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## Ethics in Distance Education during the Pandemic: Undergraduate Students' Views about Ethics

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**Abstract:** The concept of ethics is very important in education as well as in scientific research studies. The purpose of this case study was to determine the ethical views of undergraduate students who continue their education with distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research sample included 31 undergraduate students who continued their education at Balıkesir University in the Spring Term of the academic year of 2020-2021. In the study, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 10 questions was used to determine the views of the participants. In the interview form, sample cases were given to the students, and they were asked how they would behave in the case of these events. As a result of the study, it was revealed that some students were likely to exhibit unethical behaviors. The results also showed that the ethics lessons were not sufficient for the students. Therefore, it was suggested that students should be educated about ethics at an early age.

**Keywords:** covid-19, distance education, undergraduate students, ethics, unethical behaviors

### Highlights

What is already known about this topic:

- The concept of ethics is fairly important in the scientific world.
- The development of technologies and the spread of distance education have led to a change in the concept of ethics in education and the term distance education ethics has arisen.

What this paper contributes:

- In literature no study was found that investigated the views of students about ethics in the distance education process.
- It is believed that addressing undergraduate students' views about ethics during the pandemic will contribute to the literature.

Implications for theory, practice and/or policy:

- Ethical rules should be established to guide the teachers and students in distance education in educational institutions.
- Students should be made aware of these policies, and they should be informed about it.
- Ethics education should start at an early age because it takes a long time for people to form a permanent sense of ethics.

### Introduction

Science is quite important for the development of societies. Progress in science is based on trust (Hendriks et al., 2016). The fact that the products emerging in the scientific life are misleading may negatively affect the whole society. Ethical rules must be followed in order to prevent misleading information that may occur in the scientific world (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Therefore, the concept of ethics is fairly important in the scientific world. The term ethics is based on the Greek word "ethos" meaning morality and defines the behaviors and rules that must be followed (Östman et al., 2019). Mistakes made intentionally or unintentionally in the scientific world are defined as "Unethical" behaviors, and unethical



behaviors demonstrated during the scientific research process affect the reliability of the research (Wenger et al., 1999). In case of unethical behavior in scientific research, the trust in the researcher and in the institution to which the researcher is affiliated decreases (Zuber, 2015). Examples of unethical behaviors in scientific research include "Fabrication", "Falsification", "Plagiarism", "Duplicate publication/text recycling", "Salami publication", " Non-disclosure of conflicts of interest" and "Ghost or guest authorship" (Tübitak, 2018). Fabrication, which is one of the unethical behaviors in scientific research, is to present, report or publish fictitious data not included in the research. Falsification refers to modifying research tools that may yield different results or altering the results obtained based on the research data. Plagiarism is using the text written by someone else without giving their name. Duplicate publication/text recycling is publishing or attempting to publish the research results more than once. Salami publication is making or attempting to make more than one publication by dividing the research results into multiple parts. Non-disclosure of conflicts of interest means avoiding indicating the support of the institution or of the organization that has supporting the research process. Ghost or guest authorship is to remove the name of the person who has contributed enough to deserve the title of authorship in a study conducted by more than one researcher, or it refers to adding a researcher who has had no contribution as an author (Tübitak, 2018). In studies, it was pointed out that unethical behaviors becoming a habit occur due to certain behaviors and attitudes (Lam & Shi, 2008) . According to these studies, plagiarism begins with the habit of cheating in education life and, students do not regard "copy" - "paste" behaviors as plagiarism (Hongyan et al., 2007).

As in scientific research, behaviors in accordance with scientific ethics should be demonstrated in academic studies in the field of education as well. However, it is known that some of the studies conducted in the field of education have serious ethical problems. Some measures are considered to be taken to reduce the rate of unethical behaviors and violations of ethics in educational research (Gasparyan et al. 2017; Granitz & Loewy, 2007;Kuzu, 2009; Mumford et al. 2008; Nill, Schibrowsky & Peltier, 2004; Wahn, 1993): training scientists in ethics about honesty, impartiality, openness, objectivity, confidentiality, respect and responsibility, removing the pressures that lead unethical behaviors, applying heavy penalties for unethical behaviors.

