Hybrid Education During Pandemic: Voices of University Students and Faculty Members

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of hybrid education as perceived by students and faculty members at a foundation university in Turkey. This case study therefore applies a phenomenological approach aimed at analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the hybrid education delivered at a foundation university in Gaziantep, Turkey by examining the views of both students and faculty members. Semi-structured focus group interview questions were prepared by the researchers following the literature and expert views. As well as SWOT questions, further questions were added to highlight the major experiences of the participants, 22 students from three departments in the Education Faculty and six faculty members. The data was collected on the Zoom platform through focus group interviews. The meetings were recorded, and transcribed word by word. Content analysis was applied to analyze the transcribed data. The main findings reveal that the majority of students are more motivated in face-to-face classes, especially in this chaotic period, as they have the chance to get out of their home and meet their friends while attending classes. In addition, faculty members highlighted difficulties in coordinating face-to-face and online participants. The results of the research showed similarities with the studies in the literature on hybrid teaching and revealed results that will shed light on future studies.

Reference Information / Atıf Bilgisi

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***Pandemi Sürecinde Hibrit Öğretim:
Üniversite Öğrencilerinin ve Öğretim Elemanlarının Görüşleri***

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de bir vakıf üniversitesindeki öğrenciler ve öğretim üyelerine göre hibrit eğitimin güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini incelemektir. Bu nedenle bu vaka çalışması, hem öğrencilerin hem de öğretim üyelerinin görüşlerini inceleyerek Türkiye'de Gaziantep ilindeki bir vakıf üniversitesinde verilen hibrit eğitimin güçlü, zayıf yönleri, fırsatları ve tehditlerini (SWOT) analiz etmeyi amaçlayan fenomenolojik bir yaklaşım uygulamaktadır. Yarı yapılandırılmış odak grup görüşme soruları literatür ve uzman görüşleri doğrultusunda araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanmıştır. SWOT sorularına Eğitim Fakültesindeki üç bölümden 22 öğrenci ve altı öğretim üyesinden oluşan katılımcıların önemli deneyimlerinin vurgulanması için başka sorular da eklenmiştir. Veriler, odak grup görüşmeleri yoluyla Zoom platformunda toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler kaydedilmiş ve kelimesi kelimesine yazıya dökülmüştür. Yazıya dökülen verilerin analiz etmek için içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Başlıca bulgular, öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun, özellikle bu kaotik dönemde, ev ortamından çıkma ve derslere devam ederken arkadaşlarıyla görüşme şansı bulmaları nedeniyle yüz yüze derslerde daha fazla motive olduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, öğretim üyeleri yüz yüze ve çevrimiçi katılımcıların koordinasyonundaki zorlukları vurgulamışlardır. Araştırma sonuçları hibrit öğretim ile ilgili alan yazındaki çalışmalarla benzerlikler gösterdiği gibi gelecekteki çalışmalara ışık tutacak sonuçlar da ortaya çıkarmıştır.

INTRODUCTION

Hybrid education incorporates instructional components of conventional face-to-face and up-to-date online education designs (El Mansour & Mupinga, 2007). They may also be referred to as web-enhanced, blended, or mixed-mode learning. In traditional education, the teacher cultivates and conveys the content to learners in a face-to-face setting (Knowles et al., 2005). Nevertheless, traditional education has several limitations such as lack of flexibility, or the fact that it obliges the teacher and learner to be in the same place. Hybrid education on the other hand requires, in most cases, learners to first encounter new concepts, information, and techniques outside the classroom using technology. However, allowing learners to encounter new information outside the classroom means they do not make the major investments of their time as they do in face-to-face sessions (Lorenzetti, 2004).

Creating a hybrid learning environment is a difficult task. The dominant mode of collaboration when developing a face-to-face or online experience is either verbal (listening and talking) or text-based (reading and writing). In a hybrid learning environment, however, the designer is not restricted by the communication medium. Despite resource constraints, the educational designer has a wider variety of options. One possible yet difficult option for a designer is to maximize the strengths of verbal and text communication for a dynamic weaving of learning experiences and strategies from a continuum of possibilities (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

The ultimate aim of hybrid education is to establish a culture of inquiry in which learners are fully engaged and accountable. A hybrid education environment can not only build but also maintain a sense of community outside the face-to-face context. This involves growing the learning environment and increasing the depth of interaction over time. On the other hand, designing a hybrid education environment necessitates a front-end focus on social and cognitive problems that extends beyond choosing what subject will be addressed (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

