



Factors Affecting the Quality of a Remote Teaching Practicum from the Perspective of Preservice Preschool Teachers

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ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 pandemic uncertainties about how to implement and evaluate teaching practicums have been faced by the teacher training institutions. Due to some constraints imposed by the pandemic, teaching practicum courses, transitioned to an online format in the 2020-2021 academic year in Turkey, similarly to many other countries. Within the scope of this research, it is aimed to identify the factors affecting the nature of the education process based on the experiences of preschool preservice teachers in a remote teaching practicum. The participants of this study comprised 11 preservice teachers who were enrolled in preschool teacher training program of a public university, and completed the theoretical and applied parts of the “Teaching Practicum I” and “Teaching Practicum II” courses via distance education in the 2020-2021 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Basic qualitative research methodology guided this study. Data were collected via a structured interview protocol and analyzed using an inductive approach. As a result of the analysis of the interviews with the participating preservice teachers, it was determined that many factors affected the quality of the teaching practicum process carried out via distance education. Among these factors, “guidance of the mentor teacher and university supervisor,” “interactions with mentor teacher and university supervisor,” “paired peer placement,” “being a trainee teacher in the same class for two semesters,” and “access to course/learning materials” were factors that positively affected the quality of the process and were experienced as “facilitating” factors by the preservice teachers. On the other hand, “lack of technological resources,” “limitations in relationships with children and assessment,” “online classroom management,” and “family intervention” were factors that negatively affected the quality of the process and were experienced as “hindering” factors by the preservice teachers.

Keywords: Early childhood education, teaching practicum, distance education, quality, COVID-19

Okul Öncesi Öğretmen Adaylarının Bakış Açısıyla Uzaktan Öğretmenlik Uygulaması Sürecinin Niteliğini Etkileyen Faktörler

Öz

Pandemi sürecinde üniversitelerin öğretmen yetiştiren kurumlarında öğretmenlik uygulamalarının nasıl yürütüleceği konusunda belirsizlikler yaşanmış ve pek çok ülkede olduğu gibi ülkemizde de 2020-2021 akademik yılında bu derslerin teorik ve uygulama boyutları çevrim içi formatta gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışmada okul öncesi öğretmen adaylarının deneyimlerine dayalı olarak uzaktan öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinin niteliğini etkileyen faktörlerin ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını 2020-2021 akademik yılında bir devlet üniversitesinin okul öncesi öğretmenliği programında öğrenim gören ve pandemi nedeniyle öğretmenlik Uygulaması I ve II derslerini uzaktan eğitimle tamamlayan 11 öğretmen adayı oluşturmaktadır. Temel nitel araştırma olarak tasarlanan bu çalışmada veriler yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile toplanmış ve tümevarımsal yöntem ile analiz edilmiştir. Öğretmen adayları ile yapılan görüşmelerin analizi sonucunda uzaktan eğitim ile gerçekleştiren öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinin niteliğini pek çok faktörün etkilediği belirlenmiştir. Bu faktörlerden “öğretim elemanı ve uygulama öğretmeni rehberliği”, “uygulama öğretim elemanı ve uygulama öğretmeni ile etkileşim”, “partnerli çalışma”, “iki dönem aynı sınıfta öğretmenlik uygulamasını yürütme”, “ders materyallerine erişim” faktörlerinin sürecin niteliğini olumlu yönde etkileyen ve öğretmen adayları tarafından “kolaylaştırıcı” olarak deneyimlenen; “teknolojik yetersizlikler”, “çocuklarla ilişkilerde ve değerlendirmede sınırlılık”, “çevrimiçi sınıf yönetimi”, “aile müdahalesi” faktörlerinin ise sürecin niteliğini olumsuz yönde etkileyen ve öğretmen adayları tarafından “zorlaştırıcı” olarak deneyimlenen faktörler oldukları tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Okul öncesi eğitim, öğretmenlik uygulaması, uzaktan eğitim, kalite, COVID-19

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1 | INTRODUCTION

COVID-19, which has affected the whole world, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). Constituting an extraordinary period, the pandemic brought various challenges with it. For example, schools were shut down abruptly in most parts of the world and education processes from preschool to higher education were interrupted. It has been reported that 1.6 billion students around the world have been adversely affected by these events, considered to be the largest disruption of global education seen throughout history (United Nations, 2020). However, in line with the views of many international organizations and education experts that students should somehow continue their education in this time of crisis while being unable to physically attend school (Dayal & Tiko, 2020), various efforts to continue offering education with different educational models have been made.

As has been seen throughout the world, efforts were initialized in Turkey to continue providing education despite the uncertainties that the pandemic created. COVID-19 has disseminated distance education as a formerly unusual practice for formal educational processes in higher education institutions and schools administered by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE). When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, it was decided that all schools administered by the MoNE would be suspended for 2 weeks effective Monday, March 16, 2020. In the second week, it was announced that distance education processes would begin (MoNE, 2020a). The transition to distance education started with the decision made to continue education via TRT-EIN TV and the Educational Information Network (EIN). The broadcasts made via TRT-EIN TV constituted the beginning of distance education (MoNE, 2020b). Throughout this process, the EIN has been made available to preschool children during certain time periods and children were granted access to various contents uploaded by their teachers (MoNE, 2020c). With this implementation, the 2019-2020 preschool academic year was completed via the contents accessible through the EIN. In the 2020-2021 academic year, ongoing changes of the pandemic situation in the world and in Turkey accordingly brought further changes to educational processes, and educational models such as face-to-face education, distance education, and hybrid learning were introduced in the educational field (Alan, 2021). In accordance with the plan of the MoNE to oversee a gradual transition back to face-to-face education in the 2020-2021 academic year, preschool education began being provided face-to-face 1 day a week on September 21, 2020, expanding to 2 days a week in the 2 weeks that followed (MoNE, 2020d). After re-evaluation of the conditions, it was decided that face-to-face education would be given 5 days a week in all preschool educational institutions starting from October 12, 2020 (MoNE, 2020e). However, this decision only remained in place until the end of November 2020; in light of the escalation in the spread of the pandemic worldwide, a decision was made to continue preschool educational activities via distance education (MoNE, 2020f, 2020g) and the fall semester of the 2020-2021 academic year was completed in that manner. Similarly, the fluctuations in the course of the pandemic in the spring period of 2020-2021 continued to be reflected in educational processes. With the decision of the MoNE, the spring semester of the 2020-2021 academic year started with face-to-face education on February 15, 2021, and the semester was to be completed face-to-face with the exception of a total shutdown from April 29 to May 17, 2021 for preschools (MoNE, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). The semester started with distance education for kindergartens incorporated in elementary schools and then transitioned to a reduced schedule that consisted of 2 days of face-to-face education and 3 days of distance education each week as of March 1, 2021 (MoNE, 2021a). Re-evaluation of the pandemic situation led to the cessation of this practice and distance education replaced it from April 15 to June 1, 2021 (MoNE, 2021b). As of June 1, 2021, education in kindergartens incorporated in elementary schools was planned to be provided face-to-face 2 days a week (MoNE, 2021c) and the semester was completed with this schedule.

