



Halk Eğitimi Merkezi Eğitimcilerinin Sorunlarının İncelenmesi

Investigation of the Challenges of Public Education Centre Instructors

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ÖZ:Bireylerin yetiştirilmesi, beceri gelişimi ve yaşam boyu öğrenmenin sürdürülebilmesi için örgün eğitim kurumlarının dışında alternatif eğitim olanaklarına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Türkiye'de yaşam boyu öğrenmeyi destekleyen kurumlar arasında öncelikli ve ağırlıklı bir konuma sahip olan Halk Eğitimi Merkezleri bireylerin kişisel, mesleki ve sosyal gelişimlerine yardımcı olan önemli kurumların başında gelmektedir. Bu nedenle de Halk Eğitimi Merkezi eğitimcilerinin sorunlarının belirlenmesi ve çözülmesi, yetişkin eğitiminin niteliğine ve izlenebilirliğine olumlu katkı sağlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda araştırmanın amacı, Halk Eğitimi Merkezlerindeki yetişkin eğitimcilerin sorunlarına ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemek ve bulgulara dayalı olarak öneriler geliştirmektir. Halk Eğitimi Merkezlerindeki yetişkin eğitimcilerin sorunları hakkında derinlemesine bilgi edinebilmek için nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenoloji deseni tercih edilmiş, çalışma gurubu da amaçlı örnekleme tekniklerinden maksimum çeşitlilik örnekleme ile belirlen otuz altı katılımcıdan oluşturulmuştur. Araştırmanın verileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu ile toplanmıştır. Araştırma bulgularına göre eğitimcilerin sorunları *kurumsal sorunlar*, *mesleki sorunlar* ve *kursiyer sorunları* temalarında; eğitimcilerin sorunlarla baş etme yaklaşımları *destek alma yaklaşımı*, *planlı yaklaşım* ve *tepkisel yaklaşım* temalarında; Halk Eğitimi Merkezi yöneticilerinin eğitimcilerin sorunlarına ilişkin yaklaşımları da *destekleyici* ve *duyarsız yaklaşım* temaları altında toplanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları toplu bir şekilde değerlendirildiğinde Halk Eğitimi Merkezlerinin eğitimcilerin sorunlarına yönelik kurumsal çözüm stratejileri oluşturması; eğitimcilerin kadrolu bir şekilde istihdam edilmesi, çalıştıkları olumsuz koşulların düzeltilmesi ve ihtiyaç duydukları psikolojik, sosyal, teknolojik ve fiziksel desteklerin sağlanması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Halk eğitimi merkezi, yetişkin eğitimi, ücretli eğitimci, eğitimcilerin sorunları

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ABSTRACT:Alternative education opportunities are needed outside of formal education institutions to train individuals, develop skills, and sustain lifelong learning. Adult Education Centres, which have a priority and predominant position among institutions that support lifelong learning in Türkiye, are among the leading institutions that help individuals' personal, professional, and social development. For this reason, identifying and solving the challenges of Adult Education Centres instructors positively contributes to the quality and traceability of adult education. In this context, the study aims to determine the opinions of adult instructors in Adult Education Centres about their challenges and to develop suggestions based on the findings. For this purpose, to obtain in-depth information about the challenges of adult instructors in Adult Education Centres, the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research methods, was preferred in the study, and the study group was formed from thirty-six participants determined by maximum diversity sampling, one of the purpose sampling techniques. The research data were collected with a semi-structured interview form. According to the findings, the challenges of the instructors were in the themes of *institutional challenges*, *professional challenges*, and *trainee challenges*; trainers' approaches to coping with problems were in the themes of the *support-seeking approach*, *the planned approach*, and *the reactive approach*; Adult Education Centres directors' approaches to the challenges of trainers have gathered the themes of the supportive and *insensitive approach*. When the results of the study are evaluated collectively, the Adult Education Centres should create institutional solution strategies for the problems of the instructors; It is recommended that the trainers be employed permanently, that the unfavourable conditions they work in are corrected and that the psychological and social, technological, and physical support they need is provided.

Keywords: Adult education centre, adult education, temporary instructor, instructors' challenges

INTRODUCTION

Cohesive societies have emerged in the presence of individuals who have the skills and competencies required to access, generate, organise, and disseminate knowledge. Individuals who strive to develop themselves throughout their lifetime are of utmost importance. Lifelong learning refers to pursuing education and personal growth in response to changing circumstances and needs (Aksoy, 2013). Also, it is vital for enhancing the quality of life and overall wellbeing and is necessary to offer alternative education opportunities beyond formal educational institutions to foster the development of these skills and facilitate lifelong learning. Adult Education Centres (AECs) in Türkiye provide non-formal education services, supporting individuals' personal, professional, and social development through various training programs. Originally AECs established to teach reading and writing to adults who had passed the age of traditional schooling and then have evolved into comprehensive adult education institutions that aim to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Effective adult education in AECs requires a competent instructor, a well-designed training program, and a supportive learning environment. Among these variables, the trainer plays a particularly critical role in overcoming educational challenges and facilitating learning. At the European Union level, the Lifelong Learning Program aims to encompass all formal and informal learning activities, and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) provides a common reference framework for linking various qualifications across participating countries (MoNE/MEB, 2011). The EQF's implementation in Türkiye addresses leading to greater harmonisation of lifelong learning practices and developing more effective employment policy through establishing school-work partnerships. However, currently, no efforts are underway to enhance the qualifications of AEC trainers in Türkiye. Also, it has been observed that these centres tend to prioritise short-term personnel needs over the long-term development of institutional capacity and culture (Bayram, 2009; Kuşaksız, 2011). The reliance on short-term employment of AEC trainers may compromise the quality of training and hinder the development of adult learners participating in courses. Therefore, addressing the challenges of trainers working in AECs could improve the quality and sustainability of the training process and support the personal growth of adult learners. In this context, the research aims to explain the views of public education centre instructors about their challenges and to develop suggestions based on the findings.

1.1. Conceptual Framework

Lifelong learning and lifelong education are processes that contribute to individuals' lives. According to Billett (2010), lifelong learning is a personal process, while lifelong education is an institutional reality that is socially imposed and implemented, usually providing specific learning experiences. Institutions that offer adult education vary regarding their target groups, instructional content, facilitators, institutional regulations, funding structures, and regulations (Lattke, 2014). Adult education should be conducted in an environment where learners (participants) feel comfortable, the facilitator and learners have good communication, teamwork is applied for learning, and the needs of adult learners are met (Başaran, 1996). To achieve the goals of adult education, the adult and the facilitator need to conduct educational activities within a specific plan, continue the education process in a problem-centred manner, and use more practice-based skills (Reed, 1988). As emphasised in Knowles' (1970) Andragogy Theory, the selection of methods, techniques, and tools in adult education depends on the needs and interests, gender, economic status, professional and cultural structure, knowledge and skills, expectations, age, physical condition, and other aspects of the adult learners

participating in the course. In adult education, lifelong experience is significant. If the adult learners' experiences are ignored or seen as worthless, adults see it as a denial not only of their experiences but also of themselves. Therefore pedagogy should differ from adult education (Knowles et al., 2015). The role of the adult instructor becomes more defined when they are able to identify the unique traits of adult learners and make informed decisions regarding their teaching methods. Therefore, a qualified adult instructor can recognize the adult learners' traits and to improve the process.

Providing high-quality adult education is crucial as it can influence the behaviour of learners in their personal and social lives. Therefore, it's essential to offer adult education programs that cater to the social needs of adults and are in demand. Such improvement can depend on using qualified personnel as adult instructors (Sava & Lupou, 2009). In addition to possessing professional knowledge, these instructors should also have strong interpersonal skills (Peynirci, 2014). The demand for such qualified instructors is a social necessity in the changing world, marked by social, economic, and political transformations (Jōgi & Gross, 2009). According to *Andragogy Theory* (Knowles, 1970), if adult educators consider the characteristics of adults and convince the adult learner about the function of new knowledge, skills and behaviours in the education process, the adult becomes ready for learning. Similarly, the educator has a role in motivating the adult's learning process continuation. Therefore, educators need to have essential competencies in the characteristics and learning of adult learners.

