Araştırma Makalesi ● Research Article

Investigation of the Covid-19 Pandemic in School Management According to Administrators' Views

Covıd-19 Salgınının Okul Yönetimi Açısından Yönetici Görüşlerine Göre Araştırılması

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Öz: Bu araştırmanın amacı okul yöneticilerinin 2019 yılında tüm dünyayı etkisi altına alan küresel salgın (Covid-19) sürecinde okul yönetimi açısından oluşan risk ve fırsatlara ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemektir. Nitel paradigma ilkeleri doğrultusunda gerçekleştirilen bu araştırmada olgubilim deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilen Bingöl ve Muş illerinde Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı devlet okullarında görev yapan 51 gönüllü okul yöneticisinden oluşmaktadır. Veriler, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen görüşme formu aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmada kullanılan görüşme formu için Atatürk Üniversitesi Etik Kurul Başkanlığından 18/07/2024 tarihinde Sayı:05 ile araştırma izin alınmıştır. Görüşme formunda katılımcıların demografik bilgilerine yönelik sorular ile araştırmanın alt problemlerine ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemek amacıyla hazırlanan açık uçlu 2 soruya yer verilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler içerik analizi tekniği ile (MAXQDA programı aracılığıyla) çözümlenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda 2019-2020 küresel salgınının, yönetimsel açıdan okul idarecilerine risklerle birlikte birtakım fırsatlar sunduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Salgın ile birlikte yöneticilerin güncellemeleri gereken bilgilerinin olduğu, sonraki dönemlerde savaş, salgın, felaket vb. durumlarda olası okul kapanmalarında etkili yönetim için gerekli tecrübelerin edinilmesine fırsat yarattığı şeklinde sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır. Benzer çalışmaların farklı kurumlarda yapılmasının olası kapanmalarda riskler ve fırsatlar bakımından daha etkili yönetim faaliyetlerinin yürütülmesi açısından faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19, Salgın, Okul Yöneticileri, Olgubilim, Yönetim

Abstract: This study aims to determine school administrators' opinions on the risks and opportunities for school management resulting from the global pandemic (Covid-19), which affected the world in 2019. In this research based on the qualitative paradigm principles, phenomenological design was used. The study group involved 51 volunteer school administrators working in public schools under the Ministry of National Education in Bingol and Mus provinces, and determined by criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. For the interview form used in the study, research permission was obtained from Ataturk Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee on 18/07/2024 with number: 05. The study data were collected by an interview form prepared by the researchers and including questions about the respondents' demographic characteristics and two open-ended

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questions to determine their opinions on sub-problems of the study. The data obtained were analysed by content analysis technique (MAXQDA). The research concluded that the 2019-2020 pandemic posed not only risks but also opportunities for school management, and it demonstrated the need to update some knowledge of school administrators, and it enabled to gain necessary experience for effective management in possible closures during war, epidemic, disaster, etc. in the future. The study suggests that conducting similar studies in different institutions will be beneficial for more effective management activities in terms of risks and opportunities during possible closures.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, School Administrators, Phenomenology, Management

Introduction

Although the transmission routes of the coronavirus, which caused the global epidemic, are not completely known, the virus is thought to have multiple transmission routes such as droplets from sneezing and coughing of people and contact with infected objects (Dalton et al., 2020). Compared to previous infectious diseases such as MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) and SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), the coronavirus leading to Covid-19 infection has a lower mortality rate among those infected (Lopez et al., 2021). However, the rapid spread of the virus caused the number of people infected with the disease to be high. As a result, there was an increase in the casualties (Christie et al., 2021). The greatest responsibility in mitigating the adverse impacts of the global pandemic on society falls on all institution administrators, especially those who govern the state.