Similar to the experiences of institutions administered by the MoNE, some changes and transformations occurred for higher education institutions in Turkey. With the announcement made by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) on March 13, 2020, education in higher education institutions was suspended for 3 weeks effective March 16, 2020 (CoHE, 2020a). Following that, in a public statement issued by CoHE on March 18, 2020, it was announced that universities would transition to distance education via their digital resources or the depository of open course materials prepared by CoHE as of March 23, 2020. While it was stated that theoretical courses were to be conducted via digital resources, applied courses were to be conducted at the most fitting times,

which included the possibility of academic calendars being extended (CoHE, 2020b). However, the difficulties and threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the implementation of practice-based courses in teacher training programs conducted in cooperation with MoNE-affiliated institutions from being held in real classroom environments. For the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year, it was confirmed that semester evaluations would be made with the combined efforts of mentor teachers and university supervisors through the Ministry of National Education's Information System and, considering the 5-6 weeks of applied practice that preservice teachers had completed before the pandemic in the relevant period to be sufficient, instructors could hold their theoretical courses synchronously or asynchronously through distance education and teaching practicum requirements could be fulfilled with practices like lectures and assignments (CoHE 2020c). Thus, the 2019-2020 academic year was completed for faculties of universities that train teachers through total distance education for theoretical courses, with distance education for theoretical hours and the cancellation of practice hours for theoretical/applied courses like teaching practicums. Compared to the previous semester, marked by the start of the pandemic, the preparations of higher education institutions for the 2020-2021 academic year were more deliberate and systematic in both Turkey and the wider world. Considering the possibility that the pandemic would continue into the 2020-2021 academic year, new regulations were made for higher education as a result of various studies conducted by CoHE and joint institutions, and these regulations were published in 2020 as "The New Normalization Process in the Global Pandemic." Through these guidelines, frameworks were formed for the issues of distance education practices, applied training, measurement and evaluation practices, foreign students, meetings, conferences, and student exchange programs while considering potential scenarios. Authority was granted to universities regarding practices for different programs, taking into consideration that the course of the pandemic could vary between regions and cities. In other words, higher education institutions were granted the freedom to make decisions about the utilization of face-to-face, distance, and hybrid models depending on the course of the pandemic in their specific locations (CoHE, 2020d).

The planning of applied education practices has been one of the most problematic topics in this process. Concerns were raised about students participating in various application-oriented programs graduating without gaining practical proficiency (CoHE, 2020d, 2021). Although the difficulties faced by different educational institutions are similar in many respects given the need to switch to a highly unusual teaching format, teacher training programs have faced some unique difficulties (Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020). One of these difficulties has been the implementation of applied classes that require preservice teachers to be physically present in educational settings. In this context, uncertainties about how to implement and evaluate teaching practicums that require schools and universities to work together have been faced by the institutions of universities that train teachers (Moyo, 2020). Along with these uncertainties, the question of how future educators will meet professional standards and licensing criteria has raised great concerns (Jalongo, 2021). The main reason for these concerns has been the important role of teaching practicum courses in teacher training programs. Although all courses included in teacher training programs aim to holistically prepare preservice teachers for professional life by developing their knowledge, abilities, and professional competency (La Paro, 2018), the courses in which preservice teachers experience the occupation of teaching in the field, practice the profession, and enjoy the chance to apply their theoretical knowledge by meeting with students are known as teaching practicum courses and it is widely recognized that these courses are the key components of all teacher training programs (Allen & Wright, 2014; La Paro et al., 2020). They are at the center of properly equipping preservice teachers to enter the teaching profession (Cornu & Ewing, 2008; NAEYC, 2010). Moreover, teaching practicum courses are viewed as important components or elements that help develop the professional identities of preservice teachers in the context of their future employment (Caires et al., 2012; Zhu & Zhu, 2018).

Due to some constraints imposed by the pandemic, teaching practicum courses, which are among the essential components of teacher training programs, transitioned to an online format in the 2020-2021 academic year in Turkey, similarly to many other countries. Suggestions in this context regarding preservice teachers participating in live courses conducted in online education environments by university supervisors for their students and, if possible, performing the applied practices were made by the MoNE and CoHE in official statements. However, this extraordinary process brought with it various challenges, being unknown to all stakeholders of teaching practicum courses, including preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. Although there is growing interest in how distance education processes are implemented, research on the development of distance education practices in the context of the global pandemic remains limited (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020).

Efforts have been made to optimize remote teaching practicums with various regulations, but whether before the process or during the process, distance education was not properly highlighted in teacher training programs for training early childhood educators in Turkey and preservice teachers did not have prior experience in performing exercises with preschool children via synchronous distance education; these shortcomings increased the obscurity of the process. On the other hand, it is known that an accurate and timely understanding of how distance education works is important for informing and improving the educational process (Lau & Lee, 2020), and the analysis of teaching practicum experiences has the potential of providing useful information for the evaluation and improvement of such programs (La Paro & Siskind, 2022; La Paro et al., 2020). From this point of view, it is very important to study distance education practices in detail in order to be prepared for possible crisis situations that make it necessary to maintain the practice of teaching by distance education. Within the scope of this research, which is part of a wider study, it is aimed to identify the factors affecting the nature of the education process based on the experiences of preschool preservice teachers in a remote teaching practicum.

