

## Perspectives of Open Education High Students on the Open Learning Mode

Mesut Demirbilek<sup>1</sup>, & Sitar Keser<sup>1</sup>

1) *Turkish Ministry of National Education, Turkey*

### Abstract

Open education is an education and instruction network that is widely used to overcome physical and temporal limitations. In the current study, an evaluation was made by taking the opinions of students on the application areas of the open education system in Turkey. In this context, the reasons for students attending open education high schools to switch to open education high schools were examined and a general perspective on open education applications was presented in line with their goals and expectations. To this end, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was used and students' opinions and experiences about open education were elicited. The sample of the current study is comprised of 500 open education high school students registered through public education centres. An online questionnaire form consisting of semi-structured open-ended questions was used to collect data in the study. When the findings were examined, it was seen that the reasons for the participants' enrolment in open education differed. In the analysis performed, it was seen that the reasons for enrolling in open education were grouped under six sub-headings: individual-emotional reasons, familial reasons, economic reasons, health-related reasons, reasons arising from school education processes and environmental-stimulating reasons.

### Keywords

Formal education, open education, employment, professional development, accessibility, flexibility

---

**To cite this article:** Demirbilek, M., & Keser, S. (2024). Perspectives of Open Education High Students on the Open Learning Mode. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 13(2), pp. 102-125. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17583/qre.11844>

**Corresponding author(s):** Mesut Demirbilek

**Contact address:** demirbilekmesut@gmail.com

# Perspectivas de los Estudiantes de Enseñanza Superior Abierta Sobre la Modalidad de Aprendizaje Abierto

Mesut Demirbilek<sup>1</sup>, y Sitar Keser<sup>2</sup>

1) *Ministerio turco de Educación Nacional*, Turquía

## Resumen

En el estudio actual, se realizó una evaluación tomando las opiniones de los estudiantes sobre las áreas de aplicación del sistema educativo abierto en Turquía. En este contexto, se examinaron las razones por las que los estudiantes que asisten a escuelas secundarias de educación abierta se cambiaron a escuelas secundarias de educación abierta y se presentó una perspectiva general sobre las aplicaciones de educación abierta en línea con sus metas y expectativas. Para ello, se utilizó la fenomenología, uno de los métodos de investigación cualitativos, y se recabaron las opiniones y experiencias de los estudiantes sobre la educación abierta. En el análisis realizado, se vio que las razones para ingresar a la educación abierta se agruparon en seis subtítulos: razones individuales-emocionales, razones familiares, razones económicas, razones relacionadas con la salud, razones derivadas de los procesos de educación escolar y razones ambientales estimulantes. razones. En el marco de los hallazgos obtenidos en el estudio, se determinó que la educación abierta como sistema contribuye al desarrollo personal, al desarrollo profesional y a la independencia económica al ayudar a los estudiantes a superar las barreras sociales, culturales, profesionales e individuales.

## Palabras clave

Educación formal, educación abierta, empleo, desarrollo profesional, accesibilidad, flexibilidad

---

**Cómo citar este artículo:** Demirbilek, M., y Keser, S. (2024). Perspectivas de los estudiantes de enseñanza superior abierta sobre la modalidad de aprendizaje abierto. *Qualitative Research in Education*, 13(2), pp. 102-125. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17583/qre.11844>

**Correspondencia Autores(s):** Mesut Demirbilek

**Dirección de contacto:** demirbilekmesut@gmail.com

Openness, which forms the conceptual basis of open education is a concept that characterizes information and communication systems, epistemologies, society and policies, institutions or organizations and individual personalities. In essence, openness in all these dimensions represents a kind of transparency that is the opposite of confidentiality, and this transparency is often seen in terms of access to information, especially in organizations, institutions or societies (Peters, 2017). The term openness, which is the essence of open education, includes a conceptualization having many aspects such as accessibility, flexibility, equality, cooperation, democratization, social justice, transparency and removing barriers. The term has connections with critical pedagogy, but is also used to describe a colour with multiple shades, a concept with pluralistic and inclusive connotations and a process advocating broadening participation. But more importantly, open education provides an insight built on an intellectual ground into education and instruction from a life-long perspective (Zawacki-Richter, 2020).

The terms of open education, distance education and distance instruction are often used interchangeably, and there seems to be a consensus in the literature on the use of the terms of open and distance interchangeably, although they are not synonymous (Zawacki-Richter, 2020). This consensus comes from the fact that all the three terms express a model that offers opportunities to attract students' attention and give more meaning to student work by moving classroom dynamics that impose physical limitations beyond these limitations (Werth & Williams, 2021). These terms refer to a collectively created, process-oriented education model that exists on a flexible basis and allows the student to colour the curriculum in line with his/her own interests, needs and abilities to create an individualized content (Hidalgo, 2020). Open learning can be delivered in a distance, face-to-face or blended form. On the other hand, distance or distributed learning refers to a more structured and formal educational process characterized by the separation of teachers from students due to pedagogical reasons and distance in time and/or space (Moore, 1993). In the current study, the concept of "open education", which describes different forms of distance education in Turkey is used in order to avoid conceptual confusion.

Open education is a vision of an education system in which education is accessible to every individual and with minimal restrictions. It emphasizes the flexibility of the system to eliminate problems caused by barriers such as age, geographic location, time constraints and economic status (Lumanta & Flor, 2020). Technology plays an abrasive and transformative role in open education in that open education, as a technology-based model, creates an innovative ground by abrading the traditional teacher role and traditional institutionalization (Flor, 2020). Many developed and developing countries have turned to developing their information and communication technologies to provide education and make learning environments more active for individuals who do not have access to the traditional classroom-based curriculum (Bagarinao, 2020).

