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From the Editor

Dear readers of intWOJDE

Welcome to the second issue of the year 2017, Women Online Journal of Distance Education, intWOJDE which it reached and completed its 5th year. As known well intWOJDE aims to establish some more new channels of communication for the women in distance education world in general from the entire world to its specific target since 2012 April. So that, some times we are really in difficulties and sensitive for accepting and rejection the submission which are sent to intWOJDE

Among these goals of the intWOJDE there are to share experiences on effective use of distance education in formal and non-formal education, to provide a communication network among distance education experts in order to able to define new strategies for dealing with the issues of distance education for women. In international scope, this scholarly e-journal will publish refereed articles, researches, case studies, book/conference reviews focusing on the women issues and challenges of providing research and information services to women learners participated or enrolled at any of level of distance education. It will particularly strive to meet the continuing education needs of practitioners by providing a forum for the discussion of extended learning policies and practices, and trends in information technologies as they impact the delivery of any kind of the student support services for distance learners and institutions.

And also, intWOJDE reflects that the disciplines of Women' position, benefits, advantages and disadvantages in Distance Education/Learning, Open Learning areas which are interdependent with one another, as education and technology increasingly affects our system, students, colleagues, distance educators, administrators, researchers and our own professional practice and articles ranging from theoretical to practical studies, across a wide range of interests topics.

Than we are giving a place to women and DE some related sections such as "Notes for Editor", "Re-published Material/s" sections which are aiming to inform you by presenting earlier printed articles, reports, project reports key speeches in conferences or other documents. Other one is "Success Stories" Section inform you success stories of the women who are DE learner or graduated from DE institutions and related subjects women in DE world.

Another section is "Book review/s", which aims to inform you from literature and promote women and DE related books from the DE field. We started for a few issue before publishing "Interviews" section which we are planning to give a place some women expert's thoughts in this section from any field. These experts are mostly selected from deal with any sectors who are successful in their professional carriers such as academics, administrators, lowers, artists, engineer.

In addition also this issue, we decided to prepare and deliver mostly reports for to you as special on reports issue which are re-published so earlier and soonest reports for the reason to be more beneficial to you by informing especially for young generations what are reported around the world which deals with our authors, target readers and the others who are interested in with intWOJDE. We will try to deliver and provide to you, in some periods. We expect your satisfy from old to new evaluations women in distance education. In this Issue four articles, one note for editor, four reports and reprinted materials, one book review, four success stories and one interview with (Dr. Lisa GULTARI) published for intWOJDE readers.

Five articles arrived to intWOJDE from Greece, Pakistan, The Netherlands and Turkey, written by 12 authors. The first article belongs to Dr. Evangelia MANOUSOU who is Tutor Counsellor, Hellenic Open University and Charitini LINARDATOU who is Med. Msc. Teacher from Cephalonia GREECE The purpose of this pilot qualitative research is to investigate the role and importance of Second Chance Schools (SCS) in the course of women trainees' attendance. In particular, the subject of the research which was carried out through online interviews in social networking medium (Facebook) using questionnaires and interviews is to highlight the attitude of women trainees regarding their study experience in SCS as well as the perspective on distance learning during their educational pathway in SCS.

The second article is titled as "A Content Analysis Of Variables On Adaptive Learning Environment: 2000-2015", written by Seda OZER SANAL, from Firat University, Education Faculty, Fulya TORUN, from Adnan Menderes University, and Tülay DARGUT GULER, from Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey. In their study is aimed to examine developing adaptive environments or developed adaptive environments' reflections on learning process. For this reason the related journals were investigated which are from Science Direct and Web of Science databases in the period of 2000-2016 (February). According to the aim of the research adaptive learning, personalized learning and intelligent learning keywords were scanned. The journals which only developed adaptive environments or developed environments which were investigated during learning process are not involved in this study. Total journal number which is included in this content analysis is 61. The results of this content analysis will be helpful for guiding future research in this area.

Third article is arrived from Pakistan. Study is titled as "FEMALE EDUCATION: The Facilitating and Hindering Factors Regarding Female Education in Gilgit-Baltistan Context of Pakistan" which is written by Sultan ALAM, from Aga Khan University. This paper reports a study conducted in one of the villages of Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan. The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of female students and their parents regarding female education. A qualitative case study method was employed to investigate the subject matter. The participants were selected on the basis of pre-determined criteria. The findings of the study showed that female education in the context is influenced by various factors including societal norms, parents perceptions and teachers attitude. It was depicted that female students have adapted such critical circumstances and are motivated to acquire their education. Since the role of society is directly associated with the attitude of female education, and their success depends upon active involvement of whole society, therefore the study recommends that this aspect must be given more attention to further strengthen the female education in our society. This ultimately can improve societal performance through increasing female education rate in the context.

The fourth article written by Belgin BOZ YUKSEKDAG and Erol KARACA from Anadolu University, Eskisehir Turkey. Study is titled as The Perception Scale Towards Distance Nursing Education (perstoDNE). The study was carried out to develop the perception scale towards the distance nursing education. The sample of the study consisted of 777 nurses who agreed to participate in this study. The Perception Scale towards Distance Nursing Education (perstoDNE) is a valid and reliable. The scale's total Cronbach alpha coefficient was found .96. The correlations of each item with total point were between .29 and .63. In factor analysis which is done with varimax rotation for construct validity, whose eigenvalue is over 1, explaining 41.27 %of total variability, 4 factors consisting of 49 items was obtained the scale.

These factors are named "Learning", "Communication and Evaluation", "Technology", and "Management". Scale studies should be repeated with nurses who working in different parts of the World. These studies are important for the comparison of the results and the redesign of the scale.

The fifth article from The Netherlands with title as "Enhancing Women's Participation in Agricultural Education In Afghanistan Through Distance Education By The National Agricultural Education College (NAEC) Afghanistan" written by Ayesha SABRI, Shah Pour ABDULRAHIMZAI, Loes WITTEVEEN, Rico LIE, Suzanne VAN DER MEULEN. They focused on women and agricultural relation via National Agriculture Education College (NAEC) institution. They say that agriculture dominates the Afghan economy, providing an income to 61% of the households. 44% of the labour force is engaged in agriculture and women make up to 65% of this labour force. One of the priorities of the Afghan government is to develop agricultural high-school education, vocational education and training and agricultural extension services. In line with these efforts, the National Agriculture Education College (NAEC) was established in 2011, which provides a two-year teacher training course, targeted at prospective teachers for agricultural high schools (AHS). Even though women participate actively in the agricultural sector, they are underrepresented in agricultural education and extension in Afghanistan. This is also seen at NAEC, where the number of female students remains very low and as a consequence limited female teachers are available for the AHS. This paper analyses the situation at NAEC and explores the alternatives that are currently deployed by NAEC to increase access to agricultural education for women and girls.

In the "Notes for Editor" section we placed Nilanga Aki EDIRIWEERA BANDARA's letter which is titled as "Creating and Implementing A Realistic Solution To Educate Women In The Developing World". He mentioned in his letter that education is the most critical means of improving the welfare of women in the developing world. It is a most prerequisite in order to improve both social justice and economic productivity. Education, also, however, is inextricably linked to the overall health and wellbeing of women.

It is evident that social inequality can only be overcome by empowering women through education. It is also true that health literacy is part and partial of a healthy generation. Basic literacy skills could be a powerful tool to prevent diseases in the developing world. Similarly, it can effectively be used to enhance overall healthy lifestyles of vulnerable women in these societies. His letter aims to highlight some of the major barriers women face when obtaining an education, and also a potential solution to this problem.



With this issue four re-printed materials are published. The first re-printed material is about "Big Data Unlocks Impact Investing" which it is mention about rising of the digital revolution and the rise of big data can close the gap between schools in Africa and investors", which is written by Nathan BYRD.

The second one deal with the "The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2017". It is written by Julie Burton who is the President Women's Media Center. She emphasize in this fifth edition of the Women's Media Center's annual assessment of how a diversity of females fare across all media platforms -and in arenas including education, engineering and technology that pump workers into the media pipeline- finds areas of progress, regress and, sadly, outright pushback. Men still dominate media across all platforms -television, newspapers, online and wires- with change coming only incrementally.

Our research projects on coverage of campus rape and coverage of reproductive rights show that the gender of the journalist affects how they cover topics and whom they choose as sources. Women are not equal partners in telling the story, nor are they equal partners in sourcing and interpreting what and who is important in the story.

The third re-printed material is written by By Ron MOBED's Preface who is Chief Executive Officer, Elsevier, USA on "Gender in the Global Research Landscape" Analysis of research performance through a gender lens across 20 years, 12 geographies, and 27 subject areas. As a steward of world research, Elsevier has a responsibility to promote gender equality in STEM-Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics & advance understanding of the impact of gender, sex, and diversity in research. In this regard, Elsevier fully supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5, *"to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls,"* and the Global Research Council's Statement of Principles and Actions Promoting the Equality and Status of Women in Research.



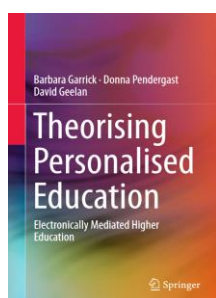
The fourth re-printed material belongs to Elizabeth M. KING & Rebecca WINTHROP, from The Brookings Institution, USA. Their subject is "Today's Challenges for Girls' Education".

*"If only I can get educated,
I will surely be the president."*

*—A teenage girl in rural Malawi
"There is no more valuable investment
than in a girls' education."*

*—Ban Ki Moon, secretary-general,
United Nations*

Educating a girl is one of the best investments her family, community, and country can make. We know that a good quality education can be life-changing for girls, boys, young women, and men, helping them develop to their full potential and putting them on a path for success in their life. We also know that educating a girl in particular can kick-start a virtuous circle of development. More educated girls, for example, marry later, have healthier children, earn more money that they invest back into their families and communities and play more active roles in leading their communities and countries.



Book review is on "THEORISING PERSONALISED EDUCATION Electronically Mediated Higher Education", edited by Barbara Garrick, Donna Pendergast, David Geelan and reviewed by Nil GoKSEL-CANBEK Lecturer School of Foreign Languages Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey. The core focus of this book is to highlight the impact of personalized learning. Throughout the book, the challenges and opportunities regarding personalized learning is explored by giving specific examples from multiple dimensions.

As noted by the authors to comprehend what is beneath personalized education, both similarities and differences in learner characteristics should be taken into great consideration and the concepts namely, de-personalization, im-personalization, inter-personalization and re-personalization should be all revised.

All in all, this book examines the theoretical underpinning of the concept of personalized education and observes e-mediated personalized education. The distance education practices are indicated in the book as well.



Then, INTERVIEW is realized by Dr. Harun SERPIL, Eskisehir, TURKEY, for the our main theme" The Role And Function Of Distance Education World From Women's Perspective: An interview with Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI for WOJDE Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI is an assistant professor and director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication and in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine.

Five Success Stories are mentioned in this issue and the first Afghan Women orchestra is announced. Please click on related button on the page.

We hope that you will enjoy with the KELSEY Wiens's successfully educate herself, 94-YEAR-OLD GRANDMOTHER, Amy CRATON's Bachelor's Degree adventure, and "My Entrepreneurship Story" as Burcu's Story.

You can reach us online either directly at <http://www.wojde.org> to receive further information and to send your recommendations and remarks, or to submit articles for consideration, please contact [intWOJDE](mailto:intwojde@gmail.com) Secretariat at the below address or e-mail us at intwojde@gmail.com

Hope to stay in touch and wishing to meet in our next Issue, 1st of June 2017.

Cordially,
Prof. Dr. Emine DEMIRAY
Editor in Chief of intWOJDE

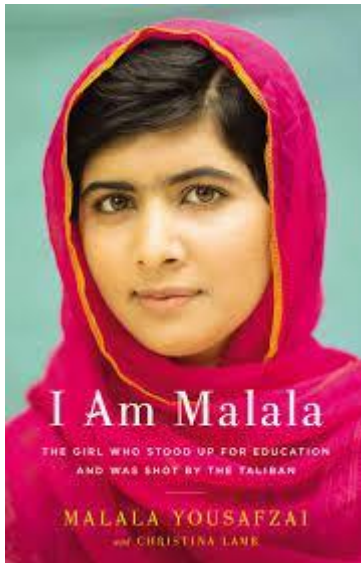
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Online Learning Insights
A Place for Learning about Online Education

**"I am Malala":
A REVIEW OF THE BOOK AND
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION**

Debbie MORRISON



I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban. Little, Brown and Company, 2013.

"I am Malala" is the true story of a fourteen-year old girl's campaign for women's right to education. In 2011 Malala was shot by the Taliban in a bus on her way home from school.

Two men boarded the school bus - "*Who is Malala*" they asked and fired gun shots; two lodged in Malala's head. The series of events that followed, described in Malala's voice, are remarkable- the politics, the media frenzy and her recovery. The shooting triggered a complex series of negotiations involving prominent political figures from Pakistan and England.

It's a powerful book. Malala's story is remarkable in light of women's role in her culture and the groups fighting to oppress women-in this case the Taliban. It was the Taliban that claimed responsibility for shooting Malala calling her crusade for education rights an "obscenity." (Walsh, 2012).

OVERVIEW

The first half of the book Malala describes Pakistan's history including the history of her ancestors and the northern region of Pakistan, Swat where she lives. Malala also shares stories of her family, giving the reader a glimpse into the culture of Pakistan from a young woman's perspective.

Many of the stories involve Malala's father Ziauddin Yousafzai. She describes his involvement in local politics, in the community and his vocal support of education for boys *and* girls. There's no doubt Malala's passion and courage to stand-up for women's rights stems from her father's actions and character. Ziauddin Yousafzai defied Taliban orders by running a private school that encouraged girls to attend.

Malala describes the challenges and frustrations her father faced when starting the school. The motto over the school's door read "*We are committed to build for your the call of the new era*". Her father believed the school's students could fight the enemy with pens, not swords.

Some reviewers claimed the book was poorly written, disjointed. It's a valid point. The first half of the book does jump around, sometimes repeating facts. But I see this as a sign of authenticity; it's written in a 14-year old's voice, from her perspective. The first half of the book provides context for the second half. I could appreciate more about what happened to Malala after her shooting because of the background she included.

EDUCATION's VALUE

In Western culture it's unthinkable that women be excluded from education. Malala and her story are symbolic of education freedom and the book delivers a message to the world. Education, considered a right for many is used as a mechanism for oppression in some countries.

Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow." Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human. -*Malala Yousafzai*

Malala's story emphasizes education's value. Looking deeper it challenges readers to examine the role of education, its purpose and function within a society. Withholding education from certain groups within a society hinders progress, threatens peace and perpetuates poverty. These principles also apply to Western cultures where education is the starting point for eliminating poverty, reducing crime and violence in impoverished neighborhoods. There are parallels; it's thought-provoking.

MOOCs and Education for Women without Access Daphne Koller founder of Coursera when launching the MOOC platform often spoke about MOOCs as a vehicle to bring education to those without access and MOOCs "democratizing education". Though the chances that MOOCs will bring education to women in countries like Pakistan and empower them is questionable.

How can MOOCs democratize education if a country's government is unstable, when there is oppression of women and other groups? Or where there is no internet or access to computers or mobile devices? What about language barriers?

MOOCs do have potential to deliver education to those without access, yet there are significant barriers to overcome.

- ✓ How Jordan's Queen plans to 'democratize access' to education, VB News, Christina Farr
- ✓ Daphne Koller: "MOOCs can be a Significant Factor in Opening Doors to Opportunity", Edsurge, Daphne Koller

CURRICULUM FOR "I am Malala"

George Washington University and the Global Women's Institute developed a university-level curriculum based upon "I am Malala" to work across various academic disciplines. The tools focus on themes such as how education empowers women, global feminism, political extremism and youth advocacy. One of the goals of the program is to encourage college students and eventually high school students to get involved, to facilitate dialogue among various groups, and to influence public opinion about access to education and women's rights.

- ✓ Global Women's Institute Launches 'I Am Malala' Resource Guide for Educators, GW Today, Lauren Ingeno
- ✓ I am Malala Resource Guide for Educators, Global Women's Institute, George Washington University

CLOSING

"I am Malala" is a compelling read. Malala as an individual is a remarkable women who is a hero for women's right to a quality education. With her father, Malala created the Malala Fund that supports education for women including the Global Partnership for Education. The book is a good starting point for learning about the complexities of women's rights in some countries and education access. "I am Malala" delivers a message to each reader about the value of education. Education empowers.

CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A REALISTIC SOLUTION TO EDUCATE WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

(Freshman Student)
Nilanga Aki EDIRIWEERA BANDARA
Faculty of Land & Food Systems at
The University of British Columbia, Canada

Dear Editor of intWOJDE

Education is the most critical means of improving the welfare of women in the developing world. It is a most prerequisite in order to improve both social justice and economic productivity. Education, also, however, is inextricably linked to the overall health and wellbeing of women. It is evident that social inequality can only be overcome by empowering women through education.

It is also true that health literacy is part and partial of a healthy generation. Basic literacy skills could be a powerful tool to prevent diseases in the developing world. Similarly, it can effectively be used to enhance overall healthy lifestyles of vulnerable women in these societies.

My article aims to highlight some of the major barriers women face when obtaining an education, and also a potential solution to this problem.



Tough Expectations

By Nilanga Aki Ediriweera Bandara

A little girl no more than five, a father she loved a mother

She never got the chance to know.

Her father loved her, gave her everything he had.

Her new mother did not.

She was expected to: cook, clean, stay at home.....

Be a girl

Her brothers went to school and explored the realms of chakkare^{*1}.

While, she stayed at home.

Her brothers went out to play cricket with their friends on the field.

While, she stayed at home.

Her brothers went out to watch movies at the theatre.

While, she stayed at home.

Her brothers went to university.

While, she stayed at home.

Her brothers went on to become: doctors, engineers, teachers and dentists.

While, she stayed at home.

She stayed at home until she was married off at the age of Nineteen.

Her husband went to work.

While, she stayed at home.

Her children went to school.

While, she stayed at home.

Her children got married and left home.

While, she stayed at home.



She was my grandmother and she did not have the opportunity to get educated, hence I would like to dedicate this article to promote the education of women in the developing world

How can we create an education system that everyone can benefit from? How can we

construct a system that does not discriminate and promote education as a privilege and not a fundamental human right? I believe that educating all human beings can make a true difference in the world. I would like to refer to a famous quote by Helen Keller: "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Basically, Keller's point is that we as human beings can achieve much more if we work collaboratively, rather than working individually. Perhaps, this will light some fire underneath our feet and push us to think how we could effectively find ways to educate women in third world countries. It is imperative that we prioritize the education of women in the developing world because there is a direct correlation that shows increased female education rates are proportionate to the increasing success of such nation (Gakidou, Cowling, Lozano, & Murray, 2010 and also Summers, L. H., & World Bank e-Library. (n.d.).

With this in mind, why are we not taking the stance to educate women more proactively? Why are we not all out on the streets with a two by four that reads: "Educate women!"? It is evident that educating women has not been a top priority of governments in the recent years. Sure we have made progress but the situation has not really changed dramatically (Summers, L. H., & World Bank e-Library. (n.d.)). We must take proactive measures to ensure that females who are living in the developing world have the ability to educate themselves without being harassed by those claiming "Women should stay at home." How can we change these traditional beliefs? After my research, I came across four common obstacles women living in the developing world face when attempting to obtain an education- family, discrimination, distance and poverty. These four forces do not work independently, rather they are intertwined in society and therefore solving this problem has become even more arduous.



Taking into consideration the family aspect of educating women seems to be one of the most tedious obstacles. Therefore, changes in the attitudes of family members can make a woman's life significantly better. Moreover, members of the family have many ways to influence and force women to do things that they would not normally agree to (Grewal, 2003 and also Alers, et al., 2014). For example, child marriage has often been cited as a primary reason why women in the developing world are unable to be educated appropriately as they are required to spend time as wives and not students (Wodon, Minh, & Clarence, 2016). Unfortunately, this fate is fairly common for girls ⁶ ; because of their family commitments, they do not have the time to engage in education. Another lingering issue, in terms of the family dynamic, is that there is a certain cultural stigma that is spread across the majority of households in the developing world; this is called the "women viewed as less than" stigma , in which women are labelled as "less than" men. This notion is very evident in Sharia Law- where women have little to no rights and freedoms in public when compared to the likes of men (Kooria, 2016).

Hence, it is evident that family members have a major impact on whether or not women in the developing world are able to obtain an education.

Distance to an institution that delivers education is another reason why women in the developing world are unable to educate themselves. In many cases, the distance to schools are very far, and the cost of public transit to these institutions are often unfeasible even if the service is available. Further, there have been many accounts by women that they have been abused (Leach, & Shashikala, 2007).) while heading to school and that these unsafe long walking to school journeys also contribute to their dropping out prior to receiving a basic education. Many would argue that we could have hostels for students, but I argue that their proposition is simply not realistic; there are many things that need to go into a proper run hostel and because of the myriad of stipulations- such as financing, liabilities and so on- we would not be able to provide adequate living

conditions. (Wasnik, V., Rao and Rao, 2012). So, this is not a feasible option or a flexible solution for this problem.

Poverty can be considered the most predominant deciding factor that influences who can get access to an education in the developing world, simply put, education almost always requires a financial element as well. Poverty is widespread in the third world and the effect of poverty is known to the majority of those living in the third world; take for example subsistence farmers -they farm to provide the bare minimum for themselves- they can not afford anything more than the bare minimums.

So, how can they afford to educate their children if they have barely enough to get by? Further, if these farmers resort to using their own children as farmers, how can these children find enough time for their education? Therefore, when finding a practical solution, we must be aware that there are families those who can not afford to send their children to school and depend heavily on their children's support to run family ventures.

I believe that if we are to create a sustainable education system for anyone in the developing world, it is important that we ensure that their education is free. Thus, we, living in the developed world have an obligation to create a solution that will be funded externally.

Discrimination is yet another barrier that prevents women opportunities for knowledge, basic literacy skills and ultimately an education As I mentioned earlier there is indeed a lurking stigma in the developing world that directly places women as "less than" men. This stigma is not only found in the homes of those living in the developing world but within the hinges of society. Take for example the gender-segregated private schools in the developing world, in which boys have predominant access.

There is research that shows that there are more private schools for boys in the developing world than schools for both genders (Ashley, L.& et al., n.d.). Hence, it is evident that this stigma plagues not only individual households but society as well.

Obviously, any solution that is suggested must be unanimously supported and accepted by the likes of governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charities and local leaders. How are we to unify all these different social forces together? I believe we need to first find a fundamental goal; this goal should set a target for all of our work and what we believe in: "To provide an unbiased education, that anyone who wishes to can join, regardless of age, gender or culture." I believe that through this collective objective we can collectively build a successful education system in the developing world for not only women but for all members of society. I believe that if we follow the core message of this goal we can, indeed, help educate those that have been discriminated, marginalised and oppressed get a true education.

