Being an Academic during COVID-19: Perceptions and Realities

Research Assistant Dilara ÖZEL[*]

Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Education, Guidance, and Psychological Counseling Department, Ankara / Turkey, ozeldilara@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-1250-599X

Research Assistant Bilge Nuran AYDOĞDU

Marmara University, Faculty of Education, Guidance and Psychological Counseling Department, İstanbul / Turkey, b.nuranaydogdu@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-1738-0682

Research Assistant Rabia Sare YANIKOĞLU

Bezmi Alem Vakıf University, Faculty of Pharmacy, Biochemistry Department, İstanbul / Turkey, sareyankoglu@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-4619-0957

Abstract

After the first case was seen in Wuhan, China, the Covid-19 has begun to spread worldwide at an enormous speed. Education started to migrate to digital technology tools, and the problem of starting online education gave birth to many problems in all countries, including Turkey. There are almost 25 million students affected by the Covid-19 at all levels in Turkey. This study aims to profile academics' experiences during the adaptation process of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, semi-structured interviews are conducted with eight academics from İstanbul to get in-depth information about the issue. As a result of the data analysis, four themes emerged as *competencies, transition, interaction*, and *influencing factors*. Theme named competencies has two codes: technological competencies and academic competencies, theme named interaction has two codes: *personal issues* and

professional issues. A theme called influencing factors has two codes as *personal factors* and *professional factors*.

Keywords: Distance learning; Pandemic; Covid-19; Academic; Qualitative research.

Covid-19 Pandemisi Sırasında Akademisyen Olmak: Algılar ve Gerçekler

Öz

Çin'in Wuhan kentinde ilk vakanın görülmesinin ardından Covid-19 muazzam bir hızla dünya çapında yayılmaya başladı. Eğitimin dijital teknoloji araçlarına geçmeye ve çevrimiçi eğitime başlaması Türkiye dahil tüm ülkelerde pek çok sorunun oluşumuna neden oldu. Türkiye'de her eğitim düzeyinde Covid-19'dan etkilenen yaklaşık 25 milyon öğrenci bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Covid-19 pandemisinin koşullarına uyum süreci sırasında akademik deneyimlerin profilini çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle konuyla ilgili derinlemesine bilgi almak için İstanbul'dan sekiz akademisyen ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Veri analizi sonucunda yetkinlikler, geçiş, etkileşim ve etkileyen faktörler olarak dört tema ortaya çıkmıştır. "Yetkinlikler" teması teknolojik yetkinlikler ve akademik yeterlilikler olarak, "etkileşim" teması ise kişisel sorunlar ve mesleki sorunlar olarak iki koda ayrılmıştır. Etkileyen faktörler olarak adlandırılan diğer bir tema ise, kişisel faktörler ve mesleki faktörler olarak iki koddan oluşmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uzaktan eğitim; Pandemi; Covid-19; Akademisyenler; Nitel araştırma.

Introduction

The role of the universities has been changing enormously during the last century with the new theories and understanding in research. Traditionally, universities are bound to teaching and research activities. Teaching includes discussing and transferring existing theories, research, and knowledge. On the other hand, research refers to developing new information and understanding. In modern society, the universities' role is starting to be questioned within the 21st century (Barnett, 2008, 2010; Collini, 2012; Sperlinger, McLellan and Pettigrew, 2018). As a result of this debate, a new term emerged as a responsibility of universities to contribute to societal and economic development (Laredo, 2007; Zomer and Benneworth, 2011).

After the first case was seen in Wuhan, China, the Covid-19 has begun to spread worldwide at an enormous speed. With such a rapid increase in the

number of cases and deaths, the World Health Organization (2020) has declared Covid-19 as a pandemic. To limit the spread of disease and ensure physical distance, governments in many countries have established restrictions such as lockdowns, shutting down workplaces except for basic needs, suspension of social events and working from home, and so on (Singh and Chauhan, 2020, Nussbaumer-Streit et al., 2020).

While the number of Covid-19 cases is increasing day by day, higher education institutes in almost every country, including Turkey, have started to obtain a distance learning approach. This transition required a new perspective on higher education itself (Bozkurt and Sharma, 2020). There was a significant migration from face-to-face learning to online learning methods because of the Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020. UNESCO (2020b) reported that 1,576,021,818 learners in 188 countries were affected by this migration to online learning at all levels. While the universities start online education, ambiguity arose about what to teach and how to teach. Furthermore, there is a considerable gap growing about education equity with online education (Zhang, Wang, Yang and Wang, 2020). Thus, it affected 99 percent of the students worldwide (UNESCO, 2020a).

As Crawford et al. (2020) stated, not all countries migrated to online education in the first place. Countries classified as developed economies such as Canada and the United States did not close the schools nationwide. However, they prefer to implement local restrictions. Furthermore, some countries such as China, India and South Korea extended their semester breaks in the first place. Migration to online teaching tools emerged as a lack of home office infrastructure for academics and students. Thus, starting online education gave birth to many problems in all countries, including Turkey (Ateş, 2021; Babutara, 2021; Hamid, Sentryo and Hasan, 2020).

