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# Educational Processes and Learning at Home During COVID-19: Parents' Experiences with Distance Education

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## Abstract

Due to the lockdown measures and severe restrictions taken to reduce COVID-19 transmission, which has globally been inflicted on people since March 2020, a new type of education in the form of online homeschooling has brought the role of parents to the forefront. Using online semi-structured interviews, this study aimed to investigate parents' views on the implementation of distance education during COVID-19 in Istanbul, Turkey. The data obtained from parents with different socioeconomic backgrounds and whose children were at public and private schools were coded using initial, process, and emotion qualitative coding techniques. The data were categorized into three main themes: beginning of distance education, process of distance education, and outcomes of distance education. The beginning theme was further analyzed under three subcategories: problems related to the child, problems related to parents, and problems related to public schools. The problems encountered during the process of distance education were investigated under three subheadings: problems related to the child's academic and social life, problems related to parents, and problems related to parent-child relationships. Data under the main theme, outcomes of distance education, were defined as positive or negative outcomes in terms of the child and parents. Results revealed that at the beginning of the process, during the process, and during the outcomes of distance education, parents experienced problems with digital technology, the new education model, teachers, themselves, and their children, as well as economic, social, and psychological problems. Parents also had various constructive suggestions about distance education during COVID-19.

*Keywords:* COVID-19, educational process, parents, child, distance education, qualitative coding

## Introduction

As another pandemic is recorded in the history of humankind, we are again in the midst of a global catastrophe that has been rapidly and deeply inflicted on the people of the whole planet, and the consequences of it are getting worse by the day (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). From March 2020 onward, states have been choosing one or more remote education facility option in line with the changing circumstances and their education policies (Barnett et al., 2021; Carpenter & Dunn, 2020; Pozas et al., 2021). While most countries have opted for remote and online teaching (Greenhow et al., 2020), hybrid learning and face-to-face instructions have been among other options (Barnett et al., 2021; Pozas et al., 2021).

The shift from regular school-based learning to home-based learning has made parents' role more apparent in children's education. Struggling to balance between their own work and their children's education for more than a year, parents have cooperated in implementing distance education (DE) processes with their children, as well as with teachers (Bozkurt, et al., 2020). Not surprisingly, this unprecedented lifestyle has brought about some conflicts and problems.

With the great impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on social, economic, and psychological factors, and the field of education on a global scale, the volatility–uncertainty–complexity–ambiguity (VUCA) world has been receiving growing attention from other fields to explain multidimensional phenomena by broadening its scope, meaning, and reflection (Hadar et al., 2020; Lepeley et al., 2021). Focusing on the relationship between the pandemic and education, the most remarkable aspects of the problem are precisely about coming face-to-face with VUCA processes. Focusing on the pandemic–child–parent–online learning relationship, researchers have approached the process in regard to barriers (Abuhammad, 2020); inadequacies (Garbe et al., 2020); resilience (Koskela et al., 2020; Lepeley et al., 2021); parental approaches (Wang et al., 2020); coping strategies (Aznar, 2021; Hadar et al., 2020; Parczewska, 2020); psychological approaches addressing addiction, stress, fear, anxiety, and self-blame (Aznar, 2021; de Araújo et al., 2020; Dong et al., 2020; İyimaya & Irmak, 2021; Jeffs et al., 2021; Patrick et al., 2020; Spinelli et al., 2020); educational approaches and learning processes (i.e., readiness) (Cahapay, 2020); homeschooling (Bubb & Jones, 2020; Pozas et al., 2021); and the home learning environment and digital parenting (Lucas et al., 2020). Leaving aside the controversy regarding the function of schools in education, which has been popular in recent times (Nóvoa & Alvim, 2020), all stakeholders in general and parents in particular have deeply experienced the absence of a physical school environment. Interpreting and evaluating such discovery processes under the light of a systems approach (beginning–process–outcome) and from the viewpoints of holistic approaches supported by different disciplines (Frye & Hemmer, 2012) may help us face, grasp, and solve ongoing complex problems of VUCA worlds.

