

VIEWS OF STUDENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND SPORT MANAGEMENT ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate viewpoints of students in recreation and sport management department on distance education, and the effects of sex, having computers and internet access at home, family's monthly income, district of the family, and students' level of class on these viewpoints. Survey method was used to carry out the study. The sample of the study consisted of the students who attend Recreation and Sports Management Departments of Physical Education and Sports High School in Sakarya University. In order to gather information, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher, and it was applied to 292 students. Several statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage, t-test and ANOVA were used to analyze the data. The result of the study showed that the variables like sex, having a computer and an internet access at home, monthly income of the families of students, the place where students' families live and class levels of the students have an influence on their opinions.

Keywords: Physical education, Distance Education, Recreation, Sport Management.

INTRODUCTION

Distance education is a kind of instruction that occurs when the instructor and student are separated by distance, time, or both (WCET 2004). It is, in the most general sense of the term, the instruction delivered over a distance to one or more individuals located in one or more places (Phipps, Wellman & Merisotis 1998). In a report prepared for NCES (1999), distance education is also defined as education or training courses delivered to remote (off-campus) location(s) via audio, video (live or prerecorded), or computer technologies, including both synchronous and asynchronous instruction. It encompasses the programs that allow the learner and instructor to be physically apart during the learning process and maintain communication in a variety of ways (Keegan, 1986). Many researchers believe that distance education is a key factor in expanding educational opportunities to remote areas (Gamble & Fischer, 1993; Hodder & Carter, 1997; Ludlow, 1995). Thus, it enables larger numbers of people to have access to education and training (Grill, 1999). Learners, no matter which country they live in, study in four types of locations when taking a course offered by distance education: home, workplace, study centers, and classrooms (Roberts, 1996).

There has been many ways for distance education throughout the history. Main different characteristics of the generations of technologies used in distance education include (NCES, 1999):

- the number of individuals that can be simultaneously supported in communication (i.e., one-way, two-way, or multiple-way communication);
- the amount and types of information (voice, video, data) that can be delivered (i.e., whether the communication channels are "broadband" or "narrowband"); and
- the speed level at which that information is delivered (i.e., whether the return rate is fast or slow).

Distance education has expanded enormously for the last two past decades throughout the world, and teachers, especially primary school teachers, reach a significant number of learners. The history behind the use of teacher education by distance differentiates between the north and the south. Until recently, in industrialized countries where distance education is just one option within a highly developed educational system, its use in teacher education was fairly limited, and the main aim of using it was to reach remote learners. But the growing legitimization in distance education, market forces in higher education and use of new educational technologies have provided an expansion in this field within the decade. Particularly, new information and communication technologies (ICTs) have opened up a range of new opportunities for course-and resource-based learning in teacher education. Examples include email tutoring, computer-based learning, online conferencing, virtual classroom observation and web-based teacher resources (Creed, 2001).

Because the distance factor minimizes dialogue between teacher and learner and also imposes a relatively high level of structure in order to meet learning goals, it is claimed by critics of independent study that distance education brings about dependence rather than improving critical thinking and self-directed learning as claimed by its proponents. Some argue that the main skill that a distance education student gains is the ability to provide perfunctory answers based on readily available information contained in the course material. One view suggests

that distance education is rigidly prescriptive and creates dependency; another argues that it promotes autonomy and encourages self-directed approaches to learning (Beaudoin, 1990).

Although online education has increased, there are some challenges. Teaching in distance education is not the same as teaching in a face-to-face environment; administration of distance education programs requires different experiences; and for students, learning online is not like the ones in face-to-face environments. Due to growing demands in distance education and the unique experience it provides, it is important for educational authorities to be aware of the benefits, difficulties, and challenges of distance education (Mupinga, 2005). The task of the distance instructor or mentor is much more than just to grade submitted materials of students. Normally, the process of instruction involves (MacKenzie, Christensen & Rigby, 1968):

- Deciding whether the students are ready to learn or not,
- Monitoring student progress toward desired objectives,
- Recognizing the difficulties that students experience in learning process,
- Encouraging students for further efforts,
- Evaluating the quality of learning, and
- Assigning a grade to estimate learning outcomes.

