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VIEWS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS TEACHER CANDIDATES ON THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC PERIOD ON PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to examine the views of physical education and sports teacher candidates on the effect of the pandemic process on the level of professional competence. For this purpose, qualitative research methods were used in the study. The study is in the phenomenology pattern, which is a type of qualitative research management. The universe of the research consists of physical education and sports department students, and the sample group is within the scope of 10 students studying at Amasya University Physical Education and Sports Department. The sample group in the study was determined by the criterion sampling method. The conduct of this study was approved by the Social Sciences Ethics Committee of Amasya University with the ethics committee decision dated 05.07.2022 and numbered 108.01-78853. In the research, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 7 questions was prepared by Sabah and Derelioğlu (2022) in order to examine the motivational sources of successful athletes. In order not to cause data loss, the interviews were audio recorded. The audio recordings obtained were transcribed. The data transferred to the article were analyzed with the descriptive analysis method in the Nvivo program. As a result of the analysis of the data, the code list was assigned to the appropriate themes. In the study, it is determined that the students of the physical education and sports teaching department could not get efficiency from both practical and theoretical courses, they had internet problems in the process, and they described this period as a loss. On the other hand, it is determined that exam evaluations do not really measure knowledge and that the grade point average of working or non-working students increases, in short, it is not a fair exam. Finally, in this process, it is determined that there are suggestions of the participants such as completing the missing materials within the scope of the course, making up especially the practical courses at the end of this process, requiring the camera to be on in order to prevent cheating in the exam, and delaying the graduation of the students who feel lacking in knowledge. In this context, it is thought that the results of the research will provide solutions that will contribute to the healthier conduct of online education.

Keywords: Physical education and sports, professional competence, teacher candidates, pandemic process

INTRODUCTION

The concept of education emerges as one of the most crucial elements in the development of societies. In the present knowledge age, with the influence of technological advancements, information technologies are rapidly evolving (İsman, 2008). Over time, societies have been affected in various ways by the advancements in technology. Education is also a field impacted by these developments (Akpinar, 2003). Throughout history, humans have overcome numerous disasters such as earthquakes and pandemics, implementing measures to endure and continue their existence (Sarı and Nayır, 2020). Those who faced these disasters have developed survival skills. Concepts like remote education and e-learning (Güneş, 2016) have emerged as a result of societies utilizing technology to take precautions in extraordinary situations for education. These extraordinary circumstances, including the reflections of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the earthquake disaster in 2023 on our country, have brought along challenges in education. Extraordinary events like the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019, with the first case seen in our country on March 11, 2020 (Budak and Korkmaz, 2020), have affected not only our routine lives but also educational, instructional, and sports activities. As the containment efforts for the pandemic proved unsuccessful, measures like social distancing and school closures were implemented (Mac Kenzie, 2020). Governments made gradual and hasty decisions to prevent the Covid-19 outbreak (Bergdahl and Nouri, 2020). One of the most important problems in education is how to increase the performance of teachers, which directly affects the quality of education (Kusan and Mumcu, 2021). Adapting educational activities to online formats took time and had negative effects on students. In this context, the global events that have impacted humanity have caused significant changes across all professional fields. Physical education and sports teacher candidates also fall within these professional groups. The abrupt halt of sports activities due to the Covid-19 outbreak has negatively affected athletes in terms of mental, psychological, and social aspects. The absence from training, fear of performance decline, anxiety, concern, and other emotions during this period can affect their aggression levels (Şahinler et al., 2020). Physical education and sports teacher candidates have been slightly more affected compared to students in other departments. The emphasis on practical courses alongside theoretical classes has forced them to receive education remotely, diminishing its effectiveness. Although accelerated practical sessions were conducted later, the necessity to follow precautions like mask usage, disinfection, and limited shared spaces influenced the quality of education. These measures have been found to have a negative impact on the competence of physical education and sports teacher candidates, as highlighted in the literature and discussions.

Based on this rationale, this study aims to explore the opinions of physical education and sports teacher candidates regarding the impact of the pandemic on their professional competence levels. In the literature, numerous studies have been conducted to uncover the adverse effects of the pandemic on education, instruction, and professional life (Başaran et al., 2020; Genç et al., 2020; Genç & Gümrükçüoğlu, 2020; Eti & Karaduman, 2020; Sakarya & Zahal 2020; Yolcu, 2020; Acar et al., 2021; Duban & Şen, 2020). Pre-service training is fundamental to the teaching profession (Burke et al., 1987). Considering the prevalence of practical courses in physical education and sports, it is believed that their professional competence may be negatively affected. Additionally, considering

the lack of studies on the impact of the pandemic on the professional competence of physical education and sports teachers in the literature, the need for this study has arisen. Therefore, this study aims to examine the opinions of physical education and sports teacher candidates regarding the impact of the pandemic on their professional competence levels. In this context, it is believed that this study will contribute to the literature by determining whether the pandemic has negatively affected the professional competence of teacher candidates who are trained in areas with practical education, and whether the assumption that the pandemic has caused damage to all education and instruction is correct.

