

HOW WAS EDUCATION AFFECTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE WORLD AND IN TURKEY?

Res. Assist. Hüseyin KARAASLAN

huseyinkaraaslan@sdu.edu.tr

Süleyman Demirel University, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world, on education will be discussed. In the first part of the article, brief information about the pandemic is given. In the second part, data on how the education process is managed in the world under the effect of the pandemic has been shared. For this purpose, the educational policies implemented during the pandemic period, specific to country examples, were conveyed. In the third part, graphics about the course of the pandemic in Turkey and the table about the chronology of the pandemic in Turkey are given. In the chronology, certain events and their dates are limited to be directly related to education. In the last part, the education policies implemented during the pandemic period in Turkey were discussed.

What is COVID-19?

The new coronavirus (Covid-19) is a virus that emerged in the last months of 2019 in the Wuhan province of China and was identified by researchers on January 13, 2020. The virus first appeared in a seafood and animal market in Wuhan province, from where it spread to the rest of the world. The disease generally puts people over the age of 60 and those with some chronic diseases at risk (TR Ministry of Health, 2020). In this process, countries have given similar reactions to Covid-19. In order to prevent the spread of the virus, places such as schools, cafes, gyms and places of worship have been closed or restricted in many countries. Businesses closed down or had to change their working hours. Support packages were presented for people who lost their jobs (Aysan, 2020, p. 677). Many governments facing this epidemic, instructed institutions to stop face-to-face meetings and to switch to distance education for educators, as a result of this, there have been situations where it was necessary to switch from face-to-face education to distance education overnight. (Daniel, 2020, p. 91).

The emergence of new mutations of the coronavirus has created new challenges in fighting against the epidemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) has described the Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta variants as worrisome. What is worrying is that these mutations can increase infectivity and lethality, alter disease symptoms, and reduce the effectiveness of prevention and control measures. (Aytekin, 2021). As a result of these developments, it is expected that there will be changes in the practices of the governments during the

pandemic period.

With Covid-19, apart from epidemics that were limited to local effects such as Ebola, for the first time, it was faced with a pandemic that affected the entire world, including developed countries. When previous researches and reports are examined, it has been predicted that the globalizing world will face more epidemic diseases and these diseases will affect all societies (Budak and Korkmaz, 2020, p. 75).

The Course of Covid-19 in the World

In this section, information will be given about the education policies carried out in the world during the pandemic period. For this purpose, it is presented how the pandemic passed in particular countries and what educational policies were put forward in this period. While selecting the countries, data richness was tried to be provided. For this purpose, attention was paid to select countries from different parts of the world.

China

On January 23, 2020, the city of Wuhan was put in strict quarantine. This quarantine covered 11 million people. Afterwards, quarantine practices spread rapidly to the remaining parts of China. However, widespread testing practices in the country also attracted attention. (BBC News Turkish, 2021a). In China, patients with Covid-19 were isolated in certain hospitals, and hospitals were rapidly built in areas with increasing cases. The rapid implementation of measures such as quarantine, social distance and isolation has produced beneficial results in China (Tekin, 2020, p. 337).

Chinese has been the target of criticism from international actors related not announcing the coronavirus to the world early in the covid-19 period and on a few other issues. For instance, according to the news of BBC News Turkish (2021b), the team formed by the WHO was prevented from entering China in January 2021. WHO described this situation as a disappointment. A team of ten people was expected to enter the city of Wuhan, where the epidemic began, and conduct research on the origin of the coronavirus. However, the WHO team entered China a few months later in April 2021 (NTV, 2021). Most of the criticism against China came from the USA. One of them is the statement made by Mike Pompeo, "I can show you a lot of evidence that the coronavirus spread from laboratories in Wuhan." Donald Trump, who made a statement a week before Pompeo, stated that he saw the evidence that the coronavirus spread from the laboratories in Wuhan, but that he would not share the details at that time (Milliyet, 2020a). One of the most up-to-date sources of accusations against China is the US intelligence agency's report on the source of the virus. In May 2021, US President Joe Biden instructed intelligence agencies to prepare a report that would lead to definitive conclusions about the coronavirus. The report was mainly based on two claims. One of these is the claim that coronavirus is naturally transmitted from animal to human. A low confidence label is used for this claim

