



## FACULTY OF SPORTS SCIENCES STUDENTS' LEARNING LEVELS OF THE PRACTICAL COURSES DURING THE PANDEMIC PERIOD

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### **Abstract:**

This research was carried out to analyze the attitude and learning levels of the Faculty of Sport Sciences students related to the practical courses lectured in distance education due to the isolation days. This research was taught to examine the attitudes of the sports sciences faculty coaching education department towards the applied lessons taught in distance education from the meal isolation days. The sample group of the study included totally 460 students including 233 females and 227 males studying at the Sport Sciences Faculties of universities in 2020-2021 Academic Year. The demographic properties of the students participating into the study such as the variables of gender, grade and department were recorded. Furthermore, 4 questionnaire questions with "yes" or "no" answers prepared by the researcher and a 10-item questionnaire for questioning the

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students' attitudes towards learning in practical courses lectured in distance education were created. The statistical values were calculated in SPSS program. The arithmetic average and standard deviation values of the obtained data were calculated. The Chi-Square Test ( $\chi^2$ ) was performed to determine whether the department and grade variables had a significant effect upon the answers given to the attitude questions. In conclusion, it was determined that the practical courses lectured in distance education in Faculty of Sports Sciences negatively affected the learning levels of students during the pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus.

**Keywords:** Covid-19 pandemic, distance practical education, university students

## 1. Introduction

On December 31, 2019, a new case that started with fever of unknown etiology, dry cough, dyspnea, and pneumonia resulted in death was reported in Wuhan, China's Hubei province (Dong et al., 2020, Jiménez et al., 2020, Palacios Cruz et al., 2021, Aktaş et al., 2020). The virus was reported to be infected from person to person by droplets or by contact of the respiratory secretion materials of the sick person with the mouth, nose, eyes and mucous membranes of healthy people (Li et al., 2020). As of February 17, 2020, the pandemic has spread to every province of China and 27 different countries in the world with more than 70,000 confirmed cases. It was declared as a pandemic on 11 March 2020 due to the very rapid spread of the disease and its high infection rate (Dong et al., 2020). The countries that have been negatively affected from the increase in the rate of cases and deaths every day in the global pandemic have had to take measures in many areas affecting and reorganizing the social life. The measures decided to minimize the infection rate of the rapidly spreading corona virus and the adverse effects of the mortality rate have been taken in our lives without loss of any time (Çelik and Yenal, 2020).

The first Covid-19 case in Turkey was diagnosed in March 2020, and some precautions were necessarily taken in educational activities in order to prevent the spread of the virus (Afşar and Büyükdoğan, 2020). First of all, education was suspended for three weeks in all primary, secondary and higher education institutions including preschool education institutions as of March 16, 2020. Subsequent to the increase at the number of cases, all education levels were decided to be maintained in distance education method until the end of 2019-2020 spring semester. At the meeting held on March 13, Higher Education Council decided to suspend education in the universities in Turkey for 3 weeks as of March 16, 2021, and subsequently, the educational activities at universities that had distance education infrastructure was decided to be executed distance as of March 23, 2020 (Şen and Kızılcıoğlu, 2020, YÖK-Higher Education Council, 2020). So that, at the same time millions of students were simultaneously started to be lectured in distance education courses in Turkey.

Distance education is defined as a form of education that is not possible to be carried on in traditional teaching techniques enabling students and teachers to be

independent from each other in different places with a more flexible but a certain standard, being low cost, allowing continuity in learning, being more practical and offering more diversity within the scope of measurement and evaluation (Demir, 2014). Today's distance education processes cannot be fully an alternative to face-to-face implementations yet (Tuncer and Bahadır, 2017). In this sense, the dimension of interaction provided in face-to-face education is possible to be expressed as the most important deficiency for distance education. The distance education system was generally used in theoretical courses in the period before the pandemic. For this reason, difficulties have arisen in administering the distance education model in departments with practical course curriculum whereas it can be easily administered in theoretical courses after the pandemic. While the distance education process is possible to be considered as efficient for theoretical courses, appropriate curricula and content for practical courses is noticed to be developed.

