



Interconnection of Unemployment and Training in the Prefecture of Arcadia

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ABSTRACT: This paper is the result of the increasing need for education in new fields and specialties due to the rise of unemployment rate in Greece. This research work aims to examine the effects of “Initial Vocational Training” and “Continuing Vocational Training” on the unemployed and the employed of the Prefecture of Arcadia. A quantitative method was conducted, via written questionnaires with close type questions. According to the research findings, most of the trainees desire to find a job. They also believe that they will find a job more easily if they certify their knowledge or if they participate in practical exercise programs. The most important motivation for trainees who participate in the programs of “Continuing Vocational Training” is to improve their knowledge and their qualifications as they have already got labor experience. On the other hand, the most significant incentive for trainees who lack working experience and participate to the “Initial Vocational Training” programs, is the easiness of finding a job. Summarizing, the findings of the survey indicate that all the trainees consider that they are unemployed because of the economic crisis.

KEYWORDS: Unemployment, Employment, Initial Training, Continuing Training, Certification, Practical Exercise

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I. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is defined as: "the existence of a surplus labor force in relation to the needs of the labor market" [1]. The unemployed according to the Statistical Service are people aged 15 to 74 who: a) do not have a job, or do not have a paid job or a self-employed job, b) are available for work, to start an activity as employed or self-employed within two, and c) are actively seeking employment, have taken specific action to find employment or self-employment for the period of the previous four, or have found a job and will start it within three months at most [2]. Finally, according to OAED, unemployed are also considered those who, after the termination of the employment relationship, are looking to find a job, accept to be employed in a job offered to them by the competent services of OAED in their wider professional field or accept to attend vocational training or postgraduate programs and generally benefit from any opportunity for employment [2]. A major challenge during the last years is the worrying rise in unemployment rates that concern citizens. On the one hand, this is caused by the rise in unemployment. This practically increases the section of the active population that is unemployed. Therefore, this leads to the increasing number of families that do not have the necessary resources to survive, and on the other hand, there is a risk of social unrest with unpredictable consequences.

Moving on, adult education is any educational process, of any content, level or method, whether it is formal education or not, or a process that extends over time or replaces primary education in schools, colleges and universities, as well as apprenticeships, through which individuals are considered adults by the society to which they belong develop their skills, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical and professional qualifications or orient them in another direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior with the dual perspective of full personal development and participation in a harmonized and autonomous social, economic and cultural development [3]

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the conducted literature review very useful information is summarized as follows: a) the accurate description of the field of research, b) the elaboration of the working hypotheses and c) the creation of literature on the subject, which should "dominate" the research report [4]. This will then capture some of the previous research work that has been done on people who attend or have already attended training programs. The research data are classified according to key issues concerning learners of both continuing and initial vocational training and are listed as follows:

First, whether a program meets the needs of trainees in S.E.K. [5] and [6] argue that the goal of finding a job is not ultimately achieved due to lack of program organization, inefficiency and bureaucracy, and participants are only interested in the subject but in solving some of their personal problems. On the contrary, Grammatikos (2012) [7] suggests that the participants acquired knowledge and skills during the attendance of the training program. That helped them towards finding a job. Finally, in a survey conducted in [8], it was found that the programs aim at satisfying the needs of the trainees, who for men are the professions of technology while women are the professions of care and health - welfare.

Next, the author in [5] also identifies the internet as the main source of information, noting at the same time the way of informing the announcements of local bodies. Finally, the trainees are often informed about training programs through their participation in organized adult education seminars. The development of relations is very important according to [9] because the dynamics of the group (trainees - trainer) is interesting, reaching the point where the trainees change ideas and beliefs within the groups through discussions and group work.

The certification of the training is very important due to: a) the acquisition of the formal qualifications that it implies b) the maximizing their professional skills and c) easier access to the labor market. Contrary to the research conducted by the Center for Educational Policy Development G.S.E.E. (2013) [9] found that only a limited number of trainees succeeds, wishes, or tries to obtain the appropriate certification, mainly for reasons of practical or economic nature. However, they do not participate in the certification exams because: a) they do not believe that they will ever practice this profession, b) the exams are late in relation to the time of graduation, c) they feel unprepared, d) they challenge the certification institution and e) they have already found a job.

A way to improve the quality, a key requirement is to use active teaching techniques, such as discussion, teamwork, role play, simulation, discussion and case studies according to the research of [8, 10]. Additionally, in the same research studies the key role of the program trainer is emphasized, which helps the cognitive process and the course of the team. Finally, Cassiotti (2008) [10] notes the importance of the correct choice of specialties which should not meet only seasonal and temporary professional needs.

