Evaluation of Emergency Distance Education Based Lifelong Learning Environment Use from Student Perspective: A Phenomenological Research

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The purpose of this study is to explore the use of emergency distance based lifelong learning environment during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of learning practices from the perspective of adult learners. Designed as a phenomenology in qualitative studies, this study focused on adult learners' experiences in the emergency online lifelong learning environment provided by the local government during the pandemic. Data were collected from three adult learners recruited through criterion and convenience sampling methods. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using content analysis technique. The findings revealed that the adult learners who participated in the study were satisfied with the distance-based online lifelong learning environment, but they encountered various shortcomings. According to the participants, four themes and their sub-themes were identified regarding the emergency online lifelong learning environment: student, perceived teacher support, environment and content. As a result of the study, it was determined that there is a need for studies that will reveal evaluations of online lifelong learning from different aspects.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has been the urgent and rapid transition of face-to-face education and training programs to distance-based online education. This change has affected both teachers and students. The shift to distance education in formal and non-formal education has created a "need to know" about how to teach and learn remotely (Kaiser & McKenna, 2021), and the pandemic has been a catalyst for the adoption and implementation of online learning (Rhim & Han, 2020).

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, sustainable and flexible learning options with distance education telemedicine were urgently organized (Ng & Lo, 2022). As in the rest of the world, synchronous (synchronous) and asynchronous (asynchronous) teaching has been used to sustain adult education. The development of digital devices, network technologies and IT skills have made online teaching possible (Zuppo, 2012). According to Amiti (2020), during the pandemic period, lessons were mostly taught in three types of online environments: Asynchronous online video courses, synchronous online traditional courses, and online flipped courses. Among these, the prominent usage model is synchronous traditional online courses. The online traditional course approach is the transfer of traditional teaching to online courses. This situation brings with it the necessity to evaluate the impact of sudden changes in teaching approaches.

For flexible and sustainable online learning to be effective and efficient, educators, organizations and institutions need to have a comprehensive understanding of its benefits and limitations (Hrastinski, 2008). Distance learning-based online learning was a model used in in-service programs, some certified courses, and adult education such as higher education before it spread across the world and the country (Johnston vd., 2015). Distance-based online learning was used to overcome common barriers faced by adults who want or need to participate in learning for various reasons (Blieck vd., 2017).

Learning takes place at all stages of life in different contexts such as home, school, work and society. From a lifelong learning perspective, all citizens as self-directed individuals should have open, flexible and personally relevant opportunities to develop the knowledge and competences required at every stage of their lives. From a broader perspective, a basic skill is seen not only as a fundamental skill such as reading and writing, but also as a set of competencies applied to tasks in technology-rich environments (Hickling-Hudson, 2007; Wilson, Scalise & Gochyyev, 2015). It is the provision of distance education through print media, radio, television and the Internet to individuals who cannot attend school or have dropped out of school for various reasons. In distance education, students and teachers are geographically and temporally separated, it is carried out by an institution, technical environments are used, there is interaction, teachers and students can meet face to face at certain times and education is given based on a model (Keegan, 1980). Although distance education is carried out using different environments, this research focuses on synchronous online learning. According to Watts (2016), synchronous interaction uses live video and audio and allows the teacher and participants to see each other.

The online education process needs to be well thought out, designed, coherent and pre-planned. In addition, content should be created by selecting and using appropriate methodologies in the online education program. On the other hand, by using emergency distance learning in crisis situations, the subject content and the design of the training programs are improved compared to traditional classroom learning (Bakov, Opolska, Bogus, Anishchenko & Biryukova, 2021). The pandemic period was declared as a crisis situation and education and training activities were carried out online around the world.

