

# Is distance education obligatory or a new trend? The effect of psychiatric nursing e-course on stigma

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** To examine the effects of psychiatric nursing e-course taught by distance learning on students' beliefs about mental illnesses.

**Design and Methods:** This study was conducted as a pretest, posttest, and follow-up quasi-experimental study with 147 nursing students.

**Findings:** The results showed that the psychiatric nursing e-course significantly reduced the stigmatization total and dimension scale scores of the participants, and the effect continued in the follow-up measurement. The difference between the pretest and posttest stigmatization scores of the students who concentrated during virtual classes and those who found student-instructor interaction and virtual course materials sufficient was statistically significant.

**Practice Implications:** Our results have shown that the psychiatric nursing e-course is effective on beliefs regarding stigmatization, and distance education is promising for nursing education to continue effectively.

## KEYWORDS

distance education, psychiatric nursing, stigmatization, student nurse, virtual lesson

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Stigmatization of mental illnesses is an ongoing social issue. It contributes to discrimination, inequalities healthcare, reduced quality of care and patient dissatisfaction (Ungar et al., 2016; Yang & Parrott, 2018). Stigmatization of individuals with mental illness is also common among healthcare professionals, and it has been reported that psychiatrists, nonpsychiatric physicians, working nurses and student nurses have negative attitudes and stigmatization toward patients with mental illnesses (Knaak et al., 2017; O'Reilly et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2017). Studies conducted in various countries have revealed that student nurses display negative attitudes toward people with mental illnesses, avoid providing care for such individuals or do not want to work in mental health departments after graduation (Kong et al., 2020; Poreddi et al., 2015; Rodríguez-Almagro et al., 2019). Considering the critical role of nurses in patient care, their vocational education process should cover this aspect as well.

Stigma toward mental illnesses is reported to be the result of myths, misunderstandings, negative stereotypes, and attitudes about mental disorders (Knaak et al., 2017). Nursing students' attitudes toward the mental illnesses of patients become the main determinant of the quality and outcomes of the care received by these patients (Lawrence & Kisely, 2010). Having negative opinions toward people will affect the way nurses view their patients and the nature of their work. This not only affects the advocacy roles of nurses in reducing stigma but also hinders the development of therapeutic relationships with patients (Enarsson et al., 2007). Nursing education plays a major role in shaping the attitudes of nursing students toward people with mental disorders, and if the concept of stigma is ignored during nursing education, negative consequences regarding patient care may occur in the future. Accordingly, the vocational training process of student nurses should provide an opportunity for them to recognize negative beliefs and stereotypes and be free from the influence of these beliefs and stereotypes. The psychiatric nursing course included in the undergraduate nursing curriculum aims to train nurses

who can effectively use the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired for the protection, treatment, and improvement of mental health (Gürman, 2016). Studies have indicated that with the psychiatric nursing course, students notice their beliefs about stigmatization and the effects of stigmatization, they recognize their beliefs about the fact that mental illnesses may be dangerous, avoidable and incurable diseases, and their desire to work in psychiatric services increases (Arbanas et al., 2017; Hastings et al., 2017; Sherwood, 2019).

Due to the restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, distance education methods have been brought to the agenda, educational institutions around the world have had to continue education via online methods, and these methods have become a part of daily life (Yıldırım, 2020). This process, for which no one was prepared, brought about disadvantages along with advantages and identified many of the problematic areas that need improvement, from the quality of education to equal opportunities, and from telecommunication services to infrastructure (Başaran et al., 2020). With the unpredictable pandemic, obtaining information about new education systems, evaluating the results and conducting studies on alternative teaching methods in professions with applied education processes such as nursing have come to the fore. It is seen in the literature that the psychiatric nursing course given through face-to-face instruction reduces the level of stigma among students according to some studies (Arbanas et al., 2017; Hastings et al., 2017; Sherwood, 2019), while it does not affect the level of stigma (Öztürk et al., 2015) or increases stigma (Sahin et al., 2019) according to others, but there literature review in this study did not reveal any previous studies concerning the psychiatric nursing course taught via distance learning methods. This study aimed to examine the effect of the psychiatric nursing e-course taught by distance education on the stigma levels of student nurses. This study will contribute to the distance education experience and provide information for more effective use of technology in face-to-face education and blended education studies in the future.

