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Primary School Teachers' Views on Learning Deficiencies in Mathematics Lessons in the Process of Distance Education

Veli TOPTAŞ¹, Feyyaz ÖZTOP²

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the opinions of primary school teachers' on the topic of the reasons for students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons during distance education in COVID-19 Pandemic process and suggestions for eliminating these deficiencies. For this purpose, the research was carried out on the basis of phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs. The research was conducted with the participation of 254 primary school teachers working in primary schools in Turkey in the 2020-2021 academic years. Data of the study was collected through a form consisted standardized open-ended questions. The data were analyzed by content analysis. The results of the study revealed that primary school teachers were found to link students ' learning deficiencies to the reasons associated with the structure of distance education, students, technical problems, family, planning, teachers and support services in the distance learning process carried out in conjunction with the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to address these learning deficiencies, it was found that they made various recommendations like planning, learning-teaching process, technical improvements, parents, student development, support services and improving the quality of teachers. In addition, it was determined that primary school teachers stated that learning deficiencies in the mathematics lessons during the distance learning process were caused by the lack of interaction and communication during COVID-19 pandemic and recommended face-to-face education as a solution for the deficiencies.

Key Words

COVID-19 Primary school teacher Distance education Mathematics lesson Learning deficiency

About Article

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¹ Prof. Dr., Kırıkkale University, Faculty of Education, Turkey, <u>vtoptas@gmail.com</u> https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8852-1852

² Gazi University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Turkey, <u>feyyazoztop@gmail.com</u>, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3462-145X

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, known to emerge in Wuhan, China, has spread rapidly worldwide. As of March 11, 2020, COVID-19 has been described as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world has adversely affected many areas, including education (Paudel, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many students and schools (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020). Moreover, in Turkey, education in schools has also been suspended as of March 16, 2020 (MEB, 2020a). Countries have sought urgent solutions to sustain educational activities while dealing with the pandemic and its effects in various areas. In Turkey, as in most countries, the decision to transition to distance education has also been taken due to the worsening of the course of the pandemic.

In distance education, while the teacher and the student are physically in separate places, communication between them occurs through various technologies (Koi-Akrofi, Owusu-Oware, & Tanye, 2020; Nazarova, Jalilova, Mukhamedova, & Rasulova 2021; Rumble, 1987). While letters were used in the first applications of distance education in the past (Kaya, 2002), it is seen that digital technologies are now widely used in distance education in the light of the latest developments. Also, in Turkey, learning-teaching processes began to be carried out employing digital tools with the transition to distance education during the COVID-19 outbreak period. Although distance education is seen as an approach for solving education problems (Beldarrain, 2006; Kaya, 2002), it can be said that new ones have been added to the known problems of distance education, and the difficulties encountered in this process have increased with the emergence of distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic period. In their research, Sarı and Nayır (2020) determined that problems occur under the categories of technology, health and others originating from partners related to the learning-teaching process in the field of education during the COVID-19 pandemic process by examining the reports of Economic Development and Cooperation Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and World Bank Institutions. In some other studies (Düzgün & Sulak, 2020; Er Türküresin, 2020; Karaca, Karaca, Karamustafaoğlu, & Özcan, 2021), it was determined that distance education practices during the COVID-19 outbreak period were not found to be very effective. The problems encountered and the process not functioning effectively enough lead to the fact that students cannot reach the gains at the lessons' targeted level, which causes learning deficiencies in the students.

Lack of learning in a particular subject will bring failure in that subject as well as causing negativities. While students who do not have a learning deficiency learn the following subjects more easily, students having learning deficiency need more time and effort while learning the subject (Köse, 2007). In order to bring education to a better level, it is necessary to replace the missing structures in children (Örs, 2019). In this context, it can be said that the learning gap of students should be taken into account-one of the lessons in which students' learning deficit is considered necessary in mathematics. Mathematics is a science in which individuals are intertwined in their entire academic life. Today, almost all professions require more or less mathematics and mathematical thinking (Olkun & Toluk Uçar, 2014). În national and international exams (MEB, 2019; MEB, 2020b; MEB, 2020c), it is seen that the average of mathematics points is low. Thus, it is essential to remove the obstacles to effective mathematics teaching and to eliminate learning deficiencies during the COVID-19 pandemic, where educational activities are carried out remotely, in order to keep the performance high in a mathematics course, which has a vital role in the academic and professional lives of individuals. Especially, acquiring targeted learning outcomes in primary school is considered essential both for this level and for students' future life because of the level at which basic mathematical knowledge and skills are acquired and attitudes are formed. In this direction, researches to eliminate the learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process, which started to be carried out compulsorily at the primary school level with the COVID-19 pandemic, gain importance.

