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Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) Practices from the Perspective of Classroom Teachers Teaching in Disadvantaged Suburban Primary School

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Abstract: The current study aims to determine how emergency remote teaching (ERT) practices were conducted in a disadvantaged suburban public primary school during the COVID -19 pandemic. For this purpose, a disadvantaged suburban public primary school in the Marmara region, Turkey, was selected as a case and an instrumental case study design was chosen for the study. For data collection, in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview form with 10 classroom teachers. In addition, natural observations were conducted by one of the researchers who is also a teacher in the same school. As a result of the thematic analysis, two main themes were identified: "disadvantage experienced by students" and "the consequences of disadvantage." The disadvantage experienced by the students has two different dimensions, social and economic. It was found that these disadvantages lead to different effects on students and teachers. The results of the study show that students face economic disadvantages in purchasing the imperative learning materials to participate in the online course. Parents do not prioritize these materials due to low awareness. Socio-economic disadvantages lead to a digital divide and inequality of opportunity in education.It is clear that school closures will create even greater challenges for disadvantaged students in the future.s. In terms of teachers, these disadvantageous situations cause instructional difficulties such as challenges in planning the teaching process, neglecting the program, effective assessment; and individual difficulties such as anxiety and sadness.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, emergency remote teaching, suburban, public primary school, classroom teacher, disadvantaged learner

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Introduction

Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which emerged in Wuhan, China, has deeply affected the whole world since the beginning of 2020, and turned into a global pandemic in a short period. While the pandemic affects all aspects of life, from social life to communication, there has also been a necessity to take urgent measures in the field of education. In early April of 2020, schools were closed in 188 countries (UNESCO, 2020a) and in many countries, including Turkey, students had to take a break from face-to-face learning for more than three months (TEDMEM, 2020). During the break, a rapid transition to emergency remote teaching (ERT) practices was required to prevent learning loss and ensure continuity of educationensure education. In this process, modern educational systems have faced an unexpected situation. Although the most current educational systems have been already in a digital transformation, remote teaching, which is a necessary outcome of the pandemic, has created a sudden change in the pace of this transformation. With this sudden change, some definitions had to be revised in many areas of education, from learning to teaching methods. In this new period, the concept of remote teaching has also gained a new dimension called emergency remote teaching (ERT) (Bozkurt et al., 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust & Bond, 2020). ERT, defined as the temporary shift of face-to-face education to an alternative instructional mode in time of crisis (Hodges et al., 2020), differs in some subjects (such as design, preparation, structure, instructional materials, student access, learning activities, assessment) from distance education defined in general (Shisley, 2020; YOKAK, 2021). Unlike a planned distance learning process, an unexpected transition to distance learning is a necessity; therefore, there is no opportunity for an adequate preparation and design process. Particularly, in the expression of ERT, the concept of "teaching" is emphasized instead of "education" (Cai & Wang, 2020; Hodges, 2020; Yen, 2020).

To eliminate the adverse effects of the pandemic and to ensure the continuity of education, governments around the world had to take some basic measures. ERT which is one of the common practices, adopted to sustain learning practices during the pandemic. In Turkey, the rapid transformation is observed in the implementation of ERT during the pandemic. Due to the pandemic COVID -19, it was decided to switch to ERT in Turkey on March 23, 2020 as part of the health measures (MDB, 2020c). As the ERT allows a large number of students to learn in online learning environments (Yurdakul, 2005), it can be an alternative way to school during the school closure period. The planned ERT period was decided to ensure continuity of education through the Educational Informatics Network (EBA) and Turkish Radio and Television Corporation TRT-EBA TV (MEB, 2020d). It was aimed that primary, secondary, high school and special education students within the scope of compulsory education would benefit from this service.

Although the measures taken by governments around the world are sufficient to meet the educational needs of the students, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected some disadvantaged groups (Lucas, Nelson & Sims, 2020). It is possible to classify these

groups in terms of their disadvantages,: homeless children, juveniles pushed into crime, working children, children subjected to abuse, refugee children, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (MEB, 2014). The current study, specifically focused on socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

It is suggested that there is a relationship between socio-economic status and school success (Ensminger & Fothergill, 2003; McLoyd, 1998; Le et al., 2019). Socio-economic status is also associated with parental education, parental occupational status, family income, and home resources (Hauser, 1994). Low-income families cannot provide their children with adequate educational opportunities, and therefore school success of their children is adversely affected (McLoyd, 1998). In connection with the socio-economic status, the problem of inequality of opportunity also arises in the COVID-19 pandemic period for students facing significant challenges in accesing technological learning tools in ERT (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020).

