

ASSESSMENT OF ANADOLU UNIVERSITY HOME MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM IN TERMS OF STUDENTS

Assist. Prof. Dr. Serpil DUNDAR
Open Education Faculty, Anadolu University
Eskisehir, TURKEY

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is the assessment of Anadolu University Open Education Faculty, Management and Organization Department, Home Management Associate Degree Program providing education via distance education system in terms of students. For this purpose, a survey consisting of 33 questions has been prepared. This survey has been sent to all active students enrolled to this department by e-mail. The following are primarily mentioned in the study; the purpose and function of the home management associate degree program which is a women oriented education program, information on the courses and student numbers.

Thereafter, by referring to the subject of woman in distance education in Turkey and in the world and the related statistical data of woman and man on education, the positive and negative sides of the distance education were mentioned with regards to women. At the findings stage, 343 surveys received from students have been assessed by being analyzed in SPSS program.

The following have been taken into consideration in the assessment; demographic characteristics of students, reasons to prefer the program, the courses from which they benefit in their social lives, intra-family relations and business lives, their opinions on academic program, computer and internet utilization, whether the program makes contribution to acquire a profession, improve themselves as an individual and growing consciousness on woman rights. In conclusion, the program assessment has been carried out in terms of students.

Keywords: Anadolu University, distance education, home management, woman.

INTRODUCTION

Open education is seen as a way of bringing more women in education because those who cannot receive proper education are mostly women both in Turkey and in the world and because the open education system overcomes limitations such as distance, time and multiple decisions. Women who cannot find the opportunity for formal education prefer open education as a way of improving themselves. For women, Open education plays an important role in personal development.

Women cannot benefit from formal education facilities because of time and place restrictions, scarcity of recourses and overwhelming duties at home. Therefore, they can be provided with opportunities to improve themselves and complete their education by open education system that serves the opportunities at their homes without any time or place restrictions. (Demiray, 2010, s. ix.).

In Turkey, besides the formal higher education departments of Child Development and Education, Home Economy, Child Development and Pre-school Education, Decorative Products, Clothing, Ready-made Clothing, Hairstyling and Beauty, Embroidery, Knitting Teaching, which aim at giving formal education for women, Eskisehir Anadolu University started associate degree program in Home Management in 1992-1993. It is one of the

open education faculty associate degree programs in the university and it enriched the list of the offered programs, which have included license degree programs in Economics and Management since 1982.

The program aims at giving students the skill and knowledge to use the sources of home, family and individuals in the most efficient way. The courses for which the students of the program are responsible in their first year are General Management, Introduction to Behavioral Sciences, Introduction to Economics, Communication, History of Civilizations, Basics of Information Technologies, Introduction to Law and Foreign Language.

In the second year they are taking Family Finances, Turkish Language, History of Atatürk's Principles and Revolutions, Family Health, Family Structure and Relations, Home Management, Women in Society, Family Psychology and Teaching courses. As of November 20, 2012, there are 4038 and 5044 active and passive students attending House Management program. 28.175 women and 19.232 men have finished the program since it was established in 1992-1993. People who graduate from this department can work as a specialist in ministries, hotels, nursery schools, kindergartens, hospitals, nursing homes, etc. In short, any public or private institution that takes up the tasks at home can be a workplace for the graduate students. (www.anadolu.edu.tr. 19.11.2012)

When the women and men examined in terms of education, it can be seen that, of all the 3.171.270 illiterate people, 553.704 are men and 2.617.566 are women. The number of men who graduated from a higher education program is 3.196.262 and the number of graduate women is 2.299.487 in the total number of 5.495.749 graduates.

45% (1.713.602) of the students who are attending a higher education program in 2010/2011 are women. (KSGM –Head Office for Status of Women-, 2012, s.12, 14).

Social connotations for women, their fertility and productivity roles affect their formal education process negatively. Society sees women as housewives and babysitters, and it does not welcome any activity that would spoil their schedule for the roles.

