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An Investigation of Social Studies Teachers' Online Readiness Levels and Their Opinions Regarding Online Education

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Abstract

In this study, a sequential exploratory mixed design was used. The participant group of the study consisted of 342 social studies teachers determined through the maximum sampling method. The data were collected with the A-12 Teachers' Online Education Readiness Scale and a semi-structured interview form. In the study, it was determined that the teachers' readiness levels for online education were high. It was also determined that the levels did not differ according to the gender and age variables, but differed according to the region of duty. In the study, it was determined that a number of the participants thought that the online readiness level of social studies teachers was generally adequate, while other participants thought that it should be improved. The participants stated that they experienced certain difficulties in online education spaces, such as inadequate technology and internet infrastructure, ineffective teacher-student communication, and students not participating in lessons. In addition, it was determined that a few of the participants were of the opinion that the blended teaching system in which online and face-to-face education are used together was a good thing, other participants were of the opinion that online education should be utilized as an alternative, and several participants were of the opinion that online education should not be used.

Keywords: Online education, online readiness, social studies teachers

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Introduction

In the twenty-first century, access to information is becoming easier, differentiated and more diversified each day. Studies to facilitate human life have led to the advancement of science and technology. The development of science and technology has led to further development in numerous fields. Health, transportation, communication and education are at the top of these fields. With the combination of education and technology, the approach to education and training has started to change. Modern educational approaches that are student-centered (Bayram, 2021), supported by communication technologies and aiming at individual learning have started to take a place in our lives. In fact, communication technologies that allow instant viewing, processing and sharing of information have affected today's learning and teaching processes. The most obvious examples of this are the use of approaches such as e-learning, mobile learning, distance education and online education. Distance education, conducted with the use of technological tools, facilitates the sharing of information without time and space limitations, enabling it to spread faster (Topal, 2020).

Online education has become a permanent part of our lives. Many more people will benefit from online education in the years to come. Online education is a system that enables self-directed learning through an internet connection independent of time and space. This independence from time and space makes it easier for students to connect and communicate effectively with their friends and teachers at any time (Mayadas, Bourne and Bacsich, 2009). Time and space constraints mean that a number of students are not able to take the courses they want, and not able to learn the subjects they need to learn in order to improve themselves. Online education has come to the forefront as an important educational model to answer these demands of students. This educational model has helped teachers and students who are not located physically together to establish a relationship beyond time and space through mutual communication (Simonson, Zvacek and Smaldino, 2019).

The term 'online education' was first used in a catalogue published by the University of Wisconsin in 1982. It is also known that William Lighty used the term online education for the first time in a written text in 1906. Online education is defined as a modern education model that helps students learn through the use of technological tools. This educational model is used in numerous countries around the world. Online education is a system in which people, regardless of profession, income and age, continue their educational process by adjusting it according to their own efforts and abilities. While the term online education was frequently used until the twenty-first century, the concepts of 'open and distance learning' started to be used after this. When the history of online education is examined, it can be seen that it is used for individuals who cannot access formal education due to health problems, age or geographical difficulties (Şahin, 2021).

When online education is examined within the scope of today's conditions, we come across the COVID-19 pandemic. In late 2019, a virus that emerged in Wuhan, China, affected the world. This virus caused economic problems on a global scale. Countries had to take various precautions and develop practices in order to survive. Quarantine, travel bans and social distancing were the main ones. Those who ignored these rules were often penalized. Attempts were made to reduce the effects of the virus by imposing a ban on going outside for a certain period of time. Many fields were badly affected by this virus. Health and education (Daniel, 2020; Gürel & Er, 2020; Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021) were the main ones. According to the data of the United Nations, 770 million students were affected by this virus. Continuity of education was provided by online education (Telli Yamamoto and Altun, 2020).