in the report. The second claim is that the coronavirus was accidentally leaked from the Institute of Virology in Wuhan. In the related report, the moderate confidence label is used for this claim. China, on the other hand, defended itself by declaring the published report as unscientific (BBC News Turkish, 2021c). A similar accusation against China by the USA was made from China to the USA shortly before the publication of the US intelligence report. According to this accusation, it has been suggested that the new coronavirus spread to the world from a military base in the USA. The claim made by Chinese sources has taken its place in the news sources, where it has become increasingly popular in China. (Hürriyet, 2021).

When the education policy of China during the pandemic period is examined, it is seen that they switched to distance education when the schools were closed. At the beginning of the epidemic, the education made with video recording on television was later shifted to online environments where teacher-student interaction and student-centred applications were made. Additionally, efforts were made to increase the effectiveness of education by giving responsibility to parents. The main slogan of education in China during the epidemic period was "School's Out, But Class's On" (Yaman, 2021, p. 3303).

United States of America

The first case in the United States was identified on January 21, 2020, in Washington state. Subsequently, cases were also seen in the states of Chicago and California. In January and February, all foreign-related cases continued to appear. The first death due to covid-19 in the USA occurred on February 29, 2020, in Kirkland, Washington state. Towards the beginning and middle of March 2020, the virus started to spread rapidly in the USA (Baker at all, 2020).

On March 13, 2020, US President Donald Trump declared a national emergency to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States. This has led to the closure of schools, bars, restaurants and cinemas. Besides, a number of other measures have been introduced to prevent mass activities conducted by more than 50 people and increase social distance. In addition, companies were asked to direct to remote teleworking (Chowell and Mizumoto, 2020, p. 1093).

The USA has been one of the countries that allocates the most economic resources in the fight against Covid-19 in the world. According to the news of BBC News Turkish (2020), the President of the USA announced an aid package of 2 trillion dollars in March 2020. There were issues such as helping the sectors most affected by the epidemic, providing cash aid to families, providing loans to small-scale businesses and financial support to health institutions within the scope of the package. According to the news of the Anadolu Agency (Baykan, 2021), another \$ 1.9 trillion covid-19 support package was signed by the US president in March 2021, approximately one year after the 2.4 trillion dollar aid package. The scope of this package included providing cash assistance, supporting local

governments and states, and supporting vaccine distributions.

As a result, the United States has been one of the hardest-hit countries by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to statistics from the WHO, (2021a) as of September 1st, it was among the countries most severely affected by the pandemic, with nearly 39 million confirmed cases and more than 634,000 deaths.

Schools continued with a cycle that opened and closed according to the epidemic course in the USA. At this point, due to the autonomy of local decision-makers, whether schools were open within the scope of the states varied. For this reason, it has become difficult to collectively describe the educational course of the whole United States in the epidemic. According to the TEDMEM (2021, p. 13) report, there are 48 countries in the world where schools are not fully open in the first year of the pandemic, one of which is the United States.

Examining the 2021 Student Achievement Plan launched by the mayor of New York and the chancellor of New York schools to compensate for the learning losses experienced during covid-19 will help us understand epidemic-era education policies in the United States. According to the article on the news site Abc7NY, (2021) the plan includes issues such as identifying learning losses, preparing a digital curriculum, involving parents in the process and compensating for the psychological effects of the epidemic.

