

**Analysis of the Perceptions of Arabic Teacher Candidates Regarding Mandatory Distance Education after the February 6th Earthquakes and the Efficiency of Conducted Classes: A Case Study of Adiyaman University***

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
<i>Received:</i> 22.03.2024	A disaster environment like an earthquake hinders education. However, in the aftermath of an earthquake, despite this hindering factor, students can continue their education uninterrupted with online learning, an urgent and important educational model. The need to continue education after the earthquake arose and distance education emerged as a solution to this situation. In this regard, the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) decided to implement distance education for the spring semester of 2022-2023 as a rapid and urgent solution. In response to the problems encountered due to the earthquake, Adiyaman University, located in one of the provinces affected by the earthquake, was paired with Atatürk University to make academic appointments, provide IT support, carry out joint activities, and prevent long-term educational loss. This research aims to analyse the perceptions of students in the Arabic Language Teaching department of Adiyaman University regarding the transition to mandatory distance education at Atatürk University following the 7.9 magnitude Kahramanmaraş Earthquake, referred to as the "disaster of the century" in Turkey, and to determine the effectiveness of the classes conducted in this process. This research was conducted using qualitative methods, the phenomenology model as one of the qualitative methods was applied. Data for the research were collected through semi-structured interview technique. The study group consisted of a total of 18 students, including 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-year students enrolled in the Arabic Language Teaching Department of the Faculty of Education at Adiyaman University during the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The data of the research were analysed by content analysis method. The findings of the research revealed that the participants' reactions to the transition to mandatory distance education due to the earthquake were initially negative. However, as the process continued, the majority of participants showed consideration for the decision to switch to distance education due to the earthquake, empathized with the situation, and believed that engaging students who were affected by the earthquake in education provided morale and motivation.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Humanity has endured many disasters until today and has learned lessons from these disasters, striving to survive by finding measures against them and disseminating these measures. For example, earthquakes, storms, fires, and epidemics have endangered human life on earth or forced people to change their way of life (Sarı and Nayır, 2020). Around 15 million people were affected by the earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş, Turkey, on February 6th (Strateji ve Bütçe Başkanlığı, 2023) Around 2 million residences, including public and educational buildings, were destroyed or heavily damaged. The significant destruction experienced in the region after the earthquake affected all aspects of life, including education. Additionally, housing became a priority issue. In order to allocate student dormitories to earthquake victims, ensure the continuation of education at universities in the earthquake-stricken area, and provide an important solution for the rehabilitation of earthquake-affected students, the Council of Higher Education decided to complete the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year through mandatory distance education.

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Distance education system is one of the methods of acquiring and teaching knowledge, skills, achievements and equipment applied through many different methods. If distance education is to be described from the most comprehensive point of view; It is a system that establishes the interaction between the transmitter and the receiver in different places with the help of technology (Yadigar, 2010: 10). Distance education is implemented through the use of tools such as the internet, computer, tablet, smartphone, television and video conferencing, where the interaction between the receiver and the giver of information is achieved, as the teacher and the learner are in different places. Thus, students are offered the educational opportunity they want, in the time they want, in the place they want (Koçdar, 2006: 23).

A disaster environment such as an earthquake contains many factors that hinder education. The immediate activation of the face-to-face education method, which is familiar and adopted by most people in the post-earthquake period, is affected by factors such as the destruction in shelters, the loss of students, faculty and staff, the destruction of schools, universities and dormitories, and the adaptation process to the new situation caused by the shock effect. Despite all these disruptions, with the distance education method, the disrupted education process can be accelerated and students can be enabled to continue their education processes in an almost uninterrupted manner (Telli & Altun, 2020). Distance education, due to its structure, is a method that has the capacity to be used as an education model suitable for students' learning styles and needs (Özgür, 2013). The Council of Higher Education (YÖK), which is a constitutional organization that regulates higher education and directs the activities of higher education institutions and has autonomy and public legal personality within the framework of the duties and powers given to it by the Higher Education Law No. 2547 (mevzuat.gov.tr, 2023), responded to the earthquake disaster centered in Kahramanmaraş. Accordingly, it has been decided that the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year will be completed through distance education (yok.gov.tr, 2023).

