
A Perspective for the Education of Business Management: Implementation of Internet-Based Learning as a Type of Adult Education

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Abstract. As widely stated, the business administration in the terms of both a field of study and profession is sharply affected by global socio-economical conditions and cultural interactions on which are generated through all societies' toward each other. This leads to place the business activities and enterprises(with all of basic functions and organizational goals) at the centre of whole social occasions although they seem only economy-based(Mucuk, 2003). Thus, the human and information technologies are the fundamentals of such structure that requires constant development and perfection.

It can be said that, in the period of rapid globalization since the 1980's, the socio-economical and technological factors that fastened by the concept of market economy caused many tragical changes(both positive and negative) in social areas including education and learning facilities(Şaylan, 1999; Timisi, 2003; Sayılan, 2006; Merriam, 2008). In such an age of re-designings and re-buildings, there are main characteristics described and inscribed for social and educational dimensions in the contemporary world of globalization. For instance, re-exploring and rising of "lifelong learning" in response to incompetency of formal education systems and rapid growth and widely implementation of information Technologies and mass communicational affects on societies(in the terms of global village and information society)might be regarded as ongoing significant issues(Tekin, 1996; Timisi, 2003).

At the learning and education dimensions of that era, as a consequence of both technological opportunities and political tendencies, lifelong learning and adult educational philosophies have emerged and gained importance. Through the characteristics and principles of lifelong learning(without limitations of time and space; without school and teacher; at any time and anywhere; problem and demand-focused,...etc.)philosophy and in concordance with basic assumptions of adult education which regards adulthood's typical requirements and capabilities as main learning incomes(self direction, problem based, past experiences, readiness to learn,...etc.), there have been new learning and education approaches developed(Okçabol, 1996; Tekin, 1996; Merriam, 2008).

From the point of technological and educational development, after the general improvement of information technologies and mass communicational innovations, it might be stated that the computer-based life and internet-based environments resulted in new dimensions for the approach of distance education. Thus, the distance educational basics have become one of the main instruments of adult education. Within this framework, in this paper, the technique of literatural review has been applied. After discussing the development of information and communication technologies, the distance education systems' structure which is related to adult educational requirements has been described.

Finally, web-based information and learning instruments and implementations' components and its possible benefits and downsides have been tasted. As a result of discussions, it has been argued that due to deficiency of formal educational systems and the necessity of lifelong learning activities, (as an output of contemporary information and communication technologies) the web-based learning and education models may fulfil variable and everlasting learning and educational demands which come from socio-economically active and ready to learn(everlearning) youngs and adults(Erkunt ve Akpınar, 2002; Miser, 2005; Odabaş, 2011; Aktürk ve diğerleri, 2011).

Keywords: Information technologies, lifelong learning, adult education, distance education and web-based learning.

1 Introduction

It is commonly shared that there has been an era of re-building in both socio-economical and political dimensions in the whole world since 1980's. In such period, many arguments and evaluations are practised in order to describe technological developments' place and effects on that multi-dimensional social structures. Especially, in the study of business administration, it can argued that the need of renewal and updating of vocational information and abilities are caused by global competence, frequent economic crises and changes in social structures.

Inevitably, the education itself, as a cause and effect(or both dependent and independent variable)has been globalizing(even not equally). Hence, non-formal and informal learnings and education systems gained importance and have been regarded as reinforcement for formal educational systems(Sayilan, 2006; Duman, 2007). Technological and conceptual developments, increasing demand for education, costs of education and necessity of efficiency in education led to a rise of distance and web-based education models(Eşgi, 2006) which are parts of lifelong learning and adults education philosophies. Additionally, the new studies and surveys over adults on education and psychology sciences(since 1970's, in 1990's mainly) marked an era in learning and teaching theories(Duman, 2007).