Turkey is one of the countries that has been affected by the Covid-19 outbreak and started to have a break from face-to-face learning. There are 206 universities in Turkey which have planned actions for the outbreak (YÖK, 2020). 7,940,133 students have enrolled in higher education in Turkey for both private and state universities. Since the number is high and the infrastructure for the online teaching and learning tools are not adequate for all students, all students enrolled in higher education in Turkey cannot obtain the online education as it is intended. There are almost 25 million students affected by the Covid-19 levels in Turkey (UNESCO, 2020b).

In the 21st century, there has been more online training, seminars, and workshops carried out, and these activities require planning, audiovisual content, and teacher-student preparation for the online process (Bao, 2020). On the other hand, most academics were unprepared for the online teaching process because of the sudden outbreak. They lacked the online teaching experience and support from the technology teams. In the first place, Turkey announced a break for three weeks in March and hoped to be prepared for the virus in this break (YÖK, 2020). On the other hand, since the pandemic was growing, education and training activities were held online. Therefore, this process should be considered an emergency remote education rather than distance learning (Bozkurt, 2020).

There are five main domains that the Council of Higher Education in Turkey started to work through with the Covid-19 outbreak: (1) legislation, (2) infrastructure, (3) human resources, (4) content, and (5) practice (Yamamoto and Altun, 2020). First of all, as a part of the legislation process, Distance Education Procedures and Principles have been changed. Therefore, all universities in Turkey could give online education with these procedures and principles. However, online education is limited only to the Spring semester in 2020. This procedure has been extended afterward, and the autumn semester started to be held online as well. Secondly, infrastructure possibilities are taken into consideration for each university (Yamamoto and Altun, 2020).

Furthermore, these resources are extended for all universities to pave the way for online lectures. At a press conference, the Council of Higher Education announced that 123 universities have Distance Education Application and Research Scratching Center, and these centers can support the online education process. Since 2009, distance and open education opportunities have started to be widespread in Turkey (Yüzer, Yamamoto and Demiray, 2013). Therefore, this developed another council's work area: human resources started to be used and improved. Another fundamental problem focusing on was the content of the online courses. Since there wasn't any online content preparation for each course given face-to-face, there were common online lectures on television given by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). And last, for the practice issue, YÖK stated that the lectures about theoretical issues should be held online. The lectures include internship and practice at laboratories should be planned when it is possible to do it face-

to-face in a compacted way. As is stated above, most of the academics were not familiar with online education tools. They had problems while giving lectures or using online materials as a part of the practice issue. Therefore, YÖK started to give training about online education tools to academics with a project started two years ago called the "Digital Transformation Project" within the scope of this project. Above 6000 academics and 50000 students got training about online education (YÖK, 2020). Although online education has become a necessary action and has enormous benefits to maintain learning by preserving physical distance during a pandemic, it increases significant difficulties and shortcomings about education effectiveness. Inadequate infrastructure, lack of technological devices because of socioeconomic status, difficulties with instructors' technological competence, inappropriate curriculum, and assessment tools for online systems are examples of distance learning issues (Dumford and Miller, 2018; Owusu-Fordjour, Koomson and Hanson, 2020). Students couldn't reach the online classes and stated their situations to their universities. Most universities, such as Middle East Technical University and Boğaziçi University in Turkey, started to run campaigns for students who did not have access to the internet and a personal computer (Boğaziçi University, 2020).

There are lockdowns and closures with the spreading of the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide, including Turkey. Therefore, higher education in Turkey started an emergency remote education (Bozkurt, 2020). This migration to online tools instead of the traditional classroom experience impacts the students as well. As UNESCO (2020a) stated, 99 percent of students were affected by the pandemic, which reached up to 8 million students in Turkey (YÖK, 2020). Since the outbreak is sudden and the universities need to take urgent actions about education, the transition process is quick and unclear for academics.

There are specific challenges for every academic during this transition. On the other hand, female academics were more affected during this online period. The productivity and scientific outputs from female academics were decreased during this global crisis (Andersen, Nielsen, Simone and Lewis, 2020; Frederickson, 2020; Gabster, van Daalen, Dhatt and Barry, 2020; Hassan and O'Grady, 2020; Gewin, 2020; Malisch et al., 2020; Staniscuaski et al., 2020). The impact of the covid-19 pandemic has a variety of issues besides gender. Universities and research institutions were not able to supply

a scientific environment for researchers. Researchers have difficulties completing their planned research programs for their funded projects and had difficulties obtaining new funded projects. Besides, researchers have difficulties networking and finding collaboration for their research. Furthermore, early career researchers lose their hope to find a job and project (Dolton, 2020; Fleming, Labriola and Wittes, 2020; Harper, Kalfa, Beckersi Kaefer, et al., 2020; Korbel and Stegle, 2020; Paula, 2020; Peeters, Mullins, Becker, Orellana and Livingston, 2020; Prudencio and Costa, 2020; Ranganathan, 2020; Stoye, 2020; Woolston, 2020a, 2020b; Yanow and Good, 2020).

This outbreak certainly influences every area of our life. Furthermore, this process requires a reassessment of higher education tools and activities. This study is aimed to learn the experiences of the academics who are currently giving lectures and running a laboratory during the outbreak. Besides, it is intended to get information about the personal experiences of the academic to come to know the effects of personal experiences on their professional life as well. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with the academicians following this purpose.

