Research Article

Faculty Members' Point of Views Regarding Lifelong Learning[1]

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to investigate faculty members' thoughts and characteristics regarding lifelong learning. The research has been designed as phenomenology. The sampling of the research consisted of 65 academicians who are professors, associate professors, assistant professors and research assistants from 17 faculties of Anadolu University in fall term of 2014-2015 education year. These participants have been selected by using purposive sampling method according to the proportional distribution of faculty members in the universe of study. Researchers designed semi-structured interview form and written-interview form to collect qualitative data. Collected data was analyzed by using content analysis. Based on the themes and codes in which analysis result achieved, faculty members' thoughts about lifelong learning and factors which effect faculty members' lifelong learning characteristics were determined. At the end of the study, it was found that faculty members participated in professional activities, social activities and personal development activities. However, academicians stated that they encounter some problems to participate in lifelong learning activities. It was found that these problems have personal, professional, institutional, social aspects and also they are originated

from the structure of academic system, technology, bureaucracy and inadequate facilities. Faculty members stated that lifelong learning is important for them in personal, professional and social ways. However, the participants identified the different aspects of lifelong learning. The participants stated that both individual and environmental factors are effective on faculty members' lifelong learning characteristics. Based on the results, several suggestions were put forward for implementation for higher education institutions and researchers.

Keywords: *Lifelong learning, faculty members, academicians, effective factors in lifelong learning*

Introduction

Rapid development in information technologies today facilitates sharing of information, information that is produced rapidly is also consumed quickly and thus, increases the need for learning in individuals. This process revealed the requirement for lifelong learning beyond the scope of the schools (Knowles, 2009). Lifelong learning is an approach where individuals of all ages participate in the learning process and all individuals are included in formal, informal and non-formal learning processes all throughout their lives, from birth to death (UNESCO, 2013). Laal (2013a) identified lifelong learning as a process that enables social awareness and empowers democratic understanding via personalized and flexible learning opportunities that aim the realization of social, cultural and economic development of individuals. Biçerli (2012) defined lifelong learning as the learning activities that the individuals participate all through their lives to improve their knowledge, skills and proficiencies within the context of in-school and out-of-the-school education without the limitations of age, socio-economic status and level of education. Jarvis (2007) described lifelong learning as a holistic development and self-improvement process inclusive of the experiences the individual gains as a result of interaction with the environment and physical, cognitive, and emotional fields. Definitions of lifelong learning reflect that it is a process that includes the whole life of individuals in preschool and post-educational periods and personal, social and professional development of individuals within the context of universal learning, technical education and all in-service and out of service training and instruction (Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012).

In addition to its importance for individuals of all ages, it is almost a must for faculty members that work in universities which is the driving force of social development today to improve themselves. Faculty members are individuals who provide instruction services and conduct scientific research in universities that provide higher education. Translators, specialists, instructional planners, research assistants, lecturers and teaching assistants who are instructional assistants that work in universities and assistant professors, associate professors, professors and professors-in-ordinary who are faculty members in universities are academic staff of different levels. Faculty members are specialists in a field that have responsibilities such as scientific research and enlightening the society with scientific facts when necessary. Under these circumstances, faculty members need to develop themselves in several dimensions as both teaching and learning individuals (Lunde and Healy, 2002).

There are studies in the literature that scrutinize lifelong learning processes of faculty members from different perspectives. In this context there are theoretical studies that stress technology as an effective tool that could be utilized in this process (Aggarwal, 2013; Kato, 2013; Latchem, Odabaşı and Kabakçı, 2006), scale development studies that aim to determine lifelong learning levels within the framework of particular dimensions (Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2014; Kirby et al., 2010; Uzunboylu and Hürsen, 2011), and research that investigate the effectiveness of programs developed for career development of faculty members (Banks, 2002; Brown, 2001; Soran, Akkoyunlu, & Kavak, 2006). Furthermore, there are studies in the literature that aim to determine the views of faculty members on lifelong learning, the significance of lifelong learning and lifelong learning competencies (Duta and Rafaila, 2014; Köğce et al., 2014; Yavuz-Konokman and Yanpar-Yelken, 2012).

An analysis of previous studies on the subject demonstrate that these concentrated on determination of the current status of faculty members concerning lifelong learning based on particular dimensions. However, it is also necessary to conduct studies that would identify the views of faculty members on lifelong learning and the factors that affect their lifelong learning characteristics in detail. The objective of the present study is to identify the views of faculty members on lifelong learning and the factors that affect lifelong learning characteristics. Thus, it is the aim of this study is to provide a holistic perspective on the lifelong learning processes of the faculty members. The following research questions were determined to serve the general purpose of the current study:

1. What are the activities that faculty members participate, the problems they face and their recommendations concerning these problems within the context of lifelong learning?
2. What are the views of faculty members on the significance and definition of lifelong learning?
3. What are the factors that affect the lifelong learning characteristics of faculty members?

Method

Study Design

The present study was designed with phenomenological design since it would make it possible to discover detailed answers for the research questions. Phenomenological design makes it

possible to identify the views of individuals on a particular phenomenon comprehensively (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011).

