



The Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on Social and Academic Lives of Nurse Academicians

Covid-19 Pandemisinin Hemşire Akademisyenlerin Sosyal ve Akademik Yaşamları Üzerine Etkileri

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THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC LIVES OF NURSE ACADEMICIANS

ABSTRACT:

Aim: This study aims to examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on nurse academicians' social and academic lives.

Method: This descriptive research study was carried out with 102 nurse academicians between June and July 2020. A form that includes 50 questions about the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on academicians' social and academic lives and which was developed by the researchers was used to collect data. The study data were collected via online Google-based data collection forms. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and chi-square test using SPSS 21.0 statistics package program. Ethics committee approval was obtained before starting the study.

Results: The results revealed that during the pandemic period, male academicians have researched about different data collection methods related to their field more compared to female academicians, they have benefitted more from the free training programs offered by world-renowned universities to improve themselves, and they have been more flexible in matters such as waking up late and going to bed late because they do not have to go to work. The academicians who had children had the opportunity to spend more time with their families during this process, and their communication with family members has changed positively ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion and Suggestions: The COVID-19 process has brought about many changes in the social and academic lives of academicians. In the transition to controlled social life, it may be recommended to organize training programs for academicians during the pandemic, living with COVID-19, and distance education technologies.

Keywords: COVID-19; Academician; Social impact; Academic impact



COVID-19 PANDEMİSİNİN HEMŞİRE AKADEMİSYENLERİN SOSYAL VE AKADEMİK YAŞAMLARI ÜZERİNE ETKİLERİ

ÖZ:

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı COVID-19 pandemisinin hemşire akademisyenlerin sosyal ve akademik yaşamları üzerine etkilerini incelemektir.

Yöntem: Tanımlayıcı araştırma türünde yürütülen bu çalışma, 102 hemşire akademisyen ile Haziran- Temmuz 2020 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veri toplama formu olarak, araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen COVID-19 pandemisinin akademisyenlerin sosyal ve akademik hayatları üzerindeki etkisini sorgulayan 50 sorudan oluşan form kullanılmıştır. Çalışma verileri, çevrimiçi Google tabanlı veri toplama formları aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Verilerin değerlendirilmesinde SPSS 21.0 istatistik paket programı kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde tanımlayıcı istatistikler ve ki Kare testi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya başlamadan önce etik kurul izni alınmıştır.

Bulgular: Çalışma kapsamındaki erkek akademisyenlerin kadın akademisyenlere göre pandemi döneminde alanı ile ilgili farklı veri toplama yöntemlerini daha fazla araştırdıkları, kendilerini geliştirmek için dünyaca ünlü üniversitelerin ücretsiz olarak kullanıma açtığı eğitim programlarından daha fazla faydalandıkları ve işe gitme zorunluluğu olmadığı için geç uyanma ve geç yatma gibi konularda daha esnek davrandıkları belirlenmiştir. Çocuk sahibi olan akademisyenlerin çocuk sahibi olmayan akademisyenlere göre bu süreçte ailelerine daha fazla zaman ayırma fırsatı bulmuşlar ve aile üyeleri ile iletişimleri olumlu yönde değişmiştir ($p < 0.05$).

Sonuç ve Önerileri: COVID-19 süreci akademisyenlerin sosyal ve akademik yaşamlarında birçok değişim meydana getirmiştir. Kontrollü sosyal hayata geçiş sürecinde akademisyenlere yönelik COVID-19, COVID-19 ile yaşama ve uzaktan eğitim teknolojileri hakkında eğitim programları düzenlenmesi önerilebilir

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19; Akademisyen; Sosyal etkilenim; Akademik etkilenim

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a human-to-human infectious disease caused by a newly discovered virus called coronavirus. While most individuals infected with coronavirus experience the disease as a mild or moderate respiratory disease and recover without requiring special treatment, the elderly, those with chronic diseases, and those with a compromised immune system are more likely to develop severe illness

