

## EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK IN THE CONTEXT OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Universities, like other organizations, need to develop strategies and techniques to manage the Covid-19 crisis. Effective crisis management requires an assessment of the proximity of the outputs resulting from current strategies and practices to the intended targets. Thus, the quality of crisis management will be measured. The paper aims to take a picture of the challenges faced by senior university students during the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic and help universities eliminate the disruptions and develop alternative strategies accordingly. Within this context, the research provides a unique assessment for academic organizations in multiple dimensions by examining how the students are affected by the online models that universities have to put into practice rapidly. It aims to contribute to the development of alternative solutions for learning academic organizations by identifying current problems. Qualitative research patterns were used in the study and qualitative research techniques were used in the analysis of the data. 13 students within the spring term of the 2019-2020 academic year participated in the research carried out at a public university. Among the numerous findings, the most striking ones are associated with the absence of synchronous classes, the forum system, the system interface, and the project/homework implementation problems.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Learning Organization, Distance Education, Crisis Management

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## 1. Introduction

The Covid-19 epidemic that has spread rapidly to most of the world was coined as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). While countries have taken unprecedented measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic, on the other hand, they are also trying to minimize the effects of the epidemic on the economic and labor market. Naturally, the scientific world has also focused its attention on the pandemic. Scientists from different fields have carried out studies depicting the negative effects of the epidemic as well as the epidemic process and the Post-Covid-19 predictions. The scientists have started to hold internet-based conferences and many scientific databases, journals, etc. Access is made available free of charge. Universities share platforms with their internal and external stakeholders that are available for free access in a certain period. Of course, when millions of people spend most of their time at their own homes, such sharing offers significant opportunities, especially for the academic community and students. In addition to the first social studies highlighting the travel restrictions (i.e. Chinazzi vd., 2020), economics (i.e. Fernandes, 2020; Guerrieri and Lorenzoni, 2020) or marketing (i.e. Andersen et al., 2020), however, it is noteworthy that there are relatively few studies on the impact of the epidemic on education life and students. In this context, it is clear that the initial most cited studies were conducted with the sample of medical faculty students and mostly focused on the psychological effects of the pandemic. Rose (2020) evaluates the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on medical education in the context of the current situation and future projection. Cao et al. (2020) examined the psychological effects of the epidemic on medical school students. Undoubtedly, education life plays a key role among the hundreds of effects of the epidemic. Although states have a dilemma of closing schools and reducing contact or keeping schools open like some other organizations by prioritizing business life and economy, many countries have decided to suspend education in schools due to the epidemic (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020). This decision, of course, means that students continue their education from their homes rather than the permanent closure of schools. In our country, due to the epidemic, primary, secondary and high schools have had to give up traditional face-to-face education models, and the epidemic conditions that directly affect millions of students and academics have quickly forced academic organizations such as universities to produce alternative models and solutions. The YÖK (Higher Education Council) statement dated March 18, 2020, points out this fact as follows: “*Extraordinary days also require the use of new ways apart from the usual methods without breaking the reality of this process. We are aware that we have to manage this process, not just follow it*” (Saraç, 2020).

In the process that started with the statement made by the Turkish Presidency on education and training activities on March 12, 2020, YÖK published information on March 13, 2020, and decided to receive the demands and offers of the universities to provide lectures in digital platforms (YÖK, 2020). Following this, in the press release published by YÖK on 18 March 2020, a new statement was issued

with the emphasis that there are Distance Education Application and Research Centers in 123 universities and that an open course material pool would be created for those who did not have this capacity. Thus, it was announced that the distance education process would begin with digital facilities in all our universities (Saraç, 2020). Here, in order not to interrupt the educational processes, it was also stated that universities could use synchronous or asynchronous distance education methods during the pandemic according to the roadmap prepared by the Digital Transformation Commission in Higher Education. Furthermore, with the statement on March 23, 2020, it was stated that YÖK courses platform was created and made available to students as a valuable product of the "Open Science and Open Access" policy. However, as highlighted by the Higher Education Council, not all universities have distance education applications and research centers. Moreover, it is yet another fact that the capacities and technical infrastructures of the universities that have these centers are not at the same level. We should note that despite numerous difficulties, university administrations are taking decisions in this difficult period to protect their personnel and students and to ensure the continuity of academic activities on the one hand, and update these decisions in coordination with the Higher Education Council when necessary.

