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Opinions of Secondary School Students on Distance Education and Social Studies Course During the Covid-19 Pandemic *

Covid-19 Pandemi Sürecinde Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Uzaktan Eğitim ve Sosyal Bilgiler Dersine İlişkin Görüşleri

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ÖZ

Covid-19 salgını, yüz yüze eğitim yerine uzaktan eğitime geçişi gerekli kılmıştır. Sosyal bilgiler dersi de bu değişimden etkilenen dersler arasındadır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, Covid-19 pandemi döneminde ortaokul öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitime ilişkin görüşlerini incelemektir. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden olgubilim deseni kullanılmıştır. Araştırma, 2021-2022 bahar yarıyılında Kastamonu il merkezindeki ortaokullarda öğrenimlerini sürdüren 8. sınıf düzeyinde 22 öğrenciyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formuyla elde edilmiştir. Bu veriler içerik analizi kullanılarak çözümlenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda öğrencilerin uzaktan eğitim sürecine uyum sağlamakta zorlandıkları tespit edilmiştir.

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated the transition from face-to-face education to distance education. Social studies is among the courses affected by this change. The aim of this research is to examine the opinions of secondary school students regarding distance education and social studies course during the Covid-19 pandemic period. Phenomenology, a qualitative research method, was used in the research. The research was conducted with 22 students studying at the 8th grade level in secondary schools in the city center of Kastamonu in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year and who agreed to participate in the research. The data was obtained with a semi-structured interview form. These data were analyzed using content analysis. As a result of the research, it was determined that the students had difficulty adapting to the distance education process.

1. Introduction

Today, with the development of technology, it is seen that the field of education is also affected by digitalization.

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Distance education is an educational model that emerged as a result of this digitalization. Distance education, which has become widespread worldwide in recent years, has a structure that allows students to continue their education independently of their schools and teachers in terms of geography and time (Turan & Karasu-Avcı, 2022). Distance education is a model in which students are not physically present in a classroom and courses are given online. This model allows students to continue their courses at home or anywhere else via a device with internet connection (Gümüş, 2007).

Covid-19 has entered the literature as an epidemic disease that has a global impact (Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2020). Covid-19, which emerged in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and began to spread from there to the world, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11 (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Following the WHO's pandemic declaration, many countries announced that they would suspend face-to-face education activities and switch to distance education in order to prevent the spread of the epidemic. Schools were closed one day after the first case was seen in our country on March 11, 2020. It was announced that face-to-face education would be suspended and online education would be switched as of March 16, 2020 (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2020).

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide has made distance education a necessity all over the world. During this process, teachers, students, and parents had to quickly adapt to distance education (Turan & Karasu-Avcı, 2022). In this direction, teachers acquired new skills such as uploading course materials to digital platforms and presenting them to students, teaching in virtual classrooms, and interacting with students online. Students learned to use digital tools to follow lessons and work with materials. Parents, on the other hand, had to resort to digital education resources to help their children's education. While the Ministry of National Education is familiar with the concept of distance education through open education in our country, our universities were not unfamiliar with this concept thanks to the open education faculties and distance education activities of universities (Erbaş, 2020). However, teachers and students encountered distance education for the first time in preschool, primary school, secondary school, and high school levels (Karabudak, 2020). This situation is especially important to determine whether secondary school students can adapt to distance education, considering their ages (Korkut & Memiş, 2021).

With the Covid-19 pandemic, social studies has also undergone a significant transformation. During the distance education process, problems such as students' interest in social studies courses decreasing and teachers' inability to communicate with their students face to face emerged. However, these problems could be overcome with innovative methods and technological tools. Video conferencing applications, digital learning materials and

virtual classroom environments used in distance education enabled students to participate more actively in social studies courses and teachers to increase their interaction with their students (Akça, 2020). In the distance education model, various digital materials are used so that students can watch lessons and complete their homework (Turan & Karasu Avcı, 2022). For social studies courses, students are also offered video lessons, digital maps, interactive presentations and online resources. These materials make it easier for students to follow lessons and help teachers increase students' interest levels (Uyar, 2020).