For the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year, distance education opportunities were used as a means to compensate for educational losses at all educational levels. Distance education is an institution-based formal education in which telecommunication systems are used to enable instructors and students in different locations to interact with each other and with class materials (Schlosser & Simonson, 2009). When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many studies examining students' attitudes towards distance education. However, most of these studies are aimed at measuring attitudes towards distance education that was made mandatory during the pandemic.

1.2. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research is to analyse the perceptions of Adıyaman University Arabic Language Teaching Department students regarding distance education at Atatürk University after the February 6 earthquake, as well as the effectiveness of the classes conducted during this process. It is believed that the findings of this research will make a significant contribution to the literature.

Four research questions were investigated in the present study below.

1. How did you feel when you heard that mandatory distance education was implemented at Atatürk University after the February 6 earthquakes? What were your initial reactions? Could you explain?
2. How did the mandatory transition to distance education due to the earthquake affect your perception?
3. Can you share your experiences with the mandatory distance education implemented at Atatürk University after the February 6 earthquakes? Can you evaluate the distance education process with its positive and negative aspects?
4. What are your opinions on the effectiveness of the distance education classes you received from Atatürk University during the spring semester due to the circumstances?

2. METHODOLOGY

This study analysed the perceptions of Arabic teacher candidates regarding distance education and the effectiveness of classes during the mandatory distance education process after the February 6, 2023 earthquakes and was conducted following the principles and procedures of qualitative research methodology. In this context, explanations were provided regarding the research model, study group, data collection, data analysis, and how the research was conducted.

One of the qualitative methods, the "phenomenological" model was used in this research. In the phenomenological pattern, the sources of data are individuals who live and experience the focused topic. (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2014).

2.1. Study Group

In this research, the convenience sampling method was employed as the sampling technique. The reason for choosing convenience sampling is to quickly and cost-effectively access close and easily accessible information. (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). The study group consists of a total of 18 students from the 2nd to the 4th grades studying in the Arabic Language Teaching Department of the Faculty of Education at Adıyaman University. 9 out of these 18 students reside in the earthquake-affected region.

2.2. Data Collection Tool

In this research, the required data were obtained through interviews, one of the qualitative research data collection techniques (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006) A semi-structured interview form was used in the interview. Semi-structured interviews allow detailed research of the subject and participants can express themselves comfortably in these interviews (Patton, 2018). Each individual interview with the students lasted approximately 20 minutes, and since the distance education process was ongoing, the interviews were conducted online and recorded.

2.3. Data Analysis

Content analysis technique was used to analyse the research data. Content analysis technique is a renewable method in which the words in the text are summarised into smaller categories by coding within certain rules (Büyüköztürk vd., 2014). After the analysis of the data, the participants were identified as S1, S2, S3, ... S18. The data under each research question were coded, and these codes were grouped under appropriate themes. While creating the codes, the statements of each participant were evaluated together with others. The findings from the analysis were visualised with tables, ensuring that they were presented in a clear and understandable manner. In order to support the findings and strengthen the reliability of the research, remarkable expressions of the students' opinions were directly conveyed when presenting the research findings.

3. FINDINGS

In this section, findings regarding the perceptions of Arabic teacher candidates at Atatürk University towards mandatory distance education and the effectiveness of the classes conducted after the February 6 earthquakes are presented. The findings obtained from the analysis of data collected through interviews with students are provided in tables under relevant headings and explained.

3.1. First Reactions to the Transition to Mandatory Distance Education at Atatürk University Due to the February 6 Earthquakes

The findings obtained from the analysis of students' responses to the question "How did you feel When you heard that mandatory distance education was implemented at Atatürk University after the February 6 earthquakes? What were your initial reactions? Could you explain?" are provided in Table 1.

