

DISTANCE EDUCATION PROCESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THEOLOGY FACULTY STUDENTS

İLAHİYAT FAKÜLTESİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BAKIŞIYLA UZAKTAN EĞİTİM SÜRECİ

İsmail DEMİR¹

Abstract

It is clear that the current global health problems have made distance education a necessity rather than a choice. It is also known that this obligation contains many problems in terms of application infrastructure and hardware. In this context the aim of our study is to examine student opinions related to the distance education model, which is frequently used in Turkey and all over the world in the 2020-2021 academic year because of the COVID-19 epidemic.. The data of the study were collected from the students who took distance education courses in the undergraduate education of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Faculty of Theology during the spring semester. The data used in the research were collected by the researchers with the previously prepared "Views of Distance Education Students on Distance Education" scale. According to the results, it was concluded that the vast majority (about 79.7%) of the students of the faculty of theology did not evaluate the distance education system that Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University started to implement in a short time as efficient. The research was conducted with a mixed research model. In other words, interviews were conducted with the students about data collection and a questionnaire was applied to the students. Since all the data are collected at the same time, the design of the research is considered as the "combination design" in mixed method research designs. As a result of these experiences, it is aimed that the data obtained about the opinions of the participants will shed light and guide the distance education applications that will be carried out in the future processes.

Keywords: Education, Distance Education, Religious Education, Theology

Öz:

İçinde bulunduğumuz küresel sağlık problemlerinin uzaktan eğitimi tercih olmaktan öte adeta bir zorunluluk haline getirdiği açıktır. Bu zorunluluğun gerek uygulama gerekse altyapı ve donanım açısından birçok sorunu bünyesinde barındırdığı da bilinmektedir. Bu çerçevede çalışmamızın amacı, COVID-19 salgını sebebiyle 2020-2021 eğitim ve öğretim yılında Türkiye’de ve tüm dünyada sık kullanılan uzaktan eğitim modelinin öğrenci görüşlerine göre incelenmesidir. Çalışmanın verileri, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi lisans eğitiminde uzaktan eğitimle ders gören öğrencilerden bahar dönemi sürecinde toplanmıştır. Araştırmada kullanılan sorular alanında uzman kişiler tarafından hazırlanmış ve uygulanmıştır. Alınan sonuçlara göre, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi’nin kısa sürede uygulamaya başlattığı uzaktan eğitim sistemini ilahiyat fakültesi öğrencilerinin büyük çoğunluğunun (yaklaşık %79,7’sinin) verimli bulmadığı sonucuna varılmıştır. Araştırma, karma araştırma modeli ile yapılmıştır. Yani veri toplama konusunda öğrencilerle mülakatlar yapılmış ve öğrencilere anket uygulanmıştır. Toplanan tüm veriler aynı anda toplandığından dolayı araştırmanın deseni, karma yöntem araştırma desenleri içerisinde bulunan “birleştirme deseni” olarak kabul edilir. Edinilen bu tecrübeler sonucunda katılımcıların görüşleriyle ilgili alınan verilerin ileriki süreçlerde yürütülecek olan uzaktan eğitim uygulamalarına ışık tutması ve yön vermesi amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim, Uzaktan Eğitim, Din Eğitimi, İlahiyat

¹ Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı, Orcid: 0000-0001-9756-1901

Introduction

The COVID-19 epidemic is a negative process that started to emerge in 2020 and has an impact all over the world. Education and training activities such as economy, health, tourism, sports, trade and entertainment fields were also adversely affected by this process. Because of this epidemic, almost all education and training institutions had to suspend the face-to-face education model and switch to the distance education model. In the face of this negative situation, educational institutions tried to keep up with the education and training activities made thanks to information technologies and attempted to revise and develop these programs. Educators, parents and students, who are involved in the educational activities themselves, were also directly affected by this negative situation. At the same time, all countries have made a great effort to ensure that educational activities are not disrupted.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a global epidemic in 2020. After it was declared as a global epidemic by WHO, it is seen that closure practices of educational institutions were started in 107 different countries of the world (UNESCO, 2020; WHO, 2020). The suspension of face-to-face education in universities because of the COVID-19 epidemic has brought along many educational problems. At the same time, this situation caused anxiety in the society and had negative consequences in many issues such as an interrupted and irregular education, especially for university students (Daniel, 2020: 3). It is thought that this epidemic may cause significant damage to all components of education and that these problems will continue afterwards (Tanhan, 2020: 3). It is an undeniable fact that it is difficult to predict the negative effects of this future epidemic on the education system.

