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Ministry of national education's provincial administrators' views on distance vocational education

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Abstract

One of the biggest advantages of technology is that people have the opportunity to access information faster and easier. In this way, people can update their knowledge in the face of constantly changing and self-updating information and improve their existing knowledge by replacing it with new ones. This rapid development has pushed educators to seek new ways in learning-teaching processes, and technology is increasingly being included in our education processes. Among the developed models, the distance education model is the most preferred in our education processes. This study aimed to examine the kind of results that will be obtained when the distance education model is integrated into in-service training. The descriptive survey method was used in the research. The opinions and experiences of the managers were used through the semi-structured interview form on the subject. According to the results of the research, it has been determined that the distance of in-service training does not cause problems in general, but it is not as effective as face-to-face training in terms of socialization and understanding of the subjects.

Keywords: Administrator; distance education; in-service training; Managers; vocational education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Individuals generally acquire most of their knowledge and skills in the school environment. Therefore, the concept of teaching is also often used together with the concept of education, because teaching activities are usually carried out in the school setting. Teaching is the whole of activities designed to initiate, maintain, and perform the learning process within the framework of a specific plan or program. These activities can be held at schools, universities, vocational training institutions, and other educational institutions. On the other hand, the concept of education is a more inclusive term and refers to the process of all the knowledge, skills, and values that an individual acquires throughout his life. When we consider education as a process, it is stated that the learning that occurs in the individual takes place within the education process. From this point of view, it is thought that education and training are an inseparable whole.

Education is defined as educational activities carried out in a certain place in line with a certain plan. Currently, many teaching activities are carried out using computers, tablets, laptops, smartphones, and other technological tools. Considering that technology greatly affects and changes other areas of life, it is not surprising that it is also included in education-teaching processes (Kang, 2024). Technology, which is a Latin word, means to build (Kaya, 2006). There are many different definitions of technology in the literature. The technology could refer to transportation, service, production, or science. They are practical solutions applied to problems in their fields. Technology in general is technical science, industrial conditions, and the theoretical knowledge and experience related to the industry are various practice methods. Technology is the whole of practical activities and practices used to organize proven knowledge in achieving the intended gains, meeting the needs, and facilitating life (İşman, 2011).

In short, technology is a series of inventions and innovations that people make using scientific methods to make their lives easier. These studies are the practice of science. In essence, the main purpose of technology is to make human life easier. From this point of view, both the discovery of fire and the invention of the wheel are technological innovations. Thanks to the innovations and conveniences brought by technology, people can do their jobs with technology or technological tools, and they can handle many transactions with a single click, almost without much effort. This shows that technology is one of the most important variables of time, and it gives us a great advantage today. While difficult tasks have become easy thanks to technology, distance has become closer.

Considering these benefits of technology, we can interpret that societies that use technology effectively and efficiently can develop faster solutions and overcome problems easily in the face of various events and obstacles they encounter. Undoubtedly, the role of education is very great in raising individuals with knowledge who can use technology effectively and efficiently (Jiang et al., 2024; Turan et al., 2022). Therefore, the concepts of technology and education have a strong relationship with each other. With the development of technology, it has become inevitable to provide various contributions and facilities in the field of education (Mouw et al., 2023). As a result of these developments, traditional education methods and models have been questioned and new educational understandings have been developed. In reality, it was a long time before technology began to affect the field of education.

Changes and developments such as the invention of writing, the invention of the printing press, and the discovery of paper facilitated the storage and transmission of information. As a result of these developments, the understanding of education has also changed and started to differentiate. With the development of technology, the changes in the education process have accelerated and technology has

become an indispensable part of our daily life and included in the education process (Findeisen & Wild 2022).

As a result, the use of technology in education has become a very important element in increasing the quality of the education-teaching process and supporting this process. There are many different definitions of the concept of educational technology in the literature. This definition is a definition given for the discipline called educational technology or instructional technology. Educational technology is a discipline that deals with the use of technology to improve the educational process. This discipline develops and applies various technological tools and methods to make the learning and teaching activities of teachers and students more efficient and effective. Educational technology also carries out studies in areas such as the design, distribution, and evaluation of materials used in the learning process. In summary, it is a systematic, scientific, and holistic approach to educational activities (Uşun, 2004).

According to contemporary approaches, the concept of educational technology in a broad sense includes the expressions of organizing, planning, implementing, and developing learning-teaching activities and activities according to the system approach (Köseoğlu et al., 2007). If we want to reach the level of developed countries, it is very important to have individuals who know how to use constantly developing technology, can keep up with this change, and understand and apply it (Öztürk, 2006). With the development of technology, many innovations and changes took place in the field of education.