With the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak, it is seen that there are researches on digital education activities with regards to primary school level (Altıntaş Yüksel, 2021; Ayaz, 2021; Baran & Sadık, 2021a; Baran & Sadık, 2021b; Batmaz, Cevahir Batmaz, & Kılıç, 2021; Bulut & Susar Kırmızı, 2021; Brako & Essel, 2020; Demir & Özdaş, 2020; Diana, Suhendra, Yohannes, & Sukma, 2021; Erbaş, 2021; Erol & Erol, 2020; Fidan, 2020; Gezen & Efendioğlu, 2021; Gupta & Gupta, 2020; İnci Kuzu, 2020; Jamilah, Sukitman, & Fauzi, 2021; Günbaş & Gözükük, 2020; Karabudak, 2020; Kargın

& Karataş, 2021; Kesik & Baş, 2021; Kızıltaş & Çetinkaya Özdemir, 2021; Koç, 2021; Konca & Çakır, 2021; Korucuk, 2020; Okatan & Tagay, 2021; Kurt, Kandemir, & Çelik, 2021; Özcan & Saydam, 2021; Özden & İlgar, 2021; Pozas, Letzel, & Schneider, 2021; Putri et al., 2020; Rahmaini, 2021; Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Sakallı, Altınay, Altınay, & Dağlı, 2021; Sarışık, Uslu, Sarışık, & Uslu, 2021; Saygı, 2021; Sirem & Baş, 2020; Uğur Göçmez & Ünal, 2021; Uluçınar Sağır & Dal, 2021; Usta & Dönmez, 2021; Uysal & Kısa, 2021; Yadigar & Yadigar, 2021; Yurtbakan & Akyıldız, 2020) and mathematics lessons (Almarashdi & Jarrah, 2021; Cassibba et al., 2021; Das, 2021; Erduran & İnce Muslu, 2020; Irfan, Kusumaningrum, Yulia, & Widodo, 2020; Kamsurya, 2020; Kilit & Güner, 2021; Kuzu, 2020; Mailizar, Almanthari, Maulina, & Bruce, 2020; Marbán, Radwan, Radwan, & Radwan, 2021; Marpa, 2021; Maulina & Bruce, 2020; Mulenga & Marbán, 2020; Panaoura, 2020; Tezer & Cumhur, 2020; Tremblay & Delobbe, 2021; Wijaya, 2021; Xie, Xiao, Hou, Liu, & Liu, 2021). However, a study that sheds light on learning deficiencies of primary school students in mathematics lessons in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 outbreak in Turkey was not observed. By determining the reasons for the primary school mathematics lesson learning deficiencies and suggestions on this subject, it can be ensured that both the existing learning deficiencies of the students are eliminated, and the learning deficiencies that will arise in case of restarting distance education in emergencies that will be encountered in the future can be prevented. Teachers' opinions, who play a crucial role in the learning-teaching process and are the key to success, which they will share by their experiences, are considered necessary. These opinions can provide important essential on the steps to be taken to identify and eliminate the causes of lesson learning deficiencies in the distance education process due to COVID-19 outbreak. In this context, the study aims to examine the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the reasons for students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons and their suggestions to overcome these deficiencies in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought in the study:

1. What are the opinions of primary school teachers regarding students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. What are the suggestions of primary school teachers for eliminating the learning deficiencies of students in mathematics lessons in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Method

Research Model

This research was carried out on the basis of phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs. The qualitative research designs are concerned with the way participants' make sense of their experiences and the facts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Phenomenology focuses on the facts that are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this study, the reasons for students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the suggestions to eliminate these deficiencies were examined according to the opinions of primary school teachers involved in the distance education process.

Study Group

Two hundred fifty-four primary school teachers working in various primary schools in Turkey formed the research study group. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to determine the study group. In the criterion sampling method, units that meet the predetermined criteria are included in the sampling (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2016; Mertens, 2010). In this study, primary school teachers who stated that their students had a learning deficiency in the mathematics lesson in the distance education process due to the COVID-19 pandemic were used as a criterion. The primary school teachers who were reached for this purpose were first asked whether their students had a learning deficiency in the mathematics lesson or not. The teachers who answered yes or partially yes answered the open-ended questions. Answers received from teachers are given in figure 1.



