

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF FIELD EDUCATION



## CONCERNS, STEPS TAKEN AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARENTS ABOUT THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN DURING THE PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

In this study, it was aimed to determine the concerns of the parents of students whose children attend primary school during the pandemic period, based on their experiences in face-to-face and distance education, the precautions they took and their expectations for this process. This research, which adapted a qualitative research method, was carried out using a phenomenological design. The participants of the study are 20 parents whose children were attending a basic education school in Afyonkarahisar. They were chosen through the criterion sampling technique, one of the purposive sampling techniques. The data of the study were collected using a semi-structured interview form which included open-ended items. The data obtained were examined through the thematic analysis. The ethics committee approval, written approval from the related institutions and verbal approval from the participants were obtained before the data collection process. In the study, it is found based on the parental reports that the students could not be motivated towards the lessons during the pandemic period, and that they moved away from the school culture and had various psychological problems. It is also found that the parents are worried about this situation, taking certain precautions and that they have various expectations from teachers.

**Key Words:** Concerns, expectations, parents of basic education students, pandemic, steps.

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 12.02.2022

Published online:

31.03.2022

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## **AİLELERİN PANDEMİ DÖNEMİNDE EĞİTİM İLE İLGİLİ KAYGILARI, ÖNLEMLERİ VE BEKLENTİLERİ**

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### **ÖZET**

Bu araştırmada, pandemi döneminde çocukları ilkokula devam eden öğrenci velilerinin yüz yüze ve uzaktan eğitime yönelik deneyimlerden yola çıkarak yaşamış oldukları kaygılarını, aldıkları önlemleri ve bu sürece yönelik beklentilerini belirlemek amaçlanmıştır. Nitel araştırma yöntemine sahip bu araştırma olgubilim deseniyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu, Afyonkarahisar ilinde ikamet eden 20 ilkokul öğrenci velisi oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile toplanmış, toplanan veriler ise tematik analiz tekniği ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma için etik kurul izni, kurumdan yazılı ve kişilerden sözlü onay alınmıştır. Araştırmada çocukların pandemi dönemi derslerine karşı motive olamadıkları, okul kültüründen uzaklaştıkları ve çeşitli psikolojik sorunlar yaşadığı belirlenmiştir. Ailelerin ise bu durumdan kaygı duyduğu, önlemler aldığı ve öğretmenlerden çeşitli beklentileri olduğu belirlenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Beklenti, İlkokul öğrenci velileri, Kaygı, Pandemi, Önlem

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### **MAKALE BİLGİSİ**

*Alınma*

*Tarihi:12.02.2022*

*Çevrimiçi yayınlanma*

*tarihi: 31.03.2022*

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## **Introduction**

In Turkey distance education process was initiated on 23 March 2020 due to the Covid 19 and continued until the end of the school year. In the next school year another plan was implemented from 21 September 2020. Pre-school students and those students attending the first grade began to involve in the diluted education. Three weeks later the same process began to be applied to the students attending the grades of 2, 3, 4, 8 and 12. However, on 20 November 2020 the schools were closed again due to the increase in Covid 19 cases. The spring semester of the 2020-2021 school year began through the distance education. From 2 March 2021 the diluted education has been implementing (Salman, 2021). All these changes in the education process have significant effects on the psychology of children. The Covid-19 pandemic has also other effects on children due to several conditions, including negative economic and social situations, long-term quarantine and social isolation processes, difficulties in accessing distance education, and failure to record domestic violence (Akkan, 2020). The presence of uncertainties about the pandemic process, the rapid increase in health problems, the introduction of curfews and the changes in the socioeconomic levels of some families have an increasing effect on the rates of anxiety and fear among children. Uncertainties about when life will be normal again also increase the level of anxiety among students (Kara, 2020). In the pandemic period the friendship patterns of the children have changed. Friendship relations have a positive effect on children's personality development and interpersonal communication by enabling them to socialize. However, in this process, it has been observed that aggressive behaviors have increased among children who stay away from their friends (Erol & Erol, 2020). The negative effects of the pandemic period have still active among children. Such negative conditions have increased the need of children to take support from their parents and necessitated much higher levels of parental involvement in their children's educational process. As in conventional educational processes, the parental participation in the distance education process inevitably comes to the fore. They are of critical importance, especially in the distance education process, to ensure harmony between home and school and to minimize the negative effects of distance education (Gündoğdu, 2021). Such a social support is essential for basic education students who experience virtual classrooms which they have not yet gained an internal control over (Kavgaoğlu, 2020). Therefore, the parental support is very critical. No epidemic on earth will last forever. Over time the Covid-19 pandemic will disappear and loose its significance. However, this does not mean that it will completely disappear from the people's agenda. Because the change caused by the pandemic on societies, its long- and short-term effects and its social-cultural, political and economic consequences will be discussed for a long time (Nar, 2020). For this reason, the various effects of the pandemic process on societies, families and children will always be a matter of curiosity.

