

Experiences with emergency distance education: A dilemma between face-to-face education and distance education in tour guiding

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Abstract: Universities switched from face-to-face to emergency distance education as a solution to the crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic. This enabled face-to-face students to experience distance education. This study examined these experiences for tour guiding education. Distance education was available in tour guiding departments at a few Türkiye universities before the pandemic, and this was a discussion topic in academic. However, emergency distance education presented a dilemma for students: distance education or face-to-face education. Thus, the research includes students in the face-to-face tour guiding departments. A qualitative, phenomenological approach was employed to collect data using semi-structured interviews and an online questionnaire. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that students preferred face-to-face education while being uncertain about the pros and cons of distance education. However, this decision should be underlined as not definitive. The study emphasizes that distance education is ineffective for tour guiding education due to the absence of practical courses, which are crucial for tour guiding, as well as effective communication. The study provides theoretical insights into the educational strategies used in tourism during crises and offers practical implications for enhancing distance education in higher education institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic forced a move to online learning at all education levels in most countries due to the risk of continuing face-to-face education (Masalimova et al., 2022). Emergency distance education (EDE) refers to online education activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In Türkiye, for example, the Chairman of the Council of Higher Education announced in a press statement dated March 18, 2020, that all university programs in Türkiye would be conducted via distance education (Saraç, 2020). Like institutions worldwide, universities in Türkiye began distance education in the spring semester of 2019-2020, which continued until the end of that academic year (Durak & Çankaya, 2020a). Then, except for departments requiring applied education, universities under the Council of Higher Education continued with distance education throughout the autumn semester of 2020-2021. Many

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universities also prioritized infrastructure improvements, such as software licenses and personnel recruitment, to be better prepared for distance education activities in the pandemic period (Durak & Çankaya, 2020b). Nevertheless, it cannot be said that universities adjusted swiftly to distance education procedures (Durak et al., 2020).

The EDE reflected the lack of time and opportunity to train teachers or arrange distance education methodically during the pandemic (Toquero, 2020). Hence, the Turkish Council of Higher Education defines EDE as the “temporary transfer of face-to-face education to the technological environment in a crisis” (Turkish Higher Education Quality Council, 2020). In this case, the main goal is not to rebuild a sustainable education ecosystem but to provide temporary access to learning and teaching support that can be easily set up and made available during an emergency or crisis (Bakhov et al., 2021). Despite using similar components, EDE differs from normal online education in terms of terminology and functionality. Turkish universities implemented EDE effectively during the pandemic, which indicates that this innovative concept may grow and spread in the future (Karataş & Tuncer, 2020).

The Tourist Guiding Professional Law (Law 6326) establishes the acceptance requirements for the tourist guide profession in Türkiye. According to the law, there are two ways to meet the requirements. The first is through tour guiding education (TGE) provided by institutions (i.e. vocational schools, and universities). The second is through TUREB’s (Turkish Tourist Guides Association) regional and national certification programs for tour guides under the direction of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Vocational schools offer both face-to-face and distance-learning TGE programs. As debates on distance tour guiding curricula continue (Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023; Köksalanlar & Çözeli, 2021; Yağcı et al., 2019), the EDE has generated dilemmas in TGE. This is because students who receive face-to-face education in tour guiding departments do not perceive distance education favorably (Yağcı et al., 2019). Due to Covid-19, these students had to engage in distance education, allowing them to experience distance TGE's efficiency.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of students studying in face-to-face tour guiding departments regarding EDE, which is compulsory due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The study helps to solve students’ dilemma about distance education given that previous studies of EDE in tourism education have identified both advantages and disadvantages of distance education (Choi et al., 2021, Qiu et al., 2021; Munoz et al., 2021; Ritonga, 2022; Ye & Law, 2021) and discussions regarding the adequacy of distance education to provide practical gains in tourism education (Bilsland et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2021; Munoz et al., 2021). The study thus aims to evaluate the EDE for TGE within this framework, considering both theoretical and practical learning. The theoretical justification of data collection tool comes from various previous studies (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022; Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023; Bilsland et al., 2020; Chandra et al., 2022; Choi et al., 2021; Goh, 2020; Köksalanlar & Çözeli, 2021; Munoz et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2021; Ritonga, 2022; Shyju et al., 2021; Şanlıöz-Özgen & Küçükaltan, 2023; Tavitiyaman et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2022; Ye & Law, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021). The present study contributes to tourism education by revealing students’ awareness and perceptions regarding the efficacy of distance education for acquiring qualifications for the tour guiding profession.

This study answers a previous research dilemma: students may learn practical skills offline but should still be aware of technology advances. In this line, tour guiding students who are undecided between face-to-face education and distance education are investigated. Addressed the following research questions:

RQ₁: Is EDE sufficient for TGE?

RQ₂: What are the perceptions of distance tour guiding education?

RQ₃: What are the perceptions of face-to-face TGE?

RQ₄: What are the students’ perceptions of the advantages of EDE for TGE?

RQ₅: What are the students' perceptions of the disadvantages of EDE for TGE?

RQ₆: Is distance education practically sufficient for tour guiding?

RQ₇: What are the perceived differences between distance education and face-to-face education in TGE?

RQ₈: What is the level of students' comprehension of distance education courses?

1.1. Background

1.1.1. Distance education

Distance education is an education method based on the internet and interactive technology that enables instructors and students to connect in a real-time setting from different locations (Simonson & Seepersaud, 2019). Newby et al. (2000: 210) define it as “*the teaching program in which teachers and students are physically independent of each other*”, while Gunawardena and McIsaac (2013) define it as “*education provided using electronic communication tools at a different time or place than the instructors*”. Advances in both business and science are now essential due to the rapid development of information and communication technology. Within this trend, earlier major communication tools of distance education, such as the telephone, television, and audio/video recordings, have become irrelevant (Kim & Jeong, 2018) to be replaced by online learning technologies, such as active learning tools (Kim & Jeong, 2018) and online courses (Qiu et al., 2021). Meanwhile, there is increasing familiarity with platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, and Google Courses, which were widely used during the Covid-19 pandemic (Kapasiasa et al., 2020). The use of these technologies, which have a function at each stage of the education process, is effective in promoting teaching techniques like distance education and online learning. Finally, earlier forms of distance education have been modified by new conceptualizations, such as hybrid combinations of distance learning, flexible learning, distributed learning, and web-enhanced instruction (Gunawardena & McIsaac, 2013: 355).

1.1.2. Advantages and disadvantages of distance education

There are both advantages and disadvantages to distance education, which students and instructors can access from different locations (Kim & Jeong, 2018: 120). According to Fojtík (2018:16), the advantages include the opportunity to attend courses at work, study at a time determined by the student, individually plan the studying mode at the workplace and at school, the absence of school every day, and the completion of tasks over the internet. Similarly, Klisowska et al. (2021), list the advantages of time management, the ability to study at the student's own speed, and access to a vast variety of educational materials. However, one of the most important advantages of online education is overcoming physical location barriers (Chandra et al., 2022).

