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Parent opinions on distance education practices in the emergency remote education period in Turkey

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Highlights

- This research emphasizes that distance education cannot replace face-to-face education, but it can support face-to-face education.
- This research draws attention to the inadequacy of distance education in terms of content and the difficulty of learning the distance education system.
- This research highlights the difficulty of achieving student adaptation and discipline in distance education.
- This research emphasizes that measurement and evaluation in distance education cannot be done properly.
- This research draws attention to the inequality of opportunity arising from financial deprivation in distance education.

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the experiences and opinions of parents in Turkey regarding distance education practices during the pandemic period. Quota sampling has been made by considering Turkey Statistical Regional Units Classification. 2371 parents participated in the research. The data collection tool consists of a scaled questionnaire, open-ended questions, preferential questions, demographic and personal information form. The descriptive survey model has been used to reach the aim of the study for data analysis. The findings of the study are as follows: The majority of the parents evaluated distance education as being insufficient, difficult to learn, restrictive in terms of the time allocated to the lessons, and a system that does not replace face-to-face education, but will support the students when they return to normal process. Teacher guidance was emphasized in overcoming technical problems. They drew attention to the guidance of teachers in overcoming technical problems, the difficulty of adapting students and providing working discipline, the inadequacy of educational content, and the inequality of opportunity caused by financial deprivations

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1. Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the whole world and caused the death of millions of people, was announced to be a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, when the first case has occurred. After the pandemic was declared in Turkey, as of the date of 14 March 2020, face-to-face education was suspended in universities and all schools that were affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. In order to prevent interruptions in education process, face-to-face education has been suspended and distance education process was started. In this process, it was observed that each country has implemented different solutions. In general, distance education applications, internet-based applications, TV and radio have come to the fore and were actively used (Eken et al., 2020).

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In order to provide education through the distance education process in Turkey, it was tried to provide services by using some technologies. These technologies and services can be listed as Education Information Network (EBA), Television Broadcasting, EBA Academic Support System (ADES), Technical Support, and Psychological Support. Education Information Network (EBA) platform was created in year 2012 by the General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technologies affiliated to the Ministry of National Education, to create a rich e-content pool suitable for all grade levels and different learning styles, and to spread the information culture. It is a platform designed to integrate technology into education and to encourage teachers to develop e-content, enabling them to exchange information and ideas (Boz, 2016). Academic Support System (ADES) is a free platform that was developed to support 11th and 12th grade students' preparation for university. Broadcasts other than EBA TRT EBA TV Primary School, TRT EBA TV Secondary School and TRT EBA TV High School channels were used to support education. Guides and platforms have been created regarding technical and psychological support.

According to the Formal Education 2020-2021 National Education Statistics announced by the Ministry of National Education during the pandemic and the transition to distance education, it is seen that a total of 18 million 85 thousand 943 students were enrolled in formal education at the level of pre-school, primary and secondary education in Turkey (MEB, 2021). It is also known that a total of 8 million 240 thousand 997 students were registered in higher education in the 2020-2021 academic year, at the associate, undergraduate and graduate levels (Council of Higher Education, 2021). According to the data announced by UNESCO, the total period of closure of schools in Turkey was 49 weeks (UNESCO, 2022).

Although schools are places where basic learning takes place, the role of parents in the education and training of children has high level of importance (Devrim, 2021). The cooperation between teachers and parents is decisive in the academic development of the student. One of the actors who are directly aware of the problems experienced by the student is the parent. Opinions of parent regarding a situation that directly affects the student are guiding for the determination and solution of the problem. COVID-19 pandemic has directly affected everyone and especially students. During the pandemic period, the compulsory closure of schools for precautionary purposes and the interruption of education have constituted an important deficiency for the development of children and youth. Inequalities of opportunity that exist in the education system in the normal period have become worse during the pandemic period (Yıldız & Akar Vural, 2020; Sharma, 2020; Vegas, 2020; Charbonnier, 2020; LaFave, 2020). Students, teachers and parents were caught as unprepared for this unexpected situation. Unexpected and indefinite closure of schools has left teachers confused about how to stay on task and connect with their students to continue learning. Even in normal times, the transition to distance education platforms that require a certain learning process has been stressful and confusing for teachers. Parents who wanted to make the process become easier and more comfortable for their children to learn at home after the closure of schools were also caught unprepared for distance and home education. This was even more challenging for parents with limited educational opportunities and resources (Elliott & Hollingsworth, 2020; Sarı & Nayır, 2020; Stamatis, 2021; World Bank et al., 2021, Azevedo et al., 2021).

2. Literature

In the world that evaluates the distance education process from the eyes of parents (Ali, 2020; Alipio, 2020; Bozkurt et al., 2020; Daniela et al., 2021; Dong, Cao & Li, 2020; Garbe et al., 2020; Griffith, 2020; Khan, 2020; Arslan et al., 2021; Başaran et al., 2020; Bozkurt, 2020; Can, 2020; Çiçek et al., 2020; Aruğaslan et al., 2022; Gür & Filiz, 2022; Güvercin et al., 2022; Ayten & Ercan, 2022) various studies have been conducted.

Aruğaslan et al. (2022), in their study with primary school first grade parents found that parents took additional responsibilities to support their children, provide educational, psychological and technological support to their children, and experience technological problems. In addition, they found that students' communication with their friends and teachers decreased, teachers' interaction with parents increased, they

thought that distance education would not replace face-to-face education and that it was an important system that could be used in situations where it was impossible to go to school.

Gür and Filiz (2022) found that parents attributed the ineffectiveness of distance education during the pandemic process to the inefficiency of online education, distraction, anxiety, environment and noise, infrastructure problems, and their lack of digital literacy.

According to the results of Dong et al.'s (2020) study in which Chinese parents' views and attitudes towards distance education were examined, parents observed that their children had adaptation problems in distance education. Besides, parents did not find distance education useful enough and stated that it could not replace face-to-face education. They stated that their and their children's digital skills were not adequate and the process was problematic and challenging for them as they were caught unprepared for the pandemic.

Daniela et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate the distance education process of parents and the difficulties they faced. According to the results of the study, it is seen that mothers supported children the most and they received support from teachers in order to support their children more. In addition, parents understood that digital skills are important to support their children, and they worried that parents with insufficient digital skills could not support their children.

