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PUBLIC SCHOOL AND PRIVATE SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY TEACHERS' VIEWS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study investigated geography teachers' views of distance education. The study was conducted in the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample consisted of 12 geography teachers from public (n=6) and private (n=6) schools in the city center of Tokat, Turkey. The study adopted a qualitative case study design. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive analysis. Participants did not consider the geography curriculum completely adequate for distance education. The class attendance rate was higher in private schools than in public schools. Participants who were more prepared for classes were more likely to use different materials. All participants believed that they provided supportive education. According to them, the main issue was whether students were engaged in learning. Participants from private schools stated that student engagement was limited. In other words, students in private schools asked fewer questions and raised their hands less often than those in public schools. According to participants, the eight most important problems regarding distance geography education were as follow: First, they had difficulty explaining complicated and abstract topics. Second, students had screen addiction. Third, classes were not long enough to cover all topics. Fourth, students had communication problems. Fifth, participants faced technical problems during lectures. Sixth, participants experienced Internet connection issues during lectures. Seventh, participants could not use measurement and evaluation tools effectively. Eighth, participants could not measure how well students achieved learning outcomes. We think that all stakeholders should collaborate to make the necessary adjustments to improve distance education in Turkey

Keywords: Public School and Private School, Distance Education, Geography, Teachers' Views

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INTRODUCTION

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) broke out in China at the end of 2019 and rapidly spread to every continent in the world in 2020. It is a new type of coronavirus first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) on December 31, 2019 (World Health Organization, 2021). Although Turkey announced its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on March 11, 2020, it started to take the first preventive measures on January 10, 2020 (Ministry of Health, 2020).

The pandemic has changed our lives globally. At first, countries looked for different ways to take preventive measures against the pandemic. Some countries, such as the UK, pursued a herd immunity strategy but ultimately abandoned it because they could not keep the virus under control. The COVID-19 is a once-in-a-century event that has caused panic and anxiety all over the world. Most countries had difficulty mobilizing resources and generally adopted the policies of other countries that acted quickly to bring the pandemic under control. Countries have taken advantage of the continuous flow of scientific information about COVID-19 and implemented numerous measures and strategies that have proven effective in keeping the pandemic under control. Some of those preventive measures are hourly and daily partial lockdowns, regional quarantines, travel restrictions, flexible working hours in the public and private sectors, etc. The purpose of these measures is to prevent the spread of the virus in the long term. School closures have been one of the first preventive measures introduced to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Most countries either closed down schools or suspended education. Turkey also closed down schools and shifted to distance education to complete the 2019-2020 school year.

Eğitim Bilişim Ağı (EBA) [Educational Informatics Network (EIN)] founded by the Ministry of National Education (MNE) was used to provide distance education during the pandemic. As of March 2020, TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), the national public broadcaster of Turkey, broadcasted online classes available to all students. As of May 2021, students had access to both TRT EIN TV and EIN (Ministry of National Education, 2021a). The Educational Informatics Network was visited 21.825.266.965 times between March 23, 2020, and April 30, 2021. The EIN TV broadcasted 9.798 hours of online classes for primary, middle, and high school students between September 21, 2020, and April 30, 2021. The EIN Android app was downloaded 30,2 million times, and the EIN iOS app was downloaded 3,1 million times. The number of live lessons held until May 1, 2021, during the 2020-2021 academic season is 233,701,382 (Ministry of National Education, 2021b).

Despite these numbers, we cannot say that distance education is effective as it should be in Turkey. The system requires numerous improvements to turn into an effective tool for students, teachers, parents, and schools. Therefore, we need to identify the problems and come up with solutions. To that end, we need more scientific research.

The Challenges of Distance Education and Related Literature

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis during which it is critical to manage education (Sarı & Sarı, 2020). However, most countries were caught off guard by the rapid spread of the virus and realized that their current education policies fell short of meeting expectations. This has shown that we need more effective policies to make sure that education is not interrupted in times of crisis.

Most countries have turned to technology for education since the pandemic began. There has been an increase in demand for distance education. However, the quantity and the quality of the education system have been an issue more than ever (Can, 2020). The Educational Informatics Network (EIN), founded by the MNE, played a key role in distance education. Over time, TRT also stepped in and started to broadcast live classes. Teachers also delivered live lectures on Zoom. While public school students mainly used EIN and TRT live broadcasts, some private schools set up their own platforms to continue education. Universities also developed their own closed-circuit systems or similar video conferencing applications. It has been more than a year since the pandemic began. Although most countries have gained experience in distance education, there are still problems in terms of quantity and quality.

