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Educational Adventure of Students in the COVID-19 Period in Turkey: Determination of Parents' Views

Murat Çakın 
Kilis 7 Aralik University, Turkey

Ebru Külekçi Akyavuz 
Kilis 7 Aralik University, Turkey

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Educational Adventure of Students in the COVID-19 Period in Turkey: Determination of Parents' Views

Murat Çakın, Ebru Külekçi Akyavuz

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the distance education process during the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of parents. It is also aimed to determine the problems regarding children's education that arose in this period and the educational and social activities parents do with their children. The study is designed as qualitative research. Parents with children studying at a primary school were included in the study group. A total of 20 parents participated in the study. Semi-structured interview forms developed by the researchers were used for data collection. Within the scope of the data obtained in the research, the problems experienced by parents in this period were collected under the categories of "instructional problems, social problems, and technological problems," and the activities they did with their children were collected under the categories of "health-related activities, educational activities, and social activities."

Introduction

The coronavirus outbreak, which began in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019, and expanded rapidly to every corner of the globe, was first seen in Turkey on March 11, 2020 (Turkish Ministry of Health, 2020: 12-13). The disease caused by a type of virus from the coronavirus family is defined as COVID-19 (World Health Organization WHO, 2020). According to the United Nations Development Program - UNDP (2020), COVID-19 has caused a global health crisis. WHO (2020:2) emphasizes that identifying and isolating individuals infected with this virus, monitoring their contacts, quarantining them, limiting their international mobility, and removing them from physical contact play an important role in saving lives.

It is a fact that COVID-19 has affected all areas such as health, education, economy, culture, and social life worldwide. To adapt to the new order caused by this pandemic, certain studies are carried out in all areas. The field of education, with students, teachers, administrators, and auxiliary school personnel, has also been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and has tried to transform itself in this period. The pandemic has particularly forced education policy-makers to make an extraordinary digital leap in children's basic education. This leap forward requires bringing not only teachers but also parents, school administrators, and the whole society to a certain level of readiness (Iivari, Sharma, & Ventä-Olkkonen, 2020:5). Methods of guiding students to effectively and appropriately regulate their emotions during public health emergencies and avoid losses caused by crisis events

have become an urgent problem for colleges (Cao, Fang, Hou, Han, Xu, Dong & Zheng, 2020:2). Major campaigns are carried out across the world in order to control these situations (UNDP, 2020). Within the scope of this struggle, distance education studies are carried out in our country, as well (Ustun ve Ozçiftçi, 2020:147), through the internet and television (MoNE, 2020) in order to prevent interruption in educational activities (Telli Yamamoto ve Altun, 2020: 26).

COVID-19 pandemic period has highlighted the concepts of distance education, online education, and homeschooling. With the pandemic, technological developments that increase the variety of educational settings and tools have become an indispensable element of education systems. Online education, which requires self-competencies in different fields (Yildiz & Seferoglu, 2020:34), provides active communication among educational stakeholders (Altıparmak, Kurt & Kapidere, 2011:320) and offers the convenience of accessing saved documents (Solak, Utebay & Yalçın, 2019:42). However, online learning also has its own limitations. Cakin and Kulekçi-Akyavuz (2020: 173) state that there are various problems in distance education such as inability to monitor students' learning, lack of educational materials at home, lack of necessary technological infrastructure, limited educational activities, inability to collect or check students' homework, failure to determine students' individual needs, adaptation problems, and distractions at home. While education administrators try to solve the educational needs of students through distance education (Pinar & Donel-Akgul, 2020:464), each individual is tasked with different responsibilities in order to minimize the negative effects of the pandemic (Acar, 2020: 17). The most important of these responsibilities undoubtedly fall to parents. In general, research emphasizes that parents' interest in their child's have an important influence on a child's education and behavior (Tarigan & Stevani, 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, educational stakeholders have, for the first time, been faced with a system that provides formal education through distance education across the whole country. To achieve rapid adaptation to this new process, teachers, who are the most crucial elements of educational services, need to stay in touch with students and their parents (Yilmaz, Guner, Mutlu, Doganay & Yilmaz, 2020:78). Also, with the COVID-19 pandemic period, parents, in addition to parenting their children, have begun to take a more active role in the education and socialization of their children. They have undertaken many responsibilities such as facilitating the education of the child, being a playmate for him/her, and managing children's health concerns. Revealing educational problems of both children and parents, who are an important and indispensable educational stakeholder, and putting forwards solution offers to solve these problems will contribute to the presentation of the education system from a holistic perspective. To this end, the present study aims to investigate the distance education process during the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of parents. It is also aimed to determine the problems regarding children's education that arose in this period and the educational and social activities parents do with their children. The study focuses on the following two questions:

1. What problems have parents encountered in the education of their children during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What activities have parents done with their children during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Method

The study is designed as qualitative research. Phenomenology, one of the approaches to qualitative research, was preferred in the study. Phenomenology seeks to determine participants' views on how they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano & Morales, 2007). In this study, education in the COVID-19 pandemic period is examined in depth. The problems experienced and activities performed in this period were tried to be determined through interviews with parents.