Fojtík (2018:16) lists the following disadvantages of distance: limited communication with instructors and classmates, missing classes and seminars, self-study, occasional escapism from the information that the student records while attending, difficulty in organizing time effectively, and motivation problems. Klisowska et al. (2021) also underline the absence of social connection as well as the need to spend a lot of time in front of a computer, and the lack of direct contact with the instructor. Köksalanlar and Çözeli (2021) emphasize the serious challenge of motivation in distance education. Due to motivational issues, sometimes referred to as reluctance towards the lesson, students frequently put off tasks and struggle with time management because they cannot adapt to distance education, thereby losing interest in the lesson.

From their investigation of tour guiding students' perceptions of distance education, Köksalanlar and Çözeli (2021) found that students have negative perceptions due to the lack of a physical classroom environment, education based solely on study notes that may also be incomprehensible, inability to communicate, technological issues, and failure to understand the course. According to Arıcı and Karaçay (2023:304), the disadvantages of distance education

include a lack of motivation, the loss of instructional and socializing roles, and a lack of control over the education process. In addition, there are communication problems, a lack of face-to-face connection, and the requirement for technical support (Korkmaz & Toraman, 2020) while Pesha and Kamarova (2021) state that the primary disadvantages of distance education include restricted communication, the need for additional help for students with difficulties understanding their courses, lack of self-discipline, lack of technological support, and unclear working hours.

1.2. EDE

Distance education is a very important tool during emergencies (Jiang et al., 2021), and the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated how important it was for higher education particularly (Li & Agyeiwaah, 2023; Qiu et al., 2021). Ideally, distance education and online learning, require planning studies and instructional designs based on theory and models. However, owing to the quick transition to EDE, which Adedoyin and Soykan (2020) identified as one of the migration techniques in the struggle against the crisis, several planning, design, and development shortcomings emerged during the pandemic. Given that EDE implemented during a pandemic differs from traditional distance education (Wang et al., 2020), Adedoyin and Soykan (2020) assert that EDE should not be regarded as effective online learning or the digital transformation of universities. Instead, they suggest examining it through the framework of “*emergency distance education platforms*”.

EDE is the temporary transfer of face-to-face education to an online environment during a crisis (Turkish Higher Education Quality Council, 2020). That is, it describes online learning activities implemented in response to the pandemic crisis environment to minimize disruption to the educational process (Sezgin, 2021). EDE initiatives globalized education, with problems like climate change, terrorism, refugee crises, natural catastrophes, and the battle against diseases becoming global issues (Qiu et al., 2021). Furthermore, similar crises will likely arise in the future, so educational institutions are now required to be prepared to respond to emergencies at any moment. For example, since the Covid-19 pandemic, Türkiye has experienced two earthquake disasters centered in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023 (Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute, 2023). Thus, EDE has been required in Turkish higher institutions due to both the pandemic and seismic disasters. Although EDE was implemented in all education institutions during the pandemic, it was only done in higher institutions after the earthquakes.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, higher education institutions accelerated the implementation of online EDE courses. These began in March 2020, in the middle of the Spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year and continued in both semesters of the 2020-2021 academic year. During the 2021-2022 academic year, hybrid education initiatives were increasingly integrated into face-to-face education. While face-to-face education returned in the Fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year, EDE reemerged as one of the government’s disaster management policies, after student dormitories were allocated to earthquake victims following the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes mentioned above. Therefore, universities completed the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year with EDE until April, and hybrid and distance education thereafter. In short, since the pandemic, EDE has become a crucial crisis intervention in Türkiye.

1.3. EDE in Tourism Education

As in other sectors, the Covid-19 pandemic damaged tourism education (Ye & Law, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021). The severe restrictions imposed by Covid-19 have made the transition to online hospitality and tourism education an obligation rather than an option (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022: 9). Although the Covid-19 pandemic significantly hindered tourism education (Ye & Law, 2021), many institutions are likely to continue with online courses as part of hybrid

education programs if the shortcomings due to the rapid shift to distance education platforms during the pandemic can be resolved (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). This would confirm Goh's (2020) prediction that as technology use grows, so will its application to tourism and hospitality education (Ritonga, 2022).

Studies conducted during the pandemic indicate that distance education will become a popular trend in tourism education (Choi et al., 2020; Qiu et al., 2021; Ritonga, 2022). In addition to Tavitiyaman et al. (2021) who reported a sudden migration to distance education in tourism, other studies focus on the advantages of EDE for tourism programs in this migration (Goh & Sigala, 2020; Lei & So, 2021). However, EDE activities implemented outside the norm impacted the method of teaching practice-based courses for tourism (Hsu, 2021). Therefore, various challenges have emerged. One of these is an inability to gain practical skills (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022). Academic institutions play a crucial role in transforming students into qualified professionals with essential skills for the tourism industry (Prifti et al., 2020). However, the pandemic resulted in the virtualization of classroom practical training (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2020; Sharma, 2020), compromising the benefits that students derive from classroom training (Shyju et al., 2021). Even though advanced technologies like virtual tour platforms, provide innovative ways to give application-based information and enhance the learning experience (Patiar et al., 2021), gaps remain in internship training and sector-specific practice courses (Qiu et al., 2021). Consequently, practical training outcomes, which are key components of tourism education, were significantly impacted by the pandemic. Although distance education during the pandemic process assisted tourism students in managing their daily lives, tourism and accommodation education requires a certain level of applied learning, as Kaushal and Srivastava (2020) emphasized in their study of tourism students in India. Similarly, Choi et al. (2020) believe that offline education is vital for students to obtain practical experience in the tourism industry. With the transition from traditional to creative evaluation, however, application training criteria may change in response to the pandemic (Qiu et al., 2021). Another advantage that EDE revealed is that tourism students can work part-time or full-time in the tourism industry. That is, online learning allows students to continue their education while meeting family and professional obligations (O'Connor, 2021).

Previous evaluations of EDE show that tourism students found their online courses to be clear, organized, practical, and fluent (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022). Although the virtual format presents some technological challenges, both students' and instructors' computer proficiency is growing (Hodges et al., 2020). Additionally, tourism students claimed to be ready for online learning and using the internet and technological devices (Poláková & Klímová, 2021). Given that students also need the knowledge and skills regarding widely used technology in the tourism industry (Xu et al. 2022), distance education has demonstrated, the need for tourism students to have essential technology-related equipment (Bucak & Yigit, 2021).

1.4. Overview of Studies on EDE in Tourism Education

Numerous studies have been conducted on use of EDE in tourism education due to Covid-19, focused on students' online experiences (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022; Munoz et al., 2021), perceptions (Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023; Korkmaz et al., 2023; Köksalanlar and Çözeli, 2021; Tavitiyaman et al., 2021), satisfaction (Chandra et al., 2022; Choi et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2021; Li, & Agyeiwaah, 2023; Shyju et al., 2021), and psychological situations (Tavitiyaman et al., 2021; Zapata-Cuervo et al. al., 2023; Zhong et al., 2021). Other studies have focused on EDE's effectiveness (Qiu et al., 2021; Patiari et al., 2021; Ritonga, 2022; Ye, & Law, 2021), the future of tourism education (Xu et al., 2022), and instructors' experiences with EDE (Şanlıöz-Özgen, & Küçükaltan, 2023). Agyeiwaah et al. (2022) claim that Covid-19 seriously disrupted pedagogical practices. They also emphasise that educational institutions that instruct students in the field of hospitality and tourism should design online course presentations in a visually appealing and encouraging environment. Arıcı and Karaçay (2023) found that despite problems