If an online learning environment and classroom are mixed, the benefits of all forms of teaching are likely to be maximized. For instance, a face-to-face education class guarantees social contact in which students require feedback for learning, while an online or web-based learning environment offers the versatility and productivity that cannot be guaranteed in a classroom environment (Akkoyunlu & Yılmaz Soylu, 2006). Students feel more involved and collaborative in activity-based integration models in hybrid learning (Doering and Veletsianos, 2014) and they proved to have higher academic success compared to traditional methods (Özgür, 2019). Also, according to the study of Bodur (2019) students find online assignments complementary to in-class practices. Moreover, students need engaging, enthusiastic, and understanding instructors who demonstrate these characteristics through self-disclosure (Ramos & Yudko, 2008) and tend to be optimistic toward incorporating distance-learning methods within conventional lectures (Reupert et al., 2009). The results of the studies on hybrid education reveal several weaknesses as well. Although hybrid education provides more flexibility, accessibility, interactive classes, and motivation for students to engage in the courses more (El Mansour & Mupinga, 2007; Hall & Villareal, 2015), it may have negative aspects such as feeling lost or experiencing technical challenges (Keskin & Özer, 2020; Sarı & Nayır, 2020) or having time management problems (Napier et al., 2011).

Although the effect of hybrid education on students' performances has been the topic of studies for almost two decades now, the role of hybrid education has been amplified with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020. After the first case of COVID-19 in Turkey on 11th May (Budak & Korkmaz, 2020), most of the educational institutes, regardless of the level of education, have switched to online or hybrid education quite suddenly, which took us a little time to adapt at first. The problem is that this sudden change is not just a technological issue but also poses a pedagogical and instructional difficulty for all the stakeholders in education (Ali, 2020). Therefore, both educators and

students were expected to be more flexible than ever in this time of crisis (Chick et al., 2020).

The institution in which the researchers are affiliated with has adopted a different approach to hybrid education than the ones described in the literature. Because of the pandemic regulations, 60% of the courses in each department are taught face-to-face and online at the same time, hence the hybrid model, and the rest of the courses are taught fully online. Students need to decide whether they want to participate in the courses face-to-face or online at the beginning of the term before they select their courses. In other words, the instructor has to be in the classroom physically for the students who choose to participate face-to-face; while also logging in online to meet the rest of the class. This way, the instructor needs to address both the students in the classroom and the ones on the screen. Since it is a new way of instruction, both students and faculty members have different experiences regarding this process. Therefore, it is important to gain insights into hybrid education from those who experience it firsthand in the tertiary level during these times of crisis.

With this in mind, the present study aims to investigate the perceptions and opinions of students and faculty members of hybrid education to be able to build on its strengths and work on its weaknesses. To this end, a SWOT analysis was conducted, and the following research questions were asked:

1. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of hybrid education as perceived by the students?
2. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of hybrid education as perceived by the faculty members?

METHOD

Research Design

To gain an in-depth understanding of students' and faculty members' opinions of hybrid education during the pandemic, the present study adopts a phenomenological design of qualitative research methods. Creswell (2007) defines phenomenological study as investigating a concept or a phenomenon from the perspective of those who experience it firsthand and in doing so revealing common ground as well as differences about that concept. In the present study, therefore, this study investigated the concept of hybrid education as it is experienced by students and faculty members. Approval of the ethical committee was received from Hasan Kalyoncu University Social Sciences Ethical Committee before the onset of the study.

Participants

The study group consisted of 22 students, aged between 18 and 23, and six faculty members, aged between 27 and 38, in the Education Faculty of a foundation university. Only one of the students was male, who studied English Language Teaching. The departments of the students were English Language Teaching (n=18), Early Childhood Education (n=2) and Primary School Teaching (n=2). The departments of the faculty members were English Language Teaching (3), Early Childhood Education (n=1), Primary School Teaching (n=1) and Measurement and Evaluation (n=1).

The participants have been taking and teaching hybrid courses since the beginning of 2020-2021 academic year. Four students choose to participate in the courses face-to-face and the rest of the students participate fully online to all of their courses. This helped us to see both sides of the hybrid education model investigated in this study.