Figure 1. The opinions of primary school teachers about whether students have learning deficiencies in mathematics lesson in the distance education process or not

As seen in Figure 1, 254 primary school teachers (Yes: 140; Partially: 114; No: 114) were included in the study because of stating that their students had a learning deficiency in mathematics lesson in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Collection Tools

An interview form consisting of standardized open-ended questions was used as a data collection tool in the study. The questions prepared for standardized open-ended interviews are finalized questions in advance (Patton, 2015). In the interview form created for this study, there were two questions aimed at determining the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the reasons for students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic and their suggestions to eliminate these deficiencies. The questions were created by benefiting from the opinions of field experts.

Data Collection Process

The data were collected in the 2020-2021 academic year. The correspondence technique was used for data collection. In the correspondence technique, data is collected through written communication (Karasar, 2019). The data is collected through online tools. The forms containing the questions were delivered to primary school teachers through a platform. The primary school teachers also filled in the forms that were given to them online. The researcher accessed the answers given through this platform.

Analysis of Data

The analysis of the data obtained from the research was carried out with content analysis. Content analysis is based on the principle of gathering similar data within the framework of specific concepts and themes and arranging and interpreting them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) define content analysis as the process of summarizing and reporting the messages contained in the actual contents of written data. The data obtained for content analysis in the study were categorized by coding, and then these categories were classified and named (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Credibility and transferability are considered essential for validity in studies (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this context, suitable participants were reached for validity in the study, the data obtained from the teachers were coded and reviewed by two different researchers which are professionals in mathematics education, direct quotations from the participants' opinions were also included, and the quotations were coded as T1, T2. For the reliability of the research, care was taken to avoid deviations and changes in meaning during coding, the codings were reviewed, and the consistency was calculated by making comparisons between the independently made codings (Gibbs, 2007). In the calculation of the consistency, the reliability formula (Reliability = Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement) proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used. As a result of the calculation, the agreement value between the coders was at an acceptable level of 86% (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

Findings

In this section, the findings obtained from the analysis of the research data are included.

Findings regarding students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process were carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The opinions of primary school teachers regarding the reasons for the learning deficiencies experienced by students in mathematics lessons in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic were analyzed by content analysis. The findings obtained are given in Table 1.

Tablo	1. The opinions	of primary school	ol teachers	regarding th	e reasons	for the	student's	learning	deficien	cies in
mathen	natics lessons in	the distance edu	cation proc	ess						

Categories Sub-categories		f		
	Lack of interaction and communication			
	The difficulty of performing measurement and evaluation	28		
	Difficulty in concentrating on the lesson			
	Lack of material	19		
	Difficulty in receiving feedback	16		
	The difficulty of embodying abstract mathematics	14		
	The inability of learning by practicing and experiencing			
	Difficulty in practicing			
	Usage of limited methods and techniques compared to traditional education			
Reasons originating	Remaining affective features in the background			
distance education	The limitation of the sense organ addressed			
	Difficulty in maintaining classroom management and discipline			
	The negativity of prolonged exposure to digital tools			
	The difficulty of taking care of students one by one			
	The difficulty of considering different student styles			
	Distraction due to other applications in the digital tools			
	The difficulty of taking different student levels into account			
	The difficulty of instant correction	2		
	Lack of peer assistance in lessons	1		
	The difficulty of writing mathematical expressions digitally	1		
Total		261		
	Absence of students in the lessons	22		
	Low motivation in students	17		
	Students being indifferent	11		
	Students not reinforcing what they have learned	9		
	Students watching the lesson in a passive way	8		
	Weakness of digital skills in students			
Reasons originating	Reluctance of students			
from the student	Students not feeling responsible	3		
	Poor readiness of students	2		
	Perceiving the process as a holiday	2		
	Abstention of students	1		
	Prejudice in students	1		
	Anxiety in students	1		
Total		91		