Distance Education in Physical Education

Improvements in the computer technology have made class activities easier for students and increased the motivation of students. Additionally, technologies in distance education can be seen as a way to facilitate learning and to improve interaction with the students in Physical Education (Yaman, 2009). The students in Physical Education Departments can cooperate with the students from other departments or schools and can make projects via internet (Mohsen, 2001; Sheingold & Hadley 1990). Owing to the effects of constructivist view, distance education has changed the role of the students and teachers in traditional learning process. (İşman, 2004). For instance, forums on the internet can increase group interaction, and web-pages can enable students to reach lots of information easily. In today's world, with modern education, we mean environments which have no place limitation and contribute to the development of individuals regardless of place and time. (Yaman, 2008). In order to be sure of its efficiency, this contribution must be very fast using all the technological innovations and it must be joyful and meet the requirements of the contemporary world (Yaman, 2008). Using e-mail is a beneficial way for informal communication among teachers as well (Knapper, 2001). The use of internet in physical education enables the information to spread fast, improves communicative and writing skills, and facilitates motivation for learning (Yaman, 2009).

The aim of this study is to investigate the viewpoints of students in Recreation and Sport Management Departments in distance education, and the effects of sex, having a computer and an internet access at home, family's monthly income, district of the family, and students' level of class on these viewpoints.

METHOD

Research Scale

For this study, 28 items were used in a fivefold Likert-type scale to measure the competency areas on computer. The students who participated in the research graded items 1-5 points in which they are required to choose one of the alternatives between Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree according to their views. In the analysis, grading was made as Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral =3, Agree=4 and Strongly Agree=5.

Reliability of the Scale

It is enough to find a Cronbach Alpha value higher than 60 in order for the scale to be reliable. In the distance education scale that was designed for this research, Cronbach Alpha value was found 0,895 for the Recreation Department, and 0,887 for the Sport Management Department. This scale was seen as highly reliable.

Research Data

Datas used in this research are obtained from the distance education scale that was applied to 292 students studying at Sakarya University Physical Education Sport College, Recreation and Sport Management Departments in the academic years of 2009-2010. After the scale was applied, an evaluation was made on the variables like sex, level of class, district of the family, monthly income of the family, having a computer and an internet access at home.

The Statistical Method of the Research

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in this research. SPSS available statistical program was used for the section analysis of the scale. Each skill area was evaluated by frequency, percentage and average

values within itself and according to sex, level of class, district of the family, monthly income of the family, having a computer and an internet access at home variables. In the last section, each individual's total points in the scale was analyzed and evaluated according to sex, level of class, district of the family, monthly income of the family, having a computer and an internet access at home. For each variable, the frequency and percentage ranks were given, and furthermore Independent Samples T-Test and ANOVA were used in order to find the correlation between two variables.

FINDINGS

Demographic Situations of the Participants

Table 1. Demographic Situations of the Participants

Variables	RECREATION		MANAGEMENT	
	N	%	N	%
Sex				
Female	57	41,3	71	46,1
Male	81	58,7	83	53,9
Total	138	100	154	100
Level of Class				
1	40	29,0	41	26,6
2	35	25,4	36	23,4
3	31	22,5	34	22,1
4	32	23,2	43	27,9
Total	138	100	154	100
District of the Family				
Province	81	58,7	99	64,3
County	47	34,1	40	26,0
Village	10	7,2	15	9,7
Total	138	100	154	100
Monthly Income of the Family				
400 TL and down	23	16,7	23	14,9
401-800 TL	51	37,0	52	33,8
801-1001 TL	32	23,2	36	23,4
1001-1500 TL	13	9,4	20	13,0
1501 TL and up	19	13,8	23	14,9
Total	138	100	154	100
Is there a computer?				
Yes	77	55,8	91	59,1
No	61	44,2	63	40,9
Total	138	100	154	100
Is there any Internet Access?				
Yes	68	49,3	75	48,7
No	70	50,7	79	51,2
Total	138	100	167	100