Ayten and Ercan (2022) found that parents have problems of adaptation during the pandemic process, have a positive view of distance education due to health concerns, prefer face-to-face education instead of distance education, and need technological support for distance education infrastructure.

Güvercin et al. (2022) determined that parent teachers considered distance education as a support tool rather than an alternative to face-to-face education, and they thought that distance education was a useful practice for students not to stay away from education during the pandemic period. In addition, they found that parent teachers thought that there were administrative problems, lack of information, internet based problems, infrastructure problems.

Ali (2020) concluded that unexpected situations such as Covid-19 eliminate social interaction, and that distance education is a necessity in such situations, and that especially higher education institutions are increasingly moving towards distance learning.

Whereas, Alipio (2020) concluded that the financial, operational and internet connection problems of low-income students cause inequality of opportunity, that this can be overcome with more strategic planning and effective management mechanisms, and that an equitable and inclusive distance education is required.

In the study of Arslan et al. (2021), most of the parents stated that they found distance education productive, homework assignments were sufficient but should be increased, course durations were insufficient but needed to be increased, and announcements were made late although communication channels were open. They also stated that it would be beneficial to provide distance education courses for them and their students.

According to the study of Başaran et al. (2020), parents thought that distance education had beneficial aspects. However, they stated that they had deficiencies in terms of limited interaction, students' inability to participate actively in the lesson, not being suitable for individual differences, and difficulties in entering the lesson due to technical problems, and they stated that it should be developed and improved in terms of infrastructure, inequality of opportunity, content and material.

Bozkurt (2020) made evaluations on educational technologies, course design in distance education, measurement and assessment, digital data and ethics, new educational roles, digital competencies and digital skills, according to the situations that came out during the pandemic period. Along with these particulars, he emphasized the need for radical reforms and strategic planning to ensure continuity in education in the context of digital transformation, digital division, philosophy of openness in education, social equality, trauma and anxiety, pedagogy of interest, understanding and empathy, support communities and mechanisms and economic dimension in higher education.

In the study they conducted to reveal the situation in K-12 and higher education in 31 countries, Bozkurt et al. (2020) found that social injustice, inequality and digital divide were very severe during the pandemic. It was revealed that parents were under an excessive burden by taking on the role of education in addition to their primary role, and as a result, they experience trauma, psychological pressure and anxiety in matters that require care, compassion and empathy. Furthermore, they emphasized the necessity of a philosophy of openness in education and alternative measurement and assessment methods and the existence of data privacy concerns.

Çiçek et al. (2020) found out that students' aggression levels increased due to the pandemic, they experienced negative emotions and their social life rituals showed variations. Furthermore, they found that the students experienced negativities such as insomnia, depression, loss of appetite, extreme stress, fear, anxiety and irritability, and observed that they had both positive and negative thoughts regarding distance education in general.

Can (2020) emphasized that the pandemic has revealed the importance of open and distance education services in the society, showing that not only quantity but also quality is important in open and distance education. It also revealed that the open and distance education system in Turkey needs to be strengthened in terms of infrastructure, access, security, content, design, implementation, quality, legislation and pedagogy.

Garbe et al. (2020) observed that parents had difficulties in balancing responsibility, student motivation, accessibility and learning outcomes in their study, in which they stated that they considered that closure of schools was positive and were satisfied with the support provided by the state.

On the other hand, Griffith (2020) found in his study that the changes made by the pandemic put American parents at risk of burnout, concluded that the mismatch between parental demands and available resources causes high stress in parents, that parents who experience burnout were prone to child abuse and neglect, and that this posed a risk in the long term.

Research on the experiences of parents who try to guide their children in the distance education process during the pandemic period has mostly remained at the local level with a limited sample, and studies with broad participation have not been found. However, this study is a comprehensive study that includes most of the results obtained in many studies conducted at the local level and is not found in the literature. This study is a very important resource for understanding almost all of the problems experienced in distance education during the pandemic. For this reason, this study can be considered as an extremely original and important research in terms of revealing the situation during the pandemic period from the perspective of the parents and its suitability for the intended purpose.

3. Methodology

3.1. The Purpose of Study

General purpose of this study is to reveal the experiences, opinions and suggestions of the parents whose children are educated in distance education, which is compulsory during the pandemic process, by examining them in the context of Turkey. It is a description of the experiences of K12 parents within the scope of distance education applications, which were made urgent and compulsory during the COVID-19 pandemic process. It is evaluated that this study, which examines the views of parents, who constitute an important actor in education, will make a significant contribution to the distance education science literature. In accordance with the purpose of the study, answers were sought to the following questions:

- What are the views of parents of K12 students on the phenomenon of emergency distance education applied during the pandemic period in Turkey?
- What are the common situations faced by parents of K12 students in emergency distance education activities during the pandemic period in Turkey?

- What are the criticisms of parents of K12 students towards the distance education system implemented during the pandemic period in Turkey?

Based on the answers given to the questions in the data collection tool, suggestions will be presented to improve the distance education dimension of the Turkish National Education system. It is hoped that these recommendations will guide decision makers and practitioners.

3.2. Method of Research

The main and sub-problems of this study, which was carried out in order to reveal the experiences and opinions of the parents regarding the distance education process carried out during the pandemic period in Turkey, were sought with the descriptive survey model. In the descriptive survey model, the variables in the research are defined as existing without any intervention, without changing or affecting the situation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Karasar, 1998). Descriptive scanning is used for research conducted on large groups, in which the opinions and attitudes of the individuals in the group about a phenomenon and event are taken, and the phenomenon and events are tried to be described (Karakaya, 2012:59).