Open education contributes to reducing the gap between different layers of society and countries by increasing the quality of education, accelerating the flow of information and increasing the number of people involved in the education process by making resources publicly available (Krelja & Kurelovic, 2016). All these have made open education a common application ground as an education system. With the effect of the pandemic, the

orientation towards distance education has turned into a more common practice (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation-UNESCO, 2021). In an analysis conducted by UNESCO (2015), the relationship between open education practices and higher education is discussed. In the relevant report, it is stated that open educational resources can have a facilitating effect on access to higher education and reduce the differences between social classes in terms of accessibility to education. United Nations [UN] (2023), in its report titled "Sustainable Development Open Education Resource", has addressed open education processes as a form of integrated education integrated into lifelong learning processes. The report emphasizes the importance of acquiring technical and vocational skills that support work-life and career processes based on the integration of open education opportunities with lifelong development. In this sense, it sets a target to significantly increase the number of young people and adults with relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship by 2030.

There are various reasons for the increasing interest in open education and distance education in recent years. Apart from the temporary health-based concerns caused by the pandemic, there are other reasons such as social, economic, individual and environmental. These reasons have also been revealed in various national and international studies (Çakır & Kezer, 2013; Sözer, 2017; Zheng, Bender & Lyon, 2021). Peters and Britez (2008) argue that the effectiveness of open education is favored because it is a method that contributes to reducing the problems of access to education produced by social, cultural and economic differences. Katene et al. (2021), in their research, found that there are three components of open education, which can be defined as time, space and process, and when these three components are considered together, the basic principles of open education can be listed as openness, respect for distance and flexibility in providing education.

Based on the context set by these studies, the present research aims to examine open education in Turkey in terms of high school students. Non-formal education provides access to education for people who cannot participate in formal education due to social, economic, health, etc. reasons. According to 2024 data, the number of people benefiting from non-formal education in Turkey is 2.529.476. Institutions where non-formal education is carried out are public education centers, vocational training centers, maturation institutes, special education and guidance services, and special education institutions (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2024). Open education activities are carried out under non-formal education activities through public education centers under the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning. Depending on open education, beneficiaries receive services in the fields of secondary school, high school, vocational education, and technical education through distance education (General Directorate of Lifelong Learning, 2024).

Current situations such as the need to address the framework of these studies carried out in this context in more depth and the increasing interest in open education high schools, especially in Turkey, are the main reasons why the current study was planned. In this connection, investigating the reasons why the open education system has reached a dimension to make it an alternative to formal education constitutes the problem situation of the current study within the context of open education high school. Unlike previous research, the present study is a multifaceted qualitative study with a large-scale participant population.

In previous researches, when the researches using qualitative methods are examined, it is seen that the number of participants is low and therefore the provision of detailed data is limited. Belen et al. (2021) analyzed the reasons for choosing open education with the participation of 71 open education students. Can and Sakallı (2023) limited the number of participants to 20 people, 10 students and 10 parents. Apart from this, the number of participants in the study by Ural et al. (2018) on analyzing the thinking styles of open high school students is 70.

This study aimed to learn the opinions and experiences of the students attending open education high schools about the causes leading them to enrol in open education high schools, the changes they have experienced and their goals and expectations. In this regard answers to the following questions were sought;

1. Why do open-education high school students turn to open-education high school?
2. How have the lives of open-education high school students changed after enrolling in the open-education system?
3. What are the contents of open education high school students' post-graduation goals?
4. What are the opinions and expectations of open education high school students about the open education system?

## Method

### Research Design and Model

In qualitative research, phenomena are examined and interpreted within the framework of the meanings that individuals attribute to these phenomena (Altunışık et al., 2010). In this context, the phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research approaches, was used in the current study in order to reveal and interpret the place of the phenomena discussed within the framework of the research questions in individual perceptions and experiences (Patel, 2002; Smith & Eatough, 2007). In this approach, perceptions and experiences are described and explained, and themes that combine them are elicited (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

### Participants

The convenience sampling method, one of the non-probability sampling methods, was used in the study in order to reach the participating open education high school students (Cohen et al., 2007). While this sampling method provides important advantages to the researcher in terms of reaching the participants, cost and time, it also facilitates reaching the volunteers (Baydar et al., 2007; Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). In this context, an online form consisting of open-ended questions was sent via SMS to 800 open education high school students registered through the Çekmeköy and Sancaktepe Public Education Centres in Istanbul and the research was carried out on a sample of 500 students who returned the forms.

When the demographic information of the participants is examined, it is seen that 238 of them are males and 262 are females; 25 of them are in the age group of 11-15, 155 in the age group of 16-20, 70 are in the age group of 21-25, 50 are in the age group of 26-30, 72 are in the age group of 31-35, 57 are in the age group of 36-40, 47 are in the age group of 41-45, 19 are in the age group of 46-50, 4 are in the age group of 51-55 and 1 is in the group of 56-60. While 229 of the students stated that they are working, 271 stated that they are not working.

