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Abstract

This study aims to examine the perspectives of the Faculty of Education Academicians towards distance education with the help of SWOT analysis. The study was designed with the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods. The research group consists of 30 academicians working in different fields at the Faculty of Education of a state University located in the north of Turkey. A Personal information form and a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers were used as data collection tools in the study. Descriptive and content analysis techniques were used in data analysis. Within the scope of the validity and reliability studies of the research, direct excerpts and participant confirmation were performed. According to the results of the research, we report that academicians focus on digital literacy, access-preparation of online content suitable for learning goals/courses, communication-interaction, assessment-evaluation, and distance education system during the transition to distance education during the pandemic period. According to the findings, a distance education transformation model was proposed for education faculties and suggestions were presented in this direction.

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Research Article**An Education Faculty Example in the Evaluation of the Distance Education Process: SWOT Analysis***Meral ÇELİKOĞLU¹ , Hacı Mehmet YEŞİLTAS² , Erol TAŞ³ **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the perspectives of the Faculty of Education Academicians towards distance education with the help of SWOT analysis. The study was designed with the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods. The research group consists of 30 academicians working in different fields at the Faculty of Education of a state University located in the north of Turkey. A Personal information form and a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers were used as data collection tools in the study. Descriptive and content analysis techniques were used in data analysis. Within the scope of the validity and reliability studies of the research, direct excerpts and participant confirmation were performed. According to the results of the research, we report that academicians focus on digital literacy, access-preparation of online content suitable for learning goals/courses, communication-interaction, assessment-evaluation, and distance education system during the transition to distance education during the pandemic period. According to the findings, a distance education transformation model was proposed for education faculties and suggestions were presented in this direction.

Keywords: Distance education, SWOT analysis, transformation in distance education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The last century has been a period in which the economic and social expectations of societies, and therefore the educational needs of individuals, differed. The developments in technology, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence have created factors that facilitate meeting basic needs such as education and facilitated the elimination of the factors that limit the opportunities to receive an education. For example; distance from the educational institution, the inadequacy of the space and capacity in the educational institutions, the desire to learn in line with the interests and abilities of the individual, the ability to continue life-long learning, etc. we may say that factors such as distance education and technological developments become easier (Koloğlu, 2016). In addition, distance education has a structure that can meet higher education standards, and the perspective on distance education has completely changed after the Covid-19 pandemic. It has become an indispensable element for the continuity of education, not an alternative (Barış & Çankaya, 2016). In the Covid-19 process, trying to adapt the entire burden of educational environments to distance education conditions has created a transformation from formal education to distance education, especially in higher education. Avallone (2020) explains this transformation with 5 basic elements in her study (Figure 1).

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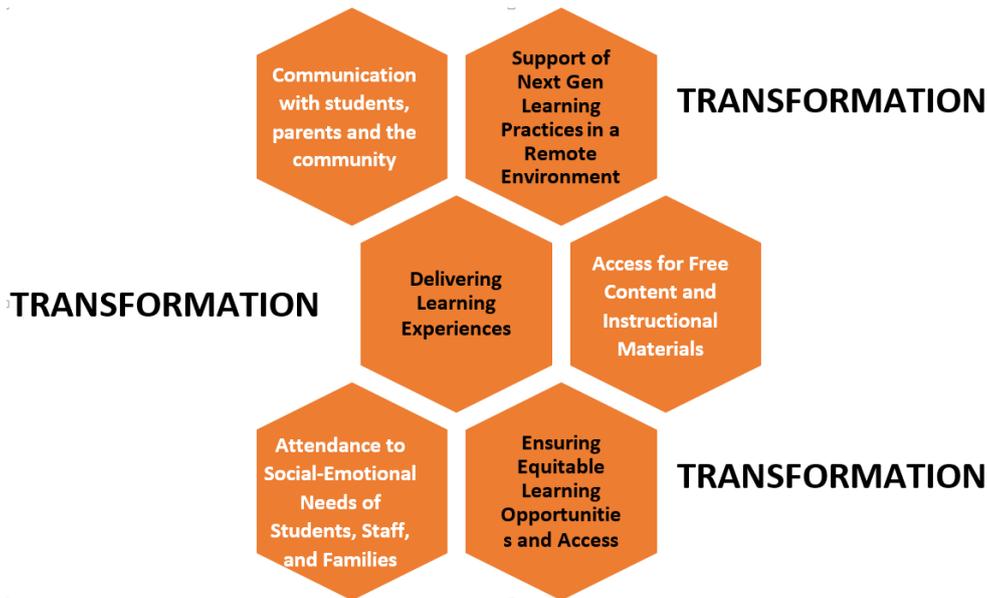


Figure 1. Transformation of education following covid-19 (Avallone, 2020),
<https://www.nextgenlearning.org/articles/supporting-our-learning-communities-in-a-time-of-crisis>)