Now, traditional teaching models and methods are being replaced by digital learning technologies, online education platforms, educational software, and other digital tools (Delcker & Ifenthaler 2022). In this way, the learning process becomes more effective, interactive, and enjoyable. In addition, with technology, students' learning styles change, learning materials are prepared considering different types of intelligence, and students are allowed to manage their learning processes. The impact of technology in education continues to increase day by day.

In summary, as a result of the rapid development of technology and the dizzying developments in information technologies, knowledge, and access to information, people can now access information more quickly and easily. In this way, they became independent learners using their individual and lifelong learning skills. Thanks to technology's faster and easier access to information, people can update their information when they encounter constantly changing and updated information. Thus, they can improve their existing knowledge by replacing it with new ones. Rapid changes and developments in technology force educators to reshape the face and structure of the education system, and to develop new curricula, educational understandings, and technology-supported learning-teaching models (Isman, 2011).

1.1. Purpose of study

Distance education, which has become one of the most important issues in the fields of education and training with the age of digitalization in recent years, has been examined in many research and projects and handled in different ways. Therefore, the importance of distance education has increased immensely. In today's world, technological and mass media, the speeds and diversity in accessing information through tools such as these have increased, and with these developments, the limitations and various obstacles of traditional methods and models have been questioned; This has resulted in the use of new models and methods in education in learning-teaching processes. One of these models is "distance education".

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1. Data collection instrument

The research is a case study of qualitative research methods. For this purpose, face-to-face interviews were conducted through a semi-structured interview form.

2.2. Participants

The study group of the research is the central districts of Antalya province. In the research, 10 provincial administrators were reached with the easily accessible case sampling method.

2.3. Data analysis

A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool in the research. The form was prepared by the participant. The data were collected by face-to-face interview method. The answers given to the questions were checked and read by the researcher, and the results obtained from the answers were shown in a table. Content and descriptive analysis were made and direct quotations from the participants were also included.

3. RESULTS

Table 1

Opinions on In-Service Training Activities with Distance Education

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	f
Distance in-service training has positive contributions					√				√		2
Provides an opportunity for further education					√					√	2
Provides flexibility in terms of time and planning								√	√		2
Important for lifelong education and vocational training						√					1
More effective than face-to-face training							√	√		√	3
I still think face-to-face training is more beneficial.	√	√	√	√			√	√		√	7
Limits relationships with colleagues								√		√	2
I think technological education is more useful						√			√		2

Table 1 shows opinions on in-service training activities with distance education. Opinions of the Participants on In-Service Training Activities with Distance Education are as follows:

M1: Face-to-face interaction is necessary, education must be in face-to-face interaction for both education and training.

M2: Interaction provides a mutual exchange of feelings. Emotions increase the permanence of education. Face-to-face training is necessary.

M3: It is good that in-service training is remote, but it is also necessary to include activities that will provide experience in face-to-face training.

M4: At the end of the distance education training, face-to-face interaction including activities and practices or practice in the field such as experiments and internships is required.

M5: In my opinion, there should be a system in which face-to-face education and distance education are carried out together. For individuals who cannot provide face-to-face education, systems can be developed in which individuals who receive distance education will share the same environment. Equality of opportunity is also ensured.

M6: Face-to-face education is very important in younger age groups, but distance education can give better results as the age progresses. I think that especially vocational education should be from a distance.

M7: This situation will differ in parallel with the level of participants in the training, as well as depending on whether the training given can be implemented or not. Regardless of the face-to-face training, it is necessary because it can make interpersonal interaction more active and be supported with concrete resources.

M8: Since humans are social creatures, interaction, and face-to-face sharing are more memorable.

M9: Face-to-face interaction is very important, but it is not everything. Some of the gains to be achieved with distance education may not be given in face-to-face education. However, since humans are social beings, interaction and face-to-face sharing can be more memorable. As a result, we cannot say that "without face-to-face training, it is necessary and there is no learning".

M10: Yes, face-to-face interaction provides more permanent learning. Because body language, gestures facial expressions, and eye contact are very important in communication. With distance education, these supportive communication methods are either limited or absent. Which can be intermittent with network issues.

When the opinions of the participants are evaluated in general, although the importance of face-to-face education is mentioned, the importance of distance education cannot be denied when necessary and in today's conditions. In addition to all these, distance in-service training creates equality of opportunity and provides great convenience for the participants.

4. DISCUSSION

Distance education, with a short definition, is the education carried out by the teacher and the student, even though they are physically in different places (Uzunboylu & Tuncay, 2012; İşman, 2011; Uşun, 2006). The different definitions of distance education in the literature are as follows: Distance education is the realization of learning-teaching activities in a virtual environment through information communication due to some deficiencies and limitations of traditional learning-teaching methods and techniques (İşman, 2011). Concepts such as distance education, open learning, simultaneous (synchronous) learning, and flexible learning are just a few of the concepts used to describe an educational process where students and teachers are physically in different places (Gökalp, 2017).

