

## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FEAR OF PARENTS AND EDUCATION AT HOME DURING THE PANDEMIA IN MUGLA

Saadet Kuru Cetin<sup>1</sup>

Goksel Ergul<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The coronavirus epidemic has had a significant impact on education systems around the world. In this context, distance education has been seen as the most appropriate method to continue the education of students without interruption. Therefore, parents have important duties. In this research, the fear experienced by parents during the pandemic period and the obstacles they experience in distance education were examined. Scanning model was adopted in the study. The data of the research was collected in the Mentese district of Mugla in the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. 154 parents, including 24 men, 130 women, 41 primary school graduates, 51 high school graduates, 48 undergraduate and 12 postgraduate parents, participated in the research. The data of the study were collected with the COVID-19 Fear Scale developed by Ahorsu et al. (2020). According to the findings of the research, the item that the participants agreed with the most was "I am most afraid of coronavirus-19" (3.98), and the item they agreed with the least was "I cannot sleep because I am worried about catching the coronavirus-19" (2,17). Most of the participating parents stated that when the distance education process started, they looked at internet-based education sites and bought extracurricular activity books for their children, but they did not give their children private lessons.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, COVID-19, parents, education.

### Article History Article Type

Received:  
Research article

Accepted:.....

Published:.....

### Recommended Citation:

## INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus (Covid-19) epidemic has been on the agenda of the world for a long time. The virus, which first appeared in the Wuhan region of China towards the end of December 2019 (Huang et al., 2020: 497), is a deadly disease that causes serious acute respiratory tract infections (Zhou et al., 2020: 270). COVID-19, which was detected in China at the end of 2019 was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11th March, 2020. It is known that coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), a new type of coronavirus disease that started to spread from China to the whole

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author: Mugla Sıtkı Kocman University, Assoc. Prof. Dr., Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences, Educational Administration, Mugla/Turkey, skuru@mu.edu.tr; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4847-5796>

<sup>2</sup> Mentese Primary School, Mugla/Turkey, gergul82@hotmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4331-6892>

world at the end of 2019, causes fear and anxiety among all people because of its emergence and consequences.

Uncertainty regarding the definitive treatment of the coronavirus (Covid-19) epidemic, which has affected the whole world, still continues. And this leads the countries to take various precautions. Since the first coronavirus case was confirmed in Turkey on March 11, 2020, various measures have been taken to stop the spread of the coronavirus, as in other countries where the epidemic was seen. In this direction, restrictions have been taken in places such as shopping malls and cinemas where people live together, and restrictions on applications to hospitals. With the call to stay at home, the government recommended social isolation to the whole country and forbidden to go out without wearing mask (T.R. Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2020). On the other hand, as of March 13, 2020, education in schools was suspended in our country, and 18 million primary and secondary school students who had previously received face-to-face education started to receive education from their homes. At the same time, according to the statistics of YOK (Higher Education Information Management System)(2020) approximately 8 million students registered in associate, undergraduate and graduate programs have also stopped their education and started to receive online education.

Moreover, the Covid-19 global epidemic causes more than millions of people to die. In addition to this, it is seen that it has negative effects in various fields such as politics, tourism, transportation and education, especially health and economy. It is claimed that situations such as social distance, isolation, death of a close friend, being infected, and the uncertainty of the future of the epidemic cause negative psychological effects on individuals (Bhuiyan, Sakib, Pakpour, Griffiths, & Mamun, 2020; Brooks et al., 2020).

In addition to the fear that people or their relatives will die, the fear of not being able to reach health institutions, the fear of food shortages, the fear of being infected at any time (Bicer et al., 2020) or the fear of infecting someone else, the fear of being unemployed, etc. will increase. Such thoughts threaten people's physical health and lives, increase their stress levels, and trigger a wide variety of psychological problems such as anxiety and depression (Harper et al., 2020; Pakpour & Griffiths, 2020).

Social and economic reflections with epidemic-related issues such as social distance, isolation, and quarantine; It can trigger psychological mediators such as sadness, anxiety, fear, anger, frustration, guilt, helplessness, loneliness and tension in individuals. These are the common features of typical mental health problems that most people will experience during and after the crisis (Ahorsu et al., 2020; Banerjee, 2020; Mamun & Griffiths, 2020; Xiang et al., 2020). The unavoidable increases in the number of positive cases and the death of people, lead to fear, which is a psychological aspect of the Covid-19 epidemic (Pakpour & Griffiths, 2020).