The difficulties of finding work according to [11] are primarily due to the peoples' ignorance of what steps to follow and due to the lack of confidence, insecurity, frustration and inability to search for alternatives. Additionally, several consider as more serious obstacles to job findings procedure the following points: the financial burden of job search (fax, e-mail, application fees), the mismatch of position - qualifications, low wages, uninsured work, working hours, barriers to communication with the Public Services mainly in matters of information on grants, rights, obligations and emotional overload of the interview process. For the same issue in the research conducted the following identified reasons for not finding work are summarized as follows: 1) the financial crisis, 2) the lack of acquaintances with employers, 3) the inadequacy of public bodies to support employment, 4) the lack of adequate networks with parties, politicians, 5) the great age, 6) lack of work experience, 7) lack of demand for specialization, 8) lack of guidance, 9) lack of training, 10) marital status, 11) gender, 12) training program and 13) non-training job search. Furthermore, the following are noted: a) there is confusion between agencies and ministries, eg I.E.K. of the Ministry of Education, & I.E.K. of OAED, b) there is no contact between trainees and companies (large companies will never turn to OAED, c) OAED offers jobs with low wages and few qualifications, c) there is a lack of employment offices in the structures such as S.E.K., d) the access - absorption of the graduates trainees in employment is low, e) the relation / relevance of the training object with the profession specialty of work of those who finally found a job is very low, f) the sustainability of the work of those who eventually found work is very low, g) the utilization of the knowledge obtained from the training at work is very low and there is generally a very low connection between the vocational training systems and employment. Finally, for the same issue, the research of the GSEE Labor Institute. - A.Δ.E.Δ.Y. in continuing training observes that post-training found only 1/4 of the trainees and only half of the trainees who found work were employed in the object of their training.

III. METHODOLOGY

The continuous social, political, and economic changes in combination with the global economic crisis have as a serious consequence the increase of the unemployed. Particularly in Greece due to the severe economic crisis, unemployment rates have increased dramatically and therefore it is necessary to explore the possibilities that exist to increase employment. In particular, the present work offers the opportunity to

investigate the effectiveness of the initial and continuing education programs implemented through state or Community funds, to control unemployment. After all, it is concluded that through the training programs the adult learners can continuously improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to cope with the challenges they face in their professional life. As such, the aim of the paper emphasizes the central issue of the interaction of unemployment with lifelong learning (initial and ongoing). It is emphasized that the sample of the respondents will come from the geographical area of Arcadia.

The main objectives of the research work are:

1. The extraction of useful findings
2. The emergence of the big issue of unemployment and its targeting in the prefecture of Arcadia
3. The mapping of the structures of the initial and continuing training in the region of Arcadia
4. Strengthening and documenting the idea of lifelong learning for all unemployed adults and workers
5. Exploring the possibility of linking training and employment in general and at the local level
6. The production of proposals for more effective and more targeted initial and continuing training that may involve cognitive subjects, trainers, and other infrastructures

It is noted that the statistical analysis of the findings was performed using the SPSS program and that these statistical findings are recorded in the form of tables, graphs, and bar graphs in the main part of the work and in a special directory at the end of the work.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Every quantitative study requires the use of statistical processes and a level of computer skills and programs, such as the SPSS Social Science Statistical Package [12]. For this reason, the data processing in the present research was done with the statistical program SPSS, utilizing the standard closed-ended answers of the five-point likert scale. Thus, based on the first six questions of the questionnaire, which are of a demographic nature, the following data are extracted. First of all, two hundred and thirty-eight trainees from all areas of the prefecture of Arcadia took part in the research, namely: Tripoli, Megalopolis, Kynouria and Gortynia, of which 105 were men and 133 were women. Of these, 151 were unmarried, 71 married and 8 divorced. Additionally, the age of the trainees was: 18-25 years old 112, 26-35 years old 44, 36-45 years old 47, 46-55 years old 31 and over 56 years old 4. The educational level of the respondents varied: 8 were primary school graduates, 19 were high school graduates, 112 were high school graduates, 45 from I.E.K., 26 were TEI graduates and 28 were A.E.I. Graduates. The occupational status of the sample was: Unemployed 167, Employed 37, Freelancers 30, Domestic 3, while one respondent did not answer. Finally, in relation to their financial situation, the trainees reported as annual income in euros: up to 10,000 (170 responders), 10,001 - 15,000 (22 responders), 15,001 - 20,000 (16 responders), 20,001 - 30,000 (12 responders), 30,001 - 40,000 (4 responders), over 40,001 (one responder), while 13 did not respond.