The rapid increase in the number of people infected with the epidemic worldwide had a profound impact on the social sphere, although it was perceived only as a health problem at first (Viselli et al., 2021). In many countries across the world, taking a series of measures in the areas with high interaction and the subsequent impositions of curfews resulted in economic stagnation in a great number of sectors (Giannini & Lewis, 2020; Soylu, 2020). In educational institutions, one of the areas with the most human interaction, the prolongation of the pandemic process led to discussions on online education vs. face-to-face education (Balcı, 2020; Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020). Therefore, all stakeholders of education were affected by the global pandemic in that period. As in the rest of the world, all educational institutions in Turkey switched to distance education by suspending face-to-face education. In that period, school administrators had important duties in overcoming the educational problems. The global pandemic caused school administrators to be challenged in an unprecedented way in business life. Although school administrators are accustomed to dealing with educational problems and conflicts, there are times when many administrators are unable to struggle with a crisis of a great scale. While schools are closed for a few days even during major natural disasters or armed attacks, this period was much longer during the period when Covid-19 was active (McLeod & Dulsky, 2021). Unlike previous disasters, Covid-19 revealed the deficiencies in the education system and the inadequacies of school administrators in responding to the crisis.

In order to prevent the spread of the pandemic in schools during the times of face-to-face education, school administrators undertook important tasks for providing cleaning and hygiene materials to schools on the one hand and raising awareness of students, teachers and parents on the practices caused by Covid-19 on the other hand (Kaplan, 2021). In addition to these tasks, school administrators were also given important roles in providing teachers and students with access to the Internet and tablets (Cengiz & Dasdemir, 2022). However, although access to these resources is perceived as a problem, it is important for children to be exposed to technology at an early age in order to turn crises into opportunities.

According to İşman (2011), compared to face-to-face education, online education has advantages such as providing education to all students and reducing education costs. However, since Covid-19 became active in a very short time, many countries were caught unprepared for distance education

(Başaran et al., 2020; Can, 2020; Daşdemir & Cengiz, 2022; Demir & Koçak, 2021). According to Erdoğan (2008), in these rarely-encountered situations, all opportunities should be used to achieve the goals. In such circumstances, good crisis management by school administrators can produce quick solutions to problems and eliminate indecisiveness and potential reactions (Aksoy & Aksoy, 2003). During the Covid-19 pandemic, some problems and also some opportunities related to school management emerged.

The occurrence of many problems in education management as a result of the global pandemic (Sarı & Sarı, 2020) and the fact that the people who would solve these problems in the field are school administrators highlighted the significance of their leadership skills (Keleş et al., 2020). According to Can and Ozan (2022), the perspectives on school management started to change during the pandemic. Based on these changes, it is important to investigate the risks and opportunities arising from the pandemic to enable school administrators to take quick measures in future disasters and turn problems into opportunities.

As a result of the review of the literature, it is concluded that although there are studies addressing the impact of Covid-19 on school management (Altunay & Erol, 2022; Can & Ozan, 2022; Demir & Koçak, 2021; Kaplan & Uğurlu, 2023; McLeod & Dulsky, 2021; Özdoğru, 2020; Yang et al., 2022; Yavuz & Çetin, 2022), there are not many studies assessing both the risks and opportunities, caused by Covid-19, for school management (Cengiz & Dasdemir, 2022). Considering the researchers conducted, it was seen that Yang et al. developed a sustainable management and decision-making model in post-Covid-19 schools. In their research, McLeod and Dulsky (2021) collected the opinions of school administrators about effective leadership in the first months of Covid-19. As a result of these interviews, emphasis on vision and values, communication and family community engagement, staff care, educational leadership and institutional capacity building, equity-focused leadership practices, and recognition of potential future opportunities were identified as key themes. In order to improve educational leadership and school management, it is recommended that the selection of administrators be based on scientific findings and that school administration be professionalized (Altunay & Erol, 2022). There are also studies in the literature that address the risks posed by Covid-19 pandemic in terms of school management (Can & Ozan, 2022; Özüdoğru, 2020; Kaplan & Uğurlu, 2023; Yavuz & Çetin, 2022). During a pandemic, failure to make effective planning, inability to follow courses, economic difficulties in accessing technology (Can & Ozan, 2022) and unpreparedness of education stakeholders for a major crisis lead to inequality of opportunity among students (Kaplan & Uğurlu, 2023). Therefore, it is believed that determining the risks and opportunities created by Covid-19 on school management by considering the opinions of school administrators will contribute to the gap in the literature.

Based on the results obtained from this research, it can be possible to have implications on how schools will be prepared for future disasters. It is suggested that identifying the risks and opportunities related to school management will support policy makers and school administrators. The aim of this study is to determine the opinions of school administrators, working in public schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in Bingöl and Mus provinces in the 2022-2023 academic year, about the risks and opportunities for school management arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The problem statement of the research: "What are the opinions of school administrators about the risks and opportunities that occur in terms of school management during the Covid-19 pandemic?" The sub-problems of this problem are given below:

• What are the risks posed for school management by Covid-19, which emerged in Turkey along with all countries around the world?

