

THE OPINIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON ECOLOGICAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TRAINING: A CASE STUDY

Assist. Prof. Dr. Rabia Vezne
Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education
Turkey

Prof. Dr. Ilhan Gunbayi
Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education
Turkey

Abstract

The aim of this research was to classify the opinions of the young people on ecological product development training they participated in a Project under Grant Scheme for Promoting Youth Employment in Sectoral Investment Areas as the reasons of joining this Project, the benefits of the Project. The research is a qualitative study with a holistic single 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 participating in the project was improving their skills and learning new things about ecologic product development. The second one was that young people did not do any preparation before the training. The final benefit of the Project was improving their knowledge about nature, their manual skills, and learning how to use it in their future work.

Keywords: Vocational education, ecological product development training, youth employment.

INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is a major problem in nowadays in almost all countries. Young workers try to find a place in the labor force, change occupations frequently, and attend courses to acquire new skills or update their knowledge. The transition from school to work is one of the most effective tool to deal with youth unemployability. One way to deal with these transition problems is to link students more closely to jobs through vocational education programs and through apprenticeships with firms. (World Bank, 1991; Ryan 2001; Zimmermann et al. 2013.) European Commission (2010) underlines the need for enhanced vocational programs to deal with high youth unemployment in Europe.

Moodie (2002) defines vocational education and training by the four general characteristics; epistemological, teleological, hierarchical and pragmatic. According to his definition, vocational education and training is the development and application of knowledge and skills for middle level occupations needed by society from time to time. This definition may be accepted by many scientist, but the implementation may be different in different countries. In other words, countries implement different vocational education structures. Some stress vocational education that develops specific job-related skills in order to prepare students to work in specific occupations while others emphasize general education that provides students with broad knowledge and basic skills in mathematics and communication and serves as the foundation for further learning and on-the-job training (Hanushek et al. 2015). Many countries provide extensive vocational education and training at the secondary level, and they involve industry through apprenticeships. According to the Hanushek et al. (2015), the rationale is that by concentrating on specific vocational skills, it is possible to improve the entry of workers into the economy and to make them productive at an earlier point.

The Europe 2020 strategy (2018), which is for growth and jobs for the current decade, emphasises smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as a way to overcome the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy, improve its competitiveness and productivity and underpin a sustainable social market

economy. The specific targets in the strategy related to employment and education are: 75% of aged 20–64 to be in work, rates of early school leavers below 10%, and at least 40% of people aged 30–34 having completed higher education. Ertl (2002) states that EU educational policy has always been an important tool for achieving EU's economic aims. Especially, vocational education and training (VET) has been seen an important tool to achieve this economic aims. With the development of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF), it becomes easier to compare between national qualifications systems and enhance transferability and mobility of labour (European Commission, 2006).

European Union (EU) uses Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) to help candidate countries to comply with EU regulations. The IPA funds build up the capacities of the countries throughout the accession process, resulting in progressive, positive developments in the region. For the period 2007-2013 IPA had a budget of some € 11.5 billion; its successor, IPA II, will build on the results already achieved by dedicating € 11.7 billion for the period 2014-2020. IPA help the beneficiaries make political and economic reforms, preparing them for the rights and obligations that come with EU membership. Those reforms should provide their citizens with better opportunities and allow for development of standards for citizens of the EU (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, 2018).

Grant Scheme for Promoting Youth Employment in Sectoral Investment Areas is delivered through IPA I to candidate countries. Under the scope of this grant scheme, youth will be provided with vocational training, entrepreneurship and internship opportunities according to trained labour force requirements in certain sectors, thus their employment in these sectors will be targeted. Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security as a beneficiary used these funding and distributed it to projects overall Turkey. "Make A Difference, Add Value to Local" was carried by Akdeniz University EuroMed Youth Centre under this Grant Scheme. The aim was organizing vocational education to young people who are out of formal education and work.