## 2 | DESIGN AND METHOD

### 2.1 | Objective and method

This study was designed as a pretest, posttest, and follow-up quasi-experimental study without a control group. It was aimed to examine the effects of the psychiatric nursing e-course given by the distance education method on the beliefs of students about mental illness, as well as students' views on distance education, virtual classes, psychiatric case discussions and documentary/film screening. The permanence of the effect of the education process was evaluated by applying a Personal Information Form and the Beliefs toward Mental Illness Scale (BMI) for the pretest before the virtual lessons started, the Personal Information Form, BMI and a Documentary/film Evaluation Form for the posttest at the end of the 14-week distance education period and BMI for the follow-up measurement 2 months after the posttest.

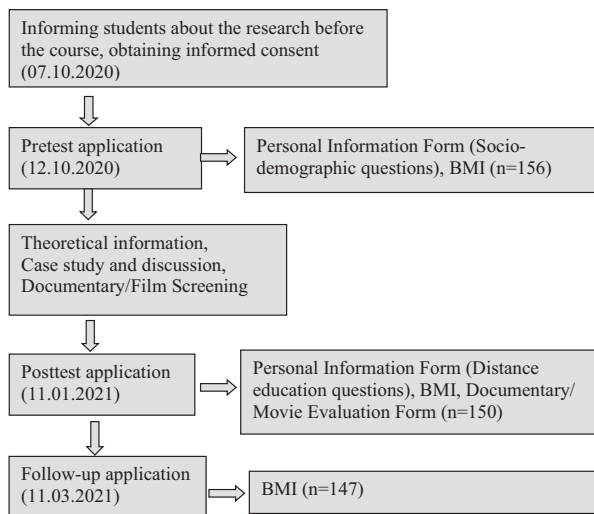
### 2.2 | Population and sample

The population consisted of 174 students who were enrolled in the course. Within the scope of the research, no sampling method was used, and 147 students who had not taken a psychiatric nursing e-course before and volunteered to participate in the study were included (participation rate: 84.5%). An informed consent form was sent to the students who registered for the course to obtain their consent after informing them about the study before implementing the course, stating that participation was not compulsory, it would not affect their success or grades in the course, they could leave the study whenever they wanted and for any reason, and the study would be carried out without collecting their identifying information (by using codenames). The students were given time to decide, and after 5 days, the link to the online survey form containing the data collection instruments was sent to those who agreed to participate, and the codename information and repetitive data entries were matched. At each data entry, the codename information was checked by the researchers, and only the students who registered for the course were allowed to participate in the survey. At the beginning of the study, 156 students voluntarily agreed to participate, but 9 students left the study, and the study was completed with the remaining 147 students

### 2.3 | Implementation

Among the authors, the researcher who carried out the theoretical explanation and application process of the course had participated in a 60-h e-instructor certificate program to effectively manage the distance education process. Due to the pandemic, the students were not allowed into the application areas, and the entirety of the theoretical and applied education process was carried out online in virtual classes. The students were divided into two virtual classrooms, and the same educational content was provided to both classrooms by the researcher for 4 h per week (six virtual classes), 56 h in total for 14 weeks (84 virtual classes in total). During the classes, the theoretical explanations were based on the psychiatric nursing course textbook (Gürman, 2016), psychiatric case examples were used for the course applications (Oltmanns et al., 2017), and the movies "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," "Patch Adams," "A Beautiful Mind," and the documentaries "Biz, Siz, Onlar" (Us, You, Them) and "Şizofren Yazar YC'nin Hayatı" (Life of Schizophrenic Author YC) were screened for the students to watch.