Categories	Sub-categories	f	
	Connection (internet) problems		
	Lack of hardware		
Reasons originating	Impossibility of acquiring technological tools		
problems	Problems in logging into online education platforms	7	
problems	Insufficiency of digital lesson materials	1	
	Power cut	1	
Total		68	
	Parents not providing the necessary support	17	
	Indifference of parents		
D	Failure to provide a suitable learning environment at home		
from the family	Presence of distracting stimuli in the home environment		
from the family	The intervention of family members during the lesson	4	
	Parents not cooperating with the teacher	2	
	Family members doing the homework of students	1	
Total		59	
	Short lesson period	24	
Reasons originating	Learning outcomes being in a large number		
from planning	Absence of compulsory school attendance		
	Implementation of the current program	2	
Total		36	
	The poor digital skill of teachers	2	
from the teacher	Strict behavior of teachers		
from the teacher	Prejudice of teachers	1	
Total		4	
Reasons originating	Not being informed	1	
from the insufficiency of support services	Insufficiency of technical support	1	
Total		2	

Tablo 1. The opinions of primary school teachers regarding the reasons for the student's learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process (Continued)

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the reasons for the students' learning deficiency in the mathematics lesson in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic are collected in seven categories as reasons originating from the nature of distance education, students, technical problems, family, planning, teachers and insufficiency of support services. According to primary school teachers, the reasons originating from the nature of distance education are considered from the most to the least as lack of interaction and communication (f = 66), of performing measurement and evaluation (f = 28), difficulty in concentrating on the lesson (f = 24), lack of material (f = 19), difficulty in receiving feedback (f = 16), difficulty in embodying abstract mathematics (f = 14), inability of learning by practising and experiencing (f = 13), difficulty in practicing (f = 11), usage of limited methods and techniques compared to traditional education (f = 10), remaining of affective features in the background (f = 10), the limitation of the sense organ addressed (f = 9), difficulty in maintaining classroom management and discipline (f = 8), negativity of prolonged exposure to digital tools (f = 8), difficulty of taking care of students one by one (f = 6), difficulty of considering different student styles (f = 6), distraction due to other applications in the digital tools (f = 6), difficulty of taking different student levels into account (f = 3), difficulty of instant correction (f = 2), lack of peer assistance in lessons (f = 1) and difficulty of writing mathematical expressions digitally (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of reasons arising from the nature of distance education are given below.

"In distance education, it becomes difficult for students to embody, because close contact is not provided, the appropriate teaching method and technique for the student cannot be chosen..." (T13)

"I think the fact that distance education does not appeal to the unique learning style of each student (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.), that there is no immediate feedback, correction, that active elements such as motivation cannot be used, and that studies that evaluate learning cannot be done immediately during and at the end of the process cause students to have learning deficiencies. " (T44)

"Not being able to supervise the students in front of the screen, the existence of students entering the game instead of entering the lesson even they have the opportunity" (T35)

According to the primary school teachers, the reasons originating from the students are considered from the most to the least as absence of students in the lessons (f = 22), the low motivation in students (f = 17), students being indifferent (f = 11), students not reinforcing what they learned (f = 9), students watching the lesson in a passive way (f = 8), weakness of digital skills in students (f = 7), reluctance of students (f = 7), students not feeling responsible (f = 3), poor readiness of students (f = 2), perceiving the process as a holiday (f = 2), abstention of students (f = 1), prejudice in students (f = 1), and anxiety in students (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of reasons originating from students are given below.

"Students do not comply with the duration of the lesson. When they get bored, they leave the lesson..." (T17)

"Shy and indifferent students completely break away from the lesson ..." (T140)

"Students not actively participating in the lesson and watching the lesson from the screen ..." (T206)

According to the primary school teachers, the reasons originating from the technical problems are considered from the most to the least as connection (internet) problems (f = 30), lack of hardware (f = 17), the impossibility of acquiring technological tools (f = 12), problems in logging into online education platforms (f = 7), insufficiency of digital lesson materials (f = 1) and power cut (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of reasons originating from technical problems are given below.

"Because there is not enough technological equipment in the houses ..." (T175)

"Experiencing problems on the internet because of the living in a village ..." (T239)

"Problems in programs used in distance education ..." (T79)

According to the primary school teachers, the reasons originating from the technical problems are considered from the most to the least as parents not providing the necessary support (f = 17), the indifference of parents (f = 15), the lack of an appropriate learning environment at home (f = 12), presence of distracting stimuli in the home environment (f = 8), the intervention of family members during the lesson (f = 4), parents not cooperating with the teacher (f = 2), and family members doing the homework of students (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of reasons originating from a parents are given below.

