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OPINIONS OF SOCIAL WORK UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS ON DISTANCE EDUCATION PRACTICES DURING THE PANDEMIC PROCESS

Sosyal Hizmet Lisans ve Lisansüstü Öğrencilerinin Pandemi Sürecinde Uzaktan Eğitim Uygulamalarına İlişkin Görüşleri

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to evaluate the distance education practices offered to social work undergraduate and graduate students during the Covid-19 pandemic from the perspective of students and to make suggestions for the development of educational activities in the light of these evaluations. The study was designed within the scope of the quantitative paradigm and using the descriptive model, which is one of the survey models. The population of the study is undergraduate and graduate students continuing their education within the social work department in Turkey, and 446 social work undergraduate and graduate students were reached to represent the population within the scope of the study. The questionnaire form developed by Smoyer et al. (2020) and adapted into Turkish by the research team was used as a data collection tool. Some of the main findings presented in the study reveal that the theoretical courses within the scope of distance education during the pandemic process were mostly taught in a synchronous model (94.4%), the view that "course recordings can be watched later (30.1%)" stands out as the strongest aspect of distance education, and 79.6% of the participants found face-to-face education more beneficial than distance education. At the same time, 82.1% of the participants stated that they did homework, 77.1% of them took online multiple-choice exams and 64.8% of them took take-home exams. The findings are valuable for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of distance education processes and making necessary improvements.

Keywords: *Distance education, social work, social work students, pandemic*

Öz

Bu çalışmada amaç; Covid-19 pandemisi sürecinde sosyal hizmet lisans ve lisansüstü öğrencilerine sunulan uzaktan eğitim uygulamalarının öğrencilerin perspektifinden değerlendirilmesi ve bu değerlendirmeler ışığında eğitim faaliyetlerinin geliştirilebilmesi adına önerilerde bulunulmasıdır. Çalışma, nicel paradigma kapsamında kurgulanan ve tarama modellerinden biri olan betimsel modelin kullanıldığı bir araştırmadır. Çalışmanın evreni Türkiye’de sosyal hizmet anabilim dalı dâhilinde eğitimini sürdürmekte olan lisans ve lisansüstü öğrencileridir ve çalışma kapsamında evreni temsil etmek adına 446 sosyal hizmet lisans ve lisansüstü öğrencisine ulaşılmıştır. Çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak Smoyer ve arkadaşları (2020) tarafından geliştirilen ve araştırma ekibi tarafından Türkçe’ye uyarlanan anket formu kullanılmıştır. Çalışma dahilinde sunulan temel bulgulardan bazıları; pandemi sürecinde uzaktan eğitim kapsamında en çok senkron modelde (%94,4) teorik derslerin işlendiğini, uzaktan eğitimin en güçlü yanı olarak “ders kayıtlarının sonradan izlenebiliyor olması (%30,1)” görüşünün ön plana çıktığını, katılımcıların %79,6’sının yüz yüze eğitimi uzaktan eğitime kıyasla daha faydalı bulduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Aynı zamanda uzaktan eğitimde ölçme ve değerlendirme yöntemleri olarak katılımcıların %82,1’i ödev yaptığını belirtirken, %77,1’i çevrimiçi çoktan seçmeli ve %64’8’i take home exam’a dâhil olduklarını belirtmiştir. Bulgular, uzaktan eğitim süreçlerinin güçlü ve zayıf yönlerinin değerlendirilmesi ve gerekli iyileştirmelerin yapılabilmesi açısından değerli görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Uzaktan eğitim, sosyal hizmet, sosyal hizmet öğrencileri, pandemi*

INTRODUCTION

With Covid-19, which was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, many measures have been taken in our country and in the world, and these measures have affected numerous events in daily life. Subsequently, in order to maintain social distancing, education in universities starting from primary education has entered the online process (Ministry of Health, 2020; Simanovic et al., 2021). The online education process has become the main concern of educational institutions. In order to use this system effectively, it is necessary to understand the challenges faced with the online education system (Almaiah et al., 2020). In social work education, the online method has various limitations along with the benefits it brings with it. In this context, it is seen that the social work discipline lags behind other disciplines in online education (Anderson-Meger, 2011).