In the virtual classes, firstly, theoretical information was conveyed. Later, it was aimed to raise awareness on the changing lives of people in general due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulties experienced by and attitudes of healthcare professionals who were working as caregivers with the help of psychiatric case discussions and documentary/film screening for the students who would not be able to make clinical observations due to the pandemic period. Studies have reported that film/documentary screening is an effective method in the psychiatric nursing course and reduces the level of stigma among participants (Ayhan et al., 2018; Blasco et al., 2015). For this reason, the documentaries "Biz, Siz, Onlar" (Us, You, Them) and "Şizofren Yazar YC'nin Hayatı" (Life of



**FIGURE 1** Implementation

Schizophrenic Author YC) prepared by schizophrenia associations and the movie “A Beautiful Mind” to raise awareness about the symptoms of the disease, the difficulties it brings and the effects of stigma and the movies “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” and “Patch Adams” to raise awareness about the effects of healthcare professionals’ attitudes toward patients were screened for the students to watch (Figure 1).

For the evaluation stage in the course, the students were given individual performance and group performance assignments, the classes were taught interactively, and attention was paid to keep the interaction with the students on a maximum level. A content-oriented model was chosen for the virtual classes (Owston et al., 2020).

Virtual classes were carried out via the Ahi Competence-Based Education Project (ACBEP), where all of the students were registered. This platform offers online and offline teaching opportunities, video conferencing in a virtual classroom environment, file/screen sharing, whiteboard sharing, chat, breakout rooms for group work, surveys, nonverbal feedback (e.g., raising hand, yes/no answers), participant management, and tools such as session recording. During the virtual class, the interaction with the students was maintained also in writing using the chat tool or verbally with the microphone and camera. The chat records were retrieved after each class, and the questions of the students that were not answered during the class were answered by messaging. All lecture notes were uploaded to the system at the beginning of the class, forums related to lecture topics were opened, and feedback was provided to the assignments given to the students. The participation rate of the students in the virtual classes was 95%.

## 2.4 | Data collection tools

### 2.4.1 | Personal information form

Information on the students was collected including their socio-demographic characteristics with nine questions and their views on

distance education, the virtual classes, case discussions and documentary/movie screening sessions with 11 questions prepared in accordance with the literature on distance education (Tuncer & Bahadır, 2017).

### 2.4.2 | Beliefs toward Mental Illness Scale

The scale was developed by Hirai and Clum in 2000 to evaluate beliefs about mental illness. The validity-reliability study of the scale for the Turkish language was conducted by Bilge and Çam in 2008, and the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient of the 21-item 6-point Likert-type scale was reported by these authors as 0.82. The scale consists of the “Dangerousness,” “Incurability and Poor social skills,” and “Shame” dimensions regarding negative beliefs and thoughts about individuals with mental illnesses (Bilge & Çam, 2008). A higher score on the scale as a whole or on its dimensions indicates higher levels of negative beliefs about mental illness (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .914$ ).

### 2.4.3 | Documentary/movie evaluation form

A total of eight questions were directed to the students to evaluate their views about the documentary/movie screening sessions. The students were first asked to score the documentary/movie they watched on a scale of 1 (I did not like it at all) to 10 (I liked it very much), and then, to write down their views by describing the impact of the documentary/movie on them. The students were given sufficient time to express their views on the screening sessions in detail.

