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Situations of distance education institutions in Turkey

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Abstract

When present conditions are taken into consideration, the numbers of distance learning institutions are gradually increasing as well as formal education institutions. The numbers of programs which have been used in these institutions have been increasing in both graduate and postgraduate levels of education with a meaningful variety. Especially, universities have been following these programs through the medium of distance learning centers which they have set up within their institution. Furthermore, colleges of further education, educational institutes and some special centers have been established which follow these distance learning programs outside the university. The purpose of this study is to evaluate/to assess the present conditions of distance learning organizations. In this study, the data will be collected and evaluated about the structure of the institutions, how the distance learning programs are carried out (mixed and/or online) and how the evaluation is made (face to face and/or online).
The data will be collected via the present web pages of these centers. Thus, the present conditions of these centers which are increasing in numbers day by day and a subject of a quality discussion will be evaluated.

Keywords: Distance education, Turkey,

1. Introduction

Distance education aroused with the aim of supplying the needs of formal education because of variety reasons to get up to date by providing facilities to be used effectively in our developing world of today is meeting the requirements in this field by making feel its importance as time goes by.

1.1. Distance Education

While the concept of distance education is defined as an educational teaching model which requires specific communication ways carried out via techniques of conception of special course and special teaching methods,

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(Moore, Kearsley, 1996), distance education is defined as a training method supplying an opportunity of education to individuals who weren't able to have a right to study in formal education institutions, because of age, illness, geographical distance or individuals who lost this opportunity by using various materials such as pressed, visual, auditoria, and electronic materials (Demiray, 1999). İşman (1998) defines "distance education" as an education system where instructors and learners carry out their relations of teaching-learning at different places and different times via communication technologies or via post. Generally, when the definitions of distance education are examined, five specialities of distance education reveal (Keegan, 1996).

a) Both instructors and learners stand at different places during learning process,
b) Education institution effects both prepared learning materials and supplied supporting services to learners,
c) Using technique materials like video, audio, and computer to convey the content of lecture and to assemble learners and instructors,
d) That's learners are able to initiate a dialogue and they are able to benefit from it by providing bilateral communication,
e) Individuals maintain teaching (training) individually not as a group due to the fact that it isn't able to gather learner's group together through learning process.

The conceptual bases of distance education are: 1) to create new resources; 2) to provide unity between occupation and education; 3) to democratize the learning process; 4) to supply lifelong learning training; 5) individualism in education; 6) to benefit from existing training institutions effectively; 7) using technology in education effectively; 8) inclining the needs of individuals, society, and technology; 9) to discourse to the masses; 10) to provide unity of individual and massive education; and 11) it is sequenced that training demand and financial recourses are stabilized (Alkan,1996).

Despite the disparities in the sources of richness and contraries in politic regime, all countries have common opinion on fundamental subjects about the world education systems. These items are listed below (Hızal, 1983:1): a) fundamental education to all individuals; b) vocational education based on fundamental education; c) lifelong learning to individuals who wants to improve themselves in their jobs and wants to be trained again; d) in all steps of education, taking into consideration geographical, economic, and social conditions of countries, education adopted to the learners' circumstances and their needs; e) education helping societies to protect their cultural and politic identities; and f) education aiming to materialize all targets economically. According to this common opinion, distance education is suitable for them.

In Turkey, where about 1.233.000 people apply for university and 900.000 of them are enrolled to a college program by higher education institution (OSYM), reducing the need of places and instructors so that all individuals would able to go to university is supplied only by combining our limited sources with developing technologies via distance education.

1.2. Development in Turkey

Distance Education, at the beginning, primarily in the world, with a letter in Boston newspaper, dated 20th March, 1728 and with an announcement notifying that Steno courses will be given, was found in 1924 in Turkey by John Dewey. In 1933-34, teaching courses via letter was held and Programme of cultivation's calendar was intended for rural area via radio's broadcasting (Üç Kardeş, Şahin, Efe & Küçükönder, 2004). Initial application was performed in academic year of 1958-59 by surveying Institution of Banking and Law of Commerce, bound to the Law Faculty in Ankara University. This Institute gave banking courses to individuals who were not in Ankara by using the technique of correspondence course during two-period (Karayalçın, 1959; cited in Duman, 1994). Initial assignment of Ministry of Education concerning to this issue was to found the Correspondence course's centre, bound to the department of statistics and publication in Technical and Vocational organization in 1960 (Duman, 1994).