Method

Participants

In this study, the snowball sampling technique is used to reach academics who are actively a part of the online education process. Eight academics from different universities conducted semi-structured interviews about their personal experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. Four academics are working at a private university, and four academics are working at a state university in İstanbul. In Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants

Category Name	Groups	Numbers of Participants
Age	25- 30	3
	31 and above	5
Gender	Male	2
	Female	6
Years of Experience	1-5	3
	6-10	5
University Type	Public University	4
	Private University	4
Title	Research Assistant	4
	Assistant Professor	4

As it is stated above, six participants are females and only two participants are male academics. Four participants are the academics from the Faculty of Pharmacy, and the other four participants are the academics from the Faculty of Education. Therefore, while four academics from the Faculty of Pharmacy were involved in the applied courses such as laboratory tests, four academics from the Faculty of Education were more involved in the theoretical courses. Participants' age range was between 25 and 38, with a mean of 28. On the other hand, three participants are below the 30-year-old, and their year of experience is at most five years. Four participants are working as research assistants in their universities. These four research assistants were giving online courses, directing laboratories, and actively involved in the online education system during the covid-19 pandemic. Also, the other four participants earned their Ph.D. degrees, and they are working as assistant professors at their universities.

Instrument

Interview protocol is developed for semi-structured interviews with academics by the researchers. Semi-structured interviews are preferred since they allow room for interaction between researcher and participants. During the interview protocol development, expert opinion and feedback are provided by one academic of the Department of Educational Sciences at METU and one academic of the Department of Educational Sciences at Marmara University. Interview protocol refers to four areas: (1) Demographic information of the participants, (2) Academic situation and the applications during the Covid-19 pandemic, (3) Personal experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic, and (4) Suggestions to universities for the online education process.

Research Design and Procedure

This research is designed as a qualitative phenomenological study since the research aims to understand academics' individual experiences in depth. Qualitative studies pave the way for understanding the individual perspectives and the meaning of events rather than proving a hypothesis (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Phenomenological studies emphasize the life experiences of the participants and understanding these experiences from the perspectives of individuals. Therefore, this approach was used to understand the experiences of academics during the covid-19 pandemic in-depth.

The semi-structured interview protocol was designed by the researchers and the feedback from one academic from Middle East Technical University

Educational Sciences Department was taken. Before conducting the interviews, the permission granted from Middle East Technical University Human Research Ethics Committee (with protocol number 240-ODTU-2021), two pilot interviews were carried out and the participants gave feedback on the questions. Semi-structured interviews are conducted via skype and zoom. During the interviews, prompts (reminders) and probes (further inspection) were used to understand the phenomena in depth. Interviews carried on ranged from approximately 45 minutes to 75 minutes, with a mean of 60 and a median of 55 minutes. Recordings were made during the interviews with the informed consent of participants. The data collection process timeline was a period starting from the end of July 2020 to the middle of October 2020.

Data Analysis

The qualitative content analysis is used to reveal the data's unique details rather than determine the statistical significance of the particular words or concepts. Therefore, relevant themes and codes are used to understand social reality (Zhang and Wildemyth, 2005). Pre-established themes and codes are not used since the aim of the study are to enable the in-depth clarification of the phenomena (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). Word-to-word transcription of the interviews is done for the reliable analysis of the data. All interviews were examined by the researchers. One academic from Marmara University's triangulation process is to ensure the data's trustworthiness and transferability (Creswell, 1998). The feedback and suggestions by the academic for the triangulation were taken into consideration. Thus, themes and codes of the study will be discussed considering the researchers' analysis. Kappa value was calculated high for intercoder reliability (Kappa value .974). Suggested themes and codes are taken into consideration by the researchers, and the data is coded as a result of the consensus. Ethical permission from Marmara University Applied Ethics Research Centre (Ethics Committee) was received, and the whole procedure was applied according to the ethical codes.

Findings

This study aims to understand the experiences of academics in Turkey during the transition to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, semi-structured interviews are conducted with eight academics from two different universities and faculties. Four themes emerged from the content analysis based on semi-structured interviews: *competencies, transition, interaction*, and *influencing factors*. Theme-named competencies have two codes as *technological*

competencies and *academic competencies*. The theme named interaction has two codes as personal issues and professional issues, and the theme called influencing factors has two codes as personal factors and *professional factors*.

Competencies

The first theme referred to *competencies* related to the academics' perceptions of adequacy about online teaching methods. Participants highlighted two aspects of the competency of the online education process: *technological competency* and *academic competency*. The first code-named technological competency includes academics' technology literacy. Academics who identify themselves as keeping pace with technology stated that the transition process to online education because of the pandemic was easy for them since they already know online education tools such as zoom and Webex. However, some participants indicated that the process is much harder for them because they need to learn about technology tools and simultaneously deal with the online teaching process. It is found that technological competency cannot be explained just with the participants' age.

> "*I am very unfamiliar with such systems, and I also have difficulty learning. After all, it might be because of being 34 years old. It wasn't about your computer or laptop, or the fact that I'm so bad at electronics. Therefore, many things have happened, but I tried to adapt my life to these electronic revolutions.*" P2

As stated in the quotation, P2 is 34-years-old and stated that she has no technological literacy. She was not using any of the social media applications before the pandemic. Thus, it was a challenging process for her to start an online education suddenly. Thus, this emergency remote learning because of the pandemic brings the adaptation process for academics as well.