The feeling of fear, which has an important role in people's "fight or flight" decision at the time of danger, can cause people to feel anxious and stressed when it rises above a certain level, and it can negatively affect their mental health. Studies have found that fear of COVID-19 is predominantly associated with anxiety, depression, and stress (Bakioglu et al., 2020; Harper et al., 2020).

Furedi (2001: 8) defines fear as a mechanism that enables the human mind to concentrate on the fear object when faced with unexpected and unpredictable situations. It is a human reflex to feel fear, anxiety and worry in the positive or negative, sudden and unexpected changes in his life. In another definition, it is the feeling of fear, the tension that occurs during a perceived danger and threat, rapid heartbeat, tension in the muscles, etc. It is an intense emotional arousal experienced with symptoms (Duzenli, 2019, p.947). Social distance and isolation have been talking a lot among the people. For this reason, a new fear, which is defined by different terms such as "coronaphobia" or "fear of COVID-19", has begun to spread in the society.

## Method

In order to determine the online education barriers of the parents, the survey design, one of the quantitative research methods, was used. One of the quantitative research methods, the survey design aims to describe the characteristics of large masses with questions such as "at what level" (Buyukozturk, Kilic, Akgun, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2016)

Because of the continuing the spread of the epidemic and strict isolation measures, postponing the opening of schools and universities in the country, it is expected that it will affect the mental health of the parents. For this reason, the aim of the study is to examine the levels of tolerance for fear and uncertainty according to some variables. For this purpose, the question "What is the level of parents' intolerance of COVID-19 fear and uncertainty?" was searched.

### Participants

Parents, from Mugla's Mentese district, are the study group. An online questionnaire was used to collect data from 154 parents in Mentese district of Mugla, using a primitive random sampling approach as a sample. Parents who took part in the survey are listed in Table 1. At this part, the demographic characteristics of the parents and students are expressed.

**Table. 1**

*Demographic Background of participants*

Demographic Background		Number of Participants	Percentage
Gender	Female	130	%84.4
	Male	24	%15.5
Level of Parent's Education	Primary School	41	%26.6
	High School	51	%33.1
	Undergraduate Degree	48	%31.1
	Postgraduate Degree	12	%7.79
The Student's school	State School	144	%93.05
	Private school	9	%5.84

### Research Instruments

The data of the study were collected with COVID-19 Fear Scale. The COVID-19 Fear Scale (C19-FS) is a one-dimensional scale which was developed by Ahorsu et al. (2020). The scale consists of 7 items (Some items of the scale: "I am very afraid of the coronavirus"; "Thinking about the coronavirus disturbs me"; "When I watch the news and stories about the coronavirus on social media, I feel anxious"). The scale is a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = totally agree). Factor loads (.66-.74) and corrected item-total correlation (.47-.56) of the scale were found to be acceptable. The internal consistency of the scale was calculated as  $\alpha = .82$  and test-retest reliability as  $r = .72$ . K19-FS showed a positive correlation with perceived weakness, hospital anxiety, and depression (Ahorsu et al., 2020)

### Results

#### *The level of e-learning implementation barriers*

At this part, the descriptive statistics results of e-learning implementation barriers for parents who participated in the study, are given.

**Table 2.**

*Descriptive results of e-learning implementation barriers for parents Level barrier*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1 I am very afraid of coronavirus-19.	154	3,98	1,06
2 It makes me uncomfortable to think about coronavirus-19.	154	3,84	1,11
3 My hands become clammy when I think about coronavirus-19.	154	2,16	,98
4 I am afraid of losing my life because of coronavirus-19.	153	3,47	1,21
5 When watching news and stories about coronavirus-19 on social media, I become nervous or anxious.	153	3,69	1,15
6 I cannot sleep because I'm worrying about getting coronavirus-19.	154	2,17	1,02
7 My heart races or palpitates when I think about getting coronavirus-19.	154	2,53	1,16

Table 2 shows that the opinions of the participants vary between 2,17 and 3,98 in the parents of the e-learning implementation barriers scale. The weighted arithmetic mean for this dimension was calculated as 3,12. In other words, the parents expressed the statements regarding this dimension as "Neither agree nor disagree". The item, most agreed by participants in this dimension is "I am most afraid of coronavirus-19" (3.98), The item, least agreed by participants in this dimension is "I cannot sleep because I'm worrying about getting coronavirus-19." (2,17)

**Table 3.**

*Descriptive results on whether look at the internet-based education sites for their child*

	Yes	No	(No answer)	Total
<i>When the e-learning process started for your child, did you look at the internet-based education sites?</i>	87	60	7	154

The question "When the distance education process started for your child, did you look at the internet-based education sites?" is asked to the parents for the this study. Accordingly, 87 parents who participated in the study stated that they looked at internet-based education sites due to distance education during the pandemic process, while 60 parents stated that they did not look at internet-based education sites. 7 parent's preferred not to answer this question.