Adult education institutions in Türkiye affiliated with the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning covering the public education centre that organizes lifelong learning activities, maturation institutes and open education (open secondary school, open high school, open education "Imam Hatip High School", vocational open education high school, vocational and technical open education school) (MoNE/MEB, 2018). In addition to these, municipalities, unions, institutes, in-service training units and professional organizations are among the institutions that provide non-formal education (Güneş & Deveci, 2022). The experiences of Nation Schools, Public Houses and Village Educator Courses, which provided education to the public before AECs became operational in Türkiye in 1953, are important initiatives that significantly contributed to the people's education. The structuring of AECs in 1953 coincided with the beginning of new searches in the field of educational administration in Türkiye. With the establishment of AECs, non-formal education activities have gradually expanded, and many adults have participated in training and benefited from institutions. According to the Lifelong Learning Directorate Monitoring Report (MoNE/MEB, 2022), the Lifelong Learning Directorate has 24 maturation institutes and 995 public education centres affiliated. When compared with formal education, including preschool, primary, secondary, and higher education institutions, many institutions, and organizations are involved in the execution and organization of non-formal education. For this reason, uncertainties and changes are seen at a high rate in the management process of non-formal education institutions. However, when we look at the studies carried out before AECs in Türkiye, AECs are the adult education organizations where the concept of Lifelong Learning is the most systematically operated. They reach a comprehensive number of adults. However, many adults need training but cannot attend the courses. According to EuroStat (2019) data, it is seen that the participation rate in adult education in Türkiye is 6.2% and remains below the EU average (11.1%). According to data from 2020, there are a total of 82,310 personnel employed in Adult Education Centres (AECs) in Türkiye, with 73,147 of them being on secondment and 9,163 being permanent staff (MoNE/MEB, 2021). This indicates that many instructors in AECs are employed on a short-term basis. The first reason for this is the priority given to basic education to overcome the problems experienced in ensuring schooling in Türkiye as well as in the world. The second is that adult education is not seen as an urgent need in terms of the use of financial resources. Therefore, the resources allocated to adult education are limited. Thus,

this limitation has significant implications for the professional development of these instructors, the formation of an institutional culture, and the overall quality of education provided. The studies should identify the challenges facing instructors in AECs and develop appropriate solutions and education policies to ensure adult education's efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. However, due to the dominant neoliberal economic understanding in public administration, States have sought to reduce costs by increasing the involvement of the private sector in education services, leading to a reduction in the personnel number in the public sector (Bayram, 2009; Kuşaksız, 2011; Şişman, 2021). According to Bağcı (2014), although the need and demand for an equitable adult education increased rapidly between 1995 and 2011, its expenditures and the corresponding teacher capacity did not incline at the same rate. Public budget policies do not support discourses emphasizing equality in adult education. The legal basis for the practice of employing instructors on a short-term basis contained in paragraph 4/C of Article 4 of the Civil Servants Law No. 657 (Official Newspaper, 1965) and the decision on the course and additional course hours of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE/MEB) directors and instructors. As per the laws, when there is a lack of staff, it's permissible to hire temporary, part-time, and substitute personnel or instructors, also known as temporary teachers or instructors. The definitions have resulted in the short-term employment of instructors solely in exchange for course fees. Besides, inequalities emerge between short-term and long-term employed instructors, such as discrepancies in wages, leave entitlements, and social benefits, which may prevent short-term employed instructors from achieving personal satisfaction economically and psychologically and hinder AECs from effectively fulfilling their functions. Since different sectors provide adult education, Nuissl (2009) stated that the training and qualifications of adult education personnel are very diverse. Adult education personnel's training has no systematic and organized structure which is a critical prerequisite. According to the employment conditions of the adult instructor, a few numbers of them work especially for adult education and in an institutional context. Many personnel are engaged in precarious employment conditions, or a job partly related to adult education activities. Likewise, Jütte et al. (2011) stated that the work of an adult educator varies depending on the sector (vocational or general adult education) and institutional affiliation.

Professional instructors are critical for the successful delivery of adult education. Mezirow (2000) with *Transformational Learning Theory* emphasized that adults' transformational learning can lead to a developmentally more inclusive, differentiated, permeable and integrated perspective. The transformational learning aims to think independently. Based on Mezirow's theory, the role of adult instructors is to encourage adult learners to think with greater autonomy. To ensure the qualifications of these instructors, they must receive both andragogical and formation training. Hence, after adult instructors are employed, AEC managers should guide, plan, and organize in-service training and professional development practices for adult instructors to receive andragogy training. To optimise the success of the educational process, adult education centre (AEC) managers should carefully consider the qualifications and abilities of their instructors when structuring the management process, establish institutional standards, and provide the necessary support. Thus, AEC can deal with policies related issues. AEC instructors are the primary human resources of AEC. Moreover, AEC's way of employing human resources explains some theoretical issues. It requires assessing the qualifications of trainers in terms of the assumptions of organizational and management theories. Accordingly, in human resource management theory, the organizational goal is to move beyond mere administrative functions. Organizations have to prioritise the development of employee qualifications and abilities to meet the needs of both the individual and the organisation (Can, 2021). As a result of this assumption, AEC managers identify the educators' qualifications and take the necessary steps for their development can contribute to the effectiveness of the education process. From another perspective, the AEC managers

and MoNE can view the development of adult instructors' qualifications as the social capital of AEC institutions. Because the social capital theory highlights the value of individuals' abilities, competencies, experiences, and specialisations as resources for the organisation. At the same time, Putnam's (2000) *Social Capital Theory* emphasized that individuals' abilities, competencies, experiences, particular skill areas, and individual or group specialization are significant resources for the organization. As a result, increasing investment in instructors can improve education quality and efficiency and contribute to achieving organisational goals (İşevi & Çelme, 2005). Lastly, the perspective of educational administration should address the development adult educators' qualifications for organizational justice. The organisational justice theory suggests that damage to perceptions of justice can adversely affect individuals' attitudes and performance (Miles, 2012). In the case of AEC instructors, who may be classified as either permanent or non-permanent staff and may compare themselves unfavourably to other workers of the MoNE, this may negatively impact their motivation and ultimately their institutional commitment and the efficiency and quality of adult education.

The literature review suggests that adult education in Türkiye lacks adequate social, political, and economic support (MoNE/MEB, 2018). Türkoğlu and Uça (2011) investigated the challenges of adult education centres (AECs). Sabancı and Rodoplu (2013) examined the issues encountered in AEC supervision. Yazar and Lala (2018) explored the problems faced by teachers, master trainers, and trainees in AECs. Lele (2020) determined the factors affecting adult instructors' teaching styles and teaching style preferences. He found a significant relationship between teaching style and demographic factors such as age, years of teaching experience, and teaching subject. In his quantitative study, Onwuadi (2012) evaluated adult instructors' training needs and their level of proficiency in using teaching materials. Smith (1976) tried to list the characteristics that adult educators and administrators should have in his descriptive study. Groen et al. (2013) investigated how four adult female educators cope with the experience of transitioning to an online asynchronous adult learning environment. Housel (2022), on the other hand, explored the possibility of the pandemic to elevate adult learning and restructure existing policies and practices from the perspectives of program managers and educators in adult education programs. In this context, the difference of this study from the studies in the literature is that it evaluates the experiences of adult instructors in AEC from a multi-angle perspective. One of the solutions for adults to acquire and develop some basic skills is to solve the problems of instructors working in the AEC. Thus, this study aims to determine adult instructors' opinions in AECs about their challenges and to develop recommendations based on the findings. The sub-problems of the research are as follows:

1. What are the views of AEC instructors on the challenges they face at AECs?
2. What are the views of AEC instructors on the strategies they use for addressing challenges?
3. What are AEC instructors' views on their director's approach during the AEC instructors face the challenges?

