

# Opinions of Office Managers and Assistant Office Managers on Career Adaptability and Office Technology Competency Distance Learning Program\*

Nuran Öztürk Başpınar\* Orkun Şen\*\*

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## Abstract

Career adaptability prepares employees for the uncertainties of changing work environments and unforeseen changes, making it easier to get the process right. Because technology is constantly changing, office workers in technology-intensive offices should continually update their office technology skills. This study sought to answer the question, "What are the opinions of office managers and assistant office managers on career adaptability and office technology competency distance in-service training programs? The research was designed as a case study using qualitative research methods. In the study, data were collected electronically with semi-structured questions from volunteer participants (84) who received distance education on career adaptability and office technology competency, and content analysis was conducted. The participants were office managers and assistant office managers working in Anadolu University Open Education System. The findings of the study demonstrated that the distance in-service programme had a substantial impact on the professional development and ongoing learning of the participants. The programme facilitated the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, enhanced the utilisation of office technologies, and addressed the challenges encountered during the execution of duties. Additionally, it fostered a sense of self-assurance among the participants, offered novel perspectives, and provided guidance in career progression. However, some participants emphasised the negative aspects of the distance in-service training programme, such as the inability to fully meet the need for socialisation, and suggested the development of more interactive and practice-based programmes. These results are expected to help institution managers to develop and/or improve effective in-service training programmes in the relevant field.

**Keywords:** Career Adaptability, Office Technology, Distance In-Service Training, Office Manager

## About the Article

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Corresponding Author's: Phd. Associate Professor, Anadolu University, Eskişehir Vocational High School, Türkiye,  
E-mail: nbozturk@anadolu.edu.tr



Assoc. Professor, Anadolu University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Türkiye.

## Introduction

Career defines the mobility of employees between positions and the metaphorical journey of the individual in business life (Bingöl, 2013). The positions, progression or advancement of a person throughout his/her life are explained by the concept of career. Career necessarily includes phases such as learning, self-development and specialization and provides psycho-social satisfaction to employees. The concept of career management defines the management of a career for individual and organizational purposes. Through successful career management, organizations can have human resources with the skills and abilities of the future. Career adaptability refers to the ability of individuals to overcome challenging situations in their professions (Hartung, 2013). Career adaptability is effective in individuals finding new jobs and transitioning between different jobs (Maggiori et al., 2013). In today's flexible employment environment, career transitions are common and career paths are less predictable (Ginevra & Nota, 2017). Individuals with high career adaptability are successful in new areas of responsibility in the work environment and can easily overcome unexpected changes (Savickas, 2013; Dönmezoğulları & Yeşilyaprak, 2019).

In recent office designs, the focus of office technologies and design ideas is on a flexible, reliable and smart layout that provides easy access to information for staff (Karakurumer & Benli, 2022). Cloud-based platforms facilitate communication and remote working between organizations and employees. For these reasons, organizations want their employees to be familiar with different software programs and office technology. This requires employees to continuously learn new skills (Workplace Technology). As a matter of fact, through various in-service trainings, organizations try to improve their employees' keyboarding, word processing, spreadsheet and presentation programs such as PowerPoint, web surfing and networking, database management, website design, graphic creation, use of electronic document management systems and file management skills and increase their technological competencies. This situation has made it imperative for office managers and assistant office managers to continuously update their skills and become technologically savvy individuals in order to meet increasing expectations. Organizational support in the process of career adaptability can help employees to be more successful in career adaptation by improving their sense of importance and value (İrge & Okay, 2021). In fact, in informal communication, some of the clerical employees say that they feel inadequate in dealing with office technologies and need more support. One of the factors causing this inadequacy is the limited in-service training provided. It is very important to improve the career adaptability and technology competency of clerical staff through in-service training. For this to happen, it is necessary to accept that career development is a two-way relational process that should be integrated (Hall & Moss, 1998).

## Distance In-Service Training

Education is the process of providing people with knowledge, skills and attitudes. Human beings and societies are subject to constant change; as such, education is imperative in ensuring the continuity and contemporary relevance of both (Balay, 2004). In a world of intense competition and rapidly developing information technology, the information learned by employees becomes obsolete and insufficient in a short time. Therefore, the need for training to adapt to the conditions is increasing day by day. This situation has led to the emergence of the concept of lifelong education. Lifelong education is a combination of continuous and multidimensional education (Görmüş & Kahya, 2014). In-service training is a sub-process of lifelong education and is an essential activity for organizations (Kulaz, 2013). Training is one of the most effective ways of enabling employees to update their skills. In both the private and public sectors, training is an integral part of business life (Karbuş & Aydın, 2024). In-service training is conducted to provide employees with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to perform their jobs (Altun Bogoçlu & Gündüz, 2022). In-service training can be delivered face-to-face or through distance learning. Distance learning has been shown to offer several advantages, especially when working with a large and geographically dispersed target group (Bakır, 2022). The use of distance learning methods can promote standardization (Halvurt, 2010).

