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Snapshot of Faculty Readiness for Emergency Remote Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Türkiye

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Abstract: This study aimed to examine the faculty members' readiness and adaptation to the emergency remote teaching (ERT) process in higher education institutions in Türkiye. The research was an embedded mixed-method design, integrating qualitative data within a predominantly quantitative framework. Data were collected via an online questionnaire developed by the researchers, consisting of six subsections with 26 closed-ended and six open-ended questions. The participants included 185 male and 199 female faculty members from 76 different higher education institutions in Türkiye. Before the pandemic, many higher education institutions lacked experience with online teaching, LMS, and video conferencing tools, using mainly presentations, documents, and PDFs. During the pandemic, Moodle, Google Classroom, and Zoom became widely used, and faculty shifted to using more presentations, PDFs, and videos, with homework and online exams as the primary assessment methods.Higher education institutions adapted quickly to online teaching but faced major technical and instructional challenges. Most relied on personal devices and internet access without receiving institutional training or support for digital content creation, assessment methods, interaction strategies, or technical assistance. The findings underscore the need for targeted institutional support to better prepare faculty for future remote teaching scenarios.

Keywords: faculty readiness, Emergency Remote Teaching, distance education, COVID-19, technical challenges, educational challenges, pedagogical challenges, institutions' policies, faculty members, higher education, online teaching

Highlights

What is already known about this topic:

- The COVID-19 pandemic forced a global shift to the emergency remote teaching, revealing varying faculty readiness.
- Pre-pandemic digital literacy heavily impacted adaptation, with many educators facing challenges like insufficient training, inadequate tools, and lack of institutional support.

What this paper contributes:

- The study highlights the faculty readiness for ERT, revealing gaps in digital literacy and experience.
- It examines shifts in teaching practices, materials, and assessment methods toward digital tools while identifying key educational, technical, and instructional challenges that hindered effective online teaching.

Implications for theory, practice and/or policy:

- Institutions should provide tailored faculty training in digital pedagogy, enhance internet infrastructure, supply necessary hardware, and establish policies for equitable access to digital teaching tools and resources.
- Institutions should encourage professional development in online teaching through certifications, workshops, and institutional recognition programs.

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Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education institutions worldwide faced an unprecedented shift from face-to-face education to distance education technologies. Some institutions managed this transition with pre-existing response plans, while others struggled without prior preparation. A survey conducted by the European Association for International Education among higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area revealed that only 58% of respondent institutions had implemented a response plan. Meanwhile, 16% had no plans to develop one, 14% were working on a plan, and 12% were uncertain about their institution's actions (Rumbley, 2020). This emergency required swift decisions by higher education institutions and policymakers to sustain education continuity, significantly impacting educators and learners (OECD, 2021). Institutions that had previously integrated technology into teaching processes enjoyed a comparative advantage (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020).

The shift to distance education during the pandemic exposed challenges unique to emergency remote teaching (ERT). Unlike planned distance education, which is designed to be flexible and structured, the pandemic necessitated rapid and often improvised transitions to online learning. This urgent transformation bypassed essential components such as course design, instructional methods, and instructor training (Bilgiç, 2021). Bozkurt and Sharma (2020) emphasized that ERT differs fundamentally from distance education, referring to it as a temporary and unplanned solution during a crisis. Hodges et al. (2020) highlighted the distinct nature of ERT, while Shisley (2020) defined it as delivering instruction remotely when in-person classrooms were inaccessible.

The effectiveness of ERT depended heavily on institutional capabilities, infrastructure, and faculty readiness. Key prerequisites for successful distance education included technical infrastructure, internet access, and accessible online resources (Ali, 2020; International Association of Universities [IAU], 2020). However, the digital divide posed significant challenges, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where students often lacked internet access to participate in remote learning (Traxler et al., 2020). Beyond physical access, the digital divide also encompassed motivational, skill-based, and usage-related disparities (Van Dijk, 2020). UNICEF (2020) reported that 463 million children worldwide could not access distance education, citing socioeconomic and technological barriers. Even high-income countries were not fully prepared for the abrupt transition, facing limitations in video conferencing tools, digital content, and trained instructors (OECD, 2021) (See Table 1).

Table 1. Readiness of Higher Education Institutions for Distance Education during the Pandemic (OECD, 2021).

Factors of readiness	High-income countries	Middle-income countries	Low-income countries
Business continuity plan	Not always available	Rarely available	Rarely available
Emergency management office	Not always available	Rarely available	Rarely available
Power supply	Fully available	Fully available	Not always available
Broadband Internet	Fully available	Generally available	Not always available
Learning management system	Fully available	Generally available	Not always available
Videoconferencing	Not always available	Not always available	Rarely available
Digital content resources	Not always available	Rarely available	Rarely available
Teaching and learning unit	Not always available	Not always available	Rarely available
Trained instructors	Not always available	Not always available	Rarely available
Cybersecurity	Not always available	Not always available	Rarely available

Faculty readiness emerged as a critical factor in the success of distance education during the pandemic. While infrastructure is essential, the readiness of faculty and students also plays a significant role (Ali, 2020). Distance education requires unique pedagogical approaches and competencies, making faculty readiness a challenge for institutions (IAU, 2020). Bozkurt and Sharma (2020) noted that while ERT offered a temporary solution, its effectiveness drew from pre-existing distance education practices. The lack of faculty readiness for online teaching can significantly impact student engagement, course quality, satisfaction levels, and retention rates. Research has shown that when faculty members are not adequately prepared, it often results in disengaged students and poorly designed courses, leading to lower satisfaction and retention rates (Eom & Ashill, 2016). Institutions that fail to provide sufficient training or support for instructors may experience higher dropout rates and reduced overall course effectiveness, impacting institutional revenue and long-term success. Effective faculty preparation is essential to create engaging, well-structured online courses that meet the needs of students and ensure their retention (Bawa, 2016).

This study aims to evaluate faculty readiness for ERT, focusing on their experiences before and after the pandemic. It explores the concept of faculty readiness for distance education and ERT, contextualized by existing literature. Understanding and enhancing faculty preparedness are crucial for improving the overall effectiveness of distance education, ensuring institutions are better equipped for future crises.

Definition of Faculty Readiness for Distance Education

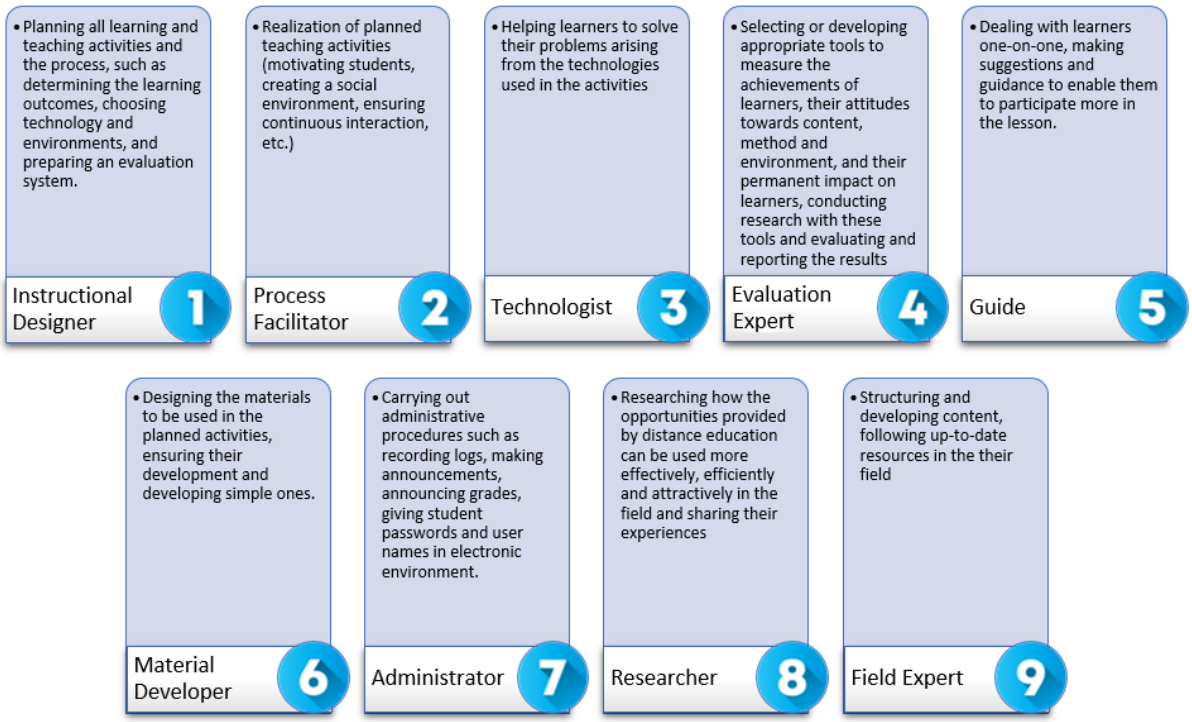
The development and transformation of higher education institutions through the adoption of distance education have provided learners with the opportunity to study regardless of time and location. This shift has introduced new needs for higher education institutions, requiring not only the provision of technical infrastructure but also the ability of faculty members to adapt to this new teaching environment. For face-to-face teaching to be effectively integrated with distance education through online platforms, it is essential to address the needs of both the institution and the faculty (Doğan et al., 2012). It is unrealistic to expect instructors who are reluctant to abandon traditional teaching methods to innovate or teach in new ways (Bates & Sangrà, 2011).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many higher education institutions continued their education without interruption, relying on the competencies and experiences of instructors in distance education. When faculty members adapt both pedagogically and technologically to distance education, students experience more positive learning outcomes. In this context, faculty readiness plays a crucial role. Faculty readiness encompasses the interest, current knowledge, and experience in delivering online courses, and it may be interpreted differently for individuals depending on institutional expectations and available resources (Hodges et al., 2020).

When faculty members engage in distance education, they are confronted with a new teaching method that requires substantial preparation. Several factors, such as the additional time required for course preparation, resistance to abandoning traditional teaching techniques, and negative perceptions of the distance education system, can prevent faculty readiness and adaptation (Koloğlu, Kantar, & Doğan, 2016). In the design of distance or online courses, particular emphasis should be placed on the role of the faculty member and the course syllabus. These aspects are crucial in the early stages of course planning and require careful attention (Doğan et al., 2012). Another critical consideration is how learners engage with distance education. Faculty members should focus on understanding how students learn in an online environment and utilize diverse materials for various learning purposes. In traditional face-to-face education, analyzing learners' activities through the learning environment is essential (Alajmi, 2010). Given these considerations, faculty members are expected to adopt various roles in distance education. According to Aydın (2004), these roles include Instructional Designer, Process Facilitator,

Technologist, Evaluation Expert, Guide, Material Developer, Administrator, Researcher, and Field Expert (See Figure 1). These diverse roles highlight the multifaceted nature of the faculty member's responsibilities in the distance education environment.

