Education Process in Hybrid Classrooms from the Perspective of Special Education Academicians

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Abstract

Hybrid education has become a natural part of our lives in recent years due to global or regional emergencies. It is thought that the impact of hybrid education on the education process is important for the quality of the education offered. The aim of this study is to examine the views of academicians working in the field of special education on hybrid courses in depth. The study was conducted using a case study from qualitative research designs in line with the research purpose. Nine academicians working in the field of special education took part in the study. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in the process of determining the participants. Two criteria were used to determine the participants to be included in the study. The first of these criteria is to be working as an academician in the field of special education in universities affiliated to YÖK, and the second is to have conducted hybrid courses in their professional life. Research data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observations. In addition, a reflective researcher diary was kept regularly to ensure data diversity in the study. The data were analyzed using content analysis technique. The research findings were organized under four main themes and 15 sub-themes. The main themes are listed as transition to hybrid courses, facilities provided by hybrid courses, difficulties arising from hybrid courses and the future of hybrid courses. This study focuses on the views of special education academics on hybrid education classes. Difficulties experienced in hybrid classrooms after the pandemic and earthquake and solution suggestions are reported. It is thought that hybrid education classes will become a routine of our lives with the disappearance of technological equipment.

Keywords: *Distance education, Hybrid education, Hybrid classroom, Special education*

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of hybrid is the process of combining two different things for one purpose or thing. Hybrid education is defined as the delivery of a course both face-to-face and remotely (Kastornova & Gerova, 2021). This approach is used to provide students with both face-to-face classroom interaction and experiences and remote access through online platforms (Kiketa et al., 2022). The concept of hybrid is also referred to as blending or mixed in the literature (Usta & Mahiroğlu, 2008). According to Toprakçı, (2017), distance education is defined is the whole of the activities of learning and teaching they carry out partially or completely even though the students and teachers are physically separated from each other by coming together synchronously and asynchronously by the channels are wire, wireless and postal communication tools (telephone, radio, letter, television, internet, intranet, video, computer, etc.). Distance education, which is one of the basic stages of the hybrid process, is also explained with concepts such as internet-based, computer-based education, online education, e-education etc. (Taylor, 2001). According to Horton (2000), blended learning is the combination of web-based learning with some of the strengths and advantages of classroom learning. In another definition, hybrid education is the use of technologies as well as different educational methods in a traditional learning environment (Singh, 2003; Toprakçı & Ersoy 2008). Hybrid education classrooms are formed by integrating online learning tools and technologies into traditional classrooms (Triyason, Tassanaviboon & Kanthamanon, 2020). Web-based education, in other words, distance education, which has been used for many years around the world, has become one of the functional ways to reach large masses with the COVID-19 Pandemic. As a matter of fact, our country has decided to switch to distance education (YÖK, 2020); Toprakçı, Hepsöğütlü & Toprakçı, 2021). With the decrease in the effects of the pandemic, institutions first switched to hybrid and then face-to-face education (Yıldırım & Rovshenov, 2022). However, on February 6, 2023, two earthquakes of magnitude 7.8 Mw (± 0.1) and 7.5 Mw occurred nine hours apart, with epicenters in Pazarcık and Elbistan districts of Kahramanmaraş, respectively, and the education process in our universities started to be carried out remotely again (YÖK, 2023a). After the shock of the earthquake was overcome and the priority problems were solved, The Council of Higher Education announced the transition to hybrid education in universities (YÖK, 2023b). The idea that distance learning should be a supportive and complementary element of face-to-face education rather than a core element (Yavuz & Toprakçı, 2021), can contribute to the hybrid classroom approach. In short, hybrid education has become a natural part of our lives in recent years with the impact of global or regional emergencies.

Current studies are being added to the literature with the hybrid education model in which distance education and face-to-face education are offered together. When the international literature is examined, it is seen that current studies on hybrid education have been carried out in various fields and subjects. Jumabaeva et al. (2020) conducted an applied study on hybrid education at a university in Kyrgyzstan. Hall and Villareal (2015) examined the advantages of hybrid education from the perspective of graduate students. Gleason and Greenhow (2017) demonstrated the impact on university students' learning through a specialized hybrid education application robot. In another study, a course design for a hybrid education approach was carried out with the participation of teachers and students from two different institutions (Hilli, Nørgård, & Aaen, 2019). Ulla and Perales (2022) also discussed the hybrid education process during the pandemic by exemplifying the practices of a teacher. Potra et al. (2021) addressed the difficulties experienced by first-year students in the hybrid education system used by Romania. Kastornova and Gerova (2021) summarized the use of hybrid education in the French system.

In the national literature, Akran (2021) determined the perceptions of pre-service teachers in various departments of the faculty of education towards hybrid education through metaphor analysis. On the other hand, Kazu and Güher-Özercan (2023) examined the process of teaching literacy with hybrid education with the participation of primary school first grade teachers and student parents. Toytok and Öztaş (2022) compiled the hybrid education practices used in public and private institutions with the opinions of school administrators. In another study, hybrid education practices and their effects in Turkey were revealed through meta-analysis (Korucu & Kabak, 2020). While Hebebci and Usta (2015) examined blended learning tendencies, Pesen and Oral (2016) examined the effect of blended learning

approach on pre-service teachers' academic achievement and motivation level. Among these studies, there are many branches at all levels of the education process. However, there is no study directly related to the field of special education. On the other hand, there are no studies in which special education academicians take part as participants. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the views of academicians working in the field of special education on hybrid education classrooms. For this purpose, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the opinions of special education academicians about hybrid education classrooms?
2. What are the problems and solution suggestions in hybrid education classrooms?