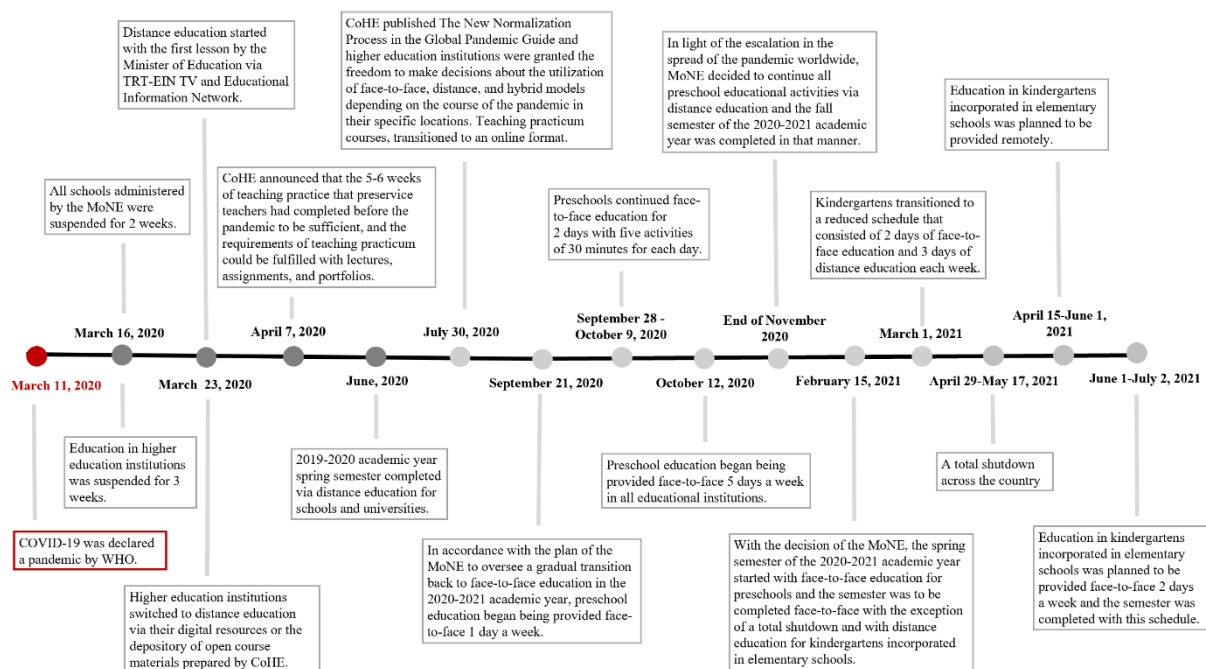


Figure 1. Timeline for education in Turkey during the COVID-19

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Teaching practicum courses are included in the undergraduate program in preschool education with the names “Teaching Practicum I” and “Teaching Practicum II,” which are compulsory courses conducted in the 7th and 8th semesters of the program. Teaching practicum courses with both theoretical and practical aspects are conducted in cooperation by universities and the MoNE. For the theoretical part of these courses, preservice teachers meet with the instructor of the course 2 hours per week and attend theoretical lessons face-to-face, while for the applied part, preservice teachers are placed in kindergartens and preschools administered by the MoNE in groups of two and have opportunities to experience the teaching profession 6 hours per week for 12 weeks under the guidance of mentor teachers and university supervisors. Under normal circumstances, preschool preservice teachers plan activities for a 12-week applied practicum in accordance with the 2013 Preschool Education Program within the scope of teaching practicum classes and carry out face-to-face educational practices with children in accordance with these plans in the schools where they are placed. However, this standard arrangement could not be implemented in the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year and the spring and fall semesters of the 2020-2021 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The preservice teachers who participated in the present research completed both the theoretical and practical aspects of the “Teaching Practicum I” and “Teaching Practicum II” courses taught by the authors via distance

education in the 2020-2021 academic year. The participating preservice teachers each completed their teaching practicums with a peer in the same classroom in both the fall and spring semesters. Preservice teachers first participated in theoretical courses conducted synchronously online with the instructor of the course every week via the learning management system (LMS) of the university. In these courses, which were recorded, providing the opportunity to watch the recordings again, the instructor gave the students information about activities in the preschool education program and made suggestions about activity planning. The preservice teachers planned activities for preschool children and presented these activities to the mentor teachers via an online platform. Preservice teachers updated their activity plans in accordance with the recommendations of the mentor teachers and then uploaded their plans to the corresponding assignment tab created in the LMS. The instructor of the course examined the activity plans before the online lessons and gave written feedback to the preservice teachers via the LMS. In addition, the preservice teachers presented their opinions about the activity plans to the instructor and other preservice teachers in synchronous online courses. The course instructor and participating preservice teachers gave suggestions on how to make the activities developmentally appropriate and engaging for young children and the activities were shaped into their final forms in line with these suggestions. Preservice teachers participated in the educational process remotely and synchronously, with the mentor teachers meeting with children to apply the activities that had been prepared. The preservice teachers were given the opportunity to carry out activities designed for the distance education of young children; in this way, the teaching practicum course was completed in 12 weeks. During this 12-week applied practical process, the university supervisors also observed the educational practices carried out by the preservice teachers through distance education at least two times and gave them feedback and suggestions regarding the practical process. In addition, mentor teachers supported the progress of the preservice teachers in this process by sharing their opinions and suggestions about their activities.

2 | METHOD

This study, which aims to identify the factors affecting the quality of a distance-based teaching practicum in terms of preservice preschool teachers' perspectives, was designed qualitatively. Basic qualitative research methodology, which is one of the most commonly used forms of qualitative research in the field of education, guided this study. In basic qualitative studies researchers are primarily interested in "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). In the present study, efforts were made to determine the factors affecting the quality of the remote teaching practicum from the perspective of the participating preservice teachers by focusing on how they interpreted their experiences in the practicum.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this study comprised 11 preservice teachers who were enrolled in preschool teacher training program of a public university, and completed the theoretical and applied parts of the "Teaching Practicum I" and "Teaching Practicum II" courses via distance education in the 2020-2021 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the relevant training practices in the scope of these courses. The convenience sampling method was used to select participants. In convenience sampling, the researcher selects individuals who are within easy reach and who volunteer to participate in the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2016). Accordingly, at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year, preservice preschool teachers who would take the teaching practicum courses offered by the authors of the study were contacted and the purpose, content, and scope of the study were explained to them. In addition, they were informed about the measures to be taken to ensure their rights and confidentiality as participants. The study was conducted with 11 preservice teachers who voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. Nine of the participants were female and 2 were male. Two of these 11 participants were enrolled in the preschool education undergraduate program as a second-degree program.

DATA SOURCE AND COLLECTION

A structured interview protocol developed by the authors was used as a data collection tool in this study. The first version of the interview protocol was presented to an academic working in the field of teacher education and a preschool educator with 16 years of service to obtain their opinions and it was subsequently organized according to the received feedback. A pilot interview was then conducted with a preservice preschool teacher and the

interview protocol was finalized. The data were collected by sending forms about voluntary participation and the interview protocol to the 11 preservice preschool teachers included in the study via email and requesting their replies via email after the completion of the 2020-2021 academic year.

DATA ANALYSIS

In the analysis of the data obtained within the scope of this research, an inductive approach, which is presented as one of the strengths of qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013), was used. Dominant or distinct patterns repeatedly seen in the data were sought without the restrictions of structured methods and it was attempted to find appropriate results in line with the purpose of the research (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2015). After preparing texts containing the research data and making them suitable for analysis, the data were reviewed several times and possible themes and patterns were sought. The interview texts were then read and coded by both researchers independently in detail and relationships between the codes were examined (Glesne, 2011). The researchers came together and compared the encodings that they had produced; after reaching a consensus on any encodings that differed, themes were formed. In order to determine how consistent the obtained themes were with the data (Merriam, 2009), the dataset and the created themes were sent to an expert in the field of education who was familiar with the research topic and had experience in qualitative research. After the expert independently analyzed the data, the researchers met with the expert and the analyses were compared and finalized.

RESEARCH ETHICS

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Education and Human Sciences of Anadolu University. Participants' consent to participate was obtained via an online form sent to their email addresses. Participants were informed about the aim and content of the study, their rights as participants, and the measures to be taken to ensure their confidentiality, and the authors emphasized that no personally identifying information would be used in the study so as to further protect the participants' anonymity. Pseudonyms are used instead of the participants' names.

