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RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Investigation into Preservice English Teacher Educators' Online Teaching Experiences

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Abstract

The coronavirus 2019 pandemic has necessitated the need for preservice English teacher educators (PETEs) to undertake online teaching. Given the lack of research in the literature on unraveling the perceptions of PETEs regarding their asynchronous or synchronous teaching practices, this cross-sectional survey research could prove beneficial by providing insights from the evaluations of 11 Turkish PETEs teaching at two state universities, their online instructional practices, and the challenges they faced while teaching online. The data collected from the online survey were analyzed by performing descriptive statistics and inductive content analysis. The findings revealed that the PETEs had analogous experiences in the course of online teaching because they deemed asynchronous online teaching monotonous and not as effective as synchronous online teaching (SOT) primarily owing to the lack of spontaneity. The findings also demonstrated that PETEs did not believe SOT was free of problems, and the manner in which online assessment was undertaken provided factual evidence concerning preservice English teacher learning.

Keywords: Asynchronous online teaching, coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, preservice English teacher educators, preservice English teachers, synchronous online teaching

Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak and its convergence into a pandemic has caused teacher educators (TEs) to abandon their traditional teaching practices. The incorporation of technology into education has engendered more courses to be provided either online or in a hybrid manner, meaning an equitable distribution of total class hours between online and face-to-face teaching (International Association of Universities, 2020; Philipsen et al., 2019). Although there exists a group of preservice English teacher educators (PETEs) who had integrated the online component into their face-to-face teaching or had only conducted classes online even before this pandemic, there exist TEs who have no prior experience of online teaching. Therefore, responding to the demands of universities and equipping preservice English teachers (PETs) with the knowledge and skills required for online teaching might be much harder for the novice TEs. However, the issues TEs face in online classes could constitute a basis for their future online instructional practices. Although educators are

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highly likely to face several challenges during online teaching, they need to rise to the occasion (Davis et al., 2019), more so because online teaching is expected to be the standard of teaching as of 2025 (Palvia et al., 2018).

Online teaching and learning is no longer a rare phenomenon in higher education (Bollden, 2016; Khoo & Cowie, 2011) and has prompted a socioconstructivist approach to higher education (Green et al., 2013). In line with the socioconstructivist approach, educators can form communities of practice to collaborate through Web 2.0 tools (Palmer & Schueths, 2013). The pivotal role played by TEs to prepare preservice teachers to fulfill expectations of integrating technology into teaching is highlighted in the related literature (Graziano, 2017). In light of the assumption that quality teacher education relies on qualified TEs (Goodwin et al., 2014), it is important for TEs to be proficient in the online teaching format. In doing so, preservice teachers can be trained better in teaching online by qualified PETEs either via a course specifically designed for familiarizing them with online teaching or adding it to the content of one of the extant courses (Graziano & Bongey, 2018). Literature review unveils the lack of research on PETEs' distance education experiences; therefore, this study could provide insights into the reasons for their choices with regard to asynchronous online teaching (AOT) and synchronous online teaching (SOT), which can offer invaluable evidence concerning their professional development needs for conducting effective and quality online teaching. Accordingly, the prospective training in online teaching and learning for PETEs might be designed in accordance with the issues highlighted by the participants in that their preference for a certain type of online teaching may stem from their lack of knowledge on how to conduct online teaching effectively and overcome obstacles they encounter in the course of online teaching.

Skills Needed in Online Teaching

The competencies university educators need to have for success in online learning environments have been revealed to be context bound (Alvarez et al., 2009), and improving online teaching skills is assumed to necessitate unceasing critical reflections on online teaching experiences (Baran et al., 2011). It was pointed out in the research by Archambault and Crippen (2009) that online teaching experiences promoted participating teachers' face-to-face teaching practices and that they were enthusiastic about developing their online teaching skills. It was demonstrated in the study by McShane (2004) that the university teachers using computer-mediated communication monitored their teaching more. Academic staff is conceived to take on a role different from their recognized role when they apply online pedagogy into their teaching (Kilgour et al., 2019) in that they could be considered to be students trying to develop their online teaching skills. The skills required for successful online teaching are specified in the skills pyramid by Hampel and Stickler (2005) in the following order, from the layer at the bottom to the one at the top: "basic ICT competence, specific

technical competence for the software, dealing with the constraints and possibilities of the medium, online socialization, facilitating communicative competence, creativity and choice, and own style" (p. 317).