There is still confusion between social work education and social work practice with unclear boundaries. However, practical trainings help both in assessing students' competencies and in understanding the theoretical framework and theories related to social work professional practice (Kourgiantakis & Leei, 2020). At this point, social work academics question whether basic social work knowledge and skills (especially clinical social work) can be taught through distance education (Reamer, 2013). In a study conducted in Australia, it is seen that social work education has become more complex and uncertain with Covid-19, and in a study conducted in Canada, the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in social work education was investigated, and it is seen that social work practice education is tried to be offered online to eliminate this disruption (Afrouz, 2020; Kourgiantakis and Leei, 2020).

In a study conducted by Simanovic et al. (2021) with social work students receiving online and hybrid education, it is seen that although the students have been subjected to this education system for a short time, the majority of them have a positive attitude, but they face problems such as access to technological devices, lack of non-verbal communication forms such as body language in online courses, problems with internet connection, motivation and self-discipline problems, lack of study space, and procrastination behavior. In a study conducted with 186 social work students in Vietnam, it is seen that there are difficulties in online social work education due to the fact that universities are not ready yet; students experience problems with internet access, frequently falling out of the course during the course, not being able to hear well, not being able to participate at the beginning of the course, but they find it positive in terms of flexibility and accessibility to online education in case of need. (Dihn & Nguyen, 2020).

At the same time, a study conducted in Zimbabwe suggests that the effects of Covid-19 are not only clear for those who are oriented towards the theoretical areas of social work, but also have far-reaching effects for students who need social work practice (Zvomuya, 2021). According to Zidan (2015), it is seen that online education creates difficulties for social work students in gaining social work practice skills.

Although the benefits and effectiveness of online social work education have been demonstrated in the literature, it is a fact that there are still concerns about the effectiveness of online education in social work undergraduate and graduate education, as social interactions play a fundamental role in the skills of social work students compared to other fields (Forgey & Williams, 2016; Smoyer et al., 2020). However, it is seen that the online education method does not help social work students gain the ability to analyze and think critically, and students have problems in putting the theoretical knowledge they have learned into practice (Rodriguez-Keyes et al., 2013).

As a result of the literature review, it has been observed that such a study has not been conducted with social work undergraduate and graduate students at the national level before. For this reason, it corresponds to a very important study ground to try to improve the quality of education offered to social work undergraduate and graduate students who are receiving education in order to ensure the psychosocial well-being of individuals and society and to increase their welfare levels or to develop new educational teaching methods. The Covid-19 pandemic has also affected individuals and society in the field of education. This situation has led to the need to investigate the views of undergraduate and graduate students in the social work department, which is an applied discipline, on online education.

AIM

The aim of this study is to evaluate the distance education practices offered to social work undergraduate and graduate students during the Covid-19 pandemic from the perspective of students and to make suggestions for improving educational activities in the light of these evaluations.

METHOD

The study was designed within the scope of the quantitative paradigm and using the descriptive model, which is one of the survey models. Descriptive model is a research conducted with large groups to obtain information about the opinions and attitudes of individuals included in the sample about a phenomenon and event, and to describe phenomena and events (Dulock, 1993). In this study, it was deemed appropriate to choose this method since it was aimed to describe the experiences of undergraduate and graduate students studying at the undergraduate and graduate level within the social work department regarding social work education during the pandemic process.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of undergraduate and graduate students studying in social work departments in Turkey. It is known that the total number of students studying at the undergraduate level in social work departments of universities in the 2019-2020 academic year is 32,714 (Higher Education Information Management System, 2021). It is not possible to reach the number of students of universities offering postgraduate education in social work departments. At this point, as a result of the examination of the web pages of social work departments in Turkey by the researchers, it is seen that 9 universities have social work doctorate programs and 18 universities have social work master's programs with thesis. When the quotas published by the universities are evaluated, 10 students are accepted to doctoral programs and 15 students are accepted to master's programs with thesis each semester. Considering that the minimum duration of doctoral programs is 4 years and the minimum duration of master's programs with thesis is 2 years, it can be said that the number of graduate students actively continuing their education within the social work department during the pandemic in Turkey is approximately 360 doctoral students and 540 master's students with thesis. It is possible to say that the total number of undergraduate and graduate students studying social work, thus the total number of the universe is approximately 33,614. Since it was not possible to reach the entire population in terms of means, time and cost, a sample was selected from the population. The sampling process was carried out with the convenience sampling method to represent the universe. At this point, it is seen that the ideal sample size recommended in the literature for the relevant population size is 380 (Sekeran, 2003). Within the scope of this study, 446 social work undergraduate and graduate students were reached and the ideal population-sample representation was realized.

