The Impacts Of Using Additional Teaching Materials On Students' Performance In Package Program Education: The Case Of Fidelio And Sejour

Hasan Kinay, Abdullah Akgün, Hakan Çetin, Yusuf Yilmaz, Zeki Akinci

Akdeniz University

E-mails: *kinay@akdeniz.edu.tr, akgun@akdeniz.edu.tr, hakanc@akdeniz.edu.tr, yusufyilmaz@akdeniz.edu.tr, zakinci@akdeniz.edu.tr*

Abstract

This study has been carried out to examine the effects of the use of additional teaching materials on student's performances, during educational activities regarding the use of package programs in the tourism sector. The study design called for two separate groups. Students were provided with a laboratory for study outside of course hours. 73 students took part in practice sessions outside of course hours, while a total of 145 students took the examinations. While researching the effects of using course books, 93 students took classes having been provided course books, while a further 97 students took the classes without course books. A post test controlled experimental design was used to compare the two groups. The study was carried out with third year students of the Akdeniz University, School of Tourism and Hotel Management in the fall term of the 2011 – 2012 educational year. To gather data on the effectiveness of usage of course books, the Fidelio program instructors applied a test with 10 open ended questions, prepared by employees working in the sector and using the program and the researchers. For the laboratory effectiveness study, a post test consisting of 10 questions was prepared by the researchers together with sector employees and applied to the students. The results of the study were evaluated using the SPSS 15.0 statistical software package. Based on the findings, the researchers have made recommendations on the use of course books and laboratory study outside of class hours in applied courses such as package program instruction.

Keywords: Additional Teaching Materials, Package Program Education, Package Program Usage

1.INTRODUCTION

We are living in an age where global competition pressures are increasing, information is produced rapidly and the information produced is consumed even faster than it is being created; the information age. This age is characterized by an increased flow of information between organizations, individuals and institutions, where the effectiveness of this interaction is high. The increase of the amount of information, triggered by computer use, has affected all sectors, including the tourism and hotel sector.

The tourism sector bases activities on the production of services, requiring an active workforce, while some positions, such as customer service and reception, necessitate a face to

face relationship with customers, meaning that there is a need for qualified personnel. In the constantly changing and developing society, it is clear that individuals who can use information technologies in an efficient way will be considered to be highly qualified and will be more successful (Kurbanoğlu and Akkoyunlu, 2002). For this reason, those wishing to find employment in the tourism sector must be skilled in the use of at least one of the automated systems that are widely used, in order to find employment more easily. The effective use of information technologies in the tourism industry, in hotels, catering establishments, travel companies and sub-units of these organizations, facilitates the management of human resources and increases the efficiency of employees. If human resources can benefit from information technologies, the quality and global competitiveness of the tourism industry will increase (Alkaya, 2006).

A study performed in 2004 shows that the greatest issue encountered in computer use in hotels stems for the users, but more specifically, the training of users. The same study concludes that "problems caused by the training of users must be decreased" (Kınay and Kınay, 2004).

An examination of curricula of schools providing tourism education shows that the vast majority include courses on automated systems used in the sector. The most encountered problem in automation education is that students are not able to repeat and practice what the learn in class. Even if the student is able to perform all of the tasks as described by the instructor, as the students are not able to repeat these tasks outside of the classroom, they usually come to the next session having forgotten all they have learned. However, being "informed" in the information age means to develop learning capacities, use information, obtain new skills and turn this into a consistent form of behaviour (Yıldırım, 2001). Failure to utilise skills learned in class outside of the classroom means that learning has not really taken place.

In information technologies education, whether a student owns a computer, how effectively the student uses computers in daily life, and the social environment all affect the quality of the learning process. A study performed on "information technology education in primary schools shows that gender, the educational status of the parents, whether the family owns a computer, whether the parents assist the child with homework, the student's perceptions and attitudes towards studying all have a statistically significant effect (Demir, 2008).

In the transition from an industrial society to information society, educational models also exhibit significant changes. In transitioning to an information society, the teacher's role as a guide, the student learning through teamwork, management based on educational-administrative leadership, learning based on personal initiative, variable educations programs, organizational learning and multi-faceted conceptional learning criteria become important. In this context, learning through computer laboratory activities, with peers, through debate and consulting other resources and by joint activities that allow students to complement each other, is considered to have the potential to be high quality and sustainable.

Many studies show that the use of additional teaching materials has a positive effect on student success. The effect of computer assisted instruction has been shown to have a positive effect in science classes (Altunay and Şeker, 2008), English classes (Akdağ and Tok, 2008), and education with autistic children (Bayram, 2006).

2. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND PACKAGE PROGRAMS

All technology used in gathering, processing, storing, transmitting through networks and presenting information to users, including communication and computing technologies, may be referred to as "information technologies" (Tonta,1999).

Developments in information technology have also affected the field of software. Two important developments have taken place in the field of software for end users in an organizational context. Firstly, instead of specific programs with a single aim developed by in house software experts or end users, organizations are using package programs developed by software companies. This trend began with the emergence of affordable and easy to use software packages designed for micro computers. Today, package programs are available for almost every sector and are developed and marketed by software companies.