A study by Edwards et al. (2011) on the qualities of successful online educators revealed that there was no profound difference between the qualities of online and face-to-face educators because both were believed to "challenge and affirm students, establish clear classroom practice and be persons of influence." Highlighting the possibility that TEs might have no other choice but to teach online, Fletcher and Bullock (2015) argued that they should ponder over how to teach online even if they would rather teach face-to-face. Given the fact that the transition from face-to-face teaching to online teaching is not a smooth process (Fernandez, 2014), success in online teaching requires valiant effort expended by online educators. It is important to bear in mind the factors and issues to be tackled in online teaching for achieving success in it (Sims et al., 2002).

Skills required for online teaching are different from those needed in face-to-face teaching, and therefore, teacher education programs should also provide training for online teaching (Pulham & Graham, 2018). In addition, the time spent by online teachers has been found to be more than that invested by face-to-face teachers (Spector, 2005). Taking into account the likelihood of the divergence between what university lecturers preach and what they do in online teaching environments, Owens (2015) concluded that the gap between the two was bigger in nonexpert university lecturers' online classes, whereas it was less in classes conducted by experts. The findings in the research by Carpenter et al. (2020) indicated the significance for student teachers to observe how technology was used in the field and the coverage of its use in the coursework on campus. Moreover, the results of that study demonstrated that according to the participating TEs, incorporating pedagogical approaches that could prepare teacher candidates for effectively using technology was the most important TE technology competency, whereas engaging in leadership and advocacy for using technology was the least important. Besides knowledge of technology, institutional support mediates TEs' integration of technology in their instructional practices (Nelson et al., 2019). The TEs engaged in online teaching in the research by Downing and Dyment (2013) lacked confidence in teaching online at the start of their online teaching experience, which was addressed by the technical and pedagogical support provided to them. Creating an environment contributing to the development of students' socioaffective, sociocognitive, and organizational skills is posited to be the responsibility of online TEs, which they can fulfill by the proper communicative tasks they will set and with the mentoring and feedback they will provide (Hampel, 2009). The literature review conducted by Uerz et al. (2018) shows that TEs need four domains of competence for teaching and learning with technology: technolo-

gy competencies, competencies in pedagogical and educational use of technology, beliefs about the use of technology in teaching and learning, and competencies in innovation and professional learning. Setting forth 16 myths about online learning, Li and Akins (2005) claimed that quality online learning was based on:

> … clarity of goals, sound e-pedagogy, committed and dedicated learners and instructors, excellent support from administrators and staff and opportunities to practice application of new knowledge and skills. It also depends on a reasoned view of online learning -- not subscribing to myths without questioning them (p. 58).

Online foreign language teaching outcomes and students and teachers' perceptions of online foreign language learning and teaching have been the topic of a sufficiently large number of studies. Online teaching is contended to be more effective for improving receptive language skills as opposed to productive skills, and teachers have diverging beliefs about the effectiveness of online language learning (Canals & Rawashdeh, 2019). The skills teachers require for online language teaching were identified by Guichon (2009) as socioaffective, pedagogical, and multimedia skills.