When the studies on distance education in the literature are examined (Ağaoğlu, 2020; Aldemir, 2020; Aras, 2019; Baki, 2016; Balaman, 2015; Begimbetova, 2015; Bozkurt, 2019; Bulutlu 2018; Chaney, Eddy, Dorman, Glessner, Green & Lara-Alecio, 2007; Çengel, 2014; Demirci, 2018; Demirtaş, 2020; Deveci, 2019; Erfidan, 2019; Gürkan, 2017; Kaya, 2020; Koloğlu, 2016; Mercan, 2018; Özcan, 2019; Pregowska, Masztalerz, Garlińska & Osial, 2021; Ramos-Morcillo, Leal-Costa, Moral-Garcia & Ruzafa-Martinez, 2020; Sığın, 2020; Sinecen, 2019; Üstün, 2020; Valenta, Therriault, Dieter & Mrtek, 2001; Yavuz, 2016; Yeşilfidan, 2019), it is seen that there are various studies. It is seen that these studies are mostly concentrated on university levels. At the primary school level (Karabudak, 2020), first-grade teachers' views on distance education were examined. At the secondary school level (Akça, 2020; Akça, 2022; Uyar, 2020; Yeşilyut, 2021), social studies teachers' views on distance education were examined. In addition, at the secondary school level (Akgül & Oran, 2020; Korkut & Memiş, 2021), there are studies that address both student and teacher views on distance education. Accordingly, it can be said that there are studies on distance education at the secondary school level, but studies that address both teacher and student views are limited. In the distance education process, the participation status of secondary school students in distance education, their opportunities to have technology (computer, tablet, smartphone and most importantly internet connection), and their ability to use this technology should be taken into consideration. Determining whether meaningful learning is taking place, considering the systemic problems (freezing, disconnection, etc.) experienced during the distance education process and the age levels of middle school students, is of great importance for the healthy conduct of education and training. In this context, the aim of this study is to address the opinions of secondary school students regarding distance education and social studies course during the Covid-19 outbreak. In this context, the following questions are sought:

1. What does the pandemic mean to you?
2. What does distance education mean to you?
3. How do you think you are adapting to distance education?
4. What platforms do you use to attend classes during distance education (EIN, Zoom, Google Classroom, Skype,

etc.)?

a. Which of these platforms do you use the most and find useful?

5. How do you communicate with your teachers during distance education?

6. How do you communicate with your friends during distance education?

7. Which digital platform (EIN, Zoom, Google classroom, Skype, etc.) did you use to teach social studies? Why?

8. What are your opinions about teaching the subjects of social studies during distance education?

9. What are the problems you experienced in social studies during distance education?

10. Do you find distance education or face-to-face education more efficient? Why?

11. What are your suggestions for making social studies more efficient during distance education?

2. Method

In this section of the research, the research design, the study group, the data collection process, the analysis of the data and the validity and reliability of the data are included.

2.1. Research Design

The qualitative research method was preferred in this study. Qualitative research is a research method in which qualitative data collection tools such as observation and interview in a natural environment are used (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). It can be said that this method was preferred because the opinions of 8th grade middle school students were addressed in the research. Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. Phenomenology can be defined as a model that allows participants to reach a general judgment by examining their personal experiences about a phenomenon or situation in depth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). This model was preferred because the opinions of 8th grade middle school students about distance education were addressed in line with their personal experiences.

2.2. Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 22 8th grade students studying in secondary schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in the city center of Kastamonu. The reason why 8th grade secondary school students were chosen as the study group is that the students were asked to experience the social studies course during the pandemic period. The opinions of these students, who were in the 7th grade during the pandemic period, were taken when they became 8th grade. The appropriate sampling type was used in the research. Appropriate sampling is known as the sampling type that allows the researcher to achieve

his/her purpose most easily (Creswell, 2014). In this study, appropriate sampling was preferred in order to access the data more quickly and easily.

