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## The effect of Covid-19 on pre-service teachers' lifelong learning tendencies

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### Abstract

Lifelong learning has an important place in many discussions about education. Lifelong learning is seen as a supporter of education in order to meet the needs of individuals regarding their interests, curiosities and abilities, and to contribute to the development of individuals socially and professionally. In order to provide these supports, the support of formal and non-formal education institutions and all in service and out of service activities are evaluated within this scope. Individuals who want to be involved in the lifelong learning process face many difficulties. Although these problems differ in the process, the biggest problem affecting the access of the student to the formal education is the Covid-19 epidemic today. In this process, individuals have gained many new habits besides being affected psychologically and they have to increase their efforts a little more. Although lifelong learning has a very comprehensive content, one of its main purposes is the personal development of students who continue the formal undergraduate program at the university. Besides the steps that the students follow their development in the normal process, it is a matter of curiosity how they followed their own development in the Covid-19 epidemic process. With this study, it was aimed to investigate the effects of coronavirus (Covid-19), which is the biggest problem of today and which worries the whole world including our country, on lifelong learning tendencies. Qualitative research methods will be used in this research. The participants are undergraduate students studying at the Faculty of Education, the whole world including our country on lifelong learning tendencies. Semi-structured interview forms to be directed by researchers with 10 students. In this study, which aims to obtain in-depth information, content analysis will be used in the process of analyzing the responses which received from ten students.

**Keywords:** Life long learning, Covid-19, teacher candidates.

### 1. Introduction

It is very important for educators and decision makers to have information about the reasons why individuals participate in lifelong learning. Individuals participating in lifelong learning processes usually do this voluntarily. In this context, instructors and decision makers will be able to design a more qualified learning process for individuals when the reasons for participating in lifelong learning and the goals they want to achieve

are known. If the factors affecting the decisions of the participants are known, the curriculum is designed in a way that aims to train students with a quality that they can develop through lifelong learning after graduation. As participation in lifelong learning is left to the individual's choice, the reasons for participating in educational services are mostly based on individual needs. Requirements affecting individual needs can be expressed as communication, which includes psychological and social factors, social communication, education preparation, professional development, family, togetherness, social excitement and cognitive interest (Karacabey & Bozkus, 2019). The basic idea behind the concept of lifelong learning is quite simple. This thinking related to the fact that deliberate and intended learning can and should be created along the lifeline of each individual. This idea is emphasized in ancient writings and in the work of European theorists such as Comenius and Matthew Arnold (Knapper & Cropley, 2000).

Discussions on how to associate lifelong learning practices in Australian Education Faculties also revealed a number of important developments regarding lifelong learning. In this context, it is expected to have the qualifications to differentiate the lifelong learning curriculum by taking into account individual needs, following new understandings of knowledge, including learning, teaching and information and communication technologies, gaining leadership and management skills, providing cooperation and division of labor, setting standards, measuring, evaluating and reporting. (Toomey, Chapman, Gaff, Mcgilp, Walsh, Warren, & Williams, 2004).

Considering all these competencies, lifelong learning is generally a continuous process that focuses on the reflection of learning opportunities to the whole life and aims to develop individuals' potential and competencies throughout their lives (Diker Coskun & Demirel, 2012). On the other hand, lifelong learning can be thought of as a combination of processes in the lifeline. These processes are defined as the body (genetic, physical and biological), mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, senses, emotions), experiences in social status, perceived content that is subsequently transferred cognitively, new knowledge and skills that are emotionally or practically integrated into the individual background, resulting in constant change or, in other words, becoming more experienced (Jarvis, 2007). Lifelong learning incorporates the characteristics of three forms of learning which are formal, non-formal and informal learning. It can be systematic, purposeful and organized, being deliberate, planned and spontaneous, as well as being a part of natural life, including unplanned, accidental, and unconscious learning (Sharma, 2002).