The data processing continued with the five questions of the second part of the questionnaire concerning general information that determine the educational profile of the respondents. In particular, in the first two questions, both the knowledge of foreign languages and the computer literacy of the respondents are at satisfactory levels, as the percentages of those who are known from moderate to very good level are over 60% (Figure 1a and 1b). In the third question that investigates the possible participation of trainees in a vocational training program in the past, they state that they have not participated in a percentage of 67.23% while only 19.75% participated only once (Figure 2). That is, the vast majority participate for the first time in a training program. It also appears that most of the sample comes from the ongoing training, as 200 respondents attend K.E.K. and only 38 in I.E.K. (Figure 3).

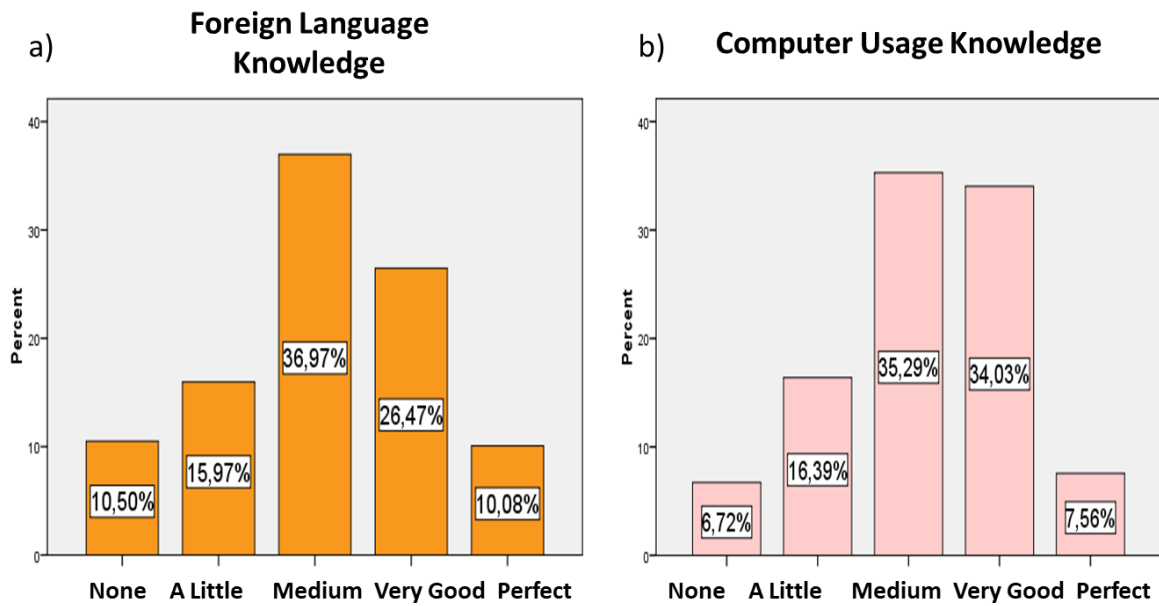


Figure1: a) Foreign Language Knowledge, b) Computer Usage Knowledge

Types of Education Certification

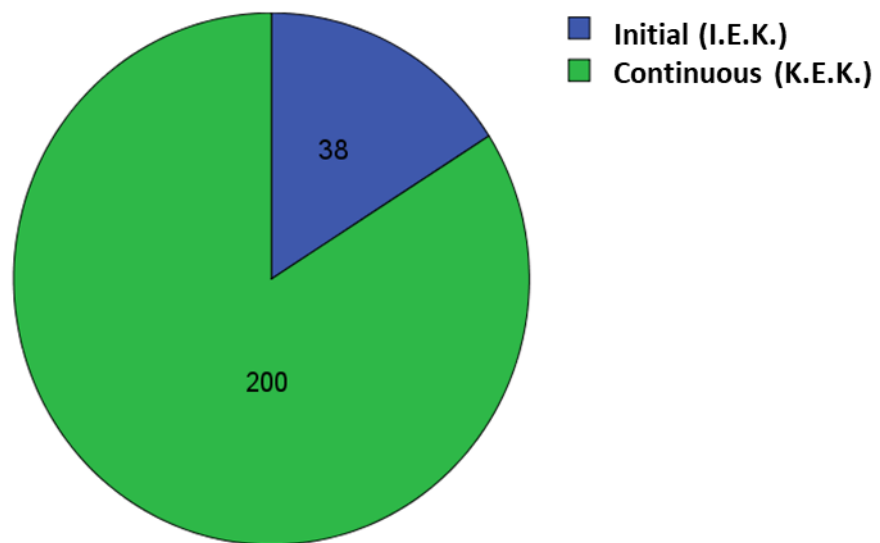


Figure2: Types of Education Certification

V. DISCUSSION AND OUTLOOK

The present research can be the starting point in order to conduct research in the prefecture of Arcadia in order to: a) correlate past and current results, b) explore the most appropriate ways of utilizing the training, c) explore the beliefs of trainers and other staff of the initial structures and continuing training in relation to the quality and value of the training programs provided and d) study the views of employers regarding the usefulness and direction of the training programs offered. Finally, based on the findings of the survey, the intention to participate in future training programs is presented in Figure 3.

