The Opinions of Academic Staff of Yüzüncü Yil University on Distance Education

Hayati Çavus

*Yüzüncü Yil University, Faculty of Education, Department of Computer Education and
Instructional Technologies Education, Van, Turkey, 65080
E-mail: hcavus@yyu.edu.tr*

KEYWORDS Distance Education. Higher Education. Academic Staff Opinion

ABSTRACT It is important to consider the point of views and the willing of the academicians to be involved in the distance education courses, which have been started to be offered in most universities of Turkey in the recent years, as well as their readiness to these applications. It is also significant to identify the problems correctly to take measures in order to eliminate these existing problems. In this study, the perspectives of faculty members, working at the University of YüzüncüYil, on distance education programs were investigated. In the research, already developed scale was used to collect data. In this study, the sampling method was not employed, instead the entire population was tried to be reached. However, the study was conducted with 540 faculty members. At the stage of data analysis, factor analysis, cluster analysis and descriptive statistical methods were used. In this study, the perspectives of faculty members on distance education were found to be relatively positive.

INTRODUCTION

Distance education is an institutional, managerial and planned system that requires special lecture designs, teaching methods applied and various technologies, where students and instructors are in different locations (Betz et al. 2005). Distance education can be defined as the education system, in which the students and instructors are in difference places in terms of location and time (Lever-Duffy et al. 2002)

The intended purpose of distance education is offering education programs in any field to every individual without the limitations of time and space (Çetin et al. 2004). The main difference between distance education and traditional education methods is the use of technological communication devices (Can 2004). Distance education can be considered as a significant opportunity for those who are unable to attend traditional education activities for any reason. In addition to this, distance education is also an opportunity for other students, in traditional education systems, who want to have different types

Address for correspondence:
Dr. Hayati Çavus
YüzüncüYil University,
Faculty of Education,
Department of Computer Education and Instructional
Technologies Education, Van, Turkey, 65080
Telephone: +90 432 444 50 65 / 1762
Fax: +90 432 225 13 68
*E-mail:*hcavus@yyu.edu.tr

of knowledge and skills (Altan and Seferoglu 2009). When there is sufficient number of students, distance education is the least expensive education system in terms of the costs compared to other formal teaching systems (Elmas et al. 2010). Distance education system can be summarized in three periods from past to present. In the first period, the communication was provided through newspapers, letters etc. In the second period, a distance education structure based on audio and video was employed. Interaction was very limited in both periods, and the interaction between student-student and student-teacher was little if any. The third period can be defined as the interactive education, where computer and modem were being used. In the third period, learning and communication are regarded as a social process (Tuncer and Taspinar 2008)

The advancing computer technology has brought some innovations. The increased use of computer has offered many opportunities, which has resulted in the use of computers also in education system. In computer technology, the use of internet network has led other people, in different locations, to be included in the sessions (Tuncay and Uzunboylu 2010). Distance education is a system that carries out learning and teaching activities together by using the communication technologies and email services of the students and instructors (Isman 2011). Alkan (1998) has defined distance education as "A teaching method, in which the communication

between the students and instructors have been provided by a certain center through various education environments and instructional units in case there is no possibility to carry out the classroom activities due to the limitations of traditional teaching-learning methods."

Considering the definitions of distance education, there are some common features between these definitions. These common features are listed by Isman (2011) as follows:

i. Teachers and students in different locations,
ii. Communication technologies are conducted,
iii. Use of postal services,
iv. No compulsory attendance,
v. Special teaching methods,
vi. One-way and two-way communication,
vii. Special programs, special tools and equipment.

Similarly, according to Gürol and Atici (2001), distance education has 6 essential features;

i. Teachers and students are in different locations,
ii. The existing student-institution relationship,
iii. The use of tools such as printed materials to provide communication between the institution and students and environment,
iv. Face-to-face training opportunities at certain times,
v. Providing bidirectional communication between students and institution, combining education with real life.