Economic and social changes in the 1960s brought the discussion of lifelong learning (Edwards, 2002). In 1972, UNESCO emphasized lifelong learning with some suggestions it brought. These suggestions, which also indicate the importance of the concept of lifelong learning, are listed as (1) it is wrong to limit education to school age and school buildings, (2) the school is inclusive of educational activity in all environments, including internal and external, (3) the necessity for educational activities to be more flexible (4) education is a long-term existential activity like life (Knowles, n.d. as cited in Akbas & Ozdemir, 2002). In the 1990s, lifelong learning has been a tool for the reform and modernization of national education and training systems (Field, 2001). After the 1990s, a more careful importance was attached to education by the European Union and 1996 was determined as the year of lifelong learning by the commission. A new paper was presented by the G8 countries in 2000. In the educational projects of the European Union, objectives and practices related to lifelong learning are included. For example, Leonardo Da Vinci program has lifelong learning bases for vocational education. One of the aims of this program is to empower lifelong learning by using tools related to the information society. The concepts of

employment, unemployment, school, industry and collaboration are discussed in the context of lifelong learning. Along with these, it also has objectives such as language learning and fighting exclusion (Akbas & Ozdemir, 2002). In our country, the concept of lifelong learning was realized in the 2000s, the Ministry of National Education showed the importance it attaches to this concept by establishing the "General Directorate of Lifelong Learning". This concept includes the notions of formal and non-formal education.

The concept of lifelong learning differs by considering the individual as the basic building block, thinking of learning outside the school environment, thus changing the perception of the school role, for this reason reducing the role of the state in education, and in contrast to all these it also differs by strengthening social qualities and not imposing time limits on the learning process (Gulec, Celik & Demirhan, 2012). In other words, lifelong learning involves the self-actualization efforts of an individual whose basic needs for knowledge and skill acquisition are met in the school environment in order to achieve their individual high-level goals. As Nelson stated, qualities such as high level of responsibility, accuracy, creativity, decision-making skills, thought and movement autonomy, and self-awareness are essential qualities for lifelong learning (Boran & San, 2013).

In understanding the competences related to lifelong learning, eight key competences have been identified as key competences in lifelong learning within the European framework, which was put forward by the European Union Education and Culture Commission in 2007. These competencies are expressed as communication in mother tongue, communication in foreign language, mathematical basic competence in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social citizenship awareness competence, initiative and entrepreneurship competence, cultural awareness and expression competence (European Commission, 2007). These competencies aim at achieving individual success, social acceptance of the individual and active citizenship employment. In addition, problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, risk assessment, initiative and decision-making and management skills are also skills that are included in these overlapping competencies. The aim is to include and develop these competencies in the lifelong learning process (Turkey's National Agency, 2012).

When the individual develops scientific literacy skills by integrating these competencies and similar high-level thinking skills with scientific knowledge, he/she will take an important step in enhancing the lifelong learning performance, thus the motivation and success to reach the goals regarding lifelong learning will increase. The individual who gains a scientific attitude will also have the ability to separate the problems, events and situations that he/she encounters in the learning process outside the school environment from among individual thoughts as much as possible and interpret them based on the logical data he/she has (San & Boran, 2013). Lifelong learning provides the individual with further learning opportunities independent of time and place by providing the basic skills mentioned. Lifelong learning provides the individual with further learning opportunities independent of time and place by providing the basic skills mentioned. In this context, universities play an important role in providing individuals with lifelong learning skills. Particular attention is drawn to the contribution of universities to realize lifelong learning in the Bologna process. Lifelong learning was also emphasized in the 2001 Prague Statement and the 2003 Berlin Conference.

Higher education is a special field of study considering its important support in the development and implementation of the lifelong learning system. It provides an institutional framework for lifelong learning. This importance derives from their role in

theory development and research building, and from the influence and prestige of universities and colleges within the education systems of many countries. The development of lifelong learning is related to what universities teach, research, and influence on knowledge, attitudes, values and practices in many areas of society. Institutes train individuals as people who will later shape society. In addition, they have an important role in the education of teachers regarding lifelong learning, not only providing information, but also providing theoretical principles and practical experience. Additionally, faculty members at the universities are important role models for the implementation of teaching strategies for lifelong learning (Knapper & Cropley, 2000). Considering the participation of students in decision-making mechanisms and the decisions to support mobility, it is a necessity for universities to organize student-centered curriculums that provide flexible learning opportunities both in pre-pandemic living conditions and due to pandemic conditions that limit the opportunity to learn as in a classroom we are in today. In this context, it has become an inevitable need for universities to reorganize their curriculum in a way to gain lifelong learning qualities. For these reasons, universities should take the responsibility of creating an environment in order to gain lifelong learning skills (Sorani, Akkoyunlu, & Kavak, 2006). A large share of this responsibility falls on the academic staff. However, as found by Kogce, Ozpinar, Mandaci Sahin and Aydogan Yenmez (2014), although the faculty members have positive views and strong sensitivity to lifelong learning, they do not have the expected level of comprehensive knowledge of the themes and sub-themes of the 21st Century Learner Standards. Therefore, it is a necessity for teaching staff to improve themselves in this regard. However, it is important for them to consider factors such as structural flexibility, repeating from memory, learning and transfer learning in the context of the curriculum, intrinsic motivation, and multi-sensory integration regarding lifelong learning (Parisi & Wermter, 2019).