Data Collection Tools

Phenomenological studies mostly include interviews with those who experience the

'phenomenon' - hybrid education in our case- that is investigated to have a deeper understanding (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted in the present study. Some questions were prepared before conducting the interviews such as "How was your overall experience with hybrid education?". It is important to ask broad questions to have a general framework (Creswell, 2007). Then more detailed questions were asked in focus groups about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of hybrid education. Focus group interview is one of the qualitative data collection methods and performed with participants in groups of 4 to 8 people (Fraenkel et al., 1993). Participants took turns to answer questions and had a chance to make comments on each other's opinion by agreeing or disagreeing or providing additional information. Faculty members formed one focus group with six participants, while students formed three groups, which included 7 or 8 participants. The interviews were made via a video call platform because of the pandemic regulations and were voice-recorded to be transcribed later.

Data Analysis

The content analysis method was used for data analysis. Content analysis is "a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way" by categorizing the data, which is referred to as 'coding' (Fraenkel et al., 1993, p.478). In the present study, the transcribed data was analyzed with the help of two of the researchers for reliability and validity purposes until the results reached saturation (Huberman & Miles, 2002). It is important to go over the data several times with at least two researchers to perform a reliable analysis for coding. Both researchers first went through the whole data and coded separately and later combined their findings. The interpretation of the data is supported by direct quotes from participants.

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RESULTS

In line with the aim of the study, the transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed and there were several themes and codes that emerged. There were four predetermined categories: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and after the analyses another category 'suggestions' were added. First, we examined the strengths category, and Table 1 shows the themes and codes that emerged from students' opinions on the strength category.

Table 1. Students' Voices in the Strengths Category

Themes	Codes	Participants	F	Sample Excerpts
Communication	Face to face interaction	S2, S3,S5,S6,S7 S8, S9, S11, S12, S16	10	“It is easy to communicate face to face”
	Teaching Methods and Strategies	Flow of classes (face to face)	S8, S16, S18	3
Measurement and Evaluation	Easy	S9	1	“Evaluation is easier since all of them are not tests”
	Motivation	S1, S8, S14, S16	4	“I want to participate more when the lessons are face to face”
	Saving time	S3, S10, S13	3	“We do not waste time on road

General Strengths				to school since it is so far from the city center"
	Concentration	S2, S12	2	I can concentrate on online lessons much better, but I can be distracted easily in the classroom"
	Comfort	S4	1	"It is more comfortable to attend lessons online"

In line with the first research question, students were asked about the strengths of hybrid education. As shown in Table 1, there are four themes under the Strengths category. One code emerged under Theme 1, Communication. Ten students stated that it is easy to communicate through face-to-face interaction and that hybrid education offers an opportunity to reach all students. From Theme 2, Teaching Methods and Strategies, the code that emerged is flow of classes, which 3 students referred to. One student found evaluation easier in hybrid education. Motivation, saving time, concentration, and comfort are the codes that emerged from Theme 4, General Strengths.

As a result of the interviews with the faculty members, the strengths category included three themes and various codes that are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Voices of the Faculty Members in the Strengths Category*

Themes	Codes	Participant s	F	Sample Excerpts
Strengths for Students	Increase in motivation	T4	1	"Students' motivation is higher in face-to-face courses"
	Increase in self-discipline	T5	1	"Students attending online courses believe that they are behind the other students and they want to communicate more with the professors"
	Cooperation for homework assignments	T1	1	"My students cooperate with each other"
	Communication with students	T2	1	"I could easily communicate with my students when they had problems"
	Remembering students' names	T7	1	"Since the students don't turn on the cameras, we remember their names well"
	Using technology	T2, T3, T6, T7	3	"I try to make use of online platforms such as mentimeter, quizzes, kahoot, which make the lesson interactive"
	Saving time (technology-based classes)	T1	1	"I could easily explain a topic that takes a week in a 15-minute-video"
Strength	Planning complementary	T7	1	"We can easily plan

s for Faculty member s	classes easily			complementary classes even at the weekends"
	Classes being recorded	T5, T6	2	"The students can watch the videos again if they have problems"
	Professional development	T7	1	"This model helps us to develop ourselves and find alternative solutions"
	Creating alternative solutions	T6	1	"This model prompted me to find alternative ways to conduct practical courses"
	Awareness	T6	1	"Trying new solutions helped me to gain awareness"
	Self-reflection	T1	1	"Since the lessons are recorded; I watch the records again and criticize my body language or tone of voice"
General strength s	Protection from Covid-19	T1, T4	2	"We can protect ourselves from corona thanks to this model"

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Table 2 presents the themes related to the voices of the faculty members in the Weakness category. Faculty members stated an increase in their students' motivation, self-discipline, and cooperation in homework assignments. Three faculty members pointed out that they started to use technology. Other strengths for faculty members are communication with students, remembering students' names, saving time, planning complementary classes easily, classes being recorded, professional development, creating alternative solutions, awareness, and self-reflection. Lastly, the decrease in catching Covid-19 is another strength for 2 faculty members in Theme 3, General Strengths.