During the pandemic process, online education was started in Turkey, as in other parts of the world, in order to continue education. In order to control the pandemic in Turkey, education in universities was suspended for three weeks at first. However, as the impact of the pandemic increased, 123 universities in Turkey switched to fully online education in the spring semester of 2020. This situation continued until the 2021-2022 academic year. In the following academic year, a hybrid education model was applied. Therefore, while a number of courses were taught face-to-face, other courses were taught online. Today, although face-to-face education has been implemented, certain courses are still given online (Turan and Avcı, 2022). When we examine all these processes, it can be seen that online education is the first choice in educational practices in the twenty-first century worldwide (Topal, 2020).

Due to the processes mentioned above, online education in Turkey has been used extensively in the social studies course, which includes all social science disciplines with a predominance of verbal information. According to the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), this course combines and blends knowledge from the social sciences and humanities to develop students' citizenship competencies. This course enables children in culturally diverse societies to internalize democratic rules and live their lives according to these rules. In addition, social studies is a course that aims to help children develop logical decisions based on knowledge in the process of social adaptation (NCSS, 2020). Social studies deals with the interaction of people in their social and physical space from the past to the present. It is a course that aims to raise children who have adopted the basic principles of democracy and effectively integrated these principles into their lives by teaching the content provided by social sciences with an interdisciplinary approach (Doğanay, 2005). It can be said that social studies is a course that prepares children for life so that they can solve the problems they face in daily life (Deveci and Bayram, 2022).

The social studies course, due to its nature, includes content from numerous social and human disciplines (Evans, 2004). Therefore, it is a course that includes concepts and terms specific to each discipline (Polat & Bayram, 2022). As such, it is a course that includes both intensive verbal information and a lot of conceptual confusion. In fact, online education allows this course to be taught with a constructivist approach, to create student-centered learning spaces, and to use audio-visual tools that can appeal to a large number of sensory organs. It can be said that teaching this course through online education will help students learn the compacted verbal information and diverse concepts in the content of the course more effectively. However, the realization of this depends on the teachers' knowledge of online education and their ability to use these spaces effectively. The social studies course, which has a complex nature, can be made enjoyable by teachers through online education. Therefore, it is important that teachers, who are the practitioners of the social studies course, have high levels of readiness for online education. This is because the healthy and efficient implementation of these educational spaces is related to the knowledge and skill levels of the practitioners. At the same time, the opinions of practitioners and their experiences on this subject are considered important in order to identify and eliminate any deficiencies in these educational spaces. Based on this idea, the subject of this research was deemed important and this research was conducted.

Aim

In this study, the aim is to examine social studies teachers' online readiness levels and their opinions in regard to online education. Within the scope of this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

- What are the online readiness levels of social studies teachers?
- Do social studies teachers' online readiness levels differ according to the following?
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Region of duty
- What are the opinions of social studies teachers regarding online education?

Research Design

In the study, a sequential exploratory mixed design, in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected together, was used. Sequential exploratory mixed design is for studies in which quantitative data are collected first and then qualitative data are collected and used to support the quantitative data (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). The reason for using this design is that quantitative data were first collected by using a scale, and then qualitative data were collected through an interview form.

Participants

The participant group consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of the group that included all the participants of the study from which the quantitative data were collected, and the other part consisted of the group from which the qualitative data were collected. The group in which the quantitative data were collected was formed by the maximum diversity sampling method. The maximum diversity sampling method is aimed at forming the participant group with individuals with different characteristics (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020). The reason for using this sampling method in the study is to include teachers of different genders, ages and education levels who are working in seven geographical regions of Türkiye. Personal information regarding the participants from whom the quantitative data were collected is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Personal Information Regarding The Participants From Which The Quantitative Data Were Collected

Variable	Feature	f	%
Gender	Female	181	52.9
	Male	161	47.1
	Total	342	100
Age	25-35 Years	165	48.2
	36-45 Years	79	23.1
	46-55 Years	76	22.2
	56+ Years	22	6.4
	Total	342	100
	Total	342	100
Region of duty	Marmara	96	28.1
	Central Anatolia	67	19.6
	Aegean	49	14.3
	Mediterranean	21	6.1
	Black Sea	28	8.2
	Southeast Anatolia	57	16.7
	Eastern Anatolia	24	7.0
	Total	342	100

