

Teachers' Views on Lifelong Learning

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Abstract

Lifelong learning is all forms of learning from cradle to grave. Lifelong learning requires everyone to improve themselves. People are expected to be lifelong learners because school knowledge is insufficient. In this framework, educational approaches all over the world focus on lifelong learning and need lifelong learners. This study adopted a qualitative research design to investigate teachers' views on lifelong learning. The sample consisted of 30 teachers from different branches. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide. The data were analyzed using content analysis. Participants viewed lifelong learning as a process not limited to schools. They also associated it with all kinds of learning activities and personal growth. They believed lifelong learning was necessary for technological advances, social change, and a high quality of life. They stated that the goals of lifelong learning were accessing educational opportunities, increasing knowledge and skills, and transforming students into qualified people. They noted that motivation, education systems, and social and cultural changes affected lifelong learning.

Keywords: lifelong learning, Teacher, Qualitative research, Teacher opinions

Citation

Koç, S. (2024). Teachers' views on lifelong learning. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 11(2), 250-261. <https://doi.org/10.52380/ijcer.2024.11.2.621>

Received	21.01.2024
Accepted	27.04.2024
Publication	15.06.2024
Peer-Review	Double anonymized - Double Blind
Plagiarism Checks	Yes - iThenticate
Conflicts of Interest	The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.
Complaints	ijceroffice@gmail.com
Grant Support	The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding in support of this research.
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Introduction

Lifelong learning is all forms of learning from “cradle to grave.” Lifelong learning requires everyone to improve themselves. People are expected to be lifelong learners because school knowledge is insufficient. In this framework, educational approaches all over the world focus on lifelong learning and need lifelong learners.

The concept of lifelong learning has arisen to adapt to the swiftly evolving and changing social and cultural landscape, aligning with the requirements of the current era. Lifelong learning has evolved into a significant benchmark for assessing education levels and employment conditions in both developed and developing countries. The world is in a state of rapid and multifaceted change. Lifelong learning can be viewed as a solution to meet emerging needs amid rapid change [Ministry of National Education (MNE) in 2014].

In 1995, the European Union's White Paper set out the Union's aims and objectives for lifelong learning under the title “Towards the Learning Society: Teaching and Learning.” The report and the commission aspire to transition towards a society that encompasses all segments and engages in continuous learning. The decisions also have a concrete practical aspect. The objectives outlined in the White Paper encompass motivating individuals to acquire new knowledge, fostering collaboration between the school and business sectors, addressing social exclusion, cultivating proficiency in three of the union's languages, and balancing investment between industries and education (Akbaş and Özdemir, 2002). In 1995, the European Union, following a decision of the European Parliament and Council, proclaimed 1996 “The European Year of Lifelong Learning.” During the 2000 European Council meeting, lifelong learning was acknowledged as one of the fundamental components of the European Union (European Commission, 2002).

Lifelong learning encompasses all intentional learning activities, whether formal or informal, continual and ongoing, with the goal of enhancing knowledge, skills, and competencies within the realms of personal, social, community, and/or professional life (A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, 2000). In addition, the European Commission defines lifelong learning as all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competences within a personal, civic, social, and/or employment-related perspective (2002). Lifelong learning encompasses both employment-related and individual, citizenship, and social goals and takes place in different settings within the formal education system. It incorporates more flexible forms of learning designed to enhance investment in people and knowledge. It also supports the acquisition of fundamental skills (e.g., computer literacy) while expanding opportunities for innovation (Turan, 2005). Lifelong learning is a combination of individual and organizational learning (Jarvis, 2004). It also encompasses informal education, often used in conjunction with concepts such as adult education and continuing education, which refers to the continual acquisition and updating of various knowledge, values, skills, and qualities that individuals accumulate throughout their lives, from infancy to the end of life. Lifelong learning is defined as a supportive process that helps people put all this knowledge, values, skills, and understandings into practice (Candy, 2003). Lifelong learning is affected by numerous direct and indirect factors, such as age, economics, politics, motivation, role models, learning for fun, cultural context, literacy, attitudes, competencies, skills, ICT, and experience (Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012). Lifelong learning is about learning, which takes place throughout life. It relies on effective learning that emphasizes information processing, fundamental learning-to-learn skills, and cognitive and metacognitive abilities (Cornford, 1999, 2000, 2002). The goals of lifelong learning encompass the development of a highly qualified workforce, personal growth for a more successful life, and the strengthening of society (Chapman & Aspin, 2001). Nyiri (1997) uses key concepts to define lifelong learning. To him, learning is constant. People with a tendency toward lifelong learning believe that they can learn throughout their lives. They are also eager to learn and are not afraid of making mistakes. In other words, lifelong learners are those who are willing to learn and enjoy learning.