Because of the Coronavirus Pandemic, which caused various negativities globally, it was stated that, starting on April 17, 2020, schools in 191 countries around the world ended face-to-face education and 1,724,657,870 students were adversely affected by this situation (UNESCO, 2020). This process has similarly affected Higher Education in Turkey as in other countries.

It has been decided to continue the educational activities of all public and state universities operating in Turkey by switching from face-to-face courses to online courses as of March 23, 2020. Thus, it is aimed to maintain social distance in the coronavirus epidemic, to encourage especially the young population, who are seen as the carrier of the virus, to stay at home and to prevent contagion in this way. In this context, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University has been one of the universities that successfully transitioned to the distance education model and quickly kept up. The most important problem faced by many universities with this transition or transformation decision is the lack of preliminary preparation for the distance education system, which is aimed to be done via the internet (Telli & Altun, 2020).

With this study, it is investigated how the students who receive theology undergraduate education evaluate the distance education system, which was decided quickly because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and which was transferred to prevent the negative effects that would affect the learning status of the students. Based on this purpose, some suggestions were made to various public and private stakeholders, especially state and public universities, according to the results of the study (Buluk and Eşitti, 2020).

Distant Education during COVID-19

The coronavirus is a type of virus that is estimated to have first appeared in a livestock market in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. This disease has become an epidemic in a very short time. While the condition of 7 of the patients in whom the virus was seen at the beginning was serious, one patient died. In about 9 days, a professional team of scientists, epidemiologists and doctors announced that a different virus had emerged and was defined as

the new type of Coronavirus (COVID-19). Different interpretations have been made in various sources regarding the number of cases when this new disease was first seen. According to one of them, the number of cases is 42, and according to the other, the number of cases is 41. It was reported that all of these patients, except those traveling from Wuhan city to Thailand, were Chinese citizens, and it was stated that the rapid spread of the epidemic could be due to these people and it was stated that caution should be exercised in this regard. (Üstün and Özçiftçi, 2020: 143).

It is known that the coronavirus has condemned many business areas and employees around the world to struggle with the economic problems caused by the epidemic. It is seen that many people who lost their jobs due to the economic crisis, were given unpaid leave or had to close their businesses in this process, struggled with financial difficulties in addition to their health concerns. In this process and afterwards, it is predicted that economic problems will continue in almost all sectors around the world. While it is reported that many businesses operating in manufacturing, automotive, real estate, accommodation and catering services will suffer the most from the coronavirus crisis, it is reported that education is among the areas that are thought to be less damaged than other sectors.

On the other hand, it is known that positive developments in information and communication technologies affected all sectors, including education, in the periods before the coronavirus process. With the COVID-19 process, it is thought that the importance of this effect is more clearly understood in the entire education community. The transfer of the Education Informatics Network, which was previously used by the Ministry of National Education, to television screens via TRT, along with the break in face-to-face education, accelerated the digitalization process of education-training in that some private schools and universities started to give lessons in digital environment by activating their online course infrastructures. Along with all these, there are expert opinions that the accelerating "digitalization in education" movement should be supported after the pandemic process (Altunel, 2020).

The digitalization movement in education brings many opportunities. It is certain that these opportunities can make significant contributions to the Higher Education system, but only depend on the educators' full command of digital education technologies. At this point, it is noteworthy that positive developments have been observed in the technology-oriented systems of schools and in the knowledge and skills of educators in the field of technology, with many trainings and investments made recently. It is predicted that these positive developments will increase the quality of higher education in the future, together with the process we are in due to the pandemic, by spreading to all of the education-training processes and supporting the system with digital tools.

Until now, individual education needs have mostly been met with face-to-face education, and education needs for a certain community have been met mostly with distance education applications. In this context, two types of education opportunities are offered to students in higher education, namely distance education and face-to-face education. With the development of technology, access to distance education has increased, and many opportunities have been put forward to combine mass and individual education methods in a single structure (Karataş, 2003). During the COVID-19 process, applications to take advantage of these opportunities have become widespread.