2.3. Data Collection Process

The process of collecting data for the study began with obtaining the ethics committee permission and the permission of the National Education Directorate. First, the principals of the secondary schools in the city center of Kastamonu were contacted and appointments were made from the appropriate schools. By making an appointment, we went to the middle schools and asked the 8th grade students to fill out the semi-structured interview form in empty classrooms in some schools and in the guidance rooms in some schools. Students were given 20 minutes to fill out the interview form.

2.4. Data Collection Tool

In this study, the data was analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is an analysis technique used to organize, classify, compare texts, and derive theoretical conclusions (Cohen, et al., 2007). For content analysis, the data must first be conceptualized and given a comprehensible structure, and these concepts must be organized in a logical manner to reveal themes that explain the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Before starting the data analysis, the forms belonging to the students participating in the study were numbered as (S1, S2, S22). After the numbering, the answers given to each question were read separately and conceptualized to create a meaningful whole. Then, the concepts were organized, themes explaining the data were created, and the analysis of the data was completed. Participants sometimes gave more than one answer to a question. These answers of the participants were classified under more than one category.

2.5. Reliability and Validity of the Research

Coolican (2009) states that reliability can be achieved by analyzing the data by another researcher and comparing the results. In this research, reliability was tried to be achieved by analyzing the obtained data by another researcher and coming together on the parts that were thought differently and reaching a common decision. This situation is called analyst triangulation in the literature. Analyst triangulation is the situation where the same data is analyzed autonomously by one or more researchers and these analyzes are compared (Patton, 2014). In addition, in order to increase reliability in this study, the reliability formula developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used (Consensus Percentage (P): $\text{Consensus (Na)} / (\text{Consensus (Na)} + \text{Disagreement (Nd)}) \times 100$). This rate, calculated as $380 / (380 + 21) \times 100 = 94.76$, supports the reliability of the research. In qualitative research, validity means monitoring the researched as objectively as possible (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In order to ensure validity in this research, all processes were discussed in detail. The opinions

expressed were evaluated in an impartial manner and validity was tried to be increased. In addition, the data obtained through the interviews and the codings created are kept by the researcher to allow the relevant people to examine and evaluate. In addition, validity was strengthened by quoting the participant opinions from time to time.

3. Findings and Comments

This section of the research includes the findings regarding the data obtained.

In the research, 8th grade students were asked the question, “What does the pandemic mean to you?” The students’ opinions on this question are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Students’ Views on the Concept of Pandemic

Categories	f	%
Staying at home	9	2,25
Boring life	6	1,5
Virus	2	0,5
A disease seen everywhere	2	0,5
Being limited from everything	2	0,5
Feeling sad	2	0,5
Being away from loved ones	2	0,5
Protecting from the pandemic	1	0,25
Total	25	100

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that 8th grade students perceive the concept of pandemic the most as “staying at home” (f=9, %=2,25). This category is followed by “boring life” (f=6, %=1,5), “virus” (f=2, %=0,5), “a disease seen everywhere” (f=2), “being limited from everything” (f=2, %=0,5), “feeling sad” (f=2, %=0,5), “being away from loved ones” (f=1, %=0,25) and “being protected from the pandemic” (f=1, %=0,25). Based on these findings, it is seen that 8th grade students do not know what the pandemic is and try to explain it from their own perspective. Only 2 students correctly explained the pandemic by saying that it is a “disease seen everywhere”. Some students’ opinions on this question of the research are given below:

S-1 “Virus and confinement to homes.”

S-7 “The same disease is seen throughout a region.”

S-9 “People’s lives are taken over, they can’t do what they want.”