Figure 1. The Roles of an Online Instructor



Additionally, Demir and Yurdugül (2015) emphasize several factors that influence faculty readiness, including acceptance of distance education, access to technology, motivation, time management, institutional support and policies, course content, pedagogical competencies, and proficiency in using technology. Based on these components, the following section will explore research on faculty readiness for ERT during the pandemic period.

Faculty Readiness for Emergency Remote Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Faculty readiness became a crucial issue in the success of the rapid transition from traditional teaching to ERT. Readiness is not limited to the technical proficiency required to use digital platforms, but also encompasses the pedagogical and psychological preparedness necessary to engage students. Faculty members had to quickly adjust to delivering content in a virtual environment, often without prior experience or adequate support. Faculty readiness was influenced by a variety of factors, including access to technology, familiarity with online teaching tools, institutional support, and individual perceptions of the effectiveness of remote teaching. Studies in the literature highlight how factors such as access to technology, institutional support, and prior experience collectively shape faculty members' readiness for effective remote teaching.

One of these studies is conducted by Bolliger and Halupa (2021) in two private higher education institutions to evaluate faculty readiness for online education. The results showed that 70% of faculty members felt prepared for the transition to online learning. Faculty members expressed more confidence in communication with students but reported lower confidence in time management. Those who had previous experience teaching online before the pandemic were more confident than those without such experience. The study also highlighted several challenges that negatively impacted faculty confidence, including lack of technical skills or institutional support, issues with the delivery format and technology,

concerns about student engagement, the integrity of assessments, time constraints, and increased workload. Faculty members were encouraged to support students through regular feedback, design their courses effectively for online delivery, monitor student performance, and create schedules to guide students on appropriate times for consultation (Alajmi, 2010).

In a study by Junus et al. (2021) involving 112 lecturers, it was found that while lecturers were technically skilled in using Learning Management Systems (LMS), they faced challenges with time management and internet access. Similarly, Zalat et al. (2021), in a study with 346 medical faculty members, identified insufficient internet connectivity, inadequate computer labs, and lack of personal computers or laptops as major obstacles to the online learning process. Factors such as being at a younger age, having fewer than 10 years of teaching experience, and being male were found to influence the acceptance of distance education.

Sims and Baker (2021) conducted research with 183 faculty members, revealing that younger faculty members were less confident than their older counterparts in believing that online teaching could meet the same quality standards as face-to-face instruction. Another research further concluded that faculty members' and students' familiarity with e-learning technology significantly affects their attitudes toward its use. Thus, it is crucial to enhance the knowledge of faculty members and other stakeholders about distance education technologies to facilitate effective adaptation (Ahmad et al., 2020). Another study by Alshehri and Alahmari (2021) conducted with 274 faculty members emphasized that technical, instructional, and pedagogical support provided by faculty administration, as well as LMS readiness, are key factors for successful adaptation to online education.

The majority of studies in the literature highlight the challenges faced by faculty members during the transition to ERT, a situation mirrored in many higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic in Türkiye. In 2021, Türkiye was home to 224 higher education institutions. These institutions enrolled a total of 3,114,623 students in associate degree programs, 4,676,657 students in bachelor's degree programs, 343,569 students in master's degree programs, and 106,148 students in doctoral programs. Furthermore, 159 of these institutions had established Distance Education Application and Research Centers (Council of Higher Education Information Management System, 2021).

Following the government's decision on March 12, education in all higher education institutions in Türkiye was suspended for one week starting March 16. During this time, universities' distance education capabilities were assessed. After the Council of Higher Education's directive, most institutions began their distance education programs on March 23, 2020. However, some institutions, not fully prepared for the transition, took an additional 2 to 3 weeks to resume their educational activities (Keskin, Çınar, & Demir, 2022). For the next 1.5 years, higher education institutions in Türkiye continued their education through distance learning.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to provide a detailed examination of the experiences of faculty members in Türkiye regarding ERT, comparing the period before and after the pandemic. To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. How did faculty members experience distance education before and during the ERT process?
2. What technical challenges did faculty members encounter during the ERT process?
3. What educational challenges did faculty members face during the ERT process?

Methodology

Research Method

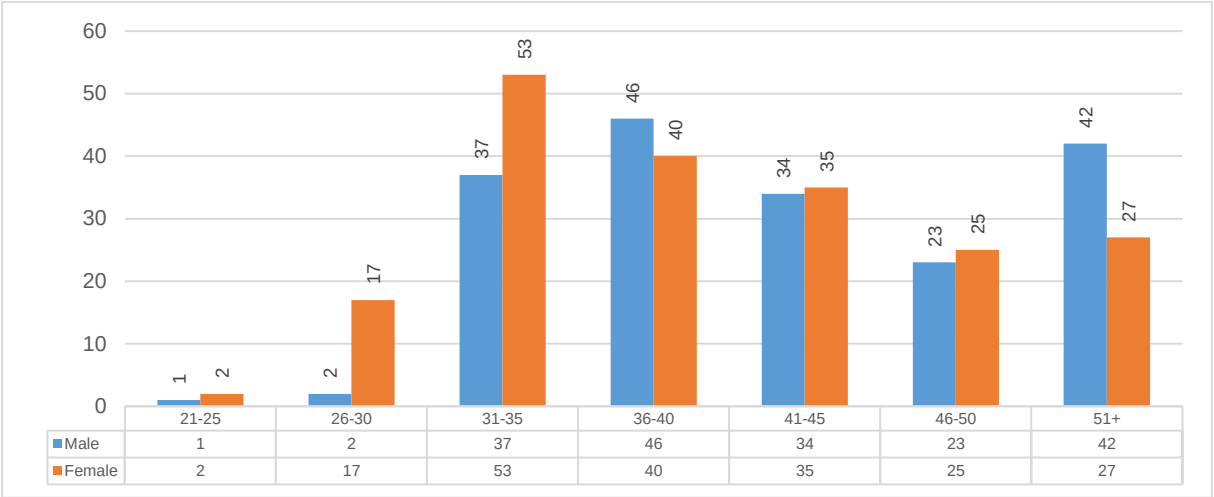
This study aims to examine the faculty members' readiness and how they adapted to the ERT process in higher education institutions in Türkiye. To achieve this, the study was designed as an embedded

mixed-methods research design, where both quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, with qualitative data embedded within the quantitative data (Creswell et al., 2003).

Participants

Faculty members are key stakeholders in the ERT process. The participants in this study include 384 faculty members (185 male and 199 female) representing 76 different higher education institutions in Türkiye. The participants' ages range from 21 to 51+ years (See Figure 2).

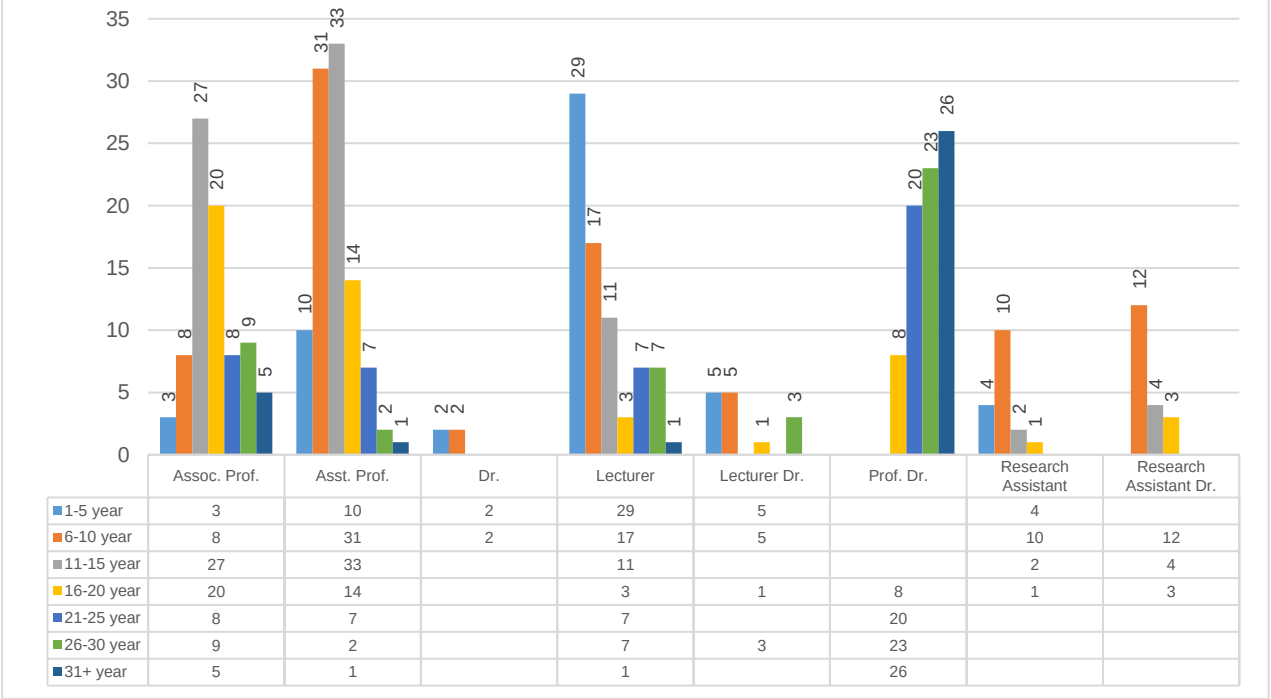
Figure 2. Distribution of Participants by Age and Gender



	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51+
Male	1	2	37	46	34	23	42
Female	2	17	53	40	35	25	27

Participants in this study have varying levels of work experience in higher education institutions, ranging from 1 to 31+ years. As shown in Figure 3, the distribution of participants by title and work experience includes: 17 Research Assistants, 19 Research Assistants with a PhD, 98 Assistant Professors, 4 PhD, 80 Associate Professors, 74 Lecturers, 14 Lecturers with a PhD, and 77 Professors.