Hence, while evaluating the decisions taken by universities within their own decision mechanisms, it should not be forgotten that these decisions are made in a crisis environment. Covid-19 is a global crisis and a crisis is a situation of tension that is "*unexpected and not sensed beforehand, which needs to be responded quickly and urgently by the organization, threatening its current values, aims and assumptions by making the prevention and adaptation mechanisms of the organization inadequate*" (Tağraf and Arslan, 2003). Crises bring along conditions that make it difficult for organizations and managers to carry out organizational and managerial activities for different reasons (Tutar, 2000). Therefore, universities, as academic organizations, need to develop their own unique crisis management approach in line with their existing infrastructure, capabilities, capacities, and potentials, and develop strategies and techniques to manage the Covid-19 crisis. In this approach, defining and comparing existing organizational resources and expectations, determining the crisis management framework and basic strategy, clarifying the crisis management plan, establishing special committees for the crisis in the organization chart, and determining their duties and authorities is essential. Creating institutional awareness about the crisis and creating an effective communication plan that eliminates information asymmetry is also essential. Effective crisis management, firstly, requires an assessment of the proximity of the outputs resulting from current strategies and practices to the intended targets. Thus, in a way, the quality of crisis management will be measured. As mentioned above, the decisions taken within the decision mechanism can be updated. Because such evaluations are indispensable for learning organizations. As a matter of fact, learning organizations can "*renew*

*themselves by realizing the necessary transformations when necessary*” in light of such evaluations (Öneren, 2008). Besides, the effective realization of these transformations will definitely have an impact on the organizational reputation. Effective crisis management also indicates the existence of effective reputation management. Organizational reputation is a perceptual expression of the organization's past performance and expectations from the future (Fombrun, 1996). At the same time, it is a common expression of the past performance and the results of this performance, which shows the organization's ability to transfer its value-attributed outputs to its stakeholders (Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997). Organizational reputation is an intangible and valuable strategic resource that is difficult to imitate. It plays an important role in organizations' access to resources, gaining a competitive advantage in the current environment, and neutralizing the factors that may hinder the activities of organizations. The performance of organizations in crises such as Covid-19 has a huge impact on organizational reputation. But a good reputation also makes a significant contribution to organizations during and after crisis periods. Studies show that a good reputation can act as a buffer against negative propaganda during and after crisis periods and contributes greatly to overcoming crises (Yüncü et al., 2017). The reputation gained through such performance in times of crisis will be a sign of their future performance, as well (Dimov et al., 2007).

## **2. Materials and Method**

This research was carried out with a group of the senior year students of a state university. It aims to explore the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on students and to evaluate the initial online education practices caused by pandemic conditions. In this direction, a qualitative research design was adopted as it allowed to interpret the network of relationships that dominate the situations as we experience today or to reveal their meanings (Neuman, 2012: 224), as it provided an original evaluation opportunity for the effects of the extraordinary conditions we are in. The answers of nine questions posed to students were analyzed using qualitative research techniques.

### **2.1. Population and Sample**

The universe of the research consists of the students taking Lecture C of B department in the aforementioned public university in the spring terms of 2019-2020 academic year. Although the number of students taking this course is 21, the number of students participating in the study is 13 in line with the voluntary basis underlined in the informed voluntary consent form.

### **2.2. Data collection tool**

In this study, first-hand data collection method was followed. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, initial plan was to conduct interviews with volunteer participants via video conferencing tools. However, in order that the participants do not feel under pressure and give their answers sincerely, an alternative

roadmap was designed in order to achieve the aim of the study. Accordingly, participants were asked to provide written answers to nine questions on a form without including their name, age, gender, etc. on it. A semi-structured interview form addressing nine questions was made accessible to only this group on the internet. The question form was prepared in accordance with scientific research methods and the decision of Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board dated 27.05.2020 and numbered 2020/83.