Table 1 shows that a total of 342 social studies teachers took part in the study. When the table is analyzed in terms of the age variable, it can be seen that 52.9% (181) of the participants were female and 47.1% (161) were male. The table shows that 48.2% (165) of the participants were 25-35 years old; 23.1% (79) were 36-45 years old; 22.2% (49) were 46-55 years old; and 6.4% (22) were over 56 years of age. The table shows that 28.1% (96) of the participants worked in Marmara; 19.6% (67) worked in Central Anatolia; 14.3% (49) worked in the Aegean area; 6.1% (21) worked in the Mediterranean area; 8.2% (28) worked in the Black Sea area; 16.7% (57) worked in Southeast Anatolia; and 7% (24) worked in Eastern Anatolia.

The participant group, from which the qualitative data were collected, consisted of seven teachers who volunteered to be interviewed among the teachers from whom the quantitative data were collected. The names of these participants were kept confidential within the scope of ethical principles, and the teachers were given a code. These codes are; T1, T2, T3 and so on.

Data Collection

The quantitative data of the study were collected with the A-12 Teachers' Online Education Readiness Scale developed by Polat, Hopcan, and Yahşi (2022). The scale includes nine sub-dimensions and fifty-two items. The scale was developed as a five-point Likert-type scale. Permission to use the scale has been obtained.

A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated to check whether the scale was suitable for use in this study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .72. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient greater than .70 indicates that the scale is reliable (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). The scale was sent to 342 social studies teachers working in different regions of Türkiye by way of Google Forms. In the personal information section of the scale the

participants' gender, age, and region of duty were included. The data in the scales sent by the participants were organized and filed for the analysis step. The 1.00-1.79 point range obtained from the scale data was evaluated as being very low; 1.80 - 2.59 point range as low; 2.60 - 3.39 point range as medium; 3.40 - 4.19 point range as high; and the 4.20 - 5.00 point range as very high.

The qualitative data were collected with a semi-structured interview form designed by the researcher. Expert opinion was sought during the development of the interview form. In the process of developing the form, eight questions were first prepared. The questions, with a file containing the purpose of the study, were sent to four assistant professors competent in qualitative research; their opinions were requested on the suitability of the questions for the purpose of the study. Within the scope of the feedback received from the experts, two questions were deleted, two questions were combined into a single question and one question was redesigned. The forms were sent to the teachers by e-mail and they were asked to send them back after answering the questions on the form.

Data Analysis

In order to determine the tests to be used in the analysis of the quantitative data, both the skewness and the kurtosis values of the data as well as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2019) values were examined since the participant group was more than thirty-five people. The skewness value was calculated as -.51; the kurtosis value was calculated as -.12; the Kolmogorov-Smirnov value was calculated as .00. The skewness and kurtosis values of the data are between -1.5 and 1.5, regarding this, the result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is less than 0.05 (Tabachnick and Fidel, 2019). It was determined that the data did not show normal distribution and, accordingly, nonparametric tests were used in the analysis process. In this context, a Mann-Whitney U test and a Kruskal-Wallis test were used to analyze the data.

Content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data of the study. Content analysis aims to reach conceptual and relational structures regarding the problem (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The reason for using content analysis in the study is that the analysis was carried out within the scope of the themes that emerged during the analysis, not according to predetermined themes.

Ethical Issues

This study was conducted with the permission of the scientific research ethics committee of a university in Türkiye within the scope of the decision dated 03.08.2023 and numbered 179.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented under two separate headings; 'The Quantitative Results' and 'The Qualitative Results'.