### **Data Collection Tools**

In order to collect data in the study, an online questionnaire form consisting of semi-structured open-ended questions was used. Questions in semi-structured question format are prepared by the researcher in advance and participant opinions are kept partially within the framework of the research questions and context (Smith, 2003; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2012).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The content analysis technique was used in the analysis of data including participant opinions. In this connection, using the Maxqda program, the common meanings, perceptions, relationships derived from the opinions of the open education high school students were coded and these codes, which constituted the concepts at the core of the data, were categorized and themed in a systematic and impartial way (Eysenbach & Köhler, 2002; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Patton, 2002; Stone et al., 1966). In this context, the codes, categories or themes obtained in line with the analysis carried out in an inductive framework are presented in tables. In the analysis and reporting process, the participants were coded as “S1, S2...” in order to ensure personal confidentiality.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Guba and Lincoln (1982) stated that it is important to ensure credibility in qualitative research and that the research should have reliability, transferability, persuasiveness and confirmability in order to achieve this. Creswell (2014), on the other hand, stated that it is enough to meet one or more of these criteria to achieve this. In this context, in line with the framework drawn by Guba and Lincoln (1982) and Creswell (2014), detailed information about the research process was given in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, subjective researcher judgments were avoided and the code and theme-generating process was carried out by two researchers separately. The coding consistency was calculated according to Miles and Huberman (1994) and found to be 83%. In addition, in order to prevent “stage fright” and “participant reactivity”, which are frequently encountered in qualitative research, opinions were collected using the online form and attention and care were paid to personal and emotional issues during the data collection process.

## Findings

The findings obtained in line with the opinions of the open education high school students were grouped within the framework of four themes in the context of research questions. These themes are; (1) triggering reasons, (2) changes in the individual's life, (3) goals after graduation and (4) opinions and expectations regarding the system.

### Reasons Triggering Enrolment in Open Education High School (Events and Situations)

The opinions of the participants about the reasons triggering their enrolment in open education high school are grouped under six sub-themes as seen in Table 1 below; (1) individual-emotional reasons, (2) familial reasons, (3) economic reasons, (4) health-related reasons, (5) reasons arising from school education processes and (6) environmental-stimulating reasons.

**Table 1**

*Student Opinions on Events and Situations Triggering Enrolment in Open Education High School*

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes
Triggering reasons	Individual and Emotional Reasons	Emulation
		Regret
		The trauma experienced
		Fostering individual development
		Breaking down prejudices
		Humiliation-Pride
Triggering reasons	Familial Reasons	Making dreams come true
		Spare time
		Increasing parental productivity
		Pioneering
		Family encouragement-motivation
		Parental obstacles
Triggering reasons	Economic Reasons	Family pressure
		Early marriage
		Employment advantage
		Material incompatibility-socioeconomic conditions
Triggering reasons	Health-Related Reasons	Inadequacy of conditions
		Desire to achieve material autonomy
		Health problems
Triggering reasons	Reasons Arising from School-Education Processes	Psychological problems
		Effect of the pandemic
		Negative view of formal education
		Getting away from the pressure environment at school
		Studying more comfortably
		Experiencing discipline problems
		Gaining more time for the University Entrance



Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes
		Exam Failing a class Formal education not meeting the needs Not being successful in the High School Entrance
	Environmental-Stimulating Reasons	Peer encouragement and support Experiential examples Sports activities

### Individual-Emotional Reasons

In the sub-theme of individual-emotional reasons, the participating open education high school students stated that they saw people or their friends who graduated from open education high school and went to university, and that they emulated them. In addition, they stated that leaving their education life unfinished caused them to regret and they enrolled in an open education high school to compensate for these regrets. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 2**

*Some Student Opinions on Individual-Emotional Reasons*

<i>Emulation</i>	“I emulated my friends attending university.” (S8)
<i>Regret</i>	“I wanted to study so much because I had always regretted.” (S127)
<i>Trauma experienced</i>	“Inability to adapt to school after my mother’s death” (S44)
<i>Fostering personal development</i>	“With the thought that learning has no age” (S101)

Some participating open education high school students stated that they faced prejudices in their environment and society that girls should not be able to study or that they could not study after a certain age, and they enrolled in open high schools in order to break down these prejudices. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 3**

*Some Student Opinions on Individual-Emotional Reasons*

<i>Breaking down the prejudices</i>	“I registered against the will of my uncle who said that girls did not study and did not send me to school.” (S272)
<i>Humiliation-Pride</i>	“I was embarrassed to write ‘primary education’ while filling out the form.” (S211)
<i>Making my dreams come true</i>	“My dream is to be a police officer; to make it true.” (S264)
<i>Making better use of spare time</i>	“...I was able to make better use of my spare time at home” (S184)



## Familial Reasons

Under the sub-theme of familial reasons, some open education high school students stated that they enrolled in open education high schools in order to be productive and conscious parents, to be useful and contribute to their children's education life.. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 4**  
*Student Opinions on Familial Reasons*

<i>Increasing parental productivity</i>	"I am a mother and I want to study and improve myself in order to be a productive mother to my son in the future." (S7)
<i>Pioneering</i>	"My children had no desire to study. I wanted to be a pioneer. I wanted them to complete their education along with my own dream." (S104)
<i>Family encouragement-motivation</i>	"It is the support and love of education I get from them." (S108)
<i>Parental obstacle</i>	"My family didn't let me study; it was my dream to have a diploma." (S123)
<i>Familial pressure</i>	"My brother told me to go to high school until my family went crazy at home; he forced me to enrol, so I enrolled in an open education high school." (S238)
<i>Early marriage</i>	"I couldn't study because I got married at an early age." (S496)

## Economic Reasons

In the sub-theme of economic reasons, participating open education high school students stated that they had problems in employment and finding a job because they were primary school graduates and that their workplaces employed at least high school graduates and that they needed a diploma in this regard. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 5**  
*Student Opinions on Economic Reasons*