Online Teaching in Preservice Teacher Education

The importance of training preservice teachers in online teaching is emphasized in the literature (Duncan & Barnett, 2009). Taking that into account, Downing and Dyment (2020) accentuated the need for teacher education programs to be informed by research on online teaching based on "systematic, shared, and strategic approach" (p. 330). The research by Rakes and Dunn (2015) examined preservice and in-service teachers' perceptions regarding online teaching and revealed that they did not favor online teaching and demanded more knowledge regarding the differences between online and face-to-face education. In addition, TEs had distinct perceptions regarding the effect of online teaching in preservice teacher education. Online mentoring was used to integrate technology into pedagogy with subject teachers and TEs in the study by Dorner and Kumar (2016), and it was suggested that online mentoring taking place with the participation of subject-specific mentors, TEs, mentor teachers, and prospective teachers could help preservice teachers develop their skills for online teaching. According to Hathaway and Norton (2012), preparing teachers for online teaching necessitates:

> understanding the unique attributes of online learning environments essential to effective online course design, understanding and using a range of technology applications unique to online learning (e.g., course management systems, discussion boards, and synchronous virtual classroom tools), and working with virtual groups and the associated concerns with teachers'/learners' online presence and teacher learner and learner-learner interactions (p. 151).

Prospective language teachers need to be prepared for teaching languages online (Compton, 2009), which requires language TEs to aid prospective language teachers in gaining and developing the skills they will need to use in online foreign language teaching. Because teachers occupy a vital role in fostering online collaboration amid students (Ernest et al., 2013), they need to possess the knowledge and skills required to facilitate online collaboration among students. TEs are responsible for fostering interaction and sustaining student motivation in online learning environments (Bennett & Lockyer, 2004).

AOT is postulated to be less effective than SOT owing to the lack of live interaction between the teacher and students. Nonetheless, perceived advantages of SOT may be jeopardized unless it is appropriately conducted or active participation by students is promoted. Perceived disadvantages of AOT can be eliminated by stimulating online discussions among preservice teachers. For instance, Hambacher et al. (2018) concluded that asynchronous online discussions were deemed by preservice teachers as a medium for learning about classroom management as they pointed out that they could think in detail about their own ideas and reflect on their classmates' views as well.

Processes involved in online teaching might result in reconstruction of teachers' professional identities (Sato & Chen, 2019). TEs need to reconstruct their identities as teachers in the face of increasing use of technology in the coursework (Ungar & Baruch, 2018). The study by Jonker et al. (2017) reported that blended teaching caused changes in TEs' professional identities; however, their beliefs regarding teaching, learning, and education remained unchanged. Furthermore, they acted as facilitators, transmitters of knowledge, personal coaches, and communicators to cope with the changes produced by blended teaching.

Emphasizing the crucial role to be played by teacher education programs in preparing preservice teachers for online teaching, Rice and Deschaine (2020) suggested that preservice teachers should be given the chance to practice teaching in online schools and programs. Thus, TEs need to provide opportunities to preservice teachers for integrating technology into their teaching practices to learn how to teach in an online format and/or by accompanying face-to-face teaching with technology-based activities (Stansberry, 2017). Sun et al. (2017) suggested complementing initial teacher preparation programs with an advanced educational technology course. Other recommendations in the literature involve providing knowledge of the value of technology integration into teaching to university lecturers and attempting to change their pedagogical beliefs from traditional toward constructivist (Taimalu & Luik, 2019). Voithofer et al. (2019) reported that most of the experienced TEs did not adopt the technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) framework, and the

TEs with the highest level of technological knowledge were the ones who adopted TPACK the most. In addition, the study reported that the TEs working for the institutions offering graduate degrees adopted TPACK more than those working for institutions not offering graduate degrees.

This study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What are PETEs' perceptions of their lived AOT/SOT experiences?
2. What do PETEs think about the effectiveness of online assessment they have carried out?
3. According to PETEs, what type of education—face-to-face education, SOT, AOT, or a combination of two of them or all three of them—is more effective in PET education?

Method

Research Design and the Setting

This study was designed as a cross-sectional survey research. The explanations provided by Creswell (2012) as to cross-sectional survey research could unveil why this study employed it:

> In a cross-sectional survey design, the researcher collects data at one point in time. For example, when middle school children complete a survey about teasing, they are recording data about their present views. This design has the advantage of measuring current attitudes or practices (p. 377).