At this point, it is possible to say that the abilities and new information sources required in business administration and strategical management will lead executives to consider lifelong learning and distance education facilities elaborately. In that, the requirement of learning and embracement of contemporary business management's strategical mission and vision policies among mid-level managers, staff personnel and subordinates has become permanent(Eren, 2006). So, such an issue indicates that there will always be a constant necessity for ever-learning, continuous learning and lifelong education activities under the conditions of business environment without formal educational institutions.

2 Conceptual Framework

Unlike commonly explained, the philosophies of lifelong learning and adults education are not contemporary and modernist concepts, but represent the inherited reflections of old ages' social lives' institutional facilities since ancient civilizations. In the past, it was discussed that education had to be diffused individuals' whole life span, but, realizing of such approaches in educational implementations has been carried out in the 20th century(Tekin, 1996). Thus, we can say that nearly re-explored lifelong learning and adults learning philosophies can be traced back to ancient Chinese and Greek civilizations (cases of Confucious and Socrates)(Komşu, 2011). Lifelong learning and lifelong education in general means all learning and educational activities and experiences which consists of learning needs in different lifespan periods' personal development stages and social environments(family, working, mass communication, social organizations,...etc.)(Tekin, 1996).

It will be easier to apprehend the connections between business management abilities and lifelong learning by exhibiting the related and inter-connected notions in lifelong learning and adults education. There are some of basic notions related to literature of lifelong learning and adults education below(Duman, 2007):

- *Lifelong education* - *Further education* - *Free education* -
 - *Self-directed learning*
- *Recurrent education* - *Non-formal&informal education* - *Distance education*
- *Work-based learning*

Adults learning and adults education concepts as main components of lifelong learning and education have typical characteristics that differ from pedagogical approaches' (Tekin, 1996; Elias and Merriam, 2005; Duman, 2007):

- The processes of adult learning and education may be regarded as complementary philosophies of general theories on education and can reflect required principles and assumptions about adulthood's main structure.
- As a philosophy, the adults education involves liberal, progressive, behaviourist, humanistic, critical-radical and post-modern approaches' different views, assumptions and principles.
- Adult education means an educational system of planned, organized and intentional structure.
- The main classification of described learning needs in adult education consists of *personal development*, *vocational competency* and *community development*. Thus, learning and education subjects in adult education are defined by many social agents and requirements.

Nowadays, the term of information and communication technologies(in a broad sense)is a means of activities including accessing, storing, sharing, processing, presenting...etc. information through a variety of media(Kanvaria, 2012). Therefore, it may be observed that the information and communication technologies which has a major and wide-ranging role in whole industrial processes and all kinds of services and household consumers' daily life in different forms is changing the concepts of learning and education implementations.

It means that such informational and technological developments resulted in emerging and rising of new and different types of communication between learners, teacher-facilitators and their social environments in the processes of learning and teaching. Thus, that new forms of relation and communication has changed the ways of classical learning-teaching. As a result of that, the education philosophy gained new principles and qualifications which increased learners' liberation and reduced the dependency on teachers (Kanvaria, 2012). On the other hand, it must be recognized that there are interactions between information-communication technologies and social structures and it requires to be exhibited with all multi-dimensional aspects. Hence, there is a variety of approaches(which can be gathered in three main sides)analyzing social structures through information and communication technologies.

First of them is the approach of "information society". According to it, the technological revolution may be regarded as an informational revolution and it indicates the beginning of a new social era. The concept of information society approach, representing the tradition of liberal Western thought's progressivism, argues that the changes in information-communication technologies are leading to an information-based, progressive, emancipatory and more democratic social structures. From the point of second one(which reflects more critical views), contemporary technological developments must be discussed through post-industrial and post-fordism concepts. Finally, the last approach, called as post-modern society and new communication technologies, emphasizes the post-modernism's socio-cultural, socio-economical and political dimensions' interconnections(Timisi, 2003).