<i>Advantage of being employed</i>	"I want to work; my education is an obstacle to this." (S11)
<i>Material problems-socioeconomic conditions</i>	"I couldn't study because of financial difficulties and now I am passionate to study." (Ö263)
<i>Bad conditions</i>	"I did not have the conditions to continue formal education." (S189)
<i>Gaining financial autonomy</i>	"I want to stand on my own feet, I want to live without needing anyone" (S304)

## Health Related Reasons

In the sub-theme of health related reasons, participating open education high school students stated that they experienced various health problems or psychological problems, stated that they could not continue their formal education because of this and that they had to take a break, that they were worried about failing in the class and thus they enrolled in an open high school. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 6***Student Opinions on Health Related Reasons*

<i>Health problems</i>	“Due to a health problem, I couldn’t do my current job at my later age and I enrolled in an open high school to have a better job.” (S359)
<i>Psychological problems</i>	“I couldn’t go to school because of a psychological disorder and I wanted to continue with open education.” (S235)
<i>Effect of the pandemic</i>	“I couldn’t attend my school due to the pandemic and thought that open education would make more sense.” (S168)

**Reasons Arising from School-Education Processes**

In the sub-theme of reasons arising from school and education processes, some open education high school students stated that they found the school unnecessary, that the education system was not sufficient, that the formal education caused a waste of time, that they did not like crowded environments such as schools, that they did not like the education and vision of the high schools in their region and that the education system was judgmental and humiliating.. Moreover, some students stated that they were transferred to open high school due to some discipline problems they experienced at school. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 7***Student Opinions on Reasons Arising from School-Education Processes*

<i>Negative view of formal education</i>	“I couldn’t like school anyway, I don’t like crowded environments” (S149)
<i>Getting away from the pressure environment at school</i>	“I was preparing for the University Entrance Exam; I was under a lot of psychological pressure at school so I passed the exam.” (S22)
<i>Studying comfortably</i>	“Since I was in a vocational high school, I couldn’t study for my lessons, so I decided to switch to open education.” (S57)
<i>Experiencing discipline problems</i>	“I had discipline problems in high school and therefore I enrolled in open education.” (S196)

Some of the participating open education high school students stated that they were preparing for the University Entrance Exam and that they enrolled in open high schools in order to study better and gain time for the exam. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 8***Student Opinions on Reasons Arising from School-Education Processes*

<i>Gaining more time for the University Entrance Exam</i>	“There was an exam, so I didn’t want to waste my time at school.” (S197)
<i>Failing in the class</i>	“I switched to open education because I couldn’t pass the class.” (S225)
<i>Not meeting their needs in formal education</i>	“I was not happy at school, the teachers were very bad, my classes were bad.” (S450)
<i>Not being successful in the any High School Entrance</i>	“I entered the High School Entrance Exam, but I couldn’t be placed anywhere, so I enrolled in an open education high school.” (S470)

### Environmental-Stimulating Reasons

In the sub-theme of environmental-stimulating reasons, some participating open education high school students stated that their friends' encouragement and their support resulted in their enrolment in an open education high school, while some students stated that people in their family and surrounding were successful in the university exam after going to an open education high school and these were effective as experiential examples in their decision to attend an open education high school. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 9**

*Student Opinions on Environmental-Stimulating Reasons*

<i>Encouragement and support by friends</i>	“I enrolled with the support of my friend” (S208)
<i>Experiential examples</i>	“Both of my elder brothers switched from formal to open education high school in the 12 <sup>th</sup> grade and they were successful in the university exam, so I decided to switch to an open education high school.” (S310)
<i>Sports activities</i>	“I'm going to a football course so I enrolled in open education” (S204)

### Changes Taking Place in the Life of the Individual after Enrolling in an Open High School

The opinions of the participating open education high school students about the changes that occurred in their lives after they enrolled in open education high schools are grouped under four sub-themes, as seen in Table 2 below; (1) personal changes, (2) educational changes, (3) social-economic changes and (4) negative changes.

**Table 10**

*Student Opinions on the Changes Taking Place in Their Life*

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes
Changes	Personal Changes	Happiness
		Self-confidence development
		Increased responsibility
		Fostering personal development
Educational Changes	Educational Changes	Gaining self-discipline
		Motivation
		Increase in social activity
		Saving time
Social-Economic Changes	Social-Economic Changes	Goal orientedness
		More Effective Preparation for the University Entrance Exam
		Contribution to raising awareness of the importance of reading
Negative Changes	Negative Changes	Increasing achievement
		Getting a change to make a choice
		Gaining prestige
		Creating a perception change in society
		Finding a job-financial return
		Regret

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes
		No change

### Personal Changes

Under the sub-theme of personal changes, participating open education high school students said that after enrolling in an open education high school, they felt better and happier, that this system made them feel comfortable and gave them the pleasure of achieving something. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 11**

*Student Opinions on the Personal Changes*

<i>Happiness</i>	“I am happy to complete my unfinished education.” (S488)
<i>Self-confidence development</i>	“My self-confidence has improved; I have shown everyone that I can succeed.” (S123)
<i>Increased responsibility</i>	“My life has become so busy and my responsibilities have increased so much.” (S163)
<i>Fostering personal development</i>	“My perspective on life has changed a lot; my desire to study has increased.” (S331)
<i>Gaining self-discipline</i>	“I have improved in managing my time. As I was able to discipline myself, my self-esteem increased and I started to work more efficiently.” (S323)

Participating open education high school students stated that after enrolling in an open education high school, they were motivated to finish high school and go to university, that they had more time to study, that they improved themselves and that they found more time for themselves and doing their work. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 12**