### 2.4.4 | Data analysis

The data collected in this study were evaluated using the SPSS v.25.0 software. Frequency ( $n$ ), percentage (%), arithmetic mean, and SD were used as descriptive statistics. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the normality of the distribution of the data, and nonparametric tests were used for the non-normally distributed data. Mann-Whitney  $U$  and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to compare the differences in the students’ scores regarding distance education. The effects of the psychiatric nursing e-course on the students’ beliefs about mental illness were analyzed using paired-samples  $t$  test. Inductive qualitative content analysis was conducted for the written views of the students on the documentary/movie screening sessions. While analyzing the content, coding was performed in line with the literature, and categories were created (Karataş, 2015). The created categories were then reviewed again, their definitions were finalized (Baltacı, 2019), and these categories are presented with their frequencies. For the data, the statistical analysis results were interpreted within a margin of error of 5% and a 95% confidence interval, and the level of significance was expected as a  $p$  value of  $<.05$ .

**TABLE 1** Comparison of the students' pretest, posttest, and follow-up BMI scores ( $n = 147$ )

		Pretest $\bar{X} \pm SD$	Posttest $\bar{X} \pm SD$	Follow-up $\bar{X} \pm SD$	P1	P2
BMI and subscales	Dangerousness	21.41 $\pm$ 6.91	15.14 $\pm$ 6.33	14.73 $\pm$ 6.45	<.001**	0.601
	Incurability and poor social skills	25.34 $\pm$ 9.81	19.97 $\pm$ 9.61	19.64 $\pm$ 10.28	<.001**	0.771
	Shame	0.92 $\pm$ 1.62	0.58 $\pm$ 1.44	0.66 $\pm$ 1.47	0.003*	0.535
	Total	47.67 $\pm$ 15.89	35.70 $\pm$ 15.57	35.04 $\pm$ 16.39	<.001**	0.740

Note: P1, pretest–posttest comparison; P2, posttest–follow-up comparison.

\*\* $p < .001$ ; \* $p < .05$ .

### 3 | FINDINGS

Of the participating nursing students, 64.6% were women, 46.9% lived in the provincial center, 81% had a nuclear family structure, 64.6% had income equal to their expenses, the mothers of 72.8% had primary school education, the fathers of 34.7% had secondary school education, 40.1% attended the virtual classes using their cellphones, and 40.8% used mobile data. The mean age of the students participating in the study was  $21.88 \pm 1.551$  years.

The post-course BMI total score and the Dangerousness, Incurability and Poor Social Skills and Shame dimension scores of the students were determined to be significantly lower in comparison to their precourse scores ( $p < .05$ ). There was no significant difference between the students' follow-up and posttest scores on the scale ( $p > .05$ ) (Table 1).

As seen in Table 2, the differences between the pre-course and post-course total BMI scores of the students who concentrated during the virtual classes, those who evaluated the effect of being at home during the pandemic on their education life as positive and those who found the student–instructor interaction and virtual course materials sufficient were found to be statistically significant, where the post-course scores of these students were significantly higher ( $p < .05$ ). Ninety-five percent of the students evaluated the case examples provided during the psychiatric nursing e-course in the place of applied training as effective, and 93.2% evaluated documentary/movie analyses as effective.

The movie "A Beautiful Mind" was the most-liked movie among those that were screened ( $9.29 \pm 0.988$ ), and the students stated that the movie contributed to their "understanding of the disease, its symptoms and the difficulties it brings along" (Table 3).

### 4 | DISCUSSION

The stigmatization of mental illnesses and psychiatry is a widespread issue among healthcare workers, and it negatively affects the care provided for individuals with mental illnesses (Knaak et al., 2017; Yang & Parrott, 2018). This situation makes it necessary to address the concept of stigma while the individuals are still students and evaluate the effect of the education they are provided with. In this study conducted for this purpose, it was found that the psychiatric nursing e-course taught by distance education caused a significant