S-10 “Stuck at home, away from our loved ones.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the question, “What does distance education mean to you?” The students’ views on this subject are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Students’ Views on the Concept of Distance Education

Categories	f	%
Live lesson	8	1,76
Education done away from school	3	0,66
Lesson done via internet	3	0,66
Not understanding lessons	2	0,44

Sitting in front of a screen	1	0,22
Not being able to communicate healthily	1	0,22
Lessons half as productive as face-to-face education	1	0,22
Computer	1	0,22
No answer	1	0,22
Seems meaningless	1	0,22
Total	22	100

The concept of distance education was most frequently expressed by students as “live lessons” (f=8, %=1,76). This category is followed by “education done away from school” (f=3, %=0,66), “lessons done via the internet” (f=3, %=0,66), “not understanding lessons” (f=2, %=0,44), “sitting in front of a screen” (f=1, %=0,22), “not being able to communicate healthily” (f=1, %=0,22), “lessons half as productive as face-to-face education” (f=1, %=0,22), “computer” (f=1, %=0,22) and “seems meaningless” (f=1, %=0,22). Based on these views of the students, it is seen that they do not know what distance education is and that they explain distance education according to their own perspectives. Some of the students’ views regarding this question of the research are given below:

S-11 “Difficulty in communication.”

S-12 “Receiving online education during the period when we cannot go to school.”

S-14 “It refers to a lesson away from school.”

S-20 “Distance education is really a torture with the difficulties in understanding.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the question, “What do you think about your adaptation to distance education?” The students’ views on this issue are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Students’ Views on Adapting to Distance Education

Categories	f	%
I adapted	8	1,76
I had difficulty adapting	8	1,76
I could not adapt	4	0,88
Total	22	100

According to Table 3, 8th grade students mostly stated the following regarding their adaptation to distance education: “I adapted” (f=8, %=1,76) and “I had difficulty adapting” (f=8, %=1,76). These categories are followed by the category of “I could not adapt” (f=4, %=0,88). Accordingly, it is seen that more than half of the 8th grade students could not adapt to distance education or had difficulty adapting. Some students’ opinions regarding this question of the research are given below:

S-6 “I couldn’t do it, my motivation was low.”

S-8 “It’s hard to adapt. I can’t focus on the lessons.”

S-10 “I adapted better to distance education, but sitting in front of a screen was very boring.”

S-12 “I didn’t adapt very well.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the following questions: “What platforms (EIN, Zoom, Google Classroom, Skype, etc.) do you use to attend classes during distance education? Which of these platforms do you use the most and find useful?” The students’ opinions on these issues are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Students’ Opinions on the Platforms They Use and Find Useful During Distance Education

Categories	f	%
Zoom	22	8,8
Education Information Network (EIN)	18	7,2
Total	40	100

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the platform used the most by 8th grade students in the distance education process is “Zoom” (f=22, %=8,8). This category is followed by the “Educational Information Network” (f=18, %=7,2) category. Accordingly, it is seen that 8th grade students use the Zoom platform more and find it useful. Some students’ opinions on this question of the research are given below:

S-11 “EIN TV, Zoom.”

S-13 “I use Zoom the most and find it useful.”

S-21 “I think Zoom is the best program.”

S-22 “EIN, because it has educational content.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the question, “How do you manage your communication with your teachers during the distance education process?” The students’ opinions on this issue are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Students’ Opinions on Their Communication with Their Teachers During the Distance Education Process

Categories	f	%
Live lessons	7	1,61
Phone	5	1,15
Online	5	1,15
WhatsApp	3	0,69
Zoom	1	0,23
I did not communicate	1	0,23
I could not communicate	1	0,23
Total	23	100

It is observed that 8th grade students communicate with their teachers the most during the distance education process via “live lessons” (f=7, %=1,61). This category is followed by “phone” (f=5, %=1,15), “online” (f=5, %=1,15), “WhatsApp” (f=3, %=0,69), “Zoom” (f=1, %=0,23), “did not communicate” (f=1%=0,23) and “could not communicate” (f=1%=0,23). Accordingly, it is observed that the majority of 8th grade students can communicate

with their teachers. Some students’ opinions regarding this question of the research are given below:

S-2 “It was good and nice, we were trying to answer the questions they asked or the questions we asked.”

S-8 “I couldn’t communicate with my teacher.”

S-11 “We were doing it online.”