In the distance education method, the process of teaching has been offered as a three-dimensional approach;

i. Teaching through printed materials,
ii. Teaching through publications,
iii. Face to face teaching.

Synchronous and asynchronous methods are employed in the application of distance education.

The studies conducted on this field show that it is needed to adapt the online courses to the teaching practices in the development process of teaching methods (Desai et al. 2008; Fetherston 2001; Koehler and Mishra 2009). The researchers also argue that the demand on the use of technology in education shifting from teaching to learning paradigm has been increased (Hardy and Bower 2004; O'Banion 1997;

Smolin and Lawless 2003). This shifting has been changed the roles of the instructors as into course mentors, coordinators and facilitators (Hardy and Bower 2004; Smolin and Lawless 2003). Distance education can be considered as effective as face to face education where distance education has some important features to provide time and place independence and rich communication alternatives (Kaya and Tan 2014).

The Yüzüncü Yil University had been established by Legislative Decree No. 41 on July 20th, 1982. However, the attempt to establish a university in the eastern region of Turkey has been started earlier. Yüzüncü Yil University (in Turkey) continues its education activities with 14 faculties, 4 institutes, 11 colleges and 19 application and research centers on the campus located near Van Lake, 15 km from the city center. The distance education platform has been completed at the university and some courses are offered through distance education system in the academic year of 2013-2014.

Distance education has a flexible structure for university education. The individual work and study program of the students have been focused on the suitable learning resources provided by the organized institutions. A college course addressed to the students of distance education is the key point in the education process (Sporis et al. 2013).

In recent years, many agreements have been signed with the neighboring countries in the field of education as a result of the geographical location of Yüzüncü Yil University. In these agreements, the distance education model has an importance place in terms of the education offered by the neighboring countries to their citizens. This study is very important in terms of identifying the level of readiness of Yüzüncü Yil University to distance education, which is an education system of the future, and presenting the perspectives of faculty members. On the other hand, the Higher Education Council (YÖK) has been promoting distance education practices in recent years and implementing policies towards establishment of distance education systems by the universities. Although this situation shows that distance education will be more functional in the near future, it is more important to investigate the situation of the institutions and faculty members towards distance education. These cases are the factors contributing to the importance of the study.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is presenting the distance education potential of Yüzüncü Yil University. In the study, it has been tried to reveal what kind of structure has been established to determine the contribution and attitudes of the faculty members to distance education.

The answers of following questions have been searched within the scope of the research;

 i.   How are the attitudes of the faculty members towards distance education?
 ii. Do the attitudes of the faculty members differ based on their positions and titles?
 iii. Which variables affect the attitudes of the faculty members towards distance education?
 iv. What are the opinions of the faculty members that can contribute positively to distance education?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this study, the opinions and perspectives of the faculty members towards distance education and their contributions, if needed, to distance education practices has been tried to determine. The screening model has been employed in this descriptive study.

Participants

The population of the research was composed of the faculty members of all faculties and colleges of Yüzüncü Yil University. In the study, the sampling method was not used, instead the whole population was tried to be included. In this regard, the data collection tool was sent out as a printed document to all 1414 faculty members, working in all departments of the university. However, only 580 of these data collection tools have returned back to the researcher, and 40 of these tools have been excluded from the study, because they were not filled in properly; thus, the analyses were carried out with the data collected from 540 participants.

Data Collection Tools

In the research, the scale developed by Süer et al. (2005) has been used. In the first part of the scale, the items related to demographic variables have taken place; in the second part, 15-item 5-point Likert-type attitude scale was used to determine the attitudes of faculty members towards distance education; and in the third part, an 18-item questionnaire was used in order to determine the work that can be carried out by the faculty members to contribute to distance education.