Participants

Parents with children studying at a primary school were included in the study group. The criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used to determine the study group. The criterion was for the parents to have children studying at a primary school and being responsible for the education of the child. A total of 20 parents participated in the study. The information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Information about the Participants

Participants	Gender	Educational Background	Age	Participants	Gender	Educational Background	Age
K1	Female	Secondary	35	K11	Female	Undergraduate	37
K2	Female	Secondary	28	K12	Male	Undergraduate	39
K3	Male	Associate Degree	35	K13	Male	Undergraduate	33
K4	Male	Associate Degree	37	K14	Female	Undergraduate	36
K5	Female	Postgraduate	41	K15	Female	Undergraduate	35
K6	Female	Master	42	K16	Female	Undergraduate	31
K7	Female	Postgraduate	38	K17	Male	High school	38
K8	Female	Postgraduate	38	K18	Male	High school	34
K9	Male	Primary	33	K19	Female	High school	39
K10	Male	Primary	50	K20	Male	High school	38

Eleven mothers and nine fathers participated in the study. It can be inferred from Table 1 that the educational backgrounds, primary, secondary, and high school and university, of the participants, differ.

Data Collection

For this study, permission (dated 15.06.2020 and numbered 2020/15) was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Kilis 7 Aralik University. After obtaining permission from the Ethics Committee, the data collection phase was initiated. The data were collected between June and July 2020 through online interviews with parents.

Semi-structured interview forms developed by the researchers were used for data collection. While developing the interview form, parents with children studying at a primary school were interviewed, and they were asked to describe their experiences during the pandemic period. As a result of the interviews, a framework was determined regarding the problems parents usually experience and the activities they do with their children, and the interview questions were developed accordingly.

In order to determine the content validity of the interview questions, opinions were taken from two experts with a doctorate in educational sciences and with children studying at a primary school. As a result of the feedback from the experts, one question was added to the interview form, and the form was thus finalized. Prior to the actual implementation, two parents were interviewed to check the comprehensibility of the questions. Since there was no problem with the comprehensibility of the questions, the actual implementation was initiated.

The data were collected by the researchers. First of all, the participants were determined. In order not to risk the health of the researchers and participants, all interviews were conducted using audio and video communication apps (WhatsApp, Skype, etc.). Interviews were conducted at times determined by the participants and researchers. The interviews took about 20 minutes and were recorded using the chosen communication apps.

Data Analysis

The obtained data were transcribed and analyzed. N-VIVO program was used to analyze the data. The data were analyzed using the content analysis technique. Once the interview data were obtained, the stage of coding the data was initiated. The codes were determined based on the responses given by the participants. Similar codes were collected under the same category. Codes such as P1, P2 were used instead of the names of the participants in the extracts from the interviews.

In the study, validity and reliability studies were also performed. To ensure the internal validity (credibility) of the study, after the interview data were transcribed, they were shared with the participants to confirm whether the data were in line with their statements. To ensure external validity (transferability), all practices in data collection and analysis of data were explained in detail, which is in accordance with the nature of qualitative research, and the findings were enriched with extracts from the interviews.

Also, in order to provide external reliability (confirmability), codes and categories and raw data were compared one more time. In addition, in order to ensure the reliability of the qualitative dimension, the obtained data were compared independently by the two researchers. Codes and categories with consensus and disagreements were determined, and necessary corrections were made. In order to calculate the reliability of the study, the reliability formula [Reliability = Consensus (31) / (Consensus (31) + Disagreement (3))] developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used. Using this formula, the percentage of consensus in coding was calculated as 0.91. A consensus of over 70% is considered to indicate the reliability of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It is thought that the ratio of 91% in the study is sufficient for coding reliability.

Results

For the first research problem, an answer to the question “What problems have parents encountered in the education of their children during the COVID-19 pandemic?” was sought. Participating parents mostly stated that they had instructional problems. According to the data obtained from the interviews, the problems experienced by the parents were gathered and interpreted under three categories: instructional problems, social problems, and technological problems (see Table 2).

Table 2. The Problems Experienced by Parents in the Education of their Children during the COVID-19 Period

Category	<i>f</i>
Instructional problems	57
Social problems	32
Technological problems	8

The category of instructional problems consists of the following codes: online education (16), academic achievement (11), provision of course materials (5), and teacher support (2). The numbers next to the figures represent the frequency of the codes (see Figure 1).