decrease in the total BMI scores of the participant students and their scores on all its dimensions, and this effect continued in the follow-up measurements ( $p < .05$ ). In a previous study, a face-to-face psychiatric nursing course was found to reduce students' negative attitudes toward schizophrenia and depression (Arbanas et al., 2017). In another study, it was reported that the psychiatric nursing course improved the knowledge, attitude and preparedness of student nurses to care for people with mental illnesses (Hastings et al., 2017). Öztürk et al. (2015) found no significant difference between the total BMI scores of students who took face-to-face psychiatric nursing courses and those who did not take them, and the students who participated in their study were found to have negative beliefs about mental illnesses. The effects of psychiatry training courses on pharmacy, nursing and social work students were investigated in another study, no significant difference was found between the stigmatization scores of the students, and it was reported that this was due to gaps in education (Sherwood, 2019). To the best of the knowledge of the researchers of this study, there is no study in the literature where a psychiatric nursing course was taught by distance education. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, online education has become compulsory, and research on distance learning has become quite important in this respect. Web-based training is reported to be a useful tool in increasing the self-efficacy of healthcare professionals, even in harsh working environments such as psychiatric hospitals (Laine et al., 2019). In this study, the psychiatric nursing e-course was found to reduce stigmatization. Unlike the face-to-face classroom environment, distance education has advantages such as excluding negative classroom stimuli, being able to re-watch the classes, participating in the class without speaking—in written form—and having easy access to course materials. Furthermore, some characteristics of distance education, such as students' ability to ask questions instantly and interact with their peers via chat rooms, forums and group studies, facilitate teaching. It may also be argued that receiving training through distance education, with high instructor–student interaction in the classes and the concretization of theoretical knowledge through case examples and documentary/movie analyses, provides awareness for stigmatization, creates change in perspective and contributes to the permanence of change.

In this study, it was found that the stigmatization scores of the students who concentrated during the virtual classes, those who positively evaluated the effects of being at home on their education life and those who found the student–instructor interaction and the

**TABLE 2** Comparison of the students' evaluations regarding distance education, according to the difference between posttest and pretest BMI scores ( $n = 147$ )

		<i>n</i> (%)	BMI posttest – pretest difference $\bar{X} \pm SD$	<i>p</i>
Were you able to concentrate during virtual classes?	Yes	48 (32.7)	15.10 ± 15.43	0.040*
	Partly	92 (62.6)	11.22 ± 16.73	
	No	7 (4.8)	0.14 ± 9.08	
Have you been able to study efficiently during the distance education process?	Yes	45 (30.6)	14.53 ± 16.54	0.137
	Partly	86 (58.5)	12.10 ± 15.46	
	No	16 (10.9)	4.00 ± 18.30	
How did being at home during the pandemic affect your success?	Positively	26 (17.7)	19.19 ± 13.63	0.009*
	Negatively	80 (54.4)	12.13 ± 16.57	
	No impact	41 (27.9)	7.04 ± 16.28	
How would you rate the instructor's performance in distance education?	Average	3 (2.0)	-0.33 ± 11.15	0.055
	Good	61 (41.5)	8.65 ± 16.53	
	Really good	83 (56.5)	14.84 ± 15.71	
Do you think the psychiatric nursing e-course is effective in terms of measurement and evaluation?	Yes	108 (73)	13.37 ± 16.45	0.151
	Partly	36 (24.5)	8.25 ± 15.69	
	No	3 (2.0)	5.66 ± 11.93	
How do you evaluate distance education in terms of student–student interaction?	Sufficient	79 (53.7)	14.53 ± 15.58	0.065
	Partly Sufficient	64 (43.5)	9.45 ± 16.88	
	Insufficient	4 (2.7)	1.50 ± 12.39	
How do you evaluate distance education in terms of student–instructor interaction?	Sufficient	43 (29.3)	16.34 ± 15.20	0.019*
	Partly Sufficient	64 (43.5)	12.34 ± 15.76	
	Insufficient	40 (27.2)	6.65 ± 17.08	
How do you evaluate the psychiatric nursing e-course in terms of achieving learning goals?	Sufficient	131 (89.1)	12.76 ± 16.19	0.051
	Partly Sufficient	16 (10.9)	6.12 ± 16.32	
Did you find the psychiatric nursing e-course materials sufficient?	Yes	127 (86.4)	12.98 ± 16.48	0.048*
	Partly	20 (13.6)	5.50 ± 13.55	
Did you find the case examples provided for applied learning effective?	Yes	141 (95.9)	12.06 ± 16.42	0.803
	Partly	6 (4.1)	9.66 ± 13.45	
Did you find the documentary/film analyses effective?	Yes	137 (93.2)	12.24 ± 16.39	0.421
	Partly	10 (6.8)	8.20 ± 14.95	