(WHO, 2020). A wide variety of symptoms have been identified in patients with COVID-19, which are fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nasal congestion or discharge, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea (CDC, 2020). The incubation period of the disease is between 2 and 14 (average 5.2) days after the person is exposed to the virus, and there is a risk of the virus being transmitted to others during this period (Rothan & Byrareddy, 2020). After the virus was seen and spread rapidly in Wuhan, China (December 2019), the epidemic alert affected the world, and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic (Sethi et al., 2020). According to the data of WHO dated 3 December 2021, 263.363.622 people have been affected by the pandemic, and 5.232.562 people died so far (WHO, 2021). The Republic of Turkey of the Ministry of Health reported that a total of 8.700.641 people have been affected by this disease so far, and 76.041 people lost their lives (Ministry of Health, 2021). Since the virus is spread through close contact, coughing, sneezing and small droplets produced while talking, many countries responded with preventive measures such as health promotion campaigns, curfews, restrictions on public gatherings, a break in primary, secondary and higher education, and adopting distance education (Lai et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, which has disrupted many routine activities in daily life, including education and training, higher education institutions in Turkey suspended their educational activities for a week as of March 16, 2020, with the decision dated March 12, 2020, and starting from March 23, 2020, distance education process was initiated (Turkish Republic of Turkey, Council of Higher Education, 2020). For the academicians working in a higher education institution, a distance working system was adopted to comply with the conditions of staying at home and maintaining social distance. In this process, both the students who receive education and the academicians who provide education have been affected, and they have tried to adapt to this unexpected situation (Kurnaz & Serçemeli, 2020). For academicians teaching in traditional classrooms, changes in distance education have required significant revisions in lesson planning and design. Academicians have had to reorganize their syllabus and assignments in less time than needed to develop online courses. At the same time, it has been observed that the pandemic process is challenging for academicians who have to continue to carry out academic studies and projects (Burk et al., 2020).

Distance (home) working system is a system that has flexible working conditions and requires employees to balance work, family, and personal life for personal reasons or their motivation (Wattis et al., 2013). The studies conducted so far have revealed that the home-related responsibilities of the academicians have increased as they are now at home, the time they spend on their work is less than the time they allocate to their families, the time they spend on hobbies has increased to

cope with stress, the vast majority of them are satisfied with the distance working system, and they no longer waste time commuting to work. The studies further revealed that academicians can allocate more time to conducting research and can work on their manuscripts; however, they state that the workplace has an important place in social life and complain about not having the opportunity to socialize at home; they generally are not satisfied with the distance education system (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020; Burk et al., 2020; Göktepe, 2020; Kurnaz & Serçemeli, 2020).

In the literature, there is no study investigating the effects of COVID-19, which has become a pandemic worldwide, on academicians; thus, this study aims to fill the gap by investigating the effects of the COVID-19 plague on the social and academic lives of nurse academicians.

METHODS

Design

This descriptive study was conducted with the nurse academicians working in private and public universities in Turkey between June and July 2020 to investigate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on their social and academic life.

Sample

The research population is composed of the academicians working in the Nursing Departments of private and public universities in Turkey. The sample size was not calculated. The study was carried out with 102 academicians who were reached through the snowball sampling method, who were contacted via e-mail and social media accounts, and who agreed to participate in the study. The number of nurse academicians in Turkey is 2532 (Council of Higher Education, 2020). In this study, 226 academicians were reached. Of these academicians, 124 did not agree to participate in the study (4.9% of the research population), and 124 academicians agreed to participate (8.9% of the research population). No similar reference article was found in the literature, and in the post hoc power analysis conducted based on the findings of the study, the rate of those who did not have any concerns about the future was taken as 26.5%, and in the group of 102 people, the sample power was found to be 96.1% with 5% error margin.