### 2.3. Analysis of data

In the analysis of the responses of the participants, frequency analysis, descriptive analysis and theme analysis techniques as a part of content analysis were used. Frequency analysis, which is often used in content analysis, revealed the frequency of the numerical and percentage appearing of certain concepts in the responses of the participants. Thus, it has been made possible to make an order of importance and classify the determined concepts and codes. When possible, the general and in-group frequencies were also given. In this context, direct quotations were made from the responses of the participants that support the determined codes and themes. These direct quotations were used extensively in the descriptive analysis process. In the last part of the research, a comprehensive theme analysis was performed by combining all tables and the determined themes were given in a table. Finally, the determined themes were interpreted.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Analysis of the answers to the questions addressed

**Table 1.** Are there any positive or negative impacts in your academic performance after Covid-19?

	Frequency	%	Code	Frequency	%
Positive	6	46,15	Homework & Projects	3	37,5
			Research Methods	2	25
			Time	3	37,5
Negative	7	53,84	Motivation	1	12,5
			TWLIC	3	37,5
			Mental, Psychological State	2	12,5
			Focus	3	37,5

As seen in Table 1, although 53.84% of the participant students have a negative opinion, it is seen that the positive and negative situations in their study performances do not display a serious proportional difference. Stating that there was a positive change in their performance, the group's

statements indicate that 3 important factors were effective in this change: The widespread use of Homeworks and project applications preferred in the distance education model, the abundance of time that can be allocated per homework, and the students' experiences regarding research methods and techniques.

... *“now I feel a little more relaxed and freer as we will generally be evaluated via homeworks and projects” (P2).*

... *“I can spend more time doing my homework and projects, I read a lot unlike before the pandemic (P11)”.*

... *“I take academics as guides and I am getting into the habit of reaching information as it should be through research methods” (P6).*

On the other hand, the statements of the group, who stated that there was a positive change in their performance, exhibit that 4 important factors were effective in this negative change: Low motivation, the way the lessons are conducted in line with the distance education model, mental and psychological state and focus problems. In fact, due to the causality relationship between them, it seems possible to collect the mental and psychological state and focusing problems under one heading.

... *“as some of our lectures progress asynchronously only in the forum, we try to learn the subjects by ourselves and understand them through our own efforts. Therefore, we do not fully understand” (P9).*

... *“the level of motivation for productivity and efficiency is at lower levels” (P1).*

... *because we are always at home, I have a mental depression and frankly, I don't want to do anything” (P13).*

... *“and I'm having a different focus problem. I've been trying to study almost every day since I came home, but when I ask myself what I have done, I unfortunately do not have a clear answer” (P10).*

**Table 2.** Do you think that you can manage your lectures, homework and projects well in the distance education process? Why?

	Frequency	%	Code	Frequency	%
Yes	7	53,84	Technology	1	14,28
			Time	5	71,42
			Implementation	1	14,28
No	6	46,15	Lectures	3	33,33
			Laziness	3	33,33
			Sparing Time	1	11,11
			Stress/ psychology	2	22,22

When the expressions of the group who think that they manage their lessons, homework and projects well are coded, 3 important factors stand out: Technological facilities, abundance of time to use and opportunities to apply the theoretical knowledge. Based on the frequency of emphasis, the time factor differs significantly from the others within these 3 factors. 71.42% of the participants in the group who think that they manage their lessons, homework and projects well, directly emphasizes the abundance of time. 14.28% of them talk about technological facilities and 14.28% of them mention the effect of their ability to practice. In addition, considering that the participants who emphasized the practice also refer to time indirectly, it is understood that 85.7% of the participants who answered yes indicate time as the determining factor.

... *“Because we are in the age of technology ,and articles and files as supplementary materials are too many” (P1).*

... *“I understand the homework and complete my homework with the right steps, not theoretically, but with practice” (P6).*

... *“I do my homework without rush. Since I have nothing else to do, I am only focused on my homework and projects” (P11).*

On the other hand, it was observed that 4 important factors came to the fore in the expressions of 46.15% of the group who did not think that they managed their lectures: homework and project-based lectures of applied distance education model, individual factors like laziness, psychological condition caused by stress, etc. The two most striking factors in this group are the way lessons are conducted and individual factors. It is observed that these are followed by stress and psychological factors. Also, participant responses were carefully examined in order to understand the relationship within these 4 factors, but there was no data that could indicate such a relationship in the answers to this question.

... *“I merely study whatever is asked and it is just that. In this way. No contribution at all” (P4).*

... *“Perhaps this is the time when I would be the most productive and work the most, but I am interrupting my responsibilities by showing signs of laziness” (P5).*

... *“sometimes I don't make any progress in my homework for 5-6 hours. Really, the psychological aspect of being a senior and the current situation has worn me a lot” (P13).*

**Table 3.** Are you worried about your midterm and final exams? Why is that?

	Frequency	%	Code	Frequency	%
Yes	10	76,92	Individual performance	2	15,38
			Homework / Project	6	46,15
			instructors	2	15,38
			Focus	1	7,69
			Lectures	2	15,38
No	3	23,07	Transition to Online Education	2	100

Table 3, which summarizes the answers to the question reveals a significant proportional difference unlike the previous ones. The results show that 76.92% of the participants are anxious about the exams. When the expressions of this group are examined, 5 basic factors draw attention: the obligation to work individually, the homework system, the attitude of the instructors, the focus problem, and the way lectures are conducted in the distance education model.