Life-long learning can be gained in formal ways such as nurseries, kindergartens, secondary schools, general and vocational-technical high schools, faculties, institutes and colleges; non-formal ways such as in-service training activities, training courses in villages, distance education, including training given to farmers such as irrigation, fertilization techniques, public / adult education, special purpose courses, certificate programs; or informal ways such as family, social environment, library, TV, radio and internet which can occur at any moment of life that happens randomly, spontaneously in the natural environment without plans and programs, without evaluation, and when the goals are not predetermined. (Araz, 2014; Diker Coskun, 2019; Turkoglu , 1996).

In some studies on lifelong learning in higher education in the literature, university students' lifelong learning levels are low (Coskun & Demirel, 2012; Gokyer & Turkoglu, 2018; Tunca, Alkin-Sahin, & Aydin, 2015), and in some studies it is moderate (Kilic, 2014; Kozikoglu, 2014), while they have a qualified level of motivation and persistence, they are at a negative level in the lack of learning regulation and curiosity (Karaman & Aydogmus, 2018). In other words, it is seen that university students are not very enthusiastic about learning new things. Also, Gokyer and Karakaya Cirit (2018) found that teachers who graduated from education faculties do not have the desire to improve themselves, do something new, go to libraries, and therefore they lack curiosity and have low lifelong learning tendencies.

Again in the literature, in different studies on lifelong learning for teacher candidates (Evin Gencel, 2013), it was observed that teacher candidates felt insufficient in communication in a foreign language and in social and citizenship competencies. In this context, considering that teacher candidates' self-learning readiness levels differ according

to their demographic characteristics (Yenilmez & San, 2008), it can be said that one of the ways to overcome the inadequacies regarding lifelong learning is to use computer technologies effectively (İzci & Koc, 2012). It has been determined that there is a significant relationship between computer and internet usage frequencies and digital competencies, one of the lifelong learning competencies (Bilir, Cekic, & Uslu, 2013). For example, using behavior management system applications such as Class Dojo to improve lifelong learning competencies will also increase academic success (San, Kocak, & Kis, 2017).

Considering the Covid-19 pandemic, which plays a key role in changing today's life style, it is a necessity to determine the lifelong learning qualities of teacher candidates and to develop these qualities by taking into account the results obtained, and to review the functionality of lifelong learning paths according to the levels and differences of individuals. In this context, priority should be given to determining the lifelong learning tendencies of teacher candidates. Therefore, in this study, it was aimed to examine the views of Turkish teacher candidates on lifelong learning tendencies and to reveal the changes of these views during the Covid-19.

For this purpose, answers to the questions below were sought in the study.

- What are the views of Turkish teacher candidates about lifelong learning tendencies?

- What kind of a process do they follow for lifelong learning tendencies during the pandemic?

## **2. Method**

The research is designed based on qualitative research methods. Qualitative researches (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008) conducted within the scope of revealing perceptions and events in the natural environment in a realistic and holistic manner by using qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008), and what kind of activities pre-service teachers did for their lifelong learning tendencies and how these activities differentiated during the Covid-19 process has been examined in depth. Phenomenology design was used in a study designed to investigate a fact. Phenomenology studies are used to display facts and examine participants' experiences about a situation in detail (Cresswell, 2007).