Data Collection Tools

The questionnaire form developed by Smoyer et al. (2020) and adapted into Turkish by the research team was used as a data collection tool in the study. The survey consists of a total of 17 questions, including 4 questions to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants (age, gender, education level, type of university attended) and 13 questions directly related to the purpose of the study. In order to use the data collection tool in the study, an interview was conducted with the researcher Assoc. Prof. Amy Smoyer, who created the data collection tool and used it for the first time in her studies in the USA, and the Turkish version of the data collection tool was finalized as a result of the interview with her.

Data Collection

During the research process, ethics committee permission was obtained to confirm the ethical appropriateness of the research. Afterwards, the questionnaire form was transferred to the Google

Forms platform and made ready to be presented to the research participants. Participants' voluntary participation in the research, obtaining their informed consent, keeping their identities confidential and ensuring that they do not suffer any harm due to their participation in the research constitute important ethical standards for research in the field of social sciences (Drake, 2013). In this context, the research process was conducted in accordance with scientific ethical principles and values and on a voluntary basis by obtaining the informed consent of the participants. Since the questionnaire was presented to the participants via the Google Forms platform, it was not possible to physically fill out the form under the current conditions, the participants were informed that the relevant information was read on the first page of the Google Forms questionnaire form and their consent was obtained for voluntary participation. After the participants gave consent to the relevant information, they were able to see the survey questions and participated in the study in this way.

The research data were collected by forwarding the Google Forms link to social work undergraduate and graduate students via social media. The data collection process took place in July-August 2021. The data collection process was finalized within a period of two months depending on the ideal sample.

Data Analysis

All statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 program. The data obtained were analyzed within the scope of descriptive statistical methods.

FINDINGS

Table 1 shows that the average age of the participants is 21.4 and the majority of them are women (93.3%). 58.3% of the participants continue their education at foundation universities.

Table 1. Sociodemographic information of the participants (n = 446)

Demographics	Mean/SD	%
Age	21.4 (2,59)	
Gender		
Woman	416	93,3
Man	30	6,7
University Type		
State	186	41,7
Foundation	260	58,3
Level of Education		
Undergraduate 1st Year	90	20,2
Undergraduate 2nd Year	121	27,1
Undergraduate 3rd Year	136	30,5
Undergraduate 4th Year	77	17,3
Postgraduate	22	4,9

Table 2 includes the opinions of the participants regarding their theoretical courses during the pandemic process, as well as information on the methods in which the theoretical courses were presented. In this context, the vast majority of students (94.4%) reported that the theoretical courses

were presented synchronously in the universities where they received social work education during the pandemic process. Students who were educated with the hybrid method also had the opportunity to benefit from face-to-face education in their theoretical courses, and it is seen that the rate of theoretical courses being presented with the hybrid method is 2.5%. Since the research focuses on the impact of the distance education method, the answers of the students who benefited from hybrid education and were involved in face-to-face education were excluded from the identification of strengths and weaknesses. When we look at the opinions on the strengths of the lecturing method used, it is noteworthy that the video recording of the lectures and the fact that these recordings can be watched later (30.1%) is perceived as a strong aspect, and the easy accessibility of the course environment (16.8%) is a similarly strong factor. On the other hand, 18.4% of the students stated that the lecturing method used in the theoretical courses did not have any strengths.

As seen in Table 2, in terms of the weaknesses of the lecture method used in theoretical courses, inadequate interaction and communication (22.3%) and inability to provide an efficient learning environment (21.1%) are stated as important weaknesses, while technical problems (20.5%) and loss of concentration during the lecture (18.4%) are noteworthy.

Table 2. Information and thoughts on theoretical courses during the pandemic process

Variables	n	%
Lecturing Method used in Theoretical Courses (<i>n</i> = 446)		
Synchronous	421	94,4
Hybrid Model	11	2,5
Asynchronous	7	1,6
Synchronous and Asynchronous use together	5	1,1
Course Material sharing only	2	0,4
Strengths of the Lecturing Method Used in Theoretical Courses in Distance Education (<i>n</i> = 435)		
Ability to Watch Course Recordings Afterwards	131	30,1
I don't think it has a strong side	80	18,4
Easy Accessibility of Course Environments	73	16,8
Ease of Accessibility to Training Documents	40	9,2
Increasing Interaction and Student-Faculty Communication	39	9
Facilitating Guest Participation in Classes	36	8,3
Other	22	5,1
Encouraging Research and Class Participation	14	3,2
Weaknesses of the Lecturing Method Used in Theoretical Courses in Distance Education (<i>n</i> = 435)		
Insufficient Interaction and Communication	97	22,3
Not Providing an Efficient Learning Environment	92	21,1
Technical Problems	89	20,5
Loss of Concentration During Class	80	18,4
I Do Not Think It Has Weaknesses	25	5,7
Other	26	6
Lack of Active Participation of Students in Classes	17	3,9
Too Long Course Duration	9	2,1

