Turkish Studies *Educational Sciences*

Volume 14 Issue 3, 2019, p. 925-935

DOI: 10.29228/TurkishStudies.22791

ISSN: 2667-5609

Skopje/MACEDONIA-Ankara/TURKEY

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Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi

Article Info / Makale Bilgisi

✍ *Received/Geliş:* 01.03.2019

✓ *Accepted/Kabul:* 10.06.2019

✍ *Report Dates/Rapor Tarihleri:* Referee 1 (04.04.2019)-Referee 2 (03.04.2019)- Referee 3 (06.04.2019)

This article was checked by iThenticate.

THE OPINIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON COOKERY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Currently, youth unemployment is one of the main problems in most of the countries. It is not easy to find a place in the labor market for young workers. Therefore, they usually change occupations. They also try to get new skills to find a place in the labor market. The transition from school to work is important to cope with youth unemployability, and the best way to do it is to link students more closely to jobs through vocational education programs and through apprenticeships with firms. The aim of this research was to understand and interpret the opinions of the young people on vocational education they took in a Project under Grant Scheme for Promoting Youth Employment in Sectoral Investment Areas as the reasons of joining this Project, the preparations before the Project and the benefits of the Project. The research is a qualitative study with a multiple holistic case study design. Data were collected via interviews by using semi-structured interview form. At the end of the research, conclusions emerged under three themes. The first one was that the main reason for joining the project was improving their skills and learning basics of cookery. The young people's reasons of participation in Project training are getting certificate which will help them to find job easily and improving oneself and learning new things. Suitably, it is understood that young people participated in the training for finding a job with the certificate they will get at the end of training. Young people stated that they did not do any preparation before the training. According to young people, the final benefit of the Project was improving their knowledge about food and cooking. Young people stated that the benefits of the

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training are learning different kinds of local dishes and becoming a cook in tourism sector.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Currently, youth unemployment is one of the main problems in most of the countries. It is not easy to find a place in the labor market for young workers. Therefore, they usually change occupations. They also try to get new skills to find a place in the labor market. The transition from school to work is important to cope with youth unemployability, and the best way to do it is to link students more closely to jobs through vocational education programs and through apprenticeships with firms. The aim of this research was to understand and interpret the opinions of the young people on vocational education they took in a Project under Grant Scheme for Promoting Youth Employment in Sectoral Investment Areas as the reasons of joining this Project, the preparations before the Project and the benefits of the Project. The method of this research is qualitative study. The research is a case study with a multiple holistic case. Data were collected via face to face interviews by using semi structured interview forms. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2000:19), qualitative study is a study which a process to present perceptions and events in a holistic and realistic way in their natural environment. Data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analyses are used in qualitative study. Case study present results by observing them in their real context which determines the reasons and results. In qualitative research design, the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as individual life cycles, small group behaviour, organizational and managerial processes, school performance, and interpersonal relations in real contexts (Cohen et al, 2007; Yin, 2012). At the end of the research, conclusions emerged under three themes; the reasons of participation, the preparations before training, and the benefits of the training. When we interpret/analyse the opinions of young people on the reasons of participation in training generally, young people wants to have a certificate to find a job in hotels and restaurants. Suitably, it is understood that young people participated in the training for improving themselves and learning new things. Suitably, it is understood that young people participated in the training for finding a job with the certificate they will get at the end of training. The opinions of young people on the reasons of participation in Project training revealed that young people are looking for a job opportunity. They wanted to learn new skills and improve themselves in order to find a job easily. According to the results of Hanushek, et al (2015)'s study, in the group of vocational countries, individuals completing a vocational education are more likely to be employed when young. Powell (2012) did a research about the role of vocational education and training (VET) in poverty alleviation. The research is based on interviews with 20 South African Further Education and Training (FET) college students. The central argument is that VET has an important role to play in poverty alleviation, but only if located in a multi-dimensional view of poverty which understands poverty as capability deprivation across multiple human functionings. In this broader notion of poverty, the role that VET