There are some fundamental implementing factors in the realization of such a transformation. According to Figure 1, firstly, a distance education plan should be created and all stakeholders involved should be guided and communicated with this plan in the process. Secondly, deeper learning opportunities need to be designed for online distance education, especially due to the involvement of social distancing. Third, equitable learning opportunities, access, and social equality (without language, religion, race, etc. discrimination) should be provided in the distance education environment. Then, to manage extraordinary situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic, etc., the social-emotional needs of all stakeholders (students, staff, and families) in the education process must be met to cope with the stress of such situations and to manage the resulting anxiety. Fifth, it is necessary to provide a learning experience that includes the distance education guide, resources, and online resource links to support the process and approaches to be used in teaching. Finally, free and unrestricted access to content and educational materials, and recommended network resources are required (Avallone, 2020). Many educational institutions have tried to create the dynamics mentioned above. However, in this process, it is obvious that there is a problem of harmony between the opportunities of educational institutions, educational goals, and expectations of students (Bilgiç & Tüzün, 2015). The low rate of adaptation to change, perhaps the lack of a B or C plan for such situations in many institutions, has hampered education to a large extent. In the world, adaptation to this process has become easier and productivity has increased in countries that have taken strategic planning measures (Regueras, Verdu, Munoz, Perez, De Castro, & Verdu, 2009; Tibingana-Ahimbisibwea, Willisb, Catheralla, Butleraand & Harrison, 2022). When faced with an unknown situation, strategic planning is a way to help an institution be more productive, and it is the most important guidance on how to use existing resources to achieve goals and objectives (Gürel & Tat, 2017). SWOT, on the other hand, is the most widely used among the known strategic planning methods (Vindača, Lubkina, Abuže & Ušča, 2021; Yelken, Kılıç, & Özdemir, 2012).

1.1. SWOT Analysis

Today, the continuous change and development of institutions, systems, personnel, and beneficiaries of these systems have made the ability of individuals to adapt to changing conditions the most important individual competence. The profiles of not only companies, and institutions, but also education systems, schools, teachers, and even students are constantly changing, and we wake up to

the new day with different values and competencies. This situation necessitates an evaluation and the conversion of positive or negative results into opportunities. Knowing our strengths and weaknesses, both as individuals and as institutions, we should be able to analyze emerging opportunities and emerging or potential threats, and reveal the situation we are in. There are different bases on which we can seek help in such a case analysis. One of them is referred to as SWOT analysis in the literature. SWOT is a term formed by the combination of four different terms as a word. These are stated as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Namugenyi, Nimmagadda & Reiners, 2019). SWOT was first introduced by Humphrey in the 1960s as SOFT (Satisfactory, Opportunities, Fault, and Threat). Over time, SWOT gets its final form with the contributions of many researchers (Bozok, 2019:28). In this analysis, factors consist of internal and external environments and various subsystems connected to them. It is a necessity to analyze these factors in education systems as in institutions. Conducting such analyzes will certainly contribute greatly to increasing the quality of education. In this regard, the use of SWOT analysis in the preparation of upper policy documents and in determining development areas is also mentioned in the MoNE 2015-2019 Strategic Plan Preparation Program (MoNE, 2013:11). While the process of examining this organization and its environment is called SWOT analysis (Gürel & Tat, 2017), the result of this analysis reveals a thinking model for managers (Ülgen & Mirze, 2014). It is a standard brainstorming and communication technique used to identify problems associated with changes (Zhu & Mugenyi, 2015). In this analysis method, strong and weak factors constitute internal factors, while opportunities and threats constitute external factors (Leiber, Stensaker, & Harvey, 2018).



Figure 2. Schematic Presentation of SWOT Analysis (Leiber, Stensaker & Harvey, 2018).

The main purpose of the SWOT analysis is to make a systematic evaluation of the subject under investigation. In educational processes, we may state that the internal and external factors of the institution or program are revealed (Gökmenoğlu & Eret, 2011). For example, a SWOT analysis of distance education, which is the subject of the research, can provide us with ideas about the existence of strong and weak points, the opportunities, and the threats that distance education can bring in this process. It will help us in solving the problems experienced especially in the context of systemic, procedural, and student-academicians.

SWOT analysis studies carried out to increase the quality of the education process in higher education (faculties of nursing, tourism, accounting, computer and programming, computer and instructional technologies, business administration, and open education) are mostly included in studies

that evaluate this process from the eyes of students, apart from the studies reflecting the views of the faculties providing distance education and the common compulsory courses taught in these faculties (Aksoy, Aksu, Sözbir & Erenel, 2022; Barış & Çankaya, 2016; Bayrak & Önal, 2021; Erfidan, 2019; Koloğlu, 2016; Makhakhane, Wilkinson & Ndeya-Ndereya, 2016; Özköse, Arı & Çakır, 2013; Yanpar Yelken, Kılıç & Özdemir, 2012). However, with the Covid-19 pandemic, no study has been found that includes the views of academicians working in education faculties that provide both practical and theoretical courses with distance education. Since the views of the academicians, who are the instructors of the courses, have a significant impact on the values and standards of the pre-service teachers and the field (Swazey, Anderson, & Louis, 1993), it is considered that the relevant study will shed light on the systemic, procedural and stakeholder problems within the education faculties and offers suggestions for the solution of these problems. In this regard, our research question and sub-problems that we seek to answer within the scope of the study are;

Research Question: How do the academicians working in the Faculty of Education perceive the application of distance education in teacher education?