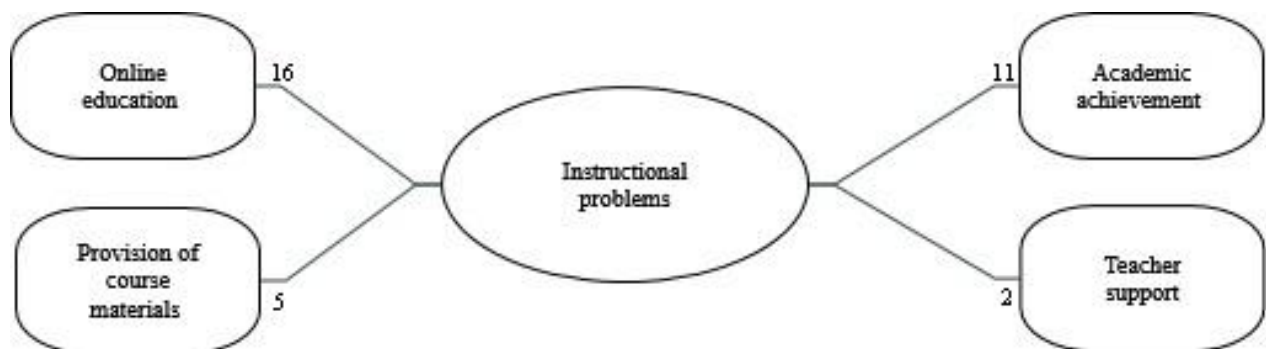


Figure 1. The Category of Instructional Problems and the Codes

Sixteen parents stated that they had problems with online education. Some of the excerpts from the interviews regarding this code are as follows: “They should have done without ads. They should have given at least 4 lessons a day, not 2 lessons.” (P15) “Education was not enough. Can a half-hour television education replace school education? How much can they learn about the class in (only) half an hour?” (P10) It is clear that these participants emphasized that the time allocated for online education was not enough. Similarly, P2 stated that online education does not have enough variety in terms of content: “More activities could be done for the children, more activities for hand skills, and so on.” One of the participants, P7 emphasized that as the period takes longer, the child gets bored: “At first, we did not have any problems with following the EBA (Education Information Network) classes; children were following (online classes). However, recently, they did not want to follow (online classes) because they got bored.” P14 stated that children are generally bored with online education: “They did not want to follow EBA. They watched the classes broadcast on TV only on the first day. Then they didn’t watch them again. They said (the classes broadcast on TV were) very boring; they got bored.”

In this context, it can be stated that the fact that children get bored in the distance education process may create negativities in terms of the quality of education and that online education is seen as insufficient by parents.

Regarding the code of academic achievement, P1 stated: *“I said, ‘You are now having difficulties even with reading.’ They still continue with online classes.”* P9 stated: *“We are noticing a decline in children’s learning since the schools were closed. We do our best, but it doesn’t work.”* In this context, it can be stated that the supervisory and supportive role of the teacher has decreased in the distance education process, which negatively affected students’ academic achievement. Similarly, P5 stated, *“We sometimes had a hard time getting him to do his homework when he had so much homework, and because he has a little brother at home that distracts him,”* while P1 stated that *“At first, teachers were assigning homework, but then, they started to slack off, too. They started not assigning any homework.”* In this context, it can be stated that assigning too much or no homework is among the factors that can affect students’ academic achievement. Similarly, P10 emphasized a different factor that could negatively affect students’ academic achievement: *“(The child) had difficulty learning new subjects.”*

Regarding the code of provision of course materials, P18 and P5 drew attention to another negative effect of the pandemic period on students: *“We couldn’t get test books either. We do not go to the district center because there is this virus. Nobody is going”* (P18), *“It was sometimes difficult to buy the materials necessary for my child’s activities due to the measures we took against the pandemic”* (P5). Regarding the code of insufficient teacher support, P1 emphasized that they could not get the necessary support from the teacher: *“I called the teacher once or twice; (the teacher) said ‘I don’t know much about EBA, either’. So, I gave up and did not bother (the teacher).”* On the other hand, P15 stated that they could not sufficiently feel the presence of the teacher in distance education: *“Teachers try to monitor children over the phone as much as they can, but it is not sufficient and efficient. It has not been fruitful for us.”*

The codes that fall under the category of social problems are given in Figure 2.

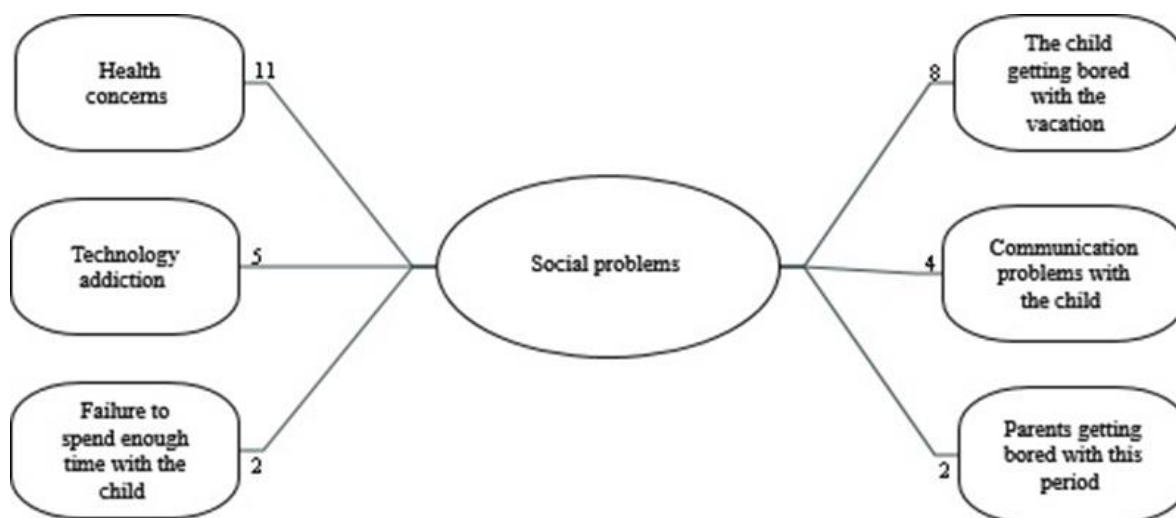


Figure 2. The Category of Social Problems and the Codes

The category of social problems consists of the following codes: health concerns (11), the child getting bored with the vacation (8), technology addiction (5), communication problems with the child (4), failure to spend enough time with the child (2), parents getting bored with this period (2).