Then we looked into the weaknesses of hybrid education as perceived by students and faculty members. Table 3 shows the themes and codes that emerged from students' opinions on the weaknesses category.

Table 3. *Students' Voices in the Weaknesses Category*

Themes	Codes	Participants	F	Sample Excerpts
Technical Problems	Internet problems	S1, S2, S4, S13	4	"We can have connection problems so often"
	System problems	S4, S5, S7	3	"You can be marked as absent by the system although you have attended"
Teaching Methods and Strategies	Not effective teaching and learning	S10, S13, S18	3	"Online courses are different from the face-to-face courses; they are less effective"
	Short lesson planning	S19, S20	2	"Since the online courses last only one hour, we can cover a small part of the topic that we

				will be responsible for during the evaluation"
Classroom Management Problems	Chaotic management	S3, S12, S21	3	"Professors sometimes forget about the ones who are online, and they just focus on the ones in the classroom"
	Interaction	S1, S5, S6, S11	4	"It is really hard to have interaction in online courses"
	Crowded classes	S2, S11	2	"Some face to face courses are very crowded and it can be dangerous"
Time Management Problems	Time consuming	S7, S9, S19	3	"We waste time because of frequent breaks in face to face courses"
Personal Problems	Bored	S1, S8	2	"Online courses are more boring than face-to-face courses"

The themes related to the students' voices in the Weakness category are Technical Problems, Teaching Methods and Strategies, Classroom Management Problems, Time Management Problems, and Personal Problems. Problems related to the internet and system in Theme 1 are the most frequently stated weaknesses of hybrid education. Three students stated that online courses are not effective, and 2 students said short lesson planning was a weakness of hybrid education. Chaotic management, interaction, and crowded classes are the codes that emerged under Theme 3, Classroom Management Problems. For 3 students, online courses are time consuming, and, similarly, 2 feel bored during online courses.

Faculty members also expressed their opinions related to the weaknesses category and six themes were revealed and presented in Table 4 with the codes.

Table 4. *Voices of the Faculty Members in the Weaknesses Category*

Themes	Codes	Participants	F	Sample Excerpts
Readiness problems	Ambiguity in the beginning	T1, T2, T5, T6	4	"We didn't know what we would do in this hybrid model at the beginning"
	Not knowing what to do; how to handle problems	T1, T3, T5, T6	4	"It took 3-4 weeks to get used to the system"
	Adaptation problems	T2, T3	2	"I had difficulties orienting myself to the system at first"
Technological problems	Internet problems	T1, T2, T4, T6	4	"Students have connection problems"
	Equipment problems (projector etc.)	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7	6	"The projector may not work"

Teaching methods and strategies	System problems	T4	1	"The system does not work sometimes"
	Voice problems	T1, T2	2	"No one could hear each other"
	Classes becoming more theoretical	T6	1	"Since there is less interaction, my lessons are becoming more theoretical"
	Teaching plans, syllabus changed	T6	1	"I had to change my syllabus. For example, I cannot use creative activities that I used to apply before"
	Lack of peer learning/pair-group work activities	T5, T6	2	"In group work, the interaction among students is less"
	Cameras off	T5, T6	2	"Although I insist, the students don't turn on their cameras"
	Poor interaction due to masks on faces (not knowing who is speaking)	T1	1	"I couldn't understand who was speaking because of the masks"
	Feeling like one side is ignored all the time	T1, T2, T4,	3	"I asked myself which group I had to focus on"
	Sitting while teaching online	T1, T6	2	"I hate sitting down during the lessons, but now I have to and I have difficulty in concentrating"
	Time consuming new techniques	T3	1	"Sharing every material on the system creates difficulties in time management"
Time management problems	Pandemic rules	T4	1	"We have to check where the students sat the previous week for contact tracing"
	Time for ventilation of the classroom	T3, T4, T6	3	"We spend half an hour for ventilation, so we have only an hour for lesson"
	Uncertainty for the final exams	T1	1	"I didn't know how I would evaluate the