### *2.1. Working group*

Qualitative studies avoid making a generalization according to their objective and tend to do more in-depth study. However, the random selection of the individuals who will be included in the objective of the research will enrich the study. The working group of this study consists of Turkish language teaching undergraduate students. Interviews were held with 10 students who have achieved their education by distance learning as of March in the 2019-2020 fall semester. In the interviews, the diversity principle was taken into consideration in choosing individuals within the group, but it was very difficult to reach the volunteer participant due to the pandemic. Therefore, Turkish language teaching undergraduate students were selected on a voluntary basis with an easily accessible sampling method. Easily accessible sampling has an important role in bringing practicality

and speed to study (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008). Personal information of the students interviewed is given in the Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive information about the working group

Student ID	Gender	Class Level
Student 1 (S1)	Female	2
Student 2 (S2)	Female	2
Student 3 (S3)	Female	3
Student 4 (S4)	Male	3
Student 5 (S5)	Male	2
Student 6 (S6)	Female	2
Student 7 (S7)	Female	3
Student 8 (S8)	Female	3
Student 9 (S9)	Male	3
Student 10 (S10)	Male	2

When the descriptive statistics of 10 students participating in the study are examined, it is seen that the participants attend an equal number of students from the 2nd and 3rd grade levels. While the participants at the 2nd grade are composed of 3 females and 2 males, it is seen that the same distribution is observed at the 3rd grade level.

## 2.2. Data Collection

Interview forms, which are qualitative data collection tools, were used in the study. The structured interview form developed by the researchers was applied to the participants. Researchers benefited from the literature during the development of the form. The created form was examined by an assessment and evaluation expert and a language expert, and then it was applied to a student as a pilot. After testing for clarity, the final form was created. The interview forms developed in the structured form were applied by reaching 9 participants by phone and 1 participant by directing online. In the interview form sent to the student online, what is expected of the student is specified in detail in the instruction part.

## 2.3. Data Analysis

After the responses of the participants to the interview forms were collected, these interviews were fully analyzed. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis. As stated by Yildirim and Simsek (2008), four stages were followed in the analysis of the data obtained from the interview. First of all, representative names were given to the students. The results obtained from the examination of the data were coded, the categories were found, and the data were defined and interpreted by arranging them according to the codes and themes. The basic process in content analysis is to gather similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to organize and interpret them in a way that the reader can understand.

Therefore, at the end of the data collection, a verification study was conducted with the comments of the students.

### 3. Findings

Initially, the questions directed to the students were used, in order to make inferences about students' lifelong learning tendencies.

Students' answers to the question, which is "What do you think about lifelong learning?" were described as out-of-school learning. For this question, which was gathered under a single theme, the codes achieved from the students were obtained as continuous for individual development (S2, S4, S5, S6, S7, S10), as a completely inevitable element for life (S2, S3, S4, S7, S9), and as supporting individuals (S1, S3, S5, S8). The distribution of the codes obtained is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Views on Lifelong Learning

	Out-of-school learning
<b>Continuous</b>	S2,S4,S5,S6,S7,S10
<b>Inevitable</b>	S2,S3,S4,S7,S9
<b>Supporting</b>	S1,S3,S5,S8

When the distributions in Table 2 are taken into account, there are codes that students' lifelong out-of-school learning has a continuous, inevitable and academic supportive feature. Among these codes, the most emphasized thought by students is that lifelong learning is continuous. Students' views regarding the continuity code are given below:

*“Lifelong learning is a constant thing in our lives, whether we want it or not. So, when we leave school, we constantly learn from home, from the bus, from the family.”*[S2]

*“It shows that lifelong learning is not limited to school and not everyone needs a school to be able to learn. It is a continuous learning style and anyone who wants to know can obtain all kinds of information.”*[S4]

*“If we consider human beings as a developing and changing existence, we have to accept that learning continues throughout life. Lifelong learning is the knowledge and experiences we gain from different family and environmental factors from birth to death.”*[S7]

*“Lifelong learning is everything we can learn flexibly in different times and places. We do a lot of learning throughout our life. In my opinion, all learning from birth to death is lifelong learning.”*[S10]

Under the learning out-of-school theme, the expression that students express intensely in their views is that lifelong learning is an inevitable element for life. The views of the students belonging to this code are given below:

*“Lifelong learning is an inevitable learning that is not limited to schools and takes place for the individual to keep up with the developing age regardless of the education level of the individual.”* [S2]

“We need to adapt to an environment and a situation in order to live. For this, lifelong learning is inevitable.” [S7]

Another code under the learning out-of-school theme is the supporting code. The views of the students belonging to this code are given below:

