more	3	7,91
Total	42	100
Education level		
Bachelors	23	54,8
Masters	14	33,3
Doctorate	5	11,9
Total	42	100
School Type		
Primary	23	54,8
Secondary	7	16,7
High School	12	28,6
Total	42	100

Tools for Collecting Data

In this research, “Identification of the Current Situation in Distance Learning and Training Needs Analysis for School Managers” survey is used as a data collecting tool, which is developed by the researchers. In the process of developing the survey form, expert opinions are received and literature review is done. After this, questions suitable to the content of the research are formed and a pilot study is conducted. At the end of the study, the survey form is finalized. The form consists of 31 questions of which 16 are open - ended and 15 are close - ended questions.

Analysis of Data

In the research, descriptive analysis is used in close - ended questions and content analysis is used in open - ended questions. The analysis of the open - ended questions are conducted with two different experts. For reliability, consensus rate between the coders is calculated by the formula of Miles and Huberman (1994) and found out to be 0,92 in general. In addition, SWOT analysis has been carried out within the scope of the research.

FINDINGS

This section includes the findings of the research. The participants are asked whether distance learning is provided in their schools and the answers received are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: The Findings Related To Whether Distance Learning Is Provided

Providing Distant Learning	f	%
Yes	41	97.6
No	1	2.4
Total	42	100

As seen in Table 2, the majority of the participants (41%) provide distance learning. The participants are asked regarding which platform they use to apply distance learning. The answers received are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. The Platforms in Distance Learning

Platforms (N=42)	f	%
Zoom	31	34,83
Google Meet	21	23,60
Whatsapp	16	17,98
Moodle	9	10,11
Google Classroom	5	5,62
Eba	3	3,37
Jitsi	1	1,12
Smartschool	1	1,12
Youtube	1	1,12
Class Dojo	1	1,12
Total	89	100

Most of the participants indicate that they use Zoom, Google Meet and Whatsapp platforms to apply distanced - learning. The sufficiency of the infrastructure in distance learning has been asked to the participants. The answers received are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Infrastructure Situation in Distance Learning

Infrastructure Sufficient	f	%
Yes	10	23.8
No	32	76.2
Total	42	100

As seen in Table 4, the majority of the participants (76.2%) think that the infrastructure in distance learning is insufficient. The participants are asked about the reasons of the insufficiency of the infrastructure in distanced - learning. The answers received are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Deficiencies in Infrastructure in Distance Learning

Infrastructure Deficiencies (N=42)	f	%
Internet deficiency	31	47,70
Communication tools deficiency (such as computer and tablet)	29	44,61
Platform deficiency	5	7,69
Total	65	100

As seen in Table 5, the majority of the participants indicated deficiencies in internet (47,7%) and communication tools (such as computers and tablets) (44.61%) as deficiencies in infrastructure in distance learning. In case the infrastructure is insufficient in distanced - learning, the participants are asked whether any action is taken towards improving the deficiencies. The answers received are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Actions Taken for Deficiencies in Distance Learning

Action for deficiencies	f	%
Yes	35	83.3
No	7	16.7
Total	42	100

The majority of the participants indicated that no action has been taken in improving the deficiencies in distance learning (%83.3). The participants are asked about the teachability of distance learning. The answers received are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Teachability of Distance Learning

Viability	f	%
Yes	21	50,0
No	10	23,81
Partially	11	26,19
Total	42	100

As shown in Table 7, half of the participants (50%) think that distance learning is viable. The participants are asked whether training is provided to teachers during the distance learning period. The answers received are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Training Provided To Teachers in Distance Learning

Training provided to teachers	f	%
Yes	31	73.8
No	11	26.2
Total	42	100

As shown in Table 8, the majority of the participants (73.8%) received training. The descriptive analysis of the content of the trainings are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. The Trainings Provided To The Teachers During Distance Learning

Trainings Provided (N=42)	f	%
Moodle	14	28,58
Zoom	11	22,45
Software	9	18,37
Distance education management and techniques	8	16,32
Web2	2	4,08
Google Meet	2	4,08
Jitsi	1	2,04
Protection against distance education bullying	1	2,04
Eba	1	2,04
Total	49	100

The participants are asked about the problems, that are encountered the most by the teachers. The answers received are provided in Table 10. Accordingly, student problems, internet problems and equipment problems are the problems that are encountered the most.