The aim of this study is to have information about the experiences of the Konya Vocational Training Course (KOMEK), which was carried out face-to-face by Konya Metropolitan Municipality within the scope of lifelong learning during the pandemic period, moved to the online environment simultaneously due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to be able to learn about the experiences of the students who are the

subject of the system and to reveal this. In addition, the impact of online lifelong courses provided by the local government during the period when it is not known when the COVID-19 pandemic will recover will be determined. For this purpose, the research question was determined as "How would you describe your experiences as a student of an online lifelong learning course?". The key words in this research question are "lifelong learning", "online environment", "student", "experiences" and "describe". In phenomenological research, the key words in the research question are first identified, defined and discussed. In the research question, "lifelong learning and online environment" refers to the courses within KOMEK, while "student" refers to the participants who participated in the study as adult students who completed the course by attending one of the programs in KOMEK. The term "experience" refers to how the participants perceived the phenomenon personally. The expression "you describe" is used to mean what the phenomenon means to the participants and how it is defined.

As in face-to-face teaching, institutions, teachers and students are the components in online teaching. During the COVID-19 pandemic days, teachers and students had to participate in simultaneous online teaching urgently and quickly (Acar-Çiftçi, 2022). This study aimed to obtain the experiences and suggestions of the students who attended the online distance education course that the local government organized for adult students during the pandemic period. In line with the results of the research, it is thought that it will contribute to improving the quality by providing information to adult education to be realized online. From this point of view, answers to the following questions were sought in the research.

1. What are the experiences of adult learners regarding the courses they have taken in emergency distance education-based synchronous online education environments during the pandemic period?

2. What are the suggestions of adult learners in line with their experiences regarding the courses they have taken in emergency distance education-based synchronous online education environments during the pandemic period?

Adult Education in Turkey during the Pandemic

COVID-19 has been declared a pandemic worldwide as a result of being an epidemic disease and spreading to large geographies. The primary decisions taken to prevent this spread have been the use of masks, hygiene and social distancing (World Health Organisation-WHO, 2020). Social distancing is recommended by health institutions to maintain physical distance between people to prevent the spread of the disease and to avoid contact such as handshaking, hugging and kissing.

Due to the pandemic, all educational institutions in our country, as in the whole world, were asked to switch to online platforms, causing physical closures globally. K-12 educational institutions used TRT EBA TV and EBA live lecture platform (Çetin & Göçebe-Yüceer, 2023); higher education institutions used their own "Learning Management System (LMS)" (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu-YÖK, 2020); organizations that continue other education and training activities tried to contribute to working adult education by using image transfer platforms (ZOOM, MS Teams, Whatsapp, Google Classroom, e-mail) (Casanova & Paguia, 2022).

During the pandemic period, it had a greater impact especially in urban areas with dense populations. The role of local governments, which are authorized to provide and deliver services closest to individuals in urban areas, has once again emerged as important in the fight against the pandemic. Accordingly, it has been observed that local governments around the world have improved their service delivery and transportation methods and skills to support the fight against the pandemic and aim to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (Bayraktar, 2020). The importance of providing solutions at the local level against global problems has become more prominent with the COVID-19 pandemic. When the unique, fast and effective solutions of local governments around the world and in our country are examined, the following topics stand out: Public information activities, social support and assistance, education, culture, arts, moral and psychological support and health services (Bilgiç, 2020). In our country, the support provided by local governments during the pandemic is of great importance.

METHOD

In this section, the research model, participants, data collection tool, and the data analysis process following data collection are outlined.

Research Design

This study was conducted using qualitative research method in order to examine in depth the experiences of adult learners who participated in the courses realized within the scope of emergency online lifelong learning. The research was conducted in phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research methods. In the phenomenology design, it generally tries to examine what individuals' experiences of any phenomenon are and how they make sense of their experiences (Creswell, 2019). The phenomenon examined in this study is being an adult learner in a course in an emergency online lifelong learning environment and the experiences related to it. In this context, the research aims to examine the experiences of those who are adult learners in a course in an emergency online lifelong learning environment and who have completed the course, and to obtain information about the advantages it provides, the limitations they face, and the necessary suggestions for it to be more effective.

Participants

In this phenomenologically designed study, individuals who attended and successfully completed the Online KOMEK course were informed about the scope and duration of the study via e-mail and invited to the interview. Individuals who responded positively to the invitation according to their availability for multiple interviews constituted the participants of the study. The research was conducted with the participation of three students who attended and successfully completed the KOMEK course conducted online in the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. The ideal number of participants in a phenomenological study depends on the nature of the study (Laverty, 2003), but a smaller number of participants is usually preferred to clearly depict their lived experiences (Crimmins, 2017; van Manen, 2016). Table 1 shows the participating adult students demographic characteristics.