It can be argued that human life is based on learning. As an ever-continuing process at any time and anywhere in our lives, learning itself, doesn't occur only in schools or separate places alike, but develops through whole actions and experiences in daily life. Family relations, friendship environments, places on streets, shopping, radio-tv programs and other media might be regarded as main learning sources. In this sense, (especially via pc and internet using) computer and internet-based learning and education have gained importance rather than other classical environments and instruments. There are such observations indicating that as an informal learning model the web-based learnings

overrode other types or models of learning for the young's liberal education notably(Miser, 2006). At this point, the concept of distance education must be described before discussing use of internet-web in business learnings and education.

In generally, the "distance education" is a teaching method and approach which is developed and operated (in order to overcome classical learning-teaching implementations' limitations) from a centre between program planners, performers and learners through particular communicational and interactional teaching modules and environments. As a type of such concept, the internet-based education may be described as an interactional process which provides learners and teachers with data transmission through hi-tech informational devices(Odabaş, 2011; Türkoğlu, 2003). The internet-based(or web-based) education's main target groups consist of people of all ages and different educational levels. Additionally, internet and web environments marked an era in distance education and mass communication activities by building interconnections into electronical environments via computers and computer-based systems between people at same or different spaces. Such learning practises on internet or intranets which are irrespective of time and space may be identified as "*e-learning*"(Erkunt ve Akpınar, 2002; Erturgut, 2008).

3 Need of Study

The characteristics of lifelong learning and adults education are too complicated and interdependent to be bounded by just educational studies and issues. Therefore, there is a necessity of studies based on interdisciplinary approaches for learning and education requirements in business environments. Moreover, advances in information and communication technologies result in such views and studies' benefits. By means of such paper, drawing attention and emphasizing the positive and negative aspects of implementations of distance education, internet-based and non-formal learnings have been aimed.

4 Methodology

This is a paper of literature reviewal and compilation study. Especially important is such educational studies which discusses multi-dimensional and interrelated fields in social sciences. Through the instrument of such discussions and arguments it will be possible to facilitate the recognition and embracement of adults education concept. In order to achieve that a deductive and elucidatory manner has been applied and general arguments and descriptions presented under the conceptual framework.

5 Discussion, Analysis and Interpretation

It will be relevant to describe basic notions and components of adults education and learning before distance education and internet-based issues. Learning of adults is a manner of constant individual attitude in the sense of lifelong learning(including intended and unintended learnings). Besides, adults education means a large group of activities (which are methodical, organized, planned and programmed) for the purpose of fulfilling the learning needs and cobuilding learning experiences of individuals who could be regarded as adult(Duman, 2007). There are many reasons and aspects observed in social lives related to lifelong learning and re-explored adult education concepts and they indicates that the studies and practises of adult education philosophies are playing critical roles in contemporary societies. It can be told that those issues and considerations result from both changes in social structures and views of different educational and multi-disciplinary theories.

The needs and reasons that requires and justifies adult education might be summarized in such a main frame below(Elias and Merriam, 2005; Duman, 2007):

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- The reasons come from formal educational systems (deficiency of curriculum, inappropriate methods, old-fashioned or out-of-date information, ...etc.)
 - The socio-economical and technological problems and developments (migration, urbanization, financial-global crisis, unemployment, advances in information and communication tech., ...etc.)
 - Needs of learning and maturation (social needs and super-ego, ...etc.)
 - Needs of individual developments raising with lifespan periods (early adulthood, emerging adulthood, mid-age, aging, ...etc.)