In Turkey, DE during COVID-19 started in March 2020, just as in much of the rest of the world, and remote education has been utilized either in complete or partial lockdown. The ministry's education platform, Educational Informatics Network (EIN), TV-based DE (TRT-EBA TV), and online teaching conducted by teachers have all had been positively received (Cakin & Kulekci Akyavuz, 2021; Fiş Erümit, 2020). However, it is well known that there have been recurrent complaints about the problems teachers, parents, and educators have experienced during this process (Adibelli & Sümen, 2020; Akbulut et al., 2020; Hebebe et

al., 2020). The underlying reasons for these complaints can be related to the varying experiences students enrolled in education have based on the type of school (i.e. public or private), region, and students' profiles; differences in socioeconomic structures; and teachers' practices.

In delivering DE during COVID-19, parents' constructive educational interventions may prevent children from possible future deep learning losses. In addition to being informed by the perspectives of parents in Turkey, information about the implementations of, and approaches toward, DE in other parts of the world during the pandemic might also enrich researchers' points of view on local and global scales.

The current study aimed to investigate parents' and their children's experiences with educational processes conducted between March 2020 and January 2021 in Turkey during complete and partial lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within this framework, this study responded to the following research question: How did parents with school-age children experience the beginning (March 2020), middle (two consecutive school terms), and end (January 2021) of DE during the COVID-19 pandemic?

## Method

This study was conducted to explore parents' experiences with DE in Istanbul, Turkey, during COVID-19. Semi-structured online interviews were implemented with parents. Designed within the paradigm of qualitative research, the current study coded the data with eclectic methods. In eclectic coding, two or more first-cycle coding techniques are used simultaneously to explore the data (Saldana, 2012). The present study used initial, process, and emotion coding techniques in an eclectic manner (Saldana, 2012). During initial coding, participants' responses were coded sentence by sentence, which allowed the data to be coded holistically. This was significant because the coded data revealed the problems parents experienced and the solutions they found differed based on their socioeconomic status (SES) levels. Similarly, the holistic data set also revealed that some parents had the same experiences. Additionally, process coding was used to provide a detailed account of the problems that parents experienced as well as the solutions they found. This is because process coding accounts for the instances of hesitation and/or stops when they start interacting in order to reach a goal or solve a problem (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Last, it was observed that parents had intense emotions in relation to their children's education during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a difficult period. To provide a detailed account of those intense emotions experienced by parents, the researchers used the emotional coding strategy.

Twenty parents whose children were enrolled at private or public schools were included in the current research. One of the most important criteria used to construct the study group was the parents' varying SES levels. A purposive sampling strategy was used when recruiting the participants. This decision was used because most international reports providing information about the reflections of COVID-19 on education remarked on the SES levels of parents as an important dimension (Di Pietro et al., 2020; OECD, 2020). Details about the characteristics of the participants are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Participants' Characteristics*

Mother's education level	<i>n</i>	Father's education level	<i>n</i>	Devices with Internet connection at home	<i>n</i>
Primary school	1	Primary school	1	1 (mobile phone)	1
High school	2	High school	1	2 (mobile phone + tablet)	2
Vocational school	3	Vocational school	1	3 (mobile phone + tablet + TV)	2
Bachelor's (ongoing)	2	Bachelor's	6	4 (mobile phone + tablet + computer)	5
Bachelor's	6			5 (> 1 mobile phone + computer + TV + tablet)	1
Master's	2	Master's	5	6 devices	2
PhD	4	PhD	6	7–9 devices	7
Total	20	Total	20	Total	20
No. of children at home	<i>n</i>	Family income	<i>n</i>	Child's grade level/Type of school	<i>n</i>
1	7	No answer	1	Elementary school/Public school	12
2	12	3,000–6,000 TL	7	Middle school/Public school	6
3	1	6,000–9,000 TL	3	Elementary school/Private school	3
		9,000–12,000 TL	3	Middle school/Private school	4
		12,000+ TL	6		
Total	20	Total	20	Total	20

*Note.* TL = Turkish lira.