“It can help us to adapt in the ever-changing life and to be positioned in the society. Actually, there is information we want in every field, but in order to achieve this, we have to determine a path for ourselves and continue on that path in order to fill the knowledge hunger and gap in ourselves. Thanks to technical knowledge and skills, we will both make our lives easier and have new professions, hobbies and knowledge.” [S5]

“The more you learn, the happier you get. Learning new things supports you at every stage of life. For example, learning something for myself makes it easier for me to do many things in faculty. But this should not be limited. Lifelong learning is inevitable for everyone. My father can also use what he learned at work or in the market.” [S8]

The answers received from the students to the questions which are "What do you think are important criteria for you in life long learning? What motivates you to meet these criteria?" were collected under the main theme of important criteria. Under this theme, two themes emerge as "Personal Activities" and "Reasons for Performing". Information on these themes and the codes under them are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Important criteria in the Lifelong Learning process

Important criteria	
Personal Activities	Reasons for Performing
Improving language skills (S2,S4,S5,S7)	Self-efficacy (S2,S4, S10)
Improving communication skills (S2,S4,S10)	Contribution to society (S3,S4,S8)
Using technology (S2,S8, S10)	Respectability (S2,S5,S8)
Participating in social activities (S2,S5,S8,)	
To follow current events, news and experts (S6, S10)	

Under the theme of *important criteria* in the lifelong learning process, the theme, which includes what these criteria are and the criteria that students want to be developed, was given as the Personal Activities theme. Under this theme, the criteria that students stated as important are included with the codes of *improving language skills* (S2, S4, S5, S7), *improving communication skills* (S2, S4, S10), *using technology* (S2, S8, S10), *participating in social activities* (S2, S5, S8) and *following current events, news and experts* (S6, S10). At the beginning of these activities, the most important activity for students was expressed as improving their language skills. The students’ views regarding the code of improving language skills are given below:

“Learning a language is absolutely essential for self-taught individuals. We do not meet much here, but there are a few foreign students in our dormitory, if I could actively speak their language, I would agree with them better and learn about their lives in their countries.” [S2]



*“If you want to have an important status in lifelong learning, the first important thing is to improve yourself. For this, the first step starts with learning a foreign language. For example, I love to play baglama. Maybe I’ll be a singer singing with baglama in a foreign language.” [S4]*

*“Language is the most important thing we will need throughout life. It is especially true for our department. It would be wrong to expect this from other people if we do not use our language well and represent our department well. This is actually not only for us, but also all of us, as Turks, should use Turkish properly. I think this is the most important criteria for individuals in our country.” [S7]*

The students’ views regarding the code of improving communication skills are given below:

*“We have to learn from somewhere throughout life. To do this, we first need to understand other people and establish good communication with them.” [S2].*

*“The first step for us to live in harmony throughout life is to get along with each other. If we have a learning process, it will start with improving our communication skills. I think this is the most important step to be developed. Maybe everyone is right but cannot express it, so people should improve in this direction.” [S10]*

The students' views regarding the code of using technology are given below:

*“...but there are a few foreign students in our dormitory, if I could actively speak their language, I would agree with them better and learn about their lives in their countries. Fortunately, there was cell phone and we were talking by translating. I think this is also a criteria.” [S2]*

*“Actually, today we are dependent on technology in order to learn, so we stay away from the learning environment without developing ourselves in using technology. The simplest is that if I could not use the LMS system actively, I would have had trouble participating in the online exam like A.... Therefore, individuals should train themselves technologically.” [S8]*

The students' views regarding the code of participating in social activities are given below:

*“I think that if we want to learn something in lifelong learning, our priority is to be open to information. Seminars should be very popular. People learn from people. Therefore, if we are in a learning environment, everything should be regarded as a good stimulant. For example cinema, if it gives you a good message it gives you a good learning.” [S5]*

*“...Maybe I’ll be a singer singing with baglama in a foreign language. That’s why I attend many concerts and try to go to seminars to improve myself.” [S8]*

The students' views regarding the code of following current events, news and experts are given below:

*“Lifelong learning is learning from everything actually. We have learned a lot from newspapers and magazines. I follow all the experts of my field on social media and they already know me.” [S6]*

*“If lifelong learning will continue, it is necessary to follow current situations. The science changes every day, according to experts. Follow up is a must.” [S10]*

According to the students' views, improving language skills, which is under the theme of personal activities, is considered as an important criteria for lifelong learning, both in a foreign language and in their own language. On the other hand, communication is a skill that will enable individuals to communicate with each other and ensure the continuous and healthy progress of lifelong learning; using technology is a criteria for being able to adapt to daily life more easily; participating in social activities is an action for individuals to learn something by communicating with each other; to follow current events, news and experts is stated as an important criteria for continuing learning.

