The main purpose of this edited book is to define, analyze and discuss the qualifications of Distance Education Expert (DEE) to comprehend the relation between DEE knowledge and exceptional performance in action. The key focuses will be the following: (a) Who are the DEE in action? (b) What are the main behavioral, social, cognitive, and emotional characteristics of DEE? (c) What are the main critical and creative skills of DEE? (d) What are the main professional knowledge of DEE and (e) What are the main intellectual and distinguishing wisdom of DEE.

The overall objectives and mission of this publication are to carefully define Distance Education Expert (DEE) based on the current and future trends, needs, and priorities, which affect and modify the development of Distance Education (DE) in a postmodern world; we need to learn how to break down the digital walls. Past and future developments must be considered in order to devise a unique, open, and democratic system of DE through management, communication, pedagogy, technology, and evaluation in the education system. There is an urgent need to define and discuss DEE recognized as a reliable resource of techniques and skills.

This book has totally 16 chapters and is divided into 3 sections: “Introduction,” “Who are Distance Education Experts?” and “Research and Theory Related to Distance Education Experts.”

Chapter 1 gives information about defining, analyzing, and discussing the qualifications of distance education experts to comprehend the relation between distance education experts knowledge and exceptional performance in action. The key focuses will be the following: (a) Who are the distance education experts in action? (b) What are the main behavioral, social, cognitive, and emotional characteristics of distance education experts? (c) What are the main critical and creative skills of distance education experts? (d) What is the main professional knowledge of distance education experts? and (e) What are the main intellectual and distinguishing characteristics of distance education experts?

Chapter 2 focuses on integrating the field of communication science to the distance education to find out the roles, competences, and responsibilities of the distance education experts in Turkey. Within this context, the chapter aims to develop a new perspective for distance education leadership. The distance education leadership requires skills including designing, evaluating, managing, and sustaining communication processes. In this context, this chapter discusses building a new perspective that provides the integration of the communication field in distance education for the experts, stakeholders, and researchers in distance education leadership.

Chapter 3 points out that distance higher education has been growing rapidly all over the world and the importance of understanding psycho-pedagogical issues of learners studying in Distance Education (DE) has been growing too. Moscow universities have always had and are crucial to the development of education in the vast area covering the entire territory of the former Soviet Union. In this chapter, an attempt is made to investigate the current studies on components of individual differences like self-actualization, self-regulation, locus of control, and motivation, and their influence in DE setting, aca-
ademic views, and development visions for Cyber U-learning model on the future of distance education in Russia and Ukraine. The current review of the literature indicates that physical and psychological separation of learners and teachers initiate various psycho-pedagogical issues and special attention must be given to accommodate this in content development, pedagogical, instructional, and cyber ubiquitous learning design of DE.

Chapter 4 shows that distance education institutions are different from other traditional organizational structures, because they require a virtual structuring. Therefore, the concept and practice of educational leadership is considered as a special area in distance education management process. As a requirement of 21st century, distance education leadership has been seen as a matter or necessity to be developed and to be investigated in the management of distance education. In this chapter, it is aimed to bring the insights of various researchers to define characteristics or qualifications of leadership in distance education, which are or should be different from traditional educational leadership through a literature review relevant to leadership and theories in leadership, educational leadership, and distance education leadership.

Chapter 5 examines that we need sophists to produce theory for Distance Education systems. Because we live in postmodern times and Distance Education is a hybrid assemblage formed by education, communication, and advanced technologic systems, there are many people who work for Distance Education institutions and organizations and there are many participants—the principal ones are naturally students/learners—of Distance Education environments. Thus, we could say that each of them is an expert of Distance Education. Distance Education systems are innovative, modular, popular, and easy to access. Distance Education systems become also inspiration source for conventional learning systems. In this context, the authors discuss who is/who could be a Distance Education expert. The authors conclude that Plato’s Sophist is an ideal model!