METHOD

1. Research Model/Design

Qualitative research enables people to reveal their thoughts about a situation, event or phenomenon (Chmiliar, 2010). Case study is one of the designs used to examine a current phenomenon in depth in a certain period of time in the real environment (Gerring, 2007; Merriam, 2013). From this point of view, the research was designed as a case study in order to examine in depth the view of academicians in the field of special education towards hybrid courses.

2. Data Collecting Tools

In qualitative research, various data collection techniques such as interviews, observations and document analysis are utilized (Creswell, 2007; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Semi-structured interviews and observations were used in the study. On the other hand, a reflective researcher diary was kept regularly. The diaries, which were prepared with one line spacing and 12-point font, totaled 13 pages. Interviews were conducted with special education academicians conducting hybrid courses, and some of the courses were observed by the researchers.

3. Sampling or Study Group

Participants were determined by criterion sampling (Patton, 1987) among purposive sampling methods. Two criteria were used to include participants in the study. The first criterion was to be an academic in the field of special education and the second criterion was to have given hybrid courses. From this point of view, the people that the researchers could reach were the academicians working in the Department of Special Education at Anadolu University. Information about the participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Participant information*

Transition to Hybrid Courses	The Conveniences of Hybrid Courses	Challenges from Hybrid Courses	The Future of Hybrid Courses
Emotions	Economic benefits	Technological equipment	Routinization
Preparation	Reliability	Professional satisfaction	Development of theoretical background
Precautions	Comfort zone	Clasroom management	
	Technology literacy	Evalution	Development of physical infrastructure
		Communication/Sociality	

As seen in Table 1, nine academics participated in the study, at least one from each sub-field of special education. Since hybrid courses are generally conducted by young academics, it is seen that the participants are between the ages of 29 and 36. Two of the academics who participated in the study were female and seven were male. The shortest interview lasted 10 minutes and 53 seconds, while the longest interview lasted 25 minutes and 29 seconds. The data collection process started on 15.02.2022 and ended on 11.03.2022, including observations. Semi-structured interviews were usually conducted in the researcher's or participant's office, while one participant was out of town and was recorded by video call.

4. Data Collection Process

The semi-structured interviews conducted within the scope of the study were audio-recorded in the offices of the researcher or the participants. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face or online for participants who are far away (Linabarry & Hammel, 2017). Due to the transfer of one of the participants, the interview was conducted by recording via video call from the phone. The observations were completed by obtaining permission from the academician of the relevant course and taking notes without interfering with the course operation.

5. Data Analysis

The data were transformed into findings using content analysis technique. Content analysis consists of four steps: creating a thematic framework, processing the data, reaching and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Initially, the raw data were coded. Then, the codes obtained were transformed into themes and sub-themes with the comparison of two experts. After inter-expert agreement and verification, the findings were obtained by taking into account the theoretical framework.

6. Validity and Credibility

One of the ways to ensure validity and credibility (reliability) in qualitative research is to obtain expert opinion (Merriam, 1998). After the preparation of the semi-structured interview questions, the opinions of three experts who have studies on qualitative research methods were obtained. After the expert feedback, the questions were revised and a pilot interview was conducted. After the pilot interview, the semi-structured interview questions were finalized and used. The notes related to the observations were shared with the academician of the relevant course and his/her approval was obtained regarding their authenticity.

FINDINGS

After the analysis, 4 main and 15 sub-themes were reached. Theme and main theme distributions are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *Main themes*

Transition to Hybrid Courses	The Conveniences of Hybrid Courses	Challenges from Hybrid Courses	The Future of Hybrid Courses
Emotions	Economic benefits	Technological equipment	Routinization
Preparation	Reliability	Professional satisfaction	Development of theoretical background
Precautions	Comfort zone	Clasroom management	
	Technology literacy	Evalution	Development of physical infrastructure
		Communication/Sociality	

As can be seen in Table 2, the main themes consist of four main themes: the process of transition to hybrid courses, the benefits, the challenges and the future of hybrid courses. The main themes consist of 15 sub-themes.

1. Transition to Hybrid Courses

The first main theme obtained after the analysis is the transition to hybrid courses. There are three sub-themes under this theme: emotions, preparation and precautions. Academics who entered the classrooms to teach face-to-face classes again after a year of fully online classes expressed different emotions such as excitement, fear and panic. As a matter of fact, Hikmet described this situation as 'I was uneasy' and Rafet as 'excitement, confusion'. Another participant Ragıp stated that many feelings were experienced at the same time with the expression 'mixed emotions, the dominant one was the fear of contamination'.