The theme created about why the criteria that are seen as important for students in the lifelong learning process are considered important, was named the reasons for performing. The reasons given under this theme were collected under the names of self-efficacy (S2, S4, S10), contribution to society (S3, S4, S8) and respectability (S2, S5, S8) codes. The students' views supporting these codes are given below:

*“The point that motivates me the most in doing these is the idea that the world is now taking on a more universal structure and that we can exist in different worlds than we imagined by breaking our shells.” [S4]*

*“Carrying out these activities both enables me to be more successful and gain reputation in my field. I think the more different things you know, the stronger you are.” [S5]*

*“I try to find logical solutions to problems that concern me, society, or the world, or I just try to understand them thoroughly. I think what I can do for these problems and I try to be useful.” [S8]*

In the self-efficacy code, the individuals achieve themselves and thus they are happier, in the contribution to society code they desire to do something for the benefit of the society, and in the respectability code they want to feel valuable in the society come to the fore.

The answers given to the question “How did the pandemic process change your lifelong learning preferences?” which was directed to the students, were collected under the main theme of lifelong learning during the pandemic process. Information regarding the codes under this theme is given in Table 4.

Table 4. Themes and codes of the difficulties encountered

<b>Lifelong Learning Process During Pandemic</b>	
<b>Negative</b>	<b>Positive</b>
Lack of motivation (S2, S4, S6)	Learning to be sensitive (S1, S2, S4, S6, S9)
Anxiety (S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S9, S10)	Spending time with the family (S3, S4, S5, S7)
Ineffectiveness of online training (S2, S4, S7, S8)	Self learning (S2, S3, S4, S5, S8, S10)
Staying away from social order (S2, S3, S6, S9)	Online facilities (S2, S3, S4, S5, S6)

The lifelong learning process was examined under the positive and negative themes during the pandemic. The codes obtained under the negative theme are more intense. There are basically 4 codes under the negative theme.

These codes are lack of motivation (S2, S4, S6), anxiety (S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S7, S9, S10), ineffectiveness of online training (S2, S4, S7, S8), and staying away from social order (S2, S3, S6, S9). The students' views regarding the codes are given below:

Students' views regarding the lack of motivation code;

*"Being unable to leave home, having only limited opportunities and online training was a bit boring during this period. This situation prevented our motivation and all kind of learning desire."* [S2]

*"Although we are now used to the pandemic a little longer, it causes considerable stress, especially in our province. This causes us to postpone our own training."* [S4]

Students' views regarding the anxiety code;

*"What if my father loses his job, then all this learning things blah blah turn to a baloney..."* [S1]

*"We are constantly in a manner of panic. So that I guess we will not be able to learn in line with our goals without getting rid of the panic of the pandemic. I can't say this process doesn't teach us anything."* [S3]

*"Questions in my mind like 'When there will be an exam, is my internet limit enough?' and 'Can I find a computer when there will be online lessons? also put stress on me.'" [S6]*

*"I am very afraid that something will happen to my family or me in pandemic. I think this is more important than my own learning process."* [S7]

*"A situation we never expected and were not used to ... When will schools be opened or how will the exams be? Waking up with a new stress every day ..."* [S10]

Students' views regarding the ineffectiveness of online training code;

*"Even the course I was going to take for language learning tried to do it online. But it is not possible for me to understand the lesson online which I hardly understand even face to face."* [S2]

*"We are only trying to learn something from available resources or online. Unfortunately, there is not a satisfactory website or application, or I could not find it."* [S4]

Students' views on the code of staying away from social order;

*"Most individuals learn from each other in lifelong learning. However, it is not appropriate for us to approach each other in this pandemic. This of course makes learning inefficient."* [S6]

When the students' views were asked about lifelong learning, their views were combined under two themes that were described as positive and negative about the process, during the pandemic. The first code includes students' negative views about the process.