In the face of globalization, evolving technology, and changing expectations, public institutions are under pressure to be flexible, transparent, and adaptable in order to maintain their activities and competitive advantage (Özdemir et al., 2017). In response to this need, there have been changes in the traditional structure of public administration, including digitalization and an emphasis on raising the educational level of civil servants. Article 214 of the Civil Service Law No. 657 emphasizes the importance of in-service training to improve the skills and productivity of civil servants and prepare them for their future roles. These initiatives aim to ensure that public institutions can effectively navigate the changing world order and effectively serve the evolving needs of society.

The literature on distance training focuses mainly on teachers in public institutions. A study by Avcı and Güven (2021) identified the subjects that teachers need to be trained in the context of distance education. Another study by Tekin (2020) found that teachers have both positive and negative opinions about distance education programs, attributing the different perspectives to individual differences and the characteristics of distance education. Other studies examine the service sector and the field in general. Kelsey and Mincemoyer (2001) found that local government employees have a positive view of distance education, especially because of the flexibility it offers in terms of time constraints. On the other hand, Öztürk and Sancak (2007) found that barriers to in-service training include inadequate training infrastructure, insufficient basic training for human resources, and high costs. Selimoğlu and Biçen Yılmaz (2009) found that in-house training programs improve the adaptation to work, commitment and self-confidence of human resources and enable them to stay up-to-date.

Anadolu University Open Education System Office Managers and Office Staff have received in-service training in the past years. The scope of these trainings can be listed as Higher Education Regulations, Rules of Behavior in Public Relations, Training for Candidate Officers, Effective Communication and Public Relations, Vocational Training, Legislation. In this study, the main question, what are the opinions of office managers and assistant office managers about the distance training program on career adaptability and office technology competency, was evaluated with the views of the participants. Based on this main problem, the answers to the following sub-questions were sought based on the opinions of the participants:

1. What are the feelings and thoughts of office managers and assistant office managers about career adaptability and office technologies distance in-service training methods?
2. How does the provided distance in-service training meet the needs of office managers and assistant office managers in the effective use of office technologies?
3. How does the provided distance in-service training help office managers and assistant office managers to learn new knowledge and skills?
4. What is the role of the provided distance in-service training in solving the problems faced by office managers and assistant office managers in performing their duties?
5. What are the advantages of distance in-service training for office managers and assistant office managers in the realization of their personal career plans?
6. What is the effect of the distance in-service training on the perspective of the office managers and assistant office managers in the field of office technologies?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

In this study, one of the qualitative research methods, namely case study design, in which a single group (office managers and assistant office managers) was analysed, was utilised. The reason for conducting qualitative research is to focus on the phenomena in the flow of social life and to examine these phenomena without any transformation. Because with a case study, a limited, single or collective situation, event, process, program, or individual can be studied and generalizations can be made (Çapar & Ceylan, 2022).

### **Study Group**

The study group is determined according to the subject and purpose of the study. In this study, convenience sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was selected. This approach provides practicality and convenience for the research process (Haşiloğlu et al., 2015). The study group consisted of office managers and assistant office managers who work in the offices of the open education system at Anadolu University

Open Education Faculty where the researcher(s) work and who preferred to participate in the study. The researchers met with the faculty administrators, lecturers and office staff before the study started and briefed them, thus ensuring accessibility and ease of operation during the study. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the participants.

**Table 1.** *Distribution of Demographic Information of Participants*

Variables	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	48	57,1
	Female	36	42,9
Age	24-43	21	25
	44-63	63	75
Marital Status	Single	7	8,3
	Married	77	91,7
Level of Education	Secondary Education	2	2,4
	Bachelor's degree	65	77,4
	Postgraduate	17	20,2
Whether their education is in the field of "Office Management"	Yes	13	15,5
	No	71	84,5
Whether they receive their education in formal or distance education	Formal	37	44
	Distance	47	56
How long they have been working	6-10 years	4	4,8
	11-15 years	21	25
	16 years and more	59	70,2

Analysis of Table 1 shows that 48 of the 84 participants were male (57.1%) and the remainder (42.9%) were female. The majority of the participants (75%) were between 44-63 years old. Most of the participants (75%) are married. When analyzed by educational level, 77.4% of the participants have an undergraduate degree and 20.2% have a graduate degree. Only 15.5% of the participants received their education in the field of office management. 56% of the participants received their secondary or higher education through distance learning. When analyzing their working period, 70.2% of

them have a working period of 10 years or more. While 7 of the participants are from Istanbul, the other participants are from different cities as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Distribution of Participants by Province*

Number of participants	Provinces	Total
Provinces with one participant	Adana, Adıyaman, Ankara, Ardahan, Balıkesir, Bilecik, Bursa, Çanakkale, Elazığ, Erzincan, Erzurum, Hakkâri, Iğdır, Isparta, Kırıkkale, Kırklareli, Kilis, Kocaeli, Manisa, Mersin, Nevşehir, Ordu, Osmaniye, Sivas, Tekirdağ, Tunceli, Uşak, Van, Yozgat, Zonguldak	30
Provinces with two participants	Aksaray, Amasya, Antalya, Aydın, Bartın, Bingöl, Bolu, Burdur, Gümüşhane, İzmir, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Kırşehir, Kütahya, Muğla, Niğde, Rize, Sakarya, Şanlıurfa	38
Three provinces with participants	Edirne, Samsun, Trabzon	9
Total		77*

\*Including Istanbul, it is 84.