3 | FINDINGS

As a result of interviews with the participating preservice teachers, it was determined that many factors affected the quality of this teaching practicum process carried out via distance education. Among these factors, “guidance of the mentor teacher and university supervisor,” “interactions with mentor teacher and university supervisor,” “paired peer placement,” “being a trainee teacher in the same class for two semesters,” and “access to course/learning materials” were factors that positively affected the quality of the process and were experienced as “facilitating” factors by the preservice teachers. On the other hand, “lack of technological resources,” “limitations in relationships with children and assessment,” “online classroom management,” and “family intervention” were factors that negatively affected the quality of the process and were experienced as “hindering” factors by the preservice teachers.

The themes related to the factors affecting the nature of the remote teaching practicum process found as a result of these analyses are shown in Figure 2. The findings obtained are presented below with examples of the opinions of the participants via excerpts from their responses.

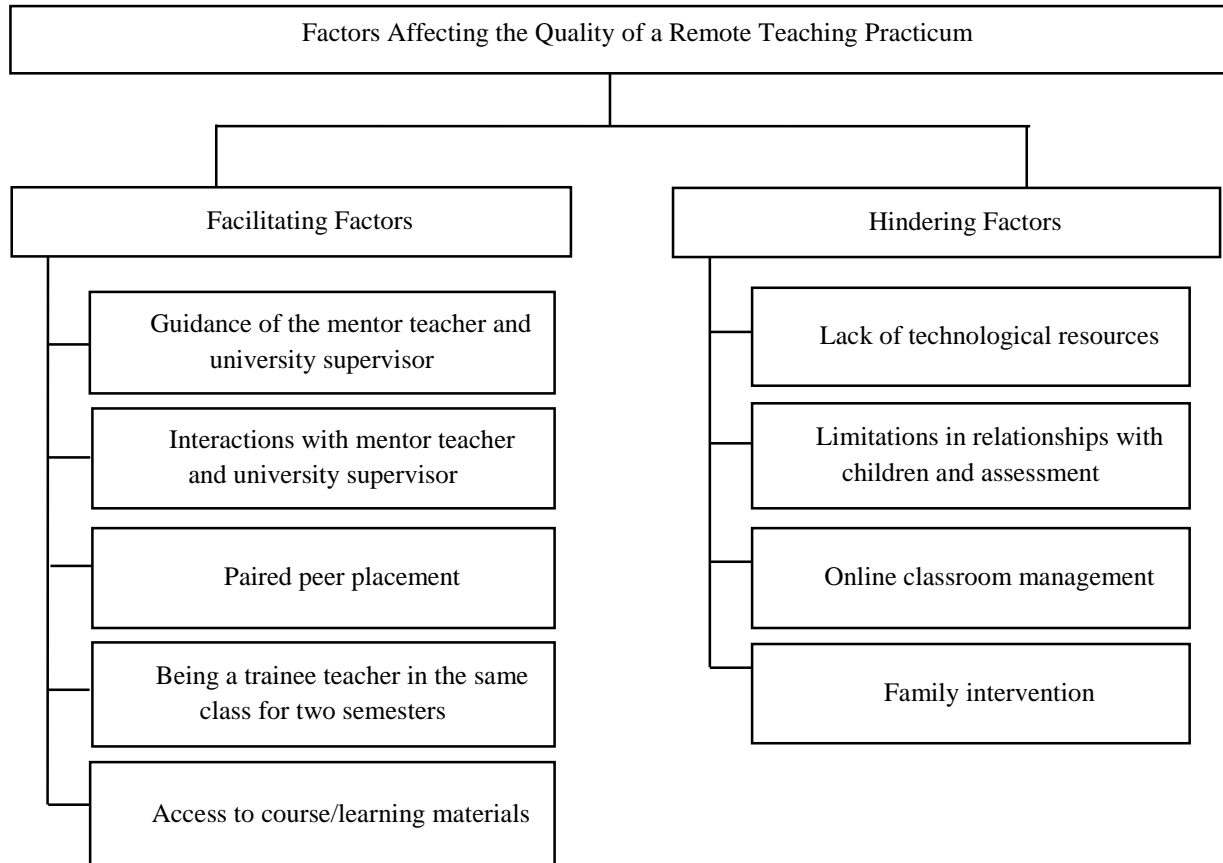


Figure 2. Themes related to the factors affecting the nature of the remote teaching practicum

FACILITATING FACTORS

GUIDANCE OF THE MENTOR TEACHER AND UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

It was observed in accordance with the views of the participants that guidance provided by mentor teachers and university supervisors to preservice teachers was the foremost among the factors that positively affected the quality of the remote teaching practicum process, being experienced as a “facilitating” factor by the preservice teachers.

All 11 participating preservice teachers stated that guidance from the mentor teachers facilitated the process. Demet, one of the preservice teachers, stated her views about the facilitating role of the guidance provided by mentor teachers, for both planning and implementation processes, as follows: “*We communicated through WhatsApp video chat after every session. Our mentor teacher provided feedback along the lines of ‘This was missing here, you can do this in this way,’ or ‘I liked this activity this week, you can use these materials.’ They also helped us a lot with class organization. That’s what I can say about the training. Our teacher helped us a lot.*” Türkan similarly mentioned the facilitating role of the guidance of the mentor teacher as follows: “*Our mentor teacher was generally interested in us and provided help. By giving suggestions on classroom management, activities, and professional aspects, they helped us learn about what we can put into practice. They listened to us and answered our questions on all the issues we wondered about.*” Another preservice teacher, Ilgaz, stated: “*I think that our mentor teacher tried to support us in every way in the process. The prepared activity plans were becoming more realistically applicable and especially suitable for children in accordance with the given advice.*” This participant furthermore emphasized that the guidance of the mentor teacher facilitated and increased the quality of the process.

It was determined that, in addition to the mentor teachers, university supervisors also played an important role in offering guidance throughout the processes of the remote teaching practicum. A majority of the participating preservice teachers (n=10) emphasized the facilitative role of the guidance of university supervisors. For example,

Aysu stated her opinions about the facilitating role of university supervisors in this remote teaching practicum course as follows: *“At first, I had difficulty understanding the plans, but with time and the help of our supervisor, I could make sense of the course. The supervisor presented the class in a clear and comprehensible fashion and I got answers to my questions about the parts I couldn’t understand. I can say that the practicum course was conducted smoothly and I think it helped me a lot with preparing my plans and implementing them through distance learning. I’m glad we had such a course.”* Akif, another preservice teacher, emphasized the role of the instructor as a facilitator of the theoretical parts of the course as follows: *“[The process] was successful, as you may have already noticed. After your feedback, we succeeded in all of the practices that we undertook. I think this process would be just as successful under normal circumstances [i.e., in face-to-face education]. We would be in person and face-to-face, but we would still receive the same feedback about what we were doing. I think that the feedback was useful for us.”*

INTERACTION WITH MENTOR TEACHER AND UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

The components of these teaching practicum courses included the preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. It was concluded in accordance with the opinions of the preservice teachers that the interactions among these groups of individuals affected the quality of the teaching practicums conducted via distance education and the interactions were experienced as a facilitating factor by the preservice teachers.