Chapter 6 focuses on the dynamics of the digital age that must be analyzed properly. With newly developing areas of expertise, management of distance education institutions is rapidly becoming a process in need of delicate attention. On both an individual and organizational level, adapting to change may be realized through a perspective based on expertise. Thus, for distance education institutions to properly analyze the changes taking place around them and the organizational development process for distance education institutions must be scientifically analyzed. The success of organizational development efforts in distance education institutions relies on distance education administrators who are experts of change and can also successfully manage the process of change. In this chapter, the need for new perspectives in the process of change for distance education institutions is described regarding the importance of distance education institutions, and the organizational development process of distance education institutions in general along with the contribution of distance education experts in this process is conceptually put forth, while recommendations for future research are made.

Chapter 7 mentions that the new communication technologies like Web 2.0 applications involve information sharing and collaboration between users. These technologies bring the informal communication and learning styles to the forefront. Under favor of the new communication technologies’ enabled networking, the main driver for the learning process is shifting from instructor-centered approaches to carefully designed learner experiences with robust interactions between learners and content. In this sense, the chapter also explores the role of academics and media professionals as distance-learning leaders and distance education experts through this transitional stage. The chapter focuses on how distance education experts take part in distance learning environment design and what the main skills for distance education experts as leaders, instructors, and designers in the age of networks are, through the discussions of theoretical approaches.
Chapter 8 proposes that the provision of quality healthcare depends on well-trained qualified personnel. The belief of formal health education leads to doubts related to distance education. These doubts can be eliminated with the well-structured distance nursing education programs. The distance nursing education programs can provide an enriched learning experience like the formal education. Among healthcare workers, nurses have important responsibilities. Because of this, the education of nurses is important and specific. Some designs that adhering to the principles of distance nursing education are easily adopted by both users and implementers. If the designers make a good distance nursing education design, the nurses will get a good education as formal education. In this context, experts who include designers and instructors are important.

Chapter 9 discourses that the communication and information technologies are undergoing a major innovation process in our day. The new education technologies have had positive reflections on the traditional and distance education systems and are being used extensively in these areas. In the global competition environment, knowledge has become an important commodity for the distance education institutions. The intellectual capital stocks to create and protect knowledge and to develop it into a competitive element are equally important as the physical capital stocks for the distance education institutions. In this chapter, the job skills, workplace effectiveness, economic and environment friendly actions, personal capital, intellectual capital, personal well-being of the distance education expert and his/her contribution to economic growth and human development are discussed.

Chapter 10 analyzes that with the advent of developing technologies, it is possible to use different resources in the courses. Web-based technologies provide us to use wide variety of educational technologies to extend educational opportunities beyond the traditional classroom learning. Especially with Web-based instruction or other smart learning technologies, learners have the chance to reach educational resources anywhere, anytime, rather than a place- and time-bound learning. However, the wisdom of a technology is framed by the wisdom of the user and developer of this technology. That means effectiveness of any technology that is used in a learning environment depends on how it was designed, developed, and used. From this perspective, the main purpose of the study was to design, develop, deliver, and evaluate a new distance Web design course for the needs of students in a vocational higher education institution. Proactive action research was used as a framework during the research process. This research focused on the analysis of the existing face-to-face course to mitigate its problems in the new design. Then, accomplishments and insufficiencies of the new design in the new context were investigated.

Chapter 11 examines that an expert is a person with content knowledge and professional skills in a field. Are online teachers distance education experts? What are the main behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics of distance education instructors? What competencies should online instructors possess in order to be distance education experts? In this chapter, the researcher examines National Educational Technology Standards for teachers, National Standards for Quality Online Teaching, and empirical research on teachers’ roles and competencies to seek a definition for online instructors as distance education experts. Several issues related to online teachers’ competencies and technology standards are discussed. Future research studies are recommended.

Chapter 12 reveals the results of a preliminary analysis of degree-granting distance education expertise programs by identifying the programs offered by higher education institutions all around the world and examining the general features of these programs from various aspects. As a result of this study, 27 degree-granting programs in 18 universities were identified in 12 different countries for distance education expertise. These programs were examined in terms of the aims and target population, educational models, delivery methods, admission and graduation requirements of the programs, and proposed career
opportunities by these programs. The results of this analysis are intended to help develop a basis for the clarification of the profession; guide educational institutions, decision-makers, and program designers for developing distance education expertise programs; help individuals who intend to gain academic expertise in distance education to choose the most suitable program that meets their needs; and contribute to the research on leadership and expertise in distance education.

