Teachers' Opinions on Social Studies Course Homework in Distance Education Process

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ÖZET

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to radical changes in the education system, as in many areas around the world. In this context, face-to-face education was suspended in Turkey, and distance education practices were introduced. For the first time, distance education at the primary and secondary school level, other than higher education, has had various repercussions for teachers, students, and parents. The purpose of this study is to examine the views of teachers, students, and parents on homework assignments during the distance education process in the social studies course. This study, which is qualitative research, was conducted within the framework of phenomenology design. The research was conducted with 20 teachers working in public schools in Ordu province. During the data collection process, 9 open-ended questions were asked to the teachers using a semi-structured interview technique. The data obtained were evaluated by the content analysis method through the MAXQDA program. The results of the study revealed that most of the teachers saw homework as a reinforcement tool. In addition, it was determined that the WhatsApp application was used intensively for delivering, evaluating, and following social studies homework assignments in the distance education process. These findings emphasize the effects of distance education applications and the role of communication tools. The study highlights the importance of parental support in the homework process and emphasizes the significant role of communication tools like WhatsApp and EBA in distance education, underscoring their impact on homework practices during the pandemic.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER

Distance education, Social studies, Homework, Teacher opinions, Covid-19 pandemic.

Introduction

Information and communication technologies are developing very rapidly today. Knowledge spreads rapidly and is produced at the same speed. Technological products, which are specific indicators of these achievements, are the source of various orientations to alleviate difficulties through inclusion in educational life. New trends in education aim to make a person more active in learning, facilitate access to information, accelerate learning, and make what is learned permanent (Okan & Arapgirlioglu, 2019). With the increase in technological environments, flexibility in education and ease of access to information have led to a new perspective on the traditional understanding of education, and the distance education model has emerged in this direction. Distance education is an education system model in which teachers and students do not necessarily have to be in the same place, and educational activities are carried out using postal services and information and communication technologies (İşman, 2011).

When we look at the definitions of distance education; it offers freedom of time and space, is not limited to a certain age and education level, enables communication and interaction with advanced technologies, and provides education services to many people who cannot use traditional education services (Yurdakul, 2015). Distance education has become an education model that can be used in many fields and has attracted more attention over time. According

to Yorgancı (2015), distance education significantly affects student success compared to the traditional method and saves time in terms of the rich content offered by distance education.

Distance education is nowadays developing and expanding with changes that challenge the formal education system, thanks to communication technologies such as radio, television, interactive audio teleconferencing systems, interactive audio and video conferencing systems, and computer and internet educational tools. Distance education systems are used in different ways; as a rule, they are synchronous (time-dependent), asynchronous (time-independent), and blended (semi-independent) learning models depending on the content of the curriculum, the target audience, and technological developments (Yungul, 2018). Yorgancı (2015) defines synchronous education as environments where students and teachers interact with each other in different environments at the same time and where there is mutual communication, while asynchronous education is education in which the inventories required for the course are shared with the student on the internet, regardless of space and time, and there is no communication between the student and the teacher. Synchronous education allows the teacher and the learner to interact in various ways, eliminating the need to be in the same environment and allowing the advantages of face-to-face education to be known. On the other hand, Asynchronous education provides the opportunity for self-learning independent of the student and the teacher.

The blended learning model involves a combination of face-to-face and online learning. Through blended learning, time and space constraints are removed, supporting communication and interaction with skills delivered both in the classroom and online. This model is a learning and teaching approach that has e-learning capabilities, is cheaper, easy to upgrade, fast, and addresses the disadvantages of geographical location (Yungul, 2018). The coronavirus, which has affected the whole world, has been effective in all areas of life and has caused disruptions in education. In this process, Turkey suspended face-to-face education and started distance education to ensure the sustainability of education. In this process, as of March 16, 2020, schools in Turkey were suspended until April 30, 2020. In this context, it was decided to continue education with open and distance education applications for three TV channels (EBA TV Primary School, EBA TV Middle School, and EBA TV High School) at primary and secondary education levels (MoNE, 2020).

Due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic, it was announced that the distance education period was extended until May 31, 2020, and on April 29, 2020, it was decided that students who successfully completed the first semester could continue distance education and move to the next grade regardless of their grade point average (MoNE, 2020). With the closure of schools, distance education became a common practice for teachers, students, and families. Teachers assigning homework to students, students working at home, and families actively participating in their children's education played an important role in this process. This study aims to examine teachers' views on the homework assignments given to students by social studies teachers during the distance education process in the social studies course in Turkey during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this purpose, the following questions were asked to the teachers with a semi-structured interview form:

1. What is homework according to teachers?
2. What are your thoughts about social studies homework given in distance education? Can you explain?
3. Do you give homework regularly (continuously) in the social studies course in distance education? Why?
4. Which types of homework (research, test solving, activity, gap filling, etc.) do you usually assign in social studies courses in distance education? Could you explain?
5. Which tools and materials (Whatsapp, Eba, Zoom, Google Classroom, etc.) do you use to keep track of the homework you give in the social studies course in distance education? Can you explain?