METHOD

In this section of the study, information regarding the research model, population and sample, data collection tool, and the analysis process has been provided.

Research Model

In this study, the opinions of physical education and sports teacher candidates regarding the impact of the pandemic on their professional competence level were investigated using qualitative research methods. The study adopts a phenomenology design, which is a type of qualitative research approach. This approach allows for the exploration and interpretation of lived experiences related to a phenomenon for individuals or a group (Grbich, 2013). Therefore, the inclusion of physical education and sports department students in the sample group is due to their experiences related to the pandemic.

Participants

The universe of the study consists of students in the physical education and sports department, and the sample group covers 8 students studying in the Department of Physical Education and Sports at Amasya University. The sample group in the study was determined through criterion sampling. The criteria determined by the researchers for the sample group are as follows:

- 1. Participants must be enrolled in the physical education and sports teaching department.
- 2. Participants must be in the fourth year of their studies.
- 3. Participants must have received online education due to the pandemic.

Data Collection Tools

For the execution of this study, ethical approval was obtained from the Amasya University Social Sciences Ethics Committee on 05.07.2022 with decision number 108.01-78853. For the study, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 7 questions was prepared by Sabah and Derelioğlu (2022) to examine the motivation sources of successful athletes. Below are the general question titles included in the semi-structured interview form:

Question 1: Explain the impact of the pandemic on the level of delivery of theoretical courses. Question 2: Explain the impact of the pandemic on the level of delivery of practical courses. Question 3: Do you think the pandemic will have a negative impact on your employment status? Explain. Question 4: Do you consider yourself professionally competent upon graduation? Explain. Question Question5: Do you think the exams held during the pandemic adequately measured your competence level? Explain.

Question 6: Did the pandemic have any contribution to your education? Explain. Question 7: In your opinion, how should this process (within the scope of education) be managed during

the pandemic period? Do you have any suggestions or opinions? Explain.

Data Collection

Following the receipt of ethical committee approval, interviews were conducted with physical education and sports students on the determined day and time. Initially, information about the study's subject and scope was provided, and participants were informed that they could leave the study at any time if desired. During this process, interviews were recorded to prevent data loss. The interviews with the students lasted between approximately 42 to 60 minutes.

Data Analysis

In the study, semi-structured interview forms prepared by Sabah and Derelioğlu (2022) were utilized. The interview forms were prepared to cover topics such as the impact of the pandemic on course delivery, exam evaluations, professional competence, etc. In interviews conducted with physical education and sports department students, audio recordings were transcribed to text to avoid data loss. The transcribed data were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method in the NVivo program. As a result of the data analysis, a code list was assigned to appropriate themes.

FINDINGS

This section of the study presents information regarding the results of the data analysis. Following the analysis of the data, codes were assigned to relevant themes and presented in tabular form.

	Age	Gender	Sport	Income status	Sport age	Level of exercise
P1	22	Male	Team	Middle	8	Professional
P2	23	Female	Individual	Middle	5	Amateur
Р3	22	Male	Team	Middle	8	Amateur
Ρ4	22	Male	Individual	Middle	7	Amateur
P5	22	Female	Team	Middle	12	Amateur
P6	23	Male	Individual	Middle	8	Amateur
Ρ7	23	Female	Individual	Middle	6	Amateur
P8	23	Female	Individual	Middle	10	Amateur
Р9	24	Female	Team	Middle	16	Amateur
P10	21	Male	Individual	Middle	14	Professional

Table 1 presents information regarding the participants' demographic characteristics. A total of 10 fourth-year students from the Department of Physical Education and Sports, consisting of 5 females and 5 males, participated in the study. The age range of students mainly engaged in individual sports disciplines varies between 21 and 24. The majority of participants with middle-income levels are involved in sports as amateurs, with their years of engagement in sports ranging from 5 to 16 years.

		Table 2. Unline E	ducation Theoretical	Course Process
Name	Node Coo		Coded	Coded Text
Name	Туре		Words	Coded Text
				Insufficient participation level
	Node Students			Lack of concentration
				Lack of productivity
The substant		Churchenster	22	Difficulty coping
Theoretical		Students	23	Absence of classroom environment
				Internet issues
				Difficulties in asking questions
				System errors
			Reports	

Table 2 presents the views of the students of the Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching regarding the online theoretical course process during the pandemic period. When the students' opinions about the online theoretical course process are examined, it can be observed that they faced issues such as insufficient participation in classes, internet connectivity problems, inability to derive productivity from the process, and experiencing difficulties in maintaining focus. An excerpt from one of the participants' statements is provided below:

P6: "...During the pandemic, our theoretical courses were conducted through distance education platforms, and I don't think I gained much efficiency from them. I sometimes experienced internet connectivity issues, and sometimes the online platform itself encountered errors, which caused difficulties in communicating with the instructor during the class and asking questions. I don't believe I fully understood and learned the topics as a result."