Başaran et al. (2020) argue that although distance education has some advantages, it prevents active engagement and interaction because it discourages individuality and is rife with some technical issues. Therefore, as noted by Toraman & Kayalar (2020), distance education requires some improvements as distance learners turn to books, teachers, parents, or the internet when they have difficulty comprehending topics. Gören et al. (2020) argue that distance education is not as effective as face-to-face learning. Therefore, they make some recommendations. For example, EIN should be improved, teachers should choose activities to motivate students, and school administrators should hold activities and provide in-service training for teachers. Çakın & Külekçi Akyavuz (2020) also make some recommendations to make distance education a more effective alternative. For example, students should be provided with free internet access, teachers should hold activities that motivate students, and parents should be informed about the distance education process. Özdoğan & Berkant (2020) also recommend that the MNE improve the infrastructure and provide in-service training, especially for measurement and evaluation, for a more effective distance education experience. Uyar (2020) makes the following recommendations: distance education programs, e-content for courses, technical improvements, free internet, and seminars on distance education for parents. Can (2020) also states that the MNE should improve the infrastructure of distance education and turn it into a more effective alternative that is safe and easy to access.

Some researchers have focused on distance education (Özgül et al., 2020; Bostan Sarıoğlan et al., 2020; Demir & Özdaş, 2020; Telli Yamamoto & Altun, 2020; Balaman & Hanbay Tiryaki, 2021). Alper (2020) concentrated on private school teachers' views of distance education and found that they could adapt to distance education and technology use.

Although distance education has been known for a long time, it has played a particularly critical role since the pandemic began. However, distance education has some problems regarding its wide applicability and adaptability to all levels of education. Some of those problems are technical issues, Internet connection problems, absenteeism, engagement problems, a lack of rich content and measurement and evaluation tools, difficulty reaching goals and learning outcomes, and gaps of knowledge on distance education.

We can solve these problems by conducting more research. Therefore, this study aimed to determine geography teachers' views of distance education to identify their problems. We recruited both public and private school teachers and compared their views. We think that this study will contribute to the literature.

METHOD

Research Design and Study Group

Maxwell (2018) recommends four components for an effective qualitative research design: establishing a good research relationship, choosing the right method, data collection, and analysis. This qualitative study also took into account these components and adopted a case study research design.

As noted by Yin (2017), case studies are exploratory studies that collect data for further investigation. A case study is a design of choice for qualitative research (Öztürk, 2014). Qualitative studies employ certain data collection tools. According to Merriam (2018), data collection tools sensitive to revealing meaning in qualitative research are interview, observation, and analysis. Yıldırım & Şimşek (2011) also argue that interviewing is the most common qualitative data collection method.

The data were collected through interviews, which were conducted using a semi-structured interview questionnaire. The study was approved by the Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University (Date: 08.06.2021 & No: E-33490967.044.45654). The study was conducted in the 2020-2021 academic year in the city center of Tokat, Turkey. According to the data of the Tokat National Education Directorate, there are 111 geography teachers in public schools and 22 geography teachers in private schools.

The study group consisted of six public and six private school geography teachers (n=12) recruited using convenience/accidental/incidental sampling (Büyüköztürk et al., 2015). Participation was voluntary and women's participation was accidentally limited. Each participant was assigned a letter and a number (P1, P2, P3, etc.). Table 1 shows the participants' characteristics.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Public School Teachers			Private School Teachers		
Participant No	**Gender**	**Work Experience (years)**	**Participant No**	**Gender**	**Work Experience (years)**
P1	Man	≥25	P7	Woman	0-5
P2	Man	≥25	P8	Man	6-10
P3	Man	≥25	P9	Man	16-20
P4	Man	21-25	P10	Man	16-20
P5	Man	11-15	P11	Man	16-20
P6	Man	16-20	P12	Man	11-15

Data Collection Tool

The data were collected using a semi-structured interview questionnaire based on Yıldırım & Şimşek (2011). The questionnaire consisted of items on demographic characteristics (gender, work experience, school type, etc.) and eight questions. We developed questions about sub problems suitable for research purposes. A geography teacher and an expert checked the questions for intelligibility and relevance.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected face-to-face at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. We conducted interviews after taking necessary preventive measures (mask, distance, hygiene, spacious room, etc.) against COVID-19. Each interview lasted 15-25 minutes, and new participants were recruited until data saturation was reached. In other words, data collection was terminated when more data did not add any new information or insight.