with technical support and communication at their universities, tour guiding students are satisfied with the advantages of online education, such as convenience and low cost. Chandra et al. (2022) point out the importance of practical lessons and on-site training. To meet industry expectations for student employability, they emphasize the need for efficient tools and curricular adjustments. According to Choi et al. (2021), blended education should be considered to support learning if online learning is to be successful. They also emphasize that communication between faculty and students continues to be a key factor for success. Choi et al. (2020) also state that improvements in online learning are achieved when stronger relationships are established between instructors and students. Additionally, Kaushal and Srivastava (2020) noted sectoral concerns about the practical benefits of accommodation and tourism education. According to Korkmaz et al. (2022), although tourism students have favorable perceptions of distance education, they prefer to attend classes face-to-face. In addition, they discussed the disadvantages of distance education, including isolation from the social environment, technical issues, and the difficulty of communicating with the instructor. Köksalanlar and Çözeli (2021), in one of the few studies on tour guiding education during the Covid-19 period, reported that students perceive distance education negatively due to a lack of one-on-one education and classroom environment, inability to communicate, internet problems, and lack of technical tools like computers. They also found that most students were unwilling to study, unable to concentrate, and disengaged from their courses and school. On the other hand, some students evaluated distance education positively due to factors like convenience, accessibility, and efficient use of time. O'Connor (2021) investigated the active learning methodologies used in higher education travel and tourism programs in Ireland. They highlighted the significance of applied learning in bridging the gap between academia and industry, where students learn to perform properly.

Patiar et al. (2021) evaluated the function of the Virtual Field Trip (VFT) platform for meeting practical skills in online education. They concluded that VFT provides a technology-enhanced option for acquiring employability skills. Qiu et al. (2021) recommends the internationalization of online tourism education given that any country may face the problem of how to address crises like climate change, terrorism, refugee flows, and natural disasters. They suggest internationalizing by diversifying platforms, internationalizing the curriculum, internationalizing professors, and internationalizing students. According to Amin et al. (2022), motivational factors are important in e-learning. The quality of e-learning impacts both student competency and satisfaction. Kallou and Kikilia (2021) call EDE as “transformative” and state that “The latest Covid-19 pandemic developments have led to a new perspective of education through digital technologies, changing how universities perceive the teaching and the learning process” (p.37). Finally, Justin et al. (2022) examined students’ online learning experiences and found that, although they agree that online learning makes their work life easier, they prefer to attend in-person classes.

2. METHOD

A qualitative, phenomenology research design was adopted for this study. Phenomenology refers to the conscious experience of a person’s own life environments (Schram, 2003:71). That is, it studies experience or consciousness structures and examines the structure of perception, cognition, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, volition, physical awareness, embodied action, and social interaction. It examines conscious experience from the first-person point of view as well as the conditions of experience that are important to those structures (Smith, 2018). Phenomenology is a popular approach in the social sciences because it allows individual experiences to be studied (Merriam, 2018). In this line, this study examines the EDE experiences of the students to evaluate the efficacy of distance education for tour guiding.

2.1. Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was preferred for “obtaining in-depth information about specific attributes of the person, event, or situation most appropriate to answering the research questions” (Maxwell, 2012: 97). The sample comprised students registered in face-to-face tour guiding departments at universities in Istanbul. The sample selection criterion was to have experience of at least one semester in EDE (hybrid education or distance education) applied during the Covid-19 pandemic, as distinct from normal learning processes. There are also distance education programs in Türkiye, mainly in Istanbul. Thus, they were not included in the research. The study was conducted with 81 students registered in face-to-face tour guiding departments in Istanbul universities during the academic year 2022-2023 (Table 1).

2.2. Data Collection

The data were collected during the Fall and Spring semesters of the 2022-2023 academic year, with approval from the university ethics committee, (Istanbul Arel University Ethics Committee’s decision dated 06 June 2022, numbered Istanbul 2022/10). Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions (four demographic questions and nine TGE questions). Three of TGE questions were close-ended, while the remaining six were open-ended. The interview questions were adapted for tour guiding education from previous studies of EDE in tourism education during the Covid-19 pandemic (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022; Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023; Bilsland et al., 2020; Chandra et al., 2022; Choi et al., 2021; Goh, 2020; Köksalanlar & Çözeli, 2021; Munoz et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2021; Ritonga, 2022; Shyju et al., 2021; Şanlıöz-Özgen & Küçükaltan, 2023; Tavitiyaman et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2022; Ye & Law, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021). Merriam (2018) suggests using triangulation and participant confirmation to assure the internal validity, reliability, and generalizability of qualitative research, particularly when based on an interpretive paradigm. Hence, a “confirmation email” was forwarded to all participants, whose e-mail addresses were acquired with their permission, to ensure participant confirmation and scope validity in the study, after receiving their responses to confirm their responses. To achieve triangulation, the data were validated by two researchers.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by thematic content analysis. Maxqda software was used to compile and code the data, create the main and sub-themes, define the code frequencies, and determine the relationships between the codes. A descriptive research design was adopted to determine the key themes underlying the students’ experiences of EDE in TGE. The relationships between the main and sub-themes were examined through code relationship analysis, a code map, and complex code configuration analysis. Seven key themes were identified: (1) *perception of face-to-face education in TGE*, (2) *perception of distance education in TGE*, (3) *Difference between face-to-face and distance education in TGE*, (4) *Sufficiency of EDE in TGE*, (5) *Practical sufficiency of distance education in TGE*, (6) *Disadvantages of EDE*, (7) *Advantages of EDE*. The themes were determined based on studies of pre-pandemic tour guiding education via distance learning (Yağcı et al., 2019) and tourism education during the pandemic period (Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023; Köksalanlar & Çözeli, 2021; Agyeiwaah et al., 2022; Chandra et al., 2022; Choi et al., 2021; Goh, 2020; Qiu et al., 2021; Shyju et al., 2021; Şanlıöz-Özgen & Küçükaltan, 2023; Tavitiyaman et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2022; Ye & Law, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021). In the following sections, while interpreting the findings, representative statements are quoted in accordance with the qualitative research writing principle of “identifying expressions that symbolically represent a subject and frequently indicate the opinions of other participants with similar perceptions”.

3. FINDINGS

A total of 6089 words were evaluated using the software program. Word frequency analysis revealed there are 306-word groups. The most frequently repeated words were “more” (115), “formal” (66), “sufficient” (52), and “distance” (47).

3.1. Sample Profile

The research participants were students registered in tour guiding departments at three universities in Istanbul. Over half were female (56%), single (77%), and between the ages of 18 and 33 (64%). Most participants were associate students (80%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample profile*.