... *“Because being alone in understanding the subject creates anxiety” (P1).*

... *“Since I don't know what I got right or wrong, I can't help thinking whether I did it wrong” (P13).*

It is noteworthy that the participants' responses pointing to homework and projects as the source of uneasiness with the largest percentage in the group refer to different dimensions of homework and projects. Being unfamiliar with the homework system, how homeworks would be evaluated, the amount of homework, and the effect of homework on the GPA are expressed under this heading.

... *“I feel anxious because we are mostly used to the exams and we are unfamiliar with the homework system” (P1).*

.... *“Our teachers give us too much and unnecessary homework” (P11).*

In 15.38% of the group experiencing anxiety, the anxiety was observed to be caused by the lecturer of the course.



.... *“how the teachers will evaluate what will happen is a complete mystery” (P6).*

... *“Of course, the level of responsibility of each of our teachers is not the same. But unfortunately, we cannot do anything other than trust” (P9).*

Similarly, it was observed that 15.38% of the group experiencing anxiety refers to the way lectures are conducted. Here, the homework system with the highest ratio with 46.15% and the way lectures are conducted factors were established in the same sentence and in a similar context in most of the participants' expressions and there was a great relationship between them. Moreover, the answers stating that they experienced an uneasiness due to the instructor also point to a similar relationship. When these 3 factors are taken together, it is seen that they cover an area with 76.91%.

... *“We cannot learn through online education and I cannot help worrying about finals” (P8).*

... *“Frankly, I do not think that there are things that can be understood by simply uploading notes to the forum, and I cannot help thinking about whether I am going to get a low mark because I don't know what I got right or wrong” (P13).*

On the other hand, when the group expressions that stated that they did not feel uneasy about the midterm and final exams, it was observed that the students did not crystalize the reasons and stated that only transition to online education is normal and the process now requires it.

.... *“The current time shows that the education system should go in this direction and the main duty of us students is to continue education regardless of the situation” (P5)*

**Table 4.** Did the Covid-19 pandemic cause changes in your career plans after graduation? Why?

	Frequency	%	Code	Frequency	%
Yes	10	76,92	Delay	2	18,18
			Government	2	18,18
			Economic Crisis	4	36,36
			International Mobility	1	9,09
			Exam dates	1	9,09
			Cancelled Internship	1	9,09
No	3	23,07	No plan	3	100

Table 4 shows that 76.92% of the participants point to a change in their postgraduate plans. The participants in this group emphasize 11 different factors while explaining the reasons for the change, and the most important factor in this group is the economic crisis with a rate of 36.36%. It is also clear that the participants think that the economic conditions will worsen gradually from today to tomorrow.

In addition, it is observed that the code of economic crisis is closely related to delayin plans and government factors, and the participants in this group mostly prefer to emphasize these 3 factors together. Looking at the situation from this window indicates an important proportional power of 72.72%.

... *“I do not think that my efforts for the private sector will find a response from this crisis for now. Because I think that after this process is completely over, we will have more economically difficult times” (P12).*

... *“I do not think that I will find a job” (P4).*

When the statements of the participants are examined within the framework of these factors, the rate of having to postpone their plans alone is 18.18%. Similarly, the rate of 18.18% expresses the tendency to work in the public sector for future plans because it is safe in crisis environments. In addition, 9.09% emphasizes the changes in the dates of exams such as ALES and YDS, and 9.09% emphasizes the effect of internship cancellation.

... *“Just as I was thinking about starting my own business and about to take action, this virus made me postpone my plans” (P3).*

... *“while I see working in the private sector as an option, I am more likely to enter one of the government offices that I can lean on in such extraordinary situations” (P6).*

... *“I was going to complete my last year by doing an internship and my manager was trying to train me for recruitment and integrate me, but this virus turned everything upside down” (P13).*

Table 4 shows that 23.07% of the participants did not mention any change in their post-graduation plans. The answers show that all participants in this group did not have any plans before the pandemic, either.

