Distance Education Services for Students with Disabilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Their Parents' Level of Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT This study aimed to examine the distance education services offered to students with disabilities (SWDs) during the COVID-19 pandemic, identify the level of parents' satisfaction with them, and delineate any benefits and obstacles to distance education. To this end, a descriptive-analytical method was applied using the questionnaire tool. The study sample consisted of 114 randomly selected parents of SWDs. According to the findings, the arithmetic averages of the phrases of the dimension, '*benefits of distance education services for SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their parents*', ranged between 3.16 and 4.04, with parents ranking the phrase, '*The teacher should provide the support that suits the student's abilities during distance teaching*' as the highest (mean = 4.04). Similarly, the averages of the phrases of the dimension, '*obstacles to distance education services for students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their parents*', scored between 2.58 and 3.51, while the phrase, '*support services offered to students are insufficient*' rated moderately in the first place (mean = 3.51). Similarly, parents scored the phrases of the dimension, '*parents' satisfaction with distance education services for SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by their parents*', between 2.81 and 3.56, and the phrase, '*I am satisfied with the methods of communication available during the educational process*' came on top, with a moderate average of 3.56.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced school closures worldwide, leading to a significant interruption of the education process, with negative effects compared to the pre-pandemic era. This is evidenced by the consequent cancelling of exams or replacing them with a lower alternative (Burgess and Sievertsen 2020; Düzyol and Yildirim 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic also caused a huge shift in the education sector, as decision makers were forced to approve the continuation of the distance-learning process to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic on students (Ulas et al. 2021; Yazici et al. 2021; Sezer et al. 2022), including students with disabilities (SWDs). Teachers, SWDs, and their parents face several challenges due to the disability itself and the heterogeneity within the same disability group in the distance education process. Therefore, specialists have been concerned about ensuring that SWDs have a fair opportunity for distance education, making the best use of the virtual space to adapt and modify the curriculum according to the needs of each student. Accordingly, thinking about how to teach SWDs has become more important than ever before in meeting the goals of the educational process (ASCD 2020). However, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has been pursuing the distance learning process without preparation or prior training for teachers, students, or their parents, thus prompting the need to identify availability and parents' level of satisfaction with distance education services offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the largest global health crises in the modern era that has forced most countries to close their schools, colleges, and universities. The crisis has made decision makers choose between two options, that is, to close the schools to limit the spread of COVID-19 and save lives (Güngör et al. 2022; Sezer and Can 2022), or to keep them open to preserve the economy. Families have also been put under the pressure of remote home education in an unprecedented manner, which has affected their productivity as well as their children's social life and learning (Burgess and Sievertsen 2020). The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2023) also reported that people with disabilities (PWDs) are among the groups that may be disproportionately affected by the pandemic due to the interruption of services on which they largely relied (Çoban and Yazici 2022; Güler and Bedel 2024). To ensure the continuity of the educational process for PWDs in accordance with local laws, schools have introduced

the distance education process (Kim and Fienup 2021; Kurtdede and Yildirim 2022).

Specialists stressed that teachers and students face challenges in meeting their educational goals through distance education. Further, providing multiple resources for distance education for SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic is more necessary than ever (Nelson 2020). However, research on this issue is scant. Thus, to further investigate the issue and expand the literature, the researcher conducted an extensive study to evaluate distance education and the level of parents' satisfaction with the distance education services offered in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Accordingly, the study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the benefits of distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their parents?
2. What are the obstacles to distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their parents?
3. What is the level of parents' satisfaction with distance education services offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their parents?

Objectives

This study aimed to examine the distance education services offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic and delineate the benefits and obstacles of distance education. It also attempted to identify the level of parents' satisfaction with distance education services for SWDs.

Significance

The significance of the current study is derived from the importance of identifying the challenges that parents may face, providing appropriate support to avoid them in the future, and ensuring the quality of distance education. Distance education is an essential pattern of education for PWDs. It is important to guarantee that the process continues, along with face-to-face education, even after the COVID-19 crisis, to ensure diversity in the education of PWDs. The study also derives its significance from the importance of evaluating distance education services for decision makers in the MOE with the intention of improving and developing a virtual environment for the better education of PWDs. Further, the study enriches the theoretical framework by filling the gap due to the scar-

city of educational studies aimed at investigating the benefits of and obstacles to distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, the findings of the study highlight the necessity of continuing the educational process during the pandemic while emphasising the importance of achieving quality distance education and ensuring the achievement of quality education outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