The Quantitative Results

A descriptive statistical test was conducted to determine the mean scores of the teachers participating in the study. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

The Descriptive Statistics for the Mean Scores

<i>N</i>	Mean	Standard deviation
342	4.76	.12

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that the mean is 4.76 and the standard deviation is .12. This result shows that social studies teachers' online readiness levels were found to be extremely high. In the study, the teachers' online readiness levels were investigated according to the gender variable. In this context, a Mann Whitney U test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

The Mann Whitney U Test Results of Social Studies Teachers' Online Readiness Scores According to the Gender Variable

Gender	<i>n</i>	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
Female	181	168,43	27117,00	14076,00	.58
Male	161	174,23	31536,00		
Total	342				

When Table 3 was examined, it was found that the social studies teachers' online readiness levels did not show a significant difference ($U = 14076,00$; $p > .05$) according to being male or female. This result shows that the gender variable does not affect the social studies teachers' online readiness levels.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to examine the online readiness levels of the social studies teachers according to the age variable. The values obtained are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

The Kruskal-Wallis Test Results of the Social Studies Teachers' Online Readiness The Scores According to the Age Variable

Age	<i>n</i>	Mean rank	<i>df</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>
25-35 Years	165	173,63	3	.82	.84
36-45 Years	79	171,27			
46-55 Years	76	172,38			
56+ Years	22	153,34			
Total	342				

When Table 4 was examined, it was determined that the social studies teachers' online readiness levels did not show a significant difference ($\chi^2=.82$; $p>.05$) according to the age variable. According to this result, it can be said that the different ages of the social studies teachers did not affect their online readiness levels.

In the study, the social studies teachers' online readiness levels were investigated within the scope of the region of duty. In this context, a Kruskal Wallis test was conducted. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5.

The Kruskal-Wallis Test Results of the Social Studies Teachers' Online Readiness Scores According to the Region of Duty Variable

Region of duty	<i>n</i>	Mean rank	<i>df</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>	Difference
Marmara	96	161,33	6	23,14	.00	Marmara<Black Sea;
Central Anatolia	67	180,70				Central anatolia<Black Sea;
Aegean	49	164,00				Aegean<Black Sea;
Mediterranean	21	129,81				Mediterranean<Black Sea;
Black Sea	28	246,80				Southeastern Anatolia<Black
Southeastern Anatolia	57	172,07				Sea; Eastern Anatolia<Black Sea
Eastern Anatolia	24	149,08				
Total	342					

When Table 5 is examined, it can be seen that the online readiness levels of the participants show a significant difference ($p<.05$) according to the region of duty. In terms of the information in the table, it can be seen that the online readiness levels of the social studies teachers working in the Black Sea region are higher than the levels of those working in other regions. Based on this result, it can be said that working in different regions affects the online readiness levels of the social studies teachers.

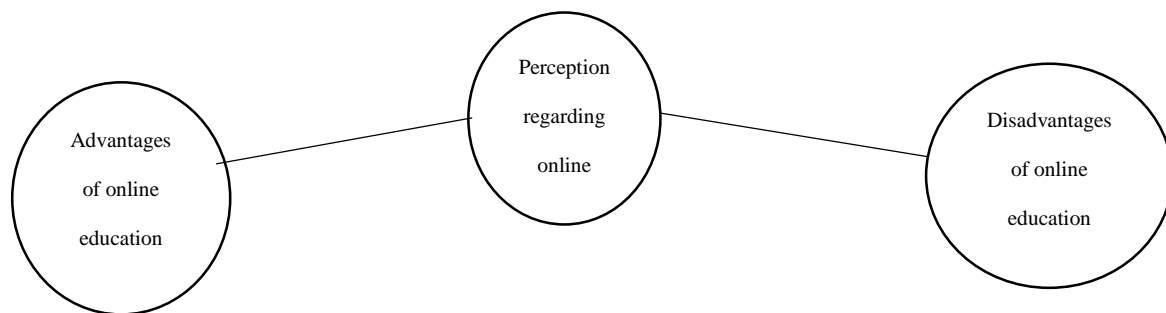
It was determined that the social studies teachers' online readiness levels were found to be high. In the study, it was also determined that the online readiness levels of the teachers did not show a significant difference according to the gender and age variables, but showed a significant difference according to the region of duty.

The Qualitative Results

In the study, the social studies teachers' views on online education were investigated. The results obtained from the interviews with the volunteer participants are presented below under certain headings.

