



An Examination of The Students Enrolled in The Faculties of Economics, Business Administration and Open Education of Anadolu University from A Gender Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine from a gender perspective the undergraduates enrolled in the Faculties of Economics, Business Administration and Open Education of Anadolu University which provides education through the method of distance education. A questionnaire with 28 questions was prepared for this purpose. The questionnaire was sent through email to all of the active students enrolled in these faculties. The study firstly provides information on the distance education system of Anadolu University and its faculties that provide education through this method, on the number of students in the faculties, and on the percentages of female and male students preferring various departments. Then, it discusses the importance of distance education for women in terms of the concept of gender, woman – man roles and gender equality. In the section of findings, 2018 questionnaires received from the students were analyzed through the SPSS software and evaluated. The assessment considered the students' demographic characteristics; their level of participation in the programs; their reason for preferring distance education; the time they allocate for the courses; their use of computer and the Internet; whether they, especially the women, would prefer distance education if their gender was different, and the materials they most commonly use in the distance education system. In the conclusion, the data were assessed comparatively from a gender perspective.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the historical development processes of education, the developments emerging in the information and communication technologies have deeply affected the educational systems and paved the way for innovations. The basic reason for this is the fact that the communication between the learner and the teacher is one of the essentials of successful education [1]. Reasons such as developments in communication technologies and inability to receive formal education due to population growth, migration, being employed, terrorism etc. have led to the emergence and implementation of new and alternative ways of education such as 'mass education', 'public education', 'open education', 'correspondence education', 'distance education', etc. Today, educational activities are organized in two ways, which are named as 'formal education' and 'distance education' [3].

The humanity has been led to discover different education models due to such reasons as increasing number of students in educational institutions and inadequate number of educators, individuals' desire to receive education under the conditions that are suitable for their own situations and at different times and different locations throughout the lifelong learning process, and institutions' demands to provide faster and more economical in-service trainings for their staff. The concepts of distance education, distance learning, online education, learning through Web, e-education and e-learning have emerged as a result of such discoveries [4, 13].

Distance education systems, which have many advantages for learners and educators, have gone through various stages depending on communication and information technologies. As a result of the use of printing press, radio, television, the Internet, tele-conference, video, and other technologies in distance education, six generations of distance education models have been developed so far. Over time, the distance education models have started to be addressed within the framework of six generations, which are the Correspondence Model, the Multi-media Model, the Tele-learning Model, the Flexible Learning Model, the Intelligent Flexible Learning Model and E-Learning [5].

The most important reason why distance education had not been used in Turkey until 1955 was the idea that education was not possible without teachers and the idea that literacy education could not be provided through distance education. The Institute of Banking and Commercial Law of the Faculty of Law of Ankara University took the first concrete and important step in implementing distance education in Turkey by training bank staff members through correspondence in 1956. In 1961, Center of Correspondence Education was established by the Ministry of National Education, and it provided preparatory courses through correspondence for those who wished to complete their education by distance learning. The year 1981 was a turning point for distance education in Turkey. This new process, which started with Anadolu University's more planned and more scientific system that met the social needs, has become an educational model being implemented professionally by many universities today [4, 15].

Open education system started to be implemented in 1982 in order to prevent the congestion in the higher education system and to enable more students to receive higher education by suppressing the demand for universities, and this system has been developing, spreading and continuing to serve for its original purpose to a great extent [2]. In 2012-2013 academic year, 65 state universities and 24 private universities in Turkey provided open and distant education programs at the level of doctorate, master's degree, bachelor's degree and bachelor's completion, certification, in-service trainings, seminars and courses [2]. The need of the modern societies for innovation and the situations of leaving the education system in any way or never being included in this system have steered individuals towards trying distance education. Globalization has increased the number of alternatives in education just as it has done so in economics and politics. Distance education had emerged as one of the diversified alternatives, probably as the most attractive alternative [18]. While 40,617 out of 322,320 students were enrolled in open education programs and 284,703 were enrolled in face-to-face education programs in 1984, number of the students enrolled in open education programs seem to be increasing today [6].