Data Collection

The data collection form consists of 50 questions developed by the researchers (8 questions related to socio-demographic characteristics, 23 questions related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social lives of academicians, and 19

questions related to the impact of the pandemic on their academic lives) (Kurnaz & Serçemeli, 2020; Yıldırım & Eslen-Ziya, 2021). The data were collected through the data collection form using the "Google Form". After ethical approval was obtained, announcements were made to attract participants utilizing communication networks. These announcements were made via social media networks such as WhatsApp groups, Facebook, and Instagram, through which nurse academicians keep in contact and communicate. The form was shared with the academicians, and they were allowed to share it with their colleagues using the snowball sampling method. The data were collected as the academicians who agreed to participate in the study filled in the Questionnaire within an average of 15-20 minutes.

Data Analysis

SPSS 23.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Chicago, Illinois) was used for the statistical analyses and evaluation of the data. The socio-demographic data were expressed as a number, percentage, average, and standard deviation. Whether the data showed normal distribution was checked by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and descriptive statistics and chi-square test were used to analyze the data. The statistical significance level was accepted as $p < .05$.

Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from University, Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (2020/381), and the necessary permission was received from the Ministry of Health, before the study. In the first part of the questionnaire, the aim of the study and the research team was introduced, and it was stated that participation was voluntary, the information gathered would be kept confidential, and the data obtained would only be used for scientific purposes. At the end of the first part of the web-based questionnaire, two options were presented to the participants: I agree to participate in the study, and I do not agree to participate in the study. The participants who selected the "I do not agree to participate in the study" option were excluded from the study. With this method, the informed consent of the participants was obtained. The ethical principles in the Helsinki Declaration (2008) were followed in all stages of the study.

RESULTS

Table 1. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

	n	%
	X±SD (min;max)	
Age	34.5±7.7 (24; 60)	

Gender		
Female	78	76.5
Male	24	23.5
Marital Status		
Married	62	60.8
Single	40	39.2
Having children		
Yes	51	50.0
No	51	50.0
Academic title		
Research Assistant	52	51.0
Instructor	17	16.7
Assistant Professor	21	20.6
Associate Professor	6	5.9
Professor	6	5.9
Years of experience	7.9±7.1 (1; 35)	
The workplace during the pandemic		
Home	73	71.6
University	3	2.9
Both	26	25.5

The average age of the participants in the study is 34.5 ± 7.7 (min:24; max:60). According to the findings 76.5% of the participants are female, 60.8% are married, 50% have children, 20.6% are assistant professors, the average years of experience is 7.9 ± 7.1 (min:1; max:35), and 71.6% continue to work from home due to the pandemic (Table 1).

Table 2. The effect of covid-19 pandemic on the social lives of nurse academicians

	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I have had the opportunity to analyze plans for the future in detail.	61	59.8	26	25.5	15	14.7
I have had the opportunity to spend more time with my family.	73	71.6	14	13.7	15	14.7
I have had the opportunity to allocate time for myself.	60	58.8	16	15.7	26	25.5

This calmness feels very good, as the hectic lifestyle is exhausting.	58	56.9	22	21.6	22	21.6
I was happier while working intensively.	34	33.3	41	40.2	27	26.5
Since there is no obligation to go to work, I am more flexible about getting up late and going to bed late.	76	74.5	12	11.8	14	13.7
I think this period is a good opportunity to finalize the work that I have delayed for a long time.	58	56.9	25	24.5	19	18.6
I have had the opportunity to do hobbies such as painting, knitting, and playing an instrument.	31	30.4	20	19.6	51	50.0
I think this period is a good opportunity to read the books I want to read.	56	54.9	22	21.6	24	23.5
Being at home constantly is overwhelming.	39	38.2	24	23.6	39	38.2
I miss spending time with my friends and relatives.	86	84.3	11	10.8	5	4.9
I miss sitting in a cafe, having coffee, and watching people.	70	68.6	13	12.7	19	18.6
I miss going to the theatre, cinema, and concert.	69	67.6	16	15.7	17	16.7
I have become pessimistic during the pandemic.	25	24.5	36	35.3	41	40.2
I spend all day doing nothing.	17	16.7	26	25.5	59	57.8
I am constantly worried that something will happen to the people around me.	50	49.0	25	24.5	27	26.5
I think my relatives or me will catch this disease one day.	38	37.3	45	44.1	19	18.6
I do activities such as yoga, pilates, and meditation to relax mentally.	28	27.5	18	17.6	56	54.9
In this process, I have turned to spirituality.	47	46.1	27	26.5	28	27.5
I think nothing can be the same anymore.	51	50.0	33	32.4	18	17.6