This research aims at unpacking PETEs' views on their lived AOT/SOT experiences at one point following their online teaching experiences. In this regard, this study was conducted as a cross-sectional survey research. Before the start of study, ethical approval was obtained from Hatay Mustafa Kemal University Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Board (document numbered 21817443-050.99-30414 and dated June 2, 2020). Participants' consent was obtained before commencing the study.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face education was ceased at the end of the fifth week of the spring term, marking the beginning of online teaching and learning at all levels of education in the context of this research. The state universities in which the data were collected made announcements about how distance education was supposed to be conducted, and the PETEs participating in this study had the option to carry out their teaching through either SOT or AOT. The PETEs who decided to conduct AOT were expected to record a 20- to 30-min-long video for each lesson of a course and upload it to the universities' distance education systems so that PETs could achieve each course's learning objectives from a distance,

simply by watching the uploaded videos and reading the texts. The PETEs teaching their courses synchronously were required to upload the videos of taught lessons to the system with the purpose of offering a chance to the PETs not having access to the internet or having exceeded their internet quota to watch the lessons they could not attend. In addition to using the distance education system as the platform for teaching PETs, the PETEs used it to carry out midterm and final examinations of the spring term by handing out assignments to the PETs who had to submit them before the due dates determined by the PETEs. Following the completion of the spring term, the survey developed by the researcher was emailed to the PETEs who were kindly asked to return the filled-in survey via email in 10 days. The email sent to the PETEs also involved information about the purpose of the study. After collecting the data, the analysis was conducted.

Participants

The survey was emailed to 15 PETEs working at two state universities using the same distance education system, but only 11 PETEs responded to the email. Of the participants, 6 were female and the rest were male. The mean age of the participants was 41.2 years. The universities the PETEs work for do not have the technical infrastructure to carry out SOT, and the participants who taught both asynchronously and synchronously used an application they thought to be more efficient to be able to teach synchronously. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants for this study, which does not target generalizing the findings to a wider population; on the contrary, it sets out to arrive at a detailed understanding of what PETEs experienced as teaching online (Creswell, 2012). Although 7 of the participants taught content courses, 4 PETEs offered pedagogy courses. Except for 3 PETEs, all the others taught their courses solely asynchronously. No information that could reveal the identity of the participants will be given throughout the paper to protect their privacy and to maintain anonymity.

Data Collection Tool and Analysis

A survey consisting of two parts was developed by the researcher. The first part aimed to collect demographic information of the participants, whereas the second part comprising two closed-ended and six open-ended questions aimed to unpack PETEs' perceptions of teaching from a distance. The first step taken in the process of developing the questionnaire was reviewing the related literature. Then, the questions produced in view of the extant literature were sent to 2 PETEs who were not among the participants of this study to ensure the questions could provide answers to the research questions and were precise. Necessary revisions were made in the questions in accordance with the comments of the PETEs, and thereafter, the survey was emailed to the study participants.

The completion of data collection initiated the analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data gathered from the closed-ended questions, and inductive content analysis was conducted to analyze the data obtained from the open-ended ones. Two coders, one of whom is the researcher, conducted the inductive content analysis. The steps recommended by Creswell (2007) were followed while coding the data. The coders read participants' responses several times and then assigned codes to them. Following that, similar codes were grouped to avoid redundancy. Thereafter, the coders reread the data to make sure new codes did not emerge and circled the quotes that endorsed the codes. Finally, themes were developed from the codes. Member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was conducted to establish the credibility of the study by sharing the results and their interpretations with 4 participants in an effort to ensure they mirrored what they had in their minds about their lived AOT/SOT experiences.

Results

The results from the closed-ended questions of if they had carried out AOT and SOT showed that other than the 3 participants teaching both synchronously and asynchronously, the remaining 8 participants taught only asynchronously. The second question in the survey was asked to find out the PETEs' reasons for not teaching synchronously. The content analysis of participants' responses led to the emergence of the following in vivo theme.