In education curricula of the Faculty of Sport Sciences and School of Physical Education and Sports, the courses have been conducted in two ways as theoretical and practical. Some of these courses are only theoretical, some are theoretical and practical, and some others are only taught in practice. Administering theoretical and practical courses together is extremely important in terms of putting the learned knowledge into practice, using the body effectively, comprehending and performing individual-team and field courses. In the current curriculum, the Physical Education and Sports Teaching Department's total course hours in 8 semesters is 171 including 42 hours (24.5%) as practice; the total course hours of the Coaching Education Department is 171 including 56 hours (31.8%) as practice; the total course hours of the Department of Sports Management is 174, and 26 hours (14.9%) of these are practice and the total course hours of the Recreation Department are 206, 42 hours (20.3%) of these are practice courses. According to this rate, the practice courses which create a large part of the general course hour base are extremely valuable in terms of lecturing the courses in Faculties of Sport Sciences. Moreover, especially the practical courses enable the students acquire experiences in terms of using the demonstration method in their future professional lives with their students and teaching the acts of their course. In this context, it is considered that administering practical courses face to face is possible to be more beneficial for students studying in sports sciences. It is suggested that the not administering face-to-face education during the pandemic period has had negative effects upon the educational processes of departments that have practice courses such as Faculty of Sports Sciences and School of Physical Education and Sports. The distance education system's quality of providing theoretical subjects reveals some inadequacies for students of the departments with practical courses. Due to the limited number of studies on the subject, to what extent these inadequacies will affect students is not known well. In this sense, it is very important to investigate the subject.

This research was carried out to determine the effects of the practice courses lectured in distance education during the pandemic period on learning levels of the students studying at Faculty of Sports Sciences of the universities.

## **2. Method**

This research was designed using the screening model. The screening model was used for studies carried out on larger samples investigating the properties such as interests, skills, attitudes and views of the participants upon a subject or event (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008). The random method was used in sample selection (Baştürk and Taştepe, 2013). The sample group of the study totally included 460 university volunteer students including 233 females (50.7%) and 227 males (49.3%) studying at the Faculty of Sport Sciences of various universities in the Fall Semester of the 2020-2021 Academic Year. The questionnaire form was performed to the students online, and the necessary explanations were given in the questionnaire before starting the study.

### **2.1 Data Collection Tools**

#### **2.1.1 Personal Information Form**

In the study, the personal information form created by the researchers was used to determine the demographic properties of the participants such as age, gender, the department they studied, the university they studied, and the practical courses they took with distance education during the pandemic period.

#### **2.1.2 Attitude Questionnaire**

The questionnaire form prepared by the researchers using the examples in the literature was used in order to determine the participants' attitudes towards distance education courses and exams due to the isolation days caused by Covid-19 virus. The questionnaire form included 10 items to be answered as "I agree", "Neither agree nor disagree" and "I disagree". The items asked in the questionnaire were listed below.

### **2.2 Data Analysis**

SPSS 25 statistical analysis software was used to analyze the data. These data were expressed in frequency and percentage. In addition, the Chi-Square Test ( $\chi^2$ ) was performed for determining whether the variables of department and grade had a significant effect upon the answers given to the attitude questions.

### **2.3 Ethical Aspect of the Research**

Ethical permission was obtained as result of the decision number 20 taken in 02.04.2021 dated and E-60263016-050.06.04-29083 numbered Sivas Cumhuriyet University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Social and Human Sciences Committee meeting.