Nonetheless, the current approach to solving the general problem of education in the developing world has been through the system of setting up local schools in various areas of the developing world (Houghton and Tregear, 1960).) I believe a benefit of this approach is that students can work within their community and help solve local problems, which is fairly beneficial.

On the other hand, some of the problems this solution encounters are that there is simply not a standard definition or set guidelines for where these schools should be placed. For example, there is no guideline to say if a school should be placed every 100 km² or a school for where there are 100,000 inhabitants, thus this is a major setback and why I think this current system is failing. Further, we run into a situation of staffing, how can we provide staff for these schools? I believe this is a critical downfall of the current

system, as for how are we going to deliver a strong education system without a dedicated and qualified workforce? Based on personal experience, I know I would not be able to be where I am today without the unconditional support my teachers have given me throughout my educational journey.

I also wonder if these schools promote gender discrimination and view women as less than men. Is there a better solution that can help educate women in the developing world?

I believe a solution to this problem can be found through the open learning distance education model. I believe that this model is efficient, relatively cost-effective and can easily be personalized. There is growing criticism of a one-size-fits-all approach to education and knowledge transfer. To move beyond this traditional system of teaching and learning a new approach is urgently needed. There is a huge need to adapt "personalization" of education to our current learning environment both in the developed and developing world. It is efficient because this will help many of those who have other commitments, such as the children of subsistence farmers, obtain an education.



Nonetheless, it is also more cost-effective and reasonable than setting up a local school every "x kilometers" as everyone will have an equal chance to be educated.

Ultimately, I believe that distance education can be considered a genuine solution towards educating women in the developing world, however, it does come with its own challenges such as no face to face education -which is disadvantageous to those who learn kinesthetically and those who are auditory learners- and the cost of setting up a reliable access point will definitely be expensive and cumbersome. Additionally, how will this learning point be delivered?

As I mentioned before, the solution to the problem of educating women in the developing world is, indeed, a complex problem and requires the cooperation and collaboration between multiple parties. The solution is not a simple cheque, nor can it be achieved overnight; it will require years of hard work and dedication between the likes of thousands of people- especially local leaders, Government officials non-governmental organisations, and charities. I have a plan and believe before proceeding with the entire developing world as a whole, we should focus on a single country in the developing world and have a pilot project within this country to see how successful this proposed program could be.

Through pilot testing, we will be able to find out more about our demographic group - women- and see how they learn and what are the most effective ways of setting up a program that caters to their needs and learning style.

Further, we can test a variety of devices- such as laptops and tablets- and even apply for a discounted/donated rate from the likes of companies such as Microsoft which has it's own donation program called the Microsoft Citizen NGO Support Programme.

Therefore, this preliminary research and groundwork process is extremely crucial and requires patience and perseverance, as expected of any project of this caliber. Once we obtain some solid data, we will have to extrapolate it and try to create some best-fit measures that can be carried onto other countries in the developing world. I believe that this will be the best way to build our project.

Ultimately, I believe a realistic solution to the problem of educating women in the developing world is through distance education as, to date, this is the most sustainable and practical form of delivering education in the developing world, where students are often separated by hundreds if not thousands of kilometers to their "nearest schools". In addition, it is not only the distance to these schools, but the cost of attendance can certainly add up; for example, it is not uncommon for students to pay an annual tuition and many also pay for transportation services to their school.

Furthermore, family commitments are taken exceptionally seriously in the developing world and it is important that these women have the opportunity to balance school with their family.

Hence, the solution to this problem lies in the realms of an innovative distance education system. How can we make this a reality?

I am happy to outline a potential policy proposal as a solution to this problem. I believe social entrepreneurs should step in and support this idea in order to make it a reality. Social entrepreneurs, indeed, could make a tremendous contribution to increase easy access to educational opportunities for these vulnerable women.

Moreover, social entrepreneurs could offer education and literacy training for many women in the third world by embracing an open learning model. They even can partner with international charities in order to successfully launch this education model for the benefit of women in the third world. I was reading a recent interesting and related article in the Huffington post (Kielburger, C. and Kielburger, 2014).

According to this interesting report, providing start-up capital to household based business could enhance women's access to education and literacy training.

The purpose of this start-up was to allow mothers to invest in school fees and materials for their daughters. The champion of this startup was a 21 year old Ugandan woman.

Through this socially responsible start-up, she was able to empower 400 mothers and helped advance women's education on a continent where 30 million women don't have an opportunity to go to school (Kielburger, C. and Kielburger, 2014).

*1 Chakkare, sinhalese for mathematics

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THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SECOND CHANCE SCHOOLS TO FEMALE ATTENDANCE: Views and Perceptions of Women Trainees, Opportunities and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this pilot qualitative research is to investigate the role and importance of Second Chance Schools (SCS) in the course of women trainees' attendance. In particular, the subject of the research which was carried out through online interviews in social networking medium (Facebook) using questionnaires and interviews is to highlight the attitude of women trainees regarding their study experience in SCS as well as the perspective on distance learning during their educational pathway in SCS.

The interest of this research is that for the first time what is investigated is the role of SCS as well as their importance to the education of women and the views and perceptions on issues related to their reintegration into the educational system. Also for the first time the present investigation shows the incentives of women reconnection with the school, which stem from the early school leaving in the teens and their expectations which for the majority of women trainees are to broaden their horizons (cognitive, social, professional).

A significant contributor to this effort apart from the family environment for the majority of women turned out to be the school teachers. The possibility of distance learning is a key question for future research since it is a perspective that can facilitate the smooth progress of women trainees' attendance.

Keywords: Second Chance Schools, women's education, unemployment, incentives, expectations, distance learning.

INTRODUCTION

Second Chance Schools (S.C.S.) is a European program recommended in the fight against social exclusion. Their goals are to reconnect learners with educational and training systems, to form a positive attitude towards learning, the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, strengthening of the personality and, finally, access to the job market. S.C.S. were instituted in Greece by Law 2525/97 under which they have professed prescribe the principles of the European Union. The target group for the S.C.S. are citizens 18 years and older who have not completed compulsory secondary education. Attendance at S.C.S. is two years and provides high school diploma (Youth Foundation and Lifelong Learning. Second Chance Schools, 2012).

According to Efstratoglou, Nikolopoulou (2008:5) in the study of demographic factors in SCS it was shown that women participate at a higher share (56.7% in comparison to 43.3% for men) in the population of individuals who have not completed compulsory education.

According to the survey of Strantzalis (2005, in Zotos, 2006, p. 59) in the S.C.S. of Neapolis, Thessaloniki, it seemed that the women trainees predominate in numbers than men (percentage 20% higher). Roussos characteristically says:

"Students in SCS are by default adults and constitute a "vulnerable" group of individuals who need special treatment and support. The common denominator of Trainees is early school leaving, while part thereof has characteristics of other socially vulnerable groups. These are people who cannot any longer afford normal schooling and careers, and often do not even have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities in order to take advantage of existing training opportunities to reclaim or remain in a job. These people usually are on the verge of social exclusion."
(n.d., p. 40)

Early school leaving is associated with the illiteracy phenomenon and as indicated in Pavlaku (1991, in Athanasiadou 2002, p. 2) in all geographic regions the rate of female illiteracy is higher than the male rate, regardless of the literacy level of each country.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Surveys (Shamir 1985, Waters & Moore, 2002) highlight the social and psychological impact of unemployment on men and women. According to Prause, Dooley & Huh (2009, in Kaminioti, 2013, p. 121) job loss involves loss of income, position, etc. and can lead to depression.

The exploration of female unemployment is relatively new and is placed after 1970. The impact of unemployment is diverse for them as well.

As Samartzi states (1992:247), "it directly affects the level of a woman's life and of her family's as the autonomy, economic independence as well as the possibility of personal satisfaction, needs, and expectations are limited."

Women's vocational rehabilitation is an important social and psychological aspect of the need of women to join training programs. According to Karalis (2013) the adult participation reasons in programs of lifelong learning on their occupation is related to their need to learn new things and the belief that education should last throughout their lives, especially the need for professional upgrading.

Research findings (Balatti, Black & Falk, 2007, Beder, 1999, Dymock & Billett, 2008, Eldred, 2002 Green, Preston & Sabates, 2003, Hammond & Feinstein, 2006, Merri fi eldetal, 1993 Nashashibi, 2004, Preston & Feinstein, 2004, Preston & Green, 2003, Preston & Hammond, 2002, Schulleretal, 2004, Swain, 2006, Ward & Edwards, 2002, in Panitsidou, 2013:70) point out that the participants in LLL programs provide the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, understanding and trust in others and in themselves, elements which bring distinct changes in their personal lives, while allowing them to play a functional role in the family, in the community or at work.

The recent literature review (Landritsi, 2007, Sipitanou & Platsidou, 2010) revealed that there are a limited number of studies on the training provided to S.C.S. in Greece. The survey of Sipitanou & Platsidou (2010) focuses on personal assessments of learners in S.C.S. of Thessaloniki, Neapolis in Thessaloniki and Giannitsa for the positive attitudes,

abilities and difficulties they encountered in the course of their study. In the SCS of Patras, Pyrgos and Agrinio, Landritsi (2007) investigates the characteristics of learners and the influence of their cultural background to the learning processes while Prapas (2005) focuses on the investigation of educational practices in S.C.S.. Efstratoglou & Nikolopoulou (2008) investigate the factors associated with supply and demand of the learners in S.C.S.. Kotti (2008) examines whether the methods of experiential learning are applied in the Acharnes S.C.S. or not.

Prigou (2008) investigates the expectations of learners in the S.C.S. of the Thessaly region (except the S.C.S. of the Larissa Judicial Prison) and the degree of their implementation taking into account the educational and professional development following their attendance at S.C.S. At the same time, she investigates the causes of the trainees' dropout when they were at a young age and the support framework during their study in S.C.S. Pavlidou (2012) explores the learners' perceptions across the course of numerical literacy of the S.C.S. in Aridaia, and the role of ICT and new teaching methods in the course. A pilot study of Linardatou & Papadaki (2013) on the trainees in the S.C.S. of Acharnes during the school year 2012-2013 investigates the effectiveness of teaching the Greek language by combining face to face and distance learning.

Mystakidou (2015) explores the views of undergraduates and graduates of the S.C.S. of Drama, Kavala, Serres, Xanthi, Komotini and Alexandroupolis on the contribution of such schools in the reintegration of the trainees in the formal education system, the obtaining of necessary knowledge and skills, the enhancement of their self-esteem and thus the improvement of their professional and social status. Kyriazopoulou (2015) investigates the economic and cultural capital of learners of the Agioi Anargiri S.C.S. as well as the expectations they have with obtaining their diploma.

From these studies, and since the majority of learners in S.C.S. are women, it is evident that the attitude of this target-group has not been studied, regarding the participants' study experience in SCS and, in particular, their views and perceptions of education at S.C.S.. What has also not been explored is the role and importance of SCS in the education of women as well as the possibility of distance learning.

METHODOLOGY OF THERESEARCH

The research concerns the case study of nine women who attended S.C.S. from 2013 to 2015. More specifically, the research questions which have been studied are:

- ✓ What is the role and importance of SCS in the education of women?
- ✓ What are the views and perceptions of women for the experience of attendance at S.C.S.?
- ✓ What are the prospects and potential of SCS in the education of women?

The interviews were conducted in writing via Facebook, using as a tool an 11-question. Questionnaire, which has given to 10 trainees in SCS, of which 9 completed it, during the period between September 2015 and April 2016. There were several difficulties in the direct and quick response of women given the fact that some of them do not have easy internet access or even that some do not know how to handle the PC well.

Extra telephone interviews were conducted for clarification and better documentation of the answers given in writing. According to Robson (2007: 335) telephone interviews share many of the advantages of the face to face interview: a high response rate, correcting obvious misinterpretations, possible use of exploratory questions, etc. For the validity of the survey and reliability the method of triangulation (Cohen & Manion, 1994)

was applied with the implementation of interviews with two women teachers (Math and Literature) who have served in S.C.S. about three years.

- A) Participants' profile: Personal data (age, marital status, occupation)
- B) Results of the research through Facebook Criteria:
- C) Information sources for SCS

Briefly Regarding Demographics

Five trainees are aged over 46 years old, three are 36-45, and one is 26-35. Six are married, two divorced, and one single. Four have 2 children, one has 3, three have 1 and one has no children. Four are unemployed, two work full-time, one is retired, two work part time. Besides E6 who was married when attending S.C.S., all the others were in the same personal and professional situation when attending the S.C.S..

Age dropout: The trainees abandoned school at an early age between 11 and 14 years old that is in elementary school or up to the second year of junior high school.

A) Participants' profile: Personal data (age, marital status, occupation)

Code	Age	Marital Status	No of Children	Occupation
E1	46 and above	married	2	Full-time employment in the private sector
E2	46 and above	married	3	unemployed
E3	46 and above	divorced	2	unemployed
E4	36-45	married	1	Part-time employment in the public sector
E5	46 and above	married	2	unemployed
E6	36 - 45	divorced	2	unemployed
E7	26-35	married	1	Part-time Employment in the private sector
E8	36-45	single	0	Full-time employment in the private sector
E9	46 and above	married	1	pensioner

Age of leaving school: They left school at a young age between 11 and 14 years old that is at Elementary school or until the second grade of Junior High school.

B) The reasons for leaving school

Code	Age of leaving school	Class	Reasons for leaving school
E1	12	6 th Grade Elementary	Financial
E2	14	2 nd Grade Junior High school	Financial
E3	11	5 th Grade Elementary	Financial
E4	14	2 nd Grade Junior High school	Failed at the exams, work and ashamed to attend the same grade
E5	12	6 th Grade Elementary	Change of country, foreign language.

E6	12	6 th Grade Elementary	Financial
E7	15	2 nd Grade Junior High school	Family—parents forbade her to study further
E8	16	2 nd Grade Junior High school	Family
E9	12	6 th Grade Elementary	Financial

We note that the dropout ratios for most trainees (5 out of 9) were mainly economic related to general difficulties they were facing in their family environment. As a result, some trainees were involved in occupations for a living at an early age. Two trainees had no support from the family environment.

Another case that stands out is also the case of E7 whose parents did not let her continue in school for financial reasons. One trainee was discouraged by the school and another one by a country change, and a change in language, so a change of environment. The case of E4 is typical as it highlights the fact that she did not pass the second year of junior high school and she did not want to continue school because of the embarrassment she felt.

C) Information sources for SCS

E1 was informed about SCS through the internet. E2 was informed about SCS from one of her acquaintances. E2 was informed about SBS through an acquaintance of hers. E3 was informed about SCS through television. E4, E5, E6 by friends, some of which had had the SCS experience. E7 and E8 by teachers (school principal, teacher). E9 from a brochure.

D) The information on SCS, incentives for return to school, and support factors of this option

Code	Incentives for return to school	Incentives and support agents back to school
E1	Unfulfilled ambition	Two teachers at school, her husband and her children
E2	Improving knowledge	The family and most especially her daughter
E3	The need for professional and personal development	Her own self and all teachers in the school
E4	Unfulfilled ambition	All teachers in the school and her own self
E5	Improving knowledge	Her children and her girlfriends
E6	The need for better job	Teachers and a girlfriend urged her to apply to SCS
E7	The need for professional and personal development	Her child learning about SCS
E8	The need for professional and personal development	Her family, those who were around and the school itself
E9	Unfulfilled ambition	The ones who supported her in her studies were her husband, her daughter and grandchildren as well as her own self

We find that their main motivation to return to school after a long absence (approximately over 30 years ago) was the need to acquire knowledge and evolve personally as well as professionally. For three trainees (E1, E4, E9) it was the need to achieve their unfulfilled ambition, which had been created by leaving school in adolescence. E4 characteristically states that with her experience with the S.C.S. she felt

that she can accomplish things in her life. She has gained greater self-esteem and confidence and most importantly she no longer feels any shame and guilt for not having been able to continue school in the past. Similarly, E1 also points out that at her workplace (she works in the private sector) she has gained more self-esteem and self-confidence, and she does not feel at a disadvantage compared to other workers.

E9 also considers important the fact that she managed to realize the unfulfilled ambition she had to continue school since after attending S.C.S. she felt "filling" with knowledge and friends. Besides, her desire was so strong that the only person who urged her to begin her studies at S.C.S. after 48 years was herself.

Family and friends are encouragement factors and on two occasions (E4, E9) the personal self. Apart from the family environment, the role of SCS and teachers is worth noting in supporting and encouraging learners to pursue and complete their studies in SBS. The teachers at SCS, as E1, E3 and E6 characteristically mention, are very supportive and friendly, encouraging learners to continue their studies in SCS and helping them overcome any difficulties and obstacles.

E) Impressions and the degree of satisfaction with attendance at SCS

The impressions from studies in SCS are very positive for all trainees. Teachers have contributed in this image of the SCS. E1 characteristically mentions that for the first time she felt that she could have a friendly relationship with her teachers. She never felt disadvantaged in relation to them, since they treated her with respect and appreciation. From 1-5 the degree of satisfaction with their studies in SCS three trainees (E1, E2, E3) evaluate it with grade 4 and the other six with grade 5.

F) Expectations of women from attending the SCS

Interestingly, all women are interested in improving their knowledge, having as their basic motivation the need for self-improvement.

Three trainees aim through the development of the cognitive process at personal development in employment issues and at obtaining a high school diploma.

E9 characteristically mentions that what she expected was knowledge of herself. Self-knowledge and self-esteem are common reference site in all trainees. E5 characteristically mentions that she hoped to gain knowledge.

E4 shares the same view and she characteristically mentions that through the attendance of the SCS she hoped to gain other kind of knowledge as well, to meet people to learn interesting things about life, both personally and in general.

G) Encouraging other women to study at SCS

All trainees would recommend to other women to attend SCS. The reasons are mainly cognitive which are related to personal development and the enhancement of their self-image and self-esteem.

Characteristically, E2 mentions that the reason she would recommend to other women to attend the SCS are to receive as much knowledge as they can in order to feel better as people.

E3 similarly emphasizes the need to broaden her horizons.

E4 stresses that "attendance at SCS is an opportunity to do something for themselves".

E6 stresses that "attendance at SBS is a step because we must move forward."

E7 relates attendance at SBS with the acquisition of new ideas related to everyday life. What is more, she believes that the learning that takes place in SCS is exactly what she needs to learn.

H) Positive and negative aspects; difficulties from the experience of studying at S.C.S.

Code	Positive aspects	Negative aspects-Difficulties
E1	Attending the following courses: Physics, Mathematics, Language, Computers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of time and hours of attendance at SCS.
E2	The perfect, friendly relationship with their teachers, the creative work they did, the team work she did with her classmates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient heating Lack of teachers (at the beginning of the year)
E3	Improvement of her knowledge in a large scale, experiences, new acquaintances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient facilities
E4	Cooperation in class, communicating with teachers, excursions, festivals the theatrical play, the projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of time
E5	The study hours at school when they were working in groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many study hours
E6	Very good teachers, knowledge, teamwork.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of teachers at the beginning of the year
E7	She finds nothing difficult since the teachers are excellent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dictation
E8	The love that she has received from people and especially the teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of certain teachers.
E9	The most pleasant hours she spent at school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No difficulty

Positive aspects of their attendance at S.C.S.. All trainees have a positive view of the study experience at S.C.S. It is interesting that teachers at S.C.S. have decisively contributed in the creation of the learners' positive attitude towards school. E8 characteristically talks about the love she has taken from people and especially from teachers, who deal with the trainees the right way.

E6 characteristically emphasizes teamwork and the fact that teachers are very good not only concerning the knowledge they have but also because of the attitude towards them. She considers that teachers give her the freedom to express her views on the issues being discussed not only in the classroom and on the break as well and most importantly to feel important and equal to them.

E2 also comments on the positive aspects she has gained with the attendance of the SCS, the perfect, friendly relationship with the teachers, the creative work they did, the knowledge they received, the collective work she did with her peers.

E7 also shares the same opinion, and she characteristically mentions that she finds nothing is too difficult at the SCS, since the teachers are excellent. E4 points out the supportive role of teachers and she characteristically mentions that the main difficulties in her studies at the S.C.S. was that sometimes she could not go because of lack of time, due to some personal problems and she missed lessons and material, and sometimes she stayed behind but with the help of her teachers and their support she did fine.

Among the strengths of studying at S.C.S. is the way of learning. In particular, the good practices in S.C.S. such as projects, festivals, excursions, theatrical performances. E4 characteristically mentions that she liked the cooperation they had in the classroom, the communication that she had with her teachers, the excursions they went on, the celebrations they had in school, the theatrical play they had the first year, the projects that they had the second year. E9 points out about her attending the S.C.S. that these were the most pleasant hours she spent in school. She did not feel tired and did not have any absences. E8 also points out that at S.C.S. learning takes place calmly and confidently and that there is a mood for student life. What is also remarkable is the impression that some trainees have formed on the material of some courses. Especially E8 states that the material of the courses is good and relaxing.

Negative aspects of their attendance at S.C.S.: The fact that there were no teachers for all courses is a decisive factor in the not smooth operation of the school. E6 characteristically mentions that what she would like to improve at the SCS is to see all the teachers from the beginning of the school year. E2 points out that she "would like to have more teachers and that they are there to teach from the beginning of the year." E8 also characteristically mentions that one of the main difficulties she has faced in her studies is the lack of some teachers. Learners' weakness in some subjects is a factor discouraging attendance. E8 characteristically mentions spelling at the language literacy lesson as a basic difficulty in her studies. Another negative aspect in attendance at S.C.S. is lack of infrastructure.

E8 characteristically mentions spelling in the language literacy lesson as a basic difficulty in her studies. Another negative factor in attendance at SBS is lack of equipment.

E4 characteristically mentions that she would like to see the following improvements at the S.C.S.: The state should help make the buildings better so that students and teachers can give their best in their field and generally treat S.C.S. schools in a more sensitive way as far as the financial part is concerned and generally in every area. E2 also has a similar view commenting that the school material needs some upgrading as well.

Another negative aspect in the school operation is the timetable which is a constraint, since some trainees fail to be diligent in their studies on a daily basis due to their other obligations. E1 characteristically mentions that the main difficulties in the attending the S.C.S. was lack of time and the hours of attendance in S.C.S.