Statement Analysis

	RECREATION					SPORT MANAGEMENT				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think distance education is a useful educational system.	1 22,5	6 26,1	2 23,2	1 22,5	5,8	0 13,0	3 34,4	6 23,4	4 22,1	1 7,1
I can get enough feedback about my strength in education thanks to distance education.	5,8	5 25,4	0 29,0	1 37,0	2,9	4,5	1 26,6	7 30,5	2 33,8	4,5
My opinion on using internet in distance education is positive.	3 9,4	5 10,9	2 15,9	8 49,3	0 14,5	0 3,9	2 19,5	8 14,3	8 50,6	8 11,7
I want these kind of implementation methods in all our classes (including the applied ones).	5 18,1	1 29,7	2 15,9	5 25,4	5 10,9	6 16,9	2 27,3	9 18,8	0 26,0	7 11,0
Distance education provides opportunity for using various internet technologies.	5,1	4 17,4	5 18,1	5 47,1	7 12,3	5,8	0 19,5	9 18,8	0 45,5	6 10,4
Distance education gives more learning responsibility to me.	8 13,0	0 36,2	9 21,0	5 18,1	6 11,6	1 13,6	7 37,0	7 24,0	9 18,8	0 6,5
Distance education makes me feel like I am good at an important field.	0 14,5	9 35,5	3 16,7	5 25,4	1 8,0	8 11,7	4 35,1	2 27,3	3 21,4	4,5
I can get enough feedback about my weaknesses in education thanks to distance education.	4 10,1	1 29,7	0 21,7	3 31,2	0 7,2	0 6,5	9 31,8	0 26,0	7 30,5	5,2
I think distance education is better than traditional class teaching.	1 22,5	9 35,5	9 21,0	0 14,5	6,5	5 22,7	9 38,3	9 12,3	4 22,1	4,5
Having education independent from time and place increases my performance.	2 15,9	0 36,2	6 18,8	4 17,4	6 11,6	6 16,9	2 33,8	0 19,5	5 22,7	1 7,1
I can ask questions that I avoid to ask in class atmosphere thanks to distance education.	3 9,4	0 21,7	2 8,7	5 47,1	8 13,0	1 7,1	7 24,0	4 15,6	5 42,2	7 11,0
I can improve my learning by asking debative questions.	2	4	8	7	7		3	6	1	6

	8,7	17,4	13,0	8,6	12,3	5,2	21,4	23,4	39,6	10,4
E-mail, talking and debative activities made on electronic bulletin board provide me more perspectives.		3	0	8	8	2	6	3	1	2
	6,5	16,7	14,5	49,3	13,0	7,8	16,9	21,4	39,6	14,3
At distance education, there is no discomfort that I encounter in traditional class atmosphere	4	4	4	4	2	8	5	0	8	3
	10,1	31,9	17,4	24,6	15,9	11,7	29,2	19,5	31,2	8,4
Applied lessons take more time than the ones in traditional class atmosphere	3	3	8	4	0	8	0	3	1	2
	9,4	31,2	20,3	31,9	7,2	11,7	26,0	21,4	33,1	7,8
I think that I have to know the computer softwares very well to have distance education		5	5	2	8	3	5	4	6	6
	5,8	10,9	10,9	52,2	20,3	8,4	22,7	9,1	42,9	16,9
I think that I have to know the computer hardwares very well to have distance education		4	3	6	7	5	7	7	6	9
	5,8	17,4	9,4	47,8	19,6	9,7	24,0	11,0	42,9	12,3
I think that I have to know the internet very well to have distance education	0	4	9	6	9	5	3	7	5	4
	7,2	10,1	13,8	47,8	21,0	9,7	21,4	11,0	42,2	15,6
Distance education decreases my communication and travelling costs		3	1	4	1	5	2	0	1	6
	6,5	16,7	15,2	39,1	22,5	9,7	20,8	19,5	33,1	16,9
Studying at home in distance education process causes motivational problems, parental conflicts and lack of attention	7	7	8	8	8	6	5	5	0	8
	12,3	19,6	20,3	27,5	20,3	10,4	16,2	29,2	32,5	11,7
I think that in distance education, it will be difficult to communicate with academics		2	8	1	9	6	9	6	9	4
	5,8	15,9	20,3	37,0	21,0	10,4	18,8	10,4	44,8	15,6
I think that in distance education, in-class interaction and debative activities will be lesser.	0	3	3	5	7	5	0	4	3	2
	7,2	16,7	9,4	39,9	26,8	9,7	13,0	15,6	47,4	14,3
I think that campus is more useful for job sources and benefits of having the job facilities		8	2	6	3	2	6	9	8	9
	6,5	20,3	15,9	40,6	16,7	7,8	16,9	25,3	37,7	12,3
I think contemporary teaching methods are used in distance education	1	4	6	1	6		1	0	9	
	8,0	24,6	26,1	29,7	11,6	4,5	20,1	39,0	31,8	4,5
I think the lessons with distance education will be permanent	9	5	0	6		2	9	7	9	
	13,8	32,6	29,0	18,8	5,8	14,3	31,8	30,5	18,8	4,5
I think that lack of school and lesson materials will be provided by distance education	2	7	5	3	1	9	2	6	5	2
	15,9	26,8	25,4	23,9	8,0	12,3	27,3	29,9	22,7	7,8

Students having distance education benefit from library more.		5	4	3	8	0	3	9	0	2
	5,8	18,1	17,4	38,4	20,3	6,5	21,4	18,8	39,0	14,3
Thanks to distance education, global education come true and equal opportunity in education is achieved	4	0	5	2	7	4	0	5	2	7
	10,1	14,5	18,1	37,7	19,6	10,1	14,5	18,1	37,7	19,6

T-Test Results on Sex Variable

As a result of the analysis, it was found that there is a meaningful difference level of $P < 0,05$ among the students studying at Recreation Department according to the sex variable. Female students agreed more with the statement “Distance education gives more learning responsibility to me” at the meaningful level of $P = 0,034$ than the male students.

