

Chapter 4

Open and Distance Learning Administration: The Organizational Models, Cultures, and Structure and the Barriers and Trends in ODL Administration

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims at providing a perspective regarding the concept of open and distance learning administration. In this respect, the introduction part of this chapter includes the definition of administration, the understanding of administration in distance education, comparison of the concepts of administrator and leader, and the changing roles of the administrator, while the first heading focuses on types of institutions, organization model and administration cultures. The second heading covers Open and Distance Learning (ODL) administration units and the structure of the organization. This heading also includes those found in administration units in distance education, their duties as well as the sub-units of academic management and the duties of these sub-units. The third heading presents the management functions in ODL institutions. At the end of this part, the current barriers and trends related to management in open and distance education were investigated.

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INTRODUCTION

Management is the process of making effective decisions and putting these decisions into practice in a way to use the time and sources (human, money, machines, materials, information and so on) appropriately and productively for the purpose of achieving the previously set goals and objectives (Eren, 2011). In another saying, management is the art of transforming plans into reality. It is also a process which includes doing the jobs productively, making effective decisions on when and how to do things and eventually checking what has been done (Rumble, 1992).

The fact that institutions being managed have different goals has resulted in various definitions of management. The administration of ODL is a bit more complex when compared to other types of management for several reasons. For instance, in distance education, learning materials can be produced in different ways in terms of their quantity and distributed to numerous students from a large geographical region. On the other hand, face-to-face and regular interaction cannot be achieved between learners and instructional sources. This situation has necessitated management systems different from those valid and effective in traditional systems. Management systems could vary from one country to another as well as between different institutions even in the same country (Parhar, 2003). It is possible for institutions to achieve successful management if they can apply management functions effectively and productively by gathering current sources to achieve the previously-set goals. Even if management of distance education institutions is parallel to the traditional understanding of management to a certain extent, it may differ with respect to management and sources.

MANAGEMENT

While there are different definitions of management provided in related literature, they also share some common features. According to Genç (2007), the following common features come into prominence when the definitions of management are examined:

- **Goal:** For the maintenance of an organization, it should have certain goals.
- **Labor Division:** After determining the goals of the organization, among the employees, those who will achieve these goals should be selected. The current things to do are distributed to the employees in accordance with their fields of specialization.

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