... *“If I were a planful person, I would have already graduated right now. I will probably let it go again. Making money, drawing my own path always makes me happy and gives me confidence. It has been like that for six years. I guess the only difference after graduation is to be able to fully focus on my job and my desires” (P10).*

**Table 5.** Is there an increase or decrease in your reading other than lectures and Homeworks? Is there any change in genres or types?

	Frequency	%	Code	Frequency	%
Yes	8	61,53	Increase	8	47,05
			Time	3	17,64
			Different field reading	5	29,41
			Own field reading	1	5,88
No	5	38,46	Continuity	1	25
			No such habit	3	75

As seen to Table 5, there is a change in the reading for 61.53% of the participants. The statements of the participants in this group, who stated that there was a change, gathered around 4 important factors: direct expression of the increase, abundance of time and its effect on reading, different field readings, readings about their own field. It is observed that there is a significant increase in the reading of the students in this group compared to their own field readings and they read more in the fields of philosophy, sociology, history and theology studies. Also, the time factor is important in that it is one of the factors that we encountered in previous questions.

... *“I can say that there has been a clear increase in my reading. Normally, I had books that I could not read because I could not find enough time due to my school and social life. I was finally able to read them” (P2).*

... *“There is an increase in my reading in general. During this period, I noticed that I mostly read sociology” (P12).*

... *“now I turned to books such as philosophy: where did we come from, where are we going, peace of mind, energy to the universe” (P3).*

... *“I have much time, I am reading history” (P6).*

... *“I started to follow future predictions” (P5).*

**Table 6.** Have there been any other important changes in your life with Covid-19?

	Frequency	%	Code	Frequency	%
Yes	13	% 100	Use of Social Media	8	42,10
			Lack of socialization	3	15,78
			Discover myself	2	10,52
			Spend time with family	6	31,57
No	0				

As seen in Table 6, all of the participants state that there are serious changes apart from their education lives. When these changes were coded, 4 different factors emerged. The most important of these is seen as the increase in the use of social media by the participants and spending quality time with the family. However, while some of the participants talk about their longing for their past life and the effects of being away from their family, some of them emphasize that they have more time for themselves in this process.

... *“Also, I started to spend more time on social media as my free time increased. This was too bad for me” (P2).*

... *“First of all, my level of sociability decreased a lot, but the advantages of this for me were to spend more time with my family and focus more on issues related to myself” (P2).*

**Table 7.** What do you think about the distance education model that is applied in your school? If you were one the decision maker, what would you do differently? What would you change?

	Frequency	%	Code	Frequency	%
Positive	3	33,33	Homework/ Project	2	50
			Diligent Managers	2	50
Negative	10	76,92	Synchronous lectures	7	46,66
			Face-to-Face education	1	6,66
			Instructors	3	20
			Forum	4	26,66

When Table 7 is examined, 33.33% of the participants express a positive opinion about the distance education model. Positive opinions are gathered around two codes: The managers 'diligent work during pandemic and the satisfaction of the project and homework implementation.

... *“I think they are trying to do the best on our behalf while the decision is being made right now” (P10).*

... *“I think we are implementing the best possible system for now. However, since it is a new system that we are not used to, we may experience problems” (P2).*

On the other hand, 76.92% of the participants stated negative opinions about the distance education model. In this framework, it is seen that the participants who gave negative opinions are gathered around 4 factors in order of importance: Not conducting synchronous lectures, using only forums, and the initiative of the instructor. One participant argues that the training should be face to face. In fact, although they are given separately in the table to elaborate the statements, it is also possible to consider the codes of synchronous lectures, forum and instructor initiative together.

... *“I would have used a live course system instead of a forum” (P1).*

... *“I would rather have an online test where users' microphones and cameras are turned on” (K4).*

... *“The only thing I would do differently would be to find a safe channel that could broadcast live and make the participation of live lessons mandatory” (P6)*

... *“I don't think it's a useful system. I do not understand how the professors who only try to teach on the forum are so comfortable about this” (P9).*

... *“if I were you, I would definitely do my best to keep the education face-to-face. Why are the civil servants still, while we students are still waiting for the process to be completed” (P7).*

**Table 8.** Are there any gains or losses in this process?

	Frequency	%	Codes
Losses	1	12,50	Face-to-Face Education
	4	50	Social life
	2	25	Future plans
	1	12,50	Time
Gains	3	18,75	Resilience
	4	25	Medical Awareness
	2	12,50	Patience
	2	12,50	Self-improvement
	2	12,50	Reasonable consumption
	2	12,50	Reading
	1	6,25	Family

Table 8 shows that the gains reported by the participants have a more balanced distribution proportionally, and that medical awareness and resistance gains take the first two places. On the other hand, 4 main factors have been determined in terms of losses of the participants. Among these, the total

percentage of social life and future plans corresponds to 75%, which significantly coincides with the answers to previous questions.