Measurement and Evaluation Problems	Too much homework instead of exams	T1, T4	2	students” “Now I have more than 150 mid-term assignments to check”
	Students not knowing how to study	T1	1	“Since the assessment methods are uncertain, students do not know how to study and prepare for them.”
Personal Problems	Stress (due to technical problems etc.)	T5	1	“We have time limitations, and students are waiting, and we have to solve the problem immediately, so it can be really stressful.”
	Low self-esteem	T5	1	“The first weeks we didn’t know what to do in hybrid courses, we didn’t know if there was a camera in the classroom or... So, it affected my self-esteem during my lessons.”
	Multitasking	T4	1	“I have to control the students and the slides and the ones who are online, so I become a multitasking person”
	Need extra energy	T4	1	“We have to spend too much energy”
	Anxiety (risk of catching Covid-19)	T4, T7	2	“There is the risk of corona since the students don’t keep the social distance sometimes”

Themes related to the voices of the faculty members in the Weaknesses category are Readiness Problems, Technological Problems, Teaching Methods and Strategies, Time Management Problems, Measurement and Evaluation Problems, and Personal Problems. Faculty members felt a level of ambiguity at the start of hybrid education and stated that they didn’t know what to do or how to handle problems. They also had adaptation problems. The most frequently stated weakness of hybrid education in Theme 2, Technological problems is equipment problems and internet problems. Faculty members also had system and voice problems and stated that classes are more theoretical. The codes that emerged under Theme 3 are teaching plans, syllabus changes, lack of peer learning/pair-group

work activities, cameras off, poor interaction due to masks (not knowing who is speaking), feeling like one side is ignored all the time, and sitting while teaching online. Time management problems encountered by faculty members are time consuming new techniques, pandemic rules, and time for ventilation. The faculty members also had measurement and evaluation problems such as uncertainty about the final exams, too much homework instead of exams, and students not knowing how to study. Moreover, they stated that they had some personal problems during hybrid education, which are stress (due to the technical problems etc.), low self-esteem, multitasking, needing extra energy, and anxiety (risk of catching Covid-19).

The third category that was investigated about hybrid education was ‘opportunities’. The data clustered around two themes, and they are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Students’ Voices in the Opportunities Category*

Themes	Codes	Participants	F	Sample Excerpts
Academic Advantages	Learning to use technology	S7,S9	2	“I got better at using technological devices efficiently thanks to online courses”
	Lessons being recorded	S1, S7	2	“We have the opportunity to watch the courses again if we wish to.”
	Easy to present online	S7	1	“It’s easier to present on screen than to do it in front of the whole class.”
	Possibility to transfer to online class	S1	1	“We can switch to full-online mode if we want to.”
	Formative assessment	S8	1	“It’s better to have other forms of assessment other than exams.”
Student-Teacher Interaction	Teachers more understanding	S5, S9	2	“The instructors are more understanding if we have problems with the online system”
	Teacher more flexible	S10	1	“The teachers are more flexible in cases of sicknesses; they provide us with extra time (with the assignments)”

Table 5 presents two themes related to the students’ voices in the Opportunities category. In Theme 1, Academic Advantages, learning to use technology, lessons being recorded, easy to present online, possibility to transfer to online class, and formative assessment are the opportunities students pointed out. Two codes emerged under Theme 2, Student-Teacher Interaction, teachers are more understanding and teachers are more flexible.

The opinions of the faculty members were also examined in the opportunities category and the results are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Voices of the Faculty Members in the Opportunities Category

Themes	Codes	Participant s	F	Sample Excerpts
Professional Development	Technological literacy development	T4, T6	2	"I am trying to improve myself in using technology"
	New projects emerged	T1, T3	2	"We start to think about projects that we have never thought about before"
	Using and applying new technology	T2	1	"We learned how to use and apply the tools that we haven't used before"
	Learning about online tools	T3, T4, T7	3	"I didn't know what Zoom was before online courses"
	Discovering advantages of online teaching	T1, T2, T7	3	"I realized that I can improve myself thanks to online teaching"
	More practical	T7	1	"It is easier to reach someone who will give a speech online"
	Following online training-seminar	T7	1	"We can attend online training without travelling anywhere"
	Learning how to conduct more enjoyable online classes	T7	1	"We try to make lessons more enjoyable especially for the ones who are online"
Personal Development	Becoming multitasking (flying professors)	T1, T4	2	"We are in the top of being multitasking"
	Self-reflection	T1, T7	2	"I learned how to control my body language, mimics etc. watching videos"
	Becoming more flexible/understanding	T3, T4	2	"When the students say that they couldn't upload their assignment on time because of connection problems, I can easily say OK"
	Time for self	T7	1	"We can save time for ourselves no commuting or flying"
Opportunities for Students	Student-teacher interaction	T6, T7	2	"We can save more time for our students"
	Transparency in grading	T4	1	"I could watch and evaluate my students' presentation again after they objected to the grades"
	Watching the recordings	T4, T6	2	"Students can watch the