Today, in order to carry out education successfully and to ensure the continuity and permanence of success in education, education should be scientific, honest and reliable and should be carried out with ethical values. Educational ethics refers to the principles that lead to correctness in the education process. The development of technologies and the spread of distance education have led to a change in the concept of ethics in education and the term distance education ethics has arisen. The rules to be followed in the distance education system can be called distance education ethics. In relation to the principles in distance education ethics, examples of the instructor's responsibilities include:

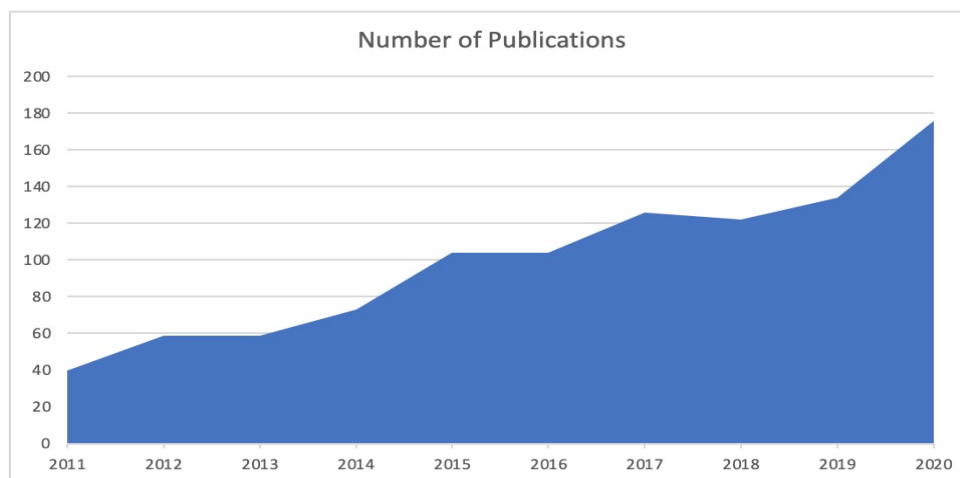
- Acquiring and maintaining professional competence,
- Providing comprehensive and detailed evaluations of distance education systems and their impact, including the analysis of the potential risks,
- Accessing only authorized communication sources

In addition, the student's responsibilities could be said to include:

- Using the bandwidth for academic studies,
- Not sharing their passwords with others,
- Not presenting other people's studies as their own,
- Using the studies with permission or reference,
- Establishing online communication oneself,
- Presenting original studies (Rogerson & Bynum, 2006) .

It could be stated that the importance of ethics has increased in recent years and that awareness-raising activities on this subject have become widespread. For example, the course of Scientific Research

Methods and Ethics has been made a compulsory course in all Master's programs by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) in Turkey. Figure 1 shows the numbers of studies conducted in the field of ethics in the Web of Science (WOS) database by year.



**Figure 1.** Distribution of studies on ethics by year

As can be seen in Figure 1, the Web of Science (WOS) database contains a quite number of studies on the concept of ethics in social sciences and in education. It is seen that from the year 2011 to 2020, the number of publications in the relevant field has increased over the years. Therefore, it could be stated that the concept of ethics is increasingly becoming popular in the academic field and studies.

In the light of developments in technology, new paradigms have emerged in the field of education. (Durak & Çankaya, 2018). These changes have accelerated especially with the Covid 19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected many areas of life, as well as caused significant changes in the field of education (Durak & Çankaya, 2020a, 2020b; Elçiçek, 2021; Quansah & Essiam, 2021; Yakar, 2021). In this process, all educational institutions had to switch to emergency distance education (Bozkurt et al., 2020). This situation has made ethical elements important. Therefore, it has gained importance to investigate the ethical issues in emergency distance education with various dimensions.

In this respect, the purpose of this study was to determine undergraduate students' views about ethics in emergency remote education in the covid-19 pandemic. When the studies in the literature were examined, no study was found that investigated the views of students about ethics in the distance education process in Turkey. It is believed that addressing undergraduate students' views about ethics during the pandemic will contribute to the literature.