\* $p < .05$ .

virtual course materials sufficient decreased significantly after the e-course. Some difficulties experienced by students in the distance education process have been reported as self-regulation, technological competence, loneliness and technological complexity (Owston et al., 2020; Pozdnyakova & Pozdnyakov, 2017). A previous study revealed that the importance of the social presence of the educator increased in distance learning processes during the COVID-19 pandemic, and students experienced a loss in their social presence (Whittle et al., 2020). With distance education, the role of the educators in transferring knowledge has weakened, and their guiding,

intermediary and facilitating characteristics have become prominent. As for students, the need to acquire skills such as “being more autonomous, self-sufficient and developing a critical perspective” has increased (Bozkurt, 2020). It may be stated that, for students who view being at home as an advantage, the absence of time- and energy-consuming requirements for participating in face-to-face courses makes it easier to participate in virtual classes more effectively and be more enthusiastic and energetic. The decrease in the stigma levels of the students who thought the course materials and classroom interaction were sufficient in this study was statistically

**TABLE 3** Scores and opinions provided by the students on the documentaries/movies ( $n = 147$ )

Documentary/movie ( $\bar{X} \pm SD$ )	Categories (%)	Student statements
"Us, You, Them" and "Life of Schizophrenic Author YC" (8.84 ± 1.37)	Change in perspective (54.8%)	<b>*S24</b> "What I knew only theoretically was not enough to actually prevent me from being prejudiced. Seeing concrete examples and real lives affected me positively"
	Understanding the encountered difficulties (30.5%)	<b>S33</b> "I could not take the internship and evaluate a patient, but now I have a better understanding of the patients, the disease and the problems it brings"
	Normalization, concretization (18.2%)	<b>S41</b> "I realized that schizophrenia patients are not different from other individuals of society." <b>S65</b> "It was very useful since I had never met any schizophrenic person until today; I was able to visualize it in my mind"
	Empathic approach (16.9%)	<b>S65</b> "Finding out that what you see does not actually exist and the accompanying desperation after this realization... Learning about these helped me understand patients and empathize better"
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (8.05 ± 1.57)	Learning the right nursing approach (%64.2)	<b>S76</b> "I saw the rights and wrongs in the approach of nurses towards patients; I understood the possible consequences of the wrong approach"
	Seeing and concretizing a psychiatry clinic (49%)	<b>S108</b> "I saw the functioning of a psychiatry clinic while I was at home." <b>S38</b> "The information we learned in theoretical classes came to life and provided the opportunity to reinforce what I learned"
	Recognizing the responsibilities of a psychiatric nurse (27.9%)	<b>S86</b> "I saw the importance and roles of psychiatric nursing and how the care provided affects the lives of patients, and I was really touched"
	Grasping the importance of therapeutic environment and communication (14.4%)	<b>S78</b> "I saw how effective the therapeutic environment and communication are for treatment"
Patch Adams (9.28 ± 1.09)	The importance of the humanitarian and holistic approach (57.8%)	<b>S32</b> "When healthcare professionals are treating patients, they should care for their patients with a holistic and humanitarian approach, not as if they are repairing a damaged organ or a robot"
	Being patient-oriented (15.7%)	<b>S44</b> "The most permanent information for me was 'there is no disease, there is a patient'" <b>S130</b> "We can win or lose if we treat the disease, but if we treat the human, we always win"
	Being innovative and original (13.1%)	<b>S46</b> "I learned that communication established by going beyond stereotypes can be more effective"
	Altruism (12.2%)	<b>S19</b> "I learned that it is possible for people to do good even in the most difficult situations"
A Beautiful Mind (9.29 ± 0.98)	Understanding the disease, its symptoms and hardships it brings (70%)	<b>S16</b> "I fully understood delusions and hallucinations; It was nice to see them being managed," <b>S23</b> "I saw schizophrenia, its treatment and the difficulties of using drugs; I was very touched and felt sorry"
	The importance of family support and socializing (54.8%)	<b>S32</b> "I saw the positive impacts of family support, having a job, in short, being a part of society, in schizophrenia patients and its contribution to treatment"
	Normalization (34.3%)	<b>S79</b> "I saw that schizophrenia patients were not as dangerous as thought, and they could be productive people for society with the right treatment and an unbiased approach"
	Seeing its manageability (16.1%)	<b>S136</b> "There is always hope." <b>S2</b> "It was great to see that life goes on with schizophrenia"