plays includes training for employability, but also includes the expansion of other important. According to Sezgin (2009) and Esme (2007), the aim of vocational education is to gain individual necessary basic skills to find a job in labour market. The young people's reasons of participation in Project training are also compatible with the aim of vocational education since the participants wanted to get a certificate which will help them to find job. Young people stated that they did not do any preparation before the training. When we interpret/analyse the opinions of young people on the benefits of the training generally, the opinions are compatible with the reasons of participation. They stated that training will help them to learn different kinds of local dishes and vegetables. In other words, the final benefit of the Project was improving their knowledge about food and cooking. Young people also stated that the benefits of the training is the support to become a cook in tourism sector. The opinions of young people on the benefits of the Project training are also compatible with the findings of Pieck (2011)'s study. He argues that VET short courses provided in rural Mexico have benefits which go beyond the mere learning of a trade or skill but also include "socialisation, empowerment, [and] the motivation to set up micro-businesses. . ." (Pieck, 2011). His argument has validity and strong resonance with the experience of the participants interviewed in this study. According to the findings of this study, the researchers suggests that young people should be informed more about different trainings which will support and enhance their employability and should attend those trainings in order to increase their different skills. Moreover, the researchers also suggest that young people should be informed about EU Projects in order to get benefit from different kinds of projects.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Cookery Training, Youth Employment

GENÇLERİN AŞÇILIK MESLEK EĞİTİMİNE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLERİ: BİR DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

ÖZ

Son zamanlarda genç işsizliği çoğu ülkede temel sorunlar arasında yer almaktadır. Genç çalışanların iş gücü piyasasında kendilerin bir yer bulması kolay olmamaktadır. Bu sebeple sık sık iş değiştirmektedirler. Ayrıca iş piyasasında bir yer edinebilmek için yeni beceriler kazanmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Genç işsizliği ile mücadelede en etkili araçlardan birisi de okuldan işe geçiştir, ve okuldan işe geçişi sağlamanın en iyi yolu mesleki eğitim programları ve firmalarda staj yapılması yolu ile öğrencileri iş piyasasına yaklaştırmaktır. Bu araştırmanın amacı Sektörel Yatırımda Alanlarında Genç İstihdamını Desteklenmesi Hibe Programı çerçevesinde yürütülen projede verilen eğitime katılan gençlerin görüşlerini projeye katılım, proje öncesi hazırlıklar ve projenin yaraları başlıkları altında anlamak ve yorumlamaktır. Araştırma bütüncül çoklu desenli nitel bir durum çalışmasıdır. Veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formuna dayalı bireysel görüşmelerle toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçları üç başlık

altında değerlendirilmiştir. Projeye katılma nedeni olarak beceri geliştirme ve aşçılığın esaslarını öğrenme öne çıkmıştır. Gençlerin proje eğitimine katılma sebepleri arasında kolaylıkla iş bulmalarını sağlayacak bir sertifika almak, kendilerini geliştirmek ve yeni şeyler öğrenmek yer almaktadır. Benzer şekilde, gençlerin eğitime, eğitim sonunda alacakları sertifika ile iş bulmak amacıyla katıldıkları anlaşılmıştır. Gençler proje öncesi herhangi bir hazırlık yapmadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Projenin sağladığı yararlar başlığı altında ise yemek ve aşçılık konusunda bilgi artırmak ön plana çıkmıştır. Gençler, projenin yararlarını farklı yerel yemeklerin öğrenilmesi ve turizm sektöründe aşçı olmak olarak ifade etmişlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mesleki Eğitim, Aşçılık Eğitimi, Genç İstihdamı.