Eleven parents stated that they had some concerns. Regarding this code, P2 stated, *“We are very worried. We are worried that the school will reopen. Children in classrooms will infect each other with the virus; there are thousands of students in schools. Even if the school is reopened, we will not send (our child) if necessary,”* while P3 stated, *“I am worried about whether children can practice social distancing when schools are reopened.”* In this context, it can be stated that parents are worried that the reopening of schools might increase the spread of coronavirus. Similarly, P20 emphasized that even if schools are reopened, they might close again: *“Maybe compensatory education can be done, but then there may be an increase in cases, and the schools may be reclosed; I am worried about this.”* Eight parents stated that their children were bored in their leisure time. Regarding this code, P7 emphasized the negativity of the isolation at home: *“During this period, me and my children were (isolated) at home. We did not go outside for 2.5 months. This is why my children got very bored,”* while P13 stated, *“Whatever we did, it was not like the time when schools were open, they got very bored.”* In this context, it can be stated that school closures due to coronavirus disconnect children from their natural social environment, i.e., the school, which, in turn, depresses them.

Technology addiction is also considered one of the social problems. Regarding this code, P3 stated, *“My child’s frequency of using a tablet has increased a lot, (my child) is playing games on the tablet a lot now.”* Similarly, P19 emphasized parents’ helplessness against the negative consequences of having to spend all the time at home: *“Their frequency of using the internet increased. There is nothing to do at home, so we cannot object (to our child’s using the tablet or the computer).”* In this context, it can be stated that children who have a lot of free time compared to the time when schools are open prefer to spend more time with technological devices, which may lead to negative consequences in the future.

Communication problems with children were identified as another social problem. Regarding this code, P13 emphasized that they had problems in getting their children to do their homework: *“There was no problem in the first weeks, but we had many problems later on. He did only half of his homework.”* On the other hand, P15 stated, *“Children do not listen to their parents much. Therefore, they rarely listen to you.”* In this context, it can be stated that as the time spent without the supervision of teachers increases, communication problems between parents and children may increase. Regarding the code of failure to spend enough time with the child, P10 stated, *“I am at work all day long, I can’t take enough care of my child.”* In this context, it can be stated that especially working parents may have difficulty spending enough time with their children during the school closure. Regarding the code of parents getting bored with this period, P12 stated, *“Both students and we got very bored. Our attention span and motivation has reduced, therefore studying time has reduced as well.”* It can be stated that parents who cannot feel the presence of teachers sufficiently during the school closure also got bored with the situation, which is another factor that negatively affects distance education.

Another problem expressed by the parents is technological problems. The codes that fall under this category are

shown in Figure 3.

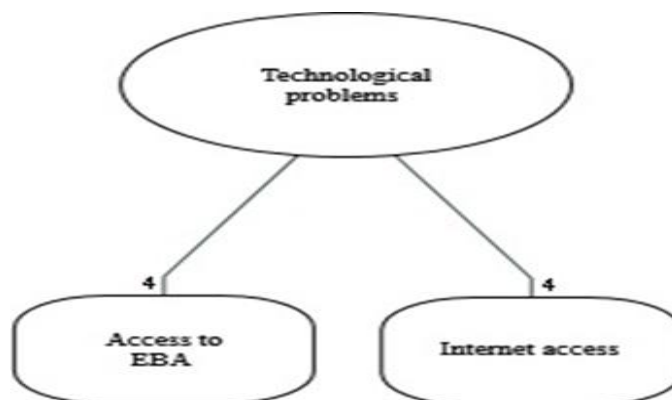


Figure 3. The Category of Technological Problems and the Codes

Four parents stated that they had problems in accessing EBA. Regarding this code, P19 stated, “*The teacher assigned homework on a daily basis, and we did it, we couldn’t connect to the EBA website, we had connection problems,*” while P16 stated, “*We were unable to log in EBA, the system was freezing. So I could not benefit from the (free) internet provided by the operator.*” On the other hand, P7 stated that they had to turn to other websites due to limited access to EBA: “*EBA was very busy, and we were able to use it in only certain hours. We could connect to EBA for only a limited time every day. This was a problem, access (to EBA) should not have been limited. We got support from other educational websites.*” In this context, it can be stated that problems with access to EBA, which is one of the most effective tools in distance education, has led to negativity in terms of continuity of teaching activities. Regarding the code of Internet access, P15 stated, “*For example, when online classes are held through different applications, problems arise with the system. Disconnections happen, and I think the teachers are also fed up,*” while P9 stated, “*We do not have a computer at home, (we have) only the mobile internet, which is limited, so we cannot access online classes very often.*” In this context, it can be stated that disconnections in online classes may cause children to experience focus problems and that students who do not have access to the internet are deprived of distance education.