• What are the opportunities created for school management by Covid-19, which emerged in Turkey along with all countries around the world?

Method

Research model

This research aims to determine the risks and opportunities created for school management by the global Covid-19 epidemic, which affected Turkey, like many countries around the world, in 2019. The phenomenological design was used in this study that was conducted using qualitative research method. The phenomenological design provides researchers with the opportunity to obtain in-depth information, focusing on the phenomena that we know but do not fully comprehend (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). This study investigates school administrators' perceptions, experiences and impressions regarding the risks and opportunities posed by the Covid-19 pandemic for school management.

Study group

In this study based on qualitative approach, the study group was determined through a certain limitation following preliminary studies conducted in accordance with the purpose of the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In line with Fraenkel and Wallen's (2006) classifications, the study group was selected by criterion sampling method. Criterion sampling refers to the application of a certain criterion to the community from whom the data related to the subject of the research will be collected. After determining the individuals or situations to be examined within the scope of the study, the researcher can use a list of criteria defined in advance by himself or other researchers (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). It was believed that with this method to be used, the research would be carried out quickly and practically, and reliable data could be obtained. In the study, 51 volunteer school administrators were interviewed within the framework of the criteria determined by the researchers. The criteria can be listed as follows:

- Working as permanent staff in schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education (preschool-primary-secondary school),
- Working as a school administrator during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The information about the respondents given in the interview form is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Different Variables

Variables		f	%
Level of school where the respondent works	Preschool	6	11.7
	Primary	18	35.2
	Secondary	13	25.4
	High school	14	27.4
Job position at school	Principal	22	43.1
	Chief Assistant Principal	5	9.8
	Assistant Principal	24	47.0
Length of service	1-10 years	5	9.8
	11-20 years	24	47.0
	21-30 years	15	29.4
	31 years and above	7	13.7

Data collection tools and process

For the purpose of data collection in the study, a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers was used to determine the opinions of school administrators on the risks and opportunities posed by the Covid-19 outbreak for school management.

While the interview form was being developed, the questions directed to the respondents were defined as a result of a careful examination of the relevant literature. Particular attention was paid to

ensuring that the prepared questions were easy to understand and focused, and that they were not multidimensional (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). During the elaboration of the interview form, five questions were prepared by reviewing the literature on Covid-19. The draft form was submitted to expert opinions. In this context, the opinions of three academicians experienced in qualitative research and six school administrators working at different levels were obtained. After the items that experts agree are intended to collect the same data were collected in a single item and reviewed as statements, the interview form was reorganised into two items. In order to check whether the items were expressed clearly and comprehensibly, the opinions of three administrators were consulted before the data were collected, and the interview form was finalised.

The interview form consists of two structural parts. The first part covers the school level, job position and length of service of the respondents, while the second part includes 2 open-ended questions to determine the opinions and evaluations of the respondents regarding the risks and opportunities posed by the Covid-19 outbreak for school management.

Ethical permission for the research was obtained from Atatürk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee on 18/07/2024 with the number: 05.

Data analysis

The respondents were asked to give an appointment for the implementation of the interviews. During the interview, the respondents were informed that they could convey their views through a voice recorder or an interview form, but all respondents preferred to express their views in writing. The data of the study were analysed using content analysis technique. Content analysis aims to reveal concepts, themes and relationships that are not analysed in depth. The data obtained with this technique were conceptualized, organized, and relevant themes were identified (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). For the analysis of the data obtained, the respondent forms were numbered (R1, R2, R3...) as a first step. The answers given by the respondents were scanned with a scanner and converted into pdf format. The forms converted into pdf format were transferred to MAXQDA 2022 programme. Based on the research questions, the data were categorized. The answers provided by the respondents were divided into sub-codes with an inductive analysis, and themes were identified based on these sub-codes. In the analysis process, it was aimed to carry out all sub-coding without interruption. The findings were reached by creating tables, concept maps and word clouds findings were analyzed from the programme.