Distance education is a teaching method that has emerged as an alternative to traditional education-teaching problems, by planning educational activities and by preparing the interaction and communication between practitioners and students in a specific way, and carried out from a specific center through teaching units and different environments. Newby et al., (2000) define distance learning as an organized educational program in which teachers and students are physically separated. Uluğ and Kaya (1997), on the other hand, named all learning activities of students and teachers, which are structured in different environments in terms of space and time, as distance education. Distance education is the use of the existing curriculum and content of any formal education institution at home, office, workplace, among others, to places outside the campus, such as; It is the process of transferring and distributing using tablets, smartphones, computers, internet mass media (Aydemir, 2018; Newby et al., 2006; Uşun, 2006; Verduin & Clark, 1994).

Distance education is a flexible education method that allows individuals to carry out their learning activities and is suitable for their own needs. Distance education aims to bring education services to the wider masses and to eliminate the disadvantages and limitations of traditional education. (Uluğ and Kaya, 1997; İşman, 2011; Uşun, 2006). In short, distance education is the use of technology in the field of education as well as the contribution and advantages of technology to our daily lives (Özdemir et al., 2004). Distance education is a systematic structure that includes learning-teaching activities that teachers and students, who are not in the same physical or spatial environment, interact through different communication technologies to provide education services to large and wider masses and to provide equality of opportunity and opportunity in education (Yalın, 2001).

Among other things, distance education includes teachers and students not physically present in a classroom as well as learning activities that are planned and executed without requiring participants to be in the same restricted regions as the residents (Gündüz & Odabaşı, 2004). Akgül (2000) stated that teachers and students are in different geographies and emphasized that various electronic tools or written materials should be used in this education model. One of the most popular and common uses of distance education is that it is a systematically planned learning method that requires special teaching materials and designs, where learners and instructors are located at different times and places. (Aydemir, 2018; Jonassen et al., 1995). Although the existence of multimedia tools and presentation systems in the distance education system makes it difficult to define distance education, as can be seen, there are many definitions in the literature (İşman, 2011; Yılmaz et al., 2015).

In a study comparing the policies and practices of in-service teacher education in Japan and Turkey, suggestions are made for in-service training activities in Turkey. The research was carried out using qualitative research methods. In-service training activities in the two education systems were examined through visits to educational institutions and semi-structured interviews. The research shows that the most important problems encountered in in-service training activities in Turkey are the lack of professional staff, the lack of collaborative partnerships among teachers, the lack of feedback, and the lack of a systematic in-service training model (Bayrakçı, 2009). At this point, based on the literature, providing in-service training remotely will increase the sustainability of the pieces of training. Based on the opinions of the participants, the face-to-face planning of some of the remote online training will also make the in-service training more functional.

5. CONCLUSION

In the research, it has been determined that in-service training given by distance education has a positive effect on teachers' attitudes towards computers and computer self-efficacy perceptions; female teachers developed a more positive attitude towards distance education than male teachers;

again, female teachers' self-efficacy levels improved more than male teachers; It has been determined that there is no significant difference in attitudes and self-efficacy levels according to professional branch and seniority (Tekin 2007). Similarly, those who participated in this study also mentioned the positive effects of distance education.

In a study titled "Examination of Teachers' Attitudes towards Distance Education in Terms of Different Variables", it was observed that the attitudes of teachers working in Eskişehir towards distance education differ in favor of teachers with less professional seniority (Emin and Baran 2020). However, experienced managers participating in this research also find distance education more beneficial in terms of providing time, space, and planning flexibility.

In addition, in a study conducted by Erol Doğan (2007), it was revealed that teachers' attitudes towards the use of computer and internet technologies differed in favor of teachers with less professional seniority. Therefore, it can be said that the approach of young participants to technological tools is more positive. It is quite remarkable that the experienced managers who participated in this research emphasized face-to-face education as well as distance education.

In another study, it was determined that teacher candidates' attitudes toward distance education were at a positive level (Öztürk 2006). Participants also evaluated distance education positively. However, they also stated that they have some disadvantages due to issues such as network problems and internet access. To eliminate these problems, it would be appropriate to increase the technical staff in charge, strengthen the connected technological infrastructure, provide additional internet support and transportation, and free connection support to the personnel working in the institution, especially in in-service training.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Various workshops and courses can be organized so that participants at different levels of distance education technology, which has become an inseparable part of our age, can use these technologies effectively and efficiently.
- In addition to synchronous lessons in distance education, there may be pre-prepared training materials and content and video courses that provide information on how teachers can use them whenever and wherever they want.
- In addition, financial support may be given to the participants for technology expenditures so that they can attend such courses.

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