Study Context and Participants

Study universe consisted of a total of 1298 faculty members working at 17 faculties at Anadolu University during 2014 – 2015 academic year fall semester including research assistants, assistant professors, associate professors and professors. Participants of the present study were selected on a voluntary basis and 65 faculty members were selected using purposeful sampling based on the proportional distribution of faculty members in the universe. Thus, 5% of the specified universe was reached. Distribution of the study participants based on gender, academic titles and the faculties they work in is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of the Participants Based on Gender, Academic Titles and the Faculties they Work in

Gender	n	%	Faculties	n	%
Female	32	49,2	Faculty of Sciences	3	4,6
Male	33	50,8	Faculty of Fine Arts	4	6,2
Total	65	100	Faculty of Aeronautics and Astronautics	3	4,6
Academic Title			Faculty of Law	3	4,6
Professor	12	18,5	Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	4	6,2
Associate Professor	13	20	Faculty of Economics	3	4,6
Assistant Professor	20	30,8	Faculty of Communication Sciences	4	6,2
Research Assistant	20	30,8	Faculty of Business Administration	4	6,2
Total	65	100	Faculty of Architecture and Design	2	3,1
Faculties			Faculty of Engineering	2	3,1
Open Education Faculty	5	7,7	Faculty of Health Sciences	3	4,6
Faculty of Pharmacy	4	6,2	Faculty of Sport Sciences	3	4,6
Faculty of Humanities	4	6,2	Faculty of Tourism	3	4,6
Faculty of Education	11	16,9	Total	65	100

The present study was conducted in Anadolu University since this particular institution has a deep rooted history in distance and lifelong learning and provides significant financial support and opportunities for faculty members in their scientific activities (Anadolu University, 2014; Kaya, 2014; Ministry of National Education, 2012). Furthermore, the institution has an

advantageous position for it facilitates data collection processes since it employs the researchers of this study. When all these reasons are considered, Anadolu University was chosen as the setting of the present research since it is a higher education institution with adequate characteristics for the aim of the present study.

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form and a written interview form developed by the authors. Semi-structured interview form was designed by the researchers to determine the views of faculty members on lifelong learning and the factors that affect their lifelong learning characteristics. For this purpose, open-ended questions were developed to search for answers via face-to-face interviews and the abovementioned data collection tool was constructed. Furthermore, additional questions were prepared to obtain in depth data. Written interview form was designed by the authors to identify the views of faculty members on lifelong learning and the factors that affect their lifelong learning characteristics. For this purpose, open-ended questions were developed for the participants to respond in writing and the abovementioned data collection tool was constructed. Developed written interview form also included explanatory information about the study for participants. Data collection tools used in the study were presented to 7 field experts in Computer Education and Instructional Technologies, 3 measurement specialists and 1 language expert. According to feedback from experts, data collection tool reorganized and it tested in a pilot study with 3 faculty members with similar characteristics with the sample was conducted to determine the comprehensibility of the questions included in the form and it was finalized based on the obtained feedback. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 26 participants in the sample (2% of the universe) and 39 participants were asked to complete the written interview forms (3% of the universe) to collect data.

Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to data collection in the study, an application was presented to Anadolu University Ethics Committee and the ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained. Faculty members included in the study were approached individually and appointments were made and interviews were conducted at a place and time appropriate for the participants personally by the author. Different data collection methods were used for data triangulation and to improve the

credibility of the study. Furthermore, data were collected from participants with different characteristics for data triangulation. However, to maintain long-term interaction during the data collection process, the number of participants were not limited to a small number and 22-63 minutes long interviews were conducted with the participants. Before applying the data collection tools, the objective of the study, its content, how the collected data would be used and their rights and privacy principles were presented to the participants in writing and these information were explained by the researcher verbally and the written consent of all participants were obtained stating that they have participated in the study voluntarily.

The interviews were recorded with a sound recording device. During the interviews, additional questions were asked to the participants based on the course of the interview in an attempt to collect more detailed data. Furthermore, the participants were asked to explain their thoughts in detail when the responses were nor completely understood by the researcher. Thus, an in-depth approach was adopted during the data collection process to improve the credibility of the present study. The views expressed by the interviewees during the data collection process were listened by the author without a guiding or judgmental attitude, a positive communication environment was established and the participants were allowed to express their thoughts freely. At the end of the interviews, the author summarized the collected data for the participant and their approval for the accuracy of the collected data was obtained to improve the credibility of the study. After the interviews were completed, the sound recordings were transcribed. If there were incomprehensible data in the transcribed interviews, the related participant was approached to clarify her or his views. Furthermore, data were collected using written interview forms from the participants included in the study sample. Related forms were given to the participants personally by the author and they were asked to respond the questions in the form in writing. Participants replied to the questions whenever they found appropriate and personally returned the forms to the author.

When the data collection process was over, collected data were analyzed using content analysis method. Content analysis is a method used to reach concepts and correlations that could explain collected qualitative data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). Using the content analysis process, the data were coded based on categories and themes. Thus, the views of the faculty members on lifelong learning and the factors that affect their lifelong learning characteristics were identified. This analysis was conducted by two field experts to maintain credibility of the study and consistency in coding was established. For the qualitative analysis, NVIVO 10 software was

utilized. Analysis results were reported by direct quotes of the participants to maintain the transferability of the present study.

Findings and Comments

Findings on the Activities that Faculty Members Participated within the Context of Lifelong Learning

The responses given by the participants of the present study, the faculty members, for the first research question of the study on the activities they participated within the context of lifelong learning were analyzed with content analysis and the themes and sub-themes presented in Table 2 were identified.