As a result, women, especially with a family, have difficulty in attending studies or activities outside home and there is a lot of research justifying the fact. That is why open education seems to fit commonly for women.

Moreover, attendance to courses for women with roles housewives and mothers makes it very difficult to manage time; however, distance education system lets them be as flexible as they want in terms of time. Women's inclination towards open education is fostered by their time, place and resource restrictions and also by their socio-economic incapability. (Kwapong, 2007, s:69).

In the countries where open education is a means of higher education, there are a number of studies conducted on male and female students' participation to distance education programs.

In one of her studies, Christine Von Prummer reveals that distance education is a favorable facility in the sense that it lets housewives and mothers plan and organize their house chores, their time to spend with kids and their own time to study and work.

In distance education, especially adult women can pursue their education while they are working or starting a family as well. (Von Prummer, 2000, s:3). In her study, Sheila Wipf states that distance education is a very apt opportunity for women who wish to develop themselves in academic sense and that it lets them pull the strings of their own life, which was beyond the bounds of possibility in the past.

She also asserts that the number of women utilizing computer and other technologies in distance education has come up to the number of men. (Wipf, 2007).

The following data has been attained in the study carried out by Kirkup and Von Prummer: Multiple roles that women take on, financial burdens, security worries and distance to the facilities become an impediment for women to receive traditional education. For a woman who takes on all the responsibilities at home, it becomes impossible even to go to the place of education. Surrounded by financial restrictions, they cannot pay for tuition, babysitters and transportation for the sake of attending formal education.

Besides, cultural roles that are fixed for women, early marriages and lack of family support destroy their desire to go to school. However, distance education systems can overcome most of the boundaries that prevent women from receiving education and raise the level of justice in education by lessening the differences in physical appearance, socio-economic backgrounds, race and gender. Learning becomes independent from time and place, but the financial and technological restrictions remain in distance education, too.

Technophobia and the expensiveness of hardware and software can still bear problems for women. (Eshelman, 1997).

Open education systems are a great opportunity for women to complete their education, yet it can be still problematic for especially working women to benefit from distance education due to their responsibilities at home.

They cannot allocate enough time for their studies and cannot get support from the other family members.

A criticism about women attending distance education programs is that these programs lock women down in their homes, alienate them from social life and push them to loneliness.

Students cannot get enough interaction while they can receive enough of it in face-to-face education.

Nevertheless, distance education system is a worthy opportunity for women to acquire a profession, pursue a career/status and complete unfinished education; and also for lessening the inequalities originating from gender. (Demiray, 2010, p.119).

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this study is the assessment of Anadolu University Open Education Faculty, Management and Organization Department, Home Management Associate Degree Program providing education via distance education system in terms of students.

For this purpose, a survey consisting of 33 questions has been prepared and this survey has been sent to 2129 female and 2968 male students enrolled to this department by e-mail. 343 students out of 5097 have sent the survey back but one survey has been canceled.

The evaluations have been made on 342 surveys. As the variables in the survey are nominal, one of the non parametrical techniques chi-square method has been employed and cross-charts relationships have been explained.

SPSS 20.0 packaged software was used in the scope of this analysis. The purpose and function of the home management associate degree program which is a women oriented education program, information on the courses and student numbers are mentioned in the introduction part of the study.

Thereafter, by referring to the subject of woman in distance education in Turkey and in the world and the related statistical data of woman and man on education, the positive and negative sides of the distance education were mentioned with regards to women.

At the findings stage, 342 surveys received from students have been assessed and evaluated.

The following have been taken into consideration in the assessment; demographic characteristics of students, reasons to prefer the program, the courses from which they benefit in their social lives, intra-family relations and business lives, their opinions on academic program, computer and internet utilization, whether the program makes contribution to acquire a profession, improve themselves as an individual and growing consciousness on woman rights.