The second code-named *academic competency* includes the curriculum adaptation process for online teaching practices. In this part, academics focus on the knowledge and ability they have for online lectures. Four of the participants highlighted that they did not have any previous experience with online teaching. They did not get any specific training on how to adapt the course tools to online lectures. They also mentioned that it creates a considerable barrier both for them and for the students since some of the tools they are using are not appropriate for online lectures, such as PowerPoint presentations and in-class activities.

On the other hand, two participants stated that they had online classes

when visiting universities in the United States (US) or online application process abroad. Thus, they had an idea about how online courses should be and which tools they can use. However, there is another shortcut in this case because the participants stated that they do not have the tools they can use like those in the US. For example, they had a good platform for online lectures. They got the proper internet connection and the tools for these lectures.

> "*Our university sent a few instructions, but I did not receive any special education for the online system. Frankly, I did not have much difficulty because we were always interviewing or presenting on Skype when we applied for various Post Hoc positions abroad. I did not have any difficulties because we had experience. I did not need education, but the university did not provide any education.*" P3

Besides the curriculum adaptation issue of the academic competency, participants also stated that exams are a big issue for the lecturers. Two research assistants indicated that professors used to ask information-based questions for the exams students could find online. However, they advocated that the exams should include critical thinking and inclusion of the knowledge besides the informative questions. Therefore, professors need to be more creative while preparing the exam questions and make students think about the cases rather than memorizing the equations and definitions.

> "*This shows our unpreparedness for online lessons. Since we do not know what the online course is like, we cannot change our measurement method. Maybe in the fall semester, it will be necessary to alternative methods such as assigning homework or making students a presentation. ... We have to change our measurement methods... but since we are not prepared for them, now we do as if we were still in the classroom.*" P5

Participant five stated that professionals did not have any information about online education beforehand and were not prepared for this transition. Since they got used to providing traditional assessment tools and did not have any information to prepare the critical and new ones, exams and homework continued in the traditional ways.

Transition

The second theme is *transition* related to the universities' transition stage from face-to-face education to online courses. All the participants stated that this transition was fast for everyone inside the university since this is an emergency. Thus, they did not have any preparation for online lectures. However, they also stated that the pandemic started to spread slowly in the

first phase, and it was a fact, and we will have it as a country. Thus, participants also stated that the universities might prepare an emergency plan for the pandemic beforehand. Thus, they might be more prepared. At least they may talk with the students if they have sufficient tools such as computers, laptops, or the internet for the online lectures.

Furthermore, all the participants stated that the rectorship and dean's office decided on online lectures. Thus, there wasn't any consultation and briefing meeting for the lecturers inside the university. Therefore, they just learn about online lectures via email.

> "*They made a decision saying 'Let's use this.' So frankly, I have no idea how that decision was taken. Not 'how we will use it' but 'How should we do the lectures? How should we approach students? What do the students expect?'. Of course, there are students in Istanbul, and there are students out of the city. Some students do not have good computers outside of the city and do not have access to the internet. Of course, we did not know these students, and they turned to the dean's office or computer center. They informed us about the students. So we held a meeting or two about these students with computer center.*" P3

As participant three indicated, universities run the decision-making processes without consulting the academics primarily. However, some universities may contact students who need further assistance with internet tools. Therefore, universities inform the academics about the situation and try to find a solution for them. However, this was not the case for every university. Two academics from different universities stated that they couldn't hear anything about the students who couldn't attend the online lectures.

Interaction

The third theme, named interaction, is related to academics' communication facilities during online lectures in both their personal and professional life. Thus, this theme has two codes as *professional issues* and *personal issues*. As a part of the professional issues, all the participants stated that they did not get any information from their students in the first place. Therefore, they indicated that the dean's office should collect information from every student if they have sufficient tools for online education or not. Thus, all the lecturers might have a meeting and discuss what they could do about this issue and decide together. Instead of this, all the participants stated that the decisions came down and couldn't reach their students. This process was not efficient for both lecturers and the students.

Furthermore, since students may not want to open their cameras during the online lectures, it creates a problem for academics who see their faces while explaining a subject. Five participants indicated that they could not understand if the students grasp the main ideas of the course. Three participants stated that they learn directly from students or dean offices that students in rural areas have difficulty accessing online courses because of inadequate internet access.

> "*Not all students have problems accessing online platforms, but there are many students who have difficulties. Many of my students wrote to me saying that they are in the village, they have too many courses and their internet quota is not enough for participating all of them.*" P2

On the other hand, 5 participants stated that they could be more in touch with the students who can use technological tools effectively, such as WhatsApp and zoom. Students started to ask their questions after or before the course via WhatsApp since they created a group for every course. Furthermore, they felt freer to speak and ask questions since the classes are online. Participants indicated that students might feel more comfortable joining the class discussions.

As part of the personal issues, all participants stated that they need to contact their colleagues more. All participants mentioned that they need meetings with all the members of their faculty. Besides the decisions on online courses, they stated that they were forgotten that they are human beings and were curious about their colleagues. Since the quarantines started suddenly, they needed to contact others they were in contact with every day. Thus, communication with other faculty members has a vital issue in their lives.

However, all participants also stated that they started to contact their family members during the pandemic. They were conducting video calls almost every day with the relative they were talking on the phone once a week before the quarantine. Since this is a crisis, they want to keep in touch with them, especially older relatives. Thus, as P7 stated below, communication between them increases, and they are more connected during the pandemic.