## Data Collection Tools

Data were gathered through online semi-structured interview forms. After preparing the interview questions, content experts were consulted regarding the questions' clarity and suitability in line with the aim and conceptual framework of the current study. Considering these experts' opinions, interview questions were revised and finalized. Since the interviews were semi-structured, the questions were elaborated on if the interviewee needed any clarification. Furthermore, probes were used in instances where the researchers felt further details were necessary to gather in-depth data. The following samples were among the questions included in the interview form: (a) Have your opinions of DE changed? If yes, can you elaborate on these changes? (b) Have you ever attended online courses at home? What are your observations? (c) How did you help your child when s/he was not able to grasp the topic? Who helped her/him during such situations? (d) What kind of attitudes and values do you think your child needed to acquire during his/her absence from the physical school environment? How did you understand this? Can you give an example?

## Data Analysis

Online semi-structured interviews were implemented with parents toward the end of the fall 2021 term because online teaching was fully grounded at this time, whereas it was not during the spring term following March 2020.

Data gathered from parents were transcribed on a computer. The following details the stages of data coding:

- Text segmentation: Prior to starting data coding, the interview transcripts were divided based on answers.
- Codebook creation coding: Each researcher created a codebook for himself in the first coding cycle. A sample first cycle coding is displayed in Table 2. The researchers independently coded some answers eclectically with the abovementioned initial and process coding methods. During emotional coding, on the other hand, the notes that were kept during the interviews were used by the researchers. To ensure consistency, the researchers compared and contrasted the texts that were coded for similar emotions.
- Coding stage: During the coding stage notes that revealed the participating parents' SES levels were kept.
- Coding assessment of reliability: One condition that increases the reliability of coding in the analysis of in-depth semi-structured interviews is consistency, which indicates whether the coders' use of codes changes over time (Krippendorff, 2004). Therefore, the researchers revised the codes that they had labeled independently. Afterward, the researchers met and used the following questions to review their codes:
  - a. To what extent are the codes related to the aims of the study?
  - b. Does the created code really represent the information included in the labeled text?
  - c. What are the codes generated by the researchers?
  - d. What is the extent to which the codes generated by the researchers are compatible?

Inter-coder reliability, a measure used to make sense of the way the coders coded the data, was used to test the level of coherence between the coders. It can be used to calculate the reliability of the coding stage and/or establish the validity of the emerging coding structure. While not providing a specific level of reliability, Miles and Huberman (1994) underline that inter-coder reliability should be as close to 0.90 as possible. The inter-coder reliability in the present study was over 0.80.

- Codebook modification: Problematic codes were discussed by researchers and revised.
- Final coding: Once the researchers completed the final version of first-cycle coding. They worked together during the stages of second and third cycle coding. In this phase, the codes formed in the

second cycle were recoded as the final codes taking the questions in the interview form into consideration as shown in Table 3.

**Table 2**

*Sample Coding from the First Cycle*

Summary of interview	Codes
We did not encounter any significant problem, for we have necessary technological equipment and a devoted teacher. We faced some connections problems due to technical matters at the beginning, but they were resolved in time.	Advantages of possessing necessary technical equipment. Initial adaptation process. Technical problems. Resolution in time.

**Table 3**

*Codes in the Second and Third Cycles*

1. Beginning of DE
1.a. Problems related to child
1.b. Problems related to parent
1.c. Problems related to public school
2. Process of DE
2.a. Child
2.a.1. Problems related to child's academic life
2.a.2. Problems related to child's social life
2.b. Parent
2.b.1. Problems related to parent
2.c. Parent–child
2.c.1. Problems related to parent–child relationship
2.d. Parents' solutions and practices after class hours at home
2.d.1 High-SES parents' way of increasing academic skills
2.d.2 Low-SES parents' way of increasing academic skills
2.d.3 Practices related to social skills
3. Outcomes of DE
3.a Child–parent
3.a.1 Positive outcomes
3.a.2 Negative outcomes

4. Parental suggestions

4.a. Suggestions for teaching system

4.b. Suggestions for teacher

*Note.* DE = distance education; SES = socioeconomic status.