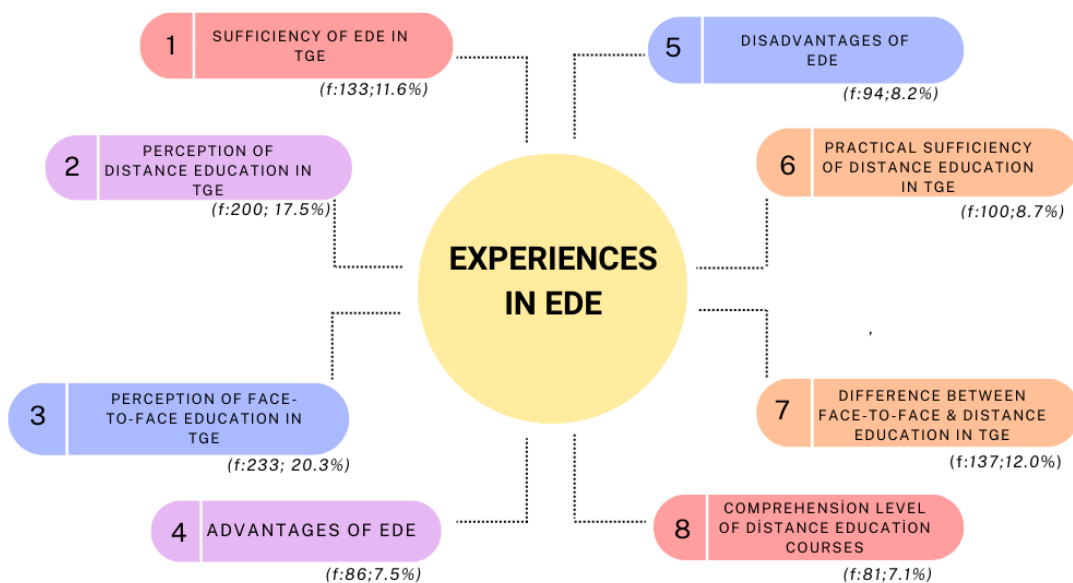
Gender	f(81)	%	Marital status	f	%
Female	46	56.79	Single	60	74.07
Male	35	43.21	Married	21	25.93
Age			Education level		
18-25	30	37.04	Associate student	65	80.25
26-33	22	27.16	Undergraduate student	16	19.75
34-41	14	17.28			
42-49	10	12.35			

* Information for all participants is given in Appendix 1.

3.2. EDE Experiences in TGE

As the code system in Figure 1 shows, EDE experiences in TGE were divided into eight main themes. We coded educational level as an additional main code. Therefore, all main codes and 31 sub-codes total 1,145 codes. According to the super-code results, the codes with the most frequency were the perception of face-to-face education in TGE (20%), the perception of distance education in TGE (17.5%), the difference between face-to-face and distance education in TGE (12%) and the sufficiency of EDE in TGE (11%). The students' experiences mostly centered on these four themes.

Figure 1. Experiences in EDE.



Notes: Total codes are f:1145; 100% including education level (f:81; 7.1%); TGE: Tour guiding education; EDE: Emergency distance education

Appendix 2 presents the students' perceptions of distance education in TGE. The sub-codes are ranked from the highest to the least frequent. The most mentioned sub-codes were "Perceptions of strengths of face-to-face education", "Neutral perceptions of face-to-face education" and "Perceptions of weaknesses of DE". The students predominantly concerned perceptions of the strengths and general characteristics of face-to-face TGE and the weaknesses of distance TGE. They stated that distance education and face-to-face education contribute differently to successful learning.

3.2.1. Sufficiency of EDE in TGE

The students stated that EDE was not sufficient for TGE because of insufficient vocational courses (46.1%), motivation problems (21.1%), and lack of effective communication (32.2%) (RQ1).

3.2.1.1. Insufficient for Vocational Courses. The students claimed EDE did not provide the qualifications for the tour guiding profession. Due to the theoretical importance of the courses, they retained knowledge more effectively in face-to-face than in distance courses. They also underlined that this knowledge should be supported by field trips: "*I think that courses should be put into practice and that verbal education is better when it is done face-to-face*" (P1); "*A program that needs to be supported by field studies/trips*" (P28).

While the course's conceptual framework and the instructor's skills are important for the students, tour guiding departments must include field trips to provide practical training, as mentioned by various participants: "*Some courses require practice and a field trip*" (P34); "*I don't believe that distance education will allow us to learn this profession effectively. We must see it with our own eyes, touch it, and experience it since this is not a virtual profession*" (P66).

Two key skills required in the tour guiding profession are the ability to communicate with others and the ability to use at least one foreign language. Neither of these skills can be obtained solely through distance education: "*I believe that the best way to improve at learning foreign languages is to have a face-to-face education that emphasizes practice*" (P66). P16 offered the following explanation:

In certain courses, regardless of the quality of the instructor, the course content demands physical presence in the classroom or on the trip. In the case of tourist guiding, distance education will not provide successful practice tours or classroom presentations. Presentations in the classroom can help students express themselves in front of a group.

3.2.1.2. Lack of Effective Communication. Given that tour guides are extroverts with effective communication skills. The students highlighted the limitations of EDE in providing this:

Distance education may be beneficial for some courses, but it is preferable to have practical courses. To practice speaking, storytelling, and conversation in crowded environments, face-to-face education is essential in tour guiding. (P8).

Additionally, tour guides need to be able to express themselves well, make a good impression, and communicate both verbally and nonverbally (P3):

The profession of tour guiding is narrative-based. Face-to-face schooling allows us to study mimicry, posture, expression style, and how teachers control their body language when teaching. One-on-one classes with our instructors and questions, ideas, opinions, and discussions are more productive. Distance education cannot do this.

In comparing the advantages of face-to-face education to EDE, the students claimed that the latter was insufficient. They stressed how crucial instructor-student connection and communication are to the course's efficacy:

I consider that EDE needs additional instructor-student engagement. Although synchronous-asynchronous courses are possible in EDE, I believe that face-to-face education is more effective. (P26).

Emphasizing the theoretical lessons of tour guiding departments, the students emphasized that it would be more productive to have face-to-face courses because of the EDE's interaction problem:

Tourist guiding communication should be high quality; however, EDE communication is virtually nonexistent. Distance education is insufficient to better comprehend courses such as Anatolian Civilizations and Art History, to share information, and to ask questions (P36).

3.2.1.3. Motivation Problems. EDE activities in tour guiding departments tend to have low student concentration and motivation. Students said they were not successful because they were not motivated to attend class due to hardware challenges (P75, P70, P56, P52): “*Technical issues and abstractness prevent me from focusing on the course. (P52)*”; “*I can't study because I'm sleepy. (P70)*”; “*I'm unable to be productive, ... I can't pay as much attention as I can face-to-face (P71)*”. An unexpected finding was that working students claimed that the classroom environment is preferable to that in distance education, because of the students' difficulty adapting to the courses owing to a lack of motivation (P2, P3, P32, P56, P65, P68): “*I'm not sure whether distance education is sufficient and worthwhile after a hard day of work. I believe that face-to-face education is more beneficial*” (P65).

3.2.2. Perception of distance education in TGE

The students were asked to list the first five words that came to mind when considering distance TGE. This word association test showed how the students think about distance TGE. The words most frequently given primarily related to perceptions of weaknesses, related to as RQ2 (35.4 %), although strengths (32.0%) were also highlighted.

Regarding the weaknesses of distance TGE, the students mainly mentioned attention problems, equipment deficiencies and socialization problems. For example, they used words like “boring, incomplete, insufficient, lack of communication” (P36), “connection problem, voice delay” (P51), “boring, carelessness, indifference” (P3), “lack of communication, harmony problem, solidarity, lack of understanding” (P14), “lack of focus, bad voice” (P56), “abstract, inattention, inadequacy” (P52), “inefficiency”, “inability to perceive” (P78), “inefficiency”, “inability to socialize” (P68), “connection problem” (P66), and “antisociality” (P34).