Figure 3. Distribution of Participants by Title and Years of Experience in Higher Education Institutions



	Assoc. Prof.	Asst. Prof.	Dr.	Lecturer	Lecturer Dr.	Prof. Dr.	Research Assistant	Research Assistant Dr.
1-5 year	3	10	2	29	5		4	
6-10 year	8	31	2	17	5		10	12
11-15 year	27	33		11			2	4
16-20 year	20	14		3	1	8	1	3
21-25 year	8	7		7		20		
26-30 year	9	2		7	3	23		
31+ year	5	1		1		26		

Data Collection

The research data were collected using an online questionnaire developed by the researchers. The questionnaire consists of six sub-sections: (1) Demographic information (8 items), (2) Pre-pandemic educational experiences (6 items), (3) Post-pandemic educational experiences (12 items), (4) Technical problems during the ERT process in the pandemic (2 items), (5) Educational problems during the ERT in the pandemic (2 items), and (6) Open-ended questions about experiences in the ERT process (5 items). A five-point Likert-type scale was used for the relevant questions.

The online questionnaire was created using Google Forms. To ensure content validity, feedback was gathered from five field experts. Based on their input, some items were rearranged for clarity and relevance. The final version of the questionnaire was shared with faculty members through email groups and social media. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the quantitative data obtained from the online questionnaire in the study. Percentage and frequency distributions were calculated using the SPSS program. For the data from the open-ended questions, content analysis was conducted using the NVivo10 program. The responses to the five open-ended questions, which focused on participants' experiences during the ERT process, were coded based on a total of 384 data sources from participants. These codes were used to identify key themes. The qualitative findings are presented in Table 2, alongside the research questions, to complement and support the quantitative data.

Table 2. Codes and Frequencies According to Research Questions

Themes	Codes	f
Distance education experiences of faculty members	Contribution to Education	152
	Participation	28
	Experience	33
	Effective Teaching	137
	Course Design	114
	Learners	14
	Faculty Member	27
Educational problems	Pedagogy	419
	Participation	185
	Institutional Issues	45
Technical problems experienced by faculty members	Number of Participants	20
	Content, voice and camera sharing	65
	Technical Issues	180

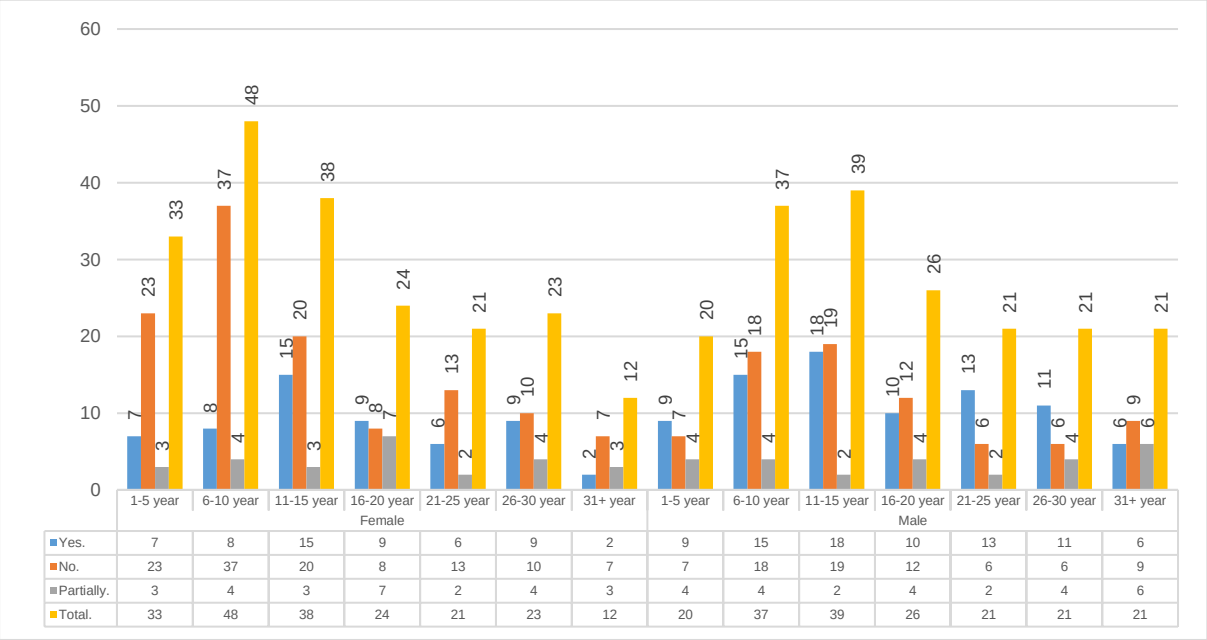
Findings

In this section, the findings derived from the data are presented in order according to the research questions.

Faculty Members' Experience with Distance Education Before and During the Emergency Remote Teaching Process

The majority of participants had not taught via distance education prior to the pandemic. A total of 192 participants (50 %) reported no experience teaching distance education, while 138 participants (35.9%) had taught via distance education, and 56 participants (14.5%) had partially taught via distance education. Additionally, 44.3% (n=82) of male participants and 30.2% (n=56) of female participants had experience teaching distance education (See Figure 3).

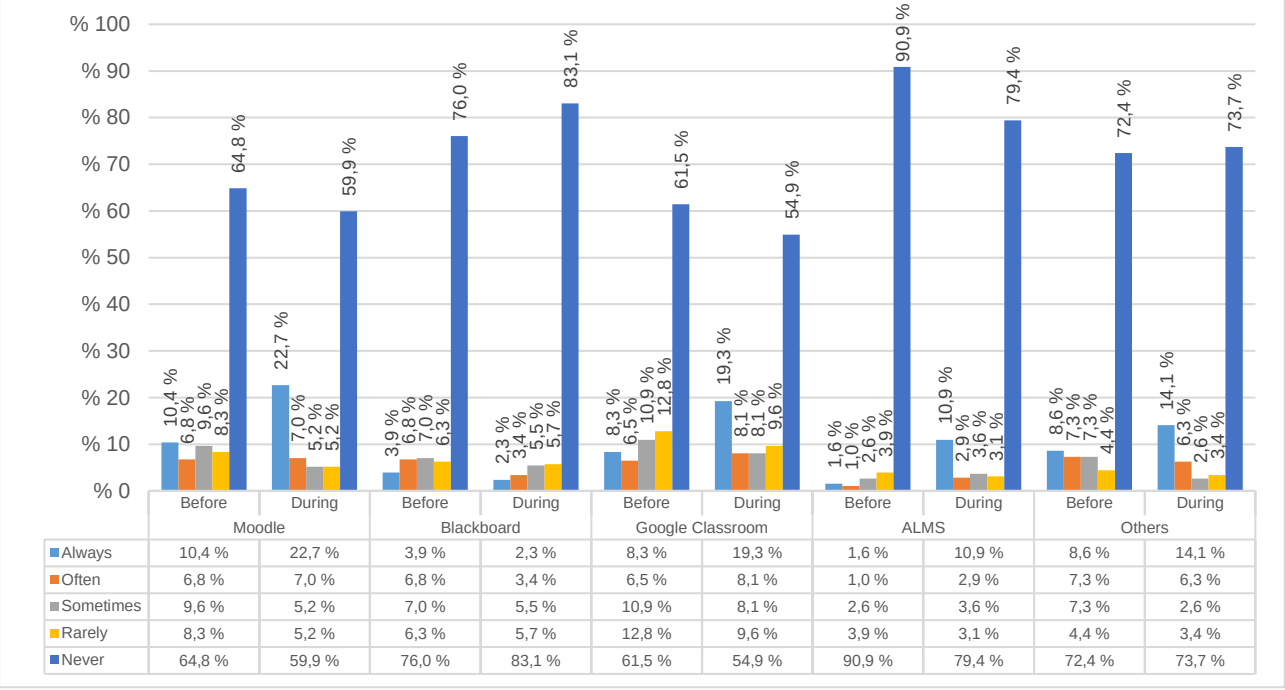
Figure 3. Distribution of Participants by Distance Education Experience, Gender, and Working Experience in Higher Education Institutions



	Female							Male						
	1-5 year	6-10 year	11-15 year	16-20 year	21-25 year	26-30 year	31+ year	1-5 year	6-10 year	11-15 year	16-20 year	21-25 year	26-30 year	31+ year
Yes.	7	8	15	9	6	9	2	9	15	18	10	13	11	6
No.	23	37	20	8	13	10	7	7	18	19	12	6	6	9
Partially.	3	4	3	7	2	4	3	4	4	2	4	2	4	6
Total.	33	48	38	24	21	23	12	20	37	39	26	21	21	21

The majority of participants reported using various Learning Management Systems (LMS) prior to the pandemic, with the following distribution: Moodle (35.1%), Blackboard (24,0%), Google Classroom (38.5%), ALMS (9.1%), and others (27.6%). During the emergency remote teaching period, the most commonly used LMS were Moodle (39.7%) and Google Classroom (27.3%). Despite an increase in LMS usage during the pandemic compared to the pre-pandemic period, the data show that, overall, the majority of participants did not use any LMS during the pandemic (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Distribution of Participants by LMS Experience

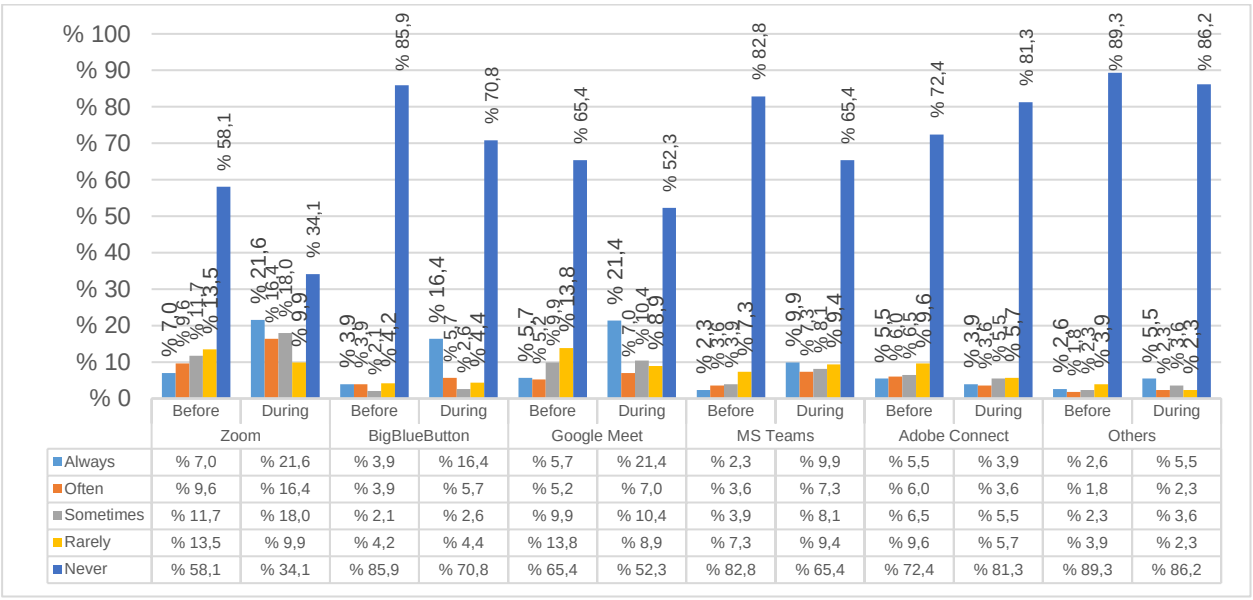


	Moodle		Blackboard		Google Classroom		ALMS		Others	
	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During
Always	10,4 %	22,7 %	3,9 %	2,3 %	8,3 %	19,3 %	1,6 %	10,9 %	8,6 %	14,1 %
Often	6,8 %	7,0 %	6,8 %	3,4 %	6,5 %	8,1 %	1,0 %	2,9 %	7,3 %	6,3 %
Sometimes	9,6 %	5,2 %	7,0 %	5,5 %	10,9 %	8,1 %	2,6 %	3,6 %	7,3 %	2,6 %
Rarely	8,3 %	5,2 %	6,3 %	5,7 %	12,8 %	9,6 %	3,9 %	3,1 %	4,4 %	3,4 %
Never	64,8 %	59,9 %	76,0 %	83,1 %	61,5 %	54,9 %	90,9 %	79,4 %	72,4 %	73,7 %