3.3. Sampling or Study Group

In order to represent the samples in Turkey, a quota sampling strategy has been followed by taking into account first level of the Turkish Statistical Regional Units Classification (NUTS) developed in accordance with the European Union Regional Statistical System. In the quota sample, the examples with certain variables that are believed to determine the characteristics of the universe are taken into account (Gürbüz, 2018; Kılıç, 2013). According to the quota sampling principle from 12 regions in the NUTS first level classification of Turkey, the number of participants expected to be included in the study as per their population ratio has been determined. Participants were reached with an easily accessible sampling method. In the easily accessible sampling method a state that is close and easy to access is selected. Data collection continues until the number of people to be included in the sample reaches the desired size (Gürbüz, 2018). In this study, the sample size was determined to be 2371. Demographic features of the sample are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic features of the study group

Demographical Feature		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	1706	72,0
	Male	665	28,0
Age	21-40	1516	63,9
	41-55	837	35,3
	56 and above	18	,8
Graduation Status	Elementary school	452	19,1
	Junior high school	403	17,0
	Senior high school	677	28,6
	Associate	225	9,5
	Undergraduate	547	23,1
	Postgraduate/doctorate	67	2,8
Profession	Housewife	1152	48,6
	Teacher	339	14,3
	Self-employed	233	9,8
	Worker	211	8,9
	Staff	75	3,2
	Nurse	52	2,2
	Farmer	46	1,9
	Architecture/engineer	31	1,3
	Security staff	26	1,1
	Health sector	24	1
	Banker	16	0,7
	Army officer	15	0,6
	Academician	12	0,5

	Doctor	6	0,3
	Other (Please specify)	133	5,6
Settlement place	Province	871	36,7
	District	1321	55,7
	Village	179	7,5
	Total	2371	

Demographic information about number of participants' children and school level of children are given in Table 2.

Table 2.

Demographic information about number of participants' children and school level of children

	School Level										
Number of children	**Private training and rehabilitation center**		**Pre-school**		**Elementary**		**Junior high school**		**Senior high school**		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	Total
1. child	15	,6	70	3,0	683	28,8	998	42,1	605	25,5	2371
2. child	10	,5	196	11,5	575	33,8	612	36	309	18,2	1702
3. child	7	1,2	128	23,3	166	30,2	119	21,7	129	23,6	549
4. child	3	1,8	26	16,3	46	28,7	48	30	37	23,2	160
5.child	1	1	9	9,3	31	32	36	37	20	20,7	97
Total	36		249		1501		1813		1100		

3.4. Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire form consisted of 16 questions developed by the researcher was used in the study. The main purpose of the questionnaire form is to determine the applications that parents consider as positive, criticize and recommend in emergency distance education, which is implemented in a versatile and short time. In the data collection tool which is used in the study, there are 7 personal information questions asking for the demographic information of the participants. In the measurement tool created by the researcher, there are 1 yes-no question, 6 open-ended questions containing the opinions, suggestions and criticisms of the parents on different issues, 1 preferential question and 1 scaled question consisted of 45 criteria. For the content validity of the data collection tool, opinions of 2 academicians working in Computer and Instructional Technologies Education departments, 1 informatics specialist working at the Information Technologies and Communication Institution, 4 teachers from different branches and age groups working at schools that are affiliated with Ministry of Education, 1 measurement and evaluation field academician and the measurement tool was given its final form.

3.5. Data Collection Process

Data collection tool has been prepared on the Survey Monkey site, and the link address required for access was shared with a certain number of classroom teachers who were working in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Access link to the research was shared with parents of students in Whatsapp, Telegram, BiP social network groups through teachers between the dates of 5 May 2020 – 12 June 2022. Access to the data collection tool was allowed only once from the same IP address. Participants participated in the research voluntarily.

3.6. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. Categorical data being obtained were analyzed by frequency analysis and content analysis. SPSS 24 and NVIVO 10 package programs were used for the analysis.

4. Findings

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the experiences, criticisms and suggestions of parents regarding the emergency and compulsory distance education practices in schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education due to the pandemic. For this purpose, first of all, an answer was sought to the question of what are the general opinions of the parents on the concept of "distance education" during the pandemic process. 2304 out of 2371 participants answered this question and the opinions of parents regarding the concept of distance education are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Opinions of parents about the concept of distance education during the pandemic period

Themes	Sub Themes	Frequency	Percentage	Sample status
Positive	▪ Continuity of education ▪ Protection of health ▪ Independent of time ▪ Independent of place	1330	57,7	K1: It was efficient even if not as much as the case with face-to-face education and he could have education. K2: Distance education is a very important practice in terms of health. I think the education is sufficient for my own children. K3: This is a work done in the best way to be done in this epidemic scourge we are in. K4: We understood that education can be anywhere and anytime, not just at school. K5: The meaning that education can be taken everywhere, not in a fixed place, and keeping our children's knowledge fresh K6: A good job applied to keep up with the lessons K7: It is a very good practice in terms of not keeping our children away from education and training in difficult days. K8: Provides the opportunity to learn independently of time and place.
Negative	▪ Inefficient and inadequate ▪ Difficulty in adaptation ▪ Learning difficulty ▪ Technical problems ▪ Inequalities of opportunity ▪ Insufficient content	974	42,3	K9: I don't find it enough. I think face-to-face training is necessary. K10: I don't think we are getting the best results K11: I think that distance education is not as efficient as one-to-one education. Unfortunately, the teacher-student dialogue and the student's understanding of the lesson are insufficient. K12: It is not as effective as school, young people do not care much and primary school is insufficient, even there is not one hour a day, even primary school children need to put more lessons in size, especially 1st and 2nd grades, since it is a much more important basis for primary school children K13: Not good. Couldn't adapt kids K14: The meaning and importance of distance education for me; inadequate and incomplete education. K15: I attended all the classes with my child, but I think that it is very weak and insufficient. K16: There is no education system called distance education, nothing can be trained remotely, this is not a suitable education system no matter what process it is in.
Total		2304	100	

When the answers of 230 participants to the question "What is the meaning and importance of distance education for you" are examined, it is seen that they are classified under two main themes. These themes

are in the form of positive opinion and negative opinion about distance education. 57.7% of the participants expressed a positive opinion about distance education. Parents who gave positive opinions emphasized that they benefited from distance education, and that it was a good solution during the pandemic period and that education could continue regardless of time and place. On the other hand, 42.3% of the participants expressed a negative opinion about the concept of distance education and they made statements that distance education was useless, inefficient, and inadequate.