Table 10. Main Problems That Are Encountered By The Teachers

Problems Encountered (N=42)	f	%
Student problems	26	36,11
Internet	21	29,17
Communication tools (such as computer, tablets)	11	15,28
Lack of interest of the parents	6	8,33
Lack of knowledge	4	5,55
Systematic organizational problems	3	4,17
Students that do not know Turkish	1	1,39
Total	72	100

The participants are asked about the problems that the students encounter during the distance learning. The answers received are shown in Table 11. The majority of the participants indicated that the students encounter problems in communication tools (35,44%) and internet (32,91%).

Table 11. Main Problems Encountered By Students

Problems encountered by students (N=42)	f	%
Communication tools (such as computer, tablets)	28	35,44
Internet	26	32,91
Student problems	15	18,99
Students not being able to use the technology	5	6,33
Lack of interest of the family	3	3,80
Systematic organizational problems	2	2,53
Total	79	100

The participants are asked about the participation of the students in distance learning. The answers received are shown Table 12.

Table 12. Participation Ratio Of The Students in Distance Learning

Ratio of Student Participation	f	%
Low	2	4,76
Medium	13	30,95
High	27	64,29
Total	42	100

As seen in Table 12, 4,76% of the participants think that the participation is low, 30,95% of the participants think that the participation is medium. Accordingly, the answers regarding the reasons of low and medium participation are shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Reasons Of The Low And Medium Student Participation in Distance Learning

Reasons for Low and medium student participation (N=42)	f	%
Deficiency in communication tool (such as computer, tablet)	14	33,33
Problems with internet	14	33,33
Decreased student motivation	4	9,52
Technical deficiency of the teacher	1	2,38
Lack of supervision of the student	5	11,90
Lack of knowledge of the family	4	9,52
Total	42	100

The participants are asked about the problems that the families encountered in distance learning. The answers received are shown in Table 14. The problems that are encountered the most are internet (24.68%), equipment (24.68%) and supervision of children (19.48%).

Table 14. Problems That The Families Encounter in Distance Learning

Problems encountered by the families (N=42)	f	%
Internet	19	24,68
Equipment	19	24,68
Supervision of the children	15	19,48
Lack of education	8	10,39
Lack of interest	6	7,79
No problem	4	5,19
Psychological problems	3	3,89
Problem with the teaching environment	2	2,60
Lack of confidence	1	1,30
Total	77	100

The participants are asked about the strengths of the distance learning. The majority of the participants had replied to the question of strengths of distance learning as the reflection of the technology to education, making the education possible everywhere, sustainability of the education. Accordingly, the descriptive analysis of the answers received is provided in Table 15.

Table 15. Strengths Of The Online Learning

Strengths of distance learning (N=42)	f	%
Usage of technology in education	13	22,81
Making education possible everywhere	11	19,30
Sustainability of education	11	19,30
Minimum cost	6	10,53
Traceability of the course material	6	10,53
Participation of the families in teaching	4	7,01
Continued communication with the teachers	3	5,26
Continuing motivation	2	3,51
Staying healthy	1	1,75
Total	57	100

The participants are asked about the weaknesses of the distance learning. The descriptive analysis of the content of the answers provided are shown in Table 16. The majority of the participants gave these answers: not replacing face-to-face education (17,46%), negative effects on social development (17,46%) and difficulty in managing class (14,29%).

Table 16. Weaknesses Of The Online Learning

Weaknesses of distance learning (N=42)	f	%
Not replacing face-to-face education	11	17,46
Negative effects on social development	11	17,46
Difficulty in managing class	11	14,29
Internet	8	12,70
Unequal opportunity	7	11,11
Communication problems	6	9,52
Deficiencies communication tools (such as computer and tablet)	4	6,35
Not being able to do applied lessons	3	4,76
Lack of interest of the family	2	3,17
Total	63	100

The participants are asked about the threats of the distance learnings. The descriptive analysis of the content of the answers are shown in Table 17. Based on this, according to the participants, the threats of distance learning are negative effects on social development (25%), cause to health problems (17.86%), technological addiction (16,07%) and threats due to the lack of related laws (16,07%).