This theme was named as negative, and the most prominent code under this theme according to the students' views was the anxiety code. In this code, there are views such as the fact that something happens to students' families or themselves, that there is no foresight and certainty for both the social process and the training process and especially carriage of economic concerns in the pandemic. Students cannot spare time for their development due to the pandemic. This causes them to lose their motivation and be reluctant. The students have the view that even if they want to improve themselves online, not everything new in the process reaches a qualified level. They also stated that the lifelong learning process, which is affected by social learning, is highly affected by the pandemic.

Another theme under the main theme of lifelong learning process during the pandemic process was named as positive theme. There were 4 codes under the positive theme. These codes are learning to be sensitive (S1, S2, S4, S6, S9), spending time with the family (S3, S4, S5, S7), self learning (S2, S3, S4, S5, S8, S10), Online facilities (S2, S3, S4, S5, S6). The students' views regarding the codes are given below:

Students' views regarding the code of learning to be sensitive;

*“Actually, I think this process reminded us of the things we wasted with many troubles and also reminded us how many valuable things we had. I have passed on hugging each other, we are even afraid of approaching to each other now.”* [S1]

*“We have seen the reflections of our small impact on nature and how the costs of this make a return to us. We have learned a great lesson in how careful we should be both towards ourselves, people and nature in the process. Although the consequences are heavy, this was actually a good learning for us.”* [S4]

Students' views regarding the code of spending time with the family;

*“We stayed with our family more than ever before, sometimes out of necessity and sometimes willingly, during the pandemic. We are truly estranged from each other. Although it was difficult at first, we needed it very much. We forgot to learn from them.”* [S5]

Students' views regarding self learning code;

*“..I cannot say the pandemic doesn't teach us anything. For example, we have been doing research about Covid-19 via internet. At first, I started to follow the news abroad, especially the foreign universities. I think this situation contributed to our self learning.”* [S3]

*“Staying at home would be the biggest contribution for humanity in the pandemic. While doing this, of course, we got bored. I learned many recipes from the internet during this period. This is the first time I've done something on my own.”* [S8]

Students' views regarding online facilities code;

*“Even the fact that many universities make available their online resources has really created great opportunities for us.”*[S3]

*“Of course, the fact that many communication tools are free has given us an advantage in this respect. We started video chatting directly with friends and free of charge.”* [S6]

#### **4. Conclusion, Discussion, Recommendations**

According to the findings obtained from the participants' views, lifelong learning is an inevitable part of life outside of school. However, it has a continuous and academic supportive feature. Promoting lifelong learning has recently received increasing attention in education and business environments. Examining the needs of the 21st century, scientists and trend forecasters have almost unanimously agreed that schools should train constantly evolving and technologically competent workforces that can compete in global markets (McCombs, 2010). Different studies in the literature (Karakus, 2013; McCombs, 2010; Day, 1999) also mention the effect of the school environment on the acquisition of lifelong learning competencies. Karakus (2013) found that lifelong learning competencies increase when the next class is passed, and therefore the school is effective, and in this sense, higher education institutions have important responsibilities. If the school wants to improve lifelong learning skills, teachers need to change their roles. They should be in a supporting role for students in discovering and acquiring knowledge, attitudes skills, abilities, and thus facilitating learning, not as real, theoretical or applied knowledge distributors. In this context, it is a need to stimulate students' critical attitudes and active learning styles in the lifelong learning process. As stated by the participants in this study, in the role of the school as a supporter of lifelong learning, teachers should have (1) originality-based self-efficacy, (2) establishing relationships that facilitate self-regulation, (3) seeing the connections between subject, discipline and life, (4) self-reflection, development and adaptation competencies related to lifelong learning.

Improving language skills, especially in both foreign languages and their own languages, is an important criteria for lifelong learning. As stated by Phillipson and Lam (2011), language improvement is established by the connection between the improvement of language and the improvement of cognitive thinking. Studies show that when language improvement increases in multiple ways, cognitive improvement also increases in multiple ways, and that language improvement facilitates thought improvement. In this context, learning different languages brings different thoughts, and different thoughts bring richness to look at the world with different perspectives. In this context, as stated by the participants of this study, lifelong learning is very important in both mother tongue and foreign language development. In the research conducted by Demir (2011), the contribution of lifelong learning to foreign language development was found at a good level. Communication is a skill that will enable individuals to get along with each other and ensure the continuous and healthy progress of lifelong learning. As Goransson (2007) stated, this continuity is nourished by the culture-based experiences, beliefs, knowledge, skills, attitudes and expectations regarding the use of language and the language itself.

