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Investigation of the relationship between learning approaches and online self-regulation behaviour

Murat EKICI ^{a *}, H. Irem COSKUN ^b, Halil YURDUGUL ^c

^a *Research Assistant, University of Usak, Usak 64000, Turkey*

^b *Researcher, Hacettepe University, Ankara 06000, Turkey*

^c *Associate Professor, Hacettepe University, Ankara 06000, Turkey*

Abstract

In this research, researchers aim to contribute to current literature on self-regulation by investigating the relationship between learning approaches and online self-regulation behaviour. In this study we use learning approaches as a predictor of online self-regulation skills. Sub factors of online self-regulation skills; environmental structuring, goal setting, time management, help seeking, task strategies, self-evaluation are dependent variables and sub factors of the learning approaches; deep approach, surface approach are independent variables. Research data collected from 303 college student who attended online distance courses of Usak University. Regression analysis showed that learning approaches are significant predictors of online self-regulation skills.

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1. Introduction

Today, most of the higher education institutions offer some kind of distance education alternative (Parsad & Lewis, 2008). Most usual alternative is the internet based distance education because online distance education gives these institutions the ability to cost-effective and flexible training (Casey, 2008). Learner autonomy is the most fundamental feature of online learning environments (Barnard et al, 2009; Barnard-Brak, Lan, & Paton, 2011). Students who engage this kind of learning environments support autonomous learning, have to manage their own

* Corresponding author: Murat EKICI. Tel.: +90-276-221-2148
E-mail address: murat.ekici@usak.edu.tr

learning and take responsibility over learning. In the other words they have to be self-regulated learners. The main idea arise from autonomy is freedom of choice which means learners choose what and how to learn (Andrade & Bunker, 2009). In this regard, the learners' approaches to learning and self-regulation skills have gain importance in terms of learning outcomes. Furthermore, approaches to learning related to quality of learning outcomes (Trigwell, Ellis & Han, 2011). From this point of view, current study aims to investigate the relationship between self-regulation which can be defined as “active management level of meta-cognitive, motivational and behavioral aspects of their own learning processes” (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001) and learning approaches which can be defined as “motivation and strategy used to fulfil the learning objectives in order to achieve learning goals”(Kirby et al, 2003). Thus we define research question of the study as “Do learning approaches are significant predictors of online self-regulation skills?”

1.1. Self-regulated Learning

Self-regulated learning has a multi –factorial complex structure and difficult to use traditionally (Boekaerts, 1996). Learners who have self-regulation skills are able to manage their anxiety and behaviours in order to facilitate their learning and maintain their academic success (Brynes et al., 1999). Patterns of thought, emotions and actions works together to achieve the learning objectives in Self-regulated learning process (Boekaerts, 2002). Kruglanski et al. (2010) focus on two basic functions of self-regulation which are assessment and locomotion by considering self-regulation in terms of setting goals and trying to achieve these goals. Assessment refers to comparison of alternative ways to achieve goals and locomotion refers to move from one situation to another. Carver & Schier (2011) define self-regulation as self-correcting adjustments, such as suppressing an urge arising from inside or anxiety originate from the individual for staying connected in the process of achieving the goal.

According to Pintrich (2004) there are four basic assumptions self-regulated theory based on. These are;

1. Learners are active in such process as making meaning, setting goals and setting strategies regarding to certain purposes
2. Learners have the potential to direct their own learning
3. Learning is an intentional activity not random
4. Self-regulation activities compromise personal characteristics and the actual learning performance

1.2. Learning approaches

As a result of the studies conducted over last three decades, teaching-learning processes have redefined and learner -centric understanding have adopted in which instructor's role moves from being a source of information to learning facilitator. One of the basic ideas arising from this situation is that learners have different approaches to learning (Lublin, 2003). These approaches are not individual differences but they differ from person to person. While some learners may have a deep approach to learning, others may have surface approach (Biggs, 1999). Surface approach implies learner's tendency to choose the fastest way to become successful, learning without asking in-depth questions and dealing with issues in minimal scale without understanding them. On the other hand deep approach consists opposite characteristics such as the ability to associate new knowledge with existing ones, study the different aspects of the material to see the whole picture, doing research related to meaning and connections between daily life, personal experiences and learning material (Bati , Tetik & Gurpinar, 2009).

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

Participants of the study consist of 303 students enrolled several departments of Usak University. All of the participants are taking at least one course by online distance education provide by the university. While 222 of them are female, 81 are male. Ages of the participants differ between the range 18 to 30. Distribution of participants according to departments they enrolled given in table below.

Table 1. Distribution of the participants according to department

Department	F	%
Science Teaching	91	30.0

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