Benefits of Distance Education for SWDs

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Education for PWDs stresses the need to provide appropriate adaptations and modifications to ensure fairness and equality with their ordinary peers. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the world to interrupt the education process in the physical environment of the classroom and resort to distance education. This step was known as the "distance education crisis", as the provision of distance education was imposed without planning, prior preparation, or training (Petretto et al. 2021; Sanal-Erginel 2022). California State University (2003) defined distance education as "the implementation of the educational process in an unconventional way, where the teacher and student are not present in the same environment, but still, they are expected to interact with the help of technology and communication". Distance education is characterised by flexibility, as teachers can present their lessons at any time without the need to move to school, and this saves them the cost of transportation and facilitates students' access to lessons at any time outside official learning hours (Al-Dhaheri 2020; Yakar 2021; Kayaalp et al. 2021). Moreover, distance education using technology enables Autism Disorder Spectrum (ADS) students to interact in a better way than their interactions within the classroom, and this enhances the use of their strengths (visual-spatial skills) (Chu et al. 2020).

Ramadan (2020) stated that distance education has several advantages, including the use of multimedia to communicate and enrich the material and enable teachers to choose the appropriate time to record the material and prepare it in advance. The materials presented in distance education are also clear, comprehensive, and flexible, which helps achieve the desired goals (Rashid 2008). Moreover, distance education may be synchronous, which depends on the direct broadcast of the material from the teachers, enables them to interact with their students at the lowest cost, and ensures

that the students can obtain immediate feedback during the virtual class. However, distance education requires a good communication network that enables the teacher and the learner to benefit from the simultaneous broadcast, and it also requires that teachers adhere to the time allotted for the lesson (Hussein 2020). Asynchronous distance education does not require students to be present with the teachers at the same time, as the latter can produce the educational material and save it for the learners to refer to it at any time. Nonetheless, students cannot obtain immediate feedback from their teachers in asynchronous education, thus lacking social interaction between teachers and students (Hussein 2020).

The continuation of the education process during the COVID-19 pandemic was made possible by the use of distance education, which is an inevitable necessity for adapting to the conditions in the world (Al-Khamisi 2020; Taner et al. 2021). Despite all the above, there are several challenges faced by both teachers and students. Al-Anzi (2020) also reported that distance education will highly develop students' writing and reading skills in the Arabic language, as this requires the use of the computer to complete tasks and duties. Furthermore, distance education makes it easy to refer to recorded lessons, which contributes to students' proficiency and improves their level of education.

Obstacles to Distance Education

The challenges facing distance education include students' insufficient skills in using educational platforms effectively, which affects their academic performance, as in the case of PWDs, who suffer from a remarkable drawback in their computer skills (Timuçin and Tatli 2024). This indicates the inability to meet the goals of the educational process because of the student's diminishing role as an active learner (Demir and Ilhan 2022). Many studies have also confirmed insufficient training on how to use educational platforms in the learning process as an obstacle for students. Al-Huwaiti (2020) reported that insufficient training in the use of educational platforms, as well as the unavailability of fast internet, affects the quality of the distance education process. Al-Maliki and Daghestani (2020) identified additional obstacles, including insufficient financial resources, poor internet connections at schools, the large number of teachers' tasks, and inadequate training. This calls for the need to ensure that teachers are qualified to use distance education to increase the efficiency of educational platforms.

Al-Ruwaili and Al-Anzi (2021) argued that the obstacles to distance education include insufficient educational tools, the difficulty of recording lessons, and the lack of specialists in managing administrative services that individuals need within educational platforms. The authors also indicated that the challenges in distance education for PWDs involve teachers' inability to use a variety of teaching methods or to provide their students with study plans due to their lack of training in how to use technology and solve the problems they face. In addition to the insufficient training of special education specialists on the appropriate use of technology as one of the obstacles to the effectiveness of distance education for PWDs, teachers affirmed the presence of distractions in students' environments, including the absence of a designated place at home to receive distance education, which constitutes a challenge in providing effective distance education for PWDs and meeting educational goals. Although parents acknowledged the successful use of several applications, such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams, during the transition process to distance education, Basilaia and Kvavadz (2020) reported that the challenges of distance education, as perceived by parents and students, are the students' feeling of boredom in receiving the educational process at home, surrounded by many distractions that hinder the effective learning process. Parents also pointed out the difficulty of monitoring their children, which is an additional burden during the distance education process, as parents are also committed to other household chores. They also expressed moderate attitudes toward the process of educating their children at a distance. Mothers emphasised that the distance education process is a new form of providing the educational process for them, so they cannot determine its effectiveness (Al-Shayab 2020).