6. Which tools and materials (Whatsapp, Eba, Zoom, Google Classroom, etc.) do you use to deliver the homework you give in the social studies course in distance education to the students? Can you explain?
7. How do you do the measurement and evaluation of the homework you give in the social studies course in distance education? Can you explain?
8. How do you inform the students (via WhatsApp, EBA, Zoom, Google Classroom, etc.) about the results of the measurement and evaluation of the homework you give in the social studies course in distance education? Could you explain?
9. As a teacher, what are your recommendations for students and parents regarding homework assignments in social studies courses in distance education? Could you explain?

Method

Research Design

This study was conducted within the framework of qualitative research model. Qualitative research focuses on the examination of social life in the natural flow of life. Since it includes different perspectives and analyses of social life, it tries to reflect these different perspectives in detail (Punch, 2014). This study was conducted within the scope of the "phenomenology" design, which is one of the qualitative research designs. "In phenomenological studies, it is generally aimed to reveal and interpret individual perceptions or perspectives on a particular phenomenon" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). This study was conducted within the framework of qualitative research, which is a flexible approach because it is based on revealing and understanding the views of Social Studies teachers and is open to reorganization afterward.

Research Group

The research was conducted with 20 Social Studies teachers who teach 4th grade primary school and 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of secondary school in public schools in Ordu province. Qualitative data were collected from the teachers through interviews, including their views on homework in the Social Studies course in the distance education process, how much time is allocated to homework, difficulties arising during homework, how students access homework, follow-up of homework, what kind of homework is given, frequency of homework, evaluation of homework, how the evaluation of homework is delivered to students, and the effect of homework on course grades. The interview method is a method that provides a complete and detailed presentation of the subject that includes clear and open questions to the participants (Kalsen et al., 2020). Social Studies teachers working in various schools in Ordu province were included in the study by random sampling method.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of teachers

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	15	75
	Female	5	25
Age	20-29	7	35
	30-39	11	55
	40 and above	2	10
Education status	Undergraduate	3	15
	Master's degree	4	20
Professional experience	1-5 years	2	10
	5-10 years	16	80
	10-20 years	2	10
Unit of settlement	Village/town	5	25
	District centre	11	55
	Province centre	4	20
Total		20	100

Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the teachers who participated in the study. In terms of gender distribution, 75% of the participants were male, and 25% were female. When the age groups are analyzed, 55% of the participants are between 30-39 years old, 35% are between 20-29 years old, and 10% are over 40 years old. In terms of educational background, 15% of the teachers have bachelor's degrees, and 20% have master's degrees. In terms of professional experience, 80% of the teachers have 5-10 years of experience, while 10% have both 1-5 years and 10-20 years of experience. In terms of the workplace, 95% of the teachers work in villages or towns, and 5% work in district centers. In general, the majority of the participants were male, in the middle age group, with moderate professional experience and working in rural areas.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, data were collected using a semi-structured interview form to examine the views of primary and secondary school-level Social Studies teachers on homework in distance education. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to describe the events they perceive in their own words, thus obtaining in-depth information (Aslan, 2018). The interview form developed by the researcher was finalized by taking expert opinions and consists of open-ended questions under the name of "Teacher Interview Form."

Teacher Interview Form

A semi-structured interview form for primary and secondary school social studies teachers was developed to enable teachers to provide detailed opinions about homework. The initial version of this form, which consisted of nine open-ended questions, was analyzed in terms of clarity, comprehensibility, and subject matter appropriateness in line with the opinions of experts in the field of education. After the pilot application with social studies teachers, feedback was received from the participants about the clarity and comprehensibility of the questions and questions that could be added or removed were discussed. In line with the expert opinions, the evaluations of the researchers and the suggestions from the pilot application, the final version of the form was determined as nine open-ended questions. Semi-structured interview type is more flexible than structured interview. The researcher can add sub-questions to deepen the answers according to the flow of the interview or skip some questions if necessary. A semi-structured interview is a frequently preferred technique in educational sciences since it provides the flexibility to make directions within the framework of the subject (Türnüklü, 2000). For this reason, a semi-structured interview form was preferred in the study.

Data Collection Process

In the research process, firstly, the relevant literature was reviewed, and it was examined whether there were any similar studies, including teachers' views on homework assignments given in primary and secondary schools within the scope of distance education. During this review, the theoretical framework and the number of related studies on distance education homework given in primary and secondary schools were increased and added to the research. This form was finalized in line with the opinions of experts and reached a level to be evaluated by content analysis as a result of the pilot application with randomly selected primary and secondary school Social Studies teachers in Ordu province. The participant teachers were coded as "T1, T2, ..."; some of the responses were given as themes in the findings section to be directly exemplified. The necessary permission for the application of this interview form was obtained from the Ordu Provincial Directorate of National Education, and the final application of the research was carried out.