Regarding the strengths of distance TGE, the students most frequently addressed being economical and offering some conveniences: “savings” (P61), “low cost” (P22), “cheap” (P10), “time-saving, fast access, planned” (P20), “location independence” (P12), “comfort, fast communication, time-saving” (P73), “flexible” (P23), “risk-free, easy, re-watchable, accessibility to resources” (P33), “practical, placeless” (P39) and “practical, useful” (P44).

Most of the word association responses related to the technological abilities of distance education. Because perceptions and attitudes are not determinative, these words were evaluated as neutral perceptions. Examples included “culture, history, tourism, travel, art” (P48), “computer” (P69), “internet, computer (P11)”, “icons, Greek and Roman sculpture art, ancient city, neolithic” (P19), “art (P81)”, and “online education, presentation, zoom, connection” (P62).

To examine the co-occurrence of perceptions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of distance TGE, the code relations browser was examined. This indicated a strong relationship between the two sub-themes, with 135 concurrences. That is, the students mentioned both strengths and weaknesses while expressing their cognitive perceptions of distance TGE.

3.2.3. Perception of face-to-face education in TGE

When the students were asked to write the first five words that came to mind about face-to-face education in TGE, about half of their responses focused on the strengths of face-to-face education (51.9%) as well as their neutral perceptions (37%), and weaknesses (10.3%). These findings help answer RQ3.

Regarding face-to-face TGE's weaknesses, "way" (P63), "expensive" (P33, P79), and "waste of time" (P20, P43) were used, while "ease of communication" (P12), "socialization" (P34), "sincerity" (P55), "motivation" (P39), "healthy education" (P39), "efficiency" (P42) and "interaction" (P26) were used in association with strengths. Finally, neutral perceptions were expressed through words like "education" (P48), "knowledge" (P51), "school" (P60), "class" (P48), and "book" (P8).

3.2.4. Advantages of EDE for TGE

In relation to RQ4, the students identified five main advantages of EDE for TGE: Effective time management (46.5%), compensation (18.6%), independence from location (11.6%), savings (5.8%), and ease of access to materials (4.6%).

3.2.4.1. Effective Time Management. Several students found distance education advantageous particularly those caring for families: "*I can work and take care of my family, and I can also attend classes; I can do both*" (P80). Other students noted how they save time by avoiding transportation problems: "*We can manage our time more efficiently by avoiding Istanbul's traffic*" (P73). Finally, 46.5% of the participants gave effective time management as EDE's greatest advantage.

3.2.4.2. Compensation. According to 18.6% of the responses, distance education gives more chances to repeat courses and compensate. One significant advantage, for example, is the ability to watch recordings of missed courses and revise poorly understood material: "*We can watch the course's record anytime we like*" (P9, P26); "*Because the courses are recorded, if a course is missed due to force majeure, the missing parts are readily finished, and a more productive working environment is attained through repetition...*" (P30).

3.2.4.3. Independence from Location. Studying regardless of their location via the Internet was another significant advantage for 11.6 % of the participants: "*You don't need to go, you can receive a diploma from home, anywhere*" (P18); "*Education from anywhere*" (P39).

3.2.4.4. Savings. Another advantage of EDE due to its independence from location is savings, particularly transportation costs: "*minimizing unneeded travel costs*" (P7); "*eliminating travel costs*" (P20).

3.2.4.5. Ease of Access to Materials. The final advantage of distance education mentioned was easier access to course materials and course records: "*Everyone has access to course materials*" (P33); "*Students have faster access to more resources for self-training*" (P41); "*Courses are videotaped weekly*" (P8).

3.2.5. Disadvantages of EDE for TGE

In relation to RQ5, the students identified five main disadvantages of EDE for TGE: Inappropriacy for the TGE (29.7%), lack of motivation (23.4%), lack of communication (18%), technical problems (9.5%), and poor course attendance (6.3%).

3.2.5.1. EDE's Inappropriacy for TGE. Because tour guiding is an interactive profession based on practice, the students wanted to learn not only theoretical information but also how it is used in the field. As P30 put it:

Due to inadequate practice, the education at the associate, undergraduate, and graduate levels in our country is insufficient. I think it would be useful to share information and teach students to utilize it in the field. Distance education isn't enough; field education is needed.

The students believe that distance education is inappropriate because tour guiding is based on conversation and engagement. Distance education is thus deficient in terms of learning how to talk in front of a group and acquiring expressive abilities: *“It produces a lack of experience for some courses, and students avoid the communication skills required for the guiding profession from the start.”* (P34); *“Not being able to make trips, having trouble speaking in front of the group”* (P16); *“Since tour guiding is all about communicating with people, it's not a good idea to teach lessons without ever seeing anyone or talking to them”* (P37).

3.2.5.2. Lack of Motivation. A primary disadvantage of distance education identified by the students was motivation. They claimed that they did not attend courses, particularly because they were unable to pay attention and that, even when they did listen, they had trouble understanding the subject. The statements, respectively, are as follows: *“There are situations in which we do not comprehend what we are listening to as a result of our negligence and haphazard attendance at the course”* (P52); *“Loss of attention, low motivation and lack of interest”* (P40); *“The most serious disadvantage is the difficulty in comprehending courses and obtaining information”* (P24).

3.2.5.3. Lack of Communication. A few participants (P65, P56, P48, P46, P42, P9, P2) listed, a lack of communication as an additional disadvantage. More importance should be given to the communication process between instructor-student and student-student in distance education. P42 suggested the lack of feedback, which is the most essential aspect of effective communication, as another problem. Furthermore, synchronous courses are challenging even though communication is simultaneous (P56, P46, P16, P9): *“Sociability and productivity become less. There is a problem in one-to-one communication with the instructor”* (P65); *“The rate of feedback about whether the student has received the information is poor”* (P42); *“I may claim that face-to-face education is more conducive to the expression of ideas, whereas distance education is predominantly unidirectional and restricts student participation”* (P16).

3.2.5.4. Technical Problems. The internet and information communication technologies are key components for effective distance education. They are the most essential elements for ensuring effective communication, engaging coursework, and course motivation: *“I cannot take classes because the internet is bad”* (P79); *“Courses are not effective due to internet problems”* (P57); *“Technological and hardware problems can negatively affect communication”* (P39).

3.2.5.5. Low Attendance to Courses. In addition to motivation problems, poor course attendance has detrimental effects on distance education students. This may be exacerbated by the lack of attendance requirements at some universities and the flexibility of the distance education process: *“Lack of classroom environment, no obligation to attend classes”* (P33); *“Insufficient attendance in the course. In contrast to face-to-face education, the instructor and students become unmotivated when there are few participants”* (P30); *“During the course, there's not enough involvement”* (P61).