Table 2

The Activities that Faculty Members Participated in within the Context of Lifelong Learning

Themes and Sub-themes	f	Participant Statements
Occupational Activities		
Scientific	65	*"I attend symposiums, conferences and panels."* [K3]
		"I follow the books, articles related to my field." [K54]
Educative	17	*"I instruct classes. One prepares for the course and learns."* [K7]
		"Online instruction processes contributed to me intensively." [K29]
Administrative	4	*"My duties as a deputy dean make me improve as an administrator."* [K13]
Social Activities		
Cultural	28	*"I like to visit the museums to learn about history."* [K32]
		"I visit fairs and shows organized in various subjects and fields." [K64]
Artistic	26	*"I am interested in painting. I received training on painting as well."* [K15]
		"I like to dance. I take lessons on modern dances." [K26]
Sports	12	*"I am interested in football. We play among friends."* [K2]
		"I am into body building to have a healthy body.." [K33]
Civil Society Work	10	*"I am a member of TEMA foundation and I have duties in that institution."* [K15]
		"For example, I worked as a UNICEF volunteer for 15 years." [K26]

Themes and Sub-themes	f	Participant Statements
Personal Development Activities		
To Fulfill Needs	16	*"I am taking child development courses to raise my son better."* [K19] *"I try to improve myself in cooking."* [K23]
On Information Technologies	15	*"I improve myself by following current technologies."* [K39] *"I follow current events on social networks."* [K55]
Media Follow Up	14	*"I read newspapers to follow current events."* [K21] *"I watch the news on TV."* [K31]

The frequencies of the themes in Table 2 demonstrated that the participants primarily participated in scientific activities followed by social and personal development activities, respectively within the context of lifelong learning.

Findings about the Problems Encountered by Faculty Members During the Lifelong Learning Process

The responses given by the participant faculty members, for the first research question of the study on the problems they encountered during the process of lifelong learning were analyzed with content analysis and the themes and sub-themes presented in Table 3 were identified.

Table 3

The Problems Faculty Members Eencountered during the Process of Lifelong Learning

Themes and Sub-Themes	f	Participant Statements
Personal Problems		
Time management	25	*"I make mistakes in time management and cannot participate in different activities."* [K62]
Individual Differences	16	*"Certain academicians rest on the laurels they receive."* [K9] *"Certain academicians do not tend to share knowledge."* [K64]
Marriage	10	*"I could not attend to conferences in distant locations due to my child."* [K51] *"One needs to travel out of the city or abroad for scientific activities. I had experienced problems with my partner on these occasions."* [K65]

Themes and Sub-Themes	*f*	Participant Statements
Occupational Problems		
Academic Factors	14	*"The lack of awareness of the academicians on lifelong learning is a problem."* [K10] *"Conflict of generations makes the communication between younger and older academicians difficult."* [K18]
Educational Factors	10	*"My course load prevents me from indulging in different topics."* [K4] *"Sometimes, I could not find training opportunities on topics that I feel a need for."* [K59]
Structure of the Academic System	19	*"Standardization in academics hinders creativity."* [K18] *"Academia in our country is disconnected with the society."* [K24]
Insufficient Opportunities	15	*"I spend extensive efforts to prepare the experimental environment I need."* [K13] *"I am the only research assistant in the department and I deal with the class of 85 individuals alone."* [K21]
Institutional Tasks	14	*"My administrative duties limit my learning activities."* [K7] *"Unaccounted for tasks could come up in the institution and could slow you down."* [K8]
Social	8	*"I want to learn things but I am intimidated by the reaction of the society."* [K23] *"It is a problem that the society does not possess a lifelong learning culture."* [K49]
Technological	5	*"I think the information pollution on the Internet is a problem."* [K44] *"Sometimes the Internet connection speed is unsatisfactory."* [K46]
Bureaucratic	2	*"We are overwhelmed by the bureaucracy. For instance, when the rector changes, all projects come to a halt."* [K25]

The frequencies of the themes in Table 3 demonstrated that the participant primarily experienced personal problems during the lifelong learning process. Furthermore, it was observed that these personal problems were followed by occupational factors, the structure of the academic system, lack of opportunities, institutional tasks, social, technological and bureaucratic factors, respectively.

Findings Related to the Solutions for The Problems that Faculty Members Encounter During Lifelong Learning

The responses given by the participant faculty members for the first research question of the study on the solutions for the problems they encountered during the process of lifelong learning were analyzed with content analysis and the themes presented in Table 4 were identified.

Table 4

Solution Propositions on the Problems Faculty Members Encountered during the Process of Lifelong Learning

Themes	ƒ	Participant Statements
Personal	13	*"Activities in lifelong learning should be organized based on priorities."* [K8] *"Academicians should influence each other positively in that matter."* [K12] *"Academicians should improve their time management skills."* [K17]
Structure of the Academic System	6	*"There should be a system where academicians who prefer to conduct research and instruct classes are be differentiated."* [K13] *"Personal benefits provided for the academicians should be enforced."* [K18]
Educational	5	*"Producing proceedings or articles within the context of graduate courses would be appropriate."* [K10] *"Awareness for lifelong learning could be improved via advertising."* [K42]
Technological	4	*"It could have been better if Internet was a more organized and easily accessible resource."* [K3] *"Internet infrastructure should be further developed."* [K46]
Institutional	4	*"University should support us for development on topics outside our field of study."* [K1] *"Institutional support on maintaining professional – personal life balance would be preferable."* [K19]

The frequencies of the themes in Table 4 demonstrated that the participant proposed primarily personal solutions for the problems they encountered during the lifelong learning process.