For the second research problem, an answer to the question, “What activities have parents done with their children during the COVID-19 pandemic?” was sought. The resulting categories are provided on Table 3.

Table 3. Activities Parents do with their Children during the COVID-19 Period

Category	<i>f</i>
Health-related activities	42
Educational activities	27
Social activities	24

The data obtained within the scope of the second research problem are collected under three categories: health-related activities (42), educational activities (27), and social activities (24). The codes that fall under this category are shown in Figure 4.

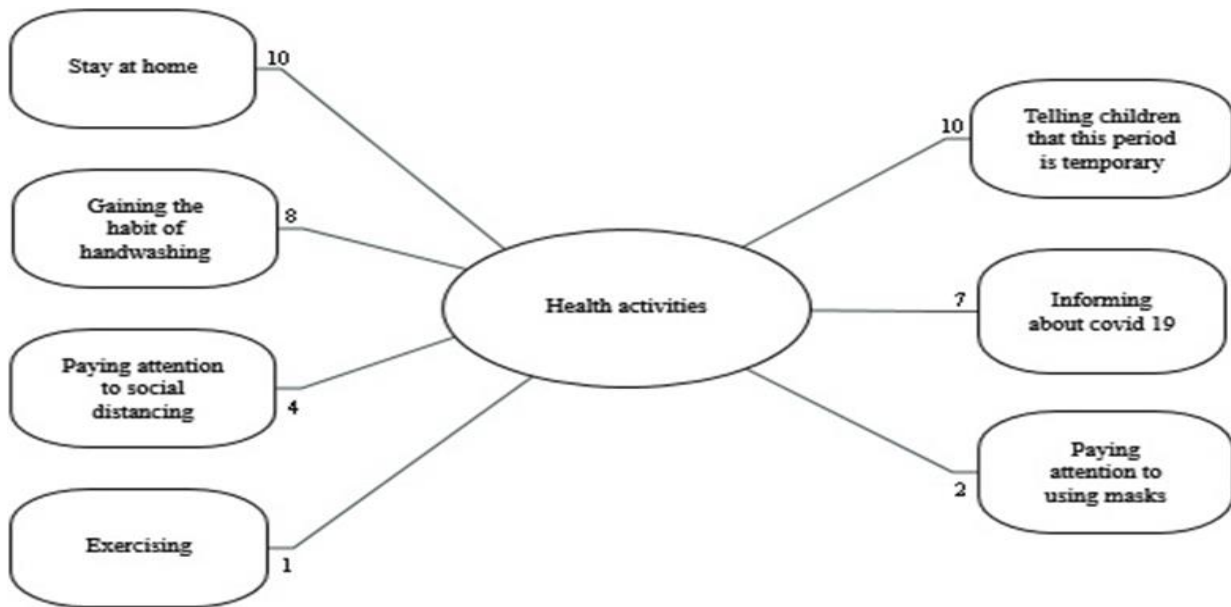


Figure 4. The Category of Health-related Activities and the Codes

Ten parents stated that they ensured that their children stay at home. Regarding this code, P10 stated, “We stayed at home for a long time (during the lockdown), they have only recently started to go out, and they do this very rarely,” while P19 stated, “We are not going out unless we have to, I have to protect my children.” In this context, it can be stated that the fact that children avoid contact with other people by not going out is positive for both their own health and public health. Similarly, telling children that this period is temporary was considered another health-related activity. Regarding this code, P7 stated, “I told (my child) that this period was temporary, that everything would be better, that we would go back to the old days and we would continue our education in schools again,” while P12 stated, “(My child) is constantly asking when the pandemic will end, saying ‘I missed my school, will it reopen?’ And we answer that ‘Yes, it will reopen.’” In this context, it can be said that telling children that the pandemic is temporary motivates children. Regarding the code of gaining the habit of hand washing, P4 stated, “When we come home, we change our garments. We wash our hands, I say (to my children) ‘Wash your hands,’” while P2 stated, “They even acquired the habit of washing their hands; in the past, they used to wash their hands only after meals, now both before and after meals.” Considering the importance of keeping hands clean for our health, it can be stated that it is positive for children to acquire or reinforce the habit of washing hands.

Regarding the code of parents’ informing their children about COVID-19, P8 stated, “We explained the cleaning and hygiene rules and made a short chat about what can happen when these rules are followed,” while P7 stated, “I told that we need to pay attention to hygiene and social distancing.” It can be stated that parents’ informing their children in this period when children are deprived of the school environment is positive. Regarding the code of paying attention to social distancing, P5 stated, “During the lockdown period, when I came from outside, they did not approach me until I did the necessary disinfection.” In this context, it can be stated that paying attention to social distancing, which is one of the primary conditions for protection from the virus, is positive for health. Regarding the code of paying attention to using masks, P20 stated, “We tell (our child) to wear a mask and pay attention to hygiene; we warn (him/her) quite often about wearing a mask.”

