Research

Back to the classroom: Teachers' views on classroom management after Covid-19

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to reveal the effects of the disruption to face-to-face education during the pandemic on the classroom environment upon return to the classroom. The participants of this case study were 16 teachers working in Turkey. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and their contents were analysed. The study revealed that there were cognitive changes, motivation and concentration problems, social changes, discipline problems, and psychomotor changes observed in students' behaviours after the transition to face-to-face education. The sources of the behavioural changes were the family, the Ministry of National Education, being away from school, and use of technology. The strategies used by the teachers in terms of classroom management while managing the process after the transition to face-to-face education were management of teaching, behaviour management, management of relationships, and management of the physical environment.

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INTRODUCTION

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected all walks of life around the globe since the beginning of 2020, many governments have taken measures to restrict the mobility of their citizens. Such mitigation measures have also influenced schools' and universities' function. These sudden closures are regarded as a situation that will threaten education (World Bank, 2020). In fact, the United Nations report on "Education during COVID-19 and beyond" stated that the closure of schools and other learning areas affected 94 percent of the world's student population and 99 percent in low- and low- to middle-income countries. The crisis exacerbatings pre-existing educational inequalities by reducing opportunities for many of the most vulnerable children, youth, and adults to continue with their education (United Nations, 2020). Due to the prolongation of the measures taken and the continuation of the vaccine development studies, alternative methods have begun to be implemented to continue education and training activities (Reimers et al., 2020). When school buildings around the world were closed with the purpose of protecting the health of children and educators, many educators quickly turned to technology-oriented distance education (Sokal et al., 2020). The use of various online learning and teaching platforms has led to the reshaping of 21st-century classroom management within the scope of distance education (Apak et al., 2021).

A great impact of the pandemic on education is its potential disruption of all the components in the learning process. It would affect students' readiness and involvement, support of teachers, classroom equipment, safety and inclusiveness of schools, and system management (World Bank, 2020). This pandemic has created serious challenges for teachers all around the world. Teachers, all of a sudden, have found themselves needing to adapt quickly to an online teaching and learning environment. Accordingly, it has become important to arrange various educational contents in order to present all the subjects comprehensibly in the new learning environment. Classroom management is undoubtedly an issue that requires special attention in these chaotic times (Manea & Gări-Neguţ, 2021). The reason for this is that the classroom environment allows not only learning and cognitive development, but also the social, emotional, and psychomotor development of students. There are also studies indicating that socio-affective factors play an important role in the development of teacher–student relationships (Ansari et al., 2020; Hughes, 2012; Jones et al., 2014; Poulou, 2017).

Most of the studies on the pandemic focused on issues like teachers' opinions on distance education (Baran & Sadık, 2021; Han et al., 2021; Oducado, 2020), problems experienced in distance education (Kavuk & Demirtaş, 2021; Kultaş & Çalışkan, 2021; Saygı, 2021; Şahan & Parlar, 2021; Şenel Çoruhlu & Uzun, 2021), the effects of the pandemic on the education system (Bozkurt, 2020; Can; 2020a; Sarı & Nayır, 2020; Sezen-Gültekin & Algın, 2021), and virtual classroom management (Arslan & Şumuer, 2020; Can, 2020b; Hoang et al., 2021; Lathifah et al., 2020). However, with the transition to face-to-face education, the

effects of the process in which schools were closed constitute the starting point of our research. The aim in the present study was to reveal the effects of the disruption to face-to-face education during the pandemic on the classroom environment upon return to the classroom. Answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What kind of changes were observed in students' behaviours during the transition to face-to-face education after the pandemic? How did these changes affect the classroom environment?

2. What/who might be the source(s)/reason(s) of/for this change in student behaviour according to teachers?

3. What kind of strategies did the teachers use in terms of classroom management?

Theoretical Framework

Effective classroom management should not only be used to refer to controlling behaviour but also to create supportive learning environments that can respond to changing and complex needs (Brophy, 1998; Evertson & Harris, 1992). Good classroom management should embody discipline, routines for instructional and non-instructional tasks, flow of instruction in transition between subjects, classroom climate and environment, and arrangements for learning (Covino & Ivanicki, 1996). Moreover, classroom management requires establishing and maintaining a positive classroom climate based on respect, openness, fairness, and trust. A productive and positive classroom environment is the result of the teacher's consideration of students' academic as well as social and individual needs (Stronge et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2000). Within this context, there are some roles that teachers must undertake. Teachers should develop supportive relationships with students and between students, build an environment where students can learn in the best way, include group work that will encourage student participation, support students' development of social and self-regulation skills, and display appropriate approaches toward students with behavioural problems (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). It is understood from all these explanations that classroom management is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon.

Classroom management is often defined as an area where teachers assume one of the most challenging roles and constantly report a need for additional training and support (Reinke et al., 2011). In global-scale evaluations as well, the issue of student behaviours and classroom management is both given a great deal of attention and regarded as highly essential in professional development (OECD, 2019). This situation can be explained by the fact that even if teachers have attended training on classroom management, they often report a need in this sense for more support with the aim of developing themselves further. It is of critical importance to ensure teachers' roles are up to date in order to adapt to the increase in diversity and multiculturalism in society, the development of knowledge, and the increase in the opportunities to access information (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2007).