The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis. As noted by Yıldırım & Şimşek (2011), descriptive analysis is more superficial than content analysis and is supported by direct quotations. Again, as suggested by Sayım (2019), we used frequency tables without quantification to make the qualitative research process easier to understand.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

This section addressed the research questions. Participants' views are as follows:

INTERVIEW QUESTION 1: Distance education focused on the learning areas and outcomes in the geography curriculum used for face-to-face education. Do you think the curriculum met your needs? Do you think the curriculum was adequate for distance geography education?

Table 2: Participants' Views of the Adequacy of Curriculum and Learning Areas

Public School	*f*	Private School	*f*
• Adequate	2	• Adequate	3
• Somewhat Adequate	3	• Somewhat Adequate	2
• Inadequate	1	• Inadequate	1

Public school teachers who considered the curriculum and learning areas "adequate:"	**Private school teachers who considered the curriculum and learning areas "adequate:"**
"…The learning areas and outcomes in the curriculum met the needs of distance education. The only problem was the lack of student engagement." (P1)	*"…Yes, I think it does the job." (P8)*
"…It was good enough for geography teaching. The digital setting provided students with more visual materials." (P3)	*"…It was adequate. It was useful and adequate when it came to distance education." (P9)*
Public school teachers who considered the curriculum and learning areas "somewhat adequate:"	*"…The materials that I used during distance education were pretty adequate and met the needs." (P12)*
"…Geography teaching during distance education was somewhat adequate. There was no problem with the teaching, but there was a problem with the distance education part." (P2)	**Private school teachers who considered the curriculum and learning areas "somewhat adequate:"**
"…It did good to students, though it wasn't as effective as face-to-face learning." (P5)	*"…Not, exactly, but it was OK. The pandemic and the distance education process cause time management problems because the distance education schedule hasn't been well-planned, and this has a negative impact on geography classes." (P7)*
"…The curriculum and the methods were somewhat adequate when it came to distance education. Our students learned as much as possible." (P6)	*"…It was somewhat adequate, like, I think it met 70% of our needs." (P11)*
Public school teachers who considered the curriculum and learning areas "inadequate:"	**Private school teachers who considered the curriculum and learning areas "inadequate:"**
"…No, it didn't meet the needs." (P4)	*"…I delivered lectures on Zoom. The geography classes were not very productive because I needed maps and materials. Besides, I had no idea about the students' emotional reactions, and so the geography classes were unproductive and dull." (P10)*

The results showed that the geography learning areas and outcomes were not completely inadequate during distance education. All curricula are designed according to face-to-face education, but many curricula were used for distance education during the pandemic. Private school teachers considered the geography curriculum and learning outcomes more adequate than public school teachers, probably because private schools have more opportunities than public schools. Moreover, we can state that we should improve distance education to increase productivity and satisfaction in both public and private schools.

INTERVIEW QUESTION 2: How much do you think students attended the geography classes during distance education? What do you think is the attendance rate in percentage?

Table 3: Participants' Views of Class Attendance

Public School	*f*	Private School	*f*
• High class attendance rate	3	• High class attendance rate	6
• Low class attendance rate	3	• Low class attendance rate	-
Public school teachers who reported "high class attendance rates:"		**Private school teachers who reported "high class attendance rates:"**	
"…We had problems particularly in twelfth grades. It was about 80%" (P1)		*"…Most students attended the geography classes. It was about 95%. This is because it's a private school, I mean, they pay for it." (P10)*	
"…We admit students through an entrance exam. Our students are interested in classes and have positive attitudes towards them. So, the attendance rate was about 90%." (P5)		*"…The class attendance rate was about 90%." (P8)*	
"…We admit academically successful students. So, our students are academically successful, and the attendance rate is more than 90%." (P6)		*"…It was about 90%." (P9)*	
Public school teachers who reported "low class attendance rates:"		*"…The class attendance rate in distance education was 80-90%." (P12)*	
"…The class attendance rate is generally low. It gets lower from 9th to 12th grade. So, the attendance rate is about 25%." (P2)		*"…We can say it's about 80%." (P11)*	
"…I think the attendance rate was low in vocational high school. I mean, it was about 30-40% in geography classes." (P3)		*"…The ninth graders were more eager and stable. But, the eleventh graders, and especially the twelfth graders, who were preparing for the university exam, were less motivated. The class attendance was about 70%." (P7)*	
"…It was about 10% in 12th grade. I think it was higher in other grade levels." (P4)			

The higher the academic performance, the higher the class attendance rate in public schools. Participants stated that twelfth graders attended classes less because they were preparing for the university exam. It was also the case in private schools. We should address the problem of absenteeism to improve the efficiency of classes. All in all, private school students attended

geography classes more often (minimum 70%) than public school students, probably because parents pay tuition for private schools.