... *“There may be a step towards normalizing the rate of consumption. The concept of health, family and freedom has changed a lot for me” (P6).*

... *“I learned what patience means and people's lives cannot be as they planned suddenly and everything can change suddenly” (P4).*

**Table 9.** What do you miss most about the period before Covid-19?

Codes	Frequency	%
To breathe without a mask	3	11,53
Social life	11	42,30
To eat or drink out	3	11,53
Shopping	2	7,69
Doing sports	1	3,84
Instructors	2	7,69
Loneliness	1	3,84
To touch freely	3	11,53

Table 9 shows that the participants missed their social relationships the most before Covid-19. Although the table describes 8 factors to provide a detailed explanation, in fact, it is seen that the factors in the table indicate the longing for social life over 80%.

... *“to be able to meet our loved ones freely, to do shopping freely, to be able to touch places without being anxious, to ask our teachers what we want to ask face to face” (P10).*

### 3.2. Extraction of Themes

The following table shows the distribution of the codes given in the previous nine tables by the extracted themes. Accordingly, it has been evaluated that the responses of the participants can be handled in the context of four main themes: the distance education model applied by the institution, the individual factors, time, and other environmental factors that the participants cannot directly control. The codes in bold in Table 10 show that the code in question is mostly in a negative statement. In this framework, it is seen that all themes except the time theme largely involve negative expressions.

**Table 10.** Classification of the extracted codes through theme analysis

Distance Education Model	Individual Factors	Time	Social Life	Environmental Factors
<b>Homework/ Project</b>	Loneliness	Self-improvement	Spend time with family	Government
<b>Lectures</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	Time	<b>Lack of socialization</b>	<b>Economic crisis</b>
<b>Individual study</b>	<b>Mental, Psychological State</b>			<b>International mobility</b>
<b>Instructor (initiative)</b>	<b>Focus</b>	Period	<b>Eating/drinking out</b>	<b>Proficiency exams (ALES/YDS)</b>
Diligent executives	<b>Laziness</b>	Patience	<b>Shopping</b>	
<b>Synchronous lectures</b>	Spare time for myself	Adaptation	<b>Doing sports</b>	<b>Internship</b>
<b>Face-to-Face education</b>	<b>Stress</b>		<b>Social life</b>	<b>Delays</b>
<b>Forum</b>	<b>No plan</b>		<b>Future plans</b>	
Research methods	Reading more		Reasonable consumption	
<b>Online education</b>	Different fields reading		Health	
<b>Instructors</b>	Own field reading			
Technology	<b>Continuity</b>			
	<b>Social Media</b>			
	Discover myself			

#### 4. Conclusion

In this study, the paper aims to take a picture of the challenges faced by senior university students during the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic and help universities eliminate the disruptions and develop alternative strategies accordingly. At this point, the research reveals important findings for decision-makers who have to make and implement decisions quickly under extraordinary conditions. These findings point to critical points that may affect the tactical plans of the near future for universities that have to manage the process. As a matter of fact, universities are obliged to eliminate the disruptions that occur in the process with the dynamic crisis management approach they adopt in the distance education process. Above all, more than half of the participants state that the Covid-19 pandemic has negatively affected their study performance and that they cannot manage their Homeworks or projects well. The answers point to individual psychological and motivational factors and the distance education model as the reason. Similarly, three-quarters of the participants stated that they were worried about the midterm and final exams and they emphasize the elements in the distance education model applied. The answers reflecting the opinions of the participants about the distance education model applied come to the fore negatively. Accordingly, the points of criticisms about the distance education model are about

asynchronous lectures and that the instructors conducted lectures differently. Asynchronous lectures, slow forum systems, useless interface, grading of Homeworks, etc. elements also point to the most common problems. Hence, considering the possibility of continuing distance education, it is considered beneficial to review the problems indicated by the participants. Moreover, major universities around the world are announcing one by one face-to-face classes are canceled for the near future and classes will be held online. For this reason, the uncertainties about face-to-face education and the high possibility of continuing education on the internet increase the value of the findings of this study for decision-makers.

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