	of missed classes			recordings again and again"
Opportunities for University	Infrastructure development	T5	1	"There are very few universities that conduct hybrid model"
Administration	Transparency (recordings of sessions /reporting)	T5	1	"The recording can be proof for our way of having a lesson"

The themes related to the voices of the faculty members in the Opportunities category are presented in Table 6. The codes that emerged under Theme 1, Professional Development are technological literacy development, new projects emerged, using and applying new technology, learning about online tools, discovering advantages of online teaching, more practical, following online training-seminar, and learning how to conduct more enjoyable online classes. Faculty members stated that they had some opportunities for personal development like becoming more multitasking, self-reflection, becoming more flexible/understanding, and time for themselves. They also expressed some opportunities for students such as student-teacher interaction, transparency in grading, and watching the recordings of missed classes. Finally, faculty members pointed out infrastructure development and transparency (recordings of sessions/reporting) as opportunities for university administration.

Another category that was investigated was 'threats'. Table 7 shows students' opinions on this category which was revealed to have three themes and six codes in total.

Table 7. Students' Voices in the Threats Category

Themes	Codes	Participants	F	Sample Excerpts
Student-Teacher Interaction	Difficulty in taking turns to speak	S2, S7, S15	3	"I don't want to speak in online courses because I think I won't be able to get a turn to speak"
	Getting feedback from teachers	S5, S11, S13	3	"Getting feedback in online courses is not as easy as getting feedback in face-to-face courses"
Personal Problems	Risk of catching Covid-19	S9, S10, S13, S14	4	"I was afraid of catching Covid-19 in face-to-face courses, but I caught it from my family"
	Lack of physical activity	S1, S3, S9, S13	4	"It is so hard to sit in front of the computer screen; I feel sleepy"
	Accommodation problems	S9	1	"It is very dangerous to stay at the dorms in this period"
Procedural Problems	Use of cameras	S1, S13	2	"They insist on us turning on our cameras."
	Having both online and face-to-face classes on the same day	S8	1	"It is very difficult to participate in an online course in the morning and then go to the campus for a face-to-face course"

The themes related to the students' voices in the Threats category are shown in Table 7. Three

students stated that they had difficulty in taking turns to speak. Getting feedback from teachers is another threat expressed by 3 students under Theme 1, Student-Teacher Interaction. The risk of catching Covid-19 and lack of physical activity in Theme 2 are the most frequently stated threats of hybrid education. Accommodation problems is another threat mentioned by a student under Theme 2, Personal Problems. Use of cameras and having both online and face-to-face classes on the same day are the codes that emerged from Theme 3, Procedural Problems.

The opinions of the faculty members were also examined under this category and Table 8 shows the relevant results.

Table 8. *Voices of the Faculty Members in the Threats Category*

Themes	Codes	Participants	F	Sample Excerpts
Measurement and Evaluation	Unfair grading	T1	1	"Unfair grading is a serious problem"
	Tendency for high grades due to pandemic	T1	1	"There is a tendency to give higher grades"
	Not using rubrics	T1	1	"The grade given to the student may not reflect the real grade when a rubric is not used"
	Objections to grades	T1	1	"There will be too many objections to the grades if holistic scoring is used for evaluating the students' assignments"
Threats for Students	Student-teacher interaction needs	T2, T6, T5	3	"I am afraid of not being able to reach all the students" "Students are getting more and more passive and reserved in online courses. They don't want to participate in the lessons."
	Lack of practice	T6, T7	2	"4 th graders couldn't get to school for teaching practice"
Threats for Faculty Members	Classroom management	T2	1	"In online courses we can't see students' faces, so I cannot manage the classroom"
	Psychological	T5, T6, T7	3	"Our students need psychological support, but we need it as well"
	Professional	T7	1	"There is uncertainty. We cannot plan for the future"
	Health problems	T4	1	"Sitting in front of the

			screen means lack of physical activity"
Work-Life balance	T4	1	"Since we cannot see our students at school, we always receive emails and reply to them and give feedback all the time"

Table 8 presents three themes related to the voices of faculty members in the Threats category. In Theme 1, Measurement and Evaluation, the things considered as a threat by faculty members are unfair grading, tendency for high grades due to the pandemic, not using rubrics, and objections to grades. The codes that emerged under Theme 2, Threats for Students are student-teacher interaction needs, and lack of practice. Three faculty members stated that both students and they need psychological support during hybrid education. The other threats for faculty members are classroom management, professional threats, health-problems, and work-life balance.