Success in lifelong learning cannot be achieved through individual efforts alone. We need to organize our social policies in this direction as well. Social policies should not solely concentrate on the development of the social economy; they should also prioritize the well-being and self-realization of individuals (Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012). As individuals, we should embrace a self-learning mindset, availing ourselves of lifelong learning opportunities to apply current knowledge and skills in our daily lives (Yaman & Yazar, 2015).

Lifelong learning is about how rather than what to learn. It seems that it focuses on the question, Let's learn. Information learned in schools is constantly changing; the important thing is to be open to new information and learn how to access it. Then lifelong learning means providing the needed information in the shortest and most effective way possible. It can be defined as the ability to reach. Teachers can successfully play their role as facilitators of learning, and their realizations are seen to be related to their lifelong learning skills. The development of information technologies has led to new developments being implemented in the learning-teaching process. Approaches and methods and lifelong learning skills are the most important competencies for teachers. In order to create an effective learning environment in schools, teachers must be equipped with lifelong learning skills.

Lifelong learning skills affect both the quality of the instructor and the education. It is the most important competence area related to improving the quality of the education system. The teacher helps the learners become aware of their thoughts, to draw a strategic path, and to develop their motivation. It has to be a guide to achieving the goals.

There is a large body of research into lifelong learning. For example, Güleç, Çelik, and Demirhan (2012) made an assessment of the concept and scope of lifelong learning. Some researchers have focused on teachers' and preservice teachers' tendency toward lifelong learning (Yaman & Yazar, 2015; Erdamar, Demirkan, Saraçoğlu, & Alpan, 2017; Pınarcık, Özözen Danacı, Deniz, & Eran, 2016; Şahin & Arcagök, 2014). Kuzu and Erten (2016) concentrated on teachers' lifelong learning competencies, while Ayra and Kösterelioğlu (2015) addressed the relationship between lifelong learning tendency and professional self-efficacy among teachers. When the research findings were analyzed, teachers' lifelong learning tendencies and professional self-efficacy were determined to be at a good level. Evin-Gencil (2013) studied preservice teachers' lifelong learning competencies, and according to the analysis results, it was determined that there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions in terms of gender and department of study. The field in which preservice teachers feel most competent is communication in their native language. While other researchers examined their lifelong learning tendencies (Tunca, Alkın-Şahin, & Aydın, 2015; Kılıç, 2014; İzci & Koç, 2012; Oral & Yazar, 2015). Receptoğlu (2021) focused on preservice teachers to investigate the relationship between their lifelong learning tendencies and self-directed learning skills. Diker-Coşkun and Demirel (2012) concentrated on college students' lifelong learning tendencies. Yavuz-Konokman and Yanpar-Yelken (2014) addressed the lifelong learning competence of education faculty lecturers. Karakuş (2013) focused on the lifelong learning competencies of vocational school students. Köğçe et al. (2014) studied academics' views on 21st century learner standards and lifelong learning. Babanlı and Akçay (2018) concentrated on the lifelong learning competencies of trainees in adult education. The studies were conducted with both preservice teachers and teachers. Quantitative studies generally examine the relationship between lifelong learning tendencies and another variable. Most studies have adopted quantitative research designs. There is no qualitative research that has been done with teachers. Therefore, this qualitative study will make a significant contribution to the literature.