There are numerous studies on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey. The major study topics are as follows: the experiences and views of parents about the distance education (Mısırlı & Ergüleç, 2021), the awareness of the parents of basic education students concerning the concept of digital parenting during the Covid-19 pandemic (Nayci, 2021), the views of the children and their mothers about the Covid-19 (Yüksek Usta & Gökcan, 2020), the metaphors used by the basic education students about the distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic (Bozkurt, 2020), the psychological effects of the pandemic on children and the ways to reduce them (Özçevik & Ocakçı, 2020), the problems faced by the basic education students in regard to the distance education (Akça & Akgün, 2020) and the views of the parents of the basic education students about the distance education (Günbaş & Gözükcük, 2020).

Similar studies have also been carried out in different countries. In a study conducted in Finland it is aimed to reveal the parents' concerns and ways of coping with the problems they experienced based on their views on sustainable family resilience in the distance education implemented during the covid 19 epidemic (Koskela et al., 2020). In a study carried out in Pakistan it is aimed to examine how parents consider the effects of the pandemic on their children's education, the support they received, the difficulties their children experienced and the ways to cope with the difficulties in learning (Bhamani et al., 2020). In a study in the USA the perceptions of the parents about the educational process in the pandemic were analysed together with their support to their children, the support they took and the problems they experienced (Garbe et al., 2020). In a study conducted in Poland (Parczewska, 2020), it is aimed to determine the difficulties experienced by the parents who homeschool their children during the covid-19 epidemic and the ways they employed to cope with these problems. A study conducted in Indonesia (Lase et al., 2020) examined the parents' perceptions and attitudes towards distance education due to the closure of many schools due to the covid-19 outbreak.

It is seen that the common point in the studies carried out in Turkey is the analysis of the views of the teachers and parents concerning the distance education (Akça & Akgün, 2020; Akgül & Oran, 2020; Akkaş Baysal & Ocak, 2020; Ayaz, 2021; Çetin & Ercan, 2021; Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020; İnci Kuzu, 2020; Mısırlı & Ergüleç, 2021; Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020; Yılmaz & Güner, 2020). The common points covered in the studies carried out in other countries include the concerns of the parents in the pandemic, the parental support and the ways to cope with the difficulties (Abuhammad, 2020; Bhamani et.al., 2020; Garbe et al., 2020; Koskela et al., 2020; Lase et al., 2020; Parczewska, 2020). In this study, the following topics are analysed: the concerns of the parents about the distance and face-to-face education during the pandemic process, how these concerns are reflected on their children, what changes occurred in the lives of children (such as working habits, sleep, nutrition, etc.), how they provide support to their children and what precautions they took. Since it is thought that the features related to the distance and face-to-face education may affect the experiences of parents, it is anticipated that this study will contribute to the understanding of the related topics. It is hoped that the findings will be beneficial to the educational practices to be carried out in the face-to-face and distance education process.

## **Aim**

In this study, it is aimed to determine the concerns, the precautions taken and the expectations of the parents whose children were attending the basic education schools during the pandemic period. Based on this aim the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of the pandemic on the basic education students and their parents?
2. What are the concerns, precautions and expectations of the parents regarding the distance education process during the pandemic period?
3. What are the concerns, precautions and expectations of the families regarding the face-to-face education process during the pandemic period?

## **Methodology**

### **Research design**

In accordance with the aim of the study, the qualitative research and phenomenology design were used as the basis of the study design. The phenomenological design emphasizes the views and experiences of the participants, questions the meanings derived from the experiences, and focuses on the patterns formed from these experiences (Cresswell, 2012). This study is described as a phenomenological study since it is aimed to analyse and examine the concerns of the parents of the basic education students during the pandemic period, the precautions they have taken, and their expectations from this process, based on their experiences in regard to the face-to-face and distance education.

### **Participants**

The participants of the study are 20 parents whose children were attending a basic education school in Afyonkarahisar. They were chosen through the criterion sampling technique, one of the purposive sampling techniques. The main purpose of criterion sampling is to select a sample that meets a set of predetermined criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study, two criteria were taken into consideration in the selection of the participants, namely volunteer participants and having children attending a basic education school. Of 20 participants 12 were female and 8 male. In addition, 14 of them are university graduates, 4 of them are high school, secondary school and primary school graduates. Of the participating parents, 13 were working in a public institution, one was working in a private firm, one was freelance, and five were engaged in other professions. There are five parents from each grade level (namely, 1., 2., 3. and 4 grades).