1. What are the perceived strengths of the academicians working in the Faculty of Education regarding the application of distance education in teacher education?

2. What are the perceived weaknesses of the academicians working in the Faculty of Education regarding the implementation of distance education in teacher education?

3. What are the opportunities perceived by the academicians working in the Faculty of Education regarding the application of distance education in teacher education?

4. What are the threats perceived by the academicians working in the Faculty of Education regarding the implementation of distance education in teacher education?

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Method

In this study, which was conducted to evaluate the distance education process of the faculty of education faculty members with SWOT analysis, the case study design, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. A case study is a research design in which data obtained through different data collection techniques such as interviews and observations about a situation or event in our current life are systematically examined, interpreted, and described (Creswell, 2013).

2.2. Study Group

The study group in the research consists of 30 academicians working in the education faculty of a state university located in the north of Turkey. The maximum diversity case sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used to include the academicians from all departments. The title and department information of the academicians are presented in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

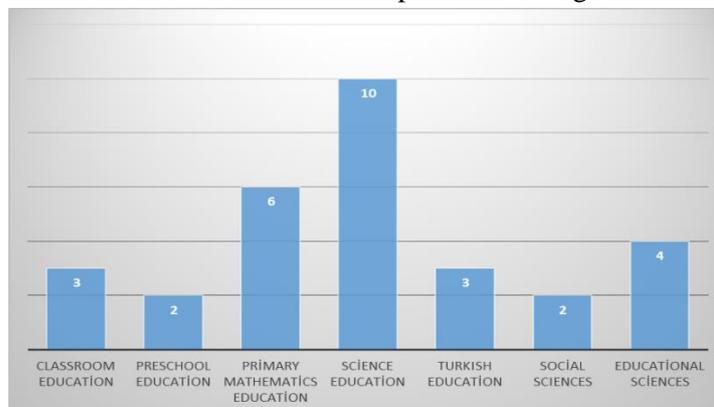


Figure 3. Distribution of academicians according to their departments

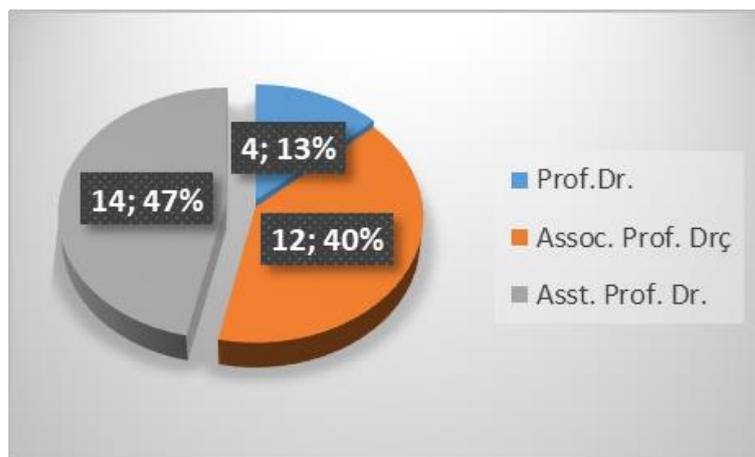


Figure 4. Distribution of academicians according to academic titles

As seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4, we see that most of the academicians working in the field of science education participated in the study, along with the majority of Assoc. Prof. Dr. and Asst. Prof. Dr. faculty members.

2.3. Data Collection Tool and Data Collection Process

In the research, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 4 questions developed by the researchers was used as the data collection tool. Within the scope of the validity and reliability studies of the data collection tool used, the opinions of experts in the field of educational sciences and technology education were consulted. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, interview questions were prepared online via Google Forms. Afterward, the necessary information was given to the research group and the relevant link was sent. They were asked to sincerely answer four different questions posed to them to clearly demonstrate their experiences in distance education processes. The data of the study were collected between 03.09.2021 and 03.26.2021.

2.4 Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the research were first arranged and made ready for the analysis process. The data are presented by making descriptive content analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis methods. One of the primary purposes of content analysis is to establish relationships between the obtained data through concepts. The basic process in this analysis is to gather similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to interpret them by arranging them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The participants were coded as A1, A2, A3, ... A29, A30. To ensure the reproducibility and confirmability of the data obtained, it is necessary to explain how the data was obtained and analyzed. In the data analysis, two independent researchers create codes and themes from the data obtained after determining the common theoretical structure. Using the reliability formula of Miles and Huberman (1994), the agreement among the coders was calculated as 84%.