INTERVIEW QUESTION 3: Did you experience any problems when using materials in your lectures?

Table 4: Participants' Views of Material Use in Lectures

Public School	*f*	Private School	*f*
• Yes, I experienced some problems.	2	• Yes, I experienced some problems.	2
• No, I did not experience any problems	4	• No, I did not experience any problems	4
Public school teachers who experienced some problems when using materials in lectures.		**Private school teachers who experienced some problems when using materials in lectures.**	
"…I had problems particularly in ninth grade; the whole thing was a bit superficial because the students couldn't touch the materials, like the globe and the map and whatnot." (P2)		*"…I had some problems with question banks and during tests. I also had difficulty keeping track of homework assignments." (P9)*	
"…There wasn't enough time. Our presentations didn't cut it. The problem was that the students didn't have the materials at hand." (P4)		*"…I did some slide presentations in class during distance education, but it was not enough. I also used different programs to deliver the lectures, but it was in vain because the students didn't have those programs." (P10)*	
Public school teachers who did not experience any problems when using materials in lectures.		**Private school teachers who did not experience any problems when using materials in lectures.**	
"…No, I didn't have any problems. I was prepared." (P1)		*"…I was able to use the conventional materials during distance education. So, I had no problems whatsoever." (P7)*	
"…I was able to access materials, like maps, pictures, graphs, and diagrams." (P3)		*"…You experience no problem if you get ready for classes. Preparation is tiring and time-consuming." (P8)*	
"…Geography classes involve a lot of visual materials. I think it was enough. We used EIN and other digital platforms." (P5)		*"…I had no problems because I used a tablet and graphs." (P11)*	
"…Geography classes involve a lot of visual content. So, it was advantageous during distance education. I used EIN, digital apps, and interactive presentation materials in my lectures." (P6)		*"…I had no problems. I just had Internet connection and app problems. That was all." (P12)*	

We obtained similar results regarding geography teachers' material use during lectures. Public school teachers complained that students could not touch the materials (the globe, maps, etc.) and could not access some sources. Participants who prepared for each class and had access to various materials were able to manage the distance education process smoothly. It was also the case in private schools. Participants who prepared for each class stated that they had no problems in their classes. Some private school teachers noted that they did not have enough question banks and had students who lacked the software programs used during class. Both public and private school teachers had similar answers. However, the results show that teachers who prepare for each class and have enough materials are more likely to deliver lectures effectively.

INTERVIEW QUESTION 4: Did you perform any supportive activities in your classes?

Table 5: Participants' Views of Supportive Activities in Lectures

Public School	*f*	Private School	*f*
• Yes, I did.	5	• Yes, I did.	4
• No, I did not.	1	• No, I did not.	2
Public school teachers who performed supportive activities during lectures:		**Private school teachers who performed supportive activities during lectures:**	
"…I chose activities on EIN in line with the topics I covered in my lectures. on WhatsApp, I contacted those who couldn't attend the classes." (P1)		*"…I got my students to solve puzzles. I did some activities on maps depending on the topic. I also did some activities on Google Earth. I did some tests at the end of the units. I made my lectures more interactive." (P7)*	
"…Yes, I showed videos and animations." (P2)		*"…I used different types of software programs in my lectures." (P8)*	
"…I used various geography lesson videos. They were helpful." (P3)			

"…I sent students homework assignments and tests on WhatsApp or EIN." (P5) *"…Yes, I did, but not as much as I used to do in face-to-face education. I used such activities as cooperative learning, creative drama, and six thinking hats." (P6)* **Public school teacher who did not perform any supportive activities during lectures:** *"…No, almost never." (P4)*	*"…I did some activities, like puzzles and fill-in-the-blanks." (P10)* *"…Yes, I did." (P12)* **Private school teachers who did not perform any supportive activities during lectures:** *"…I did question – and test-based activities. I didn't do any other activities." (P9)* *"…I didn't do any other activities." (P11)*

Most participants performed supportive activities in their lectures. Public school teachers stated that they used EIN, WhatsApp, videos, animations, and other supportive activities in their lectures. However, just one public school teacher did not perform any supportive activities. On the other hand, private school teachers got their students to solve puzzles and involved them in Google Earth activities. They also used various software programs and activities. Participants who chose question – and test-based activities did not use supportive activities in their lectures. We can state that we should encourage teachers to use more supportive activities in their lectures.