*Student Opinions on the Personal Changes*

<i>Motivation</i>	“I have become more ambitious, I want to finish high school and enrol in university.” (S285)
<i>Increase in social activity</i>	“... since my free time increased, I increased my social activities by enrolling in state courses.” (S323)
<i>Saving time</i>	“I can spend more time studying.” (S37)
<i>Goal orientedness</i>	“If I graduate, I will take the security guard exam, if I pass, I will be security guard.” (S71)

### Educational Changes

In the sub-theme of educational changes, participating open education high school students stated that after enrolling in an open education high school, they had the opportunity to prepare for the University Entrance Exam more efficiently, that they began to spend more time and effort for the exam, and their success in mock exams increased. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 13***Student Opinions on the Educational Changes*

<i>More effective preparation for the University Entrance Exam</i>	“I can better prepare for the University Entrance Exam.” (S354)
<i>Contribution to raising awareness of the importance of reading</i>	“As I read the books, I had the chance to get better information.” (S459)
<i>Increasing achievement</i>	“I have increased my achievement much more than it was at school by studying by myself.” (S481)
<i>Getting a change to make a choice</i>	“I am more comfortable, I get the information I want from the teacher I want.” (S22)

**Social-Economic Changes**

In the sub-theme of social and economic changes, participating open education high school students stated that after enrolling in an open education high school, their environmental perspectives changed, they felt proud of themselves and they gained prestige by expressing that they received good reactions from the people around. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 14***Student Opinions on the Social-Economic Changes*

<i>Gaining prestige</i>	“I got very good reactions from the people around me.” (S304)
<i>Creating a perception change in society</i>	“Girls can also study, support themselves and feel proud of themselves.” (S272)
<i>Finding a job-financial return</i>	“I started working in a company. I was accepted immediately.” (Ö271)

**Negative Changes**

In the sub-theme of negative changes, some of the participating open education high school students said that they regretted not being able to go to formal education and that the school environment was more productive, while others said that after enrolling in an open education high school, they did not experience any changes in their lives. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 15***Student Opinions on the Negative Changes*

<i>Regret</i>	“In conclusion, school is everything and I regret not going to school.” (S166)
<i>No change</i>	“There has been no change in my life since I started my open education life.” (S482)

## Goals after Graduating from the Open Education High School

Opinions of the participating open education high school students about their goals after graduating from the open high school are discussed under three sub-themes as (1) economic-social goals, (2) educational goals and (3) occupational goals, as seen in Table 3 below.

**Table 16**

*Student Opinions on their Goals after Graduating from the Open Education High School*

Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes
Goals	Economic-Social Goals	Setting up a new business
		Finding a job in the public sector
		Higher chance of being employed
		Financial independence
		Making contributions to society
	Educational Goals	Attending a university
		Continuing education
	Occupational Goals	Professional career
		Having a profession

### Economic-Social Goals

In the sub-theme of economic and social goals, participating open education high school students stated that they would set up a new business after graduating from an open education high school. In addition, some students stated that they would take exams to be appointed as a civil servant after getting their diploma and that they would like to get a job in the public sector. Moreover, most of the students said that after getting their open education high school diploma, they aimed to find a job suitable for them, that they would try to find a good job that would support them and that they wanted to earn financial income, while some said that they aimed to get a better job and status. On the other hand, some of the participants, especially female students, stated that they wanted to obtain their financial independence so that they would not have to depend on anyone, especially their spouses, that they would find a job that would enable them to stand on their own feet and that they aimed for a future where they would earn their own money. Some students stated that they aimed to be useful individuals who would contribute to humanity, society, family and country. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 17**

*Student Opinions on their Economic-Social Goals*

<i>Setting up a new business</i>	“I intend to set up my own business.” (S9) “I am planning to set up my own business and improve myself.” (S235)
<i>Finding a job in the public sector</i>	“I will take the Public Personnel Selection Exam and try to get a job as a civil servant.” (S164)
<i>Higher chance of being employed</i>	“I want to find a good job.” (S212) “Getting a better job, getting a job with a higher status” (S377)
<i>Financial</i>	“Having a job anywhere, standing on my own feet ” (S340)

---

*independence*

---

*Making* “I want to be a good person for my family and my country.” (S388)*contributions to* “To do the job I want and be useful to humanity” (S395)*society*

---

**Educational Goals**

In the sub-theme of educational goals, most of the participating open education high school students stated that they wanted to study at university after completing their open high school education, and in this sense, they were eager to attend the departments they wanted at university. In addition, some of the students stated that they would continue their education until the end and that they were determined in this sense. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 18***Student Opinions on their Educational Goals*

---

*Attending university* “Becoming an artist by studying at the conservatory” (S12)*Continuing education* “Studying, studying and studying” (S56)“I want to do my master’s degree.” (S453)

---

**Occupational Goals**

In the sub-theme of occupational goals, participating open education high school students stated that they aimed to make a career in the context of their own profession after receiving their open high school diploma, that they would try to expand their careers and that they wanted to reach the status they aimed at. In addition, the majority of the participating students said that they aimed to have a profession after receiving their diplomas and to achieve the professional development necessary to have their targeted jobs. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 19***Student Opinions on their Occupational Goals*

---

*Professional* “I want to reach a good place in my career.” (S348)*career*

---

*Having a* “Getting a certificate to be a security guard, either armed or unarmed” (S146)*profession*

---

**Opinions and Expectations Regarding the Open Education High School System**

The expectations and opinions of the participating open education high school students about the open education high school and its system are grouped under five sub-headings; (1) communication-information, (2) exam process, (3) registration processes, (4) support (5) teaching processes, as seen in Table 4 below.