### 3. Findings

**Table 1:** Demographic Properties of the Students and Their Views on Distance Education

		N	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	227	49,3
	Female	233	50,7
<b>Department</b>	Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching	187	41,3
	Department of Coaching Training	111	24,5
	Department of Sports Management	135	29,8
	Department of Recreation	20	4,4
<b>Grade</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	115	25,4
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	71	15,7
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	91	20,1
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	176	38,9
Would you like distance education process to continue?	Yes	116	25,1
	No	346	74,9
Do you consider the current distance education system in your university efficacious?	Yes	211	45,7
	No	251	54,3
Can you connect to the distance education system at your university without experiencing any problems?	Yes	271	58,5
	No	192	41,5
Do you benefit from the distance education system at the university you are studying?	Yes	273	59,3
	No	187	40,7

**Table 2:** The Attitude Results of Students against Practical Courses Lectured During Isolation Days Caused by Covid-19 Virus

	I agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		I Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I think the practical courses lectured in distance education process will create a deficiency and negativity in my education life in the next semester or normal life.	317	68,3	84	18,1	63	13,6
I do not consider the opportunities offered by our school for practical courses in distance education process as efficacious.	254	54,7	137	29,5	73	15,7
I do not think the education before the pandemic period and the education during the distance education period have created a negative difference to my learning level.	165	35,6	146	31,5	153	33,0
I do not think the courses lectured in distance education for the Faculty of Sport Sciences students during the pandemic period are suitable for our department.	300	64,7	97	20,9	67	14,4
I do not think the theoretical expression of my practical courses in distance education process contributes upon my learning level.	293	63,1	100	21,6	71	15,3

I would like the measurement and evaluation of my practical courses to be fulfilled online after the pandemic period is over.	149	32,1	145	31,3	170	36,6
I would like my practical courses to be lectured by visual or live presentations instead of theoretical expression in distance education process.	317	68,3	100	21,6	47	10,1
I would like to take my practical courses face to face if there were opportunities during the pandemic period.	346	74,6	74	15,9	44	9,5
I do not believe that I will be able to put my theoretical practical courses into practice in distance education.	224	48,3	173	37,3	67	14,4
I do not consider my learning level in practical courses adequate in distance education process.	298	64,2	106	22,8	60	12,9

When the preferences of the students participating into the study in a 3-point Likert-type scale were analyzed in Table 2, it was noticed that whereas the rate of "I Agree" was high (%36,6) only in the item of "I would like the measurement and evaluation of my practical courses to be fulfilled online after the pandemic period is over," the rate of "I agree" was high for all the remaining items.

**Table 3:** The Chi-Square Test Results According to the Variable of Grade in Attitude Levels of the Students towards the Practice Courses Lectured in Distance Education during the Pandemic Period Caused by the Covid-19 Virus

		1 <sup>st</sup> Grade		2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade		3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade		4 <sup>th</sup> Grade		Pearson Chi-Square p
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
I think the practical courses lectured in distance education process will create a deficiency and negativity in my education life in the next semester or normal life.	I Agree	84	73,0	46	64,8	64	70,3	115	65,3	,118
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	24	20,9	14	19,7	15	16,5	28	15,9	
	I Disagree	7	6,1	11	15,5	12	13,2	33	18,8	
I do not consider the opportunities offered by our school for practical courses in distance education process as efficacious.	I Agree	56	48,7	40	56,3	60	65,9	94	53,4	,094
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	42	36,5	23	32,4	17	18,7	49	27,8	
	I Disagree	17	14,8	8	11,3	14	15,4	33	18,8	
I do not think the education before the pandemic period and the education during the distance education period have created a negative difference to my learning level.	I Agree	38	33,0	26	36,6	33	36,3	65	36,9	,720
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	44	38,3	23	32,4	25	27,5	52	29,5	
	I Disagree	33	28,7	22	31,0	33	36,3	59	33,5	
I do not think the courses lectured in distance education for the Faculty of Sport Sciences students during the pandemic period are suitable for our department.	I Agree	77	67,0	50	70,4	59	64,8	105	59,7	,620
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	22	19,1	10	14,1	19	20,9	44	25,0	
	I Disagree	16	13,9	11	15,5	13	14,3	27	15,3	
	I Agree	76	66,1	45	63,4	59	64,8	106	60,2	,594