### **Data collection tools**

The data of the study were collected through the interviews. Therefore, an interview form entitled the interview form about the parents' concerns, steps and expectations about the education in the pandemic. The form is consisted of eleven open-ended items. The draft form was reviewed by two specialists, one from the classroom education field and one from the educational sciences. Based on the feedback from them the items were revised. The form is used in a pilot study using a sample of two parents. The findings of the pilot study were used to further revise the items in terms of clarity, expression, relevance and understanding, and the items were finalized.

### **Data collection procedure**

The data of the study were collected between 24 and 30 April 2021. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder. Before the start of the interview, the participants were informed in advance that their identities would not be shared with the third parties in any way, and that the information/findings obtained would only be used for scientific research purposes. The interviews were conducted in an environment where the participants could easily answer the questions (using Whatsapp & Zoom applications). Interviews with the participants took place between a minimum of 12 minutes and 25 seconds and a maximum of 25 minutes and 5 seconds.

### **Ethical permission**

Before the data collection process an ethical permission was taken (Afyon Kocatepe University, Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee date 24 April 2021 and numbered 2021/243).

## **Data analysis**

The data collected were examined using the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Thematic analysis allows us to analyze the commonalities, similarities and differences in the data (Gibson & Brown, 2009) as well as to organize the dataset in the smallest dimensions and to describe the data in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The stages of thematic analysis include familiarity, coding, initial theme development, theme revision, theme completion, and report generation (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In this research, the following procedures were carried out within the scope of thematic analysis:

During the familiarization phase, the interview recordings were transferred to Word by the authors, and the transcripts were read several times to identify keywords and phrases related to the research questions. The codes were then used to identify these keywords and were then grouped together to form the initial themes. These themes were revised to create shorter thematic groups before the final theme list was developed. Again, at this stage, during the writing process of the research report, it was decided to directly quote the reports of the participants that would most effectively describe the themes and codes related to the themes. In order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants in the direct quotations, each participant was given a code name [i.e., Canan (V11)]. The first number in the codes indicates the grade level of the child, and the second number indicates the participant's order in the research.

## **Validity and reliability analyses**

In qualitative research, the concepts of credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), reliability-consistency (internal reliability) and confirmability (external reliability) are used instead of the concepts of validity and reliability (Erlandson et. al., 1993 cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study, in order to increase credibility (internal validity), the authors' own prejudices and values were avoided as much as possible, and the in-depth data were collected. At the end of the data collection, the data obtained were summarized and presented to the participants for their confirmation. In order to ensure transferability/transferability (external validity), the study participants were determined using the purposeful sampling. In addition, the research process was described in detail, and the detailed descriptions and direct quotations from the participants' views were presented. In order to increase reliability/consistency (internal reliability), another reviewer was included during the coding phase of the data, and the reviewers provided the codes and sub-themes separately from each other. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Miles and Hubberman formula (Miles & Hubermann, 1994):  $[\text{Mutual agreement} / (\text{Mutual agreement} + \text{disagreement}) \times 100]$ . The reliability coefficient was found to be 82%. The data were collected by the authors for confirmability (external reliability). The data analysis were reviewed by another specialists, and a confirmation examination was made.

## **Findings**

The findings of the study are presented under the following three headings: (1) the effects of the pandemic on the students and their parents, (2) the concerns, steps taken and expectations

of the parents about the distance education process and (3) the concerns, steps taken and expectations of the parents about the face-to-face education process during the pandemic.

### **Views of the parents about the effects of the pandemic on the students and them**

The opinions of the parents about how they felt about the decision to close the schools after the pandemic were analysed. The feelings of the parents about the closure of schools due to the pandemic are given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Feelings of the Parents about the Closure of Schools due to the Pandemic*

Theme	Subtheme	Codes
<b>Negative feelings</b>	Concerns	Decrease in academic achievement virus transmission to children Not being able to gain the study habits Not being able to adapt to the pandemic conditions Not being able to gain a school culture
	Uncertainty	Not knowing how education will be offered Not knowing when the schools will be opened Not knowing how to support the children in the educational process
	Sadness	Children being away from school Children unable to make friends
	Confusion	The need not to close schools Being so early to close schools
<b>Positive feelings</b>	Trust/Happiness	Protecting children from disease Family members being together An opportunity for parents to educate their children

As can be seen in Table 1 the parents mostly reported negative feelings due to the closure of the schools (concerns, uncertainty, sadness and confusion). They frequently emphasized the possibility of decrease in their children’s academic achievement. There are other parents who reported positive feelings about the closure of the schools.

One of the parents who expressed concerns over the closure of the schools reported the following views: *“It caused concerns due to fact that my child would attend the 1st grade. I thought that she could not learn reading and writing.”* (V14). The views of another parent who expressed uncertainty are as follows: *“When will the schools open? How far will this disease go? It is still not over.”* (V32). The following quotations indicate the positive feelings of the parents about the closure of the schools: *“We were worried about the children because there was no vaccine and treatment at that time. Closing schools made it better and we felt ourselves safer.”* (V12) and *“I was happy to have an opportunity to educate my children and to spend time with them.”* (V13).