Findings on the Significance of Lifelong learning for Faculty Members

The responses given by the participant faculty members for the second research question of the study on the significance of lifelong learning were analyzed with content analysis and the themes and sub-themes presented in Table 5 were identified.

Table 5

Significance of Lifelong Learning According to Faculty Members

Themes	f	Participant Statements
Professional		
Educational Significance	30	*"Lifelong learning is important to be an example for the students."* [K37]
		"It is important for the academicians to be role models." [K45]
Academic Significance	28	*"Lifelong learning is significant for academic inspiration."* [K13]
		"Lifelong learning is significant to sustain scientific self-confidence." [K62]
Personal	25	*"In my opinion, lifelong learning is a way of life for us."* [K11]
		"It is significant in developing a critical assessment and perspective." [K32]
Social	13	*"It is significant for the academicians to understand the society and the society to understand the academicians."* [K17]
		"It is significant for us to fulfill our responsibility to increase social awareness." [K39]

The frequencies of the themes in Table 5 demonstrated that the participants expressed their views on the significance of lifelong learning primarily based on professional followed by personal and social aspects.

Findings on the Definition of Lifelong Learning by the Faculty Members

The responses given by the participant faculty members for the second research question of the study on the definition of lifelong learning were analyzed with content analysis and the themes and sub-themes presented in Table 6 were identified.

Table 6

Definition of Lifelong Learning According to Faculty Members

Codes	f	Participant Statements
Continuous learning throughout life	47	*"Lifelong learning is learning from cradle to tomb."* [K17]
Formal, Informal and Non-Formal Learning Processes	17	*"Includes all knowledge acquired in formal and informal settings about all topics and it is an infinite process."* [K15]

Codes	*f*	Participant Statements
Personal Development	10	*"Learning activities conducted within the context of personal development."* [K30]
Everything conducted to acquire knowledge	9	*"It is everything we conduct to acquire knowledge."* [K20]
Adapting to the age	8	*"It is the adaptation of the individual to her or his age by renewing herself or himself."* [K28]
Development based on needs	5	*"It is the ability of the individual to develop based on needs."* [K13]
Learning based on interests	4	*"It includes learning activities conducted within the context of personal interests."* [K30]
Being beneficial for the society	4	*"Being beneficial for the society by transferring the learned knowledge."* [K9]
Learning independent from time and space	3	*"Developing knowledge, skills and competencies without the limitation of time and space."* [K29]
Professional Development	3	*"Self-improvement of the individual for the purpose of professional development."* [K1]
Effort to learn	3	*"Lifelong learning is to spend effort to learn new information."* [K41]
Life Experience	3	*"It is the cumulative knowledge we acquire through life."* [K58]
Acquiring Awareness	3	*"It is the self-improvement of the individual by developing an awareness."* [K31]
Social Development	2	*"Continuing social development of the individual."* [K54]
Academic Development	2	*"It is a lifelong process where we develop ourselves academically."* [K34]
Curiosity to Learn	2	*"It is a developmental process that occurs as a result of curiosity to learn."* [K2]
Using Information and Communication Technologies	2	*"Self-development of the individual by acquiring new knowledge using primarily information and communication technologies and other resources."* [K36]
A Culture	2	*"If we need to make a secondary definition, lifelong learning is a culture."* [K17]
A Learning Process Encompassing All Individuals	1	*"It is an information acquisition process that includes all individuals and occurs at all times."* [K11]
A Multi-Dimensional Communication Process	1	*"It is a multi-dimensional communication process that entails sharing information."* [K58]
Preparing the self for the future	1	*"Individual preparing for the future through self-training."* [K60]
Cultural Development	1	*"Cultural improvement of individuals by self-development."* [K33]
Freedom to Learn	1	*"In my opinion, lifelong learning is freedom to learn."* [K38]

Codes	*f*	Participant Statements
Internal Motivation	1	*"It is learning new information and self-renewal through internal motivation."* [K16]
Problem Solving	1	*"Self-development and problem solving while looking for answers for the questions."* [K12]
Questioning	1	*"The situations where I question while experiencing that contribute to my knowledge."* [K24]
A Research Process	1	*"Lifelong learning is a research and learning process."* [K65]
Staying Alive Both Physically and Mentally	1	*"Lifelong learning could also be expressed as a learning effort to stay alive both physically and mentally."* [K65]
Spiritual Satisfaction	1	*"Spiritual satisfaction by acquiring new information."* [K64]
Earning Money	1	*"A continuous self-development process to earn money."* [K20]

Analysis of the Table 6 would demonstrate that participants defined lifelong learning from different perspectives.

Findings on Personal and Environmental Factors That Affect Lifelong Learning Characteristics of Faculty Members

The responses given by the participants for the third research question of the study on the factors that affect their lifelong learning characteristics were analyzed with content analysis. Themes and sub-themes, which demonstrated that lifelong learning characteristics of faculty members were affected by both environmental and personal factors, were obtained as a result of conducted analysis. Related findings are listed in Tables 7 and 8, respectively.