Findings

In this section, the findings related to the problem of the research are given. The research findings are listed in line with the sub-objectives of the research. The answers given by the school administrators through the semi-structured interview form were transformed into a concept map and presented in Figure 1.
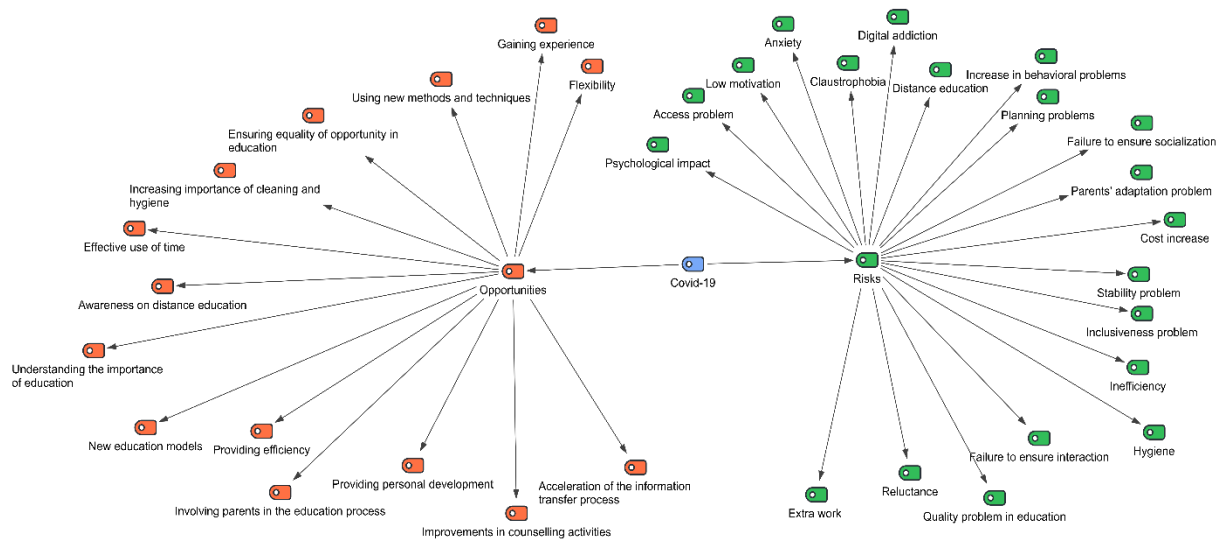

Figure 1. The Opportunities and Risks Posed by Covid-19 for Administrators

Considering Figure 1, it is seen that a concept map is created by grouping the answers given by the administrators as risks and opportunities. The concept map is divided into two themes: opportunities and risks. Opportunities are shown in orange and risks are shown in green. The opportunities in the concept map created in line with the answers given by the school administrators were identified as awareness of distance education, increasing importance of cleaning and hygiene, ensuring equality of opportunity in education, using new methods and techniques, understanding the importance of education, gaining experience, effective use of time, flexibility, acceleration of the information transfer process, providing personal development, involving parents in the education process, providing efficiency and creating new education models. The risks posed by Covid-19 are listed as follows: Failure to ensure interaction, reluctance, stability problem, inefficiency, parents' adaptation problem, inclusiveness problem, distance education, cost increase, access problem, failure to ensure socialization, psychological impact, planning problems, low motivation, claustrophobia, hygiene, anxiety, digital addiction, quality problem in education, extra work and increase in behavioral problems.