**Table 4.**

*Descriptive results on whether extracurricular activity books are buy for their child*

	Yes	No	(No Answer)	Total
Say 2. Did you buy extracurricular activity books for your child when the distance education	124	26	4	154

---

process started?

---

In the study, the question "Did you buy extracurricular activity books when the distance education process started for your child?" was asked to the parents. Accordingly, 124 parents who participated in the study stated that they bought the extracurricular activity books during the pandemic process, and 26 parents did not buy the extracurricular activity books. 4 students did not answer this question.

**Table 5.**

*Descriptive results on whether take private lessons from a teacher for their child*

	Yes	No	(No answer)	Total
<i>Did your child take private lessons from a teacher when the distance education process started?</i>	25	126	3	154

For this research, the question, "Did you have your child take private lessons from a teacher when the distance education process started?" was asked to the parents. Accordingly, 25 parents who participated in the study stated that they had their children receive private lessons during the distance education process, while 126 parents stated that their children did not receive private lessons. 3 parents did not answer this question.

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

Online education is regarded as the best solution in these unusual circumstances where there is no way for face to face education (Ergul, & Kuru Cetin, 2021; Kuru Cetin, & Taskin, 2016). Sindiani (2020) has also stated that online education is the best choice in this period. However, Arslan et al. (2021), it was concluded that the parents had problems with the applications used in the distance education process. Bayburtlu's (2020) research supports this finding that special precautions should be taken for both working parents, as both working parents' children are left uncontrolled during the distance education process. Morrison (2003) and Kuru Cetin and Taskin (2016) and Kiral, and Brion, (2021). have stated that family participation in the education process is effective in the success of the student.

This study has investigated these barriers of online education, the parents face during Covid-19 pandemi. The data was collected from the online questionnaire filled out by the parents of the students, experienced in online education. Okatan and Tagay (2021) has stated in their research that parents and children are worried about the pandemic, parents have most concerns about education, health and technology use. The usage of technology among parents and children has increased during the pandemic process and most students has regularly participated in distance education activities prepared by the Ministry of National Education. It has been concluded that parents have seen distance education activities as necessary, parents have bought extracurricular activity books and used internet-based education sites to support education. These results clearly state that the pandemic period reflects our lives in many ways, and it clearly reveals the place of information technologies in our lives. According to the results of the research, parents have mostly preferred to educational videos, source books, reading books, other parents, or classroom teachers from the internet to support their children's education. At this point, the education level of the parents is an important variable. Parents with higher education levels will have less difficulty in supporting their children's education. According to Yildiz and Vural (2019), as the education level of the parent or the person who takes care of the child increases, the educational opportunities, and qualifications at home increase.

According to Altunel and Ozogul (2020), parents, who have an increasing role in the education process, are worried when managing this situation that they have not faced before. It is quite normal as long as these anxieties experienced by the parents can be controlled and not reflected on the children. According to the results of the study by Dai and Erkok (2020), parents have high negative feelings towards the pandemic period. This situation also increases the anxiety level of children.

As a result; It is understood that the COVID-19 pandemic brings new roles to the parents of students in addition to their normal roles, and it is understood that parents are expected to fulfill some duties and responsibilities appropriate to these roles. According the results of the research, the following suggestions can be made: In this study, questions were asked to both male and female parents. But, a different research can be applied to male or female parent. In this context, only the gender variable can be studied and a qualitative study can be made to contribute to the literature. Educational activities should be organized to raise awareness of parents about the roles expected from parents in the process of distance education. Experts cannot predict how long the pandemic process will last. Accordingly, parents' concerns about education should be reduced first, and parents should be guided about their own and their children's use of technology. Online seminars can be organized on this subject. Printed resources on the subject can be delivered to parents. The scope of this research consists of parents in Mentese district of Mugla province. Similar studies can be done in different provinces, districts and organizations. By comparing these data, obtained by diversifying and expanding the research, more general results may be reached.