Data Analysis

In the research, the data to be obtained with the interview form were analyzed with MAXQDA (Qualitative Data Analysis Software) and analyzed with content analysis. The main purpose of content analysis is to access concepts and relationships that can explain the data obtained with the data collection tool. Thus, it enables the concepts to lead people to themes, and the themes to organize the phenomena and make them more understandable (Yıldırım & Şimşek,

2013). The data of each participant were analyzed and coded. In content analysis, it is essential to analyze the collected data in depth. For this reason, it allows the themes and sub-dimensions that were not evident before the analysis to be examined in depth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The first step in data analysis is to develop an appropriate classification or to create a coding scheme. For this purpose, the raw data obtained from observations, interviews, and interviews are read and transformed into narratives by separating them into themes, categories, and case examples through content analysis. The themes, patterns, and narratives obtained from fieldwork and analyses are the products of qualitative research (Patton, 2014). The data obtained through semi-structured interview forms were analyzed by content analysis in four stages (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Coding the Data

The information obtained from each question of the interview form was analyzed and divided into sections that form a meaningful whole and attention was paid to what each section conceptually expresses. The researcher coded these sections. After all the data were coded in this way, a code list was created, and this list served as the basis for organizing the data.

Finding Themes

The codes obtained were analyzed by bringing them together. Commonalities between these codes were tried to be found. In other words, the collected data were categorized through codes, in other words, a thematic coding process was carried out. The resulting themes formed a more general phenomenon. According to the scope and depth of the collected data, arrangements were made according to higher-level codes and themes emerging from common relationships.

Organizing the data according to codes and themes

The data were organized in a related way so that the reader could understand them, making it easier to define and interpret the data according to specific phenomena. These definitions are included in the findings.

Interpretation of findings

After the findings defined on the basis of the data are presented with their percentages as they are, each stakeholder is quoted according to the codes, and the comments and opinions of the researcher are included at the end of each finding.
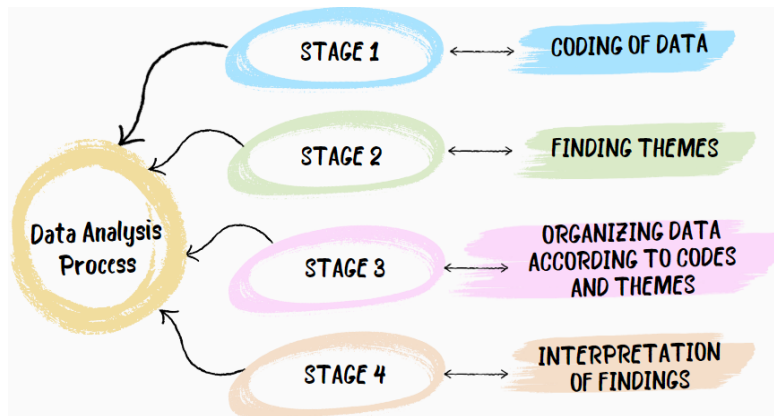

Figure 1. Data Analysis Process (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Validity and Reliability Measures

In this study, various methods were used to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Validity refers to the in-depth examination of the subject with data collection and analysis methods appropriate to the purpose of the research, while reliability refers to the reproducibility and consistency of the results obtained.

Validity

Development of Data Collection Tools: The semi-structured interview form used in the study was developed by taking expert opinions. Experts experienced in the field of education evaluated the questions in the form in terms of comprehensibility and appropriateness. Thus, it was ensured that the questions were appropriate for the purpose of the research and clearly understandable by the participants.

Pilot Study: The interview form was piloted, and the clarity and applicability of the questions were tested in this process. After the pilot application, necessary adjustments were made to the form according to the feedback received. In this way, the data collection tool was aimed to have a valid structure.

Reliability

Coding Reliability: During the data analysis process, coding was done by the researcher and the consistency of the coding was ensured. The accuracy of the codes was checked by reviewing the themes; thus, the same codes and themes were consistently applied to different pieces of data.

Expert Oversight: During the data interpretation process, the opinions of the research advisor and field experts were obtained to confirm the accuracy and reliability of the analysis results.

Direct Quotations (Participant Consent): In the presentation of the findings, direct quotations from the participants were used to support the results' reliability. The quotations reflect the participants' own statements, and no researcher interpretation was made.

Researcher Objectivity: The researcher kept objective in analyzing the data and kept his personal comments out of the process. In this way, the results' reliability was tried to be increased.

The Role of Researchers

In this postgraduate thesis study, the researchers contributed to every stage of the study by taking an active role, especially in the data collection, analysis, and interpretation stages. The graduate student assumed direct responsibility at every stage of the research as the main conductor of the thesis study. He personally carried out the processes such as determining the research questions, developing the research plan, developing data collection tools, and conducting a pilot study. She was also extensively involved in analyzing the data obtained, conducting content analysis, and interpreting the results.