The Results Related to Perception Regarding Online Education

In the study, the social studies teachers' perceptions regarding online education were investigated. The results are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.*The Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Online Education*

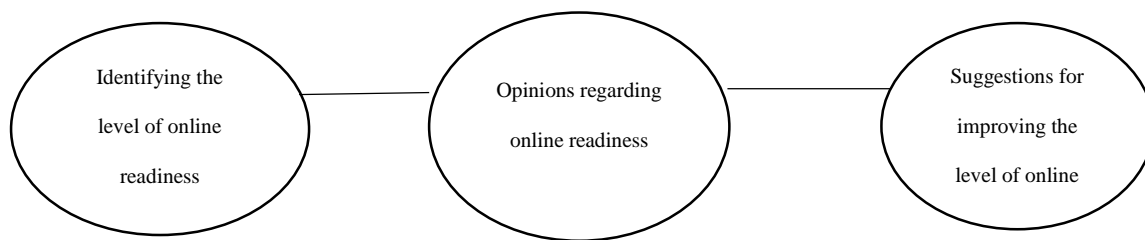
As can be seen in Figure 1, the social studies teachers' perceptions regarding online education are categorized under two themes; 'advantages of online education' and 'disadvantages of online education'.

T1 was one of the participants who revealed his perception of online education with the most comprehensive expressions. T1 said, *"Online education is a model that should be used effectively in today's technology age. In our world where most of the instruments are digitalized, online education is necessary."* He also mentioned the necessity of online education nowadays. T1 also stated that, *"The first advantage of online education is that it is economical. It saves both space and resources..."* as well as mentioning the advantages of online education. T1 said, *"In order for every process to work, a space needs to be prepared. It is easy to prepare the online space, but of course it will take time for students and educators to adapt."* He mentioned the disadvantages of online education.

Another participant, T5, stated his perception regarding online education with striking expressions. T5 expressed his perception in this context as, *"In today's world, the importance of technology in storing, producing, organizing and accessing information is increasing day by day. Therefore, rapidly developing technologies are changing the nature of how we learn, teach and perceive. This is not only a revolution for learning purposes but also an opportunity to safely access and disseminate information in a complex world."* On the other hand, T5 stated the advantages of online education as follows: *"It provides a more reliable, fast and contemporary education. It provides individualized education. It saves time."* T5 stated the disadvantages of online education as follows: *"It is necessary to ensure information control. There is incorrect information transfer due to fast and uncertain information access. It affects socialization (negatively)."*

Results Related to Opinions Regarding Online Readiness

In the study, the social studies teachers' opinions regarding online readiness were investigated. The results are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2.*The Social Studies Teachers' Opinions Regarding Online Readiness*

As can be seen in Figure 1, the social studies teachers' opinions regarding online readiness are categorized under two themes; 'identifying the level of online readiness' and 'suggestions for improving the level of online readiness'.

In the study, it was determined that a number of the teachers mentioned the concept of online readiness. The most noteworthy statements that contribute to this result are as follows: T3 defined online readiness as, *"Online education is having the desire, technological knowledge and skills to use online spaces. That is the contents and spaces accessed through the Internet."* T2, states online readiness as, *"Online readiness is the individual's ability to learn on online platforms as an alternative to face-to-face learning."* These participants also expressed opinions about the level of online readiness. In fact, T3 used the following expressions in the relevant context:

"Online readiness level should be high in order for education and training activities to be carried out effectively. One of the actors of educational activities is the teacher. The teacher prepares and plans the materials for the online learning space. Therefore, the teacher should determine the purpose and needs of education and training. It is necessary to have technological knowledge and practice, to manage time well, to follow up the activities, and to have a healthy communication skill. If these requirements are realized, the teacher's online readiness level will increase."

When T3's words are examined, it is understood that he/she has comprehensive thoughts about the level of online readiness and thinks that multiple perspectives should be utilized in determining the level of online readiness.

T2 expressed his/her opinion that social studies teachers' online readiness levels should be improved with the following statements:

"However, I believe that in order to improve this level, some training should be given to teachers. For this, I think that the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) should plan the seminar weeks well and prepare its teachers for all kinds of scenarios and set workable training and goals. Training should be based on real goals, not for show. The pandemic period is the most important evidence of this."