It is known that the most important way to distance education and the digital infrastructure required for this is the "system approach" in the field of education. It is noteworthy that the experts emphasized that the education of the next period is digital education, and the next period of digital education is the system approach. (Bright, 2017). In

addition, the further development of software systems, the provision of adequate and necessary hardware facilities, the harmonization of necessary policies, the prevalence of technology and digitalization, and most importantly, the seriousness of monitoring reports of these processes are among the priority issues to be realized.

Based on all these, it can be said that the concept of distance education has gained much more importance in the education community with the COVID-19 virus, which has had an impact worldwide and therefore in our country. Various sectors have been adversely affected by this process, and a recession has been encountered in every field we can think of, and economic and social life has been interrupted. In this difficult process, where almost all fields have become stagnant and people have difficulty in doing their daily work, educators and administrators who have a say in the management of education in our country strengthen the infrastructure of the distance education system, ensure that this process continues in a healthy way through the internet and various information technologies, and that students continue their education lives in a positive way. They tried to ensure that they could survive and overcome this period with the least damage.

Research Problems

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the performance of students who continue their education with online education because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In this context, the problem statement of the research is: “What are the perceptions of undergraduate students of the Faculty of Theology towards online courses offered via distance education platforms?”

The sub-problems of the study are as follows:

1. What are the advantages, disadvantages of conducting the courses in the Faculty of Theology in the form of distance education?
2. What is the level of technical infrastructure required for the courses to be conducted properly?
3. How do students see the course environment in the distance education process compared to the traditional classroom environment?
4. What kind of learning opportunity does distance education offer for the students of the Faculty of Theology?
5. How do students evaluate the online exams during the distance education process?

Hypotheses of the Study

This study is very important to determine the quality, advantageous/disadvantageous parts and limitations of distance education in theology faculties in a healthier way. With the feedback from the students, the negative situations encountered will be determined and the way for a better education will be opened.

In accordance with these purposes, the following hypotheses have been developed within the scope of the study:

H1: Students' need for face-to-face education affects their satisfaction with distance education courses positively or negatively.

H2: Some courses related to the field significantly affect the distance education course satisfaction of undergraduate theology students.

H3: Students' learning speed and perceptions affect distance education course satisfaction.

Research Method

This research, which tries to determine the attitudes of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Faculty of Theology undergraduate students towards distance education, was conducted with a mixed research model. That is, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied in this study. Interviews were conducted as a data collection tool and questionnaire technique was used (Kaptan, 1998:138, 143). The mixed method, which creates a bridge between quantitative and qualitative research methods, is defined as the researcher combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a study itself or in different studies that follow each other (Creswell, 2019). In this study, data were collected by combining qualitative and quantitative methods to determine the experiences and perceptions of students studying at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Faculty of Theology regarding distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic process. Since all the collected data are collected at the same time, the design of the research is considered as the "combination design" found in mixed method research designs. Since all the collected data were collected at the same time, the design of the research is an explanatory sequential mixed design. (Creswell, 2019).

The scale in the questionnaire prepared to measure the distance education performance of students during the COVID-19 period was based on the study conducted by. Since there are some differences between the distance education system used at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University and the scale content used in the studies of Yıldırım, Yıldırım, Çelik, and Karaman (2014) during the COVID-19 process, various questions were removed or adapted according to the distance education course formats of the Faculty of Theology. The scales used in the questionnaire were applied in a 5-point Likert type. The answers given to the statements were evaluated as: 1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree 3- Undecided, 4-Agree and 5- Strongly agree. In the questionnaire form, the purpose of the research was first explained to the students and then they were asked to fill in the questionnaire. This scale consists of ten items. One dimension (three items) in the original scale and five other items were excluded in our study because they were found to be repetitive. Information about the reliability coefficient of the study is also given in the "Validity-Reliability" section.

At the stage of determining the qualitative questions, similar studies on the subject were collected and the questions included in these studies were examined, the questions related to the subject to be evaluated were selected, and after the interviews with the students of the Faculty of Theology with the added questions, the questionnaire was adapted to the purpose of this study. Afterwards, the survey questions are in accordance with the rules in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" in accordance with the decision of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Graduate Education Institute, dated 19/08/2021 and numbered 14/16, and the letter numbered E-84026528-050.01.04-2100144045. implemented accordingly. Meticulous work has been done in interpreting the feedback from the questionnaire. In order to confirm the validity of the questions, opinions and recommendations were received from the lecturers who are experts in the field, and in order to determine the functionality of the questions, these questions were asked to a group of students and it was examined whether the questions were understandable and whether the questions and answers matched.