30.6% of the population in Antalya is living in rural areas and working in agriculture field although tourism is an important sector in Antalya. Unemployment rate in rural areas are high since people have not enough vocational skills and competences to work in tourism sector. Because of these reasons, Akdeniz University EuroMed Youth Centre started "Make A Difference, Add Value to Local" Project aims to increase work opportunities for young people and their employability. It is funded by Ministry of Labour and Social Security and European Union Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance under Grant Scheme for Promoting Youth Employment in Sectoral Investment Areas. Overall objectives of the project are enabling young people who have a big share in country's population but can't take part in labour market make a difference locally and making contribution to uprising of employment. One of the project purpose is to improve the main abilities and skills of 30 Young People which will increase the potential of employment in tourism sector that is the leading sector of Adrasan region in Antalya. The other purpose is to provide attendance of 30 young girls living in Adrasan but not having regular income to labour force by revealing the cultural values and by protecting the environment. The target group is young people who are at the age of 17-29 and living in Adrasan. They mostly graduated from secondary school or left school early, work part time in tourism sector, do not have skills to work in tourism regularly and especially young girls who get married early and do not go to school because of family, economic and social reason.

Main activities of the Project were:

- Organizing project team and beginning duty.
- Project Internal Evaluation Supreme Board: The board will meet each month and evaluate the Project process and write reports each three months.
- Project Opening Meeting.
- Carrying out the activities of dissemination.
- Electing target group.
- Application of Pre-test and post-test For Young People who will attend education.

- Vocational educations of 3 month cookery and 3 month ecologic product development.
- Setting up a Prefabricated Workshop for "Ecologic Product Development" Vocational Education.
- 2-month Tourism English Education for 60 young people.
- Education of general skills for 60 young for 5 days .
- Education of entrepreneurship: making business plan and utilizing from the funds like KOSGEB etc. for 5 days for 30 young.
- Apprenticeship Training of 30 young people for 30 days.
- 12-month guidance and consulting service for 180 young people.
- Guidance Booklet of Young Workers in Tourism Sector.
- 2 Agro Tourism Seminars for 200 people.
- 2 days gourmet talks and creating menu as per Adrasan'a Tat Kat Days.
- Study Visit to Ayvalik for setting samples of research, analysing, promotion and practice of local products.
- Setting up regional product market.
- Project Closing Meeting and Preparing Final Report.

The results of the Project were:

- The potential of young woman was evaluated in Adrasan.
- Local cultural values were revealed and put on market as products.
- A Prefabricated Workshop was set up for "Ecologic Product Development" Vocational Education.
- Cookery Course and Education of Ecologic Product Development were given to 60 young people
- Apprenticeship opportunity was provided for 30 young people.
- General and entrepreneurship skills of young people improved.
- Young women set up their own business by coming together.
- A guidance booklet with the theme Young Workers in Tourism was prepared.
- 2 Agro Tourism Seminars were arranged as seminars open to public attendance.
- Tourism English was taught to 60 young people who took vocational course.
- As part of the Adrasan'a Tat Kat Days, 30 menus were prepared and gourmet talks were arranged 5 times.
- Touristic products for sale including local food and souvenir were created and presented for sale in the market of local products.
- Understanding of collaboration, consulting and equity improved between young people.
- A study visit to Ayvalik with 30 young people who live in the region was arranged for setting the samples of research, analysing, promotion and well application of local products.

To reach the project aims, young people who were out of formal education and work force were chosen. A series of trainings and a study visit were planned. First of all, youg people attended ecological product development training for 40 working days, then they attended entrepreneurship training for 5 days. Finally, they did a study visit to an NGO who produces goods from waste products, sells them, and helps women to earn their living (Gunbayi & Vezne, 2017).

The aim of this research was to classify the opinions of the young people on ecological product development training as the reasons of joining this Project, the benefits of the Project. To reach this aim, the answers to following questions was searched:

1. Why do young people participate in the project training?
2. What are the benefits of the Project Training?
3. What do young people think the Project training is like? Why?