INTERVIEW QUESTION 5: Do you think your students participated in classes adequately, such as asking questions, raising their hands, etc.?

Table 6: Participants' Views of Student Engagement in Classes

Public School	*f*	Private School	*f*
• Students participated in classes adequately.	2	• Students participated in classes adequately.	1
• Students participated in classes somewhat adequately.	1	• Students participated in classes somewhat adequately.	1
• Students participated in classes inadequately.	3	• Students participated in classes inadequately.	4
Public school teachers who stated that students participated in classes adequately. *"…There was no problem with participation, like asking questions and engaging in class" (P1)* *"…Yes, student engagement was OK." (P2)* **Public school teacher who stated that students participated in classes somewhat adequately.** *"…The students raised their hands and asked questions, but not as much as it was in face-to-face education." (P3)* **Public school teachers who stated that students participated in classes inadequately.** *"…No, I don't think there was enough student engagement." (P4)* *"…Student engagement was quite lower than it was in face-to-face education." (P5)* *"…Students engage in classes less in distance education than in face-to-face learning. We have a hard time keeping things under control when the cameras are off and when we cannot have student-teacher interaction. This is what we should address." (P6)*		**Private school teachers who stated that students participated in classes adequately.** *"…It was OK. Some students were not active in face-to-face education because they were shy or had low self-confidence. Those students were more active in distance education. This is one of the advantages of distance education." (P7)* **Private school teacher who stated that students participated in classes somewhat adequately.** *"…I can say that the student engagement was moderate." (P12)* **Private school teachers who stated that students participated in classes inadequately.** *"…Face-to-face learning is interactive, but student engagement was low in distance education." (P8)* *"…No. Many students became invisible in distance education. We kept asking them questions to involve them in lessons." (P9)* *"…Definitely not. There was no student engagement at all. I tried to keep my students focused on classes by calling out their names." (P10)* *"…No, I can't talk about student engagement at all. The classes were dull and boring for both sides." (P11)*	

Half the public school teachers found student engagement (raising hands, asking questions, etc.) inadequate. More than half the private school teachers found student engagement inadequate. One of the private school teachers stated that distance education had one advantage, which was that it allowed shy students with low self-confidence to engage more in distance education. All in all, participants found student engagement inadequate. Therefore, we should encourage students to raise their hands and ask more questions. We think that this can make classes more productive and affect learning positively.

INTERVIEW QUESTION 6: What do you think were the challenges of distance education for students? Was there any difference between distance education and face-to-face learning?

Table 7: The Challenges of Distance Education for Students

Public School	*f**	Private School	*f**
• Home setting and screen addiction	2	• Complex and abstract content	3
• Short classes	2	• Lack of emotional communication	2
• Technical and connection problems	2	• Low motivation	1
• Absenteeism	1	• The comfort of the home	1
• Complex and abstract content	1	• Lack of sightseeing and observation	1
• Lack of technological equipment	1	• Lack of practice	1
• Other reasons	1	• Lack of visual material	1

*Multiple answers

Public school teachers who regarded home setting and screen addiction as a challenge of distance education for students:

"…One of the greatest challenges was that the students were always at home spending most of their time in front of screens for classes." (P5)

"…The students were always at home, spending most of their time in front of screens, whether their phone, tablet, or TV. After a certain point, the classes got duller, and the students lost concentration." (P6)

Public school teachers who regarded class duration as a challenge of distance education for students:

"…The classes were too short for us to solve questions." (P2)

"…I had to cover a topic in a short time (30 minutes), and sometimes I just couldn't. In face-to-face education, I could go over a topic to make sure that the students got it. So, I can say that this was a disadvantage." (P3)

Public school teachers who regarded technical and connection problems as a challenge of distance education for students:

"…We sometimes had technical problems." (P5)

"…We had Internet connection issues. We had audio and video quality problems." (P6)

Public school teacher who regarded absenteeism as a challenge of distance education for students:

"…The class attendance rate was low, which negatively affected the class quality." (P2)

Public school teacher who regarded complex and abstract content as a challenge of distance education for students:

"…I had a hard time explaining, and the students had a hard time understanding abstract topics that require operational skills, like isohypses. I got my students to do activities and question-solving to overcome this problem." (P1)

Private school teachers who regarded complex and abstract content as a challenge of distance education for students:

"…The students had difficulty understanding some topics because they were too complex and abstract." (P7)

"…The students with underdeveloped abstract skills had a hard time in classes." (P10)

"…For example, they [students] had a hard time understanding complex topics, like isohypses." (P11)