2.5 Validity and Reliability

2.5.1. Include direct excerpts

The codes and themes are presented in tables. In addition, the opinions taken from the academicians within the scope of the validity and reliability studies on the data obtained in the study are given with direct excerpts.

2.5.2. Participant confirmation

One of the ways to ensure the internal validity of studies is through participant confirmation. Participant confirmation; the participants are asked for feedback on the findings after the researchers

shape the study findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this direction, the participant confirmation method was used in the answers given to the questions asking the academicians to reflect on their views on distance education with the help of SWOT analysis.

2.5.3. Expert review

One method that increases the internal validity and credibility of the studies is the expert review method. The expert review includes a critical and objective examination of the entire study, including the theoretical framework, method, data analysis, and conclusion part of the process. In this direction, the expert opinions of two academicians who are experts in educational sciences and technology education were consulted. The opinions of the two experts were compared and brought together.

3. FINDINGS

In this part of the study, the results of the analysis carried out for the data obtained in the study are presented. First of all, academicians were asked whether they had experience in distance education in their previous lives. The results obtained are presented in Figure 5.

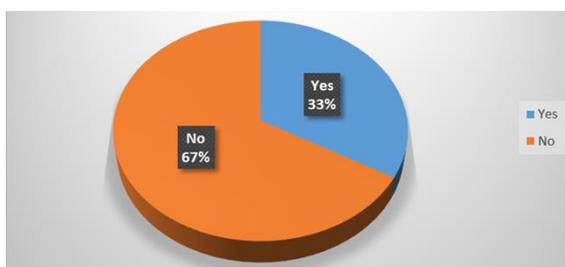


Figure 5. The answer given by the academicians to the question “Have you had any experience of distance education before the pandemic period?”.

33% (n=10) of the academicians state that they have experienced the distance education process before. However, 67% (n=20) of the academicians state that they have not experienced the distance education process before.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis results of codes belonging to the theme of “strengths”

Codes	Academicians	f	%
Freedom of Time and Space	A1,A6,A7,A8,A10,A13,A15,A16,A17,A18,A20,A21,A23,A26, A27, A29, A30	17	28,3
Digital Literacy	A4, A18, A20, A27, A28, A30	6	20
Economic	A2, A6, A7, A14, A15, A16, A22, A24, A28	9	15
Resource Richness	A5, A6, A12, A15, A16, A22, A24	7	11.6
Recording of courses	A3, A11, A14, A15, A24, A28	6	10
Pedagogical Contribution	A19, A22, A24, A28, A30	5	8.2
Individual Learning	A12, A13, A19	3	5
Assessment and evaluation	A3, A9	2	3.3
Safe Environment	A14, A15	2	3.3
Opportunity Equality	A16, A27	2	3.3
Information and Data Sharing	A17	1	1.6

The analysis results of the academicians on the strengths of distance education are presented in Table 1. In this direction, we observed that especially academicians emphasize the code of freedom of time and space on the strengths of distance education.

Excerpts from academicians on the subject are as follows.

A10:“..... Providing education opportunities for students working in different cities, especially in postgraduate courses”

A16: “...It is one of the most important advantages of being able to teach the lesson in every place, that is, being away from the necessity of an environment such as a classroom.....”

Academics also state that one of the strengths of the distance education process is digital literacy skills. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

A18”..... In addition, to gain experience in using instructional technologies

A27” I think it is very suitable for the effective use of instructional technologies. It is necessary for the concretization of concepts at primary and secondary education levels

Academics state that one of the strengths of the distance education process is being economic. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

A14” creating an opportunity for the children of families with financial difficulties to follow their undergraduate education at less cost than home

Academics point out the richness of resources as course content and materials as one of the strengths of the distance education process. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

A12”..... The process enabled more use of visual content.

A16”.....In addition, we can easily deliver many educational materials to students through distance education.....”

Academics state that one of the strengths of the distance education process is the recording of the courses. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

A24”.....Providing students with the opportunity to watch the courses they could not attend again

A15”..... Ensuring the student's freedom in accessing the lessons

Academics state that they have pedagogical contributions as one of the strengths of the distance education process. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

A19”..... It is beneficial for permanent learning that the students mostly solve the difficulties they encounter with their lessons on their own.”