S-21 “We were talking in class via EIN.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the question, “How do you manage your communication with your friends during the distance education process?” The students’ opinions on this subject are given in Table 6.

Table 6: Students’ Opinions on Their Communication with Their Friends During the Distance Education Process

Categories	f	%
Social media	4	1,24
Phone	4	1,24
Messaging	4	1,24
WhatsApp	4	1,24
Online	4	1,24
Meeting	4	1,24
Live lesson	3	0,93
Discord	2	0,62
Zoom	1	0,31
I did not communicate	1	0,31
Total	31	100

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that 8th grade students communicate with their friends mostly through “social media” (f=4, %=1,24) during the distance education process. This category is followed by “phone” (f=4, %=1,24), “messaging” (f=4, %=1,24), “WhatsApp” (f=4, %=1,24), “online” (f=4, %=1,24), “meeting” (f=4, %=1,24), “live lesson” (f=3, %=0,93), “discord” (f=2, %=0,62), “Zoom” (f=1, %=0,31) and “did not communicate” (f=1, %=0,31). In this direction, it is seen that the majority of 8th grade students can communicate with their friends. Some students’ opinions on this question of the research are given below:

S-1 “In live classes.”

S-3 “Social media.”

S-5 “WhatsApp.”

S-6 “By phone.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the question, “Which digital platforms (EIN, Zoom, Google Classroom, Skype, etc.) did you use to teach social studies during distance education? Why?” The students’ opinions on the question are given in Table 7.

Table 7: Students’ Opinions on the Platforms They Used and the Reasons for Using Them While Teaching Social Studies During Distance Education

Categories	Codes	f	%
Zoom	Freezing of EIN	7	1,68

	Teacher preference	5	1,2
	Being better	3	0,72
	Being more useful	3	0,72
	Providing ease of use	1	0,24
	Having it for everyone	1	0,24
	Having the opportunity to extend the lessons	1	0,24
EIN	Better	3	0,72
Toplam		24	100

Table 7 shows that 8th grade students mostly use the “Zoom” (f=21) platform while studying social studies during the distance education process. It is seen that the reason why students prefer the Zoom platform is “freezing of EIN” (f=7, %=1,68). This code is followed by “teacher preference” (f=5, %=1,2), “being better” (f=3, %=0,72), “being more useful” (f=1, %=0,24), “providing ease of use” (f=1, %=0,24), “having it for everyone” (f=1, %=0,24) and “having the opportunity to the lessons” (f=1, %=0,24). Accordingly, the reason why most of the students prefer the Zoom platform is due to the freezing problem encountered in the EIN platform. Some students’ opinions on this question of the research are given below:

S-8 “EIN because I found it more useful.”

S-13 “Zoom, because it is easy to access and there is no communication problem.”

S-14 “Zoom. Because everyone has it.”

S-22 “Zoom. Because we could extend the lessons by 2-3 minutes.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the following questions: “What are your views on teaching social studies subjects in the distance education process?” The students’ views on these subjects are given in Table 8.

Table 8: Students’ Views on Teaching Social Studies Subjects in the Distance Education Process

Categories	f	%
We had difficulty learning the subjects	11	3,19
It was not productive	4	1,16
It was productive	4	1,16
There was a lack of motivation	3	0,87
It was insufficient	2	0,58
I have no opinion	2	0,58
I did not attend the class	1	0,29
It was fun and enjoyable	1	0,29
Total	29	100

According to Table 8, it is seen that the 8th grade students mostly stated the opinion regarding the teaching of the social studies course as “we had difficulty learning the subjects” (f=11, %=3,19). This category is followed by the categories of “it was not productive” (f=4, %=1,16), “it was productive” (f=4, %=1,16), “there was a lack of motivation” (f=3, %=0,87), “I have no opinion” (f=2, %=0,58), “I did not

participate in the lesson” (f=1, %=0,29) and “it was fun and enjoyable” (f=1, %=0,29). In this direction, it is seen that the 8th grade students had difficulty learning the subjects of the social studies course during the distance education process, the lessons were not productive during the distance education process, they experienced a lack of motivation and found them inadequate. The opinions of some students regarding this question of the research are given below:

S-14 “We could not fully understand the lesson, the connection was cut off.”