> "*So I realized how precious the interaction is. We have been living in different cities with my family for a long time. But before the pandemic, I was not talking to my family on video. I have been in more contact with them in this process.*" P7

Influencing Factors

Influencing factors is the fourth theme that emerged as a result of the analysis. It includes the issues that affect academics during the pandemic and affect their online lectures. This theme is referred to as the *personal* and *professional factors* that influence online courses. Participants stated that personal factors such as relatives or close friends have Covid-19, personal characteristics such as feeling depressed because of social isolation, increasing household responsibilities because of the lockdown, and spending all time inside the home affect their performance. For example, P4 and P6 stated that since they were at home during the lockdown and did not want to order some food because of health issues, it was hard for them to cook and prepare for the lectures well. They stated that they did not realize how this small thing affected their daily life. Thus, arranging the duties for home and work was a little bit hard for participants in the first place of online lectures.

> "*We cannot order food from outside because the virus can come from outside. We do not order anything, and we do everything ourselves. It was a little boring like that. It was fun at first, but then we got bored of cooking.*" P4

The second code is professional factors. Four participants stated that they have a heavy workload because of the online lectures. When they were leaving for their jobs at the usual time, they spent time on transportation, more time for their lunch, and conversations with their colleagues. However, during the lockdowns, they feel like they need to work all the time. This situation created a huge problem and expanded the working hours for academics.

Furthermore, two academics stated that they are working all the time because of the online lecture hours. They stated that they might have lectures and meetings at even eight or nine in the evening. Thus, they may have to work till midnight some of the evenings, and these academics indicated that the workload is getting heavy for them day by day.

> "*Normally, before the pandemic period, we were doing some things together, but I tried to support some things more, not because this is the workload for me because he was out every day during the pandemic as well because of his job. I thought, "I'm at home. My husband is tired."* P6

> "*My sister took more care of her children, my uncle is generally more with his work, so of course he could continue. I can understand that women generally, as I have seen from other friends, especially women with children, cannot spare time for their work. Maybe they spent less*

time than the male lecturers." P5

As the sixth and fifth participants stated, gender roles play a significant role in the academics' workload. Since the female academics spent their time at home and the schools were closed, they need to take care of their children more than before. Besides, they may engage with the house more. P6 did not state this issue as a gender role. However, she was working from home as well as a lecturer.

Discussion

This study intends to explore the academics who are currently giving lectures and running a laboratory during the outbreak. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with eight academics from different universities to meet this aim. Four themes emerged from the analysis of these interviews: *competencies, transition, interaction*, and *influencing factors*. Themes named competencies include two codes as technological competencies and academic competencies, and the theme of influencing factors involves codes of personal factors and professional factors.

One of the most critical issues about distance education is technological competence. Participants' experiences demonstrated no adequate support to use technological devices or training about online education. It can be seen that academics try to find alternative ways to give lectures and measurement methods by themselves. Nevertheless, giving academics training for planning and evaluating courses following online education can reduce the disadvantages of online settings (Toquero, 2020). Another qualitative study was conducted with university students that also supports this finding. It presents that since some academics are not familiar or proficient in using technological devices, it creates a challenge for an effective learning system (Khalil et al., 2020). Transporting to online education brings out academic competency for adaptation content and assessment methods. Toquero (2020) points out that it is vital to adapt curriculum and apply novel methods in a crisis learning environment. Results from this study indicate that curriculum and applicable methods for distance education is another challenge for them. Joseph and Venkattappa (2020) indicate that academics try to adapt their content to be more functional despite insufficient knowledge and experience. In parallel with these findings, participants from this research state they could change their content and instruction methods with alternatives even though their university could not provide any training. However, in online education,

assessment methods can be more challenging for instructors (Kearns, 2012). Participants' experiences in the current study are similar to this statement. They present that their assessment skills are inadequate to adapt exams to online learning settings.

It is an understandable process for universities to take action immediately. Considering the crisis, substantial universities had to take responsibility, making immediate requests without asking academic personnel's opinions (Tesar, 2020). All academics in the current study as well stated that they were not part of the decision-making process. Since the academics are the ones who are in contact with the students consistently, they should be part of the decision-making process about the tools they are using for the lectures. Furthermore, academics do not inform their students if they have access to internet tools or not. This creates a massive problem in terms of education as well. Academics stated that they failed the students who cannot attend the online classes without knowing if they need some assistance to attend the classes. Participants stated that some of their students, especially those who live outside of the city, do not have the technological tools or infrastructure to participate in online education. Even though some universities try to provide technical support, it is not adequate to make it accessible. In parallel with these statements, researches reveal that due to socioeconomic status and social inequality, the transition from face to face to online education causes students not able to attend their courses (Aristovnik, Keržič, Ravšelj, Tomaževič and Umek, 2020; Owusu-Fordjour, Koomson and Hanson, 2020; Williamson, Eynon and Potteri, 2020). Besides, five academics mention lack of contact with students. By this result, the findings of Adnan and Anwar (2020) and Tümen-Akyıldız (2020) support these results and state that lack of communication between students and instructors emerges during distance education and also harms effective learning.