METHOD

This study employs a phenomenological design, a qualitative research method, to gain a deep understanding of the challenges faced by adult instructors in adult education centres (AECs). Qualitative research is a type of empirical research that involves collecting data in the form of words and images to understand a phenomenon in a holistically and subjecting this data to an inductive analysis process (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). Parallel to this, phenomenology aims to obtain in-depth insights based on the experiences of individuals who can express the meaning, structure, and essence of a phenomenon

(Christensen et al., 2020). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) defined phenomenology as a qualitative research design as well as philosophy. According to him, although all qualitative studies benefit from the philosophy of phenomenology and its emphasis on human experiences, phenomenology is a research design with its specific principles, methodological approach, and tools. In other words, phenomenology seeks to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences and how they communicate these meanings to the outside world (Patton, 2015). In this study, the phenomenological design is used to explore the psychological essence of the meanings attributed to the experiences of adult instructors in AECs regarding the challenges they face. We analyzed broad research questions and examples in depth by comparing different people's experiences to get the gist of the phenomenon and found discoveries and unexpected themes. This research, in a phenomenological way, examined the meaning ascribed to the phenomena in depth, from every angle, through intense and deep interviews, with a focus on individual experiences, and revealed the psychological and cultural essence of that experience.

2.1. Participants

The participants for this research were selected using maximum diversity sampling, a purposeful sampling technique, to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of adult instructors in AECs concerning the challenges they face. This technique aims to reveal common experiences within a heterogeneous group that is diverse in various aspects (Patton, 2015). Additionally, in phenomenological research, the study group is composed of individuals who have experienced the events and phenomena related to the research topic and can describe them (Yazıcıoğlu & Erdoğan, 2014). Therefore, the researchers gathered data from adult instructors working in different branches of Adult Education Centres affiliated with Izmir province in April and May 2022. The researchers determined that the data reached the saturation point after 36 interviews. Given the diversity of courses and instructors in AECs, the researchers formed a study group of this size to achieve maximum diversity, including trainers with different experiences in various courses.

The study group consisted of 36 participants, 16 females and 20 males. The age range of the participants was distributed as follows: 20-25 years (3 participants), 26-30 years (13 participants), 31-35 years (8 participants), 36-40 years (4 participants), 41-45 years (6 participants), 46-50 years (2 participants). In terms of professional seniority, 7 participants had 1-5 years of experience, 12 had 6-10 years, 10 had 11-15 years, 4 had 16-20 years, and 3 had 21 or more years. In terms of organisational seniority, 23 participants had 1-5 years, 7 had 6-10 years, and 6 had 11-15 years. Additionally, 7 participants held associate degrees and 29 held bachelor's degrees. The researchers chose the participants from 10 Adult Education Centres located in different districts. The positions of all AEC instructors participating in the research are temporary and master trainer.

2.2. Data Collection

In this study, data were collected through face-to-face interviews with participants using a semi-structured interview form containing open-ended questions to explore their experiences regarding potential challenges. While preparing the interview questions, firstly we did a literature review (Dolanbay, 2014; Kuşaksız, 2011; Öner, 2014; Polat & Polat, 2020; Sabancı & Rodoplu, 2013; Sava & Lupou, 2009; Türkoğlu & Uça, 2011; Yazar & Lala, 2018). The researchers created a question pool containing twelve questions. As a result of a literature review, the researchers create the interview questions and collected them in a pool of questions. In the third step, we used the criteria of relevance,

orientation, clarity, and helping to understand the psychological foundations of the case to select questions from the question pool. The researchers selected the questions that fit the criteria in question from the pool of questions. In the fourth stage, the questions were subjected to expert review. To determine whether the revised questions are for the in-depth information desired within the scope of the research, two experts from the departments of Lifelong Learning and Adult Education and Education Management shared opinions about the revised questions. After the expert examined the questions, the researchers reduced the number of questions to three. Then, a pilot study tried five adult instructors not included among the participants to examine the intelligibility of the questions by the target audience. The pilot study involved a few results, and the researchers revised the questions. Finally, as a result of the pilot application, the form was revised again based on feedback and suggestions for its suitability for the study purpose and was finalised for use. The semi-structured form contained three questions about the phenomenon of adult instructors in AEC regarding their challenges and the dimensions of the phenomenon including the challenges faced by AEC instructors, their coping approaches, and the approaches of AEC administrators.

The researchers contacted adult instructors were beforehand to obtain consent and schedule an appointment for a one-on-one interview lasting between 45 and 60 minutes, recording to collect the data. To elicit in-depth responses during the interviews, the interviews contain the form of a conversational exchange, the researchers asked open-ended questions supported by probing questions (*What challenges do you face as an AEC instructor? How did you cope with these challenges as an AEC instructor? What approaches did AEC managers take towards addressing the challenges faced by you?*). Following the interviews, each participant was duly confirmed, and their consent obtained. Subsequently, they were furnished with a copy of the recording. It was ensured that the requisite confirmation and consent were obtained from the participants prior to sharing the recording. The data collection process took approximately three months to complete.

2.3. Data Analysis

The phenomenological design is a perspective that seeks to explore and deeply understand the experiences of individuals and how they make sense of these experiences over time (Thomson et al., 2017). According to Husserl, phenomenology is a philosophy (Patton, 2015). Husserl defines phenomenology as "*revealing that what is grasped following perception is not just something existing and persists in the perceiving gaze, but something that existed before, before this gaze is turned to itself, an intentional life that is constantly flowing through consciousness*" definitions (Husserl, 1973). Husserl explained that to see the phenomena we are dealing with as they are, people will get away from their prejudices and reach reality (essence) by questioning the thought and culture that is adopted by society (Husserl, 2023). In phenomenology, data analysis can be conducted using either descriptive or hermeneutic approaches (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The study used content analysis technique and hermeneutic approach in conjunction to analyse the participant experiences. Content analysis is to conceptualize the data and identify themes based on describing the phenomenon. The findings are then explained and interpreted within the context of the emerging themes and patterns (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The analysis followed a staged sequence: first, transcription of the audio recordings were, and grouping of the participant responses according to the research questions. Then, coding included performed at the word, line, or paragraph level to identify the intended meaning (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Themes brought together similar codes. In the next stage, the researchers systematically organised data according to the emerging codes and themes and reported using direct quotations.

During the data analysis process, the researchers paid attention to ensure validity and reliability. Firstly, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), among the criteria regarding reliability and validity, researchers should clearly define their roles, and the researchers' report should be transparent and systematic to ensure transferability (validity). Therefore, to prevent individual comments, whether intentional or not, from distorting or filtering the information and influencing the data analysis, the results were compared by returning to the participant views at every stage of the analysis and care was taken to reflect the participant's experiences accurately. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2021) and LeCompte and Goetz (1982) claim that the strategy of saving the raw data increases the reliability of the study. Secondly, the researchers retained raw data for potential use as a comparison tool in future research, and efforts increased reliability (verifiability). Thirdly, when there was no inconsistency between the codes, themes, which represent the most abstract level of the phenomenon, emerged based on the part-whole relationship (Carlsson Lalloo et al., 2021). The researchers gave direct quotations from the participants' views to provide evidence for the determined codes and themes, and considered the criteria of explanatory, diversity and extreme examples were in the selection of quotations. The aim was to present and represent the collected data as effectively as possible. To this end, the researchers selected quotations consistent with the themes for clarity, presented the different opinions of various participants as much as possible for diversity, and shared a small number of opinions that encompassed all dimensions of the themes as extreme examples. In addition, the internal validity related with expert review, and external validity (transferability) was ensured by thoroughly describing the research process. The researchers presented the codes together with the frequencies and digitized them to indicate the frequency in the codes. For encoder reliability, Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula was used ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Consensus}}{\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement}} \times 100$). According to the formula, the reliability rate was 97%, 94%, and 95% for the three questions. As a result of the data analysis, three themes related to instructors' challenges and instructors' approaches to coping with these challenges, as well as two themes related to directors' approaches to instructors' challenges, were identified. The themes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Themes Generated as a Result of Data Analysis