S-15 “Since the lessons were remote, we had difficulty understanding the subjects.”

S-17 “Insufficient and not effective.”

S-20 “As I said, distance education was troublesome, but it was fun. It was very enjoyable to listen to subjects such as history, etc.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the question, “What are the problems you experienced in the social studies course during the distance education process?” The students’ opinions on these issues are given in Table 9.

Table 9: Students’ Opinions on the Problems They Experienced in the Social Studies Course During the Distance Education Process

Categories	Codes	f	%
Computer (software, hardware, etc.) problems	Microphone	10	13,6
	No problems	10	13,6
	Sound	2	2,72
	Power outage	2	2,72
	Computer lag	1	1,36
	No personal computer	1	1,36
Internet connection related problems	Breaking	10	13,6
	Freezing	8	10,88
	I had no problems	7	9,52
	Internet not working	2	2,72
Problems with the teacher	I had no problems	21	28,56
	Teacher's internet connection was interrupted	1	1,36
Problems with friends	I had no problems	21	28,56
	Friend's insistence	1	1,36
Family related problems	I had no problems	13	17,68
	Home environment is noisy	12	16,32
	Family pressure	2	2,72
	I had no problems	12	16,32
If you have any other problems	No answer	2	2,72
	Zoom platform is in English	1	1,36
	Staying away from social media	1	1,36
Total		136	100

When Table 9 is examined, it is determined that 8th grade students encounter different problems titled as computer, internet connection, teacher, friend, family and others in

social studies course during distance education process. Among these problems, it is seen that they experience problems related to internet connection (f=27) and family (f=27) the most. Some students' opinions regarding this question of the research are given below:

S-1 “Disconnection and freezing.”

S-5 “Yes, internet disconnection.”

S-13 “They make a lot of noise during class.”

S-17 “Noise.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the question, “Do you find distance education or face-to-face education more effective? Why?” The students' views on these issues are given in Table 10.

Table 10: Students' Views on the Reasons They Find Distance Education or Face-to-Face Education Effective

Categories	Codes	f	%
Face to face education	Lessons are more efficient	7	1,82
	More understandable	6	1,56
	Easier to ask questions	2	0,52
	Having a social environment	2	0,52
	More permanent	2	0,52
	Better adaptation to lessons	2	0,52
	No answer	1	0,26
	No connection problems	1	0,26
	Being disciplined	1	0,26
	Being used to it	1	0,26
Distance Learning	The classroom environment is noisy	1	0,26
Total		26	100

According to Table 10, it was determined that 8th grade students found “face-to-face education” (f=21) to be the most efficient. This category is followed by “distance education” (f=1). The reasons why students found face-to-face education more efficient are “lessons are more efficient” (f=7), “more understandable” (f=6), “easier to ask questions” (f=2), “having a social environment” (f=2), “more permanent” (f=2), “better adaptation to lessons” (f=2), “no answer” (f=1), “no connection problems” (f=1), “being disciplined” (f=1) and “being used to it” (f=1). Some students' opinions on this question of the research are given below:

S-6 “I can understand subjects better face to face.”

S-8 “Face to face education is more efficient because nothing is understood with distance education.”

S-18 “Face to face education because it is more effective explanation.”

S-19 “Face to face social environment is better, lessons are more enthusiastic.”

In the study, 8th grade students were asked the question, “What are your suggestions for the social studies course to be more productive during distance education?” The students' opinions on this issue are given in Table 11.