While the data collected from faculty members are transferred to a computer program (SPSS), the positive sentences were rated from "I Don't Agree" to "I Strongly Agree" choices as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 scores, whereas the negative sentences were rated in the exact opposite way from "I Strongly Agree" to "I Don't Agree" choices as the scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

The confirmatory factor analysis was performed in order to examine the validity of the data obtained by the data collection tools. The suitability of the data to Factor Analysis should be checked by the sphericity test; if the result of the test is found statically significant, then the factor analysis is performed (Tatlidil 1996). The KMO value was found as 0.885 and the applicability of the sample size has been approved by KMO and Bartlett's statistic (KMO = .885; $\chi^2 =$ 1436,616, p≅0.000). The KMO value is higher than 0.60 which is acceptable. The KMO value is related to the applicability of the sample. The higher results of KMO and Bartlett tests show that the factor analysis is applicable and there is a high correlation between the items. The alpha internal consistency coefficient and in this context, item-total correlations have been calculated as an indicator of reliability each sub-factor in the "Attitudes Scale towards Distance Education" that has been identified as two factors. The total-item correlation is ranged between 0.42 and 0.82 for the 1st Factor and 0.39 and 0.81 for the 2nd Factor. According to these values, it can be said that each item distinguishes the attitudes towards distance education very well. On the other hand, the ratio of variance explained by each factor is 25.85 percent, 21.75 percent, respectively and 47.60 percent in total. The alpha reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.84 for the 1st Factor, whereas it was calculated as 0.68 for the 2nd Factor. The alpha reliability coefficient obtained from the whole scale was 0.88. Similar results have been obtained in the study carried out by Süer et al. (2005). These values show that this scale is valid and reliable enough for this study.

The total variance of the scale items has been observed as 47.402 percent under two factors by

the method of principal component analysis. It can be said that this explanation rate is sufficient for also social science studies. The factors, in which the items have been collected under the sub-factors of Interest and Confidence at the end of the confirmatory factor analysis, were consistent with the results of the studies conducted by Süer et al. (2005). There are 9 items (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, and 13) under the Interest Factor and 6 items (3, 8, 10, 11, 14, and 15) under the Confidence Factor.

The Cronbach's alpha (α) internal consistency coefficient was calculated for the reliability of all the items of the scale. The alpha coefficient has been found as 0.83 for the aspect of interest and 0.68 for the aspect of confidence, respectively. The Cronbach's alpha (α) internal consistency coefficient was found as 0.84 for the whole scale. The data obtained show that the scale can be considered as reliable.

The analysis of the data, obtained as a result of the implementation of the scale and questionnaire, has been performed through a statistical package program developed for social sciences. The t-test and one-way analysis of variance have been employed for the comparisons between the groups. The average and standard deviation values have been used in order to determine the level of attitudes towards each behavior.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study have been presented on the basis of research questions.

Demographic Data

The personal information is given about the faculty members included in the study. The distribution of faculty members regarding their faculties and titles are given in Table 1.

Analyzing the Table 1, it has been seen that 8.5 percent of the surveyed faculty members(N= 46) are Professors, 4.4 percent (N= 24) are Associate Professors, 31.1 percent (N= 168) are Assistant Professors, 25.6 percent (N= 138) are teaching assistants, 4.4 percent (N= 24) are lecturers, 1.9 percent (N= 10) are experts and 24.1 percent of the faculty members are research assistants, respectively.

1. The Attitudes of the Faculty Members towards Distance Education

The attitudes of the faculty members towards distance education have been included in order to find the answer of the first research question. According to this, the attitude, interest and total scores of the faculty members are given in Table 2. The mean of "Confidence on Distance Educa-

Table 1: The distribution of faculty members regarding their faculties and titles