Table 17. The Threats Of Online Learning

Threats of distance learning (N=42)	f	%
Negative effects on social development	14	25,0
Technological Addiction	9	16,07
Threats due to lack of laws	9	16,07
Cause to health problems	10	17,86
Unequal opportunity	5	8,93
Cause to decrease in motivation	4	7,14
Not ensuring student supervision	3	5,36
Not being able to do applied lessons	2	3,57
Total	56	100

The participants are asked whether the students have received trainings about online learning. The answers received are shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Training Provided To Students During Distance Learning

Training provided to Students (N=42)	f	%
Yes	12	28.57
No	30	71.43
Total	42	100

As seen in Table 18, the majority of the participants (71,43%) stated that no training is provided to the students. The descriptive analysis of the content of the trainings provided are shown in Table 19.

Table 19. Training Provided To The Students in Online Learning.

Trainings to Students (N=42)	f	%
Methodology and techniques	7	46,66
Programs to be used	6	40,0
Accessibility to the teacher	1	6,67
Participation to Education	1	6,67
Total	15	100

The participants are asked whether the families are trained about distance learning. The answers are as shown in Table 20.

Table 20. Training Provided To The Parents About Distance Learning

Training provided to parents (N=42)	f	%
Yes	8	19.05
No	34	80,95
Total	42	100.0

As seen in Table 20, the majority of the participants (80,95%) stated that no training is provided to the families about distance learning. The descriptive analysis of the contents of the trainings provided to families are shown in Table 21.

Table 21. Trainings Provided To The Parents About Distance Learning

Trainings to Parents (N=42)	f	%
Program to be used	4	36,36
Communication	3	27,27
System to be applied	3	27,27
Prevention against bullying	1	9,09
Total	11	100

The participants are asked about the positive effects on the participants. The answers received are shown in Table 22.

Table 22. Positive Effects Of Online Learning

Distance Learning has positive effects?	f	%
Yes	33	78,57
No	9	21,43
Total	42	100

As seen in Table 22, the majority of the participants (78,57%) indicated the positive effects of distance learning. The descriptive survey analysis of the answers are shown in Table 23.

Table 23. Positive Effects Of Online Learning On The Students, Parents And Teachers.

Positive Effects of Distance Learning (N= 42)	f	%
Continuation of education	13	32,5
Sustainability of communication	7	17,5
Time for the family and the children	7	17,5
The importance of the technology	6	15,0
Access to research and knowledge	4	10,0
Economic scale	1	2,50
Awareness for the importance of education	1	2,50
Development of the teacher	1	2,50
Total	40	100

Distance learning opportunities are asked to the participants. The descriptive analysis regarding the answers are provided in Table 24.

Table 24. The Opportunities Of Online Learning

Opportunities of Distance Learning (N=42)	f	%
Positive usage of technology	15	24,19
Easy access to knowledge	10	16,13
Teacher-student development	10	16,13
Continuation of education	8	12,90
Fast communication/time saving	6	9,68
Student permanance	4	6,45
Location problem	4	6,45
Economic	3	4,84
Control of the student by the family	1	1,61
Revision of the lesson	1	1,61
Total	62	100

The participants are asked what kind of activities were planned towards students with special needs in distance learning. The descriptive analysis of the answers received are as shown in Table 25.

Table 25. Activities Organized For Students With Special Needs in Distance Learning

The needs of the students with special needs (N=42)	f	%
No activity done	19	48,72
The special needs teacher is doing lessons	14	35,90
Materials are sent to the parents	4	10,26
Special training class is formed/lessons are provided	2	5,13
Total	39	100

The participants are asked whether they have received training during distance learning period. The answers received are in Table 26.

Table 26. The Findings Related To Receiving Training During Distance Learning

Received training	f	%
Yes	26	61.9
No	16	38.1
Total	42	100

As seen in Table 26, the majority of the participants indicated that they have received training during distance learning period (% 61,9). The descriptive analysis of the content of the trainings are shown in Table 27.

Table 27. Trainings Received During Distance Learning Period

Trainings received (N=42)	f	%
Moodle	14	25,00
Online Education Information	12	21,43
Zoom	10	17,86
Google Meet	6	10,71
Web2	5	8,93
Eba	5	8,93
Measurement and evaluation methods	3	5,36
Jitsi	1	1,78
Total	56	100

The participants are asked about their training needs about distance learning. The answers received are shown in Table 28.