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

This study was conducted in Antalya from November 31st, 2016 to January 15th, 2017. 29 young people from Adrasan District of Antalya participated in Ecological Product Development Training in the

Project. A non-probability sample technique based on purposive sampling method was used because the sample derives from the researcher targeting a particular group, in the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population, it simply represent itself. This is frequently the in small scale research, for example, as with one or two schools, two or three groups of students, or a particular group of young people, where no attempt to generalize is desired; this is frequently the case for qualitative researches such as action ethnographic or case (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Table 1: Participant Status And Accompanying Data Collection

Code	Sex	Age	Interview
A	Female	19	Yes
B	Female	22	Yes
C	Male	25	Yes
D	Female	25	Yes
E	Male	24	Yes
F	Male	21	Yes
G	Male	20	Yes
H	Female	19	Yes

As seen in Table 1, the informants in this study were young people. Face to face interviews done with 8 young people who participated in the training. The participants were volunteers and there was no limitation.

Method

The method of this research is qualitative study. The research is a case study with a holistic single case. Data were collected via face to face interviews by using semi structured interview forms. According to Yin (2017), 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, 2017).

Data Collection

In order to classify the opinions of young people as the reasons of attending the training and the benefits of the training, semi-structured individual interview was used because it would provide an in depth exploration of the topic, it would allow the flexibility, for example, to change the order of questions, simplify the questions and to probe the interviews (Cohen et al, 2007). Data were collected from November 31st, 2016 to January 15th, 2017. Face-to-face interviews were used and informants' experiences, thoughts and feelings are recorded in a taped diary.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with repeated readings of interview transcripts from conversations with young people. The purpose was to determine the essence of the phenomenon and structures of experiences of young people participated to Project training. During data analysis, the data were organized categorically and chronically, reviewed repeatedly and continually coded. Interview transcripts were regularly reviewed. In addition, data analysis process was aided by the use of a qualitative data analysis computer program called NVIVO 10. These kinds of computer programmes do not actually perform the analysis but facilitate and assist it. That is NVIVO 10 does not perform the analysis but only supports the researcher doing the analysis by organizing data and recodes and nodes etc. (Kelle, 1995; Cohen et al, 2007).

Ethical Considerations

Participants were briefed about the research aims, kept informed at all stages and be offered anonymity. A consent form was signed between researcher and each participant about the use of the data in terms of how its analysis would be reported and disseminated. It was also tried to be careful not to impose researcher's belief on others and researcher's beliefs were secondary and the participants thinking be what was required.

Interview Process and Mapping

The purpose of this study was to to classify the opinions of young people on Project training. Thus the mapping of interview questions was carried out in three levels. Firstly, young people 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.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure reliability and validity of the study, some steps were followed: (i) data were collected from various sources such as interviews (individual) and documents in terms of triangulation (ii) data were used as direct quotations from the interviews without making any comments on them, (iii) a purposive sampling method based on voluntarism was used in order to get opinions and experiences of young people in Göynük Science High School (iv) data were coded by two independent researchers and Cohen's kappa coefficient were calculated to determine inter-rater reliability of themes coded -0.92 perfect agreement- for inner reliability (Landis & Koach, 1977) and (v) records of interviews, documents and participant observations were kept for outer reliability.

FINDINGS

In this study, the opinions of young people participating in Project training are tried to be presented. The opinions of young people are classified as the reasons of joining this Project and the benefits of the Project. During the research process, participants were offered anonymity.

1. Reasons for Participating in the Project Training

Young people were asked about the reasons for participating in the training. The data can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Reasons for Participating in the Project Training

Reasons	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	f	%
1 Interest in ecological materials					√	√	√		3	37.50%
2 Interest in ecology			√	√					2	25%
3 Doing something with ecological products		√							1	12.50%
4 Free time activity		√							1	12.50%
5 Gaining knowledge about ecology	√								1	12.50%

As it can be understood from the frequency analysis of the reasons for participating in the training in Table 2, 37.5% of young people stated that the main reason of participation was interest in ecological materials. Some of the opinions of the participants are as follows:

I want to learn how to make souvenirs from materials in the nature. (E1, 4)

I was interested in ecological products. (F1, 4)

I was interested in natural, organic and ecological development (G1,4)

Next, 25% of young people stated that the reasons of participation were interest in ecology. Some of the opinions of the participants are as follows:

I was interested in ecological product development. (C1, 5)

I was interested in ecological product development. (D1, 5)

12.5% of young people stated that the reasons of participation were doing something with ecological products, free time activity and gaining knowledge about ecology. Some of the opinions of the participants are as follows:

I want to say, the reason I joined is I really like doing something with ecological products. (B1,1)

I wanted to gain some knowledge about progress of Ecology. (A1,3)

I wanted to have some things to do to spend my time in winter days. (B1,2)

When we interpret the opinions of young people on the reasons of participation in training generally, young people are interested in ecology and ecological materials. Thus, it was understood that young people participated in the training for learning about ecology and ecological products.

2. Benefits of Project Training

Young people were asked about the benefits of training. The data can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Benefits of the Project Training

Benefits	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	f	%
1 Helpful for finding a job in the future	√		√		√		√	√	5	62.50%
2 Improvement in handcraft						√		√	2	25%
3 No future plan or development	√								1	12.50%
4 Start producing ecological goods				√					1	12.50%
5 Learning new things		√							1	12.50%

As it can be understood from the frequency analysis of the benefits of training in Table 4, 62,50% of young people stated that the main benefit of the Project was helpful for finding a job in the future. Some of the opinions of the participants are as follows:

I don't think I will do this in the future. (A2,1)

I think if I do business in this industry in the future, it will be helpful. (C2,1)

If I do this business in the future, I believe this training will be very beneficial. (E2,1)

I thought if I do this business in the future, I believe this training will be very beneficial for me. (G2,1)

I am thinking about finding a job related to the trainings. (H2,1)

Next, 25% of young people stated that the benefit of the Project was improving in handcraft. Some of the opinions of the participants are as follows:

I have learned things about..... I improved my handicraft. (F2,2)

I joined because I wanted to improve my handicraft. (H2,2)

12.5% of young people stated that the benefits of the Project were learning new things and 12.5% of young people stated that they had no future plans or development. The other 12.5% of young people stated that they started producing ecological goods. Some of the opinions of the participants are as follows:

Actually it affected a lot, for example while doing things like with horns in front of us..... we learned something new. I was doing something, they were doing something, when we compared it, it was very different. Things like that. (B2,5)

I don't think I will do this in the future. (A2,3)

Ecologically, for example we started doing some things from natural products.(D2,4)

When we interpret 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 would help them to find a job in the future. Having the similar opinions, young people stated that the benefits of the training were improvement in the handcraft, learning new things, and producing ecological products.

3. Metaphors for Project Training

Metaphors formulated by 8 participants can be categorized under one theme as in Table 4: nature. A defined training as "I would liken it to nature, generally everything we take is from nature, so we do everything ecologically". B defined training as "Because you took ecological product development training and you used lots of natural things. –Exactly, in short terms, just nature". C described the training as "I would liken it to nature because we benefited from nature alot". D defined training as "I would liken it to nature because we take our materials from nature. Products you develop are about nature".

Table 4: Metaphors for Project Training

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

E described the training as: "I liken it to nature because every product's material was provided by nature". Similarly, F used nature metaphor for describing the training: "I would liken it to a tree, because everything was made out of tree, nature". As for G, he defined training as a nature: "It is like nature. We used natural and organic products. We took everything from nature". Participant H said: "I think it was about nature, everything we learned was about nature".

As it can be understood from the frequency analysis of metaphors defined by young people in Table 4, training was perceived as nature. It is most probably because of the content of the training. Participants used ecological materials from the nature to produce goods.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was done to understand and classify the opinions of young people living in Adrasan and unemployed on Project training as the reasons of participating in 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 were interest in ecology and ecological materials. Thus, it was understood that young people participated in the training for learning about ecology and ecological products. The opinions of young people on the reasons of participation in Project training revealed that young people did not know detailed information about the training in advance. They just knew the training topic and they wanted to attend the training because it had an appealing heading.