A30”... Flexibility, openness to research and discovery

Academics state that the distance education process is suitable for individual learning as one of its strengths. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

Table 2. Descriptive content analysis results of codes belonging to the theme of weaknesses

Codes	Academics	f	%
Interaction	A1,A2,A3,A4,A5,A6,A9,A10,A11,A14,A15,A16,A18,A19, A20, A21, A22,A23,A24,A25,A26A27,A28,A29	24	24,4
Individual Infrastructure	A6, A7, A11, A12, A15, A16,A17,A18,A20,A22,A24	11	9.8
Infrastructure	A3, A4, A14, A15,A16, A17,A22,A24,A26,A29	10	9
Motivation	A4, A6, A7, A12, A14, A16, A19,A27	8	7.1
Applied Courses	A11, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A22, A24	8	7.1
Assessment & Evaluation	A8, A11, A12,A14,A17,A22,A29	7	6.2
Classroom Management	A1,A7,A11,A16,A19,A28,A30	7	6.2
Inequality of Opportunity	A13, A14,A15,A22,A24,A29	6	5.3
Up skilling	A11, A15, A16, A17, A19, A24	6	5.3
Time	A2, A4,A15,A23,A30	5	4.4
Peer Learning	A11,A14,A19,A22	4	3.5
Pedagogical Contribution	A18,A20,A22,A30	4	3.5
Attendance to Lesson	A4, A8, A9, A11	4	3.5
Controllability	A22,A29,A30	3	2.6
Feedback	A3, A15, A21	3	2.6
Extrinsic Motivation	A3, A21	2	1.7

The analysis results of the academics on the weaknesses of distance education are presented in Table 2. In this direction, we observed that principally academics frequently dwell on the “interaction” code of the weaknesses of distance education.

A6 “... Low interaction, minimal social sharing, the human being is a social being and interaction is very important in learning and motivation.....”

A12” The indifference of the students who are not accustomed to distance education towards opening the camera and microphone, and the student's inability to answer the questions caused deficiencies in active participation in the lesson.”

Academicians state that one of the weaknesses of the distance education process is the individual infrastructure that students have. Some excerpts from academicians opinions are given below.

A24 “...Problems of access to technology created by inequality of opportunity

Academicians state that one of the weaknesses of the distance education process is the infrastructure. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

A17 “..... Technical problems and infrastructure problems may occur.”

A26”..... The lack of technical and technological infrastructure of the stakeholders (student, teacher, etc.) involved in distance education.”

Academicians state that one of the weaknesses of the distance education process is the problems encountered in applied courses. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A18 “.....It is difficult to carry out many activities that can be done in the classroom (group discussion, cooperative learning, etc.) in the distance education process.”

A20 “.....It is more difficult to interact with students and to carry out many activities that can be done in the classroom (group discussion, cooperative learning, etc.) in the distance education process.”

Academicians state that one of the weaknesses of the distance education process is the inequality of opportunity. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A15 “...ineffective in regions with low socioeconomic levels of families.”

A23”... Difficulties and limitations related to the inability of every student to access distance education equally, problems caused by the lack of or limited physical facilities of students, and institutions such as infrastructure.....”

A29”..... not every student has access due to technological and economic reasons

Academicians state that one of the weaknesses of the distance education process is the problems experienced in assessment and evaluation. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A11 “.....Lack of opportunity to observe students, lack of healthy assessment and evaluation

Academicians state that one of the weaknesses of the distance education process is the point of attendance of the lesson. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A4 “.....In addition, there may be other applications that can distract the student from the computer or phone.”

Table 3. Descriptive content analysis results of the codes of the Opportunities theme.

Codes	Academicians	f	%
Freedom of Time and Space	A3,A6,A7,A8,A11,A15,A16,A22,A23,A24,A27,A29,A30	13	20.6
Increasing Digital Literacy	A4,A11,A12,A14,A15, A17,A24,A25,A28	9	14.2
Individual Learning Opportunity	A6,A12,A13,A15,A16,A22,A27,A28,A29	9	14.2
Ease of Access to Information	A6, A8, A18,A20,A21,A22,A27,A29	8	12.7
Economy	A15,A19,A24,A26,A30	5	7.8
Effective use of technology	A12,A14,A18,A20	4	6.4
Reaching a large audience (mass)	A10,A22,A24	3	4.8
Equality in Opportunity	A16,A27,A29	3	4.8
Awareness of Course Content in Distance Education	A2,A14	2	3.2
Pedagogical Development	A15,28	2	3.2

Assessment and Evaluation	A18,A24	2	3.2
Data and Source Diversity	A1	1	1.6
Safe Environment	A3	1	1.6
Sustainability in Education	A2	1	1.6

The results of the analysis of the views of the academicians on the opportunities provided by distance education are presented in Table 3. In this direction, we found that academicians frequently focus on the freedom of time and space code at the point of opportunity provided by distance education.