In conclusion, the program assessment has been carried out in terms of students.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study, aiming the assessment of Anadolu University Open Education Faculty, Management and Organization Department, Home Management Associate Degree Program providing education via distance education system in terms of students; 30.7% of 342 participants are women and 69.3% are men.

The women participated in the study are aged between 18-24 with a rate of 44.8%, 25-34 with a rate of 39% and the men participated in the study are aged between 25-34 with a rate of 39.2% and between 18-24 with a rate of 28.7%. As for the marital status; whilst 68.6% of the women and 54% of the men said they are single, 77.1% of the women and 62.4% of the men said they do not have kids.

Considering the income rates of the students, 49.5% of the women and 23.6% of the men said they have no regular income while 29.5% of the women and 30.8% said they have a monthly income of 1000-2000 TL.

The region where 44.8% of the women and 40.1% of the men live is Marmara and it is followed by Inner Anatolian region. "Big cities" top the list of the residential place with a rate of 61.9% for women and 57% for men and second best choice is "small cities".

After the demographics of the participants, they were asked about their opinion on the distance education programs.

First, their reasons to prefer the program were questioned and the answers of the female participants were "acquiring a profession" with a percentage of 53.3% and "getting promotion in the current job" with 19%.

However; men said they chose it for "getting promotion in the current job" with a rate of 34.6% and to "getting a degree" with a rate of 31.2%.

As seen in Table: 1, there is a significant correlation between sex and reasons to prefer the program ($p < 0,05$). The reasons of male participants to prefer the program gather

around "getting a degree" and "getting a promotion in the current job".

However, those of women are found as "acquiring a profession" with a rate of 53.3%. When the findings are analyzed in terms of gender, women regard Home Management program as a women oriented program to get a profession while men see it as a way of getting promotion in their current job and getting a degree, not as a way to acquire a job.

This result complies with the objectives of the program as is stated in the employment opportunities of the program.

Table 1:
The Reasons to prefer the program

| $\chi^2 = 43,977; p=0,000$ | | | Sex | | Total |
|----------------------------|---|---|--------|--------|--------|
| | | | Female | Male | |
| The reasons | Acquiring necessary information for the family and daily life | f | 4 | 12 | 16 |
| | | % | 3.8% | 5.1% | 4.7% |
| | Getting a degree | f | 17 | 74 | 91 |
| | | % | 16.2% | 31.2% | 26.6% |
| | For general knowledge | f | 4 | 15 | 19 |
| | | % | 3.8% | 6.3% | 5.6% |
| | Getting promotion at current job | f | 20 | 82 | 102 |
| | | % | 19.0% | 34.6% | 29.8% |
| | Self-realization | f | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| | | % | 1.9% | 2.5% | 2.3% |
| | Acquiring a profession | f | 56 | 48 | 104 |
| | | % | 53.3% | 20.3% | 30.4% |
| | Coincidence | f | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | | % | 1.9% | 0.0% | 0.6% |
| Total | | f | 105 | 237 | 342 |
| | | % | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

When students are asked if they find the courses in the program satisfactory, Female students stated that they find them satisfactory with a rate of 82.9% and male students said that they find it satisfactory with a rate of 82.3%. (Table 2).

Table: 2
Are the courses in the program satisfactory?

| $\chi^2 = 0,017; p=0,897$ | | | Sex | | Total |
|---------------------------|---|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| | | | Female | Male | |
| Enough | f | 87 | 195 | 282 | |
| | % | 82.9% | 82.3% | 82.5% | |
| Not enough | f | 18 | 42 | 60 | |
| | % | 17.1% | 17.7% | 17.5% | |
| Total | | f | 105 | 237 | 342 |
| | | % | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Opinions of women and men on whether the courses are satisfactory do not differ. ($p < 0,05$). Majority of both men and women think that the courses in the program are satisfactory.