Al-Anzi (2020) showed that obstacles to distance education were generally rated as moderate. The study concluded that the slow internet connection was one of the most remarkable obstacles to distance education, as it ranked first and scored a high rating according to parents. Further, participants indicated that some lesson topics were monotonous, which bored the students and led to poor responses and negative effects on their motivation. However, there are no significant differences at the 0.05 level based on the student's educational stage in the attitudes of students' parents toward distance education in private schools. Along the same lines, Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) argued that sitting in front of a computer for a long time sub-

jected students to boredom. Teachers were also unable to manage distance education compared to regular classes, which made it difficult for them to accurately measure outcomes, especially regarding individual differences between students in the classroom. Other challenges include extended periods of internet outage and the difficulty of providing high-speed internet and computer devices for each child in the family for economic reasons (David et al. 2020).

Abu Zeitoun et al. (2021) claimed that the attitudes of parents of students with learning disabilities (LD) toward distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic were negative, with no significant differences at the 0.05 level in parents' attitudes based on the student's gender. Sallam and Elhady (2023) pointed to the difficulty of integrating LD students with their normally developing peers in distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic, as distance education poses a challenge for LD students. It is also necessary to consider the method of education offered to this category of students according to the individual differences of each disability. The completely blind, for example, require that educational aids depend on and develop the remaining senses, whereas the visually impaired need visual aids to support the learning process (Al-Lalla 2016). This was confirmed by Al-Otaibi (2014), who reported that it is difficult to adapt distance education to suit individual needs.

Parents play an essential role in students' success in school, as they encourage and motivate them to strive. However, this role has become more complex and requires more than mere encouragement and motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the educational process takes place from home (Kim 2020; Lau and Lee 2020) and requires parents to provide the appropriate environment for the education process. Parents need to allocate a suitable place at home while attempting to meet the requirements of their daily duties while ensuring effective communication with teachers. They are keen to carry out the daily routine of students at home, and intensively monitor their students in the primary stage, as they need guidance, whether in completing daily duties or using electronic devices to access lessons (Ewing and Cooper 2021; Li and Zhou 2021).

Burdette and Greer (2014) investigated parents' viewpoints on distance education offered to their children with disabilities. The authors showed that although parents were satisfied with the outcomes of distance education, they acknowledged several problems with distance instruction, including the challenge

to the social interaction skills, which SWDs enjoy through traditional education. Thus, parents prefer receiving education in schools in the traditional way for their children. Parents also stressed the importance of spending more time with their children with disabilities to support the learning process in terms of understanding and assimilating the educational material, despite their insufficient knowledge of how to meet their needs according to what is required in the individual educational plan. Distance education also enhances parents' awareness of the difficulties their children face in the learning process, which prompts them to find effective ways to meet their individual educational needs (Burdette and Greer 2014; Smith et al. 2016).

Smith et al. (2016) demonstrated that parents found communication with teachers effective and more flexible with the technology used and more continuous than traditional communication within the school. Ayda et al. (2020) investigated the distance education of PWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic and concluded that teachers acknowledged that there was no special education, an action plan to support the distance education of PWDs, or even an individual educational plan that supported each student according to their needs. They reported that SWDs in primary education did not benefit sufficiently from the distance education they were offered together with their regular peers, as some activities, typically appropriate for all students in most cases, were simply added to support SWDs, with no specific plans to cater to their needs in this context. Sallam and Elhady (2023) argued that teachers face difficulties in remotely teaching reading and writing to PWDs, as these skills require direct instruction and a lot of time to complete the academic tasks required of them. The teachers also mentioned the ineffectiveness of teaching PWDs at a distance, as they needed direct teaching in the classroom. Distance education does not allow students to use many teaching methods, including methods that depend on multiple senses to enhance students' comprehension.

Despite the importance of investigating the role of parents of children with disabilities and their level of satisfaction with distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is not much research on the topic. To bridge the study gap in the literature, this study aimed to identify the experiences of parents of SWDs regarding the benefits and obstacles of distance education during the pandemic, and their satisfaction with the services offered, due to the need to enhance and improve the distance education process for PWDs similar to their ordinary students.

METHODOLOGY

The current study employed a descriptive analytical method, which investigates a problem or a specific phenomenon to reach logical explanations for it. This approach was used to examine a questionnaire about distance education services offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic and the level of parents' satisfaction with them.