## Results

The results of the current study about parents' views on DE during COVID-19 in Istanbul, Turkey, are displayed in Table 4. There were some problems from the beginning of DE. Analyzing the data collected from parents, this process was divided into three main categories: beginning, process, and outcome of DE.

**Table 4**

*Codes and Themes Emerging from Parents' Interviews*

1. Beginning of distance education		
Problems related to child	Problems related to parents	Problems related to public school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unwillingness to attend online courses</li> <li>● Perception of semester break—coping with it</li> <li>● Time management</li> <li>● Difficulty in perceiving online homeschooling process</li> <li>● Difficulty in adapting to online learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting technological tools and equipment needs</li> <li>● Inadequacy of domestic resources</li> <li>● Increase in the cost of education</li> <li>● Change in domestic economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disorganization in the system</li> <li>● Delay in authorities' actions</li> <li>● Delay in online courses</li> <li>● Infrastructure problems</li> <li>● Shortcomings in EİN (EBA)</li> <li>● Teacher's or parent's limited or lack of Internet access</li> </ul>
2. Process of distance education		
Child	Parent	Parent–child
Problems related to child's academic life	Problems related to parents	Problems related to parent–child relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase in anxiety about online courses</li> <li>● Lack of interest in assignments</li> <li>● Loss of trust in online courses</li> <li>● Lack of motivation for online courses</li> <li>● Learning losses</li> <li>● Denying or relaxing responsibility</li> <li>● Intensive online courses</li> <li>● Excessive workload</li> <li>● Difficulty in combining home and school</li> <li>● Shouldering heavy responsibility</li> <li>● Teacher not giving sufficient feedback</li> <li>● Teacher not evaluating student work sufficiently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feeling of inadequacy as parents</li> <li>● Not having sufficient academic knowledge or education level in compliance with the course</li> <li>● Time management</li> <li>● Mixing of roles (parent-teacher at home)</li> <li>● A desire to be alone</li> <li>● Decrease in time allocated to individual life</li> <li>● Bored and tired</li> <li>● Not being able to focus on their own jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Anxiety experienced in family members</li> <li>● Feeling of boredom with family members</li> <li>● Feeling of unhappiness with family members</li> <li>● Loss of toleration and respect</li> <li>● Repeating instructions each day</li> <li>● Attending the class</li> <li>● Listening to the course</li> <li>● Responding to the teacher</li> <li>● Completing assignments</li> <li>● Too much screen exposure</li> <li>● Reading books</li> </ul>

Problems related to child's social life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Decrease in the quality of their own undertakings and the effect of this anxiety on household</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feeling isolated</li> <li>● Yearning for friends and playing games</li> <li>● Decrease in emotional sharing with peers</li> <li>● Restrictions in movement—deteriorations in physical fitness</li> <li>● Too much screen exposure</li> <li>● Longing to work in a group</li> </ul>	

Parents' solutions and practices after class hours at home

High-SES parents' ways of increasing children's academic skills	Low-SES parents' ways of increasing children's academic skills	Practices related to social skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents' individual support</li> <li>● Having their children get private lessons</li> <li>● Making children do more exercises</li> <li>● Making children study more</li> <li>● Making children read more</li> <li>● Revising online sources more often</li> <li>● Increasing the number of supplementary books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual efforts to improve their teaching (e.g., asking teachers how to teach a topic or self-studying the subject before teaching)</li> <li>● Making their children do more exercises</li> <li>● Making children study more</li> <li>● Reading more books</li> <li>● Reviewing online sources</li> <li>● Following various educational channels</li> <li>● Asking for help from teacher friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meeting with friends through online social platforms</li> <li>● Digital games</li> <li>● More parent-child communication</li> <li>● Focusing on enjoyable activities</li> </ul>