Mustafa Kaya, Alperen Çırcır, Alper Eyiç, Mehmet Kargün, Recep Bozdemir  
FACULTY OF SPORTS SCIENCES STUDENTS' LEARNING LEVELS OF  
THE PRACTICAL COURSES DURING THE PANDEMIC PERIOD

I do not think the theoretical expression of my practical courses in distance education process contributes upon my learning level.	Neither Agree nor Disagree	26	22,6	13	18,3	15	16,5	42	23,9	
	I Disagree	13	11,3	13	18,3	17	18,7	28	15,9	
I would like the measurement and evaluation of my practical courses to be fulfilled online after the pandemic period is over.	I Agree	34	29,6	25	35,2	30	33,0	55	31,3	,965
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	38	33,0	21	29,6	25	27,5	57	32,4	
	I Disagree	43	37,4	25	35,2	36	39,6	64	36,4	
I would like my practical courses to be lectured by visual or live presentations instead of theoretical expression in distance education process.	I Agree	88	76,5	50	70,4	61	67,0	110	62,5	,075
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	22	19,1	16	22,5	20	22,0	39	22,2	
	I Disagree	5	4,3	5	7,0	10	11,0	27	15,3	
I would like to take my practical courses face to face if there were opportunities during the pandemic period.	I Agree	97	84,3	56	78,9	70	76,9	114	64,8	,002**
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	12	10,4	5	7,0	13	14,3	42	23,9	
	I Disagree	6	5,2	10	14,1	8	8,8	20	11,4	
I do not believe that I will be able to put my theoretical practical courses into practice in distance education.	I Agree	56	48,7	36	50,7	50	54,9	77	43,8	,013*
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	50	43,5	27	38,0	21	23,1	70	39,8	
	I Disagree	9	7,8	8	11,3	20	22,0	29	16,5	
I do not consider my learning level in practical courses adequate in distance education process.	I Agree	77	67,0	47	66,2	65	71,4	103	58,5	,448
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	25	21,7	14	19,7	16	17,6	47	26,7	
	I Disagree	13	11,3	10	14,1	10	11,0	26	14,8	

\*p<0,05, \*\*p<0,01

When the Attitude Levels of the students participating into the study towards the Practice Courses Lectured in Distance Education were analyzed, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p<0.05$ ) according to the variable of grade in the answers given to the item of "I would like to take my practical courses face to face if there were opportunities during the pandemic period," and to the item of "I do not believe that I will be able to put my theoretical practical courses into practice in distance education" and no significant difference was found in the other items ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table 4:** The Chi-Square Test Results According to the Variable of Department in Attitude Levels of the Students towards the Practice Courses Lectured in Distance Education during the Pandemic Period Caused by the Covid-19 Virus