Sample

The study population consisted of all parents of SWDs in the city of Makkah Al-Mukarramah during the fall semester of 2021. The study sample included 114 randomly selected parents.

Table 1: Distribution of the study sample by demographic characteristics

Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	36	31.6
	Female	78	68.4
Type of disability	Learning disability	28	24.6
	Mental disability	32	28.1
	Hearing impairment	21	18.4
	Visual impairment	9	7.9
	Autism disorder spectrum (ADS)	8	7.0
	Multiple disabilities	16	14.0
Child's school stage	Primary	38	33.3
	Middle	62	54.4
	Secondary	14	12.3
Total		114	100

The study used a closed questionnaire to investigate the distance education services offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic and to measure the level of parents' satisfaction with them. A 25-phrase questionnaire was developed by the researcher and classified under three main dimensions of i) benefits of distance education for SWDs (1-9), ii) distance education obstacles (10-16), and iii) the level of parents' satisfaction with distance education offered to SWDs (17-25).

Face Validity

The face validity of the questionnaire was measured by submitting it to a panel of four faculty members at Saudi universities in the field of special education. The study questions and objectives were attached to the questionnaire, which was modified according to the comments and amendments of the arbitrators. The final version of the tool consisted of 25 representative phrases that could measure what it intended to measure. A 5-point scale was employed (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, with numerical scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively). The validity and reliability of the scale were measured using methods of face validity and internal consistency. The following scale was employed to calculate the five-point scale:

$$\frac{\text{Upper limit of the scale (5) – Lower limit of the scale (1)}}{\text{Number of required categories}} = 1.33$$

Table 2: Correlation of the phrases of each dimension with the total score of the dimension

Benefits of distance education for SWDs		Obstacles to distance education		Level of parents' satisfaction with distance education for SWDs	
Phrase	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Phrase	Pearson's correlation coefficient	Phrase	Pearson's correlation coefficient
1	0.734*	10	0.661**	17	0.784**
2	0.676*	11	0.685**	18	0.793**
3	0.782*	12	0.685**	19	0.673**
4	0.618*	13	0.774**	20	0.659**
5	0.716*	14	0.792**	21	0.614**
6	0.456*	15	0.629**	22	0.663**
7	0.777*	16	0.727**	23	0.748**
8	0.696*			24	0.763**
9	0.705*			25	0.693**

* statistically significant at the 0.01 level; SWDs: students with disabilities

The outcome (1.33) was added to the end of each category, and hence the categories were rated based on the formula, that is, 1.00-2.33 (low), 2.34-3.67 (moderate), and 3.68-5.00 (high).

Validity

The questionnaire was applied to a pilot sample of 25 individuals from the study population, who were excluded from the target study sample. The purpose was to calculate the values of Pearson's correlation coefficients for the relationship of the phrases with their respective dimensions, as shown in Table 2.

According to Table 2, the correlation coefficients for the phrases of each dimension with the total score of the dimension are high and statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level.

Reliability

To measure the reliability of the tool, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as an indicator of internal consistency. The total reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.798, which is a very high percentage and indicates the reliability of the tool. The reliability coefficient calculated by the half-split method was 0.715.

According to Table 3, the internal consistency coefficients based on the Cronbach's alpha equation for the three dimensions, that is, benefits of distance education for SWDs, distance education obstacles, and level of parents' satisfaction with distance education for SWDs, and were 0.858, 0.829, and 0.876 respectively, and the reliability coefficient of the tool was 0.798, which are all statistically significant values.

Statistical Methods Used in the Study

Given the nature and objectives of the study, the data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and the results were extracted according to the following statistical methods:

1. Pearson's correlation coefficient
2. Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and the reliability coefficient by the split-half method to calculate the reliability of the study tool.
3. Frequencies and percentages of the distribution of the study sample members according to personal variables.
4. Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the phrases of the study tool and the dimensions as a whole.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the First Question: What are the benefits of distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their parents?

The arithmetic averages and standard deviations for the first dimension (benefits of distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by their parents) were calculated, and the phrases were arranged in descending order according to their arithmetic averages, as shown in Table 4.

According to the results, one of the most important benefits of distance education offered to SWDs was the teacher's keenness to provide support appropriate to students' abilities in the process of distance instruction. Ramadan (2020) also highlighted the teacher's capacity to use multimedia through distance education to enrich the material. This finding may be ascribed to the teachers' endeavour to meet the educational goals of SWDs, as students' success is part of the teacher's success. Teachers also pay extra attention to adequately supporting PWDs. However, the results of the current study are inconsistent with those of Al-Ruwaili and Al-Anzi (2021), who demonstrated that teachers could not use various teaching methods to support their students.