In any type of adult educational activities (distance, non-formal, ...etc) are principles, methods and assumptions which differs from common pedagogical approaches' (or as Freiré's (2008) calling the *banking education* concept's) characteristics. In consideration of basic principles and assumptions of adult educational theories (liberal, behaviourist, humanistic, progressive, andragogical, ...etc.), there must be such basics listed below for contemporary adult education philosophies (Elias and Merriam, 2005; Duman, 2007):

- Human nature has a progressive structure of tendency to advance toward perfection. Therefore adaptation of conditions and learning through living are its basic characteristics. As a result of that the functions of learning and education must be explained as realizing this inherited quality.
- Learning and education are everlasting lifelong processes (from cradle to grave) that both might be regarded as titles of basic human rights.
- Adults have ability of learning by themselves in a self-directed manner and they have self concept and self-respect which deserves others' attention and recognition. Adults tend to learn something by problem-based attitudes; they don't need to learn without an obvious problem to be solved.
- All experiences and background of adults are considered as main educational input for new learnings in continuing life.
- Adults prefer to determine the timing and way of learnings by themselves. This is called as principle of readiness to learn which indicates the necessity of intention for learning.
- Learning & education activities are supposed to facilitate the liberation and improvement of adults.
- In learning & education activities play the educators or instructors a role of facilitating and guiding.

As a learning and education material and tool, the internet has been argued and expected to fulfil the needs of adult education and fasten the basic principles and assumptions of adult learning & education listed above. As a communicational environment, the internet's place in distance education activities should be exhibited in order to comprehend what differs it from other alternative communicational bases. There are some of advantageous characteristics of internet environments offered below (Timisi, 2003):

- It can provide the users with personal, group and mass communication opportunities.
- It can provide the users with sharing and publishing in lower costs than other tools.
- It allows global multi-access with low costs.
- It allows world-wide text-based interpersonal communication (irrespective of time and space).

It is obvious that internet is a technology which allows to build meetings for learners, teachers and courses. It generates electronical environments where people at same or different places can establish connections between each other through computers. Many of organizations and companies use internet and web tools for educational activities. Such internet or intra-based e-learning programmes consist of new communicative and interactive channels including learning materials, communication, learner supporting, feedback and educational evaluation implementations (Erkunt ve Akpınar, 2002).

The *distance education*, is a teaching method which becomes prevalent when it is not possible to perform the class activities due to shortages of traditional formal education systems. In this method, the communications and interactions between programme-curriculum planners, implementers and learners are established through special courses and teaching environments managed from an educational centre. In other words, it is an education process which allows learners and teachers who are at different places to communicate simultaneously or whenever required (Odabaş, 2011).

As for the *internet-based* distance education is means of exchanging data or information in an interactional basis via high tech tools by learners and educational operators. It is argued that the concept of distance education is derived from distance learning, home education, teleeducation, free university, e-university,...etc. As a result of that, there are a large variety of demanders for distance educational programs. So adults, youth and children who vary by sex, age, experience, vocation,...etc. require to be considered in accordance with their degree of learning, developmental periods, motivations and learning objectives. Hence in order to design an internet-based education program (as a type of distance education), these seven points must be regarded below (Odabaş, 2011):

- Motivation level of learners
- Determining the course content (curriculum)
- Reminding of former information of learners
- Enabling the attenders to participate
- Guiding services and feed-back
- Measurement and evaluation of learners
- Updating and other arrangements

There are many conditions affecting the succeed of such implementations (e-learning & teaching), for this reason its achievements depend on conditions forming the processes. For instance, stimulating the improvement of thinking and argumentation, learner directed teaching, interactive learning and studying, participative teaching and problem solving focused activities must be included. Additionally, although it is discussed that internet-based learning and teaching have some advantages in comparison with traditional face-to-face education, it is expected to provide access availability, pursuing the same learning objectives as traditional systems', lower costing and high degree of learner satisfaction. Achieving such qualities and conditions require an efficient planning and designing processes. For that purpose, there are series of steps in a process of internet-based education programming and designing (Türkoğlu, 2003):

1. Describing the project and starting the project preparation
2. Organizing the team of project and planning
3. Finding financial resource and making decision of beginning
4. Developing the curriculum
5. Preparation of administrative, supportive and physical resources
6. Designing the web site and other educational media
7. Evaluation of preparation process and implementation of pilot scheme (testing)
8. Determining the availability and suitability of the project on the web environment
9. Approving, implementing and updating

