

# Gender Analysis of the Students Enrolled In Anadolu University Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Business Administration and Open Education Faculty

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the undergraduate and associate students enrolled in Anadolu University Faculties of Business Administration, Economics and Open Education, which are providing education through the distance education systems, in terms of gender. For this purpose, a survey consisting of 28 questions was prepared. This survey has been sent to all active students enrolled in these faculties by e-mail. Primarily, the following issues are mentioned in the study; information on distance education system of Anadolu University and faculties providing education through this method, number of students in faculties, the rates of the preferred departments in terms of man and woman. Thereafter, the importance of the distance education for women is mentioned in terms of gender notion, man-woman roles and gender equality. At the findings stage, 1651 surveys received from students have been assessed by being analyzed in SPSS program. The followings have been taken into consideration in the assessment; demographic characteristics of students, participation rate in programs, reasons for preference of the distance education, time allocated for their courses, computer and internet utilization, whether they prefer the distance education in case of different gender especially in terms of woman, the materials from which they benefit at the utmost in the distance education system, and finally the data have been assessed comparatively in terms of gender.

Keywords: *Anadolu University, distance education, woman, gender.*

## INTRODUCTION

Distance learning is a dimension of contemporary and new education technologies. The concepts and applications in this field are a result of some necessities and the advances in communication and education technologies. Distance learning applications have some conceptual grounds. These are creating new education and teaching opportunities, establishing job-education integrity, democratization in education, life long education, turning towards individuality, effective use of institutions, technology-education integration, turning towards the needs of individuals and society, grounding on three dimension integrity (printed material, published material, face to face education), reaching masses, individual- massive education integrity, education demand and financial resource balance. (Alkan, 1998, s:24-26).

Distance education, which enables students to learn by making use of communication technologies, is a contemporary application. Being practiced in many developed and developing countries, it is a system in which people

from different ages, income or occupation groups continue their education at their own pace and without losing their productivities. It includes education models that unite students in different places, instructors and education tools with communication technologies. It is an education philosophy that makes it possible for people to benefit from the technology of the era. Anadolu University Open and Distance Education System is the first institution that provides higher education through distance education model in contemporary terms in our country. Article 5 and 12 of the law no 2547, which came into force on 6th November 1981, and which reorganizes Turkish Higher Education, gave Turkish universities the right to provide “ Life long and Open education”. Later on, with the decree law no 41 issued on 20th July 1982, this mission was given to Anadolu University, and which- in technological and scientific terms- supplied its deficiencies in a very short time. Thereby, The Open Education Faculty, which arose out of existing Communication Sciences Faculty, was charged with distance education service throughout the country.

Open Education System starting with two distant learning programs in the field of Economics and Business Administration in 1982-1983 education year has broadened its service area since then. In 1993, Open Education System was restructured according to the education needs at the time with the decree no 496 and the programs of Economics and Business Administration became four year license programs. Business Administration Faculty was founded in 1993 when Open Education system was restructured. Business Administration Faculty contributes much to the generalization of higher education among a mass of people. Business Administration Faculty has Management and Organization, Accounting- Financing, Administration, Marketing and Home Economy departments. The Faculty of Economics, founded in 1993, also provides education via distance education system. It has the departments of Economics, Finance, Public Administration, Labor Economics, Industrial Relations and International Relations. Open Education Faculty was charged with open education and managing the things about implementations and associate degree and degree completion and certificate of all kinds. Using advanced technologies such as the Internet, computer aided education and video conferencing in the lessons, in open education system, faculties try to create a technological interaction and make the students adjust to these technologies. Moreover, in particular zones, academic consultancy and face-to-face education services are given. The student numbers in faculties as of 20.11.2012 are shown in Table 1. ([www.anadolu.edu.tr](http://www.anadolu.edu.tr). 19.11.2012)

Table 1: Student number

Faculties	Woman	Man	Total
Open education	320.653	258.850	579.503
Economics	113.386	175.087	288.473
Business Administration	163.916	299.878	463,794
Total	597.955	733.815	1.331.770