Women find the core courses in the program satisfactory with a rate of 82.9% while men thinks they are satisfactory with a rate of 82.3%. 74.3% of women find the branch courses satisfactory whilst 71.7% of men find them satisfactory.

The rate of women who find language courses re satisfactory is 61.9% and the rate of men who think so 70%.

These findings show the satisfaction of the students about the program, courses and course contents.

However, to the question "Do you think it is enough for the program to be a two year associate degree?", 62.9% of women and 51.5% of men answered "No it is not, it should be a four year license program".

When the question "Does the program make any contributions to acquire a profession?" was asked, students said, "yes" with a rate of 68.4% (Table 3). This rate is 79% for women and 63.7% for men.

It has been noted that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and the opinions on the contribution of the program to get a profession after chi-square analysis. ($P < 0.05$).

It has been also found that the opinions of female participants on contribution of the program to get a profession are more positive compared to men.

This result complies with the fact that women answered "to acquire a job" when their reasons to prefer the program were asked.

Table: 3
Does the program make any contributions to acquire a profession?

| $\chi^2 = 7,919; p = 0,005$ | | | Sex | | Total |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | | Female | Male | |
| Yes | f | 83 | 151 | 234 | |
| | % | 79.0% | 63.7% | 68.4% | |
| No | f | 22 | 86 | 108 | |
| | % | 21.0% | 36.3% | 31.6% | |
| Total | f | 105 | 237 | 342 | |
| | % | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | |

Whether the program makes any contributions to personal growth 75.4% of all the participants answered "yes".

This rate is 82.9% for women and 72.2% for men. It has been noted that there is a meaningful relationship between gender and program's contribution to personal growth. ($p < 0,05$)

It has been also found that the opinions of female participants on program's contribution to personal growth are more positive compared to men.

To the question "Do the courses in the program help raise awareness on woman rights?" 65.7% of women and 65.4% of man answered "yes".

It has been noted that there is not a meaningful relationship between gender and program's contribution to raising awareness on woman rights. ($p > 0,05$) In general, men and women stated positive opinions about the subject. In this sense, the program seems favorable in terms of students.

When the question "What are the courses that you most benefit from in your social life, intra-family relationships and work life?" was asked, 22.9% of women and 24.1% of men chose "Information Technologies" as the course that they most benefited from in their social life.

The second most chosen subject is "Introduction to Law" by 19% of women and 18.1% of men. It has been seen that there is not a meaningful relationship between gender and the most benefited courses in social life. ($p > 0,05$)

The fact that the majority of the participants are young and live in big cities is in direct proportion to their most benefited course "Information Technologies". 43.8% of women and 39.7% of men chose "Introduction to Behavioral Sciences" as the course that they most benefited from in their intra-family relationships.

The second most chosen subject is "Communication" by 34.3% of women and 26.6% of men. There has been spotted no meaningful relationship between gender and the most benefited courses in intra-family relationships. ($p > 0,05$).

No significant difference was detected between course preferences of men and women.

These two courses are important for their intra-family relationships and this implies that the program plays a meaningful role in students' personal life and that the program is reaching its aims.

To the question "What are the courses that you most benefit from in your work life?", 24.8% of women and 27.8% of men answered "General Management" as the course that they most benefited from in their work life.

The second most chosen subject is "Information Technologies" by 21.9% of women and 18.6% of men. It has been seen that there is not a meaningful relationship between gender and the most benefited courses in work life. ($p > 0,05$). No significant difference was detected between course preferences of men and women.

Most of the participants are working at different jobs and it explains why "general management" the most favorable answer for their work life.

94.2% of the participants said they have personal computers. The rate for women who have personal computers is 93.3% and the rate for men is 94.5%.

As for the Internet use, 91.4% of women and 88.6% of men stated they use the Internet. The total rate of the participants who utilize the Internet is 89.5%. No significant difference was detected between the Internet utilization of men and women.

Majority of the students has access to technology and they use it as necessary. The most preferred type of course material is "books" by 52.4% of women and 43.9% of men.