Finally, some of the internet-based education's advantages might be summarized in such entries (Erkunt ve Akpınar, 2002):

- A learning opportunity irrespective of time and place
- Fulfilling the need for availability of learning at different speeds and durations
- Opportunity of studying with experts or professionals
- Increasing of recalling rates and shortening the learning periods
- Opportunity of learning by learner-based (private) materials
- A learning process which appeals to many of senses via multimedia environments
- Instant updating possibilities (informational sense)
- The possibility of studying each course in accordance with learners' need, timing and intellectual capacity

- The possibility of self-controlling and evaluation of learning process by learners' themselves
- Reducing the costs of education

As seen above the definitions, notions and aspects of distance and internet-based education concepts, it can be argued that such learning and education systems exhibit compatibility with basics and assumptions of adults education philosophy and may fulfil the needs of personal improvement of adults and provide convenient educational conditions in business life. Especially, overcoming the limitations of time and space, problem-based approaches, enhancing private course contents and curriculum, opportunity of self-directed learning, interactive learning activities between learner and teacher,...etc. prove that such an education system may contribute more effective inputs for business life conditions.

However, besides its positive dimensions discussed, there are negative and/or restrictive qualities and aspects(as usual in any education technology) of internet environments. In spite of today's search engines' and directories' high level actuator power and accessibility, it is observed that some teachers feel anxiety and suspicious about the information on the web. Additionally, some kinds of technical problems and limitations due to software and hardware on the web (band width, baud rate, communication speed, software technicality,...etc.) are supposed to be analysed cause of possible effects and results on learning and teaching(Eşgi, 2006). The negative results of internet and web based education systems have been discussed particularly in Eşgi's(2006) study on a group of pre-service teachers. Inferring from the results of the study, such implications and statements may be summarized below:

- The main problem is as educational tools the web based environments' influence over educational methodology and therefore there are some kinds of boundedness shaping the teaching facilities, because web conditions(both hard and software) form main frame of learning and teaching objectives.
- There might be difficulties in concluding the suitable methodical and conceptional approach(behaviourist, constructivist,...etc.) which will establish the design of web site. There are two main points to be concerned: First is the the *learner groups' qualifications and expectations* and second is the *conceptual basis*.
- The learning materials need to be improved. If there is an impression about materials' incompetency and an expectation of enhancing the educational quality through technological developments, it is the only way to achieve. The material which is intended to improve must ensure these issues: It must *encourage the participation of learners* and *simulate the real life under the conditions of classroom* adequately.
- The responsibility of learners' success in internet based teaching is regarded as their own task. However, despite the printed materials are used as complementary for whole formal educational facilities, it has not been taken into account in internet based teachings sufficiently. In fact, printed materials are the only complementary tools (apart from chatting channels which provides them with interactive activities with other learners and teachers) for learners who studies through web. Therefore, the printed materials must be used for effective learnings.
- A well-designed distance education system(internet based especially) must supply the sensual and spatial advantages of formal face-to-face systems. Thus there would be an equality or balance between formal face-to-face and distance educational philosophies.
- The preference and advantages of face-to-face educational systems' are still in effect. That's why the system implementers are supposed to place great importance to aspects of *efficient feed-back mechanisms, preventing of suffering from loneliness and providing required skills*.

6 Educational Implications

As discussed above, due to both personal requirements and technological developments the distance education philosophies have become widespread tools for learning and education. As a result of internet and web technologies' increasing availability, the internet-based systems of distance education have been developed, thus the new learning models called e-learning which are compatible with adult education and adult learning philosophies have been favored. Since its requirements, technical and methodical opportunities provided, e-learning is both a part and result of internet-based educations.

E-learning may be described as utilizing of internet technologies in order to get solutions for information and performance based problems. It is a means of personal education which is predicated on interactivity and dynamism of co-operational development. The main characteristics of such learning might be summarized as below(Erturgut, 2008):

1. E-learning is a means of web based system which enhances and facilitates updating, storing, sharing and using of information and learning activities.
2. In e-learning processes the information and/or teaching applications are offered to learners through a computer which can operate internet technologies. E-learning, beyond traditional education concept, takes learning into account with a broad sense and hence focuses on not only transferring information but providing information and tools which enables increases in personal performances.