### Data Collection Tools

In this study, first of all, participants were provided with 5 days of distance in-service training on 5 different topics, namely (1) career adaptability, (2) EDMS applications, (3) use of electronic mail and electronic calendars, (4) cyber security, (5) information, search and selection, by 6 trainers. While creating the content of the in-service training program, the opinions of institution managers, participants, trainers and other stakeholders were consulted. Thus, it was aimed to evaluate the impact of the participants' career adaptability and office technology competency of the distance in-service training program on office managers and assistant office managers with the views of the participants. In the process of devising the questions, meticulous attention was paid to the comprehensibility of the questions for the respondents, with a view to facilitating their capacity to discern the intricacies of the subject matter and to further their understanding of it (Bektaş& Kablan, 2023).

### Role of the Researcher(s)

In the case study, the researcher participates in the research process as a part of the situation as he spends a long time in the environment where the situation takes place (Çapar & Ceylan, 2022). Therefore, the role of the researcher should be made clear in order to demonstrate the overall credibility of the research (Şahin, 2013). In this context, it can be stated that the researcher(s) increased their experience and knowledge about quantitative and qualitative methods through the courses they took and the studies they

conducted during their master's and doctoral education. In addition, the researcher(s) previously worked as office staff in the same institution, actively participated in and experienced many processes, including distance learning programs as a student and instructor in the open education system and worked as an administrator in the same system.

### **Data Collection Process**

In a case study, the researcher observes the current environment or person, obtains information from various sources (documents, people, etc.) and investigates the development process of the phenomenon causing the situation. A case study is to describe the events that occur in their own environmental conditions from different perspectives by limiting time and space and using various data collection tools (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In this study, the draft questionnaire, which was created by reviewing the literature, was presented to a language expert and two field experts before the application and their opinions were taken to increase the validity and reliability of the study. In this particular context, and in accordance with the opinions of experts in the field, superfluous details were excised from the questions, while concomitantly certain additions and deletions were made, resulting in the development of the questions. Then, the necessary legal permissions were obtained for the realization of distance in-service training and data collection. A test application was made with 4 participants and the form consisting of 6 questions was finalized.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained in the study were analyzed by the content analysis method. The utilisation of the inductive method in content analysis facilitates the classification of events or phenomena, thereby enabling more efficacious analysis and interpretation (Harwood & Garry, 2003). In data analysis, a systematic process including steps such as collecting information, organizing the collected information, interpreting and reaching research findings was followed (Vural & Cenkseven, 2005). Finally, the research data were interpreted, compared with the literature and reported with a non-arbitrary analysis plan appropriate to the purpose of the research.

### **Reliability**

Content analysis systematically describes the content of participants' opinions (Altunışık et al., 2010). Therefore, the raw data obtained were first read several times to give the researcher an idea. Then, according to the questions in the semi-structured interview form and the order of the questions, all the answers given to each question were collected and this process was repeated for all the questions. In each section, the responses to the questions were carefully read and codes were created by grouping similar opinions together, and themes were derived from the common aspects of these codes. These stages of analysis were carried out independently by two researchers and then the researchers came together to compare the codes and themes. The existing inconsistencies were discussed and a consensus was reached by eliminating the differences. Then the frequency of repetition of the codes by the participants was



determined as the frequency. Codes, themes, and frequencies were attempted to be explained, presented in tables, and interpreted as findings. The researcher(s) participated in the process as an active actor with the objective of comprehending the ongoing events. However, this engagement was undertaken within the confines of a controlled subjectivity framework. At each stage of the research process, the researcher(s) took care to utilise the roles of observer, questioner and interpreter within the framework of scientific ethics (Tutar, 2022). In this context, the confirmability of the study was increased by including direct quotations from the participants' own statements in the process (Tekir, 2021).

### Ethical Issues

Anadolu University Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee decided that the study was ethically appropriate with protocol number 472459 dated 24.01.2023.

## Findings

### Participants' views on Question 1

Participants' responses to the question "What are your feelings and thoughts about the distance learning method you received? Explain" are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Feelings and Thoughts on the Methodology of the Training Provided*

Themes	Sub Themes	Codes	Sample Opinions
Professional Development and Continuous Learning (N=75)		Efficiency (N=21)	P64: <i>I think that the in-service training program will make us effective and efficient in our business life.</i>
	Effectiveness and Efficiency of Training (N=55)	Usefulness of the training (N=34)	P43: <i>The training was very relevant and very useful in terms of information. It was even better that the training topics were related to our work.</i> P78: <i>Very useful training. It should be given to all office staff, not just managers and assistant office managers.</i>
		Increase in knowledge and skills (N=10)	P15: <i>Distance in-service training had a positive effect on increasing my knowledge and skills.</i> P65: <i>The information we received within the scope of the adaptability in-service training program helped us to perform our duties more effectively and efficiently.</i>
	Personal Development and Professional Development (N=12)	Personal development (N=2)	P44: <i>It was invaluable for my personal development.</i>
	Training Content and Topics (N=8)	Training Content and Topics (N=8)	P22: <i>The in-service training program on Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), Applications, Use of e-Mail and e-Calendar, Cyber Security, Information Search, Finding and Selecting Information, and Career Adaptability was highly productive in enabling</i>