## Literature

The review of the related literature within the scope of this study revealed that there were studies examining attitudes towards ethical values, opinions, levels of academic ethics, and levels of unethical behavior. Some of them are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Related studies in literature

Researchers	Research Purpose	Conclusion
Köklü (2000)	The purpose was to investigate the frequency and reasons of students' unethical behaviors.	The reasons for demonstrating unethical behaviors included choosing the easy way, lack of research skills, and not giving importance to ethics education.
Genç, Kazez and Fidan (2013), Erdoğan, Gökoğlu and Çakiroğlu (2017)	They aimed to determine the online unethical behaviors of undergraduate students.	It was concluded that undergraduate students exhibited low levels of unethical behavior and male students had higher levels of unethical behavior than female students.

Erdem (2008), Beyhan and Tunç (2012)	They aimed to examine the preservice teachers' ethical use of information technologies.	It was concluded that pre-service teachers with "very good" and "good" computer usage levels behaved more unethically than users with moderate computer usage levels.
Gökçeşlan, Günbatar and Berikan (2015), Köse Biber and Biber (2020)	They aimed to determine the students' levels of informatics ethics	They concluded that students had low levels of ethical knowledge about privacy, freedom of thought and intellectual property and moderate levels of ethical knowledge about being moral, and that the informatics ethics levels of secondary school students and vocational high school students were not different. In addition, the students' levels of informatics ethics were high.
Lane and Schaupp (1989)	They aimed to examine students' ethical beliefs perceptions.	It was concluded that the perceived beliefs of students to be successful at university differed between faculties and that the business and economics students had a higher tendency towards demonstrating unethical beliefs.
Özenç Uçak (2002)	The researcher studied on plagiarism, one of the violations of scientific ethics, and wanted to draw attention to the connection between plagiarism and cheating.	It was pointed out that ethics and plagiarism should be taught to students starting from an early age; that the information given to the students about ethics and plagiarism in the first years of their education would reduce the related problems they would experience in the following years; and that the students' awareness of scientific ethics should be raised first.
Özden and Ergin (2013)	They aimed to determine the views of the students who continued their postgraduate education in the department of science education about the ethical rules.	They concluded that the students behaved in accordance with ethical rules.
Özgür and Akgün (2014)	They examined the unethical behaviors of students in distance education department and computer education and instructional technology department regarding their computer and internet use and investigated their exposure to unethical behaviors.	It was concluded that male students demonstrated unethical behavior more than female students and that students from the department of computer education and instructional technologies demonstrated unethical behaviors more than distance education students
Tosun, Geçer and Kaşıkçı (2016)	They aimed to examine the relationship between pre-service teachers' perceptions of internet ethics and their perceptions of locus of control.	It was concluded that the pre-service teachers' perceptions of internet ethics were at a good level; that they behaved with internal control; and that there was a low and significant relationship between their perceptions of internet ethics and locus of control.
Uğurlu and Sert (2020)	They aimed to examine the attitudes of postgraduate students regarding academic ethics values.	Postgraduate students' attitudes towards academic ethics values were at a moderate level; that their attitudes towards academic values differed significantly according to gender and did not differ based on the variables of age, parental education level and being an active student in the institution.
Karakaş, Caner, Kahyaoglu and Kahya (2018)	They aimed to examine pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding being an ethical teacher and their views about the course of professional ethics.	It was concluded that the preservice teachers found teachers ethical who did not discriminate, acted fairly, and behaved in accordance with regulations.
Pehlivanlı and Akın (2019)	They aimed to examine whether the levels of workaholism and academic ethics of the academic staff differed in accordance with demographic characteristics.	It was concluded that academic ethical values were higher in female academicians than in male academicians; that workaholism was higher in single academicians than in married academicians; and that the institution-related values were lower in the academic group aged 50 and over than in the academic group belonging to the age group of 41-50 years old.
Erdirençlebi and Filizöz (2019)	They aimed to determine whether the perceptions and attitudes of academicians towards ethical values differed according to demographic variables.	It was concluded that perceptions and attitudes regarding ethical values differed according to demographic variables.