Distance education can be defined as a teaching method which is managed from certain centers, which aims at individuals' self-learning, and in which educational contents are delivered through tools specially prepared for learners and through various media [1]. Distance education (e-learning) is a planned way of teaching in which learners and teachers are engaged in courses in different ways synchronously or asynchronously by using current communication technologies, independently from time and space and without any need to be physically present at a certain place. Those who cannot benefit from the educational opportunities in their area of residence for any reason are enabled by distance education to get the education they desire. Distance education has been provided for more than a century through correspondence education, open education, teleconference applications, and more recently through the Internet technologies. Specially designed textbooks, television, radio and computer applications are used in distance education practices. Distance education is neither a second class education that people apply for additionally to formal education nor a way of teaching that poorer countries resort to. It is a rational, modern and innovative system of education under today's conditions in which education and training are having a rapid transformation towards electronic environment. Considering the restrictions of classroom activities and communication, distance education is one step ahead of the ordinary formal (traditional) learning-teaching. It is a teaching method where communication and interaction is established through teaching units and various environments by educators, students and the center which serves as a bridge connecting these two sides [9, 10, 11].

Distance education is student-oriented; education provided by technology provides equal opportunities. Such kind of educational system provides educational opportunities for physically disabled students, paves the way for lifelong learning, and provides service for a very high number of students. It enables access to the learning environment and the content for 7 days and 24 hours; it is inevitable for people that cannot benefit from traditional education. It enables employed people to allocate time for their families and continue their learning in the same time; for those who take a break in their education due to marriage, childbirth or other reasons, it gives a chance to continue their education without any interruption. It enables all students to learn at their own pace, it enables quick and easy access to information, and it eliminates additional expenses required by face-to-face education such as transportation, accommodation, housing, food, etc. [3, 4, 9, 12].

Today, universities are expected to provide service not only for their own students but also for wider communities, because just like the changing information, people trying to reach information have become different than formal education students. Now, students from any age and with any qualifications desire to reach experts at different locations and the different course subjects. The most applicable way to do this is to develop a system of education that is based on computer networks. Having noticed this reality, universities have started

to provide services through distance education programs, too. However, although distance education has been continuously developing, it has been criticized by various authors and educators. The positive and negative results of distance education on individuals have been mentioned, and the issue has been examined in social terms [18].

The total number of students enrolled in open and distance education programs of state universities was 1,536,493, and 628,034 of them (40.87%) were women in the 2000-2001 academic year in Turkey; in the 2014-2015 academic year, 1,323,948 (46.38%) of the 2,854,702 students were women [7]. This situation shows that in addition to the increase in the number of open and distance education practices of universities, there has been also an increase in the number of students included in these practices, and that all the individuals can benefit from open and distance education regardless of their gender. It is observed that Distance Education practices have been developing in the entire world depending on the level of development of the societies. This shows that distance education is not only a transfer of technology, but it is a system with social, cultural and political aspects, too. Apart from producing the technology, the important thing is to improve and use this technology according to the needs. There is a need for quantitative, qualitative and experimental studies related to distance education in Turkey, too [16]. Therefore, the study aimed to determine the views of students continuing university education about open and distance education. Within the framework of this general aim, the study attempted to find answers for the following problems.

- What are the views of the students from different genders about educational programs?
- Do the reasons of the students for choosing their current program vary by gender?
- Do the opinions of students about the contribution of their current program to getting a vocation vary by gender?
- Does the time allocated by the students for their courses vary by gender?
- Does the time allocated by the students for using computers for distance education vary by gender?
- Does the students' status of benefiting from the Internet opportunities for educational purposes vary by gender?

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Model:

Descriptive survey model, which aims to describe a situation as it is, was used in the study.

Participants of the Study:

The population of the study is made up of undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculties of Economics and Business Administration and the Faculty of Open Education of Anadolu University. The participant group of the study includes 2018 students from this population who were contacted through the Internet and voluntarily took part in the study. 553 of the participants are women and 1465 are men; 903 are married and 1115 are single; all the participants except 111 students (including 80 housewives and 31 retired participants) are employed; except 541 participants, all the other participants have a certain monthly income which is not less than the minimum wage. 501 of the students are enrolled in the Faculty of Economics, 676 in the Faculty of Business Administration, 436 in the bachelor's degree program of the Faculty of Open Education, and 405 in the associate degree program of the Faculty of Open Education.