Table 1.

Initial Reactions to the Transition to Mandatory Distance Education Due to the Earthquake

Theme	Code	Student	f
Negative Reaction	Anger	S2, S8, S18	3
	Worry	S1, S3, S7, S8, S10, S16, S17, S18	8
	Doubting the decision was correct	S5, S7, S8, S10, S12, S14, S17, S18	8
	Sadness	S1, S2, S6, S7, S9, S10, S12, S13	8
	Surprise	S6, S7	2
	Pairing the Faculty of Education with the Faculty of Literature	S1, S3, S5, S6, S7, S8, S10, S14, S15, S18	10
Positive Reaction	Fear	S7, S18	2
	Being able to empathise and accept	S2, S7, S9, S12, S13, S15	6
	Joy	S1, S3, S4, S9, S12, S13, S15	7

The findings in Table 1 indicate that students' reactions to the transition to mandatory education due to the earthquake can be grouped under the subthemes of negative reaction and positive reaction. It was understood that students mainly reacted negatively to the transition to mandatory education due to the earthquake. Nearly all students expressed discomfort regarding the transition to mandatory distance education at Atatürk University. Similarly, students residing in the earthquake region also reacted negatively to this issue. It was observed that the initial negative reaction of the students is pairing the Faculty of Education with the Faculty of Literature (10). It was understood that some students were worried (8) about the transition to mandatory distance education and the reason for these concerns was the difference in faculty. It was observed that other negative reactions of the students regarding the transition to mandatory distance education were sadness (8), anger (3), surprise (2), fear (2), and doubting the decision was correct (8). It was understood that the students who reacted negatively were disturbed by the mandatory transition to distance education at Atatürk University, even if it was due to the earthquake. While justifying this, students, especially those affected by the earthquake, highlighted that they were still under the influence of the events and had not yet recovered psychologically. They also pointed out the suddenness of such a decision and emphasised their discomfort with the Faculty of Literature being involved instead of the Faculty of Education. Examples of students' negative reactions to the mandatory distance education decision at Atatürk University are as follows:

I am from Adiyaman and I did not leave my city during this process. I experienced this process live. Unfortunately, our loved ones, relatives, neighbours, and acquaintances were left behind in concrete piles. In this process, let alone education, there is no environment where we can manage our basic living needs, no water, no electricity, let alone everything else, there is no network. There was no environment where we could say 'hello, I am fine', let alone manage our basic needs. Suddenly, I heard the news on TV that mandatory distance education would be implemented. Hold on, let us first understand what happened. Yes, education was necessary, but this decision was wrong. From my perspective, I did not find this decision healthy. Because first, we needed to recover. That is why I could not adapt to the education process immediately. (S5)

When I first received the news of mandatory distance education, I was frankly shocked and scared. Although our country had experienced a great natural disaster, considering how important education is for every individual, I thought that distance education would be much less efficient than face-to-face education, so I thought it would be very inefficient for my education. In addition, the difference in faculties made me very uneasy. This situation made me think about how I would manage, how I would learn something, whether we would experience differences in the classes. (S7)

It was not something that should have been done at that moment. We could not recover psychologically for a long time. It was a new university, we did not have our lecturers, we did not even have our own department. I do not know what could have been done as an alternative, I could not think about it at that moment, but I did not feel positive emotions. I thought it was not the right decision. (S10)

I experienced a mix of emotions including anger, anxiety, and fear. The reason for this was that we did not know the lecturers at Atatürk University, and I thought we would have problems since it was a department that was not related to our own department. (S18)

It was observed that although in small numbers, some students showed positive reactions to the transition to mandatory education due to the earthquake. It was understood that the majority of these students actually had negative initial reactions to mandatory distance education at Atatürk University. However it was deduced that when they thought about the people in the earthquake region and when education started at Atatürk University, they found this decision appropriate and accepted the situation with understanding. It is noteworthy that most of the students who showed consideration towards the decision were from the earthquake region and the others had acquaintances in the earthquake region. It was found that five students living in earthquake region were happy that the transition to mandatory distance education due to the earthquake and believed it was the right decision. It was understood that these five students saw mandatory distance education as an opportunity to overcome the difficulties and psychological process of the earthquake. Examples of positive reactions to the transition to mandatory distance education at Atatürk University due to the earthquake are as follows:

I was one of those who felt the earthquake directly and we were psychologically collapsed. Ambulances sirens, hearses, they all still come to my mind vividly just like the first day. It was a very difficult process. We were also lacking in consoling each other and providing support to each other, because everyone had lost their families and relatives. Distracting myself with classes, engaging in something other than thoughts of the earthquake mentally relieved me. I thought this decision was the right one. (S4)

While I was saddened on one hand, I was also happy with this decision. Because I thought that there would not be school in the spring semester. Then I heard the news of mandatory distance education at Atatürk University, and I was very happy. The fact that education would continue was better than not having it at all. I think this decision was a right one. (S9)

I learned the news that the mandatory distance education would take place at Atatürk University through my friends. At first, I was saddened and thought that this was not the right decision, because I was living in Hatay. I could not attend the classes for a long time because of the internet and other reasons. We had lost many members of our family. Then we settled in a hotel in Alanya. As time passed, I was happy with this decision, we were very happy that Atatürk University embraced us in this bad moment, we did not feel alone, and thus, our semester did not go to waste. (S12)

First, when I received the news that schools were switching to distance education, I was really sad because I was under the influence of what happened and I thought it was not the right decision, but then when I talked to my friends living in the earthquake region, I realised that the situation there was more serious than we saw. My friends could not attend classes for a long time. They had an internet problem. Some had lost their parents. They were not in a position to adapt to the classes. However, over time, by empathising, I thought that this was a logical decision. (S13)

3.2. Effects of the Transition to Mandatory Distance Education at Atatürk University Due to the February 6 Earthquakes

The findings obtained from the analysis of students' responses to the question "How did the mandatory transition to distance education due to the earthquake affect your perception?" are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Opinions on the Effects of the Mandatory Transition to Distance Education Due to the Earthquake

Theme	Code	Student	f
Negative Perceptions	Being mandatory and unplanned	S5, S9, S17, S18	4
	Earthquake-stricken students studying in those conditions	S5, S12, S17	3
	A hasty decision	S5, S9, S10, S14, S17, S18	6
	Being an understandable situation	S1, S7, S8, S10, S12, S15, S16	7
	Being a positive situation for the safety of both earthquake-stricken students and other students	S1, S4, S8, S12, S16, S18	6
	Increasing morale and motivation of earthquake victims by engaging them in education	S1, S4, S12, S16, S18	5
Positive Perceptions	Being the right decision to prevent their grievances	S1, S12, S16	3
	Being accustomed to the process from the pandemic period	S1, S7, S9, S10	4
	Being able to continue education regardless of the circumstances	S1, S3, S6, S7, S8, S9, S12, S16	8

The findings in Table 2 show that the majority of students had positive perceptions about the transition to mandatory education at Atatürk University due to the earthquake. It was determined that the most obvious reason for the positive perceptions of these students was that they could continue education regardless of the conditions (8) after the transition to mandatory distance education due to the earthquake. Students also stated that the transition to distance education due to the earthquake was understandable (7), that it was a positive situation for the safety of both earthquake-stricken students and other students (6), that there was an increase in morale and motivation of earthquake-stricken students by engaging them in education (5), that they were accustomed to the process from the pandemic period (4), and that it was the right decision to prevent their grievances (3). Examples of the opinions of students who developed positive perceptions about the transition to mandatory distance education at Atatürk University due to the earthquake are as follows:

In fact, distance education was a situation we were used to not only because of the earthquake but also during the pandemic. We could not think clearly at that moment because of the earthquake. Although there was a scene of suffering around us, to prevent grievance, to enable students staying with their families for economical purposes, and to prevent families from having anxiety for their children because aftershocks continued in many cities, it was a logical decision in terms of continuing the education process regardless of the conditions, and with education, increasing morale and motivation of students who experienced psychological breakdowns to some extent. (S1)