Lack of Technical Infrastructure

All the participants drew the attention to the technical infrastructure of the universities at which they teach. The statements of PETE 5 epitomize other participants' reasons for not teaching synchronously:

> At our university, we use a platform (called UZEM) which apparently lacked (maybe still lacks) the capacity to conduct lessons synchronously; they encouraged us to teach asynchronously, and – foreseeing technical challenges – I decided to conduct my lessons asynchronously. I then found a way to plan, and conduct my lesson asynchronously.

Another reason given by the participants and having a part in the emergence of this theme is the PETEs' concerns over PETs' access to the internet. It was highlighted that PETs might have problems with joining synchronous online classes as a result of not having access to the internet. PETE 2 explicated this issue in the following words:

> I know that some of my students could not attend to my online classes due to problems with accessing to internet.

PETEs' Perceptions Regarding Their Lived Experiences of SOT

The third question was added to the survey to ascertain the difficulties faced by the PETEs in carrying out SOT. The participants underscored that low level of attendance was the problem they had encountered in their synchronous online classes. PETE 7, one of the 3 PETEs teaching synchronously stated: "I had 35 students enrolled in one of my courses, but utmost 15 students joined the lessons." The PETEs also gave explanations about the low level of PET participation. They alleged that the major handicap to high level of student participation stemmed from the internet connection problems the PETs had. PETE 2 stated that the nonattending PETs contacted him by telephone and expressed their apologies stating that there was either no internet connection in the area where they lived with their family or they could not access the internet because of exceeding their internet quota.

PETEs' Perceptions of Their Lived Experiences of AOT

All the PETEs experienced teaching asynchronously. The participants were asked whether they had encountered any difficulties while teaching asynchronously. The responses of the participants led to the development of two themes.

Monotony of Teaching

The PETEs highlighted that recording teaching videos was no different than a monologue, which made the process of teaching monotonous for them. They also stressed the absence of interaction between them and PETs, which made the process of teaching monotonous. The views of PETE 10 on the problems with AOT could typify those of the others:

> You cannot really interact with the students and you cannot get an immediate feedback regarding the effectiveness of the course content and uploaded materials.

In addition to not taking pleasure in teaching, another theme emerged from other difficulties faced when teaching from a distance asynchronously, which is stated below.

Inefficacy of Online Teaching Platform

The responses of the participants indicated that the infrastructure of the online platform was not up-to-date and uploading some of the files they intended to allot to the PETs was impossible thereof. In line with this theme, PETE 8 stated:

> It should be noted that the interface must be up-to-date and have full integration with other applications. Otherwise, educators need to find alternative platforms to support their virtual classes with other necessary files.

Similarly, PETE 11 explained the difficulties she faced by drawing the attention to the need for converting the files she wanted to use into specific file types:

> I could not upload all the files I planned to share with my students because of the limited number of file types that can be uploaded to the platform. It took quite a lot of time to convert the files and there were times I could not convert them.

PETEs' Perceptions of the Online Assessment They Carried Out

The PETEs gave assignments to PETs and set the due dates for submission in accordance with the midterm and final examination weeks declared by the Rectorate. The scores the PETs got on their assignments determined their midterm and final examination grades. One of the open-ended questions in the survey served for unveiling the PETEs' conceptions of the online assessment they undertook. Their responses indicated that the PETEs did not believe that the way the online assessment was conducted assessed PET learning accurately.

Assignments Full of Copy-Paste

PETEs' views about the way they carried out online assessment illustrated that they did not reckon PET learning was assessed fully and properly because a large number of PETs completed their assignments by copying and pasting paragraphs from the web pages involving information relevant to the questions asked in the midterm and final examinations. PETE 10 stated:

> Despite the fact that I uploaded six articles to help my students generate ideas about the question I had asked in the midterm exam, almost all the students found websites that contained information to be used to answer it and copied sentences from them rather than reading the articles and taking into account what I had talked about in the videos.