Table 7

Environmental Factors that Affect Lifelong Learning Characteristics of Faculty Members

Environmental Factors	*f*	Participant Statements
Institution of Employment		
Qualifications of the Institution	50	*"Facilities provided by the institution are significant for the self-development of the individuals."* [K2] *"In my opinion, the significance the institutions assign to lifelong learning is effective."* [K8]
Work Environment	24	*"An adequate work environment is indispensable for academicians to work comfortably."* [K4]

Environmental Factors	*f*	Participant Statements
Professors	10	*"In my opinion, support provided by the professors and their active contribution are effective."* [K11] *"If your advisor is open to knowledge, you become open as well."* [K18]
Institution Administration	9	*"The perspective of university administration is an effective factor."* [K19]
Colleagues	8	*"Studies conducted by your colleagues affect you as well."* [K4] *"We learn new things from our colleagues in different disciplines."* [K19]
Students	6	*"I learn a lot from my interaction with students."* [K1] *"We try to improve ourselves to adopt to the students."* [K14]
Society	25	*"Culture of the society is important in lifelong learning in my opinion."* [K10] *"Awareness of society in all topics is effective."* [K20]
Information and Communication Technologies	19	*"Information and communication technologies encourage active participation in lifelong learning since they facilitate Access to information and render this process interesting."* [K56]
Structure of the Academic System	19	*"The structure of the academy that forces individuals for development is effective in lifelong learning."* [K17]
Environment	17	*"One is guided by the opportunities in the environment for self-development."* [K26] *"People reading around you would influence you to read as well."* [K60]
Family	16	*"If you grew up in a family that is aware of the virtue of reading, this would affect learning positively."* [K10] *"In my opinion, family support is effective on the individual with respect to lifelong learning."* [K11]
Economic Opportunities	10	*"Global economic conditions would affect the resources reserved for this purpose."* [K25] *"National economy would affect the resources reserved for lifelong learning."* [K56]
State Administration	10	*"The country should have primarily policies that support lifelong learning and these policies should be sustainable."* [K25]
Media	7	*"Media is an effective instrument in lifelong learning."* [K54]
Concerned branch of science	3	*"Law is a living field. I need to learn the innovations concerning my field."* [K7] *"Pharmacy is a dynamic field. This field makes continuous learning a requirement."* [K13]

Table 7 demonstrates that the institution of employment was considered as a significant factor in assessment of lifelong learning by the faculty members within the context of environmental factors.

Table 8

Personal Factors that Affect Lifelong Learning Characteristics of Faculty Members

Personal Factors	*f*	Participant Statements
Personal Traits		
Affective Traits	70	*"It is important how the individual perceives the lifelong learning process."* [K1]
		"In my opinion, curiosity triggers learning." [K7]
		"I think disciplined behavior guides learning." [K11]
Cognitive Traits	35	*"In my opinion, learning priorities of the individual are effective in lifelong learning."* [K10]
		"Critical thinking is necessary for self-development." [K14]
Social Traits	8	*"Social competencies of the individuals are important in learning from others."* [K12]
Psychological Traits	8	*"If the individual is happy, this would positively affect her or his learning motivation."* [K5]
		"Healthy psychology of the individual is significant for lifelong learning." [K41]
Occupational Traits	28	*"The way we perceive academic life, whether as a public service or a developmental process, is important in becoming a lifelong learner."* [K10]
Cultural Traits	12	*"In my opinion, the quality of past educational experiences are important for lifelong learning."* [K23]
		"I could say that the cultural infrastructure of the individual is effective in lifelong learning." [K25]
Economic Traits	6	*"Economic factors are effective. You could accomplish as much as your budget allows."* [K23]

Table 8 demonstrates that statements related to personal traits were prominent about personal factors. The frequencies of the themes identified in Tables 7 and 8 showed that environmental factors were prominent as indicators of lifelong learning according to faculty members.

Result, Discussion and Recommendations

Results on Activities that Faculty Members Participate within the Context of Lifelong Learning

It was understood that participants of the study primarily participated in professional followed by social and personal development activities. It could be argued that this was due to support provided for faculty members in the current academic system was focused on scientific development promoted the scientific development of the faculty members and left participation in other activities to the self-initiative and efforts of the faculty members. Thus, it could be argued that the opportunities and criteria provided by the current academic system is insufficient in supporting the holistic development faculty members.

Results on the Problems Faculty Members Encounter in Lifelong Learning Process and Recommendations for Solutions

The participants stated that they have faced limiting or prohibiting problems on active participation in lifelong learning process. Previous studies also reported that planned work and effective management of time that the participants of the present study argued they have experience problems as well, was significant in learning (Loyens, Magda and Rikers, 2008). On the other hand, participants stated that certain faculty members limited their self-development process with the academic title they have obtained and put this problem, which is specific to this occupation, on the agenda. Furthermore, the participants stated that their family responsibilities hindered their learning processes (Gouthro, 2005). In addition, statements of certain faculty members that negative attitudes of their partners in life prevent them in participating in scientific activities were significant for the literature. It was considered that reasons for the limitation caused by the abovementioned familial responsibilities were various factors such as the lack of time management skills, lack of mismanagement of family responsibilities and cultural traits of the individuals.