Technology and Distance Training Integration (N=18)		Training materials and links (N=2)	us to maintain our services in the office and provide better service to students. P13: The training provided by expert lecturers was invaluable. It is crucial to complete the deficiencies from the link provided in cases where we cannot attend live.
		Time and cost savings (N = 4)	P3: Saving time and money. Possibility to watch the parts we do not understand again. P80: The distance of the training saved time and was more efficient.
	Management of the Training Process (N=11)	Request for continuation of trainings (N=4) Training in areas of need (N=2)	P5: It was a useful training and I look forward to the continuation. P16: We wish the trainings to continue. P21: I find this training on the areas that we constantly need in the organization we work in very positive.
		Ease of transportation and accommodation (N=1)	P14: Saving time compared to face-to-face trainings and eliminating problems such as transportation and accommodation increase efficiency.
	Training Satisfaction (N=7)	Dissatisfaction/Low productivity (N=3) Lack of interaction and implementation (N=4)	P8: Verbal expressions were incomplete in meeting our needs. P71: I think there is little interaction. P77: The in-service training provided by the esteemed academics at our university was beneficial as it encompassed a substantial amount of information in a relatively brief period of time. The training typically consisted of detailed technical information and explanations. Nevertheless, repetition and practice of the subjects are essential for the retention of the information imparted.
Role and Impact of Distance Training (N=13)	Comparison of Training Methods (N=10)	Comparison with face-to-face training (N=10)	P4: Distance training can never replace face-to-face training. P33: Although it is not as useful as face-to-face training, I think it is useful in terms of professional and computer use.
	Use and Impact of Technology (N=3)	Use of Technology (N=3)	P23: It was useful, it improved our ability to use technology more effectively during research and information gathering.

As evidenced by the statements, the participants indicated that the distance in-service training program played a pivotal role in their professional development and continuous learning. The participants found the training to be both effective and efficient and indicated that their knowledge and skills had been enhanced. Furthermore, they also indicated that their proficiency in utilizing technology has enhanced. The training content and materials were perceived as accessible, and the training on technical and current issues enhanced their ability to perform their jobs effectively. They perceived the training to result in savings in both time and costs and requested the continuity of the training

program. Nevertheless, they indicated that distance in-service training may be constrained in terms of interaction and application opportunities, and that enhancements are necessary in these areas.

### Participants' views on Question 2

The participants' answers to the question "Did the distance in-service training you received meet your needs in terms of using office technologies effectively? Can you give concrete examples?" are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** *The Status of the Training Provided to Meet the Needs of the Participants in Using Office Technologies Effectively*

Themes	Sub Themes	Codes	Sample Opinions
Comprehensiveness and Applicability of the Training Program (N=37)	Training Content and Presentation (N=37)	Comprehensiveness of training content (N=17)	P22: In order to use EDMS better, useful presentations were made on creating shortcuts, adding documents, outgoing documents, preparing incoming documents, archiving and using e-mail. P71: It was definitely useful. In addition to the opportunity to refresh our knowledge about EDMS, which we have been using for years, we also learned many things we did not know. We have learned the points we need to pay attention about e-mail usage and cyber security.
		Practical applications and examples (N=20)	P2: Calendar creation options and sending e-mails to multiple people in different ways. P7: Folders and computerized archiving of incoming documents when using EDMS.
Updating Technological Competence and Knowledge (N=25)	Technological Development (N=25)	Technological competence and up-to-date knowledge (N=25)	P63: It has been very accurate in terms of better understanding the issues that we do not know / know incompletely. P37: The classification and sorting of the documents we created in EDMS has been very useful in terms of time, convenience, and access to the right information in a short time.

Participant Satisfaction and Meeting Needs (N=19)	Participant Experience (N=19)	User satisfaction and fulfillment (N=19)	P23: I think it meets my needs. For example, my use of EDMS has become easier.
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Office managers and assistant office managers indicated that the training they received was efficacious in enhancing their abilities to utilize office technologies. Training on topics such as electronic document management systems (EDMS) usage, email management, calendaring, and cybersecurity was found to be particularly useful. They indicated that the practical applications emphasized in the training program assisted them in overcoming technical difficulties encountered in their work processes and in updating their knowledge, thereby facilitating their use of EDMS.

### Participants' views on Question 3

The participants' answers to the question "How helpful is the distance in-service training you received in learning new knowledge and skills? Can you give concrete examples?" are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** *The Role of the Training in Learning New Knowledge and Skills*

Themes	Sub Themes	Codes	Sample Opinions
Contribution of the Training Program (N=101)	Learning and Development (N=37)	Learning new knowledge (N=17)	P15: <i>It enabled us to increase our knowledge and skills in some subjects we know superficially. For example, it raised awareness of cyber security. The use of EDMS has become more practical.</i> P21: <i>With this training, we can learn up-to-date information and use it in our daily work. From EDMS to e-mail, we started to be more careful about where and how we can safely and accurately find information that interests us or that we are curious about on the internet.</i>
		Practical application and technical skills (N=20)	P7: <i>In-service training is important for us office workers to reach new information. It helps us in our work.</i> P42: <i>It has been helpful. It has been more useful in subjects such as EDMS, e-mail, cyber security, etc.</i>

Training Experience (N=64)	Effectiveness of the training (N=39)	P3: Correcting our mistakes, learning innovations. P24: It enabled us to look at things from a broader perspective from the manager's point of view. We had the opportunity to review our behaviors such as due diligence, problem solving, assuming responsibility and acting collectively.
	Technological innovations and updates (N=25)	P22: We obtained detailed information about electronic signatures and their use provided by the Public Certification Center.