1. Introduction

Currently, youth unemployment is one of the main problems in most of the countries. It is not easy to find a place in the labor market for young workers. Therefore, they usually change occupations. They also try to get new skills to find a place in the labor market. The transition from school to work is important to cope with youth unemployability, and the best way to do it is to link students more closely to jobs through vocational education programs and through apprenticeships with firms. (See Ryan 2001; Zimmermann et al. 2013.) Similarly, the need for enhanced vocational programs to deal with high youth unemployment is underlined in Europe (European Commission, 2010).

Vocational education is a process of improving individuals' physical, intellectual, emotional, social and economic capabilities to help them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and competences for an occupation (Ünlüönen ve Boylu, 2005:159; Aymankuy ve Aymankuy 2002:29). Vocational education is learning by doing, preparing to life, and being in a job environment. Moreover, it increases social productivity and gives students productivity power for work, it updates programs according to the changes and socio-economic conditions (Hacıoğlu, vd., 2008:7):

Vocational education is becoming more important gradually because of the rapid changes and competition in service sector and technology. One of the main reasons of its importance is that more respect and have a happier life as a job owner can be achieved. The other importance is that adapting technological changes and competing in international markets will be easy with vocational education. (Arıkan, 1999:2).

Vocational education and training is a development and application of knowledge and skills for middle level occupations (Moodie, 2002). Although this definition is accepted by most of the countries, the implementations differs in various countries. Some countries focus on vocational education which develops specific job-related skills. Some others focus on general education that provides students with broad knowledge and basic skills in mathematics and communication. Many countries provide extensive vocational education and training at the secondary level, and they involve industry through apprenticeships, which helps students to enter the labor market and be more productive (Hanushek and others, 2015).

European Union is also giving great importance to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It is underlined especially to overcome the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy, improve its competitiveness and productivity and underpin a sustainable social market economy by the Europe 2020 strategy. According to this strategy, 75% of aged 20–64 should be in work, rates of early school leavers should be below 10%, and at least 40% of people aged 30–34 should have completed higher

education. Ertl (2002) states that vocational education and training (VET) is an important tool to achieve these economic aims.

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is used to help candidate countries to comply with EU regulations, to increase the capacities of the countries, and to achieve progressive, positive developments in the region by European Union (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, 2018). EU aimed to provide vocational training, entrepreneurship and traineeship opportunities according to trained labour force requirements in certain sectors under the scope of Grant Scheme for Promoting Youth Employment in Sectoral Investment Areas, and youth employment in these sectors was targeted. Akdeniz University carried “Make A Difference, Add Value to Local” project between 2016-2017 under this Grant Scheme distributed by Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security. A series of vocational training in tourism sector was held for the young people who are out of formal education and work.

In “Make A Difference, Add Value to Local” project, the vocational trainings were about tourism sector because Antalya, the venue of the project, is a touristic place and tourism is a developing sector in the world economy (Aktaş, 2005: 163). Furthermore, tourism supports achievement in economic, social, and cultural fields. Therefore, countries use tourism activities to improve economic development (Çetinbaş ve Bektaş, 2008:1). Similarly, in 2023 the contribution of travelling and tourism to total economy in gross national product is estimated to be \$10,5 trillion by World Travel and Tourism Council (2013:1-3).

According as United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2013), in 2012 Turkey is on the fourth rank in Europe. Moreover, Antalya comes first in Turkey in tourist number coming to Turkey (TÜROFED, 2013).

In Antalya, 30.6% of the population is living in rural areas and working in agriculture field although it has a tourism potential. Because of lack of vocational skills and competences to work in tourism sector, unemployment rate in rural areas are high. Therefore, “Make A Difference, Add Value to Local” Project, carried by Akdeniz University, aimed to increase work opportunities for young people and their employability. The objective of the Project was to help young people who can't take part in labour market to make a difference locally and make contribution to uprising of employment. The project aims to reach this objective by improving the main abilities and skills of 29 young people at the age of 17-29, increasing their potential of employment in tourism sector, and revealing the traditional cuisine of Adrasan. The target group mostly graduated from high school or left school early, worked part time, did not have skills to work in tourism.

