Motives and obstacles for teachers' participation in distance education programs

Anastasia Pampouri, Varvara Gotouchidou

Introduction

Distance education is now a reality in the field of training. The advantages offered by this learning methodology make its choice popular, both by the organizers of training programs and the participants. According to Lionarakis (2001), distance education offers the educator the opportunity not to be physically present in the place, where the educational process takes place. The variety of teaching aids and ways of communication reduce the distance between teachers and trainers (Lionarakis, 2001). In particular, Primary and Secondary education teachers seem to have come quite familiar with attending such distance education programs, especially during the last two years, because of the pandemic COVID-19.

In this framework, the article aims to explore the factors that may motivate or prevent a teacher from taking part in a remote seminar. Its main purpose is to bring to surface the characteristics of these motives and barriers, so that they are perceived and properly managed by adult educators and those who organize and implement training programs. Its scope is also to address obstacles and utilize incentives in a way that the achievement of the training programs is served by the educational goals, and trainees' effective learning is accomplished.

At this point, and before analyzing the terms 'motives' and 'obstacles', it's important to refer to the terms 'distance learning' and 'distance education'. Although in bibliography they tend to be used interchangeably, there are some differences between them. According to Phipps and Merisotis (1999: 11) "it is important to understand what is meant by 'distance learning' because the technology is evolving, the definition of what distance learning is continues to change". In 1998, the United States Distance Leanring Association, as referring by Roblyer and Edwards (2000: 192), stated that distance learning is "the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance". Another definition is given by King, Young, Drivere-Richmond and Schrader (2001: 10): "distance learning is improved capabilities in knowledge and/ or behaviors as a result of mediated experiences that are constrained by time and/ or distance such that the learner does not the same situation with what is

being learned". On the other hand, Portway and Lane (1994: 195) define distance education as follows:

> The term distance education refers to teaching and learning situations in which the teacher and the learner or learners are geographically distant and, therefore, the teaching of the course is based on electronic means and printed material. Distance education includes distance teaching (the role of the teacher in the process) and distance learning (the role of the learner in the process).

So, we understand that the term 'distance learning' refers to a wider situation, whereas 'distance education' is a way to achieve distance learning. Also, distance education presupposes the existence of an educator. In this article, we are going to adopt the term "distance education" because we focus on distance education programs. Those programs have clearly defined goals, teachers and trainees are organized, so we are referring particularly to education and not generally to learning.

On the other hand, the term 'motivation' denotes the inner strength that leads the individual to some form of action (Kantas, 1998). Motivation is defined as "the power that initiates, continues and changes behavior" (Martin, as cited in Cakir, Karademir and Erdogdu, 2018). The motivation seems to be the product of the individual's needs and desires, so it is connected with the disposal to achieve the objectives the person himself has set (Spector, 2008).

Motives of participation can be categorized in internal and external motives. Internal motives are the ones that arise from of the individual's needs himself/, so they work with pleasure, without any external pressure (e.g tendency to learn, internal satisfaction, curiosity, personal interest). On the other hand, external motives can be divided into positive (e.g. earnings, desire for prestige, encouragement, reward etc.) and negative (e.g. fear of condemnation, failure, disapproval etc.) (Shaumen, Meterbayeva, Baitasov and Utyupova, 2016). In this case, the person expects to receive in return for his actions some form of reward, which is directly related to his action (Stavropoulos, Lazou and Argyropoulou, 2017). Although external motives work most effectively at a young age, gradually and until adulthood the trainee should base his actions on stronger motives, that promote the initiative in learning (Kapsalis, 2009).

Motives of participation are related to the means by which the goals will be achieved, that is the organized educational activity (Koutouzis, 2013). The most well-known classification of adult learners based on their participation motives has been carried out by Houle. More specifically, Houle in 1961 advocated the division of adult learner's into three categories: goal-oriented, activity-oriented, and learning-oriented. According to Houle (1961) and Cross

(1981) learning oriented learners consider education as a continuous and life-long activity (as cited in Pampouri, Tsolakidou and Mavropoulos, 2020; Blunt and Yang, 2002). In any case, and regardless of the categorization and separation of motives, it is admitted that the reasons which can push an adult to participate in an educational program are directly related to both changes that take place in his personal or professional life and the way with which he interprets reality (Koutouzis, 2013).