Office managers and assistant office managers reported that the distance in-service trainings they received greatly helped them gain new knowledge and skills. Participants stated that their awareness of cyber security increased and they started to access the right information in a secure manner. They emphasized that the training they received on topics such as EDMS usage and e-mail management increased their efficiency in business processes. They stated that the training enabled them to look at the events from a broader perspective and gave them the opportunity to identify the situation, solve problems, take responsibility, see and correct their mistakes.

#### Participants' views on Question 4

The participants' answers to the question "What is the role of the distance in-service training you received in solving the problems you encounter while carrying out your duty? Can you give concrete examples?" are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** The Role of the Training in Solving the Problems Faced by the Participants While Performing Their Duties

Themes	Sub Themes	Codes	Sample Opinions
Contribution of Training to Business Processes (N=57)	Implementation and Improvement in Business Processes (N=57)	Increased problem solving capacity (N=51)	P6: We gained knowledge about what we should pay attention to in the area of cybersecurity. P22: The seminar on using EDMS was very useful in order to write the articles we write on EDMS completely and correctly. P21: Thanks to this training, we learned the information that we could not find or hesitated to find in EDMS correspondence. We benefit from this information in internal correspondence.

Limitations of the Training (N=26)	Knowledge and skills development (N=6)		P24: <i>It enabled us to look at things from a broader perspective from the manager's point of view. We had the opportunity to review our behaviors such as due diligence, problem solving, assuming responsibility and acting collectively.</i>
	Limitation (N=26)		P4: <i>It did not play much of a role.</i>
	Limited role of training (N=26)		P14: <i>I cannot say that it made an extra contribution to my existing knowledge.</i>

Office managers and assistant office managers stated that the distance learning they received improved their problem-solving skills, especially their ability to write complete and accurate correspondence in EDMS, and gave positive feedback on the applicability of the training to their business processes. However, some participants indicated that the training did not play a sufficient role in their job performance.

### Participants' views on Question 5

The participants' answers to the question "What are the benefits of the training you received in realizing your personal career plan? Explain." are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Benefits of the Training in Realizing Personal Career Plan**

Themes	Sub Themes	Codes	Sample Opinions
Development and Learning (N=83)	Contribution (N=32)	Completion of missing information (N=4)	P2: <i>It helps to complete missing information.</i> P5: <i>We overcome our shortcomings in the area of technology.</i> P9: <i>I think that the training I received will enable me to go further in my job.</i>
		Contribution to career planning (N=28)	P22: <i>While realizing our career plan, it has revealed positive results in terms of the meaning of career, the benefits it adds to the person, harmony in the working environment, our development, and knowing our strengths and weaknesses.</i>
	Technological Competence (N=51)	Technological skills and awareness (N=27)	P8: <i>It was useful about cyber-attacks and the use of EDMS.</i> P19: <i>It enables us to keep up with technology in office management.</i>
		Personal development and self-confidence (N=24)	P3: <i>Being guiding and encouraging.</i> P24: <i>In my possible career plan, this training has increased my feelings of self-confidence such as expressing myself much better in terms of communication and thinking that I am competent in new technologies.</i>

Experience (N=19)	Limitations of the Training (N=19)	Limitations of the effectiveness of the training (N=19)	P13: <i>As an employee of thirty years, I do not have a personal career plan.</i> P29: <i>It can be useful in terms of personal development, but I don't think it is at a level to make a career plan.</i>
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Office managers and assistant office managers stated that the distance training they received had positive outcomes such as career adaptability, meaning of career, adapting to the work environment, and discovering individual strengths and weaknesses, and it had positive effects on their personal career planning. They emphasized that the trainings filled the existing knowledge gaps and made them better equipped. They also stated that the trainings contributed to their self-confidence, provided new perspectives and guided them on their career paths. However, some participants stated that they still did not have a career plan and that the training did not contribute to their career planning.

#### Participants' views on Question 6

The participants' answers to the question "Did the training you received change your perspective on office technologies? How can you give an example?" are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** *The Effect of the Training on the Participants' Perspective on Office Technologies*

Themes	Sub Themes	Codes	Sample Opinions
Increased Competence and Awareness of Office Technologies (N=57)	Technological Competence and Awareness (N=57)	Positive Change (N=57)	P6: <i>It made my perspective on office technologies more enjoyable. Learning the tricks and shortcuts of the applications makes things simpler. Such as organizing or canceling meetings via e-mail calendar.</i> P22: <i>Information such as cyber security, security of digital data, operating system, threats to data security positively affected our perspective on the use of office technology.</i>
	Constancy (N=25)	Neutral/No change (N=25)	P10: <i>It did not change.</i> P13: <i>Nothing has changed.</i>

Participants stated that some of the trainings they received made a positive difference. Specifically, they said that they became more aware of how to use technology tools more effectively and efficiently, and learned tricks and shortcuts that facilitate business processes such as organizing or canceling meetings using the e-mail calendar. They stated that the training made them more aware of how to use current technologies in business life. However, some participants reported that the training did not change their perceptions of office technologies.