Table 2 presents the views of the parents concerning the effects of the pandemic on the children.

**Table 2**

*Views of the Parents Concerning the effects of the Pandemic on the Children*

Theme	Subtheme	Codes
<b>Negative effects on children</b>	Psychological	Missing friends
		Missing school
		Feeling unhappiness and sadness
		Increase of technology addiction
		Being worried
		Being irritable
	Educational	Feeling hopelessness
		Being away from education
		Undisciplined/irregular behavior
		Being away from school culture
Social	Decrease in academic achievement	
	Being unwillingness	
	Being asocial	
Health	Being bored	
	Not being able to make friends	
	Poor eye health	

Table 2 shows that for parents the pandemic has negative effects on the children. There is no participant who cited a positive effect of it on children. The parents mostly referred to these negative effects on children in terms of psychology, education, social and health. Some of the quotations are given as follows: *“Asya did not cry very much. She started to have crying spells. She had crying spells, making excuses for something. She became much more irritable.”* (V14) and *“He does not want to attend some face-to-face classes. He is reluctant to attend these courses.”* (V11).

**The concerns, steps taken and expectations of the parents about the distance education process**

The opinions of the participants on the distance education process during the pandemic period are analysed. Based on these views, first of all, the thoughts of the parents about the distance education are examined. In addition, the views of the parents are investigated about the changes in the study habits of children during the distance education process. Based on these analyses the following points are revealed: the parents’ concerns about the distance education process, for which study subjects they support their children in the distance education process, what precautions they take regarding the distance education process, and what kind of expectations they have from the teachers in the distance education process. When the views of the parents on the distance education during the pandemic period are examined, it is seen that their views on this subject were generally negative. Their views on the distance education during the pandemic period and its effect on children’s study habits are given in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Parents’ Views on the Distance Education during the Pandemic Period and Its Effect on Children’s Study Habits*

Theme	Subtheme	Codes
		Not being a full replacement for the face-to-face education
		Needing family support

<b>Views on distance education</b>	Negative views	Not providing equal opportunities/ insufficient opportunities Being a difficult process Not being useful/productive Leading to deficiency in learning Not being able to create a social environment Causing distraction Not supporting the physical development
	Positive views	Children’s ability to adapt Being a good alternative Being useful/productive Teaching the use of technological devices
<b>Views on the effects of the distance education on children’s study habits</b>	Psychological	Decreases in student motivation Unwillingness Getting bored / bored quickly Quick distraction
	Educational	Children’s inability to establish a study routine Children’s difficulty in doing homework Children’s need to get support Irregularity/ Negligence

Table 3 shows that the views of the parents about the distance education are mostly negative (not being a full replacement of the face-to-face education, not providing equal opportunity and a social environment, etc.). Some parents expressed the positive views about the distance education citing the children’s ability to adapt to it, their learning of the using the technological devices and time flexibility.

One of the participants who argued that the distance education is not productive stated the following: *“While showing a topic, it is a waste of time, and only 3-4 questions are solved in a half-hour lesson.”* (V33). Another participant stated that the distance education cannot be a full replacement of the face-to-face education and expressed the following views: *“My child does her homework, but unfortunately there is no quality as in the face-to-face education.”* (V45). However, another participant argued that the distance education makes it possible to save time stating *“It is not possible to provide the same thing as the school environment, but it saves a lot of time.”* (V13).

Based on the opinions of the parents, it is seen that the effect of the distance education in the pandemic period on the study habits of their children is mostly negative. In terms of the psychological effects on children it is reported by them that the children behaved comfortably towards their course responsibilities, they were reluctant to study, they quickly got bored with their lessons and they could not pay necessary attention to the lessons. The educational effect reported by the parents are that they had difficulty in doing their lessons, they had to do more homework compared to the face-to-face education, they could not establish a study routine, they needed support, and they did their homework carelessly.

One of the participants who argued that the distance education reduced the motivation of her children stated *“children are not interested in their courses...”* (V34). Another one reported that her children are not willing to do homework and expressed the following: *“No matter how careful we are, they are more reluctant to do homework.”* (V35). One of the participants stated that her children’s homework load increased due to the fact that the courses was not totally completed in online classes: *“Right now there is a lot of homework piling up after the live class*

until the next day. Because the teacher cannot handle everything. My child started doing more homework in distance education.” (V11).

It is also found that the effects of the distance education process on the study habits of children are generally negative, causing many of the parents to experience anxiety about this issue. Since the basic education level is an important period for the acquisition of some basic and critical behaviors, it is seen that the parents are worried that their children will not be able to acquire these critical and basic behaviors in this process. However, they are also worried about the issues that their children will not gain in this process, that they will be unsuccessful in their lessons, and that they will not gain the habit of studying.