Within the scope of the study, parents were asked whether they had their child taken private e-lessons during the emergency distance education and if they did, for which course(s) and why they preferred it. Findings related to the question are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

Frequency values about parents' making their children have private lessons during pandemic period

Private lesson	**Frequency**			**Percentage**
Yes	323			13,6
	Secondary School	**High School**	**Primary School**	
	161 (%50)	155 (%48)	7 (%2)	
No	2048			86,4
Total	2371			100

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that majority of the participants (86.4%) who were parents during the distance education process, did not make the students get private lessons for the students. Only 13.6% of the participants stated that they supported them with private lessons in this process. It was observed that 50% of the parents who stated that they took private lessons were students studying in secondary school, 48% had students studying in high school, and only 2% were parents of students studying in primary school. Similarly, when asked about which courses they took private lessons for the student they were the parent of, 25% of the participants said that they received support for artistic lessons such as ballet and piano, 39% for all courses, 6% for mathematics and 5% for English lessons. Even though 25% of the participants stated that they took private lessons, they did not share the information about which lesson it was. When the parents were asked for what purpose they preferred private lessons, all 323 participants stated that it was for the purpose of eliminating the deficiencies and supporting the distance education processes.

Parents were asked through which channels they communicated with their children's teachers since the transition to distance education, and the findings are given in Table 5.

Table 5.

Frequency results related with parent-teacher communication channels during COVID-19 pandemic period

Platforms through with communication is had	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
WhatsApp	2161	91,1
Zoom, Skype etc.	982	41,4
Phone call	970	40,9
SMS	424	17,9
E-mail	42	1,8
Instagram	39	1,6
Facebook	31	1,3
Others	174	7,3

Whatsapp (91.1%) was the most channel which was preferred most by parents to communicate with teachers during the emergency distance education process. This value was followed by Zoom, Skype and chat programs (41.4%), telephone conversations (40.9%) and SMS (17.9%), respectively. The platforms which were least preferred by parents to communicate with teachers were mail (1.8%), Instagram (1.6%) and Facebook (1.3%). 7.3% of the participants stated that they communicated through the platform other than these options. The vast majority (79%) of those who chose the "other" option stated that they contacted via EBA, a significant portion (19%) of them never contacted, and a small portion (2%) stated that they communicated via YouTube.

Participants were given 45 different situations that could arise in the distance education processes and their opinions were asked about whether they participated in these situations. Table 6 shows the results of this problem.

Table 6.

Frequency results related with cases with which parents are confronted during COVID-19 pandemic period

		I agree		I am indifferent		I don't agree	
No	**Items**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**F**	**%**
1	There is no internet connection in our house.	604	25,5	107	4,5	1660	70,0
2	Insufficient internet quota is a problem in distance education.	880	37,1	188	7,9	1303	55,0
3	Slow internet connection speed is a problem in distance education.	1225	51,7	256	10,8	890	37,5
4	There is no separate computer for each of my children, there is a computer and we all use this computer.	1557	65,7	80	3,4	734	31,0
5	My child/Each of my children has a computer of his own.	469	19,8	39	1,6	1863	78,6
6	My child(s) study in their own room.	1658	69,9	182	7,7	531	22,4
7	We did not have any difficulties in getting the login password to EBA, and when we forgot it, it was not difficult to get it again.	1399	59,0	299	12,6	673	28,4
8	We forgot the EBA login password and had to get it again.	555	23,4	169	7,1	1647	69,5
9	Teachers provide adequate technical support to parents and students.	1513	63,8	492	20,7	366	15,5
10	I got assistance/ I am getting assistance from other parents about usage of EBA	368	15,5	155	6,5	1848	77,9
11	I have/I am getting help from teachers in using EBA.	1184	49,9	149	6,3	1038	43,8
12	I find the EBA Assistant and Academic Support application useful.	1160	48,9	790	33,3	421	17,8
13	There are cuts from EBA live lessons.	1395	58,8	429	18,1	547	23,1
14	EBA TV broadcasts support learning.	1329	56,1	643	27,1	399	16,8
15	EBA has materials for each course.	957	40,4	917	38,7	497	21,0
16	The internet package that GSM operators give to students as a gift is sufficient for EBA use.	671	28,3	574	24,2	1126	47,5
17	Internet connection fee should not be collected from students for their EBA usage.	2134	90,0	112	4,7	125	5,3
18	Adequate technical support is provided to students and parents by the Ministry of National Education.	1011	42,7	743	31,3	617	26,0
19	Students are more willing to learn in distance education.	238	10,0	501	21,1	1632	68,8
20	Students can learn the new information more easily by means of distance education.	158	6,7	390	16,4	1823	76,9
21	It is difficult for students to adapt to distance education.	1777	74,9	361	15,2	233	9,8
22	It is not difficult for students to learn new information in live lessons.	587	24,8	737	31,1	1047	44,2
23	In the distance education process, students cannot create time management.	1414	59,6	647	27,3	310	13,1
24	It is difficult for teachers to maintain classroom control in live lessons.	1495	63,1	417	17,6	459	19,4
25	Students can not gain working discipline during distance education process.	1716	72,4	379	16,0	276	11,6
26	Students are more successful in distance education.	108	4,6	374	15,8	1889	79,7
27	I cannot attend to my child's lessons because I am incapable of using the Internet.	484	20,4	338	14,3	1549	65,3
28	In the distance education process, children are more vulnerable to cyber threats and are unprotected.	1305	55,0	633	26,7	433	18,3
29	EBA TV broadcasts for every lesson.	1540	65,0	449	18,9	382	16,1
30	EBA TV broadcasts are sufficient in terms of content.	626	26,4	820	34,6	925	39,0
31	I find EBA TV's preparation programs for central exams sufficient.	449	18,9	916	38,6	1006	42,4
32	My children miss classes due to the conflict of EBA TV program hours.	1022	43,1	378	15,9	971	41,0