The supervisor provided guidance on issues such as planning the research, methodological structuring, and conducting it within the framework of ethical rules. Throughout the thesis process, he/she reviewed the graduate student's work, provided guidance, and contributed to his/her academic development. The advisor guided the student's methodological decisions and provided guidance in the data analysis and interpretation processes. As a result, while the graduate student was the direct conductor of the research, the supervisor assumed the role of a guide, ensuring the academic integrity and accuracy of the research.

Findings

What is Homework, According to Teachers?

Social Studies teachers' views on homework are categorized under three main headings:

Reinforcement: It was mostly stated that homework assignments were for reinforcement. T1 stated that *"homework helps students to remember the subjects covered at school,"* and T5 stated that *"homework aims to make learning permanent through repetition. "* This approach shows that homework assignments support students to comprehend what they have learned through repetition and to increase retention.

Tool for Accessing Knowledge: Two teachers stated that homework functions as a tool that directs students to knowledge. T6 stated *that "homework assignments are important for students to stay connected to the lesson and develop their research skills"*. This view emphasizes that homework encourages independent learning and research skills*.*

Completing Deficiencies: Two other teachers stated that homework assignments were intended to complete students' missing learning. T7 stated that *"homework assignments identify missing learning and support it with feedback"*. This perspective shows that homework helps students to close their individual deficiencies.

While most of the teachers thought that homework helped students to reinforce the subjects, some teachers considered homework as a means of accessing information and completing missing learning. These results show that homework is seen as a multifaceted educational tool for teachers.

Teachers' Opinions on Social Studies Course Homework Assignments Given in Distance Education Process

Teachers' opinions about the homework assignments given for the social studies course in the distance education process were grouped under four main headings:

Homework that does not fulfill its purpose: The most common view is that homework does not fulfill its purpose in distance education. T1 stated that *"the efficiency of the lessons decreased, therefore homework lost its meaning"*. S10 stated that *"students doing homework without getting feedback reduces the effect of homework "*. This view argues that the effectiveness of assignments given in distance education is limited.

Homework that Develops Students: Five teachers stated that homework develops students' research, inquiry, and digital skills. T12 thinks that *"homework supports students' visual and cognitive skills".* T19 stated that *"assignments contribute to digital citizenship skills "*. Such assignments encourage students to participate in active learning processes.

Homework for Reinforcement: Four teachers stated that homework assignments were intended to reinforce the course topics. T2 stated that *"homework assignments focus more on the essence of the subject and enable students to comprehend the subjects".* These assignments aim to help students repeat and retain what they have learned.

Same Assignments as Face-to-Face Education: One teacher stated that the assignments given in distance education are equivalent to the assignments given in face-to-face education. T20 stated that *"assignments do not make a difference between the two types of education "*.

Half of the teachers thought that homework assignments in distance education did not fulfill their purpose, while the others stated that homework assignments contributed to the development of students or helped to reinforce the subjects. These different opinions show that the effectiveness and purpose of homework in distance education is a controversial issue.

Teachers' Opinions on Homework Organization in Social Studies Course Homework Assignments Given in Distance Education Process

Teachers' preferences regarding the order of assigning homework in the social studies course in the distance education process were categorized under two main headings:

Irregular Homework: Twelve teachers, which constitute the majority, stated that homework was given irregularly. T3 attributed *"the reason why homework is not given regularly is the lack of student participation".* T6, on the other hand, stated that *"he prefers homework assignments to be supportive of student's individual learning process and to arouse curiosity."* T19 stated that *"since students are already on the computer for a long time, homework assignments are more flexible and focus on physical activities that can be done with the family"*. This tendency reflects the teachers' efforts to ensure students' extracurricular participation in distance education.

Regular Homework: Eight teachers stated that they gave regular homework to reinforce students' learning process. T12 stated that *"regular homework assignments provide repetition and permanence for students in order to reach the efficiency of face-to-face education in distance education".* T17, on the other hand, argues that *"homework should be given regularly in order not to forget what they have learned and to eliminate missing learning".* This tendency shows that regular homework assignments contribute to students' reinforcement of course subjects.

While the majority of teachers tended to assign irregular homework, some emphasized the role of regular homework in supporting learning. The irregular homework approach is shaped by student engagement and interest, whereas regular homework aims to help students review and consolidate their learning.

Teachers' Opinions on the Types of Social Studies Course Assignments Given in the Distance Education Process

The types of assignments preferred by social studies teachers in the social studies course in the distance education process were analyzed under three main headings:

Development Assignments: The most preferred homework type, development homework, was applied by 13 teachers. T1 stated that they "reinforced the subjects by giving summary and activity-based homework assignments. " T12, on the other hand, stated that it "gave various activities, tests and fill-in-the-blank assignments in order to appeal to different learning styles of students." These types of assignments are preferred for students to gain in-depth knowledge and active participation.