In the preparation sub-theme, it was revealed how academics prepared for the hybrid course process they would experience for the first time. It is seen that the academics realized the lessons through presentations as they used in face-to-face and online education. Mehmet summarized the process as 'we used the presentations we used in face-to-face education online. Hybrid courses were also with presentations'. It is seen that the online side of the hybrid courses is published on the

institutional platforms of the school. All academics started the course on the institutional platform and took the recording. Thus, apart from the students in the classroom, students who participated online followed the lectures on these platforms. Mehmet described this process as 'lessons conducted on channels such as Canvas or Mergen'. However, it was also noted that it required both face-to-face and online preparation. For example, Vehbi said, 'The camera was integrated into Mergen and I conducted the lesson through the bigblue infrastructure. Of course, different preparations are needed, it is not enough to bring the material to the classroom, it is also necessary to upload it to the system for online participants'.

The sub-theme of precautions is a finding emphasized by all academics. It is understood that all of the participants took precautions to protect their health before entering the classrooms after the education period spent away from contact. The main precautions included wearing masks, using cologne frequently and ventilating the classroom regularly. Ragıp's statement 'I constantly used cologne' and Hikmet's statement 'I was taking exaggerated measures such as disinfectants, masks and ventilation' can be given as examples of precautions.

2. The Conveniences Provided by Hybrid Courses

The other cluster of findings that emerged after the transition process was the convenience provided by hybrid courses. This main theme was categorized under four sub-themes: economic benefits, reliability, comfort zone and technology literacy. Participants reported that hybrid courses save time and energy, and that they can conduct lessons in smaller classes with larger groups. From this point of view, they stated that it is more advantageous in areas such as time management, lighting and heating compared to face-to-face classes. Hikmet pointed out that it is economical in terms of time with the statement 'it saves time for the instructor and students', while Kerime emphasized the economical side in terms of money as 'the cost is lower, of course, electricity, air conditioning, heating'.

Among the conveniences provided by hybrid courses, reliability and comfort area emerged as sub-themes where the findings were collected. Academics find hybrid courses more reliable due to factors such as the recording of the lessons and the fact that the lessons are held with fewer student participation compared to face-to-face education. Vehbi stated that fewer student participation reduced the risk of transmission: 'Class size decreased due to health reasons. Those with Corona were isolated. The spread of the disease slowed down.' Regarding the recording of the lessons, Deniz said, 'It is an advantage that the lessons are recorded. It gives students the chance to make up later and it is safe for us.' However, there are also different opinions of the participants regarding course recordings. While the majority of the participants saw the recording of the lessons as a convenience, Asım expressed the opposite opinion: 'I did not record, I did every lesson over and over again because I care about the contribution of students' instant questions to learning. Again, most of the participants shared the view that recording the lessons created a comfort zone for the students. This general opinion is supported by Ragıp's statement: 'It provided a comfort zone for the students. They attended the lectures in an environment where they were comfortable at home.' and 'Every environment where there is internet provides comfort.

The final benefit of hybrid courses is the development of technological literacy. Some of the participants stated that the systems and programs used for the continuity of education processes after the pandemic provided development in technology literacy. It was emphasized that hybrid courses also contributed to this development, which started with the online education process. As a matter of fact, Vehbi stated this situation as follows: 'It increased the technological knowledge of the lecturers. In terms of using the system, we learned what to pay attention to. Similarly, Deniz stated, 'We never thought about how to use technology before the pandemic.

3. Challenges from Hybrid Courses

It is understood that hybrid courses not only provide convenience but also bring challenges. It is seen that technological equipment, classroom management, evaluation, professional satisfaction, communication and sociality are gathered under the theme of difficulties arising from hybrid courses. It is understood that academics have problems with these five elements. First of all, inadequate technological equipment prevented the hybrid courses from being conducted in a healthy way. In

particular, it is understood that reasons such as image quality, poor internet reception, and technological equipment not working properly caused disruptions from time to time. Regarding these problems, Rafet stated, 'There were times when we could not get efficient images from the cameras'. On the other hand, Mehmet's statement 'Access to free and fast internet is problematic' and Hikmet's statement 'The system we used did not handle some presentations and we could not upload them' support this finding.

Classroom management is a challenging element in hybrid courses. It is seen that it is very difficult to organize students in the classroom on the one hand and online participants on the other. It is emphasized that it is difficult to conduct lessons in a limited space without leaving the camera angle and the sound detection distance of the microphone integrated into the camera. As a matter of fact, Vehbi's statement 'As a lecturer, there is a message you want to convey. But vehicles get in the way, and when you try to pay attention to it, you miss the flow or the students miss it. It was also stated that classroom management is more difficult especially in practical lessons compared to theoretical lessons. This was stated by Mehmet as 'A big problem for applied lessons' and Vehbi as 'Since special education is an applied field, it is tiring to make a lesson by thinking about online listeners. The camera angle is limited, I don't know, you are interrupted, you have to think about many things. Figure 1 shows the hybrid classroom to make the participants' statements more understandable.