Tablo 1. *Demographic characteristics of the participants*

Nickname	Gender	Age	Education Status	Previous Online Course Experience	Reason for Taking Course
Ayşe	F	24	Faculty Student	Yes	Support for lesson
Ayça	F	28	Master's Degree Student	No	Writing a thesis
Aysel	F	34	PhD Student	No	Getting promoted

Table 1 provides information about the adult learners who participated in the phenomenological research. Pseudonyms were used for the adult students whose opinions and experiences were consulted. The gender of all of them is female. Their education levels are bachelor's, master's and doctorate. Their ages were 24, 28 and 34, respectively. One of the adult learners had previous emergency online course experience, while the other two did not. The reasons for attending the course were to support their undergraduate course, to write a thesis and to get promoted.

Data Collection

While collecting data in phenomenological research, different methods such as observation, diary, art product, reflection report, all kinds of artistic content in which experiences are reflected can be used, but the most preferred method is in-depth interview or multiple interviews (Çekmez, Yıldız & Bütüner, 2012). During the interviews, a single question can be asked to determine the subjective experiences of individuals or more than one question can be asked to collect detailed information according to the purpose of the research. The most preferred questions are: 1. What did you experience? 2. What conditions and situations affected your experiences? During the interview(s), the researcher does not intervene unless it is mandatory. The direction of the interview is shaped by the answers of the

participants. Audio and video recordings can be taken during the interview and the researcher can also take detailed notes.

In this study, multiple interview technique was used to determine the subjective experiences of the participants towards the identified phenomenon in detail. Interviews consisting of multiple open-ended questions were conducted as a data collection tool. Due to the small number of participants, each participant was allocated 25-30 minutes and two rounds of interviews were conducted. In the first round of interviews, the 5-10 minute introductory part of the time specified in the first round of interviews was mainly conversations about daily life in order to strengthen the communication between the researcher and the participant and to enable the participant to express himself/herself more comfortably. In the second round of interviews, it was aimed that the participants could express themselves better and that more detailed information could be obtained about the experiences they mentioned in the first interview. In the unstructured interviews, a dialogic, open and interactive structure was adopted and during the interviews, two open-ended questions were asked to the participants about how they evaluate taking a lifelong learning course online and which conditions affect this evaluation positively and negatively. In addition, based on the participants' discourse, additional sub-questions were added to these questions to collect more detailed data. The interviews were conducted in a comfortable and reassuring environment using an online communication platform at a time determined by the participants. The subjective experiences of the researcher were not reflected in the findings, and the findings were organized only on the basis of the participants' statements. No forms were given to the participants during the interviews. All interviews were audio recorded with the knowledge of the participants.

Data Analysis

In studies designed with qualitative research method and phenomenologically designed, it is generally aimed to examine the phenomena in depth. In this study, which aims to examine the goals, expectations and overall experiences of students attending courses in the emergency online lifelong learning environment and to provide a student perspective on the courses, interviews were conducted with the participants for data collection. In order to analyze the content of the data obtained from these interviews, the content analysis technique (Kızıltepe, 2015), which requires focusing on contextual features in the text content, was used. This technique requires a detailed scanning of the content rather than counting the concepts or words in the text one by one and creating categories as a result (Weber, 1990). Thus, both explicit and hidden messages in the text are addressed by determining the similarities and differences between the categories or codes (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). In this study, after the data obtained from the interviews were transformed into text, the codes were determined by the researchers through content analysis, taking into account the contextual features. In order for the codes to be better reflected and clearly understood by the reader (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011), data examples were frequently included.

Functioning of the Online Lifelong Learning System

The emergency online lifelong learning system, which is the subject of the research, is the form of KOMEK courses conducted face-to-face by Konya Metropolitan Municipality, organized on the basis of distance education-based online learning during the pandemic period. During the pandemic period, it is known that local governments abroad support adult education in various ways. One of the local governments that pioneered this in Turkiye was Konya Metropolitan Municipality's distance education-based online KOMEK courses.