## **Results and Discussion**

In this study, which was conducted to investigate the opinions of office managers and assistant office managers about the distance training program on "Career Adaptability and Office Technology Competency", 84 people participated. The participants stated that the distance learning program played an important role in their professional development and continuous learning and had positive outcomes such as career adaptability, the meaning of career, adapting to the work environment, discovering individual strengths and weaknesses, and positive effects on their personal career planning. They stated that this training increased their knowledge and skills and their competence in using office technologies. The research results of Koen et al. (2012) also demonstrated that providing career adaptation training can increase the chances of finding a qualitatively good job. The study found that those who found employment after six months reported higher levels of employment quality. They stated that the training in question increased their knowledge and skills, as well as their competence in using office technologies. Özkara et al. (2018) also found that distance in-service training contributed to participants' professional and personal development, as well as positive affective traits related to the use of technology.

Participants found the training effective and efficient, emphasizing that it filled existing knowledge gaps and made them better equipped. They stated that the training increased their ability to perform their jobs effectively, helped them overcome technical difficulties in their business processes, and made them more aware of how to use current technologies in business. They found the training on using EDMS, email management, calendaring, and cybersecurity particularly useful. They stated that their ability to write complete and accurate correspondence in EDMS has improved, that their awareness of cyber security has increased and that they can access information securely, that they have learned tricks and shortcuts that facilitate business processes such as organizing or canceling meetings using the email calendar, and that the distance learning they received provided them with new knowledge and skills. They stated that the training contributed to their self-confidence, enabled them to see things from a broader perspective, and gave them the opportunity to do due diligence, solve problems, take responsibility, and recognize and correct their mistakes. They also stated that the training provided both time and cost savings and requested continuity of training. The flexibility that distance education provides in terms of time and space is also emphasized in other studies (Gökbulut, 2021; Canpolat & Yıldırım, 2021; Bektaş & Kablan, 2023). In Tekin's (2020) study, participants viewed distance education as advantageous in terms of economy, time, and space, but disadvantageous in terms of limited communication and interaction.

Participants perceived the training content as effective and the materials as accessible. This is consistent with the findings of Gürer et al. (2016) and Özgöl et al. (2017): Participants view distance learning as beneficial in terms of easy access to content and flexibility. Most participants gave positive feedback about the applicability of the training to business processes. However, some participants stated that distance education did



not play a sufficient role in their job performance and that there were limitations in terms of interaction and application opportunities. In the study of Parmaksız and Sıcak (2015), some participants stated that distance in-service training did not provide the effectiveness of face-to-face in-service training. However, research by Suwannaphisit et al. (2021) suggests that even if the online learning curriculum is designed based on a framework that focuses on effective pedagogical principles, some staff members still demonstrate resistance to distance in-service training, yet recognise its advantages after using it. Gebel and Bozkurt (2022) came to a similar conclusion. Although the training is live and designed for participants to ask questions and express their opinions, it is normal for some participants to not express such opinions because it does not fully meet the socialization needs of the participants and is different from the in-service training they are used to. There are findings in the literature that the use of mixed methods is more effective than the use of distance education or face-to-face training alone (Sirakaya, 2017; Tekin, 2019). Research by Bluestone et al. (2013) also suggests the use of multiple techniques that facilitate interaction and enable students to process and apply information. The findings of the same research indicate that effective techniques for distance learning can be equally or more effective than face-to-face training, leading to improvements in knowledge and skill outcomes and practice behaviours.

The other factor that accounts for the fact that some participants indicated that the training did not contribute to their career planning and that the training did not change their perceptions about office technology is individual differences. The efficacy of distance-based in-service training programmes may be contingent on the characteristics of the student population (Yu et al. 2022). (Yu et al. 2022). Individual differences are considered an important variable in learning, motivation to learn, and the success of teaching methods and techniques. Distance education has advantages such as flexibility, support for individual learning, independence from time and place, and disadvantages such as limited communication and interaction (İşman, 2008). Therefore, it is normal that some participants emphasized the positive aspects of the distance education they received, while others emphasized the negative aspects and expressed negative opinions. This result is consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Cabı and Erhan (2016) and Tekin (2020).

In addition, participants indicated the importance of increasing the frequency of training and developing content that meets personal needs. In addition to the positive results, the participants' responses revealed the need to make distance learning programs more interactive and practical, to continually improve the training, and to make it more relevant to the specific development needs of the participants.