Table 3 shows the opinions of the participants regarding the practical courses during the pandemic process and the methods used to present the practical courses. The majority of the participants (83.2%) stated that practice-based courses were offered simultaneously during the pandemic process. Excluding the hybrid method, when the strengths of the distance education methods used in the practice lessons are evaluated, it is seen that a high proportion of the participants (23.8%) stated that these methods have no strengths. At the same time, it can be said that inviting guests to the practicum courses (11.6%) was perceived as a strength by the participants. 38.6% of the participants stated that they did not take a practicum course during the semester they received education.

When the situations that the participants evaluated as weaknesses regarding the methods used in practice courses are examined, it is seen that 26.2% of them stated that the methods used in practice courses do not provide an adequate learning environment. At the same time, the fact that these methods do not provide the opportunity to see cases and do home studies (10.1%) and cause insufficient interaction and communication (10.6%) were also stated as other weaknesses.

Table 3. Information and thoughts on practice lessons during the pandemic process

Variables	n	%
Teaching Method Used in Practicum Courses (n = 446)		
Synchronous	371	83,2
Hybrid Model	42	9,4
Course Material Sharing Only	14	3,1
Other	13	2,9
Asynchronous	6	1,3
Strengths of the Lecturing Method Used in Practice Courses in Distance Education (n = 404)		
We didn't have a practice lesson	156	38,6
I Do Not Think It Has Strengths in Terms of Implementation	96	23,8
I find the participation of guests in the lessons positive	47	11,6
Other	41	10,1
I Think It is Efficient According to Pandemic Conditions	26	6,4
I find it positive to be able to access course records again	24	5,9
I Think It Saves Time	14	3,5
Weaknesses of the Lecturing Method Used in Practicum Courses (n = 404)		
We didn't have a practice lesson	156	38,6
Not Providing an Adequate Learning Environment	106	26,2
Interaction and Communication were not at an Adequate Level	43	10,6
No Opportunity to See Cases and Conduct Home Inspections	41	10,1
I do not think that the practices are efficient	21	5,2
Problems May Occur Due to Technical Issues	20	5
Other	17	4,2

It is seen that the measurement and evaluation methods used in social work education during the pandemic process can differ. When Table 4 is examined, it is revealed that the most preferred assessment and evaluation methods are homework (82.1%), online multiple-choice exam (77.1%) and home exam (64.8%), respectively.

Table 4. Measurement and evaluation methods used during the pandemic (n = 446)

Variables	n	%
Homework		
Yes	366	82,1
No.	80	17,9
Online Multiple Choice Exam		
Yes	344	77,1
No.	102	22,9
Take Home Exam		
Yes	289	64,8
No.	157	35,2
Project		
Yes	71	15,9
No.	375	84,1
Supervised Multiple Choice Exam		
Yes	67	15
No.	379	85
Supervised Written Exam		
Yes	38	8,5
No.	408	91,5
Oral Exam		
Yes	18	4
No.	428	96
Other		
Yes	6	1,3
No.	440	98,7

With the transition to distance education during the pandemic process, the technical equipment and auxiliary tools that students have in order to continue the education process have also gained importance. Table 5 shows information about the technical equipment and auxiliary tools that the participants have during the pandemic process. When the table is examined, it is seen that the majority of the participants have smartphones (86.5%), desktop or laptop computers (85.9%) and 84.8% have internet connection at home.