Teachers and preservice teachers must possess lifelong learning competencies in order to lead the social change they are expected to bring about (UNESCO, 1996). Teachers should both help students learn to learn and invest in themselves through continuous improvement in their own lives. It is important for teachers to teach in accordance with the lifelong learning knowledge and skills required by today's information world and to take this into consideration when educating students. The importance of teacher education in achieving lifelong learning societies. Mentioning the importance of lifelong learning with teachers emphasizes the need to develop application competencies. This paper aimed to elicit information on teachers' views of lifelong learning. To that end, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are teachers' views on lifelong learning?
2. What are the needs of teachers for lifelong learning?

Method

Researchers adopt qualitative research designs (e.g., phenomenology) to look into phenomena through other people's lenses (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Phenomenology is an individual's or a group's experience with a phenomenon (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2015). The phenomenology pattern focuses on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding of. In the world we live in, phenomena appear in various forms, such as events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, concepts, and situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). This study adopted phenomenology to investigate teachers' views and perceptions of lifelong learning. Interviews with teachers were collected with the help of semi-structured interviews.

Study Group

The sample consisted of 30 teachers (ten women and 20 men) from various branches in the 2023-2024 academic year. Participants were recruited using maximum variation sampling based on gender, branch, work experience, and socioeconomic background. The purpose of maximum variation sampling is to ensure a comprehensive and representative sample that encompasses the diversity inherent in the larger group (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Participant No	Gender	Work Experience	Branch
1	Woman	15	Turkish
2	Man	11	Justice
3	Man	22	Primary Teacher
4	Man	8	Primary Teacher
5	Woman	3	Biology
6	Man	39	Primary Teacher
7	Man	6	Primary Teacher
8	Man	9	Gym
9	Woman	6	Science
10	Man	9	Music
11	Man	13	Preschool
12	Man	9	Turkish
13	Woman	19	Primary Teacher
14	Man	20	Primary Teacher
15	Man	11	Social Studies
16	Man	3	Primary Teacher
17	Man	7	Religious Culture and Ethics
18	Man	7	Social Studies
19	Man	10	Primary Teacher
20	Man	9	Visual Arts
21	Man	23	Gym
22	Woman	25	Handicraft Technology
23	Woman	23	Mathematics
24	Man	25	History
25	Woman	20	Preschool
26	Man	3	Primary School Mathematics
27	Man	5	Biology
28	Woman	20	Philosophy
29	Woman	5	Guidance and Psychological Counseling
30	Woman	25	History

A total of 30 teachers, 10 female and 20 male, participated in the research. 21 teachers work in primary and secondary schools, and 8 teachers work in high schools. There are 19 teachers with work experience between 0-15 years, 10 teachers with experience between 15-30 years, and 1 teacher with over 30 years of work experience. Participants were classroom (n=8), preschool (n=2), Turkish (n=2), biology (n=2), history (n=2), social studies (n=2), physical education (n=2), music (n=1), religious culture and ethics (n=1), justice (n=1), mathematics (n=1), primary school mathematics (n=1), philosophy (n=1), visual arts (n=1), handicraft technology (n=1), guidance and psychological counseling (n=1), and science teachers (n=1). All participating teachers work in the city.

Data Collection

The data was collected using a personal information form and a semi-structured interview guide. The personal information form elicited information on participants' demographic characteristics. The interview guide consisted of four questions addressing participants' views of lifelong learning. The researchers reviewed the literature and developed a pool of questions. Two experts in the educational sciences reviewed the questions for intelligibility and relevance. Initially, there were five questions. As a result of the opinions of experts, it was reduced to four questions. The researcher revised and finalized the questions based on expert feedback. Participation was voluntary. The data were derived from written documents from some teachers and some from records. Interview questions were collected by meeting teachers face-to-face in their schools. Face-to-face interviews lasted 20-25 minutes in total. Written documents derived from e-mail or from the phone.