Data Collection and Analysis:

The questionnaire form, which was developed by the researchers in line with the aims of the study, was used in the collection of the data. The questionnaire form included multiple-choice and open-end questions asking for participants' personal information and their opinions about open and distance education. The questionnaire forms were sent via e-mail to the students making up the population of the study, and they were collected back through the Internet again. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.939. The data acquired from this research, which was carried out through simple random sampling method, was analyzed in electronic environment through the SPSS 20 software. Frequencies and percentage distributions were provided in the data analysis. In the examination of the difference among variables, the statistical techniques of t-Test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used. In the cases that a difference was found to be significant, Scheffe Test, one of the Post-Hoc multi comparison tests, was used in order to determine the source of the difference.

Findings:

This section examines the differences of the participants' answers for the questions about open and distance education in terms of gender, department and program preferences. Besides, it provides demographic and descriptive statistical information about the participants. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participating students' statements (opinions) about the educational program by gender.

Table 1: Distribution of the Statements about the Educational Program by Gender.

Reason for Choosing the Program	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
To get a diploma	218	39,4	646	44,1	864	42,8
To get promoted at job	95	17,3	455	31,1	550	27,2
To get a vocation	163	29,4	153	10,4	316	15,6
To have world knowledge	14	2,5	75	5,2	89	4,4
To prove oneself	13	2,4	49	3,3	62	3,2
Lack of compulsory attendance in school	11	2,0	36	2,5	47	2,4
Financial difficulties	21	3,8	23	1,5	44	2,1
Other	18	3,2	28	1,9	46	2,3
Total	553	100,00	1465	100,00	2018	100,00
Contribution of the Participants' Programs to Acquiring a Vocation						
It has a contribution	492	88,9	1093	74,6	1585	78,5
It has no contribution	61	11,1	372	25,4	433	21,5
Time Allocated for the Courses						
Less than one hour per day	49	8,8	181	12,3	230	11,4
1-2 hours per day	124	22,4	308	21,2	432	21,4
3-4 hours per day	80	14,4	153	10,5	233	11,5
Only weekends	19	3,5	84	5,8	103	5,2
At free times	152	27,5	365	24,9	517	25,6
Only before the exams	129	23,4	374	25,3	503	24,9
Time Spent by Using a Computer for Educational Purposes						
No use	261	47,2	650	44,3	911	45,1
Less than one hour per day	150	27,1	456	31,1	606	30,0
1-2 hours per day	110	19,9	285	19,5	395	19,6
3-4 hours per day	20	3,6	44	3,0	64	3,2
More than 4 hours per day	12	2,2	30	2,1	42	2,1
Time Spent by Connecting to the Internet for Educational Purposes						
No connection	263	47,6	630	43,1	893	44,3
Less than one hour per day	155	28,1	483	32,9	638	31,6
1-2 hours per day	107	19,3	273	18,6	380	18,8
3-4 hours per day	19	3,4	45	3,1	64	3,2
More than 4 hours per day	9	1,6	34	2,3	43	2,1
The Material Most Frequently Used for Educational Purposes						
Textbooks	336	60,7	807	55,0	1143	56,5
Internet	145	26,3	458	31,2	603	29,9
Face-to-face education	17	3,1	23	1,6	40	2,0
Television programs	6	1,1	30	2,1	36	1,8
All	49	8,8	147	10,1	196	9,8
The Most Frequently Used Internet Tools						
e-exam	240	43,4	651	44,4	891	44,1
e-book	89	16,1	288	19,6	377	18,7
e-course notes	113	20,4	240	16,4	353	17,5
e-television	53	9,5	153	10,4	206	10,2
e-audiobook	27	4,9	92	6,3	119	5,9
e-consultancy	25	4,6	30	2,1	55	2,7
e-homework	6	1,1	11	0,8	17	0,9

Demographic and Descriptive Statistics:

Demographic and descriptive statistics of the study are provided in the below tables.

Table 2: Demographic and descriptive statistics regarding the participants.