One of the participants who had concerns about his children’s inability to develop well-established study habits stated the following views: “Because some points are basics and very critical. When they cannot acquire such critical qualities, it may be much more serious problems for the children in future. Therefore, this worries me a lot.” (V15). Another parent reported that he had some concerns over continuous need of his children to get help and expressed the following: “My child has become much more dependent on us. He began to do everything with us. I think he has concerns about his ability to do things. It makes us worried.” (V21).

The measures taken by the parents in order for the distance education process to be effective for their children during the pandemic period and their expectations from teachers regarding the distance education process are given in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Steps taken and Expectations from Teachers regarding the Distance Education Process*

Theme	Subtheme	Codes
<b>Steps taken</b>	Educational	Repetition of the topics/ exercises/solving test items/ homework
		Observations of students’ course attendance
		Using additional books and sources
		Reading books
		Using educational websites
	Technical background	Tablet computer
		Internet
	Printer	
	Physical environment	Study environment
		Not leading to distraction
	Social	Meeting with friends
		Social activities/ giving responsibility
	Psychological	Supporting/ motivating
	Health	Paying attention to nutrition
<b>Expectations from teachers</b>	Teaching and learning process	Additional study/repetition
		Giving equal opportunities to talk
		Creating a social environment in the courses
		Motivating the students
		Guiding the students

Measurement and assessment	Giving feedback to the homework assignments Taking into consideration the course attendance Using examinations
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When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the parents take precautions in many areas so that the distance education process can be effective for their children. It appears that they take the most precautions in the educational field so that their children can benefit from the distance education process effectively. It is observed that they follow their lessons regularly, have their children do additional work, and make use of additional resources and educational websites. Apart from this, the parents create the necessary infrastructure for children to attend online classes, prepare an environment suitable for their children to study physically, do various activities so that their children do not experience social deficiencies, support their children to be psychologically motivated towards their lessons, and ensure that their children are healthy. They also reported that they pay attention to their nutrition. One participant who stated that she had the child do additional work expressed her views as follows: *“I attempted to follow our child’s homework. In addition, we made her do additional studies about the courses.”* (V14). There is another participant who used the educational websites to support her child: *“I am trying to get questions, lectures, and materials related to the topics from education sites that he does not understand.”* (V34). Another participant emphasized the creation of a suitable study environment for children at home and stated *“Our child has a quiet study place at home. We tried not to distract him from studying at home.”* (V12).

As seen in Table 4, the expectations of the parents from teachers in the distance education process are mostly related to the education process. The parents stated that they expect teachers to make additional studies for their children in the distance education process, to give children an equal voice in live lessons, and to increase the motivation of children. Some parents, on the other hand, stated that they wanted teachers to give feedback on homework, to evaluate their children’s participation in live lessons, and to follow up with evaluation exams for the subjects they studied in the distance education process. One participant stated that teachers should give equal opportunity to students to express their views: *“As in the classroom, I had an expectation that voices would be allowed equally in the class.”* (V32). Another participant expected teachers to motivate students: *“First of all, we expected teachers to encourage children to attend the distance education classes.”* (V43). Another participant expressed her expectations from teachers in terms of assessment: *“As in the face-to-face education, I expect teachers to follow the students through the use of tests.”* (V31).

### **Concerns, steps taken and expectations of the parents about the face-to-face education process**

In line with this aim, the opinions of the participants concerning the face-to-face education process during the pandemic period are analysed. Based on these views, first of all, parents’ thoughts about the face-to-face courses at the schools were examined. Therefore, the concerns of the parents about the face-to-face education process, what precautions they take for the face-to-face education process and what kind of expectations they have from the teachers in the face-to-face education process are investigated.

Table 5 presents the views of the parents concerning the attendance of their children to the face-to-face courses at schools.

**Table 5**

*Parental Views about the Attendance to the Face-To-Face Courses at Schools*

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
<b>Letting children to attend the face-to-face courses</b>	Educational	Ineffectiveness of distance education
		Lack of compensation for the face-to-face education
		Face-to-face courses' many benefits
		Easy to learn at school
		Being active in the face-to-face education
	Lack of study at home	
Social	An opportunity to socialize	
	Not being an addict of technology	
	Being responsible	
Psychological	Feeling good	
	Being happy	
<b>Not letting children to attend the face-to-face courses</b>	Health	Increase in the number of cases
		Pandemic period
		Having a chronic disease
		Having health-related concerns
	Steps taken	Not following the steps
		Insufficient steps
Educational	Crowded classrooms	
	No opportunity to check the children	