Most participants reported never using video conferencing tools before the pandemic, with the following percentages: Zoom (58.1%), BigBlue Button (85.9%), Google Meet (65.4%), MS Teams (82.8%), and

Adobe Connect (72.4%). However, compared to the pre-pandemic period, the use of video conferencing tools increased during the pandemic. The most notable increases were observed in Zoom (65.9%), BigBlue Button (29.2%), Google Meet (47.7%), and MS Teams (34.6%) (See Figure5).

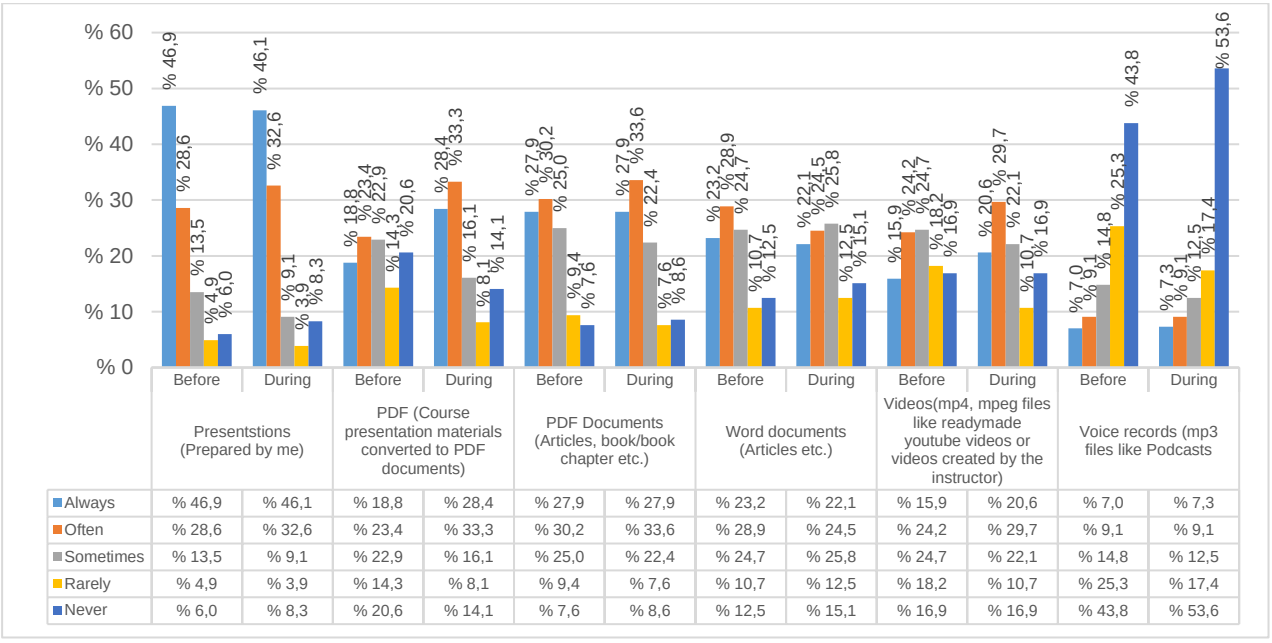
Figure 5. Distribution of Participants by Video Conferencing Tool Experience



	Zoom		BigBlueButton		Google Meet		MS Teams		Adobe Connect		Others	
	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During
Always	% 7,0	% 21,6	% 3,9	% 16,4	% 5,7	% 21,4	% 2,3	% 9,9	% 5,5	% 3,9	% 2,6	% 5,5
Often	% 9,6	% 16,4	% 3,9	% 5,7	% 5,2	% 7,0	% 3,6	% 7,3	% 6,0	% 3,6	% 1,8	% 2,3
Sometimes	% 11,7	% 18,0	% 2,1	% 2,6	% 9,9	% 10,4	% 3,9	% 8,1	% 6,5	% 5,5	% 2,3	% 3,6
Rarely	% 13,5	% 9,9	% 4,2	% 4,4	% 13,8	% 8,9	% 7,3	% 9,4	% 9,6	% 5,7	% 3,9	% 2,3
Never	% 58,1	% 34,1	% 85,9	% 70,8	% 65,4	% 52,3	% 82,8	% 65,4	% 72,4	% 81,3	% 89,3	% 86,2

Data from the pandemic period indicate that while frequencies of faculty members' video usage increased, they still predominantly preferred to use PDF files as printed materials both before and after the pandemic (See Figure 6).

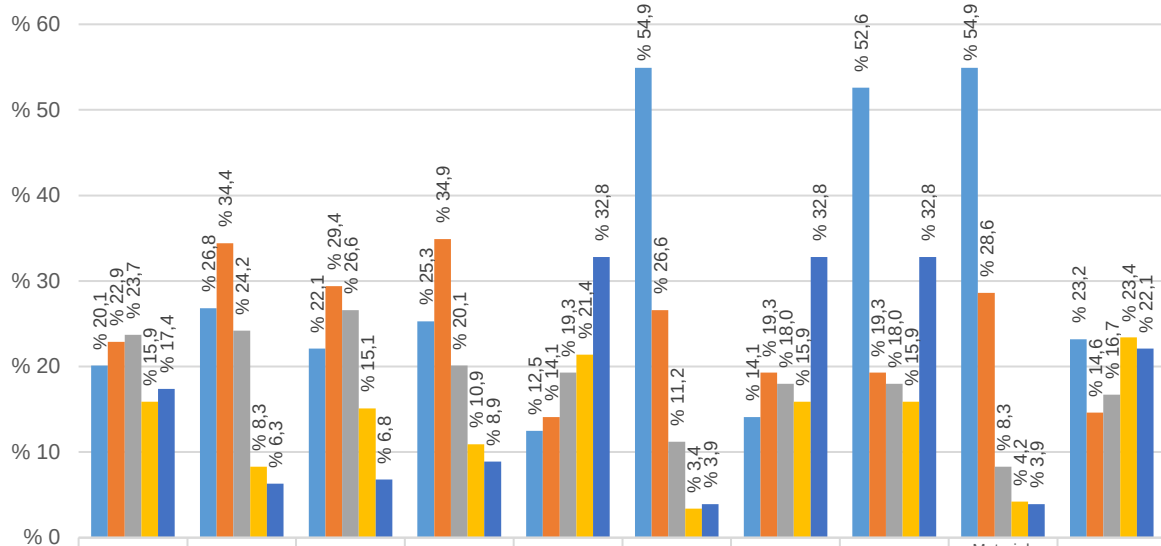
Figure 6. Distribution of Preferred Material Types by Participants



	Presentstions (Prepared by me)		PDF (Course presentation materials converted to PDF documents)		PDF Documents (Articles, book/book chapter etc.)		Word documents (Articles etc.)		Videos(mp4, mpeg files like readymade youtube videos or videos created by the instructor)		Voice records (mp3 files like Podcasts	
	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During	Before	During
Always	% 46,9	% 46,1	% 18,8	% 28,4	% 27,9	% 27,9	% 23,2	% 22,1	% 15,9	% 20,6	% 7,0	% 7,3
Often	% 28,6	% 32,6	% 23,4	% 33,3	% 30,2	% 33,6	% 28,9	% 24,5	% 24,2	% 29,7	% 9,1	% 9,1
Sometimes	% 13,5	% 9,1	% 22,9	% 16,1	% 25,0	% 22,4	% 24,7	% 25,8	% 24,7	% 22,1	% 14,8	% 12,5
Rarely	% 4,9	% 3,9	% 14,3	% 8,1	% 9,4	% 7,6	% 10,7	% 12,5	% 18,2	% 10,7	% 25,3	% 17,4
Never	% 6,0	% 8,3	% 20,6	% 14,1	% 7,6	% 8,6	% 12,5	% 15,1	% 16,9	% 16,9	% 43,8	% 53,6

Participants in the online lessons reported frequent use of various features of the videoconferencing tool, including verbal discussions (82.6%), verbal question-and-answer activities (93.7%), chat messages (93.2%), question-and-answer in the chat (91.1%), screen sharing with students (96.1%), camera sharing (96.1%), and material uploads (96.1%) (See Figure 7).