Preparatory Assignments: Ten teachers stated that they preferred preparatory assignments. For example, T5 emphasized that *"they give homework assignments that encourage students to do research,"* and T13 emphasized that *"research assignments supported by visuals are more permanent."* These types of assignments enable students to obtain information before the lesson and come prepared for the lesson.

Assignments Diversified by Subject: Three teachers stated that they diversify the types of assignments according to the subject. While T2 stated that *"all types of assignments are given at a level where students do not have difficulty,"* T16 emphasized that *"social studies course offers an environment suitable for all types of assignments since it includes different branches of science."* This kind of flexible approach provides students with assignments that can be adapted according to the scope of the course.

In the distance education social studies course, teachers mostly preferred development and preparation assignments, while some teachers utilized all types of assignments according to the content of the course. These results suggest that teachers tended to diversify assignment types according to students' needs for accessing information and in-depth learning.

Teachers' Opinions on the Delivery Methods of Social Studies Course Homework Assignments Given in Distance Education Process

The tools preferred by social studies teachers to deliver homework assignments to students in the social studies course in the distance education process are categorized under five main headings:

Whatsapp: Whatsapp, the most preferred tool, is used by 16 teachers. T2 stated that they "sends homework via Whatsapp and gives homework during Zoom lessons from time to time. " T14 stated that *"Whatsapp is preferred because it is accessible to every student and parent ".* This platform stands out because it provides fast access and allows easy communication with students.

Zoom: 13 teachers used Zoom to deliver homework assignments. For example, T3 stated that *"although he mostly used WhatsApp, he gave homework verbally during Zoom lessons ".* T13 stated that *"Zoom is preferred because it establishes a more effective communication with*

students". The fact that Zoom provides direct notification in simultaneous lessons makes this tool effective.

EBA: Ten teachers used the EBA platform to communicate assignments. T16 emphasized that *"EBA and Whatsapp provide easy access and are easy to use".* EBA is a state-sponsored platform preferred by teachers to send homework to their students securely.

Other Tools: Other individually preferred tools include Bip (2.38%), Google (2.38%), and Google Classroom (2.38%). T12 stated that he "sends homework to his students via various platforms such as Whatsapp and Bip. " T19 stated that *"Google Classroom is effective for tracking students' progress ".* Some teachers diversified these tools according to their needs.

Teachers mostly used WhatsApp, Zoom, and EBA to deliver assignments during the distance education process. While Whatsapp and Zoom enable instant submission of assignments with their fast and interactive features, the EBA platform stands out with its reliability and widespread use. Other tools were used to track student progress or provide alternative communication channels.

Teachers' Opinions on Follow-up Tools for Social Studies Course Homework Assignments Given in Distance Education Process

The most frequently used tools used by social studies teachers to follow up on the homework assignments given in the social studies course in the distance education process are categorized under four main headings:

Whatsapp: The majority of the teachers (16 teachers) preferred Whatsapp for homework follow-up. T3 stated that they "ensured the follow-up of students' homework by sending the visuals of their assignments via Whatsapp." T15, on the other hand, stated that *"he also communicated with the parents via Whatsapp to confirm whether the students did their homework or not".* This approach shows that Whatsapp stands out due to its fast access and ease of use.

EBA: Nine teachers followed homework assignments using the EBA platform. T8 emphasized that *"Whatsapp and EBA are mainly preferred,"* and T16 emphasized that *"EBA facilitates students' access as a widespread platform."* EBA, as a state-sponsored platform, contributes to homework tracking by providing secure communication between teachers and students.

Zoom: Seven teachers used the Zoom application for homework follow-up. T6 stated that *"especially in research assignments, they evaluate the status of the assignments by talking over Zoom".* T9 stated that *"Zoom provides one-to-one interaction with the student when used with EBA".* Zoom allows teachers to make instant evaluations with students because it provides visual communication.

Other Tools: Other individually preferred tools include Mail and Google Classroom. For example, T12 stated that *"he follows up homework assignments via Whatsapp, EBA, and Mail, while E19 prefers to follow up via Google Classroom".* These tools provide an alternative platform for teachers to record student performance and receive feedback.

Teachers most frequently used WhatsApp, EBA, and Zoom platforms to track social studies course assignments during the distance education process. Whatsapp's fast access, EBA's trust as an official platform, and Zoom's instant feedback were effective in the prominence of these tools.

Teachers' Opinions on Measurement and Evaluation Methods of Social Studies Homework Assignments Given in Distance Education Process

The methods preferred by social studies teachers in the measurement and evaluation of homework assignments given in the social studies course in the distance education process are categorized under four main headings:

Interactive Channels: Most of the teachers (8 teachers) preferred interactive channels such as Whatsapp, Zoom and Google Form for homework evaluations. T3 stated that it "evaluated students' homework visuals by sharing them via Whatsapp and Zoom." T20 stated that it "makes assessment and evaluation through Google Forms." These methods enable quick feedback from students and visual sharing.