When the Table 1 is examined and the studies are evaluated according to gender, it is seen that the frequency of demonstrating unethical behaviors was higher in men than in women at every education level. In the studies, it was concluded that the users' frequency of unethical behavior increased as their levels of computer use increased. In a study supporting this situation, it was concluded that computer education and instructional technology students demonstrated more unethical behavior than distance education students (Özgür & Akgün, 2014). In a study carried out with undergraduate students, it was revealed that the frequency of demonstrating unethical behavior differed between faculties and that the students studying in the faculties of business and economics demonstrated unethical behavior most (Lane & Schaupp, 1989). When the studies were examined, it was seen that the students' knowledge of ethics at all levels of education was at a low level and that ethics education should be given starting from primary school until the end of undergraduate education.

## Methodology

This study was designed using the case study model, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Creswell (2009) define the case study as a research method that allows the researcher to examine the phenomenon or event, which s/he cannot control, on the basis of how and why questions. According to Thomas (2011), case studies are regarded as a distinctive approach in seeking in-depth answers to scientific questions.

### Participants

The research sample included 31 undergraduate students who continued their education at Balikesir University in the spring semester of the academic year of 2020-2021 and who were selected using the convenience sampling method. The convenience sampling method is a sampling method that aims to prevent the researcher's time and labor loss (Morse, 2007).

Table 2. Gender and age distributions of the participants

	Variable	f	%
<b>Gender</b>	Female	18	58,06
	Male	13	41,94
<b>Age</b>	21 – 23	20	64,5
	18 – 20	10	32,3
	24 or older	1	3,2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that 58.06% of the participants in the study were female (N=18) and that 41.94% were male (N=13). When the participants' ages were examined, it was seen that 64.5% of them were between the ages of 21 and 23 (N=20); 32.3% were between the ages of 18-20 (N=10); and 3.2% were 24 years old or older (N=1).

Table 3. Class grades of the participants

	Variable	f	%
<b>Class Grade</b>	2	12	38,7
	4	8	25,8
	3	6	19,4
	1	5	16,1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

When the data in Table 3 are examined, it is seen that 38.7% of the undergraduate students were 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students (N=12); 25.8% 4<sup>th</sup> grade (N=8); 19.4% 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (N=6); and 16.1% of them were 1<sup>st</sup> grade students (N=5).

Table 4. Faculties of the participants

Department	f	%
Education Faculty	20	64,5
Engineering Faculty	5	16,1
Faculty of Economics and Administration	2	6,5
Faculty of Health Sciences	2	6,5
Faculty of Sports Sciences	1	3,2
School of Civil Aviation	1	3,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

When the data in Table 4 are examined, it is seen that 64.5% of the undergraduate students were from the faculty of education (N=20); 16.1% from the faculty of engineering (N=5); 6.5% from the faculty of economics and administration (N=2); 6.5% from the faculty of health sciences (N=2); 3.2% from the faculty of sports sciences (N=1); and 3.2% were from the school of civil aviation (N=1).

## Data Collecting Tools

In the study, the form of “Views of Undergraduate Students Taking Distance Education During the Pandemic”, which was prepared by the researchers, was used for the purpose of determining the views of the students. The interview form was made up of 10 questions. An interview form is a data collection tool developed to understand the thoughts and feelings of participants about a topic (Lasch et al., 2010). The advantages of the interview technique are that the researcher can give immediate feedback to the participant’s questions and that complex issues can be expressed by establishing trust between the researcher and the participant (Creswell, 2009).

## Data Analysis

In the study, the data collected via the interview form were first arranged and then interpreted. The data collected via documents in case studies are first organized and copied, and the organized data are coded manually in an spread Sheet editor, summarized and interpreted.

## Validity and Reliability

To support validity, there wasn’t any question that might reveal the identities of the participants. Also, the participants were informed that their answers would be used only for academic purposes. Thus, this allows the participants to respond to the interview questions in a sincere manner.

In order to achieve the reliability of the study, the findings obtained were presented without making any personal comments. The data obtained in the study were examined by the researchers and by an academicians experienced in qualitative research.

## Findings

The views of the participants were coded as “S” for confidentiality, and each participant was given a number as “S1, S2, S3, ...” next to their code. In this section, the results obtained via the interviews with 31 undergraduate students are presented.