Table 3. Online Education Practical Course Process					
Name	Node Type		Coded Words	Coded Text	
Practice	Node	Students	36	Inability to acquire learning Insufficient visual content Not getting productivity Not suitable for the department Loss There was no environment I'm trying to complete I didn't learn anything A complete learning didn't happen Caused inadequacy Ineffective	
			Reports		

Table 3 presents the views of physical education and sports teacher candidates regarding the online education practical course process during the pandemic period. When the opinions of students about the online practical course process in their field of study are examined, they express that online education is not suitable for

practical courses as their field of study mainly consists of practical lessons. They perceive this process as a loss for themselves, causing inadequacy, and lacking the classroom environment. An example excerpt from participants' statements is provided below.

P2: "...I don't find the process suitable for our field. I still regret the online practical courses I took. It was a great loss for me. In courses where I couldn't have practical experience, I am trying to compensate for my deficiencies on my own."

		Table 4. Online	Exam Process in Dista	ince Education
Name	Node Type		Coded Words	Coded Text
	туре		words	Doesn't measure knowledge
				Deficiency
	Node	Students		Uncertain
Exam			19	Averages increased
				It wasn't a fair exam
				Copy was taken There was no equality
			Reports	
			перона	

Table 4 presents the opinions of physical education and sports teaching department students regarding the online exam process during the pandemic period. When the students' views on the online exam process are examined, they express that the exams do not measure knowledge, lead to cheating, lack equality, and are not fair. Below is an excerpt from the participants' statements as a result of the interviews.

P5: "... Cheating occurred during exams. There was a lot of cheating going on. I don't think there was equality between those who attended the classes live, watched the recordings later, and those who didn't attend at all. Unfortunately, there was no equality. A system could have been established to prevent cheating."

		Table 5. Post-O	nline Education En	nployment Status
Name	Node Type		Coded	Coded Text
Name			Words	Coded Text
				I will struggle in the KPSS exam
				I need to study a lot
				I need to improve myself
				Practical lessons are inadequate
				I couldn't focus
Annointment	Node Stu	Ctudant	70	We have a lot of shortcomings
Appointment		Student	70	We have infrastructure issues
				We will be responsible for what we didn't learn
				I will overcome my inexperience privately
				We couldn't turn it into an advantage
				I don't consider it sufficient
				Not at a level to transfer to students
			Reports	

Table 5 presents the views of physical education and sports teacher candidates regarding their chances of being appointed after the online education period during the pandemic. When examining the opinions of students about their prospects of being appointed after online education, they express that they will face

difficulties in the KPSS exam, they need to work hard, they need to improve themselves, and they do not consider themselves adequately prepared. They also mention that they are not at a level to transfer their knowledge to students after graduation. Below is an excerpt from a participant's statement:

P7: "...I think this situation will greatly affect the appointment process. We have many deficiencies in both education sciences and field courses, and as a senior student, I am currently trying to handle these courses myself."

Table 6. Displays The Overall İmpact of The Online Course Process.					
Name	Node Type		Coded Words	Coded Text	
Impact	Node	Student	48	It reduced my exam stress. My grades were high. I learned how to use a computer. I enrolled in a course. It had no contribution. I lost my motivation. I realized the value of face-to-face education. We understood the importance of education. It was a very challenging process.	
			Reports		

In Table 6, the views of physical education and sports teacher candidates regarding the overall impact of the online course process during the pandemic are presented. When the views about the general impact of the online course process on students are examined, they express that this process reduced the face-to-face exam stress, improved their grades, had no contribution for them, and they realized the value of face-to-face education during this period. Below is a sample excerpt from the participant's statements:

P9: "... I realized the value of face-to-face education. Online education doesn't fully suffice. There's always something missing. It might also be related to my field of study. If my major were related to theoretical courses, maybe I wouldn't have such negative thoughts. But since my major is physical education, I had more practical courses. In this aspect, I believe that face-to-face education is much better for us."