"Existence of father, mother and other family members in a room and distraction of focus ..." (*T*47)

"... Not getting enough support from families ... " (T20)

"... They cannot pay as much attention as in the classroom setting. Home environments are not suitable." (T25)

According to the primary school teachers, the reasons originating from planning are considered from the most to the least as short lesson period (f = 24), learning outcomes being in a large number (f = 7), absence of compulsory school attendance (f = 3) and the implementation of the

current program (f = 2). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of reasons originating from planning are given below.

"... Due to the short duration of lessons and learning outcomes being in a large number, learning cannot be achieved completely." (T225)

"Students leaving the course whenever they want and teachers not being able to note their absence..." (T8)

"Trying to implement the current program ..." (T181)

According to the primary school teachers, the reasons originating from the teacher are considered from the most to the least as poor digital skills of teachers (f = 2), strict behavior of teachers (f = 1), and prejudice of teachers (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of reasons originating from the teacher are given below.

"Lack of teachers' skill in providing lesson materials online ..." (T167)

"... Teachers' prejudice..." (T18)

"... Teachers displaying a strict and authoritarian attitude..." (T193)

According to the primary school teachers, the reasons originating from the insufficiency of support services are considered from the most to the least as not being informed (f = 1) an insufficiency of technical support (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of reasons originating from the insufficiency of support services are given below.

"... Teachers, students and especially parents not being informed about distance education..." (T17)

"... Insufficiency of infrastructure and technical support ..." (T12)

Findings regarding the suggestions for eliminating the students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The opinions expressed by primary school teachers regarding eliminating the students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic were analyzed by content analysis. The findings obtained are given in Table 2.

Categories	Sub-categories	f
	Transition to face to face education	
	Performing remedial education	43
	Dilution of current mathematics lesson subjects and learning outcomes	22
	Extending the duration of lessons	11
	Taking steps to identify and eliminate the learning deficiencies	
Suggestions	Ensuring participation in the lesson	9
regarding	Increasing the number of lessons	4
planning	Transition to hybrid education	4
	One-to-one distance education	4
	Forming groups in different levels	3
	Decreasing duration of lesson in lower grades	3
	Focusing on essential learning outcomes	2
	Making the lesson attendance compulsory	2
	Decreasing the number of students	2
	Strengthening parent-teacher-student relationship	1
Total		185

Tablo 2. Suggestions of primary school teachers for eliminating the students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process

Using interesting materials10Using concrete materials9Performing continuous reinforcement8Associating mathematics lesson with daily life4Making the lesson funny4Giving importance to applied studies3Using materials suitable for different student levels2Increasing the usage of visual materials2Performing frequent controls2Performing frequent controls2Endearing mathematics lesson2Using materials suitable for different student styles1Giving homework, ensuring their control and feedback1Using materials material at home1Using new generation problems1Establishing a link between mathematics and other subjects1Behaving patiently1Making use of different sources1Total57
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Total 57 Improving students' connections 19
Improving students' connections 19
Providing students with equipment 15
SuggestionsDeveloping a digital material pool7
regarding Supporting the families who do not have technological 4
improvements Enforcing the plotforms and systems used
Developing measurement and evaluation systems for digital
environments 3
Total 51
Parents' support 10
Parents' attention 7
Parents' cooperating with the teacher 5
Suggestions Parents' reducing negative stimuli in the learning environment 2
regarding parents Parents following up with their children 1
Parents motivating their children 1
Parents providing a suitable working environment for their 1
Parents not intervening during the lesson 1
Total 28
Developing students' sense of responsibility 4
Suggestions Students reinforcing what they have learned 3
Suggestions Developing students' digital skills 2
development of Increasing student motivation 2
students Making students believe that they can be successful 1
Ensuring students pay their attention to the lesson
Total 14

Tablo 2. Suggestions of primary school teachers for eliminating the students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process (Continued)

Categories	Sub-categories	f
Suggestions	Informing parents about distance education	11
regarding the	Informing teachers about distance education	1
support services	Informing students about distance education	1
Total		13
Suggestions regarding the	Improving digital competencies of teachers	2
improvement of teachers' quality	Increasing willingness and motivation of teachers	1
Total		3

Tablo 2. Suggestions of primary school teachers for eliminating the students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process (Continued)

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the suggestions of primary school teachers to eliminate the students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic are gathered in seven categories as suggestions for planning, learning-teaching process, technical improvements, parents, student development, support services and improving the quality of teachers. The suggestions of primary school teachers for planning from the most to the least are transition to face to face education (f = 65), performing remedial education (f = 43), dilution of current mathematics lesson subjects and learning outcomes (f = 22), extending the duration of lessons (f = 11), taking steps to identify and eliminate the learning deficiencies (f = 10), ensuring participation in the lesson (f = 9), increasing the number of lessons (f = 4), transition to hybrid education (f = 4), one-to-one distance education (f = 3), focusing on basic learning outcomes (f = 2), making the lesson attendance compulsory (f = 2), decreasing the number of students (f = 2) and strengthening of parent-teacher-student relationship (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of suggestions for planning are given below.