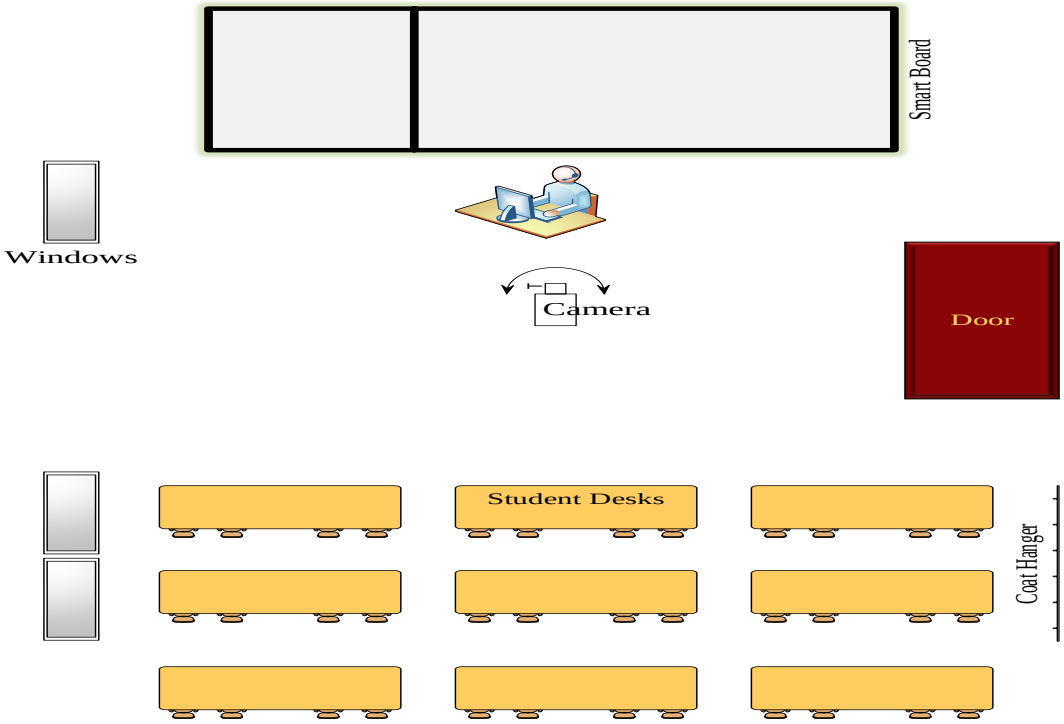

Figure 1. *Hybrid Classroom*

Among the findings obtained as a result of the observations, it is understood that the camera has a movement feature, but it can dominate a limited area that sees the board and the lecturer. On the other hand, it is seen that academics who lecture in a mobile way have problems with getting out of the camera angle and sound transmission problems due to the microphone integrated into the camera.

Evaluation is a process that all participants had difficulty with in hybrid courses. It is understood that various efforts are made and measures are taken to test course success at the end of the semester and to carry out learning controls throughout the course. Rafet 'There are problems in evaluating success in online processes. I asked for more homework in the hybrid education process compared to online and face-to-face.' emphasized the evaluation process. Similarly, Vehbi stated, 'I assessed success face-to-face with midterms and finals and checked learning through homework assignments. I often uploaded a problem to the system and asked them to submit their solutions by writing them down.'

One of the striking findings regarding the difficulties experienced in hybrid courses is professional satisfaction. Although academics preferred hybrid courses to online courses, they stated that they could not reach sufficient professional satisfaction. As a matter of fact, Kerime summarized this situation as 'The lessons are short and not enjoyable. There is no professional satisfaction. Ragıp, on the other hand,

expressed similar views as 'Teaching in a limited area with very little interaction causes a loss of motivation on my behalf. Following their views on professional satisfaction, the participants frequently mentioned the importance of sociability and interaction. The fact that students generally participate in the online part and do not participate in the interaction from there causes stagnation in the course operation. Kerime said 'we cannot interact with students' and Deniz said 'it is not suitable for human relations. It is important to make eye contact and have an interactive lesson.', emphasized the importance of communication and interaction. Another statement that needs to be emphasized in this regard was made by Hikmet: 'Our main field of study is human. I do not think that an adequate learning environment can be created without human contact.' It is also stated that high online participation in hybrid courses reduces sociality for both students and academics. Asım drew attention to the weakness of hybrid courses from the academician's point of view with the statements 'It makes you feel incomplete in social areas, you don't know the student'. Hikmet, on the other hand, looked from the students' perspective and said, 'Sitting, standing up, dynamics, communication skills are not formed when they do not come to school. They cannot develop socially'.

4. The Future of Hybrid Courses

The last theme reached within the scope of the findings is the future of hybrid courses. The future theme consists of three sub-themes: routinization, theoretical and physical infrastructure development. Most of the academics think that hybrid courses will continue and become a routine of academic life even if there is no pandemic process. Ragıp said about the routinization process: 'The system will be permanent. Especially in theoretical courses...'. Vehbi, on the other hand, pointed out the advantages of hybrid courses and said that they should become a part of academic life: 'We will turn on the hybrid even when we are doing things like seminars outside the class, and someone will watch it from a distance. The lecturer who gives up on this loses, cannot stay up to date. A few participants stated that hybrid courses should only be used for graduate education and should not become our routine. Asım's view that 'It was a transition, an intermediate form, but it should be abandoned' can be shown as the opposite finding to routinization.