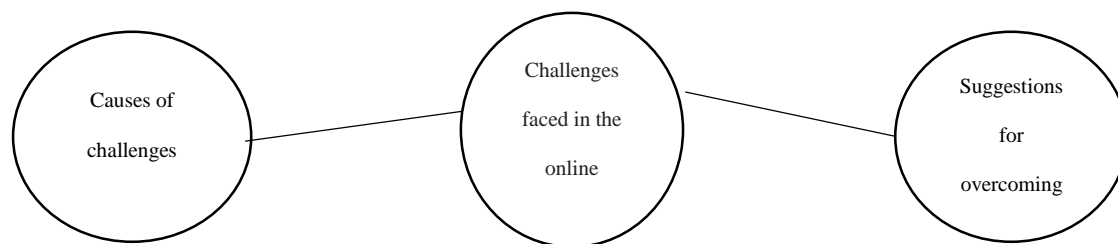
T2 revealed that the improvement of social studies teachers' online readiness levels is related to both the training provided by MoNE and teachers' own efforts.

Results Related to Challenges Faced in the Online Education Process

In the study, the challenges faced by the social studies teachers in the online education process were investigated. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3.

The Challenges Faced by the Social Studies Teachers in the Online Education Process



As can be seen in Figure 3, the challenges faced by the social studies teachers in the online education process are categorized under two themes; 'causes of challenges' and 'suggestions for overcoming challenges'.

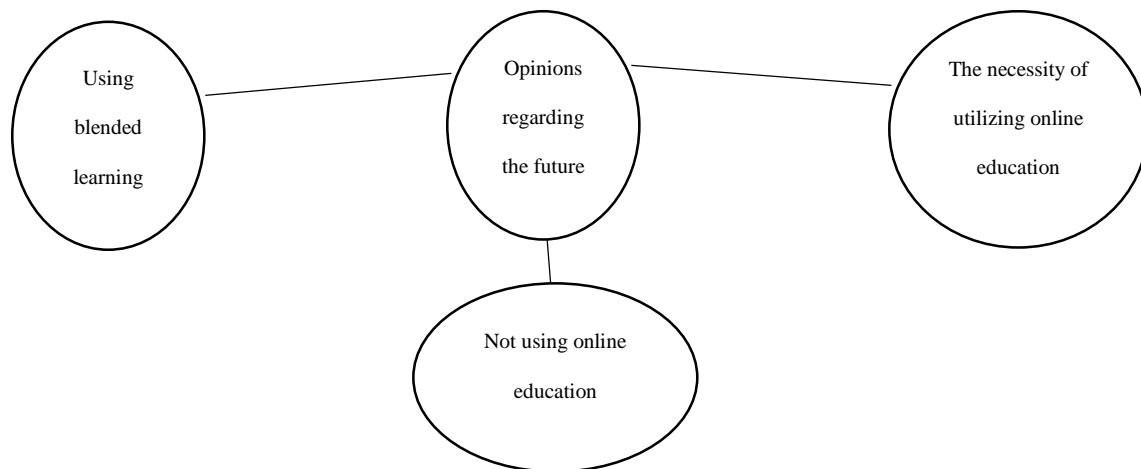
A number of the teachers in the study stated that they faced various challenges in the online education process. For example, T4 stated that he/she faced both challenges in the online educational process and the causes of the challenges with the words, *"We faced many challenges in the online education process. The main caution of these challenges was that we did not have enough knowledge and equipment."*

Similarly, T6 also stated that he faced challenges in the aforementioned process. T6's statement in this context is as follows: *"I had some difficulties in the online education process."* Continuing to speak, T6 used the following words to reinforce the challenges he/she faced:

"The challenges I faced were that at the beginning of the online education process, students did not have an internet connection or did not have a device to connect to the Internet. This problem was mainly solved with the tablets distributed to students by MoNE and the free Internet. However, later on, there were challenges such as students' internet connection problems, not attending classes, not always being active in the classes they attended or attending classes in crowded spaces, not doing homework, and not fulfilling their responsibilities. Assessment and measurement were also challenges. Since there was no face-to-face communication, I tried to solve the problems through phone contact with the parents. The online education process was beneficial for the students who actively participated in the lessons. However, in the younger age groups, the inability of each student to make their own planning or fulfill their responsibilities was a big challenge in the online education process."