Since wearing masks is a critical element in preventing transmission, it can be stated that this situation is positive. Regarding the code of exercising, P8 stated, “*We were usually inactive at home (during the lockdown), so, we started exercising daily.*” It can be stated that exercising to improve physical and mental health is very positive during this period in which the most attention should be paid to health.

The codes that fall under the category of educational activities are given in Figure 5. The category of educational activities consists of the following codes: having them in educational activities (12), helping them with studying (8), having them play educational games (4), remembering them that the school is still open (2), reinforcement implementation (1).

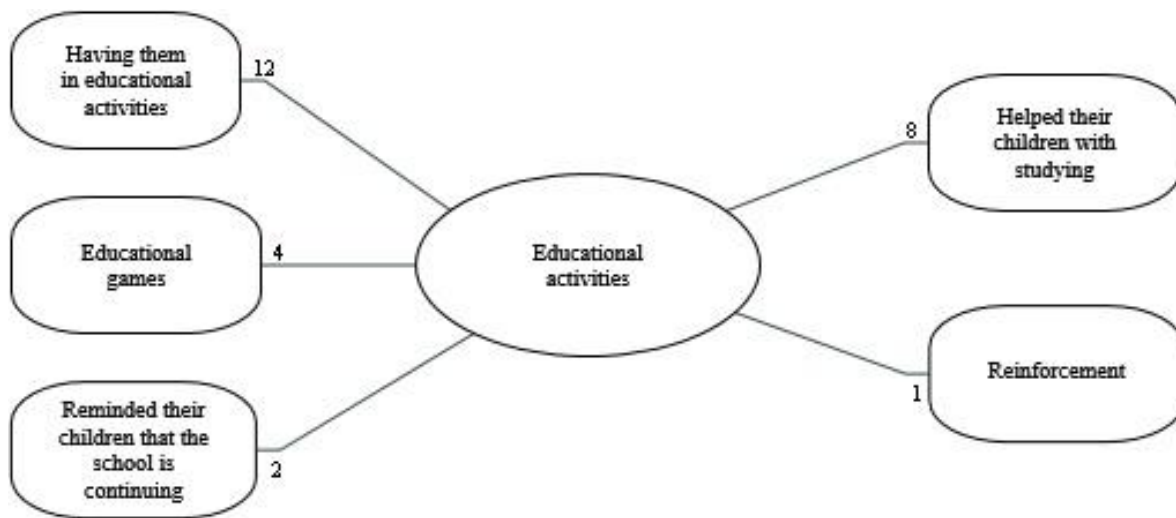


Figure 5. The Category of Educational Activities and the Codes

Twelve parents stated that they did educational activities with their children. Regarding this code, P2 stated, “*We painted pictures, we read stories,*” while P4 stated, “*We did the activities sent by our teacher, we did painting, we did fun activities.*” It can be stated that parents’ supporting their children’s education during the lockdown is positive for the continuity of education. Similarly, eight parents stated that they helped their children with studying. For example, P8 emphasized that being near the child when studying makes it easier for the child to do his/her homework: “*We tried to do the homework together by turning it into a game. There was no problem when we did it together.*” On the other hand, P20 stated, “*We followed online classes on EBA together. Sometimes, we designed and did fun activities.*” In this context, it can be stated that during the lockdown, parents had to assume the role of teachers.

Regarding the code of educational games, P8 stated, “*We took care to prevent children from worrying, we tried to make handwashing fun,*” while P14 stated, “*We often played mind games. It was somewhat a different activity (for my child).*” It can be stated that it is very positive to use games to support the education of children of play age. Regarding the code of reinforcement, P15 stated, “*I’m trying too hard, I say, ‘let’s study, read your books.’ I give them positive reinforcers.*” It can be stated that such positive reinforcers will increase students’ academic achievement. P7 stated that they reminded their children that the school is continuing: “*I said the education is not over and the school is not over. I said we must continue with distance education.*” In this context, it can be

stated that reminding children that the school is continuing, although not with face-to-face classes, increases the motivation of the child.

The category of social activities resulting from the analysis of parents' views is shown in Figure 6.