Learning Management System

A module with a student and teacher panel has been prepared for distance education based online courses prepared by the local government. Teachers and students connect to their own modules with their registration information. In the teacher module, which course(s) are given, the list of registered students in the course(s), course attendance options to be entered to students, zoom information, teacher

information are included. In the student module, they can see which course or courses they have taken, absenteeism information for the course(s), zoom information of the teacher. They can also access status information about whether they will receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the course. However, in this LMS-like module, there are no records of simultaneous courses, homework, projects, content material tracking, teacher-student messaging or student-student messaging. It is an LMS module with limited features.

Course Delivery, Content and Structure

The course followed is "Data Analysis with SPSS". Lessons were held via Zoom and were planned as 4 lesson hours a day, 2 days a week, with 30 minutes of lessons and 10 minutes of class breaks. There are 80 lesson hours in total and the course is planned to last 10 weeks. The absence period of the course is 20% of the total course hours, that is, 20 lesson hours. Those who exceeded 20 lesson hours were deemed to have failed the course. Lessons were held in the evening of the specified day. Adult students participated in the course by connecting via Zoom on the specified day and time. While the lesson was being taught, the administrators of the system randomly connected the controller during one of the relevant lesson hours to check whether the lesson was completed and whether there was participation.

The courses were held simultaneously, and the curricula were followed based on the courses and their contents created by the Ministry of Education General Directorate of Lifelong Learning. Students are informed about course content and scope. The course subject to the research has a high number of effective courses because its content includes applied subjects. The content of the course was shared both via Zoom's chat area and via WhatsApp class group. During the course, students' questions and requests were received through the video and audio environment of the Zoom program and the chat area, and feedback was given in the same ways. In addition, when students had questions and/or requests outside of class, written interviews were held on the WhatsApp account of the class group.

It is expected that there will be process, result or process-result evaluation in every teaching given. However, not having the LMS system mentioned above is one of the reasons that prevents this. In addition, due to the concern that being during the pandemic period would put additional pressure on the learners, an achievement test was not applied, instead, those who did not exceed the specified absence period were deemed successful and were entitled to receive a certificate of participation.

Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the results of qualitative studies are among the most important criteria of scientific research. For researchers conducting qualitative research, reliability raises the question "Can the findings be trusted?" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are several definitions and criteria for reliability, but the prominent criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as defined by Lincoln and Guba (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is recommended to use one or more of these strategies to check the credibility of the findings in a qualitative research. In this study, in order to ensure credibility, participants were asked whether the findings of the study accurately reflected their own thoughts, and participant confirmation was used with the answers received. For this purpose, during the interviews with adult students, the questions and answers were repeated and the meaning was clarified where necessary to confirm whether the adult student understood the question correctly and whether the answer given was understood correctly by the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Direct references were also included to increase the credibility of the study. Another technique to ensure credibility is transferability. In order to ensure transferability, a "dense description" of the participants and the research process was provided to enable the reader to assess whether the findings can be transferred to their own setting (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In line with the aim of the research, an analysis of emergency distance education based online lifelong learning processes was conducted. However, lifelong learning processes are a comprehensive concept that also examines different dimensions such as social, cultural and economic dimensions of individuals. The findings of this study are limited to the emergency distance education-based online lifelong learning dimension implemented during the pandemic period.

Ethic

The study was conducted according to ethical principles. The research was conducted within the framework of ethical principles and with the approval of the decision of "Necmettin Erbakan University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee" dated 13.11.2020 and numbered 2020/69.

FINDINGS

In these sections, the data obtained from the adult participants were coded, the coded data were classified, themes were created and presented.

Tablo 2. *Themes, categories and codes obtained from adult students' opinions*

Theme	Catogory	Code
Student	Adaptation to the Environment	Expectations from the learning environment
		Integration into the learning environment
	Belong	Learning satisfaction
		Confidence
	Experince	Change in learning
		Amenities obstacles
		Concentration
		Motivation
Perceived Teacher Support	Communication	Frequency
		Sharpness
	Support	Feedback
Media	Technology	Access
	Course Infrastructure	Lack of LMS system
		Using two environments
Content	Lesson Content	It depends on the curriculum
		Clarity of topics
	Time Management	Knowing the day and time

In line with the data collected at the end of the research, four different themes were identified under the titles of student, teacher, environment and content. The themes consist of categories and codes in their own context. According to the findings obtained from the themes, they are explained by including quotations.