Table 28. Training Needs For Distance Learning

Need for Trainings (N=42)	f	%
Yes	34	81.0
No	8	19.0
Total	42	100

As seen in Table 28, the majority of the participants (81%) are in need of trainings. The descriptive survey analysis of the training needs are shown in Table 29.

Table 29. Needs For Trainings in Online Learning

Need for Distance Learning (N=42)	f	%
Measurement and evaluation in D.E.	34	17,17
Methods for Increasing Student Motivation in D.E.	32	16,16
Teaching methods and techniques in D. E.	30	15,15
Tecnological knowledge and competences	29	14,65
Material development in D.E.	28	14,14
Class management competences	22	11,11
Communication	20	10,10
Others	3	1,52
Total	198	100,00

*Distance Education (D.E.)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research aims to identify the current situation of the distance learning applied in schools in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and to analyze the training needs of the school managers working in these schools with regards to distanced - learning. In this section, the results of the research will be presented and discussions will be based on literature review.

As a result of the research; it is found out that there is a problem with the infrastructure of the schools in TRNC. It is observed that the internet infrastructure problems have existed before and during this period, the problems have been experienced again. It was figured out that these problems do not only exist here and about this subject, Süral (2015) highlighted the importance of maintaining a robust technological infrastructure; emphasized the necessity for selecting and reforming all the components in an appropriate way for a successful and sustainable distanced - learning infrastructure. Davis, Little and Stewart (2011) stated that it is necessary to consider many factors in order to set up the infrastructure of an online and distance - learning and thus, emphasized that it is challenging to prepare a simple control list or a recipe for the actions to be taken to set up the infrastucture.

In addition to this evaluation, unlike the normal education at school done with the leadership of the teacher, family factor is found important for distance learning in the research. Accordingly, the competences of the families have been analyzed, who take the role of supervising and motivating the students during the pandemic period. The importance of the role of family have been emphasized in growing up as a “good” person. Thus, it is observed that configuration is needed in informing the families in distance learning and in ensuring that they are involved in the teaching in a direct way. Within this scope; similar results have been obtained in the researches of Tümkan and Tümkan (2020). As a result of the study, regarding the contributions, the teachers noticed the contibution of the families to the education the most and came to the conclusion that coordination in education is crucial. The current research revealed problems such as the careless attitude and behaviour of the family, problems that the

families encounter in the distance learning and inability of the families to get involved in the teaching process. For an effective distance learning, it is not enough to put the teaching materials online but the students also need a teaching environment that fulfill their attention, sympathy and empathy needs (Bozkurt, 2020).

The research revealed that there is a training need for the school managers about distance learning in the subjects of technical support, developments about infrastructure, low motivation of students and family participation. This period, that we are going through, should ensure permanent plans, because even if this pandemic ends, new pandemic periods might arise. Therefore, there might be a need for the continuation of distance learning. The teachers and school managers should definitely receive the necessary trainings. For this, it is recommended that planning is done. In the researches of Öznacar, Yücesoy, Demir (2020, p. 100), it is recommended to make studies in order to increase in-service trainings about technology, media and knowledge for the school managers working in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and also to ensure their increased participation. Gündüz, Türker, Karabekir & Altun (2020), emphasized the importance of strategic planning in education. Bozkurt (2020) indicated that Covid-19 pandemic affected the education sector directly and indirectly in several ways and there is a need for radical reforms and strategic planning to ensure sustainability of teaching.

Another finding of the research is that the school managers need technological knowledge and experience in managing the pandemic period. Based on the opinions of the managers, there is a need to strengthen factors such as internet, tablet/computers and lack of a centralized system. During the distance learning provided, factors such as low student participation, lack of teachers knowledge, lack of experience and communication problems also express deficiencies in infrastructure. In the light of these results, it is observed that the teachers and school managers are having difficulties in the usage of technology (Çalık, Çoban & Özdemir, 2019; Hero, 2020). The reason of these deficiencies are generally due to the facts that the school managers are educated towards face-to-face education, most of the schools have not done planning to provide education in distance learning, and thus lack of programming. As part of the studies, considering that the distance learning will always exist, the school managers should take training about this area. Davran (2020) emphasized that during the pandemic period, the importance of online learning will increase over the period of time, where the importance of digital learning and online distance learning will always be on the agenda, it is emphasized that not only the students and the teachers but also the whole community should gain the skills as a comprehensive point of view. This is important to overcome the pandemic crisis and to survive in the globally competing environment (Bozkurt, 2020).

