Distance education is an important part of the whole education system. It requires huge initial capital investment and hardly reaches the break-even point unless the number of users has reached a certain scale. Therefore, researchers and practitioners have paid great attention to the cost, profit, and cost-benefit analysis of distance education. However, it is surprising that few economic analyses of distance education were conducted empirically in the past three decades. In this talk, therefore, I would like to present a synthesis of past empirical findings regarding various aspects of distance education from an economic perspective, using economics theories and classical analytical frameworks (including but not limited to human capital theory, social capital theory, multi-product organization theory, education production function, cost-benefit analysis, and cost-effectiveness analysis).

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