Faculty	Title (N)							
	RA	TA	Expert	Lecturer	Asst. Prof	Assoc. Prof	Prof.	Total
Education	22	14	4	0	62	2	6	110
Science	20	2	0	0	14	4	6	46
Literature	8	2	2	0	12	0	6	30
Eng. Arc.	12	0	0	0	14	0	2	28
Agriculture	28	4	2	0	10	14	18	76
Vet	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
GSF	12	0	0	0	8	0	0	20
Med. School	0	0	0	0	6	4	4	14
Dentistry	16	0	0	0	14	0	0	30
FEAS (Econ, Bus. Etc.)	10	0	0	0	8	0	2	20
Van VSHE	0	34	0	2	2	0	0	38
Özalp VSHE	0	22	0	2	4	0	0	28
Erciº VSHE	0	18	0	0	6	0	0	24
Baºkale VSHE	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	8
Health Ser. VSHE	0	8	0	2	0	0	0	10
Theology	0	10	0	0	0	0	2	12
Foreign Lan.	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	16
Gevaº VHS	0	18	0	2	8	0	0	28
Total	130	138	10	24	168	24	46	540

VHS: vocational school of higher education

Table 2: The distribution of total attitude scores of the faculty members

	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Number of the items
Confidence	540	19.14	4.44	8	30	6
Interest	540	29.92	5.91	10	45	9
Attitude	540	49.07	9.17	24.00	75.00	15

tion" scores was $\overline{X}=19.14$ which was $\overline{X}=29.92$ for interest scores and $\overline{X}=49.07$ for attitude. The standard deviations were SD=4.44 for "Confidence on Distance Education", SD=5.91 for interest and SD=9.17 for attitude.

2. The Attitudes of Faculty Members towards Distance Education Depending on Their Positions

One-way ANOVA test was performed in order to find the answer of the second question in the research. Accordingly, there is a significant difference between the faculty members in terms of confidence to distance education depending in their positions $F(6, 263)=6.09$, $p<0.05$, whereas there is no significant difference between the faculty members in terms of being interested $F(6, 263)=1.76$, $p<0.05$ and attitudes $F(6, 263)=1.65$, $p<0.05$ towards distance education depending in their positions (Table 3).

3. The Variables Affecting the Attitudes of Faculty Members towards Distance Education

The data obtained from the faculty members regarding distance education have been analyzed; total scores based on positions, descriptive statistics related to sub-scales and differences shown by Tukey LSD are given in Table 4. The means were between $\overline{X}=13.00$ and $\overline{X}=22.00$

for "Confidence on Distance Education", $\overline{X}=27.33$ and $\overline{X}=32.25$ for interest and X=45.50 and 51.60 for attitude. The standard deviations were between SD=2.76 and SD=5.70 for "Confidence on Distance Education", SD=5.01 and SD=7.96 for interest and SD=6.36 and SD=13.35 for attitude. Significant differences have been observed in the scores of "Confidence on Distance Education" scores. These differences were between research assistants and lecturers, teaching assistants and lecturers, experts and lecturers, assistant professors and lecturers, associated professors and lecturers, professors and lecturers.

Significant differences have been observed in the answers of the faculty members to the question of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" These significant differences are presented in Table 5.

Similarly, the demographic data obtained from the participants and the answers they have given to the attitude scale have been analyzed by LSD multiple comparison method; the significant findings obtained from this analysis is given in Table 6.

Analyzing Table 6, according to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "I enjoy watching distance education related research and publications", it has been observed that it is effective on only one of the variables; "the case of studying in a distance education before" (p<0.00).

Table 3: ANOVA results

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Confidence	Between groups	634.94	6	105.82	6.09	.00
	Within groups	4568.15	533	17.37		
	Total	5203.09	539			
Interest	Between groups	355.65	6	59.27	1.76	.10
	Within groups	8837.55	533	33.60		
	Total	9193.20	539			
Total	Between groups	801.09	6	133.51	1.65	.13
	Within groups	21238.67	533	80.75		
	Total	22039.76	539			

Table 4: Totals based on positions, descriptive statistics related to subscales and differences of Tukey HSD