A3 ”..... *Participating easily in training held in other cities or even countries. Absence of risks such as epidemic disease transmission*”

A11”... *Creating time and resources for graduate students who cannot attend graduate-level courses due to reasons such as transportation etc. ...*

A12”... *The increase in demand for courses, especially in postgraduate education, is a result of the time and space independence of the process.*”

Academicians state that there is an increase in digital literacy in terms of the opportunities of the process of distance education. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A14”... *There has been a rapid transition to technology. It was a forced integration. It can also be an educational alternative in the post-pandemic period with quality content for some theoretical lessons. It has created an awareness and working space about educational digital content.....*”

A17 “...*As a necessity of the digital world, it prepares students for the digital world. Develops digital literacy skills. It provides opportunities for the use of these technological tools for teaching purpose in a meaningful way...*”

351

Academicians state that the process of distance education provides an opportunity for individual learning in terms of opportunities. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A6”... *eliminate incomprehensible notes with a chance to watch again ...*”

A29”...*The development of technology, the chance to take lessons from lecturers in different universities or to teach different departments and universities...*”

Academicians express the view of the economy in terms of the opportunities of the distance education process. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A19”... *Reducing the cost of education ...*”

A24”... *It facilitates the control and evaluation of processes such as homework and exams. Education saves stakeholders time and the economy. It strengthens technology literacy. ...*”

Academicians refer to the process of distance education as reaching a wide audience in terms of opportunities. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A22”... *Access to topics/courses and experts in a short time within the scope of technical possibilities, increasing rates in the dissemination of information, enabling students to have the right to make choices by experiencing different experiences and accessing different and wide sources, choosing, making judgments, making decisions and making decisions with the acquired knowledge and skills. Contributing to the development of initiative use skills...*”

Table 4. Descriptive analysis results of codes belonging to the “Threats” theme.

Codes	Academicians	f	%
Communication Problems	A8,A9,A10,A11,A15,A16,A18,A19,A20,A21,A22,A23,A24,A25,A26,A27	16	20.2
Decreasing socialization	A8, A9, A10,A11,A15,A18,A19,A20,A21,A22,A23,A24,A25,A27	14	17.8
Improper Execution of Assessment and Evaluation	A3, A4, A5, A7,A8,A9,A12,A21,A30	9	11.4
Failure to fully understand the nature of the lessons	A8,A15,A18,A20,A21,A22,A24,A29	8	10.1
Health Problems	A6,A8,A11,A17,A19,A29	6	7.5
Failure to provide information security	A12, A16,A17,A23,A24,A25	6	7.6
Elimination of physical interaction	A2,A4,A6,A15	4	5
Lack of Motivation	A1,A12,A30	3	3.8
Peer Learning	A9,A15,A22	3	3.8
Mental/Mechanical Production Barrier	(A17, A23, A29)	3	3.8
Failure to Fulfill Learning-Teaching Activities	A7,A15,A21	3	3.8
Inequality of Opportunity	A13,A21	2	2.5
Digital Fatigue	A29	1	1.2
Class attendance	A12	1	1.2

The results of the analysis of the views of the academicians on the threats are presented in Table 4. In this direction, we found that academicians frequently dwell on the communication problems code at the point of threats to be created by distance education.

A20”... *It strengthens the communication between the student and the academician. Most of the time, a semester ends before students even see their faces because they are not connected to the lesson with their cameras. In teacher education, the academician should be a model for teacher candidates in conveying the complex nature of a real classroom environment, such as the language he/she uses, body language, different methods and techniques he/she uses in the lesson, the activities he/she does, and the classroom management approach...*”

Academicians state that one of the threats to distance education is its compatibility with the nature of the course. Some excerpts from the views of academicians are given below.

A8 “...*Especially in science education, it is a big problem that applications and experimental studies cannot be done adequately.*”

Academicians state that one of the threats to distance education is peer learning. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

A9”...*It prevents students from becoming individualized and socializing, thus making peer communication and learning more difficult....*”

Academicians state that one of the threats related to distance education is the failure to carry out the assessment and evaluation of the lessons properly. Some excerpts from the views of academics are given below.

A4”... *Especially in the assessment and evaluation phase, there may be problems in the implementation of the exams....*”

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

According to [Anderson and Dron \(2011\)](#), all technical and social developments are shaped by the thoughts and perspectives of those who develop, experience, and implement them. For this reason, the perspectives of academicians working in the faculty of education on distance education will shape both the process and the pre-service teachers. We may say that distance education is preferred mostly for 5 Common Courses in universities in Turkey ([Kaçan & Gelen, 2020](#)). Considering that more than half of the academicians, who started to teach all of their courses in education faculties via distance

education, during the pandemic period, this study provides substantial data about giving the courses given in education faculties face-to-face or remotely, or the points to be considered in the establishment of such a system. We can say that academicians, who are indispensable stakeholders of this structure, evaluate this process, in which they experience distance education due to the Covid-19 pandemic, both in terms of pre-service teachers, their professional development, and system/process. According to this, we can say that the common result obtained in the study is that the academicians see distance education as a process in which they gain competence in the digital context in terms of their professional development, provide freedom of time and space as a system, provide an economic environment, but decrease their communication and social interactions with pre-service teachers. So the factors that academicians see as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are explained in sub-titles.