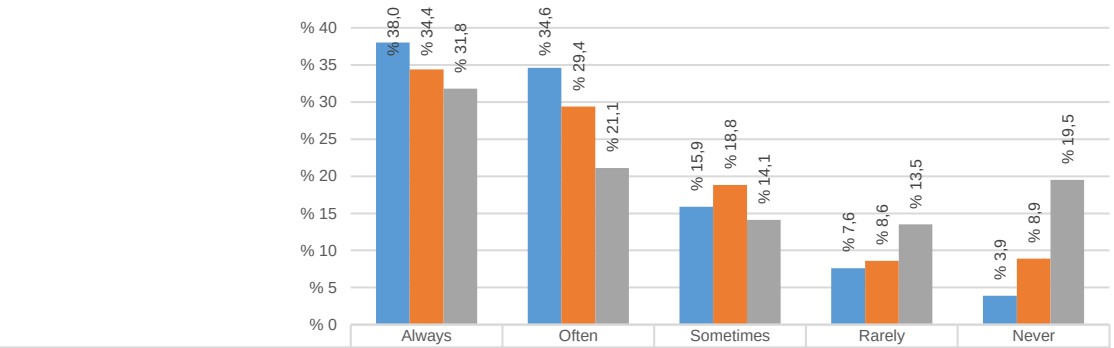
Figure 7. Distribution of Participants by Frequency of Using Videoconferencing Features in Live Classes during the Distance Education Process in the Pandemic Period



	Verbal discussion	Question and answer (Verbal)	Chat messages	Question and answer in chat messages	Hand raise (by students)	Screen share (with students)	Screen share (by students)	Camera share	Material upload (Like presentation, picture, graph etc.)	Microphone share (Only voice sharing)
Always	% 20,1	% 26,8	% 22,1	% 25,3	% 12,5	% 54,9	% 14,1	% 52,6	% 54,9	% 23,2
Often	% 22,9	% 34,4	% 29,4	% 34,9	% 14,1	% 26,6	% 19,3	% 19,3	% 28,6	% 14,6
Sometimes	% 23,7	% 24,2	% 26,6	% 20,1	% 19,3	% 11,2	% 18,0	% 18,0	% 8,3	% 16,7
Rarely	% 15,9	% 8,3	% 15,1	% 10,9	% 21,4	% 3,4	% 15,9	% 15,9	% 4,2	% 23,4
Never	% 17,4	% 6,3	% 6,8	% 8,9	% 32,8	% 3,9	% 32,8	% 32,8	% 3,9	% 22,1

Participants reported frequent use of email (96.1%), Learning Management System (LMS) messaging (91.1%), and WhatsApp messaging (80.5%) to communicate with students (See Figure 8).

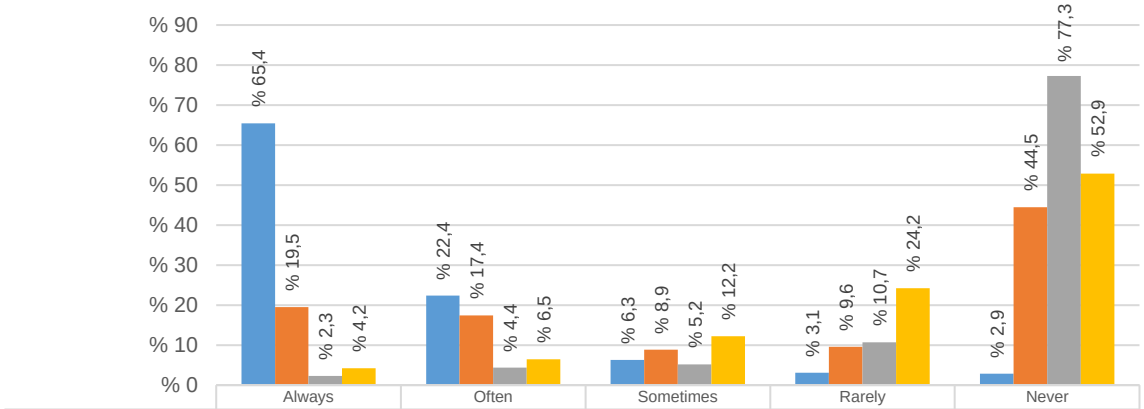
Figure 8. Distribution of Messaging Tools Preferred by Participants during the Distance Education Process in the Pandemic Period



	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
E-mail	% 38,0	% 34,6	% 15,9	% 7,6	% 3,9
Learning Management System (LMS) messaging	% 34,4	% 29,4	% 18,8	% 8,6	% 8,9
WhatsApp messaging	% 31,8	% 21,1	% 14,1	% 13,5	% 19,5

Participants generally preferred to use laptop computers (97.1%) during online lessons. However, the majority of participants did not prefer using desktop computers (44.5%), tablets (77.3%), or smartphones (52.9%) for their online lessons (See Figure 9).

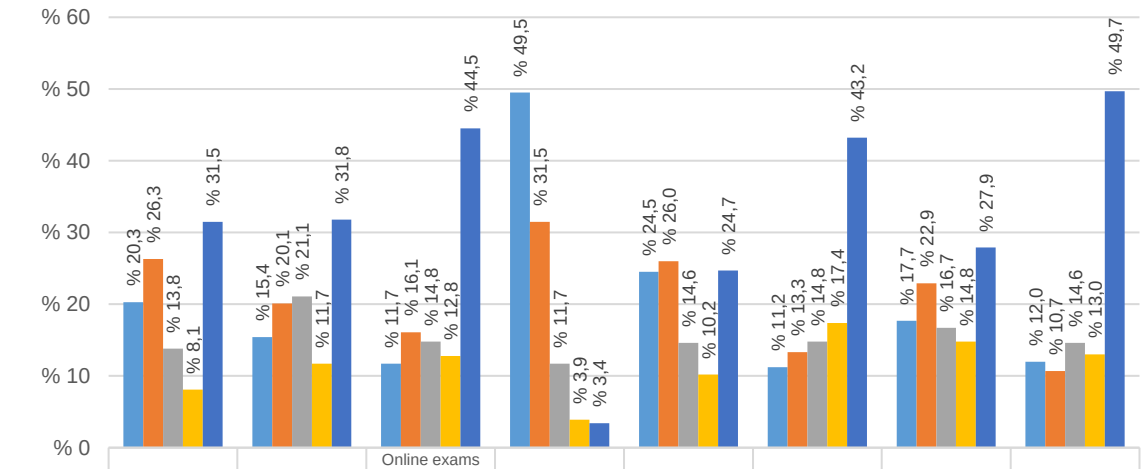
Figure 9. Distribution of Devices Preferred by Participants during The Distance Education Process in the Pandemic Period



	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Portable/Laptop Computer	% 65,4	% 22,4	% 6,3	% 3,1	% 2,9
Desktop Computer	% 19,5	% 17,4	% 8,9	% 9,6	% 44,5
Tablet	% 2,3	% 4,4	% 5,2	% 10,7	% 77,3
SmartPhone	% 4,2	% 6,5	% 12,2	% 24,2	% 52,9

Participants preferred project work (75.3%) and homework (96.6%) as evaluation methods during the ERT process. However, they were generally involved in evaluating their participation in multiple-choice online exams (68.2%), online exams with open-ended questions (68.5%), online exams combining open-ended and multiple-choice questions (55.5%), quizzes (56.8%), and participation in forums (50.3%) (See Figure 10).

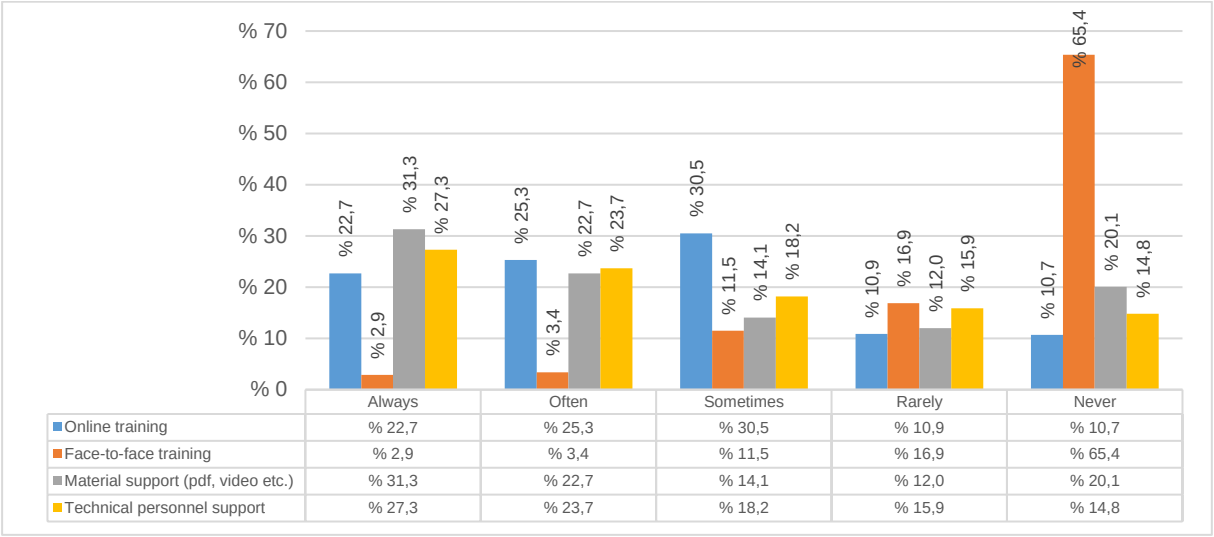
Figure 10. Distribution of Evaluation Methods Preferred by Participants during the Distance Education Process in the Pandemic Period



	Online exams with multiple-choice questions	Online exams with open-ended questions	Online exams consisting of both open-ended and multiple choice questions	Homeworks	Project works	Quizzes	Attendance to live courses	Participation in forums
Always	% 20,3	% 15,4	% 11,7	% 49,5	% 24,5	% 11,2	% 17,7	% 12,0
Often	% 26,3	% 20,1	% 16,1	% 31,5	% 26,0	% 13,3	% 22,9	% 10,7
Sometimes	% 13,8	% 21,1	% 14,8	% 11,7	% 14,6	% 14,8	% 16,7	% 14,6
Rarely	% 8,1	% 11,7	% 12,8	% 3,9	% 10,2	% 17,4	% 14,8	% 13,0
Never	% 31,5	% 31,8	% 44,5	% 3,4	% 24,7	% 43,2	% 27,9	% 49,7

Higher education institutions generally preferred not to provide material support such as PDFs, videos etc. (79.9%), technical personnel support (85.2%) and online training (89.3%) as well as face-to-face training (34.6%) (See Figure 11).