The theme of influencing factors includes personal and professional situations affecting academics. Personal influencing factors involve social isolation, feeling depressed, relatives or close friends having Covid-19 disease, or housework such as cooking and cleaning while continuing their work. It can be seen that such circumstances have a significant impact on the psychological health of all individuals. Therefore, it causes many mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, burns out, and so on (Mertens, Gerritsen, Duijndam, Salemink and Engelhard, 2020; Salari et al., 2020).

Another significant issue arising from results is gender inequality in academia during the pandemic.

As a consequence of lockdown, every individual begins to work from their home. However, women are more likely to take responsibility for housework or childcare than men (Power, 2020). This conclusion can be made only by examining the publication numbers of scientists (Viglione, 2020). From the beginning of the pandemic, the number of male academics increases as female researchers' studies drop (Ribarovska, Hutchinson, Pittman, Pariante and Spencer, 2021). Studies conducted during the pandemic reveal gender inequality and show that female academics have had more responsibilities about home, and therefore their time spent on their research has decreased considerably as compared to male academics (Andersen et al., 2020; Frederickson, 2020; Lerchenmüller, Schmallenbach, Jena and Lerchenmueller, 2021; Yıldırım and Eslen-Ziya, 2020). In parallel with these findings, current research reveals that participants' experience and opinions bring out that men have more time to work.

In contrast, women have difficulties focusing on cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, etc. Another professional influencing factor that creates a challenge since working online creates a heavy workload for participants. They maintain all their lecturers, meetings, and communication with students, colleagues, and administration through the internet. In line with these findings, Watermeyer, Crick, Knight, and Goodall (2021) demonstrate that online teaching made a change in the balance of home and work and the working hours of academics enormously increased after this transition. Adedoyin and Soykan (2020) present that instructors have to take too many responsibilities at the online system's migration process. They also discussed that it should not be underestimated since extreme working hours can give rise to chronic stress and mental health problems.

Conclusion

Universities' role is changing in the 21st century from research to adaptation to social and economic changes in society (Laredo, 2007; Zomer and Benneworth, 2011). The covid-19 outbreak shows the importance of this role to the whole world. Universities worldwide tried to rapidly adapt this migration from traditional learning tools to digital technology facilities, including universities in Turkey. However, since this change was so immediate, they took emergent actions to assist lectures to continue. In the

meantime, the factors that influence their professional life, interaction needed because of the quarantines, and the nature of this fast transition might be ignored. Therefore, universities should be more prepared for the following issues that might require digital learning tools regarding these problems.

There are some limitations of this study as well. First of all, the participant number is minimal since this is a qualitative study. There were participants from just two universities and two different faculties. Furthermore, all participants are from İstanbul since the snowball sampling technique was used. Academics' opinions about the subject need further exploration with more participants from different cities and universities. Also, the gender of the participants might create a bias as well. There are two males and six females in this study. Therefore, it might be helpful to include more male participants to get perspectives of male academics.

References

Adedoyin, O. B. and Soykan, E. (2020). Covid-19 pandemic and online learning: the challenges and opportunities. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 31(2), 863-875.
Doi: 10.1080/10494820.2020.1813180

Adnan, M. and Anwar, K. (2020). Online learning amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Students' Perspectives. *Online Submission, 2(1)*, 45-51.
Doi: 10.33902/JPSP.%202020261309

Andersen, J. P., Nielsen, M. W., Simone, N. L., Lewis, R. E. and Jagsi, R. (2020). Meta-research: is Covid-19 amplifying the authorship gender gap in the medical literature? *arXiv,* 1-11.
Doi: abs/2005.06303

Aristovnik, A., Keržič, D., Ravšelj, D., Tomaževič, N. and Umek, L. (2020). Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on life of higher education students: A global perspective. *Sustainability*, *12*(20), 8438.

Ateş, O. (2021). During times of disruption: The experience of emergency remote teaching in Higher education in Turkey. In Thornburg, A. W., Ceglie, R. J. ve Abertnathy, D. F., (Eds.), *Handbook of research on lessons learned from transitioning to virtual classrooms during a pandemic* (pp. 292-312). Bologna: IGI Global.

Babutara, B. M. (2021). The problems of the world of education in the middle of Covid-19 pandemic. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute Journal*, *4*(1), 450- 457.

Bao, W. (2020). COVID-19 and online teaching in higher education: A case study of Peking University. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies, 1*(3), 113-115. Doi: 10.1002/hbe2.191

Barnett, R. (2008). Being an academic in a time-impoverished age. In Amaral, A., Bleiklie, I. and Musselin, C., (Eds.), *From governance to identity* (pp. 7–18). Berlin: Springer.

Barnett, R. (2010). *Being a university*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Boğaziçi University. (2020). A First from Boğaziçi University: The internet bursary for distance learning. Retrieved from http://www.boun.edu.tr/en-US/Content/Announcements/Announcements?LoadModule=News&NewsID =2199&Filter=true

Bozkurt, A. (2020). Koronavirüs (Covid-19) pandemi süreci ve pandemi sonrası dünyada eğitime yönelik değerlendirmeler: Yeni normal ve yeni eğitim paradigması. *Açıköğretim Uygulamaları ve Araştırmaları Dergisi (AUAd)*, *6*(3), 112-142.