Inequality of opportunity in education, actually, is not a new issue. Even before the pandemic, more than 250 million children in many countries were unable to attend compulsory education (UNESCO, 2018), and about 750 million adults were illiterate (UNESCO, 2017a). Moreover, it was estimated that around 387 million primary school-age children worldwide could not acquire basic maths and reading skills (UNESCO, 2017b). With the pandemic, the current educational predicament has been worsened. In other words, the pandemic crisis has affected disadvantaged groups and has deepened educational inequalities (Ozer & Suna, 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). Students ' socioeconomic differences continue to put them at a disadvantage during the ERT (Aguliera & Nightengale-Lee 2020; Alvarez, 2020; Bozkurt, 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Effects of the transition to ERT worldwide have been more severe, especially for disadvantaged students without access to technology and the Internet (Aguliera and Nightengale-Lee 2020; Bozkurt, 2020; Ozer & Suna, 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin). As each student does not have equal opportunities in terms of belonging to the well-educated family and the use of technologies such as laptop computers and smart phones, especially disadvantaged students have faced challenges in adapting to ERT practices during the pandemic (Motiejūnaitė-Schulmeister & Crosier, 2020). Socio-economic inequalities lead to a digital divide (Bozkurt, 2020), which is defined as the difference in accessing or using digital technologies (Hargittai, 2003). While some countries provided the children of lower-income families with computers and tablets, many countries were unable to take the necessary measures (The World Bank, 2020). Although many countries, including those with highly developed economies, have taken some other measures (De Brouwer, Raimondi & Moreau, 2020), an effective and fair solution has not yet been found to the inequality of opportunity in education that was much more pronounced during the pandemic period. Low-income disadvantaged groups in developed countries indicate that these students may not receive adequate education. Since some students from lower-income families do not have access to the internet at home, it is seen that these students cannot attend ERT practices. Technology-based ERT practices have not only deepened inequality of opportunity in education, but

also caused psychosocial impacts, especially for disadvantaged students (Karakose, 2021).

On the other hand, there is a risk that millions of students may not return to school following the pandemic. Challenges faced by socio-economically disadvantaged students may increase this risk. These challenges range from financial constraints and fear of the virus to barriers of educational opportunities such as early and forced marriage, early or unintended pregnancy and traditional gender role attitudes that prevent girls from accessing education (TEDMEM, 2020). In addition, it is considered that learning losses and learning gaps occurred during the Pandemic may also lead to the alienation of disadvantaged students from school. In order to compensate for the learning losses and bridge the learning gaps, it is recommended to provide educational and material support to children of low-income families (Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). But at the same time, the lack of students' socialization appears to be increasing due to the ERT practice (Whittle, Tiwari, Yan & Williams, 2020).

Equality of opportunity in education has gained a legal basis in Article 8 of the basic law of national education in Turkey (MEB, 1973). However, it is considered that not every student has the same opportunities to have the necessary tools, equipment, information and support for ERT (Kocayigit & Usun, 2020; Ozer, 2020; Salman, 2020a). OECD (2020) report on students' availability of technology reveals that there was only one computer available for every four students in Turkey. The inequalites among students living in disadvantaged districts become clearer. Moreover, a further assumption about the increase in risk does not only cause school absenteeism, but also a school dropout. In other words, the reflections of ERT are more striking in disadvantaged districts and schools.

As a result, it is clear that the status of socio-economically disadvantaged students has become an issue that needs more attention during the pandemic. It is observed that the current studies on emergency remote K-12 education focuses mostly on the general challenges the teachers and the students face during the pandemic process (Abaci et al., 2020; Bozkurt, 2020; d'Orville, 2020; Ferri, Grifoni & Guzz, 2020; Pacheco, 2020; Toquero, 2020). Besides, the trend topics in these studies are teachers' digital competence, digital infrastructure, students' learning habits, and home-school connection (Bond, 2020). It is also understood that researches on education of disadvantaged students during the pandemic period especially focus on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (Asbury et al., 2020; Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020; Majoko, & Dudu, 2020; Schuck & Lambert, 2020; Toseeb et al., 2020). Although several studies (Aguliera & Nightengale-Lee 2020; Alvarez, 2020; Bozkurt 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Eivers, Worth, & Ghosh, 2020; Karakose, 2021; Motiejūnaitė-Schulmeister & Crosier, 2020; Ozer & Suna, 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020) and reports (TEDMEM, 2020; The World Bank, 2020; UNESCO, 2020) draw attention to the issues encountered by socio-economically disadvantaged students during the pandemic. Hardly any studies have focused on teachers' experiences, particularly on classroom teachers teaching in a suburban school. The current study aims to fill this gap and put socio-economically disadvantaged students in the ERT period on the top. To this end, the

study seeks to answer the following research question: What were the experiences of teachers in a disadvantaged suburban elementary school during the COVID -19 pandemic with ERT practices?