Traditional Assessment Methods: Seven teachers used traditional methods such as tests and rating scales to assess homework. T12 stated that they "prepare answer keys for the homework assignments and check the students' answers in this way." These methods include classical measurement tools such as true-false control and test assessment.

Alternative Assessment Methods: Six teachers used alternative methods such as tracking charts, rubrics, and visual assessments. T2 stated that it "evaluates homework by considering how much effort students put into it," and T19 stated that it "evaluates homework by considering how close students get to the outcome." These methods provide a broader perspective on the homework process.

Lack of Assessment and Evaluation: One teacher believed that homework is a natural developmental tool and did not conduct measurement and evaluation in this process. T6 stated that *"homework provides skills to the student, and there is no need for a formal assessment. "*

Teachers' use of different methods in the assessment of assignments in the distance education process shows an effort to diversify the assessment processes. Interactive and alternative assessment methods enrich the process by utilizing the advantages of digital platforms, while traditional methods provide a reliable option for measuring accuracy.

Teachers' Opinions on Notification of Assessment and Evaluation Results of Homework Assignments Given in Social Studies Course in Distance Education Process

Teachers preferred various digital platforms to communicate the results of the assessment and evaluation of homework assignments given in the social studies course during the distance education process. According to the data, Whatsapp stands out as the most common notification tool, while Zoom and EBA were also among the frequently used tools.

Whatsapp: Most of the teachers (13 teachers) stated that Whatsapp provides fast and easy access to students. For example, T2 stated that they "communicate homework results via WhatsApp or during the lesson," and T14 stated that "WhatsApp is preferred because it is a common communication tool." This approach shows that Whatsapp is the primary notification tool for teachers due to its user-friendly structure.

Zoom: Seven teachers preferred to communicate homework evaluation results via Zoom. While T3 stated that it "communicated the assessment grades via Zoom or E-school," T10 stated that it "communicated some homework results to the students on Zoom during the lesson." This method provides instant feedback to students.

EBA: *The* EBA platform is also used as a notification tool by seven teachers. T12 stated that they "generally report homework results via WhatsApp, EBA, and Bip." EBA supports teachers' function of evaluating and communicating student performance through a state-sponsored platform.

Other Platforms: A small number of teachers used platforms such as Google Classroom, Bip, direct notification during the lesson and E-school. For example, T19 stated that it "provided feedback via Google Classroom," and T3 stated that it *"sent grades via E-school".* These platforms were considered as alternative and more formal notification channels.

Teachers mostly preferred WhatsApp for communicating assessment and evaluation results, but they also used different digital tools such as Zoom and EBA. The study demonstrates the diversity of use of digital platforms and the potential of these tools to provide fast, accessible feedback to students.

Teachers' Recommendations to Students and Parents Regarding Homework Assignments Given in Social Studies Course in Distance Education Process

This study categorized teachers' recommendations to students and parents regarding social studies course assignments in the distance education process under four main headings.

Parental Support: The majority of teachers (11 teachers) emphasized that parents should play an active role in homework follow-up. According to their views, parents should monitor their students' course and homework process and provide support when necessary. For example, T2 stated that *"parents should help students develop the habit of working in a planned way,"* while T10 suggested that *"parents should encourage the correct use of digital tools for educational purposes."* This category emphasizes the importance of parental involvement for the successful completion of homework assignments.

Students' Active Learning: Five teachers suggested that students should participate in an active learning process while doing homework. For example, T6 stated that *"students should be supported with activities such as reading books about the subjects or going on field trips".* T18, on the other hand, recommended that *"students should relate the assignments to life and make their own contributions to this process".* This approach encourages students to assume their own responsibilities in the learning process.

Other Advice: Some teachers (3 teachers) gave general advice to students and parents. T14 emphasized that the *"pandemic is a process experienced all over the world and that students can access information in any environment".* T15 stated that they "found face-to-face education more useful than distance education."

Additional Methods: Two teachers recommended that students benefit from various sources (e.g. tests and reading books) during the homework process. T6 stated that *"feeding children with extracurricular readings and different sources will increase their interest in the lessons".*

Teachers suggested that parents should play a supportive role, students should actively participate, and various resources should be used for homework assignments to be effective in the distance education process.

Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the interview form questions about teachers' views on homework during the Covid-19 pandemic distance education process; When the question "What is homework?", it was concluded that 16 out of 20 teachers characterized homework as reinforcement. In addition, two teachers saw homework as a means of accessing information, while two teachers defined homework as completing deficiencies. Teachers think that homework is reinforcing and that homework is beneficial for both parties. Teachers did not indicate that they saw homework as preparation for the lesson. This result is similar to other studies. In Can and Gelbal's (2022) study, Can and Gelbal (2022) found that teachers perceived homework as reinforcement, repetition, and question-solving. In Kalyoncu's (2020) study, most of the teachers perceived homework as reinforcement. Studies show that most teachers perceive homework as reinforcement.