The word clouds created in line with the answers given by the administrators were illustrated as a group in the form of opportunities and risks.
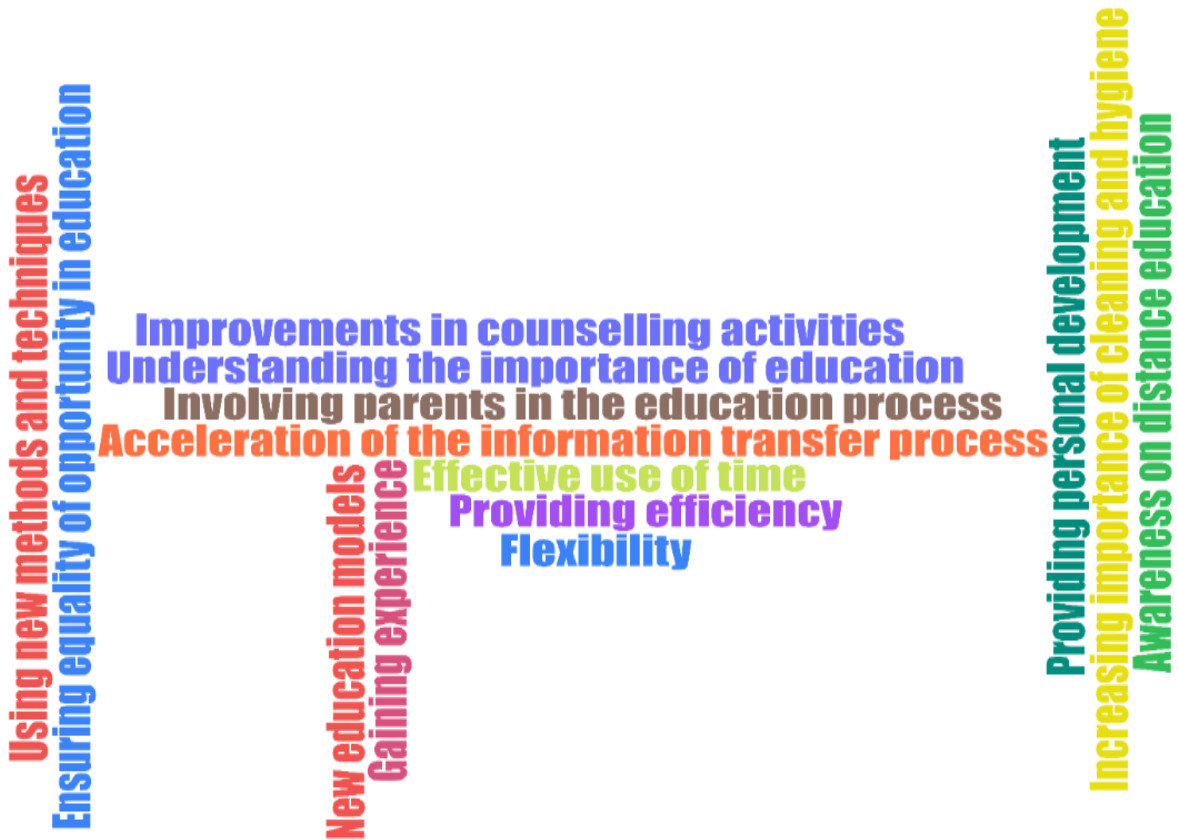
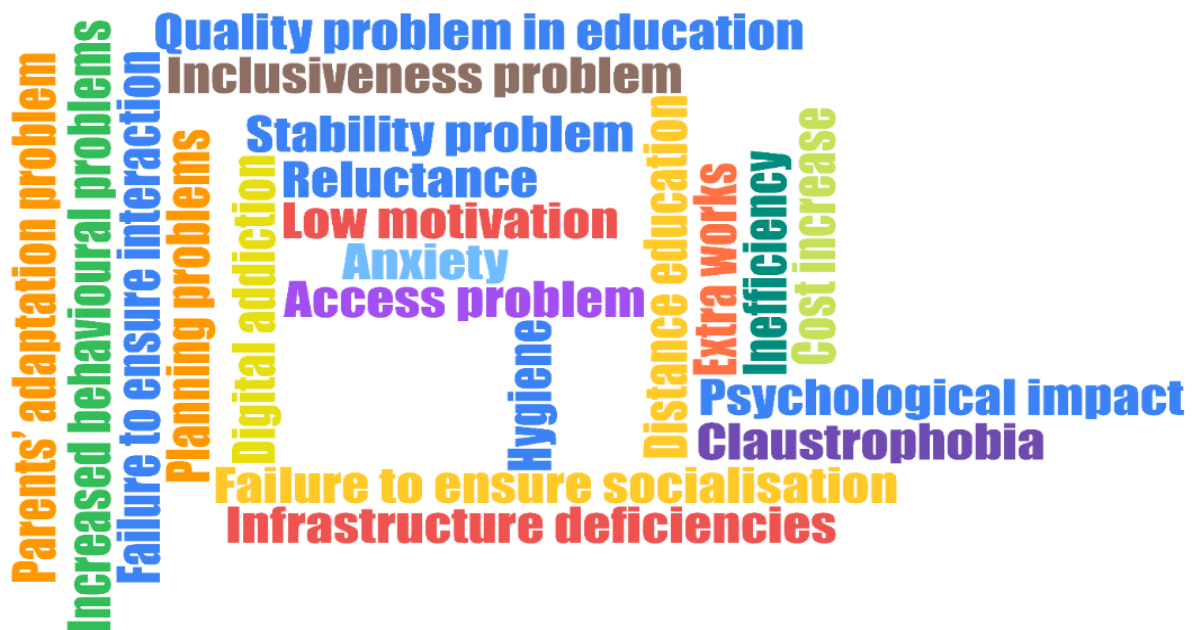**Figure 2.** The Word Cloud of Opportunities Created by Covid-19 for Administrators