Private school teachers who regarded the lack of emotional communication as a challenge of distance education for students:

"…During distance education, there was this problem of the lack of emotional communication." (P8)

"…I couldn't tell which students did not understand what was going on during classes. There was no emotional communication." (P9)

Private school teacher who regarded low motivation as a challenge of distance education for students:

"…I observed that the students had low motivation in geography classes, like in all other classes." (P7)

Private school teacher who regarded the comfort of the home as a challenge of distance education for students:

''…One of the greatest challenges was that the students were in the comfort of their homes instead of classrooms." (P7)

Private school teacher who regarded the lack of sightseeing and observation as a challenge of distance education for students:

''…What I failed to do in distance education was that I couldn't get my students to see and observe things." (P8)

Public school teacher who regarded the lack of technological equipment as a challenge of distance education for students: *"…The students living in villages had no Internet access. Some students didn't even have tablets or computers." (P4)* **Public school teacher who pointed out other challenges of distance education for students:** *"…The students had no access to resources. We, as teachers, couldn't help our students adopt some target behaviors. Besides, we experienced communication problems, like the students had difficulty expressing themselves." (P4)*	**Private school teacher who regarded the lack of practice as a challenge of distance education for students:** *"…Distance education did not allow us to practice stuff like we used to in the classroom. The students had a hard time about it." (P10)* **Private school teacher who regarded the lack of visual material as a challenge of distance education for students:** *"…We didn't have visual materials." (P12)*

Public school teachers stated that students had difficulty with distance education because they were in the comfort of their homes, spending most of their time in front of screens. They also noted that their students had a hard time with distance education because the classes were too short and imbued with technical and connection problems. Private school teachers remarked that their students had difficulty understanding the complex and abstract topics. They also added that their students were less interested in online classes because there was no emotional communication. Both public school and private school teachers pointed out common problems regarding distance education: complex and abstract topics, the comfort of the home, and the lack of communication. Therefore, authorities should take measures to eliminate these problems.

INTERVIEW QUESTION 7: Do you think you were able to evaluate students' performance in distance education? Were you able to measure how much they learned?

Table 8: Students' Performance in Distance Education

Public School	*f*	Private School	*f*
• Yes, I was able to evaluate students' performance in distance education.	3	• Yes, I was able to evaluate students' performance in distance education.	2
• I was able to evaluate students' performance in distance education to some extent.	1	• I was able to evaluate students' performance in distance education to some extent.	1
• No, I could not evaluate students' performance in distance education.	2	• No, I could not evaluate students' performance in distance education.	3
Public school teachers who were able to evaluate students' performance in distance education: *"…Yes, I think the students who participated in classes learned well. They achieved the learning outcomes, and I was able to measure and evaluate their performance." (P1)* *"…I don't think the students who attended the classes had any loss, I mean, learning outcomes wise. I did online tests, and I believe I did enough evaluation. (P5)* *"…I did quizzes, tests, and in-class activities to evaluate my students' performance. The students who actively participated in lessons achieved most of the learning outcomes. I think they learned about 90% of what they were supposed to learn." (P6)* **Public school teacher who were able to evaluate students' performance in distance education to some extent:** *"…We couldn't perform enough measurement and evaluation. I can say that the students achieved learning outcomes to some extent." (P2)*		**Private school teachers who were able to evaluate students' performance in distance education:** *"…I think I was able to measure my students' performance by using the questions and methods that I used in face-to-face education." (P8)* *"…I can say that the students who attended the classes achieved enough learning outcomes. I also think that I was able to evaluate my students' performance." (P11)* **Private school teacher who were able to evaluate students' performance in distance education to some extent:** *"…I asked my students questions at the end of each class. I did tests every four hours of class. I also did some map-drawing activities. I can say that we had a 60% achievement." (P10)*	

Public school teachers who could not evaluate students' performance in distance education:	**Private school teachers who could not evaluate students' performance in distance education:**
"…I couldn't evaluate the students' performance because the MNE kept postponing the tests. I sometimes gave my students performance homework assignments. I don't think the students achieved enough learning outcomes." (P3)	*"…I don't think I was able to measure how much my students learned and what learning outcomes they achieved." (P7)*
"…No, we couldn't evaluate our students' performance." (P4)	*"…I don't think my students achieved enough learning outcomes. I didn't have the chance to measure it directly. I gave them some tests." (P9)*
	"…To me, measurement and evaluation was completely inadequate, but I can't say the same thing for learning outcomes." (P12)

Three public school teachers stated that the students who attended the classes regularly achieved enough learning outcomes. They also added that they were able to evaluate their students' performance. However, private school teachers painted a gloomier picture as they noted that they had difficulty evaluating their students' performance. They also had doubts about their students achieving enough learning outcomes. Therefore, we can state that authorities should focus on these problems and take the necessary measures to improve distance education measurement and evaluation tools.