According to the participants, the use of technology is a criteria for being able to adapt to daily life more easily, and participation in social activities is an efficiency for individuals to learn something by communicating with each other. According to Sharma (2002), using technology is an increasingly important skill for lifelong learning today. It seems much

more efficient to transfer information from one database to another than from one database to the mind. It is a necessity to have the competence of which information technology and how to use it to achieve the relevant goals for lifelong learning. As stated by Ingle and Duckworth (2013), the use of information technologies in the lifelong learning process brings pedagogical benefits in terms of sharing, personalization, accessibility, communication and association. It also offers benefits in exam results, retention of learning, student satisfaction, social equality and student achievement. Berberoglu (2000) states that it is a necessity for growth, development and improvement of our country to use information technologies and communication tools for lifelong learning. Again, according to the results obtained from this study, keeping up-to-date is an important criteria for continuing learning. Considering that language development supports social learning in cultural and social contexts, as stated by the participants of this study, language development is seen as a variable that affects and influences lifelong learning (Foley & Thompson; 2016).

Within the scope of self-efficacy, it has come to the forefront that the participants achieve themselves and thus become happier, they desire to do something for the benefit of the society within the scope of contribution to society, and they want to feel valuable in the society within the scope of respectability. In this context, Parkinson (1999 as cited in Karakus, 2013) also suggests that students should use strategies such as communication expectations, assuming their own responsibilities, providing motivation, enabling out-of-class learning and teaching how to learn, so that individuals will gain lifelong learning competence. It has been found that as individual learning responsibility is emphasized for lifelong learning lessons, the possibilities of structuring learning opportunities within these courses increase (Edwards, 2002). There is a general consensus in the literature about the importance of various attitudes and motivations underlying technical fields in particular, and in lifelong learning in general. McCombs (2010) also emphasizes that it is very important for those known about motivation and learning to develop attitudes and skills for lifelong learning from primary school to post-secondary education, moreover, to determine how to apply the principles of lifelong learning in educational environments that include business and industry. In this context, she suggests focusing more on the great theories that integrate the principles of learning, motivation, cognition and affect in order to develop lifelong learning skills and thus take the person in context as a whole. In addition, as Cornford (2002) stated, learning to learn skills consisting of cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies are necessary for the development of effective lifelong learning throughout life. Since the mastery in cognitive and metacognitive skills cannot be achieved at the end of secondary education, full development will be achieved in the process of higher education and through work experience, it is very important for more advanced and higher education instructors to design their teaching to gain these skills.

Participants stated the negativities related to the pandemic as having anxious about something happens for their families or themselves, not having any predictions for both the social process and the training processes, the presence of uncertainty and especially the economic concerns in the pandemic. Teacher candidates cannot spare time for their development due to the pandemic and this causes their motivation to decrease and they become unwilling. Also, even if they want to improve themselves online, not everything new in the process reaches a qualified level. Referring to this situation, Bozkurt (2020) states that the education provided during the pandemic is emergency distance education instead of distance education. According to Bozkurt, instead of urgent distance education that

produces temporary solutions for existing needs, ongoing and permanent solutions should be tried to be produced within the framework of lifelong learning in distance education. While emergency distance education tries to keep education alive with the opportunities available in times of crisis, distance education aims to continue education with planned and systematic activities by following a certain goal with its theoretical and practical knowledge. In this context, it is a necessity to increase the tendency towards HyFlex (hybrid flexible) applications (Olapiriyakul & Scher, 2006; Sands, 2002) in addition to blended learning applications (Bersin, 2004; Bonk & Graham, 2006) in order to minimize the negativities experienced in the learning process stated by the participants. With these practices, it is also a need to support students' self-directed and self-managed learning skills, to plan and follow appropriate instructional designs by using different educational theories, approaches and strategies (blended learning, reverse learning, etc.), and to examine learning outcomes (Bozkurt, 2020).

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