Regarding the barriers, Rogers (1999) refers to their existence in adult education as a normal fact that stems from the nature of people and their tendency to acquire and assimilate new knowledge. Of course, not all obstacles have the same characteristics and the same reasons for appearing. Thus, dealing with them is not a simple process and depends primarily on the trainer (Rogers, 1999). The obstacles' categorization can be done based in many different criterions such as psychological, pedagogical, technical, social and cultural (Berge, 1998). Cross (1981) separates the barriers of participation and learning to three groups: a) the situational ones (e.g. lack of money or time), b) the organizational obstacles (e.g. schedule) and c) the dispositional obstacles (e.g. attitudes and behaviors versus training) (Pampouri et. al, 2020). On the other hand, Kokkos (2005) emphasizes that internal barriers are what ultimately determine whether the learner will continue to attend the program or whether he / she will give up, whether he / she will decide to invest in learning or not. In any case, and despite their categorization, to some degree barriers can overlap and merge together (Dabaj, 2011).

Leggett and Persichitte (1998) indicate that the barriers of distance education are related to:
- training programs' duration
- access to educational materials
- the resources that the trainee must allocate to participate in the program
- specialized knowledge that the trainers must have, in order to satisfactorily meet the requirements of the program and the trainees.

Regarding the barriers in learners' participation, they are connected to the social roles learners are called to serve as adults (Karalis, 2013). In addition, the conflict between new and old knowledge can obstruct the participation of adult learners, who often maintain a cautious attitude towards questioning their previous knowledge (Kokkos and Lionarakis, 1998).

Focusing on distance education, Seraphim (2016) states that the barriers observed, may be related to technology, time, support / response / interaction, and reward / recognition. Besides, among the negative characteristics of distance education, Karoulis (2007) includes the fact that it requires more effort, reduces

human contact and is easier to give up. But, at the same time, the possibility offered by distance education for the realization of teaching anywhere and any-time offers the opportunity to overcome some obstacles (Papastamatis, 2010).

In order to determine the context of research questions and its objectives, it is worth referring to the results of some relevant studies. Initially, even the implementation of a distance education program can itself be a motivation to participate. The research, conducted by Pampouri, Tsolakidou and Mavropoulos (2020), in which 96 adult educators for lifelong learning participated, showed that 65% of the participants prefer distance training programs for their educa-tion. In the same survey, more than half of the respondents indicated as impor-tant motives for participating in training programs the development of quali-fications and skills, the belief that education should last a lifetime, the interest in acquiring new knowledge, obtaining a certificate of attendance and boost-ing their productivity. On the other hand, work obligations, caring for children or family members, other obligations and participation cost were reported by trainees as main obstacles (Pampouri, Tsolakidou and Mavropoulos, 2020).

The research of Hasiotis and Mavroidis (2019) is related to the motiva-tion of Secondary Education teachers to participate in distance education pro-grams. 202 secondary school teachers from the Prefecture of Magnesia took part. It turned out that the participants were open to new ideas, wanted to en-rich their knowledge, to improve and they showed interest in sharing their ide-as with other learners. It was pointed out that an important factor that raises teachers' motives is the subject of distance education program (Hasiotis and Mavroidis,2019).

In addition, the research of Lionarakis, Orphanoudakis, Kokkos, Emvalotis, Manousou, Hartofylaka, Ioakimidou, Papadimitriou, Karagianni, Grammenos, Karachristos, Stavropoulos (2020) was based on the evaluation of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) program. It is worth noting that the use of these Massive and Open Online Courses (MOOCs) upgrades the quality of lifelong learning. Their usefulness is described in the following sentence: "MOOCs al-low teachers to teach more students in a single lesson than in a lifetime" (Pam-pouri, Kostelidou, Sionta, Souitsme & Mavropoulos, 2021). The purpose of the program was to help Greek teachers to properly use distance education, given the new conditions in teaching set by COVID-19. A total of 4949 Primary and Secondary Education teachers participated in this research, with 23% being men and 77% women. Teachers evaluated the program they attended by stat-ing the degree of their satisfaction, the usefulness of knowledge acquired and their desire to attend a similar program in the future (Lionarakis et. al., 2020).