During the 12-month Project, pre-test was implemented to 29 participants before 3-month Cookery training, 2-month Tourism English Training, and 5-day general skills training. Post-test was also implemented after these training to see the improvement. Participants who attended these trainings also did 30-day apprenticeship in the local restaurants. A Guidance Booklet of Young Workers in Tourism Sector which includes the curriculum of the trainings was also prepared. As part of the “Adrasan’a Tat Kat Days” events, 30 menus were prepared and gourmet talks were arranged 2 times.

Researchers aimed to classify the opinions of the youth on Cookery training in the reasons of joining this Project and the benefits of the Project. To reach this aim, the answers to these questions will be searched:

1. What are the reasons for participating in the Project Training?
2. What are the benefits of the Project Training?
3. What do young people think the Project training is like?

2. Methods

2.1. Sampling

This study was done at Antalya from 31st of November 2016 to 15th of January 2017. 29 unemployed youth from Adrasan District of Antalya participated in Cookery Training in the Project. Researchers used a non-probability sample technique based on purposive sampling method. Since the sample is derived from a particular group and it does not represent the wider population, it only represents itself. This is frequently done in small scale researches such as with two or three groups of students or a particular group of youth. Researchers did not attempt to generalize; this is frequently the case for qualitative researches such as case, action, or ethnographic (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Table 1. Participant status and accompanying data collection

Code	Gender	Age	Interview
A	Male	23	Yes
B	Male	29	Yes
C	Male	28	Yes
D	Male	25	Yes
E	Female	27	Yes
F	Male	20	Yes
G	Male	28	Yes
H	Male	24	Yes

As it is seen in Table 1, youth were the subjects in this study. Researchers did face to face interviews with 8 youth who attended the training. The participants were volunteers and there was no limitation.

2.2. Method

Qualitative study is the method of this research. It is a case study with a holistic multiple case. Face to face interviews by using semi structured interview forms were used to collect data. Qualitative study helps to present perceptions and events in a holistic and realistic way in their natural environment. In qualitative study, observation, interview and document analyses are used to collect data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2000:19). In a case study, results were presented by observing them in their real context. The case study method helps researchers to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. These real-life events may be individual life cycles, small group behaviour, organizational and managerial processes, school performance, and interpersonal relations in real contexts (Cohen et al, 2007; Yin, 2012).

2.3. Data Collection

Researchers used semi-structured individual interview to classify the opinions of youth as the reasons of attending the training and the benefits of the training. The reasons of using semi-structured individual interview is that it would provide an in-depth exploration of the topic, it would allow the flexibility, such as changing the order of questions, simplifying the questions and to probing the interviews (Cohen et al, 2007). Researches collected the data from 31st of November 2016 to 15th of January 2017. Researchers used face-to-face interviews and recorded subjects' experiences, thoughts and feelings in a taped diary.

2.4. Data Analysis

Repeated readings of interview transcripts from conversations with youth was done at the first step to determine the essence of the phenomenon and structures of experiences of youth. During data analysis, researchers organized the data categorically and chronically, reviewed the data repeatedly and continually coded the data. Researchers also regularly reviewed interview transcripts. Moreover, data analysis process was aided by the use of NVIVO 10 which is a qualitative data analysis computer program. NVIVO 10 programmes do not actually perform the analysis but facilitate and assist it. In other words, it does not perform the analysis. It just supports the researcher doing the analysis by organizing data and recodes (Kelle, 1995; Cohen et al, 2007).

2.5. Ethical Considerations

Researchers informed the participants about the research aims, they also kept participants informed at all stages and offered anonymity. Researchers and participants signed a consent form about the use of the data. This consent form included information about how its analysis would be reported and disseminated. Researchers paid great attention not to impose their belief on others. Researchers' beliefs were secondary and the participants thinking was the required one.