Study Group-Universe and Sample

Study Group

The research was carried out with 424 students studying at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Faculty of Theology in the spring semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. At the same time, open-ended questions were asked to 50 randomly selected students among these students. Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with these students and no focus group interviews were conducted. These interviews were conducted unstructured to obtain richer data and each interview lasted an average of thirty minutes.

Data collection process

At this stage, importance was given to ensuring that the questions were clear and undirected. The draft interview form prepared was tried with a pilot application by taking the opinions of experts in the field and it was decided to use it without making any changes in the form, since the test results were deemed sufficient. Participating students were given detailed information about the study beforehand, and it was explained that the data obtained during the interview would be kept confidential and not used for any other purpose, in accordance with ethical rules.

Analysis of Data

Qualitative data has a strong potential to illuminate complex situations and provides a rich content to the researcher. The potential of qualitative data and the emergence of its content are closely related to its correct analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2016). In the data analysis of this research, descriptive analysis and content analysis were used together. In descriptive analysis, the data are summarized and interpreted within the framework of determined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In content analysis, the facts hidden in the data are revealed in a consistent and meaningful way (Neuman, 2014). In this study, data analysis was started with descriptive analysis, and it was completed with content analysis since it was desired to reach more in-depth and holistic information. The path followed in collecting and analyzing research data is as follows:

A data form suitable for research purposes was prepared in order to be used in the analysis of the data collected through the forms and to create the necessary framework for descriptive analysis. This form has been prepared according to the thematic framework of data on the transition process of distance education, distance education practices, efficiency of distance education, teacher-student communication and university-teacher-student interaction. Quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS 20 program. Component Matrix was used as analysis technique.

Validity-and Reliability

The data obtained at the end of the research were collected by the researcher in a sincere trust environment. In the preliminary study with 50 students, the questionnaire was subjected to Cronbach-Alpha (.734) analysis and its internal consistency was tested. The Cronbach-Alpha (.864) coefficient of the original scale is also as stated. Based on these data, the questionnaire was then applied to the sample group. The data were handled with a critical approach throughout the study. Thus, a deep-focused knowledge acquisition process was provided. All raw data and analysis stages used in the research were systematically organized and preserved.

Results

In this section, the findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the research data are given. Findings related to the subjects such as; “Students Perspective on Distance Education, Distance Education Process, Communication in Distance Education and Efficiency of Distance Education” were emphasized. Also; The purpose of phenomenological research is to try to understand what the social process/phenomenon studied is, how it is, what it means, and what common meanings it is represented by the experiencers. In our study, what the students' answers to qualitative questions mean in common are given below the quantitative findings they are related to.

Table 1: Gender information of the students participating in the research

Gender	N	%
Woman	275	64,9
Man	149	35,1

A total of 424 students, including 275 female students and 149 male students, participated in the study.

Table 2: Age information of the students participating in the research

Age	N	%
18-25 years old	398	93,9
26-34 years old	12	2,8
35 years and older	14	3,3

398 students aged 18-25, 12 students aged 26-34, and 14 students aged 35 and above participated in the study.

At the same time, the questions asked by 50 randomly selected students among these students were made open-ended, document analysis was made and the reasons for these were examined in line with the answers they gave.

Below are the open-ended questions:

- 1- What do you think about the suitability of distance education for your lifestyle?
- 2- What are your views on the exams held during the distance education process?
- 3- What do you think about the opportunities provided by distance education?
- 4- To what extent is the information learned in the distance education model usable?
- 5- What are your views on the efficiency of distance education and face-to face education?
- 6- What is the level of your need for school and class in terms of participation in classes?

Table 3: Suitability of Distance Education to Students' Lifestyles

“Distance education suits my lifestyle.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	179	42,2
Disagree	77	18,2
Neither agree nor disagree	77	18,2
Agree	36	8,5
Strongly Agree	55	13,0

While 21.5% of the students participating in the research stated that distance education was suitable for their lifestyle, 60.4% stated that it was not. 18.2% of the students stated that they were undecided on this issue. According to these results, the life styles of only 21.5 of the students studying at ÇOMÜ Faculty of Theology in the spring term of 2020-2021 are compatible with the distance education model.