33	I find the recess contents of EBA TV useful.	1321	55,7	604	25,5	446	18,8
34	Material variety should be increased in EBA.	1697	71,6	534	22,5	140	5,9
35	As a parent, I can communicate with teachers and school administrators during this process.	1500	63,3	486	20,5	385	16,2
36	With distance education, only theoretical courses are given. Courses that require practice cannot be given.	1359	57,3	665	28,0	347	14,6
37	Exams had during distance education can not measure actual success.	1740	73,4	439	18,5	192	8,1
38	The Ministry of National Education should prepare regulations for exams, passing courses, graduation and internships for compulsory situations requiring distance education.	1411	59,5	641	27,0	319	13,5
39	When face-to-face education is introduced, distance education can be continued to support/reinforce learning during out-of-school hours.	1344	56,7	449	18,9	1344	56,7
40	Distance education must completely replace face-to-face education.	120	5,1	200	8,4	2051	86,5
41	Teachers giving distance education do not get tired as much as they do face-to-face education.	1092	46,1	565	23,8	714	30,1
42	I find the distance education practices of the MEB generally successful.	975	41,1	780	32,9	616	26,0
43	Adequate psychoeducational support is provided to students by the Ministry of National Education.	754	31,8	874	36,9	743	31,3
44	Adequate psychosocial support is provided to parents by the Ministry of National Education.	671	28,3	874	36,9	826	34,8
45	I find the Bizden program for parents on EBA TV useful.	927	39,1	1024	43,2	420	17,7

When Table 6, which includes the opinions of the parents regarding the emergency distance education process carried out in the first period of the pandemic in Turkey, is examined, it was found that the opinion which the participants agree with the highest rate (90%) was “Internet connection fee should not be charged for the use of EBA by students”. This view was followed by the statement “It is difficult for students to adapt to distance education” with 74.9%, and again with 73.4%, it was followed with statement that “Examinations in distance education do not measure real success.” and was followed by 72.4% with statement that “Students cannot provide work discipline during the distance education process” In Table 6, there is the opinion that the parents do not agree with the highest rate, and with 86.5%, “Distance education should completely replace face-to-face education.” This opinion is followed by the opinion “Students are more successful in distance education” with 79.7%; opinion is followed with view that “My child/each child has his/her own computer” 78.6%, and “I have/I get help from other parents in using EBA” with 77.9% and “Students learn new information more easily with distance education” with ratio of 76.9%. The content analysis of 1128 parents' responses to criticisms is given in Table 7.

Table 7.

Criticisms of parents regarding distance education processes during COVID-19 pandemic process

Themes	Frequency	Percentage	Sample Case
Inadequacy	462	41	K1: Very unsuccessful and insufficient K2: EBA is not enough K3: I don't find it enough K4: Insufficient K5: There was not enough teaching
Difficulty	201	17,8	K6: A difficult system to understand K7: The students had a hard time. K8: It is very difficult to learn something new this way K9: I think it is difficult to learn new knowledge and repeat it and place it.
Temporal problems	196	17,4	K10: Lesson hours K11: Short course hours

			K12: There are very few course hours, for example, basic courses should be more. K13: The number of lesson hours is low, only 2 lessons are held per day, not like this at school. K14: Lesson times are very short and contain very fast lectures
Not being similar to face-to-face education	171	15,2	K15: No training can replace face-to-face training. won't hold K16: Of course, school is not like face-to-face education. K17: I did not find it useful because it was not face-to-face K18: I am in favor of face-to-face education K19: It is never a substitute for face-to-face education, it is a very bad practice. K20: Many people have a computer, tablet phone, internet connection, etc. in their homes. there are no things so distance education is not good for me K21: It is bad when there is no internet
Technical problems (infrastructure, internet, computer etc)	98	8,6	K22: We could not attend the lessons of the teachers from the EBA internet, the website could not be opened at all. K23: They have deficiencies in preparing the necessary technical infrastructure for students. K24: The application freezes constantly, there are many difficulties in logging into the application
	1128	100	

When the answers given to the question of what are your criticisms about the distance education practices of the Ministry of National Education, which was asked to the parents, were examined by content analysis, it was observed that they were gathered under five basic themes in total.

These themes range from having the most content to having the least content Inadequacy (41%), Difficulty (17.8%), Time problems (17.4%), Not similar to face-to-face training (15.2%), Technical problems (infrastructure, internet, computer, etc.) (8.6%). The majority of the participants considered that the system was inadequate and made statements about the situation as “insufficient”, “inadequate”, “not sufficient”. When the criticisms of the parents on the distance education process were examined, it was seen that another emphasized concept was that the system and the process were difficult. Parents expressed their criticisms on this subject by using explanations such as “It is a difficult system to understand”, “Students had a hard time”, “It is very difficult to learn something new in this way”. Another topic that parents criticize is related with temporal problems. Under this theme, the parents criticized that the lessons were short in terms of time and that both the lesson hours and the total number of lessons in a day were low. 15.2% of the participants criticized the distance education system by comparing it with the face-to-face education system and they stated that it would not be an alternative to face-to-face education and it would not be as efficient as face-to-face education. 8.6% of the participants stated that the biggest problems in the process were technical problems arising from both the internet and the equipment, and they criticized the distance education process in this regard. Content analysis of the answers given by 1038 parents for positive opinions is shown in Table 8.

Table 8.

Affirmative opinions of parents about distance education processes during COVID-19 pandemic period

Themes	Frequency	Percentage	Sample Case
Process management	492	47,4	K1: It helped the students not to be left behind. It was beneficial for the development of the students. K2: At least, it did not completely remove children from school, lessons and education. Of course, there are shortcomings, but its usefulness cannot be denied. K3: The children did not drop out of school. They didn't get cold from the lessons K4: Children still feel that education is going on for them somewhere.
Opportunity to repeat	438	42,2	K5: In this period, distance education made children say that repeating their lessons is better than nothing. K6: Good topic repetition K7: Repeating the lessons and not forgetting the lessons K8: It helps children to reinforce the topics again

			K9: There are videos on all subjects within the curriculum. Students are provided with materials to reinforce what they have learned.
Health	108	10,4	K10: Good for our children's health K11: Our children stayed at home, they stayed healthy, this is the most important thing. K12: It's a big step for children, mothers don't mind, I think it is very important that they have a healthy look at home in front of me. K13: A precaution against the virus
	1038	100	