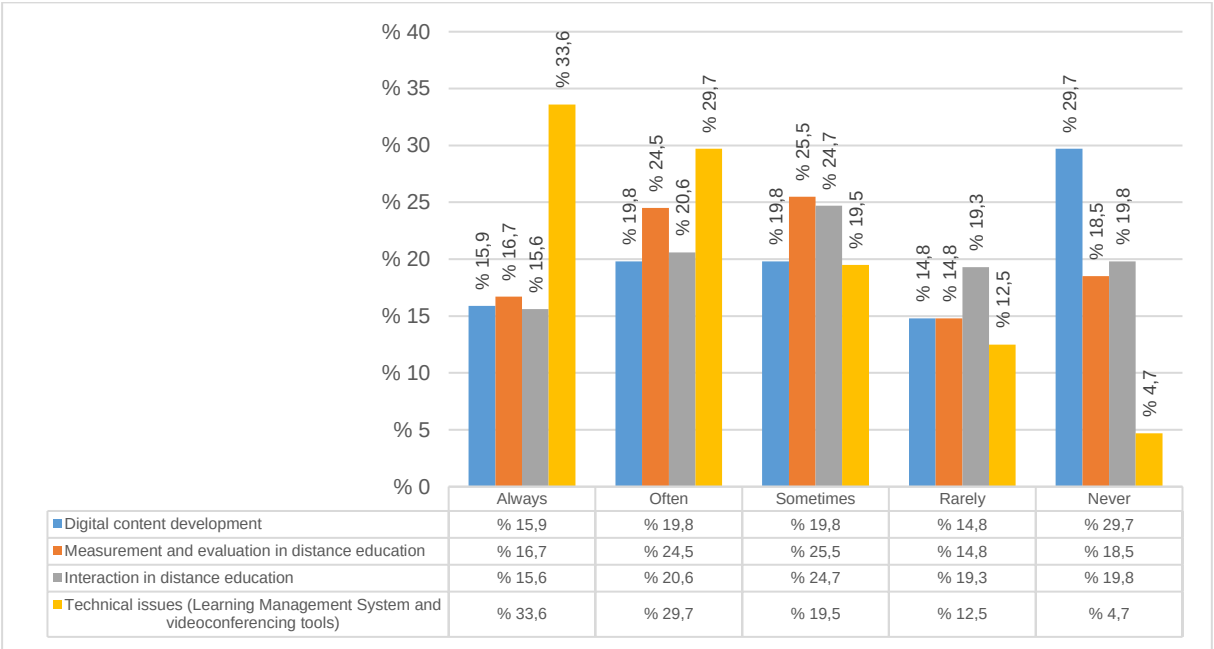
Figure 11. Distribution of Support Provided to Participants by Institutions during the Distance Education Process in the Pandemic Period



	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Online training	% 22,7	% 25,3	% 30,5	% 10,9	% 10,7
Face-to-face training	% 2,9	% 3,4	% 11,5	% 16,9	% 65,4
Material support (pdf, video etc.)	% 31,3	% 22,7	% 14,1	% 12,0	% 20,1
Technical personnel support	% 27,3	% 23,7	% 18,2	% 15,9	% 14,8

Most institutions did provide support for digital content development (70.3%), measurement and evaluation methods in distance education (81.5%), interaction in distance education (80.2%) and technical support (95.3%) (See Figure12).

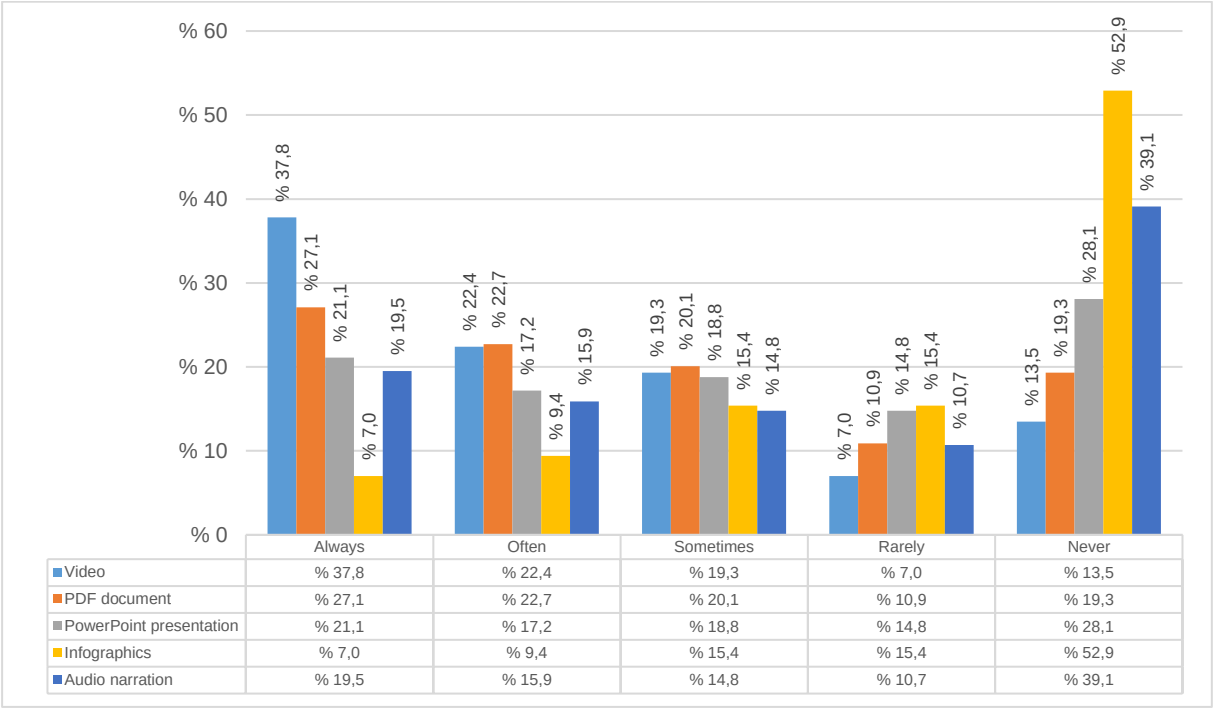
Figure 12. Distribution of Support Issues Provided to Participants by Institutions during the Distance Education Process in the Pandemic Period



	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Digital content development	% 15,9	% 19,8	% 19,8	% 14,8	% 29,7
Measurement and evaluation in distance education	% 16,7	% 24,5	% 25,5	% 14,8	% 18,5
Interaction in distance education	% 15,6	% 20,6	% 24,7	% 19,3	% 19,8
Technical issues (Learning Management System and videoconferencing tools)	% 33,6	% 29,7	% 19,5	% 12,5	% 4,7

The majority of institutions generally preferred to prepare supplementary materials such as videos (86.5%) and PDF documents (80.7%) (See Figure 13).

Figure13. Distribution of Supplementary Material Types Prepared by Institutions during the Distance Education Process in the Pandemic Period



	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Video	% 37,8	% 22,4	% 19,3	% 7,0	% 13,5
PDF document	% 27,1	% 22,7	% 20,1	% 10,9	% 19,3
PowerPoint presentation	% 21,1	% 17,2	% 18,8	% 14,8	% 28,1
Infographics	% 7,0	% 9,4	% 15,4	% 15,4	% 52,9
Audio narration	% 19,5	% 15,9	% 14,8	% 10,7	% 39,1

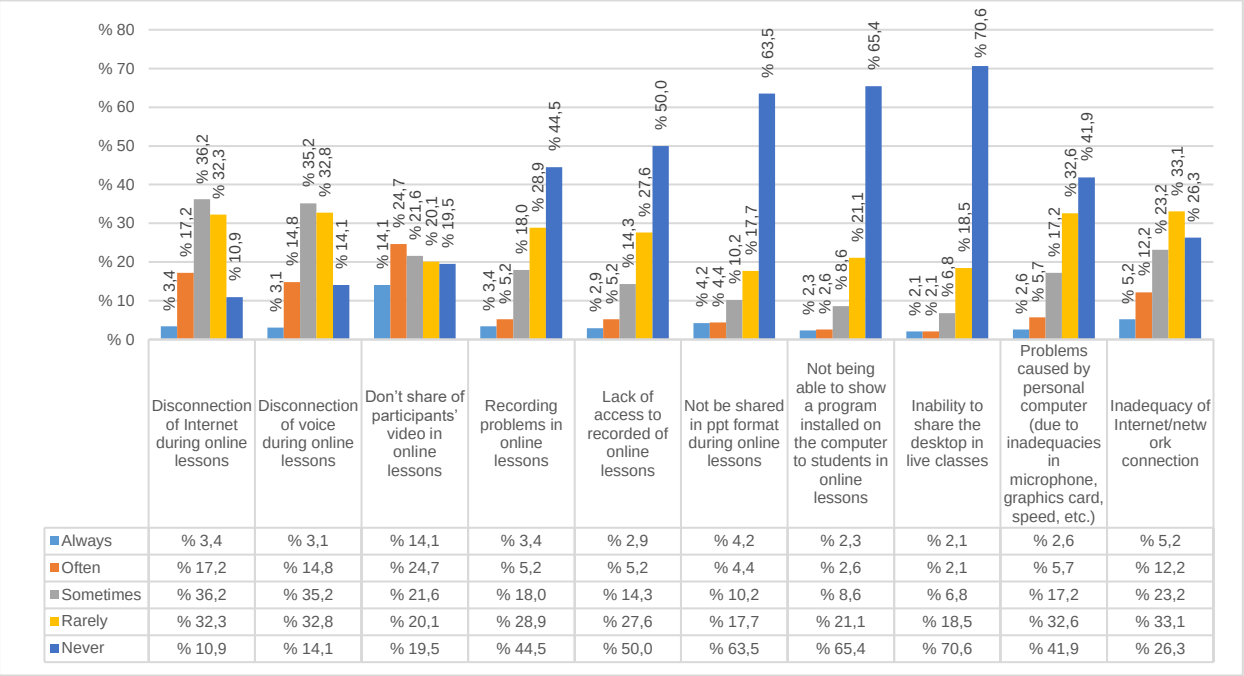
Although inexperienced faculty members initially faced challenges with technology use, content development, classroom management, time management, ensuring participation, and evaluation processes, they were able to find solutions as they gained experience. Some participants shared their experiences and reflected on how these would influence their future teaching, as seen in the following quotes:

> *P149: I already have a lot of experience. With excellent time and process management, I am confident that I will continue providing my students with the best possible education.*
>
> *P312: I believe that it will be easier for me and more efficient for students thanks to the features of the system used and what I learned during the digital course material development process. I also plan to continue using the distance education infrastructure in my lessons after the pandemic ends*

The Technical Challenges Experienced by Faculty Members During the Emergency Remote Teaching Process

Online learning environments are a preferred educational option for individuals who are unable to attend face-to-face education for various reasons. These learners are typically individuals who strive to learn according to their own preferences and have the necessary infrastructure and technology to access courses. However, it is unreasonable to expect that inexperienced learners and instructors who are suddenly shifted from face-to-face education to ERT will immediately adapt to online courses . As a result, both learners and faculty members faced more technical problems during the ERT period. According to the collected data, the majority of participants experienced technical issues related to internet disconnection (89.1%) and loss of sound (85.9%). Additionally, participants not sharing videos (80.5%) was also reported as a technical problem (See Figure14).