### **Recommendations**

The results of this study show that new distance in-service training programmes should include comprehensive and various subjects in the areas that office workers need. It is important that the new distance in-service activities to be organised should be planned

in line with the views of the participants, and for this purpose, it is important to apply a questionnaire for possible interests, needs and expectations. Thus, up-to-date options can be offered for different areas of interest. In addition, suggestions such as increasing the number of trainings, making an evaluation at the end of the distance in-service training, giving feedback to the participants according to the results of this evaluation and rewarding those who successfully complete the training with certificates can also be presented. In this way, the level of overlapping of individual and organisational career planning can be increased, employees can be prevented from wanting to leave the organisation or silent resignation by displaying a versatile or unlimited career attitude, and their productivity and performance can be increased. In this framework, some concrete and applicable policy recommendations can be developed to increase the effectiveness of distance in-service trainings:

- *Increasing interactivity:* Active participation of participants should be encouraged by adding live discussions, group work and case studies to training programmes.
- *Practice-based training:* Practical applications and virtual simulations should be offered in addition to theoretical knowledge, especially in skill-oriented subjects such as office technologies.
- *Personalising the learning process:* Modular training contents should be offered, taking into account the potential for participants to possess varying levels of knowledge and skills.
- *The provision of more feedback mechanisms:* At the conclusion of the training programme, surveys and individual feedback sessions should be organised to evaluate the satisfaction and suggestions of the participants, and the content should be updated accordingly.
- *The implementation of a hybrid model:* Face-to-face workshops or mixed (hybrid) training models should be used in certain periods instead of distance education.
- *The strengthening of social connection:* Virtual networks, forums or online working groups should be created to meet the socialisation needs of the participants.

In addition to these contributions, the study also has some limitations. As a case study, the limitations of the research are determined by the time, the place where the situation is analysed and some characteristics. The study is limited to the distance learning that took place between certain dates and the data collection process. In addition, the fact that the group of the study consists only of the office managers and assistants of Anadolu University Open Education System is also a limitation. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies should be designed to include larger groups of participants.

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## Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Kariyer, çalışanların pozisyonlar arasındaki hareketliliğini ve bireyin iş hayatındaki metaforik yolculuğunu tanımlamaktadır (Bingöl, 2013). Kişinin hayatı boyunca bulunduğu pozisyonlar, ilerlemesi ya da yükselmesi kariyer kavramı ile açıklanmaktadır. Kariyer mutlaka öğrenme, kendini geliştirme ve uzmanlaşma gibi aşamaları içerir ve çalışanlara psiko-sosyal tatmin sağlar. Kariyer yönetimi kavramı, kariyerin bireysel ve örgütsel amaçlarla yönetilmesini tanımlar. Başarılı bir kariyer yönetimi sayesinde kurumlar geleceğin beceri ve yeteneklerine sahip insan kaynağına sahip olabilirler. Kariyer uyum yeteneği, bireylerin mesleklerindeki zorlu durumların üstesinden gelebilme becerisini ifade etmektedir (Hartung, 2013). Kariyer uyum yeteneği, bireylerin yeni işler bulmasında ve farklı işler arasında geçiş yapmasında etkilidir (Maggiori vd., 2013). Günümüzün esnek istihdam ortamında kariyer geçişleri yaygındır ve kariyer yolları daha az öngörülebilirdir (Ginevra ve Nota, 2017). Kariyer uyum yeteneği yüksek bireyler, iş ortamındaki yeni sorumluluk alanlarında başarılı olmakta ve beklenmedik değişikliklerin üstesinden kolaylıkla gelebilmektedir (Savickas, 2013; Dönmezoğulları ve Yeşilyaprak, 2019).

Kariyer uyum sürecinde kurumsal destek, çalışanların önem ve değer duygularını geliştirerek kariyer uyumunda daha başarılı olmalarına yardımcı olabilir (İrge ve Okay, 2021). Nitekim informal iletişimde, bazı çalışanlar büro teknolojileriyle başa çıkma konusunda kendilerini yetersiz hissettiklerini ve daha fazla desteğe ihtiyaç duyduklarını belirtmektedir. Bu yetersizliğe neden olan faktörlerden biri de verilen hizmet içi eğitimin sınırlı olmasıdır. Hizmet içi eğitim yoluyla büro personelinin kariyer uyumlarını ve teknoloji yeterliklerini geliştirmek çok önemlidir. Bunun gerçekleşmesi için kariyer gelişiminin iki yönlü ilişkisel bir süreç olduğunun kabul edilmesi gerekmektedir (Hall & Moss, 1998).

Hizmet içi eğitim, yaşam boyu eğitimin bir alt sürecidir ve örgütler için vazgeçilmez bir faaliyettir (Kulaz, 2013). Hizmet içi eğitim, çalışanlara işlerini yapabilmeleri için ihtiyaç duydukları bilgi, beceri ve tutumları kazandırmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilir (Altun Bogoçlu ve Gündüz, 2022). Hizmet içi eğitim yüz yüze veya uzaktan eğitim yoluyla verilebilir. Uzaktan eğitim, özellikle büyük ve coğrafi olarak dağınık bir hedef grupla çalışırken çeşitli avantajlar sunar (Noe, 2009). Ayrıca uzaktan eğitim yöntemlerinin kullanılması standardizasyonu teşvik edebilir (Halvurt, 2010).