When the answers given to the question of what are your affirmative opinions about the distance education practices of the Ministry of National Education, which was asked to the parents, were examined by means of content analysis, it was seen that they were grouped under three main themes in total. Majority of the participants (47.4%) considered it positive that at least they did not fall behind in the distance education process. They made statements regarding this view by stating “the children did not drop out of school”, “at least they did not get away from the lesson completely”. When the affirmative opinions of the parents about distance education process were examined, it was seen that another concept emphasized by 42.2% of the parents was that the system allowed for repetition. Parents expressed their opinions about this subject with expressions as “Repetition of the good subject”, “Repetition of the lesson and not forgetting the lessons”, “It helps children to reinforce the subjects again”. Another topic that 10.4% of parents consider as positive is related with health. Under this theme, parents stated that distance education is good for children's health during the pandemic process. Content analysis of the answers given by 803 parents for the suggestions is shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Suggestions of parents about distance education processes during COVID-19 pandemic period

Themes	Frequency	Percentage	Sample Case
Making test	245	30,5	K1: Children can be tested in distance education K2: There should be an online exam K3: The exam related to the topics covered could be done orally. by course teachers K4: Evaluation of knowledge by taking an exam once a week K5: A general exam should be done when each subject is finished.
Continuation	215	26,7	K6: EBA TV should continue when face-to-face training is started. K7: I recommend continuing education for support purposes. K8: I would like it to continue when the schools open, it would be like repeating the course K9: Should continue as a supporter
Content and material support	187	23,3	K10: I think that more professional content and applications can be developed in the process. K11: More content can be added. K12: EBA contents should be enriched K13: Mathematics lessons can be made more fun for primary school children. By using different materials, it can be made to be catchy and entertaining. K14: Various materials can be used during the lectures on EBA TV in order to be catchy about the subject.
Time increase	156	19,5	K15: Since lectures are given in a certain period of time in distance education, topics are explained very quickly. New topics are getting harder to grasp. It is necessary to change this situation positively and to add more time to the issues. K16: EBA TV course duration should be extended K17: The duration of the lessons given for primary school is very little, it can be increased.

			K18: They can tell a little slower, so the time may be a little longer. K19: The lecture period may be a little longer. The children gather themselves and sit in the lesson, concentrate on the lesson and the lesson ends.
	803	100	

When the answers given to the question of what are your suggestions about the distance education applications of the Ministry of National Education, which was asked to the parents, were examined by means of content analysis, it was seen that they were grouped under four main themes. These themes were corrected as ranging from having the most content to having the least content (30.5%), continuing (26.7%), content and material support (23.3%), and Time increase (19.5%). Highest rate of recommendation from the participants was in the form of taking the exam. They made explanations about this situation by means of expressions such as “Children can take exams in distance education”, “There should be an online exam”, “A general exam should be done when every subject is finished”. When the parents' suggestions about distance education process are examined, it is seen that another emphasized suggestion is that the distance education should continue as supportive in addition to the face-to-face education. Another topic that parents suggest is diversity in content and material. Under this theme, the parents suggested that more professional content and applications could be developed in the process, and that different materials could be used to make the lessons become memorable and enjoyable. 19.5% of the participants suggested an increase in the duration of the courses in the distance education system.

5. Result and Conclusion

In this study, which aims to reveal the experiences, criticisms and suggestions of parents about the emergency and compulsory distance education practices in schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education due to the pandemic, the majority of parents stated that they consider distance education to be positive but that it can not replace face-to-face education. Parents' approach to distance education is better than having no education at all. Same parents stated that distance education is inadequate, difficult to learn, restrictive in terms of the time allocated to classes and that it is a system that can not replace face-to-face education. When we look at the studies that overlap with this finding, there are studies that reveal the following: the necessity of distance education activities but also their inadequacy (Okatan & Tagay, 2021); Distance education has not achieved its purpose and is not as effective as face-to-face education (Erol & Erol, 2020). Not having the digital competence to use online education applications in the distance education process (Arslan et al., 2021); Distance education is problematic and challenging for families, parents lack digital skills, cannot embrace online learning (Dong et al., 2020). Studies revealing that parents have a pessimistic attitude towards distance education due to the difficulty of learning distance education (Zhang, 2021). However, there are also studies that overlap with this conclusion and show that parents consider distance education activities as being productive and are satisfied with distance education activities (İnci Kuzu, 2020; Yılmaz et al., 2020). Depending on the negativities being experienced, the parents stated that distance education is a difficult system to learn; It can be attributed to the fact that they had such an experience for the first time, they were caught unprepared for this situation and their lack of digital literacy.

In another result of this study, parents drew attention to the difficulty of adapting students to distance education and they stated that students were not willing to learn in distance education, they could not learn easily and as a result, they would not be successful. The parents, who rejected the idea of completely replacing face-to-face education with distance education, stated that face-to-face education could be supportive because it allows for repetition. When the studies in the literature are examined, it is seen that in distance education, students cannot achieve permanent learning in the online environment, distance education can not replace face-to-face education, and students' knowledge deficiencies cannot be eliminated in this way (Kaya & Dilekçi, 2021). It is stated that what has been done during the pandemic process is insufficient, more efforts should be made for the education of children, children do not want to participate in studies, their development cannot be supported, their problematic behaviors increase, their routines are disrupted, and they can not fully benefit from distance education (Şenol & Yaşar, 2020). It is stated that

online education can not replace the physically applied face-to-face education in classrooms, and that students do not have an adequate environment for learning in terms of both cognitive and emotional participation (Zang, 2021). The vast majority of parents (92%) found that face-to-face education at school was more valuable after the distance education process that started during the pandemic period (Yılmaz et al., 2020). Distance education does not replace face-to-face education, it is not effective, and as a result, the academic success of students is negatively affected during this process (Erol & Erol, 2020). It seems to coincide with studies showing that distance education and face-to-face education can support each other in the future (Akgül & Oran, 2021). Based on this result, the opinion parents have that distance education should be considered as a system that does not replace face-to-face education but supports face-to-face education, which has difficulties in terms of adaptation for the student due to the circumstances, can be considered as very important and instructive.