Variables	Frequency	%
Your department	Faculty of economics	501
	Faculty of business administration	676
	Faculty of open education – bachelor's degree program	436
	Faculty of open education – associate degree program	405
Your gender	Female	553
	Male	1465
Your age	18-24	595
	25-34	862
	35-49	508
	50-64	50
	65+	3
Education	Regular high school	465
	Anatolian high school	77
	Vocational high school	332
	Imam hatip (religious) high school	39
	Science high school	6

	Open education high school	114	,06
	2-year associate degree	655	,32
	4-year faculty	243	,12
	Other	87	,04
Income level of your family	Minimum wage	448	,22
	1000-2000	783	,39
	2001-3000	401	,20
	3001-4000	197	,10
	4001+	189	,09
Education of your spouse, if you are married	Regular high school	42	,02
	Anatolian high school	10	,00
	Vocational high school	111	,06
	Imam hatip (religious) high school	80	,04
	Science high school	333	,17
	Open education high school	564	,28
	2-year associate degree	877	,43
Occupation of your mother	Police	2	,00
	Public servant	32	,02
	Teacher-educator	50	,02
	Freelancer	26	,01
	Worker	45	,02
	Housewife	1622	,80
	Member of the military	2	,00
	Academician	177	,09
	Retired	4	,00
	Tradesman	9	,00
	Health worker	6	,00
	Other	43	,02
Occupation of your father	Police	20	,01
	Public servant	148	,07
	Teacher-educator	59	,03
	Freelancer	201	,10
	Worker	277	,14
	Housewife	4	,00
	Member of the military	15	,01
	Academician	6	,00
	Retired	852	,42
	Other	436	,22
Marital status	Married	903	,45
	Single	1115	,55
Geographical region	Black Sea	152	,08
	Central Anatolia	403	,20
	Aegean Sea	254	,13
	Mediterranean Sea	194	,10
	Marmara	844	,42
	Eastern Anatolia	79	,04
	Southeastern Anatolia	92	,05
Area of residence	Metropolis	1226	,62
	City	591	,30
	Town	107	,05
	Village	43	,02
Occupation	Police	25	,01
	Public servant	220	,11
	Teacher-educator	59	,03
	Freelancer	112	,06
	Worker	259	,13
	Housewife	80	,04
	Member of the military	39	,02
	Academician	5	,00
	Retired	31	,02
	Tradesman	35	,02
	Health worker	78	,04
	Religious officer	5	,00
	Engineer	55	,03
	Technical employee	198	,10
	Banker	40	,02
	Other	449	,22
	Student	328	,16
Income	No income	541	,27
	Minimum wage	349	,17
	1000-2000	681	,34

	2001-3000	306	,15
	3001-4000	87	,04
	4001+	54	,03
Reason for choosing the program	To get a diploma	357	,18
	To be promoted at job	280	,14
	To acquire a vocation	316	,16
	To have world knowledge	89	,04
	To prove oneself	62	,03
	Coincidence	7	,00
	Financial difficulties	44	,02
	Marriage and family issues	6	,00
	Bachelor's completion	296	,15
	Second university	211	,11
	I think it will contribute to my vocation	270	,14
	There is no compulsory attendance	47	,02
Do you think that your current program has a contribution to acquiring a vocation?	Yes	1585	,79
	No	433	,21
If your gender was different, would you still prefer distance education?	Yes	1750	,87
	No	268	,13
Would you like your children to receive distance education in future?	Yes	1123	,56
	No	895	,44
How much time do you allocate for your courses?	Less than one hour per day	230	,11
	1-2 hours per day	432	,21
	3-4 hours per day	233	,12
	Only weekends	103	,05
	At free time	517	,26
	Only before exams	503	,25
Do you have a computer at home?	Yes	1865	,92
	No	153	,08
How much time do you spend using a computer for distance education?	I do not use	911	,45
	Less than one hour per day	606	,30
	1-2 hours per day	395	,20
	3-4 hours per day	64	,03
	More than 4 hours per day	42	,02
Do you have access to the Internet?	Yes	1848	,92
	No	170	,08
How much time do you spend on the Internet for the purposes of distance education?	I do not use the Internet	893	,44
	Less than one hour per day	638	,32
	1-2 hours per day	380	,19
	3-4 hours per day	64	,03
	More than 4 hours per day	43	,02
Which materials do you use the most in your current distance education program?	Book	1143	,57
	Television programs	36	,02
	The Internet	603	,30
	Face-to-face education	40	,02
	All	196	,10
Which Internet tools do you use the most in your current education program?	e-exam	891	,44
	e-book	377	,19
	e-television	206	,10
	e-consultancy	55	,03
	e-audiobook	119	,06
	e-homework	17	,01
	e-course note	353	,17