To this open-ended question asked about the suitability of distance education for students' lifestyles, students see distance education as suitable for their lifestyles because of the reasons such as the elimination of the distance problem, being economical, saving time, and not having costs such as accommodation and transportation, while distance education can be efficient up to a point. In this open-ended question asked about the suitability of distance education for students' lifestyles, not every field course is suitable for this model, it does not allow for socialization, students prefer distance education to their lifestyles for reasons such as the elimination of the distance problem, being economical, saving time, and not having costs such as accommodation and transportation. While we see it as appropriate, distance education can be productive up to a point, not every field course is suitable for this model, it does not allow socialization, students have problems in asking questions and the school gives the student discipline. They stated that they did not find it suitable for their lifestyle.

Table 4: Student Opinions on Exams During the Distance Education Process

“I think that the exams held during the distance education process can measure the level of students appropriately.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	180	42,5
Disagree	88	20,8
Neither agree nor disagree	67	15,8
Agree	38	9,0
Strongly Agree	51	12,0

While 21% of the students who participated in the research stated that the online exams during the distance education process were appropriate in measuring the knowledge, 63.3% stated that the exams were not appropriate. 15.8% of the students stated that they were

undecided on this issue. Looking at the table, this situation can be interpreted as a healthy measurement-evaluation cannot be made in the distance education process.

Students who argue that the exams given in this process are decisive stated that the exams are multiple choice but the choices are already mixed, that for some courses, the teachers take the exam orally and that it is not possible to cheat because some teachers ask questions based on interpretation rather than knowledge, while students who argue that the exams are not determinative are the truth of the exams. They claimed that it was not reflective, that there was no sincere assessment environment, and that many students were organized and cheated despite all precautions.

Table 5: Opinions of the Students Participating in the Research on the Opportunities Provided by Distance Education

“Distance education provides a good learning opportunity for students.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	232	54,7
Disagree	84	19,8
Neither agree nor disagree	49	11,6
Agree	21	5,0
Strongly Agree	36	8,5
Unanswered	2	0,5

Only 13.5% of the students participating in the research stated that distance education offers a good learning opportunity for them, while 74.5% stated that it does not offer a good learning opportunity. 11.6% of the students were undecided on this issue. According to these data, the majority of students expressing that distance education is not an opportunity for them can be interpreted as they like and adopt formal education.

Students who see the distance education process as a good learning opportunity for themselves, express their views; They rely on the fact that the distance education model has a much more accessible aspect, especially in Arabic education, that the lessons are made more enjoyable with live lessons, and that the lessons are processed more efficiently in terms of planning, presentation and material usage habits. Students who think the opposite say that they have difficulty in understanding some subjects because the lessons that require reading-interpretation and practice cannot be done properly, that some teachers try to run the lesson with videos uploaded years ago, that they have difficulty in asking questions in the lesson, that the lesson hours are very short and the lessons are not of normal intensity. they do not see the distance education model as an opportunity for themselves, claiming that they cannot concentrate fully.

Table 6: Students' Views on Permanence in Learning in the Distance Education Model

“Distance education ensures that learning is permanent.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	254	59,9
Disagree	78	18,4
Neither agree nor disagree	47	11,1
Agree	18	4,2
Strongly Agree	26	6,1
Unanswered	1	0,2

Only 10.3% of the students participating in the research stated that what they learned in the distance education process was permanent, while 78.3% stated that what they learned in this process was not permanent. 11.1% of the students were undecided on this issue. These data can be interpreted as the majority of students have problems with permanent learning in the distance education process.

Students who argue that learning is permanent in the distance education period emphasized that since the lessons are recorded, there is a chance to watch it again when there is a subject that they cannot understand, at the same time, students can ask questions in written form and this can be more permanent with visual learning, the assignments given can be researched more healthily and it is possible to follow up the homework. Students, who argue that this process is not permanent in learning, stated that they already have problems in regular attendance, they do not see education as just information transfer, and they are deprived of this opportunity due to the closed or limited working of the university's library during the distance education process, and because they cannot access the resources they want, this prevents permanent learning for them.

Table 7: Opinions of the Students Participating in the Research on the Efficiency of Distance Education and Traditional Education

“Distance education is more efficient than traditional education.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	279	65,8
Disagree	59	13,9
Neither agree nor disagree	39	9,2
Agree	17	4,0
Strongly Agree	26	6,1
Unanswered	4	0,9

According to Table 7, the rate of students who think that distance education is more efficient than traditional education is only 10.1%, while the rate of students who think that distance education is not more efficient than traditional education is 79.7%. The rate of students who are undecided on this issue is 9.2%. According to the table, the majority of students cannot get the desired efficiency from distance education.