Methods

Research Design

A qualitative case study design was executed in the current study. Case study design focuses on one or more certain cases and provides a holistic view to examine various factors related to the specified case (Cresswell, 2019). The instrumental case study method, which focuses on a specific case to provide insight into a particular issue, was employed in the study (Stake, 2000; cited in Glesne, 2016). The case selected in the current study is a disadvantaged suburban public primary school with socio-economically disadvantaged students. Designated as disadvantaged, the school is located in the suburban area of the The Marmara Region in Turkey. One of the reasons why the school is described as disadvantaged is the students' socio-economic background. A large part of the school population consists of Roma/Gypsy students, while the rest comprises immigrant students, or those granted the temporary protected status and those from low-income families. Thus, the study aimed to provide a holistic description of this school's classroom teachers' experiences on the ERT practice during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Participants

To determine the participants of the study, criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was adopted. Criterion sampling refers to the preference of situations that meet a set of pre-determined criteria in accordance with the purpose of the research (Patton, 2005). The researchers formulate these criteria or a pre-existing criteria list might be adopted (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In the current study as one of the researchers was already teaching at the school, based on the observation of the researcher, it was decided to conduct this study. Target population of this stuy was classroom teachers teaching in suburban primary school in Marmara Region of Turkey. The sampling criteria include being classroom teacher with at least 5 years of teaching experience and conducting ERT activities in a disadvantaged primary school during the COVID-19 Pandemic process. The study participants consisted of 10 classroom teachers in a disadvantaged suburban public primary school in the Marmara Region. Totally 14 classrrom teachers were teaching at the school and 4 teachers were not included in the study due to their unwillingness. The study participants consisted of teachers teaching at different grade levels and with at least 6 years of professional experience. The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Code	Gender	Grade Level	Class Size	Professional experience	Experience at school
P-1	F	2.grade	28	14 years	8 years
P-2	F	4.grade	27	20 years	8 years
P-3	F	2.grade	24	16 years	2 years
P-4	F	1.grade	31	16 years	2 years
P-5	F	3.grade	23	14 years	3 years
P-6	F	1.grade	31	17 years	15 years
P-7	F	3.grade	27	17 years	6 years
P-8	F	2.grade	26	17 years	5 years
P-9	F	4.grade	28	15 years	1 year
P-10	M	3.grade	24	6 years	3 years

Data Collection

This study covers the fall semester of the 2020-2021. Hybrid education was implemented between 5 October and 13 November 2020. In the hybrid education process, part-time face-to-face education and ERT practices were applied together. On November 13, 2020, the school was closed again and ERT practices were carried out until the end of the fall semester. During this period, naturalistic observations were conducted by one of the researchers. One of the researchers worked together with classroom teachers at this school during face-to-face part of hybrid education and made observations about the process. Field notes were taken by the researcher regarding the observations made throughout the process and end-of-day reflections were written. The teachers carried out ERT practices during the three months when the schools were fully closed. Interviews with teachers were held at the end of the fall semester of the 2020-2021 school year. Cresswell (2019) states that interview and document analysis are commonly used data collection methods in the case study. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview method to explore the classroom teachers' teaching experiences and practices during ERT. In preparing semi-structured interview questions, the relevant literature was first reviewed; hereafter, expert reviews were obtained from an expert in curriculum and instruction.

Following the review, the interview protocol (Appendix- 1), consisting of five questions and related probe questions, were finalized. The interview protocol consists of three dimensions: the first dimension includes information about the scope of the study and the participant's rights, the second dimension includes questions about participant demographic, and the last dimension includes semi-structured interview questions. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic measures, all of the interviews were conducted via online with the consent of the interviewees. During the interview, the researchers took memos to obtain holistic data during the interview. The interviews lasted between 30- 45 minutes. In addition to the interviews, naturalistic observations were employed for data collection. Naturalistic observations were based on the impressions of the researcher teaching at

the school where the study was conducted. In naturalistic observation, the researcher does not attempt to manipulate variables or control the activities of individuals, but observes and records things that happen naturally (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The researcher has been working at the school where the observation was conducted for 6 months.

Data Analysis

The interview data were interpreted together with the memos and naturalistic observations of the researcher. As one of the researchers was already a teacher in the school, naturalistic observations were conducted and the researcher kept field notes during data collection process. During data analysis, in addition to interviews, end-of-day reflections and memos were managed to reveal and interpret the phenomenon. Each of the researchers took part in the data interpretation process. Thematic analysis was executed to interpret the data. In thematic analysis, the data are interpreted as categories and themes. In this type of analysis, the key element is coding. By breaking up the data into the clauses and sentences, coding enables the codes representing these data to be revealed and compares these data with other codes in the same category (Glesne, 2016). In the case study data analysis, depending on the type of case study and the purpose of the study, a holistic or unilateral analysis may be preferred, or a thematic analysis, such as a situational analysis or a cross-case analysis, to determine the most appropriate method of analysis (Cresswell, 2019).Researchers paid attention to adopting a holistic approach in the data analysis and describing the features that characterize the case. In the coding process, the attention was paid to the causal connection between the answers, not to the order of answers given to the questions. The coded data were categorized by considering causal relationships. By relating the emerged categories, themes were developed.