**Table 20***Expectations and Opinions regarding the Open Education High School System*

Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
<b>Opinions and Expectations</b>	Communication--Information	Lack of information
		Personnel qualifications and behaviours
		Technical problems
	Exam Process	Difficulty of exam questions
		Increasing the exam time
		Continuing with online exams
Registration Processes	Improvement of the registration system	
	Reducing registration fees	
	Removal of periodic registration renewal	
	Increasing course credits	
Support	Granting scholarships	
	Increasing the number of university preparation courses	
	Internship support	
Teaching Processes	Mobile education support	
	Integration with face-to-face education	
	Lack of resources	

### Communication-Information

In the sub-theme of communication and information, the majority of the participating open education high school students stated that they were not informed about the system during and after the registration process, so they missed the registration and exam times. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 21***Expectations and Opinions on Communication-information*

<i>Lack of information</i>	“It’s absurd to have to re-register every semester, I couldn’t take the exams this semester because I didn’t know; my account was frozen.” (S341)
<i>Personnel qualifications and behaviours</i>	“We want friendlier staff.” (S14) “Staff quality should be improved.” (S416)
<i>Technical problems</i>	“The internet site of the open education system crashes very quickly.” (S16)

### Exam Process

In the sub-theme of the exam process, participating open education high school students talked about the difficulty of the exam questions and stated that different age groups should also be included in the system and expressed their expectation about making the exam questions easier. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 22***Expectations and Opinions on Exam Process*

<i>Difficulty of exam questions</i>	“Exams are very very difficult, I ask them to do them a little easier.” (S69)
<i>Increasing the exam time</i>	“The current system is good, due to the pandemic, the online exam system has protected our health and saved us and future generation from paper waste. It’s fine, but only the exam time is very short, I think it would be better if the time were increased.” (S339)
<i>Continuing with online exams</i>	“Exams should always be online.” (S175)

**Registration Processes**

In the sub-theme of registration processes, participating open education high school students expressed their views on the development and improvement of the registration system and the transition to the online registration. In addition, some of the students suggested increasing the course credits and stated that this would enable them to graduate earlier. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 23***Expectations and Opinions on Registration Processes*

<i>Improvement of the registration system</i>	“The registration system can be improved, and better improvements can be made in the system.” (S134)
<i>Decreasing registration fees</i>	“Fees need to be more economical.” (S428)
<i>Removal of periodic registration renewal</i>	“It may be that everything ends with a registration for a period instead of making people deal with registration renewal every semester.” (S423)
<i>Increasing course credits</i>	“I find course credits low.” (S409)

**Support**

Under the sub-theme of support, participating open high school students stated that there were people who could need financial support among open education high school students and suggested that they could be given scholarships or social aid. In addition, they said that preparatory courses should be increased for open education high school students who want to prepare for university. In addition, some students stated that mobile education support can be provided in areas that include disadvantaged groups. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 24***Expectations and Opinions on Support*

<i>Granting scholarships</i>	“Social assistance is required for open education students.” (S331)
<i>Increasing the number of university preparation courses</i>	“It would be nice to open more courses to prepare for university.” (S87)
<i>Internship support</i>	“In finding a place for internship, assistance should be given.” (S279)
<i>Mobile education support</i>	“Developing a mobile education system and ensuring that everyone in Anatolia, the elderly, children and women, can access education.” (S90)

**Teaching Processes**

In the sub-theme of teaching processes, some open education high school students stated that the open education system can be integrated with face-to-face education that can be offered at the weekends. In addition, some of the students mentioned the inadequacy of the resources and stated that qualified resources should be given to them. Some of the participant opinions on the subject are as follows;

**Table 25***Expectations and Opinions on Teaching Processes*

<i>Integration with face-to-face education</i>	“There may be face-to-face education at the weekends.” (S214)
<i>Lack of resources</i>	“There should be regular and systematic training online, our resources are very insufficient.” (S237)

**Discussions**

In the current study, in which the reasons that cause open education high school students to enter the system, the changes in their individual life, goals and expectations and their views on the system were revealed. The reasons that cause open education high school students to enter the system were found to include individual, familial, economic, health-related reasons, experiences in formal education processes and environmental stimuli. When the reasons for the widespread use of open education are examined in previous reports and studies, it is seen that the ethics of open education in overcoming social, economic and cultural difficulties are mentioned. For example, Inamorato Dos Santos vd. (2016) stated that the flexible structure of open education applications is preferred because it reduces financial, geographical, and temporal problems. In the relevant report, it is emphasized that the opportunity to access education with low budgets through digital technologies, on an ethical communication and interaction network anytime, anywhere, facilitates social integration. In the context of open education, Peters and Britez (2008) emphasized that the negative effects of social, cultural and economic differences can be reduced with open education opportunities.

Fostering personal development is a general reason found in the current study as revealed by many other studies. For example, Ülger (2021) states that open education applications

provide important contributions in terms of fostering personal development even under emergency conditions such as pandemics, through the flexible teaching applications provided by the open education applications and the course contents accessed through the technological infrastructure. Likewise, the European Commission (2011) emphasized in its report that the temporal and spatial configuration of formal education can create obstacles to learning and personal development, and that these obstacles can be overcome with open education as it offers personalized planning.

One of the economic reasons is to ensure employment. At this point, open education is seen as a way to gain social and economic independence. Özgür (2005) emphasizes that enabling individuals to become economically independent will also contribute to the country's economy and states that this situation has turned into a more obvious advantage through open education, especially for individuals who are outside the compulsory education age. Çakır and Kezer (2013) similarly state that among the reasons for enrolling in open education is the desire of individuals to become economically and socially independent.