In order for hybrid courses to be continuous and become a routine in the lives of academics, theoretical infrastructure should be strengthened. Most of the participants drew attention to the necessity of improving the technological competencies of academics who benefit from this method. Mehmet used the expressions 'Digital literacy trainings should be provided for professors' regarding the strengthening of the theoretical infrastructure. Ragıp also stated that 'Participation should be compulsory' regarding the training process. The participants' perspectives on the content of the training are in line with Deniz's statements, 'Good practice examples should be told to us'.

In addition to strengthening the theoretical infrastructure, improving the physical conditions is the last sub-theme that emerged regarding the future of hybrid education. In this theme, there are suggestions such as preferring fiber on the Internet, updating technological equipment, renewing databases, and strengthening the platforms used by universities. As a matter of fact, Rafet stated that databases should be updated especially in the online transfer process with the statement 'We need WEB 2 technology support'. Mehmet, on the other hand, suggested that 'Internet and technological equipment of the students should be sufficient' in order to carry out the courses in a qualified way. On the other hand, regarding the development of platforms where universities publish online courses carried out simultaneously with face-to-face courses, Deniz stated, 'Platforms such as Kanvas and Mergen should be developed, and the data size should be increased. Finally, the importance of the use of technological devices equipped with equipment that will provide the academician with space to move in the classroom is emphasized. The general opinion of the participants coincides with Vehbi's statements: 'Cameras should dominate the entire classroom, they should be able to capture images from various angles and sound flawlessly'.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Among the first findings of the research are the experiences during the transition to hybrid education. It is understood that being back in the classroom creates complex emotions in academics. Karakuyu (2020) reported that teachers who returned to the classroom felt emotions such as fear, panic, anxiety and excitement. Similar findings were observed in special education academics with the start of teaching

in hybrid education classes. Educators who returned to the classroom with complex emotions took intensive individual measures to reduce the risk of transmission for the pandemic period.

It is seen that no special preparation was made for the lessons to be conducted in hybrid education classes. In their study, Jumabaeva et al. (2020) mentioned that there were difficulties in preparing online content due to lack of time and experience. However, no such finding was found in this study. It is seen that the preparations made for hybrid courses are no different from online or face-to-face courses. Although the different feelings of encountering a new classroom model and the anxiety caused by inexperience are expressed, it is seen that there is no special preparation for hybrid classrooms. As a matter of fact, it can be stated that the preparation process during the pandemic period was more about health measures rather than course content.

Hybrid education provides students with flexibility in terms of time, space and economy (Akran, 2021; Chick et al, 2020; Fu, 2013). In the current study, findings that overlap with Akran's research such as providing economic benefits, saving time and providing a comfort zone were found. On the other hand, it is understood that the transition to online and then hybrid education is beneficial for the development of technology literacy. As a matter of fact, Yağan (2020) found that the online education process increased adaptation to technological developments. At this point, although it is a necessary transition, it can be emphasized that hybrid education contributes to the personal development of special education academics.

Villegas-Ch et al. (2021) consider hybrid education as one of the best mixed models offered to students to ensure that student education is not disrupted during the pandemic and that future generations receive a good education. Special education academics have similar views. It is thought that the hybrid model, which proceeds simultaneously face-to-face and online, will become a part of educational life and become routine provided that physical conditions are corrected and deficiencies are eliminated. One of the main physical problems is the disruptions caused by technological equipment. Similarly, it is seen in different studies that technological tools and equipment can cause technical problems during the course (Potra et al., 2021). The integration of up-to-date technological equipment that meets the needs can make hybrid classrooms sustainable. As a matter of fact, hardware infrastructure is of great importance in hybrid learning applications (Korucu & Kabak, 2020).

Among the problems in the hybrid education process is the insufficient social interaction between student-instructor and student-student. In the process of transition to e-learning, traditional teaching methods cannot be fully taken into account and the lack of interaction in the classroom environment has negative consequences for learning experiences (Hošková-Mayerová & Rosická, 2015). In addition to the difficulties in effective learning-teaching experiences, measurement and evaluation stages are not carried out in a qualified manner. If important issues such as how much of the target behaviors are achieved in the distance education and exam process, which subjects are sufficiently learned, and what the deficiencies are, the process will be excluded from measurement and evaluation (Sarı, 2020). Therefore, even though the courses are conducted in hybrid classrooms, the continuation of e-exams continues to affect the measurement and evaluation processes.

Special education academics offered suggestions such as renewing databases, strengthening the platforms used by universities, and supporting web 2.0-like technology to increase the functionality of hybrid education classes. Various applications such as University 4.0 (Salmon, 2019; Şen & Kızılcalıoğlu, 2020; Aybek, 2017), web 2.0 technologies (Castro, 2019; Shen & Ho, 2020) are recommended to provide universities with a quality education opportunity in the digital transformation process. On the other hand, it is seen that academics and students need training on the technological tools used. It is also necessary to train instructors and students to use these tools (Garrison & Akyol, 2009; Olapiriyakul & Scher, 2006). However, it can be thought that giving priority to academics will accelerate the adaptation to hibirt education classes. Because educators are an important factor in students' willingness to learn and the successful implementation of the use of technology in education (Metin, 2018).