		Department of Physical Education and Sports		Department of Coaching Training		Department of Sports Management		Department of Recreation		Pearson Chi-Square <b>p</b>
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
I think the practical courses lectured in distance education process will create a deficiency and negativity in my education life in the next semester or normal life.	I Agree	129	69,0	79	71,2	88	65,2	14	70,0	,404
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	28	15,0	18	16,2	31	23,0	5	25,0	
	I Disagree	30	16,0	14	12,6	16	11,9	1	5,0	
I do not consider the opportunities offered by our school for practical courses in distance education process as efficacious.	I Agree	109	58,3	61	55,0	68	50,4	11	55,0	,467
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	45	24,1	37	33,3	45	33,3	6	30,0	
	I Disagree	33	17,6	13	11,7	22	16,3	3	15,0	
I do not think the education before the pandemic period and the education during the distance education period have created a negative difference to my learning level.	I Agree	65	34,8	40	36,0	51	37,8	7	35,0	,882
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	56	29,9	32	28,8	44	32,6	8	40,0	
	I Disagree	66	35,3	39	35,1	40	29,6	5	25,0	
I do not think the courses lectured in distance education for the Faculty of Sport Sciences students during the pandemic period are suitable for our department.	I Agree	114	61,0	74	66,7	92	68,1	16	80,0	,368
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	44	23,5	24	21,6	21	15,6	3	15,0	
	I Disagree	29	15,5	13	11,7	22	16,3	1	5,0	
I do not think the theoretical expression of my practical courses in distance education process contributes upon my learning level.	I Agree	114	61,0	71	64,0	86	63,7	15	75,0	,665
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	43	23,0	26	23,4	25	18,5	4	20,0	
	I Disagree	30	16,0	14	12,6	24	17,8	1	5,0	
I would like the measurement and evaluation of my practical courses to be fulfilled online after the pandemic period is over.	I Agree	57	30,5	34	30,6	47	34,8	4	20,0	,588
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	56	29,9	40	36,0	38	28,1	9	45,0	
	I Disagree	74	39,6	37	33,3	50	37,0	7	35,0	



I would like my practical courses to be lectured by visual or live presentations instead of theoretical expression in distance education process.	I Agree	128	68,4	72	64,9	95	70,4	16	80,0	,503
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	36	19,3	28	25,2	29	21,5	4	20,0	
	I Disagree	23	12,3	11	9,9	11	8,1	0		
I would like to take my practical courses face to face if there were opportunities during the pandemic period.	I Agree	144	77,0	74	66,7	106	78,5	15	75,0	,395
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	27	14,4	24	21,6	17	12,6	4	20,0	
	I Disagree	16	8,6	13	11,7	12	8,9	1	5,0	
I do not believe that I will be able to put my theoretical practical courses into practice in distance education.	I Agree	80	42,8	55	49,5	73	54,1	12	60,0	,225
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	81	43,3	38	34,2	41	30,4	7	35,0	
	I Disagree	26	13,9	18	16,2	21	15,6	1	5,0	
I do not consider my learning level in practical courses adequate in distance education process.	I Agree	116	62,0	71	64,0	94	69,6	14	70,0	,323
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	45	24,1	30	27,0	21	15,6	4	20,0	
	I Disagree	26	13,9	10	9,0	20	14,8	2	10,0	

When the attitude levels of the students participating in the study towards the practical courses lectured in distance education were analyzed, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference in all items ( $p>0,05$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

COVID-19 which started in Wuhan, China in November 2019 and was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020 affected the education sector as well as many other ones. With the spread of the pandemic, education was suspended in our country and the distance education model was decided to be administered in all educational institutions since the spread of the pandemic could not be stopped. In this context, it was observed that the majority of educational institutions were blindsided for transition to distance education (Şen and Kizilcalioğlu, 2020). Since theoretical and computer-based practice courses were carried out in distance education model until today, there appeared greater difficulties in these courses due to the first trial of practice courses lectured in laboratory and workshop environments.

It was very difficult to reach concrete data due to the fact that the rate of practical courses was high in the Faculty of Sport Sciences and there was almost no research carried out on how the distance education model administered during the pandemic

process could affect the learning levels of the students. In this context, this research was a completely original study, and would provide remarkable contributions upon further studies on this subject. Furthermore, since the literature on the subject was very limited, the comparisons were made with the studies in similar quality. The results of this study which was carried out depending on the importance of the process were as follows.

In the questionnaire we performed, the rate of students who answered yes to the question "Would you like distance education process to continue?" was (n=116, 25.1%), and the rate of students who answered no was (n=346, 74.9%). When considering the values obtained, it was noticed that the number of students who did not want the distance education process to continue was quite high. In this context, the students of the Faculty of Sports Sciences had a high desire level to have face-to-face education. It was considered that some of the students answered no thinking that it was easier to pass the courses in distance education process.