First enterprise in 1961, in our country began with being found the centre of correspondence course by Ministry of Education and with being carried out this teaching technique. These studies were disseminated by being organized in rank of general management in (Alkan, 1996, p. 21).

Institution of formal higher education is another enterprise of distance education. Furthermore, it was found to supply training to learners who graduated from high school in 1975. All equipments and facilities of the centre of correspondence course were conveyed to this institution. Distance education's programmes that institution of formal higher education carry out; Informal Higher education departments in technical and social sciences, Education Institutes, Islam Institute and distance education's programme of trade –tourism high school, Education Institutes, Technical High School for girls, and Technical High School for boys are programmes of correspondence course (Hakan, 1998).

The fifth and seventh item in the law of high education, counted 2547, published in official journal counted in 17506 and dated on November 6th, 1981, commissioned to universities to grant distance education and then this mission was given to Anadolu University by means of law, counted 41, made in 1982 (Gülbahar, 2009).

Informal High School, founded in 1992, granting a certificate of secondary education and Informal Primary School, founded in 1997, granting a certificate of primary education and vocational and technical informal school granting a certificate of electrician installer are informal schools (MONE, 2010).

In following years it is seen that not only Anadolu University but also other universities grant distance education. After the base of Internet was formed in 1993 in Turkey, a new dimension has been brought to distance education. Initially education based on Internet began with the leader of Middle East Technical University and the application of education asynchronies based on internet was developed with the aim of expanding the departments of informatics, founded in 1997 (Horzum, 2007). While METU begins to grant distance education on internet by granting certificates with the program IDE-A, nowadays Ankara University, Sakarya University, and Mersin University have background for not only to grant distance education by granting certificates but also to grant university degree in distance.

Most of the universities in Turkey gradually grant distance education under an institute or under a vocational high school by founding a centre of distance education. Distance education is defined that units of teaching model, prepared by Alkan privately as printed teaching materials like articles, figures, or pictures was done through letters (printed materials) in the past by means of sending them to the learners at regular intervals, but in the following years by the help of developing technology, it was transformed training via broadcasting that units of teaching prepared specifically for distance education are conveyed to the learners through radio and television. In these days, by the help of internet technology developing swiftly, the concept of e-learning is being used via live (online) broadcast of technologies.

Nowadays, distance education is done with both printed materials and via broadcasting. Furthermore, educations that can be given through internet as synchronic and asynchronous have been included to them. Universities grant these applications inclusive of programs they started in respect of their rules of distance education.

In this survey, it is stated that current programs of Associate degree, Undergraduate degree, Master, and PhD are carried out in which universities and in which under institute, department, or centre and how these programs are being carried out.

2. The Method

Browsing model is used to describe the existing situation in survey (Karasar, 1995). The data used in survey are obtained from web pages of institutions granting distance education. The list of universities granting associate degree and undergraduate degree in distance, is scanned from the choice paper prepared by Institution of choosing students for universities, but it isn't obtained detailed information in web pages of some universities; so this survey is limited to data obtained from web pages of universities and institutes that can be reached. Besides, informal education program, Anadolu University grant isn't included in this survey. On the other hand, informal education programs carried out via internet are included in this survey.

3. Findings

The structure of higher education has four steps in Turkish education system. These are associate degree, undergraduate degree, Master, and PhD. Undergraduate degree usually takes four years of higher education training.

Universities in Turkey are bound to Institute of Higher Education (YÖK). The universities must be able to take permission from YÖK in order to open an associated degree or university degree. Quatos, programs, wages, and designating of lecturers are planned by Institute of Higher Education. When the statistics of the institutes of higher education are examined, it is seen that there are 102 public universities, 52 private universities, nine private vocational high school, two universities with special statutes and five military higher education institutions. The number of universities granting distance associate degree is 30. Seven of them are private university, and one of them is a university with a special status and the others are public universities. The number of universities granting higher education is gradually increasing every year. Furthermore, universities carry out certificate programs opened inside of universities are carried out by Vocational Higher School, Centre of Distance Education, The Centre of Implication and Research of Distance Education, Institute of Social Sciences, and Sciences. While programs are being carried out, there are mid-term exams, end of term exams and make up exams. Exams and evaluations are made in terms of (law) items in regulations of distance education in universities. Exams are usually held face to face in particular institutes (Ankara University, The Institute of Distance Education, Çukurova Universtiy, and Adana Vocational High School). In addition, there are universities like Afyon Kocatepe University, Gazi University, Vocational High School in Distance Education, Süleyman Demirel University, and Uşak University that make end of term exams face to face and midterm exams through internet. Besides, there are programs supported with effective and online lectures through internet and via broadcasting in the frame of this program.