The Covid-19 pandemic affected education all over the world and required teachers to urgently adapt themselves to online learning and teaching environments (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020; Stamatis, 2021). Teachers faced some unpredictable difficulties while trying to adapt to online learning unprepared (Choi et al., 2021). At the beginning of the process, the fact that teachers were not very familiar with online teaching was a challenging factor (Feriver & Arık, 2021; Gudmundsdottir & Hathaway, 2020; Marshall et al., 2020; Trust & Whalen, 2020). In addition, teachers experienced difficulties in performing professional duties such as lesson planning, assessment of learning, communication with parents, and differentiated instruction in the online environment (Marshall et al., 2020). While teachers in some schools were able to conduct their lessons online since their students had access to the necessary technology, their home environment was supportive, and the classroom sizes were large enough to manage on a digital platform, some other teachers in other schools struggled to reach students and their parents (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). In this sense, according to the school principals participating in the study carried out by Hamilton et al. (2020), the most frequently cited restrictive factors were students' lack of internet access, difficulty in providing equal education for all students, and inability to communicate with students and families in distance education. Social distances between teachers and students also affected the management of the learning process. According to Hattie (2009), teachers' timely feedback and formative assessments during the teaching process had the greatest impact on academic outcomes. On the other hand, although autonomous learning by students is considered important, Hattie's analysis, in which the effect size was found to be very low, showed that a learning process controlled by students themselves is not likely to be an effective way to influence academic outcomes. Moreover, the fact that the learning process of the students was largely their own responsibility during the period when the schools were closed could not provide the desired progress in cognitive development and outcomes.

Effective classroom management skills are already essential under normal circumstances, but in cases of major crises such as pandemics or natural disasters, the typical functioning of schools is disrupted. Such conditions necessitate the transition to distance education, making classroom management skills even more critical for several reasons (Goldman et al., 2021). For instance, new challenges appear in the way teaching practices and student behaviours are managed (Lohmann et al., 2021). While reducing undesired student behaviours and ensuring student participation and motivation have been effective classroom management practices employed by teachers (Gage et al., 2018), there emerges a need for more innovative approaches together with the new conditions (Lathifah et al., 2020). As observed during distance education, younger students started to be more unwilling and uninterested in regarding participation in the learning process and found the process boring and meaningless (Stamatis, 2021). Issues related to the implementation of rules and behavioural expectations can be considered other classroom management factors that have caused difficulties during this process.

In the post-pandemic period, in order to close the gap that occurred in success levels to a great extent, academic support stands out as a solution. Nevertheless, the pandemic showed us that inequalities beyond classes also need to be given considerable attention. These inequalities include parental support, home environment, access to learning resources and mental health problems (of children or their families), exposure to violence, negligence and abuse, bereavement, and nursing responsibilities. This requires collaborative work to remove barriers to learning (Quilter-Pinner & Ambrose, 2020). While managing this process, it has become more critical for teachers to establish greater communication and interaction with students, to focus on social support, and to encourage family participation. This is because, according to Stamatis (2021), communication between teachers and families is a crucial factor that determines the quality of the learning process.

Teachers have been adversely affected by this process (Cardoza, 2021; Hargreaves, 2021; Jones et al., 2022; Weale, 2020). It is thought to be caused by both the uncertainty created by the epidemic conditions and the frequent changes in the decisions taken regarding education. However, it is seen that the voices of the teachers are not heard enough in the public sphere and the studies on the experiences of the teachers are limited (Aktaş Salman et al., 2021). Within the scope of the Education Monitoring Report, the focus was on how teachers were affected by the pandemic conditions. In the present study, we focused on the difficulties that teachers faced in the classroom environment after the transition to face-to-face education, and revealed the changes observed in students' behaviours and the reflections of these changes on the classroom environment.

METHOD

Research Model

The study was designed as a case study. The fact that the research questions include 'why' and 'how' questions and that in the study the focus was on a contemporary phenomenon, namely post-Covid 19 classroom management, led to the adoption of this design (Yin, 2018). Hays (2004) draws attention to the importance of detailed description in case studies and focuses on understanding events, facts, institutions, or people and explaining their effects (Seggie & Bayyurt, 2015). The current research was carried out with research questions aiming to find out what kind of change occurred in student behaviour after the Covid-19 pandemic, why this change occurred, and how teachers acted during this process. The first and most important condition to identify the research method is to classify the type of research question asked, and some perception-based studies are also based on qualitative evidence (Yin, 2018).