Two different questions were prepared in line with the statement of “Imagine that you are going to prepare an assignment about a course you have taken and that you need to use a scale in the research you will do within the scope of this assignment. You know that you need to prepare items for the related scale and send it to the instructor of the course within 2 days for checking. While preparing for this assignment, assume that you have also found a ready-made scale on the relevant topic.”, which was one of the questions in the semi-structured interview form.

In relation to the question of “You take some of the items from the ready-made scale you have found, and would you show them to your teacher as if you prepared them yourself?”, S15 responded as “*No, I don’t because taking it as a ready-made scale does not provide any benefit for me to improve myself. What is important is to improve myself with effort.*”, while S1 said “*It depends; I mean I can make a few little changes in the items in the scale I found and show it to the teacher as if I prepared them myself.*”

In relation to the question of “Do you think it would be a right behavior to use the ready-made scale without the knowledge of the person who prepared it? Why?”, S16 said “*Of course it’s wrong. There is no right side of it. Maybe it can be used if that person is contacted and asked for permission. It is best to make it original and prepare it ourselves.*”, and the response of S20 was “*It is not ethical in the first place because there is a lot of effort, and if we use it without reference or permission at that moment just because it works for us, we would be disrespecting that effort.*”. On the other hand, S1 said “*I don’t think it’s wrong, especially if I get what I get from websites in question because I think that the people who published this information, with some exceptions, published it knowing the situation.*”



In relation to the question of “Can copy-paste homework be considered unethical? Please explain”, S28 said *“No, because the aim of the homework is to ensure that the student learns. When we do it this way, both the goal cannot be reached and the effort of someone else is benefited without permission”*, while S4 said *“It can be ethical as long as the bibliography is stated. To conclude, the individuals doing the research are doing it in order to provide an exchange of information”*, and S14 said *“Some assignments do not require copy- paste because some assignments contain only information, and copy-paste is likely to be done for homework with general knowledge.”*

In relation to the question of “Do you prefer to have your exams face-to-face or online? Why?” 2 out of 31 students did not give qualified answers. Therefore, the answers given by 29 students were taken into account, as seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of the exam type

	<b>Variable</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Exam Type	Face to face	24	82,76
	Online	5	17,24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that 82.76% (N=24) of the students preferred to have the exams face to face (N=24). In relation to this, S16 said *“I definitely prefer face-to-face. Currently, very high rates of exams do not distinguish between those who know and those who do not, and their reliability is very low. The rate of cheating is too high. Topics are not fully explained and understood,”* and S28 responded as *“I prefer face-to-face. Because I think that exams done this way are more fair.”* In addition, S6 thought *“Frankly, I prefer it done online because I’m less stressed in exams like this.”*

According to the participants’ responses to the question of “Do you think online exams are fair and reliable? Explain with reasons,” almost all of the students agreed that the exams in distance education were not fair and reliable. In relation to this question, S5 said *“No I do not think so. Helping someone and cheating are much easier than in face-to-face exams. I also think that there are teachers who do not make objective evaluations in tasks such as homework presentation.”* In addition, S1 said *“Of course I don’t think so because not everyone has internet access, and not everyone has the same internet quality. I think everybody cheats except the few who try to be honest,”* S31 said *“No, I don’t think so. Some schools conduct their exams in a way that students can pass their exams, while others make it as difficult as they can,”* and S27 said *“I think some courses are reliable because how can they do better in these conditions?”*

In the interview form, in line with the statement of “You are requested to collect data on a subject as a midterm exam homework, but to collect the data, you have to go out and hold interviews. And you are too afraid of catching Covid?”, the participants were asked two different questions.