News or developments related to the agenda constantly pre-occupies me.	41	40.2	22	21.6	39	38.2
During this period, my communication with family members has changed positively.	61	59.8	32	31.4	9	8.8
I miss communicating with people.	71	69.6	22	21.6	9	8.8

Table 2 demonstrates that during this period, 71.6% of the academicians have had the opportunity to allocate more time to the family, 74.5% are more flexible about getting up late and going to bed late because they do not have to go to work, 84.3% miss spending time with friends and relatives, 68.6% miss sitting in a café and drinking coffee and watching people, 67.6% miss going to the theater, cinema or a concert, and 69.6% miss communicating with people (Table 2).

Table 3. The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Academic Lives of Nurse Academicians

	Agree		Undecided		Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
During this period, I devote more time to housework than academic work.	61	59.8	12	11.8	29	28.4
In this process, I stay away from job-related issues.	11	10.8	20	19.6	71	69.6
Being away from the work environment reduces motivation for academic work.	33	32.4	23	22.5	46	45.1
Not being able to do what I need to do for my academic development creates stress.	50	49.0	25	24.5	27	26.5
Not being able to continue the projects I have been running due to the pandemic creates anxiety.	48	47.1	25	24.5	29	28.4
Not being able to collect the data of the research I have been conducting due to the pandemic creates anxiety.	57	55.9	19	19.6	26	25.5
Teaching my classes through distance education during the pandemic creates anxiety.	37	36.3	28	27.5	37	36.3
I feel happy when I think about the time I will get back to work.	49	48.0	37	36.3	16	15.7

I think this process is a good opportunity to write academic articles.	57	55.9	22	21.6	23	22.5
In this period, I participate in the free education programs offered by world-renowned universities to improve myself.	51	50.0	15	14.7	36	35.3
I search for different data collection methods related to my field.	64	62.7	21	20.6	17	16.7
The pandemic process improves my innovative side.	59	57.8	25	24.5	18	17.6
In this process, I plan the academic studies I want to conduct when I return to normal life.	74	72.5	18	17.6	10	9.8
I think this process has negatively affected my academic performance.	40	39.2	29	28.4	33	32.4
I miss communicating with my students.	74	72.5	14	13.7	14	13.7
I miss my office at work.	61	59.8	19	18.6	22	21.6
I miss communicating with my colleagues.	79	77.5	10	9.8	13	12.7
I feel I cannot go to work again.	23	22.5	27	26.5	52	51.0
I feel I will not teach again.	24	23.5	21	20.6	57	55.9

As the data in Table 3 shows, during the pandemic, 62.7% of the academicians have searched about different data collection methods related to their field, 57.8% believe that the pandemic process has developed their innovative side, 72.5% planned the academic studies they want to conduct when they return to normal life, 72.5% miss communicating with their students. 59.8% miss their office at work, and 77.5% miss communicating with their colleagues (Table 3).