3. Outcomes of distance education

Positive results	Negative results
In terms of child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase in academic success</li> <li>● Providing more successful learning with access to many resources</li> <li>● Increase in self-regulation skills</li> <li>● Increase in academic self-confidence</li> <li>● Being more aware of the availability of interactive resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lacking a sense of responsibility</li> <li>● Increase in learning gaps</li> <li>● Wasting time</li> <li>● Being distant from school discipline</li> <li>● Screen addiction</li> <li>● Increased distrust of teachers</li> <li>● Inadequate time for exam preparation</li> <li>● Students alone in the academic process</li> <li>● Unable to meet student's infrastructural needs</li> <li>● Students' desire to show themselves but an obstacle of distance education</li> <li>● Anxiety over many things to be done</li> <li>● Deficiencies in advanced cognitive skills arising from the constant didactic method of teaching</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unpleasant communication habits</li> <li>● Deterioration in physical health (weight gain, deteriorating eye health)</li> </ul>
In terms of parent	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Professional teacher perception</li> <li>● Teacher finding solutions to the problems</li> <li>● Teacher giving healthy feedback</li> <li>● Teacher supporting student</li> <li>● Teacher appreciating her/his profession</li> <li>● The perception that online education is not different from offline education</li> <li>● Parents with a high level of satisfaction in online teaching process</li> <li>● Self-confident parent</li> <li>● Being aware of the availability of interactive resources more</li> <li>● More online research</li> <li>● More involvement by parents in the education process of their children</li> <li>● Learning to observe his/her child's lessons better</li> <li>● Better revealing the shortcomings of his/her child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unwillingness to turn his/her home to a school environment</li> <li>● Academically inadequate perceptions of parents</li> <li>● Perception of insufficient teachers</li> <li>● Teacher not responding to students' inquiries</li> <li>● Teacher not able to lead the course efficiently</li> <li>● Teacher not caring for students</li> <li>● Teacher not appreciating her/his profession</li> <li>● Teacher not assessing work adequately</li> <li>● Increase in search for teachers giving private courses</li> <li>● Increase in educational expenses of family income</li> <li>● Increase in distrust in school and teacher</li> <li>● Increase in distrust in education system</li> <li>● Perception of insufficiency of online teaching (e.g., time, classroom activities)</li> <li>● Parents not satisfied with teacher and school administration</li> <li>● Putting excessive pressure on children to study more</li> <li>● Economic fatigue</li> </ul>
Parents' suggestions	
Suggestions for system	Suggestions for teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Free Internet access for all children</li> <li>● Enriching e-resources and providing easy access to these resources</li> <li>● Continuing online teaching during long vacation periods</li> <li>● Improving online tracking system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Developing empathy skills</li> <li>● Making the course clearer</li> <li>● Developing the ability to communicate effectively (with parents, students, etc.)</li> <li>● Having a sufficient level of technological knowledge and capabilities</li> <li>● Improving their researcher, innovator, and difference-making sides</li> <li>● Having appropriate teaching knowledge and skills for online teaching</li> <li>● Happy teacher loving his profession</li> <li>● Being a role model for students in innovative technological domains</li> <li>● Gaining the ability to prepare e-content and to enrich online interaction.</li> </ul>

Note. EIN = Educational Informatics Network; EBA = Egitim Bilisim Agi

## **Beginning of Distance Education**

Beginning of DE was analyzed under three subtopics, namely, problems related to child, problems related to parents, and problems related to public school.

### ***Problems Related to Child***

The fact that the children were at home during COVID-19 created a feeling of holiday or a break for the children, so they found it difficult to conceive of DE. During the pandemic's early phase, children stepped into the world of DE for the first time and had to wait at home before switching to this new system.

This disruption in regular school-based learning during the COVID-19 crisis caused schoolchildren to face many problems with academic and social life, such as increases in anxiety about online courses, learning losses, lack of motivation for online courses, constant changes in course schedules, excessive workloads, denying or relaxing their own responsibility, teachers not giving sufficient feedback and not evaluating student work properly, and difficulty in combining home and school life.

Children suffered from problems in the social domain as well: namely, staying alone because of too much exposure to online teaching, yearning for friends and to play games with them, decreasing emotional sharing with peers, longing for group activities, and poorly managing time in social activities.

One of the most crucial problems that all children confronted was time management. Respondent K9 touched upon this point: "They say that there is still much time but they postpone their responsibilities, behaving in a relaxed manner."