Sub-Problems	Themes
1. What are the views of AEC instructors on the challenges they face at AECs?	Organisational Challenges
	Professional Challenges
	Course Participant Challenges
2. What are the views of AEC instructors on the strategies they use for addressing challenges?	Approach to Receiving Support
	Planned Approach
	Reactive Approach
3. What are AEC instructors' views on their director's approach during the AEC instructors face the challenges?	Supportive Approach
	Insensitive Approach

2.4. Research Ethics and the Role of Researchers

The research was conducted under the ethical rules Ege University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee by the ethical rules after obtaining the approval of the Ethics Committee dated 24.06.2020 and numbered 09/01. Before conducting the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose and expected benefits of the research, the procedures to be followed, any potential

risks, and what was expected of them through consent form. Before proceeding with the research, they must obtain approval. The semi-structured interview form does not contain any elements that may cause disturbance, offense, or disruption to the participants. To preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, the study employed coded pseudonyms in lieu of real names and refrained from revealing their identities.

The analysis of qualitative research is inherently subjective because researchers have a participatory role. The researchers engaged with the participants, coded and decontextualised the data and then recontextualised it. Throughout the research process, researchers have the role of ensuring rigour and reliability. At the same time, the researchers put aside their existing knowledge and assumptions. Furthermore, they reflected the participants' thoughts with an open mind. Being aware of their perspectives, the researchers presented the participants' experiences.

2.4. Limitations of the Study

Phenomenological research typically employs in-depth, multiple interviews as a primary method for collecting data. Other techniques that may be utilised include participant observation, action research, focus groups, and the analysis of personal texts (Giorgi, 1997; Lester, 1999). While this study utilised a single interview with each participant to explore their AEC experiences, efforts were made to mitigate potential limitations associated with this approach. These efforts included probing questions to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the participants' views, confirmation of statements made by participants, and sharing audio recordings with participants following the interview to ensure the accuracy of interpretation.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Challenges of AEC Instructors

The first sub-problem of the research is stated as "What are the views of AEC instructors on the challenges they face at AECs?" The codes and themes created for the sub-problem are given in Figure 1.

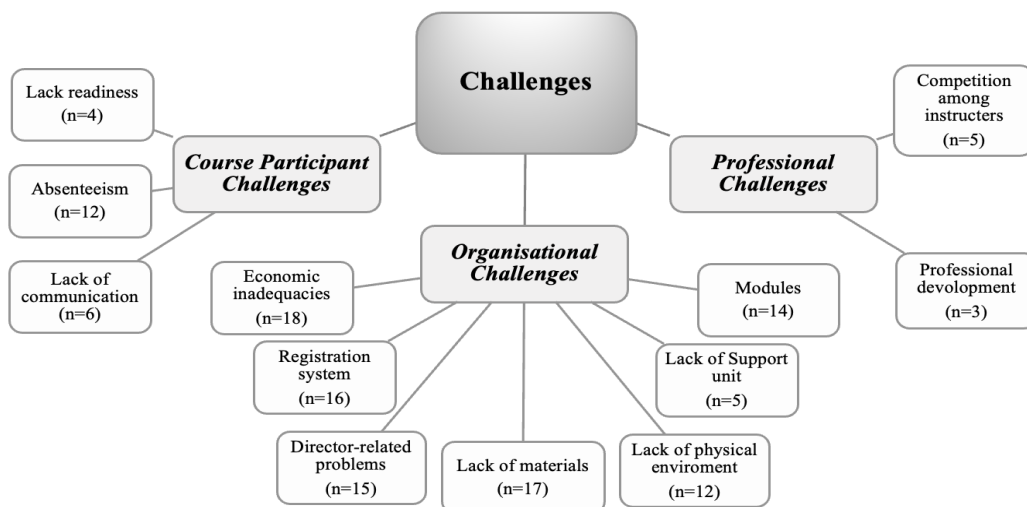


Figure 1: Challenges of AEC Instructors

When the views of the participants on the challenges faced by AEC instructors were analysed, the themes of “*organisational challenges, professional challenges, and course participant challenges*” were identified. According to the participants’ views, firstly, the theme of *organisational challenges* is related to the organization itself, its structure, and its deficiencies. Secondly the theme of *professional challenges* is related to the content of work done. Thirdly the theme of the course participants’ *challenges* is related to the adult learners’ characteristics.

The theme of *organisational challenges* was derived from the participants’ opinions and experiences regarding the structural difficulties of working in an adult education centre. Within this theme, the codes of “*economic inadequacies (n=18), registration system (n=16), director-related problems (n=15), lack of materials (n=17), lack of physical environment (n=12), lack of support unit (n=5), and modules (n=14)*” were identified.

The code of *economic inadequacies* refers to the low course fees received by the AECs. In this code, participants mentioned that the course fees they received were not enough to sustain their lives. Some instructors also emphasised that they do the additional job(s) due to the low course fees. An excerpt from the participants’ statements related to this code is as follows:

“I do not have any expectations for the future with the course fee. I am both doing the job and looking for new jobs for myself. I get less than the minimum wage. If you do what they say to do, I must take a 2-hour module. The 2-hour module is 40 Liras in December. Forty Turkish Liras per day of the course.” K27

The *registration system* code refers to the high number of procedures required for student registration. In this code, participants mentioned the negativities they experienced in opening courses. The instructors stated that they had difficulties in preparing the necessary documents, finding students for the courses, and approving the courses. An excerpt from the participants’ views on this code is as follows:

“I find the student, talk to the place where the course will be opened. They request to HEM for the course to be opened. A list is made for the courses to be opened at AEC. If I do not have enough points as an instructor, if I am not ahead in the ranking, someone else opens a course at the student I find and the course place I arrange. They give the course to whoever is next on the list. This time I talk to my friends and try to persuade them. If they show understanding, they give me their turn. Sometimes they may not give their turn. We have serious problems with the opening of the course.” K33

The *director-related problems* code refers to the lack of supportive behaviour of AEC directors towards the instructors. In this code, the participants shared their experiences about how the directors at the AECs made their jobs more difficult rather than helping them. Some of them also claimed that directors showed favouritism and discriminatory behaviour. An excerpt from the participants’ statements related to this code is as follows:

“In front of the manager, you feel that you are not treated as a human being. His behaviour towards me changes because I am a master. He never treats us like human beings. Another problem is that he tells us to work in the basement. Something happens in the classroom, and he sends us somewhere else. ... The principal calls me to his office every 3-4 months. He said, “Why are you opening courses? I asked, “When will it be my turn to open a

course?" He said, "You'll find out when it's your turn, we'll call you." I can't get any help. I can't get any help. The other day I was 10 minutes late for class.... If you don't turn up on time again, I'll close the course. He said, "We will see you when you come here, if you want to take time off, you will call us. He offended me a lot. There is no good style." K12

The *lack of materials* code refers to the lack of support from the AEC in terms of the materials needed for training. In this code, the participants stated that they provided the necessary materials for the courses with their means and that the AEC did not allocate any resources in this regard. An excerpt from the participants' views on this code is as follows:

"There is no material or support for lessons at the AEC. I requested materials, but they said we do not have a budget. Our students provided the materials themselves, and sometimes the authorities at the place where the course is held meet our requests. I don't want it to be this way, there has been such a problem for years. I try to cover everything myself. I have never seen a penny extra from the AEC until now." K33

The *lack of a physical environment* code refers to the fact that most of the training practices is carried out outside the AEC building. In this code, the participants mentioned that the physical facilities of the AEC were not suitable for conducting courses and that they tried to overcome this problem with their efforts. An excerpt from the participants' statements related to this code is as follows:

"There are problems in finding a place for courses. If an institution has requested a course, if it is my turn for the course, I go to the place indicated by the institution for the course. In general, we have problems finding a place for courses. Sometimes we go to any school principals and ask for classrooms. We do not want to change our current place. Because I don't want someone else to come and take the foundation you have laid here. I don't want to find classrooms from someone else. At the same time, if another instructor has tried, I don't want to be on top of it." K1

The code of *lack of support unit* refers to the lack of an interlocutor for instructors when they encounter any challenges. In this code, the participants stated that there is no formal or informal unit within the AEC for the procedural problems they experience in opening and conducting courses. An excerpt from the participants' views in this code is as follows:

"There is no unit where I can get help when I have problems. AEC asks us to collect some documents. They did not help us in case of lack of materials, personal problems or problems related to our field. There is no one to guide us in this regard. They are all sitting at their desks. When I asked why my course was not opened, there were even directors who said, "How do I know and am I the keeper of your course?" K3

The code of *the modules* refers to the disadvantages caused by the division of the training service into modules. In this code, the participants mentioned the challenges they experienced due to the superficiality of the content and the short duration of the modules. An excerpt from the participant statements related to this code is as follows:

"We have very serious problems with the modules. There are problems in the distribution of the hours of the subjects in the modules. The topics that can be given in a few hours are given for weeks. I must spread the lessons over many weeks. The topics that are difficult and long enough to last for weeks are usually compressed into 8-16 hours." K15

The second theme is professional challenges. This theme encompassed the specific challenges encountered by AEC instructors in their roles. Within this theme, two codes were identified: “*competition among instructors (n=5)* and *professional development (n=3)*.” Both codes demonstrate the unique challenges faced by AEC instructors and highlight the importance of addressing these issues to support the success and well-being of these professionals.

The code of *competition among instructors* refers to the experiences of these instructors regarding any issues they encounter with their colleagues, whether direct or indirect. In this code, they mentioned the friction between colleagues about the order of opening courses, cliques, and space allocation/classroom availability. An excerpt from the participants’ views on this code is as follows:

“We have problems among instructors. Sometimes they can be selfish. They complain behind each other’s backs. If the number of trainees of a teacher is low and a warning message is not sent, they complain. I make labour, but he comes and sits. He satisfies his own ego. Common-use areas are a problem among trainers. For those who open courses in the same place, sharing is problematic. Hours overlap. One instructor tried to take the students I taught. When students want to work with another teacher, the course is closed if there are not enough students.” K10

The *professional development* code includes the difficulties experienced by these as they seek to improve their skills and knowledge in their field. In this code, they emphasised that they could not find solutions and had difficulties in their efforts for their professional development due to the lack of official in-service training programmes of MoNE. An excerpt from the participants’ statements in this code is as follows:

“We are experiencing difficulties individually. Something new is constantly coming out, and everything is renewed. I am a handicraft teacher, and new works and techniques are constantly emerging in my field. If there were training for professional development, it would be much easier for me to participate in this training. However, I try to learn new techniques through trial and error by watching videos on YouTube or social media.” K15

The third theme identified by the participants in their experiences as AEC instructors involved challenges related to the course participants themselves. This theme was characterised by three principal codes: “*lack of readiness (n=4)*, *absenteeism (n=12)*, and *lack of communication (n=6)*.”

The code of *lack of readiness* referred to the educational level difference between the course participants, which could present challenges for the instructors in terms of effectively delivering the material. In the context of this code, it was noted by the instructors that the absence of prerequisites for AEC courses leads to a diverse range of learners with differing levels of education being enrolled in the same class. This can pose challenges for instructors in terms of providing well-suited instruction to the needs and abilities of all learners and ensuring that all students can engage with and benefit from the material thoroughly. An excerpt from the participants’ views on this issue is as follows:

“University graduates and housewives also come to the computer course. Everyone who does not know how to switch on or switch off the computer, who is not closely related to technology but who wants to improve themselves comes. I have difficulties in maintaining the level among adults. I like working with adults very much. Some trainers know how to work with adults well, some do not know much. I sometimes have difficulty in maintaining the level difference.” K14

The code of *absenteeism* referred to the issue of adult trainees not attending the course regularly, which could disrupt the learning process and hinder the achievement of learning objectives. This means that the instructors faced a common problem in that a significant number of trainees did not complete the courses. This was problematic as the regulations stipulate that courses must be closed if the number of students falls below a certain threshold, typically seven. An excerpt from the participants' statements on this issue is as follows:

"AECs frequently send messages about absenteeism. I get in trouble because students are absent. I am very uncomfortable with this. When they come to inspect the classrooms, if there are not at least seven students in the classroom, we are almost scolded. AEC management is not understanding. They have closed the course. I always experience this threat. We have problems in this regard." K7

The code of *lack of communication* referred to challenges that arose due to the communication style between the trainees and the instructor, potentially affecting the overall effectiveness of the training. Accordingly, instructors stated that they encountered communication problems between students and instructors during the lesson due to educational level and age differences. An excerpt from the participant views in this code is as follows:

"I have problems with the trainees. I teach pastry. There is a lot of interest in the course. It is difficult to work with students over 50 years old. Everyone has a lion in their heart. Everyone thinks they are a pastry chef when they take a course. I show people who have never made anything other than cakes how to make a cake. When they can't do it, they ask me, "Why didn't I do it? Why couldn't I do it?" they get angry with me. I have problems in the lessons because of the style of the students. They have speech problems due to the environment they live in." K35

As a result, based on the participants' experiences, it was seen that the challenges faced by AEC instructors were grouped under three themes: *"organisational challenges, professional challenges and course participants challenges"* Participants primarily stated that economic inadequacies, registration system, problems stemming from directors, lack of materials, lack of physical environment, lack of a support unit and institutional problems related to modules hinder them in the delivery and implementation of training services. In another theme, professional challenges, the participants talked about the specific difficulties of being AEC instructors, their feelings of inadequacy in professional development and the feelings created by competition among educators. In the last theme, where they touched on the challenges of the trainees, the participants shared their negative experiences about the lack of readiness, absenteeism, and lack of communication of the trainees during the training. As a result of these experiences, they experience negative emotional experiences.

3.2. Approaches of AEC Instructors to Cope with Challenges

The second sub-problem of the study was formulated as *"What are the views of AEC instructors on the strategies they use for addressing challenges?"* The coding and themes generated to address this sub-problem are shown in Figure 2.