I) Suggestions for the Improvement of Education in SCS-The Role of Distance Learning

Suggestions for improving S.C.S.: According to the views of nine women trainees in S.C.S. it is important to improve education in S.C.S. mainly on building infrastructure, heating issues, technological equipment, and improvement of attendance hours. The most immediate and pressing issue is the immediate filling of S.C.S. positions with the necessary teaching staff. E8 characteristically mentions that she "would like to see the lack of teachers be improved concerning the operation of the S.C.S.." E7 has a similar proposal since she considers that what made her attendance difficult was the inadequate number of teachers at the S.C.S.. E6 similarly states that what she would like to see improved at the S.C.S. is for all the teachers to be at the school from the beginning of the school year.

Distance education in S.C.S.: Of the nine trainees only three (E1, E3, E5) expressed positively at the prospect of distance education at S.C.S.. In particular, E3 would like to repeat the subjects of Literature and English through this way because the material of these courses is delivered quickly and she does not have enough time to learn the new information, and moreover she cannot easily retain what she learns because of her age. E1 commented that distance learning will probably help her with the computers lesson

(meaning in the IT course). E5 believes distance learning would also help her in Mathematics.

On the contrary, the other trainees do not consider they need distance education. They focus on the collaborative learning approach through which they cultivated friendships not only with the other students but also with their teachers. This fact is the main reason they prefer face to face courses. E8 characteristically mentions that distance learning is impersonal.

RESULTS OF TRIANGULATION

The answers which were given by the two teachers resulted in the following conclusions:

- The annual and total average of the women who have attended S.C.S. is 25 in a total of approximately 45 per year. On average, the women who attend S.C.S. are 35 years old. Most women left school at the age of 13 and were enrolled in the first grade.
- The main reasons why they left school were: Marriage - pregnancy at a young age, poor performance at school, work (family financial difficulties).
- They started looking for a second chance at education from the age of 30.
- They were informed about MCS by friends or relatives, advertisements or even by the media.
- Women choose to attend SCS for the following reasons: The S.C.S. are easier to attend - friendly schools for adults, there is no pressure on the issue of home study, there are no exams, the lesson is in accordance with the learners' needs. They also have the opportunity to improve their knowledge, to find a better job and to aim at professional development. The unfulfilled ambition they have had to attend school and the fear of unemployment have also been high motivations in their choice to study at S.C.S.
- The main difficulties women encounter while attending S.C.S. are working and family responsibilities, which are an obstacle to their consistent attendance at S.C.S.; as a result, they are absent more often.
- The people who support women's attendance of the S.C.S. are mainly from their family and friendly environment and, in many cases, significant support is provided by the school teachers.
- The women feel very satisfied with their attendance at SCS for the following reasons: They very much appreciate the school, the friendly environment, the respect the teachers show to their weaknesses, the acceptance and encouragement they provide them. It is important that they enjoy studying at the SCS as it increases their confidence (they did not believe that they were worth as students before) seeing that they understand the learning objects. They feel fortunate that there is this institution and that they are given this opportunity to study.
- Completing their studies they hope to gain more self-esteem, knowledge, experiences, and friendships.
- They recommend to other women to attend the SCS for the positive friendly environment that exists in the S.C.S., the knowledge they gain, the friendships that grow not only with other trainees but also with the trainers.
- They estimate that distance learning would help women attend the SCS only in cases when people face disability problems or difficulty in commuting because of their residence in an inaccessible area. They argue that under no circumstances should the state abolish the proximity in teaching and training provided in SCS.
- Distance learning could help create a flexible learning environment that will complement the teaching provided in SCS in cases of women trainees that are unable to attend the SCS on a daily basis due to work obligations. Generally, as far as distance learning is concerned, the study shows that as they do not know exactly what it is, they do not a complete picture of its contribution.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The study of these data as well as the results of triangulation leads to the following conclusions:

✓ The role of SCS and their importance to the education of women is crucial to the process of their reconnection with the educational system. Research shows that all nine women trainees evaluate their schooling experience in the SCS positively. Similarly, in the research of Mystakidou (2015) 71.3% of the graduates felt perfectly satisfied with their studies in SCS as far as satisfying their individual needs and expectations are concerned. Moreover, in the survey of Sipitanou & Platsidou (2010:7) the trainees mentioned in quite high degree positive attitudes towards learning (average = 4.2 on the scale 1-5).

According to Kotti (2008:37) the trainees express great love for S.C.S. and gratitude to all those involved in it. In the present research, the impressions and the degree of satisfaction of women trainees are shown by their attendance at SCS. The majority of women (6 out of 9) evaluate with the grade 5 on the scale 1-5 their study experience at S.C.S. The remaining three evaluate it with the grade 4.

✓ They identify the positive points relating to the collaborative learning style, the knowledge they gained, the creative work that took place in SCS, the communication with the teachers, their supporting role towards them in the difficulties they encountered. Unlike the research of Prigos (2008:59), which notes that on the issue of support for learners in SCS, females enjoy less support compared to men from both parents and the wider family environment, this research highlights mainly (apart from the supportive role of the family) the supportive role of teachers in SCS for the majority of the women (5 out of 9 trainees).

✓ A new finding that emerged through this research and which enhances the role and importance of S.C.S. is that all trainees highly recommend to other women to attend the S.C.S. having as their basic criterion the acquisition of knowledge and new experiences.

✓ The crucial role of teachers in S.C.S. is also reflected by the fact that the majority of the women trainees considers as one of the negative aspects of their study experience in S.C.S. the lack of teachers from the beginning of the school year. In particular, five out of eight women face structural obstacles, which according to Cross (1981), Mackeracheretall (2006, as cited in Giannakopoulou, Thanou 2013:4) are related with the organization and operation of the educational institutions, such as the lack of teachers, inadequate infrastructure, etc. Unlike other researches (Giannakopoulou & Thanou, 2013, Karalis, 2013, Sipitanou & Platsidou, 2010), who consider that the difficulties of women in Adult Education programs are related to socio-cultural barriers, such as the established male and female roles, the social standards and traditions, the lack of time due to work commitments and because of childcare, this research highlights the main difficulty encountered by women trainees in their attendance at SCS, which is the lack of teachers.

✓ From the opinions and perceptions of women trainees it appears that the incentives to return to school are the satisfaction of the unfulfilled ambition for three (03) trainees while for the remaining four (04), the need for personal and professional development and for improving knowledge. These data agree with the research of Pavlidou (2012:59) which shows that the reasons the trainees went to SCS were the unfulfilled ambition and the knowledge. The creation of the unfulfilled ambition is related to the fact that the majority of the learners (5 out of 9 women) left school for economic - financial reasons. Similarly, at the research of Prigou (2008, p:62) the primary reason for leaving school is the economic.

✓ The expectations of women from their studies in SCS are: Unlike the Kyriazopoulou research (2015) which shows that the majority of students in the SCS of Agii Anargiri expect that with the diploma they will be able to get a job, in the present research only two (02) trainees consider finding a job their basic expectation. Similarly, at the research of Mystakidou (2015), 88.7% of the respondents expressed optimism that the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies in SCS would facilitate to a higher or lower degree their professional development. In the present research seven (07) trainees expect to gain knowledge, experiences, and friendships without associating them though with their career path.

✓ Possibilities and prospects. The role of distance education. The possibilities and prospects arising are expansion of the institution, direct and timely staffing of S.C.S., better information to women who may be the target group, improvement of infrastructure. As for the perspective of distance education what is interesting is that of the nine trainees only three believe it will be useful because they do not know how it works and how it can help them. Similarly, according to Pavlidou (2012) the trainees in the SCS of Aridea have a negative attitude towards the use of New Technologies in the course of numerical literacy due to ignorance. However, there is also a certain percentage of students who have a positive attitude towards this perspective. In a pilot study of Linardatou & Papadakis (2013) on the trainees in the SCS of Acharnes during the school year 2012-2013 it was found that the participation of women is greater in the teaching of the Greek language by combining face to face and distance learning as well as the effectiveness of its implementation, since their learning results in the Greek language have improved, this boosted their confidence and changed their attitude towards their participation in programs of lifelong learning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

What would facilitate more the women who attend S.C.S. is a mixed flexible study program (a combination of face to face and distance learning) with which they could cover the learning gaps created due to their absences.

With this purpose it would be useful to investigate such an education perspective. In this context it would be useful to investigate the role of teachers in the S.C.S. and especially their supportive role in this education model.

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES ON ADAPTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: 2000-2015

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ABSTRACT

In this current study context it is aimed to examine developing adaptive environments or developed adaptive environments' reflections on learning process. For this reason the related journals were investigated which are from Science Direct and Web of Science databases in the period of 2000-2016 (February).

According to the aim of the research adaptive learning, personalized learning and intelligent learning keywords were scanned. The journals which only developed adaptive environments or developed environments which were investigated during learning process are not involved in this study. Total journal number which is included in this content analysis is 61. The results of this content analysis will be helpful for guiding future research in this area.

Keywords: Intelligent teaching systems, adaptive learning systems, personalized learning, content analysis.

INTRODUCTION

It is an accepted fact nowadays that each learner is different from each other, and single method, design or material cannot provide teaching to everyone equally. Therefore, educators should know the need of each learner related to the subject and design the education accordingly in order to improve the effect of teaching, and present a learner-based education.

It is quite difficult and time-consuming process for educators to do those things (Zeng, Zhao and Liang, 2009). For this reason, education processes are mostly limited to failure in fitting to learners. Even though learners have different knowledge levels or different learning speed, their process of learning are not followed, mid-term evaluation are not performed. In fact, superficial conclusions are obtained only with the evaluations that are performed in the

end of term, and even an evaluation about what the learners have learnt are not performed deeply. That causes unsuccessful learning processes (Kellman, 2013).

Interactive teaching materials, which lead the education to be shaped according to the performance of students, are started to be improved with the involvement of computers to education process. That approach is entitled various names like computer-based learning, adaptive educational hypermedia, intelligent education and adaptive learning (Griff and Matter, 2013). The term adaptive learning, which will be used in this research, is emerged as an alternative to the traditional “fit to all” approach, and has 2 main features as “variety” and “interaction” (Wang, Wang and Huang, 2008).

Variety is based on the understanding that a context might be suitable for some but not suitable for the others in contrast with the understanding of only one context. Accordingly, it is important to vary context in adaptive environments.

In addition to this, there needs to be a support system, which learners can interact with whenever they want, in adaptive learning environments since utilizers are achieving self-learning. That also emphasizes the interaction feature of adaptive learning environments (Wang, Wang and Huang, 2008).

The structure of the adaptive systems are based on creating a model according to learners’ information, preferences and purposes so that it can fit their needs, and also using that model with the interaction of users (Brusilovsky, 2001).

Therefore, it can be said that adaptive learning environments are also aiming at presenting customized, flexible and personal education by considering various features of learners such as their knowledge level, preferences instead of providing the same training for every learner. Brusilovski (1999) stated that adaptive and intelligent systems could improve different aspects of learning environments. For example, while adaptive presentations increase the utility of course materials, whole process of course can be controlled by adaptive navigation support and also it can make learners choose their home works or assignments. Besides, homework doing can be increased significantly with the problem-solving support and by submitting intelligent feedbacks.

The previous research shows that adaptive learning environments are affecting learning positively. Kelly and Tangney (2006) stated in their research that students, who are in low learning level, and use only limited sources, are observed and it is found that when they use the adaptive learning strategies, they encounter with other sources they do not normally prefer and there is also an increase in their learning. In another research, Fasihuddin, Skinner and Athauda (2016) developed adaptive structure that related with personalization of open learning environments.

In the end of the research, they stated that the adaptive environment that they related to learning styles helped students in their learning and was quite admired by students. Similarly, Chen (2014) also stated in his study that adaptive e-learning environment affected positively both their learning level and motivation of learners. In another study, Yang et al. (2013) suggested an approach that provides a design of adaptive learning environment according to learners’ learning styles and cognitive styles. In their research findings, they revealed that their adaptive environment that they developed basing on that approach lead a significance increase in the learning success of learners.

In conclusion, it can be said that many research were made related with adaptive learning environments that spreading with the advantages presented by Web 2.0 technologies. It is seen that some of those researches evaluated the affectivity of existing environments whereas some researches were made to develop new adaptive environments or to produce an approach in order to develop adaptive environments. It can be said that examining that variety of researches deeply and studied variability, providing a clear table about participants or findings will reveal important information about the design and effectiveness of adaptive learning environments. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop an adaptive environment, or examining the researches that are about the reflection of developed adaptive environment on learning process and describe the existing situation.

METHOD

The related articles that were published in between 2000-2016 (February) in the Science Direct and Web of Science database are reviewed in order to develop adaptive environment or examine the reflection of developed adaptive environment on learning process with this descriptive study that has a review characteristic. In this way, description of existing situation intended for adaptive learning environments was aimed. The articles that were collected in the range of determined keywords are examined whether they are suitable or not to the purpose of the study, and descriptions were made after the determination of the articles that were going to be included to the study by conducting a content analysis.

Data Collection and Analysis

Within the purpose of the study, review was made with the keywords that adaptive learning, personalized learning and intelligent learning by examining the studies that were published in between 2000-2016 (February) data base about adaptive learning environments and also by examining the articles about intelligent learning and personalized learning that are used regarding adaptive learning in that period.

The number of obtained publications within the context of keywords is in Table 1. All acquired publications were examined, only studies that were published as articles were embraced, and only the examination of the development of adaptive environment or developed adaptive environment in learning process among those studies were included in the content analysis of this study.

In the study, the total number of article that were described with content analysis is 61.

Table 1.
Total number of articles acquired from related data base

Keywords	Number of Articles	
	Web of Science (n)	Science Direct (n)
Intelligent Learning	34	109
Personalized Learning	57	48
Adaptive Learning	33	189

61 articles that were examined in line with the purpose of the study were subjected by researchers under the main titles that were determined before. Those titles were, respectively, keywords, name of the journals, research methods, dependent and independent

variables, quality of the study groups and size, purpose of the study, data collection tools, data analysis type and general conclusions of researches.

FINDINGS

Keywords that were included in the study are in Table 2. According to that, commonly used keywords are, respectively, adoptability (n=21), intelligent learning systems (n=14) and personalized learning (n=12).

Table 2.
Keywords that were used in the studies

Keywords	Sayı (n)
Adoptability	21
Intelligent Learning Systems	14
Personalized Learning	12
Computer Supported	9
Evaluation	8
Mobile Learning	8
Learning and Teaching Strategies	8
e-learning	7
Interactive Learning Environment	6
Learning Styles	6
Data Mining	4
Model of Learner	4
Indistinct	3
Multimedia	3
Other	85

The journals that articles were located in are in Table 3. It can be seen that 34% (n=21) of the publications were in Computers & Education, 23% (n=14) is in Expert Systems with Applications, 10% (n=6) is in Computers in Human Behavior, and 33% (n=20) of the remained studies were published in other journals.

Table 3.
Journals that articles were located in

Name of the Journal	Number (n)
Computers & Education	21
Expert Systems with Applications	14
Computers in Human Behavior	6
British Journal of Educational Technology	3
Educational Technology Research and Development	3
Other	14

When the procedural dimensions of performed studies were examined, it can be seen that a clear majority is quantitative. In fact, in 77% (n=47) of the studies, quantitative methods were based. Besides, 16% (n=10) of the studies used mixed method and 7% (n=4) of the studies used quantitative method. When the independent and dependent variables that were embraced in the study were examined (Table 4), it can be seen that 16% (n=15) of the dependent variable is learning performance, 9% (n=9) of the dependent variable is academic success. It is an expected situation to take those two dependent variables as dependent variable, which constitute 25% of the studies and examine the general learning conditions, in studies. When the independent variables that were examined in studies were looked, it can be seen that the large majority is learning styles with 30% (n=12). Cognitive style variable that follows it only constitute 10% (n=4) of the studies.

Table 4.

Variable types in the studies

Variable Types	Variable Names	Number (n)
Dependent	Learning Performance	15
	Academic Success	9
	Attitude	5
	Motivation	4
	Time of mission accomplishment	3
	Satisfaction	3
	Problem-Solving Skill	2
	Other	15
Independent	Learning Style	12
	Cognitive Style	4
	Prior Knowledge	3
	Attitude	2
	Interaction	2
	Satisfaction	2
	Gender	2
	Motivation	2
	Other	11

In Table 4., the dependent variables expressed as others are; speaking skill, vision, emotional condition, reaction, perception, creativity, early reading skill, learning style, student model, effort, satisfaction, feeling of success, work load, self-sufficiency and self-regulation. In the independent variables expressed as others are; cognitive load, self-perception about creativity, input variable, success, performance, working memory capacity, adaptive suggestions, course advises, critical thinking, technological acceptance and creative learning style.

It can be seen (Table 5.) that 92% (n=27) of the part, which constitutes majority of the quality of the groups in the study, is individuals that are in educational institutions. There were no mention about the quality of the study group in 3 study, and in only 1 study, employees that are in an institution can be seen. When the quality of the study group is examined in details, it was stated that 51% (n=27) of the studies were made with individuals that are in university.

Apart from this, when the studies that are stated as postgraduate, which constitute 6% (n=3) of the studies, are included, it can be seen that more than half of the studies (54%) were conducted in higher education institutions.

Table 5.
Quality of the study groups

Quality of study group	Number (n)
University	27
Primary School	7
High School	6
Post Graduate	3
Unspecified	3
Secondary School	3
Teacher	3
Employee	1

Table 6.
Size of the study groups

Size of the study group	Number (n)
51-100	21
26-50	10
101-200	10
201-500	10
1-25	5
501 and more	2
Unspecified	3

When the size of the study groups is examined, it can be seen (Table 6.) that major part of the studies were studied with the participant groups that are more than 50 (70%, n=43). Crowded groups that are 100 and more constitute 36% (n=22) of overall.

These are important factors in terms of providing normal distribution premise in analysis and generalizability of study outcomes, and therefore increase generalizability. Apart from that, there are 5 studies total (8%) that normality premise cannot be examined and constitute the necessity of application of the tests, which are not parametric, and out of generalizability. 3 of those examined studies (5%) were not mentioned about the size of the study group.

When the purpose of the conducted studies are examined, it can be seen (Table 7.) that in 66% (n=40) of the studies, environment development and evaluation practices were made. In 21% (n=13) of the studies, the effect of used environment on the related variables was examined. In 3 different studies, which constitute the remained 10% (n=6) part, with 3% parts (n=2), respectively, opinions of users about environment, relationship between variables and model or strategy presentations were examined.

Table 7.
Purpose of the study

Purposes of the Studies	Number (n)
Development and Evaluation of Environment	40
The effect of the usage of environment on variables	13
Users opinions about environment	2
Relationship between variables	2
Presentation of model or strategy	2

It can be seen in studies that the commonly used data collection tool type is survey. In total, in 38 studies survey were used as a data collection tool (Table 8.). Log data as collected (n=8) as the second major. Following those, achievement test (n=14) and interview (n=10) are stated to be used as a data collection tool.

Table 8.
The data collection tools that were used in the studies

Data Collection Tools	Number(n)
Survey	38
Log Data	16
Achievement Test	14
Interview	10
Preliminary Test	6
Posttest	6
Scale	5
Observation	2
Other	8

Other tools that were only used in one study as data collection tool are Web-OSPAN, learning processes, expert opinion, accuracy number, time of mission accomplishment, estimation, aptitude test and availability test.

It is seen that commonly the descriptive analysis (n=15) were made in studies. Following to that, t-test (n=12) and ANOVA (n=8) were conducted (Table9.). Applying those analysis were expected findings when considering commonly used data collection tools. Data analysis types that were only used one each studies are dynamic indistinct petri networks, estimation algorithms, Wilcoxon test and ki-square test.

Table 9.
Types of data analysis that were conducted in the studies

Types of data analysis	Number (n)
Descriptive	15
t test	12
Anova	8
Data Mining	4
Codification	4
Fuzzy Logic	3
Clustering	3
Content Analysis	3
Ancova	2
Mann Whitney U Test	2
Other	4

When the general conclusions are examined in the end of the studies, there emerge five different dimensions. These are success, personal difference, affectivity of learning and environment, autonomy and satisfaction and attitude. The results according to those five dimensions were examined in Table 10 as positive, negative and neutral. Accordingly, in 18 studies there were positive results towards success, in 2 studies there were no difference towards success, and the success's being influenced negatively were none of the studies. Personal differences were embraced in 10 studies.

Accordingly, there were positive improvements towards personal differences in 8 of the studies whereas one apiece studies there were negative and neutral results. The results about affectivity of learning and environment were found in 39 studies and 36 of those results were seen as positive. Besides, only 1 study was negative and neutral results were obtained in 2 studies.

In the context of autonomy, it was stated that in 5 studies there were positive results. When we looked the results from the satisfaction and attitude, it was seen that 17 of the 19 studies had positive result, and only one negative and one neutral result were appeared in remained studies.

Table 10.
Results of the Study

Result	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Success	18	0	2
Personal Difference	8	1	1
Affectivity of learning and environment	36	1	2
Autonomy	5	0	0
Satisfaction-Attitude	17	1	1

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Dynamic and constant increase of information leads channels that present it diversified day by day. Nonetheless, different features that learners have bring the need of variety and preference in learning environment along. Adaptive environments, which have been in existence since 1970s, are considered as important in terms of providing convenient environment for that dynamism and distinctness.

Along with the running across to many definitions in literature, briefly, it can be said that adaptive learning environments are the environments provide a structure that is adapted according to the learner's, who is included to the learning process, features, interests, expectations and needs. Aforementioned adaptation has a dynamic structure, and it enriches the environment with the developments in technology and coding languages. Besides, it makes important contributions to those environments with Web 3.0 technologies setting to work.

Therefore, it is thought that this study is important in terms of recognizing from which perspective those gradually spreading areas are approached and which fields gaps exist in.

In this study, the condition of research articles that conducted about adaptive learning environments was examined. First review of the articles that was included to the study was made in Science Direct and Web of Science database. Article screening process was limited to, in the context of related keywords, social sciences field, 2000-2016 (February) and research articles.

397 research articles were reached in the end of database review. Study was performed with 61 research articles by eliminating those that did not fit the research content and those whose full text cannot be reached. It is seen that examined researches are mostly from Computer & Education (n=21) and Expert Systems with Education (n=14) journals.

It is possible to see according to what the structure is adapted by examining dependent and independent variables of adaptive learning environment that were handled in the inspected researches. It draws attention that learning style (n=12) was mostly handled in researches as an independent variable.

Following the learning style, it is also seen that cognitive styles (n=4) were also handled in some researches. It can be said, as the reason for that situation, that materials that developed to measure learning styles are easily applicable.

It is seen that Kolb's learning style inventory was applied for learning styles, and adaptive environment was arranged and presented according to the learning style that establisher, resolver, absorber, and changer. In this case, it can be said that adoptability has a dynamic structure in only 4 different environments. Since the tools related to measurement of learning styles are self-evaluation-based tools, they are also open to give disinformation.