Canada

The first case of Covid-19 in Canada was identified on January 25, 2020. A state of emergency was declared in Quebec on March 12, 2020, and in the Nova Scotia region and other regions on March 22. The Canadian government has imposed some travel restrictions as of March 14, 2020 due to the increasing number of cases. As of March 16, access to the country has been restricted. As of March 12, educational institutions were closed and various closure measures were implemented (Selçuk, 2020, p. 89). Schools in Canada opened in September 2020 after being closed for as long as seven months. Schools started hybrid education in the new period, the number of courses decreased and was supported by distance education. Another practice in Canada during this period has been the appointment of a paramedic to each school. The relevant paramedic is assigned to check the case status at the school where he/she is assigned and to identify the cases. In addition, these officials supervised the implementation of pandemic rules at the school. In Canada, the inadequacy of physical facilities in public schools in implementing pandemic measures has been instrumental in parents directing students to private schools (Acar, 2020).

United Kingdom

The government has announced a £330bn aid package to fight against the economic impact

of the Covid-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the pandemic was seen as an emergency and it was emphasized by the government that businesses such as airlines and accommodation companies are under threat. Furthermore, information has been shared with the public that the amount will be increased if this assistance is not enough (BBC, 2020). The assistance announced by the government generally covers business owners who use credit, small business owners, self-employed people and members of many other sectors. Within the scope of the package, practices such as the landlords' inability to evict their tenants for 3 months, and the postponement of the used loans for 3 months have been put forward. (GOV.UK, 2020) Schools in England, which have been closed for two months, started education in a controlled manner on March 8, 2021, with the opening of all primary schools and the gradual opening of other levels. United Kingdom has also been one of the countries keeping schools open intermittently. The latest opening meant that students returned to school for the fourth time since the beginning of the pandemic. (BBC News Turkish, 2021d).

Russia

Russia's introduction to the new coronavirus took place on January 31, 2020. The first coronavirus-related death occurred on March 19, 2020. (Chirciu, 2021) Decisions regarding educational institutions in Russia are taken at a federative level and it is seen that very strict measures are not taken in schools. It is seen that the measures taken are limited to measuring fever and limiting parents' access to school. Most of the schools continued face-to-face education in the pandemic. Besides, as some parts of the country face infrastructure problems while transitioning to online education, various disruptions have occurred. (Anadolu Agency, 2021). In Russia, where the practices related to the closure of schools appeared later, the last bell, which is a tradition and rings on the day the schools close in May, had to ring in digital classroom environments in May 2021. (Sputnik, 2020).

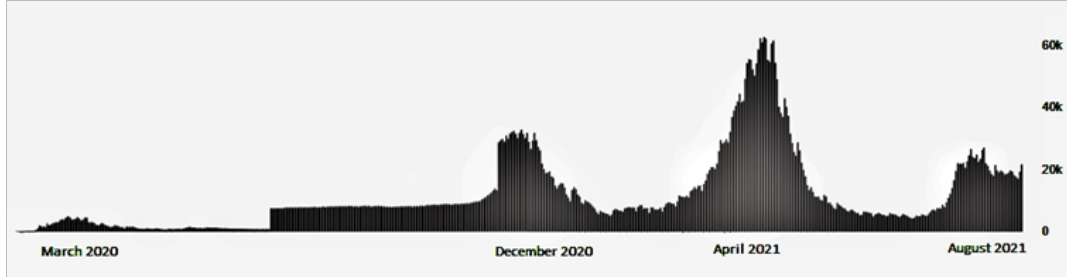
Australia

The first new coronavirus case in Australia was seen on January 25, 2020. (Ministers Department of Health, 2020). In Australia, where the economic impact of the pandemic is being felt strongly, it has been shared that the stimulus package planned for the fiscal year 2020-2021 will cause a huge deficit in the country's economy. Regarding long-term economic problems, the Australian government's Intergenerational Report 2021 foresees that the economic effects of the epidemic will last for 40 years (Pandey, 2021). In August 2020, a state of disaster was declared for a state. In the same time period, while a lockdown was declared on Sunday evening in some states, schools across the country were closed for face-to-face education and distance education was started. (Euronews, 2020). Exactly one year later, in August 2021, it was reported in the media that schools were closed again due to increasing cases (TRT News, 2021).

The Course of Covid-19 in Turkey

In this section, the course of Covid-19 in Turkey will be examined by presenting a graph of cases and deaths. In the continuation of the chapter, important developments in education in the pandemic will be presented in chronological order.