In another result of this study, it has been determined that most of the parents do not take special lessons for reinforcement purposes and stay away from physical interaction during the distance education process. Interaction between students and teacher-student interaction is very important in education. Pandemic has eliminated the ideal face-to-face education environment. It is considered that these behaviors of the parents can be explained by the pandemic conditions. A small number of parents organizing private lessons have provided their children with private lessons due to the problems, deficiencies and inadequacies experienced in the distance education processes. There has been a pandemic process with minimal interaction. This situation prevented students from learning by interacting and socializing. Negative interactions arising from interaction are also frequently found in studies in the literature (Daniela et al., 2021; Dong et al., 2020; Garbe et al., 2020; Misirli & Ergulec, 2021; Yılmaz et al., 2020) and this result overlaps. The absence of real environments where students can interact with each other, not allowing for socialization, and an artificial and superficial virtual environment are the particulars seen (Kaya & Dilekçi, 2021). Restricted interaction and inability to socialize constitutes an important problem in distance education (Lau and Lee, 2020; Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020). During the pandemic, students could not socialize and receive adequate guidance services (Basaran et al., 2020). The possibility that the virus can be transmitted to students due to interaction caused parents to display an extremely anxious, meticulous, protective and protective approach (Ercan et al., 2020). During the pandemic process, parents were afraid of losing their family members and relatives, their anxiety and worries increased, and they experienced anxiety for the future (Tuzcuoğlu et al., 2021). Studies revealed that the biggest advantage of distance education when compared to face-to-face education is that children receive education in a safe environment in terms of health (Akgül & Oran, 2021) which is similar to this result. As it is known, the most obvious difference in distance learning and face-to-face learning arises from the physical presence or absence of students and teachers (TEDMEM, 2020). Since it is necessary for the health of the children to stay home during the distance education process, the parents preferred to stay away from the initiatives that would provide the socialization and physical interaction of the students, such as private lessons. It can be stated that the fear and anxiety that the virus can be transmitted by contact during the pandemic process constituted one of the factors that prevented parents from taking lessons for reinforcement purposes.

Within the scope of this study, the parents stated that the technical support provided to them in using EBA was partially adequate. In this process, parents received technical support from teachers about using EBA. The parents received technical support from the Ministry of National Education, although it was not sufficient for other technical problems being experienced such as connection issues. When the studies are examined, it is seen that there are studies which emphasize the technical problems of emergency distance education (Garbe et al., 2020; Günbaş & Gözüçuk, 2020; Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020). Covid-19 pandemic has led to a rapid transition to distance education, which puts more responsibility on parents than usual for learning (Lee et al., 2021). In this process, parents have been the most important assistants and learning agents of students in online learning (Daniela et al., 2021; Lau & Lee, 2020). As a natural consequence of particulars such as technological infrastructure, they experienced problems with students and were negatively affected by the process together with students (Daniela et al., 2021; Griffith, 2020; Misirli & Ergulec, 2021). Connection problems were also experienced during distance education (Keskin & Özer

Kaya, 2020). Education stakeholders found distance education insufficient due to infrastructure deficiencies (Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020). Reasons for the negative approaches of parents to distance education, which are that there are infrastructure problems in distance education during the pandemic and the current practices are insufficient (Kadan, 2021), are as follows, in order of frequency: type of education, interaction, technical reasons, student and family-based experiences (Kaya & Dilekçi, 2021) and these factors coincide with this result.

Another result of this study has shown that parents were worried about fulfilling their responsibilities in the distance education process and could not trust them, they thought that children could not adapt to distance education voluntarily, they could not manage time, they could not discipline themselves, and teachers thought that they would have difficulty in controlling the classroom. When the literature is examined, it is seen that the studies covering the following overlap with the aim of this research: The problems experienced by the parents in distance education are caused by the students, the students neglect their responsibilities, spend a lot of time in front of the computer / tablet and engage in extracurricular issues, there is no in-depth learning due to motivation problems, the teachers cannot follow up sufficiently (Kaya & Dilekçi, 2021), students are away from school during the pandemic process. Prolonged stay in education causes concerns about learning losses of all stakeholders in education (TEDMEM, 2020), students experience low motivation (Garbe et al., 2020; Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020), inadequacy in self-regulation skills (Dong et al., 2020; Lau & Lee, 2020), the excessive and unconscious use of digital tools (Erol & Erol, 2020; Lau & Lee, 2020; Misirli & Ergulec, 2021), the increase in the time spent by all family members on television, computer, telephone and internet during the pandemic process (Özyürek et al, 2021), according to Chinese parents, the essence of distance education Studies that have been found to deepen the problem for students with low efficiency and insufficient learning autonomy (Zhang, 2021) overlap with this result of the study. Based on these results, it can be stated that parents who can not trust their children in the distance education process have a right to worry about their children. Because distance education broadcasts such as TV and distance education applications are highly likely to be insufficient in the learning of children with low academic success and insufficient self-regulation skills (TEDMEM, 2020).

According to the parents in this study, the biggest obstacle faced by students in distance education or EBA application is the deprivation caused by economic inadequacy. This situation has caused inequality of opportunity in the acquisition of technological devices to be connected to the internet and has further increased the digital divide. The high demand for not charging internet connection fees in EBA usage, the lack of technological tools that every child can connect to the internet in families with many children support the economic insufficiency. Similarly, in studies conducted with parents, issues such as lack of economic resources, lack of internet access, lack of reliable infrastructure and devices, lack of technology literacy and insufficient digital self-efficacy constitute difficulties affecting parents in distance education (Garbe et al., 2020); Distance education is problematic for teachers, students and parents due to the fact that every family does not have equal technological equipment and that there are inadequacies in technology use skills (Guernsey et al., 2020). The inability to have distance education tools or to buy new ones due to economic inadequacies constitutes a major problem (Kaya & Dilekçi, 2021), and there are inequalities in the access of students to technology and the internet, including individuals with special needs, during the pandemic process (Kaden, 2020; Sullivan et al., 2020). Children of high-income families can benefit from online education without any problems, while children from low-income families have difficulties in completing their homework and participating in education online (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). Students in rural areas have limited opportunities, do not have sufficient teaching materials, most of them do not have their own room, they do not have personal computers/tablets, additional devices such as work desks, headphones, cameras, and educational materials that will help teaching about their own lessons (Kuş et al., 2021). Students suffer from technological deprivation due to their rural living conditions, they have trouble connecting to the internet or they can not have access to internet at all (Karahan et al., 2020). Biggest problem encountered in distance education is the internet problem, the state should provide free internet assistance to families in need, and the infrastructure problems related to the internet should be eliminated (Akgül & Oran (2021). Inequalities are experienced in every society, but the pandemic has made even the