Therefore, a wrong user profile that was defined to system in the beginning of the process can affect gain attainment process negatively by imposing a process that is not suitable for learner. For this reason, it is important to prefer cognitive styles, which are based on performance tests, for those kinds of environments because it provides a better environment. Moreover, the effect of developed adaptive learning environments on mostly the variables learning performance and academic success was also examined.

It is seen that those environments has positive effect on performance and success. It is supported finding in literature that using adaptive environments in learning processes support learning process (Chen and Duh, 2008; Chen, Lee and Chen, 2005; Hong, Chen, Chang and Chen, 2007; Gaeta, Orciuoli and Ritrovato, 2009). By making variables diversified, a detailed discussion can be provided about the reflection of those environments on learners.

It was determined that developed adaptive environments in the researches were mostly towards university students (n=27). This situation can be explained as university students have the ability to use those kinds of materials and environments, and they are easily accessible.

It is important to diversify sample so that variety of developed materials and obtained results can be compared and discussed more comprehensively. When the sample size in the research is examined it can be seen that there is a concentration in between 51-100. The reason for this situation is considered as to provide normality assumption in order to execute statistical tests that are parametric. Survey (n=43) was mostly preferred to collect data while descriptive statistics (mean, frequency) (n=15) and t-test (n=12) were applied in the analysis of data. It is also seen that generally quantitative research method (n=47) was preferred. It is thought to be important to support research results with qualitative data for discussing data more deeply.

The purposes of the researches that were inspected were seen as to develop an adaptive environment and examine (n=40) its effect on some variables.

With this analysis study, in addition to recognize increase in the studies about adaptive learning environments, developed new environments are expected to provide more opportunities to user. Accordingly, adaptation mechanisms are important in terms of according to what they adapt.

Besides, it is thought that it would have positive effect on users and provide more dynamic structure if adaptation would not be limited to beginning of the process but continue in the period. Even though there were no detailed information about the environment/material content in researches, supporting content with multimedia materials will affect the process in terms of being efficient and sufficient, directly or indirectly.

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FEMALE EDUCATION: The Facilitating and Hindering Factors Regarding Female Education in Gilgit-Baltistan Context of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports a study conducted in one of the villages of Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan. The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of female students and their parents regarding female education. A qualitative case study method was employed to investigate the subject matter. The participants were selected on the basis of pre-determined criteria. The findings of the study showed that female education in the context is influenced by various factors including societal norms, parents perceptions and teachers attitude. It was depicted that female students have adapted such critical circumstances and are motivated to acquire their education. Since the role of society is directly associated with the attitude of female education, and their success depends upon active involvement of whole society, therefore the study recommends that this aspect must be given more attention to further strengthen the female education in our society. This ultimately can improve societal performance through increasing female education rate in the context.

Keywords: Gender Inequalities, Institutional Structure; Gender Barriers

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Women play very vital role in development of any societies. The pace of development is highly dependent on joint efforts by men and women in different fields of development. One of the important developmental fields is education, where women folk can participate and utilize their energies to bring prosperity within societies. The importance of education, mainly women education nowadays can be well understood by the remarks given by woman who fled from Darfur to Chad (2004) saying that they had left behind all of their possessions. The shared that the only thing that they have brought in is what has been in their heads, what they have been taught, that is their education. They told that all the luxuries have been gone but education is the only thing that cannot be taken from them.

Education plays a pivotal role in developing human capital among diverse societies. It can be the beginning, not only of individual knowledge, information and awareness, but also a holistic strategy for development and change. It is very much connected to form social relationships on the basis of equality with others and to achieve the important social good of self-respect. It is important to mobilize (through access towards jobs and the political process), to health and life (through the connection to bodily integrity) and to maintain other significant communications to sustain a developmental world and promoting the concept of global village.

Though the Education has become a universal human right all around the globe but this right has not been not been practiced in its real meanings in many parts of the world. Similar situation has been prevailing in the given research context, the northern part of Pakistan. This territory, being the remotest parts of Pakistan (one of the developing countries) heavily governs on patriarchal values in structuring a society. It represents different cultural practices for men and women. A man is always considered as the

legitimate authority to avail all the facilities and opportunities for development purposes than women. Here home has been defined as a woman's legitimate ideological and physical space where she performs her reproductive role as a mother and wife. In comparison, a man dominates the world outside the home and performs his productive role as a breadwinner. Men and women are conceptually segregated into two distinct worlds. The household resources are allocated in the favor of sons (male members of the family) due to their productive role. Education for boys is prioritized vis-a-vis girls, because it is perceived that boys must be equipped with educational skills to compete for resources in public arena, while girls have to specialize in domestic skills to be good mothers and wives, hence, education is not that important for girls. This gender division of labor has been internalized by the society, and girls/women do not have many choices for themselves that could change these patriarchal realities of their lives. Society does not allow women to develop their human capabilities by precluding them from acquiring education. Chaudhry (2007) research study has endorsed the fact that lack of emphasis on the importance of women's education is one of the cardinal features of gender inequality in Pakistan which has shown a direct impact on economic growth in Pakistan.

Various studies have endorsed such disparities, practiced in Pakistani context. According to UNDP report (2010), Pakistan ranked 120 in 146 countries in terms of Gender-related Development Index (GDI), and in terms of Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) ranking, it ranked 92 in 94 countries. Besides patriarchal values there are other factors which limit women access to various walks of life. Some of them are destruction of schools and killings which harmed women's education in Pakistan. For instance, 14-year-old education activist and blogger Malala Yousufzai was shot in the head and neck by some of militant insurgents after she blogged about the destruction of schools and closing of all-girls schools.

INTRODUCTION

Various statistics show that education in Pakistan can be characterized by extensive gender inequalities. Women have to face socio-cultural hurdles to acquire education. International community has developed a consensus through the Millennium Development Goals to eliminate gender inequality from education. The proponents of gender equality argue that it is not only humane and ethical thing to provide everyone easy access to education without any gender bias, but it is also essential for development and progress of a society that both men and women are educated. They also point towards empirical studies that have confirmed that gender inequality in education has significant impact on rural poverty in Pakistan, and female literacy is important for poverty alleviation. For example in the year 2006, the literacy rate in urban areas was recorded 58.3% while in rural areas it was 28.3%, and only 12% among rural women.

To overcome such situations, various Feminists like Martha Nussbaum have argued that there is an immediate need to increase the public expenditures on female education in order to achieve gender equality at all levels.

Comparison of data for men and women reveals significant disparities in educational attainment. By 1992, among people older than fifteen years of age, 22 percent of women were literate, compared with 49 percent of men. The comparatively slow rate of improvement for women is reflected in the fact that between 1980 and 1989, among women aged fifteen to twenty-four, 25 percent were literate.

The discrepancy between rural and urban areas is even more marked. In 1981 only 7 percent of women in rural areas were literate, compared with 35 percent in urban areas. Among men, these rates were 27 and 57 percent, respectively. Pakistan's low female literacy rates are particularly confounding because these rates are analogous to those of

some of the poorest countries in the world. The recently developed national education policy of Pakistan 2009 depicts out that females and pupils in rural areas face systematic disadvantage at all levels of education. Females are particularly under-represented in rural areas (36% versus 43% for urban areas), a feature that also holds for secondary education (35% for rural and 48% in urban areas).

The need to address the concerns of women in international development has been well publicized since the United Nation's Women's Year (1975) and the following Decade for Women (1976-85). It was shown that women and children are the most vulnerable to the adverse consequence of diversion of resources from health and education and withdrawal of subsidies from food, medical care and education. In poorer areas, this leads to underdevelopment, poverty, hunger, disease, and is associated with high birth rates.

In Pakistan, the Economy is one of the leading factor which effects directly on resource availability in general and on education in particular. At the global level, Pakistan is categorized among the low-income economies of the world with one of the highest rates of population growth and high fertility (NIFC, 1998). When Pakistan came into existence in 1947, its population was 32.5 million. Today, the population is greater than 134 million (UN ESCAP, 1998). This makes Pakistan the ninth most populous country in the world with a growth rate estimated around 2.9 percent per annum.

Pressure caused by high population growth rates affects the quality of life, as measured by social and economic indicators such as the number of people adequately fed and their health, housing conditions, and mainly the literacy/educational attainment.

It is reported that "Pakistan appears locked into a stagnating economic regime, where growth and exports rely on low paid and unpaid female labor; and where women's household subsistence production underpins the low wages paid in the productive economy" (Elson & Evers, 1997).

Gender barriers place restrictions on women's access to social infrastructure, such as credit and labor markets, federal, provincial and local decision-making bodies, and represents constraints to balance and sustainable economic growth.

Conditions for women are very poor: a newspaper survey done in Pakistan revealed that 99 per cent of housewives and 77 per cent of workingwomen were beaten by their husbands. They listed the following types of violence committed against women: murder in land disputes, being blinded by husbands frustrated on some issue, being kicked to death, burnt in anger, abducted, sold, sexually harassed, and raped (AWRAN, 1985).

Gilgit-Baltistan, the most marginalized and remotest areas of Pakistan also portrays similar situation prevailed in other rural parts of Pakistan. Being a far-flung remotest rural territory, this region has been suffering for availability of resources, especially the educational opportunities. Though this region was formally aligned with Pakistan in 1947 but due to various calamities in the country it has always faced severe conditions regarding availability of resources to improve economy and ultimately acquiring education. This territory comprised of ten districts but all districts represent different pictures regarding education facilities, particularly for female education. Some of the districts even have no schools which could facilitate female education. Hence, the inhabitants mainly rely on agriculture to improve their economic growth and poverty reduction and pay less attention towards education.

There are certain other obligations which limit female education in Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan. Culturally, all the districts represent different practices which serve as encouraging or hindering factors. These cultural and social practices have deep rooted

impacts in schools as well and certain practices remain a source to increase students' dropouts.

Besides various challenges, the historical perspectives regarding education in Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly female education remained one of the most crucial challenges. In this connection, various aforementioned studies depicted that the women education in Pakistan, particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan face many challenges to foster women education. Secondly, to study the hindering factors towards access to female education are exceptional. Thus, there is scarcity of literature to address this most important issue. Therefore, and in the light of existing literature which shows a grim picture about Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan, this research study is undertaken to expose out those factors which impede girls' education in this remotest and marginalized region of Pakistan. Therefore the study aims at achieving the given objectives pertaining to female education in the context as:

- ✓ To identify the cultural practices which hinder women's education in Gilgit-Baltistan context of Pakistan?
- ✓ To find out the perceptions of girls regarding their education.
- ✓ To find out the perceptions the parents possess towards their girls' education
- ✓ To provide a platform to conduct similar kind of research studies to generate indigenized knowledge and wisdom.

Hence the purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of female students and their parents regarding their educational experiences in one of the villages of Gilgit-Baltistan. To explore about their perceptions, the study focused on the following main and subsidiary questions to guide the study:

Main Question

- ✓ How do female students and parents perceive female education in a village setting in Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan?
- ✓ **Subsidiary Questions**
- ✓ How do female students opt for their studies?
- ✓ What challenges female students face while acquiring their education?
- ✓ What are the perceptions of parents regarding their female children?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The contemporary studies depict various aspects regarding the facilitative and hindering perspectives regarding female education. In this connection, the studies carried out by Hafeez (2007) about mother and father perception on girls' education in six districts of the Punjab province reported that both fathers and mothers give importance to general education, while a large number of parents gave much more importance to professional education for boys than girls. Furthermore female education in mathematics and science in Africa (FEMSA, 1997), is another project conducted for exploring parents, males, females and teachers attitudes towards girls' particularly in science, mathematics and their access to education particularly in science, mathematics and technology subjects in the four African countries (Cemeroon, Ghana, Tanzania, & Uganda). Similarly, Manimekhani (2002) who attempted to compare the relative role of working women vis-à-vis housewives in household decision making found that education and employment opportunities to women enhance the status of women in household through greater privilege in decision making for women. This would increase general social status of women and bring about gender equality.

Pointing towards access for female education, Devaki jain (1979) pointed out that even if house hold work is not recognized as work at least data should be made available in order to see whether women's domestic work prevent them from acquiring education, job and higher status. It is very often the case that women do not undertake paid work or attempt to market their service mainly due to the pressure of household duties. Therefore, the women are not able to offer their service outside the market. The less opportunities to women education is considered directly related with socio-economic conditions. As Kravdal (2000) studies found that the higher-order birth rates were relatively low in regions where many women were literate. Farhad and Bacchus (1999) share many constraints regarding access to female education. One of them is parents' fear of girls' independent access to the outer world in case girls go to school, because women's conduct is associated with family honour. Similarly, a gendered division of labour is stated by them as another factor that hinders girls' education. In conformity to the societal norms, young girls start their care giving role.

In the context of the international commitments; universal primary education (UPE), EFA, and MDGs, our country has launched different projects, for example ESR 2001-2005, and NEPA, 2001-2015, with little visible improvement in girls' education.

These projects remained insufficient to meet the required targets as the current scenario of girls' education requires paying prompt attention to this and many other questions about targets in achieving UPE and girls' education. Furthermore, a majority of parents show concern about household responsibility which effects the contribution of women's education. A significant number of parents also feel that household responsibilities are more important than women education. Parents consider security as the prime need for girls to opt education. Some of the other factors are lack of physical facilities like classroom, water, latrine, electricity, and boundary walls which are also associated with security for female folks. More importantly, the lack of quality of education is also regarded as a major concern that keeps girls away from educational institutions.

Another traditional factor, for example, societal and family pressure on the mobility of women strongly influences the family decision of women sending for higher education. Similarly, the custom of early marriage also effect women education. Apart from it, the presence of educational institutions in another caste or kinship residential area is also a reason for stopping from attending university. Feudalism and class system in some of the regions is also linked with girls' access towards educational institutions.

Though female education is possess deep rooted meanings for developing the nations as rightly uttered that educate a man and you educate an individual, educate an individual, educate a women and you educate a nation. But despite all the efforts women still lag behind in literacy. The situation is a result of certain factors which are common to all of us in negative attitude of parents to the education of girls, inhabiting culture values and practices, religious values, poverty and early marriage, among others. Though religious practices also impact on female education but such experiences are indirectly observed. According to religious and legal factors had only indirectly effects on higher education of women. Religion is not reckoned to be a direct factor of any significant to the issue of female education opportunity. However, it is invoke by some of those who wish to constrain such opportunity, so that it operates implicitly through perceived norms. It would be helpful if religious leaders were to espouse the cause of girls' education. Women play an important educational role in the community, because they are responsible for educating their children, they also exercise an influence over the rest of the community in order to guarantee their integrity and development.

It has been also claimed that the within group inequalities and between group inequalities arise due to similar factors. However, the central reason for wage inequality,

namely Technology, works through separate channels for within and between group dynamics.

Also, there are differential returns to race and gender but these are mainly analyzed by making across group comparisons, and not necessarily paying enough attention to what might generate variations for the members of the same category. The gender gap in education for China has declined over time; however the schooling continued to be more unequal among females.

All these studies tell that socio-economic groups such as gender or race are very broad and usually are divided along income, regional and family background lines. Thus, it is Necessary to investigate the within group differentials.

On the basis of parents' view about educating a child the study reported that due to the changing socio-economic conditions, there were possibilities of increasing with drawal of children from schools. The study also identified that the preference of parents of giving priority to boys, education also effects women education. According to women have to purchase foods that are less processed; they also spend more time trying to find cheap foods and gathering fuel wood and water. Since a considerable proportion of the fuel and water procurement is done women this division of labour affects women's participation in higher education.

According to that the religious scholar, politicians, and feudal lords tend to use Islam for their own purpose to impose restrictions, power, and operation, in most cases on people in the rural areas. There are many factors of low enrolment of woman in the universities. Culture barriers, custom, religious scholars, traditions and politicians have great influence in Gilgit town. Women and girls are the victims of this form of patriarchy.

The study conducted by pointed out that Pakistan is a country where women are considered to be dishonor not for only family but society, many of them are bound between the four walls of the house, some more interesting cases I have come across with are, many of the women are allowed to get education but unfortunately after completion of their education they are not allowed to work in offices, which is loss of the talent, loss of the resources and a disastrous factor to the society, who otherwise could play an important role for the socio-economic development of the society, such women must be encouraged to be independent economically, so that they can work side by side with the men to improve the standard of living of the families, which would obviously affect the national prosperity, since approximately half of the population consists of women, but unfortunately Pakistan is such a suffocated country where women do not have freedom of speech.

Many factors effect girl's education in Gilgit context. Most of the parents consider the return from education in term of monitory benefits. Girls are supposed as guests who would sooner or later be married off considering boys as the heir and breadwinners for the family. State that the huge dropout rates however indicate that girls are more often than boys are needed for other activities such as looking siblings; doing domestic work and helping with farm work such factors affect their studies.

By way of introducing gender issues in education in Gilgit-Baltistan, we begin with general observations on the condition of women education in Pakistan. An assessment by Bari (2000) provides a harsh account of the position that the social and cultural context of Pakistani society is mainly patriarchal. Men and women are conceptually divided into two separate worlds. Home is defined as a woman's legitimate ideological and physical space, while a man dominates the world outside the home... Therefore women's mobility

is strictly restricted and controlled through the system of purdah, sex segregation, and violence against them, this type of factors and perception effect women education.

A recent report by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) (2003: 37) Farming is the largest source of income for the vast majority of people in the Gilgit.

In most cases, with both men and women working long hours in their fields, older children, mostly girls, have to take care of younger siblings as well as handle other household chores. Generally, these older girls are not able to attend school or enjoy an uninterrupted education. This factor also contributes to the effect girl's education.

According to, daughters are considered to be 'guests' in their parents' homes, because eventually they will move to their husbands' homes. As can be expected, this sense that girls are only 'temporary sojourners' often negatively influences parents' attitudes towards their daughters' education. And the socially constructed disadvantages are reinforced by the geo-physical conditions of Gilgit-Baltistan, which are major hindrances to females in regard to access to education, particularly higher education, and also restrict their general movements, as most of the population lives in small hamlets and villages that are scattered all over a vast, mountainous area. In spite of what has been said, the situation in Gilgit-Baltistan is not universally depressing.

Though female education possesses deep rooted meanings for developing the nations as rightly uttered that educate a man and you educate an individual, educate an individual, educate a woman and you educate a nation. But despite all the efforts women still lag behind in literacy. The situation is a result of certain factors which are common to all of us in negative attitude of parents to the education of girls, inhabiting culture values and practices, religious values, poverty and early marriage, among others.

Besides other factor, there are certain religious practices impacting on female education too but such experiences are indirectly observed. According to religious and legal factors had only indirectly effects on higher education of women. Religion is not reckoned to be a direct factor of any significant to the issue of female education opportunity. However, it is invoke by some of those who wish to constrain such opportunity, so that it operates implicitly through perceived norms. It would be helpful if religious leaders were to espouse the cause of girls' education.

Similarly, Manimekhani (2002) who attempted to compare the relative role of working women vis-à-vis housewives in household decision making found that education and employment opportunities to women enhance the status of women in household through greater privilege in decision making for women. This would increase general social status of women and bring about gender equality. Pointing towards access for female education, Devakijain (1979) pointed out that even if house hold work is not recognized as work at least data should be made available in order to see whether women's domestic work prevent them from acquiring education, job and higher status. It is very often the case that women do not undertake paid work or attempt to market their service mainly due to the pressure of household duties. Therefore, the women are not able to offer their service outside the market. The less opportunities to woman education are considered directly related with socio-economic conditions. As Kravdal (2000) studies found that the higher-order birth rates were relatively low in regions where many women were literate. It has been also claimed that the within group inequalities and between group inequalities arise due to similar factors.

However, the central reason for wage inequality, namely Technology, works through separate channels for within and between group dynamics .Also, there are differential returns to race and gender but these are mainly analyzed by making across group

comparisons, and not necessarily paying enough attention to what might generate variations for the members of the same category. The gender gap in education for China has declined over time; however the schooling continued to be more unequal among females. All these studies tell that socio-economic groups such as gender or race are very broad and usually are divided along income, regional and family background lines. Thus, it is Necessary to investigate the within group differentials. On the basis of parents' view about educating a child the study reported that due to the changing socio-economic conditions, there were possibilities of increasing withdrawal of children from schools. The study also identified that the preference of parents of giving priority to boys, education also effects women education. It is a fact that women play an important educational role in the community, because they are responsible for educating their children, they also exercise an influence over the rest of the community in order to guarantee their integrity and development.

The studies by Bunwaree (1999) depicted out another dimension which hamper women education. He found that women have to purchase foods that are less processed; they also spend more time trying to find cheap foods and gathering fuel wood and water. Since a considerable proportion of the fuel and water procurement is done women this division of labor affects women's participation in higher education.

There have been extensive studies on differential education opportunities among genders. King and Hill examined the barriers to women's education in developing countries, and conclude that despite the decrease in the gender gap, girls still receive less education than boys. One of the main factors behind this is the institutional structure where there are biases against girls' school choice, and another one is the cultural impediments and different standards applied to genders.

There is also discrimination and segregation in the labor market, which pushes women to select certain professions and get training for them. The World Bank data show that there has been a significant improvement for the girls' enrolment in schools. For example, the secondary school enrolment rate among girls in low income countries was around 26% in 1990 and rose to 41% in 2001. The school enrolment rate for boys in the same set of countries has gone up from 42% in 1990 to 51% in 2001.

This indicates a convergence but there is still a 10% gap between the genders. Despite the low investment in girls' education, the returns to schooling for women are found to be quite high. In some cases, the returns to secondary schooling for girls are estimated to be higher than it is for boys.

As understood from these studies, several factors can influence boys' and girls' education options in a dissimilar manner leading to not only disparities across genders but also among the females themselves. Therefore, analyzing the education opportunities for girls is a prominent exercise, especially for developing countries where schooling for this group offers potential contribution to economic growth and individual well-being.

RESEARCH DESIGN

As the purpose of this study was to explore the perception of selected female students and few parents regarding their girls', therefore to study about their perceptions, case study method seemed more applicable to get the required data. The study particularly used this method as it allows using different tools such as interviews, observations, document analysis etc. Determining the importance of such method Creswell (1998) demonstrates that, "Case study provides the researcher with an opportunity to involve multiple sources of information which are rich in context" (p.61). Therefore, these

multiple tools under case study method helped me in triangulation of the data which ultimately enhanced the validity of my research findings.

Research Participants and Context

The study was carried out in one of the remote villages of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. This study involved two female students who were studying at higher grades and two of the parents (one who is optimistic towards female education and the other who is reluctant to send their female child to acquire education). While selecting research participants, the proposition by Merriam (1998) was considered that while sampling one should keep in mind the purpose of the study, the context of the respondents and their experiences relevant to the purpose of study. As the purpose of this study was based on studying the perceptions of female students and parents, therefore a purposive sampling was carried out as it allows choosing a case; it illustrates some feature of process in which the researcher is interested (Silverman, 2000). Precisely, the following criteria were observed while selecting research participants:

- ✓ Female students must be studying in university level education;
- ✓ The parents who are motivated to educate their female children;
- ✓ The parents who are reluctant to send their female children to get education
- ✓ They show willingness and volunteer to participate in the study and are interested in sharing their perceptions.