"Students should be given remedial education for mathematics lesson ..." (T43)

"Mathematics lesson will be more effective if it is done face to face in the classroom environment" (T48)

"The main learning outcomes should be emphasized in the mathematics lesson; other learning outcomes should be made lighter ..." (Ö228)

The suggestions of the primary school teachers for the learning-teaching process from the most to the least are using interesting materials (f = 10), using concrete materials (f = 9), performing continuous reinforcement (f = 8), associating mathematics lesson with daily life (f = 4), making the lesson funny (f = 4), giving importance to applied studies (f = 3), using materials suitable for different student levels (f = 2), increasing the usage of visual materials (f = 2), performing frequent controls (f = 2), applying different techniques (f = 2), endearing the mathematics lesson (f = 2), using materials suitable for different student styles (f = 1), giving homework, ensuring their control and feedback (f = 1), using math videos in the form of cartoons (f = 1), giving place to different activities (f = 1), students creating materials at home (f = 1), using new generation problems (f = 1), establishing link between mathematics and other lessons (f = 1) behaving patiently (f = 1) and making use of different resources (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of suggestions for the learning-teaching process are given below.

"... To endear the mathematics lesson and try to make it funny..." (T173)

"Enriching the curriculum and resources with new generation problems. Making the new generation problems suitable for digital use by videotaping them ..." (T4)

"More importance should be given to activities of practicing by writing ..." (T84)

The suggestions of primary school teachers for technical improvements from the most to the least are improving students' connections (f = 19), providing students with equipment (f = 15),

developing a digital material pool (f = 7), supporting the families who do not have technological opportunities (f = 4), enforcing the platforms and systems used (f = 3), developing measurement and evaluation systems for digital environments (f = 3). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of suggestions for technical improvements are given below.

"Providing families with adequate equipment such as tablets and computers ..." (T9)

"... Strengthening and accelerating internet infrastructures..." (T234)

"... Strengthening the Zoom and EBA infrastructure..." (T62)

The suggestions of primary school teachers for parents from the most to the least are parents' support (f = 10), parents' attention (f = 7), parents cooperating with the teacher (f = 5), parents reducing negative stimuli in the learning environment (f = 2), parents following up their children (f = 1), parents motivating their children (f = 1), parents providing a suitable working environment for their children (f = 1), and parents not interfering during the lesson (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of suggestions for parents are given below.

"Parents should act in a way to increase the motivation of the students; they should make the student believe that they can be successful in the mathematics lesson." (T59)

"I can suggest that the parents should not intervene behind the screen during the lesson; they should see their shortcomings after the lesson and help them ..." (T35)

"During the lesson, negative stimuli should be reduced, and parents should act consciously." (T43)

The suggestions of the primary school teachers for the development of students from the most to the least are developing students' sense of responsibility (f = 4), students reinforcing what they have learned (f = 3), developing students' digital skills (f = 2), increasing student motivation (f = 2), making students believe that they can be successful (f = 1), students comprehending the importance of mathematics (f = 1) and ensuring students pay their attention to the lesson (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of suggestions for the development of students are given below.

"Students' sense of responsibility should be developed" (T67)

"Students' digital skills should be developed" (T96)

"Students should be made to believe that they can be successful in mathematics lesson" (T139)

The suggestions of the primary school teachers for the support services from the most to the least are informing parents about distance education (f = 11), informing teachers about distance education (f = 1), and informing students about distance education (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of suggestions for support services are given below.

"... Organizing parent informing activities..." (T14)

"Teachers and students should be informed about distance education ..." (T67)

The suggestions of the primary school teachers for the improvement of teachers' quality from the most to the least are improving teachers' digital competencies (f = 2) and increasing the willingness and motivation of teachers (f = 1). Some quotations from the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the category of suggestions for improving the quality of teachers are given below.