Similarly, PETE 8 deplored the fact that his students cheated from each other while answering the questions. He pinpointed that even the mistakes made by some of his students were the same, and therefore, he did not perceive the way the examinations were administered was effective. Putting forth similar reasons, PETE 1 also purported that the examination results did not reflect actual learning outcomes.

Open to Numerous Excuses Made by the PETs

Another issue raised by the PETEs relating to what they had experienced of online assessment was pertaining to the PETs who did not upload their assignments to the system on time. PETEs' perceptions concerning this issue were that there were PETs expressing their excuses such as "I could not finish my assignment on time because my mother was ill," "I could not finish my assignment because I was ill," "I could not upload my assignment because I did not have internet," and so on, for not being able to submit their assignments on time. PETE 4's statements on this issue involve one of the excuses offered by the PETs and reflect the viewpoints of other PETEs:

Even though the PETs taking my course had eight days to submit their assignments, some students called or e-mailed me on the ninth day and told me, "I have internet connection problems. I could not upload my midterm exam assignment and the system is closed to uploading now. May I send it to you by e-mailing till tomorrow?" I know those students had time management problems and thought that their excuses would be accepted because of the pandemic.

PETEs' Preferences for the Mode of Teaching in PET Education

Associated with the PETEs' conceptions of their lived AOT/SOT experiences, the participants expressed their beliefs concerning effective modes of education in preservice teacher education by responding to the last question in the survey. The analysis of the data revealed that 1 PETE favored merely face-to-face education, 1 participant believed a combination of face-to-face education and AOT, and the remaining 9 PETEs considered that a combination of face-to-face education and SOT would serve better for preparing PETs for the profession. The PETE favoring merely face-to-face teaching expounded his point of view by emphasizing the significance of spontaneity in teaching PETs. The PETE supporting the integration of AOT into face-to-face teaching directed the attention to limited face-to-face class time, which could be complemented by uploading documents to universities' distance education systems for the use of PETs.

The content analysis of the responses of the PETEs believing that a mix of SOT and face-to-face teaching was the best mode of teaching led to the development of the conclusion that a combination of face-to-face teaching and SOT is the right mode of teaching. The explanations given by the PETEs to endorse their points of view concentrated on the importance of face-to-face teaching and equipping PETs with the skills they will need to use to teach their prospective students online, which, according to them, could be realized by incorporating SOT into face-to-face teaching in the PET education program. The statements of PETE 8 exemplify other proponents' views:

I believe that face-to-face education accompanied by synchronous distance education works best. Being present in the classroom does not mean that learning takes place. It is important to direct students towards creating their own voice and this could very well happen in both real and virtual classrooms. Also, being able to teach in distance education is a necessary skill that we need to equip our teacher candidates with.

Discussion, and Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings demonstrated that the PETEs faced difficulties when conducting AOT/SOT, which parallels the literature (Davis et al., 2019; Fernandez, 2014; Sims et al., 2002). The PETEs not teaching synchronously put forward the view that the infrastructure of the distance education system used by their universities was not

up-to-date, forcing them to teach asynchronously. This brings forth the necessity for technical support to be provided to PETEs, the importance of which was also emphasized in the research by Downing and Dyment (2013) and Nelson et al. (2019). Any institution obliging online teaching should prepare the technical infrastructure to enable online teaching to be conducted smoothly; however, PETEs need to take quick steps to develop their technical skills because one of the skills needed to be successful in online teaching is the technical competence to tackle the limitations and take advantage of the opportunities of online teaching tools (Hampel & Stickler, 2005). The PETEs teaching synchronously stated that the level of PET attendance to online classes was low, and the reasons expressed by the PETs for that were related to internet access and connection problems. Despite the possibility that there could be PETs inventing excuses for not joining synchronous online classes, it is highly likely that there were PETs who really did not have access to the internet owing to their location or exceeding their quota. For PETs and other university students experiencing problems with access to the internet as a result of not having enough internet quota, universities can take measures to encourage PET participation, such as providing extra internet quota to them. PET active participation matters considerably to maximize PET learning in online classes just as in the case of face-to-face classes, which brings along TEs' duty to motivate preservice teachers, as was indicated in the research by Bennett and Lockyer (2004). Considering the fact that to date, most studies on student active participation are based on face-to-face classes, explorations into the ways for increasing PET participation in online classes need to be carried out.