Based on the interview form questions about teachers' opinions on social studies course homework during the Covid-19 pandemic distance education process; 10 teachers stated that homework did not achieve its purpose, five teachers stated that homework developed students, four teachers stated that it was for reinforcement, and one teacher stated that it was the same as face-to-face education. Based on the results here, it is concluded that 10 teachers stated that homework assignments did not achieve their purpose and went beyond their purpose and that the purpose of homework assignments should be reconsidered. According to Kemertaş (2003), in order to encourage students to do successful homework and study, students' thoughts and products should be evaluated with verbal appreciation. According to Büyüktokatlı (2009), the majority of the teachers who participated in the study on the

examination of teachers' opinions on homework practices in primary education stated that they gave homework to reinforce and repeat the subject. Based on the findings of the study and related research, differences emerged in teachers' opinions.

Based on the interview form questions, including student opinions on how the social studies course homework assignments given during the Covid-19 pandemic distance education process were delivered to the teacher, it was concluded that 18 students delivered their homework to the teacher via WhatsApp, three students via Zoom, and one student via Eba. In addition, it was also found that students sometimes used more than one platform to deliver their homework to their teachers. Based on the findings, including the opinions of the teachers about the tools and materials used by the teachers to deliver the homework assignments of the social studies course given in the distance education process to the students, it was concluded that 16 teachers used Whatsapp, 13 teachers used Zoom, 10 teachers used Eba, one teacher used Bip, one teacher used Google, and one teacher used Google Classroom to deliver the homework assignments to the students. It was concluded that teachers sometimes used more than one platform to deliver homework to their students. In addition, it was concluded that students mostly used the WhatsApp program while delivering homework, and teachers actively used the same application. In the study of Baki and Çelik (2021), it was revealed that Whatsapp was used more effectively in educational activities during the COVID-19 pandemic period, and at the same time, Eba and interactive channels were shared. According to Yaşar and Şimşek (2022), Eba was the most preferred application by students in the distance education process. When compared with the studies, it was revealed that similar results were reached with our study in terms of students' and teachers' delivery and control of homework assignments.

Based on the interview form questions, including the opinions of the teachers about the homework organization in the social studies course homework given during the Covid-19 pandemic distance education process, it was concluded that 12 teachers gave homework regularly and eight teachers did not give homework regularly. In Çakır's (2022) study, the frequency of homework assignments during the Covid-19 pandemic process was expressed as once a week, twice a week, three times a week, once every two weeks or not at all. When the two studies were compared, it was concluded that homework was given as regularly as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic distance education process.

Based on the interview form questions including teacher opinions about which types of homework are given more in the social studies course during the Covid-19 pandemic distance education process; 13 teachers answered as development homework, 10 teachers answered as preparation homework, three teachers answered as giving homework from all of them according to the subject, and seven teachers claimed that they gave both development and preparation homework. It was concluded that seven teachers gave homework in a more varied style, while 13 teachers gave homework only to improve the knowledge learned. Considering the situation of homework before the pandemic, Çetinkaya (2019) found that primary school teachers gave homework in the form of presentations, research, note-taking, and material preparation in the life science course. Ok and Çalişkan (2019), on the other hand, found that teachers gave homework in the form of research, activity, test solving, reading, repetition, and writing. Baynazoğlu (2019) states that primary school teachers give homework in the form of research, investigation, and games. In Ok's (2018) study, the answers he received from the questions he asked teachers about what kind of homework they gave are as follows: different types of activities, research, activity, summary, planning, drawing, writing, interview, and interpretation of current issues. During the pandemic process, it was observed that teachers gave homework in the form of worksheets and tests from auxiliary resources and textbooks, online exams, digital activities, (Z) books, and homework using Eba and Whatsapp (Çakır, 2022).

Based on the interview form questions, including the opinions of teachers about which tools and materials teachers used to follow up the homework assignments given in the social studies course during the Covid-19 pandemic distance education process; 16 teachers followed up

their homework assignments using tools such as Whatsaap, nine teachers used Eba, seven teachers used Zoom, one teacher used e-mail, and one teacher used Google Classroom. It was also found that teachers sometimes used more than one platform to track homework assignments. Before the pandemic, it was concluded that follow-up was done with a follow-up chart, assigned student, student-teacher follow-up, and returning to questions that could not be done in the next lesson; during the pandemic process, it was concluded that follow-up was done by returning to questions that were not understood, via EBA and Whatsapp, and by contacting the parents (Çakır, 2022). When the studies conducted were evaluated, it was seen that homework follow-up differed during the pandemic process.