When we generally interpret the benefits of the Project training, we can say that the training will help them to find a job in the future. Having the similar opinions, young people stated that the benefits of the training were improvement in the handcraft, learning new things, and producing ecological products. 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. 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 followings are suggested by the researcher:

- 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.
- Young people should be informed about EU Projects in order to get benefit from different kinds of projects.

IJONTE's Note: This research was presented at the 9th International Congress on New Trends Education - ICONTE 2018 held in Antalya between 10-12 May 2018 as an oral presentation.

BIODATA AND CONTACT ADDRESS OF AUTHORS



She completed his BA studies on English Language Teaching in Middle East Technical University, MA on Educational Administration and Supervision in Kırıkkale University, and PhD. on Adult Education in Ankara University in Turkey. She has been working as an EU Projects Advisor since 2009 and she has been working at Akdeniz University, International Relations Office as an EU Projects Advisor since 2013. She has also been working as an Assistant Professor at Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education, Educational Sciences Department since 2018. She is scholarly interested in adult education, teacher training, vocational education and EU project.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Rabia Vezne
Akdeniz University
I Faculty of Education
Educational Sciences Department
Dumlupınar Bulvarı
Kampus 07058 Antalya- Turkey
E. Mail: rabiavezne@akdeniz.edu.tr



He completed his BA studies on English Language Teaching, MA on Educational Administration and Supervision, PhD. on Educational Administration, Supervision, Planning and Economy in Hacettepe University in Turkey and Post Doctorate Study on Qualitative Research Methods in Sheffield Hallam University in the UK. He has been working as an Associate Professor at Akdeniz University, Faculty of Education, Educational Sciences Department since 2003. He is scholarly interested

in qualitative research methods, organizational communication, organizational culture and climate, motivation at work, job stressors and school leadership, vocational education and training linked to employment issues and national development particularly in Turkey but also in Central/Western Asia and Europe.

Prof. Dr. İlhan Günbayi
Akdeniz University
Faculty of Education
Educational Sciences Department
Dumlupınar Bulvarı
Kampus 07058 Antalya- Turkey
E. Mail: igunbayi@akdeniz.edu.tr

REFERENCES

- Cohen, L., Mannion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. UK: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ertl, H. (2002). The concept of modularisation in vocational education and training: the debate in Germany and its implications, *Oxford Review of Education*, 28(1), 53–73.
- European Commission (2006). *Proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning* (Brussels, Commission of the European Communities).
- European Commission (2010). *The bruges communiqué on enhanced european cooperation in vocational education and training for the period 2011–2020*. 7 December 2010. Bruges.
- Europe 2020 Strategy (2018). Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en on 07/04/2018.
- European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations (2018). Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/overview_en on 07/04/2018.
- Landis, J. R. & Koch, G. G. (1977). The measurement of observer agreement for categorical data. *Biometrics*, 33(1), 159-174.
- Moodie, G. (2002). Identifying vocational education and training. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*. 54(2), 249-266.
- Gunbayi İ.& Vezne R. (2017). *Turizmde Genç Çalışanlar*. Akdeniz Üniversitesi Yayınları, Antalya.
- Hanushek, E. A., Schwerdt, G., Woessmann, L. & Zhang, L. (2015). General education, vocational education, and labor-market outcomes over the lifecycle. *The Journal of Human Resources*. 52(1):48-87.
- Pieck, E. (2011). *Using a different lens to look at technical training*. Norrag News NN46 (September).
- Powell, L. (2012). Reimagining the purpose of VET – Expanding the capability to aspire in south african further education and training students. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 32, 643-653.

Ryan, P. (2001). The school-to-work transition: a cross-national perspective. *Journal of Economic Literature*. 39(1):34–92.

World Bank. (1991). *Vocational and technical education and training: a world bank policy paper*. Washington, D.C.

Yin, R. K. (2017). Durum calismasi arastirmasi uygulamalari. (Translated by I. Gunbayi), Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

Zimmermann, Klaus F., Biavaschi, C., Eichhorst, W., Giuliotti, C., Kendzia, M.J., Muravyev, A., Pieters, J., Rodríguez-Planas N., & Schmidl, R. (2013). *Youth unemployment and vocational training*. Boston: Now Publishers, Inc.