The participants stated that they have encountered academic and educational problems. Thus, due to the limitations in quality personnel, the participants argued that their course responsibilities increased in the institution. This view was parallel to the findings in the literature that institutional duties limited the individuals' lifelong learning (Clapper, 2010).

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Certain participants proposed to divide the faculty members into two groups of specialized research and instructional academicians to resolve these problems.

Similar to the reports in the literature (Stewart, 2009), faculty members stated that the negative example of the faulty mentality of other academicians in the same institution on lifelong learning affected them negatively. Furthermore, the participants argued that the conflict among generations in academia created communication problems, resulting in further limitations in lifelong learning. This finding was considered significant for the literature.

Similar to the reports in the literature that environmental opportunities were important in learning (Wolflin, 1999), participants of the present study stated that their inability to access the training they required was a limitation as well. On the other hand, parallel to the reports in literature that lifelong learning understanding of the society affected the individual (Cedefop, 2003), study participants reported that the lack of the lifelong learning perspective and culture in the society could limit their learning and could sometimes create a pressure that prevents it.

Certain faculty members among participants expressed that standardization was experienced in academic life and individuals without democratic approach in academia could limit the creativity of other individuals. When it is considered that lifelong learning approach is shaped on the basis of respect to individual differences, democracy and freedom of thought (Martin, 2004), it could be argued that the abovementioned condition could be an obstacle against the enforcement of lifelong learning. On the other hand, participating faculty members in the study stated that the universities were disconnected with the society under existing academic conditions. When it is considered that lifelong learning could not exist independent from the society and its dynamics (Van Weert, 2005; Warren, 2004), it could be argued that the inefficiency of current academic system in supporting and encouraging social interaction could slow down penetration of the lifelong learning approach.

The participants expressed that the problems they experienced in using information and communication technologies and accessing the information they need on the Internet limited their lifelong learning efforts. When it is considered that today technology literacy skills and information literacy skills are required for each individual to become a lifelong learner (Diker-Coşkun, Kızılkaya Cumaoğlu and Seçkin, 2013; Gürdal, 2000; Hammer, 2013; Laal, 2013a; Stasane, 2008), it could be argued that the faculty members should be supported in that respect.

On the other hand, since the participants stated that they sometimes experienced problems in providing scientific resources they need and encountered red tape during implementation of their project, it is necessary to reduce the related bureaucracy.

Results on the Significance of Lifelong Learning for Faculty Members

It could be argued that participants believed that lifelong learning was important for academicians and reflected this importance in personal, professional and social spheres. In this context, parallel to the reports in the literature, the participants expressed that lifelong learning was significant for the personal development of individuals (Kirby et al., 2010) and to act in a critical manner (Scales, 2008) and it was required to adapt to the rapid changes in life and follow the advances in every field and to update their information (Güleç, Çelik and Demirhan, 2012).

The participants expressed the professional significance of lifelong learning both with respect to academic and educational perspectives. Accordingly, faculty members thought that lifelong learning was significant due to the nature of their profession, since they are engaged in scientific work. Furthermore, they stated that lifelong learning was important for them to update their academic knowledge along with the advances in their respective fields, sustain their professional self-confidence and to become pioneers in science by publishing quality papers. On the other hand, faculty members argued that lifelong learning was important to better perform their duties as educators and become role models since they have duties to train students.

The participants expressed the personal significance of lifelong learning by arguing that it is a lifestyle for them. Parallel to this statement, Yavuz-Konakman and Yanpar-Yelken (2014) reported that faculty members are in a continuous effort to learn and considered lifelong learning competencies as a requirement. On the other hand, parallel to the idea that universities possess social responsibilities and roles (Soran, Akkoyunlu, & Kavak, 2006), participants of the present study stated that they need to improve themselves and thus, lifelong learning is significant for academicians to understand the society better and to be understood by the society better based on the premise that faculty members had a responsibility to the society and social environment.

The frequencies of the responses given by the participants are concerned, it could be stated that they expressed the significance of lifelong learning based on professional development followed by personal and social perspectives, respectively. It was considered that this was due to the effects of the incentives provided for the faculty members with a focus on professional development and the lack of powerful university-society relationships in the current academic system on the perspectives of faculty members about lifelong learning.

Results on the Definition of Lifelong Learning by the Faculty Members

The participant faculty members defined lifelong learning from different perspectives. These definitions were primarily concentrated on the idea of continuous learning throughout an individual's life. Furthermore, parallel to the reports in the literature, the participants defined lifelong learning based on self-development of individuals (AGE, 2014) based on formal, informal and non-formal education processes (Selvi, 2011), independent of time and space (Biesta, 2011) and with the freedom of learning (Tuschling and Engemann, 2006). Furthermore, faculty members reduced lifelong learning to their private lives and defined it based on learning activities to achieve personal development, professional development, social development, cultural development and academic development. It could be argued that these statements were consistent with the views that lifelong learning was related to personal, social, cultural, physical development, including individual's professional development (Jarvis, 2007; Laal, 2013b; Morgan-Klein and Osborne, 2007; Preece, 2009). On the other hand, certain participants defined lifelong learning within the context of contributing to the society and holding on within the social system.