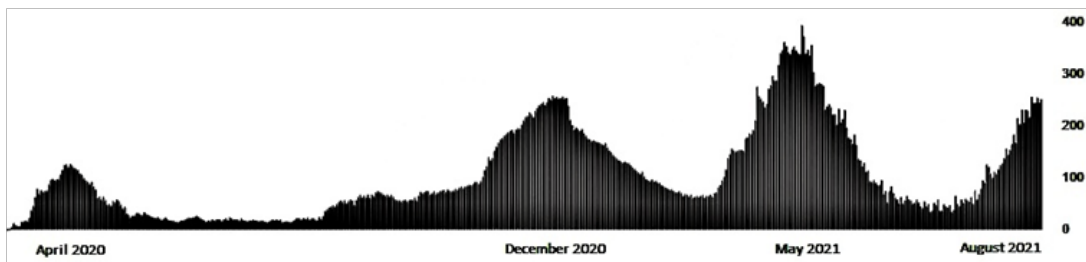
Figure 1. Graph of Covid-19 Cases in Turkey



WHO. (2021b). WHO coronavirus (covid-19) dashboard. Accessed from <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/tr>.

The graph seen in Figure 1 is a graph of the number of cases in Turkey taken from the WHO's website. When the graph is examined, it is seen that after the first case was seen in March 2020, it continued on a certain course and peaked at three points. The highest peak in the number of cases was seen in April 2020. When the decrease in the number of cases in the graph is examined, it can be seen that the applied restrictions are effective. When evaluated in general, it is among the comments that can be understood from the graph that the cases decreased in the summer months.

Figure 2. Graph of Covid-19 Deaths in Turkey



WHO. (2021b). WHO coronavirus (covid-19) dashboard. Accessed from <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/tr>.

The graph seen in Figure 1 is a graph of the number of deaths in Turkey taken from the WHO's website. When the graph is examined, it is seen that the death numbers are fluctuating. It is also noteworthy that the death numbers, in general, peaked four times. It can be said that these peaks took place in April and December of 2020 and May and August of 2021. In general, it can be asserted that the number of deaths decreased as the number of cases decreased as a result of the restrictions.

Seeing the impact of Covid-19 on education in Turkey as a timeline would be helpful in monitoring the course of education policy. Table 1 has been created for this purpose. Important dates are shown in the first column of the table, developments occurring on this date in the second column, and the source of this development is shown in the last column.

Table 1. Timeline of the Course of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Turkey

Date	Case	Source
March 11th, 2020	The first case of coronavirus was seen in Turkey.	(TRT News, 2020a)
March 16, 2020	One week of primary and secondary education and three weeks of university holidays have started. Then this holiday was extended.	(Anadolu Agency, 2020)
April 3, 2020	Lockdown is declared for people under the age of 20.	(T.R. Ministry of Interior, 2020a).
April 9, 2020	Distance education in-service training program for teachers has started.	(Ministry of National Education, [MNE] 2020a)
May 4, 2020	Some freedoms have been imposed on the lockdown for citizens under the age of 20.	(TRT News, 2020b).
May 29, 2020	It was announced that private preschool institutions could be opened as of June 1, 2020.	(MNE, 2020b)
June 1, 2020	It has been announced that private schools could start face-to-face compensation training from 15 August 2020.	(MNE, 2020c)
June 2, 2020	It has been decided that public preschool institutions can remain open until June 19, 2020.	(MNE, 2020d)
June 18, 2020	A partial lockdown was imposed during the LGS sessions on June 20, 2020 and the YKS sessions on June 27-28, 2020.	(T.R. Ministry of Interior, 2020b).