Participants

Since the Covid pandemic, teachers have shared their thoughts on this period in postgraduate education, seminars, and conversations with other teachers. Teachers who observe changes in student behaviours and perceive this as a problem constituted the study

group of the research. The study group consisted of 16 teachers working in primary, middle, and high schools in the 2021-2022 academic year and who voluntarily participated in the research. The participants were informed about the study. Five of the participating teachers work in primary schools, five in middle schools, and six in high schools. The demographic characteristics of the teachers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

Code	Gender	Level	Branch	Teaching Experience
T1	Female	Middle School	Turkish Teacher	19 years
T2	Female	Primary School	Class Teacher	21 years
T3	Female	High School	History Teacher	14 years
T4	Female	Primary School	Class Teacher	14 years
T5	Female	Middle School	Turkish Teacher	10 years
T6	Female	Middle School	English Teacher	9 years
T7	Female	Middle School	Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Teacher	7 years
T8	Male	Primary School	Class Teacher	16 years
T9	Female	Primary School	Class Teacher	19 years
T10	Female	Primary School	Class Teacher	24 years
T11	Female	High School	English Teacher	6 years
T12	Female	Middle School	Mathematics Teacher	13 years
T13	Male	High School	English Teacher	17 years
T14	Male	High School	Mathematics Teacher	28 years
T15	Male	High School	Physical Education Teacher	14 years
T16	Male	High School	Information Technologies Teacher	20 years

Data Collection

The data of the study were collected through a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. While preparing the research questions, the dimensions of classroom management were taken into account. The interview questions were prepared by reviewing the literature and previous studies. The questions were peer-reviewed before use. The remaining four questions were arranged in terms of meaning and the interview questions took their final form. One of the researchers had a preliminary interview with two teachers, and on reaching the conclusion that the questions were intelligible, the interviews were started. The teachers were asked the following interview questions:

1. What kind of changes did you observe in students' behaviours during the transition to face-to-face education after the pandemic?

2. How did these changes affect your classroom environment?

3. What/Who do you think is the cause(s) of this change in students' behaviours?

4. What kind of strategies do you use while managing this process in terms of classroom management?

The interviews were conducted online and recorded using the recording software on the computer. The dates and times of the interviews were arranged according to the availability and preferences of the teachers. Before the interviews, the teachers were given detailed information about the purpose and scope of the study. They were also informed that their names would be kept confidential and that codes would be used to refer to the teachers instead of names in the study. The interviews were recorded once the consent of the teachers was obtained. The duration of the interviews varied between 16 and 27 minutes.

Data Analysis

 The data recorded in the interviews were transcribed manually word by word in Microsoft Word and a dataset of a total of 52 pages of consisting of 13234 words was obtained. The consistency of the video recordings with the written data was checked by the researchers and spelling mistakes were corrected. The data were prepared for coding. The data of the study were analysed by content analysis. In content analysis, content is coded as data in a form that can be used to address research questions and any material collected in the study, which can be referred to as the records of the study, is transformed into data through coding (Lune & Berg, 2017: 182).

First of all, the data were coded separately by both researchers. Then the researchers came together and evaluated the codes. No action was taken for the data they gave the same codes to. Codes that expressed similar or the same meanings were combined and it was agreed on the code that would best reflect the situation. Duplicate or unnecessary codes were removed. For example, cognitive regression, forgetting the rules, technology addiction, violence, family indifference, weakness in movements, communication problems, bullying, and individualisation were the accepted codes. Then the researchers came together again and the categories they created were evaluated and these categories were combined and gathered under the draft themes. The generated codes, categories, and themes were sent to an expert in the field of educational sciences. In line with the feedback from the experts, the categories and themes were finalised. For an overview of the coding, refer to the results section.

Ethical considerations

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, attempts were made to achieve the credibility (in preference to internal validity), transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability), dependability (in preference to reliability), and confirmability (in preference to objectivity) criteria suggested by Guba (1981). In order to ensure credibility, the demographic information related to the teachers was given in detail. In addition, expert opinions were obtained during the development of the interview questions and the creation of categories and themes. In order to ensure transferability, the

data were transferred through detailed description, and direct quotations from the views of the teachers were included. In order to ensure dependability, expert opinions were utilised, as mentioned before. In addition, the fact that two researchers created the codes separately, discussed the issues on which they differed, and reached a consensus is an indication that dependability was achieved. For confirmability, the transcript of each teacher's video recording was shared with the relevant teacher participating in the interview and the participant's confirmation was obtained. In addition, all the video recordings, written documents, and the other documents studied during the analysis process were kept (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Shenton, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 2016).

In the present study, all rules that are required to be followed within the scope of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. None of the actions listed under the title "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, were taken.

Ethical review board name: Pamukkale University Social and Human Sciences

Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

Date of ethics review decision: 29.12.2021

Ethics assessment document issue number: 68282350/22021/G025

RESULTS

In this section, the findings obtained in line with the purpose of the study are presented under the headings of changes observed in students' behaviours after transition to face-to-face education, the causes of behavioural changes, and the strategies followed by teachers in terms of classroom management.

Findings concerning changes in students' behaviours after the transition to face-to-face education

Changes observed in students' behaviours after the transition to face-to-face education were discussed under the themes of cognitive changes, motivation and concentration problems, social changes, discipline problems, and psychomotor changes, and the findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Changes in students' behaviours after transition to face-to-face education

Themes	Categories
Cognitive Changes	- Learning problems - Comprehension problems - Level differences among students - No visible difference between grades - Decrease in vocabulary capacity - Disposition to exert minimal effort

Motivation and concentration problems	- Decrease in motivation
	- Unwillingness
	- Concentration problems
Social changes	- Individualisation
	- Socialisation problems
	- Addiction to technology
Disciplinary problems	- Problems related to the rules/order
	- Undesired behaviours
Psychomotor changes	- Increased mobility during lesson
	- Limited and slow movements
	- Weakness and regression in psychomotor skills