Attitude towards distance education	Position	N	Mean	SD	Difference
Confidence in Distance Edu.	Res. Ass.	130	18.43	3.84	1-4, 2-4, 3-4,
	Teac. Ass.	138	19.22	4.26	4-5, 4-6, 4-7
	Expert	10	22.00	5.43	
	Lecturer	24	13.00	2.76	
	Asst. Prof	168	20.12	4.20	
	Assoc. Prof	24	18.17	5.70	
	Prof	46	20.00	4.06	
	Total	540	19.10	4.40	
Interest in Dis. Edu.	Res. Ass.	130	28.66	5.42	
	Teac. Ass.	138	30.86	5.01	
	Expert	10	29.60	7.96	
	Lecturer	24	32.50	6.65	
	Asst. Prof	168	30.25	6.47	
	Assoc. Prof	24	27.33	6.31	
	Prof	46	28.91	5.20	
	Total	540	29.87	5.85	
Total Attitude	Res. Ass.	130	47.09	8.58	
	Teac. Ass.	138	50.07	8.10	
	Expert	10	51.60	13.35	
	Lecturer	24	45.50	6.36	
	Asst. Prof	168	50.37	9.69	
	Assoc. Prof	24	45.50	11.81	
	Prof	46	48.91	8.47	
	Total	540	48.97	9.05	—

*$p<0.05$

Table 5: The attitudes of faculty members towards distance education

Scale items	Yes (%)	Unde- cided	No %	p
	4	3	4	
1. I enjoy watching distance education related research and publications	56.36	38.14		<.00
2. Distance education is as effective as face to face (traditional) education as an education method.	43.64	41.53		<.00
3. I feel sorry for the time spent for the activities related to distance education.	41.82		42.33	<.00
4. Distance education sounds like a different excitement	63.64	40.47		<.00
6. It gives me great pleasure to be in the activities related to distance education.	41.82	39.53		<.04
8. I am not sure that we can get sufficient results from distance education	40.00	41.40		<.00
9. The studies related to distance education must be extended.	54.55		50.70	<.01
10. Distance education forces people to individualism, so I don't approve it.	36.36	36.74		<.00
11. It bothers me to make investments on distance education rather than making improvements on traditional education.	36.36		34.11	<.00
15. Distance education does not mean anything beyond being an education approach for me.	45.45		32.56	<.01

(3: Undecided, 4: I agree)

A similar comparison was made in accordance with the sub-scales of the attitude scale; significant differences were observed in the answers of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" and "Faculty/College". The corresponding values are given in Table 7.

According to the LSD multiple comparison results conducted for Confidence Subscale, it has been determined that one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.00) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00) were effective.

Table 6: The results of LSDmultiple comparison

	A1	A10	A3	A4
B1. I enjoy watching distance education related research and publications				
B2. Distance education is as effective as face to face (traditional) education as an education method.	p<0.02	p<0.00		
B3. I feel sorry for the time spent for the activities related to distance education.	p<0.01		p<0.00	
B4. Distance education sounds like a different excitement	p<0.04	p<0.00		
B6. It gives me great pleasure to be in the activities related to distance education.	p<0.05	p<0.00		
B7. Distance education is a strong tool to reach wider audience.	p<0.00			
B8. I am not sure that we can get sufficient results from distance education	p<0.04	p<0.00		
B9. The studies related to distance education must be extended.	p<0.00	p<0.00		p<0.03
B10. Distance education forces people to individualism, so I don't approve it.	p<0.01	p<0.00		
B15. Distance education does not mean anything beyond being an education approach for me.	p<0.01	p<0.00		

(A1: Faculty/College, A10: Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far? A3: Position, A4: Sex)

Table 7: Subscales of the attitude scale and demographic variables

Variables	Source	DF of squares	Sum square	Mean value	F	Pr>F
Confidence	Model	26	44.71	1.71	3.53	<.00
	Error	513	118.25	0.48		
	General	539	162.97			
Interest	Model	26	26.16	1.00	2.63	<.00
	Error	513	92.86	0.38		
	General	539	119.02			

According to the multiple comparison results conducted for interest sub-scale, it has been determined that one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.0065) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00) were effective.