In addition, the study applied interviews as major tool for data collection, as "an interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insight on how subjects interpret some piece of work" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.96). Using interview method, the participants are asked open ended questions and ask for elaboration and clarification. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), "by probing an interviewee's responses, we are likely to add to the richness of the data, and end up with better understanding of the phenomenon we are studying" (p.95).

After each interview session, the data was reviewed which helped for making clarifications regarding questions asked and to prepare further probing questions on a need basis. To get participants' responses, a loosely structured interview guide was used to facilitate the conversation. Additionally, maintaining a methodological journal remained an ongoing activity throughout the whole data collection process. This journal was used to write down the experiences during the discussion and interviews and noting down observations. For further clarifications, the reflections were written during visits to participants while data collection process.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Glesne (1998) stresses that data analysis should be done simultaneously with data collection process which enables the researcher to focus and shape the study as it proceeds. In line with these thoughts, data analysis in during the research study continued throughout the data collection process. Additionally, during collection of data, this process was accomplished in an organized way. For instance, the data was read several times and summaries were made. Then, the key ideas were sought and grouped them in similar categories. Furthermore, these categories were analyzed to identify key themes. The recurring themes were interpreted into research findings. While reviewing the whole data, five major themes emerged in nearly every interview. They are described under following paragraphs.

Perception of Female Students and Parents' Attitude

All the four participants in the study perceive education as a major tool in their career. They are highly motivated in acquiring education and consider education as one of the leading factors to build the human character.

The interviews with all the participants depicted out that they have a sound understanding regarding female education and its role in developing their families and their personal value in society.

As all the female students belonged to a specific Muslim community which is directly supported by their spiritual leader, therefore they give higher regards to their spiritual leader who pays higher attention and guidance towards acquiring female education. Supporting to such guidance, one of the participants uttered:

In my opinion I have to follow the guidance of our spiritual leader who advises us get education at any age level. Our leader emphasized that if a man has two children, a boy and a girl and if the parents cannot afford for both, they must prefer girl over boy. As if the female are educated, the whole family is benefited by her education. Therefore being a follower, I must understand the role of education in my life. (Interview: June 15, 2013)

Similar expressions were also shared by other participants. They were of the view that besides helping their mother at home and whenever they find any free time, they prefer to study books instead of watching television or being relaxed. One of the participants expressed:

I am the eldest daughter at my home. Though my mother is doing all the domestic work, i.e. cooking, sweeping and washing cloths etc. but I have to support my mother when she becomes too busy. I help my mother especially in cooking and pressing cloths of my younger brothers and sisters. Sometimes I become overburdened with home tasks; still I try my best to avail some time to study books and my course. And when I did not get any time at day time, I prefer to stay late night where I study one to two hours daily. This really helps me out and I become able to overcome my study difficulties. (Interview: June 17, 2013).

Pointing towards importance of female education one of the parents expressed:

I have never attended any school as in our times no schools exist in my village. Though I was interested to go to any schools and wished to get education. But due to unavailability of female schools in the surroundings I could not do so. I wish if I will get opportunity now a day to attend any schools. I will at least read my son's letter who is serving in Pakistan army. (Interview: June 19, 2013)

Such remarks uttered by the research participants depicted out that they have understood the real meaning of education in their lives. This highly motivated aptitude seems because of the guidance given by their spiritual leader and they seemed to obey the instructions whole heartedly.

Family Aptitude/Regard for Female Education

The parents and all the family members of each research participants was quite remarkable regarding their daughters' education. The whole data revealed that their families regard female education and give preference over gaining education than other important tasks at home. In their priorities, they mark education on the top. Speaking about such aptitude of the parents, one of the research participants shared:

My parents give the top-most priority to education. They always guide me to acquire education. They always pinch me to remain attached with the books. My father and mother are farmers and we have a huge land. All the agricultural activities perform by my parents. They always guide me to study and study. They share their stories and enforce that as they haven't got any education, therefore they do not have any choices other than agricultural work. They say that you are lucky having access towards education therefore try your best to remain intact with the books. (Interview: June 22, 2013)

Similar expressions were also reflected in other participants' views. They were candid in saying that their parents and family members always encourage female education. They remain busy in searching out various means which could support their daughters in marching towards acquiring education. Pointing towards such aptitude one of the participants' shared:

My father and mother are very keen in my education. Whenever I go back to my home after school hours, they ask me what you learnt today. Though they are not highly educated but still they interestingly listen to me. Their attitude is always encouraging as they ask me what type of other supplies you need to do your school tasks. This really boosts my courage and I try to involve myself with the books. (Interview: June 24, 2013)

When one of the parents' participants was asked about their female child, she depicted out:

Though in our surroundings female face difficulty in attending the schools but I boost up confidence of my daughter. She has to walk 15 minutes to reach her school and I always ask her to go with the other team mates.

Me and my husband are happy the way our daughter is securing in her class. Sometimes I pay visit to school and meet with the headteacher to know about my daughter's progress. He shares openly how my daughter performs in her class. I always become happy to hear his remarks, and share with my daughter too and she follows my advice. (Interview: June 22, 2013)

Various interview sessions with the participants pointed out that they do not possess any pressure by their parents and family members. They are highly supported by their families in acquiring their education and are happy with their school lives.

The System and School

The contemporary data revealed that all the female students are studying under a system which has deep rooted educational aptitude towards female education. As their system lies under NGO-based systems therefore it has been applying multiple approaches to enhance female education. Interestingly, the participants are studying in a school which is totally a female school and hence it provides more freedom for girls apply their potential without any difficult hurdles.

Additionally, the school has its own vision and mission statement. Both the statements have given prime importance towards female education. The teachers and other staff members are trained routinely to achieve their vision and mission. During their school time, they design such activities which remain instrumental in developing various skills among female students. Pointing towards such practices, one of the participants shared her views as:

Our teachers are skillful and the same with headteacher. They design beautiful activities; we enjoy working with our teachers. Though my teachers are mostly male but I did not hesitate to share with my teachers. They have given us such encouraging environment

that we always enjoy our school time. Inside classes, they always encourage us to present our learning in front of whole class. This boosts up our confidence. We are lucky that we are having such beautiful teachers. (Interview: June 25, 2013)

Sharing about other experiences, another participant expressed that:

Our Principal is a highly educated person. He is very cooperative and keen to involve us in school activities. During assembly, he speaks less and encourages us to design different activities to present in the assembly. We, as teams design different activities and present in daily-based assembly proceedings. We love this activity and we try our best to bring different innovative practices in assembly time. We recite Holy Quran, present latest news and other information to all our fellows and other students studying in our school. (Interview: June 26, 2013)

Pointing towards the role of the system and schools' aptitude towards female education, one of the parents said:

We are thankful to the AKES system for providing opportunities to improve female education. If this system did not exist, we were unable to send our female children to any schools.

They have opened many schools in surroundings. In my view, their quality of education is nice and we feel happy to send our children to this school. The headteacher and teachers are cooperative too. When we need their assistance, they welcome us. Sometimes they also contact us for school matters. We and our children are happy in this school. (Interview: June 25, 2013)

It was also revealed that the system under which this school is functioning is facilitative to school staff and students. The system organizes various sessions regarding teachers, community members and headteachers professional development. It also launches such informative programmes for the students which remain highly supportive in building their relationships with the school and making decisions about their future. Indicating towards such kind of practices, one of the participants embarked that:

During summer vacations and different intervals our Principal and our organization professionals arrange sessions for us. During these sessions we are informed about the career we need to opt in our future studies. They give us multiple directions. This is so beautiful and now we have gained a track and we are applying our best to follow it. They also provide us counseling and guidance sessions. It helps us to see our strengths and decide about our future. (Interview: June 27, 2013)

The above mentioned various expressions shared by the research participants depicted out that the school has a strong facilitative role in enhancing students' motivation and findings their career. They also are supported by the professionals directly linked in their schools. All these supportive mechanisms really help the students to find their right tracks as career path.

Societal Influence

The research participants are deeply concerned with the social and societal practices prevailing around them. They consider the role of society as one of the biggest hurdle in acquiring female education. In their perceptions, a nation's educational progress and development relies on the positive approach of society. If the society encourages female folks for opting education and serving in different fields, the nation can progress. They were of the view that the surrounding where they get education is unluckily in reversed practice. Female are considered somehow different than their male counter parts. They

had to prefer the nearest school to get their education and moving to distant parts, they face many challenges which are reflected through society practices. The participant from higher grade sharing her experiences narrated that:

I am living an area which is little bit far from my school. I have to walk for 20 minutes daily to reach to my school. Sometimes, I have to come cross the main roads. I feel that the people around these roads are not welcoming towards female education. They are not positive towards me. Sometimes I feel embarrassed to see their behavior while they are talking to each other and indirectly they try to say some of the bad names. I feel disheartened with their behavior. To overcome this I usually ask my father to accompany me towards my school. (Interview: June 28, 2013)

Reflecting with her experiences, another participant responded:

In my surrounding majority of the households belonged to illiterate families. They did not have enough knowledge about the role of education, particularly female education. They give priority to household tasks than education. When we go to school they feel that we are not supportive to our parents. Sometimes they also whisper our parents. At that moment I become upset and think about whether I am doing any wrong practice. (Interview: June 28, 2013)

The views of one of the parents' participants were quite similar to the student participant. She uttered:

We are living in an area where people are less educated. They do not prefer their female education. They generally feel that girls do not need to get education. They have to do household tasks. We need to send our sons to schools because they can support our families. Girls have to go to another house and they will not give us anything, just serving another house. (Interview: June 18, 2013)

Various discourses with the research participant presented similar feelings regarding female education. They shared similar kind of challenges happened because of societal practices. But their responses reflected that they are optimistic towards their education and they feel that this situation may be reverted if all the female are encouraged to get their education. They also feel that certain religious practices also hamper their education. There are certain stereotypes attached with female and all these factors remain a source of disappointment for female to acquire their education.

Peers/Colleagues' Role

The data showed that peers and colleagues have strong association with the female students regarding their education. It was noticed that female students not only share their knowledge, they also remain supportive to each other in difficult times. Highlighting such practices, one of the research participants was candid in expressing that:

In my school I have another family which is my fellows' family. I really love to be a part of this family. We work together as sisters, discuss about the topics, share our learning and get help from each other. My team-mates are so supportive, they like to share. We not only share our educational activities, but share our personal problems with close friends. We join our hands if any of our fellow feels under stressed. This is so nice practice and we are lucky to have such beautiful friends in our school. (Interview: June 30, 2013)

Similar perceptions were also narrated by other participant, saying that:

I feel the role of my colleagues' one of most encouraging episode. If my colleagues were not supportive I may have left this school. When I joined this school I was not considered

as a good student. I was facing many problems in understanding any concept. As I was small, I was unable to ask from the teachers for clarity.

I feel ashamed to ask again and again. I used to ask by my peers. They were so kind and supportive. We used our break times to share and hence I improved my understanding and now I am leading the class and remain one of the top position holders in my class. (Interview: June 30, 2013)

The third participant shared another dimension of colleagues' and peers' support. She was of the view that:

I have a circle of nine friends. They all belong to my class. In various subjects we have assigned responsibilities to each other. For example, I am leading the English subject and other friends lead different subjects too. Our task is to go through in-depth study about any theme or topic. All of us do so and we come to school earlier than school timings. We discuss our learning with other friends and hence improve our understanding. We often use our break time and free periods to discuss various contents. This is quite amusing as we become sound in our courses. (Interview: June 30, 2013)

Various dimensions of participants sharing regarding the role of their peers depicted out those students deeply consider the role of their colleagues in their professional journey. Being same age students, they are frank in sharing their educational and personal matters. They see a strong affiliation with their colleagues during difficult times, discuss freely and resolve their academic and personal matters.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The research has gathered many insights by barely scratching the complex topic of female education. Female education in Gilgit is a multifaceted situation with many different areas that merit attention. The societal approach regarding female education may be an especially potent area for further research, as it seems to be a large problem that is mainly underground and secretive. Future research could also compare the different regions in Gilgit or even whole context of Gilgit-Baltistan. Since this research focused mainly on a small town, and in particular, the small village adjacent to Gilgit town, the other voices are not really captured. Therefore further deeper studies in this connection would be interesting to examine what factors cause these differences.

Research specifically looking at the role of various stakeholders in encouraging female education would be beneficial. Looking solely at different approaches that NGOs and other community-based sponsored schools could be very helpful to uncover what problems the female students face and based on the findings the future challenges may be addressed.

While it is difficult to make any sweeping generalizations about the findings of these three case studies, it is possible to make various connections between the research and the field. One general impression formed from the three female students is that all three appeared to be very composed, self-assured, and confident. They answered the questions articulately and with ease. They presented an image of competence and self-assurance both in their conduct and in the content of their answers.

A further observation drawn from the data is that all three women have an encouraging attitude from their parents and family members and hence they are motivated to continue their education despite several societal challenges in their ways. My experiences also endorse that many women have gone through such bitter experiences in our localities. Similar situation was also the case for all three of the research participants I interviewed.

There seemed to have been certain key persons in their lives who made the suggestion at the right time in their career that gently nudged them in the direction of educational institutions.

However, all the participants uttered that they were notably "tested" in the initial stages of their studies. While this "trial" period may occur for any first year student, male or female, the consensus amongst the three participants was that they felt they were challenged somewhat more because they were female. This certainly supports the research that women sometimes lack legitimate authority and often women feel they have to work harder to be considered as equal to their male counterparts. It would appear then, that female students face two main hurdles in securing and maintaining an educational approach. First, as research points out, there are various barriers women must overcome and secondly, an initial "testing" period where the female students must "prove" themselves worthy. Once these two hurdles are overcome, it would appear that the female students have a better chance to succeed in their educational journey.

The literature suggests more and more women are obtaining certification and pursuing higher education, and there is an influx of women taking graduate level work at the masters' and doctoral level (Shakeshaft, 1987).

The research I conducted seemed to verify that women are becoming more highly motivated as all the three female students I interviewed had their own plans to acquire higher education. It appears those females are putting themselves in better positions to obtain significant positions by undertaking higher studies.

Current literature points to a female's domestic and family responsibilities as being another possible barrier to women pursuing careers in educational setting. My research does seem to support the literature. I found that all of the three research participants expressed the same feelings that apart from their school tasks, they have to perform another domestic tasks and family responsibilities. To fill those responsibilities they have to pay extra attention towards their routine activities and performing other domestic tasks.

A significant factor was that the parents are paying greater roles in provision of study time for these female students as they bear the workload more than what they were expected to do so.

One of the participants concurred that the dual responsibilities women faced were very challenging, not only in terms of workload, but also in terms of the perceived scrutiny of her female skills often perceived by community members. Since research does support the notion that women are still bearing the brunt of the domestic responsibilities and are the primary care-givers, it is clear that these dual responsibilities of career and home may be a deterrent to many women striving for acquiring education.

In attempting to ascertain whether societal obligations and practices is an issue or not for women in educational setting, it was quite difficult to draw any sort of broad conclusions from my research sample. However, it appeared that although being unmarried was not an issue for the particular participants I interviewed, they did have the perception that being unmarried could potentially be difficult for aspiring female students but the stereotyping aptitude regarding female folk may cause certain difficulties for them. We can draw that the society's lack of comfort with issues of sexuality and some of the unspoken beliefs about men and women working together may have affected the perceptions. These factors could certainly inhibit or interfere with some women advancing up the educational ladder.

The powerful influence of gender socialization has been thoroughly documented.

Mahoney (1993) cites Witaker and Lane in saying women are limited by social expectations, parental guidance and self-aspiration. Men are more often socialized to persevere and seek professional success while women are socialized to nurture and support others as they assume the traditional role of mother and caretaker of the home. It is difficult to say how much influence gender socialization has had on these three female research participants. However, it is apparent that for two of the three women, negative socialization did not appear to have hindered their ambition very much.

The literature often points out that women tend to lead in more collaborative, democratic ways. Such perception are also confirmed through my research as all three female students indicated during the interview process that connecting with staff, collaborating for staff input, and working as a team were important to them.

There were strong indications that these female students prefer non-confrontational, democratic ways of working with their peers, teachers and their communities.

From the information the three female participants provided about their typical day, it became apparent that they worked very hard at this stage of educational life. They have been spending a great deal of extra time not only in their course studies, but in extracurricular responsibilities as well.

I concluded that these female students are extremely dedicated and hard-working individuals. They face the challenge of their studies in ways that ensure they are successful for their communities and derive satisfaction for themselves.

So, based upon the commitment expressed by the three research participants, it is recommended that women who are immersed with lot of responsibilities must opt for distance learning educational opportunities.

In developing countries, like Pakistan, there are various distance learning programmes being offered at state level and there is an easy access towards such programmes.

If the women are being informed and provided with the opportunities, they not only can improve their educational status, but also render their services in improving the status of their families and overall societies. .

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THE PERCEPTION SCALE TOWARDS DISTANCE NURSING EDUCATION (perstoDNE)

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ABSTRACT

The distance nursing education programs provide an alternative way to solve nurse shortage. In creating these programs, the perception of nurses toward distance education are important. The perceptions of nurses are not known in Turkey. There is no a perception scale. The study was carried out to develop the perception scale towards the distance nursing education.

The study was carried out to develop the perception scale towards the distance nursing education. The sample of the study consisted of 777 nurses who agreed to participate in this study. The Perception Scale towards Distance Nursing Education (perstoDNE) is a valid and reliable. The scale's total Cronbach alpha coefficient was found .96. The correlations of each item with total point were between .29 and .63. In factor analysis which is done with varimax rotation for construct validity, whose eigenvalue is over 1, explaining 41.27 %of total variability, 4 factors consisting of 49 items was obtained the scale. These factors are named "Learning", "Communication and Evaluation", "Technology", and "Management". Scale studies should be repeated with nurses who working in different parts of the World. These studies are important for the comparison of the results and the redesign of the scale.

Keywords: The perception scale, distance nursing education, perstoDNE.

INTRODUCTION

International Council of Nursing (2006) stated that there is a link between the number of nurses and health services offered to community and in many countries around the world. There is evidence toward the rise of imbalance nurse supply/demand and there are major differences in nurse ratio in the world. There are 140 thousand nurse shortage in the USA, and it is expected to be 800 thousand nurse until 2020. According to World Health Organization data, in 57 countries it remains per thousand less than 2.3% of nurses, doctors and midwife. This ratio shows that some people cannot even get basic health care in the world (Callister, 2012). In Turkey, there is only one nurse for every 549 people (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013).

This shows that the number of nurses is not enough in Turkey as well. The International Council of Nurses declared that nurse shortage is an important workplace supply-demand imbalance, especially in developing countries. It is necessary to increase the number of well-educated nurses to meet this demand. ICN declared that the solution can be with the contribution of national, international, educational and legal professional organizations (Rosenkoetter & Nardi, 2007). Mueggenburg (2003) emphasized that health care services are not sustainable only with the increase of nurse numbers. Qualified nurses are required to meet the health needs of the community. Qualified nurses are defined as

individuals who can think critically on the stages of diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation during the care process and can work effectively with other members of the health team (Birol, 2007; Lundqvist & Axelsson, 2007).

Aiken et al. (2003) declare that globally high nursing education is influential in meeting the needs of qualified health care, reducing mortality rates and receiving positive patient responses through scientific contributions. Tri-council (2010) state that the health of the nation will be at risk without a highly educated nurse workforce. To raise the level of nurse education is important, to meet the nation's nursing needs and to provide safer, and effective patient care. Tri-council encourages nurses to study at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels regardless of the professional entry level. It states that distance education based on computer technologies is alternative solution to continue the education of nurses (Tri-council 2010).

In this context, the shortage of qualified nurses in the health system and the thought of increasing the level of nurse education has led to increase distance nursing education programs based on computer technology (Schnetter, Lacy, Jones, Bakrim, Allen & O'Neal, 2014; Atack & Rankin, 2002; Gazza & Hunker, 2014; Shea, 2008; Della-Vecchia, 2010; Holly, Legg, Mueller & Adelman, 2008; Talbert, 2009).

Yu & Yang (2006) note that nurses have a positive attitude toward distance learning. They add that these learning methods may be used as a new in-service educational method for nurses. The study of Friedlander (2006) shows that the attitudes of married nurses toward distance education are positive. Atack (2003) defines that the results of study on distance education courses based on computer technology are positive. The majority of nurses report that distance learning is convenient, and the course content is useful (Atack, 2003). Moore & Kearsley (2005) noted that there are the basic questions that the design team should think about the development of courses to be taught via distance learning. The target audience is important to answer these questions.

The requirements and learning characteristics of the target audience should be defined. Nurses have different levels of nursing education. In this context, the perceptions of the target group with the motivation from the learning centered approach are an important factor to be taken into consideration when establishing the distance nursing education programs.

Studies on the perception of nurses towards distance education is inadequate in Turkey. The PhD thesis of Project manager is "The Attitudes of Psychiatry Nurses towards the Distance Nursing Education (astDNE). The results of that study showed that astDNE is a reliable and valid. It was conducted with 194 nurses, in Istanbul. (Boz Yüksesdag, 2013). In this study, we aimed to repeat scale study with more nurses working in different parts of the Turkey.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

The study consists of nurses who working at hospitals in the center of Eskisehir. The total study population consisted of 1873 nurses. The sample of the study consisted of 777 nurses who agreed to participate in this study.

Objectives

The study was carried out to develop The Perception Scale towards Distance Nursing Education.

Research Hypothesis:

H1= The Perception Scale towards Distance Nursing Education is a reliable and valid to measure the perception levels of nurses towards distance nursing education.

Data Collection Tools and Data Collection

Research data were collected by the researcher with the perception Scale towards Distance Nursing Education. The scale was administered to 777 nurses in January 2016.

This data collection tool consists of two parts. In the first part, 15 questions about personal information and in the second part, there are 72 perception statements about distance nursing education. 5 point grading for reactions was preferred for the perception items in this research.

The participants were asked to grade every single one of the perception statements with one of the following categories: "strongly disagree - disagree- neutral- agreed - strongly agreed". To calculate a total for each of the participants, the most positive category was taken as 5 points and the most negative category was taken as 1 point, and every question was given a grade between 1 and 5 (Turgut, 1977).

Evaluation of Data

In data analysis, SPSS version 20 was used. The data were analysed under two title:

- ✓ Development Of The Perception Scale Towards Distance Nursing Education
- ✓ The Perceptions Of Nurses Towards The Distance Nursing Education. However, İn This Study, Only The Development Stages Of Perstodne Were Given.