Table 5. Information on technical equipment and auxiliary tools during the pandemic (n = 446)

Variables	n	%
Smart Phone		
Yes	386	86,5
No.	60	16,5
Desktop Computer or Laptop		
Yes	383	85,9
No.	63	14,1
Wifi/Internet Connection at Home		
Yes	378	84,8
No.	68	15,2
A Computer with a Working Microphone		
Yes	262	58,7
No.	184	41,3
A Computer with a Working Camera		
Yes	252	56,5
No.	194	43,5

Headphones with Microphone		
Yes	186	41,7
No.	260	58,3
Headset Without Microphone		
Yes	45	10,1
No.	401	89,9

When Table 6 is analyzed, it is seen that the majority of the participants (55.2%) stated that their level of participation in scientific activities increased during the pandemic process. At the same time, a significant portion of the participants (79.6%) stated that they found the face-to-face education method more useful than the distance education method in social work education. When the opinions on the use of distance education in social work education after the pandemic are examined, it is seen that 60.5% of the participants stated that this method should not be used.

Table 6. Participants' views on the pandemic process (n = 446)

Variables	n	%
My Level of Participation in Scientific Activities (Congress, Panel, Symposium, etc.) Increased During the Pandemic		
Strongly Disagree	68	15,2
Disagree	72	16,1
Undecided	60	13,5
I agree.	143	32,1
Strongly Agree	103	23,1
Face-to-Face Education Method is More Beneficial than Distance Education Method in Social Work Education		
Strongly Disagree	33	7,4
Disagree	27	6,1
Undecided	31	7
I agree.	65	14,6
Strongly Agree	290	65
Participant Views on the Use of Distance Education System in Social Work Education After the Pandemic		
I think it should not be used	270	60,5
Other	46	10,3
Available for Theoretical Courses Except Applied Courses	38	8,5
I am of the opinion that its use will be positive	27	6,1
Continued Use for Scientific Events (Congress, Panel, Symposium, etc.)	27	6,1
May be Suitable for Use as a Hybrid	17	3,8
Available for Elective Courses Except Required Field Courses	14	3,1
Recording of lectures and access to materials can be beneficial	6	1,3

DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to understand the online education experiences of social work undergraduate and graduate students starting with the pandemic. In this direction, 446 social work undergraduate and graduate students were reached and a questionnaire consisting of 17 questions was applied. In the questionnaire, in addition to the demographic characteristics of the students, the methods of teaching the theoretical courses, their opinions on the functioning of the theoretical courses, the methods of teaching the applied courses and their opinions on the functioning of the applied courses

were included. At the same time, how the students were evaluated with the online method, what equipment the students who received online education had, and finally, the students' perspectives on online education, which was rapidly passed during the pandemic process, were mentioned.

According to the results obtained, it was understood that the theoretical courses were mostly taught in synchronous model (94.4%). According to the participants' responses, the strongest aspect of distance education in theoretical courses was "the ability to watch the lecture recordings later (30.1%)", followed by the statement "I do not think it has a strong aspect (18.4%)". The weakest aspects of distance education in theoretical courses were "insufficient interaction and communication (22.3%)" and "inability to provide an efficient learning environment (21.1%)".

Looking at the literature, Demirbilek (2021) conducted a study with 1449 university students and asked the participants to define distance education metaphorically. The results obtained were similar to the results of this study and the most positive metaphor was "having continuity" and the most negative metaphor was "being inadequate". In the study conducted by Selvaraj et al. (2021), 64.4% of the participants stated that there was little interaction with the teacher in online education. Similarly, in the study conducted by Şen and Kızılcıoğlu (2020), the participants stated that they found the lessons boring because they were online, that distance education reduced interaction with the teacher, and that technical difficulties did not turn this situation into a positive one despite providing freedom in time and space. In a study conducted by Smoyer et al. (2020), social work students stated that they were dissatisfied with online education because it reduced communication and limited their ability to ask questions or consult their teachers about course content and assignments. There is a parallel between the findings of the study and the findings in the literature. This situation suggests that online education cannot reach the desired efficiency due to both technical infrastructure problems and the inability of students and teachers to feel themselves in the classroom environment by attending classes from different places. As in face-to-face education, students' inability to communicate with their teachers and find someone to consult their questions in online education may be another reason that decreases efficiency.