July 3, 2020	It was decided that the new academic year would start on August 31, 2021, with distance education, and that schools would be opened gradually, first at the preschool and first-grade level and then at other levels.	(TRT News, 2020c).
November 18, 2020	Lockdown for under-20s have been imposed with certain freedoms.	(T.R. Ministry of Interior, 2020c)
August 15, 2021	It was announced by the Higher Education Council that preparations were made for universities to start face-to-face education in the 2021-2022 academic year.	(Higher Education Council, 2021).
August 19, 2021	The Minister of National Education announced the start of face-to-face training at all levels on 6 September 2021.	(MNE, 2021a)
September 5, 2021	It was announced that the students in the class, which had two cases in ten days, would be considered contacted and that class would pass to distance education during the quarantine process.	MNE, 2021b

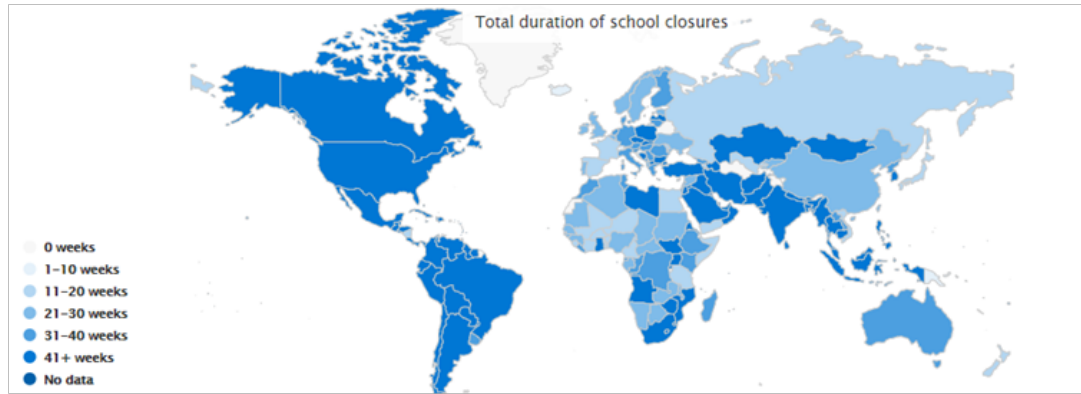
When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that education policies related to the pandemic were implemented shortly after 11 March 2020, when the first case was seen in Turkey, and in this context, schools were first pass to distance education. It can be said that the lockdown imposed on under-20s in Turkey also affects the education process. Because school-age people were subjected to a mandatory quarantine, they continued their education at home in the process. Thus, there was a process in which students stayed at home for a long time and continued home education. It is also among the practices of this period that teachers' in-service training is carried out with distance education in order not to be interrupted during the pandemic process. It is seen that the other effect of the pandemic is the postponement of the central exams. With these postponements, millions of students who will take the exam have been subjected to another effect of the pandemic. As seen in the table, compensation training programs have been implemented to eliminate the inevitable learning losses during this period. When the policies for the 2021-2022 academic year are examined, it can be said that more decisive practices have been put forward for the start

of face-to-face education. It can be asserted that the elimination of the vaccine problem contributed to this.

Education in the Shadow of Covid-19

Education systems affected by the Covid-19 pandemic have generally turned to emergency practices for today while also sought to produce solutions for the future (TEDMEM, 2020). The first of these solutions was to close the schools to face-to-face education. Much of the world has kept schools closed for a long time. According to UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] (2021), the duration of school closures in the world from the beginning of the pandemic to the present day -- September 2020 -- is shown on the map below.

Figure 3. Periods When Schools Around The World Remain Closed (Week)



UNESCO. (2021). *Education: from disruption to recovery*. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse#schoolclosures>

When the map in Figure 3 is examined, it is seen that the majority of the world keeps schools closed for at least 31 weeks. In Turkey, schools remained closed for a total of 49 weeks from the first date of school closure until September 2021 (UNESCO, 2021). The reopening periods of each country after the schools are closed and how the education processes continue when the schools are closed varies. When evaluated in terms of Turkey, with the onset of the covid-19 epidemic, schools were closed on March 16, 2020, first temporarily, then until the end of the term, and pass to distance education. (Milliyet, 2020b). After this time, the education and training in the schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education were started to be carried out through the Information Network (EBA) and some channels of TRT, and the central exams were postponed (Can, 2020, p. 27). EBA, which was established to provide communication between teacher and student and to store auxiliary materials, was broadcast on 18 different channels during the pandemic period with TV screening and six different channels were allocated for each level of education. Twenty-minute lessons are shown on these channels, which are called EBA TV. Thus, EBA has operated in both TV, internet and smartphone applications (Duban and Şen, 2020, p. 360).