Finally, Rezabek (1999) aimed to highlight the motivations and barriers of

adult students to participate in distance education courses. The survey questionnaires were answered by 210 students, while 23 students were interviewed by the researchers. The results confirmed that there were many motives which could influence participation in distance education. Among those which were dominant was the opportunity to obtain a degree or a certificate of attendance, with the least possible impact on work and their family. On the other hand, the obstacles identified were financial weakness, lack of time, alienation from the study, the degree of difficulty of the course and discouragement from people in the social environment. In many cases these obstacles were overcome through the provision of some financial assistance or encouragement and support from family and friends. Some students, of course, had a strong determination that acted as internal motivation (Rezabek,1999).

Method

The purpose of the research was to identify the motives and obstacles that Primary and Secondary Education teachers may encounter in their attempt to participate in a distance education program. Its ultimate goal was to help the participants themselves realize the existence and characteristics of these motives and barriers. In order to effectively prevent and face those factors, we need to learn more about them.
- More specifically, the research questions were the following:
- What is teachers' experience from their participation in distance education programs (number of programs, duration, effectiveness)?
- What motivates teachers and to what extent do those factors motivate teachers to participate in distance education programs?
- What are the barriers to participation and to what extent do they prevent teachers from participating in distance education programs?

Participants

Research sample was consisted of 60 teachers of Primary and Secondary Education who worked during the research period in public sector schools of the Region of Western Macedonia, in the cities of Ptolemaida and Kozani.
    Participants' main characteristics are the following: 63,3% were women and 36,7% were men. Their age range was between 28 to 59 years. They were married, unmarried or divorced. They served in a Primary (46,7%) or a Secondary School (53,3%). They had been teaching for 1 to more than 20 years. More specifically, almost half of the participants were quite experienced teachers, as

they had been teaching for more than 16 years (25% had teaching experience for 16-20 years and 23,3% for more than 20 years), while 15% had low teaching experience, between one to five years. Regarding participants' job position, they worked are teachers, directors, or deputy directors. It's worth noting that teachers' previous participation in a distance education program at least once was set as a prerequisite for participating in the research.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research was conducted in the academic year 2020-2021, between 7 to 17 May 2021. According to the research methodology, its scope and research questions, the quantitative method considered as the most appropriate for data collection, through the completion of an anonymous electronic questionnaire, which was conducted and uploaded in Google Forms by the researchers. According to Creswell (2011): "The electronic questionnaire is a sampling tool for data collection, which is available through a computer. It provides an easy and fast form of data collection" (p.433).

Before the research, the questionnaire was pilot checked, to determine if the questions were comprehensible and if the participants were able to complete the questionnaire (Creswell, 2011). In particular, the questionnaire was sent electronically to four teachers who met the characteristics of the research sample, to identify omissions, errors, and ambiguities in the wording of the questions. Those individuals were excluded from the final sample of the survey.

Convenience sampling was applied, as the research was limited to the geographical area of the Region of Western Macedonia, mainly in the cities of Ptolemaida and Kozani. Convenient sampling, as opposed to simple random sampling, can provide useful information to answer research questions and assumptions, even though individuals are not certain to be representative of the population (Creswell, 2011). A disadvantage of convenience sampling is that it is vulnerable to self-selection bias. That happens because the participants in a convenience sampling may be more capable and motivated compared to the participants that are randomly selected (Brodaty, Mothakunnel, Vel-Palumbo, Ames, Ellis, Reppermund and Sachdev, 2014). Data analysis was made with SPSS system, Version: 28.0.1.0(142), and the analysis of statistical data was based on descriptive statistics.

The Scale

The questionnaire was anonymously and consisted of short answer and closed-

ended questions. In some of them the Likert scale was used on a rate of one (1) to five (5), which is a scale of theoretically equal intervals between responses (Creswell, 2011).