Theme 1: Student

Learner Adaptation during Online Adult Education

Tools such as Hangout, Teams, ZOOM, which are used to provide video and audio communication in distance education-based online learning environments, had low recognition before the lockdown. Adult learners who participated in the study reported that the continuation of their lifelong courses online during the pandemic was a positive development. However, the synchronization and non-recording of course lectures had a negative impact on course learners' expectations. Therefore, it was determined that it negatively affected their expectations of adaptation to the learning environment.

> Aysel: Our course was an applied course. I was not used to both watching the lecture and practicing what was explained. Although our instructor taught the lesson at a normal pace, it was very difficult for me to follow the lesson in such an environment. The fact that the lessons were taught simultaneously and not recorded created a fear of not learning because we could not watch them again. This situation lowered my expectations for the course.

While starting the lesson on the day of the course, it was determined that sharing files suitable for the subject from the chat section of the ZOOM program and whatsapp student group, sharing requests, questions and problems accelerated the integration of adaptation to the environment.

> Ayça: In the first lessons of our course, I think there was a lack of communication both with the lessons and with the instructor and other learners. However, the guidance and encouragement of our course instructor helped us to solve this confusion quickly. She put us at ease by responding positively to our reasonable requests. Because we were able to use ZOOM's chat room in class and whatsapp group outside of class. This helped us get used to both the course and each other.

Learner Belonging during Online Adult Education

When the course participants are examined, the level of education is bachelor's, master's and doctoral students; the age range is between 20 and 40; the working status is student, student-employee. The number of those with no previous online education experience is high. This situation brought difficulties in the first lessons, and it was reported that the teacher effort reduced this and increased student belonging.

> Ayşe: In addition to using the usual lecture method, our instructor sometimes asked questions to involve us in the lesson, sometimes asked volunteer friends to share the screen and made us do the application together. If we were wrong or incomplete, he corrected us immediately. This increased our interest in the course, the lesson, the subject and our sense of accomplishment.

Learner's Experience during Online Adult Education

During the pandemic period, with the transition from face-to-face to emergency online learning across the world, there were changes in the teaching habits of teachers and learning habits of students. Lessons were taught and recorded simultaneously, and it was possible to watch the lessons again asynchronously. Course materials were digitized, assignments and projects were digitally transmitted to students and delivered digitally, and different interaction tools were explored. However, in these courses, the lessons were taught simultaneously and the lessons were not recorded. This meant that the student could not watch the lesson again later. Since there was no LMS, there was no sharing of assignments, projects and materials, the responsibility, management and supervision of learning was left more to the student.

> Aysel: In adult education, the learner participates in the course(s) for a specific purpose. He/she tries to reach his/her goal by controlling his/her own learning. In such a course, I realized that I had more control over myself. There were no homework and projects in our course, there was no exam pressure. Although there were no lecture recordings, the fact that our teacher shared digital content with us, that the topics were repeated from time to time, that we could ask questions freely during the lesson showed that I learned and could do it, and it was a driving force.

Not being able to go out, go to school, go to work in lockdown has limited individuals. Learners' ease of attending courses from home brought with it positive and negative effects on barriers, concentration and motivation.

> Aysel: As a working woman, participating in online courses from home contributed to both my personal development and professional development. Without the pandemic, it would have been difficult for me to attend such a course, and I would not have been able to complete it. I was able to easily ask my questions during the course. I had the opportunity to easily access digital content. I think I had different opportunities. While listening to the lecture at home, I can say that I had a hard time as a mother, wife and working woman. I added a new responsibility to my responsibilities. Considering the personal and professional contributions it would provide, it was easy for me to recover.