\*S = student.

significant. One may argue that uploading the course materials into the instruction management system before the virtual classes start, shorter virtual class times and the conduct of online classes with a model that emphasizes interaction contributed to this result. It may be stated that educators conducting surveys and interactive discussions that increase student interaction in virtual classes, providing support for students in case of technological difficulties, giving teamwork assignments for loneliness problems and starting forum discussions increase the effectiveness of the course by alleviating the difficulties of distance education and contribute to the reduction in stigmatization.

In this study, case examples and documentary/movie analyses were used during the practice hours conducted virtually in line with the constraints of the pandemic. In the literature, movie screening in psychiatric nursing education has been reported to be a powerful educational tool that increases learning potential and experience (Blasco et al., 2015; Röhm et al., 2017). With this tool in this study, it was aimed to concretize the theoretical knowledge and reduce the stigmatization levels of the students. Consequently, the students evaluated the case examples and documentary/movie analyses as an effective method. In the analysis of the student views, the most common opinions were about “change in perspective towards stigmatization” for the documentaries, “learning the right nursing approach” for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, “the importance of a humanistic and holistic approach” for *Patch Adams* and “understanding the disease, its symptoms and the difficulties it brings” for *A Beautiful Mind*. The students also defined categories such as embodying-reinforcing concepts, understanding the roles of the psychiatric nurse, understanding the importance of the therapeutic environment and communication, being patient-oriented, innovative and empathetic, understanding the importance of social support, normalizing the disease, and seeing that it is possible to cope. In a previous study, nursing students watched the movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and when their views on the film were asked, they reported that the film made it easier for them to understand psychiatric nursing issues, increased their awareness, and this was reflected on their patient care practices (Ayhan et al., 2018). In another study, the researchers determined that movies that students watch within the scope of a psychiatric nursing e-course contribute to the themes of learning, awareness, development, change and motivation and facilitate learning on cognitive, affective and behavioral levels (Terzioğlu et al., 2017).

#### 4.1 | Implications for nursing practice

The psychiatric nursing e-course taught within the scope of this study using the distance learning method was determined to be effective in changing the participants' negative beliefs about mental illnesses, and its effects were found to be ongoing on a similar level after 2 months. It may also be stated that student nurses benefit from distance education with a planned and effective use of online teaching methods. Conducting evaluation studies for distance education will guide other studies on the topic.

#### 4.2 | Limitation of the study

The limitations of the study were that it was conducted in a single center and that it was conducted without a control group since the psychiatric nursing e-course is a mandatory course.

#### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflict of interests.

#### ETHICS STATEMENT

The study was carried out in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki, and the written and verbal consent of the students who voluntarily agreed to participate was obtained before the study. Institutional permission was obtained from the Department of Nursing at the Faculty of Health Sciences at Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, and ethical approval was obtained from the Noninvasive Studies Ethics Committee (Decision No.: 2020-14/110; Date: 06.10.2020).

#### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Author elects to not share data.

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