The choice of specific questions was not arbitrary but was based on questionnaires used in other relevant surveys. More specifically, the questions of the first section (relationship of teachers with the distance attendance of programs) arose through the adaptation of questions from Hasiotis and Mavroidis (2019) research. On the other hand, the research of Pampouri, Tsolakidou and Mavropoulos (2020) was crucial for the formulation of questions 12, 14, 15 and 17. Finally, questions 13, 16, 18 and 19 were inspired by Rezabek's (1999) research.

The first seven questions of the questionnaire concerned the participants' profile (gender, age, etc.), while the rest could be divided into three sections, depending on the research question they were focusing on. Thus, the first section (questions 8a, 8b, 9a, 9b, 10, 11) referred to the first research question and explored teachers' previous experience from their participation in distance education programs. The second research question, regarding motives of participation in distance education seminars, corresponded to the second section of questions (questions 12, 13, 14, 18, 19). Finally, the third research question, aiming to investigate barriers to participation, was answered by the third group of questions (questions 15 to 17). The degree of reliability of the questions in the first section was 0.723, based on Cronbach's a scale, whereas in the second section was 0.869 and in the third section was 0.637 (Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
1st section of research questions	0,723	6
2nd section of research questions	0,869	5
3rd section of research questions	0,673	3

Findings

Regarding the first research question, referring to teachers' previous experience gained from their participation in distance education programs, the answers of the participants were as follows: Most respondents stated that the last time

they attended a distance training program was 1.5 years ago (86,7%, n=52). Almost half of the participants (43,3%, n=26) attended a distance education program of medium duration, up to 3 months, which lasted between 100 to 300 hours. In addition, almost one third of those surveyed, reported having attended only one distance education program in the last five years (28,3% n=17). Regarding the evaluation of teachers' overall experience from their participation in distance education programs, more than half stated that they were satisfied (61,7%, n=37). Finally, 71,7% (n=43) answered that they were willing to attend a distance education seminar soon, while only 28,3% (n=17) stated that they were not interested in that.

Regarding the second research question, which explored the most important motives of participation in distance education programs, teachers answered as follows: The three factors that motivated them most were: "To become better at my job" (80%, n=48), "Because I want to learn new things" (68,3%, n=41) and "Because it is important to be educated throughout our lives" (60%, n=36). Participants rated some factors that motivate teachers to participate in distance education programs (e.g personal development, job improvement), depending on the extent to which those factors affect them (1 =not at all, 2 = little, 3 = moderately, 4 = a lot, 5 = very much) (Table 2). Important or very important motives were personal development (68,3%), expansion of spiritual horizons (65%) and improvement of the job position (46,7%). On the other hand, the use of free time (56,7%), the association and communication with other people (55%) and the increase of their income (48,3%) seemed to have little or no influence. Also, conditions that affect the teachers and could be motives for participation in a distance education program were as follows: its subject (84,4%), educational material (68,4%), the hours (68,4%), its cost (58,4%) and the trainers who would teach in it (40%) (Table 3). In addition, the factors that could facilitate and motivate participation in a distance education program were: "Recognition of qualifications acquired through attendance" (65%, n = 39), "Facilitation from work (e.g special license)" (60%, n=36) and "More information about distance programs that are implemented "(58,3%, n=35).

Table 2. Degree of motivation effect

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Personal development	60	3.82	0.97
Improvement of job position	60	3.02	1.37
Income increase	60	2.62	1.35
Expansion of spiritual horizons	60	3.72	1.06
Association and communication with other people	60	2.48	1.19
Use of free time	60	2.38	1.32

Table 3. Reasons of participation in a distance education program

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Program cost	60	3.60	1.09
Program subject	60	4.47	0.79
Trainers	60	3.45	0.93
Educational material	60	3.80	0.92
Hours/ Schedule	60	3.85	1.07

The answer to the third and last research question was given by formulating the most important obstacles teachers might face in their participation in distance education programs. According to the answers given, the three main factors that prevent teachers from participating in a distance training seminar were: "the cost of participation" (81,6%, n=49,), "the lack of time" (81,6%, n=49) and "seminar schedule (attendance hours and days)" (66,7%, n=40). Participants also identified the degree to which certain barriers affect their participation in distance education programs. Important or very important obstacles are lack of time (66,7%), financial reasons (60%), personal / family reasons (55%) and fatigue (50%). On the other hand, the least important obstacles are the fear of failure (73,3%) and stress or psychological factors (45,5%) (Table 4).