Ten of the participating preservice teachers emphasized that the positive interactions that occurred between themselves and the mentor teachers improved the quality of the teaching practicum course and had a facilitating role in the process. One of the preservice teachers, Ilgaz, mentioned the facilitating role of the easy and nurturing interactions that they achieved in the teaching practicum as follows: *“Our teacher formed a group with us via WhatsApp and was giving us feedback via email. Zoom meetings were already being set up at our demand. That’s why they were really a facilitator and why we had positive communication with our teacher.”* Another preservice teacher, Gözde, also emphasized easy communication with her mentor teacher as follows: *“We have always been able to communicate with our teacher. I think it’s important to have good communication and to be able to get along well with the children and the mentor teacher.”* Similarly, Hande stated that positive communication with the mentor teacher eased the process of communicating with parents as follows: *“Our teacher Gül was doing her best for us. Our communication was easy. The teacher was guiding us when we needed to do something. For example, when we were to conduct an activity, the teacher was texting us and saying that if we needed help with the materials, she could reach the parents accordingly so we could be prepared.”*

Another facilitating factor in the interactions that the preservice teachers emphasized was the interaction established with the university supervisor who conducted the teaching practicum course. Nine of the participants stated that the positive interactions they established with the university supervisor facilitated the process.

One of the preservice teachers, Aykan, stated the following regarding the interactions that were established with the university supervisor conducting the teaching practicum course and the reflections of that interaction on the process: *“Although we couldn’t be face-to-face, we interacted with [the supervisor] synchronously. We could chat through chat screens or video chats at times, we could ask our questions and get quick feedback and corrections. This is a very big advantage in terms of theoretical courses... If communication were to be one-sided, I would not say that this process could be so effective. In any case, we were able to reach [the supervisor] instantly by e-mail at worst and we were able to get instant feedback...”* Similarly, preservice teacher Türkan explained the facilitating role of interaction with the university supervisor in the theoretical part of the teaching practicum course in terms of the efficiency of the course as follows: *“My teacher was good to me. I mean, I don’t think it’s any different from normal, face-to-face [education]. [The process] was productive. We talked in class and were able to ask our questions and got answers. For me, it was no different from a normal, formal lesson; it was productive.”* Preservice teacher Şeyda said the following in the same context: *“Our theoretical course was a productive process because it was conducted with as much interaction as possible.”*

PAIRED PEER PLACEMENT

The vast majority (n=9) of these preservice teachers, who all carried out their practices in pairs during the teaching practicum process in both the fall and spring semesters, stated that working with partners facilitated the

remote practicum. They reported that paired placement played a facilitating role in professional development, eliminating the technical difficulties that may occur in distance education and classroom management.

One of the preservice teachers, Nur, drew attention to the processes of activity planning and post-activity peer review while emphasizing the contribution of paired placement to their professional development in the process of this remote teaching practicum as follows: *“We were helping each other a lot while we were producing activities. Starting from a small and unsuccessful idea, we were progressing towards much more successful ideas. Şeyda and I were both contributing to the progression of the idea. In this way, we were advancing our activities to a much better point. We were supporting each other with our creativity. And after we conducted the activity, Şeyda and I were critiquing each other. We were just asking each other questions directly. We were criticizing each other about what we did wrong, was it like this, was it like that, at what points did we fall short or do well.”* Similarly, Aysu explained that working with a partner gave them the opportunity to learn from their peers and made the process easier while contributing to their professional development as follows: *“My [peer] teacher was an advantage for me. We supported each other. At the points where I got stuck, they told me what we could do. I told them what we should do at the points where they got stuck. [Peer pairing] was better for us. I learned from them, too. I enjoyed the way they explained subjects. I liked the expression style of my peer, and I took them as an example in this context. I liked their creative ideas sometimes. They were able to give me good ideas.”*

In addition, some preservice teachers emphasized the role of paired peer placement in terms of eliminating the technical problems that may occur in distance education and classroom management in the process of remote teaching practicums. For example, Şeyda stated her views on this issue based on experiences in the practical process as follows: *“We helped each other technologically. For example, maybe I couldn’t get hold of the whole class. The kids came and went [from the online courses] sometimes. We were having such a problem. Some of the kids didn’t have a good internet connection. At this point, for example, while giving children the right to speak, I might skip some students. We couldn’t exactly control who was in and who was out [of the online lesson]. For example, Nur was managing that process and texting me via WhatsApp. I could see her messages at the top [of the screen]. We could very easily see which child I didn’t give a turn to speak or which child I skipped. The screen is constantly changing as students are entering and leaving. We may not really be able to manage the situation alone. Children don’t know that; they may think that the teacher ignored them on purpose. We tried to avoid that situation. That’s how we coordinated.”* Another preservice teacher, Lale, emphasized that working with peers helped to eliminate technical problems and implement classroom management, and that more than one educator should definitely be involved in distance education processes: *“For example, we had a problem like this. When we shared our screen, we couldn’t see the preschooler on the right side. It would turn into a tiny box, and after that, we could only see four children. For example, if there were more than four children, someone had to constantly check whether anyone raised their hands, whether anyone wanted to say something to participate in the class, because as you’re seeing the same child on the right screen all the time, checking on the children is a very sensitive thing in preschool, because they keep their hands raised there for minutes, and they can be offended when you don’t see them. We had the following worry a lot: how will we control them during screen sharing? We tried to complement each other. In this sense, I think that being in a pair is definitely a big help for fixing the problems of the technical infrastructure. At the same time, even if there are no technical difficulties, it helps with classroom management. ...there could maybe even be three teachers.”*

BEING A TRAINEE TEACHER IN THE SAME CLASS FOR TWO SEMESTERS

In addition to working with a peer, carrying out the processes of the teaching practicum in the same classroom in both the fall and spring semesters was evaluated as a facilitating factor by most of the preservice teachers (n=7). These preservice teachers stated that working with the same class for two semesters played a facilitating role in getting to know the children and the mentor teacher, and therefore in planning and implementing educational activities.

The views of some of the preservice teachers on the facilitating role of completing the teaching practicum process in the same classroom in both semesters are presented below.

Şeyda, drawing attention to the difficulties that children and teachers faced in getting to know each other in distance education compared to face-to-face education, stated that the fact that they completed the two-semester teaching practicum process in a single classroom made it easier for them to get to know the children and the mentor teacher and therefore facilitated the practice process: *“No matter how much communication we’ve had, we haven’t*

had the opportunity to really get to know the children in distance education. We've been doing observations, anyway, so we had the opportunity to get to know the students a little, but the children didn't have the opportunity to get to know us very much. At this point, when I evaluate the process in relation to the students, I actually see that the situation was positive, because we barely saw each other. We observed them in the first semester. We also went through the process of meeting each other, but despite that, faces are what we and the children got familiar with. We connected online. Whether we like it or not, we don't recognize the children. We can't tell who is missing, who is there, who is not. We don't know their names. This situation is very important for children. [They want to] be addressed by name. When we're saying something or giving turns to speak randomly, not in order, [it's impossible to tell] who we gave the right to participate to and who we didn't. We had a very short period in the first semester in connection to this, but I think we experienced the impact of this greatly. It was the same way with the teacher. We got to know our teacher in the first semester. [We got to know] their point of view, how they view education, their point of view on children, how they manage the process. We got to see this through the observations we made during activities. When I look at it from all angles, the situation was a positive for us."