Table 11: Students' Suggestions for the Social Studies Course to Be More Productive During Distance Education

Categories	f	%
I have no suggestions	14	3,22
Lessons should be taught more lively and enthusiastically	2	0,46
Teachers should be friendly	2	0,46
Internet problem should be solved	1	
Everyone should have the same source	1	0,23
Turkish language support should be added to Zoom platform	1	0,23
Students should be interested	1	0,23
Lessons should be turned into games	1	0,23
Toplam	23	100

In Table 11, the 8th grade students stated the most “I have no suggestions” (f=14, %=3,22) for the social studies course to be more efficient during the distance education process. This category is followed by “lessons should be taught more lively and enthusiastically” (f=2, %=0,46), “teachers should be friendly” (f=2, %=0,46), “internet problem should be solved” (f=1, %=0,23), “everyone should have the same source” (f=1, %=0,23), “Turkish language support should be added to the Zoom platform” (f=1, %=0,23), “students should be interested” (f=1, %=0,23) and “lessons should be turned into a game” (f=1, %=0,23). While the majority of the students did not make any suggestions for the social studies course to be more efficient, it was observed that some students made various suggestions. The opinions of some students regarding this question of the research are given below:

S-17 “Lessons should be taught more lively and enthusiastically.”

S-20 “I would like our teachers to be more friendly to us.”

S-21 “I would say that we should focus more on the lessons and that we should have a better relationship with the teachers.”

S-22 “I would be more interested if the lesson were turned into a game.”

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

In the study, it is seen that students do not know what the concepts of pandemic and distance education are and explain these concepts according to their own perspectives. In the study of Bakioğlu and Çevik (2020), it was concluded that social studies teachers do not know what the pandemic means, and those who think they know confuse the

pandemic with viruses and epidemics. It is understood that the results obtained from these studies support the results of the research.

The study shows that students have difficulty adapting to distance education. In the study of Akgül & Oran (2020), it was determined that students lacked motivation in the distance education process and got bored easily. In the study of Akça (2020), it was concluded that students had difficulty attending classes due to the lack of facilities such as the internet and computers. It can be said that these deficiencies negatively affect students. The results obtained from these studies support the results of this research.

It is observed that students use Zoom and EIN platforms to attend classes during the distance education process. It is understood that students find the Zoom platform more useful than EIN. In the study of Uyar (2020) and Kılıç & Beldağ (2021), it was determined that teachers used EIN and Zoom platforms during the distance education period. In the studies of Karabudak (2020) and Akça (2020), it is seen that teachers use EIN and Zoom platforms and find the Zoom platform more efficient due to the freezes in EIN and the stability of the Zoom platform. The results obtained from these studies support the results of this research.

It is understood that the study concluded that students communicate with their teachers during the distance education process through tools such as "live lesson", "telephone", "online", "WhatsApp", "Zoom". In the study of Elçi & Tünkler (2022), it was determined that communication was established with students and parents through WhatsApp groups. In the study of Karabudak (2020) and Akça (2020), it was seen that students were contacted through communication tools such as phone, message and WhatsApp. The results obtained from these studies support the results of this research.

It is observed that students communicate with their friends during the distance education process through communication tools such as "social media", "phone", "messaging", "WhatsApp", "online", "meeting", "live lesson", "discord". In the study of Elçi & Tünkler (2022), it was determined that communication was established with students and parents through WhatsApp groups. In the study of Akça (2020) and Karabudak (2020), it was observed that students were contacted through communication tools such as phone, message, and WhatsApp. The results obtained from these studies support the results of the research. In addition, it can be said that students' communication by meeting face to face is to meet the need for socialization.

It is seen that students study social studies courses on Zoom and EIN platforms during the distance education process. It is understood that students use the Zoom platform more in social studies courses. In the studies of Uyar (2020) and Kılıç & Beldağ (2021), it was determined that teachers used EIN and Zoom platforms during the distance education period. In the studies of Akça (2020) and Karabudak (2020), it is seen that teachers use EIN and Zoom platforms and find

the Zoom platform more efficient due to the freezes in EIN and the stability of the Zoom platform. The results obtained from these studies support the results of this research. In the research, it is seen that the students have difficulty in learning social studies subjects and cannot get efficiency from the lessons. In the studies of Ceylan & Çoban (2021), Aydemir (2021) and Elçi & Tünkler (2022), it was concluded that social studies achievements were not sufficiently achieved. In addition, Akça (2020) concluded that the distance education process was not very efficient for students. In this context, the fact that similar results were obtained in the studies conducted supports the result of the research.