Table 4. Degree of obstacle effect

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD
Financial reasons	60	3.62	1.09
Personal/ Family reasons	60	3.50	1.07
Lack of time/ Hours	60	3.77	1.03
Tiredness	60	3.43	1.03
Anxiety/ Psychological factors	60	2.72	1.17
Fear of failure	60	1.90	1.07

Conclusions and Discussion

Regarding the first research question: "What is the experience of the participants from the distance education programs they have attended?", the results are of particular interest. When teachers were asked when it was the last time that they participated in a distance education program, the vast majority, 86.7%, said that this was the period from 2020 to 2021. On the contrary, only 13.3% had attended a distance education program before 2019. As we can see, there is a rapid increase in this percentage over the last 1.5 years. Although the cause of the increase is not clear from the results of the research and the answers given, we can assume that this is due to the changes caused by the COVID-19 virus in the way educational structures work. Relevant findings emerge on the study of Lionarakis, Orphanoudakis, Kokkis, Emvalotis, Manousou, Hartofylaka, Ioakimidou, Papadimitriou, Karagianni, Grammenos, Karachristos, Stavropoulos (2020), in which 60% of the participants stated that they would not participate in the program if it was not carried out by the method of distance education. It is easy to understand that the new conditions pushed teachers to attend distance education programs.

Regarding the second research question, "What motivates teachers and to what extent do those factors motivate teachers to participate in distance education programs?". To answer this question, it is particularly enlightening to identify the factors that motivate teachers to attend lifelong learning programs. According to the participants, the three most important motivations for participating in distance education programs were: to increase productivity at work (80%), to gain new knowledge (68,3%) and the need for lifelong learning (60 %). The answers given in the research of Pampouri, Tsolakidou and Mavropoulos (2020) were simi-

lar. According to them, the participants considered the same factors as the most important motivations for their participation. It's normal for the adult trainees to be motivated by the impact of the new knowledge in their professional life, but at the same time the percentage of those who express the need for lifelong learning is important too. Moreover, Karalis (2017) in his research showed that adults consider as the most important reason to participate in an education program to be more efficient at their work (20,3%). It seems that continuous learning is a key element of adults' worldview and can be an important internal motive for their training. In a different context, the research of Hasiotis and Mavroidis highlighted some different motives as more important. More specifically, the motivation of the participants was a result of their willingness to come in contact with new ideas (85,4%), to improve themselves from their mistakes (83%) and to share their ideas with others (82,6%) (Hasiotis & Mavroidis, 2019).

Referring to the third and final research question: "What are the barriers in participation and to what extent prevent teachers from participating in distance education programs?", some conclusions are worth mentioning. Teachers who took part in the research stated that the three factors that prevent them the most from attending distance training programs are: the cost of participation (81,6%), the lack of time (81,6%) and the schedule of seminars (66, 7%). These results are in accordance with the research of Pampouri, Tsolakidou and Mavropoulos (2020), since in a similar question the participants claimed that they were affected by lack of time (82%), participation costs (63%) and lack of sufficient information about the implementation of programs (20%). In addition, in Karalis's (2013) research, when the participants were asked to choose the one most important obstacle, almost the half of them (46,9%) voted the cost of participation. Although the cost of participation seem to be the main obstacle also in face to face education programs, programs' schedule has been cited as a major barrier too. According to Karalis's (2017) research "almost half of the participants recognize barriers that refer to the way the programs are organized and the lack of time due to occupational obligations" (p.88). Distance education can remove this barrier. It is characteristic that only 15% of adult trainers stated that the hours and days of implementation of distance education programs prevented their participation in them (Pampouri et. al., 2020). According to these results, we can say that adults' personal life and obligations influence their training. In addition, the cost of participation (70%) is the most important obstacle according to the research of Rezabek (1999). This is followed by a lack of time and a lack of familiarity with reading / the degree of difficulty. Program schedule was not an obstacle identified by those who participated in Rezabek research interviews.