Education is a fundamental right from which all individuals should benefit equally without gender discrimination. However, when the proportion of literate people and people's getting benefit from education opportunities all around the world are taken into consideration it has been noticed that there is a severe difference between man and woman. This is not different in Turkey. Although the women in Turkey gained the most fundamental right to have an education with the law, which came into force in 1924 and which clustered the education in Turkey under one system, the inequality in practice continues. According to the data in 2009 of Turkish Statistics Institution, the rate of illiterate women is %12.9 while the rate of illiterate man is %3.4 (KGSM, 2010, p: 9). Despite the significant progress in public education opportunities since the foundation of the republic until today, there are still considerable opportunity inequalities between man and woman in terms of making use of these opportunities in addition to the inequalities between different regions and urban-rural areas. Especially when urban and rural areas and age factor are taken into consideration, compared to men, women face remarkable inequalities in terms of taking advantage of education opportunities. However, this unequal opportunity in education is not exclusive to Turkey and it is not the only one inequality area between men and women. It is known that throughout the history there has been an unequal division of labor between man and woman based on sexual role division and this division of labor is the source of gender inequality, which is accepted as one of the most important dimension of social inequalities. In addition to education, gender inequality exists in many other aspects of life such as domestic work, paid work and taking part in political life. (Suğur and Savran, 2006, p.195)

People learn and acquire gender differences throughout their socialization process. Besides, it changes according to individuals and cultures (Dökmen, 2004, p: 11). This notion is a decisive factor in our educational preferences as it is also the case in every other aspect of our lives. Gender roles determine the division of social labor

between genders. In other words, some occupations and positions are defined as women's job and some are defined as men's job. For this reason, gender discrimination is mostly discussed in work life and in education environments where individuals acquire the necessary skills to get a job. Basic areas where gender discrimination in work life arises are categorized as vocational guidance, staffing and attitudes, behaviors and judgments in organizations (Acar, Ayata and Varoğlu, 1999, p: 6-7). Gender equality means equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities in public and private areas as well as being citizens that are equally strong and inequality of education opportunities that stem from gender discrimination. Time and place restrictions, scarcity of resources and more duties at home than men lead distance education facilities to reach the women at their homes and help them further their education (Demiray and Curabay, 2000, p: 41). The purpose of distance education in Turkey is to encourage people who are in a disadvantageous position in terms of social, economic and geographical restraints to continue their higher education actively and to offer auspicious opportunities especially for women. Distance education makes it possible for a good number of women to consider higher education with its reasonable cost and flexible timing for students and it also provides equal opportunity in education by removing some psychological, social, physical obstacles women face (McIsaac and Köymen, 1990, p: 26).

## PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this study is to analyze the undergraduate and associate students enrolled in Anadolu University Faculties of Business Administration, Economics and Open Education, which are providing education through the distance education systems, in terms of gender. For this purpose, a survey consisting of 28 questions was prepared and has been sent to 597.955 female and 733.815 male students enrolled in these faculties by e-mail. 1615 students out of 1.331.770 students have sent the survey back but one survey has been canceled. The evaluations have been made on 1650 surveys. As the variables in the survey are nominal, chi-square method has been employed and cross-charts relationships have been explained. SPSS 20.0 packaged software was used.

Introduction part was allocated to brief information about Anadolu University Open Education system and faculties involved in the system. And also the numbers of the students in the faculties and male-female ratio in the preferred departments was given. Later, the importance of distance education system for women was issued in terms of gender equality, social roles of men and women and the concept of gender. In findings part, 1650 survey results were analyzed on SPSS program. During evaluation, students' demographics, attendance rates, reasons for choosing distance education, time allocated for the lessons, computer and Internet use and the materials that are used the widest were taken into consideration. Female students also evaluated by whether they would still choose distance education if they were different sex. In the end, the results were comparatively evaluated for male and female students.

## FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

In this study, aiming at analyzing the undergraduate and associate students enrolled in Anadolu University Faculties of Business Administration, Economics and Open Education, in terms of gender; 27.4% of 1650 participants are women and 72.6% are men. The percentage of students who studies at Faculty of economics is 25%, and that at business administration is 34.1%. Open Education Faculty undergraduate students account for 21.2% of the participants whereas associate degree students at the same faculty account for 19.7%. The women participated in the study are aged between 18-24 with a percentage of 40.7% and 42.3% of the women are between 25-34. The rest 28.8% are aged 35-49. As for the marital status; whilst 60.2% of the women and 51.8% of the men said they are single, 72.1% of the women and 58.4% of the men said they do not have kids. When the number of siblings asked, 27.2% of the women said they have 2 siblings, 26.5% said they have only one and 23.9 said they have 4 or more siblings. Men said they have one sibling with a rate of 27.3%, two siblings with 25.5% and four or more siblings with 23.6%. Considering the income rates, 43.4% of the women and 20.5% of the men said they have no regular income while 25.7% of the women and 26.1% said they have a monthly income of 1000-2000 TL. The region where 45.1% of the women and %39.9 of the men live is Marmara and it is followed by Inner Anatolian region. Metropolitan cities reserve 60.6% of the men and 59.2% of the women and second best choice for accommodation is "cities". When it comes to the parents of the participants; 51.3% of the men and 44.4% of the women has mothers who are primary school graduates. And 39.5% of the men and 38.9% of the women have fathers who are primary school graduates.

After the demographics, students were asked about their opinion on the distance education programs. First, their reasons were questioned and the answers of the female participants were "acquiring a profession" with a

percentage of 30.3% and “getting a degree” with 16.2%. However; men said they for “getting a degree” with a rate of 18.1% and to “ get promoted” in their current jobs with a rate of 16.2%. As seen in Table 2, there is a significant correlation between sex and reasons to prefer distance-learning programs ( $p < 0,05$ ). Women chose distance education programs mostly to acquire a profession and that is a meaningful gender related result. It is positive for women to choose the options: no compulsory attendance, marriage and familial reasons and financial restrictions with lower rates similar to those of men. This indicates that social inequalities in our country stemming from gender difference are lessening gradually.

Table 2: The reasons to prefer the program

		X <sup>2</sup> = 123,080 ; p = 0,000	Sex		Total
			Male	Female	
The reasons to prefer the program	Other	f	57	22	79
		%	4.8%	4.9%	4.8%
	No compulsory attendance	f	29	9	38
		%	2.4%	2.0%	2.3%
	Getting a degree	f	217	73	290
		%	18.1%	16.2%	17.6%
	Marriage and familial reasons	f	1	3	4
		%	0.1%	0.7%	0.2%
	Acquiring general knowledge	f	60	11	71
		%	5.0%	2.4%	4.3%
	Second university	f	124	44	168
		%	10.4%	9.7%	10.2%
	Promotion at the current job	f	196	38	234
		%	16.4%	8.4%	14.2%
	Completing a license	f	187	59	246
		%	15.6%	13.1%	14.9%
	Financial restrictions	f	17	15	32
		%	1.4%	3.3%	1.9%
	Contribution to the current job	f	184	41	225
		%	15.4%	9.1%	13.6%
Acquiring a profession	f	126	137	263	
	%	10.5%	30.3%	15.9%	
Total		f	1198	452	1650
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When the time allocated for the studies is questioned, 27.2% of the women answered “ at available times ” and 23% said “1 or 2 hours a day”. Men answered to the same question as “only before the exams” with a rate of 25% and “at available times” with 24%. While women’s answers mostly include studying at available times and 1 or 2 hours a day, men’s mostly include studying only before the exams. This shows that women make effort to keep their study time regular. The time allocated for studying shows discrepancy while comparing genders and a meaningful relationship has been found between gender and reasons to study at the program.

The following results were found after inquiring students’ time that they spend using computer and on the Internet for distance education purposes. 27.4% of the women and 31.1% of the men said they use computers for less than an hour a day for distance education purposes whereas 47.3% of the women and 44.2% of the men said they do not use computers for that purpose at all. No meaningful relationship was observed between genders and time spent using computers for their studies. In other words, there is no difference between genders in terms of the time they spend in front of computers for distance-learning purposes. The amount of time women and men allocate for using computers is close to each other. The percentage of the women saying they use the Internet for distance learning purposes is 47.6% and the percentage of the men saying the same is 42.9%. 28.8% of the ones saying that they use the Internet for less than an hour a day are men and 33% of them are women. No meaningful relationship was observed between genders and time spent online for their studies. The amount of time women and men allocate for going online is close to each other. Noting no significant difference in making use of distance education technologies goes against the notion that women tend to remain distant to technology compared to men.