Bozkurt, A. and Sharma, R. C. (2020). Emergency remote teaching in a time of global crisis due to Coronavirus pandemic. *Asian Journal of Distance Education, 15*(1), 1-6.
Doi: 10.5281/zenodo.3778083

Collini, S. (2012). *What are universities for?* London: Penguin Books.

Crawford, J., Butler-Henderson, K., Rudolph, J., Malkawi, B., Glowatz, M., Burton, R., Magni, P. A. and Lam, S. (2020). Covid-19: 10 counties' higher education intra-period digital pedagogy responses. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching*, *3*(1), 9-28.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. California: Sage Publications Inc.

Dolton, P. (2020). *The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a crisis in the UK universities*. Retrieved from: https://voxeu.org/article/covid-19-pandemic-causing-crisis-uk-universities

Dumford, A. D. and Miller, A. L. (2018). Online learning in higher education: exploring advantages and disadvantages for engagement. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, *30*(6), 451-465.
Doi: 10.1007/s12528-018-9179-z

Fleming, T. R., Labriola, D. and Wittes, J. (2020). Conducting clinical research during the COVID-19 pandemic: protecting scientific integrity. *Journal of American Medical Association, 324*(1), 33-34.

Frederickson, M. (2020). *COVID-19's gendered impact on academic productivity*. https://github.com/drfreder/pandemic-pub-bias

Gabster, B. P., van Daalen, K., Dhatt, R. and Barry, M. (2020). Challenges for the female academic during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Lancet, 395*(10242), 1968-1970.
Doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31412-4

Gewin, V. (2020). The career cost of COVID-19 to female researchers, and how science should respond. *Nature, 583*(7818), 867-869.

Hamid, R., Sentryo, I. and Hasan, S. (2020). Online learning and its problems in the Covid-19 emergency period. *Jurnal Prima Edukasia*, *8*(1), 86-95.

Harper, L., Kalfa, N., Beckers, G. M. A., Kaefer, M., Nieuwhof-Leppink, A. J., Fossum, M., Herbst, K. W. and Bagli, D. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on research. *Journal of Pediatric Urology*, *16*(5), 715-716.

Hassan, J. and O'Grady, S. (2020). *Female world leaders hailed as voices of reason amid the coronavirus chaos*.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/04/20/female-world-leaders-hailed-voices-reason-amid-coronavirus-chaos/

Joseph, N. P. and Venkatappa, N. (2021). Education in the time of Covid-19 lockdown-Academics the next level of covid warriors. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, *12*(3), 3325-3331.

Kearns, L. R. (2012). Student assessment in online learning: Challenges and effective practices. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, 8*(3), 198-208.

Khalil, R., Mansour, A. E., Fadda, W. A., Almisnid, K., Aldamegh, M., Al-Nafeesah, A., Alkhalifah, A. and Al-Wutayd, O. (2020). The sudden transition to synchronized online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia: a qualitative study exploring medical students' perspectives. *BMC Medical Education*, *20*(1), 1-10.
Doi: 10.1186/s12909-020-02208-z

Korbel, J. O. and Stegle, O. (2020). Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on life scientists. *Genome Biolology*, *21*(1), 113-115.

Laredo, P. (2007). Revisiting the third mission of universities: Toward a renewed categorization of university activities. *Higher Education Policy*, *20*(4), 441-456.

Lerchenmüller, C., Schmallenbach, L., Jena, A. B. and Lerchenmueller, M. J. (2021). Longitudinal analyses of gender differences in first authorship publications related to COVID-19. *BMJ Open, 11*(4), 1-8.
Doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045176

Malisch, J. L., Harris, B. N., Sherrer, S. M., Lewis, K. A., Shepherd, S. L., McCarthy, P. C., Spott, J. L., Karam, E. P., Moustaid-Moussa, N., Calarco, J. McC., Ramalingam, L., Talley, A. E., Cañas-Carrell, J. E., Ardon-Dryer, K., Weiser, D. A., Bernal, X. E. and Deitloff, J. (2020). Opinion: in the wake of COVID-19, academia needs new solutions to ensure gender equity. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, *117*(27), 15378-15381.

Mertens, G., Gerritsen, L., Duijndam, S., Salemink, E. and Engelhard, I. M. (2020). Fear of coronavirus (COVID-19): Predictors in an online study conducted in March 2020. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 74*, 22-45.
Doi: 10.1016/j.janxdis.2020.102258

Nussbaumer-Streit, B., Mayr, V., Dobrescu, A. I., Chapman, A., Persad, E., Klerings, I. and Gartlehner, G. (2020). Quarantine alone or in combination with other public health measures to control COVID-19: a rapid review. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, (9), 13574-13580

Owusu-Fordjour, C., Koomson, C. and Hanson, D. (2020). The impact of Covid-19 on learning - The perspective of the Ghanaian student. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 7(3), 88-101.

Paula, J. R. (2020). Lockdowns due to COVID-19 threaten PhD students' and early-career researchers' careers. *Nature, Ecology & Evoluation*, *4*(8), 999-1000.

Peeters, A., Mullins, G., Becker, D., Orellana, L. and Livingston, P. (2020). COVID-19's impact on Australia's health research workforce. *Lancet, 396*, 461-462.

Power, K. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the care burden of women and families. *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy, 16*(1), 67-73.
Doi: 10.1080/15487733.2020.1776561

Prudencio, M. and Costa, J. C. (2020). Research funding after COVID-19. *Nature Microbiology, 5*(8), 564-567.