The findings demonstrated that all the PETEs valued face-to-face teaching, showing the importance attached by them to conducting their teaching while both PETEs and their students were physically present in the classroom. Likewise, the participants in the study by Rakes and Dunn (2015) also preferred face-to-face teaching. The commonly shared conception among the PETEs with regard to AOT is the profound difference between AOT and face-to-face teaching, because PETs are separated from PETEs not only with respect to time but also place in AOT as against face-to-face teaching. The statements of the PETEs on SOT indicate that they believed SOT was more effective than AOT as it offered affordances similar to those of face-to-face teaching. AOT was assumed to be monotonous by the participants for there was no live contact between them and PETs, which decreases PETE motivation. The responses of the participants to the question of the difficulties they encountered while teaching asynchronously demonstrated that AOT demotivated them. It is self-evident that the live atmosphere in the classroom environment with the discussions generated either by the PETE or PETs or with PET microteaching motivates PETEs to perform better in online lessons. Nevertheless, PETEs need to motivate themselves by reading about how to make teaching and learning enjoyable for them and PETs in online teaching. PETEs might also form communities of practice, the importance of which

was also illustrated in the paper by Palmer and Schueths (2013), by virtue of which more experienced PETEs can help PETEs who are new to online teaching by sharing of the tactics to be employed to make online classes more effective for PETs. In addition to the personal attempts of PETEs to remove the constraints of AOT, universities should take the responsibility of satisfying PETEs' needs, which could be fulfilled by arranging trainings on how to conduct online teaching efficaciously and updating the available distance education system.

The results also showed that the PETEs did not believe that online assessment truly exhibited if PETs achieved learning objectives because there were PETs cheating through copying and pasting from a variety of websites and/or each other's answers. The participants were discontented with the way midterm and final examinations were administered from a distance. The issues addressed by the participants bring to the forefront the requirement for working on ways for carrying out effective and efficient online assessment.

This research was carried out with an eye to delving into the PETEs' views on their lived experiences of teaching from a distance. The results of this study indicate that the PETEs and universities were caught unprepared by the COVID-19 pandemic in that the PETEs highlighted the infrastructures were not up-to-date, and except for 1 PETE, other participants had never taught from a distance before. The findings also show that PETEs' lack of experience of online teaching confined them to the universities' distance education systems rather than using available online teaching platforms. This pandemic has made TEs and higher education institutions recognize the fact that they should be well prepared for distance education by developing their skills in online teaching and updating the distance education systems they have been using. PETEs must be eager to develop their online teaching skills such as finding suitable virtual platforms and designing and conducting engaging online lessons to increase PET participation because it is only when they are ready for teaching from a distance, can they overcome any problem originating from the technical infrastructure or low level of PET motivation, resulting in a low level of attendance to online lessons.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Considering the number of participants in this study, it is obvious that it is impossible to extend the findings to other contexts. Therefore, more studies with the participation of more respondents from a wide range of universities must be undertaken. In this study, the study participants were teaching at two state universities with the same distance education system; for this reason, further research should be carried out in more state universities and private universities to learn whether PETEs' perceptions of their lived online teaching experiences change substantially according to universi-

ties' technical infrastructure and the support offered by them. In addition, the findings are based on participants' statements. In other words, the researcher did not watch PETEs' online lessons. Watching at least one or two lessons of each PETE might provide insight into this. Further studies analyzing the online lessons taught by different PETEs should be carried out to get a precise idea about what constraints they have to deal with in online teaching and how they should try to overcome them. Moreover, this study examined exclusively the PETEs' conceptions of their online teaching experiences. Studies can be conducted to compare and contrast PETEs' online teaching and PETs' online learning experiences.

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