Cognitive changes

According to the teachers, after the transition to face-to-face education, students experienced cognitive problems such as learning difficulties/disabilities and learning loss. For instance, T14 put it in the following way: *"In learning and comprehending…, when they first came back, they had difficulties just like those who had just learned to walk. Their eyes looked empty."*, while T15 reported that *"I observed that the students had forgotten most of the information and were having learning difficulties…"* The teachers stated that the students had regressed in their thinking, perception, reasoning, and reasoning skills, and they had problems such as inability to concentrate and understand what they read. This was exemplified by T10's statement: *"…some students have completely lost their listening and watching skills; we had a lot of trouble."* and T16 added that *"Comprehension problems started to appear more. There are problems in their ability to imagine the abstract expressions that are taught..."* Another issue highlighted by the teachers under the theme of cognitive changes was level difference observed between the students. The teachers drew attention to the cognitive differences between students who attended online courses and those who did not during distance education. Regarding this situation, T3 disclosed that *"…The difference between the students who were transferred directly to the next class by the Ministry of National Education and the students who attended the regular online courses is at a serious level. We observed this clearly in the first exams of the term. There are students who got 100 and students who gave blank papers together in the same class..."*, while T8 put it in the following way: *"There occurred great cognitive differences between the students who attended the online courses and those who did not. While most of the participants who attended the online courses could read, write, understand, and do mathematical operations, those who did not attend could not learn to read and write. For this reason, our classes are like multigrade classes"*. The teachers also reported that transition between the grades was not noticed during this process. T7 explained this situation as follows: *"…that is, the outcomes to be achieved in primary school are really essential. Well, now the situation seems as if children passed from 3rd to 5th grade. Since there is knowledge that children cannot obtain in the school environment, we also saw this as a deficiency."* Another behavioural change noted under this theme was the decrease in students' vocabulary capacity. T5 elaborated this situation with the following statement: *"…they read fewer books. However, I think they should have read more… This actually caused a decrease in their vocabulary. In other words, while students at this age should*

normally know more idioms and proverbs… now there are idioms or proverbs that they have never heard of." The teachers also revealed that students got used to high grades during the pandemic, and together with this they began to display a disposition to exert minimal effort. For example, T1 explained this situation by saying: *"Another cognitive loss stemming from the pandemic was students' being able to achieve high grades without effort, since many students were given high grades because of the concern to ensure equality (for those without internet and technology sources). Many students got grades they didn't deserve. This year, they couldn't accept the grades they received in the real exams. They wanted to maintain the same situation and sustain their effortless achievement."*

Motivation and concentration problems

In the opinions of the teachers, the students were also observed to have changes in their motivation and concentration levels after the transition to face-to-face education. Some of the teachers argued that there was a decrease in the students' motivation levels. T6 expressed her views by saying: *"The children seem to have run out of life energy. They look indifferent. They are like ghosts… they have no enthusiasm or life energy any more like they did in the past."* and T12 added that *"… participation in the lesson has decreased a lot. While the 7th grade students, who were in the 5th grade the year the pandemic started, used to compete to solve problems, now they prefer to be passive listeners rather than participating in the lesson."* Another behavioural change specified by the teachers under the theme of motivation and concentration was students' unwillingness. According to the teachers, students were reported be unwilling in writing, doing homework, participating in the lesson, group work, and physical activities. While T3 underlined the issue of unwillingness by stating that *"I observe unwillingness to write…"*, T4 maintained that *"They didn't want to do the homework. Afterwards, most of the students were observed to display behaviours such as breakaway from the education process, unwillingness, and indifference."* The teachers also touched upon the issue of concentration problems. To give an example, T3 remarked that *"I have difficulty in getting the attention of the students for 40 minutes"*, while T11 stated *"…having difficulty in focusing on lessons, they are highly distracted…"* T13 also drew attention to this situation by saying *"There are quite a lot of concentration problems…"*

Social changes

Changes observed in students' behaviours within the scope of social changes were gathered under three categories: individualisation, socialisation problems, and addiction to technology. In terms of individualisation, the teachers stated that they observed changes in students such as inability to empathise and an increase in self-centeredness. T12 expressed this situation as follows: *"… they almost forgot how to establish healthy communication; dissatisfaction and selfishness have increased."* Another category under this theme is socialisation problems. T2 exemplified some socialisation problems through the following expression: *"Communication problems with friends and other teachers, tendency for violence, inability to start or continue a game together, panic and fear, dependence on family, inability to carry*

out group games and activities…" On the other hand, T9 explained the situation by saying *"they could only reconcile and play games with each other after a period of at least 3 months."*. The teachers also pointed out the addiction of the students to technology. T12 explained the negative effects of technology addiction in terms of social aspects with the following statement: *"Students have addiction to their tablets and mobiles. Children who once competed to get a ball or find a goal or playing area during break times now sit and talk about the games they play or are going to play on their tablets or mobiles."*