3.2.6. Practical sufficiency of distance education in TGE

Regarding RQ6, nearly two thirds of the students (59.2%) considered that distance education provides inadequate practical training for the tour guiding profession. The students who claimed that distance education is inappropriate for TGE also stated that fieldtrips are essential for tour guiding courses (P9, P13, P25, P29, P40, and P73). They stated that face-to-face education activities should be prioritized over distance education activities in developing the expressive abilities of tour guides, utilizing the information in the field, and ensuring its sustainability:

Because a tour guide must go to a site that is discussed in class, experiencing it in the context of that lesson always makes it more memorable. As a way of preparation for the profession, we may test it out for ourselves by telling our other friends the information we gained in the class. (P14)

As field-specific education is necessary, I do not think distance education is useful, but insufficient in and of itself. (P30)

This is not a profession that can be attained through distance learning, but it is quite challenging anyway. This profession must be learned by sight, sound, and touch. (P66)

Along with comprehensive education, it's important to teach students how to behave and how a tourist guide should behave, and practices should be prepared for them to conduct tour guides. (K27)

3.2.7. Differences between face-to-face & distance education in TGE

In comparing face-to-face education and distance education for TGE to address RQ7, most. Most of the students (81.4%) claimed that they differ from one another. These differences were attributed to efficiency (57.1%), socialization (14.2%), concentration (14.2%), unidirectionality (8.9%), and self-expression (5.3%).

3.2.7.1. Efficiency. The most frequently mentioned difference is efficiency, with face-to-face education being considered more efficient than distance education. The students identified various advantages of face-to-face education, including encouraging participation in the course (P38), focusing on the course better (P77), providing opportunities for socialization (P5), making effective use of body language in communication (P71), increasing the permanence of information (P66), and making communication easier (P44). They also recognized that experience sharing (P5, P24) is possible in face-to-face education and that students pay attention to this: *“It is easier to share knowledge with faculty members and other students in face-to-face education”* (P12); *“In terms of comprehension and involvement, face-to-face education is more effective”* (P57); *“Sharing experience, socializing”* (P5). Regarding efficiency, the students criticized distance education in various ways: *“Not benefiting from the experience of other students. The distance education student makes an extra effort in terms of acquiring information”* (P24); *“Lack of communication, lack of socialization”* (P48).

3.2.7.2. Socialization. Socializing is important for TGE students, especially during distance education, because it is a social profession. Hence, the students noted this: *“You cannot socialize; this is the most important problem”* (P68); *“Class communication can be established more healthily in face-to-face education.”* (P44).

3.2.7.3. Concentration. Face-to-face education makes it easier for students to pay attention to the lessons, for example through the instructors' use of body language. Several students stated that they paid more attention in face-to-face lessons: *“Face-to-face education allows easier idea sharing and concentration”* (P18); *“We can pay more attention in face-to-face lessons”* (P72).

3.2.7.4. Unidirectionality. Another difference is that face-to-face education provides a two-way communication process, whereas distance education usually presents a one-way one. Hence, in face-to-face education (P8), it is easy for students to ask questions and engage in discussions whereas in distance education, students only concentrate on listening to the lesson which forces them to participate in a tedious process (P36): *“Online education is very simple and one-way”* (P29); *“We watch it [the lesson] during distance education as though we were watching a documentary by ourselves. It eventually becomes boring”* (P36).

3.2.7.5. Self-expression. Students claimed that the two modes differ in providing opportunities to express themselves. In face-to-face education, they express themselves in front of the group whereas in distance education, they do so on a computer (P37). In addition, the restricted duration of distance education lessons means that students cannot effectively express themselves successfully during the course: *“Students talk in front of the public in face-to-face education and in front of the computer without seeing anyone in the other.”* (P37); *“Insufficient involvement in the lesson due to the lesson's limited duration”* (P33).

3.2.8. Complex code configuration

The relationships between the codes were determined by complex code configuration analysis, which shows the strengths of the relationships and correlations between the two codes and their subcodes (Maxqda, 2021). The intersection code-subcode frequencies define the level of the relationship between two independent codes. The complex code configuration analysis revealed 81 relationships in 10 combinations between students' comprehension level of distance courses and their educational levels (Table 2). Regarding RQ8, most (88.8%) of students reported that they could understand the distance courses and associate students rated higher than undergraduate students.

Table 2. Educational degree & perceived understanding of distance courses.

	<i>f</i>	%
Associate student + Extremely high understanding (5)	18	22.2
Associate student + Very high understanding (4)	18	22.2
Associate student + Moderate understanding (3)	17	20.9
Associate student + Slight understanding (2)	9	11.1
Undergraduate student + Extremely high understanding (5)	7	8.6
Undergraduate student + Very high understanding (4)	4	4.9
Undergraduate student + Understanding not at all (1)	3	3.7
Associate student + Understanding not at all (1)	3	3.7
Undergraduate student + Slight understanding (2)	1	1.2
Undergraduate student + Moderate understanding (3)	1	1.2
<i>Total</i>	81	100

Note: 1: Understanding not at all, ..., 5: Extremely high understanding

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

4.1. A Dilemma in TGE

Based on the perceptions of Turkish TGE students studying EDE courses, distance education is not sufficient for TGE, particularly due to insufficient vocational courses, lack of effective communication, and motivation problems. The displacement effect caused by the Covid-19 pandemic apparently reduced student motivation and impaired the learning process (Prifti et al., 2020). Other studies emphasize that students were not able to adapt due to motivation problems (Koksalanlar & Çözeli, 2021; Arıcı & Karacay, 2023; Fojtík, 2018; Klisowska et al., 2021; Davis et al., 2019). Meanwhile, ineffective communication leads students to think that distance education is ineffective (Ye & Law, 2021). As Goh and Wen (2020) point out, while distance education permits instructor-student communication, it generates some communication challenges, including the psychological distance that online communication techniques produce between people (Darke et al., 2016). Hence, the students in the present study frequently highlighted the advantages of face-to-face education in TGE, particularly as being more appropriate for the tour guiding profession. This confirms previous findings (Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023) that students prefer face-to-face education over distance education.

Yet, despite preferring face-to-face learning to online learning in EDE, the students in our study also acknowledged some advantages of distance education, particularly effective time management, compensation opportunities, independence from location, savings, and ease of access to materials. Nevertheless, in line with previous studies (Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023), it is notable that these advantages have no significant impact on learning satisfaction. It should be highlighted at this point that distance education is especially advantageous for tourism students, who generally take part-time jobs to gain experience in the industry. Distance education allows them to schedule their personal and professional lives alongside their academic studies (Choi

et al., 2020). Hence, tourism students tend to prefer asynchronous courses to synchronous courses (Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023; Sitosanova, 2021).

The participants in our study identified a number of disadvantages of EDE inappropriacy for TGE: lack of motivation, lack of communication, technical problems, and low attendance. Except for low attendance, these findings mirror the disadvantages reported in previous studies (Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023; Korkmaz & Toraman, 2020; Köksalanlar & Çözeli, 2021; Pasha & Kamarova, 2021). Regarding attendance, the students in our study stated that they were unwilling to attend synchronous courses if participation was low, which may reflect the importance that students attach to information sharing and correspondence in the online classroom (Munoz et al., 2021). Tour guides must be receptive to communication, social skills, presentation, speaking skills like body language, voice, language and diction, and creative skills like creating and telling stories. In addition, they should be passionate about the region and subject they are describing (Çolakoğlu et al., 2014: 147-154). Student preference in face-to-face programs for tour guiding to be in the classroom social environment supports this finding (Arıcı & Karaçay, 2023; Köksalanlar & Çözeli, 2021).