Küreselleşme, gelişen teknoloji ve değişen beklentiler karşısında kamu kurumları, faaliyetlerini ve rekabet avantajlarını sürdürebilmek için esnek, şeffaf ve uyarlanabilir olma baskısı altındadır (Özdemir vd., 2017). Bu ihtiyaca yanıt olarak, kamu yönetiminin geleneksel yapısında dijitalleşme ve memurların eğitim seviyesinin yükseltilmesine vurgu yapılması gibi değişiklikler olmuştur. 657 sayılı Devlet Memurları Kanunu'nun 214. Maddesi, devlet memurlarının becerilerini ve üretkenliklerini geliştirmek ve onları gelecekteki rollerine hazırlamak için hizmet içi eğitimin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu girişimler, kamu kurumlarının değişen dünya düzeninde etkin bir şekilde yol



alabilmelerini ve toplumun gelişen ihtiyaçlarına etkin bir şekilde hizmet edebilmelerini sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, "Büro yöneticileri ve büro yönetici yardımcılarının kariyer uyumu ve büro teknolojisi yeterlikleri uzaktan hizmet içi eğitim programına ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?" sorusuna yanıt aranmıştır. Ana problemten hareketle katılımcıların görüşlerine dayalı olarak alt sorulara da yanıt aranmıştır. Araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılarak bir durum çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Araştırmada, kariyer uyum yeteneği ve büro teknolojisi yeterliği konusunda uzaktan eğitim alan gönüllü katılımcılardan (84) yarı yapılandırılmış sorularla elektronik ortamda veri toplanmış ve içerik analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcılar Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Sisteminde çalışan büro yöneticileri ve büro yönetici yardımcılarından oluşmaktadır.

Durum çalışmasında araştırmacı mevcut ortamı ya da kişiyi gözlemler, çeşitli kaynaklardan (belgeler, kişiler vb.) bilgi edinir ve duruma neden olan olgunun gelişim sürecini araştırır. Bu çalışmada literatür taranarak oluşturulan taslak anket, uygulama öncesinde bir dil uzmanı ve iki alan uzmanının görüşüne sunularak çalışmanın geçerlilik ve güvenilirliğini artırmak için görüşleri alınarak ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Ardından uzaktan hizmet içi eğitimin gerçekleştirilmesi ve veri toplanması için gerekli yasal izinler alınmıştır. Dört katılımcı ile bir test uygulaması yapılmış ve 6 sorudan oluşan forma son şekli verilmiştir.

Büro yöneticisi ve büro yönetici yardımcılarının katıldıkları "kariyer uyum yeteneği ve büro teknolojisi yeterlikleri" konulu uzaktan hizmetiçi eğitim programı hakkındaki görüşlerini incelemeye yönelik bu araştırmaya 84 kişi katılım göstermiştir. İfadelerinden anlaşıldığı üzere katılımcılar aldıkları uzaktan hizmet içi eğitim programının mesleki gelişimlerinde ve sürekli öğrenmelerinde önemli bir rol oynadığını kariyer uyum yeteneği, kariyerin anlamı, iş ortamına uyum sağlama, bireysel güçlü ve zayıf yönleri keşfetme gibi olumlu sonuçları olduğunu ve kişisel kariyer planlamalarına olumlu etkileri olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Söz konusu eğitimin bilgi ve becerilerini ve ofis teknolojilerini kullanma yeterliliklerini artırdığını belirtmişlerdir.

Katılımcılar eğitimi etkili ve verimli bulmuşlar, mevcut bilgi boşluklarını doldurduğunu ve kendilerini daha donanımlı hale getirdiğini vurgulamışlardır. Eğitimin işlerini etkin bir şekilde yerine getirme becerilerini artırdığını ve iş süreçlerinde karşılaştıkları teknik zorluklarından üstesinden gelmelerine yardımcı olduğunu ve güncel teknolojileri iş hayatında nasıl kullanacakları konusunda daha bilinçli hale getirdiğini belirtmişlerdir. EBYS kullanımı, e-posta yönetimi, takvim oluşturma ve siber güvenlik eğitimlerini özellikle faydalı bulmuşlardır.

Katılımcılar uzaktan eğitimi içeriklere erişim kolaylığı ve esneklik bakımından avantajlı görmektedir. Katılımcıların çoğu eğitimin iş süreçlerine uygulanabilirliği konusunda olumlu geri bildirimde bulunmuşlardır. Bununla birlikte bazı katılımcılar uzaktan hizmet içi eğitimin iş performanslarında yeterli bir rol oynamadığını, etkileşim ve uygulama olanakları açısından kısıtlar olduğunu belirtmişlerdir.

Bazı katılımcıların eğitimin kariyer planlamalarına katkı sağlamadığını belirtmesinde ve eğitimin büro teknolojilerine ilişkin algılarını değiştirmedini bildirmesinde etkili olan diğer faktör bireysel farklılıklardır. Bireysel farklılıklar, öğrenmede, öğrenmeye motive olmada, öğretim yöntem ve tekniğinin başarılı olmasında önemli bir değişken olarak görülmektedir. Katılımcıların verdikleri yanıtlar; olumlu sonuçların yanında uzaktan hizmet içi eğitim programlarının daha etkileşimli ve uygulamaya dayalı hale getirilmesi, eğitimlerin sürekli geliştirilmesi ve katılımcıların özel gelişim ihtiyaçlarına daha uygun hale getirilmesi gerekliliğini ortaya çıkarmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kariyer Uyumu, Büro Teknolojisi, Uzaktan Hizmet İçi Eğitim, Büro Yöneticisi

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Authors	Contact
Nuran Öztürk Başpınar	Borsa İstanbul Science High School, Türkiye, E-mail: nbozturk@anadolu.edu.tr
Orkun Şen	Anadolu University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Türkiye