Based on the interview form questions about how teachers evaluate the measurement and evaluation of homework assignments in the social studies course given in the Covid-19 pandemic distance education process; it was concluded that eight teachers evaluated the homework assignments using interactive channels, seven teachers evaluated the homework assignments using traditional measurement methods, six teachers evaluated the homework assignments using alternative measurement methods, one teacher did not evaluate the homework assignments, and two teachers evaluated the homework assignments using both traditional and alternative measurement methods. Based on the interview form questions about how teachers inform students about the assessment and evaluation results of homework assignments given in the social studies course in the distance education process, it was concluded that 13 teachers reported the assessment results via WhatsApp, seven teachers via Zoom, seven teachers via EBA, one teacher via Google Classroom, one teacher during the lesson, one teacher via Bip, and one teacher via E-School. It was concluded that 10 of the 20 teachers participating in the study conducted their assessments using more than one tool. Before the pandemic, it was concluded that teachers prepared homework checklists, contacted parents, met face-to-face with students, and provided feedback by identifying mistakes while evaluating homework; during the pandemic process, it was concluded that they used homework tracking forms and provided feedback via EBA, Whatsapp and interactive channels (Çakır, 2022). Altuntaş (2017) stated that the use of web technologies in homework provides immediate feedback on homework. Considering the current study and other studies, it is seen that homework assessments before and after the pandemic differ, and technology-based applications are used.

Based on the interview form questions about teachers' recommendations to students and parents regarding homework given in the social studies course during the Covid-19 pandemic distance education process; 11 teachers made recommendations for parental support, five teachers for active learning of the student, two teachers for using additional methods, three teachers made other recommendations, and it was concluded that one teacher suggested both additional methods and active learning of the student. According to the study, the majority of teachers stated that parents should support students. Silinskas and Kikas (2019) stated in their study that parents should help their children with their homework, but if parents are too involved in the process, children's feelings of self-confidence are damaged. When Ok (2018) asked teachers what kind of influence the family has on homework, it was seen that the most common expectations are controlling the homework, providing financial and moral support to the student, helping with research, pointing out the deficiencies in the homework and helping to interpret the homework. In the study conducted by Genç (2019), the majority of teachers were asked about the expectations of teachers from students during the homework process, and it was concluded that students should do their homework in accordance with the purpose, on time, and from their hearts. When the studies and the current study are evaluated, teachers' expectations from parents are more in the direction that they should support students without overdoing their homework.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Educational Institutions

Strengthening Digital Infrastructure

Considering that digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and EBA are used extensively for homework tracking and communication during distance education, more secure and accessible educational platforms should be developed. Institutions should facilitate access to such tools and provide technical support for students and teachers.

Diversifying Teaching Methods

Distance education should encourage the use of interactive and diverse teaching methods rather than lectures. Institutions can provide regular training and guidance for teachers to learn and apply these methods.

Supporting Parental Involvement

Provide guidance for parents and informative content on how students can benefit from family support when doing homework. This can increase students' interest in homework and contribute positively to the homework process.

Recommendations for Researchers

Studies on a Large Sample

This study covers a specific region; therefore, larger-scale studies can be conducted to represent Turkey in general. More comprehensive data on the impact of distance education can be obtained by conducting similar studies in regions with different socio-economic levels. Research on Types of Instruction and

Types of Assignments

The effects of different types of instruction and assignments on student achievement and motivation in distance education should be investigated. Thus, evidence-based recommendations can be provided to teachers on the effects of various types of assignments.

Multiplication of Course-Based Studies

Similar studies can be conducted in courses other than social studies. In particular, research in the field of positive sciences can provide important data on the functionality of homework in these courses and its effect on student achievement.

Recommendations for Teachers

Diversifying and Targeting Homework

Teachers should diversify the types of homework by taking into account students' needs and interests. In addition to classical methods such as test solving, creative and project-based assignments can be given.

Providing Regular Feedback

Students should be given regular feedback during the follow-up and evaluation processes of assignments done with digital tools. This allows students to see their deficiencies and recognize their areas of development.

Information and Support for Parents

Parents should be guided to ensure that they contribute to the homework process. Parents can be informed about how to support students in the homework process.

Recommendations for Parents

Providing Support to Students

Parents should play a supportive role in students' independent learning processes. In this process, they can support students in developing homework habits without interfering excessively.

Increasing Attention and Motivation

Parents should provide a suitable working environment for students to avoid lack of attention or loss of motivation while doing homework, and they should show a motivating approach when necessary.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Statements of Publication Ethics

I/We hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Researchers' contribution rate

The study was conducted and reported with equal collaboration of the researchers.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

As of 2020, researchers applying are required to upload the Ethics Committee Approval Document. Such information as institution name, date, number, etc., regarding the "Ethics Committee Approval Document" should be presented here.

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