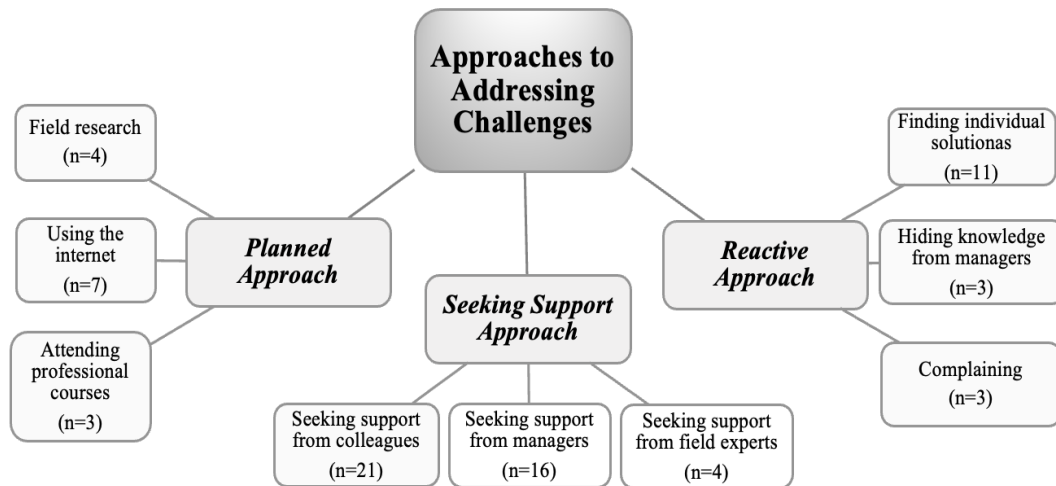


Figure 2: Approaches of AEC Instructors to Cope with Challenges

Upon analysis of the participants' experiences in sharing their approaches to addressing challenges, the themes of "seeking support approach, planned approach, and reactive approach" were identified, as shown in Figure 2. While the *planned approach* theme focuses on potential challenges, the *seeking support approach* and *reactive approach* focus on existing challenges. In addition, while the support approach includes cooperation, the *reactive approach* consists of positive or negative action plans that emerge when educators cannot cooperate.

The first theme, the seeking support approach, was based on the participants' views and experiences of obtaining assistance from their professional environments to solve challenges related to organising and conducting courses. This theme included the codes of "seeking support from colleagues (n=21), seeking support from managers (n=16), and seeking support from field experts (n=4)."

The code of *seeking support from colleagues* involved the collaborative behaviours of the instructors. In this code, instructors stated that they were in constant communication and sharing with their colleagues both on bureaucratic and educational issues and in terms of equipment. An excerpt from the participants' views on this code is as follows:

"I got support from my colleagues in the meantime. We help each other. We can give clothes and shoes to each other. Sometimes I consulted my seniors about the problems related to our students in the courses. Since I have been doing this job for years, there were people who consulted me. I complete the deficiencies of some of my friends. If necessary, I tried to do this by going to their courses and showing them one-to-one. If students are missing at the time of the course opening, we can send students to each other. I helped those who did not know how to fill in the course books. I can get help when making student entries." P11.

The code of *seeking support from managers* referred to the supportive attitudes of the AEC directors in easing the work of the instructors. In line with this, some instructors stated that their directors helped them with procedural issues related to the courses. An excerpt from the participants' statements in this code is as follows:

"I received support from the directors. During the application for the new course, the AEC directors took one-to-one interest in us. After the application, they helped us in every sense

during the course. When I had the slightest problem, they solved it as soon as possible. I did not have any problems during the course, thanks to the directors.” K2

The code of *seeking support from field experts* encompassed the experiences of the participants in receiving knowledge and expertise from experienced colleagues (mentors) within the context of a mentor-mentee relationship. In this code, instructors emphasised the benefits of getting help from experienced people in learning the tricks related to their work. An excerpt from the participants' opinions related to this code is as follows:

“I have been an athlete for 18 years. Being an athlete and being a coach are very different things. When I first started coaching, I could not transfer what I learnt as an athlete to my trainees. So, I trained under someone who was better than me, someone who had been a coach. It was good for me to reach my current position.” K9

The second theme identified by the participants in their experiences of coping with challenges was the planned approach theme. This theme encompassed the views and experiences of the participants regarding the strategies they implemented to address potential and current problems. The planned approach theme included the codes of *“field research (n=4), using the internet (n=7), and attending professional courses (n=3).”*

The *field research* code involved the experiences of the participants in conducting research on the fundamentals of their courses. In the context of this code, the instructors reported conducting field research to gain in-depth knowledge to mitigate challenges in the courses they taught. An excerpt from the participants' statements on this issue is as follows:

“I give folk dances courses. There was a debate about which folk dance was locally correct. So, we researched, and we went back a long way. We researched very old village weddings. We really found some dances. We prepared a booklet based on our research. At the moment, we have an information booklet on folk dances of our region in the culture centre. I do the training according to this booklet.” K12

The *using the internet* code encompassed instructors' efforts to obtain new information about their areas of expertise. Accordingly, the instructors reported using online resources to stay informed about developments in their field of expertise and to gain new knowledge related to their course content. An excerpt from the participants' views on this issue is as follows:

“All trainers in this organisation do more field research than the trainees. It is not something special for me. Because the age is changing, and teaching techniques are changing. What is being done in the field? What is related to this? It is easier to reach. I watch it on YouTube and follow it on the Internet. All my friends are in the same situation.” K16

The *attending professional courses* code included the participants' experiences in transitioning from a teacher to a student role. The instructors reported engaging in professional development by participating in courses taught by subject matter experts to enhance their skills and knowledge. An excerpt from the participants' views on this issue is as follows:

“I attend courses and training a lot. I try to follow the training. I try to renew myself in my field of study. I am very involved in this business, so I constantly follow innovations.” K13

The third theme identified by the participants in their experiences of coping with challenges was the reactive approach theme. This theme encompassed the views and experiences of the participants

regarding the strategies they implemented in response to challenges that had already occurred. The reactive approach theme included the codes of “*finding individual solutions (n=11), hiding knowledge from managers (n=3), and complaining (n=3).*”

The *finding individual solutions* code includes proactive strategies. This code involved the participants' experiences in addressing challenges as they arose. The code of finding individual solutions, indicated that the instructors had to take the initiative in the face of unexpected or unplanned events. An excerpt from the participant statements in this code is as follows:

“I can deal with my course problems as I want. I find solutions to the problems I experience individually. I try to find the source of the problem by conducting individual interviews. I try to overcome it with my own solutions. I usually use the interview with the trainee more. For example, if the student has impulsive behaviour, I try to understand his/her expectations from the course and solve it.” K24

The *hiding knowledge from the managers* code explains the strategies used by the participants with more reactive personality traits. This code encompassed their efforts to prevent problems from escalating. In the context of the code of hiding knowledge from directors, the instructors reported that they often refrained from sharing information with directors due to their perception that the managers were unable to address problems such as absenteeism effectively and that such situations could even be their detriment. The hiding of knowledge from managers was associated that the directors being unable to address AECs' challenges effectively and participants refrained from sharing information with directors due to the viewpoints and values of AEC's society. An excerpt from the participant views related to this code is as follows:

“I try not to reflect my problems to the AEC because when there is a problem, the administration says it is none of our business. I told them once that there was a problem. The student came late, left early, had work, and could not come. When I reflected this problem, they said, “Let’s close your course then.” Instead of solving the problem, the director does the opposite. Somehow, he wants to close the course and get rid of me. A definite solution.” K9

The code of complaining included the participants' experiences in transferring problems to a higher authority. The code of complaining focuses on a different issue other than the codes of finding individual solutions and hiding from directors. In the other two codes, the instructors mentioned that while they dealt with problems related to procedures or course participants, in this code, they found solutions to the problems arising from the directors by trying to reach higher authorities. An excerpt from the participant statements related to this code is as follows:

“There have been times when our directors have told me “How should I know? Am I the keeper of the course?” when I asked why the course was not opening? They do this to many instructors. Because I was qualified for the job, I complained to the necessary authorities and even went above their heads. I know my rights. Even if you know your rights, sometimes you face problems when it comes to opening the course. You end up taking a step back and lowering your head. I have experienced this a lot. In such situations, the person with the higher rank is in the right, not the actual right person.” K3

In general, the researchers identified three themes regarding the participants' approaches to coping with challenges: the planned approach, the seeking support approach, and the reactive approach. According to the seeking support approach, the participants sought help from their colleagues, directors,

and field experts for solutions to their challenges. In the planned approach, which emerged as another solution, the participants stated that they made field research, used the internet, and participated in vocational training related to their fields of expertise to cope with current and potential challenges in the future. In the reactive approach theme, which consists of the participants' experiences in the challenges-solving strategies they employ when they are caught unprepared for any existing challenges, the participants stated that they primarily seek individual solutions to the challenges. When they could not find a solution, they mentioned that they preferred to hide the problem from the directors or to complain about the situation.