> Ayşe: Being an undergraduate student and taking this course contributed to my lessons. It corrected my deficiencies. In face-to-face education, our class was very crowded. We could not communicate our questions and the answers we received were not satisfactory. With this course, I was able to ask my questions comfortably and get my answers personally. It was easy for me. Being at home helped me to be comfortable, but there were times when I got disconnected from the lesson. There are too many distractions.

Theme 2: Perceived Teacher Support

Perceived Teacher Communication Support During Online Adult Education

The students who gave opinions stated that the frequency and clarity of teacher communication was the key to their learning. They stated that being able to ask instant questions about the subject in the simultaneous lesson, getting answers, and being able to get answers to the questions they asked through different communication tools outside the lesson, and being satisfied with the answers they received supported their learning and their presence in the system.

> Ayça: I can say that our instructor enabled us to be in communication both with him and between us from the first lessons. During the live lessons, he would ask us from time to time whether we understood or not. A question asked by another friend led to other questions, and there were times when he made us look at what we learned from other angles. Again, when some of my friends stated that they did not understand the subject, he explained it again by giving different examples.

> Ayşe: During the lectures, she always answered the voice questions from the chat area of ZOOM sincerely and patiently. Outside the class, he answered our questions related or unrelated to the topic. The answers we received were in a way to clear all the rough edges in our minds.

Perceived Teacher Support During Online Adult Education

Responding to requests and questions from learners during and after the lesson through communication tools was perceived as a positive response to teacher support. It was determined that the feedback and quality given to the students supported cognitive and affective learning.

> Aysel: I was impressed to get answers to my questions during and after the lesson. Especially outside the lesson, there were places that stuck in my head, and I was able to get an answer when I asked my instructor on whatsapp. It alleviated the congestion during the pandemic period to some extent and reinforced what I learned.

Theme 3: Environment

Online Adult Education Environment

Access to Technology for Online Adult Education Environment

As a result of the analysis of the opinions of the learners, it was determined that they had no problems in accessing technological devices. The learners who participated in the course and whose opinions were taken had at least one desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet computer and smart cell phone. In addition, the fact that the course participants were from different provinces reported that they attended the courses without experiencing any problems in the internet infrastructure.

> Aysu, Ayşe, Ayça: We had our own laptop and/or desktop computers that we used for both learning and private purposes. The fact that I live in the city center meant that I was able to follow the courses without having much trouble with the internet connection and I did not experience any disconnections.

Course Infrastructure in the Online Adult Education Environment

Lack of LMS System for the Course

With the declaration of the pandemic, distance education was rapidly introduced, and there was no LMS to manage the courses supported by the local government. However, there were information platforms organized for teachers and students. Students' views on the lack of an LMS are as follows.

> Ayşe: As an undergraduate student, I expected a flexible LMS like the one at my university. It would be nice to have access to content, materials and lecture recording videos. The fact that the course lectures were simultaneous and not recorded required me to follow the lectures more carefully and I made an effort not to miss the topic. This made it a bit difficult in the home environment. Course information was available on the student dashboard, which was not very satisfying.

> Aysel: I learned the importance of the LMS system thanks to this course, because the lack of lecture videos for the course was quite difficult at first. I can say that it took time to adjust myself to this situation. This was perhaps the most negative aspect of the course. The lessons are taught simultaneously, and the fact that there is no compensation if you cannot attend the lesson or if you miss the subject during the lesson is a deficiency in my opinion.

Using Two Mediums in the Course

Within the course, students were using two different environments. The first was the ZOOM platform where simultaneous lectures were held and the second was the informative system where user information was entered. The two environments were independent of each other. In the structures used in formal education, the lecture platforms and LMS platforms were used together. This situation created a

follow-up problem for the course participants.

> Ayça: Using two separate structures did not seem very functional to me. I used the student platform at first, then I almost never used it because the lack of content, material, video recordings about the lessons reduced my interest. I only used ZOOM on the day and time of the lecture. However, our lecturer would send the files used in the lecture via whatsapp and this deficiency was overcome a little bit.

Theme 4: Content

Online Adult Education Content

Dependence of Course Content on Curriculum

During the pandemic period, it would be appropriate to carry out the online courses offered by the local government according to a certain program. The courses were based on the courses published by the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of National Education within the scope of non-formal education and the curricula of the courses. The fact that the courses opened according to the fields, course contents, and total course hours are certain shows that it is effective.