To the question “ Would you still prefer distance education programs if you were a different sex?” women answered, “yes” with a rate of 76.5% and “no” with a rate of 23.5%. Men answered the same question as “ yes” with a

percentage of 90.9% and as “no” with 9.1%. Within the context of social gender, these figures can be explained as; both women and men think it is suitable for women to prefer distance education to face-to-face education because of the density and prominence of duties at home. Whereas 90.9% of the men states they would still prefer distance learning if they were different sex, only 23.5% of women would still prefer so. And this reveals that men believe distance learning fits more to women (Table 3).

Table 3: Would you still prefer distance education programs if you were a different sex?

			Sex		
			Male	Female	Total
$X^2= 59,657 ; p = 0,000$					
Answer	No	f	109	106	215
		%	9.1%	23.5%	13.0%
	Yes	f	1089	346	1435
		%	90.9%	76.5%	87.0%
	Total	f	1198	452	1650
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When the preferred material was asked, 62.8% of the women answered as books and 25% of them answered as the Internet. Men answered as books with a percentage of 56.2% and the Internet with a rate of 30.4%. Books turned out to be the most preferred source for both women and men. The first two of the most preferred materials for distance learning are the same for men and women, but the other choices of materials in the list are different for women and men. A meaningful relationship was found between gender and preferred materials of study. ( $p < 0,05$ ) (Table 4)

Table 4: The preferred materials of study in distance learning

			Sex		
			Male	Female	Total
$X^2= 10,500 ; p = 0,033$					
Material	Books	f	673	284	957
		%	56.2%	62.8%	58.0%
	TV	f	24	5	29
		%	2.0%	1.1%	1.8%
	Internet	f	364	113	477
		%	30.4%	25.0%	28.9%
	Face to face	f	18	12	30
		%	1.5%	2.7%	1.8%
	All	f	119	38	157
		%	9.9%	8.4%	9.5%
	Total	f	1198	452	1650
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The Internet services offered to the students in distance learning e-exam is the most favored one for 44% of the men and 42.5% of the women. E-class Notes comes second.

When asked if the distance education program has any contribution to acquire a profession, 89.6% of the women and 75.5 of the men said yes. And this result corresponds to women’s top reason to study at distance education programs, which is to acquire a profession.

Lastly, 54.6% of the women and 39.8% of the men answered “no” to the question: “would you like your kids to study at distance education programs in the future?” while majority of the women want their kids to study at face to face education programs, the rate is relatively small for the men, and this indicates another difference in terms of gender.

## RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

As a result, the data collected from this study the purpose of which is the gender analysis of the undergraduate and associate students enrolled in Anadolu University Faculties of Business Administration, Economics and Open Education, which are providing education through the distance education systems, has been found positive in terms of gender.

To summarize, the following data stands out in this study. For female students, acquiring a profession while for male students getting a degree tops the other answers when the reason to choose the program is asked. As for the time allocated for their studies, women favored the answer 'at available times' while men chose 'only before the exam' the most. Both men and women stated that they do not use computers and the Internet for distance learning purposes with very close rates. Men would still prefer distance education program if they were a different sex while women said they would not choose distance education with a higher rate compared to man. For both women and men, book comes first in the list of the most commonly used material in distance education and the most preferred online service is e-exam. Students think that the program they study at contributes to acquiring a profession. Most of the female students would prefer their kids to study at programs that implement face-to-face learning, but the percentage of men who would prefer so is lower compared to women.

Distance education is an option particularly for working adults from lower class who mostly live in rural areas and cannot receive formal education. It is also a big opportunity for women, who benefit from educational facilities less than men around the world, to complete their education. However; when women, especially working ones attend distance education programs, they may face some disturbances regarding the duties at home. That is because they cannot spare enough time to study and get help from other family members. A criticism about women attending distance education programs is that these programs lock women down in their homes, alienate them from social life and push them to loneliness. Students cannot get enough interaction while they can receive enough of it in face-to-face education. Nevertheless, distance education system is a worthy opportunity for women to acquire a profession, pursue a career/status and complete unfinished education; and also for lessening the inequalities originating from gender.

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