### ***Problems Related to Parents***

Lack of DE resources at home and the increase in the cost of education changed the nature of the home economy, so parents started the process with economic fatigue. K7 referred to this: "When we fell short of technologically needed knowledge and technological facilities, the students could not join into online classes, which in effect caused them to lag behind and led to breakaways from the process."

### ***Problems Related to Public Schools***

Parents of private school children were found not to experience any systemic problems; private schools started teaching via DE immediately. In public schools in Istanbul, on the other hand, experienced problems due to various reasons such as the disorganization in the national system, insufficiency in teachers' own resources, economic problems of schools in disadvantaged regions, and authorities' delay in taking precaution actions were present. K11 expressed that "although EİN was established many years ago, we realized that it was not designed appropriately for this current system."

## **Process of Distance Education**

Similar to the analyses about the beginning of the DE process, the problems confronted during DE were divided into three distinct themes: problems related to the child, problems related to the parent, and problems related to parent-child relationships.

### ***Problems Related to the Child***

The problems related to the child were divided into two subthemes: academic and social life. In relation to academic life, it is reported that some learning losses occurred because children could not successfully merge home life with school life. Teachers' inadequate feedback and insufficient evaluation aggravated this problem further. These problems led to increases in children's anxiety levels, decreases in children's motivation to take part in online courses, and losses in children's self-confidence. Being stuck at home for a long period caused children to experience social problems, such as feeling isolated. Unable to spend time with their peers and play games, children also lost physical fitness due to long screen exposure times and movement restrictions.

### ***Problems Related to Parents and to the Parent–Child Relationship***

Results show that DE during COVID-19 changed the roles and responsibilities of not only students but also parents. Staying together all the time polluted the communication between parent and child. Parents often stated that they desired to be left alone. Repetitive instructions about the child's online courses (e.g., "participate in class," "listen to the course," "do your assignment," "answer your teacher") harmed the relationship between them.

The fact that parents stayed at home for such a long time and lacked private time produced many negative consequences. The most frequently mentioned complaint was the intermingling of roles. Parents became both parents and teachers simultaneously, which decreased the quality of their usual roles. K15 changed her mind about the direction of her life: "Everybody should do her/his own job; I think I will turn back to mothering."

Parents were not able to help their children learn at a satisfactory level at home due to their own educational inadequacies. K8 pointed out, "I do not have as much knowledge as the teacher of a course, so I have difficulty in helping my daughter with her lessons." Parents with higher levels of education and income supported their children through private tutoring, buying more educational resources, and using interactive Web resources. K13 mentioned, "We hired a private math tutor, and we sometimes took our child to school physically. Furthermore, we struggled to reach e-sources."

### **Outcomes of Distance Education**

Results demonstrated that DE did not produce the same outcomes for everyone. The data collected from parents were divided into two categories and are presented separately: (a) the analysis of positive and outcomes for students and parents, (b) the analysis of negative outcomes for students and parents.

#### **Positive Outcomes**

##### ***Positive Outcomes for the Child***

Results revealed an increase in the children's levels of academic success, better learning achievements with the help of more interactive sources, an increase in children's self-regulatory skills, and an increase in their academic self-confidence.

### ***Positive Outcomes for Parents***

The results regarding positive outcomes for parents indicated that DE was welcome because parents not only helped their children in their studies by becoming more sensitive and more self-conscious but were also satisfied with teachers' management skills during this process. Parents expressed that they better observed their children and also better identified the points of improvements in the learning process in this period.

### **Negative Outcomes**

#### ***Negative Outcomes for the Child***

Focusing on negative outcomes of DE on child's part, it appeared that parents thought that children's sense of responsibility deteriorated and that they suffered from learning gaps, screen addiction, wasted time, distance from school discipline, increased distrust of their teachers, inadequate exam preparation time, and witnessing of teachers' teaching failures (constant didactic method of teaching). Furthermore, deteriorations in children's physical health were observed, such as problems with eyes due to excessive exposure to digital screens and weight gain due to immobility and long periods of time spent sitting in front of screens.