Disciplinary problems

In the teachers' opinions, several problems were observed in students' behaviours related to the rules such as not obeying them and forgetting them. This situation was described by T1 by the following expression *"…the children seemed to have forgotten all the classroom rules… School was like virtual reality for them."* Another point emphasised by the teachers under the theme of disciplinary problems was undesired behaviours. The teachers reported an increase in disrespect in students, trouble in addressing the teacher, negative behaviours as a result of increased sexual interests, watching inappropriate content, tendency for violence, and some unfavourable behaviours in the classroom after the transition to face-to-face education. The situation can be easily understood from T1's statement: *"There were actions including having conversation among themselves, resorting to violence, not being able to follow the lesson, and displaying disproportionate behaviour during breaks"* and from the following expression by T4: *"Negative behaviours such as speaking/interrupting without getting permission, interrupting the speaker, and arguing have appeared more in the classroom environment."* and T6 added *"And the tendency for violence is observed to have increased a lot, because of the series they watch…"*

Psychomotor changes

This theme consists of three categories: increased mobility in the lesson, limited and slow movements, and weakness and regression in psychomotor skills. During this process, the teachers emphasised that the students' mobility increased during the lessons. T6 expressed this by stating: *"They do not know how to sit in the classroom. They always put their feet on the desk. They constantly move."* In contrast to this finding, some teachers mentioned limited and slow movements among the students. T16 expressed this situation as follows: *"Students got used to moving less during the pandemic and studying in front of the screen. For this reason, it is observed that they tend not to leave the classroom even during breaks. They do not want to participate in activities that involve movement during the lesson."* Some weakness and regression were also observed in students' psychomotor skills by the teachers. Under this category, the teachers underlined issues such as weakness and regression in students' hand skills, weakness in muscles, and problems and regression in writing skills. For example, T7 described the regression in students' writing skills with the following explanation *"…we waited maybe half an hour for what they would normally write in 10 minutes. Their writings look really bad; they have really deteriorated."*

Findings on the perceived causes of the changes observed in students' behaviours

According to the teachers, the perceived causes of the changes observed in students' behaviours after face-to-face education are collected under the following four themes: family, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), being away from school, and use of technology. The categories under these themes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Perceived causes of the behavioural changes in students

Themes	Categories
Family	- Indifference of family
	- Assumed role of the family as a teacher
MoNE	- Distance education policies and practices of the MoNE
Separation from school	- Being away from school
	- The inefficiency of distance education
Use of technology	-Uncontrolled use of technology

Family

Among the causes of the behavioural changes in students, the teachers drew attention to the indifference of families to distance education. T10 explained this situation as follows: *"because the families didn't show sufficient interest and support for their children's participation in distance education..."* Another reason stated in relation to the theme of family is that families assumed the role of teachers. In this regard, T4 said, *"During distance education, parents had to take on the responsibilities of teachers, along with their roles as parents, such as following lesson schedules, checking homework, etc. This situation created problems on both sides and, after a while, led to the emergence of challenges, deficiencies, and tension".*

MoNE

According to the teachers, another reason for the changes in students' behaviour was the policies and practices carried out by the MoNE during distance education. T13 attributed the different behaviour to some changes to the policy of the MoNE regarding students' attendance in lessons in the following way: *"Because the ministry didn't take student absenteeism into consideration during the pandemic, and students realised that they could pass the class without attending the classes."* Another situation highlighted by the teachers about the policies and practices of the MoNE was the constant changes in practices. Regarding this situation, T3 expressed her views by saying *"because of the ever-changing practices of the MoNE… practices such as students' passing the grade without an exam, creating no obligation for students to attend online courses, and preventing students from opening the cameras (so they were engaged in other activities during the lesson) have caused them to have the perception that they could pass the grade somehow."*

Separation from school

Separation from school was also a reason for the behavioural changes seen in students. Under this theme, the points highlighted were students' being away from school and the inefficiency of distance education. The explanation of T15 regarding the category of being away from school is as follows: *"The main source of this change is definitely the fact that students have been away from school for such a long time."* T10 also expressed this situation in the following way: *"Student fulfill the first step of attendance by coming to school every day. Then by doing the same things every day in lessons, studies, rules, etc., the behaviour is reinforced and becomes settled. However, it was not possible in distance education."* Considering the inefficiency of distance education, T11 expressed her views with the following statement: *"The reason for this change is that students were not able to focus on the lessons as in the classroom and couldn't adequately learn new subjects during distance education."*

Use of Technology

Uncontrolled use of technology appeared as one of the reasons for the changes in students' behaviour. T5 explained this issue by maintaining *"…because of the videos and Netflix series they watch, they constantly talk about them, because the children are familiar with many of the TV series and movies that I have never even heard of, and they watch them although they are inappropriate for them and their age group."* Similarly, T7 emphasized that students use technology uncontrollably and said *"Because, as far as I understand, they were so engaged with computers. They spent a lot of time alone at home. Even after the online courses were over, they continued to play games and watch videos."*

Findings on the strategies followed by teachers in terms of classroom management

The findings regarding the strategies followed by the teachers in terms of classroom management while managing the process after the transition to face-to-face education are collected under four themes: management of teaching, behaviour management, management of relationships, and management of the physical environment. The categories related to these themes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Strategies followed by teachers in terms of classroom management

Themes	Categories
Management of teaching	- Revision of previous lessons - Being flexible - Diversifying methods, techniques, and materials - Encouragement for participation - Keeping expectations low
Behaviour management	- Being authoritative at the beginning - Being understanding