Table 4. The relationship between the gender of academicians and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on their academic and social lives

Gender					
	Female		Male		Statistics
	n	%	n	%	
Searching about different data collection methods related to his/her field					
Agree	44	56.4	20	83.3	x²:7.585
Undecided	17	21.8	4	16.7	p:0.023
Disagree	17	21.8	-	-	

Participating in the free education programs offered by world-renowned universities for self-improvement					
Agree	34	43.6	17	70.8	x2:7.427
Undecided	11	14.1	4	16.7	p:0.024
Disagree	33	42.3	3	12.5	
Being more flexible about getting up late and going to bed late since there is no obligation to go to work					
Agree	57	73.1	19	79.2	x2:6.593
Undecided	7	19.0	5	20.8	p:0.037
Disagree	14	17.9	-	-	

As the findings revealed, male academicians search about different data collection methods related to their field more than female academicians during the pandemic period, they benefit more from the free online education programs offered by world-renowned universities to improve themselves, and they are more flexible about getting up late and going to bed late because they do not have to go to work ($p < 0.05$) (Table 4).

Table 5. The relationship between having children and the effects of the covid-19 pandemic on academic and social life

Having Children					
	Yes		No		
	n	%	n	%	
Having the opportunity to spend more time with family					
Agree	42	82.4	31	60.8	X2:7.343
Undecided	6	11.8	8	15.7	p:0.025
Disagree	3	5.9	12	23.5	
Being more flexible about getting up late and going to bed late since there is no obligation to go to work					
Agree	32	62.8	44	86.3	X2:7.466
Undecided	9	17.6	3	5.9	p:0.024
Disagree	10	19.6	4	7.8	
A positive change in communication with family members during the pandemic					
Agree	36	70.6	25	49	X2:6.595
Undecided	10	19.6	22	43.1	p:0.037
Disagree	5	9.8	4	7.8	

The academicians who have children reported that they have had the opportunity to spend more time with their families in this process compared to the acade-

micians who do not have children, and their communication with family members has changed positively ($p<0.05$). Since there is no obligation to go to work, academicians who do not have children are more flexible about getting up late and going to bed late ($p<0.05$) (Table 5).

DISCUSSION

This study investigates the changes in the social and academic lives of nurse academicians during the COVID -19 pandemic process. It was found that failure to continue academic studies due to not being able to collect data and failure to perform similar academic activities have negatively affected the nurse academicians as well as other academicians (Researchgate, 2020). Some universities and scientific circles have taken some actions to reduce the negativities caused by the COVID -19 pandemic. Many funding organizations have created new research funds about COVID -19 for academicians (Frontiers, 2020). Online workshops and conferences have started to be organized (American Nursing Association, 2020; Nursing Meetings, 2020). Online libraries have made many resources free (METU Library, 2020). Online data collection methods have started to be used more. Ethical committees continued to work online so that academicians can obtain approval to collect data. The deadlines for the submission of project proposals and reports have been extended (STAT, 2020; University of Oxford, 2020). Although the changes and practices applied to reduce the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the academic lives of academicians, it is thought that they are not effective in eliminating these negativities completely.

In this study revealed that academicians are concerned as they cannot continue their projects and collect data due to the COVID -19 pandemic. The participants reported that they spend more time with family members and allocate more time to home care than academic work. The studies conducted so far have shown that academicians cannot continue their studies because they have to take care of their children due to the closure of daycare centers and schools, or they have to care for someone else at home, and they spend more time on housework (Göktepe, 2020; Hora, 2020). It is thought that the productivity of academicians has been negatively affected by the COVID -19 pandemic since they cannot conduct their academic studies effectively, and their home responsibilities have increased as they now spend much of their time at home.