About a week after the majority of universities closed, it provided a rapid pass to open and distance education and continued its education. This rapid transition required universities to implement the teaching system in which they will carry out distance education within a week, as well as to provide auxiliary documents, videos, etc. to both faculty members and students about how to use this system. These distance education practices were realized in asynchronous, synchronous or mixed form according to the infrastructure of universities (Durak, Çankaya and İzmirli, p. 2020, 792).

The distance education process has led to different suggestions in the literature on the fight against the pandemic in education. Bozkurt (2020, p. 128-129) specifies proposals such as a balanced presentation of online and offline courses in distance education, the implementation of measurement and evaluation applications based on the process, planning data-driven roadmaps, the development of digital skills, social justice, social equality, and fighting against the trauma of the process while fighting against covid-19 in the field of education.

One of the long-term effects of the pandemic on education is learning losses. While research into learning losses has so far focused on school closures as a result of holidays and natural phenomena, a new and major learning loss has been raised around the world due to the fact that schools have been closed for a long time, leading researchers to this problem. In the report titled TEDMEM (2021) *Turkey's Compensation Education Roadmap*, one of the important sources for this purpose, it was foreseen that due to pandemic period learning losses, students' PISA performance will decrease, the next generation will lose income, and total education time will decrease. In the same report, it was emphasized that all partners should work together to compensate for learning losses and that more evaluation data is needed. The data of the report titled *Learning Loss Detection and Recommendations during the Pandemic Period* published by Eğitim Bir-Sen is also noteworthy for our better understanding of learning losses (Eğitim-Bir-Sen Center for Strategic Studies, 2021). According to the report, about half of teachers stated that they were teaching live every day, and the number of teachers who said that all of the students participated in the live lesson was limited to 5 and 7 percent. The majority of teachers stated that they aimed to close the learning gap by sending documents to students who did not participate in the course.

It is also thought that it will be useful to take a look at other studies that cover the education process together Covid-19 in Turkey. In relation to this, Görgülü Arı and Hayır Kanat (2020) examined the opinions of social studies and science teachers on Covid-19. Pınar and Dönel Akgül (2020) aimed to determine the opinions of secondary school students who took science courses with distance education during the pandemic period. A study that focuses on providing partner diversity to the process has been put forward by Başaran and others (2020). The research aims to determine the opinions of students, parents and teachers on the effectiveness of distance education applied during the pandemic period. Ezer and Aksut (2021) focused on EBA in their studies and aimed

to determine the opinions of social studies teachers to use EBA during the pandemic period. Other research examining the opinions of high school teachers regarding EBA use was put forward by Türker and Dündar (2020). Çakın and Külekçi Akyavuz (2020) conducted a study in which they consulted teacher opinions on what problems the process brings. When the studies are evaluated, it is seen that the weight is research carried out by interview method. Although experimental research seems to be lacking at this point, it can be said that this is due to the difficulties caused by the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the entire world in almost every area. Education is also one of the areas exposed to this effect. Education has passed to distance education due to measures such as social distancing, which is required by the epidemic all over the world. With distance education, the importance of access to education, infrastructure, digital qualifications of educators and students has increased. Everyone has a duty to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic on education. At this point, data-driven projections and support training packages should be created. Education politicians, school administrators, teachers, parents and students should work collaboratively to get through this process with less harm.

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To Cite This Chapter:

Karaaslan, H. (2021). How was education affected by the covid-19 pandemic in the World and in Turkey? In Ö. Akman, F. O. Atasoy, & T. Gür, (Eds.), *Education, social, health and political developments in Turkey between 2000-2020*, 265-282. ISRES Publishing.