Figure 3. The Word Cloud of Risks Posed by Covid-19 for Administrators

Table 2. Themes and Codes Consisting of Administrators' Opinions on Opportunities and Risks of Covid-19

The Opportunities Created by Covid-19 for Administrators

Theme	Codes	f
OPPORTUNITIES	Awareness of distance education	5
	Acceleration of the information transfer process	6
	Increasing importance of cleaning and hygiene	9
	Ensuring equality of opportunity in education	21
	Using new methods and techniques	6
	Understanding the importance of education	12
	Gaining experience	9
	Effective use of time	5
	Flexibility	3
	Providing personal development	5
	Involving parents in the education process	16
	Providing efficiency	15
	Creating new education models.	4

The Risks Posed by Covid-19 for Administrators

Theme	Codes	f
RISKS	Failure to ensure interaction	22
	Reluctance	6
	Stability problem	7
	Inefficiency	13
	Parents' adaptation problem	8
	Inclusiveness problem	5
	Distance education	12
	Cost	15
	Access problem	12
	Failure to ensure socialization	11
	Psychological impact	2
	Planning problems	8
	Low motivation	15
	Claustrophobia	2
	Insufficiency of hygiene	15
	Anxiety	2
	Digital addiction	12
	Quality problem in education	18
	Extra works	10
	Increase in behavioral problems	5

The opinions (opportunities) of the respondents regarding some of the answers they gave to the questions prepared in line with the sub-objectives of the problem are given below:

Covid-19 enabled teachers to use different methods and techniques in education, to develop new techniques and to use technology more effectively. It showed that distance education can be a good alternative, some administrative work can be done remotely, and some studies can be carried out remotely by actively involving parents in the process (Respondent 23).

Continuous changes in planning, driven by the dynamic operation of the process, are culminated in the development of flexible and fast decision-making characteristics. Managers gained insight through experience in what they were experiencing and how much they were able to manage their teams' crises. It turns out that a large number of advanced methods for minimising learning losses have clearly emerged. One of the key positive outcomes was more informed than the critical role it plays across schools. In addition, they collected more comprehensive information on the socio-economic conditions of the families of the administrations and came back to stay at home with regard to the hygiene practices of the parents; This was an area where management struggled to make decisions (Respondent 27).

Covid-19 provided the opportunity to eliminate most of the problems of the school in terms of cleaning, hygiene and repair during the interruption period by the school management. It enabled an alternative teaching method to be implemented for delivering courses through distance education. Reducing the number of students created an alternative method for education in crowded classes and also enabled to provide education according to the student level in classes divided into two. It allowed teachers to gain the necessary skills for delivering online courses and holding meetings through technological tools, the reality of the age (Respondent 42).

The utilisation of technological means due to the pandemic facilitated the education and training process. It became faster for the school administrators to reach teachers and teachers to reach students. The pandemic accelerated and facilitated the transition to a hybrid education model (Respondent 50).

The opinions (risks) of the respondents regarding some of the answers they gave to the questions prepared in line with the sub-objectives of the problem are given below:

Distance education is a seriously challenging system in terms of planning for disadvantaged groups. It is difficult for students to receive distance education in the morning. Considering the reluctance of the parents, time should be used effectively and adjusted according to the parents. Secondly, an effective education program and lesson plan should be applied to children, and parents should be included in this process in order to ensure success. That is because a child who makes his/her parents do everything cannot receive instructions from his/her parents, this may turn into a parent-teacher conflict. In distance education, one of the parents should be with the child because many children cannot switch on the computer and cannot utilise these means on their own (e-school etc.). Considering the education level of the region, this reality is unfavorable. We have all experienced together that a child with a mother who is illiterate and unable to use social media or technology cannot benefit from these means. Therefore, it is impossible to achieve an outcome that has been studied for months, especially in face-to-face education, through distance education (Respondent 8).