This study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What does "lifelong learning" mean to you?
2. Why do we need lifelong learning?
3. What is the purpose of lifelong learning?
4. What factors do you think affect lifelong learning?

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using content analysis, which is a qualitative analysis technique. Content analysis helps researchers identify patterns, trends, and recurring themes within a body of content. The fundamental process in content analysis involves consolidating similar data within the framework of specific concepts and themes and subsequently organizing and interpreting them in a manner that facilitates understanding for the reader (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). The researchers developed four themes in light of the literature and also in line with research questions: (1) teachers' perceptions of lifelong learning, (2) the need for lifelong learning; (3) the goal of lifelong learning; and (4) factors affecting lifelong learning. They assigned a code to each participant (P1, P2, P3, etc.) and provided direct quotes to illustrate and exemplify the themes. A number of issues were taken into consideration for the reliability of the study. Research questions were created using the literature. The research questions were created to suit the general purpose of the study. Expert opinion was consulted while preparing the semi-structured interview form. Participants were given sufficient time during the data collection process. The necessary ethical committee permissions were obtained for the study.

Results and Discussion

This section presented the results regarding the research questions under the themes: (1) teachers' perceptions of lifelong learning, (2) the need for lifelong learning, (3) the goal of lifelong learning, and (4) factors affecting lifelong learning.

Teachers' Perceptions of Lifelong Learning

The first research question was, "What does 'lifelong learning' mean to you?" This section addressed the results regarding participants' answers to the question. The findings indicated three codes concerning participants' views of lifelong learning: (1) learning not limited to school, (2) any kind of learning activity, and (3) personal growth. It has been determined that learning and all kinds of learning activities and personal development are not limited to schools.

Participants stated that "lifelong learning" meant "learning not limited to school." The following are some quotations:

"To me, lifelong learning means people learning all the time, no matter where – not just in school, but everywhere" (P3).

"Learning isn't confined to schools; it happens at home, at work, in all aspects of life. It's a lifelong journey that goes on regardless of age, social or economic status, or educational level, without any barriers" (P5).

"To me, lifelong learning means education that goes beyond the walls of schools; it can happen wherever people are, without being bound by time or space" (P20).

Participants noted that lifelong learning was all kinds of learning activity. The following are some quotations:

"Life's the time from when you're born until you die. For a good chunk of that time, people need to keep learning for all sorts of reasons. So, lifelong learning? It's basically any learning thing people do, giving education to people throughout their whole lives" (P13).

"Lifelong learning, in a nutshell, includes everything you learn in your family, at schools (formal education), and even outside of them (non-formal education). It's about picking up knowledge, skills, and abilities right from the time you first open your eyes to the world. This covers all the stuff that helps you grow personally and socially" (P14).

"Lifelong learning is essentially any learning that goes on, whether you choose it or it just happens, from the time you're born till the day you pass away" (P16).

Most participants associated lifelong learning with personal growth. The following are some quotations:

"Lifelong learning is about staying open to growth and recognizing the constant need to learn at every stage of life" (P11).

"Lifelong learning is the ongoing journey of constantly gaining new knowledge, honing skills, and fostering personal growth at every phase of your life, extending beyond the school years. This idea suggests that learning isn't confined to formal education but expands into work, hobbies, social interactions, and personal growth" (P15).

"Lifelong learning is the kind of education people get, whether they've bounced out of school for any reason or are still hitting the books, all geared towards boosting their personal growth or diving into their hobbies (P21).

"Lifelong learning is all about grabbing new knowledge, building up skills, and unlocking personal potential, no matter your age, the situation you're in, or the field you're interested in" (P23).

“Lifelong learning covers the whole deal - the education, training, and learning activities that help you develop your knowledge and skills. It's about keeping up with the constantly changing world of this century, whether you're in formal classrooms or picking up things outside the traditional settings, all throughout your life” (P24).