The students participating in the research are very easy to use and share the course material, it is easier to keep in mind the information, figures, tables and examples presented visually with screen sharing, it is an advantage for us to upload the information and notes that are visually explained to the system after the course and they want it. While they find distance education more efficient due to the reasons such as being able to attend classes easily from anywhere and anytime, some students frequently experience interruptions in class due to technical problems and instrumental disruptions due to the conditions of their region, face-to-face communication with teachers is a significant disadvantage, and the state of distance education in terms of good manners and experience transfer. Distance education does not find it efficient due to reasons such as the lack of transfer of information and, most importantly, the weak student-teacher interaction.

Table 8: Students' Opinions on the Need for Space in Attending Classes

“I need the flexibility to attend class whenever and wherever I want.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	105	24,8
Disagree	60	14,2
Neither agree nor disagree	88	20,8
Agree	52	12,3
Strongly Agree	116	27,4
Unanswered	3	0,7

According to the table, 39.7% of the students participating in the research need to attend the lesson from wherever they want, while 39% do not need such flexibility. 20.8 % of the students were undecided on this issue. When these data are interpreted together with table 7, it is concluded that students need formal education for an efficient education process, but they also want to have the flexibility to take classes from wherever they want.

Students who need the flexibility to enter the lessons from anywhere in the distance education process can make their work easier because they are not tied to a certain place, that when the number of students in distance education is low and the cameras are on, better communication can be achieved than in a classroom environment, and even faster and more convenient in this way. They are based on the fact that a functional training can be done. Students who do not feel such a need say that no other place can be as effective as face-to-face education in the faculty, that the methods of question-answer and discussion should be applied in order to make the lessons more productive, and this can only be possible with face-to-face education, and the socialization environment in the classroom is extremely important. they specify.

Table 9: Students' Opinions on the Necessity of Face-to-face Education

“Face-to-face interaction is necessary for my education to take place in the best possible way.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	27	6,4
Disagree	14	3,3
Neither agree nor disagree	36	8,5
Agree	51	12,0
Strongly Agree	293	69,1
Unanswered	3	0,7

According to Table 9, 69.1% of the students who participated in the research said that they always agree about the necessity of face-to-face education, while 12% said that they agree. While 6.4% of the students said 'I never agree' to face-to-face interaction in education, 3.3% said 'I do not agree'. The rate of those who are undecided on this issue is 8.5%. When these data are evaluated together with tables 5 and 6, it can be concluded that distance education does not provide a good learning opportunity for most of the students, reduces the permanence in learning and face-to-face education is a must for a healthy education.

Table 10: Students' Views on the Efficiency of Distance Education and Traditional Education

“A more effective learning is provided with traditional education compared to distance education.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	31	7,3
Disagree	30	7,1
Neither agree nor disagree	37	8,7
Agree	52	12,3
Strongly Agree	274	64,6

While 64.4% of the students who participated in the research said they always agree that a more effective learning can be achieved with traditional education, 12.3% said they agree. While 7.3% of the students said 'never agree', 7.1% said 'disagree' and 8.7% said they were undecided. When these results are interpreted together with Tables 7 and 9, the opinion of most of the students is that traditional education is more efficient than distance education.

Table 11: Students' Views on the Need for Face-to-face Communication in Learning

“I need face-to-face communication to learn.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	28	6,6
Disagree	26	6,1
Neither agree nor disagree	47	11,1
Agree	57	13,4
Strongly Agree	264	62,3
Unanswered	2	,5

While 62.3% of the students participating in the research said that they always agree on the point of needing face-to-face communication in learning, 13.4% said "agree". 6.6% of the students said 'never disagree' on this subject, 6.1% said 'agree' and 11.1% said 'undecided'. According to these results, the majority of students need face-to-face communication for learning. In addition, when this table is evaluated together with tables 9 and 10, it can be concluded that face-to-face lessons for students are much more effective than distance education lessons.