Also, there are student's books prepared appropriately to the purpose of distance education. Besides, the systems that effective and online courses can be demonstrated through Learning Managing System (LMS) and that learners can communicate with lecturers at regular intervals are able to be constructed (Ankara University). What's more, there are universities performing the training as three-dimensional education (broadcasting, correspondence course, and face to face/online) like in Atılım University.

When associated degrees are examined it is seen that there are so many computer programming (n=21) and generally, the capacity of these departments varies from 100 to 150. In addition to this, cost of education decided by YÖK, each university has its own price. Secondly, "Applications of Accounting and Tax" programmes (n=6) follow computer programming and the capacity of this department also varies from 100 to 150.

Other Associate degree programs performed via distance education are: Management of Hotel and Tourism, Services of Pharmacy, Banking and Insurance Trade, Management of Bureau and Assistant of Manager, Management of Knowledge, Generation of Electricity and Distribution of Electricity, Management of Real Estate, Foreign Trade, System of Geographical Knowledge, Medical Documentation, and Logistics, Retailing and Management of Store, Management of Health Care Institutions, and Marketing. Individuals graduated from these programs are granted a certificate of an associate degree. Students who are graduated from these departments are given an associated degree diploma and the list of the associated programs given by universities is shown below in Table 1:

Table 1. Universities granting associate degree program

The name of university	Departments of Associate degree
Afyon Kocatepe University	Computer Programming
	Knowledge Management
Ahmet Yesevi University	Computer Programming
Anadolu University	Banking and Insurance Trade
	Management of Bureau Assistant of Manager,
	Foreign Trade
	Justice High School
	Production of Electricity and Electricity Distribution
	Real Estate and Property Management
	The system of Geographical Knowledge
	Services of Pharmacy
Ankara University	Banking and Insurance Trade
	Computer Programming

	Medical Documentation Secretariats
	Justice High School
	Management of Hotel and Tourism
Atatürk University	Computer Programming
Atılım University	Computer Programming
	Management of Hotel and Tourism
Bahçeşehir University	Logistics
	Computer Programming
	Management of Business
Balıkesir University	Foreign Trade
	Technology of Meat Production
	Technology of Nourishment
	Management of Business
	Applications of Accounting and Tax
	Ship Building
	Farming of Poultry
	Marketing
	Services of Organizations
Çukurova University	Computer Programming
	Applications of Accounting and Tax
Duzce University	Knowledge Management
	Computer Programming
Fırat University	Computer Programming
Gazi University	Knowledge Management
	Computer Programming
	Management of Business
	Technologies of Automation and Control
	Logistics
	Applications of Accounting and Tax
	Retailing and Management of Store
Istanbul Aydin University	Computer Programming
Istanbul Bilgi University	Management of Hotel and Tourism
Istanbul University	Banking and Insurance Trade
	Foreign Trade
Karabuk University	Computer Programming
	Technology of Electronic
	Management of Business
	Applications of Accounting and Data
Karadeniz Techical University	Computer programming
	Management of Business
Kırıkkale University	Computer Programming
Kocaeli University	Management of Business
Mehmet Akif University	Computer Programming
Mersin University	Computer Programming
	Services of Pharmacy
	Technology of Electronic Communication
	Technology of Electronic
	Management of Business
	Technology of Automation and Control
Sakarya University	Knowledge Management
	Computer Programming

Suleyman Demirel University	Technology of Electronic
	Management of Business
	Mechatronics
	Knowledge Management
	Computer Programming
	Management of Bureau and Assistant of Manager
	Medical Documentation Secretariats
Usak University	Computer Programming

Undergraduate degree programs given by universities are shown below in Table 2:

Table 2. Universities granting university degree

The name of university	Departments of University degree
Ahmet Yesevi Üniversitesi	Computer Engineering
	Industry Engineering
	Management of Computer Systems
Anadolu University	PreSchool Teaching
	Management
	Economy
İstanbul University	Radio, Television and Cinema
	Finance
	Business
	Econometry
	Labour Economics
	Turkish Literature
	Public Relations and Publicity
	Computer Education and Instruction Technology
Karabuk University	Industry Engineering
	Science
	History
	English Literature
Karadeniz Technical University	Computer Education and Instruction Technology
Sakarya University	Industry Engineering
	Computer Engineering
	Finance
	Human Resource Management
	Computer Education and Instruction Technology

Undergraduate degree programs via distance education granted in universities include: Computer Education and Instruction Technology, Pre-School Teaching, Philosophy, Sociology, and Turkish Literature in Anadolu University; Industry Engineering, Computer Engineering, Human Resource Management, and Department of Teacher of Computer and Technology Teaching in Sakarya University; Radio, Television and Cinema, Marketing, Finance, Business, Econometry, and Management of Computer Systems in Ahmet Yesevi University.

The most common of master programs granted via distance education is MBA master program. MBA Master's program and other master's programs have been given in the list.

Table 3.Universities Granting Master's Program

University	Type of Program	Department
Sakarya University	Master Degree	History of Republic

Social Science Institute		Public Finance
Science Institute		Information Technology Engineering Management
Gazi University	Master Degree (without thesis)	Information Technology
Ahmet Yesevi University	Master Degree	Computer Engineering Informatics Systems Management Management of Organization Education Administration and Supervision Local Governments Management of Health Institutions Management
İstanbul University	Master Degree	Informatics
Anadolu University	Master Degree (without thesis)	Teaching Children with Developmental Disabilities
	Master Degree	E-Accommodation
	Master Degree	MBA
İstanbul Bilgi University	Master Degree	MBA
Sakarya University	Master Degree	MBA
Bilgi University	Master Degree (without thesis)	MBA
Işık University	Master Degree	MBA
Maltepe University	Master Degree	MBA
Beykent University	Master Degree	MBA
Fatih University	Master Degree (without thesis)	MBA
Çukurova University	Master Degree (without thesis)	MBA
Mersin University	Master Degree (without thesis)	MBA
Sakarya University	Master Degree (without thesis)	MBA

Doctorate and Certificate programs given by universities are shown below in Table 4:

Table 4. Universities Granting Doctorate and Certificate Programs

University	Doctorate & Certificate Programs
Anadolu University	Distance Education Doctorate Program
	Executive Development Certificate Program.
Ankara University	Undergraduate Theology Program (ILITAM)
	Conservation in Museums (ÖKOP)
	Synchronous Medicine Education (STIP)
	European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) Program
	Course on Korean Economics (Synchronously)
	European Language Passport (ADP-A1)
Ataturk University	Undergraduate Theology Program (ILITAM)
Istanbul University	Undergraduate Theology Program (ILITAM)
Inonu University	Undergraduate Theology Program (ILITAM)
Sakarya University	Undergraduate Theology Program (ILITAM)
	Foreign Trade Expert Distance Education Certificate Program
	Computer Programming Distance Education Certificate Program
	CAD / CAM Distance Education Certificate Program
	Management of Engineering Distance Education Certificate Program

	E-Foreign Trade Distance Education Certificate Program
Middle East Technical University	Information Technology Distance Education Certificate Program
	Health Information Systems
Gazi University	Management of Marketing

Now, Anadolu University has a doctorate program and the some universities have lots of certificate programs (as shown in table 4). Besides, there are certificate programs that Institutes of Distance education and some institutes perform in common like cooperation among METU, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Elkingan Endowment, and Sakarya University. Certificate Programs are given commonly on teaching language, programming of computer, business of computer, foreign trade, and management of business.

4. Results

Finally, when it is assessed the situation of the institutions granting distance education, it is seen that their structures are quite different. Varieties programs inside of the institutes of distance education, informal high school (via distance education) or vocational high school are performed.
    Detailed information about the relation of programs with each other isn't obtained. Programs' quotas are almost the same with each other but the wages/or costs are quite different. Also, the ways of the programs are quite different. Exams and assessments, objectives and certificates granted are included on other discussion issues.

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