The Internet comes second with a rate of 26.7% by women and 33.8% by men. Similarly,

43.8% of women and 46.4% of men revealed that they use the e-exam service the most among other online services.

Lastly, students were asked whether the program is a women oriented one and 56.1% percent gave the answer "no".

Even if the purpose of the program and job opportunities after graduation may seem womanish considering gender roles in society, students still consider it not exclusive to women regarding the courses and contents of the program.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The program was evaluated as positive by the active students in this study, which aims at assessing Anadolu University Open Education Faculty, Management and Organization Department, Home Management Associate Degree Program providing education via distance education system in terms of students.

"Acquiring a profession" for women and "getting promotion at current job" for men are the most preferred reasons to choose the program. This result complies with the purpose of the program in terms of female students. Opinions of women and men on whether the courses are satisfactory also do not differ.

Majority of both men and women think that the courses in the program are satisfactory.

These findings show the satisfaction of the students about the program, courses and course contents. However, students would prefer the program to be a four year license degree when they were asked if the two year associate degree is sufficient for the program. It has been also found that the opinions of female participants on contribution of the program to get a profession are more positive compared to men.

This result also complies with the fact that women answered, "to acquire a job" when their reasons to prefer the program were asked. It has been also found that the opinions of female participants on program's contribution to personal growth are more positive compared to men. In general, men and women stated positive opinions about the contribution of the courses in the program to raising awareness on woman rights.

Both women and men chose "Information Technologies" as the course that they most benefited from in their social life, "Introduction to Behavioral Sciences" as the course that they most benefited from in their intra-family relationships and "General Management" as the course that they most benefited from in their work life.

The most preferred type of course material is "books" by both women and men. Similarly, Both women and men revealed that they use the e-exam service the most among other online services in distance education.

Open education has a crucial function in women's development and Open Education Faculty "Home Management Associate Degree Program" offers a mostly women oriented program, which aims at earning women the skill and knowledge to use the sources that home, family and individuals have in the most efficient way.

This fact is in line with the fact that women chose "acquiring a profession" as the first reason to choose the program.

Because of time and place restrictions, scarcity of recourses and overwhelming duties at home women can be provided with opportunities to improve themselves and complete

their education by open education system that serves the opportunities at their homes without any time or place restrictions. As is the case in other parts of the world, it should not be enough to start women oriented programs in only higher education level.

It is also necessary to establish informal education programs that would encourage women to work and help them acquire a profession, raise awareness on their own rights and become modern individuals who are self-confident and socially successful.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUHOR



Dr. DUNDAR in 2003, she received doctor's degree with her dissertation titled as "Presentation of Social Gender in Tv News" (Televizyon Haberlerinde Toplumsal Cinsiyetin Sunumu). After receiving the degree of expert in Open Education Faculty, department of non- formal education in 2009, she was appointed as an assistant professor in Open Education Faculty in 2012. Since then, she has been working as an assistant professor in Anadolu University Open Education Faculty. She was directed numerous television educational program in the center of the television production

Anadolu University. And she has many national, international articles and papers about media, women and distance education published in various books and magazines are some of her works. These are "Women's Representation in Television News"(Televizyon Haberlerinde Kadının Temsili), "The Presentation of Violence Against Women in National Newspapers" (Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Şiddetin Ulusal Gazetelerde Yer Alış Biçimi), "Women in Televizyon News in Turkey" (Türkiye'de Televizyon Haberlerinde Kadın), and television educational programme titled "Language and Concept Development in Children".

Assist. Prof. Dr. Serpil DUNDAR
Open Education Faculty, The Center of The Television Production
(Açıköğretim Fakültesi Televizyon Üretim Merkezi)
26470, Eskişehir, Turkey.
Tel : +90222 3350581 (10 hat)/5819
GSM: + 90 532 7174670
Email: sdundar@anadolu.edu.tr

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