Table 12: Students' Views on Self-Paced Learning in Distance Education

“Distance learning allows students to learn at their own pace.”	N	%
Strongly disagree	178	42,0
Disagree	89	21,0
Neither agree nor disagree	67	15,8
Agree	37	8,7
Strongly Agree	51	12,0
Unanswered	2	0,5

While 12% of the students who participated in the research said they always agree about learning at their own

pace with distance education, 8,7 said "I agree". While 42% of the students stated that they never agreed with the subject of learning at their own pace with distance education, 21% stated that they did not. The rate of students who are undecided on this issue is 15.8%. When these results are interpreted, it can be concluded that approximately 2/3 of the students participating in the research do not learn at their own pace with the distance education method.

Conclusion and Discussion:

Within the scope of this study, it has been observed that the majority of the undergraduate students of the Faculty of Theology regularly follow the distance education course system implemented by Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in a short time. It can be

thought that this situation is caused by the fact that communication in the internet environment, especially the use of technological devices, has an important place in the lives of individuals. In line with the results of this research, according to a study conducted with the active participation of students in Turkey in general, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University managed the distance education process quite well during the pandemic period compared to other foundation and state universities in Turkey (ÇOMÜ, 2020).

According to the results of this study, 60.4% of the students stated that distance education is not suitable for their lifestyle. The students stated that they do not find distance education appropriate for their lifestyles because distance education can only be productive up to a point, not every field course is suitable for this model, it does not allow socialization, the students have problems in asking questions and the school brings discipline to the students. In addition, very few (13.5%) of the students who participated in the research stated that distance education provides a good learning opportunity for them. The majority of the students (74.5%) stated that this process did not provide a good learning opportunity for them. According to these results, although a small part of the students think that the lessons are made more enjoyable with live lessons and that the lessons are more efficient in terms of planning, presentation and material usage habits, they have difficulty in understanding some subjects because the lessons that require reading-interpretation and practice cannot be done properly, and that some teachers have difficulty in understanding the subjects. They do not see the distance education model as an opportunity for themselves, claiming that they tried to run the course with the videos uploaded years ago, that they had difficulty in asking questions in the course, that they could not fully concentrate on the course because the course hours were very short and the courses were not of normal intensity.

When we look at the students' views on the permanence of the information they learn in the distance education model, only 10.3% of the students stated that what they learned in the distance education process is permanent. 78.3% of the students stated that what they learned in this process was not permanent. Although the students who argue that learning is permanent in the distance education period emphasized that there is a chance to watch it again when there is a subject they cannot understand because the lessons are recorded, at the same time, the students can ask questions in written form and this can be more permanent with visual learning and it is possible to follow up the homework, but the majority of the students stated that they do not see education as just information transfer, but they are deprived of this opportunity due to the closed or limited working of the university's library during the distance education process, and because they cannot reach the resources they want, this prevents permanent learning for them.

In addition, the rate of students who think that distance education is more efficient than traditional education is only 10.1%. The rate of students who think that distance education is not more efficient than traditional education is 79.7%. According to these results, the vast majority of students cannot get the efficiency they want from distance education. Due to the conditions of the region, students frequently experience breaks in the lesson due to technical problems and instrumental disruptions, face-to-face communication with the instructors creates a significant disadvantage, the state transfer part of distance education is missing in terms of transferring good manners and experience, and most importantly, the student-teacher interaction remains weak. For these reasons, distance education does not find it efficient.

Interestingly, feedbacks were obtained about the students' need for space while attending classes. While 39.7% of the students participating in the research need to attend the lesson from wherever they want, 39% do not need such flexibility. When these data are

interpreted, it is concluded that students need formal education for an efficient education process, but they also want to have the flexibility to take classes from wherever they want.

Students who need the flexibility to enter the lessons from anywhere in the distance education process can make their work easier because they are not tied to a certain place, that when the number of students in distance education is low and the cameras are on, better communication can be achieved than in a classroom environment, and even faster and more convenient in this way. They are based on the fact that a functional training can be done. Students who do not feel such a need say that no other place can be as effective as face-to-face education in the faculty, that the methods of question-answer and discussion should be applied in order to make the lessons more productive, and this can only be possible with face-to-face education, and the socialization environment in the classroom is extremely important. they specify.

Considering all these results, the majority of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Faculty of Theology students cannot get the desired efficiency from distance education. One of the factors causing this is thought to be the sudden transition to the distance education system.