Table 2 shows that 73% of the participants are male while 27% is female, and the majority (43%) of the participants is aged between 25 and 34. For education levels, 32% hold an associate degree and 23% are regular high school graduates. Regarding the income level of their families, 39% is between 1000 and 2000 TRY and 22% is at the level of minimum wage. An examination of the occupations of the participants' parents shows that mothers of 80% of the participants are housewives and the fathers of 42% of the participants are retired. 55% of the participants are single and 45% are married. Majority of the participants live in Marmara (42%) and Central Anatolia (20%) regions. As for the occupations of the participants, the most common occupations are public servant (11%), worker (13%), technical employee (10%), student (16%) and other occupations (22%). 92% of the participants have a computer at their homes. Regarding the time spent by using a computer for the purposes of distance education; 45% of the participants do not use, 30% use less than 1 hour, and 20% use 1-2 hours per day. 92% percent of the participants have access to the Internet. As for the time spent on the Internet for the purposes of distance education; 44% does not use the Internet, 32% spend less than 1 hour, and 19% spend 1-2 hours.

Table 3: T-test regarding the participants' opinions by the variable of gender.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Do you think that your current program has a contribution to acquiring a vocation?	Equal variances assumed	269,389	,000	-7,093	2016	,000	-,14362	,02025	-,18333	-,10391
	Equal variances not assumed			-8,194	1373,602	,000	-,14362	,01753	-,17800	-,10924
If your gender was different, would you still prefer distance education?	Equal variances assumed	281,705	,000	8,770	2016	,000	,14587	,01663	,11325	,17848
	Equal variances not assumed			7,417	753,092	,000	,14587	,01967	,10726	,18447
Would you like your children to receive distance education in future?	Equal variances assumed	11,166	,001	5,744	2016	,000	,14133	,02461	,09308	,18959
	Equal variances not assumed			5,706	981,064	,000	,14133	,02477	,09272	,18994
How much time do you allocate for your courses?	Equal variances assumed	3,097	,079	,204	2016	,839	,01830	,08979	-,15780	,19439
	Equal variances not assumed			,208	1033,599	,835	,01830	,08806	-,15451	,19110
Do you have a computer at home?	Equal variances assumed	,607	,436	,391	2016	,696	,00516	,01322	-,02076	,03108
	Equal variances not assumed			,385	966,991	,700	,00516	,01341	-,02114	,03147
How much time do you spend using a computer for distance education?	Equal variances assumed	2,145	,143	-,164	2016	,869	-,00798	,04853	-,10315	,08719
	Equal variances not assumed			-,162	963,899	,871	-,00798	,04930	-,10473	,08877
Do you have access to the Internet?	Equal variances assumed	1,677	,196	-,644	2016	,520	-,00893	,01387	-,03613	,01826
	Equal variances not assumed			-,658	1039,331	,510	-,00893	,01356	-,03555	,01768
How much time do you spend on the Internet for the purposes of distance education?	Equal variances assumed	1,178	,278	-1,077	2016	,282	-,05193	,04823	-,14651	,04265
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,079	998,042	,281	-,05193	,04813	-,14637	,04252
Which materials do you use the most in your current distance education program?	Equal variances assumed	,290	,591	-1,670	2016	,095	-,11228	,06722	-,24411	,01954
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,676	1001,043	,094	-,11228	,06698	-,24371	,01915
Which Internet tools do you use the most in your current	Equal variances assumed	8,700	,003	2,009	2016	,045	,22527	,11211	,00541	,44513

education program?	Equal variances not assumed			1,954	941,952	,051	,22527	,11530	-,00100	,45154
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H0: Items do not vary by gender.

Analyses were made to determine whether gender caused any difference in the items (Table 3). Accordingly, the items with a Sig. value smaller than 0.05 vary by gender while the other items do not vary by gender.

- Contribution of the current program to acquiring a vocation varies by gender. Average of the men is higher than the average of the women.
- The likelihood to prefer distance education in the case of a different gender varies by gender. Women have a higher average than men.
- Wishing one's children to receive distance education in future varies by gender. Women have a higher average than men.