“Lifelong learning is like an ongoing adventure in self-development and discovery. It's not just about hitting the books for work or school but diving into interests and hobbies, crossing boundaries beyond your usual field” (P29).

The Need for Lifelong Learning

The second research question was, “Why do we need lifelong learning?” This section addressed the results regarding participants' answers to the question. The findings indicated three codes concerning participants' views of why we need lifelong learning: (1) advances in technology, (2) contribution to social change, and (3) improving the quality of life. Technological developments should be considered as contributing to social change and improving the quality of life.

Participants stated that advances in technology were the reason why people needed lifelong learning. They noted that advances in technology made people more likely to receive education throughout their lives. The following are some quotations:

“Thanks to tech progress, what you learn in school might not cut it with all the gadgets like computers, the internet, and TV around. Simply put, in this tech era, people have to keep on learning throughout life to stay ahead and outdo themselves” (P3).

“Advancements in technology and recognizing what's lacking within oneself have sparked the necessity for lifelong learning” (P9).

“Relying solely on what you learn in school isn't enough to sustain a career throughout an average human's life. Given the constant evolution of technology, people are compelled to keep updating their skills and staying in the loop with new information” (P20).

Participants remarked that the need for lifelong learning was associated with keeping pace with the changing world and contributing to social changes. The following are some quotations:

“In today's world, we're deep into a time of social, cultural, economic, and political shifts and progress. As a result, the needs of both individuals and societies have evolved. In this dynamic environment, the knowledge individuals currently possess might not cut it. Lifelong education becomes crucial, allowing individuals to continually refresh their understanding and stay in sync with the ever-changing fabric of society” (P5).

“Lifelong learning is our ticket to keeping up with the ever-changing world, giving a boost to our personal and professional growth, enhancing our problem-solving skills, letting us discover more about ourselves, and throwing in a bonus by contributing to society. That's why the call for lifelong learning is absolutely crucial” (P23).

“In this era of constant information flux, lifelong learning has become a must for folks to adapt to their surroundings and navigate their lives more effectively” (P25).

Participants stated that lifelong learning improved our quality of life. The following are some quotations:

“Lifelong learning is a must for adapting to the ever-changing world, advancing in your career, finding personal fulfillment, exploring new interests, and keeping mentally sharp. The ongoing process of learning helps keep knowledge up-to-date, builds resilience, and enhances overall quality of life” (P4).

“The core objective of lifelong learning is to empower you to navigate the information-driven society you're part of and seize control of your life at a higher level, actively contributing to every aspect of life in social, economic, and cultural contexts” (P10).

“Lifelong learning enables individuals to pick up various skills and apply them in their day-to-day lives. This not only enhances the quality of life but also fosters a sense of effectiveness in individuals” (P15).

The Purpose of Lifelong Learning

The third research question was, “What is the purpose of lifelong learning?” This section addressed the results regarding participants' answers to the question. The findings indicated three codes concerning participants' views of the purpose of lifelong learning: (1) access to educational opportunities; (2) knowledge and skill enhancement; and (3) qualified human resources. They stated these as access to educational opportunities, increasing knowledge and skills, and qualified manpower.

Participants noted that the goals of lifelong learning were accessing educational opportunities and enjoying learning. The following are some quotations:

“Lifelong learning means everyone, no matter where they are-out in the country or in the city - gets the chance to learn and get trained up” (P2).

“The aim of lifelong learning is to boost education everywhere - whether it's at school, home, or work - no matter the place or space” (P14).

“The aim of lifelong learning is to give a chance to those who missed out on learning earlier, especially disadvantaged groups. It lets people learn on their own terms without being constrained by a fixed timeframe” (P26).

Participants noted that the objective of lifelong learning was to allow learners to enhance their knowledge and skills. The following are some quotations:

“The objectives of lifelong learning are to amp up knowledge and skills by constantly bettering oneself, gain new experiences, and hit personal and professional goals” (P4).