The Results Related to Opinions Regarding the Future of Online Education

In the study, the social studies teachers' opinions regarding the future of online education were investigated. The results are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4.*The Social Studies Teachers' Opinions Regarding the Future of Online Education*

As can be seen in Figure 3, the social studies teachers' opinions regarding the future of online education are categorized under three themes; 'using blended learning', 'the necessity of utilizing online education' and 'not using online education'.

It was determined that the social studies teachers had a wide range of opinions regarding the future of online education. For example, T5 said, *"There should be a blended education system. This can provide both a practice for online education and a good opportunity to get rid of traditional models."* With this statement, T5 revealed that he/she was of the opinion that blended learning, in which both face-to-face education and online education are used together, should be implemented in education training processes. Contrary to T5, T6 said, *"I do not think that online education will be an alternative to face-to-face education because of problems such as small age groups, not fulfilling responsibilities, not being able to do self planning, measurement and evaluation. Although it provides convenience in education, I think that it has many disadvantages"* and stated that he/she thought that online education should not be used because of its disadvantages. Another participant, S3, expressed his/her opinion on this issue with the following:

"Digitalization in education, the educational policies, the limitations of face-to-face education in terms of time and space, and the preferences of teachers, students and parents show that online education is also preferred outside of compulsory situations. For this reason, online education is not only an approach used in compulsory situations, it also enriches face-to-face education in schools."

When S3's statements are examined, it can be understood that he/she thinks that online education is an approach that should be utilized, but its implementation is related to the existence of various parameters.

The qualitative results of the study reveal that the social studies teachers' perceptions regarding online education differed based on the fact that online education has various advantages and disadvantages. The social studies teachers have the opinion that determining and developing online readiness is a necessity, but they also had faced various challenges in

online education processes and they had various opinions about the use of online education in teaching processes.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

In the study, it was determined that the online readiness levels of the social studies teachers were high. In the studies conducted by Parsak and Saraç (2022), Geniş (2022), and Köse (2023), the online readiness levels of teachers were also found to be high. In the studies conducted by Parlak and Kayri (2022), Üstün, Karaoğlu Yılmaz, and Yılmaz (2020), it was determined that the online learning readiness of teachers was at a medium level. According to Qureshi, Ahmad, Najibullah, and Shah (2009), teachers' negative attitudes towards online learning spaces constitute an important obstacle to the success and efficiency of these learning spaces. Therefore, the conclusion that the readiness level of teachers found high in this study is important for the successful and efficient use of online learning environments, which have become one of the indispensable elements of education in contemporary times.

In the study, it was determined that the online readiness levels of the social studies teachers did not differ significantly within the scope of the gender variable. In the studies conducted by Parsak and Saraç (2022), Köse (2023), Yılmaz and Bulut (2024), Parlak and Kayri (2022), Çetin (2018), and Teo (2008), it was also determined that the online readiness levels of teachers did not differ significantly according to the gender variable. However, in the studies conducted by Ballantine and Spade (2008), Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, and Malone (2006), and Geniş (2022), female teachers' attitudes towards online education and readiness levels were found to be higher than those of male teachers. In a study conducted by Üstün, Karaoğlu, Yılmaz, and Yılmaz (2020), a significant difference was found in terms of the gender variable. However, it was concluded that this difference was in favor of male teachers. The fact that these studies were conducted on different sample groups may be the reason for the different results.