Table 4: ANOVA test by the variable of department.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Do you think that your current program has a contribution to acquiring a vocation?	Between Groups	1,829	3	,610	3,630	,012
	Within Groups	338,263	2014	,168		
	Total	340,092	2017			
If your gender was different, would you still prefer distance education?	Between Groups	1,267	3	,422	3,680	,012
	Within Groups	231,141	2014	,115		
	Total	232,408	2017			
Would you like your children to receive distance education in future?	Between Groups	2,326	3	,775	3,150	,024
	Within Groups	495,734	2014	,246		
	Total	498,060	2017			
How much time do you allocate for your courses?	Between Groups	30,795	3	10,265	3,183	,023
	Within Groups	6494,668	2014	3,225		
	Total	6525,463	2017			
Do you have a computer at home?	Between Groups	,803	3	,268	3,833	,009
	Within Groups	140,597	2014	,070		
	Total	141,400	2017			
How much time do you spend using a computer for distance education?	Between Groups	2,142	3	,714	,755	,519
	Within Groups	1903,842	2014	,945		
	Total	1905,984	2017			
Do you have access to the Internet?	Between Groups	,667	3	,222	2,888	,034
	Within Groups	155,012	2014	,077		
	Total	155,679	2017			
How much time do you spend on the Internet for the purposes of distance education?	Between Groups	2,881	3	,960	1,028	,379
	Within Groups	1880,644	2014	,934		
	Total	1883,524	2017			
Which materials do you use the most in your current distance education program?	Between Groups	14,355	3	4,785	2,642	,048
	Within Groups	3647,526	2014	1,811		
	Total	3661,881	2017			
Which Internet tools do you use the most in your current education program?	Between Groups	12,899	3	4,300	,851	,466
	Within Groups	10179,620	2014	5,054		
	Total	10192,520	2017			

H0: Items do not vary by department.

Analyses were made to determine whether department caused any difference in the items. Accordingly, items with a Sig. value smaller than 0.05 vary by department while the others do not.

- Contribution of the current program to acquiring a vocation varies by department. The associate degree department of the faculty of open education has the highest average.
- The likelihood to prefer distance education in the case of a different gender varies by department. The department of business administration has the highest average.
- Wishing one's children to receive distance education in future varies by department. Department of business administration has the highest average.
- Time allocated for the courses varies by department. Department of business administration has the highest average.
- Having a computer at home varies by department. Faculty of economics has the highest average.
- Having access to the Internet varies by department. Associate degree department of the faculty of open education has the highest average.

- The most commonly used materials used in the current program vary by department. Department of business administration has the highest average.

Table 5: ANOVA test by the reason for choosing the program.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Do you think that your current program has a contribution to acquiring a vocation?	Between Groups	25,916	12	2,160	13,782	,000
	Within Groups	314,176	2005	,157		
	Total	340,092	2017			
If your gender was different, would you still prefer distance education?	Between Groups	11,803	12	,984	8,940	,000
	Within Groups	220,605	2005	,110		
	Total	232,408	2017			
Would you like your children to receive distance education in future?	Between Groups	16,659	12	1,388	5,782	,000
	Within Groups	481,401	2005	,240		
	Total	498,060	2017			
How much time do you allocate for your courses?	Between Groups	153,909	12	12,826	4,036	,000
	Within Groups	6371,554	2005	3,178		
	Total	6525,463	2017			
Do you have a computer at home?	Between Groups	1,971	12	,164	2,362	,005
	Within Groups	139,428	2005	,070		
	Total	141,400	2017			
How much time do you spend using a computer for distance education?	Between Groups	31,589	12	2,632	2,816	,001
	Within Groups	1874,395	2005	,935		
	Total	1905,984	2017			
Do you have access to the Internet?	Between Groups	2,073	12	,173	2,255	,008
	Within Groups	153,605	2005	,077		
	Total	155,679	2017			
How much time do you spend on the Internet for the purposes of distance education?	Between Groups	31,427	12	2,619	2,835	,001
	Within Groups	1852,097	2005	,924		
	Total	1883,524	2017			
Which materials do you use the most in your current distance education program?	Between Groups	46,256	12	3,855	2,138	,012
	Within Groups	3615,625	2005	1,803		
	Total	3661,881	2017			
Which Internet tools do you use the most in your current education program?	Between Groups	60,248	12	5,021	,994	,452
	Within Groups	10132,272	2005	5,054		
	Total	10192,520	2017			

H0: Items do not vary by the reason for choosing the program.