Another preservice teacher, Aykan, had similar views, describing the facilitating role of completing the teaching practicum in the same classroom for two semesters as follows: *"I can say that practicing with the same teacher, being in the same classroom environment with the same children, even if it is a virtual environment, in both the fall and spring semesters and getting to know the students and the teacher helped me with conducting activities in the spring semester. I became more relaxed; I was more active in the process. There were also peers who joined during the spring semester. They thought, 'I wonder how I can do it.' They experienced that [confusion], but I already knew the kids and the teacher."* Akif, emphasizing the importance of getting to know the children in preschool education, expressed this point as follows: *"I think it's good that [the process] continued with the same teacher... And also, the children... The processes of trying to get to know each other, proving our teaching [qualities], and getting to know the children are difficult. We have to provide education while familiarizing ourselves with the children as the system requires. There may also be some children who we should take care of individually. We couldn't [otherwise] get to know the children because of this, and the kids wouldn't get to know us. Because of this, the situation proved advantageous for us."*

ACCESS TO COURSE MATERIALS

The final factor that was considered to facilitate the remote teaching practicum by the preservice teachers was the accessibility of course materials. Some of the preservice teachers (n=4) stated that theoretical lessons being recorded and made accessible to them was useful when they could not attend the course and helped them study and improve their work.

One of the preservice teachers, Aykan, explained the convenience offered by having recordings of the course for the theoretical part of the teaching practicum accessible via the learning management system as follows: *"The teacher of the theoretical lessons conducting the course via the system and recording the lesson for each day during this semester offered a great advantage for students who couldn't participate in the course that day. I think that students being able to ask questions about subjects in the course that they don't understand both during the online lesson and face-to-face makes subjects easier to understand."* Similarly, Gözde explained her views about how accessibility to course materials made the process easier as follows: *"Completing theoretical courses remotely was easier and more beneficial for me. Topics that I missed or didn't take notes on were very hard to compensate for in face-to-face education, but I was able to replay the course recording and be more efficient through remote education... I was able to look into the topics I missed or skipped. I was able to listen to the topics again. It was better."*

HINDERING FACTORS

LACK OF TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The primary tool for teachers to reach students in distance education is technology. However, it was observed within the scope of this study, in accordance with the opinions of the participating preservice teachers, that a lack of technological resources was the leading factor that negatively affected the remote teaching practicum process, experienced as a "hindering" factor by these preservice teachers. The vast majority of the preservice teachers (n=10) stated that a lack of technological resources complicated the processes of the teaching practicum. In

accordance with their opinions, it was determined that this lack of technological resources was experienced by both preservice teachers and children and it was related to problems with internet connections, hardware, and software.

One of the preservice teachers, Demet, explained the technological problems that they experienced in relation to internet connections as follows: *“When I take the difficulties into consideration, I experienced occasional internet outages and disconnection problems, and that caused me to disconnect from the class, if only for a short time. There were times when we had sound related problems with the children. Sometimes we got disconnected from the system. Although these situations were short-term, sometimes they disrupted the course flow.”* Emphasizing that these situations were also experienced by the students, Şeyda stated the following: *“The worst part was that there were internet-related problems. There was a child who had an internet connection problem, and even though they were willing to participate in activities, they were constantly having connection problems, and this was an upsetting situation in every activity.”* Preservice teacher Nur stated that both she and other preservice teachers and the children experienced technological difficulties caused by internet connections: *“The most difficult part of this process for me was the internet difficulties. Sometimes we suffered from this problem and sometimes children or our peers experienced it. Especially when one of the children wanted to talk during an activity and we didn’t understand him, it became a difficult situation for both the child and the teacher.”*

Another lack of technological resources emphasized by the preservice teachers was the lack of hardware. One of the preservice teachers, Türkan, explained these hardware problems as follows: *“I had a lot of problems with phones and computers, and this was hard for me. I conducted lessons over the phone, especially because I had a lot of problems with the computer. But then I couldn’t see all the kids on the phone. They would raise their hands, for example, and I couldn’t see them all. I was trying to monitor them one by one to see who was raising their hands and which students were reacting in which ways. This was very hard for me, for example. Using a computer is really important in this process, but, I mean, I couldn’t set it up.”* Another preservice teacher, Gözde, explained the lack of technological equipment experienced by the children as follows: *“Not everyone has the same economic conditions. Some kids can use a tablet easily to see us more clearly, or some may have a computer. But some kids use phones. Our teacher Naz told us that some families don’t have extensive means [of communication] in their homes. For example, some families use a common phone, when there may be two kids in the house studying...”*

In addition to internet and hardware-based problems in the context of a lack of technological resources, the preservice teachers also noted that they experienced software problems. İlgaç described these problems as follows: *“It was really difficult to conduct remote education activities with the children. We were meeting via Zoom, and unfortunately, the children were passive due to the limitations of the application. I think the process would have been much more productive if a platform more suitable for the children was designed and if the kids could be more active in the process.”* Similarly, Akif noted the occurrence of software-related problems as follows: *“We were having problems caused by Zoom. For example, we didn’t have enough time. Because the process was online, it took us 15 minutes to connect and wait for all the children. Waiting for fifteen minutes was wasting a lot of time.”*

LIMITATIONS IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND ASSESSMENT

Not being able to form strong relationships between the children and preservice teachers in the process of this remote teaching practicum and, accordingly, not becoming familiar with the children was evaluated as a factor complicating the process by most of the preservice teachers (n=8).

One of the participating preservice teachers, Aykan, expressed the difficulties created for the activity-planning process by the inability to establish sufficiently strong relationships with the children and get to know them as follows: *“We had trouble with planning. We weren’t familiar with the children; we didn’t know anything about the children and we had no idea about their developmental characteristics. If we could at least be in a classroom with them, joining them as observers...then we could have planned accordingly. We prepared our plans based entirely on the [general] characteristics of children in early childhood that we learned [at school] ourselves.”* Şeyda, on the other hand, explained the difficulties for both parties that arose from not being able to get acquainted with the establishment of strong relationships with the children: *“The biggest challenge for me was the activity-planning process, because we didn’t really know the children; we prepared an activity for a utopian classroom somewhere else. The range [of students] being so wide made this process more difficult. If we were face-to-face, it would have been much more convenient and productive to plan the day according to the children and create new activities with them. I think the same applies for the children, because I conducted activities every 2 weeks.”*

It's difficult to establish a strong relationship with children at such long intervals with such a short period of time for an event."