As a result, after the pandemic in the world and the earthquake in our country, institutions continued their education and training processes by using hybrid education models. The model chosen in the institution where the research was conducted is hybrid classrooms where distance and face-to-face education are carried out simultaneously. Special education academics find the conveniences

brought about by this compulsory transition as the development of technological literacy and the width of the comfort zone, economically beneficial. On the other hand, inadequate technological infrastructure, low social interaction, difficulty in classroom management and lack of professional satisfaction are considered as problematic aspects of the education process in hybrid classrooms. The general opinion is that hybrid classrooms will be a routine part of teaching-learning processes in the coming years, even though they are currently used in difficult times or in exceptional cases.

Limitations and Direction for Future Studies

The research participants consisted of academics in the special education department of only one university. The participants are relatively young academics. There is no special reason for this situation. Those who taught in hybrid education classes during the pandemic and the post-earthquake period are generally young academics. During the observations, the class size did not exceed two students. All the remaining students attended the classes remotely. In future research, a similar study can be conducted with participants from special education departments of different universities. More experienced academicians can be included in the participant group. Finally, alternative studies can be conducted in which the opinions of undergraduate students can be taken and observations can be made in crowded classes.

Özel Eğitim Akademisyenleri Perspektifinden Hibrit Sınıflarda Eğitim Süreci

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Özet

Hibrit eğitim, küresel veya bölgesel acil durumlar nedeniyle son yıllarda hayatımızın doğal bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Hibrit eğitimin eğitim sürecine etkisinin sunulan eğitimin kalitesi açısından önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, özel eğitim alanında çalışan akademisyenlerin hibrit derslere ilişkin görüşlerini derinlemesine incelemektir. Çalışma, araştırma amacı doğrultusunda nitel araştırma desenlerinden durum çalışması kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmada özel eğitim alanında çalışan dokuz akademisyen yer almıştır. Katılımcıların belirlenmesi sürecinde amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya dâhil edilecek katılımcıların belirlenmesinde iki ölçüt kullanılmıştır. Bu ölçütlerden ilki YÖK'e bağlı üniversitelerde özel eğitim alanında akademisyen olarak çalışıyor olmak, ikincisi ise meslek hayatında hibrit dersler yürütmüş olmaktır. Araştırma verileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve gözlemler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Ayrıca çalışmada veri çeşitliliğini sağlamak için düzenli olarak yansıtıcı araştırmacı günlüğü tutulmuştur. Veriler içerik analizi tekniği kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları dört ana tema ve 15 alt tema altında düzenlenmiştir. Ana temalar hibrit derslere geçiş, hibrit derslerin sağladığı olanaklar, hibrit derslerden kaynaklanan zorluklar ve hibrit derslerin geleceği olarak sıralanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, özel eğitim akademisyenlerinin hibrit eğitim sınıflarına ilişkin görüşlerine odaklanmaktadır. Pandemi ve deprem sonrası hibrit sınıflarda yaşanan zorluklar ve çözüm önerileri raporlanmıştır. Teknolojik donanımların ortadan kalkması ile hibrit eğitim sınıflarının hayatımızın bir rutini haline geleceği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Uzaktan eğitim, Hibrit eğitim, Hibrit sınıf, Özel eğitim*

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Problem: Hibrit sürecin temel aşamalarından biri olan uzaktan eğitim, internet tabanlı ve bilgisayar tabanlı eğitim gibi kavramlarla da açıklanmaktadır (Taylor, 2001). Horton'a (2000) göre karma öğrenme, web tabanlı öğrenmenin sınıf içi öğrenmenin bazı güçlü yönleri ve avantajları ile birleştirilmesidir. Bir başka tanıma göre hibrit eğitim, geleneksel bir öğrenme ortamında farklı eğitim yöntemlerinin yanı sıra teknolojilerin de kullanılmasıdır (Singh, 2003; Toprakçı & Ersoy 2008). Hibrit eğitim sınıfları, çevrimiçi öğrenme araçlarının ve teknolojilerinin geleneksel sınıflara entegre edilmesiyle oluşturulur (Triyason vd., 2020). Dünya genelinde uzun yıllardır kullanılan web tabanlı eğitim, diğer bir deyişle uzaktan eğitim, COVID-19 Pandemisi ile birlikte geniş kitlelere ulaşmanın işlevsel yollarından biri haline gelmiştir.