Despite everything, life went on, and this situation showed me that life was not over. Because when there is trouble, we close ourselves off from everything, and we cannot do anything other than grieve the losses. But with the continuation of school, you feel obliged to do so, and actually distance education helped us hold on to life. It helped shift our focus a little bit. (S12)

The transition to mandatory distance education due to the earthquake evoked mixed emotions at first. However, I was not in favour of suspending education. Regardless of the circumstances, education should continue. Distance education was a positive and understandable situation for everyone's safety. (S8)

On the other hand, it was determined that some students (11) had negative perceptions about the transition to distance education due to the earthquake. According to the students, the transition to mandatory distance education due to the earthquake was a hasty decision (6). It was determined that these students developed negative perceptions because it was mandatory and unplanned (4) and because the earthquake-stricken students received education under those conditions (3). Examples of the opinions of students who developed negative perceptions about the transition to distance education due to the earthquake are as follows:

Considering the impact of the earthquake on our lives, I see this decision as hasty and unorganized. Due to the earthquake, three houses in a whole neighbourhood remained standing. In order for me to continue my education, I had to go in and out of the damaged house. That is why I did not see this as a decision made by considering the safety of the students living in the earthquake region, because there were many people like me staying in tents. The classes were starting, and we were going in and out of the damaged houses because the aftershocks continued. This was not the right decision for the safety of students living in the earthquake region. (S5)

Since we were used to the distance education process during the pandemic period, I did not have any problems in that regard. However, during the distance education that started due to the earthquake, we could not stay at home or go outside. There were people outside waiting for help. While we stayed at home, there were constant aftershocks. Initially, I could not attend classes. I think it was the right decision but made in haste. (S9)

I consider the transition to mandatory distance education after the earthquake as an injustice to students. We experienced a major earthquake, so many people lost their lives, I did not find it normal for the process to be like this, and I could not attend classes for a long time. I experienced a lack of focus. (S17)

3.3 Analysis of Distance Education Implemented at Atatürk University Due to the Earthquake

The findings obtained from the analysis of the students' responses to the questions "Can you share your experiences with the mandatory distance education implemented at Atatürk University after the February 6 earthquakes? Can you evaluate the distance education process with its positive and negative aspects?" are provided in Table 3.

Table 3.
Student Opinions on Distance Education Implemented Due to the Earthquake

Theme	Code	Student	f
Negative Aspects	Adaptation process to new lecturers and their teaching styles	S2, S7, S10, S13, Ö14, S15, S18	7
	Crowded classes due to merging two universities	S2, S3, S4	2
	Teaching large groups in a short time	S3	1
	Lack of face-to-face communication	S10, S18	2
	Lack of body language and eye contact in communication	S10, S18	2
	Lack of attention	S10, S12, S17, S18	4
	Effort to learn amidst many difficulties	S5, S12, S16, S17, S18	5
	Having lack of motivation	S10, S11, S12, S17, S18	5
	Inability to attend classes due to internet infrastructure problems	S1, S2, S12, S17, S18	5
	Student's right to speak	S1, S5, S15	3
Positive Aspects	Being able to reinforce learning by rewatching classes	S14	1
	Socializing between two college students	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S8, S10, S11, S14, S16, S18	11
	Being effective and productive despite difficulties	S2, S4, S5, S12, S14, S15, S16, S17, S18	9
	Experienced and knowledgeable lecturers	S1, S2, S4, S5, S6, S10, S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17, S18	13
	Having no attendance issues	S1, S3, S12	3