Similarly, Hande addressed the difficulties experienced due to not being able to form adequate relationships between children and preservice teachers as follows: *"I think that if I were in a classroom environment, I could communicate with the children and get to know them better. I think I could at least observe what the children were interested in, what they didn't like, and what caused their shortcomings. We were practicing with the kids once a week, and the kids didn't get to know us well, either. The semester was over before we even learned the kids' names. I think that was a big problem... We experienced the disadvantage of not being in the same environment with the children and thus not being able to communicate with them."*

ONLINE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Another factor that negatively affected the quality of the remote teaching practicum and thus experienced as a "hindering" factor according to the participating preservice teachers was online classroom management. More than half of the participating preservice teachers (n=7) stated that the intricacies of online classroom management complicated the remote teaching practicum.

Preservice teacher Demet expressed the difficulties of online classroom management in this process as follows: *"Sometimes during activities, the children start talking at the same time. It's very difficult to manage this situation. Some turn on their microphones, some move to other parts of the rooms they're in... We experienced these kinds of problems."* Similarly, Hande described the hindering effects of online classroom management for the remote teaching practicum as follows: *"I was having some trouble getting the kids' attention. I think it would be easier to get their attention in the classroom environment because there is inevitable communication with the children when you're face-to-face. A lot of factors intervene when the process is remote. You can have at least some control in the classroom, but there are so many things that you can't control in a home environment. This complicated things to a degree."*

Another of the preservice teachers, Türkan, noted the complexity of online classroom management during this practicum: *"It was a little difficult for me to manage the children in practice, because we met abruptly. How can I put it? Because we didn't meet face-to-face, I had a hard time having the floor at the beginning, when the children were reacting sporadically."*

FAMILY INTERVENTION

The final factor considered to complicate the processes of the remote teaching practicum by these preservice teachers was family intervention. Five of the participating preservice teachers stated that the intervention of families negatively affected the quality of the remote teaching practicum.

One of the preservice teachers participating in the study, Ilgaz, stated that family intervention negatively affected and complicated the practicum process: *"I think that the families of the children also affect the quality of the practice, because families may complete the activities for their children without giving the children the opportunity, and this reduces the value that the children receive from the process... Families were sabotaging a lot. They were doing everything themselves, thinking that we can't see them behind the screen. They take away the fun and activeness that the child would receive from this process. We also observed that the children weren't being left alone by their siblings and that families didn't allow the children to complete the activities independently. I think that this also negatively affected the independence of the children."*

Another participant, Şeyda, emphasized the negative impact of family intervention on assessment processes, explaining that it complicated the remote teaching practicum as follows: *"I think the most important factor is the family, because some families were more thoughtless or more perfectionist about the education of their children. During my activities, parents interfered too much with the work of the children. This is both a problem for the children and a problem for me, as it prevents me from observing the actual level of knowledge and the performance of the child. Our assessments were sometimes directed at the parents. Some of these parents were really perfectionists. They wanted everything to get done quickly. In situations like this, the children were a little more passive. The parents were doing the activities all of a sudden. No matter how much we wanted them not to interfere, their whispers were being heard from behind. They were giving the answers to the children. In fact, in some*

evaluations, we were not evaluating the child because it was not the child who did the activity. It was the parents' intervention. This was a situation that was reflected in both the process and the evaluation."

4 | DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face teaching practicums were limited and alternative modes of teaching practicums were utilized. As explained by Callaway-Cole and Kimble (2021), in situations such as a pandemic, best practices are not always possible and professional responsibility requires the implementation of various adaptations to ensure the safety of everyone, including the children, in-service teachers, and preservice teachers. However, while making such changes – in this case, shifting to a remote teaching practicum– it is necessary to ensure the quality of the process as much as possible. Therefore, it is crucial to identify factors affecting the quality of remote teaching practicums and make adaptations in accordance with those factors. In this regard, the current study aimed to identify the factors affecting the quality of remote teaching practicums from the perspectives of preservice preschool teachers. The data obtained revealed that “guidance of the mentor teacher and university supervisor,” “interactions with mentor teacher and university supervisor,” “paired peer placement,” “being a trainee teacher in the same class for two semesters,” and “access to course/learning materials” were factors that facilitated the remote teaching practicum and enhanced the quality of the process. On the other hand, “lack of technological resources,” “limitations in relationships with children and assessment,” “online classroom management,” and “family intervention” were found to be factors that hindered the remote teaching practicum and reduced its quality.

It is known that teaching practicums have three main groups of stakeholders: preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors or teacher educators. Teaching practicums are designed for preservice teachers and, via these practices, they are exposed to the strategies that they will use while educating children. In educational institutions, mentor teachers play a guiding role throughout the practicum process. In addition to current teachers of these educational institutions participating in practicums, university supervisors or university teacher educators also assist preservice teachers in higher education institutions and in their assigned practicum institutions as well. This may bring about situations that call for these staff to also take on mentoring roles (Lawson et al., 2015). The guidance and valuable support of mentor teachers and university supervisors play crucial roles in the education and training of preservice teachers and they have been considered as factors leading to the quality of teaching practicums (Mourlam et al., 2019). Similarly, to face-to-face teaching practicums, the current study has shown that guidance from mentor teachers and university supervisors is important for remote teaching practicums as well, facilitating the enhancement of the quality of the process. In addition to guidance, easy interactions with mentor teachers and university supervisors were also found to enhance the quality of the remote teaching practicum in this study. Using a systems perspective and placing teacher candidates at the center of the developing system, Laparo et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of relationships between preservice teachers and both mentor teachers and university supervisors in the processes of development and learning in teaching practicums. Similarly, Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) underlined the important role of the relationships, communication, and care that preservice teachers received from mentor teachers and university supervisors during an online teaching practicum. Thus, collaborative working relationships, communication, and the guidance of other stakeholders should be provided to help preservice teachers learn about distance education and help them gain various pedagogical skills for teaching online (Mohebi & Meda, 2021).

Another factor found to facilitate the remote teaching practicum and enhance the quality of the process in the present study was working with peers or partners, or, in other words, paired peer placement. The statements of the participating preservice teachers revealed that working with peers during a teaching practicum allowed them to benefit from peer coaching. Many studies in the literature have highlighted the positive outcomes of paired peer placement in teaching practicums (Callaway-Cole & Kimble, 2021; Silvera, 2012; Walsh & Elmslie, 2005; Wynn & Kromrey, 1999). For instance, Wynn and Kromrey (1999) underscored the importance of paired peer placement in field experiences and listed the development of support and collegiality, improved instructional strategy implementation, and expansion of opportunities for reflection and self-analysis as benefits of peer coaching. Similarly, Silvera (2012) suggested placing preservice teachers in pairs to reduce the problems experienced during teaching practicums and described peer coaching as one of the most effective ways for preservice teachers to enjoy

improved teaching practicum experiences. In line with the findings of the present study, Callaway-Cole and Kimble (2021) noted the benefits of peer coaching during the fieldwork-based experiences of preservice early childhood teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as allowing them to engage in productive feedback process. Therefore, it is of great importance to benefit from paired peer placement with peer coaching to enhance the professional development of preservice teachers in distance education.