Chapter 13 focuses on the analysis of how learners and educators perceive the role of Distance Education Educators (DEE) in a Distance Education Ecosystem (DEco). Scholars have been using ecology and ecosystem definitions as analogies through which definitions and models for creating better learning environments are discussed. This chapter presents an overview of these studies followed by the findings of a research on learner and educator perceptions regarding the role of DEEs within the DEco. The research, based on a former DEco definition compiled in a study at Anadolu University, Turkey, uses a twofold Delphi study: one conducted with experienced DE Learners (DEL) and the other with DEE. In both studies, the participants were asked to define the roles of DEE within the framework of the former DEco constituents and common and differentiating issues are analyzed. DEE, formerly described as a consumer in DEco further was categorized as an input unit, producer, and decomposer. The results revealed four key roles for DEE: empathetic facilitator, devoted expert, productive technology user, and patient negotiator.

Chapter 14 reviews that distance learning systems that have the properties of mobility, adaptability, and service-orientation are currently the actual scientific and practical problem and future direction of development of general e-learning. The chapter suggests a possible approach to the construction of a single pervasive intellectual environment for e-education services based on the concept of Triple H-Avatar. Structural basis of the proposed distance education system is an interconnected pair of intelligent software agents (avatars): avatar of student and avatar of teacher are implemented using a service-oriented architecture. Avatars are able to adapt to the current level of the student’s knowledge, currently available software, and provide technical, telecommunications, and environmental requirements, and various educational standards. As a basis of self-adaptation of avatars, a model of variability, including the three basic characteristics of hierarchy: educational content, interface, and software and technical support. In this case, the mathematical description of the model variability is implemented using the theory of hypergraphs.

Chapter 15 presents the results of a review that looked at what college resources are needed to support an online environment and how a small liberal arts college can prepare faculty for a shift in pedagogy is one of today’s major issues, when using a Learning Management System (LMS) to teach. A literature review was done to review the ideas of what college resources are needed to support an online learning environment in Higher Education and the implications for faculty development in a small liberal arts college. The main themes surveyed were faculty and the support needed to move a classroom instructor to an online instructor. The research focused on how constructivist learning could support faculty development.

Chapter 16 underlines that becoming the “basic production and power factor” in the 21st century, information confronts us in a very important form as a Global Public Good (GPG). It is the basis of the “information society” that is regarded as the advanced social form of the present time. Important roles fall to education in the production, access, and use of the information that transforms societies into an economic and social development stage. Education needs to reconstruct itself in accordance with the conditions of the information society through adapting itself to technological and scientific changes.
in order to fulfill the functions it undertakes. Addressing the topic from a theoretical perspective, this chapter aims at determining the place and importance of education for the creation of information as a global public good and the information society on the basis of the educational paradigm of the information society, and educational technologies to make it possible.

The subject area of the book is Distance Education Experts (DEE). This book has a huge potential to describe and discuss who the experts are with extensive knowledge or ability based on research, experience, and occupation, and in the specific area (management, communication, pedagogy, technology, and evaluation) of Distance Education. Therefore, the aim of this book is to establish a consensus on DEE to have professional and academic qualifications for them to be accepted as experts. In short, this book will make clear the relation between DEE knowledge and their exceptional performances in terms of cognitive structures and processes, because the need for clear definitions and critical action has never been more pressing.

In essence, we aimed to provide a rich collection of online workers’ ideas on Distance Education Experts (DEE) in order to enrich prospect analysis and practices in this area as it relates to a complex decision making process. The intellectual, social, emotional, and cognitive characteristics of DEE are diverse, perhaps, from the more conservative approaches to define DEE in previous decades. Understanding who DEEs are will make a clear distinction between an expert, a specialist, and an authority in Distance Education area.

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