FINDINGS**The development stages of perstoDNE****Creation of Items and the Opinions of Experts**

Perceptions of the target audience in the creation of distance education programs are important elements to consider.

According to literature, the studies about the distance nursing education have been found to be insufficient in Turkey. Especially, there are no studies towards distance nursing education.

On the other hand, a measuring tool is absent for determining attitudes of nurses towards distance nursing education. For this purpose, while creating scale, distance nursing education and distance education literature has been scanned, and the perception scales (Sabancioğullari & Doğan, 2011; Tavşancıl & Keser, 2002; Üstüner, 2007; Dede& Yaman, 2008; Hunt & Bohlin, 1993) related to the subject conducted abroad and in the country were examined. With them, the questions were created using qualitative study results that made by project manager with 20 nurses as well (Boz, 2008). A total of 72 scale items were written.

These items were presented to experts to ensure content validity. Experts were asked their opinions on expressive style, content, relevance to the subject area of items. According to experts, some items were revised. The final version of the scale consisted of 72 items.

Implementation of Draft Version of the Scale

Pre-test were tried on a small group, which is not included in the sample. The small group should have similar features with examples (Tezbasaran, 1996; Karaca, 2004). The draft scale was implemented to 100 nurses working at hospital in Eskisehir who had similar characteristics with the nurses in the sample.

The nurses were asked their opinions towards understandability of the questions, answering time, and applicability of the form. The nurses noted that items were understandable, and the answering time was enough. Then it was passed into the implementation phase of the study. In January 2016, 72 items draft scale was implemented to 777 nurses who worked at hospital in Eskişehir.

Stage of the Construct Validity

Factor analysis was used to examine the construct validity. In this study, explanatory factor analysis was used to determine the unknown perceptions of nurses towards the distance nursing education (Kan, 2007). Before explanatory factor analysis, the data set was examined for suitability for factor analysis (Akbulut, 2010; Büyüköztürk, 2011).

For the purpose, sample size and the method of determining factors were analyzed (Field, 2005; Büyüköztürk, 2011). The sample size was analyzed with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test (Table 1.).

Table 1.
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test

KMO		.948
Bartlett Testi	X ²	13582.028
	Sd	1176
	P	.000

In this study, Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) value were found to be 0.948, Bartlett's test 13582.028 ($p < 0.05$). According to results, the sample size was sufficient and the data was suitable for factor analysis. As to the method of determining factors, this method was used to describe the relationship between variables with the highest and the least number of factors. There are many factors determining method. The most common method is the principal component analysis. Apart from this, there are three methods to determine the number of factors. The first method is called the Kaiser criteria. The factors with eigenvalues 1 and above were taken to the scale. Another method is Catell's scree test. Each of eigenvalue was shown in a graph.

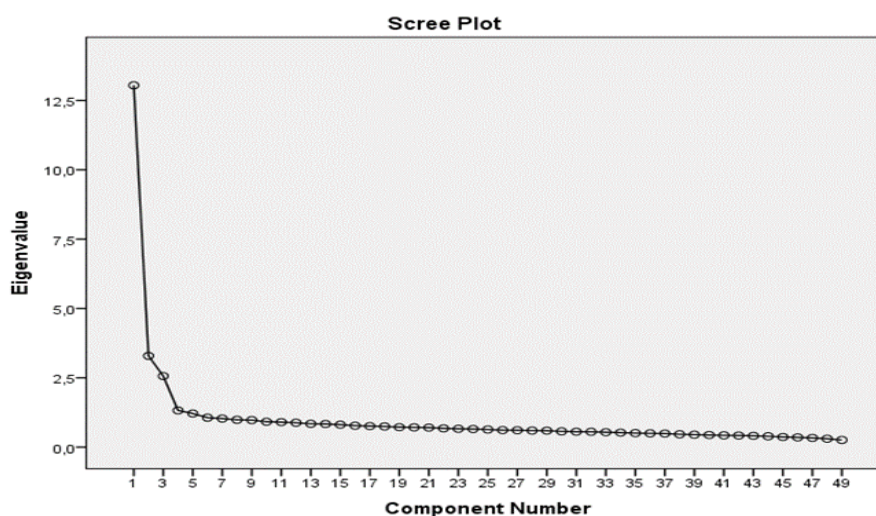


Figure 1.
Catell's scree test

According to the breaking point of continuity was decided the number of factors of the scale (figure 1.). Figure 1 shows that the breaking point is in the 4th factor. We observed a decrease. We decided that this scale was limited to the fourth factor.

In the factor analysis, it explained the variance of the first factor alone is around 0.30 and the explained variance and the eigenvalues of the following factors declined sharply, indicating that the scale has a single-factor structure (Table 2.).

Table 2.
The ratios eigenvalues and explained variance of the sub-scales

Subscales	Eigenvalue	Explained variance %	Cumulated variance
1. Subscale	13.05	26.62	26.62
2. Subscale	3.29	6.72	33.34
3. Subscale	2.56	5.23	38.57
4. Subscale	1.33	2.70	41.27

According to table 2, the eigenvalue of the first factor is 13.05, the explained variance of first factor is 26.62.

Eigen value of the second factor is 3.29, the explained variance of second factor 6.72. Eigen value of the third factor is 2.56, the explained variance of third factor is 5,23. Eigen value of the fourth factor is 1.33, the explained variance of fourth factor is 2.70. The total variance of the scale was 41.27%.

The higher the variance ratio, the stronger the factor structure of the scale (Gorsuch, 1974; Comrey & Lee, 1992).

In social sciences, 40%-60% are considered ideal variance ratios (Büyüköztürk, 2011). According to the results, the obtained variance ration, was sufficient or within the ideal level (Table 2).

Another method used in the choosing of items is factor load value. Factor load value explains relationship between items and subscales. Factor load value is 0.45 or higher than 0.45 is a good measure for item selection (Büyüköztürk, 2011).

However, in practice these values can be reduced to 0.30 for a small number of substances.

In this study, the least load value was 0.30. The Principal Component Analysis was applied to the 69-items.

Items with low variance and factor load less than thirty percent were removed from the scale. These items were the 20th, and 26th. So, it was remained 67 items on the scale. It was observed that 67 items were in factor one. Factor -1 load values ranged from 0.30-0.40.

Varimax rotation was applied to data to make easier to interpret. The 6th, 8th, 9th, 13th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 22nd, 23rd, 28th, 42nd, 43rd, 51st, 53rd, 57th, 58th, 60th, and 69th items with high-factor load value under multiple factors were removed from the scale. So, the scale has become to a 4 factors and 49-item scale. Item-Total Correlations, Principal Components and Factor Analysis Results in the Load Values of this scale were presented in table 3.

Table: 3.
Item-Total Correlations, Principal Component's and Factor Analysis Results in the Load Values

Item No	Item-Total Correlations	Communality	Factor-1 Load Value (Before rotation)	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
1.	,398	,611	,442				,70
2.	,469	,664	,510				,71
3.	,451	,521	,488				,60
4.	,393	,462	,432				,57
9.	,417	,426	,428		,62		
10.	,430	,353	,447		,55		
11.	,554	,393	,593	,56			
13.	,476	,299	,514	,50			
14.	,317	,320	,319		,49		
15.	,444	,356	,455		,50		
20.	,371	,406	,379		,63		
23.	,485	,324	,527	,54			
24.	,422	,359	,432		,50		
26.	,600	,452	,644	,56			
28.	,577	,430	,618	,61			
29.	,556	,417	,596	,50			
30.	,518	,489	,546			,62	
31.	,522	,381	,567	,56			
32.	,505	,381	,547	,53			
33.	,420	,341	,435		,53		
34.	,406	,370	,417		,58		

35.	,384	,399	,400		,60		
36.	,507	,367	,551	,57			
37.	,532	,371	,571	,54			
38.	,405	,392	,411		,54		
39.	,587	,425	,628	,55			
40.	,511	,404	,557	,60			
43.	,303	,232	,344	,43			
44.	,634	,495	,675	,62			
45.	,402	,447	,407			,57	
46.	,537	,480	,564			,60	
47.	,465	,509	,493			,64	
48.	,560	,412	,599	,57			
49.	,567	,428	,604	,60			
51.	,501	,373	,540	,57			
53.	,461	,384	,480		,54		
54.	,494	,448	,524			,57	
55.	,367	,488	,372			,58	
58.	,446	,422	,468			,60	
60.	,525	,353	,566	,54			
61.	,465	,408	,481		,58		
63.	,444	,370	,458		,56		
64.	,286	,186	,320	,38			
65.	,556	,388	,596	,56			
66.	,520	,495	,554			,59	
67.	,517	,493	,530			,56	
69.	,606	,443	,645	,59			
70.	,596	,462	,638	,62			
71.	,545	,392	,585	,58			

According to the table 3. the load factor values of items in the first sub-scale was. 38-.62, in the second sub-scale was between. .49-.63; in the third sub-scale was. 56-.64, and in the fourth subscale between found .61-.69.

Table 3. shows that the items of the Scale were highly correlated with each other. The scale has a strong factor structure. This measures perceptions toward distance nursing education.

The sub-scales of perstoDNE were named in consideration of the meaning of perception expressions (table 4.). The first sub-scale was named "Learning", the second one was named "Communication and Evaluation", the third one was named "Technology", the forth one was named "Management".

Table 4.
The Subscales of the perstoDNE and Items

Subscales	Items No
Learning	11., 13., 23., 26., 28., 29., 31., 32., 36., 37., 39., 40., 43., 44., 48., 49., 51., 60., 64., 65., 69., 70., 71
Communication and evaluation	9., 10., 14., 15., 20., 24., 33., 34., 35., 38., 53., 61., 63.
Technology	30. 45. 46. 47. 54. 55. 58. 66., 67.
Management	1. 2. 3. 4.

Table 4. shows that the first subscale contains twenty-three items, the second subscale contains thirteen items, the third subscale contains nine items and the fourth subscale contains four items.

The Reliability Stage of perstoDNE

In determining the reliability of the measurement tool were used techniques such as calculation of coefficient of internal consistence (Cronbach Alpha), and item-total correlations methods.

In this study, Cronbach Alpha of the draft scale was found 0,96. This value indicates that the draft scale was reliable. Another method to measure reliability is the item-total correlation.

Item-total correlation illustrates the relationship between the scores obtained from items and item total correlation. In selecting of the items, item-total correlation coefficient was based on criteria that the value is above 0.20 (Tavsancıl & Keser, 2002; Büyüköztürk, 2011).

Excluding the seventh, the sixty-third and the seventy-second items, the item-total correlation coefficient of each item on the scale was found to be over 0.20.

This finding shows 69-items have distinctiveness. The reliability findings of perstoDNE were given in table 5.

Table 5.
Item Analysis Results toward the total of perstoDNE

Item No	Scale Mean If Item Deleted	Scale Variance If Item deleted	Corrected Item total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha If Item Deleted
1	126,75	580,894	,398	,940
2	126,37	575,399	,469	,939
3	126,42	574,324	,451	,939
4	126,13	576,652	,393	,940
9	126,38	574,687	,417	,939
10	126,38	575,867	,430	,939
11	126,50	568,243	,554	,939
13	126,44	572,360	,476	,939
14	126,32	579,520	,317	,940
15	126,35	574,498	,444	,939
20	126,47	576,824	,371	,940
23	126,39	572,700	,485	,939
24	126,23	574,607	,422	,939
26	126,49	567,866	,600	,938
28	126,34	568,355	,577	,938
29	126,35	569,043	,556	,939

30	126,34	568,235	,518	,939
31	126,40	571,424	,522	,939
32	126,39	570,762	,505	,939
33	126,37	573,989	,420	,939
34	126,41	575,783	,406	,939
35	126,38	576,356	,384	,940
36	126,34	570,172	,507	,939
37	126,36	568,745	,532	,939
38	126,39	575,844	,405	,940
39	126,42	567,097	,587	,938
40	126,45	571,124	,511	,939
43	126,71	582,825	,303	,940
44	126,53	567,427	,634	,938
45	126,39	573,195	,402	,940
46	126,26	568,533	,537	,939
47	126,31	572,788	,465	,939
48	126,45	567,158	,560	,938
49	126,45	568,055	,567	,938
51	126,38	571,778	,501	,939
53	126,44	572,079	,461	,939
54	126,30	571,000	,494	,939
55	126,24	576,110	,367	,940
58	126,34	572,567	,446	,939
60	126,37	569,058	,525	,939
61	126,37	571,832	,465	,939
63	126,44	575,234	,444	,939
64	126,34	580,288	,286	,940
65	126,38	570,821	,556	,939
66	126,29	569,093	,520	,939
67	126,28	568,533	,517	,939
69	126,41	565,757	,606	,938
70	126,34	567,631	,596	,938
71	126,36	569,788	,545	,939

According to the table 5, Cronbach's Alpha value did not decrease when item was deleted. So, the reliability of the perstoDNE did not decline. The corrected item-total correlation was found between .29 and .63. If item-total correlation is positive and high, that means that items measure similar behavior, and shows that the scale has a high internal consistency. These high rates pointed out those 49-items have distinctiveness. The perception Scale towards Distance Nursing Education presented in table 6.

Table 6.
The Perception Scale towards Distance Nursing Education (perstoDNE)

•	In terms of time and place distance education provides flexibility to nurses
•	In distance nursing education should be provided to students problem-solving focused trainings
•	In distance nursing education, monitoring images toward diseases and nursing care facilitates learning process.
•	In distance nursing education, courses supported by visual material facilitates learning.
•	In terms of time and place to be flexible of distance education facilitates learning.
•	In distance nursing education, educators giving the face to face and remote consultation to students reinforces learning.
•	In distance nursing education students can access documents related to courses any time they want
•	In distance nursing education all resources about the field can be accessed easily.
•	In distance nursing education, knowledge sharing among students is easier.

•	It is important to get in touch with the instructor and other students in virtual chat environments
•	In distance nursing education, giving the animations of basic courses like anatomy and physiology facilitates learning process.
•	In distance nursing education students can more easily express themselves by writing during the lecture and discussion environments.
•	In distance nursing education, gaining communication skills are important for the nursing profession.
•	In distance nursing education, offered communication opportunity with nursing students in key schools in the world important in terms of professional development.
•	In distance nursing education before stepping to the education of field, it is necessary to gain students with basic computer technology skills.
•	Receiving technical support when students have problems with computer technology, it increases their education satisfaction.
•	In distance nursing education, use of technology brings diversity to teaching/learning methods.
•	In distance education, student performance is evaluated more fairly than face to face education.
•	In distance education, oral exams discussing the case, would be effective in student achievement
•	In distance education, observation of the students participating in the course would be effective in evaluation.
•	In distance education at the end of each lesson teachers giving feedback to students about their success is useful in terms of effectiveness of education
•	In distance education students should be given individual assignments to direct them reading and researching.
•	In distance education, group assignments prepared with other students are useful.
•	All courses in the nursing program cannot be given through distance education.
•	In distance education, financially computer technology (online) exams instead of face-to-face exams are more convenient for students.
•	In distance education, student nurse's active participation in the course is not possible
•	Through distance education only the theoretical knowledge of the nursing profession can be given.
•	In distance education, students who graduate without encountering patients cannot give adequate nursing care.
•	In distance education, excessive and detailed information in textbooks makes learning difficult.
•	In distance education, it is difficult to communicate with other students at the same time.
•	In distance education, students have the problem of loneliness.
•	In distance education, level of collaboration among students is low.
•	In distance education, ability for empathy cannot be gained to students who do not encounter patients.
•	In distance education, using technology besides the nursing course brings an extra burden to students.
•	In distance education, clinical skills of students cannot be evaluated.
•	In distance education, nursing knowledge and skills cannot be measured by multiple-choice questions.
•	In distance education, motivation of students is associated with their age
•	In distance education students have problems about the use of technology
•	In terms of the effectiveness of the distance nursing education, educators should have a good degree of computer technology skills
•	In distance education students who have the ability to use computer technology are more successful
•	In distance education the only condition for being

	successful is to use computer technology in a good level.
•	In distance education, educators do not need to know a good level of technology.
•	In distance education, it is easier to communicate via e-mail with the instructor
•	In distance education students can be assessed better with online exams.
•	In distance education, assessment of student achievement with the applications in the clinic is more effective.
•	Developments in health systems can be followed more easily through the distance education.
•	Distance education solves the qualified nurse problem in health institutions.
•	Professional development can be maintained through distance education at any time.
•	In distance education it is needed more educators than formal education

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Consequently, findings showed that The Perception Scale towards Distance Nursing Education (perstoDNE) is a valid and reliable. The research findings supported the hypothesis 1.

Discussions

This study is limited to the levels of participation of nurses who included in the study to the perception expressions on the scale and with explanatory factor analysis in the validity study. Scale studies should be repeated with nurses working in different parts of the World. In addition, confirmatory factor analysis should be done to test this model. These studies are important for comparison of results and the redesign of the scale.

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ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION BY THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION COLLEGE (NAEC) AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture dominates the Afghan economy, providing an income to 61% of the households. 44% of the labour force is engaged in agriculture and women make up to 65% of this labour force. One of the priorities of the Afghan government is to develop agricultural high-school education, vocational education and training and agricultural extension services. In line with these efforts, the National Agriculture Education College (NAEC) was established in 2011, which provides a two-year teacher training course, targeted at prospective teachers for agricultural high schools (AHS).

Even though women participate actively in the agricultural sector, they are underrepresented in agricultural education and extension in Afghanistan. This is also seen at NAEC, where the number of female students remains very low and as a consequence limited female teachers are available for the AHS. This paper analyses the situation at NAEC and explores the alternatives that are currently deployed by NAEC to increase access to agricultural education for women and girls:

- ✓ Targeted recruitment policies to increase the number of girls enrolling at NAEC. This will contribute to more female teachers at the agricultural high schools, thereby setting an example and creating role models for other women and girls.
- ✓ Gender sensitive curricula to prevent gender stereotyping to be reproduced in the schooling system.
- ✓ Distance education for rural girls and women to overcome social and cultural barriers they face in pursuing education.

It is realized that the specific needs of girls and women have to be taken into account when designing gender sensitive curricula. Even more in distance education the specific needs of women in agriculture requires consideration. Generally it can be said that developing and designing distance education is a challenge, which is worthwhile to investigate further.

Keywords: Afghanistan, agriculture, gender, women, distance education, innovation

INTRODUCTION

This paper gives a short introduction of agriculture in Afghanistan, the Afghan educational system and the specific niche that the National Agriculture Education College (NAEC) occupies.

The second part of this paper deals with the relevance and complexities of women's participation in agricultural education and finishes with an exploration of alternatives or possible solutions for increasing the access of Afghan women to agricultural education.

AGRICULTURE IN AFGHANISTAN

Agriculture, including livestock, dominates the Afghan economy, providing an income for 61% of the households, with it being the main source of income for 28% of the households. (Central Statistics Organisation, 2016).

According to the numbers published by the World bank (Hogg, Nassif, Gomez Osorio, Byrd, & Beath, 2013), more than 80% of the Afghan population generates its income specifically through agricultural activities, whereas in the (Central Statistics Organisation, 2016) states that 44 percent of the labour force is engaged in agriculture.

Smallholder farmers who mostly grow wheat, barley, fruits and nuts dominate Afghan agriculture. Approximately half of the country is also used as seasonal rangelands for livestock, especially small ruminants. Women comprise up to 65% of the agricultural workforce in rural areas, but their participation is primarily family based and without remuneration (World Bank, 2005).

More than thirty-five years of war and instability have had serious consequences on the agricultural sector, on farm infrastructure and on the institutions that support agriculture.

This situation has led to a loss and failure to renew the knowledge and skills needed to produce, innovate and adapt to changes.

One of the priorities of the Afghan government (the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock -MAIL), is to provide agricultural high-school, vocational education and training and agricultural extension services to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the agricultural sector (Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2017; Ministry of Higher Education, 2017).

AFGHANISTAN'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Since the start of the reconstruction efforts of Afghanistan in 2001, a strong emphasis has been placed on education. For example, the constitution lays down that education, both formal and religious, is provided free of charge from primary to bachelor level.

Primary level education starts at class 1 and continues until class 6. Lower secondary education runs from class 7 until 9.

After completing lower secondary education, pupils can either continue with a higher secondary education, from class 10 until 12, or gain admission to secondary vocational and technical education. This type of education lasts from class 10 until 12 or until 14, depending on the programme.

Higher education, at bachelor level starts after the 12th class and students need to pass an entrance level exam, the Kankor, to qualify for entry. After the bachelor level, students can enter a Master's programme, although only a few programmes are currently available in Afghanistan (EP-Nuffic, 2015).

Although education is compulsory for children between 6 and 14, roughly corresponding with grade 1 until 9, only a small minority finishes class 9. Even less pupils, under 10 percent, complete their education until class 12 (EP-Nuffic, 2015). The participation of girls in the general educational system is lower than boys, and girls also tend to drop out sooner than boys (after 5.6 years for girls vs 9.5 years for boys) (Central Statistics Organisation, 2016). This results in a high illiteracy rate of 88% among women. Literacy courses and vocational training for women is available, but these courses are based in Kabul. They tend to be short term and often men prevent women attending (Momsen, 2010).

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE EDUCATION COLLEGE

The Agricultural High Schools (AHS) in Afghanistan are part of the secondary vocational and technical education system and need to deal with various challenges depending on the part of the country they are located. Agricultural education in Afghanistan needs to reconcile extreme diversities from several perspectives: geographically, climatically, agriculturally and socio-culturally, encompassing the whole range from nomadism and subsistence farming to industrially organised agriculture. Also the division of tasks and decision-making power along gender lines varies greatly from place to place.

As a part of the efforts of the government to improve agriculture and agricultural education in Afghanistan, the National Agriculture Education College (NAEC) was established in Kabul in 2011, providing a two-year teacher-training programme (at the level of class 13 and 14). NAEC staff is conversant with current models of agricultural innovation and search for lecturing activities that combine insight of technical devices, technological practices and the social organisation after Leeuwis and Aarts (2011). In 2013 the faculty consisted of 30 teachers, 6 of whom were women.

NAEC graduates find employment as teachers in AHS, as a trainer of farmers' groups, assist the people in the area they live in, or continue their studies at university (Branderhorst, 2016).