INTERVIEW QUESTION 8: What kind of problems did you experience in your lectures?

Table 9: The Challenges of Distance Education for Teachers

Public School	***f****	**Private School**	***f****
Internet connection issues	5	Internet connection issues	6
Lack of technological equipment	4	Lack of technological equipment	5
Lack of time	2	Others	1
Too much screen time	2		
*Multiple answers			
Public school teachers who regarded Internet connection issues as a challenge of distance education		**Private school teachers who regarded Internet connection issues as a challenge of distance education**	
"…The only problem we had was the Internet connection issues." (P1)		*"…The biggest problem was the Internet connection. I work for a private school, but even it has infrastructural problems." (P7)*	
"…We had Internet connection issues." (P3)		*"…Some students had Internet connection problems." (P8)*	
"…We had Internet connection problems." (P4)		*"…We had Internet connection problems." (P9)*	
"…Some students had Internet connection problems." (P5)		*"…The biggest problem was the Internet connection." (P10)*	
"…Few students had Internet connection problems." (P6)		*"…The school had problems with its fiber internet infrastructure, which affected the classes negatively." (P11)*	
Public school teachers who regarded the lack of technological equipment as a challenge of distance education:		*"…We had Internet connection problems." (P12)*	
"…You need technological devices to conduct distance education. But not every student had that, which was a problem." (P2)		**Private school teachers who regarded the lack of technological equipment as a challenge of distance education**	
"…We had a hard time during distance education because we didn't have the technological devices (computer, Internet, etc.) that we needed for distance education." (P3)		*"…Some teachers didn't have the proper technological equipment. So, we had to supply them." (P7)*	
"…We had technical and equipment-wise problems." (P5)		*"…Parents ended up having to buy technological devices because we shifted to distance education abruptly. This caused problems in our classes." (P8)*	
"…Some students had difficulty attending the classes because they didn't have the equipment for it." (P6)		*"…Some students didn't have technological devices." (P9)*	

Public school teachers who regarded the lack of time as a challenge of distance education *"…The classes were too short. It took them [students] a long time to log into the online classes." (P5)* *"…We didn't have enough time." (P6)* **Public school teachers who regarded too much screen time as a challenge of distance education** *"…The students got bored and lost concentration because they spent too much time in front of screens." (P5)* *"…The students got tired because they were constantly in front of screens." (P6)*	*"…The second problem was that the students didn't have technological devices, like tablets and computers." (P10)* *"...Some parents with two or three children had to find a tablet or a computer for each kid." (P11)* **Private school teacher who pointed out other challenges of distance education:** *"…At first, some parents were lukewarm about distance education." (P10)*

Almost all participants stated that they experienced Internet connection problems during their lectures. Another challenge of distance education was that some students had no technological devices (tablets, smartphones, computers, etc.) by which to attend the classes. The other problems noted by public school teachers were the lack of time, too much screen time, and boredom. Therefore, stakeholders should figure out these problems to make the distance education process more productive and efficient.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focused on geography teachers' views of distance education. We discussed the results in reference to the literature.

Curricula in the world and Turkey are designed for face-to-face education. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the education system drastically. The results of the first research question showed that participants did not find the geography curriculum completely adequate for distance education. Moreover, private school teachers considered the geography curriculum suited to distance education more than public school teachers. This result shows that authorities should revise the geography curriculum and other curricula according to distance education. As noted by Telli Yamamoto & Altun (2020), education will become digital and replace face-to-face learning. Therefore, we can state that the geography curriculum in particular and perhaps all curricula in Turkey should be modified in line with the digital age.

The results of the second research question showed that public school students with higher placement test scores were more likely to attend the geography classes than those with lower placement test scores. Teachers cannot take class attendance online. However, we should find a way to solve this problem to improve the efficiency of distance education. On the other hand, the class attendance rate was higher in private schools than in public schools for two reasons. First, parents pay for private schools. Second, they expect more from their children.

The results of the third research question showed that both public and private school teachers used similar materials in their lectures. The results suggest that teachers who prepare for their classes and use various materials are more likely to deliver their lectures smoothly. Bostan Sarıoğlan et al. (2020) focused on experimental activities to enrich science classes and recommended that teachers be trained on how to conduct experiments online. Our participants also noted that online geography classes were not as effective as face-to-face learning because students had no opportunity to work with materials (the globe, maps, specimens, etc.). Therefore, we should provide teachers with training and revise the contents of curricula to improve distance education.