In comparison of the questionnaire performed to measure the attitudes of students towards the practical courses lectured in distance education according to the variable of grade, a significant difference ( $p>0,05$ ) was determined between the grades when the answers given to the items of "I would like to take my practical courses face to face if there were opportunities during the pandemic period" and "I do not believe that I will be able to put my theoretical practical courses into practice in distance education" were analyzed. No significant difference was determined in other items. When the frequency values were analyzed, it was noticed that students' willingness to take practical courses face to face was high, but the willingness rate of the fourth-grade students was lower than the other grades. It was considered that this could be arisen due the fourth-grade students' regarding themselves as trained and competent, especially in terms of practical courses, since they fulfilled all their theoretical and practical training face to face before the pandemic period. In the item of "I do not believe that I will be able to put my theoretical practical courses into practice in distance education" in which we found a significant difference between the grades, the frequency values of the fourth-grade students were specified to be high. It was noticed that the data obtained had a quality supporting the previous item. In this sense, it was noticed that fourth grade students believed they could put theoretically lectured practical courses into practice depending on the acquisitions they had in their face-to-face education in previous three-year period up to the pandemic process.

Kahraman stated that in the process experienced with COVID-19 pandemic, all theoretical and practical courses were offered to the students with distance education method, and distance education model was administered compulsorily since formal education was completely stopped. Furthermore, he stated that distance education system was beneficial and sufficient for theoretical lessons, but in fields where some part of the curriculum was administered practically, difficulties in practical course were experienced in distance education model, and therefore the practical courses could not be maintained with distance education method (Kahraman, 2020). Kürtüncü and Kurt suggested that the practical courses lectured in the COVID-19 pandemic were inefficient

and these courses should be repeated in an accelerated manner in following periods (Kürtüncü and Kurt, 2020). Demir stated in his study on distance education from the perspectives of students that because students constantly found themselves in a listening position in a virtual classroom environment, they felt themselves isolated. Furthermore, it was stated that technological inadequacies were possible to harm the flow of information and such situations could be efficient upon student motivation (Demir, 2014). Şen and Kızılcıoğlu reported that disadvantages of distance education are felt more especially in practical courses (Şen and Kızılcıoğlu, 2020).

Yolcu stated in his study on distance education experiences of preservice classroom teachers during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic process that the vast majority of students (83%) experienced the fear of their education to remain incomplete (Yolcu, 2020). In the study carried out on conservatory students' perceptions and experiences related to distance education during the Covid-19 outbreak, Umuztaş and Taş stated that students generally experienced performance loss in practical areas (Instrument and Practices) (Umuztaş & Taş, 2020). In a study, Kırbaş mentioned that the faculty members carrying on their duties in the Faculties of Sports Sciences in universities considered lecturing practical courses with distance education was inadequate and inefficient (Kırbaş, 2020). Current literature information indicated that the theoretical lectured practical courses lectured in both sports sciences and other branches during the pandemic process had a negative effect upon the education level of the students, and this supported the data obtained in our study.

In the study, the attitudes of Faculty of Sports Sciences students towards the practical courses lectured in distance education process were analyzed in terms of the variable of department, as well. According to the data obtained, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the departments in all asked items ( $p>0,05$ ). In this sense, it was considered that the attitudes of the students of the Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, Department of Coaching Education, Department of Sports Management and Department of Recreation were the same towards the practical courses lectured in distance education.

In conclusion, it was considered that the practical courses lectured in distance education in the Faculty of Sports Sciences negatively affected the learning levels of the students during the pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus. It was observed that most of the students believed they would not be able to put the theoretical courses lectured in distance education into practice during this period and this would have a negative effect on their development. Furthermore, in this process, insofar as circumstances permit, it was considered that lecturing the courses face-to-face was adopted by the students, and there was a consensus on this.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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