From the point of statements above, it must be stated again that the advances in information and communication technologies allow personal and private learnings which occurs irrespective of time and space and fulfil new educational tools which changed and redescrbed the role of teachers(Tezci, 2003). Therefore, the area of education is one of the most affecteds by rapid changes in computer and internet tools. Thus, such facilities deserve to be regarded as supportive and facilitative instruments for the basic assumptions and principals of adult education(self concept, problem-based learning, importance of former learnings,...etc.).

The main benefits of web technologies are providing new tools for reconstructing information and learning, increasing the level of interaction and colloboration between learners(both the young and adults) and teachers and raising the quality of education. The web technologies provide such an achievement through allowing the learners to perform a large variety of online communication, online participation, online presentation, discussions, brain storming, problem-based learning,...etc. Therefore, the main characteristic of internet-based learning is its ability to fulfil the need of private and learner-based learning which gives an opportunity of differentiating and adjustable learning strategies (Aktürk ve diğerleri, 2011). Naturally, such conditions provide a basis for recognition and appreciation of former learnings' and self conceptual requirements.

Finally, the distance education and capabilities of web environment may offer convenient and sufficient conditions for adult education and learning. Consequently, the educational implementations for business administration might be considered as a part of this philosophy and methodical concepts. Within this framework, it is possible to design and operate curriculums appealing adults in business life. As argued above, in the processes of adult learning and education, there are different learning and teaching applications and methods required. The internet itself supplies the needs of both adult educational requirements and contemporary business education needs. Cause internet provides the employees with a chance of contunious, private and interconnected learning and education at work and home conditions. This is important for any level of organizational structure(mid-level managers, staff personnel and subordinates)of companies. Additionally, internet-based learning and education meet basic adult educational needs of personal development and ve vocational competency.

7 Conclusion

Nowadays, the advantages of internet based learning which reflects of e-learning's aspects are being discussed in order to evaluate the impacts of such implementations over

adults learning and education. Within this framework, in all types of internet-based education, it is argued that learners can make decisions for whatever they need to learn, what level of information they need and how to satisfy their learning objectives. As a result of this, the adult learners may have the opportunity of participation in their own learning steps(Erkunt ve Akpınar, 2002; Aktürk ve diğerleri, 2011). By the way, the main instrument for improving creativity, increasing the efficiency and adaptation of global changes in business life through learning and education is the information and communication technologies. Due to defficiency and impropriety of formal education systems, the distance education and internet based learning and education models may offer flexible and available solutions for the learning needs and problems of employees who are intended to develop themselves and update vocational information. However, inspite of its whole facilities and advantages, there are several downsides of internet based learning activities studied and observed. For instance, it may raise asocial personalities and lead learners to be deprived of face-to-face education's useful qualities.

Accordingly, it is recommended that learning and educational activities for working adults might consist of both internet based and other face-to-face education systems. The lifelong learning and adult education concepts may facilitate the required continous learning and updating of vocational information activities which are important for today's business life and they will be improved through advancing new technologies in the next years. Besides, although there are optimistic expectations and cases about information and communication technologies which may be regarded as representative of information society approach, it is obvious that there will be the possibility of negative affections which may ruin expected advantages of distance education.

Consequently, in order to design and build of internet based education systems for business personnel achievements(for mid-level managers, staff and subordinates), such three points are argued below:

- The education programme must include internet based applications which provides e-learning.
- The curriculum must be designed in accordance with the basic assumptions and principles of adult education and adult learning.
- The activities in the programme are supposed to allow the learners to benefit from the materials and instruments which are applied in face-to-face education(use of printed materials, interactive question and answer teaching,...etc.)

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