	- Monitoring students
	- Using the reactive model
	- Setting clear rules
	- Reintroducing lesson routines
	- Describing desired behaviours
Management of relationships	- Special/individual attention to the student
	- Managing the process through communicating
	- Ensuring socialisation
	- Communication with parents
	- Cooperation with the guidance & counselling service
Management of physical environment	- Change in seating arrangement

Management of teaching

In terms of classroom management, while managing the teaching process, the teachers mentioned that they revised previous lessons; provided flexibility for students; diversified the methods, techniques, and materials they used; tried to encourage students to participate in the lesson; and kept their expectations low. T11 expressed her views on revising while managing the teaching as follows: *"I revise previous lessons during the courses very often as the students fell behind due to the attendance problem during online education."* The teachers also stated that they were more flexible during this process. The explanation by T8 regarding this situation is as follows: *"I allow those who cannot complete the activities to have extra time or get help from their peers."* Some of the teachers reported that they used different methods, techniques, or materials more while managing the process. For example, T10 explained this situation by saying, *"I intended to change student behaviours through providing various contents such as cartoons, presentations, and videos on the necessity and correct use of technology for about one-one and a half months with interdisciplinary transitions during the themes of Turkish-Science-Technology, Social Studies."* and T11 said, *"I increased the methods and techniques I used in the classroom. I use various techniques to get the students' attention."* In addition, the teachers underlined the effort they made in order to get students to participate in the lesson. T5 explained how she tried to involve her students in the lesson by stating *"…the child is right there and my idea is that I should include him in the lesson. Whether a student is hardworking or not, or even if he doesn't know the subject, we tried hard to encourage his participation; I can say that we have become a little more conscious about participation in the course and self-improvement."* The teachers also noted that they kept their expectations from students low. Regarding this category, T4 expressed her opinion by saying *"In terms of classroom management, I have always considered the developmental disruptions caused by students' being away from school for a long time. I approached them by regarding them one grade below their grade level."*

Behaviour management

The teachers reported having benefited from some behavioural arrangements to create desired behaviours in students. Considering behaviour management, some teachers stated that they exhibited an authoritative approach at first. T1 explained this by saying *"I had to behave more strictly and more authoritatively in the first few months."* Some teachers, in contrast, stated that they were more understanding. T14's statement regarding this situation is as follows: *"We are trying to show more patience and attention, guide them, and increase their motivation."* Under this theme, the teachers also mentioned that they monitored students, displayed a reactive classroom management approach, set the rules clearly, tried to reintroduce the routines of the lessons, and described the desired behaviours to the students. Some of the teachers' views on these categories are given below.

T12: I need to more closely monitor whether the tasks assigned are fulfilled or not.

T9: I reinforce positive behaviours. I give stickers, say 'thank you'… I show my reaction to those who insist on their negative behaviours by sulking, warning, etc.

T16: We began to set the rules more clearly. We are now trying to describe the rules and guide students, even in matters where we don't need to or in the rules which we already expect students to obey.

T3: There is a regression in the habits in which they had no difficulty before, such as bringing the course materials to the class, preparing for the lesson, coming to the lesson on time, and doing the assigned homework. It is my priority to ensure students regain these habits.

T16: We try to describe to students the behaviour patterns that are desired so as to replace the negative behaviours.

Management of relationships

One of the issues that the teachers mentioned concerning the theme of relationship management is about showing individual attention to students. T3 explained this situation by saying *"I especially began to motivate and deal with the students who took a dislike to school and are unwilling to come."* The teachers also emphasised that they managed this process through communication/interaction. Regarding this situation, T7 said, *"Afterwards, I tried to deal with the undisciplined behaviours in the classroom through communicating with students. We don't have any other option. We tried to deal with it by communicating. We had a chat. You know, we talked about what they did or how it should be in the classroom."* Some of the teachers also stressed that they tried to ensure the socialization of the students. T5's following statement supports this: *"…I can say that we try to keep the social environment as enjoyable as possible. I can also say that we make more effort to spend more time with our students and with each other. Again, we try to do our activities face-to-face as much as possible. We have increased our meetings with students. In the evenings, we sometimes come together and play games with them. We organise different activities with our own class students."* Under this theme, the teachers mentioned that they increased communication with parents. For example, T12 reported: *"I communicate with parents more*

than ever, and I try to understand the causes of the problems at school and ask for their support in solving them." Finally, it can be understood that the teachers work in cooperation with the guidance and counselling service from the following statement by T4: "*I get help from the school's guidance and counselling service when necessary.*"

Management of the physical environment

In this context, the teachers changed the seating arrangement in the classroom. T2 exemplified this situation by saying "*I often changed the seating arrangement.*"