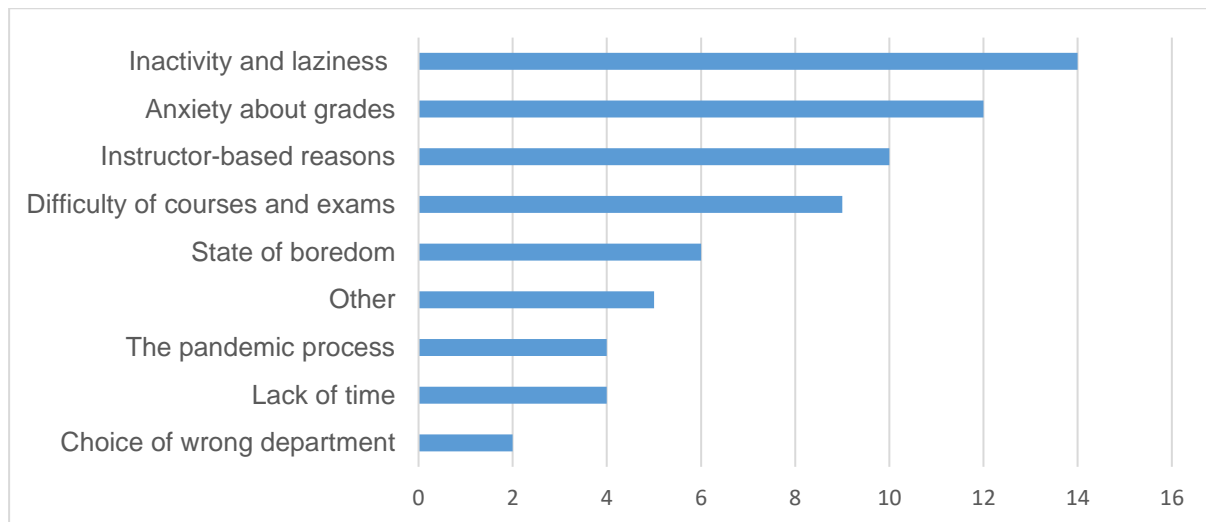
In relation to the question of “Do you do the homework by pretending as if you collected the data? Why?”, S1 said *“Yes, I do. I’m afraid of getting a low mark, and I’m afraid of the teacher’s reaction,”* and S26 said *“Yes, because health is more important than morality or virtue.”* In contrast with these responses, S15 thought *“I don’t because I want to have sufficient information about my homework so that I can easily answer the questions directed about my homework.”*

In relation to the question of “Do you think it is right to pretend as if you collected the data?”, the majority of the participants reported that it was not the right behavior to pretend as if they collected the data. S28 said *“No, it is not right, but sometimes, circumstances may require such behavior.”*

In relation to the statement of “You have been asked to prepare an assignment as part of the midterm exam. However, you learned that the same assignment was given to other classes last year. If the person doing that homework told you that s/he got a high grade on this assignment,” one of the questions was “Would you take this homework from the person who did it and send it to your teacher as if you did it yourself? Why?” Almost all of the students stated that they would not send someone else’s homework as their own. The participants mostly worried that this situation was disrespectful to the effort and that the teachers would understand when such a situation occurred. In relation to this, S16 *“I would possibly*

contact the person who did the homework just to get ideas or help. At this point, teachers should be alert and think about these possibilities. It should not be thought that it is all the student's responsibility because there are too many people who act like this. I would make effort for everything myself. None of those is ethical," while S28 said "I would. I would do that because of my anxiety about getting high grades." Another question under the above statement was "Is this a correct behavior in terms of ethics and plagiarism? Why?" All of the students reported that it was not a correct behavior in terms of ethics. The participants stated that this situation was considered as theft of labor and that the points given by their teachers would be unfair.

The participants' responses to the question of "What do you think are the reasons that cause students to behave unethically?" are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Reasons causing students to behave unethically

According to Figure 2, the leading reason that caused the students to behave unethically included inactivity and laziness (n=14), while choice of wrong department (n=2) was the least common of all the reasons. Among the participants, the students coded as S21, S25 and S27 stated that they had no idea about the reasons leading to unethical behavior.

In relation to the participants' responses to another question "Did you take a course on ethics during your education life? Do you find it sufficient? Why?", the distribution of the students who took and did not take courses related to ethics is given in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Distribution of taking a course on ethics

Taking a Course	View about the Course	f	%
Taking a course	Insufficient	9	29,03
	Sufficient	6	19,35
Taking no course	Not mentioned	3	9,68
	Total	13	41,94
<b>Total</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that more than half of the participants (n=18) took a course on ethics and that 29.03% (n=6) of those who took the course did not find the course content sufficient. It was revealed that 9.68% of the participants (n=3) took the course yet did not express any opinion about the course.