4.1. Strengths and Weaknesses

In this process, academicians stated that distance education provides freedom of time and space for pre-service teachers. In the literature academicians who work in different departments have similar views (Erfidan, 2019; Özköse, Arı & Çakır, 2013; Ustabulut, 2021; Yanpar Yelken, Kılıç, & Özdemir, 2012). In addition, they state that it provides a wealth of resources and that the fact that the courses can be watched by pre-service teachers, again and again, affects them positively in terms of theory and pedagogy. In addition, they think that lessons can be taught more economically in this way. In terms of their professional development, this process increases their digital literacy skills. However, academicians have difficulties interacting with teacher candidates in the process, and this situation also affects peer learning. Also, they experience infrastructure and hardware problems both systemically and individually, which causes inequality of opportunity. Barış and Çankaya (2016) also stated in their studies technological failures and hardware problems are the weak points of the distance education process. Academicians also state that such situations reduce the motivation of both themselves and their students, that distance education is not suitable for courses that include practice and skill acquisition purposes, and that they experience similar problems in assessment and evaluation and classroom management. There is an emphasis on the need to prepare different instructional experiences (content, method, technique, readiness, measurement, and evaluation) for different course contents in general from the statements of the academicians (Erfidan, 2019; Vindača, et al., 2021; Yanpar Yelken, et al., 2012). Although distance education provides opportunities for academicians in the context of digital literacy (Ustabulut, 2021), it is seen that they have difficulties in creating content for online education in the context of the course's achievements. In the study of Yeşiltaş, Çelikoğlu, Dağdalan, Aydın and Çetinkaya (2023), it is stated that academicians working in education faculties have difficulties in preparing digital materials. This situation supports that academicians need support in subjects such as content creation, digital material preparation, and program use, which can provide cooperation and group work in their classes, create a classroom atmosphere, and belonging, and increase their motivation.

4.2. Opportunities and Threats

Although the distance education process has been passed without experiencing the adaptation process in education faculties as in all educational institutions, it can be said that this process is seen as an opportunity by academicians in terms of providing freedom of time and space, providing an opportunity for the development of digital literacy, and providing ease of access to information. In addition, pre-service teachers have the opportunity to learn at their own individual pace. Although distance education is one of the effective approaches in preparing an education and training environment for individual needs (Çakır, Calp, & Doğan, 2015), it is seen that the academicians working in the education faculty draw attention to important factors that may threaten such a learning opportunity. The problems experienced in two-way communication in the process and the decrease in socialization among pre-service teachers are seen as the most substantial problems to be overcome. In

addition, we can state that the most important issue is that measurement and evaluation cannot be carried out in a healthy way. The fact that the nature of the courses in the education faculties could not be fulfilled is determined as another important factor. In the studies conducted by [Barış and Çankaya \(2016\)](#) and [Koloğlu \(2016\)](#), only a small number of academicians think that applied courses can be given via distance education.

4.3. Distance Education Transformation Strategy for Education Faculties

We may say that academicians concentrate on digital literacy, access-preparation of online content suitable for learning goals/courses, communication-interaction, assessment-evaluation, and distance education system during the transition to distance education during the pandemic period. One of the most important dimensions of this study is that it proposes a model for the distance education transformation process in education faculties. [Vindača, et al \(2021\)](#) state that the transformation in education during the covid-19 pandemic should be carried out in six basic stages. In this study, some key and sub-stages were added to the relevant strategy based on the opinions of the academicians (Figure 6).

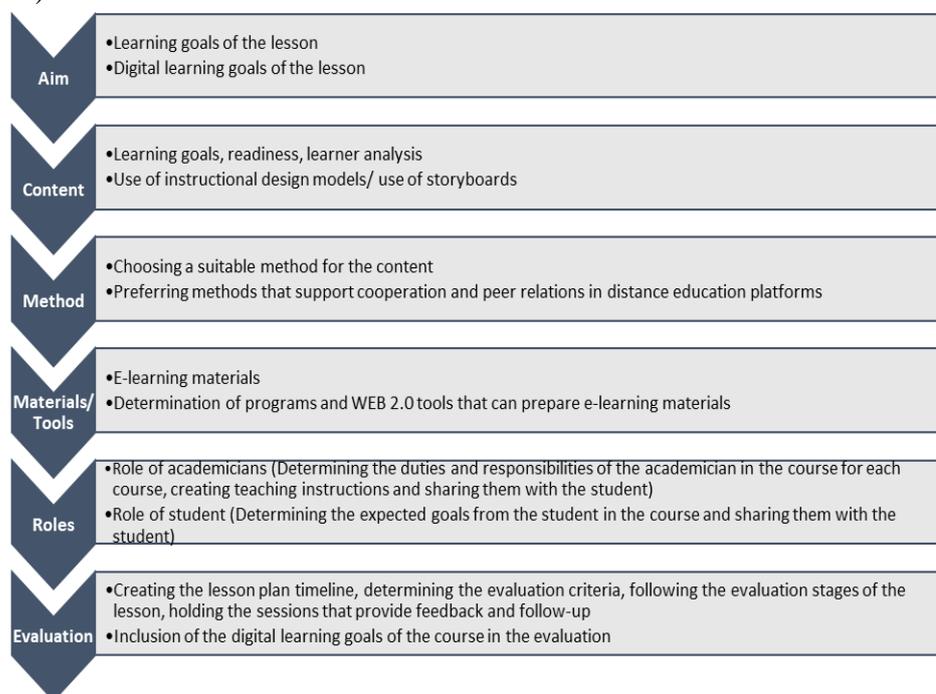


Figure 6. Distance education transformation strategy for education faculties

In order to design an effective course in distance education, it is necessary to prepare the process systematically and by following the instructional design processes ([Hsu, Hamilton, & Wang, 2015](#)).