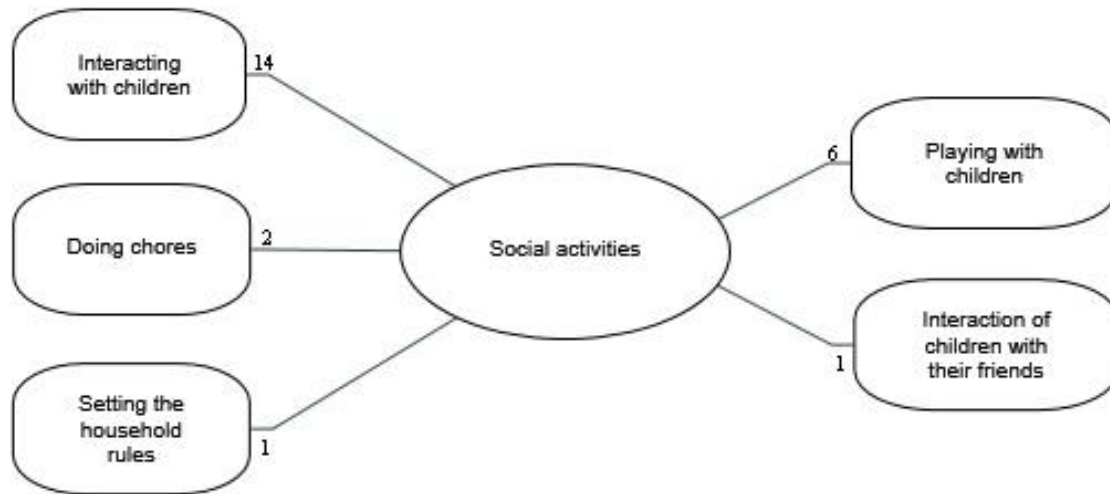


Figure 6. The Category of Social Activities and the Codes

Fourteen parents stated that they interacted with their children. Regarding this code, P8 stated, *“Staying at home made them very happy. I tried to spend as much time as possible during the day. I focused on them.”* Considering that children spend more time with their parents during the lockdown, it can be stated that interacting with children will prevent them from feeling lonely, and this situation is very positive. Similarly, regarding the code of playing with children, P1 stated, *“We started playing games. We flew a kite on the housetop,”* while P11 stated, *“We are playing a lot of games, but we still find it difficult to meet their demands since we spend a lot of time with them.”* In this context, it can be stated that meeting children’s play needs is positive.

Regarding the code of doing chores, P6 stated, *“(My child) is making pita and other meals with me in the kitchen. We prepare snacks together.”* It can be stated that it is positive to introduce children to new activities in these days when children have plenty of time. The interaction of children with their friends was considered another social activity. Regarding this code, P13 stated, *“We tried to create virtual social environments. We got our child to talk to his/her friends on WhatsApp. They played games and made new friendships in the virtual environment.”* It can be stated that during this pandemic period, when it is very important to be isolated at home, it is positive for the child to socialize with friends on the internet.

Setting the household rules was considered another social activity. Regarding this code, P8 stated, *“We prepared a document with some household rules and our names, surnames, and signatures and we called it ‘home rules agreement.’ Then we all signed it. We set rules for activities such as reading, playing, exercising, painting, drinking coffee, and tablet time, as well as study time.”* It can be stated that it is positive to have an order, which is essential in all areas of life, in the home environment through written rules.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study aimed to determine the problems regarding children's education that arose in the COVID-19 period and the activities parents have done with their children. Within the scope of the data obtained in the research, the problems experienced by parents in this period were collected under the categories of "instructional problems, social problems, and technological problems," and the activities they did with their children were collected under the categories of "health-related activities, educational activities, and social activities." The obtained findings were discussed in relation to different studies in the literature.

In the study, the insufficiency of online education was determined as the most commonly stated negative situation among "instructional problems." Paulsen (1998: 2) notes the limitations in online education as the type of institution, geographical problems, lack of equipment and resources, course time frame, and financial power. It can be stated that these and similar limitations limit distance education in our country and that not all students benefit sufficiently from distance education. Similarly, Bao (2020: 3) notes that in online education, factors such as the intensity, difficulty, and length of the teaching content should be determined in accordance with the student profile and that teachers should adjust the speed at which they teach by considering students' low concentration levels. In this context, it can be said that it is very important for teachers to consider many factors in distance education. Parents' low academic performance, difficulty in obtaining course materials, and insufficient teacher support were evaluated within the scope of instructional problems. It can be stated that in this period when teachers are not actually with students, parents' low academic performance is one of the important factors limiting the academic achievement of students and that children who are not supervised by their teachers may slack off in their homework. It can be stated that precautions should be taken to prevent this and that the responsibility of assigning homework that children can do without getting bored and that can be monitored falls upon the shoulders of teachers. Similarly, Basilaia and Kavadze (2020: 7) state that in distance education, homework and assignments should be in accordance with online education.

Parents' health concerns emerged as the most commonly stated problem among "social problems". Similarly, Yilmaz and et.al., (2020:79) concluded that in addition to parents' and children's health concerns, approximately 80% of parents stated that they had concerns about sending children back to school during the pandemic. Considering that it is parents who will decide on whether or not students attend school during the pandemic, it can be said that parents feeling this much worried is negative. The children getting bored with the vacation and technology addiction also emerged as other negative situations in this category. It can be stated that it is important for children to spend time doing activities that can reduce their boredom under the guidance of their teachers and the supervision of their parents and prevent, through careful planning, technology addiction from harming children's vital activities such as nutrition and sleep. Similarly, Isik (2020: 176) stated that people are required to spend more time at home during the pandemic and that there can be an increase in technology addiction due to boredom. Communication problems with children, failure to spend enough time with them, and being fed up with this period emerged as other negativities among social problems. It can be stated that communication problems between children, who are deprived of school and many social environments, and their parents will negatively affect their psycho-social development. Similarly, Ercan,