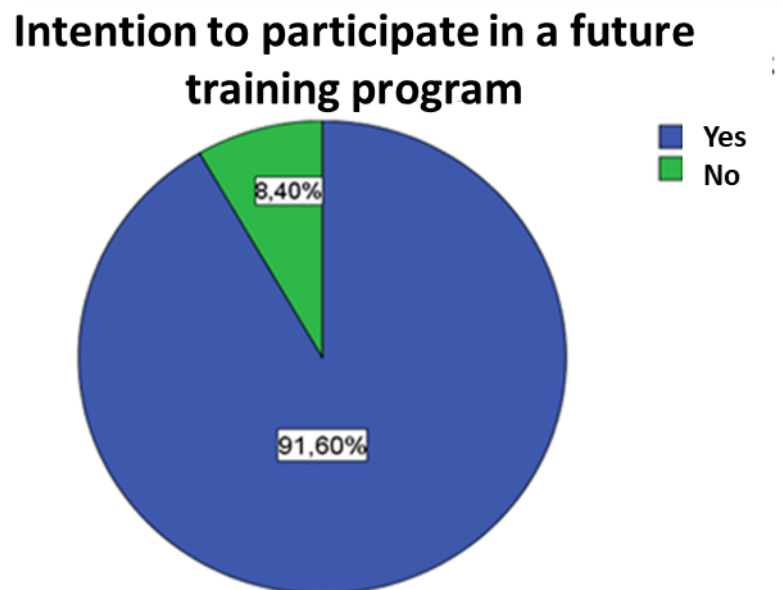


Figure3: Intention to participate in a future training program

VI. CONCLUSIONS

First of all, it turns out that social environment and internet browsing are the most powerful ways both for informing new training programs and for finding a job according to the trainees of the initial and continuing training. Also, all trainees are positive about the training they receive because they use previous knowledge and experience to find that the training programs meet their needs and on the other hand because by attending these programs, they hope to participate in an internship program at the end of the training. Then it was proved that trainees of continuing education have work experience and therefore have as the most important motivation to participate in training programs the improvement of their knowledge and qualifications while students in initial training have no work experience and therefore set as a more serious motivation for training easier access to the labor market. Then the trainees of the initial training reported that they developed satisfactory relationships with the other trainees, while on the contrary the students in the continuing one characterized the relations between them as mediocre. This is justified by the fact that the initial training programs last four semesters, so the participants are well known, while the continuing training programs last one to two months when the students in them often do not develop significant interpersonal relationships. Also, although the trainees of both training structures jointly agreed that the certification of knowledge in the training programs is very valuable, only the students in the initial training wish to participate in the knowledge certification exams from the training program. On the other hand, students in continuing education only half want to certify their knowledge. This difference is obviously due to the fact that in the initial training the process of certification exams is institutionalized in contrast to the continuing training which does not provide for certification exams of knowledge.

It was also found that the improvement of a training program is achieved for the students in the continuous training through the support for access to employment, and for the trainees in the initial training with the improvement of the existing infrastructure. This difference is explained by the time and purpose of each program. In particular, the goal of both training structures is for the participants to acquire knowledge and skills and then work. However, the time duration of the programs differs as it is short in the continuous one, with the result that the trainees consider a program that offers them work successful. On the contrary, the trainees of the initial because they study for two years seek the improvement of the existing infrastructure (notes, computers, laboratories, and teachers) that will help them to acquire the appropriate supplies for their future work. Finally, as the main barrier for finding work for trainees of both initial and continuing training is the economic crisis that our country is going through in recent years. This has as a very unpleasant result on the one hand 70.2% of the respondents to state and on the other 34.9% of the sample to be long-term unemployed as they are looking for work for more than a year. The above-mentioned findings also explain the fact that there is not a sufficient number of assignments in the place of residence of the trainees that are related to the cognitive subjects of both the initial and the continuing training.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Georgios Kokkinis was born in Arcadia, 1973. He got an engineering degree and he also studied administration of health units. He attended master programs in adult's education (2011) and Organization and administration of public services (2014). He works as a professor since 2001.

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