According to the model we propose, we foresee that academicians should transform the purpose, content, method, materials/tools, roles, and evaluation stages in creating and conducting a course with a distance education approach. According to this approach, besides the learning goals of the lesson, the digital learning goals that will be required for participation in the lesson or the conduct of the lesson or planned to be gained by the student must be determined and the content must be prepared accordingly ([Peters, 2000](#)). The content, which is another important stage, should be designed as content that is suitable for the level of the student, allows interaction, activates the student, and allows working individually or in groups ([Hsu, et al., 2015](#)). We think that the important thing here is that the instructional planner prefers one of the instructional design models by performing the learner analysis on the aims and objectives of the course and designing it in this direction. [Chang and Chen \(2015\)](#) reported that instructional design models are effective in distance education in creating a

learning and student-centered, inquiry learning environment. Uçar and Kumtepe (2016), on the other hand, stated that students' interest, confidence, effort, and success in the course increased by using the ARCS-V motivation model to solve problems such as motivation and class participation in distance education. In a systematic review study by Spatioti, Kazanidis, and Pange (2022), they stated that the ADDIE model provides a strong teaching and learning environment in distance education in terms of the multimedia presentation, feedback, interactive exercises or variety of activities, learning strategy (individualized and collaborative) and the role of educators. Another factor that academicians need support in the process is the selection and implementation of strategies, methods, or techniques that support students' cooperation and peer learning. Zorlu (2020) recommends the Jigsaw method for the application of cooperative learning in distance education in his study, Lee and Recker (2021) recommend online discussion sessions with participation motivation, while Peters (2000) suggests methods and techniques such as simulations, role-playing, brainstorming, and project groups. These examples can be reproduced for the purpose, content, and needs of the course. We report that another important factor in the distance education process is the creation of materials. It is known that resources such as presentations, screenshots, asynchronous video broadcasts, etc. are used as course materials in distance education (Şenkal & Dinçer, 2012). However, pre-service teachers stated that they needed materials that would make them active, enable practice, and help meaningful learning, rather than materials on listening/watching (Karakuş, Cheapsatar, Karacaoğlu, Esendemir, & Bayraktar, 2020). The opinions of the academicians regarding the participation of pre-service teachers in the course are also in this direction. For this reason, it is important to create environments that will enable the effective use of programs and web 2.0 tools that can be used in e-learning material design. One of the most important points mentioned in many studies on distance education is the determination of the roles of academicians and pre-service teachers within and even outside the system (Hsu, et al., 2015; Spatioti, Kazanidis, & Pange, 2022). Knowing the duties and responsibilities of the academician and teacher candidate or creating teaching instructions and sharing this information plays a key role in the effective execution of distance education. For example, determining which task or content will be done when by whom, and in what way plays an important role in the mutual execution of the process. The evaluation process is seen as one of the weakest aspects and threat factors in distance education (Koloğlu, 2016; Özköse, et al., 2013). We may say that the most important factors in the validity and reliability of the evaluation are the follow-up of the process, the determination of the evaluation criteria, and the feedback. According to the results of this study, it is important to include the digital objectives of the course in the evaluation. We think that whether the digital skills that need to be acquired in order to reach a predetermined goal in a course taught with a distance education approach are acquired or not will also affect the distance education process. Bozkurt (2020) has determined that the digital competence and skills needed in the Covid-19 process are not fully available. In this context, holding sessions that provide feedback and follow-up, and the creation of a lesson plan timeline is necessary for a healthy evaluation process.

4.4. Suggestions

According to the results of this study, it is seen that the ongoing problems in the distance education transformation process continue. In order for academicians to carry out this process effectively, it is seen that they need to get support from the institutions they work in as well as their individual needs for self-development. In order to reflect the atmosphere of face-to-face education in the classroom in education faculties to distance education, it is necessary to transform the processes of digital literacy, accessing-preparing online content suitable for learning goals/courses, communication-interaction, measurement, and evaluation. The model is a general recommendation and each department can follow the model stages according to their own needs and make the distance education process a better quality and effective process. In addition, researchers who want to work in

this field can be recommended to present a holistic picture of distance education with the models they will create by taking the opinions of pre-service teachers.

Ethics Committee Decision

This research was carried out with the permission of Ordu University Social and Human Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee with the decision numbered 02/2021-37 dated 25.02.2021.

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