NAEC has the ambition to act as a change agent for women in agricultural education in Afghanistan. This is reflected in their research agenda of 2015. One of the priorities formulated in this research agenda is *Gender*, with the aim of increased participation of female students (Sabri, Abdulrahimzai, Witteveen, & Dijkstra, 2015). As NAEC is working with a young and well-educated staff consisting of both men and women, they are in a position to fulfil this role of change agent in agricultural education for women in Afghanistan.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

In many Afghan rural areas women are involved in most agricultural activities such as producing agricultural crops, processing, sorting and packaging of food, animal husbandry or tending animals, poultry. At household level, they are engaged in trade and marketing, making dairy production and supply of chain management. Although women participate actively in agriculture and livestock activities, there are regional differences in the type of work they are involved in. As the socio-cultural settings result in a gender based diversity of the rural workforce a focus on access to agricultural education for women is required to gain full insight on the position of women in agriculture. In northern Afghanistan, for example, growing melons, tendering small vegetable plots within the compound and chicken and sheep rearing seem to be more done by women than tending other crops and taking care of larger livestock (Grace, 2004). Tavva et al. (2013) add that in Nangarhar and Baghlan provinces (east and west of Kabul), women are more involved in livestock than in crop-related activities. Despite that worldwide most of the agriculture labour is done by women, little care is given to them (SOFA Team & Doss, 2011). Generally, little to no agricultural extension activities are directed at women (Grace, 2004), making it difficult for women to obtain new or more knowledge about agriculture.

Sabri et al. (2015) noted that although women play a very important role in Afghan agriculture, it is not seen as an occupation for women, which is in line with what Grace (2004) found. The limited recognition of the role of women in agriculture is not only linked to a discourse on gender roles, but also to the low social status of agriculture, at least in some areas. In northern Afghanistan, for instance, women working the land is perceived as an indicator of poverty, showing a stigma attached to working in agriculture (Grace, 2004).

The combined gender issues result that at present few Afghan girls receive an agricultural education. A report by Altai Consulting (2015) indicates that only 2% of AHS students are women. This condition feeds into a vicious circle, in which a lack of female students results in a lack of female teachers able to serve as a role model to educate the next generation of girls in AHS.

Educating women will increase the likelihood that women are able to sustain their own livelihood along with that of their family. There also is evidence of changes in power relations within and outside households (Kabeer, 2005). Afghan female students themselves report positive individual benefits like having life goals and knowing their own abilities as assets of following a higher education (Halim et al., 2015). A woman with an agricultural education or access to agricultural extension will be able to make more informed decisions on crop and livestock management, contributing to improved livelihoods.

Nevertheless, Kabeer (2005) also warns that there are limits to the extent that education can contribute to empowerment and the decision making abilities of women.

Especially in societies like Afghanistan, which are characterised by an extreme form of gender inequality, not only access to education can be restricted, but also the lack of good examples and role models may inhibit girls and women in their empowerment. Halim et al. (2015) found that the presence of a role model within the family provides opportunities for girls to enter higher education. The importance of female role models is that they show other women and girls that it can be done, by knowingly and unknowingly encouraging potential female students (Foster & Seevers, 2002).

Therefore, recognizing the importance of women in Afghanistan's agriculture and the current lack of access to agricultural extension and education, it is important improve the access of girls and women to agricultural education in Afghanistan, which is in agreement with the arguments of Foster and Seevers (2002, 2004) that the presence of other women as fellow students, teachers and mentors help to break through restricted gender roles .

NAEC, in line with their ambitions, has an active policy for the intake of female students. A practical initiative that is currently in place is a three months preparatory course for female students from general high schools as an introduction to agricultural education training.

After the completion of preparatory course female students need to pass NAEC entrance exam to enrol into the two years program. If the intake of female students would be limited to graduates of AHS, as is the case for male students, the possible intake would be more limited. Despite this provision, NAEC staff continues to struggle with challenges regarding the low number of female students enrolling.

The limited number of female students entering agricultural education reported by Altai Consulting (2015) aligns with the situation at NAEC. The total number of students at NAEC has been increasing since its' founding: both in numbers of students entering as well as well as the increasing number of graduates (see table 1). The number of female students increased during the first years, but in 2016 it decreased, both in actual numbers as in percentages.

Table 1:
Development of the number of graduates since the start of NAEC

Year	Total no. of graduates	No. of male graduates	No. of female graduates	% of female graduates
2013	77	77	0	0
2014	172	153	19	11
2015	162	123	39	24
2016	224	194	30	13

In the analysis of the low intake of female students, NAEC distinguishes the following groups of potential female students: girls who are not allowed to study, and girls who are allowed to study, but do not have access to education.

The low status of agriculture contributes partly to the low number of girls interested in agricultural education, but also in some families more focus is paid to education for boys, as it is often the custom that their daughters change their households upon getting married and their income goes to another household.

Due to this fact, poor families are less interested to invest on their daughter's education. Low income still have a direct negative influence on participation in schooling at all levels (World Bank, 2012).

The on-going internal conflicts in Afghanistan also affect the education system at large where travelling is not always safe, or insecure / inaccessible for other reasons such as cultural practices and thereby inhibiting girls to use public transport. Although the reasons for not being allowed or not being able to study varies among families and areas, according to Halim et al (2015) the barriers female students encounter can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Social pressure and marriages at young ages: It is estimated that 57% of girls are married before the age of 16 and at least 60% of marriages are forced (Momsen, 2010).
- ✓ Economic barriers: lack of financial resources
- ✓ Family problems: the men in the family discriminate against girls getting an education
- ✓ Security and social problems: insecurity in the country

The expansion of girl's education must be at the centre of a rights-based development strategy in Afghanistan (Visvanathan, Duggan, Wiegiersma, & Nisonoff, 2011). The report by Altai Consulting (2015) illustrates that generally speaking, agricultural education for girls is welcomed as a good idea, but the biggest challenge is the safety.

For NAEC, lowering the above-mentioned barriers, and especially the safety barrier, also most families in rural areas of Afghanistan prefer female teachers to teach their daughters whereas the number of female teachers at agriculture high schools is below 2%. So, encouraging families to allow their daughters to get an agricultural education is one of the main challenges for NAEC.

ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

As is shown in the previous paragraphs, gender balance is important to consider in agricultural education in Afghanistan. There is a need for well-educated women working in agriculture who will be able to share their knowledge with other women and who are teachers in AHS or work as extension agents, for example with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

In the following sections three major alternatives are elaborated to enhance women's participation in agricultural education in Afghanistan:

- ✓ Targeted recruitment policies for the training of female agricultural teachers and extensionists;
- ✓ Gender sensitive curricula and learning environment;
- ✓ Distance education for rural girls and women farmers.

Targeted Recruitment Policies For The Training of Female Agricultural Teachers And Extensionists

To address the gender imbalance in Agricultural High Schools (AHS) of Afghanistan more targeted recruitment policies might be developed to increase women's participation at NAEC and at AHS.

In any of the AHS one female staff member is required to be in a leading role, to ensure that families rely on the management of schools and will be encouraged to send their daughters to AHS.

NAEC policies to enhance women's' access to agricultural education come with the ambition to support the presence of more female educators at AHS. The Deputy Ministry of Technical Vocational Education Training (DMTVET) responsible for the recruitment of more female teachers in agriculture high schools could implement positive action for female staff to further encourage other girls and women to attend the agriculture high schools.

At present there are many AHS in Afghanistan, approximately 1-2 in each district, but none have been dedicated especially for girls to get their education without any barriers. The government could be suggested to allocate one dedicated AHS for girls that should be taught by women or allocate special shifts for girls in AHS, so parents can allow their daughters to get education in the field of agriculture. Families could send their daughter to these schools without hesitation and their perception in regards to agriculture, as male activity will be changed. In this respect, a strong awareness spreading of agriculture education for Afghan women is highly recommended.

Gender Sensitive Curricula And Learning Environment

To address the gender imbalance in the AHS of Afghanistan, care needs to be taken of the curricula: they need to be encouraging to both male and female students. When stimulating the participation of female students, it requires specific attention in the entire curriculum to prevent social inequalities to be reproduced within the school system for example by gender stereotyping (Kabeer, 2005). Mutekwe and Modiba (2012) conclude from their research that what students unconsciously learn at school about gender roles, depends on ideologies that are embedded in their curriculum.

They refer to the roles that are ascribed to men and women textbooks and other learning materials, in examples teachers use, references that are used in visual materials, etc. Gendered and patriarchal ideas are subtly transmitted through the school system, influencing students in their ideas about their future (agricultural) occupation.

Next to the attention for the curriculum and the educational material, the attitudes of the teachers are also very important (Ifegbesan, 2010). Ifegbesan (2010) found that teachers can be unaware they hold a gender bias, but still act differently towards male and female students. To assist teachers in overcoming gender biases, they should have access to gender-neutral learning materials and be able to receive support in dealing with gender-sensitive issues. Also, gender-sensitive issues should be part of the curricula itself, to make students aware of these issues as well. Whereas NAEC is employing female staff, gender is included as a separate subject in the curricula and awareness is shown regarding the importance of female role models in agricultural education, thereby operationalizing a gender-sensitive learning environment.

Distance Education For Rural Girls And Women Farmers

Considering the apparent obstacles, both physical and socio-cultural, for increasing female participation in formal agricultural education at AHS and NAEC in Afghanistan, NAEC searches for countervailing strategies to reach remote women in agriculture. NAEC staff sees distance education as one of the promising options to countervail barriers for girls and women to access agricultural education.

There are several definitions that can be used for distance education (Keegan, 1980), but the common ground of these definitions is a physical separation of the teacher and the learner contrasting conventional education, which is very much based on a classroom interaction between teacher and learner. To bridge such a separation between the student and the teacher in distance education and to find alternatives for the classroom interaction is a challenge for NAEC.

In designing a curriculum which is suitable for distance education, NAEC-staff has to consider several issues: at first the student and teacher perspective: both students and teachers will have fundamentally different setting than in a traditional classroom education. With the different setting, also the pedagogy and, related, the use of media will be different than in a conventional classroom.

A well-thought out design of curricula and teaching methodologies, that aligns with the existing curriculum will inspire and feed into a future-proof system of distance education. For example, the fieldwork, which is an important methodology in the current NAEC curricula, and considered as an innovation in Afghan education, will prove a challenge to organise for the women who are interested in distance education.

All the above have to become operational in a context where issues of security, limited options for digital multi-media alternatives and socio-cultural barriers, similar to formal education are prevalent.

However, a recent report on the design of a Digital Farmer Field School in Sierra Leone exemplifies a strategy of using ICT-supported extension activities in areas with limited connectivity and limited electricity supply, targeted at functional illiterate people. (Witteveen, Goris, Lie, & Ingram, 2016). This innovative way of thinking inspires a search, in absence of conventional possibilities, for other strategies of learning and teaching.

In Sierra Leone, the designers had to develop learning materials that could be used in a setting of collaborative learning without direct external support. The innovative design, resulted from a design-process that put the users at the starting point: what do they want and need to be able to learn.

An important feature of this design process in Sierra Leone is the framework for responsible innovation, by (Stilgoe, Owen, & Macnaghten, 2013). The core elements of this framework (anticipation, reflexivity, inclusion and responsiveness) provided guidance to the process of developing an innovative form of distance education.

Also a context of user experience and user interface design enhanced a focus on capabilities of the end users as defining conditions for the learning design.

CONCLUSION

The important role of women in Afghan agriculture and the rural economy is not yet reflected in their participation in agricultural education. Targeted recruitment policies for the training of female agricultural teachers and extensionists, gender awareness among teachers and a gender sensitive curriculum in AHS and at NAEC are key factors in providing an empowering education and in stimulating girls and women to seek a profession in agriculture.

Distance education could provide a solution for reaching out to female students in Afghanistan who otherwise cannot overcome the barriers they face in entering further education. Distance education may overcome the needs and concerns of the potential female students and their families, as these are very real in current Afghanistan especially considering the ongoing problems of safety. The specific needs of Afghan women in agriculture have to be taken into account when designing a curriculum for distance education towards becoming an agricultural teacher or extensionists. For a methodological design of an agricultural distance education curriculum the experiences in Sierra Leone with designing a Digital Farmer Field School (Witteveen et al., 2016) may provide an inspirational foundation also for the perspective on responsible innovation applied (Stilgoe et al. (2013)). The competences of NAEC staff for designing distance education curricula may require further training on innovative learning design, practice on technological skills. Rethinking the curriculum and institutional consequences on distance education will be a challenge, which is worthwhile to investigate further.

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BIG DATA UNLOCKS IMPACT INVESTING

The digital revolution and the rise of big data can close the gap between schools in Africa and investors who want to help, writes Nathan BYRD



We know education microloans can have a powerful impact for the 30 million out-of-school children in Africa. Data from Uganda suggests a \$10,000 school improvement loan typically boosts the number of pupils at a school from 250 to 304 students within less than three years, or growth of 22.5 per cent. Such loans improve quality, too. One recent study showed that schools with access to finance improved literacy by 60 per cent more than those without. But far too many impact investors -in America, Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere- don't consider investing in Africa's education system; it is off their radar and they don't know where to start. If we could close this gap between the education system in Africa and investors who want to help, it could improve millions of lives.

The question is how to do this? The digital revolution and the rise of big data offer a tantalising new possibility. Microfinance has long leveraged data collection and analysis to boost the microfinance sector. Industry experts know that collecting metrics on financial performance and social outcomes, using a consistent format and a single database, allows us to not just understand the risk of granting microloans, but also to understand how to improve the lending model.

"The impact investment segment isn't mainstreaming education finance products into its portfolios -at least not yet "By contrast, education finance in the developing world has been slow to leverage the power of data. Yet using it is how we can get private players involved -by limiting risks, demonstrating profit potential, and effectively using data to ensure that it's all within a framework that benefits the client first- in this case, schools and students.

We have seen first-hand just how powerful data can be and how it can transform the way we operate. Opportunity International offers education microloans -financing to help parents pay tuition fees or to schools to expand, for example- for African communities. Soon after we launched our education loan programme in 2006 our data

began to show that default rates were nearly twice as high for schools that had been operating for fewer than two years. Schools that defaulted typically saw dropping enrolments and reduced cash flow prior to borrowing from the bank, the data revealed, a possible sign that local families hadn't begun to trust the school yet. Guided by that data, we adjusted our loan requirements. It was data that helped figure out which schools are likely to be successful and which are not, and broke down the "why" in order to de-risk the education lending sector.

The impact investment segment isn't mainstreaming education finance products into its portfolios – at least not yet. Under pressure, the big bank model has been delivering smaller profits over the past few years and with it innovation has stalled. Financial institutions, both big banks and traditional debt providers, have gone further up-market in search of returns, leaving socially-positive impact investments, and investors with a strong interest in impact, without the major players to serve as a critical link. In microfinance we called this 'the missing middle'. Financial institutions are either socially focused and serve the micro market, or purely commercial and focus on funding big business. Small enterprise is left without a funder.

Lest we despair, donors and investors are gradually taking note of the power of sustainable financing. Our data shows financial returns of 10 per cent or more after direct costs and loss provisions. Now, microfinance banks are requesting support to build new products. We have an opportunity to turn this into a fantastic story of leverage, matching investments with microfinance banks whose outreach can get hundreds of thousands more children into school. In education it takes all types to drive scale: NGOs, community groups, curriculum experts and, yes, private investment. We must seize the opportunity offered by big data to bring them on board.

About the writer

Nathan BYRD is head of Opportunity EduFinance, the education finance division of Opportunity International, a global nonprofit organisation that provides financial services and other sustainable solutions to help millions of families around the world.

Source: <http://www.philanthropyage.org/education/big-data-key-unlocking-impact-investing>
See more at: <http://www.philanthropyage.org/education/big-data-key-unlocking-impact-investing#sthash.HN9NyHS2.dpuf>

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE U.S. MEDIA 2017

By Julie Burton
President Women's Media Center



Media tell us our roles in society. They tell us who we are and what we can be. They frame, interpret and amplify our policies and our politics. They tell us who has power and who matters. The research we conduct is more than statistics. It is evidence, a tool for social change, and creates benchmarks to highlight the status and progress of women in media.

This fifth edition of the Women's Media Center's annual assessment of how a diversity of females fare across all media platforms -and in arenas including education, engineering and technology that pump workers into the media pipeline- finds areas of progress, regress and, sadly, outright pushback.

"When men or women turn to or on the media, yet fail to see women in our true diversity, there is a sense that all or some women literally don't count. It's crucial that the media report and reflect, not conceal and distort."

**GLORIA STEINEM
WMC CO-FOUNDER**

Men still dominate media across all platforms -television, newspapers, online and wires- with change coming only incrementally. Our research projects on coverage of campus rape and coverage of reproductive rights show that the gender of the journalist affects how they cover topics and whom they choose as sources. Women are not equal partners in telling the story, nor are they equal partners in sourcing and interpreting what and who is important in the story.

Most certainly, we salute media advances toward gender and race parity that are noted in this report. Yet, we are deeply concerned about areas where the media lurched backward. Our own WMC "Divided" analysis finds that, at 20 of the nation's most widely read and

heard news outlets, women still report far less of the news than men report. That gender gap is especially big at the major TV news Networks -where our study shows men report three times more news than women correspondents.

There are other signs that we can't relent in this battle to ensure that women and minorities stand on every rung of the media ladder, including at the very top. Women are more likely to hire other women, according to scholars whose research and commentary are highlighted in this annual compilation of studies about where media diversity exists and where it is relatively, woefully absent.

News that does not include equal roles and perspectives for women threatens democracy
FOREWORD WOMEN'S MEDIA CENTER The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2017 TOC
womensmediacenter.com 3 Too many male CEOs, producers and editors remain in their comfort zones and default to hiring and promoting those who are like them. Male executives must be willing to intentionally chart a different course, expand the talent pool without trepidation and develop a more concerted and, perhaps, radical strategy for equally sharing power with women. The problem is bigger than any one outlet—it affects the whole culture. Fake news threatens democracy, as does news that does not include the equal voices, perspectives and experiences of over half the population.

Julie Burton
President Women's Media Center

GENDER IN THE GLOBAL RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

Analysis of research performance through a gender lens
across 20 years, 12 geographies, and 27 subject areas

By Ron MOBED's Preface
Chief Executive Officer, Elsevier, USA



As a steward of world research, Elsevier has a responsibility to promote gender equality in STEM-Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics & advance understanding of the impact of gender, sex, and diversity in research.

In this regard, Elsevier fully supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5, "to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," and the Global Research Council's Statement of Principles and Actions Promoting the Equality and Status of Women in Research.

Through its New Scholars program, the Elsevier Foundation has contributed to the advancement of early- to mid-career women scholars for more than a decade via grants & other partner investments. These efforts laid a foundation of success upon which Elsevier has built broader corporate level gender initiatives. Last year, Elsevier placed a priority on fostering a gender-balanced workplace by implementing the EDGE (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality) program across our eight core business centers in numerous locations worldwide, thereby being among the first information service and

technology companies in the world to be certified globally. Concomitantly, we formed a trans-business Gender Working Group to address external-facing issues such as enhancing sex and gender reporting in research and achieving gender balance for journal editorial boards and conferences.

Further, Elsevier is committed to establishing a research framework for addressing gender issues to help advance policy. An important aspect of our commitment is this comprehensive report, *Gender in the Global Research Landscape*, a follow-on to Elsevier's groundbreaking 2015 report, *Mapping Gender in the German Research Arena*.

Critical issues related to gender disparity and bias must be examined by sound studies. Drawing upon a collection of high-quality global data sources and analytical expertise, Elsevier has produced this report as an evidence-based examination of the outputs, quality, and impact of research worldwide through a gender lens and as a vehicle for understanding the role of gender within the structure of the global research enterprise. *Gender in the Global Research Landscape* employs bibliometric analyses and methodologies that enable gender disambiguation of authors within the Scopus® abstract and citation database and includes comparisons between twenty-seven subject areas, across twelve comparator countries and regions, over two decades. Elsevier

partnered with expert stakeholder organizations and individuals around the world who provided advice on the report's development, including the research questions, methodologies, and analytics, and a policy context for the report findings. Our intention is to share powerful insights and guidance on gender research and gender equality policy with governments, funders, and institutions worldwide and to inspire further evidence-based studies.

Ron MOBED, Chief Executive Officer, Elsevier



Ron MOBED was appointed Chief Executive Officer, Elsevier in August 2012. Ron previously headed Elsevier's science and technology businesses. Joining Elsevier in 2011, Ron has had broad range of global experience in electronic information businesses across a number of sectors and regions globally. He was previously President of Cengage Learning's Academic & Professional Group. Earlier, Ron held a series of leadership positions with information services company IHS, including as Co-President & Co-Chief Operating Officer; and with Schlumberger. Ron is a Fellow of the Institute of Directors and of the Energy Institute. He holds a bachelor's degree in engineering from Trinity College, University of Cambridge and a master's degree in petroleum engineering from Imperial College, University of London.

KEY FINDINGS

The proportion of women among researchers and inventors is increasing in all twelve comparator countries and regions over time. Chapter 1

Women publish fewer research papers on average than men, but there is no evidence that this affects how their papers are cited or downloaded. Chapter 1

Women are less likely than men to collaborate internationally on research papers. Chapter 2

Women are slightly less likely than men to collaborate across the academic and corporate sectors on research papers. Chapter 2

In general, women's scholarly output includes a slightly larger proportion of highly interdisciplinary research than men's. Chapter 2

Among researchers, women are generally less internationally mobile than men. Chapter 2

Gender research is growing in terms of size and complexity, with new topics emerging over time. Chapter 3

The former dominance of the United States in gender research has declined as research activity in the European Union has risen. Chapter 3



Source:

https://www.elsevier.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/265661/ElsevierGenderReport_final_for-web.pdf

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TODAY'S CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

By Elizabeth M. KING & Rebecca WINTHROP
The Brookings Institution, USA

TODAY'S CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

Elizabeth M. King and Rebecca Winthrop

*"If only I can get educated,
I will surely be the president."*

*—A teenage girl in rural Malawi
"There is no more valuable investment
than in a girls' education."*

*—Ban Ki Moon, secretary-general,
United Nations*

#EduSummitOslo 6-7 JULY 2015
**EDUCATION FOR
DEVELOPMENT**



TODAY'S CHALLENGES FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION

Background paper for the Oslo Summit
on Education for Development

Executive Summary

Elizabeth King and Rebecca Winthrop
The Brookings Institution

Educating a girl is one of the best investments her family, community, and country can make. We know that a good quality education can be life-changing for girls, boys, young women, and men, helping them develop to their full potential and putting them on a path for success in their life. We also know that educating a girl in particular can kick-start a virtuous circle of development.

More educated girls, for example, marry later, have healthier children, earn more money that they invest back into their families and communities and play more active roles in leading their communities and countries.

Over the last 25 years, there have been large gains in girls' education, and we as a global community can congratulate ourselves for the real progress that has been made. This demonstrates that with shared goals and collective action -among governments, international

organizations, civil society, media, and the private sector- we can change the educational prospects for girls around the world.