3.3. AEC Directors' Approaches to the Challenges of Instructors

The third sub-problem of the study was stated as “*What are AEC instructors' views on their director's approach during the AEC instructors face the challenges?*” The coding and themes developed to address this sub-problem are presented in Figure 3.

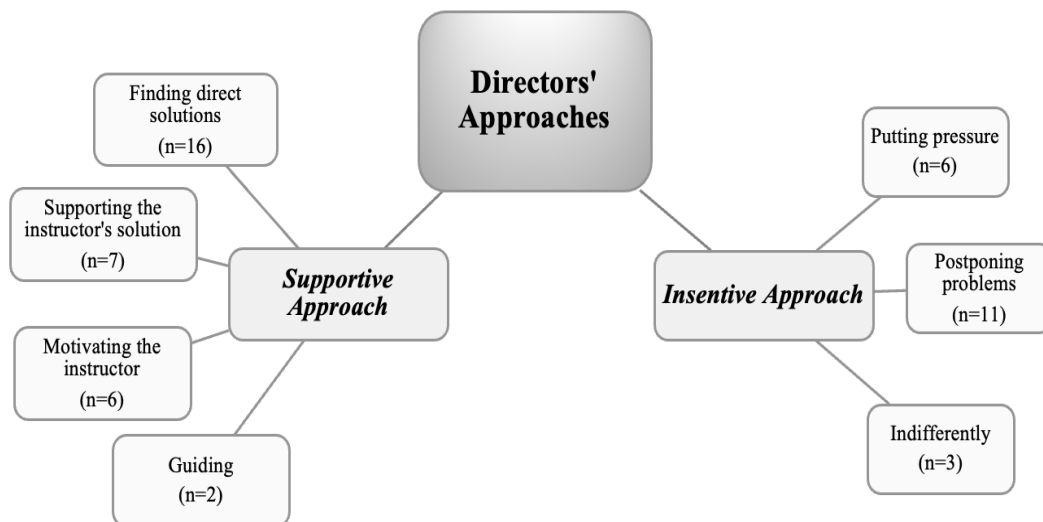


Figure 3: AEC Directors' Approaches to the Challenges of Instructors

When the opinions of the instructors about the approaches of the AEC managers towards the challenges of the instructors were analysed, the themes of “*supportive approach and insentive approach*” shown in Figure 3 were reached. While the *supportive approach* theme consists of positive managerial actions, the *insentive approach* theme represents negative behaviour patterns of managers. The supportive approach theme was formed based on the opinions and experiences of the participants about the behaviours of the AEC managers in generating solutions for the challenges of instructors. This theme has the codes of “*finding direct solutions (n=16), supporting the instructor's solution (n=7), motivating the instructor (n=6), and guiding (n=2).*”

The *finding direct solutions* code includes the experiences of the participants regarding the managers' producing solutions for the instructors. In the code of finding direct solutions, instructors stated that they brought solutions to the challenges of AEC directors in line with their demands. An excerpt from the participants' views on this code is as follows:

“When I had any problem, he directly tried to find a solution to the problem objectively. He went to the root of the problem and produced solutions. In this way, he showed a positive approach.” K18

The *supporting the instructor’s solution* code includes the managers’ approving the solutions suggested by the instructors. In the code of supporting the instructor’s solution, the instructors noted that the AEC directors approached positively or accepted the solution suggestions they presented. An excerpt from the participant statements in this code is as follows:

“He supported me when I found another place due to lack of course places. “As long as you continue your education. Bring solutions. Offer us solution suggestions. We will always be your supporter and behind you.” he said. He helped me when I found a solution.” K2

The *motivating the instructors* code includes the managers’ encouraging the instructors to find their own solutions. In the code of motivating instructors, instructors stated that they were encouraged by the AEC directors to find solutions to challenges. An excerpt from the participant’s views on this code is as follows:

“AEC managers tried to do their best. They tried to help us. They encouraged me if there was something they could do. They did their best to solve my problems. I can talk to them about everything, I can communicate with them, and they find solutions and support us. This motivates me and supports me to find solutions.” K22

The *guiding* code includes the experiences of the participants regarding the managers’ assuming a guiding role in solving the challenges. In the code of guiding, instructors stated that AEC directors offered alternative solutions to them. An excerpt from the participants’ views in this code is as follows:

“Managers are having meetings. In the last meeting, he gave a lesson. He tried to say that if you approach this way, you can happily manage your lesson. He really achieved this. Thank you, thank you. He guides us in every subject and when there is a problem.” K11

The second theme is the insensitive approach theme, in which the participants share their experiences about the approaches of the AEC directors towards solving their challenges. This theme reflects the views and experiences of the participants about the AEC directors’ leaving instructors to deal with their problems on their own. This theme has codes of *“putting pressure (n=6), postponing problems (n=11), and acting indifferently (n=3).”*

The code of *putting pressure* encompasses the experiences of the participants about the punitive attitudes of the directors because they see the instructors as the source of the challenges. In the putting pressure code, the instructors claimed that the directors threatened them and (or) used insulting attitudes in order not to cause problems or not to report the problems to them. An excerpt from the participant statements related to this code is as follows:

“Instead of a solution, the rulers are dragging us into the swamp. He says the solution is wrong. The document was lost. I travelled for three weeks until I found it. Instead of solving my problems, they created problems. So, he’s fuelling the problem. Instead of finding the document themselves, they scolded us. Somehow, he wanted to close the course and get rid of me. When I talked about the problems with the course, he felt uncomfortable. He thinks that instructors always bring problems. To avoid facing this, he sees it more logical to close the course when there is a problem.” K29

The code of *postponing problems* refers to the participants' experiences about the directors' continuous postponement of the solutions to the instructors' problems. In the postponing problems code, instructors emphasised that directors were reluctant to solve challenges and deliberately slowed down the process. An excerpt from the participants' views on this code is as follows:

“When we have a problem, it is passed over. Our problem of opening a course continues. I need to open a course because there are new groups. If the directors want, they can open it in two days. He makes me open it a week and ten days later. He makes me postpone it. He doesn't find a solution. They don't want to deal with it. I go to AEC as an instructor, I am very upset. I have also seen people who are very aggrieved. They deliberately victimise them.” K6

The code of *acting indifferently* includes the experiences of the participants about the directors' ignoring the instructors. In the AEC acting indifferently code, AEC managers' ignoring the instructors and their problems, which affects AEC instructors, has a negative impact on the AEC culture. An excerpt from the participants' statements in this code is as follows:

“AEC directors don't even know about our problems. Because we cannot find them. They are not interested in us anyway. They say they will come to inspect us, but they don't even come to inspect us. They leave us alone in the courses and do not ask about the rest.” K34.

As a matter of fact, in the context of participant experiences, two themes, supportive and insensitive, were revealed regarding AEC directors' approaches to instructors' problems. According to the participants, in the supportive approach, the directors prefer to meet the instructors' expectations with constructive (positive) actions such as finding immediate solutions to the challenges, supporting the individual solutions, motivating the instructor, or directing them. In the insensitive approach, they take a stance away from problem-solving by putting pressure on the instructor, glossing over the problems, or acting indifferent to the instructor.