Validity and Reliability

This study aimed to ensure validity and reliability by taking various measures regarding the internal validity of the design. Maxwell (2009) states that measures can be taken to ensure reliability with methods such as comprehensive and rich data, participant confirmation, data triangulation, and comparison in qualitative research (cited in Yin, 2011). In this study, member checking, peer debrifing and comprehensive data were attempted to achieve reliability. After interviews were transcribed, the transcriptions shared with the participants to obtain their confirmation. In addition, in the process of coding the interview data, the researcher obtained peer debrifing (Holloway & Wheeler, 1996). Both of the researchers took part in the interpretation process. In this respect, each of the researchers conducted data interpretation independently. Following this step, the researchers discussed the obtained codes, categories and themes for the final version. The researcher kept the memos to accurately reflect the participants' views during the interviews, and body movements, gestures and mimics that were not reflected in the voice recordings were used for enrichment and verification of the data. In addition, the researchers tried to bracket their opinion about the phenomenon to prevent bias in the

study. Apart from this, the quotatitons of participants' expressions were included verbatim in the findings section to increase the study's credibility.

Ethical Considerations

Certain ethical principles should not be violated in all studies involving human (Yildirim & Simsek, 2018). These ethical principles are counted by Christians (2005) as informed consent, deception, accuracy, privacy and confidentiality. In line with these principles, a data set consisting of the purpose and scope of the study, the interview questions and informed consent form were shared with the participants before the study. Only volunteers were included in the study. Participants were informed that they could leave the interview at any time. The study also explained to the participants that the interviews would be conducted via online tools. Except from one participant; all participants gave their consent to audio recording. Following the transcription of the voice recordings, the transcriptions were shared with the participants for member checking. To ensure the the participants' anonymity and confidentiality, only phrases like P-1, P-2 and so on were used. Before the study, the academic ethics committee approval (Documentation number of the ethics committee report: E-73613421-604.01.02-BABBFCF3) was obtained.

Findings

Following the interpretation of the data obtained, two different themes were emerged: "disadvantages experienced by students" and "consequences of disadvantages". Two sub-themes have emerged within the theme of "disadvantages experienced by students" and these sub-themes were "economic disadvantage" and "social disadvantage". Under the theme titled "consequences of disadvantages", two sub-themes "student-related consequences" and "teacher-related consequences" were emerged. Themes, sub-tehemes and categories emerged from data analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Themes, Sub-themes and Categories

Themes	Sub-Themes	Categories
Disadvantages Experienced by Students	Economic Disadvantage	Lack of resources Lack of technological material Learning environment
	Social Disadvantage	Negative environmental impact Low parental involvement Family structure Language problems Multiculturalism
Consequences of Disadvantages	Student-Related Consequences	Social interaction Participation Learning process Other problems
	Teacher-Related Consequences	Instructional difficulties Individual difficulties

Disadvantages Experienced by Students

When the observation results regarding the disadvantages of the students are examined, it is seen that the students have diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, such as Gypsies with low income and refugees or those granted temporary protected status. The information about students' socio-cultural backgrounds and their economic conditions were obtained through the following indicators during the observation: their behavior at school, the language they use in communication, the vehicle they use to reach the school, the neighbourhood they live in with their families. Concerning the disadvantages experienced by the students, two different dimensions were identified as economic and social.

Participant teachers pointed out that the economic disadvantages of students are due to the lack of materials required in the distance learning process. The points they emphasized regarding the lack of materials are the technological tools and the internet needed to follow the teaching. Regarding this, P-6 stated the following:

> The most important problem of those who cannot attend the online class is the lack of materials. Children who have sister or brother attending online class at the same time cannot attend. They have to make a choice. There is no possibility to provide this.

In addition, it was underlined that students do not have physical materials that will make ERT effective. For example, P-9 said, "When I ask students to show a common item or material during teaching, it is difficult to find it at home. In fact, most children do not have sufficient materials for learning activities." Another issue that the participants pointed out about the economic disadvantages is lack of appropriate learning environment for ERT. P-4, expressed this with the following statements:

> Since I work in a region where the education level of families is not high, I can say the following: While I teach, all family members sit in the same room. This may be due to the economic level of the family. There are conversations between family members and there is so much noise. The TV is on. There are a lot stimuli to distract the student.

Another dimension related to the disadvantages experienced by the students is social disadvantages. The participants also underlined that the learning environment causes adverse impacts on students and parents, which resulted in school absenteeism. Regarding the impact of the negative social environment on the students, P-1 stated the following:

> But there are a few parents that I know of, who are, in fact, now realizing that their thoughts are wrong and trying to give more importance to education. But the social environment impacts them so much that they give up their ideas. So how can I tell? Every day, the student who comes to school may not come to school in the fourth grade. The child socially learns this around him. The parents obviously cannot prevent it.