If a decision is made to continue the distance education system, healthy measures should be taken as soon as possible so that students will not approach this new system negatively and will adapt to it. Thus, within the scope of this study, it is thought that the problems that undergraduate theology students experience directly or indirectly in this process will disappear in time. In a similar epidemic or other situations that require continuing education remotely, the distance education system should be implemented in order for universities to establish this infrastructure in a healthy way in order to prevent further disruption of education, to process lessons efficiently and effectively, and to continue education activities in a synchronized manner. It is advisable to have them ready. In this context, in order to maintain a healthier education, it can be suggested that YÖK establish the infrastructure of an internet-based distance education system belonging to its own institution. In addition to all these, some suggestions can be made for students in similar situations.

It is important for the students to have the necessary equipment and the distance education system in order to carry out this process and its continuation. In this respect, there may be support for students by the state. An example of these supports is the identification of students who do not have a tablet or computer, which are the necessary infrastructure tools for the realization of distance education in the most healthy way, and the elimination of this deficiency. The goal here is to ensure that all students actively participate in distance education courses and to make this sustainable. Internet operators and local governments are responsible for the creation of the infrastructure. Because the internet and technology give operators the opportunity to eliminate many negativities in this regard. In this context, operators should especially support higher education for the public good. In this respect, it is certain that a great responsibility falls on the provision of infrastructure systems or other necessary elements for an uninterrupted internet to the stakeholders.

At this point, it can be recommended to provide the necessary trainings in order to support the technology-oriented skills of the faculty members and to create content compatible with the digital education system. In addition, when it is considered that the training of faculty members in creating digital content is limited, faculty members also need support. Along with the systemic support, it is thought that it will be beneficial for the faculty members to direct the training they will receive regarding their personal professional development to these areas. The fact that faculty members examine the content transferred to students through the existing internet-based distance education system and provide feedback

to the system where necessary will contribute positively to the development of the quality of the distance education system.

When we look at the different studies on this subject, we see that similar results have been reached. For example, according to the studies of (Buluk & Eşitti, 2020), it has been determined that there are various obstacles that affect the follow-up of distance education courses for tourism undergraduate students during the COVID-19 process, and these obstacles negatively affect students. In this study, tourism undergraduate students show that the lack of communication activities with the instructors is the most important obstacle, while the computer and other hardware deficiencies used in the distance education course system, internet interruptions due to busyness and various family problems are stated as important obstacles affecting the follow-up of distance education courses. they have done. According to another study on the subject (Genç, M. F. & Gümrukçüoğlu, S. 2020), the satisfaction rate of students studying in Faculties of Theology from the distance education process, which started with the coronavirus process, was only 23.1%. According to this study, the rate of students benefiting from distance education materials is 28.3%. Students criticized distance education because they are far from face-to-face interaction, such as time saving, easy access to lessons and listening to the repetition of the lesson. In addition, the unpreparedness of students and instructors for the process has caused them to encounter various problems in obtaining online materials.

An important study that obtained a similar result to the results of our study is the master's thesis prepared by Tuncer (2021). In the thesis, it was found that students are not satisfied with taking practical courses by distance education and face many different difficulties in this process. In this study, it is stated that students studying in different departments face different difficulties in the distance education process. In this study, four basic items similar to our study are presented:

1- The opinions of students who take practical courses with distance education on distance education in general terms are that distance education is insufficient to process practical courses.

2- According to the departments where they study, students who take practical courses with distance education have problems because they cannot perform the application, although the views on distance education are similar at first, the course tools and materials are different.

3- Students who take practical courses with distance education have low attitudes towards distance education.

4- The attitudes of the students who took practical courses with distance education towards distance education did not differ significantly according to the departments where they studied.

The results of a study prepared by Korkmaz (2022) also support our study. According to the results of this research, although students have some positive thoughts about distance education, they want to follow the lessons face to face by coming to school. Students think that distance education has drawbacks such as staying away from the social environment, encountering technical problems, making it difficult to communicate with the educator.

A similar result to these results is also reported in the study of Akca (2006). In this study, the problems encountered in the distance education process were determined as six headings: technical obstacles, psychological obstacles, personal obstacles, distance obstacle, interruption obstacle, time pressure obstacle.

Lastly, (Erpay, 2021) who conducted research on this subject emphasizes that theology students cannot adapt to the distance education process very well in the findings of the study. According to the findings obtained as a result of the research, it was stated by the students that the course contents offered to the students during the distance education process were not sufficient, interesting and understandable. In addition, it was stated that the distance education model is not suitable for faculties of theology, and it is necessary to switch to face-to-face education if possible.

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