The results of the current study furthermore revealed that placement in the same classroom during a year-long teaching practicum was viewed as being as important as paired placement. Most of the participants mentioned that training in the same classroom for two semesters helped them to get to know the children and mentor teachers and to plan and implement activities. Thus, placement in the same school in both fall and spring semesters was a facilitating factor that enhanced the quality of this remote teaching practicum. Considering the fact that due to the COVID-19 pandemic preservice teachers were both physically and socially distanced during the teaching practicum, this result is not surprising. As stated by Silvera (2012), placement in a strange school and perceptions of the environment as threatening are among the most challenging aspects of teaching practicums for preservice teachers. To overcome these challenges, particularly in circumstances where it is difficult to get to know the children, teachers, and other school staff, a year-long placement in a single classroom can be considered as a solution.

The final facilitating factor that emerged and enhanced the quality of the practicum evaluated here was access to learning materials. The participants mentioned that in addition to synchronous learning they also took advantage of asynchronous learning by reviewing the recordings of the lessons. It is known that learning materials and proper storage of those material are two of the most critical components of effective distance education (Baytiyeh, 2018), and for a smoother transition to distance learning in teacher education programs access to learning management systems is a key element (Quezada et al., 2020). Therefore, as revealed in the current study, maintaining access to learning materials is of great importance in providing high-quality remote teaching practicums.

As would be expected, in addition to factors that positively affected the quality of the remote teaching practicum, there were also factors that negatively affected the quality. The lack of technological resources was found to be the first factor that hindered the remote teaching practicum and decreased its quality. It was found in the present study that both preservice teachers and children faced certain constraints related to technological resources. These constraints have also been emphasized in other studies. Flores and Gago (2020) stated that lack of internet access and lack of equipment such as laptops or tablets were some of the main problems that young learners faced during online teaching practicum sessions. Moreover, Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) listed the main problems related to the lack of technological resources faced by preservice teachers during remote teaching practicums as not having an adequate internet connection or a laptop with a working camera and microphone. In this regard, to efficiently carry out remote teaching practicums and also support the education of the children it is of great importance to ensure that both preservice teachers and children are equipped with the necessary technology.

In early childhood education, building and sustaining positive relationships with children is fundamental for promoting development and learning among the children (Bredenkamp, 2017). Education in early childhood is grounded on high-quality positive relationships and teachers learn a lot about children while interacting with them. However, the findings of the present study revealed that the remote teaching practicum did not allow the participating preservice teachers to build rich relationships with children and the lack of direct interactions limited their ability to learn about the children's interests, strengths, and needs. Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) similarly pointed out these challenges in their study conducted with preservice teachers of English as a foreign language and they evaluated the lack of direct interactions with learners as the most predominant disadvantage of remote teaching practicums. Therefore, as in face-to-face education, strategies to foster positive relationships between children and preservice teachers and for them to get to know each other should be included in remote teaching practicums to enhance the quality and prepare future teachers well.

Although dealing with the demands of classroom management can be a significant challenge for many preservice teachers (McGarr, 2021), effective classroom management is viewed as a condition for student learning (Emmer & Stough, 2001). Similarly, to face-to-face education, managing courses and learning is crucial for

teaching effectively in an online environment (Albrahim, 2020). In a recent study conducted with preservice early childhood educators and their university supervisors, the importance of high-quality effective classroom management for successful online teaching and learning in early childhood was underscored by all participants (Mohebi & Meda, 2021). However, the present study indicated that online classroom management was challenging for the participating preservice teachers and acted as a hindering factor for quality during this remote teaching practicum. For this reason, preservice teachers must be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences for effective classroom management in distance education as well as face-to-face education. To this end, virtual simulations (McGarr, 2021) and online video analysis can be utilized and further enhanced by online expert feedback, which has the potential to contribute to and promote preservice teachers' professional visions of classroom management (Prilop et al., 2021).

Because the distance education of young children requires parental involvement (Mohebi & Meda, 2021), the COVID-19 pandemic turned parents into necessary components of education (Lau & Lee, 2020). It has been found in many studies that parents were collaborators in the distance education of their young children during the pandemic (Mohebi & Meda, 2021). However, in the present study, parental involvement was generally considered to be a hindering factor that affected the quality of the teaching practicum negatively. The participating preservice teachers stated that parents who desired their children to complete tasks correctly or quickly completed the assigned tasks for their children and prevented the children's learning. As Spiteri (2021) noted, this was generally the first time in their lives that parents faced the challenge of taking on substantial teaching duties. This may be why parents interfered with their children's learning. Therefore, both preservice and in-service early childhood educators should meet with parents and discuss their roles in supporting and promoting learning (Lohmann et al., 2021).

Teaching practicums have important roles in the training of qualified teachers. Although face-to-face education is the standard strategy for teaching practicums and it offers invaluable hands-on knowledge (Peyton et al., 2020), the application of distance education in this process is also valuable and it can be implemented in contexts where face-to-face education is not possible. In such cases, to ensure the quality of the education and increase the supply of qualified teachers, it is very important to be informed of all factors affecting the process and consider those factors in planning and implementing remote teaching practicums. The factors affecting the quality of remote teaching practicums that were revealed in this study accordingly provide a basis for teacher educators, mentor teachers, and other key partners to plan and implement high-quality remote teaching practicums.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

The preservice preschool teachers who received practical experience within the scope of this study completed both the theoretical and practical parts of the teaching practicum remotely and synchronously. However, different methods were used in different countries for the implementation of teaching practicums during the pandemic period. For instance, a report produced by the National Association for the Education of Young Children regarding the impact of COVID-19 on higher education programs for early childhood education revealed that using videos and self-reflections, having students videotape themselves implementing the curriculum with or without children, and allowing students to implement the curriculum with specific children were some methods for supplementing field experiences (Peyton et al., 2020). Therefore, the results of the present study reflect only one type of such practices. To be well prepared for situations such as pandemics, future studies could investigate teaching practicums implemented with different strategies. Furthermore, the present study was conducted with a relatively small number of participants from one public university, which prohibits the generalization of the results. Future studies with more diverse and larger samples should be conducted. Finally, in the present study, a structured interview protocol was the sole means of data collection, and future research using different data collection techniques and triangulating data could approach this topic from a broader perspective. All types of studies and projects examining teaching practicums implemented with different strategies constitute steps towards ensuring high-quality teacher education.

STATEMENTS OF PUBLICATION ETHICS

Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Anadolu University Social and Humanity Sciences.

RESEARCHERS' CONTRIBUTION RATE

Researchers' Contribution Rate							
Authors	Literature review	Method	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Results	Conclusion	(Other)
Author 1	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
Author 2	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that they have no conflict of interest.

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