“In our ever-changing world, lifelong learning aims to boost an individual's smarts and skills, make sure they keep growing professionally, and keep things cohesive in society” (P11).

“Lifelong learning is all about picking up activities that help folks adapt to the skills needed in this era and handle the various demands of everyday life. The idea is to kick off learning from the preschool days and keep going through the educational and professional stages” (P13).

“The big goal of lifelong learning is to make sure folks keep on grabbing fresh knowledge, refining their skills, and growing personally all through their lives. It's not just about formal education; the idea is to keep folks continually improving in their work lives, social circles, hobbies, and overall personal growth” (P15).

“The aim of lifelong learning is to keep living our lives in a high-quality and healthy way, nudging our behavior, knowledge, and skills towards positive growth” (P22).

Participants remarked that the objective of lifelong learning was to generate qualified human resources. The following are some quotations:

“Lifelong learning is all about helping us stay in the loop with the shifts in life and knowledge, contributing positively to our personal growth. Moreover, it's geared towards backing up economic development by supplying the skilled human resources that society and businesses need ”(P7).

“The goal of lifelong learning is to complement our academic and professional growth rather than serve as an alternative to formal education” (P8).

“The aim of lifelong learning is to educate not just students but everyone in society, arming them with the tools to make their lives easier” (P17).

What Factors Do You Think Affect Lifelong Learning?

The fourth research question was, “What factors do you think affect lifelong learning?” This section addressed the results regarding participants’ answers to the question. The findings indicated three codes concerning participants’ views of the factors affecting lifelong learning: (1) motivation, (2) education systems, and (3) social and cultural changes. Motivation, education systems, and social and cultural changes are factors that affect lifelong learning. Participants stated that motivation affected lifelong learning. The following are some quotations:

“People's inclination to learn can be seen as a crucial factor, influenced by their expectations from life and motivation to learn. The societal well-being level can also be considered a significant source of motivation concerning learning needs and acquiring new knowledge” (P13).

“Knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation affect lifelong learning” (P14).

“Personal goals, interests, and motivation influence lifelong learning” (P15).

“First of all, everybody should be up for learning. It's key that you grab what interests and suits you—stuff that you can make a part of your life through hands-on doing, living, and experiencing things firsthand ” (P22).

Participants noted that education systems affected lifelong learning. The following are some quotations:

“The main thing steering lifelong learning is how governments see it. Even with various factors at play, it's the governments that put education policies into action through the education systems” (P12).

“The ability of schools and their programs to offer ongoing chances for learning plays a big role in lifelong learning” (P17).

“Lifelong learning is shaped by how easily you can get into educational opportunities in the stuff you want to learn, your eagerness to make use of these chances, and your discipline in keeping up with the process” (P29).

Participants remarked that social and cultural changes affected lifelong learning. The following are some quotations:

“The way we gain knowledge is affected by social values and expectations as well as cultural shifts” (P18).

“Social and cultural changes affect lifelong learning” (P26).

“Lifelong learning gets influenced by things like where people live, the conditions around them, and the cultural vibes of the place” (P30).

Conclusion

This paper investigated teachers' perceptions of lifelong learning. The main research questions were, (1) What does “lifelong learning” mean to you?, (2) Why do we need lifelong learning?, (3) What is the purpose of lifelong learning?, and (4) What factors do you think affect lifelong learning? Participants' responses were analyzed and interpreted.