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Together with the transition to face-to-face education, students were observed to exhibit cognitive, social, and psychomotor changes in their behaviours in the classroom environment as well as motivation and concentration problems and discipline problems. From a cognitive point of view, not all students had similar experiences during the period when schools were closed. It was suggested that the lack of full participation during distance education due to the diversity in the circumstances of the families (Dabrowski, 2020; Xie & Yang, 2020) would bring about differences in the knowledge levels of the students when face-to-face education was introduced again (Munawaroh & Nurmalasari, 2021; OECD, 2020; The World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021; Yaşar, 2021). It is predicted that the learning loss due to the pandemic will be between 1/3 and 2/3 of a year (Feriver & Arık, 2021). This situation, in fact, occurred according to the opinions of the teachers, who stated that there were level differences between the students. Moreover, this situation caused students to experience learning problems and led to restructure of the learning process (Page et al., 2021). It is thought that teachers will give priority to making up for learning losses during the process of reopening schools (Kocabaş et al., 2021; ÖRAV, 2020) since one of the situations that teachers worry about is the decrease in the academic achievement levels of students (Bayindır, 2021). It was observed that students moved away from the criteria determined for measurement and evaluation, and they expected to achieve high grades without effort. This can mean that students developed the perception that they would somehow move to the upper class or graduate and that they devalued education. Likewise, one of the teachers who participated in the study conducted by Marshall et al. (2020) stated that not all students actively participated in distance education, but all of them got the highest grades. Furthermore, Yeşilyurt (2021) concluded that the level of validity and reliability in measurement and evaluation during distance education was lower than that of the measurement and evaluation performed during face-to-face education. The fact that the criteria for the assessment and evaluation of students could not be determined created challenges for the teachers and resulted in the problem of grade inflation due to concern about injustice among students or because of various pressures felt (TEDMEM, 2022).

In the present study, the findings indicated that there have been perceived social changes in students' behaviours. It has been understood with the Covid-19 crisis that school not only fulfils its educational mission within the framework of conveying knowledge, but also meets the socialisation needs of individuals (Colao et al., 2020; OECD, 2020; The World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, during this process, children had to be away from the areas where they would possibly socialise with each other (Colao et al., 2020). Therefore, it has been noted that the school environment serves as a social learning area and an area for children to acquire social skills (Stamatis, 2021). It was observed that the individuality of students increased and they had problems in socialization since they were away from school. According to other studies, students are expected to experience difficulties in terms of social interaction in face-to-face education after the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020; Yaşar, 2021). To overcome these challenges, schools can offer strong support for the development of social relationships. Most importantly, schools also host social relations. In fact, teaching and learning are related to human interactions, mutual communication, and change (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2020). Moreover, out-of-class activities rather than in-class teaching practices are becoming more important (OECD, 2021).

It was also found in the present study that there were some differences in students' behaviours in terms of psychomotor skills. Students' inability to stay still during the lesson and their constant movement were among these behaviours. During the pandemic, children thought that they needed to move around inside the house and sought reasons to get out of their chairs (Stamatis, 2021). It is evident that children need movement, play, and active learning (OECD, 2020). The fact that children had to spend a long time at home, that they had the freedom to move around at home as they wished, and that they did not feel any obligation to sit down even during the lessons was shown by increased mobility in the classroom environment. In addition, there was a weakening or even regression in students' psychomotor development and movements. Korkmaz et al. (2020) stated that 65% of secondary school students had reduced physical activity levels during the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequent inactiveness that started in this period and continued in the normalisation period was observable.

Motivation and concentration related problems in students became more evident. During distance education, students found it considerably difficult to focus on the computer screen and stay silent for a long time. Therefore, they were able to find many reasons to distract themselves (Stamatis, 2021). Accordingly, during the process of adaptation to school after the pandemic, a decrease was expected to occur in the attention span and motivation levels of the students (Yaşar, 2021). It was regarded as necessary to enhance the adaptation of students and strengthen their motivation upon returning to school (Emin & Altunel, 2021), since the emotional states and motivation levels of everyone, including teachers, students, and parents, were influenced negatively during the pandemic (ÖRAV, 2020). Together with the transition to face-to-face education, disciplinary problems also emerged.

In particular, there was an increase in the problems related to the execution of the rules and in students' undesired behaviours. For example, an increase was observed in violence (UNESCO, 2020). It can also be stated that teachers should be prepared for a different student profile than before the pandemic, since most of the students already got used to distance education and become estranged from school and routines (Kocabaş et al., 2021).

Teachers think that the sources of behavioural change in students are the family, MoNE practices, staying away from school, and using technology. One of these reasons is seen as the management of the process by the top management. There were some problems faced in ensuring coordination in the decision-making processes regarding the opening and closing of schools in Turkiye. Further, the declarations of the MoNE included inconsistent and contradictory decisions, which resulted in last-minute changes (TEDMEM, 2022). The uncertainty caused by constantly changing information from the MoNE and educational institutions as well as insufficient communication raises anxiety in individuals (Bozkurt et al., 2020). On the other hand, building a stronger education system that is well prepared for future risks is possible with a long-term improvement plan that takes advantage of innovations in education and focuses on equal opportunities (The World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, 2021). During the period when the students were away from school, the role of families gained a little more importance. One of the sources of changes in students' behaviours is parents' assuming the role of a teacher. Families played a critical role in shaping what, when, and how children learn, and the importance of family involvement in the process was emphasised (Bozkurt, 2020; ÖRAV, 2020; Quilter-Pinner & Ambrose, 2020; Stamatis, 2021). It is of great importance for parents to continue to be interested in their children, who returned to face-to-face education after the pandemic (Kocabaş et al., 2021). On the other hand, students who did not receive parental support at home also had difficulties in accessing digital learning resources (Colao et al., 2020). The increase in the use of technology was one of the sources that caused changes in students' behaviours. Especially with the Covid-19 pandemic, a significant increase was observed in digital activities and screen time (Saxena et al., 2021). In addition, students spent more time in digital environments with less supervision and control (OECD, 2020). According to the findings of research on children's use of technology, the rate of internet use by children was 82.7% in 2021. In addition, 35.9% of children in the 6-15 age group reported that they read fewer books as they spent more time in front of the screen (TUIK, 2021).