Another outcome of the pandemic is about the interest and motivation of the students (Karalis & Raikou, 2020). The care, sympathy and empathy approach, that are needed by the students, is not necessary only for the pandemic period, but it is a primary need that is required all the time for people (Noddings, 2002). In the research regarding the problems of the students, in addition to the equipment and internet problems; other problems encountered are related to the interest of the students towards the

process, behaviour and attitude, lack of communication, lack of motivation in the current education system. Since education with an online group is done through technology, group interaction is difficult to be obtained. This situation leads to a deficiency in success compared to face-to-face education. Since the students cannot interact, they develop different behaviour and opinion manners. In addition, it becomes difficult to divert the knowledge transfer depending on the characteristics of the group (Gökçe, 2008). Because it is difficult for the trainers to understand the individual attitudes during distance learning (Birkök, 1998).

The research, which included investigation of the findings on the countries economic, social and technical infrastructure; analyzed the sufficiency of the government about the topic in addition to schools and teachers, and therefore had the opportunity to see the right actions done as well as the deficiencies. The research, which studied the situation in special training, provided the current situation about this subject as well. As part of the study, it was found out that the government have not done any studies in ensuring students with special needs received distance learning. The research found out that the special education teachers' efforts contributed to the education of the children with special needs. Şenol and Yaşar (2020) stated that the education of the children with special needs was affected in an unfavorable way during the pandemic period. In order to overcome this, it is recommended that an intervention is planned and done with teachers and families.

The research also analyzed the positive effects and opportunities of distance learning among the teachers, students and families. The study also included the weaknesses and strenghts of the distance learning, as part of the SWOT analysis and helped us draw a roadmap in order to prevent the mistakes done before. The pandemic period, which has being going on for more than a year, showed that distance learning will continue to be important and that it is crucial that the government, schools and teaching staff develop themselves in this area. In the research of Can (2020), it is stated that the open and distance learning applications are an important learning source in solving problems faced in education. The fact that the current situation shows an urgent need for planning is a challanging period for all the schools. Also since the students all over the world get online at the same time, the infrastructure conditions are suffering, which makes the distance learning more problematic (Sahu, 2020). This research will enable to find the parties to be developed about distance learning in order to set up a viable distance learning system.

The Covid-19 pandemic period which affected the whole world as well as our country and led to changes in TRNC, also led to big changes in the education sector. During this period, which restricted face-to-face education, both the governers and school managers looked for alternative ways of education. The students, who actively benefit from technology mostly use technological tools to play games, watch videos and rarely use them for research purposes, get involved in an overloaded technological system during this period. The results of the study has shown that the deficiencies affect the education and the students intensely. New ways of applicable learning will ease the procedure. These actions are found necessary at schools supporting the school managers, training the teachers and teacher

candidates, providing the skills required for a dynamic digital environment, doing studies in order to make distance learning system well-qualified; providing the education that will be modified based on the development needs of the children. In service training, technological courses, seminars, online applications will help the people that have deficiencies in these areas to be more successful in the education sector.

The research also revealed the fact that the government was not ready for such a phase and was late in taking actions. The reasons that interrupted the education system of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are that the infrastructural problems could not be overcome in a short period of time, the training of the teachers were not performed in a planned and programmed manner, the students could not be supported based on their social and financial situations and that the planning was not organized by one authority. Before the 2021-2022 academic year, the infrastructural deficiencies of the schools should have been completed, the teachers should have been educated in a planned manner on the applications to be used, the curriculum and the way lessons will be provided should have been planned based on technical problems. Before the education period starts, the students and the families should have been called in groups and informed about the programs to be used and short courses should have been provided about the methodology to be used. The five parts of the distance teaching (Ministry, School Governance, Teachers, Families and Students) should play an active role in education. It is recommended that the government benefit from the experiences and infrastructure of the universities that have solved the problem of distanced - learning by using hybrid system and therefore take support from universities accordingly.

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