distribution of this inequality unequal (d'Orville, 2020). Findings that inequalities are not unique to the pandemic period, and that those who are already exposed to inequality are more affected by it during the pandemic than many other segments (Bozkurt et al., 2020) coincide with this result. Furthermore, the closure of schools along with the pandemic has not only disrupted education but has also led to more inequality (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020; Williamson et al., 2020). Digital divide is defined as the difference between those who have access to digital technologies and those who can not, or those who use digital technologies and those who can not (Hargittai, 2003). Social inequalities that emerged with the pandemic caused the pandemic process to be felt more severely, further increased and made the existing digital divide more evident. The Effect of the digital divide was felt not only in the context of countries or societies, but also in the context of institutions, even learners enrolled in different institutions in the same city were affected by the digital divide (Zhong, 2020). In Turkey, only 63% of the students have an internet connection at home, 66% have a computer or tablet, 64% have their emergency distance education from their computer or tablet. The particular that 32% of them continue on their smartphones and 23% cannot continue their distance education shows how important the digital divide is beyond the pandemic. (Karadağ and Yücel, 2020). Based on this result, it can be said that equality of opportunity can not be achieved without eliminating economic inequalities, and failure to provide equality of opportunity will further increase the digital divide.

In this study, it can be stated that the communication of parents with the school administration or teachers during the pandemic process is strong. In this process, the communication between the parents was quite low compared to the communication between the teacher and the parents. In this communication, it is seen that Whatsapp application stands out as an effective communication tool in the presence of information security concerns. As being similar to this result, parents stated that they carried out distance education in different ways such as Whatsapp and lesson videos during the pandemic (Erdem et al., 2021), and that they used the Whatsapp application during the pandemic process widely (Khan, 2020). Teachers gave online lessons and shared worksheets for their children who were continuing with inclusive education via Whatsapp group (Yazçayır & Gürgür (2021), classroom guidance teachers shared necessary information about lessons, assignments and programs through chat applications (Arslan et al., 2020), parents shared their worksheets during the pandemic process. stating that majority of them were in contact with their teachers, that they communicated through social networks (Yılmaz et al., 2020), and that social networks constituted a very important communication tool that provided communication with teachers during the pandemic period (Saavedra, 2020). It was reported in the studies that communication between students and teachers was weak during the pandemic process (Sintema, 2020). Based on this result, it can be said that social network applications, which are widely used for communication during the pandemic process, make a positive contribution to the conduct of distance education and student-teacher-parent communication.

According to another result of this study, it was seen that the parents stated that there was content for each lesson in EBA, but that these contents were inadequate and that the contents should be enriched. There are studies in the literature that support this outcome. Distance education can not be carried out efficiently due to the lack of sufficient number and quality content in every grade level, branch and subject in vocational courses (Türker & Dündar, 2020). EBA content should be prepared according to the level of children and individual differences, content should be made more useful, content containing advertisements should be removed, and more course videos should be published (Demir & Özdaş, 2020), open and distance education system should be strengthened in terms of infrastructure, access, security, content, design, implementation, quality, legislation and pedagogy (Can, 2020). The content provided for preschool education in the distance education process is lacking in terms of materials and content that will support the academic, emotional and social development of children (Akkaş Baysal et al., 2020). There are problems in accessing equipment, materials and internet in the distance education process (Erdem et al., 2021). Findings of the study (Yıldız et al., 2020) coincide with the findings of the fact that not providing supportive written materials (reading books, worksheets, test books) that they can use at home to students who follow the contents offered on EBA TV with their own means causes for inequality among students to become more apparent.

Based on this result, it is seen that EBA's inadequacy in terms of content, problems in content, openness and open source philosophy make it become important. Openness refers to the learning structure where barriers are removed between the individuals who demand information and information sources, the learners joining or leaving the mass open online course system interact and communicate during these lessons, meaning that the freedom to produce or consume information is apparent (Bozkurt, 2015). Openness is a concept that defines the learning process where the limitations are minimized and the learning decisions are taken by the learner (Rumble, 1997). Hence, it can be stated that openness philosophy reduces the emergence of social, economic and cultural differences as an obstacle in the learning process as well as the individual differences of the learners. Open course resources are to close the gap that emerged with the slogan of "education for all" and its ultimate goal is related with digital divide (Smith & Casserly, 2006). At the center of the open course resources movement is the idea that knowledge is the common property of humanity and that anyone who wishes can share, use and reuse knowledge by means of today's technologies. Structuring of educational practices and resources in the context of the philosophy of openness together with the pandemic period has shown the true value of openness in education (Bozkurt et al., 2020). As a result of these observations, there are strong suggestions to support the philosophy of openness in education in the post-Covid-19 period and to develop policies in this direction (CoL, 2020; International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2020). In addition to the use of open educational practices and the use of open educational resources, in the context of the formation of a culture of sharing and cooperation that can carry the movement of openness in education forward in the coming years, together with the pandemic, very valuable actions have been taken in the individual and institutional sense. Significant developments have been experienced all over the world in terms of open data and open science, and a global example of sharing and cooperation culture has been witnessed (Bozkurt, 2020). Ensuring the continuity of this will contribute to the solution of the content problem in the long run and will reduce the digital divide experienced at the content point.

6. Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it can be stated that in order to eliminate the inequality of opportunity that normally exists but deepened by the pandemic process, it would be appropriate to solve the technological infrastructure problems, increase the service quality in the internet connection and arrange the connection fees in accordance with the purchasing power.

In order to reduce the digital divide, providing economic incentives to families who do not have the technological tools to connect to the internet due to economic impossibilities, providing free internet connection in case of accessing the platforms where the course content is included, will contribute to ensuring equality of opportunity at the digital access point and reducing the digital divide.

Strengthening and disseminating the open source and openness philosophy will make distance education more enjoyable, suitable for all ages and grade levels, taking into account individual differences, making distance education more enjoyable, and preparing continuous professional content will make distance education effective and preferable.

Digital skills, digital literacy and digital competencies are the issues that need to be emphasized in today's information age. Even though digital learning and distance education is on the agenda due to necessity during the pandemic period, it will remain on the agenda in the new normal situation. Hence, developing policies for the development of digital literacy skills of not only learners and teachers but also all citizens with an inclusive perspective will contribute to increasing the society's competence in digital literacy.

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