> Aysel: During pre-registration, the courses were divided according to their fields. This made it easier for me to make a choice. It was important for me to look at the subjects of the course I wanted to enroll in and know what would be taught and what its scope was. Since I knew what I wanted, it helped me understand whether it was suitable for me or not. I think following the lessons knowing that the course topics would contribute to my development increased my motivation.

> Ayça: I enrolled in this course thinking that it would contribute to my master's studies. I made the right decision, it contributed. Seeing the subject contents while enrolling in the course and teaching the lessons according to these contents contributed me to reach my goal.

Time Management

Determination of Class Day and Time

The importance of having a certain time for the course attended under pandemic conditions was emphasized. The participants fulfilled their daily routines, with students following their courses during the day and employees doing their professional work and attending meetings, even remotely. However, learners reported that they organized themselves according to the day and time of the courses they attended for their personal, professional and/or social development.

> Ayşe: Since I am an undergraduate student, I had classes during the day. The course I wanted to attend was in the evening. This situation was very useful for me. When I registered, I had taken this into consideration and organized my time accordingly.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

With the impact of the pandemic caused by Covid-19, formal and non-formal education programs that provide education in our country, as well as around the world, have initiated and spread the use of distance education-based online learning environments. The local administration of Konya Metropolitan Municipality, which organizes face-to-face lifelong courses, has moved these courses to distance education-based online courses with the pandemic. This study aims to reveal the experiences and suggestions of adult learners who participated in distance education-based online lifelong learning courses.

According to the experience of the adult learner who participated in the course for the emergency online lifelong learning environment, it was seen that the simultaneous processing of the lessons and the lack of access to the course after the course was not recorded negatively affected the expectation. The transition to an online environment in lifelong courses, as in all levels of education during the pandemic period, negatively affected the student, teacher and learning performance, and showed that they were not ready for new experiences. In order to raise the adult learner's expectations from the online learning environment, it is thought that recording the lessons taught simultaneously and sharing them in the learning management system will support various learning opportunities (Khlaif & Farid, 2018).

Digital content such as materials, information, presentations, etc. related to the course content are normally delivered to students via LMS. However, although the local government did not provide such an infrastructure support while conducting emergency distance education-based online lifelong courses, the digital content was delivered to the students attending the course through ZOOM's chat area and whatsapp group. On the other hand, it is seen that similar communication tools are used in higher education institutions (Aduba & Adebara, 2022; Magableh & Alia, 2021). During the pandemic period, it was observed that using different communication tools indirectly to address student requests and expectations in the system positively affected student integration into the online environment.

The potential for isolation that emerged during the pandemic emerges as a factor that should not be ignored during the crisis period of student sense of belonging in emergency online environments. It is seen that the sense of belonging in the students participating in the course was low at first and then increased with the use of some communication methods by the teacher. Emergency online learning activities carried out in the first period of the pandemic brought various difficulties by affecting both students and teachers. However, in the following periods, with the increase in teachers' online platform pedagogy competencies, it had a positive effect on students' sense of belonging on online learning experiences (Blignaut vd., 2022). Learning satisfaction (Fan, Luchok & Dozier, 2021; Gachigi vd., 2023) and self-confidence (Peacock & Cowan, 2021) are among the factors that develop and nurture student sense of belonging in the online environment.

In the student theme sub-heading of the research results, the change in learning, facilities, obstacles, concentration and motivation of the experiences obtained in relation to emergency online learning emerged. In emergency online learning, students are responsible for their own learning and their duties have increased by managing and controlling their own learning. It is seen that the learning responsibilities of individuals participating in educational activities with emergency online learning increase (Calamlam, Ferran & Macabali, 2022), the student fulfills the necessary and relevant management in the online environment (Al Awabdeh & Albashtawi, 2023) and the student can achieve efficiency in such environments by fulfilling learning controls (Jiang vd., 2023).