"Digital competencies of teachers should be improved" (T159)

"The willingness and motivation of teachers should be increased" (T203)

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

In this study, the opinions of primary school teachers regarding the reasons for the students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons and the suggestions to eliminate these deficiencies in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic were discussed. According to

the findings obtained, it has been determined that in the distance education process carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and primary school teachers attribute the learning deficiencies of students in mathematics lesson from the most to the least to the reasons originating from the nature of distance education, students, technical problems, family, planning, teachers and inadequate support services. As the reasons originating from the nature of distance education, teachers displayed mostly insufficiency of interaction and communication and also some other reasons with regards to having difficulty in measuring and evaluating, feedback-correction, concentrating on the lesson, practicing, taking care of students one by one, taking different student levels and styles into account, writing mathematical expressions in the digital environment and the negativities brought about by the usage of digital tools. It is seen that these asserted reasons came forward as the disadvantages of mathematics learning-teaching processes in distance education carried out in the COVID-19 pandemic period also in other studies conducted (Almarashdi & Jarrah, 2021; Erduran & İnce Muslu, 2020; Irfan et al., 2020; Kilit & Güner, 2021; Mailizar, Almanthari, Maulina, & Bruce, 2020; Wahyuningrum & Latifah, 2020). The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics states that students who have the opportunities, encouragement, and support to speak, write, read and listen in mathematics lessons will communicate to learn mathematics and learn to communicate mathematically (NCTM, 2000). In the mathematics curriculum, it is stated that concrete materials should be used as much as possible in the teaching of new concepts and in the evaluations to be made (MEB, 2018). It can be said that there may be many limitations in distance education compared to face-to-face education due to the difference in physical space and usage of digital tools, and especially because primary school students are in the concrete operations period, digital environments may be insufficient in embodying abstract mathematics and interpreting mathematics.

As the reasons originating from the students, teachers brought forward the reasons such as students not participating in the lesson, low motivation, being indifferent, not reinforcing what has been learned, watching passively, weakness of digital skills, unwillingness, not feeling responsible, poor readiness, perceiving the process as a vacation, abstention, prejudice, anxiety. They put forward the reasons. It attracts the attention that these reasons came forth as the disadvantages of the COVID-19 pandemic period mathematics learning-teaching processes in other studies conducted (Erduran & Ince Muslu, 2020; Kilit & Güner, 2021; Mailizar et al., 2020). It can be said that mathematics lessons cannot be continued effectively due to the students not attending the lessons or not attending the lessons preparedly for various reasons, and the inadequacies in affective, physical, and psychomotor dimensions.

As the reasons for technical problems, teachers reported connection (internet) problems, lack of hardware, the impossibility of acquiring technological tools, logging into online education platforms, insufficiency of digital lesson materials, and power cut. These reasons appear to be a limitation in mathematics lessons conducted in digital environments and other studies (Erduran & İnce Muslu, 2020; Mailizar et al., 2020). Considering that distance education is sustained with technology, it can be said that these elements are essential not only for mathematics lessons but also for all other lessons. These factors may cause students not to be actively present in digital learning environments and may interrupt learning-teaching processes or reduce effectiveness.

As the reasons regarding parents, teachers listed the reasons such as parents not providing the necessary support and attention, failure to provide an appropriate learning environment at home, the presence of distracting stimuli in the home environment, the intervention of family members during the lesson, parents not cooperating with the teacher, the family members doing the homework of students. Also, in the researches conducted (Harper, Rosenberg, Comperry, Howell, & Womble, 2021; Panaoura, 2020), the family and home dimension in students' mathematics education during the COVID-19 outbreak has been an important issue. While schools are used as the environment in face-to-face education, the student's environment is the house in distance education. Hence, it can be said that the inability to provide learning environments at home and the parents not being able to provide the necessary moral and material support will reduce the effectiveness of mathematics learning processes.

As the reasons originating from planning, teachers stated the reasons such as short lesson period, learning outcomes being in a large number, absence of compulsory school attendance, and implementing the current program. It is seen that some of the asserted reasons are emphasized in the research (Erduran & İnce Muslu, 2020). It can be said that students cannot fully achieve the targeted learning outcomes, as the learning outcomes cannot be achieved in the given lesson periods due to the implementation of the current program also in distance education, which was initiated urgently in the COVID-19 pandemic period.