Findings in Table 3 indicate that students' experiences of the distance education implemented at Atatürk University after the February 6 earthquakes have both positive and negative aspects at similar levels. It was observed that students expressed both positive and negative aspects simultaneously. It was understood that the most commonly mentioned negative aspect of the distance education at Atatürk University after the earthquake is the adaptation process to new lecturers and their teaching styles. (7) The other negative aspects identified are as follows: crowded classes due to merging two universities (3), teaching large groups in a short time (1), lack of face-to-face communication (2), lack of body language and eye contact in communication (2), lack of attention (4), effort to learn amidst many difficulties (5), lack of motivation (5), and inability to attend classes due to internet infrastructure problems (5). Examples of students' opinions regarding the negative aspects of distance education due to the earthquake are as follows:

When I looked at distance education from my own perspective, the negative aspects in my opinion were as follows: I can express myself more on paper. That is why I experienced a decline in my grades. Additionally, as a result of merging two universities, classes were overcrowded and there were times when I did not have the right to speak. (S4)

I could not attend classes for a while due to internet problems. During an exam, an aftershock occurred, and naturally, we got scared and went out. My exam was left unfinished. When I contacted our lecturer and explained the situation, they let me retake the exam. But experiencing these things was distracting me and reducing my motivation. Since I had internet problems very often, my friends were helping me at that point. We were trying to continue our education despite all these difficulties. (S12)

What I found negative about the distance education implementation at Atatürk University after the earthquake was this: From my own perspective, I had a hard time in the exams. Since it was in Faculty of Literature, it had a more detailed curriculum. Because we were not used to this, I had difficulty in the beginning and my motivation decreased. However, over time, all these problems were solved. (S11)

Due to the number of students and the crowded classes, there was no time for translations and text readings. I experienced internet connection problems because I was in the village. I went through a process of getting used to new lecturers and their teaching styles. However, despite all this, I benefited from the experience and knowledge of Atatürk University lecturers and had a productive period. The students there included us in their social groups and helped us. Beautiful friendships were formed between us. (S2)

On the other hand, it was determined that a frequently mentioned positive aspect in students' experiences of distance education following the earthquake was the experienced and knowledgeable lecturers (13). Other positive aspects mentioned by the students include students' right to speak (3), the opportunity to reinforce classes by rewatching them (1), socialising between students from two universities (11), being effective and productive despite difficulties (9), and having no attendance issues (3). Examples of students' opinions regarding the positive aspects of distance education experiences due to the earthquake are as follows:

Atatürk University is really well-equipped in terms of distance education. During this period, it was as if we were having classes in a regular classroom. Students were asked questions, integrated into the class, and given the opportunity to speak. We could immediately ask the lecturer about a subject we did not understand and receive feedback. In fact, I still remember many of the things I learned. I think this is a plus for us. The only problem was that we attended the classes in the spring semester, and the students at Atatürk University had taken these classes in the fall semester. Since we attended in the spring semester, we could not start the classes from the beginning, we took them as a continuation. It felt like we started in the middle of the book. (S5)

Thanks to the start of classes, we got through the process easily. Our psychology also relieved, life was going on. Atatürk University students and lecturers welcomed us with open arms. We were not able to bond this much with our friends at Adıyaman University. They welcomed us well in every aspect. They did not offend us in any way or make any insinuations. We still keep in touch with some friends. (S16)

The way the instructors at Atatürk University taught the classes and kept the students focused was quite positive. In fact, everything depended on individual work. Our lecturers were putting in so much effort. We also needed to put in the effort in return. (S15)

3.4. Analysis of the Efficiency of Classes Conducted at Atatürk University with Mandatory Distance Education Due to the February 6 Earthquakes

The findings obtained from the analysis of the students' responses to the question "What are your opinions on the effectiveness of the distance education classes you received from Atatürk University during the spring semester due to the circumstances?" are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Opinions on the Effectiveness of the Distance Education Classes Conducted at Atatürk University After the Earthquake