Table 3: Internal consistency coefficient based on Cronbach's alpha equation and the reliability coefficient by the split-half method

	Dimension	No. of phrases	Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Reliability coefficient by the split-half method
1	Benefits of distance education for SWDs	9	0.858	0.780
2	Obstacles to distance education	7	0.829	0.865
3	Level of parents' satisfaction with distance education for SWDs	9	0.876	0.724
	Total	25	0.798	0.715

** statistically significant at the 0.01 level; SWDs: students with disabilities

Table 4: Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the first dimension (benefits of distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their parents)

	Phrase	M	SD	Rank	Level
3	The teacher is keen to provide support appropriate to students' abilities in the process of distance instruction.	4.04	0.75	1	High
6	There is direct communication from the teacher with parents to monitor the student via Zoom, phone calls, or text messages.	3.98	0.85	2	High
2	The instruction method used has taken into account individual differences among students.	3.56	1.08	3	Moderate
7	The distance learning system has ensured easy access and success for students with disabilities.	3.42	1.14	4	Moderate
4	Distance education provided an opportunity for continuous evaluation of students' performance.	3.37	1.06	5	Moderate
9	Distance education has made it possible to improve ways of communicating with people with disabilities (PWDs) in line with the nature of the disability.	3.23	1.14	6	Moderate
5	The distance learning process has provided interaction between students and the teacher in the educational process.	3.18	1.29	7	Moderate
6	The system used for distance learning is highly effective.	3.16	1.26	8	Moderate
7	Distance education has provided different ways to implement and review lessons in a manner appropriate to the disability.	3.16	1.09	9	Moderate
	The entire dimension	3.45	0.81	-	Moderate

The present study also showed that parents effectively communicated directly with teachers, an outcome that was highly rated. This result is in agreement with what was reported by Smith et al. (2016), that is, parents' remote communication was more effective than their traditional communication within the school. This is attributed to the fact that the use of social media facilitates the process of communicating with teachers, as parents can send their inquiries at any time by voice, text, or using video, which saves them the trouble of scheduling a prior appointment to meet the teacher at school and find answers for their questions.

In the same context, the results of the current study showed that the phrase, '*the teaching methods used take into account individual differences among students*', was moderately rated by the parents. This result is in line with Ayda et al.'s (2020) finding, as teachers reported that there was no special education for PWDs or an individual educational plan that met the needs of each student according to his or her disability. Sallam and Elhady (2023) pointed out the difficulty of teaching reading and writing at a distance, since these skills require direct instruction with students. This result can be attributed to the difficulty teachers' encounter in meeting individual differences through distance education among students, especially SWDs, who are in dire need of adapting teaching methods to suit their needs, and consequently, meet the desired goals and follow deliberate plans developed by a multidisciplinary team. The study also showed that parents assigned a moderate rating to the capacity of the distance education system to provide different ways to implement and review lessons in a way that suited each disability. This is due to the multiplicity of differences between people with the same disability, as it is difficult for the teacher to simultaneously meet individual differences from a distance.

The results showed that parents gave a moderate rating to the high effectiveness of the system used for distance education, which is consistent with those obtained by Ayda et al. (2020), who reported that PWDs did not benefit sufficiently from distance education at the primary level. The researcher ascribes this result to the challenge facing SWDs in understanding concepts and acquiring skills via distance education, and hence, they need traditional education so that they may receive direct and extensive attention from the teacher due to the characteristics of the disability. Therefore, distance education for SWDs will be effective when employed as a supplementary option for traditional education because it allows SWDs to recall what they study in the classroom at home at any time.

Results of the Second Question: What are the obstacles to distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by their parents?