As seen in Table 5, most of the parents do not want their children to participate in the face-to-face education during the pandemic period. The reason for this is having concerns about health, inadequacy of precautions and the lack of opportunity to supervise students in face-to-face education. It is also found that some of the parents want their children to participate in the face-to-face education during the pandemic period. They argued that they did not see distance education as sufficient in terms of education, and that distance education prevented the social development of children in social terms. One of the participants reported that he did not let his child to attend the face-to-face courses due to the chronic illness of the child: *“Because my child has asthma since childhood. In this pandemic period, we hear that the mutant virus causes more damage in the lungs of children. That's why I do not want to send my child to the school.”* (V15). Another participant said that he did not want to send his child to the face-to-face courses at the school because the measures taken were insufficient, and individuals did not comply with the rules: *“Because I did not want my child to attend the face-to-face courses because the measures to be taken during the pandemic process in our country are insufficient at school and many people do not comply with these measures taken.”* (V21). One of the participants argued that the face-to-face courses are much more beneficial for the students and stated her views as follows: *“Because I think that the face-to-face education is more beneficial than the distance education. And because the minister of national education said that there will be no compensation for the lessons in face-to-face education, we sent our child to school.”* (V32).

It is found that the parents are generally worried due to the face-to-face education during the pandemic period. The main reason for their anxiety is the possibility of transmitting the virus to their children for many reasons, including going to school. Other factors that cause the parents to experience anxiety about the face-to-face education are the emergence of cases at

schools, the non-compliance with the rules, inefficient face-to-face education, mutation of the virus and crowded classrooms. One of the participants explained his concerns as follows: “*In addition, I do not think that the fact that education is only two days of face-to-face education at schools will provide much benefit to children in this regard. We are concerned that it will not contribute to their academic success.*” (V21). Another parent explained his concern as follows: “*I have some concerns. The class of my child is very crowded. That’s why I did not let my child attend the face-to-face courses at the school.*” (V15).

Table 6 presents the steps taken by the parents and their expectations from teachers during the face-to-face education.

**Table 6**

*The steps taken by the parents and their expectations from teachers during the face-to-face education*

Theme	Subtheme	Codes
<b>Steps taken by the parents in the face-to-face education</b>	Steps about the actions	Having extra masks Having cologne/ disinfectant Having wet wipes Personal nutrition preparation Frequent change of clothes
	Steps to inform children	Keeping the necessary distance Using masks Washing hands Not using the sinks Feeding in the open air Cleaning of student desks Not sharing their belongings Using cologne/ disinfectant Following the school rules
<b>Expectations from teachers</b>	Educational	Academic support and repetition of the topics Paying attention to basic courses Addition studies and homework Evaluation of learning Teaching simple topic first
	Health	Paying attention to cleaning and other points Cooperation with parents Not allowing parents and others to enter into the schools
	Psychological	Improving motivation and self-confidence Guiding them to reduce anxiety
	Social	Acquisition of the school culture

Table 6 indicates that the steps taken by the parents during the face-to-face education process during the pandemic period are mostly related to the health of children. They stated that they took the necessary measures for their children to participate in the face-to-face education in a healthy way and informed their children about the pandemic. The participants also added that they wanted their children to keep materials such as spare masks, colognes, disinfectants and wet wipes in their bags. Apart from these, they argued that they inform their children about some issues that need attention. It is seen that such information is generally about keeping the distance at school, paying attention to their hygiene, giving them proper food and not sharing their belongings with his friends. One participant stated that she paid attention to the nutrition

of her child and expressed the following: *“We gave him those foods that he could share with his friends at school.”* (V11). One of the parents who stated that he used cleaning materials as a step reported the following: *“For example, he has a mask cologne and wet wipes with him. Apart from that, we constantly give him verbal warnings.”* (V24). One of the parents who stated that she informed her children about the pandemic as a step expressed her views as follows: *“We have warned our child not to get too close to her friends and not to take things from each other.”* (V35).

As seen in Table 6, it is found that most of the parents have educational expectations from teachers in order for the face-to-face education process to be effective for children in the pandemic period. Considering their expectations in this regard, they wanted teachers to repeat the subjects in distance education, to pay much more attention to the basic courses such as Turkish and Mathematics in the face-to-face education, and to conduct additional studies and to evaluate what children learned in distance education. The health-related expectations of the parents from teachers are about taking necessary precautions in school and classroom, not taking parents to school and classroom, and making cooperation with parents. The psychological expectations of the parents are that teachers should motivate children to increase their self-confidence and reduce their anxiety due to the epidemic. Social expectations from teachers are to bring school culture among their children who are away from school due to the pandemic.

Educational expectations from teachers are stated by one of the participants as follows: *“We expected the teacher to give feedback on the points that our child does not understand, I expect him to give the necessary feedback.”* (V43). The views of a participants regarding the expectations from teachers on taking steps are as follows: *“I am asking for the teacher to warn my child so that he does not take off his mask. I want the teacher to use disinfectant. I want the teacher to bring my child together with his friends.”* (V41). Another participant expressed her views as follows: *“I would expect the teacher to show interest in a way that will reduce the child’s stress, anxiety, increase her motivation, and support not only her academic success but also psychologically.”* (V13).