## References

- Ahorsu, D. K., Lin, C. Y., Imani, V., Saffari, M., Griffiths, M. D., & Pakpour, A. H. (2020). The fear of COVID-19 scale: development and initial validation. *International journal of mental health and addiction*, 1-9.
- Aslan, O., & Alparslan, Z. N. (1998). Annedeki suregen depresyonun çocukdaki depresyon ve kaygı düzeylerine etkisi: karşılaştırmalı bir çalışma. *Türk Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 9(1), 32-37.
- Bakioglu, F., Korkmaz, O., & Ercan, H. (2021). Fear of COVID-19 and positivity: Mediating role of intolerance of uncertainty, depression, anxiety, and stress. *International journal of mental health and addiction*, 19(6), 2369-2382.
- Bayburtlu, Y. S. (2020). Covid-19 Pandemi dönemi uzaktan eğitim sürecinde öğretmen görüşlerine göre Türkçe eğitimi. *Electronic Turkish Studies*, 15(4).131-151
- Bhuiyan, A. K. M., Sakib, N., Pakpour, A. H., Griffiths, M. D., & Mamun, M. A. (2021). COVID-19-related suicides in Bangladesh due to lockdown and economic factors: case study evidence from media reports. *International journal of mental health and addiction*, 19(6), 2110-2115.
- Bicer, İ., Cakmak, C., Demir, H., & Kurt, M. E. (2020). Koronavirus Anksiyete Ölçeği Kısa Formu: Türkçe geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalışması. *Anatolian Clinic the Journal of Medical Sciences*, 25(Special Issue on COVID 19), 216-225.
- Kiral, B., & Brion, C. (2021). An Educational Leader's E-Mails to the Parents During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Türkiye İletişim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (38), 1-1.
- BüyükOztürk, S., Kılıç, E., Akgün, O., Karadeniz, S., & Demirel, F. (2016). Bilimsel araştırmaya yöntemleri (13. baskı). Ankara: Pegem Yayınları.
- Ergul, G, and Kuru Cetin, S (2021). International Journal of Excellent Leadership (IJEL). *International Journal of Excellent Leadership (IJEL)*: 24.
- Furedi, F., & Yıldırım, B. (2001). *Korku kültürü: Risk almamanın riskleri*. İstanbul: Ayrıntı yayınları.
- Harper, C. A., Satchell, L. P., Fido, D. & Latzman, R. D. (2020). Functional Fear Predicts Public Health Compliance in the COVID 19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Mental Health Addiction*, 1- 14.

- Huang, C., Wang, Y., Li, X., Ren, L., Zhao, J., Hu, Y. & Cao, B. (2020). Clinical Features of Patients Infected with 2019 Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China. *The Lancet* 395(10223), 497-506.
- Morrison, G.S.; Woiko, M.J & Breffni, L. (2003). *Fundamentals of early childhood education*. (Ninth Edition) Upper Saddle River; Pearson: New Jersey, Columbus, Ohio.
- Kuru Cetin, S., & Taskin, P. (2016). Parent involvement in education in terms of their socio-economic status. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 66, 105-122  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2016.66.6>
- Okatan, O., & Tagay, O. (2021). İlkokul velilerinin gÖrüslerine gÖre COVID-19 pandemisi. *Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 17(2), 309-328.
- Pakpour, A. H., & Griffiths, M. D. (2020). The fear of COVID-19 and its role in preventive behaviors. *Journal of Concurrent Disorders*, 2(1), 58-63.
- Sindiani, A. M., Obeidat, N., Alshdaifat, E., Elsalem, L., Alwani, M. M., Rawashdeh, H. & Tawalbeh, L. I. (2020). Distance education during the COVID-19 outbreak: A cross-sectional study among medical students in North of Jordan. *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*, 59, 186-194.
- T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı, (2020). <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/>. 10.03.2022 tarihinde <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/2-gun-sokaga-cikma-yasagi> adresinden erişildi.
- Yıldız, A. ve Akar Vural, R. (2020). Covid-19 pandemisi ve derinleşen eğitim eşitsizlikleri. Türk Tabipleri Birliği COVID-19 Pandemisi Altıncı Ay Değerlendirme Raporu. [https://www.ttb.org.tr/kutuphane/covid19-rapor\\_6/covid19-rapor\\_6\\_Part64.pdf](https://www.ttb.org.tr/kutuphane/covid19-rapor_6/covid19-rapor_6_Part64.pdf)
- YOK (2020). Yükseköğretim Bilgi Yönetim Sistemi, <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>. (01.06.2020).
- Zhou, P., Yang, X. L., Wang, X. G., Hu, B., Zhang, L., Zhang, W., & Shi, Z. L. (2020). A pneumonia outbreak associated with a new coronavirus of probable bat origin. *Nature*, 579(7798), 270-273.