#### ***Negative Outcomes for Parents***

On the part of parents, the most highlighted negative issues were either that the "teachers could not manage the process" or that "they did not support their students." The following is a significant result that needs to be underlined: parents whose children were in public schools complained that teachers were not interested, could not teach effectively, and did not make adequate evaluations. K7 claimed, "We have noticed how bad the education system is," and K11 declared, "We understand better the difference between teachers who love their profession and those who do not." As mentioned above, the DE process was economically exhausting for some parents. They stated that this system would increase academic gaps between children and that it was suitable for children who had more opportunities.

#### ***Parents' Suggestions***

DE gave parents the opportunity to observe how the education system functioned in more detail. Parents wanted free Internet and suggested that long holidays increased learning losses, and to avoid these losses, teachers should support their students during these holidays.

The parents involved in the teaching process and who observed the teachers live also offered suggestions for teachers, such as better adapting to technology, developing knowledge and skills in DE, learning and being able to use methods and techniques suitable for remote online teaching, making use of activities to make lessons clearer, preparing interactive materials, increasing effective communication skills with students and parents, and assuming the roles of researcher, innovator, and one who makes a difference.

## Discussion

The results of the current research clearly highlight the significance of parents' demographic characteristics as well as the quality of their home environments during DE. While homeschooling practices during DE are not seen as an academic loss by all parents, they were referred to as being a “complete collapse” by others. Results in general reveal that the home learning environment, parental engagement (Montacute, 2020), and online support given by schoolteachers—important problems of the whole world—are issues coming into the fore.

The results of the study indicate that parents who do not have a shortage of resources at home survive the DE process with fewer problems, while parents without sufficient resources experience more negativity. Some find guiding their children difficult due to their limited academic capabilities. These conditions have created socio-emotional and financial stress for many families.

The sudden spread of COVID-19 caught public schools and teachers unprepared for DE, and the short amount of time for taking precautions made the process even more troublesome (Carpenter & Dunn, 2020; Koskela et al., 2020). UNESCO's reports (2020) revealing the rates of students being affected when schools were globally shut down during COVID-19 have crystallized that in low-income and lower-middle-income countries, over 80% of students were negatively affected by the process. Likewise, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) findings (2018) show that many students did not have sufficient e-resources for online learning. What is more, European Eurostat data (2019) have demonstrated striking differences between low- and high-income families regarding Internet access (Di Pietro et al., 2020).

Economic problems, as well as socioeconomic issues, are possible for counties in the long term, resulting from the fact that students who had insufficient resources during DE did not gain sufficient knowledge or skills and because their learning was not assessed appropriately (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; Haeck & Lefebvre, 2020). As parents stated in this study, children have suffered from many problems during the time of COVID-19, such as relaxation in responsibilities for learning, learning losses, time being wasted, being away from school discipline, being alone in the academic process, inadequate evaluation processes, and inadequate preparation time for exams. Also, since these parents did not receive sufficient support from teachers, they developed negative attitudes and beliefs toward both teachers specifically and the education system in general.

In parallel, as reported by the European Union, DE may negatively affect students' learning through four main channels: less time spent in learning, stress symptoms, a change in the way students interact, and lack of learning motivation (Di Pietro et al., 2020). Some common perspectives are that DE cannot meet the needs of the students (Abuhammad, 2020), that students' motivation toward learning in DE in the homeschooling period decreases (Pozas et al., 2021), and that negative psychological effects emerge from isolation and an inactive life leading to anxiety, stress, fear, and screen addiction in children (de Araújo et al., 2020; İyimaya & Irmak, 2021; Jeffs et al., 2021). This is in addition to other possible health issues caused by DE, such as vision and eye disorders (Dong et al., 2020) and weight gain (Adibelli & Sümen, 2020).

Low-income and less educated parents think that face-to-face education is better. Another remarkable result of the current study is that academically and economically competent parents are satisfied with DE. To exemplify, their children demonstrate better learning achievement and an increase in self-regulation skills, academic achievement, and academic self-confidence with the help of more interactive resources. Among these latter parents, there is more awareness of academic resources, more parental help for children, better observation of children, and improved identification of learning deficiencies in children.