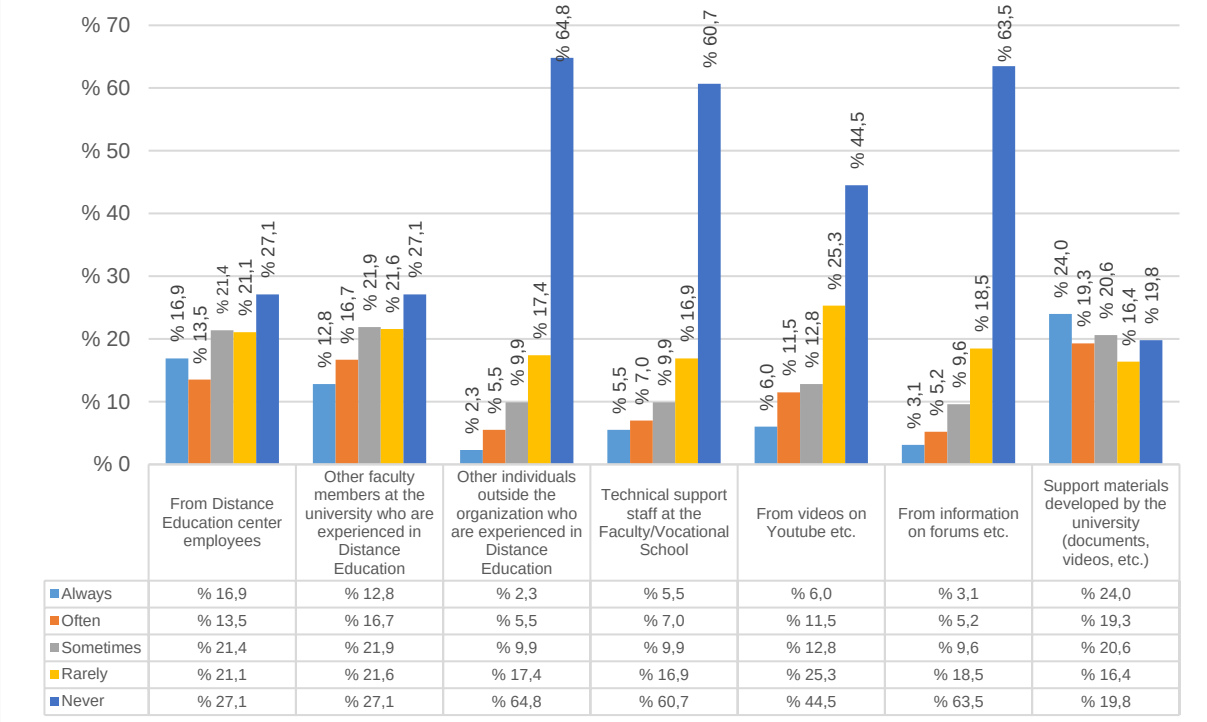
Figure 14. Distribution of Technical Problems Encountered in the ERT



	Disconnection of Internet during online lessons	Disconnection of voice during online lessons	Don't share of participants' video in online lessons	Recording problems in online lessons	Lack of access to recorded of online lessons	Not be shared in ppt format during online lessons	Not being able to show a program installed on the computer to students in online lessons	Inability to share the desktop in live classes	Problems caused by personal computer (due to inadequacies in microphone, graphics card, speed, etc.)	Inadequacy of Internet/network connection
Always	% 3,4	% 3,1	% 14,1	% 3,4	% 2,9	% 4,2	% 2,3	% 2,1	% 2,6	% 5,2
Often	% 17,2	% 14,8	% 24,7	% 5,2	% 5,2	% 4,4	% 2,6	% 2,1	% 5,7	% 12,2
Sometimes	% 36,2	% 35,2	% 21,6	% 18,0	% 14,3	% 10,2	% 8,6	% 6,8	% 17,2	% 23,2
Rarely	% 32,3	% 32,8	% 20,1	% 28,9	% 27,6	% 17,7	% 21,1	% 18,5	% 32,6	% 33,1
Never	% 10,9	% 14,1	% 19,5	% 44,5	% 50,0	% 63,5	% 65,4	% 70,6	% 41,9	% 26,3

The majority of participants preferred not to receive support from individuals or institutions during the distance education process (Figure 15). However, 80.2% of participants used support materials developed by the university, 72.9% received technical support from distance education center employees, 72.9% received assistance from more experienced faculty members at the university, and 39.3% received support from the technical support staff at the faculty. Additionally, 35.2% of participants received support from individuals outside the organization, 55.5% received support from video platforms such as YouTube, and 36.5% received support from forums.

Figure 15. Distribution of Technical Support Types in the ERT



	From Distance Education center employees	Other faculty members at the university who are experienced in Distance Education	Other individuals outside the organization who are experienced in Distance Education	Technical support staff at the Faculty/Vocational School	From videos on Youtube etc.	From information on forums etc.	Support materials developed by the university (documents, videos, etc.)
Always	% 16,9	% 12,8	% 2,3	% 5,5	% 6,0	% 3,1	% 24,0
Often	% 13,5	% 16,7	% 5,5	% 7,0	% 11,5	% 5,2	% 19,3
Sometimes	% 21,4	% 21,9	% 9,9	% 9,9	% 12,8	% 9,6	% 20,6
Rarely	% 21,1	% 21,6	% 17,4	% 16,9	% 25,3	% 18,5	% 16,4
Never	% 27,1	% 27,1	% 64,8	% 60,7	% 44,5	% 63,5	% 19,8

In addition to these issues, internet connection problems, lack of hardware, and system issues due to the number of classes were mentioned as technical problems in the open-ended questions. Some of these are presented in the following quotes:

> *P6: "Lack of student participation, internet connection problems, and inadequate hardware in existing computers."*
>
> *P14: "Internet connection problems during online lessons."*
>
> *P33: "The system crashed, and students were disconnected from the class. I didn't realize this, so I kept talking for about 10 minutes."*
>
> *P41: "If there are too many classes running simultaneously in the system, it becomes impossible to log in…"*

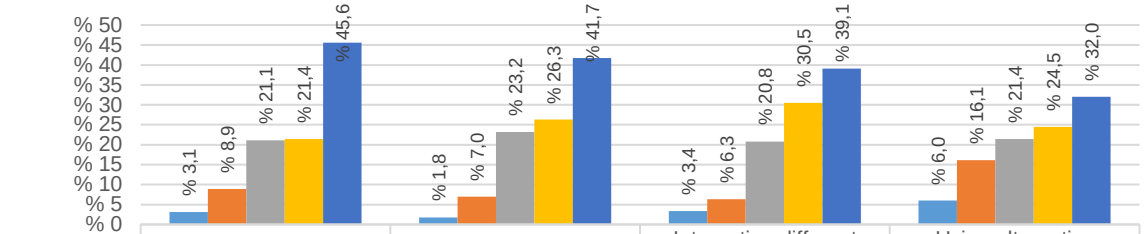
Additionally, issues with camera and sound control were mentioned, leading to unintended reflections of conversations and views in the online lesson environment, as shown in the following quotes:

> *P350: "Students forgetting to turn on their cameras or leaving their microphones on and making up songs about the lesson topic… this happened twice."*
>
> *P333: "An earthquake occurred while I was lecturing. My students, who were not in nearby cities, could see the situation on camera, and I could hear from their words that they were worried about me."*
>
> *The importance of institutional support in overcoming these technical issues was also highlighted, as in the following quote:*
>
> *P349: "Connection continuity is not ensured. For example, on the user-friendly Zoom platform, individual use is limited to 40 minutes for an online lesson. The institution should create premium accounts for all lecturers on Zoom.*

Educational and Pedagogical Challenges Faced by Faculty Members During the Emergency Remote Teaching Process

The majority of participants stated that they did not encounter educational problems during the ERT process (See Figure 16). According to the collected data, 60.9% of participants mentioned challenges in integrating different components, such as forums within the LMS, into their courses. Additionally, 68.0% of participants reported difficulties in using alternative assessment and evaluation methods for distance education, 58.3% mentioned challenges with managing online lessons, and 54.4% faced problems when converting existing courses into digital formats during the ERT process.

Table 16. Distribution of Educational and Teaching-Related Problems in the ERT Process during the Pandemic Period



	Converting existing course content into digital format	Management of online lessons	Integrating different components (forums, etc.) of the LMS into the courses	Using alternative assessment and evaluation methods for distance education
Always	% 3,1	% 1,8	% 3,4	% 6,0
Often	% 8,9	% 7,0	% 6,3	% 16,1
Sometimes	% 21,1	% 23,2	% 20,8	% 21,4
Rarely	% 21,4	% 26,3	% 30,5	% 24,5
Never	% 45,6	% 41,7	% 39,1	% 32,0

Faculty members frequently emphasized the lack of interaction and low participation from learners in online courses. Factors influencing student participation included their inability to access technology and the non-compulsory nature of attendance. Common interaction types between learners and instructors included providing immediate feedback, asking students questions, and answering students' queries, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

P42: "Limited instant interaction, no eye contact."

P128: "Lack of sincerity, insufficient monitoring of participation..."

P330: "Providing students with the opportunity to explain important information and give verbal feedback."

P234: "To be able to ask questions to students, view student responses statistically, and share them with students."

The process of lecturing and classroom management in an online environment differs from traditional teaching environment. In a classroom, instructors have the advantage of face-to-face communication, while in an online environment, faculty members pointed out that they cannot observe students unless learners turn on their cameras. However, some students keep their cameras off to protect their personal privacy. Some participants noted the difficulties of interaction between the learner and instructor during the ERT process, as in the following quotes:

P32: "We don't know if students are participating or not, as they don't turn on their cameras."

P124: "Faculty members cannot understand students' reactions because they cannot see their faces."

In online lessons, surrounding voices and people may inadvertently become part of the lesson. Sometimes, individuals who are not registered students may listen in. Some participants described this issue as follows:

P12: "My student listened to my lesson on Agricultural Practices with producers in his village. 'It was very useful' he said."

P25: "A student's frustration when his mother gets angry during class, and a question is answered by the student's family. We only knew we had a registered student, but the whole family was listening to us."

Moreover, some participants mentioned the inability to observe students' reactions unless they turn on their cameras, as seen in these quotes:

P32: "We don't know if students are participating or not, as they don't turn on their cameras."

P124: "Faculty members cannot understand students' reactions because they cannot see their faces."

It was also emphasized that learning management systems (LMS) should meet the needs of both instructors and students, ensuring that learners can actively use camera and audio features. One participant shared their approach to engaging students during online lessons:

P12: "As an online lesson, this semester I ensure that students participate one-on-one, just like in face-to-face lessons. I try to keep their interest alive by asking them questions after each topic."

In online learning environments, student satisfaction with the course, environment, and method significantly influences participation. As one participant noted:

P278: "I think it is an effective experience for students... Students who want to learn can actively participate in lessons, while those with attendance issues can watch recorded lessons."