The multicultural nature of the school is also observed as a disadvantage since it is in a region receiving immigrants. In addition, it was stated that households are generally crowded and this causes the disadvantages in terms of students' benefiting from educational opportunities. It was also pointed out that as the school is in a region that

receives immigrants, students with a mother tongue other than Turkish have poor Turkish language proficiency.

It was stated that the parents do not consider the necessary technological tools or internet access as a priority in ERT, so their awareness is low. Regarding this, P-4 said, "I have a student. His mother is working. The mother describes her motherhood duty as standing with their children and earning money. Therefore, the need for school becomes a secondary issue for her. Meeting her child's basic needs is the priority for her, but the need for education is not included in this priority. "In addition, the participant teachers stated that the parents are not conscious enough of education and that they do not care about their children. For example, one of the participant teachers, P-3, stated this as follows:

> I cannot get any feedback from some students. So, I call these children a lost generation. Because it is accepted, there are no mothers and no fathers to care about them. It is already a disadvantage. While the children were coming to school, there was no parental support. I say so. These kids disappeared. Because even if they cannot attend the online class right now, there are no parents who can guide and make my students do their homeworks.

Another point noted regarding to the parents is that the parents cannot use the necessary technological tools in ERT. The parents, who have technological devices such as phones, tablets and computers, do not have technology literacy to use these tools.

Consequences of Disadvantages

When the opinions of the participant teachers in the study were interpreted, two sub-themes were emerged: "student-related consequences " and "teacher-related consequences".

Student-related consequences

When the opinions of the participant teachers were interpreted, four different categories were emergerd: "participation", "learning process", "social interaction" and "other problems". Regarding the participation category, P-2, who has been at this school for 8 years, highlighted the increasing absenteeism in the school by stating, "The biggest problem in our school was absenteeism. That has doubled now. In my class, 6-7 of my 23 students were absent. Now that number is even more than double.". In this school, where absenteeism is an important problem, it is stated that the students have low attendance to online classes due to their disadvantage. All of the participants state that more than half of the students cannot attend the online classes. It is also seen that this is associated mainly with economic disadvantages. For example, one of the participant teachers, P-7, stated the following:

> Since we are in a disadvantaged region, our most important problem is economic. Every student wants to attend online classes. They miss their teacher; they miss their friends. It is also an entertaining platform for the students. They like to use technological tools. Unable to provide these

> opportunities, the parents feel very deficient and sad. Actually, all of the children want to attend the classes. But their economic situation does not allow this.

Also, an important problem in the school context is a dropout. The participants anticipate that the pandemic period will increase the rate of students' dropout. Regarding this, P-2 underlined the following:

> Most students normally leave school after primary school. ERT is available, but many of our children who will likely drop out of school cannot attend classes. I do not think that these children will be more disconnected from school, and most of them will not go to secondary school. So, unfortunately, I expect that the number of children dropout will increase.

In terms of the learning process, it was noted that students lacked prior knowledge and motivation for the lessons. Participating teachers indicated that learning loss increased during school closure periods, as most students were unable to participate in online classes. It is thought that this loss of learning will lead to a significant learning inequality between students. This will lead to a reorganization of the teaching process during the transition to face-to-face education. P-5, a 3rd grade teacher, stated this as follows:

> My diligent students already attend online class. We already progressed with them. But unfortunately, we fell back with those who could not. The class was completely divided into two. Those who could not attend the lesson in any way and those who could attend. There seems to be aenormous gap in the classroom right now.

As for social interaction, the participant teachers stated that the students experience deficiencies in peer learning, communication, and social skills development. Regarding this, P-10 stated that:

> I think children will be affected adversely from this process in social terms. There was such a research that children who do not experience nature have problems with balance in the future. In this process, the continuous online education of my students will cause them to get confused when they enter a social environment in the future. I think it will affect their social skills negatively.

The participant teachers also noted that partial or full school closures may negatively affect the disadvantaged students' emotional development and school culture. P-8 stated the following:

> I hope that when we get through this period and schools will be reopened, I don't think they will suffer a very significant learning loss. Somehow, we will close this gap one way or another. But I think there's a lot to be lost in how school culture is formed and the attachment with the teacher. Children who have acquired school culture at an early age transfer it more efficiently to secondary school. The loss they experienced during this two-year period will grow even more if the process continues.

The statements of the participant teachers show that during the school closure period, students could not spend time with their peers. The participant teachers state that this may lead to feeling rejected, lack of self-confidence, introversion, and emotional problems. For example, P-7 expressed this as follows:

> Children may feel rejected because they stay away from this process. Some children might also withdraw. The child who does not do his/her homework, as he does not attend many online classes

> may have already started to feel rejected or felt as left behind. Since he/she is behind his/her other friends, he/she will need to catch others with extra teacher effort and interest.