The first research question was, “What does ‘lifelong learning’ mean to you?” The findings indicated three codes concerning participants' views of lifelong learning: (1) learning not limited to school; (2) any kind of learning activity; and (3) personal growth. Participants noted that lifelong learning extended beyond the confines of formal education in schools. They also associated it with all kinds of learning activities and personal growth. To participants, lifelong learning meant that everyone learned throughout life without restrictions, not just in school but everywhere. They said that lifelong learning occurs at home, at work, and in all aspects of life, irrespective of age, social or economic status, and educational level, without any barriers. Most participants associated lifelong learning with all kinds of learning activities. They said that everybody was exposed to or in need of continuous learning for various reasons and for a significant part of their lives. They believed that lifelong learning encompassed all learning activities in the family and in formal and non-formal education institutions to develop knowledge and skills from the moment we opened our eyes to life. They added that lifelong learning included all activities that equipped us personally and socially. Lifelong learning is defined differently. According to a Memorandum on Life Learning (2000), lifelong learning is defined as ongoing, all-encompassing formal or informal learning activities undertaken to develop knowledge and skills within the realms of personal, social, or professional life. The European Commission (2002) defines lifelong learning as “all learning activities conducted throughout life with the goal of enhancing knowledge, skills, and competences within a personal, civic, societal, or employment-related viewpoint.” These deficiencies are in line with our results.

The second research question was, “Why do we need lifelong learning?” Participants' responses to the second research question yielded three codes: “advances in technology,” “contribution to social change,” and “improving the quality of life.” Participants asserted that the necessity for lifelong learning stemmed from technological advances. They believed that progress in technology rendered school knowledge obsolete, emphasizing the importance for individuals to persistently engage in learning throughout their lives as a means to surpass their current selves. In other words, they noted that people needed to constantly update themselves and access new information in the face of technological advances.

Participants noted that the need for lifelong learning helped them adapt to the ever-changing world and social shifts. Teachers stated that we were in a process of sociocultural, economic, and political flux, changing the needs of individuals and societies. They pointed out that the current knowledge individuals possessed became insufficient, highlighting the possibility for individuals to consistently renew themselves and harmonize with society through lifelong education. They also added that lifelong learning allowed individuals to stay updated with the changing world, supported both personal and professional development, enhanced problem-solving skills, and made positive contributions to society. In the study, it was determined that the area in which the preschool teachers felt most adequate was communication with the mother with cultural awareness and expression adequacy, and the areas where the competencies related to entrepreneurship and foreign language communication (Pınarcık, Özözen Danacı, Deniz, & Eran, 2016). Ayra and Kösterelioğlu (2015) addressed the relationship between lifelong learning tendencies and professional self-efficacy among teachers. When the research findings were analyzed, teachers' lifelong learning tendencies and professional self-efficacy were determined to be at a good level.

Participants remarked that we needed lifelong learning to improve the quality of our lives. They noted that the primary goal of lifelong learning was to facilitate individuals in adapting to the information society, taking control of their lives at a more successful level, and actively participating in every aspect of life within the social, economic, and cultural context. They stated that lifelong learning allowed us to develop skills and use them in our daily lives, improving our quality of life and making us feel more effective.

The third research question was, “What is the purpose of lifelong learning?” According to participants, the goals of lifelong learning were “accessing educational opportunities,” “enhancing knowledge and skills,” and “building up qualified human resources.” They believed that the objectives of lifelong learning were to provide education and training to individuals in both rural and urban areas, making educational opportunities accessible. They noted that lifelong learning sought to enhance education across all segments of society, whether at school, at home, or in the workplace, without limitations of location.

Participants stated that lifelong learning helped them acquire new knowledge and develop new skills. They noted that lifelong learning allowed them to have new experiences and accomplish personal and professional goals. They remarked that lifelong learning focused on learning activities that empowered individuals to adapt to various needs in their daily lives by acquiring the skills demanded by the times. They added that another goal of lifelong learning was to build up qualified human resources to promote economic development. They concluded that lifelong learning contributes to the academic and professional development of individuals. Chapman and Aspin (2001) also stated that the objectives of lifelong learning encompassed constructing a highly skilled workforce, fostering personal development for a more successful life, and contributing to the strength of society.