Similar results have been found in other countries facing this dilemma. The reasons why DE is not desired are stated as follows: professional knowledge in supporting children's online learning (Dong et al., 2020), lack of parents' content knowledge or pedagogy (Garbe et al., 2020), and an inability to adapt to the new teaching environment. Thorell et al. (2021) demonstrate that some parents have experienced anxiety, stress, and great difficulties during the homeschooling period. Nevertheless, the success of students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and lacking adequate parental support depends on their maintaining a close relationship with their teachers (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). On the contrary, because students in DE are not confined to a classroom (Weaver & Swank, 2020), DE processes enable better progress, enable students to receive more useful feedback, and help them be more independent (Bubb & Jones, 2020). Online education supports parent-child relationships, improves children's educational insights, and enables them to participate more in activities in different types (Dong et al., 2020). Finally, OECD's study indicates that "an increase in the autonomy of students to manage their own learning" produced an unexpected benefit of homeschooling (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020, p. 18).

Parents agree that DE creates physical and social problems in children. As highlighted in the results of this study, children suffered from longing for friends, desires to play with peers, lack of emotional sharing, being alone due to long screen time, and lack of collaboration with friends.

The COVID-19 school closures caused various problems for parents in balancing their jobs, household chores, and teaching responsibilities. While simultaneously caring for children and helping them with their education, they could not manage to work at home. In this situation, parents' capacity to manage their time was decreased (Garbe et al., 2020). Therefore, parents' suppressive behaviors (warnings about delivering DE appropriately, and time management in the homeschooling routines and daily routines) naturally increased. Parents experiencing high levels of stress were more likely to use harsher and more frequent discipline tools. This negatively affected the parent-child relationship. Children's poor time management skills created disruptions to their daily routines, and, consequently, parents' physical and psychological well-being was negatively affected by this situation (Di Giorgio et al., 2020). Parents' mental health is said to have deteriorated, while their behavioral health also worsened (Patrick et al., 2020). Parental stress was closely related to children's emotional suffering, and parental stress affected children's emotional problems (Spinelli et al., 2020).

The fact that parents are one of the important stakeholders of DE has enabled them to offer several suggestions for the system and for teachers. Parents suggest increasing e-resources and providing economic support to access these resources, continuing DE during long holidays, and developing online tracking systems for students. They suggest that teachers should better adapt to technology; develop their knowledge and skills in this field; use learning methods and techniques suitable for DE; employ activities to make the

course content clearer; prepare interactive materials; develop their research, innovation, and difference-making abilities; be a role model for students in these areas; and increase their ability to communicate with students and parents effectively.

## Conclusion

Parents feel uncomfortable and anxious about the inequality in accessing educational resources created by economic conditions. Therefore, the increasing inequality in education will pose serious problems for countries in the long run. For this reason, a more innovative type of education that is more target-oriented and in harmony with universal values, and one that enables children take on learning responsibilities, should be provided (Zhao, 2020). The researchers think that views about educational practices and schools will change as a result of DE experiences. It is necessary to improve the school system with flexible need- and place-oriented practices that involve cooperative family participation after COVID-19 (Iyengar, 2021). This cooperation needs to be organized with a perspective aiming to develop an understanding of families' lives and values and to share decision-making mechanisms with them (Koskela et al., 2020).

The results of this study show that children and parents have developed many social, emotional, and behavioral problems since the COVID-19 outbreak, that they have been affected by traumatic events during COVID-19, and that schools might need to provide services to overcome such problems. By establishing various social ties and connections, further studies can be conducted about how parents can use online and technological resources effectively post-pandemic (Iyengar, 2021). It may be possible to prepare training programs on the use of different online platforms for families to support DE process and on strengthening family–child–teacher communication (Garbe et al., 2020). One way to alleviate this issue is by better readying teachers to use digital technologies. Improving teachers' competencies in this area could make the process of dealing with problems caused by COVID-19 and possible unpredictable events that disrupt face-to-face learning activities more efficient.

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