In courses with large numbers of learners, multiple-choice questions commonly used in traditional teaching environments can be favored in the evaluation process. However, evaluating both the process and the product during online education is crucial for teaching effectiveness. One participant pointed out that learning analytics and objective evaluation are advantages of online education, but this requires instructors to spend as much time on learner evaluation as they do on content preparation:

P191: "Monitor learning analytics and objective evaluation."

Some participants also highlighted security concerns related to online exams as challenges during the ERT process. Security measures must be implemented in online exams, and assessment methods that focus on both process and product should be prioritized over traditional methods where learners can share answers with others. The following two quotes reflect concerns about security issues:

P287: "...the possibility of cheating in exams."

P386: "Inadequate student participation and students receiving help from other sources during exams."

Furthermore, participants acknowledged that the structure of each lesson requires different types of activities based on the subject matter. Online content aligned with course outcomes should be accessible 24/7, regardless of location, and activities that promote active participation should be organized. Some participants mentioned that the ERT process gave them the opportunity to develop course materials and content:

P136: "...To be able to share applications in which I can ensure active participation of students. Especially when the assignments were anonymous, the incorrect or incomplete concepts in students' minds were directly revealed. I had the chance to correct them easily."

P237: "I had the opportunity to review my content. It was enjoyable for me to use Web 2.0 tools more actively and update my content using these tools."

P379: "In addition to the subject, many different types of materials can be easily shared with students."

Institutional support in transitioning to the ERT became a critical factor. Poor planning and a lack of sufficient human resources were identified as key reasons for the inadequate support provided to faculty members in preparing training and content:

P21: "Students cannot adapt to online lessons. The quality of education can suffer if it is always assumed that only the students need to be satisfied."

Additionally, participants mentioned that their distance education experience during the pandemic would enable them to better plan future distance teaching. However, it was also emphasized that necessary measures, especially regarding class attendance and lesson records, should be taken by the administration. One participant shared their future plans and expectations from the institution:

P388: "I had distance education experience before the pandemic. During the pandemic, I had different experiences. In the next semester, if the institution permits, I would not keep records of online lessons. This would encourage students to act more responsibly and listen to lessons

carefully on time. I would change the grading system, giving more weight to class participation. I would make it compulsory to turn on cameras during online lessons and make students participate more through short presentations. Of course, my institution would have to allow all of this!"

In summary, although most participants used systems like LMS and videoconferencing before the COVID-19 pandemic, they stated they were not experienced in distance education. Additionally, they relied on printed materials rather than audiovisual content prior to the pandemic. After the onset of COVID-19, most faculty members began using videos, interactive assessment methods, and animations, alongside printed materials. However, they reported that their institutions did not provide support for content development. The majority of participants, who used personal computers and internet access, did not receive online or face-to-face training from their institutions. Furthermore, most participants did not receive institutional support for digital content development, assessment methods, interaction, or technical assistance. While the majority stated they did not face major issues with distance education systems, some encountered problems related to internet connectivity, sound, and personal computers.

Discussion

The global disruption to education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has brought education systems around the world to a standstill, affecting more than 1.6 billion students due to school closures. While nearly every country offers distance learning opportunities, the quality and accessibility of these initiatives have varied significantly (Azevedo et al., 2021). In many regions, online resources and free television or radio programs have been launched at an unprecedented pace to enable remote access to educational content (ECLAC-UNESCO, 2020). However, the availability of technology does not necessarily mean that faculty members were prepared for ERT. Since different pedagogical approaches are essential for distance education, faculty readiness has posed another challenge for higher education institutions (Bilgiç, 2021; IAU, 2020). Institutions that had already integrated technology into their teaching before the pandemic had a clear advantage over those that had not (ILO, 2020). Consequently, the readiness of faculty and instructors is a crucial factor in successfully adapting to distance teaching.

This study examines the readiness of faculty members at higher education institutions in Türkiye and how they adapted to the ERT process. According to data from higher education institutions across the European Higher Education Area, which includes 38 countries, only 58% of respondents reported having a response plan in place (Rumbley, 2020). In Türkiye, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) led institutions to rapidly transition to distance education, utilizing their available resources. Institutions with a history of offering distance education programs were able to adapt more smoothly (Bilgiç, 2021). However, some institutions were unable to implement distance education for several weeks (Keskin et al., 2022). The study revealed that many faculty members lacked prior distance teaching experience, and before the pandemic, some did not use learning management systems (LMS) or video conferencing tools. During the ERT period, many faculty members were required to use these technologies as part of their teaching process. In the literature, it has been noted that instructors with higher levels of readiness and previous distance teaching experience show greater proficiency in communication, course design, and time management during remote teaching (Bolliger & Halupa, 2021). Additionally, higher education institutions that were already using technology before the pandemic were better prepared for the transition to remote learning (ILO, 2020). As such, institutions should focus on equipping faculty members with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective online teaching.

On the other hand, despite the initial challenges, they found that distance education allowed them to maintain a connection with students in a healthy way. Furthermore, many participants expressed an intention to continue using LMS, digital materials, and alternative assessment methods in their future teaching. These findings suggest that faculty members became more confident with various learning platforms and teaching tools through their distance education experience during the pandemic.

Moreover, the ERT period accelerated the adoption of online learning environments into the higher education and highlighted the importance of being ready to teach and learn with alternative digital technologies (Fernandez-Batanero et al. 2022; Reyes-Millan et al., 2023). Post-pandemic, faculty should continue to explore alternative teaching methods and technologies for use in both online and face-to-face environments.

Effective distance education occurs when content is delivered using appropriate teaching methods and technological tools. The variety of content available in online environments allows learners to personalize their educational experience according to their preferences and learning styles. However, the experience and preparedness of instructors who design and deliver this content are equally important. Using content developed for in-person teaching in an online format can reduce interaction and engagement in the course. Furthermore, the study by Hayat et al. (2021) found that instructors needed more time to update and adapt their content for distance education compared to face-to-face teaching. Many participants reported difficulties in converting existing course materials into digital formats. Bilgiç, Doğan and Seferoğlu (2011) also highlighted that instructors often require support in developing digital content for distance education courses. In the literature, the need for proper training of teachers to effectively handle online classes was identified as one of the key issues that impacted students during the pandemic (Upadhyaya, Saha, & Dutta Pramanik, 2025). While many faculty members had basic computer skills, they needed further training in online teaching pedagogies and digital content development standards. The study also revealed that most institutions focused primarily on providing technical support, while faculty members expressed the need for assistance with content development, assessment methods, and fostering interaction in distance education settings.

In line with the literature, instructors identified Web 2.0 tools, online instructional design, and distance education methods as areas where they needed further support (Korkmaz & Aydın, 2023). Therefore, higher education institutions should not only address technical issues but also offer training in online pedagogies, instructional design, and integration of digital tools. Yavuz et al. (2024) recommend that faculty members be supported with training and certification in teaching methods, digital content development, assessment techniques, digital literacy, and the unique aspects of distance education. Such support should be offered at various levels to ensure comprehensive faculty development.

The study also found that while inexperienced faculty initially faced challenges in using technology, content development, classroom management, time management, student participation, and assessment, they were able to find solutions as they gained more experience. This suggests that experience is a key factor in adapting to distance teaching. Some participants also mentioned that the ERT period provided an opportunity to enhance their course materials and content. Thus, it is important for the faculty to have opportunities to gain experience with alternative teaching methods.

Collaboration and support from higher education institutions' administration are essential for the successful implementation of distance education and for preparing faculty for alternative learning environments (McKay et al., 2022). According to the study by Almahasheer et al. (2022), the technical, pedagogical, and assessment trainings provided by the Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (IAU) Deanship of Academic Development based on needs analyses were found to be aligned with faculty members' work goals during the emergency remote teaching process and enabled participants to successfully apply what they learned in their teaching practice. The instructors' knowledge level and communication skills generated high satisfaction, highlighting the importance of administrative support. In this study, faculty members emphasized the need for administrative support to use LMS and video conferencing tools post-pandemic. They also highlighted the importance of providing the necessary technological infrastructure and regulations. Given the growing importance of distance education in current educational approaches, especially in the post-pandemic era, higher education institutions should develop comprehensive plans to support both instructors and students in utilizing technological advancements for alternative teaching and learning methods.

Conclusion and Recommendations

During the pandemic, higher education institutions and policymakers faced the challenge of ensuring the continuity of education through alternative teaching methods. Both faculty members and students were introduced to new methods, technological tools, and platforms for teaching and learning. Online distance education emerged as an alternative means of education, primarily due to students' inability to attend face-to-face classes for various reasons. As a result, learners attended online courses according to their preferences, provided that they had access to the necessary infrastructure and technology. Faculty members, for the most part, were ready to teach online and were supported by administrative units.

However, the ERT implemented during the pandemic was not a choice but an obligation to transition of face-to-face education to online platforms. This shift applied to both faculty members and students. Institutions began offering distance education, based on their existing capabilities, infrastructure, and the readiness of faculty and students. As a result, higher education institutions that had already integrated technology into their teaching before the pandemic had a comparative advantage over those that had not. While it was crucial for institutions to provide the necessary technical infrastructure for online distance education, it was equally important to support faculty members in adapting to the new teaching environment.

It should be noted that it is unreasonable to expect inexperienced faculty and students—who suddenly transitioned from face-to-face education to the ERT—to adapt to online courses immediately. As a result, both faculty and students encountered various challenges during this period. Many faculty members faced technical issues such as internet disconnections and sound problems during live sessions. Other common challenges included integrating different components of the Learning Management System (LMS) into courses, using alternative assessment and evaluation methods, managing online lessons, and converting traditional face-to-face course materials into digital formats. Additionally, the need for administrative support was highlighted as a critical factor in helping faculty members use technology and alternative teaching methods effectively.

Despite these challenges, faculty members gained valuable experience in teaching in alternative environments. Over time, as they became more familiar with online teaching, they found solutions to many of the issues they faced. This suggests that experience is a key factor in helping faculty members adjust to alternative teaching methods. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that higher education institutions incorporate alternative teaching methods into their curricula to better prepare faculty and students for future educational challenges.

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Dilek Doğan: Conceptualization, Methodology, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. Hatice Gökçe Bilgiç: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. Sadi Seferoğlu: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Sustainable Development Goals

This study is linked to Quality education (SDG 4).

Data Accessibility Statement

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Ethics and Consent

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles to ensure the dignity, rights, and well-being of voluntary participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all individuals involved. Participants were provided with detailed information about the purpose, procedures, and nature of the study, including their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were prioritized, with all data securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes. The researchers took every precaution to ensure that the study posed no risk to participants and respected their autonomy throughout the process..

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