Preschools were the schools that were closed for the least period of time during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the closure process, the Covid-19 pandemic caused low motivation in ensuring unity in the school and providing education and training, which negatively affected the quality of education and training activities. It was tried to perform the distance education activities mainly using social media (school's Instagram account, EBA and WhatsApp). Due to the disease, children had psychological effects at first such as keeping distance, being anxious and avoiding approaching (Respondent 34).

The necessity of providing education sometimes face-to-face, remotely and part-time at different levels has often prevented healthy planning in schools with high number of students and teachers. During the pandemic, school administrators spent most of their time preparing course schedules. Likewise, the frequent requests, of provincial national education directorates, for statistics, regarding distance education activities, which do not contribute to the education process and whose results are not assessed, have made the time and work of school administrations inefficient. The obligation to obtain a "Clean School" certificate, which makes no sense in education, almost drowned the school administration in paper and paperwork. The school could have been organized according to the pandemic conditions without drowning in paperwork. As a result, the usual opening of full-time schools revealed the unnecessary of hundreds of pages of documents. The unstable education process was reflected on students and employees. School administrations, which were deprived of the income of PTAs during the pandemic, had difficulty in meeting the needs of the school such as physical, stationery, occupational health and safety, repairs, etc. due to the financial expenditures they had to make because of the obligation to obtain the "Clean School" certificate imposed by the Ministry (Respondent 49).

Discussion and conclusion

The findings of the research reveal the challenges of the pandemic in the field of education, i.e. adaptation problems experienced by parents, various disruptions encountered by administrators in the planning phase and difficulties in accessing hygiene materials, etc. While such crises require quick and effective solutions for educational organizations, they can also test administrators' flexibility, coordination and crisis management skills.

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was observed that the relevant ministry decided to close schools in order to reduce contacts. Many countries tried to prevent the spread of the pandemic by implementing this measure. This process caused families to experience difficulties in coping with household chores, and it limited children's possibilities for social interaction and led to a rapid transition to distance education. According to Burgess and Sievertsen's study (2020), this situation brought about a series of uncertainties in terms of student assessment. For school administrators, this process also created many uncertainties. As suggested by Duong (2022), school principals felt themselves under pressure. Coping with the challenges such as restriction of social interaction and increase in behavioral problems and in extra responsibilities became an important challenge for administrators in the field of education. Based on the answers of the administrators who participated in the research, the factors such as lack of developed social skills and reduced classroom interactions pointed to the difficulties of distance education. Furthermore, the uncertainties in student assessment raised the questions about more effective and fair functioning of education systems.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought along a series of uncertainties in the education sector. The restriction of face-to-face education opportunities forced many educational institutions to switch to distance education. However, this process urged administrators to look for ways to cope with uncertainties. The study by Han et al. (2018) emphasized that uncertainty can lead to uncontrolled behaviors in people. Administrators were also affected by this uncertainty and experienced planning difficulties in the face of constantly changing situations. Yıldız et al. (2020) stated that the pandemic caused schools to be closed frequently and exams to be postponed. This situation caused administrators to experience planning difficulties and feel uncertainty, and it posed a risk in education. According to the studies by Küçükali and Çınar (2020) and Chong et al. (2004), the pandemic can cause serious psychological problems even in individuals with good mental health, which shows that administrators are also psychologically affected. Moreover, as Aykut and Soner-Aykut (2020) suggested, this period of uncertainty caused people to feel lonely. As Qiu et al. (2020) emphasized, the pandemic has caused deep problems in many people. The results of the research showed that administrators faced risks and uncertainties also affected them. In this context, the results obtained support other studies in the literature.