In addition, the participant teachers consider that the disadvantaged students staying away from school and teacher's supervision will face problems such as substance addiction, technological addiction, or domestic violence. As an example, P-7 stated as follows:

> This is an extraordinary situation for us. After this is over, we can see what damage remains in the students we could not reach. When these kids get back to school, we'll have to implement emergency plans. There will be issues we fall behind, there will be behavioral problems. Maybe technology addiction... They may have been subjected to domestic violence. Or they may have been addicted to drugs because drug addiction and domestic violence are too much in this neighbourhood. Since the child does not come to school, he will be exposed to these more.

Teacher-related Consequences

The participant teachers stated that the disadvantages also cause consequences for the teacher and the teaching process. The data are organized in two separate categories as "instructional difficulties" and "individual difficulties".

Instructional difficulties include planning teaching, neglecting the official curriculum, lack of parental support, material use, and assessment. The teachers stated that they had difficulties in planning instruction and they obligated to neglect the objectives of official curriculum. Participant teachers also stated that they had challenges related to lack of parental support. P-7 expressed this as follows:

> The student is alone. The student interacts with his/her teacher to achieve learning objectives. Everything ends when the lesson is over. In other non-disadvantaged schools, parents follow learning process of their children. Did my child learn or not? or what was missing? Trying to complete it at home, if any... That's why parental support is missing here. Therefore, the teacher only struggles in the lesson. Because permanent learning becomes difficult. It takes a lot of effort in the lesson and also effort after the lesson.

It was stated that teachers' inability to use physical teaching materials is stated as a challenge during ERT. To concretize the teaching process and overcome this situation by preparing materials suitable for ERT.

In terms of assessment, the main issues highlighted were difficulty in observation, inability to use standard assessment tools, lack of parental support, and physical materials.The participant teachers stated that observation had an important role in assessment at the primary school level and had challenges. For example, P-10 said, "If we could have face to face, we would assess students learnig through observation. But we can only see the students on the screen in ERT, I don't think what we do is observation". In addition, it was stated that standard assessment tools were unable to be adopted due to the lack of prior knowledge of the students and the neglected official curriculum. Regarding this, P-7 stated following:

> You also know that if you are a teacher in disadvantaged schools, you cannot teach reading and writing in a year. You also know that you cannot go to the next level suddenly. This is a normal consequence for you. Therefore, there are general learning objectives, which were prepared for all learners in Turkey. From there, you choose the sutaible ones for your learnes. That's why there are some standard tests that I can apply, but others that I cannot.

According to the teachers, inadequate physical materials in assessment is another difficulty. Using online assessment tools do not enable reliable assessment.

Another category occured regarding the consequences of the disadvantage for the teachers is individual difficulties. Within the individual challenges, the problems experienced by the teachers personally in the process were included. The participant teachers drew attention to the issues of self-sacrifice, feeling inadequate, and conscientious discomfort. According to the participant views, working in a disadvantaged suburban public primary schoolrequires additional effort. As all students could not actively benefit from ERT, the teachers were obligated to carry out additional teaching practices to provide equal opportunities to all students. Regarding this, the 2nd grade teacher, P-8, stated following:

> I prepare a summary of what I taught in an online class for the students who did not attend the classes and post them on Whatsapp. Thinking that they will not open the web link, I send the summaries I have prepared by myself.

Regarding to feeling inadequate during the teaching process, P-5 stated: "We are falling short. I feel inadequate. Because I can't keep up with all of them. They all have different problems…"

In addition, the teachers feel uncomfortable while thinking that they cannot do anything for students who cannot benefit from ERT despite their dedication and effort. For example, P-2 stated following:

> I think at night, after leaving the children. What can I do for other children who do not attend online classes. I believe that the inequality of opportunity has reached its peak (In a sad tone of voice). It makes me think.

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

While millions of students in many countries worldwide have to reach educational opportunities from home during the pandemic period, it is evident that access to education is low in disadvantaged regions. The school, which is the subject of the current study, includes socially and economically disadvantaged students. Because of the interruption of face-to-face education, it was observed that students faced threats such as substance addiction, domestic violence, introversion, exclusion, and technological addiction during this period. In a report published by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), it was emphasized that the pandemic could negatively affect children's mental well-being. Similarly, studies focusing on the affective needs of students in the ERT period (Baran & AlZoubi, 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Robinson, Al-Freih &

Kilgore, 2020) suggested the sense of uncertainty and fear that emerged with the pandemic had a negative impact on students' well-being.

This situation imposes some responsibilities on the parents, especially the education authorities. In this context, to protect students from negative habits and toto protect them from negative habits and maintain their well-being, the school administration should conduct a situation analysis and activities to support the students and the parents. Educational activities should be organized by the school guidance service for the students and parents.