In relation to this, S3 said "Yes, I took it. I do not find it very sufficient because it just remains within that course. The fact that teachers cause unethical behaviors and they themselves exhibit such behaviors is wrong for students who take them as an example," and S4 said "I took it. I don't find it sufficient. Ethics is not just words or books we read. It is a situation that increases the quality of life, and we encounter different situations throughout our lives. It becomes very difficult to be ethical in the event that we have not experienced before. I mean, the course has little or no foresight." On the other hand, S26 responded



as *“I took it, and I find it sufficient because most students already know what is right and wrong without taking this course, but they do unethical things when the circumstances require it because most of the time, external factors cause them to do so. Most students’ first choice is to do it right.”*

The participants’ responses to the question of “Do you do your online exams or homework with the help of your Whatsapp groups? Do you think this is the right thing to do?” are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Distributions of getting help in online exams

	Variable	f	%
Getting help	No	16	51,61
	Yes	15	48,39
<b>Total</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that 51,61% (n=16) of the participants did not do online exams or homework by helping each other in Whatsapp groups. In relation to this, S19 said *“Information exchange is not correct in exams. It means cheating, which is unethical,”* while S1 said *“Yes, I do so. Help and cheating are the same things.”* In addition, S11 said *“Yes, I do. Although it is not the right behavior, this is done in order not to fall behind in in-class competition.”*

In relation to the statement of “Imagine a few of your friends agreed among themselves and took an online exam together. One of them took the exam just really to take it. One of the rest took a picture of the questions. The others searched the internet, and the test taker completed the exam. Imagine that they gave correct answers by examining the questions together and got high grades in the exam.” The first question directed to the participants was *“Do you think this is ethically right? Why?”* Of all the participants, 30 of them did not find it ethical. In relation to this, S8 said *“Right. If they can, they will do so. The main thing is not to give them that opportunity.”* The participants thought that what was done was unethical because it was theft of labor and unfair to those who did it on their own by studying hard.

S16, who did not find it ethically right, said *“I think it’s absolutely wrong. They intrude on other people’s rights. They reduce the validity and reliability of the exam. They are stealing labor. I say let their consciences think about that again.”*

In relation to the above statement, another question was *“Do you turn a blind eye to what your friends are doing? Why?”* The majority of the participants stated that they condoned, or would condone, what was done on the grounds that there would be no uneasiness because they were their friends and because everyone was responsible for themselves. In relation to this, S7 said *“Yes, I will because I’m not the one who can stop it. Even if it is not tolerated, this will not change the situation,”* while S16 responded as *“Of course I won’t turn a blind eye. I’ll say it’s wrong. I would explain why it is not right. I would research the ethical rules myself and explain them in the best way.”*

### Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

The present study tried to get the opinions of undergraduate students about ethics who took distance education during the pandemic. In the study, firstly, expert opinion was taken for the semi-structured interview form made up of 18 questions prepared by the researchers. In line with the expert view, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 10 questions was obtained. The questions were also examined by a teacher of Turkish Language in terms of grammar. In one study, Köklü (2000) also investigated the frequency and causes of students’ unethical behaviors, and concluded that the reasons for demonstrating unethical behaviors included choosing the easy way, inadequacy of research skills and not giving importance to ethics education. In the present study, the reasons for the unethical behaviors of the undergraduate students were found to be wrong department choice, lack of time, the pandemic process, boredom, difficulties in courses and exams, reasons arising from the instructors, grade anxiety and laziness. In the study, it was seen that the opinions of the students on ethics differed with the pandemic process. In their studies, Genç, Kazez, and Fidan (2013) and Erdoğan, Gökoğlu, and Çakıroğlu (2017) also aimed to determine the online unethical behaviors of undergraduate students and found that the undergraduate students demonstrated low levels of unethical behavior and that the male students had higher levels of unethical behavior than the female students. In the present study, it can