The answers of faculty members based on their faculty/college, which exhibit significant differences, are given in Table 8. The results showed that there were significant differences on the given answers to B1, B3, B8, B9, B11, and B15 with regard faculty or college that the academic staffs working at.

The answers of faculty members based on their positions, which exhibit significant differences, are given in Table 9. The results showed that there were significant differences on the given answers to B3, B8, B10, B11, and B15 with regard position of the academic staffs.

4. The Opinions of Faculty Members that can Contribute to Distance Education Practices

The descriptive analyses of the opinions of faculty members regarding distance education practices, which can contribute to the system, have been performed in order to find the answer

Table 8: The comparisons of scale items depending on Faculty/College

Statistic	DF Value	χ^2	Prob
B1: I enjoy watching distance education related research and publications.	68	93.23	0.02
B3: I feel sorry for the time spent for the activities related to distance education.	85	141.80	0.00
B8: I am not sure that we can get sufficient results from distance education.	68	92.53	0.02
B9: The studies related to distance education must be extended.	68	88.90	0.04
B11: It bothers me to make investments on distance education rather than making improvements on traditional education.	68	108.75	0.00
B15: Distance education does not mean anything beyond being an education approach for me.	68	95.55	0.01

(DF: between groups)

Table 9: Comparisons of the scale items depending on positions

Statistic	DF value	χ^2	Prob
B3: I feel sorry for the time spent for the activities related to distance education.	30	97.48	<.00
B8: I am not sure that we can get sufficient results from distance education.	24	54.38	0.00
B10: Distance education forces people to individualism, so I don't approve it.	24	55.69	0.00
B11: It bothers me to make investments on distance education rather than making improvements on traditional education.	24	45.53	0.00
B15: Distance education does not mean anything beyond being an education approach for me.	24	44.60	0.00

of the 4th question of the research. The results of the analysis are given in Table 10.

Analyzing the Table 10, 76.22 percent of the faculty members states that they cannot contribute to distance education practices in terms of 17 aspects, whereas 23.78 percent state that they can contribute to aforesaid aspects.

DISCUSSION

The findings obtained have been discussed by comparing with the related literature on the basis of the research questions.

1. The Attitudes of the Faculty Members towards Distance Education

Considering the Table 2, it has been seen that the average attitude score obtained by the faculty members on the sub-scale of "Confidence on Distance Education" was = 19.14. According to the results obtained, it can be suggested that although the attitudes of the faculty members related to the mentioned sub-scale is in a positive tendency, they also have some concerns since the distance education practices are

Table 10: The frequency and percentage distributions of the opinions of faculty members that can contribute to distance education practices

The aspect that can contribute	Can't contribute		Can contribute		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Preparing the content of the course	252	46.70	288	53.30	540	100
2. Converting the content into the course books within principles of DE	376	69.60	164	30.40	540	100
3. Preparing the content in accordance with the teaching software	438	81.10	102	18.90	540	100
4. Converting the script into the teaching software	490	90.70	50	9.30	540	100
5. Preparing the figures, graphs, animations etc. in the script in the conversion process of the content into the teaching software	432	80.00	108	20.00	540	100
6. Preparing the content for audio presentation (radio program, audio cassette, CD)	400	74.10	140	25.90	540	100
7. Converting the audio presentation into the tape and CD environment	454	84.10	86	15.90	540	100
8. Converting the content into the TV/Video script	472	87.40	68	12.60	540	100
9. Preparing figure, graphics, animation etc. for TV/Video	462	85.60	78	14.40	540	100
10. Transferring the script into the VHS cassette as a whole	494	91.50	46	8.50	540	100
11. Transferring the syllabus from VHS to CD environment	490	90.70	50	9.30	540	100
12. Offering lectures via teleconference in the DE period	390	72.20	150	27.80	540	100
13. Offering lectures via audio conference system in the DE period	396	73.30	144	26.70	540	100
14. Offering face to face lectures in the DE period	310	57.40	230	42.60	540	100
15. Offering lectures via internet in certain times (in the chatrooms either audio or visual)	372	68.90	168	31.10	540	100
16. Consulting in the DE period (once a week depending on the credit of the course)	370	68.50	170	31.50	540	100
17. Having assistance from the internet related to the course during DE period (once a week depending on the credit of the course)	400	74.10	140	25.90	540	100
Total	6998	76.20	2192	23.80	9180	100