The pariticipant teachers suggest that urgent action plans are essential for students before they return to school to prevent possible problems caused by ERT. The plan assumes that some specific measures for students related to truancy and school dropout should be included. OECD reports (2020b) also state that when schools are back in session, students who have been absent from school due to mandatory isolation should receive special support. Similarly, Daniel (2020), TEGV (2020) and UNESCO (2020d) drew attention to psychosocial support practices as well as some relaxing special practices to reduce the adverse effects of this process on students. According to the current study results, the most important effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in this disadvantaged school, where absenteeism is already osberved as an important problem, is the absence of students. Before the pandemic, the teachers effectively ensured students' attendance at school and prevented dropout, hovewer, this effect decreased during the pandemic period. It was observed that especially the students deprived of parental care and benefited from temporary protection status experienced great challenges. There are predictions worldwide that the pandemic will increase the dropout rate (OECD, 2020b, World Bank, 2020b). In addition, it is underlined that this dropout rate will weigh against of the disadvantaged students. Balci (2020) also stated that dropout rate of especially disadvantaged groups is likely to increase the following the pandemic. Similarly, when schools reopened after the Ebola crisis, a high dropout rate was observed (World Bank, 2020b). Authorities should study absenteeism and develop strategies to ensure school attendance, which is an inevitable part of the learning process. Otherwise, it is a high probability that the learning loss of the disadvantaged students will increase further.

The results revealed that the disadvantages experienced during ERT affected the students and the teachers. Disadvantages on students are particularly evident in the following subjects: students' participation, learning process, and social interaction. The increase in disadvantages prevents not only learning activities, but also the social development of students. Before the pandemic, the use of technological tools in education was a matter of choice, but in this period, it has become a necessityt has become a necessity in this period. This has led to the rapid digitalization of education. While this process has some advantages for children who have access to technological tools, the adverse impact on socio-economically disadvantaged children is even deepened. Similarly, in the case of Turkey, Kavuk and Demirtas (2021) stated that active participation in online classes could not be provided in a sufficient level during the pandemic period and one of the reasons for this was the lack of technological tools. The participant teachers underlined that the students had to stay away from schools and school culture during this period

and may experience heavy problems in the future due to difficulty in initiating social interaction. School is the only opportunity for some students to socialize and eliminate the possible negative environmental effects. Erol and Erol (2020) also drew attention to the negative effects of the pandemic on the socialization of students.

Low-income families had challenges providing students with technological equipment, internet connection, and a convenient learning environment. Similarly, Yilmaz et al. (2020) and Inci Kuzu (2020) pointed out that there are difficulties in accessing ERT in regions with low level of development. Demir and Ozdas (2020) also presented that one of the most important challenges in the ERT period was that many students in Turkey could not participate in ERT due to the lack of technological tools. In the TEGV's report (2020), the learning material support to students in disadvantaged regions was emphasized. In addition, when there is only one digital tool to participate in ERT, priority can be given to older siblings in large families. This issue, called digital divide, became one of the most essential challenges during this period for disadvantaged learners. Different studies suggest that the adverse effects of digital divide became more widespread during the pandemic period (Crick et al., 2020; Jandric´ et al., 2020). Bozkurt (2020) also stated that the digital divide caused by socio-economic challenges brought inequalities, especially for disadvantaged students. Similarly, Salman (2020b) presented that inequality in access to information and communication technologies (ICT) and the inadequacies in technology literacy were fundamental reasons behind the digital divide. Zhong (2020) also drew attention to the digital divide created by the pandemic and stated that the students' lack of sufficient opportunities in the ERT period became more vulnerable.

The low participation of students in ERT is not only related with lack of learning tools. In addition, the education level and awareness of the parents are another main issue that is effective both in the use of technological tools and in guiding their children. One of the disadvantaged groups in the school is the children of immigrants or people who have been given temporary protection status. While these students were already struggling with adaptation and language problems in the pre-pandemic period, the impact of this problem intensified in the ERT period. Similarly, Celik and Kardas İsler (2020) pointed out that elementary school students could not have an active learning process during ERT due to language problems, as they could not communicate as effectively with their teachers as they could in face-to-face classes.The disadvantages experienced by students in the ERT period also have educational and individual effects on the teacher. The participant teachers specified the challenges as difficulty in planning the teaching process, neglecting the official program, the lack of parental support, the inability to concretize learning, and the inability to make effective assesment. Lack of prior knowledge of students causes to neglect the official curriculum. Similarly, Demir and Kale (2020) underlined that the official curriculum was neglected during the distance education. Another challenge encountered was lack of parental support, which caused loss of support. As a result, it was observed that students experienced significant learning loss. The participant teachers indicated that a significant learning level difference, also called "big gap", occurred among students during ERT. It is evident that this gap will

fundamentally change both teaching practices and the teaching process in the post-pandemic period. TEDMEM (2020) report presents similar results that learning losses would be deeper especially for disadvantaged students during this pandemic period.