Analyses were made to determine whether the reason for choosing the program causes any difference in the items. Accordingly, the items with a Sig. value smaller than 0.05 vary by the reason for choosing the program while the others do not.

- Contribution of the current program to acquiring a vocation varies by the reason for choosing the program. Coincidence has the highest average.
- The likelihood to prefer distance education in the case of a different gender varies by the reason for choosing the program. Marriage and family issues have the highest average.
- Wishing one's children to receive distance education in future varies by the reason for choosing the program. Coincidence has the highest average.
- Time allocated for the courses varies by the reason for choosing the program. Second university has the highest average.
- Having a computer at home varies by the reason for choosing the program. Financial difficulty has the highest average.
- Time spent by using computer for distance education varies by the reason for choosing the program. Marriage and family issues have the highest average.
- Having access to the Internet varies by the reason for choosing the program. To prove oneself has the highest average.
- Time spent on the Internet for distance education varies by the reason for choosing the program. Marriage and family issues have the highest average.
- The most commonly used materials used in the current program vary by the reason for choosing the program. Coincidence has the highest average.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The individuals, who are self-disciplined, who can motivate themselves, who can make themselves willing to learn, who can easily use the Internet, who have a computer connected to the Internet at their home or office, who do not have time to be present in the classroom environment in formal education and who cannot find an

institution that provides the education they desire in their area of residence, are the people who can prefer distance education [9]. The study found that majority of the participants (92%) have a computer at home and the majority (92%) have access to the Internet.

The most important reason for choosing distance education through the Internet is the fact that it provides an opportunity to receive education out of working hours for the employed people who cannot allocate time for education due to their busy working life [8]. 16% of the participants in our study are students while the rest have different occupations.

The associate, bachelor's and master's diplomas which can be acquired through distance education create new opportunities for the graduates in their careers, and they improve their current position through increases in wage or promotion [8]. 79% of the participants think that the distance education program they are included in provides opportunities for them to have a vocation.

Unlike the formal education, the lack of accommodation, transportation, food and similar costs makes distance education a more economical option [8]. The income level of many participants' families is minimum wage or 1000-2000 TRY. This factor can be regarded as one of the reasons for choosing distance education.

Education which is accessible wherever there is an Internet connection provides flexibility for students in terms of time and space. The possibility to repeat the courses seems to be another advantage which supports students' learning process and does not exist in formal education. The student can reach any course material any time he/she wants. In brief, distance education contributes to the individuals' lifelong learning process by providing the opportunity of education for the employed people with restricted time and financial capacity for education [8]. The study showed that majority of the participants had computers and access to the Internet.

As for the reasons for choosing the program, the majority (42.8%) chose their current program "to get a diploma", 27.2% "to be promoted at their job", and 15.6% "to acquire a vocation". This order of reasons is the same for the male participants while the reasons for female participants are ordered as "to have a diploma", "to acquire a vocation", and "to be promoted at their job", respectively.

Distance education does not only provide comprehensive information for the individuals. It also provides the chance to gain new talents and skills. Distance education can be effective in improving skills especially in vocational education. Students have the chance to get courses from academicians with knowledge on the latest developments especially in higher education on vocational fields. Once the international vocational competences and standards are created, any student from any part of the world may have an international certificate through an examination he/she may take after the distance education he/she may receive in a vocational technical field. Students who get a certificate in this way can easily find a job in the countries they want. On the other hand, individuals who get international distance education especially in the field of social sciences will act in accordance with the international knowledge they will have acquired, when it is time to practice what they have learned. And this will create problems for them in finding solutions that are appropriate for the national problems, national culture and vocational needs [18].

According to the study, 78.5% of the participants had the opinion that the program they are enrolled in has a contribution to acquiring a vocation.

It was found that the most commonly used education materials were textbooks (56.5%) and the Internet (29.9%), respectively.

It has been observed that 75% of those who started to receive education through the Internet in the USA left the system before completing their education. This shows that distance education through the Internet is accompanied by many problems. Establishing a balance between the Internet technology and the human psychology is one of the important problems. Considering that the Internet is a simple technology, it will provide basic education for the person that uses it. However, it will not provide the learner-teacher interaction which requires processing the knowledge as in classroom environment [18, 14].