It was also found that there is a meaningful difference level of $P < 0,05$ according to sex variable among the students studying at Recreation Department. Male students agreed more with the statement “I can ask questions that I avoid to ask in class atmosphere thanks to distance education” at the level of $P = 0,009$ than the female students.

T-Test Results on Having a Computer at Home

As a result of the analysis, it was found that there is a meaningful difference level of $P < 0,05$ according to having a computer at home variable among the students studying at Recreation Department. The students that have a computer at home agreed more with the statement “My opinions on using internet in distance education is positive” at the meaningful level of $P = 0,043$ than the students who do not have.

It was also found that there is a meaningful difference level of $P < 0,05$ among the students studying at Management Department. The students that have a computer at home agreed more with the statement “I can get enough feedback about my weaknesses in education thanks to distance education” at a meaningful level of $P = 0,048$ than the students who do not have.

T-Test Results on Having Internet Access at Home

As a result of the analysis on the students studying at Recreation Department, it was found that there is meaningful difference level of $P < 0,05$ according to having internet access at home variable. The students that have internet access at home agreed more with the statement “My opinions on using internet in distance education is positive” at a meaningful level of $P = 0,005$ than the students who do not have.

It was also found that there is a meaningful difference level of $P < 0,05$ according to having the internet at home variable among the students studying at Management Department. The students that have internet access at home agreed more with the statement “I can get enough feedback about my weaknesses in education thanks to distance education” at a meaningful level of $P = 0,46$ than the students who do not have.

ANOVA Results on Family’s Monthly Income

As a result of the ANOVA, it was found that there is a meaningful difference level of $P < 0,05$ on the statements “I think that I have to know how to use internet thoroughly to have distance education” and “Studying at home in distance education process, causes motivational problems, parental conflicts and lack of attention” according to family’s monthly income variable among the students studying at Recreation Department.

According to LSD test results that was carried out to find which group created this difference, it was found that the students whose family income is 400TL and less ($P = 0,005$) and between 801TL-1000 TL ($P = 0,024$) gave more positive answers to the statement “I think that I have to know how to use internet thoroughly to have distance education” than the students whose family income is between 401TL-800TL. According to LSD test result about the statement “Studying at home in distance education process, causes motivational problems, parental conflicts and lack the attention”, the students whose family income is 400TL and less ($P = 0,003$) and between 801TL-1000TL ($P = 0,017$) meaningfully agreed more with the statement than the ones 401TL-800TL.

However, as a result of the ANOVA, it was found that there is no meaningful difference according to family income variable of the students studying at the Management Department.

ANOVA Results on the District of the Family

It was found that there is a meaningful difference level of $P < 0,05$ according to district of the family variable among the students studying at the Recreation Department regarding the statements “I want these kind of implementation methods in all our classes (including the applied ones)” and “I think that campus is more useful for job sources and benefits of having the job facilities”.

According to LSD test results was carried out to find out which group created the difference, it was found that the students whose family district were county gave more positive answers to the statement “I want these kind of implementation methods in all our classes (including the applied ones)” than the students whose family district were province and village at meaningful levels respectively $P = 0,008$ and $P = 0,001$.

According to LSD test results regarding the statement “I think that campus is more useful for job sources and benefits of having the job facilities”, the students whose family districts are province meaningfully ($P = 0,009$) agreed more with the above statement than the students whose family districts are county.

However, according to ANOVA results, it was found that there is no meaningful difference according to family’s district variable among the students studying at the Management Department.

ANOVA Results on Class Variable

As a result of the ANOVA for the Recreation Department, it was found that there is a meaningful difference level of $P < 0,005$ in the statements “I think distance education is a useful educational system.”, “I can get enough feedback about my strength in education thanks to distance education”, “I can get enough feedback about my weaknesses in education thanks to distance education”, “Distance education decreases my communication and travelling costs”, “I think that in distance education, in-class interaction and debative activities will be less” and “I think that contemporary teaching methods are used in distance education”.