In the school context, it was concluded that teachers experienced some individual challenges during the ERT period. The teachers claimed that they made a special effort and dedication for teaching. To provide equal education, the teachers struggled to teach students who were unable to attend online classes through various channels. Similarly, Cetinkaya (2020) stated that teachers teaching in disadvantaged regions made a greater effort to keep their motivation and ensure student participation during online teaching. The inability to ensure that all students participate in the learning process, the resulting inequality of opportunity, affected the teachers psychologically and made them feel sad and uncomfortable. As Basaran et al. (2020) stated, the reasons for the inequality of opportunity in the ERT period can be listed as follows; socio-economic differences among students demographic characteristics of the region they live in. In this context, it is evident that it would be appropriate to provide academic and psychological support to teachers to ensure teacher competence and maintain teacher well-being. In addition, like health workers, the teachers also need to be supported for their extra effort.

The current study also suggested that social and economic disadvantage caused negative consequences such as learning loss, low academic success, slow down in social development, increase in absenteeism and dropout rates. The students who have socio-economic advantages were able to overcome their deficiencies with the support of their parents and the opportunities such as private lessons and courses during the period when the schools were fully closed. However, the students experiencing disadvantages were unable to conduct learning. This difference among students may have profound impacts in the longer term. The disadvantaged students, who have to attend the same central exams for the next level of education in the future, will most probably experience failure resulting from the learning loss. In line with this result, it is evident that students experiencing disadvantages should be supported with extra teaching practices.

This study has some limitations due to its nature. Since most classroom teachers in the school consist of women, almost all of the participants included in the current study are female classroom teachers. A study can be conducted with a gender-diverse group of participants in future research on this subject. Furthermore, the school, which is the subject of this study, consists of socio-economically disadvantaged students. A separate study can be conducted with students who experience disadvantages in different dimensions. As the present study was conducted at the early stages of the ERT period, differences in teacher experiences and practices may occur. For this reason, another study might be conducted covering experiences from the beginning to the present to discover longitudinal effects.

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Appendix-1

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name of Participant : .....
Date and time : .....

Hello, my name is Ozgul Mutluer. I am a PhD student at Yıldız Technical University, Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Curriculum and Instruction. I would like to get your views on how distance education applications are carried out in your institution and talk about your experiences in this process. In this meeting, my aim is to contribute to the studies to be done for the evaluation and improvement of distance education applications. I interview teachers because they are seen as important stakeholders in the process, observing and managing the educational process. I hope that the results of this research will reveal enlightening information about the studies to be done on distance education applications and the measures that can be taken to increase the quality of education. Therefore, I would like to know your thoughts and experiences about the distance education process.

Before I begin, I would like to clarify some points:
● I estimate that this interview will take about half an hour.
● Everything you tell me during the interview process is confidential. It is not possible for anyone other than the researchers to see this information. In addition, while writing the research results, I will definitely not reflect the names of the participants I interviewed in the report.
● There is nothing compelling you to participate in the meeting. I will also ask you to fill in the informed consent form before the interview.
● If you allow me, I want to record the conversations during the call. In this way, we can use time more effectively and I can analyze your answers in more detail after the meeting. If you feel any discomfort, you can take the interview notes. Do you think it is appropriate?
● Before we begin, do you have any thoughts or questions you would like to ask about what I said?
● If you allow me, I would like to start the questions.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- How many years have you been a teacher?
- How many years have you been working at this school?
- How many students do you have?
- What is the number of disadvantaged (social, economic, cognitive, emotional, physical, etc.) in your class?
- What grade are your students in?
- What is your education status?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1.a How do you plan your lessons during the distance education process?
Are you struggling?
If yes, in which aspects are you struggling?
1.b. Can you fully implement your plan for distance education?
On what basis do you say this?
Can you give examples?

2. How does the teaching process differ for your students in distance education?
How is the participation of the students in your school in distance education?
Is distance education beneficial for students?
How do your students respond to you?

What are the effects of distance education on disadvantaged students?

3. What kind of activities do you do/can you do in the distance education process?"
What do you pay attention to when deciding on the event?

4. Do you encounter problems in the distance education process?
If so, what is this problem?
If the problems are numerous, what do you think is the most important problem?
Are there problems specific to your school?
What is it caused by?
How should it be resolved?
Do you have any suggestion regarding this?

5. How do you measure and evaluate in the distance education process?
Are there things you find difficult?
What are you doing for the solution?
In your opinion, how should measurement and evaluation be in the distance education process?
Are you satisfied with the assessment and evaluation process of the current application?
If not, why?
Is there anything else you want to add?
Thank you for your participation.