In addition to the increase in numbers, there is also a need for approaches of planning and educational policy which will contribute to the development of open and distance education in terms of quality. Although the Higher Education Council set the procedures and principles regarding distance education in 2013, it will be beneficial to ensure the consistency of the practices by ensuring standardization among the institutions that have already started open and distance education, to make various arrangements to eliminate any possible deficiencies, and to create a quality assurance system [2].

The fact that the male and female students receiving open education in Turkey and in the world in general are mostly working and urban people shows that the function of distance education systems in providing an opportunity of education for those masses that have not had the chance to receive higher education due to regional inequalities, traditional restrictions or economic difficulties and especially for women who are the victims of gender bias is clouded by another function today, even though it is not completely lost. In other words, in terms of female students, the function of the distance education system has entered into a process of change and transformation towards a system for women who are married, have children and carry out their responsibilities at home on the one hand, and who work, get a wage and have an urban life [17]. 27% of the participants are women.

In their study examining the social structure of the open education system from a gender perspective, Suğur and Gönç-Şavran [17] found that open education in Turkey is mostly preferred by adult men and women, who have a family, who are mostly employed in certain occupations such as public servants and workers and who live in urban areas, for the purposes related to their current occupations such as getting a promotion or completing their education as well as satisfaction of various personal goals.

In this study, the opinions of the students about open and distance education vary by gender.

Current century, which is called as information age, has provided significant opportunities with regard to education. Distance education, one of the most important of these opportunities, has emerged as an alternative learning process meeting the requirements of being a society of information age and network. This process, which has gained a different dimension with the concept of lifelong learning, becomes unrivaled thanks to its opportunities of “individualism”, “flexibility”, “interaction” and “independence”. Distance education, which takes place synchronously and asynchronously, is made up of the components of learning management system, e-content, cyber classroom, and assessment and evaluation. Although each of these components has their specific characteristics, there is a helical structure among them. The success of distance education depends on a good construction of this helical structure. The process of education will not take place completely when the content is ignored, even if the structure has a very strong system and network infrastructure. In addition, reaching the learning objectives idealized in distance education depends on complete fulfillment of the roles determined in distance education. While the definition, characteristics and components of distance education continue to be discussed today, it is very difficult to estimate the situation that the distance education will be put in by the developing technologies one decade later [4].

Other results acquired from the participants are provided below:

- Contribution of the current program to acquiring a vocation varies by gender. Men have a higher average than women. The likelihood to prefer distance education in the case of a different gender varies by gender. Women have a higher average than men. Wishing one's children to receive distance education in future varies by gender. Women have a higher average than men.
- Contribution of the current program to acquiring a vocation varies by department. Bachelor's department of the faculty of open education has the highest average. The likelihood to prefer distance education in the case of a different gender varies by department. The department of business administration has the highest average. Wishing one's children to receive distance education in future varies by department. The department of business administration has the highest average. Time allocated for the courses varies by department. Department of business administration has the highest average. Having a computer at home varies by department. Department of economics has the highest average. Having access to the Internet varies by department. Associate department of the faculty of open education has the highest average. The most commonly used materials used in the current program vary by department. Department of business administration has the highest average.
- Contribution of the current program to acquiring a vocation varies by the reason for choosing the program. The reason with the highest average is coincidence. The likelihood to prefer distance education in the case of a different gender varies by the reason for choosing the program. Marriage and family issues have the highest average. Wishing one's children to receive distance education in future varies by the reason for choosing the program. Coincidence had the highest average. Time allocated for the courses varies by the reason for choosing the program. Second university has the highest average. Having a computer at home varies by the reason for choosing the program. Financial difficulties have the highest average. Time spent by using computer for distance education program varies by the reason for choosing the program. Marriage and family issues have the highest average. Having access to the Internet varies by the reason for choosing the program. To prove oneself has the highest average. Time spent on the Internet for distance education program varies by the reason for choosing the program. Marriage and family issues have the highest average. The most commonly used materials in the current program vary by the reason for choosing the program. Coincidence has the highest average.

It is considered important to spread distance education even to the furthest parts of the country through information technologies and to carry out works to enable almost every individual to benefit from this system. In this way, it will be possible to contribute to the bringing up of qualified individuals in the society.

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