A number of differences between distance education and face-to-face education in TGE were identified through student experiences in EDE, namely efficiency, socialization, concentration, unidirectionality, and self-expression. These indicate that face-to-face education is more effective than distance education for TGE. Similarly, Arıcı and Karacay (2023) found that students considering EDE preferred face-to-face learning. Socialization and effective communication are very important for tourist guiding, which is a social profession. Therefore, using body language in face-to-face education helps to support communication and maintain students' attention during lessons (Nambiar, 2020).

While students identify attention issues (Köksalanlar & Çözeli, 2021), device deficiencies (Cao et al., 2020), and socialization challenges (Klisowska et al., 2021) associated with distance tour guiding education as weaknesses, they also note that it is cost-effective and has certain strengths. Computer opportunities and motivation are crucial for success in distance education, according to İbicioğlu and Antalyalı (2005). Similarly, Köksalanlar and Çözeli (2021) assert that students' negative perceptions of distance education are influenced by factors like technical problems, lack of motivation, and separation from peers. Yılmaz and Güven (2015) found that students believe distance education is an ineffective, monotonous, and expressionless form of education. On the other hand, distance learning can provide flexibility and convenience (Dumford & Miller, 2018; Zaveri et al., 2020), and be more affordable in terms of accommodation and travel expenses (Baçzek et al., 2021).

Research into the Covid-19 pandemic period showed that distance learning can impair student concentration (Bakhov et al., 2021; Lamanauskas et al., 2021; Vlassopoulos et al., 2021). No matter how simultaneous teacher-student communication is in online learning (Poláková & Klímová, 2021), communication is predominantly unidirectional, especially in asynchronous courses. However, if two-way communication between teachers and students can be achieved, then video-based online learning appears appropriate (Shim & Lee, 2020). Students in distance education, contrary to what Duman and Gencil (2023) argue, are unable to express themselves sufficiently due to limited course time. Akti Aslan et al. (2021) revealed that limited course duration is a communication problem for instructors. Although distance education has been shown to help students express themselves (Lamanauskas et al., 2021), the students in the present study reported problems in doing so. Regarding understanding of the material, the sample in our study primarily comprised associate students. Nevertheless, the code relationship analysis showed that most students were able to understand their distance education courses. In line with previous research (Mulyanti et al., 2020), the students in the present study experienced a dilemma regarding distance education despite its disadvantages. Studies on tourism during the pandemic predict that distance learning will expand and that its beneficial aspects will

predominate in the near future (Lei & So, 2021; Korkmaz et al., 2022; Şanlıöz-Özgen, & Küçükaltan, 2023).

4.2. Conclusion

This study makes important theoretical contributions and has practical implications for EDE in tourism education. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students enrolled in face-to-face programs were forced to experience fully online learning through EDE, thereby gaining experience in both modes. This created a dilemma for them between face-to-face education and distance education. During the pandemic, online education activities were described as EDE because they were implemented without following all the required distance education procedures. The difference from normal is made clear by the term “emergency”. Although it provided a rapid solution in a crisis, distance education may have negative effects on outcomes in some programs. Accordingly, this study examined the experiences of students in tour guiding departments—which are based on both theoretical and applied courses.

The findings indicate that tour guiding students prefer face-to-face education, but their indecision about the advantages and disadvantages of distance education and their high level of understanding of distance education courses indicate a dilemma. In fact, if EDE is extended, it may be possible for them to have more beneficial experiences. However, while these students reported positive cognitive perceptions of face-to-face TGE, they had negative perceptions of distance education. While distance education enables effective time management, it may not be appropriate for TGE. Hence, the students tend to prefer face-to-face TGE for its efficiency. The study also found that despite being aware of the benefits of distance education, the students still prefer face-to-face education because it gives them more opportunities to practice speaking, interact with others, and express themselves verbally. Karadağ and Yücel (2020) also found that social science students are less satisfied with distance education than science and health science students. We can therefore conclude that students in the tour guiding department, which falls into social science, need more communication and interaction opportunities in their courses.

4.3. Theoretical Contribution

This study examined the attitudes of university students in Türkiye’s face-to-face tour guiding departments toward EDE, which they experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, the study contributes to the EDE literature. The study provides evidence for an assessment of the distance education process from the perspective of students through their face-to-face education experience. Although the profession of tour guiding is primarily based on theoretical knowledge, there is also a need for practical activities. According to Lei and So (2021), and Goh and Sigala (2020), students had an advantage during EDE. However, Agyeiwaah et al. (2022) claim that they experienced difficulties such as the inability to learn practical skills to improve classroom learning. Although there are inequalities in the tourist guiding profession at both associate and undergraduate degree levels in Türkiye (Eser & Şahin, 2020), the main aim is to train qualified guides (Eker & Zengin, 2016). Aside from EDE, previous studies have discussed the need to support TGE with short practice trips (Eker & Zengin, 2016) and tour guides have similar perceptions (Eker, 2015). These studies have identified deficiencies in supporting theoretical courses with practice to bring well-qualified guides into the field.

The present study’s other key conceptual contribution concerns students’ dilemma regarding the advantages and disadvantages of distance education. This dilemma is evidenced by their uncertain perceptions regarding distance tourist guiding education having experienced EDE after previously only receiving face-to-face education. Apart from EDE, there are several distance education departments for tour guiding education in Türkiye. While this mode has been discussed by students and academics excluding from the pandemic in Türkiye, it is necessary to investigate the ambivalent attitudes of face-to-face tour guiding students toward

distance education during EDE specifically. As Zapata-Cuervo et al. (2023) point out, “*Students’ perceptions toward online learning would be a bit different from the pre-pandemic [period] when students had options to choose different methods of instruction.*”

4.4. Practical Implications

The study has several important practical implications. Firstly, although the participating students work part or full-time, they do not find distance education sufficient for TGE. Hence, the outputs of pre-pandemic online tour guiding departments in Türkiye should be compared with the outputs of face-to-face education, separately from EDE. Secondly, EDE provided an opportunity for tour guiding students studying face-to-face to experience distance education. Based on their experiences, they prefer face-to-face education, especially since it offers practical courses. Thirdly, the findings indicate that tour guiding students prioritize socializing, in-class interaction, active engagement, and self-expression. Hence, they may not prefer distance education because it hampers communication. However, their attitudes could become more positive by using hybrid education in tour guiding. Although students prefer face-to-face education overall, their EDE experiences seem to have confused them somewhat, which can be attributed to the advantages of distance education. Given that, as in other disciplines, distance education is expected to become increasingly common in TGE, universities should offer courses based on practical experience and provide an effective communication system to meet students’ expectations. In addition, institute principals encourage technology-based professional development and digital transformation, which lead to the design of an efficient learning environment (Karakose et al., 2021). This may be migrated to the EDE system as well.