be said that the unethical behavior levels of the undergraduate students during the pandemic were low. In the study, replying to the question about the reliability of the exams held in distance education, 82.76% of the students said that traditional exams, or face-to-face exams, were more reliable. Almost all of the students' responded as 'no' to the question of "Do you submit the assignments prepared by others as your own homework?" This situation is consistent with the results of a study conducted by Özden and Ergin (2013), whose aim was to determine the opinions of the students about the ethical rules who continued their post-graduate education in the department of science education. In their study, the researchers revealed that the students acted in accordance with the ethical rules. It was concluded that almost more than half of the undergraduate students took education on ethics throughout their education life and that the vast majority of them thought this was not enough, though. Özenç Uçar (2002) studied on plagiarism, one of the violations of scientific ethics, and wanted to draw attention to the connection between plagiarism and cheating. The researcher pointed out that students should be taught ethics and plagiarism starting from an early age; that the information to be given to students about ethics and plagiarism in the first years of their education would reduce the problems they would experience in these matters in later years; and that the student's awareness of scientific ethics should first raised. In the study, results supporting this were obtained. It was concluded that 41.94% (N=13) of the undergraduate students did not take any related education, and 58.06% (N=18) of them took education. When those who took education were evaluated within themselves, 50% (N=9) of 18 students who took education did not find the education sufficient. Pehlivanlı and Akin (2019), in their study, aimed to examine whether the workaholism and academic ethical value levels of the academic staff differed in accordance with their demographic characteristics. The researchers found that the academic ethical values were higher in female academicians than in male academicians; that workaholism was higher in single academicians than in married academicians; and that the values for the institution were lower in the academician group aged 50 or older than in those in the age group between 41 and 50. In another study which aimed to examine the attitudes of post-graduate students towards academic ethical values, Uğurlu and Sert (2020) revealed that the attitudes of the students towards academic ethical values were at a moderate level; that their attitudes towards academic values differed significantly according to gender; and that there was no difference with respect to the variables of age, parental education level and status of being an active student in the institution. In the present study, no significant difference was found between the male and female participants in terms of gender. In response to the question of "Do you think it is right to pretend to collect the data?", two female students answered "Yes", while 16 female students answered "No". In relation to the same question, three male students answered "Yes", while 10 male students answered "No". In response to the question of "Do you think the exams in distance education are fair and reliable?", one female student answered "Yes", while 17 female students answered "No". In relation to the same question, one male student answered "Yes", while 12 male students answered "No". Lane and Schaupp (1989), in their study, aimed to examine the effect on students' perceptions of ethical beliefs and concluded that the perceived beliefs of the students to be successful at university differed between faculties and that the business and economics students had a higher tendency towards unethical beliefs. In the present study, no significant difference was found in the opinions of the undergraduate students about ethics with respect to their department. In response to the question of "Do you think it would be right to use a ready-made scale without the knowledge of the person who prepared it?", two education faculty students answered "Yes", while a total of 16 students from other faculties answered "No". In relation to the question of "Do you think copy-paste homework could be regarded as unethical behavior?", five education faculty students answered "Yes", while a total of 26 students from other faculties answered "No". When the answers given are evaluated in general, it could be stated that the undergraduate students' views about ethics did not differ between their departments.

Distance education raises new ethical problems as well as the existing ones. In this process, ethical issues differentiated. In order to solve all these problems, ethical rules should be established to guide the teachers and students in distance education in educational institutions. Mostly, teachers and students are not aware of these rules, and most importantly, the rules cannot be put into practice. For this reason, educational institutions should review their current policies and shape their distance education programs on the basis of ethics. If existing policies are insufficient, new policies should be

created by taking the requirements of distance education into account. Students should be made aware of these policies, and they should be informed about it. It should be ensured that not only students but also teachers, parents and all stakeholders are aware of these rules. In this way, the solution of ethical problems will be easy for all parties.

Consequently, for the purpose of minimizing ethical problems in the distance education process, ethics education should start at an early age because it takes a long time for people to form a permanent sense of ethics. In this respect, an ethics course could be given as a separate course in secondary and higher education within the scope of the curriculum developed. Taking ethics courses could be a useful practice for students as it can increase their sensitivity in ethical behavior.

### Strengths and Limitations of the Study

It can be said that it is one of the few studies that deals with the issue of ethics in the emergency remote education process in Turkey. Qualitative methods were used to obtain in-depth information on the relevant subject. However, participant of the study is limited to 31 Balıkesir University students. Student opinions may vary as a result of different universities and different distance education applications. The study was designed qualitatively, so the results obtained are not suitable for generalization.

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