In the study, it was determined that the social studies teachers' online readiness levels did not differ significantly within the scope of the age variable. In the studies conducted by Adewole-Odesi, (2014) and Çakır and Horzum, (2015), it was also concluded that the age variable did not affect the level of online readiness. In contrast to these studies, in the study conducted by Parsak and Saraç (2022), it was determined that the online readiness levels of teachers showed a low level of significant difference within the scope of the age variable. In the study conducted by Köse (2023), it was concluded that teachers' online readiness levels differed significantly within the scope of the age variable. In the studies conducted by Parlak and Kayri (2022) and Yılmaz and Afacan (2017), it was also concluded that the age variable was effective on the online readiness level of teachers. In these studies, it was concluded that the readiness levels of young teachers were higher. The fact that these studies reached different results from each other may be due to the sample groups. In addition, considering the close relationship of young generations with technology and the Internet, it can be said that the results obtained in these studies are normal.

In the study, it was determined that the online readiness levels of the social studies teachers differed within the scope of the region of duty. This difference was found to be in favor of those teachers working in the Black Sea Region. This result could not be discussed based on the literature since there is no study in the literature investigating the online readiness level of teachers within the scope of this variable.

In the study, it was determined that a number of the social studies teachers saw online education as advantageous and others saw it as disadvantageous. In the studies conducted by Kaleli-Yılmaz and Güven (2015), Gürer, Tekinarslan and Yavuzalp (2016), and Kandemir and Nartgün (2022), a few of the participants found online education favorable and others found it unfavorable. In the studies conducted by Kılınç (2015) and Stauffer (2020), it was determined that online education provides advantages in using audio-visual tools such as tables, graphics and videos in lessons and in using many teaching methods and techniques as well as creating interactive learning spaces. In the study conducted by Metin, Gürbey and Çevik (2021), teachers expressed negative opinions about distance education. In that study, teachers stated that they faced challenges in controlling the classroom, communicating effectively with students, increasing students' motivation and ensuring their participation in the class. In this study, it was determined that these challenges stand out as disadvantages of online education.

In the study, it was determined that a number of the participants thought that the online readiness level of social studies teachers was sufficient, while other participants thought that the online readiness level of social studies teachers should be improved. However, in a quantitative dimension of the study, the readiness levels of the social studies teachers were found to be high. However, the fact that teachers who use online education find certain social studies teachers inadequate in this regard is seen as a contradictory situation in terms of the results of this study.

In the study, it was determined that a number of the social studies teachers faced challenges in the online education process. It was determined that there were a few challenges such as lack of the Internet, students' limited opportunities, students trying to participate in crowded spaces, students not being active in classes, and students not participating in classes. In the studies conducted by Yapar, Bozgün, and Sağır (2022), Metin, Gürbey, and Çevik (2021), limited access to the Internet and teachers' and students' inability to use technological devices and programs were the most important causes of the challenges faced by teachers in online education spaces. A number of studies in the literature (Kakakuş et al., 2020; Sığın, 2020) also found that the limited interaction with students in online education prevents the effective teaching of courses. In a study conducted by Gewin (2020), it was stated that the most effective way to ensure students' active participation in classes is effective communication. It can be said that these studies support each other in terms of the results obtained.

In the study, it was determined that a number of social studies teachers think that a blended teaching system, in which online and face-to-face education are used together should be used, other teachers think that online education should be used as an alternative, and yet other teachers think that online education should not be included in educational processes. Today, the increase in global problems, such as earthquakes, wars and pandemics, causes disruption in the field of education as in every other field. In order to overcome such disruption and problems, we need to utilize online education as an inseparable part of our lives. Therefore, instead of being negative towards online education, it is necessary to make an intensive effort to improve it. In this study, it was found that a number of teachers expressed negative opinions regarding online education. Limited access to the Internet, insufficient student-teacher interaction, and challenges in classroom management are the causes of such negative opinions. In order to overcome these problems, it would be useful to offer training

seminars to teachers on how to use online education effectively. Providing technological requirements, solving internet access problems and offering online training seminars to teachers would benefit both teachers and students in using online education effectively. In this context, educational institutions solving internet access problems and providing technological equipment would make a great contribution to the successful conduct of education and the teaching processes. In addition, teachers' willing and motivated participation of in-service training seminars is also considered important.

Statement of Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the author of this paper and any institution or organization.

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