The arithmetic averages and standard deviations for the second dimension (obstacles to distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic as perceived by their parents) were calculated, and the phrases were arranged in descending order of their arithmetic averages, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the second dimension (obstacles to distance education offered to SWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as perceived by their parents)

	Phrase	M	SD	Rank	Level
1	Support services offered to students are insufficient.	3.51	1.03	1	Moderate
2	There are technical problems.	3.44	1.14	2	Moderate
3	Insufficient proper training in advance.	3.26	1.14	3	Moderate
4	I do not have enough experience to use the distance education platform.	3.25	1.04	4	Moderate
5	I do not have enough time to follow the distance education platform.	3.07	1.22	5	Moderate
6	I do not have enough experience to follow the distance education platform.	2.84	1.26	6	Moderate
7	Insufficient support offered to the student.	2.58	1.10	7	Moderate
	The entire dimension	3.14	0.85	-	Moderate

According to the results, the most common obstacle to distance education for SWDs as perceived by their parents is the insufficient services and support offered to students, which also obtained a moderate rating. This result is in accord with Basilaia and Kvavadz (2020), who argued that the teacher is unable to manage the educational process at a distance compared to traditional instruction in the classroom, which makes it difficult for them to provide additional services and take into account the individual differences. The researcher attributes this to the urgent need of SWDs for special education services offered by the resource room according to an individual plan, given that students' needs are met independently, and the services are offered by a multidisciplinary team. Further, the insufficient support offered by the assistant teacher within the classroom is an obstacle to the student's ability to meet the goals, as the teacher seeks to achieve the educational goals of all students in the classroom.

Other obstacles included the absence of sufficient and appropriate training in advance (moderate rating). Al-Maliki and Daghestani (2020) also confirmed insufficient training in the use of educational platforms. The researcher attributes this to the fact that the decision to adopt and continue distance education was abrupt, and therefore, no training was offered to parents, teachers, or students in using educational platforms to ensure the success of the educational process.

Results of the Third Question: What is the level of parents' satisfaction with distance education for SWDs during COVID-19, as perceived by their parents?

The arithmetic averages and standard deviations for the third dimension (level of parents' satisfaction with distance education for SWDs during COVID-19 as perceived by their parents) were calculated, and the phrases were arranged in descending order according to their arithmetic averages, as shown in Table 6.

Based on the results, parents reported a moderate level of satisfaction with the communication methods available during and after the educational process. The researcher attributes this result to the teacher's keenness to provide multiple opportunities to communicate with parents and ensure the continuity of cooperation and the success of the distance learning process during and after the lesson. The teacher is also keen to communicate continuously and flexibly with parents using their personal numbers to ensure the success of SWDs.

Table 6: Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the third dimension (level of parents' satisfaction with distance education for SWDs during COVID-19, as perceived by their parents)

	Phrase	M	SD	Rank	Level
4	I am satisfied with the communication methods available during the educational process.	3.56	0.84	1	Moderate
5	I am satisfied with the methods of communication available after the end of the educational process.	3.42	0.82	2	Moderate
1	I am satisfied with the services offered at a distance.	3.33	1.29	3	Moderate
3	I am satisfied with the type of support offered to SWDs.	3.23	1.06	4	Moderate
6	I am satisfied with the quality of distance education.	3.14	1.20	5	Moderate
2	I am satisfied with the level of support offered to SWDs.	3.11	1.04	6	Moderate
7	I am satisfied with the distance learning outcomes.	3.07	1.03	7	Moderate
8	Distance education is useful for SWDs.	2.89	1.34	8	Moderate
9	We have reached the required level of distance education for SWDs.	2.81	1.25	9	Moderate
	The entire dimension	3.17	0.93		Moderate

The current study also reported that parents expressed a moderate level of satisfaction with the required level of achievement reached by their children with disabilities via distance education. This result corroborates the findings of Burdette and Greer (2014), who confirmed the satisfaction of parents of SWDs with the outcomes of distance education, although they prefer their children to receive education in schools in a traditional format. However, this is inconsistent with Basilaia and Kvavadz's (2020) study, which claimed that teachers are unable to accurately measure learning outcomes in distance education, given individual differences. The researcher ascribes this result to the type and severity of the disability, and the greater the disability severity, the greater the need is for intensive support to bring students to a satisfactory level that guarantees their success in distance education. Parents' moderate satisfaction is due to the efficiency of the teacher and the intensity of the effort made to ensure the success of SWDs in the distance education process.

CONCLUSION

Drawing from the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the provision of adequate training to teachers, students, and parents to ensure the success of the distance learning process and to overcome the challenges they face. There is also a need to increase the support offered to SWDs, given the individual differences, using well-thought-out and systematic plans that support their development in line with their needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher calls for supporting parents in teaching their children with disabilities to ensure effective cooperation between home and school. The MOE also needs to improve educational platforms and adopt them as a supplementary learning source in addition to traditional education in school for SWDs, which will help them recall lessons and meet the goals of the individual educational plan. Finally, qualitative studies should be carried out to identify parents' proposed solutions to overcome the challenges of distance education for SWDs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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