Despite this progress, our research shows that there are hotspots in the world where girls are not getting a quality education. While there certainly are places where boys are behind, we have focused on understanding how and where across the world girls are behind.

The message is that many countries have work to do to improve girls' education, whether related to the gender gap in primary or secondary enrollment or learning.



There are about 80 countries where progress on girls' education has stalled. These countries are not meeting the education Millennium Development Goals. They are stuck in an education bog—still struggling to enroll all girls and boys in primary school and close the gender gaps between boys and girls at both the primary and secondary levels. There are an additional 30 countries that have successfully enrolled girls and boys in primary and secondary education but are trapped in low-quality learning. They are

struggling to ensure that girls and boys master foundational skills such as basic literacy, numeracy, and science concepts.

Quality learning is important for the future lives of girls and boys, but it is also an especially important ingredient in the virtuous circle of development that comes from girls' education.

Finally, there are another 30 countries where children are successfully enrolled and learning. However, girls are behind boys in math. In some ways, we can think of girls in these countries bumping up against an educational glass ceiling.

In this report, we review in detail the progress in girls' education, the work that remains to be done, and strategies for success. Governments, international development agencies, and civil society organizations have supported a variety of programs that have made a difference in both large and small ways. There are valuable lessons to learn from them—but more progress is needed, especially in the poorest countries and among the disadvantaged populations in most countries. Ultimately we recommend renewed collective action for advancing girls' education in hotspots around the world, especially in the 80 countries where progress on girls' education has stalled. We recognize the powerful contribution that girls and women themselves can make to achieve this. Our first recommendation is to lean in with girls' and women's leadership by investing in two initiatives that could go to scale in a short time frame and rally support from a range of actors, especially civil society and the private sector.

The first initiative aims to build strong girl and women leaders by cultivating their skills and capacities to be agents of their own lives. The second initiative aims to put girls and women at the center of a data revolution on gender, one that would fill the critical information gaps about their status, what support they need to succeed, and which interventions have been the most and the least effective. Throughout the world today, it is possible to put mobile technology to work catalyzing a major girl-generated big data initiative. Our second recommendation is for governments and the partners supporting them to do the long-term work needed to focus systemic reform with a gender lens. This includes strengthening education systems so that they work for girls (and boys). To do this governments and their international partners must increase their investment in accelerating change in girls' education hotspots, especially to help countries stuck in an

education bog where progress on basic education achievement and gender parity has stalled.

Governments and their partners also must ensure that gender analysis is regularly used in developing education policy, especially in national education plans that underpin most of the systems in developing countries. A detailed analysis underpins these recommendations. The report reviews data on six major questions:

- ✓ • Why do we care about girls' education?
- ✓ • What progress can we build on?
- ✓ • What do we face today in the effort to educate girls?
- ✓ • Why are girls behind?
- ✓ • What is working to address obstacles to girls' education?
- ✓ • What should we do to accelerate progress on girls education?



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Sources:

http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/todays_challenges_for_girls_education_exec_summary.pdf

THEORISING PERSONALISED EDUCATION

Electronically Mediated Higher Education

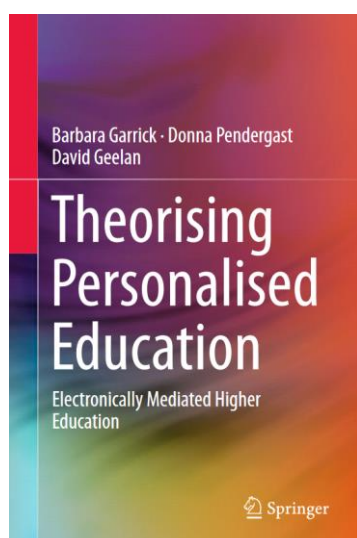
Edited by Barbara Garrick, Donna Pendergast, David Geelan

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INTRODUCTION



The core focus of this book is to highlight the impact of personalised learning. Throughout the book, the challenges and opportunities regarding personalised learning is explored by giving specific examples from multiple dimensions. As noted by the authors (Garrick, Pendergast and Geelan, 2017), to comprehend what is beneath personalised education, both similarities and differences in learner characteristics should be taken into great consideration and the concepts namely, de-personalisation, im-personalization, inter-personalisation and re-personalisation should be all revised. All in all, this book examines the theoretical underpinning of the concept of personalised education and observes e-mediated personalised education. The distance education practices are indicated in the book as well. In response to the above-mentioned queries and issues, the following 10 units are covered:

Chapter 1 (entitled *Introduction to the Philosophical Arguments Underpinning Personalised Education*) primarily focuses on the concept of personalised learning within the context of electronically mediated higher education learning and teaching. Throughout the chapter, behavioral observations of students and teachers are made. In addition, the interactions across the three modes of e-mediated learning are discussed. In sum, the theoretical construct of Jürgen Habermas' (1972) modes of knowing are explained in detail.

Chapter 2 (entitled *A Brief History of E-mediated Education*) raises the issues related to computer usage in learning personalisation. In this chapter, both traditional and e-learning methods are discussed within the scope of technology, electronic mediation and massification.

Chapter 3 (entitled *Personalised Learning, Pedagogy, and E-mediated Tools*) disputes the personalised learning by underlining the crucial matters such as e-mediated tools used for effective pedagogy, technology integration in higher education and self-regulated learning.

Chapter 4 (entitled *Through the Lens of Generational Theory*) guides readers to a discussion of the utilisation of electronically mediated environments. As discussed by the authors, the chapter tries to address behavioral similarities and differences of generations towards technological developments in higher education.

Chapter 5 (entitled *Personalised Education, Pedagogy, and Equity in the Higher Education Sector*) scrutinizes the discourse of e-mediated instruction and personalised learning. The authors here aim to rethink on the terms e-mediated and personalised instruction in higher education.

Chapter 6 (entitled *Personalised or Programmed? Current Practices of University Systems*) provides insights on experiences of educators who would like to enhance personalised learning in their pedagogical practices. In this chapter, Productive Pedagogies (Mills et al.2009) framework is specifically focalized in order to analyze the difference between personalised and programmed approaches to learning.

Chapter 7 (entitled *From Policy to Practice—Personalisation and the Higher Education Sector*) questions the deep meaning of personalised learning. As connoted by the authors of this chapter, the terrain of personalised learning, often collocated with e-mediated instruction, should be examined thoroughly and exhaustively.

Chapter 8 (entitled *Experiencing E-mediated Personalised Learning in Practice—A Teacher's Insight*) deals with the term e-mediated learning and its practice in real world. In this regard, the chapter narrates the personal experiences of a writer in relation of the policies to be put into effect in the sense of e-mediated learning.

Chapter 9 (entitled *E-mediated Approaches to Personalising Inter-Professional Learning in the Health Sector*) seeks for the probabilities of personalised health education within the context of inter-professional learning (IPL). IPL is a learning experience design in which the concepts namely authenticity, distance challenge and individualised learning have all great importance.

Chapter 10 (entitled *Evidence in Relation to the Effectiveness of E-mediated Personalised Education*) ponders the effectiveness of personalised learning. As specified by the authors, the concept of personalisation in e-mediated education should be embraced within the frame of contemporary higher education.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This book sheds light to personalised learning by elaborating essential concepts such as de-personalisation, im-personalization, inter-personalisation and re-personalisation. In addition, the notion of personalised learning is discussed fully in each chapter corresponding to modes of e-mediated learning, massification, effective pedagogy, technology integration, inter-professional learning (IPL) and contemporary higher education.

In sum, this book serves as an important reference for those who want to understand personalised learning in e-mediated context which is seen as a starting point of an effective pedagogical approach. As it is also addressed by the authors of this book, e-mediated learning can help to achieve approaches namely differentiation, individualisation, and personalisation.

It is obviously expressed in the book that personalised learning in relation with e-mediated learning is a dynamic concept that reacts to the profound changes. Therefore, it is suggested to have a close observation to improve the modes of e-mediated instruction both in formal and distance education.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESS of the REVIEWER

Nil GOKSEL-CANBEK, who is an English language instructor, is a PhD candidate in the Department of Distance Education, Graduate School of Social Sciences at Anadolu University. She pursued her MA Degree with her completed study entitled "Learner -Instructor Interaction within University-Community Partnerships by Giving Samples from Second Life (SL)" in 2009. Currently, she is working on various academic works related to Personal Learning Environments and their potential use in foreign language learning. Her other research interests lie broadly in the areas regarding Educational Social Networks, New Learning Technologies, Virtual Interaction, Augmented Reality, Web 2.0 tools, Mash-ups and Artificial Intelligence.

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INTERVIEW

THE ROLE and FUNCTION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION WORLD FROM WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE:

An interview with Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI for WOJDE

Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI is an assistant professor and director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication and in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine.

Interviewed by Dr. Harun SERPIL
intWOJDE, Anadolu University,
Eskisehir, TURKEY



Distance education -DE- has an increasingly powerful impact on the education systems around the world and plays an especially vital role in the education of developing countries. It enables a large number of populations to access educational opportunities which would not be otherwise possible through conventional systems of education. This semi-structured interview aims to benefit from her experiences, feelings, and perceptions about distance learning/education by eliciting her deep insights on the issue. As being a member int.WOJDE team,

Harun SERPIL has interviewed with Lisa GUALTIERI, PhD, ScM. Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI is an assistant professor and director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication and in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine.

int.WOJDE: Hi your welcome, who is Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI?

Lisa GUALTIERI: From the perspective of distance education, I have developed and delivered online courses for many years and still teach online! I was Editor-in-Chief of eLearn Magazine and spoke at many e-learning conferences. In addition, I am an assistant professor and director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine. My research focuses on the use of social media for participant recruitment in clinical trials and on the use of wearable activity trackers with older adults with chronic medical conditions. I am the founder of RecycleHealth, which collects unused wearable activity trackers and donates them to underserved populations. I serve on the FDA's General Hospital, Personal Use Devices Panel. I have a Ph.D. in computer science from Harvard University, a Sc.M in computer science from Brown University, and a B.A. in mathematics from the University of Massachusetts.



int.WOJDE: What are your views about distance education? How does distance education support the education system of your country?

Lisa GUALTIERI: The biggest advantage I see is the increased reach and flexibility. Many of my students are working professionals. The certificate program we offer on Digital

Health Communication offers courses to fit into students' busy lives while giving them the opportunity to learn new skills. While some of my students are in Boston, many are in other locations and as far away as India.



int.WOJDE: What has been your experience at your current workplace for distance education/learning?

Lisa GUALTIERI: At Tufts University School of Medicine, I developed the first fully online course, Mobile Health Design. That led to an online certificate program. While most courses at Tufts are offered in the classroom, my colleagues and I also realize the benefits of tools like WebEx to be able to offer a class when there is a snowstorm and the university closes due to weather.



int.WOJDE: What are the advantages of distance education model of learning over traditional model of learning?

Lisa GUALTIERI: Personally, I like teaching in person best. Here's why: First, I like to stand to lecture and it is hard to do that when you're at your laptop. Second, I like seeing my students in person, chatting with them before and after class, and seeing their faces light up when something I say excites them. Of course, online is convenient in many ways-especially for professional development. I feel like I get to know my students well, but I especially like meeting them in person.



int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance education instructors?

Lisa GUALTIERI: My suggestions are to prepare for the worst case – have a back-up plan for everything – and do everything possible to encourage students to participate. It is also important that your mastery of the topic and knowledge of how to apply it is apparent no matter how a course is delivered. I am very proud that one of the instructors I mentored, Bradley Moore, MPH, taught an online course alone for the first time to glowing student evaluations.



int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance education administrators?

Lisa GUALTIERI: My suggestion is to make technology transparent. It is a delivery mechanism. For students and faculty, it ideally should be no harder to be in an online course than to be in one delivered in a classroom.



int.WOJDE: Which areas of distance education have you been involved so far, and what are some of the lessons you have learned from them?

Lisa GUALTIERI: I have taught online for years, mostly using synchronous technologies. I direct a certificate program that is delivered online except for a one-week in person course. In addition to teaching online, I have mentored faculty who are new to teaching online.

int.WOJDE: Did you have supportive practices/programs for the education of women and girls through your work at University?

Lisa GUALTIERI: I don't think we distinguish in any way between students. They are all people!



int.WOJDE: As a woman, what do you think should be done for a more effective distance education of women?

Lisa GUALTIERI: There is exciting work being done for outreach in developing countries where there are fewer educational opportunities for girls.

int.WOJDE: You must have had interesting experiences during your work in distance education. Could you please tell us about some of those?

Lisa GUALTIERI: My most interesting experiences have been opportunities to bring in guest lecturers to share their expertise even though not local. When I think about the highlights of my teaching career, it has been some of these amazing guest lecturers, such as Dr. Richard Besser and Dr. Deanna Attai.

int.WOJDE: Our thanks go to Dr Lisa GUALTIERI for sharing her invaluable distance education/learning experience as a female professional with the int.WOJDE readers.

BIODATA of Lisa GUALTIERI

Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI is an Ass. Prof. Dr., director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication and in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine. Her research focuses on the use of social media for participant recruitment in clinical trials and on the use of wearable activity trackers with older adults with chronic medical conditions. Lisa is the founder of RecycleHealth, which collects unused wearable activity trackers and donates them to underserved populations.



She serves on the FDA's General Hospital and Personal Use Devices Panel. Lisa has a Ph.D. in computer science from Harvard University, a Sc.M in computer science from Brown University, and a B.A. in Mathematics from the University of Massachusetts.

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ALUMNA ADVOCATES FOR OPEN KNOWLEDGE

JANUARY 25, 2017

BY: Megan CATALANO

TAGS: BACHELOR OF ARTS IN PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION



When KELSEY Wiens arrived in South Africa by the road less travelled, she didn't plan to set out on a new career path. After seven years, she's back in Canada and ready for the opportunity to make a difference in her home country.

A Bachelor of Arts in Professional Communication (BAPC) alumna originally from Okotoks, Alta., Wiens was recently named Canada public lead for Creative Commons Canada based in Toronto. Wiens will build community, organize events and perform outreach activities through her new role.

"From BCcampus, Open North and OpenMedia, Canada has some of the best examples of organizations with open education policy and practices globally," says Wiens. "I'm looking forward to bringing the established projects together and supporting new projects interested in working in the open."

Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that helps people legally share their knowledge and creativity using open licenses that allow content to be used freely with attribution to the creator.

Wikipedia, Flickr and academic journals without a paywall are examples of content that can be accessed and shared openly thanks to Creative Commons licenses, she says. "The reason Wikipedia works so efficiently is that it's built on our open licenses. It allows all work on Wikipedia to be attributed back to the creator, photographer, researcher or writer and the ecosystem of sharing and gratitude building".

After her BAPC graduation, Wiens was hired by Tour d'Afrique as a communication manager in the field and spent four months cycling from Cairo to Cape Town with 50 other cyclists. Previously, Wiens worked as a library technician, but didn't know where she wanted her career to go. New opportunities were in store for her when she arrived in Cape Town.

"I fell in love with the city, the people, the beaches," says Wiens. "I took a position as an assistant researcher at the University of Cape Town and that's where I was first introduced to Creative Commons."

She then landed a position with Creative Commons South Africa leading Pan-African projects with an open education focus. She says she is excited to bring her knowledge to Canadian open projects.

"My job is all about community building and advocacy," says Wiens "The communication skills I learned in the BAPC program are essential to the work—learning how to design a communication strategy, how to write an effective message, how to write a speech. All of the tools I gained at RRU, I use almost every day."

In addition to speaking at 2015 Tedx Cape Town and being named one of South Africa's brightest young minds by the *Mail & Guardian*, Wiens founded Open Textbooks for Africa, a project designed to support the adaption and adoption of Open University Textbooks across Africa.

Thrilled to be back home in Canada, Wiens speaks fondly of her time at Royal Roads, not only because of what she learned in the classroom, but also because of the memorable time spent riding her bike around the campus.

Source: <http://www.royalroads.ca/news/alumna-advocates-open-knowledge>

HUMAN INTEREST

THIS 94-YEAR-OLD GRANDMOTHER JUST EARNED HER BACHELOR'S DEGREE: 'Education Gives Me Life!'

BY ROSE MINUTAGLIO. @ROSEMINUTAGLIO

POSTED ON JANUARY 18, 2017 AT 3:13PM EST

When 94-year-old Amy Craton accepted her diploma earlier this week, she become one of the world's oldest college graduates-and she couldn't be more proud of the big accomplishment.

"You can't live without knowledge!" Craton tells PEOPLE. "Education is living."

Craton donned a traditional lei for the graduation celebration, where friends and family gathered to support her.

"I've always wanted to have my degree," she says. "In the back of my mind that goal has always been there, but things get in the way, life gets in the way."



Please click on for listening here <http://people.com/human-interest/this-94-year-old-grandmother-earning-her-bachelors-degree-is-proof-youre-never-too-old-to-stop-learning-education-gives-me-life/>

The grandmother of 12 earned her Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing and English from Southern New Hampshire University's online program. And SNHU president Paul LeBlanc flew to Craton's home-state of Hawaii on Monday to present her with the certificate.

"But now I did it!" with SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY

**Craton decided to pursue her degree for one simple reason:
"I like to learn!" she explains.**

And although she attended Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, California, in 1962, Craton was forced to put her education on hold so she could support her four children after she and her husband divorced.



"I found myself getting older, in a chair, really not having a life or doing anything," says Craton. "But I really like to learn." So..... the grandmother started her degree in September of 2013, opting for SNHU's online program, because she is hard of hearing.

"Though I do hear, it was difficult making out what the professor was saying, but then I found out about online classes," she explains.

"It was definitely for me."

And, her decision to major in English stems from her love of writing-especially poems and haikus.

"I think if you have a chance to go back to school, if you're capable of going back to school, I see no reason why you shouldn't go back," says Craton.

"It keeps you living in life, being a part of life, not just withdrawing. If you're reaching out to other people, learning not only from school, it seems to prepare you to want to know more things than what you just get from school.

"If you have the chance to go back, by all means go to school."

**SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE
UNIVERSITY With her new degree,**

Craton hopes to write a children's book. But, she says she's not done with school quite yet. "Now I'm pursuing my master's [MA degree] in Creative Writing and English!" she says. "The more you know, the more you want to know, the more open your life is.

"Education gives you life"



Source: <http://people.com/human-interest/this-94-year-old-grandmother-earning-her-bachelors-degree-is-proof-youre-never-too-old-to-stop-learning-education-gives-me-life>

BURCU'S STORY

"MY ENTREPRENEURSHIP STORY"

“
*Dreams are reflections of real life.
Imagine the highest as possible;
because there is more than you imagine.”*
Burcu



Almost all of us, from time to time, set up sentences that start with the words "if I had an opportunity" or "I wish there was something like this". However, instead of saying 'If I had the opportunity' the important thing is to create opportunities for our own ideas and dreams. Nowadays, there are many entrepreneurship ideas in the back of many people's minds and some of them are utopic and some are logical. Because easy and quick access makes us even more encouraged to bring our ideas into action. Today, a very favourable environment to help us develop these ideas has formed. Thanks to internet, it is very easy and cost-free to access information and transmit our ideas and what we do to people. Even though people are more determined to actualize their ideas when they hear success stories by entrepreneurship, most of the time they

just stay in friend conversations.

Many entrepreneurs who see entrepreneurs written in capital letters on magazine covers and aspire them think that they can do it in a magical way and very quickly. They think that the love of entrepreneurship is a simple victory that is easily accessible with little excitement and courage. However, when they realize that achieving this triumph is through resolution and determination, they quickly get tired. Furthermore, when they see the difficulties or the work they give up before long. Here I am one of those who do not give up. Owing to maybe tenacity, obligation, imagination and maybe hard work; I always try to reach the light at the end of the tunnel.

My entrepreneurship adventure that I have unwittingly laid the foundations of goes back to my college years when these excitements have started. At the beginning of my university education, while I was studying in Mathematics department, I was thinking of being a teacher and teaching private lessons. However, my interest in innovation and technological products led me to become an engineer. While I was a senior student in electronics engineering, the paper I wrote during my final project received the "Best student paper" award at ELECO 2010. Then I received the Techno-Entrepreneurship Capital Support by the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology with the same project. With this support, I set up a company in 2011 and continued to work in the field of engineering. I got an achievement scholarship from the university that I graduated from, I started my post-graduate and continued the company activities in the university campus with the help of free office support of the same university. We are currently carrying out our studies with the support of three of my colleagues graduated from the same university. Besides, I am working as a faculty member at Ankara University and I am serving as an assistant principal. I run different projects with students and encourage them to entrepreneurship and we work on research and development project parallel to the technology trends.



Acting as an entrepreneur in life leads me to make short and long-term plans for life, to use the resources optimally, to improve human relations and to transfer the experiences I achieve in my work to efficient channels.

In addition to the students I mentor in academic life, I try to help women access the information and training opportunities they need to, enable them to become entrepreneurs and use their potentials. It is my greatest excitement to realize my own dreams and to influence people's and especially women's lives positively. I organize places where the lessons are taught by the volunteers for female students who are getting prepared for the examination but don't have a chance to take lessons and I encourage women who couldn't demonstrate their talents to this day and who are dependent on others.



Today, it has become very important for women and society to increase their activities in working life day by day. Especially when the women are more educated, determined, and ambitious, it enables her to strengthen her economic independence and position in society. The most important fact that provides this power to women is entrepreneurship. With entrepreneurship activity, the women achieve material and moral gains on one side and on the other side achieve the opportunity to turn the judgments about sex discrimination against many women into their favour with the features of independence, financial opportunities, social services, job security, family employment and challenge.



Although it seems difficult or unsustainable for a variety of reasons to pursue our dreams throughout our lives, in fact, the real key to success is this.

That's why entrepreneurship is so close and warm to people and it's the real way to pursue our dreams. We may have the goals such as being a successful person, being a successful woman, being a successful engineer, being a successful entrepreneur.

In order to reach these goals, we must define our dreams and determine a plan to achieve this dream. We must continue our way step by step, with determination, stubbornness, enthusiasm, joy and pleasure, determining our accessible milestones in this plan. When we pursue our dreams and when we



try to do what we enjoy, in fact, without realizing it, perhaps we have reached all our goals.

At the end we will have worked to reach our dreams, developed while working, progressed further at each step, and finally accomplished absolutely, and most importantly, we will have been happy.

EDITOR's NOTE:

intWOJDE's thanks go to dear Burcu YAKIŞIR GIRGIN for her tolerance and giving us her kindly re-publishing official permission.

Dear intWOJDE readers,

Have a story to share? We love hearing about how our students have met their goals through flexible education options, and we hope you'll consider sharing your journey with us. (We won't publish your story without your permission.)

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What did you accomplish through your studies that makes you proud?
What challenges, if any, did you overcome to pursue your education?
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