The Covid-19 pandemic necessitated the transition to distance education. However, during this period, it was observed that some families faced various difficulties in distance education due to lack of technological equipment, crowded families and living in rural areas. (Arıcı, 2023; Yıldız et al. 2020). This situation confirms the complaints of educational administrators about infrastructure deficiencies, technological inadequacies and access problems. The research reveals that infrastructure deficiencies and technological inadequacies in distance education cause difficulties in accessing technological equipment such as tablets, computers or televisions. When we focus on the educational dimension, as suggested by Yadigaroğlu (2023), it is an important issue that parents experienced dissatisfaction in that period. This research, in which all respondents were administrators, reveals the risk factors such as inefficiency, quality problems and dissatisfaction in education. The results of the research show that there is a general dissatisfaction in the field of education. This situation may have affected many stakeholders of the education system by influencing not only parents but also administrators. The problems such as technological deficiencies in the transition to distance education and parents'

dissatisfaction revealed serious risk factors in education. Administrators had to cope with this stress and psychology (Weiner et al., 2021).

The effects of Covid-19 are not only negative, but it also made positive contributions to the world of education. In particular, some students who did not like school stated that they missed school during the pandemic (Küçükali & Çınar, 2020). One of the tasks of school principals during the pandemic is to motivate students to learn (Lv et al., 2023) Cengiz & Daşdemir (2022) stated in their study that school principals provided student motivation by holding meetings through distance education and providing psychological support to them. In a sense, this situation facilitated the work of administrators. The acceleration of the process of receiving information mentioned in the research findings supports the relevant literature. In addition, the research results emphasized the importance of education and face-to-face education and showed that this period offered an opportunity to deepen the understanding of education.

In addition, online learning has necessitated the use of new methods in education and training. The advancement of technology has enabled the combination of flipped education approach, blended education approach, distance education and formal education (Başaran et al., 2020; Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020). Two different conclusions were reached with this research. While one view argues that the transition to distance education has increased the awareness on education and training and new methods have been developed, the other view considers this situation as a risk factor. Lack of infrastructure, inability to adapt and technological inadequacy are among these risk factors. These new educational methods and technological transformation may have encouraged change and innovation in education. However, at the same time, they may have created problems for students and educators who cannot keep up with these changes. In particular, factors such as infrastructure deficiencies may have created a significant barrier to access to distance education. Research findings suggest that the pandemic presents both risks and opportunities for administrators.

The irregularities experienced in education during the pandemic led to childcare problems and negative consequences in the relationship between children and parents (Daniel, 2020). The research findings show that parents experienced adaptation problems in that period. This situation can be considered as a potential risk factor for administrators. In particular, children's participation in distance education and the disruption of the education system may have affected the daily routines of families. This increased childcare problems and made the relationship between parents and their children more difficult.

Today, the role of school leaders is critical to cope with increasing crises and uncertainties. In this period, creating learning-oriented structures and systems should be among the priorities of leaders. Researches have shown that these structures can improve the resilience of educational organizations to crises. At the same time, the development of leaders' creative problem solving and innovation skills has enabled them to provide effective solutions to the challenges faced. In this context, strengthening leadership skills and finding sustainable solutions in education can enable school leaders to respond more effectively to future uncertainties (Wooten & James, 2008; Smith & Riley, 2012). The findings of the study that the pandemic increases awareness on distance education, enables administrators to gain experience, creates flexibility in management and improves managerial skills support the relevant literature. In accordance with the obtained results some suggestions for administrators and researchers are presented based on the discussion and conclusion part of the research.

For administrators:

- It is recommended that administrators should have alternative plans in order to eliminate uncertainties in adverse situations.
- The development of administrators, in technological terms, should be ensured by higher institutions or personally.

- MONE (Ministry of National Education) should increase and improve the content of distance education platforms.
- It is important for MONE to provide online support training to school administrators during possible crises.
- By expanding their authority in possible crisis situations, it should be ensured that school administrators can make quick decisions.
- By addressing the challenges of the pandemic period, administrators can explore ways to provide support to families and make educational processes more organized.
- This is important in terms of minimizing the difficulties encountered in education and strengthening student-parent-school cooperation during the epidemic period.

For researchers:

- In the longer term, the effects of that period on education may need to be analyzed in more detail.
- The challenges introduced by that period may require the development of various solutions and improvements in education. In this context, more in-depth studies should be conducted in the areas such as student assessment, distance education strategies and student social development.
- Beyond creating uncertainty in the education sector, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused administrators to be exposed to a series of challenges such as psychological stress, planning difficulties and social isolation.

Disclosure Statements

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