When the frequencies of these definitions are considered, it could be identified that faculty members expressed lifelong learning as a process that entails all and continues for the whole life and particularly defined it based on its benefits for the individual and its social benefits were mentioned comparatively less. This could be due to the perception that lifelong learning was a development process that occurs within the framework of professional development of the individual in Turkey and the social benefits of lifelong learning were not perceived as strongly.

Results on Personal and Environmental Factors That Affect Lifelong Learning Characteristics of Faculty Members

The study participants stated that lifelong learning characteristics were affected by personal and environmental factors. This views were similar to the reports in the literature that adult learning processes were affected by both personal and environmental factors (Jarvis, 2009).

Results on Environmental Factors

Within the scope of environmental factors, the participants expressed that the structure of academic world that forces the individual towards improvement promoted self-development of the faculty members. Furthermore, the participants stated that the opportunities provided by the institution they were employed by, its financial support, work culture of the institution, the importance assigned to lifelong learning by the institution and the awareness of institutional administration about lifelong learning, their perspective and support were effective on this process. In addition, the participants stated that lifelong learning culture in the work environment, self-development tendencies of their colleagues were effective factors for participation of faculty members in lifelong learning process. On the other hand, the participants expressed that attempts by faculty members to adapt to new generations of students and their interaction with students were effective in the self-development process. Furthermore, similar to the reports in literature, faculty members stated that the qualifications of the professors in the department and their support and assistance and model were effective factors in their active participation in the lifelong learning process (Jarman, Mcaleese and Mcconnell, 1997; Lunenberg, Korthagen and Swennen, 2007; Steward, 2009).

The participants, similar to the conception in the literature that family traits were important for development of an awareness on lifelong learning (Bruce, 2011; Hendrick, 2015; Knoche, Cline and Marvin, 2012), expressed that the family settings and conditions that the individuals were raised could make them more open to learning and furthermore, they stated that parent support was effective on lifelong learning process. In addition, faculty members stressed that the qualifications of the partner in life was also significant and effective on lifelong learning process. Additionally, the participants indicated that the awareness of the social setting of the individual on lifelong learning and the opportunities presented by the environment on learning were among the effective factors on self-development during the lifelong learning process.

Moreover, the participants stated that cultural characteristics of the society, awareness for lifelong learning in the society, the perception of the society for lifelong learning were effective on the lifelong learning process of the academicians. Similar to the abovementioned statements, it was reported in the literature that individuals exist within their environment and society and are affected by these factors (Edwards, 1997; Jarvis, 2012; Medel-Añonuevo, Ohsako, & Mauch, 2001).

Similar to the view that economic factors were effective on the penetration of lifelong learning approach in the society (Falch and Oosterbeek, 2011; Strain, 1998; Toprak and Erdoğan, 2012), the participants expressed that the world and the country provided lifelong learning opportunities consistent with the current economic conditions and these conditions were effective on the status of faculty members as lifelong learners. Furthermore, the participants indicated that decisions and strategies determined by the state in accordance with the reality, demands and needs of the society were significant in penetration of lifelong learning approach. It could be stated that these statements were parallel to the view that the states should develop policies to extend lifelong learning approach in the society (Gibb and Walker, 2011; Lynch, 2008; Thompson, 2008).

Certain faculty members among the participants of the study stated that the rapid rate of developments in their field of study forced them to develop themselves professionally and update their knowledge more rapidly than others. Thus, it could be stated that the field of study of the faculty members was also an effective factor in their lifelong learning characteristics. This finding is considered to be significant for the literature.

Results on Personal Factors

Parallel to the reports in the literature, the participants indicated that personal, economic, professional and cultural traits of the individual were effective on lifelong learning within the context of personal factors (Çubukçu, 2011; Figel, 2007; Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012; Tan and Morris, 2006; Walters and Watters, 2001). Thus, faculty members stated that continuous efforts spent by the individuals for learning, their information literacy skills, their capabilities to use information and communication technologies, critical thinking skills, time management skills, cognitive capabilities such as self-criticism and self-assessment were significant for

lifelong learning (Adams, 2007; Cornford, 2002; Crowther, 2004; Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012; Koç, 2007; Nyiri, 1997).

Consistent with the reports in the literature on affective traits, the participants indicated that the will and drive of the individual to learn, individual's motivation to learn, self-confidence in learning, curiosity to learn, openness for learning, the need to learn and constancy in learning were effective in this process (Bryce, 2006; European Commission, 2006a; Köymen, 2002; Nyiri, 1997; Schunk and Pintrich, 2002; Slavin, 1994). Furthermore, similar to the reports in the literature, participants stated that tolerance of the individuals, their level of openness to different ideas, criticism and collaboration were important in the self-development process (Biesta, 2011; Çubukçu, 2011; Jarvis, 2008; Martin, 2004). Moreover, faculty members indicated that the sense of professional responsibility, love for the profession and self-respect as a scientist guide individual for learning. Furthermore, the participants stressed that the willingness to sacrifice other occupations for the purpose of learning and ethical awareness were important, indicating topics not widely mentioned in the literature (Figel, 2007; Köğce et al., 2014).