As the present study is subject to a number of limitations, mainly related to its sample size and geographical area, more research could be conducted, focused on research themes, such as the assessment of teachers' and adult trainers' training needs and the evaluation of distance education programs. It would also be interesting to focus on exploring and defining the adult educator's role, on the one hand, to reinforce the motivating factors and, on the other hand, to minimize those that obstruct adult trainees' learning.

In this way, the scientific community will be able to further illuminate that important area of distance education and learning and enhance its effectiveness. The aim, of course, is to strengthen its advantages, to fight the obstacles and to promote this new and so useful form of education and learning.

References

Berge, Z. L. (1998). Barriers to online teaching in post-secondary institutions: Can policy changes fix it? *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 1*(2). Retrieved from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/Berge12.html

Blunt, A., & Yang, B. (2002). Factor structure of the adult attitudes toward adult and continuing education scale and its capacity to predict participation behavior: Evidence for adoption of a revised scale. *Adult Education Quarterly, 52*(4), 299–314. https://doi.org/10.1177/074171302400448627

Brodaty, H., Mothakunnel, A., Vel-Palumbo, M., Ames, D., Ellis, K. A., Reppermund, S., & Sachdev, P. S. (2014). Influence of population versus convenience sampling on sample characteristics in studies of cognitive aging. *Annals of Epidemiology, 24*(1), 63-71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2013.10.005

Cakır, O., Karademır, T. & Erdogdu, F. (2018). Psychological Variables of Estimating Distance Learners' Motivation . *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education, 19* (1), 163-182. https://doi.org/10.17718/tojde.382795

Creswell, J. W. (2011). *Research in Education: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Athens: Ellin.

Dabaj, F. (2011). Analysis of communication barriers to distance education: A review study. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies, 1*(1), 1-15. http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/2328

Hasiotis, A., & Mavroidis, H. (2019). Distance Education of Secondary Education Teachers: Investigating their Readiness for Training using Advanced Internet Learning Technologies. *Education and Sciences, 2*, 31–41.

Houle, C. O. (1961). *The inquiring mind*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Kantas, A. (1998). *Organizational-industrial psychology* (Vol.1). Athens: El-
llinika Grammata.

Kapsalis, A. G. (2009). *Educational Phycology* (4th ed.). Athens: Afoi Kiriakidi.

Karalis, T. (2013). *Motives and Obstacles for the adults' participation in life
long education*. Athens: Kambili AEBE.

Karalis, T. (2017). Shooting a moving target: The Sisyphus boulder of in-
creasing participation in adult education during the period of economic cri-
sis. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 23*(1), 78-96. https://doi.
org/10.1177%2F1477971417691782

Karoulis, A. (2007). *Open and distance education: From theory to practice*.
Thessaloniki: Tziola Publications.

King, F.B., Young, M.F., Drivere- Richmond, K., & Schrader, P.G. (2001). De-
fining Distance Learning and Distance Education. *AACE Review (formerly
AACE Journal), 9*(1), 1-14. Norfolk, VA: Association for the Advancement
of Computing in Education (AACE). Retrieved from https://www.learntech-
lib.org/primary/p/17786/.

Kokkos, A. (2005). *Adult Education: Defining the field*. Metaixmio.

Kokkos, A., & Lionarakis, A. (1998*). Open and distance education: Teacher-
learner relations* (Vol.3). Patra: Greek Open University.

Koutouzis, M. (2013). *Dropout of adults from the lifelong learning structures*.
Athens, Greece: Center for the Development of Educational Policy, Trade
Union Confederation of Greece – KANEP/ GSEE.

Leggett, W. P., & Persichitte, K. A. (1998). Blood, Sweat, and TEARS: 50 Years
of Technology Implementation Obstacles. *TechTrends: Linking Research
and Practice to Improve Learning, 43*(3), 33–36. Retrieved from: https://
www.learntechlib.org/p/83370/.