In this study showed that the majority of the academicians have a positive perception about the pandemic process as they work from home, they are more flexible about getting up late and going to bed late as there is no obligation to go to work, their communication with family members has changed positively, and they have had the opportunity to analyze their plans for the future in detail. However, some

of the academicians consider the pandemic as a negative process as they find it boring to be always at home, the news or developments about the agenda preoccupies them, and they are always worried that something will happen to the people around them. The studies conducted so far have demonstrated that almost all of the academicians work from home, and while some academics welcomed this change in the working environment positively, some consider it to be negative (Hora, 2020). The time spent to commute to work every day can now be spent doing another job at home, which is considered to be a positive change. However, some academicians also pointed out that they have limited access to the academic sources universities are subscribed to from home, which causes difficulties in accessing information. Furthermore, academicians, especially female academicians, who normally receive support from other people for housework, have to do all household chores themselves in this pandemic period, which causes them to devote less time to academic activities (Göktepe, 2020; Hora, 2020). In brief, the changes that the COVID-19 has brought about in the lives of academicians are perceived as positive by some academics, while they are considered to be negative by others.

In this study revealed that academicians who have children spend more time with their families, male academicians search about different data collection methods in the COVID -19 process more than female academicians, and they benefit more from the free education programs offered by world-renowned universities to improve themselves. Studies have found that female academicians do less academic work than their male counterparts as they spend more time on childcare and housework (Flaherty, 2020; Göktepe, 2020). This result is considered to be an expected result since women assume more responsibilities than men during the sharing of roles within the family, which is related to their gender.

In this study further revealed that academicians are able to do fewer activities than they need to do for my academic development during the pandemic. However, they have more time to write academic papers, and they have made plans about the research they want to conduct after the COVID-19 process. In similar studies, it was found that academicians have done more literature reviews and have written more academic papers during this period (Göktepe, 2020; Hora, 2020). At the same time, they were found to engage in teaching activities less, pursue career opportunities less, apply for funding and write projects less, buy fewer materials for laboratory, do fewer studies and experiments at the laboratory, collaborate and interact less with other academicians, and participate less in conferences (Hora, 2020). Academicians read more research than before the COVID -19 process, write articles, submit their previous studies to journals, and make more critical reviews, analyze the data of their previous studies and plan studies for the future (Research Gate, 2020). It is thought that since academicians cannot collect research data and encounter problems in conducting new research due to COVID-19, they have been

forced to complete studies that have been done before but have not written as articles and to make research plans for the post-COVID-19 period.

In this study revealed that some academicians feel anxious while providing distance education. Similarly et al. (2020) found that some academicians had difficulties while providing distance education. It is thought that whether or not academicians have previous distance education experience, their awareness of distance education and their ability to use technological tools may affect academicians' level of anxiety while providing distance education.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about many changes in the social and academic lives of academicians. Failure to continue the studies that were initiated before the COVID -19 and the inability to collect data cause anxiety among academicians. Planning for future studies and analyzing and completing previous studies have created a positive situation for academicians. In this process, academicians have had the opportunity to spend more time with their families, which has affected intra-family communication positively. The emergence of a situation in which women assume more responsibilities in childcare and home-related work in the family due to gender roles negatively affects female academicians. In the COVID-19 process, female academicians have done less academic work than their male counterparts. Compared to the female academicians, male academicians search more about different data collection methods related to their fields, and they benefit more from the free education programs offered by world-renowned universities to improve themselves.

It is recommended to organize training programs on living with COVID -19 and distance education technologies for academicians while transitioning to controlled social life. Academicians need to receive training about online data collection and innovative research methods to minimize the negative effect of the pandemic on their academic lives. It may be suggested to increase educational activities and international collaboration that may encourage academicians to access scientific knowledge from anywhere, especially by utilizing distance education technologies.

Limitations

Since this study was conducted with nurse academicians who could be accessed through the snowball sampling method, the results can only be generalized to this study group.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

Author Contribution

Working Concept / Design: Ö.Ö.Y., D.Ç.E, M.K., İ.A.A; Data collection: Ö.Ö.Y., D.Ç.E, M.K.; Data analysis and interpretation: Ö.Ö.Y., D.Ç.E, M.K.; Text draft: Ö.Ö.Y., D.Ç.E, M.K.; Approval of the final version of the article: Ö.Ö.Y., D.Ç.E, M.K., İ.A.A

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