During the pandemic period, education and training activities were carried out online, and students were mainly concerned with the learning experiences they received in this environment, such as the convenience of attending classes from home, such as not having time and space constraints, being able to spare time for themselves, not having transportation problems, the positive motivation brought by these conveniences (AbuKamar & Kamar, 2022; Gedik, 2023), lack of internet infrastructure, lack of informatics, lack of familiarity with the software used (Zammit, 2021), and the presence of distractions in the home environment have been reported to negatively affect concentration (Khalaf, Abubekr & Ziada, 2023; Öztürk, 2021).

It should be recognized that the online learning environment is different from the classroom learning environment and that effective ways of communication should be used. It is important for students in the emergency online learning environment to be able to ask questions and get answers from the teacher during the simultaneous lesson, and for the answers to be clear and unambiguous, and not to be in a way that can be interpreted in other ways, in order to eliminate the question marks in their minds.

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It should also be sustained through various communication channels (e-mail, whatsapp, etc.) outside of class time (Sason vd., 2022), which is thought to support community engagement.

The main role of feedback is to provide practical advice to improve student performance in online teaching as in face-to-face teaching. It also increases student motivation, confidence and self-esteem (Fine vd., 2019). The fact that the feedback given during the pandemic was during a period of high isolation and anxiety made the supportive role of the teacher more important (Fine vd., 2022).

The communication between the teacher and student about the course content given in this type of online environment is considered as pedagogical support, and it has also been reported that it provides academic progress and reduces stress (Yates vd., 2021).

There are many studies that mention problems with computers, internet, and system infrastructure for a certain part of the students who had to participate in online learning at different levels during the pandemic period (Shamir-Inbal & Blau, 2021). However, it is seen that other trainees who contributed to this study with their experiences and other trainees did not report many such problems.

Learning management systems play an important role in online learning. It is a system that supports the teacher by providing instant assessment of the learner, managing content, student engagement and tracking (Ndou, Mashau, & Chigada, 2023). In the current study, the fact that the current local government, which provides the management of the courses, does not have such an infrastructure has limited the service provided to students during the pandemic period. In addition, there is a system created, but this system is only an informative system and does not store any digital resources.

Students participating in the course use two different platforms. The ZOOM program, where the courses are taught, and the interface section where students get information about the courses they are enrolled in.

Emergenc online learning has been used during the pandemic and is likely to continue to be used in various situations. There is a need to reorganize the curriculum for online learning in terms of pedagogy (Rhim & Han, 2020). The urgent transition to distance education during the pandemic period caught the student and the teacher unprepared at the point of curriculum, as well as the way of teaching, method, curriculum and content to be followed were continued in the face-to-face environment. In this study, in which student experiences were taken, it was determined that the curriculum of the course followed the lifelong learning course curricula of the Ministry of National Education and that the students did not express much negative opinion about this.

It is a normal situation that there is a certain course schedule in face-to-face education and that there is a course schedule in the simultaneous online learning environment. On the other hand, it is a normal and usual situation that the days and hours of the lifelong emergency online courses in which the study was conducted are certain. This is important for both teachers and adult learners to organize their own programs. On the other hand, the certainty of the course schedule has an active role in monitoring students' absenteeism and attendance (Cong, 2020). Having a clear program is also important for the local administration that manages the courses in terms of monitoring whether the courses are being taught or not. The adult learners who participated in the course(s) stated that they supported this situation and planned themselves. This will ensure consistency between students, teachers and the coordinating institution.

In the Covid-19 era, emergency remote education models are seen as prototypes that education systems can emulate well beyond periods of crisis such as the pandemic. Although the worldwide shift to emergency online education has been haphazard and practically chaotic, critical studies will need to situate these changes within the broader political economy of the COVID-19 pandemic, its antecedents and long-term consequences. Education in crisis situations like the pandemic can also shed light on long-term changes in the relationship between technology and society through the seamless adoption of digital

services as a solution to any problem. In line with the research findings, if local governments want to transform lifelong learning into a more sustainable structure in times of crisis, an LMS system should be implemented and the duties and responsibilities of teachers should be conveyed to those who teach/will teach in the courses online in various ways. The pandemic policies, pedagogies, and practices characteristic of education in 2020 call for different approaches to research again, analyzing critical and theoretical accounts of educational technologies and media.

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