3. USAGE OF PACKAGE PROGRAMS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

Considering that electronic trade is becoming widespread and will take up an important share in the total trade volume of all countries, information technology has become an important issue (Gölönü, 2006). Computer based automation systems have become an important infrastructural element in the tourism sector. To address this need, many software companies have developed automation software systems specifically for hotels.

Tourism companies are required to gather information regularly, store this information and recall it when necessary. Travel agents are required to fill in forms regarding the products or services that they market as intermediaries, such as accommodation, independent catering services from restaurants, cafes and bars etc., yacht and boat rental companies, other travel agencies organizing city tours, airlines, car or limousine rental companies, railways, maritime transportation companies, and those providing guidance services in museums and places of interest in order to achieve continuity in their services and therefore achieve efficiency and customer satisfaction. Therefore, travel agencies are marketing information in a sense. In this context, travel agencies depend on correct and timely information in their operations, and information technologies are a vital aspect in management.

As the tourism sector is based on the production and development of information, information technologies are highly significant. For this reason, there is a multitude of package programs for tourism operators on the market and it is almost impossible to find a tourism agency that does not use package programs. Most of the software developed for the tourism sector targets travel agencies and organizations providing accommodation.

4. PACKAGE PROGRAM EDUCATION IN TOURISM EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Software companies marketing to the tourism sector provide most of their automation software to education institutions providing tourism education for free or a modest fee. For example, PROTEL, a company representing the Fidelio program provides free education to instructors giving reception courses in universities, in the scope of the Tourism Education and Employment Support Project. If the instructor achieves a score of 70 or higher in the examination at the end of the training, the Fidelio program is provided to the educational institution free of charge. SAN Bilgisayar, the producer of the Sejour program, used in travel agency automation, provided the program to schools free of charge, but now is struggling to

cope with the demand and charges a modest fee. Some other programs such as Newage and Tourkuaz are free to try or have demo versions.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to identify whether the use of course books and laboratory sessions outside of class hours, constituting additional teaching materials, has an effect on student success in applied vocational information technology courses. Furthermore, this study aims to identify if schools and administrators providing IT systems education should facilitate the provision of resources and space for students to study outside of class hours, to achieve higher quality and permanency in learning processes.

5.2. Research Methods

The study consisted of two parts. 73 students took part in laboratory application sessions outside of class hours, and took the examination which was taken by a total of 145 students. To examine the effectiveness of the use of course books, 93 students were provided with course books, while 97 students were not. The study used a post test controlled experimental design. The population for the study was all students receiving package program education, while the sample selected consisted of third year students at the Akdeniz University, School of Tourism and Hotel Management, department of travel and accommodation management. The data was gathered based on the results of the test that was performed. All data was analyzed using the SPSS 15.0 program.

5.3.Hypothesis

Assuming that practice on the computer is necessary for students to be successful in package program education, our hypothesis was as follows

H1: Practice with the package program in the computer laboratory outside of class hours, together with peers, has a positive effect on academic success.

Assuming that students required course books as well as computer practice to be successful in package program education, our hypothesis was as follows:

H2: Apart from computer practice in package program education, the distribution of course books has a positive effect on academic success.

6. FINDINGS

In this section, we will examine the hypothesis formulated above. Table 1 displays the correlation between students practice in computer laboratories outside of class hours and course success.

Table 1: Students activities outside of class hours and Success Rates

Correlation

	Success	Study Outside of Class
Success	1	.423**
		.000
	146	146
Study Outside of Class	.423**	1
	.000	
	146	146

As shown in Table 1, there is a correlation between the exam results and the time spent by students in study outside of class hours. The correlation coefficient was found to be .423. As a result, we can conclude that study in computer laboratories outside of class hours has a moderate positive effect on academic success (Büyüköztürk et al., 2010a). Based on this data, we can accept hypothesis H1.

Table 2 shows the results of a t-test analysis performed on independent groups to identify the effect of the provision of course books apart from computer practice, on academic success in package program education.

Table 2: The effect of course books

Course Books	N	X	S	df	t	p
Control Group	93	44.2151	24.34349	92	-5.7684	0,000
Experimental Group	93	64.1935	21.89960			

According to the results of the t-test, shown in Table 2, $t(92) = -5.7684$, $p<0.05$, and Cohen's $d = 0.598$. Therefore, we can say that the provision of course books has a statistically significant effect on student success and this effect (Cohen's $d = 0.598$) is moderate (Büyüköztürk et al., 2010b). The experimental group was observed to have a higher rate of success. Therefore, we can accept our hypothesis H2.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been shown that practice with programs outside of class hours and the provision of a resource book increases the academic success of students receiving applied package program education. Therefore, organizations providing package program education should consider acquiring package program demos, course books and other additional teaching materials for the use of students in order to increase student learning levels and success rates.

It is clear that the use of additional teaching materials increases the quality of instruction. A high quality learning process will doubtlessly lead to a higher level of success. Educational institutions may also consider the possibility of allowing students to log on to the campus services from their home computers, in order to practice using package programs. Providing the demo versions of package programs for students to install on their home computers may also be an effective way to facilitate the learning process.

This study has examined the effects of the usage of course books and laboratory package program use outside of class hours. Similar studies may be performed on the usage of other teaching materials. In this study, we have not performed research regarding the permanency of learning and this may be addressed by other researchers.

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