Arman, Emiroglu, Oztop, and Yalçin (2020:14-23) state that in this period, communication within the family should be improved, parents should talk with their children about their problems instead of giving advice, and that they should avoid criticizing them. In this context, it can be stated that parents need to undertake a great responsibility in the psycho-social development of their children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Access to EBA and internet access emerged as the “technological problems” faced by children and parents in the distance education process. Bozkurt (2020: 125) states that distance education practices, which are mostly planned with the internet and computers, further reveal the digital divide in society. Yucesoy-Ozkan, Kaya, Gulboy, & Altun (2020) pointed out that the inability of families with low socioeconomic status to access these opportunities in online education of education caused a significant interruption in education. In this context, it can be stated that families lacking the necessary equipment and infrastructure are quite disadvantageous in distance education. In the research conducted by Kado, Dem, & Yontem (2020), it was stated that some students had difficulty in accessing online education because of the lack of reliable internet access, adequate data plans, or digital tools to participate in learning. Similarly, Karadag and Yucel (2020: 191) state that even in provincial centers in our country, there are areas that do not have internet connection due to the location of base stations or lack of infrastructure investment. Kulekci-Akyavuz and Cakin (2020: 734) argue that many stakeholders in education have been caught unprepared for distance education, which has led to certain technical problems.

In this study, it was determined that parents did various activities with their children during the lockdown. In this context, the category of “health-related activities” included ‘ensuring that children stay at home’ and ‘telling children that the pandemic is temporary’ as the most frequently stated codes. During the lockdown period, warnings were made by authorities through slogans such as “stay at home” and “life fits inside the house” in order to keep individuals isolated from their social environments (Deniz, 2020: 196). In this context, it can be stated that families attach importance to the calls made by the authorities and this situation is also positive. Quarantine and isolation do not only affect many aspects of life but also may trigger psychological problems in humans (Qiu, Shen, Zhao, Wang, Xie, and Xu, 2020:1). In this context, it can be stated that telling children or making them feel that this pandemic period is temporary will increase children’s awareness and make it easier for them to free themselves from negative thoughts. Similarly, gaining the habit of hand washing, informing children about COVID-19, paying attention to social distancing, using masks, and exercising were other codes of the category of “health-related activities.” It can be stated in addition to all these health measures, physical activities that will support children’s physical and mental health are very positive for children’s development. Similarly, Hammami, Harrabi, Mohr, and Krustrup (2020) state that indoor physical activities such as dancing can prevent the development of physical and mental disorders that may occur during the isolation period.

The category of “educational activities” included the codes of ‘parents doing educational activities with their children’ and ‘parents helping their children with studying’ as the most frequently stated codes. Akoglu and Karaaslan (2020: 102) state that during the pandemic, the boundary between work and home life has been disrupted, and that the fact that children must receive distance education at home required new rules to be set within the family. In this context, it can be stated that it is positive that parents, who are more responsible for the education of their children than they were in the pre-pandemic period, spend time with their children by doing

such educational activities. Playing educational games, reminding children that the school is continuing, and doing reinforcing practices were other codes of the category of “educational activities.” Playing educational games with parents during the COVID-19 pandemic can reduce children’s anxiety and fear levels (Caykus and Caykus, 2020: 102). In this context, it can be stated that it is positive that parents do educational activities with their children.

The category of “social activities” included the code of ‘interaction with the child’ as the most frequently stated code. In their research examining family relations during the COVID-19 period, Ergul and Yilmaz (2020: 49) concluded that parents care about supporting each other, taking care of each other, and being easy-going. In this context, it can be stated that during the pandemic when isolation at home has gained so much importance, it is positive that parents interact with their children through social activities. Similarly, playing with children, doing chores with them, getting them to interact with their friends through mobile apps, and writing a home rules agreement were other codes of the category of “social activities.” Gumusgul and Aydogan (2020: 108) state that thanks to recreational games, family members can stay away from computers and smartphones, which may require being inactive for a long time. In this context, it can be stated that educational games, which include many benefits besides entertainment, are very important, especially during the pandemic period. Considering that home activities improve children’s manual skills and creativity and interacting with friends in the virtual environment supports children’s social skills, it can be stated that such activities are important for children. Considering the data obtained in the study, it was concluded that parents, one of the most important stakeholders in education during the pandemic period, assume various roles, in addition to their role as parents, such as a teacher, a health worker, or a playmate, that they strive hard to maintain the educational process, and that they experience various problems in and are concerned for the education or socialization of their children.

Recommendations

In line with the results obtained in the research, the following recommendations have been developed:

- The number of pedagogical studies that can reduce the worries of students and parents during the COVID-19 period can be increased.
- Each student can be given free and unlimited internet to use in certain educational applications.
- Online chatting and gaming environments can be offered to students in a planned manner so that they can interact with their friends.
- In order to prevent technology addiction, teachers can find pen pals for students and assign creative and fun craft activities and design projects on a daily basis.
- Photos or videos of the games played and activities done by parents and students in the home environment can be shared in messaging platforms with other parents.

Note

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Author Information


Murat Cakin

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2797-9485>

Kilis 7 Aralik University

Turkey

Ebru Kulekci-Akyavuz

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2436-8761>

Kilis 7 Aralik University

Turkey

Contact e-mail: ebrukulekci@kilis.edu.tr