4.5. Originality of the Research

Various studies have been conducted on online learning in tourism education before, during, and after the Covid-19. It is essential, nevertheless, that specific research on EDE continues because, as *a new mode of learning*, efficacy in achieving learning outcomes cannot yet be determined. As the present study has shown, research into EDE can answer the question of *how students’ perspectives alter when they move to online learning, whether they had positive or negative perceptions different from the pre-pandemic period*. In Türkiye, TGE is provided in both distance and face-to-face systems, independently of EDE. Some students in face-to-face programs considered this as inequitable, and there was already tension between students in the two educational systems before the pandemic. EDE created a potential to either increase or decrease this tension. Our findings showed that while students registered in face-to-face tour guiding departments have benefited from EDE’s advantages, they still prefer face-to-face education over online learning. At the same time, facing a dilemma between *the advantages of distance education* and *the outcomes of face-to-face education*, the students appear to have softened their negative opinions regarding distance tour guiding departments. The present study thus provides insight into both the debates surrounding distance education in tour guiding education and the consequences of the current EDE initiatives in tourism education.

4.6. Research Limitations and Future Directions

The study has several limitations. First, because this study primarily focused on EDE in TGE, it excluded students at universities that received full distance education in their normal curriculum. The findings are limited to EDE, specifically the transition from face-to-face to distance education because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, the findings of previous studies investigating normal pre-pandemic distance education cannot be compared to those in this study. Secondly, this study focused only on TGE in Türkiye, and perceptions of EDE are likely to differ for students in other disciplines and other countries. Finally, the study was exploratory qualitative research that is limited in its generalizability. Future research can therefore investigate the EDE experiences of tourism students in other countries during different crises as well as the tendencies and attitudes of tourism academics regarding EDE.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests and Ethics

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This research study complies with research publishing ethics. The scientific and legal responsibility for manuscripts published in IJATE belongs to the authors. **Ethics Committee Number:** Istanbul Arel University, 06/06/2022-2022/10.

Contribution of Authors

Meltem Altınay Özdemir: Skeletal draft, Investigation, Methodology, Analysis, Software, Validation, Supervision, and Writing-original draft. **Zeynep Tombaş:** Data Collection, Supervision, Validation and Writing-original draft.

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APPENDIX-1. PARTICIPANT PROFILE

No	Education level	Gender	Age	Marital status	No	Education level	Gender	Age	Marital status
P1	Associate student	Female	25	Married	P42	Associate student	Male	52	Married
P2	Associate student	Female	32	Single	P43	Associate student	Female	19	Single
P3	Associate student	Female	31	Single	P44	Associate student	Male	27	Single
P4	Associate student	Male	32	Single	P45	Associate student	Female	19	Single
P5	Undergraduate student	Male	40	Married	P46	Associate student	Male	34	Single
P6	Associate student	Male	27	Single	P47	Associate student	Male	29	Single
P7	Undergraduate student	Male	40	Married	P48	Associate student	Female	40	Single
P8	Undergraduate student	Male	33	Married	P49	Associate student	Male	22	Single
P9	Undergraduate student	Female	35	Married	P50	Associate student	Female	25	Single
P10	Undergraduate student	Female	30	Married	P51	Associate student	Male	20	Single
P11	Associate student	Male	35	Married	P52	Associate student	Female	19	Single
P12	Associate student	Female	21	Single	P53	Undergraduate student	Male	33	Single
P13	Associate student	Male	42	Married	P54	Undergraduate student	Female	19	Single
P14	Associate student	Male	21	Single	P55	Undergraduate student	Male	21	Single
P15	Associate student	Female	24	Single	P56	Associate student	Female	35	Married
P16	Undergraduate student	Male	45	Married	P57	Associate student	Female	18	Single
P17	Undergraduate student	Male	27	Single	P58	Associate student	Male	27	Single
P18	Associate student	Female	38	Married	P59	Associate student	Male	24	Single
P19	Undergraduate student	Male	42	Single	P60	Associate student	Female	25	Single
P20	Associate student	Male	28	Single	P61	Associate student	Male	52	Single
P21	Associate student	Male	23	Single	P62	Associate student	Female	32	Single
P22	Associate student	Male	28	Single	P63	Associate student	Female	31	Single
P23	Undergraduate student	Male	26	Single	P64	Associate student	Male	35	Married
P24	Undergraduate student	Female	25	Married	P65	Associate student	Female	26	Single
P25	Associate student	Female	38	Single	P66	Associate student	Female	18	Single
P26	Undergraduate student	Female	46	Married	P67	Associate student	Male	21	Single
P27	Associate student	Female	20	Single	P68	Associate student	Female	20	Single
P28	Associate student	Male	37	Married	P69	Associate student	Female	19	Single
P29	Associate student	Male	51	Married	P70	Associate student	Female	19	Single
P30	Associate student	Male	34	Single	P71	Associate student	Male	27	Single
P31	Associate student	Female	40	Single	P72	Associate student	Male	18	Single
P32	Associate student	Male	38	Married	P73	Associate student	Male	20	Single
P33	Associate student	Male	42	Married	P74	Associate student	Male	26	Single
P34	Associate student	Female	30	Single	P75	Associate student	Male	19	Single
P35	Associate student	Male	42	Married	P76	Undergraduate student	Female	20	Single
P36	Associate student	Female	51	Single	P77	Associate student	Female	21	Single
P37	Associate student	Male	30	Single	P78	Associate student	Female	22	Single
P38	Associate student	Female	58	Single	P79	Associate student	Male	33	Single
P39	Associate student	Male	35	Single	P80	Associate student	Male	44	Married
P40	Undergraduate student	Male	42	Single	P81	Associate student	Male	23	Single
P41	Associate student	Male	46	Single					

APPENDIX 2. SUB-THEMES OF EDE EXPERIENCES

Sub-themes	<i>f</i>	%
Perceptions of strengths (Perception of face-to-face education)	121	10.6
Neutral perceptions (Perception of face-to-face education)	88	7.7
Perceptions for weaknesses (Perception of DE)	71	6.2
Yes (Difference between face-to-face and distance education)	66	5.8
Associate student	65	5.7
Neutral perceptions (Perception of DE)	65	5.7
Perceptions for strengths (Perception of DE)	64	5.6
No (Sufficiency of EDE)	51	4.5
No (Practical sufficiency of distance education)	48	4.2
Effective time management	40	3.5
Yes (Practical sufficiency of distance education)	33	2.9
Efficiency	32	2.8
Yes (Sufficiency of EDE)	30	2.6
Insufficiency of TGE	28	2.4
Extremely high understanding (5)	25	2.2
Perceptions of weaknesses (Perception of face-to-face education)	24	2.1
Insufficient for vocational courses	24	2.1
Very (4)	22	1.9
Lack of motivation	22	1.9
Insufficient practice	19	1.7
Moderate (3)	18	1.6
Lack of communication	17	1.5
Motivation problems	17	1.5
Undergraduate student	16	1.4
Compensation	16	1.4
No (Difference between face-to-face & distance education)	15	1.3
None (Disadvantages of EDE)	12	1.0
None (Advantages of EDE)	11	1.0
Lack of effective communication	11	1.0
Slightly (2)	10	0.9
Independence from place	10	0.9
Technical problems	9	0.8
Socialization	8	0.7
Concentration	8	0.7
Understanding not at all (1)	6	0.5
Low attendance to courses	6	0.5
Unidirectionality	5	0.4
Savings	5	0.4
Ease of access to materials	4	0.3
Self-expression	3	0.3
Total	1145	100

*TGE: Tour Guiding Education; EDE: Emergency distance education; DE: Distance Education