4. DISCUSSION and RESULT

This study examined the AECs instructors' views to identify their challenges. The challenges experienced by AEC instructors were categorised under the themes of organisational challenges, professional challenges, and course participant challenges. The theme of organisational challenges emerged as the most prominent, and problems observed related to difficulties and experiences stemming from the structure of the AEC. Considering the studies that can be partially associated with this research finding in the literature, according to the results of a study conducted by Öğülmüş et al. (2013) on temporary teachers, teachers were not satisfied with their wages and personal rights, and their commitment to the profession was low. The principals thought that temporary teachers' performance and professional competencies were low. In another study, Demir (2010) found that different forms of employment reduced the sharing of teachers, permanent teachers and directors did not desire non-permanent teachers, and this situation wore down temporary teachers. Another study found that there were no qualified instructors to teach the courses offered at the AEC and that pedagogically inadequate and frequently high school graduates worked instead of qualified instructors. Participants believed that the salaries of AEC instructors were inadequate, similar to temporary teachers working in other schools and institutions (Dolanbay, 2014). According to Bierema (2011) the diversity of institutions, content and personnel related to adult education services makes it hard to have both an individual and a collective sense of professional identity. In terms of the employment conditions of adult education staff, it can be

seen that only small proportion of them work especially for adult education and in an institutional context. Most people who contribute to adult education through their work are either self-employed in precarious employment conditions, for example, or are engaged in a job only partially related to adult education activities, such as employees with training duties in institutions (Nuissl, 2009). According to Jütte et al. (2011), the work of an adult educator varies significantly depending on the sector (vocational or general adult education) and institutional affiliation. In this sense, an incompatible structure is evident in Türkiye regarding professional instructor competencies and the provision of adult education services within the framework of EQF. Therefore, the continuation of problems for current adult instructors means that the effective use of human capital in the AEC is reduced according to the social capital theory. Individuals' abilities, competencies, experiences, specialised skill areas, and individual or group specialisation are essential resources for the organisation (İşevi & Çelme, 2005). Therefore, the quality and efficiency of education increase based on the investment made in instructors by the AECs. On the other hand, emphasizing professional challenges, Onwuadi (2012) determined that adult educators have low proficiency in the effective use of teaching materials and lack adequate training in adapting teaching materials, and this problem hinders educational outcomes. According to the study of Groen et al. (2013), adult educators need technical support at all stages of adapting to education in the online environment, especially at the beginning, as well as individual and institutional support. The current research findings (organisational challenges) may be due to AEC instructors feeling outside their institutional system and experiencing learned helplessness.

The experiences of the adult education centre (AEC) instructors about their approaches to coping with the challenges they experienced were grouped under the themes of receiving support approach, planned approach, and reactive approach. Results indicated that the instructors emphasised the approach of receiving support the most. Adult education centre (AEC) instructors emphasised that they tried to get help from their business environment to solve the problems they experienced in opening and conducting courses. Similarly, a study finding can be directly related to this study result. Instructors without job security were more cautious than others in their relationships with directors, their daily lives were dominated by anxiety and fear, and for this reason, they performed many tasks at school that they did not have to do outside their job descriptions (Demir, 2010). In a study by Dolanbay (2014), many AEC instructors in Türkiye have to do additional work to make a living. Therefore, there is serious competition among them, and the level of instructors' open relationships open to cooperation decreases. Dausien and Schwendowius (2009) also state that the training styles of adult education personnel are very diverse and the effort to increase the number of full-time personnel working in adult education has not been successful. According to another study (Paulos, 2015), because adult educators have a variety of backgrounds and career paths, some use the connective skills and communication skills they acquired in their fundamental education or transferred from previous professional experience unrelated to this career. Paulos emphasizes that there are differences in the qualifications of adult educators at the basic training level, further training level and previous career paths. Despite this, in another study (Housel, 2022), adult education administrators and trainers' views on adult learning and policies during the pandemic process included balancing multiple sources of stress in the process, coping with pandemic uncertainty; virtual classroom participation, remote work and efforts to cope with the digital divide. According to the literature (Demir, 2010; Dolanbay, 2014) and research findings, since most AEC instructors are employed without staff they prefer short-term solution approaches to solve problems. Problem-solving approaches may be related to a decrease in organisational trust. However, according to the theory of organisational justice, damage to the perception of justice may cause adverse effects on individual attitudes and performances (Miles, 2012). The findings may show the assumptions of organizational

justice theory because AEC educators gave up seeking institutionally planned solutions and instead emphasized the approach of getting support among their colleagues, which may be related to the weakening of organizational justice perceptions. Further, results explain that AEC instructors prefer to seek and receive support because they have similar unfavourable conditions and tend to continue their jobs.

The approaches of Adult Education Center (AEC) directors towards the challenges faced by instructors contain two themes: a supportive approach and an insensitive approach. Considering the studies in the literature that can be indirectly associated with this research finding, the study of Polat and Polat (2020) regarding the perception of AEC administrators. These authors found that AEC directors are generally perceived as problem-solving and hardworking leaders with positive characteristics such as being seen as family members, altruists, and unifiers. According to Dolanbay (2014), many AEC courses take place outside the AEC building, making it difficult for directors to establish effective communication and supervision of instructors. Furthermore, many course participants only interact with the instructor and may not be aware of the director's role. According to the theory of human resource management, this can create challenges for AECs in achieving their goals. However, by diagnosing the qualifications of instructors and bringing their skills and abilities to the forefront, AEC directors can develop them in line with individual and organisational needs. This finding may be related to adult education, which Lattke (2014) emphasized in their research, is much less regulated than other parts of the general education system. Also finding may be related to the fact that the adult education field is extremely diverse in terms of target groups, teaching content, providers, institutional arrangements, funding structures and legislation. Adult educators want their problems to be solved by the administration and that administrative practices are insufficient. Onwuadi (2012) identified strategies to increase adult education qualifications as adequate government funding of adult education programs, participation of trainers in refresher courses/continuing education programs, and professionalization in adult education. Based on the present research, findings indicated that AEC directors are aware of the challenges experienced by instructors and demonstrate supportive behaviours in addressing the grievances they identify.

This study explains the views of adult instructors in AEC regarding their challenges, the challenges faced by AEC instructors, their coping approaches, and the approaches of AEC administrators. With the European lifelong learning process, both in the context of increasing the need for adult instructors and in the context of future labour mobility and ensuring the international equivalence of the profession, it is necessary to consider the challenges of an adult instructor to have the competence to provide adult education services. According to Kuşaksız (2011) in Türkiye, as in many countries in the new liberal era, the main policy has been to reduce personnel expenditures, which constitute a significant portion of education expenditures. By increasing flexible employment practices, MoNE tries to fill the existing teacher shortage with contracted teachers, unstaffed master teachers, substitute teachers and paid teachers instead of high-cost appointments (Bayram, 2009). This can create a range of direct and indirect problems in AECs, as the focus of this research. Taking into account the economic, political, social, and educational contexts of adult educators' challenges, namely national legislation, professional qualification standards, personal and professional identity, learning opportunities at all levels, and the recognition and status of the profession as well as professional organizations (Jögi & Gross, 2009) and evaluated, it is possible to find solutions. In this context, the suggestions developed based on the research findings are as follows:

This study indicates that the theme of organisational challenges is the most prominent challenge faced by instructors in adult education centres (AECs). To address this issue, it is essential to ensure that instructors do not feel marginalised within the organisational system and that they have equal rights as permanent staff. Since the approach of receiving support stands out the most in the experiences of AEC instructors in coping with the challenges they experience, the social, technological, psychological, and physical support they need can be provided to mitigate unfavourable working conditions. Since the supportive approach is prominent in the approaches of AEC directors to the challenges of instructors, it is crucial to prioritise the qualifications and abilities of instructors as human resources and to develop them in accordance with individual and organisational needs. In order to effectively address the challenges faced by AEC instructors, it may be beneficial to provide training to AEC directors in management fields.

Contribution Rate of the Researchers

We declare that the authors contributed to the research jointly.

Statement of Conflict of Interest

We declare that there is no conflict of interest during the preparation and implementation of the research, data collection, interpretation of the results, and article writing.

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