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions**

In the study, the opinions of the parents on education during the pandemic period are analysed in the study. Through the interviews, it is tried to determine the concerns of the parents about both the face-to-face and distance education during the pandemic period, the precautions they took and their expectations from teachers. The fact that the current pandemic has affected many areas of our lives has increased the concerns of the parents on this issue and it is seen that it has caused various feelings among the parents such as uncertainty, sadness, surprise, confidence and happiness. It is also found that the parents mostly experienced the negative emotions such as anxiety, uncertainty, sadness, and surprise due to the closure of schools due to the pandemic. The studies conducted in Turkey (Akkaş Baysal & Ocağ, 2020; Bozdağ, 2021; Günbaş & Gözükcükük, 2020; Keleşoğlu & Adam Karduz, 2020; Yüksek Usta & Gökcan, 2020) and in different countries (Bhamani et al., 2020; Garbe et al., 2020; Koskela et al., 2020; Lase et al., 2020; Parczewska, 2020) also concluded that the parents have difficulties in homeschooling after the closure of schools and they experience negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, stress, helplessness and uncertainty. The reason why the parents experience negative feelings in general can be cited as the fatal risk of the pandemic in terms of health, not knowing how long the process will last, and their view that their children will be away from school and education.

The parents stated that their children were generally adversely affected during the pandemic period and generally experienced psychological problems. It is found that the restrictions in many areas due to the pandemic and being away from school and friends cause children to miss school and friends, to feel unhappiness, to worry, to become irritable, to have crying spells and to experience hopelessness. In addition, it is stated that during the pandemic process, children lost their educational motivation and became asocial. The other studies also reported that children get bored at home and have psychological problems (Bozdağ, 2021; Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020), that they miss their friends and school environment (Akça & Akgün, 2020; Akgül & Oran, 2020; Akkaş Baysal & Ocak, 2020; Lase et al., 2020), that they experience restlessness or eating and sleep disorders (İnci Kuzu, 2020; Özçevik & Ocakçı, 2020; Yüksek Usta & Gökcan, 2020), that their motivation has reduced and they become asocial (Topcubaşı & Cebeci Topcubaşı, 2020), that they experience fear and anxiety of being infected (Akoğlu & Karaaslan, 2020; Bhamani et al., 2020; Özçevik & Ocakçı, 2020), that they frequently cry without any solid reason (Alisinanoğlu et al., 2020) that they experience sluggishness and poor concentration (İnci Kuzu, 2020) and tension and conflict (Alisinanoğlu et al., 2020; Parczewska, 2020).

The parents mostly expressed negative thoughts about distance education during the pandemic period: that it is not a full substitute for the face-to-face education in general, that children need constant family support in this process, that it does not provide equal opportunities, that it does not create a social environment, that it is a difficult process and not efficient and that it causes incomplete learning. Some of the negative views of the parents about the distance education which have been reported in different studies are as follows: problems related to technical background and Internet (Abuhammad, 2020; Akgül & Oran, 2020; Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020; İnci Kuzu, 2020; Lase et al., 2020), not being very productive as much as face-to-face education (Akça & Akgün, 2020; Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020; İnci Kuzu, 2020; Parczewska, 2020; Topcubaşı & Cebeci Topcubaşı, 2020), not providing a social environment (Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020; Mısırlı & Ergüleç, 2020), being a costly way of education (Abuhammad, 2020; Lase et al., 2020), not providing a classroom atmosphere (Akça & Akgün, 2020), student distractions (İnci Kuzu, 2020), learning loses (Akkaş & Ocak, 2020) and not providing an equal opportunity to students (Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020). Therefore, it can be stated that the parents mostly express negative views about the distant education.

According to the parents, there is a negative change in the study habits of children during the pandemic period. They reported that their children experience the lack of motivation, reluctance, boredom, distraction, disorder and difficulty in their study habits. There are other studies which reported that the student motivation is very low (Bozkurt, 2020; Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020; Lase et al., 2020; Topcubaşı & Cebeci Topcubaşı, 2020), they are not interested in the courses (Lase et al., 2020), children study undisciplined and irregularly (Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020), they get easily bored (Mısırlı & Ergüleç, 2020), and easily distract (Yurtbakan & Akyıldız, 2020). It is also reported that the level of reading books among children is very low (Akça & Akgün, 2020; İnci Kuzu, 2020). It is found in the present study that the change in children's study habits causes anxiety among some parents. They stated the reason for their anxiety as basic education being the period when basic and critical behaviors are acquired. They also cited children's inability to acquire the habit of studying, and their unsuccessful and incomplete learning in their lessons. In the research conducted by Akkaş Baysal & Ocak (2020), it concluded that the parents experience anxiety and fear that their

children will move away from school and lessons. Lase et al. (2020), on the other hand, found that children's difficulties in the lessons cause the parents to worry.