2.6. Interview Process and Mapping

Since the purpose of this study was to to classify the opinions of youth on Project training, the mapping of interview questions was carried out in three levels. Firstly, youth were asked why they participated to the Project, secondly what the benefits of the Project were, and finally what and why they thought the Project training were like.

2.7. Validity and Reliability

Researchers followed some steps to assure reliability and validity of the study: (i) researchers collected data from various sources such as individual interviews and documents (ii) researchers used direct quotations from the interviews without making any comments on them, (iii) to get opinions and experiences of participants, researchers used a purposive sampling method based on voluntarism (iv) two independent researchers coded the data and researchers calculates Cohen's kappa coefficient to determine inter-rater reliability of themes coded -0.92 perfect agreement- for inner reliability (Landis & Koach, 1977) and (v) researchers kept records of interviews, documents and participant observations for outer reliability.

3. Findings

The opinions of youth attending training are tried to be presented by researchers. The opinions of youth are classified as the reasons of joining this Project and the benefits of the Project.

3.1. Reasons for Participating in the Project Training

Youth were asked about the reasons for participating in the training and in Tablo 2, the data can be seen.

Table 2. Reasons for participating in the Project Training

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	f	%
1 Becoming a cook	√								1	12.50%
2 Getting certificate			√			√	√		3	37.50%
3 Getting certificate and knowledge about cooking		√							1	12.50%
4 Improving oneself and learning new things				√	√			√	3	37.50%

As it is seen in Table 2, 37.5% of youth expressed that the main reason of participation is getting certificate. Another 37.5% of youth expressed that the main reason of participation is improving oneself and learning new things. Some of the participant opinions are indicated below:

I joined because I wanted to get my cooking certificate. I work in tourisms, so we need the certificate. (C1, 2)

I wanted to join because I work in this industry. I needed the certificate. (F1, 2)

I am working at toursime sector and I attended to take cookery certificate (G1,2)

I already studied cooking, but I needed to improve myself and I needed to learn new things. (D1, 4)

I work at tourism industry, so I found it appropriate to join a cooking course. I joined because I wanted to introduce our local foods to the guests that come in the summer. I am happy about the course. (E1, 4)

I already work in the industry, so I needed to learn some new things, that's why. (H1, 4)

Next, 12,50% of youth expressed that the reasons of participation are becoming a cook and Getting certificate and knowledge about cooking. Some of the participant opinions are indicated below:

I joined because I wanted to be a cook. (A1, 1)

I joined because I wanted to get my certificate and extend my knowledge about cooking. (B1,3)

When we interpret/analyse the opinions of youth on the reasons of participation in training generally, youth wants to have a certificate to find a job in hotels and restaurants. Suitably, it is understood that youth participated in the training for improving themselves and learning new things.

3.2. Benefits of Project Training

Youth were asked about the benefits of training. In Table 3, the data can be seen.

Table 3. Benefits of the Project Training

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	f	%
1 A lot of contribution for being cook	√								1	12.50%
2 Different kinds of dishes		√	√	√			√	√	5	62.50%
5 Different kinds of vegetables and dishes					√	√			2	25%

As it is understood from the frequency analysis of the benefits of training in Table 4, 62,50% of youth expressed that the main benefit of the Project is learning different kinds of dishes. Some of the participant opinions are indicated below:

I have learned about foods indigenous to Adrasan, I have learned tatkat foods, and I have learned about spices. (B2, 2)

It contributed to me, we learned cooking, we learned how to cook local desserts and foods. (C2, 2)

We cooked some food indigenous to Adrasan, it was nice for us. (D2, 2)

We learned about food indigenous to Adrasan. (G2, 2)

We cooked meals indigenous to Adrasan. (H2, 2)

Next, 25% of youth expressed that the benefit of the Project is learning different kinds of vegetables and dishes. Some of the participant opinions are indicated below:

Of course it did because we learned about the vegetables that we didn't know existed here before, we learned about what we could do with them, we learned some new dishes. So, this is so good for us because we can present these food to our guests easily. (E2, 3)

You prepared food from the plants you took from the nature. (F2, 3)

12.5% of youth expressed that the benefits of the Project is that it had a lot of contribution for being cook. a lot of cooking. Some of the participant opinions are indicated below:

I want to be a cook, so these trainings contributed a lot to me. (A2, 1)

When we interpret/analyse the opinions of youth on the benefits of the training generally, the opinions are compatible with the reasons of participation. They expressed that training will help them to learn different kinds of local dishes and vegetables.

3.3. Metaphors for Project Training

As it is seen in Table 4, participants formulated metaphors under nature theme. A defined training as *"I think it is like nature. Meals we cook are all coming from natural products."* B defined training as *"I would liken it to nature because we brought and used vegetables and greenery from nature."* C described the training as *"We liken it to nature, because we make the foods we took from nature"*. D defined training as *"I would liken it to nature because everything we used was from the nature, it was all natural"*.

Tablo 4. Metaphors for Project Training

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	f	%
1 Nature	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	8	100%

E described the training as: *"Of course we can liken it to nature because we provided the vegetables from nature"*. Similarly, F used nature metaphor for describing the training: *"You prepared food from the plants you took from the nature"*. As for G, he defined training as a nature: *"We liken it to nature, we take the plants from nature and we make food"*. Participant H said: *"I would liken it to nature, we used everything from there"*. As it can be understood from the frequency analysis of metaphors defined by youth in Table 4, training was perceived as nature. It is most probably because of the content of the training. Participants used local vegetables of Adrasan from the nature.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was done to understand and classify the opinions of young people living in Adrasan and do not work on Project training as the reasons of joining this training and the benefits of the training. Accordingly, data were collected through semi-structured individual interviews.

The young people's reasons of participation in Project training are getting certificate which will help them to find job easily and improving oneself and learning new things. Suitably, it is understood that youth participated in the training for finding a job with the certificate they will get at the end of training. The opinions of youth on the reasons of participation in Project training revealed that youth are looking for a job opportunity. They wanted to learn new skills and improve themselves in order to find a job easily. According to the results of Hanushek, et al (2015)'s study, in the group of vocational countries, individuals completing a vocational education are more likely to be employed when young. Powell (2012) did a research about the role of vocational education and training (VET) in poverty alleviation. The research is based on interviews with 20 South African Further Education and Training (FET) college students. The central argument is that VET has an important role to play in poverty alleviation, but only if located in a multi-dimensional view of poverty which understands poverty as capability deprivation across multiple human functionings. In this broader notion of poverty, the role

that VET plays includes training for employability, but also includes the expansion of other important capabilities.

According to Sezgin (2009) and Esme (2007), the aim of vocational education is to gain individuals necessary basic skills to find a job in labour market. The young people's reasons of participation in Project training are also compatible with the aim of vocational education since the participants wanted to get a certificate which will help them to find job.

When we generally interpret the benefits of the Project training, we can say that the training will help them to learn different kinds of local dishes. Having the similar opinions, youth expressed that the benefits of the training are learning different kinds of local dishes and becoming a cook in tourism sector. The opinions of youth on the benefits of the Project training are also compatible with the findings of Pieck (2011)'s study. He argues that VET short courses provided in rural Mexico have benefits which go beyond the mere learning of a trade or skill but also include "socialisation, empowerment, [and] the motivation to set up micro-businesses. . ." (Pieck, 2011). His argument has validity and strong resonance with the experience of the participants interviewed in this study.

Researchers suggest the followings according to the findings of this study:

- Information about different trainings which will support and enhance youth employability will be given and youth should be encouraged to attend those trainings to gain different skills.
- More information about EU Projects should be given to youth to help them to get the most benefit from different kinds of projects.

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