Name	Node Type		Coded Words	Coded Text
Views and Recommendations	ns Node Student	80	Attendance should have been mandatory. Students' deficiencies should have been addressed Exams should have been conducted via video. Breaks should not have been given. Practical lessons should have been postponed. Graduation should have been delayed. Remedial classes should have been conducted. Students should have been encouraged. A system should have been established to prevent cheating. File uploads should have been required. Education should have been conducted in-person. Students should have been divided into groups. Extra classes should have been organized.	
			Reports	

Table 7 includes the recommendations of the students from the Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching regarding the online education process during the pandemic period. When the student views on the online course process are examined, they propose that attendance should have been mandatory during this process, students should have been divided into groups, and education should have continued face-to-face if possible. Furthermore, they suggest that students with knowledge deficiencies should have their graduations delayed if necessary, a system should have been established to prevent cheating during exams, and especially compensatory face-to-face lessons should have been held for practical courses. Below is a quotation from the participants' statements:

P1: "...Attendance should have been mandatory in the online education system. Support should have been provided to students who didn't have sufficient materials for attendance. Participation in exams should have been through video for a more secure process."

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In this study, the aim is to examine the views of physical education and sports teacher candidates on the impact of the pandemic on their professional competence level. The information about the results of the study is presented in this section.

The study reveals that students from the Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching couldn't derive efficiency from both practical and theoretical courses during the online education process. They encountered internet issues throughout the process and considered this period as a loss. It's determined that the evaluation of exams doesn't genuinely measure knowledge, the average grades of both active and non-active students increased, indicating that a fair exam wasn't conducted. Additionally, participants who stated that this process didn't provide them any contribution also acknowledged that it reduced exam-related stress and helped them appreciate the value of face-to-face education.

Regarding post-graduation aspects, the study concludes that students believe they will struggle with the KPSS exam after graduation, they don't perceive themselves as capable of educating students at a satisfactory level post-employment, they have deficiencies that need to be addressed, and they need to improve themselves. Lastly, the participants' recommendations in this process include completing the missing materials in the curriculum, postponing practical lessons if necessary, making camera usage mandatory during exams to prevent cheating, and delaying the graduation of students who feel deficient in terms of knowledge. For instance, Daniel (2020) pointed out that the pandemic hindered students from assessing their own performance and led to anxiety due to this uncertainty. In another study, they stated that this process causes anxiety and depression as well as health problems and may lead to an inactive life (Çakıcı et al., 2022).

In a study conducted by Liu et al. (2020), it was found that female students exhibited higher levels of stress and inadequacy compared to male students. Başaran et al. (2020), indicated that while the implementation of online education was seen as beneficial for uninterrupted education during the pandemic, participants raised

concerns about limited interaction, students' lack of active participation, unsuitability for individual differences, and technical glitches during accessing the lessons. Moreover, Genç et al. (2020) mentioned that postgraduate students considered factors such as the elimination of physical preparation for classes and the accessibility of lesson records and materials as contributing to the efficiency of remote education. Another study (González et al., 2020) revealed that the pandemic negatively affected professional competence.

On the other hand, according to the study by Genç and Gümrükçüoğlu (2020), 42% of students expressed satisfaction with the performance of instructors. Additionally, the application of teacher training courses through online education mostly had a negative impact on the professional competence of teacher candidates (Eti and Karaduman, 2020). In a study by Sakarya and Zahal (2020), almost all students argued that lessons should be conducted face-to-face. Furthermore, Yolcu (2020), found that a significant proportion of students were not adequately prepared for remote education in terms of technical equipment. In addition, Doghonadze et al. (2020) suggest that teachers' techno-pedagogical competencies need to be developed for effective instruction. In the study conducted by Acar et al. (2021), it was determined that providing opportunities for the use of various activities during the remote learning process positively contributes to enhancing technological knowledge. In the work of Duban and Şen (2020), teacher candidates emphasize the importance of parents assisting their children. Bergdahl and Nouri (2020), emphasize that supporting teachers in terms of sharing materials, fostering collaboration, and engaging in joint planning would be beneficial. Çetin et al. (2021) highlight that remote education can also incorporate the perspectives of stakeholders (school administrators and parents) regarding the provision of physical education and sports classes. Finally, Sabah et al. In the study conducted by Dr., it was stated that it is important to take the necessary precautions in order for the students to have sufficient equipment from the departments they are studying.

SUGGESTIONS

In this section of the study, recommendations are provided based on the research results:

- In order to make the online course process more effective, attendance should be mandatory.
- Especially for practical-based programs, necessary measures should be taken to provide compensatory lessons.
- Exams should be conducted in a video format to distinguish between students who actively participate and those who do not.
- Students' deficiencies such as lack of internet, tablets, computers, etc. should be addressed during the online learning process.
- In this context, other researchers conducting studies should be encouraged to carry out mixed (qualitative and quantitative) method studies.

ETHICAL TEXT

"This article adheres to journal writing guidelines, publication principles, research and publication ethics, and journal ethical rules. Any violations related to the article are the responsibility of the author(s)."

For the execution of this study, ethical approval was obtained from the Amasya University Social Sciences Ethics Committee on 05.07.2022 with decision number 108.01-78853.

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