The pandemic, whose effects we have not yet fully overcome, is shown among the reasons for being involved in the open education process, as in the current study. The pandemic has not only increased the demand for existing open education applications, but has also led to the conduct of formal education at distance (Zheng, 2021). According to the data of UNESCO (2023), the transition to distance education, including the open education applications, has quadrupled compared to the pre-pandemic period and reached 1.38 billion people all over the world. In the research conducted by the World Economic Forum (2022), it was revealed that this increase started to become permanent both in terms of the results it produced and because of technological developments.

The current study proves that student's self-confidence increases, that they feel happy, that they are more motivated to receive education and that their self-discipline develops after they are involved in open education processes. It can be said that the reason for these positive developments is related to the fact that open education is an individualized process. Students can plan their own study time, access resources online without time constraints and exchange information with the study groups they have established (Farrow, 2014).

Within this system, it is seen that open education high school students show a positive change as reflected in the results, they are more willing to prepare for university exams and they feel more prestigious in the social life. This is because educational resources are accessible and diverse on a decentralized, more individualized and horizontal basis. A more individualized education process makes them feel more comfortable and gain prestige in their relations with peers and in the social sphere (Hylén, 2006).

Despite all these positive results, open education high school students still have expectations for the system. Expectations such as facilitating the registration system, abolishing periodic registration renewal, granting scholarships, providing university preparation support, internship support and qualified resource support and ensuring better personnel behaviours and attitudes will increase the benefits for students by improving the system.

### **Conclusion**

As this study and former studies have revealed, the open education system is shaped by a supply-demand balance created by problems arising from formal education, family and cultural reasons, economic problems and health-related problems as well as individual reasons. The flexibility, accessibility, and lack of temporal and spatial limitations of open education increase its preferability. These features of the open education system are also in compliance with the dimensions constituting the framework of educational responsibilities defined by Tomasevki (2001) as “4A” and stated in human rights declarations of states as available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.

Research findings show that it may be beneficial to conduct field surveys, especially in rural areas, in order to determine the needs of the open education system and to increase the supply-demand balance to a more optimal level. In addition, researchers can reveal findings that can increase the functionality of open education applications by conducting research to focus on psychological, cultural, economic and social dimensions separately for open education students. Finally, it will be useful to prepare a report comparing the open education systems of other countries and present it to policy makers so that a more effective process can be created.

### References

- Altunışık, R., Coşkun, R., Bayraktaroğlu, S., & Yıldırım, E. (2010). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Araştırma Yöntemleri SPSS Uygulamalı [Research Methods in Social Sciences SPSS Applied]* (6. Baskı). Sakarya Yayıncılık.
- European Commission (2011). *Reducing early school leaving*. Eur-lex. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/lexuriserv.do?uri=sec:2011:0096:fin:en:pdf>
- Bagarinao, R. T. (2020). Open admission: Rethinking the use of admission criteria in degree programs. In Lumanta, M. F. & Flor, A. G.. (eds.) *Conversations On Openness: An Engagement In Discourse Capture*. University Of The Philippines Open University.
- Baydar, M. L., Gül, H., & Akçıl, A. (2007). *Bilimsel araştırmanın temel ilkeleri [Basic principles of scientific research]*. Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Basımevi.
- Belen, A., Kandak, M., Demir, E., Çekin, B., Demir, M., & Kandak, D. (2021). Açık lise öğrencilerinin görüşleri doğrultusunda açık liseyi tercih nedenlerinin belirlenmesi: Ermenek örneği [Determining the reasons for open high school preference in line with the opinions of open high school students: the case of Ermenek]. *Uygulamalı Sosyal Bilimler ve Güzel Sanatlar Dergisi*, 3(6), 99-114. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1742659>
- Çakır, Ö. & Kezer, F. (2013). Reasons for enrollment in open elementary school and students' views on open elementary school practices. *Global Journal of Human Social Science Linguistics & Education*, 13(9), 49-56. [https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS\\_Volume13/7-Reasons-for-Enrollment-in-Open-Elementary.pdf](https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume13/7-Reasons-for-Enrollment-in-Open-Elementary.pdf)
- Can, E. & Sakallı, A. (2023). Örgün öğretimden açık liseye geçiş nedenleri: Bir durum çalışması [Reasons for transition from formal education to open high school: A case study.]. *Açıköğretim Uygulamaları ve Araştırmaları Dergisi (AUAD)*, 9(1), 194-237. <https://doi.org/10.51948/auad.1214224>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th edition). Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Eysenbach, G., & Köhler, C. (2002). How do consumers search for and appraise health information on the world wide web? Qualitative study using focus groups, usability tests, and in-depth interviews. *British Medical Journal [BMJ]*, (324), 573-576. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.324.7337.573>
- Farrow, R. (2014). *Open education handbook*. Open Knowledge. <https://oerpolicy.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/07/Open-Education-Handbook.pdf>
- Flor, A. G. (2020). The invisible teacher. In Lumanta, M. F. & Flor, A. G.. (eds.) *Conversations on openness: An engagement in discourse capture* (pp.1-21). Open University of The Philippines.
- Gravetter, J. F., & Forzano, L. B. (2012). *Research methods for the behavioral sciences*. Linda Schreiber-Ganster.

- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1982). Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 30 (4), 233-252. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02765185>
- Hidalgo, M-S. P. (2020). An exploration of open curriculum in the context of social transformation. In Lumanta M. F. & Flor, A. G. (eds.) *Conversations On Openness: An Engagement In Discourse Capture*. University Of The Philippines Open University.
- Hylén, J. (2006). *Open educational resources: Opportunities and challenges*. OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. [www.oecd.org/edu/ceeri](http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceeri).
- Katene, I., Katans, E. & Vāvers, V. (2021). Open education as a philosophically methodological basis for distance education. *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference*, (2),267-282. <https://doi.org/10.17770/sie2021vol2.6385>
- Krelja Kurelovic, E. (2016). Advantages and limitations of usage of open educational resources in small countries. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science (IJRES)*, 2(1), 136-142. <https://www.ijres.net/index.php/ijres/article/view/94>
- Lumanta, M. F.,& Flor, A. G. (2020). *Conversations on openness: An engagement in discourse capture*. University Of The Philippines Open University
- Ministry of National Education [MEB] (2024). *E-Yaygın Sistemi Kurs Programları [E-Learning System course programmes]*. E Yaygın. <https://e-yaygin.meb.gov.tr/pagePrograms.aspx>
- General Directorate of Lifelong Learning (2024). *Açık Öğretim Okulları [Open Education Schools]*. Hbogm. <https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/portal/index.php?page=18#>
- Merriam, S. B., & Grenier, R. S. (2019). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Miles, M, B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded Sourcebook*. (2nd ed). Sage Publications.
- Moore, M.G. (1993). Theory of transactional distance. In D. Keegan (eds.), *Theoretical principles of distance education* (pp. 22–38). Routledge.
- Özaydınlık, K. (2014). Toplumsal cinsiyet temelinde Türkiye’de kadın ve eğitim [Women and education in Turkey on the basis of gender]. *Sosyal Politika Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 14(33), 93-112. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/spcd/issue/21122/227509>
- Özgür, A. Z. (2005). Türkiye’de uzaktan eğitimde televizyonun etkileşimli kullanımı: Olanaklar, sınırlılıklar ve çözüm önerileri [Interactive use of television in distance education in Turkey: Possibilities, limitations and solutions].*Selçuk İletişim*,3(4), 80-97. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/178011>
- Patel, R. M. (2002). *Phenomenoloji: History, its methodological assumptions and application*. Mini-dissertation (Unpublished master’s thesis). Rand Afrikaans University.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Sage Publications.
- Peters, M. A., & Britez, R. G. (2008). *Open Education and Education for Openness*. Sense Publishers.
- Peters, M. A. (2017). *Encyclopaedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*. Springer Science+BusinessMediaSingapore. <https://www.daneshnamehicsa.ir/userfiles/files/1/Encyclopedia%20of%20Educational%20Phi.pdf>



- Smith, J. A. & Eatough, V. (2007). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In E. Lyons & A. Coyle (Eds.). *Analysing qualitative data in psychology* (1st ed.) (pp. 35-50). Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446207536.d10>
- Smith, J.A. (2003). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. Sage Publications.
- Sözer, Y. (2017). Mesleki açıköğretim lisesi öğrencilerinin örgün eğitim dışında olman edenlerine ilişkin görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi [Evaluation of the opinions of vocational open education high school students about the reasons for being out of formal education]. *Dicle Üniversitesi Ziya Gökalp Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, (30), 493-507. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14582/DUZGEF.785>
- Starks, H.,& Trinidad, S. B. (2007). Choose your method: A comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), 1372-1380. [10.1177/1049732307307031](https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307307031)
- Stone, P. J., Dunphy, D. C., Marshall, S. S., & Ogilvie, D. M. (1966) *The general inquirer: A computer approach to content analysis*. The M.I.T. Press.
- Tomasevki, K. (2001). *Human rights obligations: Making education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable*. Novum Grafiska AB, Gothenburg.
- Ülger, K. (2021). Uzaktan eğitim modelinde karşılaşılan sorunlar-fırsatlar ve çözüm önerileri [Problems-opportunities and solution suggestions in distance education model]. *Uluslararası Güncel Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 7(1), 393-412. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/intjces/issue/64208/869328>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2021). *When schools shut: Gendered impacts of COVID-19 school closures*. UNESDOC Digital Library.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO] (2015). *Guidelines for open educational resources (OER) in higher education*. UNESCO and Commonwealth of Learning. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000213605>
- United Nations [UN] (2023). *Sustainable Development Open Education Resource (OER) Platform*. Sdgs. <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/sustainable-development-open-education-resource-oer-platform>
- Ural, O., & Esmer, E. (2018). Açık öğretim lisesi öğrencilerinin düşünme stillerinin incelenmesi [Investigation of thinking styles of open education high school students]. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 18(1), 592-604. <https://doi.org/10.17240/aibuefd.2018.18.36350-411093>
- Werth, E.,& Williams, K. (2021). What motivates students about open pedagogy? Motivational regulation through the lens of self-determination theory. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 22(39), 34-55. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v22i3.5373>
- World Economic Forum (2022). *How is the education sector responding to COVID-19?* Weforum. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-education-global-covid19-online-digital-learning/>
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2012). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri [Qualitative research methods in social sciences]*. Seçkin Yayıncılık.

- Zawacki-Richter, O. (2020). Elements of open education: An invitation to future research. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 21(3)*, 321-334. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v21i3.4659>
- Zheng, M., Bender, D., & Lyon, C. (2021). Online learning during COVID-19 produced equivalent or better student course performance as compared with pre-pandemic: Empirical evidence from a school-wide comparative study. *BMC Medical Education, 21(495)*, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-02909-z>