Ranganathan, S. (2020). Slow research in the time of Covid-19. *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, *5*(3), 46-60.

Ribarovska, A. K., Hutchinson, M. R., Pittman, Q. J., Pariante, C. and Spencer, S. J. (2021). Gender inequality in publishing during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity, 91,* 1-3.
Doi: 10.1016/j.bbi.2020.11.022

Salari, N., Hosseinian-Far, A., Jalali, R., Vaisi-Raygani, A., Rasoulpoor, S., Mohammadi, M. and Khaledi-Paveh, B. (2020). Prevalence of stress, anxiety, depression among the general population during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Globalization and Health, 16*(1), 1-11.

Singh, R. P. and Chauhan, A. (2020). Impact of lockdown on air quality in India during COVID-19 pandemic. *Air Quality, Atmosphere and Health, 13*, 921–928.
Doi: 10.1007/s11869-020-00863-1

Sperlinger, T., McLellan, J. and Pettigrew, R. (2018). *Who are universities for? Remaking higher education*. London: Bristol University Press.

Staniscuaski, F., Reichert, F., Werneck, F. P., de Oliveira, L., Mello-Carpes, P. B., Soletti, R. C., Almeida, C. I., Zandona, E., Ricachenevsky, F. K., Neumann, A., Schwartz, I. V. D., Tamajusuku, A. S. K., Seixas, A. and Kmetzsch, L. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on academic mothers. *Science*, *368*(6492), 724-725.

Stoye, E. (2020). How research funders are tackling coronavirus disruption. *Nature.*
Doi: 10.1038/d41586-020-01120-2.

Tesar, M. (2020). Towards a Post-Covid-19 'new normality?': Physical and social distancing, the move to online and higher education. *Policy Futures in Education, 18*(5), 556–559.
Doi: 10.1177/1478210320935671

Toquero, C. M. (2020). Challenges and opportunities for higher education amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Philippine Context. *Pedagogical Research, 5*(4), 1-5. Doi: 10.29333/pr/7947

Tümen-Akyıldız, S. (2020). College students' views on the pandemic distance education: a focus group discussion. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Scienc*e, *4*(4), 322-334.

UNESCO. (2020a). *School closures caused by Coronavirus (Covid-19)*.
https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse

UNESCO. (2020b). *Startling digital divides in distance learning emerge.*
https://en.unesco.org/news/startling-digital-divides-distance-learning-emerge

Viglione, G. (2020). Are women publishing less during the pandemic? Here's what the data say. *Nature, 581*(7809), 365-366.
Doi: 10.1038/d41586-020-01294-9

Watermeyer, R., Crick, T., Knight, C. and Goodall, J. (2021). COVID-19 and digital disruption in UK universities: Afflictions and affordances of emergency online migration. *Higher Education, 81*(3), 623-641.
Doi: 10.1007/s10734-020-00561-y

Williamson, B., Eynon, R. and Potter, J. (2020). Pandemic politics, pedagogies and practices: digital technologies and distance education during the coronavirus emergency. *Learning, Media and Technology, 45*(2), 107-114.

Woolston, C. (2020a). Pandemic darkens postdocs' work and career hopes. *Nature*, *585*(7824), 309-312.

Woolston, C. (2020b). Junior researchers hit by coronavirus-triggered hiring freezes. *Nature, 582*(7812), 449-450.

World Health Organization. (2020). *WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19- 11 March 2020.* https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020

Yamamoto, G. T. and Altun, D. (2020). Coronavirüs ve çevrimiçi (online) eğitimin önlenemeyen yükselişi [Coronavirus and the inevitable rise of online education]. *Journal of University Research*, *3*(4), 25-34. Doi: 10.26701/uad.711110

Yanow, S. K. and Good, M. F. (2020). Nonessential research in the new normal: the impact of COVID-19. *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, 102*(6), 1164-1165.

Yildirim, T. M. and Eslen-Ziya, H. (2021). The differential impact of COVID 19 on the work conditions of women and men academics during the l down. *Gender, Work and Organization, 28*(S1), 243-249. Doi: 10.1111/gwao.12529

Yıldırım, A. and Şimşek, H. (2016). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

YÖK. (2020). *Küresel salgında yeni normalleşme süreci.* Ankara: YÖK.

Yüzer, V., Yamamoto, G. T. and Demiray, U. (2013). *Türkiye'de e-öğrenme: gelişmeler ve uygulamalar.* Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Zhang, W., Wang, Y., Yang, L. and Wang, C. (2020). Suspending classes without stopping learning: China's education emergency management policy in the COVID-19 outbreak. *Journal of Risk Financial Management, 13*(3), 55-56. Doi: 10.3390/jrfm13030055

Zhang, Y. and Wildemuth, B. M. (2005). Qualitative analysis of content. *Human Brain Mapping*, *30*(7), 2197-2206.

Zhang, Y. and Wildemuth, B. M. (2005). Qualitative analysis of content by. *Human Brain Mapping*, 30 (7), 2197-2206.

Zomer, A. and Benneworth, P. (2011). The rise of the university's third mission. In Ender, J., de Boer, H. F. and Westeheijden, D. F. (Eds.), *Reform of higher education in Europe* (81-101). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. Doi: 10.1007/978-94-6091-555-0_6