The last category that emerged during the course of study was 'suggestions' which was mentioned by the faculty members. Table 9 reveals the themes and codes under this category.

Table 9. *Voices of the Faculty Members in the Suggestions Category*

Themes	Codes	Participant	F	Sample Excerpts
		s		
Measure ment and Evaluatio n	Using rubrics for grading	T1	1	"Rubrics should be used to achieve a fair scoring of student assignments"
	Blind grading	T1	1	"Blind grading should be used for evaluating assignments if possible"
Providing Support for Students	Personal development	T5	1	"I believe additional training seminars should be provided for both psychological support and personal development of the students"
	Psychological support	T6	1	"Because of lack of interaction, students get more lonely and need psychological support in this sense."
	How to use technology Effectively	T4, T6	2	"We have to be trained in how to use technology effectively"
	Providing socializing opportunities	T6	1	"Students need more activities in terms of interaction and socializing"
	Activating student clubs	T5	1	"Student club activities have decreased and we can do nothing about it"
	Encouraging students to be	T6	1	"We should plan some

Providing Support for Faculty Members	more active			activities or trainings to get students to be more active participants"
	Planning extra-curricular activities	T6	1	"We can plan seminars for our students' personal development"
	Trainings	T6	1	"I believe we need more technology training, maybe more than the students"
	Hybrid classroom management strategies	T5	1	"Since it is a very new experience for us, we, as instructors, need support and training in terms of classroom management in hybrid education"
	Psychological support	T6	1	"I think the disadvantages can be alleviated in a great extend with psychological support and personal development training"
Improving the System for Hybrid Education	Technological infrastructure	T4, T5, T6	3	"The technological infrastructure should be improved because it is both a threat and a suggestion"

The faculty members also made some suggestions to improve hybrid education. Measurement and Evaluation, Providing Support for Students, Providing Support for Faculty Members, and Improving the System for Hybrid Education are the Themes related to the Suggestions category. One faculty member suggested using rubrics for grading and blind grading. In addition, faculty members suggested providing support for students, for example, personal development, psychological support, how to use technology effectively, providing socializing opportunities, activating student clubs, encouraging students to be more active, and planning extra-curricular activities. Similarly, faculty members made some suggestions for themselves such as training, hybrid classroom management strategies, and psychological support. Finally, in Theme 4, improving the System for Hybrid Education, 3 faculty members stated that the technological infrastructure should be improved.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Hybrid education becomes a necessity during times of crisis such as pandemics and, in response to the recent Covid-19 crisis in particular, hybrid education has had to be redefined. In Turkey, in response to student choice and with a small number of face-to-face attendees, both face-to-face and online means of instruction have been introduced in higher education. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the strengths and weaknesses in order to relate to instructional standards and the related literature since it is an unfamiliar approach for most instructors and students. This case study uses phenomenological methodology to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of hybrid education, analyzing the perspectives of both students and faculty members at a foundation university in Gaziantep, Turkey.

The result of the interviews with participants revealed that there were similarities to the studies conducted so far as well as the ones that are specific to the present study. First of all, four themes emerged under the strength category. They believed that it was *easier to interact* with the instructor as there were less students who attended the courses face-to-face, and therefore they felt the instructor could reach them all in the class, which affected the '*flow of the courses*' for the better. Other than the communicative aspect, students stated that it was more '*comfortable*' to attend the courses online, which helped them to be more '*concentrated*' on the courses. Additionally, both students and faculty members stated that students who attended the courses face-to-face were more '*motivated*', which was supported by El Mansour and Mupinga (2007) in the sense that hybrid education allows students and teachers flexibility, resulting in greater motivation.