Can (2020) and Uyar (2020) also recommend improvements to distance education infrastructure, content, and design. Özgül et al. (2020), Özdoğan & Berkant (2020), and Gören et al. (2020) maintain that the MNE should take the initiative and provide infrastructure and in-service training to improve distance education. Our results are consistent with the literature.

The results of the fourth research question showed that both public and private school teachers were for using supportive activities in their lectures. Most participants believed that they provided enough support to their students. They stated that they performed different activities, such as videos, animations, problem-solving, evaluation tests, Google Earth, etc. Although Alper (2020) argues that private school teachers adapt to distance education and technology more quickly than public school teachers, we did not detect any difference between the two groups.

The results of the fifth research question showed that one of the problems with distance education was the lack of student engagement. Students had difficulty engaging in online classes because they had to connect through the Internet. Both public and private school teachers noted that their students had difficulty engaging in online classes. In other words, they raised their hands less and asked fewer questions. This was a greater problem in private schools. It is evident that we should encourage students to speak up and ask questions during classes in order to improve the quality of distance education. Toraman & Kayalar (2020) found that distance learners turned to books, teachers, parents, or the Internet because they had difficulty comprehending topics in online classes. The researchers also reported that most students wanted to transition back to face-to-face learning because they had problems with distance education.

Student engagement should be improved to solve these problems. As noted by Çakın & Külekçi Akyavuz (2020) and Gören et al. (2020), stakeholders should make improvements to increase student motivation. Özgül et al. (2020) state that face-to-face learning should be integrated into distance education at regular intervals to improve student motivation in distance education. Some of our participants noted that some students overcame their shyness and low self-confidence in distance education. This result indicates that distance education helps some students engage more in their own learning.

The results of the sixth research question showed that public school students had difficulty engaging in distance education because they got bored in the comfort of their homes and spent most of their time in front of screens. Participants also noted that public school students had difficulty engaging in distance education due to Internet connection and time management problems. Private school teachers noted that their students could not focus on distance education for two important reasons: First, the topics were too complex and abstract. Second, students lacked emotional communication skills. Our results are consistent with the literature (Can, 2020; Çakın & Külekçi Akyavuz, 2020; Demir & Özdaş, 2020; Gören et al., 2020; Özgül et al., 2020; Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020).

The results of the seventh research question showed that teachers had difficulty evaluating students' performance in distance education. Half the public school teachers stated that the students who attended the classes achieved more learning outcomes. They also believed that the measurement and evaluation were adequate. On the other hand, private school teachers believed that the measurement and evaluation were inadequate. Our results are consistent with the literature (Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020; Özgül et al., 2020).

The results of the eighth research question showed that public school teachers had difficulty delivering online lectures for four reasons. First, they experienced Internet connection problems. Second, students had no technological devices (tablets, smartphones, computers, etc.). Third, the classes were too short. Fourth, teachers and students were tired of spending too much time in front of screens. Similar to public schools, the most important problems in private schools were the Internet connection and its quality and the lack of technical equipment. Earlier studies have also reported similar results. Başaran et al. (2020) and Uyar (2020) focus on technical problems in distance education and make some recommendations. Other research recommendations include: for example, students should be provided with free Internet access (Çakın & Külekçi Akyavuz, 2020). The Educational Informatics Network platform should be improved (Gören et al., 2020; Demir & Özdaş, 2020). For security reasons, foreign video conferencing programs should be replaced by national software programs (Balaman & Hanbay Tiryaki, 2021). It is recommended that authorities address these technical problems. All in all, we can state that both public and private school teachers experience similar problems regarding distance education although they vary in importance. The following are recommendations based on the results:

- We should improve the geography curriculum and learning areas and outcomes according to distance education. In this way, we can be prepared for possible crises in the future.
- We should help reduce or prevent absenteeism among students by undertaking certain steps.
- We should make sure that online geography classes are engaging. We should integrate interesting content and materials into the curriculum.
- We should encourage students to engage more in their own learning by getting them to raise their hands and ask questions.
- We should develop hybrid teaching models to help prevent screen addiction, boredom, and monotony.
- We should improve the quality of Internet connection and technological infrastructure to overcome the problems that not only geography teachers but teachers from different disciplines experience during online lectures.
- The state should take the necessary steps to eliminate inequality in education.
- We should develop appropriate assessment and evaluation instruments for distance education.

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