not widely used in Turkey and people are not informed sufficiently about the system yet. Considering the scores of the faculty members obtained from the subscale of "Interest on Distance Education", it has been seen that the average score of the attitudes was calculated as $\overline{X}$=29.92. According to this average value, it has been found that although the faculty members think positively in terms of the aspect of interest, this interest is not sufficient enough as desired. Finally, it has been seen that the average score of the faculty members obtained from attitude scale towards distance education was $\overline{X}$=49.07. Based on these results, it can be suggested that the distribution of attitudes of faculty members are nearly in a positive manner; although they seem interested and confident, they still have some uncertainties.

2. The Attitudes of Faculty Members towards Distance Education Depending on Their Positions

Analyzing the Table 3, as a result of the variance analyses on attitudes of the faculty members on distance education, it has been seen that there are significant differences in the sub-scale of "confidence in distance education" depending on positions of the faculty members. According to the result of Tukey LSD, considering the attitude scores of faculty members, included in the study, related to the subscale of the 1st scale, it has been seen that the average attitude score of Research assistants in this subscale was (=18.43), whereas it was ($\overline{X}$=19.22) for Teaching Assistants, ($\overline{X}$=22.00) for Experts, ($\overline{X}$=20.12) for Assistant Professors, (=18.17) for Associate Professors, ($\overline{X}$=20.00) for Professors and ($\overline{X}$=13.00) for Lecturers at a level of α = 0.05, respectively. According to this result, it can be suggested that the attitudes of all faculty members, excluding the Lecturers, towards distance education seem more positive and confident compared to the attitude and confidence of the Lecturers.

3. The Variables Affecting the Attitudes of Faculty Members towards Distance Education

Considering the Table 4, there are differences between lecturers and all the other academic staff in point of "Confidence in Distance Education". In Turkey, lecturers are considered as academic staff who do not need to advance in their academic career. This consideration may affect their level of confidence in distance education.

Considering the Table 5, it can be said that there are significant differences between the answers of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" and answers of the items number 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 15 in the scale. As a result, it has been concluded that majority (63.64%) of the participants, who have already studied in a distance education system, have agreed on the item "Distance education sounds like a different excitement", whereas most of the participants (50.77%), who have not studied in this system so far, have agreed on the item "The studies related to distance education must be extended as much as possible".

According to the LSD multiple comparison results (see Table 6) related to dependent variable of "Distance education is as effective as face to face (traditional) education as an education method (B2)", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.02) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "Distance education is as effective as face to face (traditional) education as an education method (B2)", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.00) and the variable of "Position" (p<0.01).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "Distance education sounds like a different excitement", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.04) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "It gives me great pleasure to be in the activities related to distance education (B6)", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.05) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.05).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "Distance education is a strong tool to reach wider audience (B7)", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.00).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "I am not sure that we can get sufficient results from distance education (B8)", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.04) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "The studies related to distance education must be extended (B9)", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.00), Sex (p<0.03) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "Distance education forces people to individualism, so I don't approve it (B10)", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.01) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results related to dependent variable of "Distance education does not mean anything beyond being an education approach for me (B15)", it has been determined that it is effective on one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.01) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.01).