Parallel to the findings in the literature (Dong, 2004; Endrawes, 2010; European Commission, 2006b; Figel, 2007; Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012; Yasukawa, 2009), the participants expressed that social skills and financial opportunities of an individual were effective on the individual's lifelong learning. Furthermore, the participants also stated that willingness to conduct scientific activities that would provide financial benefits would support self-development processes. On the other hand, the participants stressed the significance of positive and healthy psychological traits since this would provide happiness and hope for the future for individuals and indicated that learning processes were affected by the psychology of the individual. The academicians who participated in the present study stated that the views on their profession was also important and this profession should not be perceived as merely public service or its aim should not be to achieve titles. In addition, the participants argued that their willingness to get promotions in their profession could be a supporting factor for self-development, however, when the real purpose is to achieve a title, faculty members could halt self-development when they reach that particular title. It is considered that these statements describe factors specific to faculty members in lifelong learning process and important for the literature.

Faculty member participants of the present study indicated that competency in their fields encourage academicians for self-development. It could be argued that this statement is consistent with the reports in the literature that the experience and competency of an individual in her or his profession is a factor that supports self-development (Knapper and Cropley, 2000; Rotwell and Kazanas, 1998). On the other hand, parallel to the findings in the literature, study participants stated that foreign language fluency of faculty members (Adams, 2007; Çubukçu, 2011; European Commission, 2002; Scales, 2008) and their needs to update their classes supported self-development processes. Furthermore, the participants stressed that the culture, which the faculty members were raised in and the quality of their previous academic experiences were effective on their being active participants in lifelong learning and expressed views that were consistent with the reports in the literature (ELLI, 2010; European Commission, 2007; Holmes, 2002; Phoenix, 2002).

The frequencies of statements on environmental factors effective on lifelong learning demonstrated that the participants predominantly indicated views based on the institutions they were employed. It is considered that this was due to the fact that faculty members approached lifelong learning from the perspective of career development. On the other hand, when the frequencies of statements on personal factors effective on lifelong learning are considered, it could be argued that the participants predominantly made statements based on personal traits. In this context, the participants expressed that factors based on affective and cognitive traits of individuals were effective, respectively. On the other hand, it was observed that faculty members mentioned social or psychological traits of individuals less than other factors. In addition to personal traits, it was observed that faculty members stressed professional traits of the individuals as effective factors. In contrast, it could be argued that the frequency of the views on cultural and economic factors were lower. It could be stated that one of the reasons for this situation was the increasing significance of cognitive and affective traits due to the individual's responsibility of self-learning. Furthermore, it could be argued that another reason for the abovementioned situation could be the secondary role which social, psychological and cultural factors play in our society due to the career focus of lifelong learning approach in Turkey.

When the findings of the study are assessed within the context of Anadolu University, it could be concluded that the extensive financial opportunities, courses and seminars organized within the context of academic development are significant and beneficial in supporting faculty

members' lifelong learning processes. On the other hand, it was identified that despite all opportunities provided the participants experienced problems in lifelong learning. It is considered that, albeit lifelong learning has a multi-dimensional structure which is affected by several factors, activities conducted in the institution were insufficient or ineffective since this characteristic was not completely understood. In fact, it could be argued that most of the activities which the participants participated within the context of lifelong learning and the fact that their statements on the significance and definition of the concept were based on career development indicated this deficiency. Thus, it could be stated that current lifelong learning approach in Anadolu University was career development oriented and present awareness levels of faculty members should be developed to provide a holistic development.

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations could be made for institutions, and implementation and research purposes:

- Projects to enable further integration of universities with the society could be developed.
- Nationwide projects could be developed and implemented by a structure that all stakeholders such as education experts, media institutions, non-governmental organizations and universities participate to extend the penetration of the lifelong learning approach.
- Media institutions could focus on successful individuals who are role models in their fields to provide examples for the society at large.
- The government could initiate partnerships between related national and international institutions and organizations for both the society and academicians on lifelong learning and create a basis for new applications.
- The government could determine national lifelong learning strategies parallel to the social structure and realities of our society in collaboration with field experts and stakeholders and provide the necessary budget and human resources and act within a predetermined action plan.
- Activities could be organized to expand the understanding that lifelong learning includes holistic development of faculty members in addition to their career development.
- Current levels of the factors that have negative effects on lifelong learning processes of faculty members in higher education institutions could be identified and applications could be developed to remove these factors.

- Moral and material institutional support could be provided for faculty members to improve themselves in all areas of development within the context of lifelong learning in higher education institutions.

- New criteria that includes development and activities of faculty members in different fields within the context of holistic development could be determined and implemented for academic promotions and assignments. Thus, multidimensional self-development of academicians could be promoted.

- Educational activities could be organized in higher education institutions to strengthen ethical awareness of faculty members. In this respect, university administration could create a serious supervision mechanism to research the degree of effective use of opportunities provided by the university.

- Similar studies could be conducted in different universities to investigate the views of faculty members on lifelong learning and their lifelong learning characteristics.

- Similar research could be conducted in universities in different countries to compare the findings with the present conditions of faculty members in Turkey with respect to lifelong learning.

- Different scales could be developed for factors that affect lifelong learning characteristics of faculty members determined in the present study and the status of other universities could be determined based on these factors.

- Data could be collected using the scales developed for factors that affect lifelong learning characteristics of faculty members and statistical models could be developed to establish correlations between these factors.

- Action researches could be conducted to increase the quality of educational activities provided for faculty members in the institution within the context of lifelong learning.

- Interdisciplinary researches could be conducted to determine lifelong learning understanding of the society and the effects of this understanding on faculty members.

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