The research shows that students encounter various problems during the distance education process. These problems are listed as computer (software, hardware, etc.), internet connection, teacher, friend and family, and other (if any other problems experienced). Students stated computer (software, hardware, etc.)-related problems as "microphone," "I did not experience any problems," "sound," "power outage," "computer lag," and "not having a personal computer." The fact that Karabudak (2020), Akça (2020), Elçi & Tünkler (2022) and Ceylan & Çoban (2021) reached similar results supports this result of the research. When we look at internet-related problems, it is seen that students mostly encounter problems such as "disconnection," "freezing," and "no internet reception" regarding internet connection. In the studies of Akgül & In the study of Malkamak and Ünsal (2024), it was determined that secondary school students encountered problems such as internet and infrastructure, unsuitable home environment, hardware insufficiency, system problems, and lack of motivation during the distance education process during the pandemic period. Oran (2020), it was concluded that the most common internet-related problem was disconnection and freezing. In the study of Doğan & Temir (2022), students also stated that they encountered internet outages and freezing problems. The results obtained from these studies support this result of the research. When the problems originating from teachers are examined, the students stated that they did not have problems with their teachers. In the study of Korkut & Memişoğlu (2021), it is seen that the students encountered the problem of not being able to reach the teachers. The result of this study differs from the result of this research in this respect. In the study of Akgül & Oran (2020), it is seen that the students did not encounter any negative situations originating from the teacher. The result obtained from this study supports the result of this research. When the problems originating from friends are examined, it is seen that the students did not have problems with their friends either. In the study of Akgül & Oran (2020), the students stated that they missed their friends. Ramos-Morcillo et al (2020) stated in their study that one of the disadvantages of distance education is that students have some problems in accessing technical tools. In the study of Korkut & Memişoğlu (2021), it was determined that the students experienced a decrease in their friendships.

Accordingly, it can be said that the students did not experience a problem originating from friends, they missed their friends, and there was a decrease in their friendships because they could not spend much time with their friends. When the findings regarding family-related problems are examined, it is understood that more than half of the students do not have a family-related problem. It is seen that some students face the problems of “noisy home environment” and “family pressure”. Chaney et al (2007), in their study on student attitudes, opinions and perceptions of distance education towards the quality of distance education courses given at a university in the United States, emphasize that student-teacher competencies, interaction and active learning techniques are important for the healthy continuation of this process. In the studies of Akça (2020), Karabudak (2020) and Korkut & Memişoğlu (2021), it is determined that sounds overlap and cause confusion due to noisy home environment. The results obtained from these studies support the results of the research.

In the research, it is seen that students find face-to-face education more efficient due to reasons such as “lessons are more efficient”, “more understandable”, “easier to ask questions”, “social environment”, “more permanent”, “better adaptation to lessons”. Akça (2020); Özdoğan & Berkant (2020); Karabudak (2020); Korkut & Memişoğlu (2021); Kılıç & Beldağ (2021); Doğan & Temir (2022) concluded in their studies that face-to-face education is more efficient than distance education. The results obtained from these studies support the results of this research.

In order for social studies courses to be more efficient during the distance education process, it is observed that students make suggestions such as “lessons should be taught more lively and enthusiastically”, “teachers should be friendly”, “internet problem should be solved”, “everyone should have the same source”, “Turkish language support should come to the Zoom platform”, “students should be interested” and “lessons should be turned into games.” In the studies of Karabudak (2020) and Akça (2020), it was determined that they made suggestions such as developing platforms, developing materials suitable for distance education and providing in-service training to teachers in order to make the distance education process more efficient. In this context, it can be said that in-service training to be given to teachers will increase the performance of teachers. In addition, it can be thought that developing platforms and materials suitable for distance education will make the social studies course more efficient.

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