According to the LSD test result regarding the statement “I think that distance education is a useful educational system”, it was identified that 2nd class students agreed with the statement more than the 1st and 3rd class students at meaningful levels respectively $P = 0,001$ and $P = 0,019$. Besides, 4th class students agreed more with the above statement at a meaningful level of $P = 0,005$ than the 1st class students.

According to the LSD test result regarding the statement “I can get enough feedback about my strength in education thanks to distance education” it was identified that 2nd class students agreed more with the above statement than the 1st, 3rd and 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P = 0,005$, $P = 0,015$ and $P = 0,019$.

According to the LSD test result regarding the statement “I can get enough feedback about my weaknesses in education thanks to distance education” it was identified that 2nd class students agreed more with the above statement than the 1st and 3rd class students at meaningful levels respectively $P = 0,014$ and $P = 0,004$.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the item “Distance education decreases my communication and travelling costs”, it was identified that 2nd class, 3rd class and 4th class students agreed more with the above statement than the 1st class students at meaningful levels respectively $P = 0,008$, $P = 0,003$ and $P = 0,008$.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “I think that at distance education, in-class interaction and debative activities will be less”, it was identified that 2nd class, 3rd class and 4th class students agreed more with the above statement than the 1st class students at meaningful levels respectively $P = 0,023$, $P = 0,002$ and $P = 0,000$.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “I think that contemporary teaching methods are used in distance education” it was identified that 2nd class students agreed more with the above statement than the 1st and 3rd class students at meaningful levels respectively $P = 0,021$ and $P = 0,015$.

As a result of the ANOVA made for the Management Department, it was found that there is a meaningful difference at the level of $P < 0,005$ regarding the statements “I think that distance education is a useful educational system”, “I want these kind of implementation methods in all our classes (including the applied ones)”, “Distance education gives more learning responsibility to me”, “I can get enough feedback about my weaknesses in education thanks to distance education”, “I think that it is better than traditional class teaching”, “I can improve my learning by asking debative questions” and “Applied lessons take more time than the ones in traditional class atmosphere”.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “I think that distance education is a useful educational system” it was identified that 3rd class students agreed more than the 1st, 2nd and 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P=0,036$, $P=0,000$ and $P=0,000$. Also, 1st class students agreed more with the above item than the 2nd and 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P=0,032$ and $P=0,042$.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “I want these kind of implementation methods in all our classes (including the applied ones)” it was identified that 1st class students agreed more than the 3rd and 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P=0,025$ and $P=0,000$. Also, 2nd class students agreed more with the above statement at a meaningful level of $P=0,013$ than the 4th class students.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “Distance education gives more learning responsibility to me” and it was seen that 1st class students agreed more than the 2nd and 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P=0,005$ and $P=0,009$.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “I can get enough feedback about my weaknesses in education thanks to distance education” it was identified that 1st, 2nd and 3rd class students agreed more than the 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P=0,002$, $P=0,023$ and $P=0,006$.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “I think that it is better than the traditional class teaching” it was identified that 1st class students agreed more than the 2nd and 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P=0,005$ and $P=0,015$.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “I can improve my learning by asking debative questions” , it was identified that 1st and 3rd class students agreed more than the 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P=0,001$ and $P=0,035$.

According to the LSD test that was carried out for the statement “Applied lessons take more time than the ones in traditional class atmosphere”, it was identified that 3rd class students agreed more than the 2nd and 4th class students at meaningful levels respectively $P=0,006$ and $P=0,019$.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study has shown that the variables like sex, having a computer and an internet access at home, monthly income of the families of students, the place where students' families live and class levels of the students have an influence on their opinions. For example, the female students agreed more with the statement “Distance education gives more learning responsibility to me; the male students agreed more with the statement “I can ask questions I avoid to ask in class atmosphere thanks to distance education”. Moreover, the variables like having a computer and an internet access at home, and families who live in small towns affected students' views in positive ways. Furthermore, it was seen that class levels of the students resulted in meaningful differences between the students' views. Students almost from every class level had more positive views on some of the statements and the views differed from each other concerning certain statements.

Based on these results some recommendations can be made as follows: While designing distance education, classes that take student qualities into consideration might help them to increase their concentration. Besides, improving distance education facilities and the number of the courses accessible via distance education might help the students who have difficulties in attending the courses due to personal issues. Moreover, designing asynchronous learning facilities and improving the flexibility of the attendance may help students to attend courses without being worried to skip the classes.

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