As the reasons originating from teachers, the weakness of digital skills, strict attitudes of teachers, prejudge and as the reasons regarding the insufficiency of support services, not being informed and inadequacy of support services were shown. Some of these reasons were also included in some studies conducted at home and abroad (Erduran & Ince Muslu, 2020; Mailizar et al., 2020) as problems encountered in distance education mathematics lessons COVID-19 outbreak. It can be said that the learning-teaching processes are not efficient due to the fact that teachers, who are among the building blocks of education, do not have the relevant competencies and qualifications, partners are not informed about distance education and the necessary support on these issues cannot be received.

According to the findings obtained, it was determined that primary school teachers made suggestions for planning, learning-teaching process, technical improvements, parents, development of students, support services, and improving the quality of teachers in order to eliminate students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lesson in the distance education process carried out due to COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers made suggestions for planning mostly as transition to face to face education and some other suggestions such as performing remedial education, diluting the current mathematics lesson subjects and learning outcomes, extending the duration of lessons, transition to hybrid education, determining the learning deficiencies, and eliminating these deficiencies. Studies (Tezer, Cavus, Orkun, Osum, & Ture, 2021) have shown that even countries that conduct the pandemic process with hybrid education experience problems about the efficiency of mathematics lessons. It can be said that because teachers complain that distance education cannot provide the opportunities provided by face-to-face education, suggestions for switching to face-to-face education outweigh. In addition, it can be said that with the integration of the current curriculum into distance education, the learning outcomes are in a large number considering specified periods, and the teachers suggest that the arrangements on these issues should be made again because the time is short for the determined learning outcomes. Also, according to Avdemir (2018), the entire structure in distance education systems should be built in line with student needs and the program should be built on student outcomes. Therefore, arrangements can be made by considering the needs in order for mathematics education to achieve its purpose.

Teachers also made suggestions such as using interesting and concrete materials, performing continuous reinforcement, associating the mathematics lesson with daily life, making the lesson funny, giving importance to applied studies for the learning-teaching process; improving students' connections, providing students with equipment, developing a digital material pool for technical improvements; developing students' sense of responsibility and their digital skills, making students believe that they can be successful, increasing students' motivation for the development of students; informing parents, teachers, and students about distance education for support services, and developing digital competencies and increasing willingness and motivation for their colleagues. It is seen that some of these suggestions were specified by researchers or participants in various studies (Erduran & İnce Muslu, 2020; Kamsurya, 2020; Kilit & Güner, 2021; Kuzu, 2020; Marbán et al., 2021; Marpa, 2021; Mulenga & Marbán, 2020; Panaoura, 2020) in order for the problems experienced in distance education activities in mathematics lesson during the COVID-19 pandemic period to be eliminated or ameliorated. It is seen that teachers offer various suggestions to partners, mostly in order to enrich the learning-teaching process, to emancipate it from uniformity, and making it more efficient. It can be said that all partners who have a direct or indirect influence on this process, especially teachers on one side of the communication channel and students on the other side, should give importance to distance education, take responsibility, and make an effort.

When the findings obtained from the research are evaluated in general, it was determined that teachers consider the structure of distance education, especially the lack of interaction and communication, as the most important reason for the mathematics lesson learning deficiency in students in the distance education process carried out due to COVID-19 pandemic; and as for the

elimination of learning deficiencies, they suggested to switch to face-to-face education at most. In the study, it has been observed that classroom teachers draw attention to many factors regarding the cause of the learning deficiency and its elimination. These reasons or suggestions can also be encountered in distance education activities in different student levels and disciplines during the COVID-19 pandemic period. It can be said that since this research is aimed at the mathematics lesson, which has a unique abstract structure and aimed at the elementary school, which is among lower levels, the emerging elements should be overemphasized. Because while numerical data are frequently encountered in daily life or professional fields, living conditions require having skills related to technology and mathematics. Students also discover important ideas (Van de Walle, Karp, Bay-Williams, Wray, & Brown, 2019). This study is limited to the opinions of teachers who believe that students have learning deficiencies. The research is thought to contribute to the studies to be carried out to eliminate learning deficiencies or prevent their occurrence during or after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following suggestions have been recommended in line with the findings obtained from the research;

- Students' learning deficiencies in mathematics lessons in the distance education process can be determined, and remedial education can be given on these subjects.
- If the distance education continues, the current program can be revised by this process.
- In order to make the distance education process more efficient, all partners can be informed about distance education, and studies can be carried out to increase the partners' digital competencies.
- Studies may be conducted to improve digital tools used in distance education.

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