As a precaution in the distance education process, the parents are found to make their children repeat lessons and topics, follow their children's course attendance and homework, benefit from additional resources and sites in children's lessons, provide their children with equipment and infrastructure, provide their children with a working environment and support their study habits, motivate their children and that they made their children do social activities. In the studies it is reported that the parents support their children's homework (Günbaş & Gözükcük, 2020), have their children do additional studies, guide their learning (Koskela et al., 2020; Lase et al., 2020), cooperate with their teachers (Koskela et al., 2020), organizes social events (Bhamani et al., 2020), gives motivation (Garbe et al., 2020), and follows the children's courses (Yurtbakan & Akyıldız, 2020). In the studies it has been also found that the parents can help their children do their homework (Ayaz, 2020; Günbaş & Gözükcük, 2020; Lase et al., 2020; Yurtbakan & Akyıldız, 2020), but they need support when there is the lack of devices (Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020) and when there is a need to give psychological motivation (İnci Kuzu, 2020; Parczewska, 2020).

The expectations of the parents from the teachers in the distance education process are determined as follows: to provide additional education to children, to give students an equal voice in live lessons, to provide a classroom environment, to provide motivation for high class participation, to use technology effectively and to give priority to main lessons. In the studies the parents suggested that teachers should employ the support strategies for low-achieving students (Abuhammad, 2020), organize the teaching process better (Koskela et al., 2020), explain the subjects in a more detailed manner (Yurtbakan & Akyıldız, 2020) and cover much more interesting experiments and activities in lessons, make students do more homework, make better use of technology (Ayaz, 2020), provide social interaction (Özdoğan & Berkant, 2020), motivate students (Mısırlı & Ergüleç, 2020) and communicate more with parents (Bhamani et al., 2020).

While some of the parents wanted their children to participate in the face-to-face education during the pandemic period, some of them stated that they did not want their children to participate in the face-to-face education. Those parents who want their children to participate in the face-to-face education expressed that the distance education is inefficient, that a social environment is created in face-to-face education, that his children feel happier at school and that they experience technical problems in distance education. Some of the parents stated that they did not want his children to attend the face-to-face education during the pandemic period due to reasons such as the increase in the epidemic and cases, the mutation of the virus, the chronic disease of his child, and the failure to comply with the rules and precautions. In the related studies, the parents argued that they want their children to participate in the face-to-face education because they can communicate with their teachers at school and get feedback from them (Günbaş & Gözükcük, 2020; Yurtbakan & Akyıldız, 2020).

Although some of the parents wanted their children to participate in face-to-face education during the pandemic period, it is found that they were concerned about this situation. It is revealed that the parents experience anxiety due to the possibility of transmission of the virus, cases in schools, and crowded classes. In addition, some parents stated that everyone will overcome the virus in a healthy way, that the necessary precautions are taken in schools and that they do not experience anxiety because they think that their children have necessary

awareness about the pandemic. Yüksek Usta and Gökcan (2020), in their study, concluded that children are well-versed in the precautions and that they are aware of the fact that they should take necessary steps to protect themselves from the virus.

It is determined that the parents generally take precautions in regard to the health-care in the face-to-face education during the pandemic period. It is also found that they inform their children about the pandemic, while sending their children to school, they told them that they should keep spare masks, disinfectants, colognes, and wet wipes in their bags, while at the same time keeping their distance, not taking their masks off, not sharing their belongings, obeying the rules and paying attention to hygiene. Yüksek Usta and Gökcan (2020) found that the parents told their children about the epidemic, the precautions to be taken, and did not benefit from any source or person while telling these topics to their children.

The expectations of the parents from the teacher in the face-to-face education during the pandemic period are found to be as follows: to support their children academically, to pay attention to individual differences, to eliminate the deficiencies of distance education, to take necessary health measures, to cooperate with parents, to provide children with self-confidence and motivation and to make students to gain the school culture. Çaykuş and Mutlu Çaykuş (2020) stated that teachers should organize in-class and extra-curricular activities where children can share their feelings and thoughts about the covid-19 epidemic, realize their dysfunctional thoughts, and learn what they do not know about the covid-19. In addition, teachers stated that the children should work in cooperation with their family members with whom he/she spends all his/her time and with mental health professionals, if any, to receive a psychological support.

The following suggestions are developed based on the findings of the study:

- Activities that increase the motivation of teachers and children should be included in the education process of the pandemic period.
- A parent, children and teacher cooperation should be ensured in order to carry out the education process effectively.
- Equal opportunity should be provided to all children in the education process of the pandemic period.
- Parents may be given some training to offer much more suitable support to their children in the distance education process.

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