Another point was *not wasting their time on the road* for attending classes, which is important since the location of our university is very far from the city center. In addition to the opinions of the students, faculty members mentioned that they gained '*awareness*' in terms of problem-solving skills and finding quick solutions to unforeseen problems. They also expressed that this model showed them new ways to plan complementary courses if needed. Another strength faculty members emphasized was that they could watch the recordings of courses to help them '*reflect*' the way they teach. These results support the findings of Hall and Villareal's (2015) study.

Under the category of weaknesses, classroom and time management and technical problems are the most frequent aspects, which is in line with the studies of El Mansour and Mupinga (2007) and Sarı and Nayır (2020), who emphasize the problems arising from technical challenges. Keskin and Özer (2020) also revealed that students experienced technical difficulties and that they couldn't communicate with the instructor as easily as they wanted. Professional development is another code emerging from faculty members' statements under this category, similar to Sarı and Nayır's study (2020). One theme that stands out in this study under the weaknesses category of faculty members is '*measurement and evaluation problems*', which is crucial to underline because it mostly directs the way teaching content is prepared. Similarly, Sarı and Nayır (2020) found that measurement and evaluation problems were reported by UNESCO and OECD during the COVID-19 educational processes. This problem can be addressed by the researchers in the future studies. Another problem that was stated by both students and faculty members as a weakness was '*time management*'. Since the instructors need to present their course materials online as well as face-to-face, if a problem occurs in the online system, students who attend the courses face-to-face have to wait for the problem to be solved as well as the ones who are online. This finding is supported by the findings of Napier et al. (2011) and led us to keep reports on the problems encountered in the online system each week and share them with the IT department so that the problems would not occur again.

According to students and faculty members, there are several common opportunities in hybrid

education such as lessons being recorded and learning to use technology as professional and academic development. This finding is supported by the study of Sarı and Nayır (2020), in which they find that both students and teachers developed their technological skills during the time of pandemic. Students also believed that the instructors are more *flexible* because of the possible online problems and are more understanding in terms of the assignments especially because of the health problems caused by Covid. El Mansour and Mupinga (2007) also pointed out the flexibility of the online courses as opposed to the rigid schedules of the face-to-face courses. This flexibility was expressed by the faculty members as well, claiming that it was easier for them to be more tolerant about the submission of the assignments. Faculty members also believed that hybrid education provided '*transparency in grading*' since the instructors could refer to the recordings of the students' performances if needed.

Under the category of threats, those who chose to participate online pointed out the difficulty in taking turns, getting feedback and lack of physical activity. They also mentioned the instructors' insistence on using their cameras. Majority of the students stated that they do not feel comfortable with their cameras on because of privacy reasons, or some find it distracting to see themselves on the screen. This finding is also stated by the faculty members as they consider this as a classroom management problem in hybrid courses, which is another important contribution of the present study and can be addressed in the future studies to be able to provide a solution. In addition, students stated the difficulty in spending a great deal of time in front of the computer caused '*lack of physical activity*' and made them lose focus on the lesson after some time. This is another important result that was revealed by this study. Technical problems, lessons being more theoretical, and time management problems are some of the themes and codes. Courses such as practice teaching at the Faculty of Education were negatively affected since pre-service teachers needed to incorporate online tools of education into their practices in a short period of time. This result may fall into the category of '*learning losses*' as stated in the study of Sarı and Nayır (2020).

Lastly, faculty members provided some suggestions as to the problems of hybrid education in this model but can also be used as a guide for upcoming practices and studies regarding hybrid education. They mentioned blind grading and emphasized the importance of rubrics to avoid the problems mentioned in the weaknesses category. On this point, Korucu and Kabak (2020) also suggest that evaluation methods of hybrid learning should meet the demands of all the stakeholders and provide a sense of security by fully considering the technical challenges. Also, they expressed the need for psychological and technical support for both the students and faculty members to help overcome the challenges caused by both the pandemic and the sudden change in the delivery of education. In this context, Bozkurt (2020) suggests that students should be provided with the flexibility and autonomy because of the time and setting restrictions and the online education should be designed based on the qualities of the existing infrastructure. On this note, Ali (2020) recommended that educational institutions should have the '*basic ICT Infrastructure*' for online learning to be efficient and effective along with the support for staff members' and students' needs.

This study provides insights into the opinions of both students and teachers regarding hybrid education which is implemented differently than the ones investigated so far in the literature. The study is therefore important in the sense that we can underline the needs of the students and act on the suggestions of the teachers, which can pave the way for a more productive virtual learning environment. On that note, future studies may use experimental design and focus on practices and interventions to hybrid education to minimize the drawbacks and maximize the efficiencies.

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