Hibrit eğitime ilişkin uluslararası literatür incelendiğinde güncel çalışmaların çeşitli alanlarda ve konularda gerçekleştirildiği görülmektedir. Jumabaeva ve diğerleri (2020) Kırgızistan'da bir üniversitede hibrit eğitim üzerine uygulamalı bir çalışma gerçekleştirmiştir. Hall ve Villareal (2015) hibrit eğitimin avantajlarını lisansüstü öğrencilerin bakış açısıyla incelemiştir. Gleason ve Greenhow (2017), özel bir hibrit eğitim uygulama robotu aracılığıyla üniversite öğrencilerinin öğrenmeleri üzerindeki etkisini göstermiştir. Kazu ve Güher-Özercan (2023) ise ilkokul birinci sınıf öğretmenleri ve öğrenci velilerinin katılımıyla hibrit eğitim ile okuma yazma öğretimi sürecini incelemiştir. Toytok ve Öztaş (2022) ise kamu ve özel kurumlarda kullanılan hibrit eğitim uygulamalarını okul yöneticilerinin görüşleri ile derlemiştir. Bir başka çalışmada ise Türkiye'deki hibrit eğitim uygulamaları ve etkileri meta-analiz yoluyla ortaya konmuştur (Korucu ve Kabak, 2020). Bu çalışmalar arasında eğitim sürecinin her kademesinde çok sayıda branş bulunmaktadır. Ancak doğrudan özel eğitim alanıyla ilgili bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır. Öte yandan özel eğitim akademisyenlerinin katılımcı olarak yer aldığı bir çalışma da bulunmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, özel eğitim alanında çalışan akademisyenlerin karma eğitim sınıflarına ilişkin görüşlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem: Araştırma, özel eğitim alanındaki akademisyenlerin hibrit derslere bakışını derinlemesine incelemek amacıyla bir durum çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Çalışmada yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve gözlemler kullanılmıştır. Öte yandan düzenli olarak yansıtıcı araştırmacı günlüğü tutulmuştur. Hibrit dersleri yürüten özel eğitim akademisyenleri ile görüşmeler yapılmış ve bazı dersler araştırmacılar tarafından gözlemlenmiştir. Katılımcılar amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme (Patton, 1987) ile belirlenmiştir. Katılımcıların çalışmaya dâhil edilmesinde iki ölçüt kullanılmıştır. Birinci ölçüt özel eğitim alanında akademisyen olmak, ikinci ölçüt ise hibrit ders vermiş olmaktır. Çalışmaya özel eğitimin her alt alanından en az bir kişi olmak üzere dokuz akademisyen katılmıştır. Katılımcıların 29 ila 36 yaş arasında değişmektedir. Veriler içerik analizi tekniği kullanılarak bulgulara dönüştürülmüştür. İçerik analizi tematik bir çerçeve oluşturma, verileri işleme, bulgulara ulaşma ve bulguları yorumlama olmak üzere dört adımdan oluşmaktadır (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2013). İlk olarak ham veriler kodlanmıştır. Daha sonra elde edilen kodlar iki uzmanın karşılaştırması ile tema ve alt temalara dönüştürülmüştür. Uzmanlar arası mutabakat ve doğrulamanın ardından kuramsal çerçeve de dikkate alınarak bulgular elde edilmiştir.

Sonuç, Tartışma ve Öneriler: Analiz sonucunda 4 ana ve 15 alt temaya ulaşılmıştır. Analiz sonucunda elde edilen ilk ana tema hibrit derslere geçiştir. Bu tema altında duygular, hazırlık ve önlemler olmak üzere üç alt tema bulunmaktadır. Tamamen çevrimiçi derslerle geçen bir yılın ardından yeniden yüz yüze ders vermek üzere sınıflara giren akademisyenler heyecan, korku ve panik gibi farklı duygular ifade etmişlerdir. Geçiş sürecinin ardından ortaya çıkan diğer bulgu kümesi ise hibrit derslerin sağladığı kolaylıklardır. Bu ana tema dört alt tema altında kategorize edilmiştir: ekonomik faydalar, güvenilirlik, konfor alanı ve teknoloji okuryazarlığı. Katılımcılar hibrit derslerin zaman ve enerji tasarrufu sağladığını, daha küçük sınıflarda daha büyük gruplarla ders yapabildiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında zaman yönetimi, aydınlatma ve ısınma gibi alanlarda yüz yüze derslere göre daha avantajlı olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Hibrit derslerin kolaylık sağlamasının yanı sıra zorlukları da beraberinde getirdiği anlaşılmaktadır. Teknolojik donanım, sınıf yönetimi, değerlendirme, mesleki tatmin, iletişim ve sosyalliğin hibrit derslerden kaynaklanan zorluklar teması altında toplandığı görülmektedir. Akademisyenlerin bu beş unsurla ilgili sorunlar yaşadığı belirlenmiştir. Öncelikle teknolojik donanımın yetersiz olması hibrit derslerin sağlıklı bir şekilde yürütülmesini engellemiştir. Özellikle görüntü kalitesi, internet çekiminin zayıf olması, teknolojik donanımın düzgün çalışmaması gibi nedenlerin zaman zaman aksamalara neden olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Bulgular kapsamında ulaşılan son tema ise hibrit derslerin geleceğidir. Gelecek

teması rutinleşme, teorik ve fiziksel altyapı gelişimi olmak üzere üç alt temadan oluşmaktadır. Akademisyenlerin çoğu pandemi süreci yaşanmasa bile hibrit derslerin devam edeceğini ve akademik hayatın bir rutini haline geleceğini düşünmektedir.