The fourth research question was, “What factors do you think affect lifelong learning?” Participants stated that “motivation,” “education systems,” and “social and cultural changes” affected lifelong learning. They believed that motivation acted as a catalyst for lifelong learning by influencing initiation, persistence, adaptability, and overall satisfaction with the learning process. They implied that cultivating and sustaining motivation was essential for individuals to embrace a lifelong learning mindset and reap the benefits of ongoing personal and professional development. They believed that the success of an individual in their lifelong learning journey was not solely reliant on personal efforts. Organizing social policies in a direction that supports and facilitates lifelong learning is equally crucial. This involves creating an environment where educational opportunities are accessible, encouraging a culture of continuous learning, and providing resources to support individuals in their pursuit of knowledge and skills throughout life. Social policies can play a pivotal role in promoting a lifelong learning mindset at both the individual and community levels, fostering a more educated, adaptable, and resilient society (Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012). Moreover, it was revealed that there was a positive, moderate-level relationship between the two variables. Besides teachers, life-long learning tendencies were higher in favor of female teachers. Teachers lifelong learning tendencies did not differ by branch or experience. Similarly, the self-efficacy beliefs about educational internet use did not differ by gender, branch, or experience (Erdamar, Demirkan, Saraçoğlu, & Alpan 2017).

Participants stated that education systems also affected lifelong learning. The structure and accessibility of formal education systems can impact individuals' access to lifelong learning opportunities. The curriculum design within education systems plays a role in shaping individuals' perspectives on learning. A curriculum that emphasizes real-world relevance and practical skills may foster a positive attitude toward lifelong learning. The learning environment created by education systems can impact individuals' attitudes toward ongoing learning. An encouraging and supportive environment promotes a culture of curiosity and exploration beyond formal education. Educators within the system can inspire a lifelong learning mindset through their teaching methods and attitudes. Teachers who encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and a love for learning contribute to fostering a culture of lifelong learning. Education systems that acknowledge and validate informal learning experiences can encourage individuals to pursue various learning opportunities outside formal settings (Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012). Education systems that prioritize the development of essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability prepare individuals for a lifelong learning journey. These skills are valuable in navigating a rapidly changing world (Cornford, 1999, 2000, 2002).

Participants noted that social and cultural changes also affected lifelong learning. Social and cultural changes shape the context in which lifelong learning occurs. A culture that values learning, embraces diversity, and adapts to societal shifts contributes to creating an environment where individuals are more likely to engage in continuous learning throughout their lives. Lifelong learning is affected by numerous direct and indirect factors, such as age, economics, politics, motivation, role models, learning for fun, cultural context, literacy, attitudes, competencies, skills, ICT, and experience (Günüç, Odabaşı, & Kuzu, 2012). It is compatible with the literature.

Lifelong learning is crucial for personal development, professional success, adaptability to change, and contributing to a vibrant and dynamic society. It is a key element in navigating the complexities of the modern world and promoting continuous growth and fulfillment throughout one's life. Teachers also play a significant role in this process because they are role models. In the realm of technological advancements, lifelong learning is

imperative for two significant reasons: to elevate the overall welfare level of society and to foster individual development. The goals of lifelong learning encompass not only boosting the knowledge and skills of individuals but also the creation of qualified human resources. In addition to individual motivation, sociocultural changes are other important factors affecting lifelong learning. Teachers influence their students in every aspect. Being a role model for students, especially their attitudes during lessons. Professional development is important for teachers.

Recommendations

Policymakers play a crucial role in promoting lifelong learning by introducing effective educational policies. Additionally, educators should prioritize lifelong learning and organize related training programs, contributing to the welfare of society and enhancing the overall quality of life.

Lifelong learning allowed individuals to stay updated with the changing world, supported both personal and professional development, enhanced problem-solving skills, and made positive contributions to society. So the teachers should enhance their professional development.

Teachers implied that cultivating and sustaining motivation was essential for individuals to embrace a lifelong learning mindset and reap the benefits of ongoing personal and professional development.

Acknowledgements or Notes

The author received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

Ethical Approval

Ethical permission (date: 07.02.2023, no: 2023/02) was obtained from the Van Yuzuncu Yıl University Social and Humanities Ethics Board Presidency for this research.

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