Lionarakis, A. (2001). Open and distance multimodal education: Reflections on
a quality teaching material design approach. In A. Lionarakis (ed.), *Opin-
ions and Concerns about Open and Distance Education. Athens: Propom-
pos* (pp. 33-52). Athens: Propompos.

Lionarakis, A., Orphanoudakis, T., Kokkos, A., Emvalotis, A., Manousou, E.,
Hartofylaka, A., Ioakimidou, V., Papadimitriou, S., Karagianni, E., Gram-
menos, N., Karachristos, C., Stavropoulos, E. (2020). The development of a
massive online course on distance education to support Greek school teach-
ers during the COVID-19 lockdown. *ICERI2020 Proceedings*. 6373-6380.
https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2020.1370

Pampouri, A., Kostelidou, S., Sionta, E., Souitsme, M., & Mavropoulos, A.
(2021). Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs): A Review. *INTED2021
Proceedings*, 7349–7356**.** https://doi.org/10.21125/inted.2021.1468

Pampouri, A., Tsolakidou, P. & Mavropoulos, A. (2020). Training Of Lifelong Learning Adult Trainers: Motivation and Obstacles. *ICERI2020 Proceedings*, 6212-6219. https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2020.1334

Papastamatis, I. A. (2010). *Adult Education for Vulnerable Social Groups* (1st ed.). Athens: Sideris Publications.

Phipps, R., & Merisotis, J. (1999). *What's the Difference? A Review of Contemporary Research on the Effectiveness of Distance Learning in Higher Education*. Washington DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Portway, P. S., & Lane, C. (1994). *Guide to Teleconferencing & Distance Learning* (2nd ed.). Applied Business teleCommunications.

Rezabek, R. (1999). *A study of the motives, barriers, and enablers affecting participation in adult distance education classes in an Iowa community college*. University of Northern Iowa, UNI Scholar Works. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.uni.edu/etd/749

Roblyer, M. D., & Edwards, J. (2000). *Integrating educational technology into teaching* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Rogers, A. (1999*). Adult Education*. Athens: Metaixmio.

Seraphim, K. (2016). Incentives and barriers to distance in-house training: the case of a large Greek bank. *International Conference on Open & Distance Education, 5*(1A), 149–164. https://doi.org/10.12681/icodl.490

Shaumen, G. S., Meterbayeva, K. M., Baitasov, A. A. & Utyupova, G. E. (2016). Motives for Choosing the Profession of a Social Care Teacher in the Universities of Kazakhstan. *International Review of Management and Marketing, 6*(3), 133-139. Retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/irmm/issue/32090/355228

Spector, P. E. (2008). *Industrial and organizational psychology: Research and practice* (5th ed.). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Stavropoulos, B., Lazou, A., & Argyropoulou, G. (2017). Social dimensions of Adult Education. The motives of trainees and the role of the adult educator. In F. Gousias (ed*.), Proceedings of the 4th Conference "New Educator"* (pp. 972-980). Athens.

Abstract

This article aims to explore motives and obstacles faced by teachers, when attending distance education programs. The aim of the research was to describe participants' characteristics, to highlight their motivations and obstacles, as well as to study the effect of these motives and obstacles on teachers' intention

to participate in distance education programs. The research sample was 60 participants, more particularly 38 women and 22 men, who had participation experience in distance education programs. This quantitative research was conducted by using questionnaires, collected between March and May 2021. Research analysis results showed that the most important teachers' motivations of participation were to increase their work efficiency, acquire new knowledge and to invest in their lifelong learning. On the other hand, the main obstacles were the cost of participation, lack of time, due to work or family commitments and the time schedule of distance education programs.

Key-words: motives, obstacles, teachers, distance education

Anastasia Pampouri
Teaching Staff, University of Macedonia
156 Egnatia str., Thessaloniki 546 36
Tel.: 6943254518
E-mail: apamp@uom.edu.gr

Varvara Gotouchidou
Postgraduate student, MEd., University of Macedonia
139 Delfon str., Thessaloniki
Tel.: 6986921227
E-mail: esp18032@uom.edu.gr