Regarding the delivery methods of the applied courses, the participants stated that the most common style was "synchronous (83.2%)", which is the same as the theoretical course. When asked about strengths, the most common statement was "We did not have an applied course (38.6%)", followed by "I don't think it was a strength in terms of application (23.8%)". For weaknesses, 38.6% of the participants said "we did not have a practical course", while 26.2% chose the option "not providing an adequate learning environment". In a study conducted by Kürtüncü and Kurt (2020) with 516 students, 76.4% stated that distance education was insufficient for applied courses, and 41.5% stated that they

thought that the school would be prolonged due to this situation. In another study conducted by Puljak et al. (2020), 47.4% of 2520 participants stated that they were concerned about the inability to give applied courses online, that this situation could not be compensated, and 55.1% of them thought that they would have difficulties in their future business life. In Dinh and Nguyen's (2020) study with 186 social work undergraduate students, a similar situation was found and the majority of the participants expressed their dissatisfaction with online education, especially in applied courses. Applied courses require more face-to-face education than theoretical courses. The reason for this is that applied courses enable the individual to establish one-to-one contact with the profession and learn the job in the field. Therefore, the fact that applied courses are online worried many students and made them think that they would fall behind in their field education.

As measurement and evaluation methods with distance education, which started with the pandemic period, 82.1% of the participants stated that they did homework, 77.1% said "yes" to online multiple choice and 64.8% said "yes" to home exams. The majority of the participants said "no" to project, proctored multiple-choice, proctored written exam, oral exam and other methods. Since it is difficult to conduct exams in the online system, many schools preferred the method that is easier to supervise, such as homework. In a study conducted by Şenel and Şenel H. (2021) with 486 students, homework was the most used method and it was found that students were satisfied with this method. However, Lischer et al. (2021), in their study on social work students, found that in addition to those who were satisfied with the homework method, there were also those who stated that the satisfaction level was low because the homework method increased the workload.

In terms of technical equipment in distance education, more than half of the participants have a smartphone, desktop computer or laptop, wifi, microphone and camera. Similarly, one study found that only 19.6% of 336 participants did not have a computer, while 12.2% had irregular internet connection, but 42.3% of the participants were still concerned about situations such as lack of materials (Başer et al. 2020). Similarly, Altuntaş et al. (2020) found that more than half of the participants had the necessary equipment.

Finally, while the majority of the participants stated that their participation in scientific activities increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, they also stated that they preferred face-to-face education in social work education. Similarly, face-to-face courses were preferred in the literature and it was stated that distance education was not as efficient as face-to-face education (Bingöl, 2020; Okan, 2020; Chakraborty et al. 2021; Selvaraj et al. 2021; Smoyer et al. 2020). It was also found that lecturers preferred face-to-face education to distance education (Karatepe et al. 2020). On the other hand, it is an undeniable fact that there are students who prefer distance education to face-to-face education despite the problems they experience (Afşar & Büyükdoğan, 2020). However, in the current study and other studies, it is seen that the number of students who are dissatisfied with online education is

higher. This may be due to the lack of preparation of institutions, students and teachers for online education. As a matter of fact, the school system, teachers and students who had no experience in online education encountered many problems in this process. However, these groups made more effort than necessary to solve these problems. As a result of these and similar situations, it is seen that satisfaction with online education has decreased.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study cannot be ignored in terms of providing an effective and efficient social work education. As a matter of fact, although distance education, which is offered compulsorily throughout the country with the pandemic, has brought some gains in terms of an applied profession and discipline such as social work, it has also contained negativities in general. In order to minimize or eliminate these negativities, it is important to make the necessary evaluations and improvement studies within the findings of the current study and other studies in the literature. In this context, some suggestions that can be presented in line with the findings obtained from the study are listed below:

- Organizing workshops and scientific events to discuss what needs to be done to improve distance education to be offered in the field of social work, taking into account that it may be needed and put into use again for different reasons after the pandemic,
- Providing information and training to social work academics who will use the distance education method about educational methods and techniques and educational materials that can be used, which will enable them to increase their in-class interactions with students during the education process and enable students to focus on the lessons,
- It would be appropriate to prefer distance education as an auxiliary method in social work education except in compulsory cases and, if possible, for elective courses other than the core subjects and courses specified in the core curriculum or for the participation of guest speakers from the field.
- Considering the practical aspect of the social work discipline, the practice-based education that students will receive in university education is important in terms of micro, mezzo and macro level interventions that they will perform while doing professional work in the field after graduation. For this reason, the distance education process in social work education should be structured according to this situation.

As a result, this study approaches the distance education process from the student perspective and has a limited perspective. It can be said that there is a need for different studies that can look at the

subject from different angles and examine the views of students and academicians on the distance education process as a whole.

ETHICAL INFORMATION ABOUT RESEARCH

Ethics committee approval was received from the Istanbul Medipol University Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors contributed equally to the research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

The authors declare that they have no competing interest.

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