As for the strategies applied by the teachers regarding classroom management after face-to-face education, the first one is related to the management of teaching. During this process, the teachers mentioned that they revised previous lessons due to the learning deficiencies and losses in order to close the gaps. Indeed, according to a recent analysis of the approaches to address learning losses, it is seen that the focus is on "the removal of the gaps" or "re-establishment of learning" (Anderson 2021; cited in Reimers, 2021). Cullinane and Montacute (2020) stated that when schools return to the normal process, make-up or support lessons should be provided for children with learning deficits in addition to normal

lessons or during the summer months. The underlying reason is that the disadvantaged students were likely to fall behind their advantaged friends during school closures (cited in Balcı, 2020). The teachers emphasised that they benefited from different methods, techniques, and materials during this process. Learning losses during the pandemic required schools and teachers to re-evaluate students' knowledge and skills when they returned to school. This obliges educators to devise curriculums adjusted according to students' levels and to develop appropriate individualized methods to support students (Reimers, 2021). The teachers also stated that they attempted to attend to students actively in the lessons. One of the five scientifically proven classroom management practices put forward by Simonsen et al. (2008) is to ensure active participation of students in the lesson. They have indicated that teachers can increase active participation by increasing students' opportunities to respond, using direct instruction techniques, applying peer instruction, using computer-based instruction, and providing guided notes. Active participation in lessons creates opportunities for students to learn and apply new knowledge and strategies, to explain their reasoning, to examine their thinking processes, and to recognise the need to review thinking. It also provides teachers with a window into students' thinking processes and learning, allows them to diagnose learning problems or assess student progress, and offers teachers the opportunity to build a structure for students' understanding or provide cognitive and affective support (Turner & Patrick, 2004).

Another strategy used by the teachers to prevent students' undesired behaviours and create desired behaviour change is related to behaviour management. Under this theme, the teachers stated that they employed the reactive model. Most of the teachers mainly use reactive applications to control student behaviour. Moreover, using preventive approaches in classroom management is associated with increases in student participation and improved teacher well-being (Hepburn et al., 2021). Clunies-Ross et al. (2008) revealed that the use of predominantly reactive management strategies is significantly related to increased teacher stress and decreased student task engagement. In addition, the teachers underlined that they set clear rules in the classroom. In fact, it was found that certainty in the classroom is positively related to student achievement, participation level, and student satisfaction (Hines et al., 1985; Shindler et al., 2009; cited in Shindler, 2010).

While the teachers were managing this process, they also gave importance to the management of relationships as a classroom management strategy. The teachers noted that they showed attention to students individually and tried to manage the process with communication. In line with this, there have been numerous studies indicating that students' academic achievement and productive behaviours are affected by the quality of the teacher–student relationship (Archambault et al., 2017; Hughes, & Kwok, 2007; Konishi et al., 2010; Niebuhr & Niebuhr, 1999). Establishing caring relationships between teachers and students is crucial. Developing effective communication is a challenging but vital step in building caring and functional interactions within the classroom. When students feel that a teacher cares about them, they regard the teacher as a trustworthy ally rather than an

enemy. This situation increases students' motivation to follow the instructions, obey the rules, and exert effort during classroom activities (Elias & Schwab, 2011). Increasing communication/interaction with parents was stated to be another effective strategy applied by the teachers. Classroom management and teaching will be more effective when families are actively involved in their child's education, as they are critical sources of information on topics such as students' interests, learning styles, and learning backgrounds. As long as teachers view parental involvement as an educational resource and know how to take advantage of it, student learning and motivation will increase (Walker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2011).

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our study had some limitations. First, the data were collected through online interviews. The second was the diversity that we tried to provide within the scope of the teaching experience of the participants. Teachers with 5 years or less experience were not included in the research. The less experienced teachers did not want to participate in the research because of their workload.

Some suggestions have been developed within the scope of the research results. It has been observed that there have been significant changes in student behaviour in recent years. These changes are reflected in the school environment, classroom environment, family environment, and social environment. Therefore, it is thought that there is a need for studies focusing on this subject. Similar research can be considered in detail in different types of schools. In addition, studies involving students, parents, and school administrators can provide different perspectives.

Considering the cognitive experiences of students, additional support should be offered within the scope of schools to eliminate learning losses. It may be necessary to review lesson plans to reduce problems with motivation and concentration. Game-based and technology-supported activities can be prepared that can be applied during the introduction to the course and during the period. One of the most important issues during the period of being away from school has been socialization. Projects in which students can work and collaborate can be developed. Social and sportive activities, club activities, and competitions can be organized and socialization of students can be emphasized. In this way, students' psychomotor skills can also be supported. Informative training can be given to students and families regarding the correct use of technology. Rules for the management of behaviour should be clearly defined and reinforced. It is thought that a communication-oriented approach to students will provide mutual benefits.

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