Theme	Code	Student	f
Negative Perceptions	Unhealthy listening environments	S3	1
	Lack of eye contact and physical interaction during classes	S7	1
	Problem with maintaining focus	S12, S18	2
	Experiencing communication issues due to technological problems	S3, S12, S17, S18	4
	The necessity of taking classes from both previous and next semesters	S18	1
Positive Perceptions	Efficiency of classes	S1, S2, S4, S6, S7, S8, S10, S11, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17, S18	14
	Receiving feedback from lecturers in classes	S6, S7, S10, S11, S12, S14, S16, S17, S18	9
	Careful and detailed explanation of subjects during classes	S1, S5, S8, S9, S10, S11, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17, S18	12
	Recognition of students' weaknesses	S15, S16, S17, S18	4
	Chance to rewatch the classes	S1, S9, S10, S12	4
	Conducting live classes and being able to ask questions in real-time	S2, S3, S4, S5, S9	5

The findings in Table 4 indicate that the majority of students had positive opinions regarding the effectiveness of the distance education classes they took from Atatürk University during the spring semester. The effectiveness of distance education classes (14) was attributed to the careful and detailed explanation of subjects during classes (12), receiving feedback from lecturers during classes (9), recognition of students' weaknesses (4), and the chance to rewatch the classes (4). Examples of students' opinions reflecting the positive effectiveness of the distance education classes taken due to the circumstances are as follows:

The classes I took at Atatürk University were enjoyable and productive. The materials of the classes are still available on my computer. We had the opportunity to rewatch the classes and take notes. Arabic Grammar I class was given in the fall semester, and we took Arabic Grammar II class in the spring semester. Although many subjects were covered in the previous semester, our lecturers were able to bridge the gap without us noticing. (S1)

Atatürk University is a well-established university in Arabic studies and the lecturers have contributed significantly to our knowledge and experience. Even though the classes were crowded, the classes were productive. When a student listens to the classes attentively, they will naturally benefit. Thanks to live classes, I could ask any questions I had in my mind instantly, and this created a healthy learning environment. (S4)

Taking classes from expert lecturers was incredibly enjoyable. For example, before the earthquake, I benefited from the books of a certain lecturer, after the earthquake it was delightful and very productive to have that lecturer from Atatürk University teach me. Arabic literature is like a vast ocean, and we were able to benefit from that ocean. This was very important to us. We gained an abundance of knowledge, and in addition to that, we learned translation techniques. The live classes prepared us well, and they made us feel as if the classes were being conducted in a classroom setting. Additionally, friendship groups were formed between Adiyaman and Atatürk University. Our friends from Atatürk University recorded teaching videos and sent them to us. We are now sister universities. (S5)

Additionally, a small number of students (9) mentioned that they experienced a loss of communication (4) due to technological problems regarding the efficiency of the distance education classes they took from Atatürk University during the spring semester. According to these students, the effectiveness of the classes in mandatory distance education due to the earthquake was perceived negatively, with students developing negative perceptions such as an unhealthy listening environment (1), lack of eye contact and physical interaction during classes (1), problems with maintaining focus (2), and the obligation for students to take additional classes outside their regular semester (1). Examples of negative perceptions of the effectiveness of distance education classes from these students are as follows:

I could not benefit much from the classes, because the one semester was already spent with the adaptation and motivation period. This situation caused us to not understand much. We entered the adaptation process and the semester ended. Classes were overcrowded. I am someone who likes to ask questions and raise objections, and in this case I could not do so. (S3)

I could not benefit much because I was in a different place mentally and psychologically. Even if I wanted to, I could not focus on the classes. (S12)

When we had face-to-face classes, it was easier for me to understand when I studied with my roommate at the dorm. My friend would understand the parts of the lesson that I did not understand, and I would understand what he did not understand. We would explain each other this way. We supported each other in learning, but this was not possible with distance education. I did not have anyone to study Arabic with, and that was challenging for me. Apart from that, the classes at Atatürk University were quite efficient. We could receive feedback from the instructors. (S7)

4. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of 18 students of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades from Arabic Language Teaching Department of Adiyaman University contributed to the research with their opinions. Students were asked their opinions and thoughts about mandatory distance education and the efficiency of the classes conducted at Atatürk University after the February 6 Earthquakes, and their responses to these questions formed the evaluation part of the study. When the answers given by the students regarding the distance education process at Atatürk University were examined, it was determined that the reactions of the majority of the students in this difficult process were negative. Additionally, it was found that students living in the earthquake region also reacted negatively to this issue. While justifying this, it was observed that the students were reacting to such a sudden decision before they fully comprehended the situation, as they were under the influence of what happened. They additionally pointed out why the process was taking place in the Faculty of Literature instead of the Faculty of Education. However, it was determined that even though a small number of students were disturbed by the transition to mandatory education after the earthquake, they saw this decision as an opportunity to get rid of the difficulties and psychological burden of the earthquake when they considered the people in the earthquake region. With the beginning of the education process at Atatürk University, it was understood that their fears and anxieties decreased, and they showed consideration towards the decision over time. Additionally, it was observed that students had positive perceptions about the transition to distance education due to the earthquake. They believed that continuing education under any circumstances was positive for the safety of earthquake victims and other students, and engaging earthquake victims in education would increase their morale and motivation.

Based on the findings obtained in this research, it was observed that even though students initially reacted negatively to the transition to distance education at Atatürk University due to the earthquake, their negative opinions changed significantly over time. The effects of this positive change that emerged as a result of positive opinions can be explained by the experienced and knowledgeable lecturers at Atatürk University and the socialisation between the students of the two universities. It was understood that the most prominent negative opinions of students about distance education were the process of adapting to

new lecturers and their teaching styles, inability to attend classes due to internet access issues, lack of attention, and effort to learn amidst many difficulties.

This research concluded that the opinions of the majority of students were positive regarding the effects of mandatory distance education implemented at Atatürk University following the February 6th earthquakes, in terms of its impact on the effectiveness of the classes. It was understood that the primary reason for the positive opinions include the classes being more productive than expected, meticulous and detailed classes, receiving feedback from instructors, identifying students' weaknesses, and the opportunity to rewatch the classes.

When the findings of this research were evaluated collectively, it was concluded that Arabic Language Teaching students of Adıyaman University had both positive and negative general opinions about distance education. Although they initially had negative thoughts when they heard about distance education, upon starting classes at Atatürk University and adapting to the process, it was understood that the expertise of Atatürk University lecturers and the assistance provided by Atatürk University students in forming social groups positively influenced their opinions.

This study was conducted under certain limitations. The most important limitation in the study is that it is limited to 18 students. The primary limitation of the study is due to the qualitative research method. The small number of participants and the lack of analytical generalisations are among the fundamental limitations. Another limitation of the study is that only interview data is included, and the focus of the study is only on students from a single department of a university. The results are based on the experiences and observations of the 18 participating students.

Turkey is located in one of the world's important earthquake zones. Due to its geological structure and geodynamic location, there are many active faults in our country. The fact that our country is an earthquake-prone region indicates that new earthquakes will occur in the future. Therefore, this situation imposes important responsibilities on the field of education. In other words, earthquakes have already made their first "take precautions!" warning to thousands of people. Consequently, our country should undoubtedly be prepared for new earthquakes in terms of technology, accessibility, educational programs, facilities, hardware, implementation, and personnel. Based on the results obtained in the research, below are the recommendations presented regarding the classes conducted through distance education and their effectiveness:

- In cases where distance education is mandatory, the reasons for choosing distance education should be explained to students in a convincing manner.
- The reasons why mandatory distance education will be provided at Atatürk University should be explained to students in detail with their justifications.
- Internet infrastructure problems throughout Turkey should be addressed and improved to the best possible extent.
- Distance education environments should be made as suitable as possible for face-to-face education settings.
- Both educators and students should be provided with in-service training such as preparing digital materials related to distance education and using information technologies.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

This research was approved by the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Adıyaman University, with the decision 30 and dated 22.03.2024.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

Researchers contributed equally at all stages of the research.

Statement of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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