Araştırmanın ilk bulguları arasında hibrit eğitime geçiş sürecinde yaşanan deneyimler yer almaktadır. Sınıfa geri dönmenin akademisyenlerde karmaşık duygular yarattığı anlaşılmaktadır. Karakuyu (2020) sınıfa geri dönen öğretmenlerin korku, panik, kaygı ve heyecan gibi duygular hissettiklerini bildirmiştir. Sınıfa karmaşık duygularla dönen eğitimciler, pandemi dönemi için bulaşma riskini azaltmaya yönelik yoğun bireysel önlemler almıştır. Hibrit eğitim sınıflarında yürütülecek dersler için özel bir hazırlık yapılmadığı görülmektedir. Jumabaeva ve diğerleri (2020) çalışmalarında, zaman ve deneyim eksikliği nedeniyle çevrimiçi içerik hazırlamada zorluklar yaşandığından bahsetmiştir. Ancak bu çalışmada böyle bir bulguya rastlanmamıştır. Hibrit dersler için yapılan hazırlıkların çevrimiçi veya yüz yüze derslerden farklı olmadığı görülmektedir. Yeni bir sınıf modeliyle karşılaşmanın getirdiği farklı duygular ve deneyimsizliğin yarattığı kaygı dile getirilse de hibrit sınıflar için özel bir hazırlık yapılmadığı görülmektedir. Nitekim pandemi dönemindeki hazırlık sürecinin ders içeriğinden ziyade sağlık tedbirleri ile ilgili olduğu söylenebilir.

Villegas-Ch ve diğerleri (2021) hibrit eğitimi, pandemi sürecinde öğrenci eğitiminin aksamaması ve gelecek nesillerin iyi bir eğitim alması için öğrencilere sunulan en iyi karma modellerden biri olarak değerlendirmektedir. Özel eğitim akademisyenleri de benzer görüşlere sahiptir. Yüz yüze ve online olarak eş zamanlı ilerleyen hibrit modelin, fiziki koşulların düzeltilmesi ve eksikliklerin giderilmesi şartıyla eğitim hayatının bir parçası haline geleceği ve rutinleşeceği düşünülüyor. Fiziki sorunların başında teknolojik donanımların neden olduğu aksaklıklar gelmektedir. Benzer şekilde farklı çalışmalarda da teknolojik araç ve gereçlerin ders sırasında teknik sorunlara yol açabildiği görülmektedir (Potra vd., 2021). İhtiyaçları karşılayan güncel teknolojik ekipmanların entegrasyonu hibrit sınıfları sürdürülebilir kılabilir. Nitekim hibrit öğrenme uygulamalarında donanım altyapısı büyük önem taşımaktadır (Korucu ve Kabak, 2020).

Hibrit eğitim sürecindeki sorunlar arasında öğrenci-eğitmen ve öğrenci-öğrenci arasındaki sosyal etkileşimin yetersiz olması da yer almaktadır. E-öğrenmeye geçiş sürecinde geleneksel öğretim yöntemleri tam olarak dikkate alınamamakta ve sınıf ortamındaki etkileşim eksikliği öğrenme deneyimleri için olumsuz sonuçlar doğurmaktadır (Hošková-Mayerová & Rosická, 2015). Etkili öğrenme-öğretme deneyimlerinde yaşanan zorlukların yanı sıra ölçme ve değerlendirme aşamaları da nitelikli bir şekilde yürütülmemektedir. Uzaktan eğitim ve sınav sürecinde hedef davranışların ne kadarına ulaşıldığı, hangi konuların yeterince öğrenildiği, eksikliklerin neler olduğu gibi önemli konular ölçme ve değerlendirme dışında bırakılırsa süreç olumsuz etkilenecektir (Sarı, 2020). Dolayısıyla dersler her ne kadar hibrit sınıflarda yürütülse de e-sınavların devam etmesi ölçme ve değerlendirme süreçlerini etkilemeye devam etmektedir.

Özel eğitim akademisyenleri, hibrit eğitim sınıflarının işlevselliğini artırmak için veri tabanlarının yenilenmesi, üniversitelerin kullandığı platformların güçlendirilmesi ve web 2.0 benzeri teknolojilerin desteklenmesi gibi öneriler sunmuştur. Dijital dönüşüm sürecinde üniversitelere kaliteli bir eğitim olanağı sağlamak için Üniversite 4.0 (Aybek, 2017; Salmon, 2019; Şen ve Kızılcalıoğlu, 2020), web 2.0 teknolojileri (Castro, 2019; Shen ve Ho, 2020) gibi çeşitli uygulamalar önerilmektedir. Öte yandan akademisyenlerin ve öğrencilerin kullanılan teknolojik araçlar konusunda eğitime ihtiyaç duyduğu görülmektedir. Öğretim elemanları ve öğrencilerin de bu araçları kullanacak şekilde eğitilmesi gerekmektedir (Garrison & Akyol, 2009; Olapiriyakul & Scher, 2006).

Sonuç olarak dünyada yaşanan pandemi ve ülkemizde yaşanan deprem sonrasında kurumlar hibrit eğitim modellerini kullanarak eğitim ve öğretim süreçlerine devam etmişlerdir. Özel eğitim akademisyenleri bu zorunlu geçişin getirdiği kolaylıkları, teknolojik okuryazarlığın gelişmesi ve konfor alanının genişlemesi olarak ekonomik açıdan faydalı bulmaktadır. Öte yandan, yetersiz teknolojik altyapı, düşük sosyal etkileşim, sınıf yönetiminde zorluk ve mesleki tatmin eksikliği, hibrit sınıflardaki eğitim sürecinin sorunlu yönleri olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Genel kanı, hibrit sınıfların şu anda zor zamanlarda veya istisnai durumlarda kullanılsa da önümüzdeki yıllarda öğretme-öğrenme süreçlerinin rutin bir parçası olacağı yönündedir.

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