According to the LSD multiple comparison results (see Table 7) conducted for *Confidence Subscale,* it has been determined that one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.00) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00) were effective.

According to the multiple comparison results (see Table 7) conducted for *Interest Subscale,* it has been determined that one of the independent variables "Faculty/College" (p<0.0065) and the item of "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" (p<0.00) were effective.

Considering the perspectives of faculty members (see Table 8) on distance education depending on their departments (faculty/college), the most significant differences were observed in the item "I feel sorry for the time spent for the activities related to distance education".

After making some comparisons depending on positions(see Table 9), some significant differences have been identified in terms of all negative questions related to Distance Education in the scale. In parallel with the result obtained depending on the type of the school (college/faculty), the most importance significance was observed in "I feel sorry for the time spent for the activities related to distance education".

4. The Opinions of Faculty Members that can Contribute to Distance Education Practices

Considering the aspects of faculty members on point of contribution to distance education (see Table 10), they can make some contributions, and distributions of the faculty members, it has been determined that 20 percent to 51 percent of the faculty members can contribute to the items of 1, 14, 16, 15, 2, 12, 13, 17, 6 and 5, respectively; whereas 9.3 percent to 18.9 percent of the faculty members can contribute to other activities.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the attitudes of faculty members, working at the University of Yüzüncü Yil, on distance education programs and their potential contributions have been investigated. A total of 540 faculty members from all faculties and colleges have participated to the study.

Considering the findings of the study related to the perspectives of faculty members regarding distance education, it has been determined that although the total attitude scores of the faculty members related to distance education along with the scores of subscales of "confidence in distance education" and "interest in distance education" are higher than the average, they are not at a high level. Considering the answers given by the participants regarding "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?", it has been seen that most of them have not been in any distance education practice before. This situation can be interpreted that the participants of the study have not sufficient information about distance education. However, it can be also discussed that to what extent investigating the distance education practices positively affect the attitudes towards distance education. It can be also suggested that the scores of the participants were not higher as

expected due to these reasons. In contrast, it has been seen that there are significant results related to the answers given by faculty members regarding distance education attitude scale, demographic data, "Have you ever studied on a distance education application so far?" and some attitude items. There are significant differences between the answers of the faculty members, studied in distance education before, and other faculty members, have not studied in distance education yet, in terms of some attitudes related to distance education.

Considering the findings of the study related to the aspects that can contribute to distance education practices by the faculty members; it has been determined that these faculty members need advancedlevel of technicalknowledge and skills in order to contribute to distance education practices and making these practices more effective. 53.3 percent of the participants have stated that they can contribute to only preparation of the curriculum of the course. It can be said that the preparation of the content for distance education is not very different compared to the content of courses with traditional teaching methods. Nevertheless, these rates show that the participants are either experience a general insufficiency to prepare the content of distance education courses or do not have sufficient information about distance education practices. On the other hand, the answers of the participants regarding teaching design and development of teaching software show negative manners ranged between the values of 69 percent and 91 percent. This situation can be interpreted as that they do not see themselves capable enough for teaching design and developing the teaching software. These data can also be considered as that the participants do not see themselves capable enough for teaching design and developing the teaching software within the scope of only distance education practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering that distance education practices take place at the universities including the aforesaid university, the following recommendations can be made by taking the findings of this study into account.

The differences between the academic staffs who have applied or studied distance education practices and who have not, suggest that the activities, designed to inform faculty members about distance education, must begin as soon as possible. Some training activities should be organized towards preparation of distance education courses, development of teaching materials, use of teaching technologies and gaining skills primarily for faculty members that are interested and eager in distance education. In accordance with the related studies conducted in this field, trial practices should be performed in the courses with suitable contents. Preparation and using contents for distance education may have some differences than the traditional educational practices. In order to find out these differences and develop a guideline for content preparation and instruction in distance education, further studies are recommended to be conducted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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