

Investigation of the Lifelong Learning Tendency of College Students

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Abstract The concept of 'lifelong learning (LLL)' has emerged because of the necessity of renewing earlier and immemorial information in time. LLL is involved in a various kind of international foundations' works. European Union is perceived as more efficient in comparison with international companies in terms of lifelong learning practices. European Commission defines the lifelong learning as not only knowledge and aptitude, but also a beneficial opportunity in order to survive individual, social and economic life or in every single field of learning skills and activities. The important place of lifelong learning in the world is utilized to identify the tendency of exact learning levels. In this study, 'Lifelong Learning Tendency Scale' has been enforced as survey to students who studied in different departments for 2016-2017 Spring year. There were 148 vocational school students from 5 different departments. In this study, 4 sub-categories has been determined as motivation, perseverance, the absence of organizing learning and the absence of curious with the demographic information of participants. According to the scale results which was carried out on 5 different departments, it was received that while the highest score of lifelong learning tendency was considered as management, the lowest score was agreed as computer programming.

Keywords Lifelong Learning, Motivation, Organizing Learning, Perseverance, the Absence of Curious

1. Introduction

Individuals who acquired lifelong learning skill represents as impression as they could be successful in all probable fields. Lifelong learning requires the usage of active and constant information. People who can reach the information when one needs for the solution of problems and who could add new ones into it are described as individuals who have the lifelong learning skill (Polat and Odabaş, 2008). It is a quite significant situation for

universities that have distance education to raise ones who can contemplate critically, solve a problem, make a decision independently and have lifelong learning skill (Göksan, et al., 2009).

Since Grundtvig utilized the concept of lifelong learning for the first time in his works, he is regarded as the founder of this notion. Then Comenius' perceptions constituted the backbone of this abstraction (Wain, 2000).

Nowadays, the notion of lifelong learning has been utilized in the national and international foundations' studies frequently. It was deducted that "Green Bulletin" as a project which aims to reduce the unemployment rates and to turn a constant vocational school organization in a systematic structure by a commission established in 1990s by EU. European Union that runs a "Through Learner Society" project has published a commission report which is named as "White Bulletin" intending to raise the awareness of lifelong learning (Akbaş and Özdemir, 2002).

Lifelong learning involves the vocational and technical education, the widespread ranges of including, during and excluding the service in terms of learning process. In other words, it could be appreciated as an advantageous opportunity which provides equality for individuals and also a process where there is no existence of time, place, age, socio-economic level or even education level (Günüç, et al., 2012).

The rapidly reasonable alterations, innovations and developments centered on information and communication technologies have brought about to define our current era as information era. One of the features of information era is to educate where, when and how to use information. In order to benefit from such qualified opportunity, individuals ought to accommodate these rapid innovations in technological and scientific developments; that is to say, they should be information literates (Köğçe, et al., 2014). Therefore, it is required that information literates should advance their skills to access and to use knowledge in this complicated and complex world where producing and sharing information considerably.

In this study, lifelong learning tendency has been

searched and studied demographically on 148 college students who were chosen as subjects. This investigation involves 5 vocational school students whose departments are different from each other. In order to reach exact responses, frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t test, one way variance analysis (Anova test) calculations have been realized. Consequently, existed learning skills are considered as valuable for education foundations and for educators in this time that reaching and learning information has an important place for individuals. In finding section, differentiation between scale scores and department based scale scores is emphasized in accordance with the demographic structure. And in result section, all evidences and findings have been gathered carefully and addressed to related foundations.

2. Literature

Network and information capacity have been increased with developing technology concept. Existed owned knowledge returns to the previous one after a while. Therefore, lifelong learning is regarded as one of the skills that are required for maintaining the coherence and congruence among the society in information era. Lifelong learning has been a notable notion for a while. This conception is included in various kind national and international foundations such as UNESCO, ILO, OECD, EU (Beycioğlu and Konan, 2008). UNESCO and EU have endeavored to draw attention to lifelong learning concept and declared the year of 1996 as lifelong learning year (Chien, 1996). Comparing with other international foundations, EU has been sought as much more efficient and active in implementation of lifelong learning systems (Lee, et al., 2008). EU interprets the notion of lifelong learning as activities that seek to improve the individuals' knowledge, skills, and talents in individual and social or vocational fields (European Commission, 2002). While Kulich (1982) described the state of lifelong learning as the distribution of education in one's lives, White (1982) defined this term as the preparation of one's lives to manage it carefully. And Lengrand (1979) explained as an education which is associated with whole life (Aspin and Chapman, 2000). As well as there is a theory that education involves every field of life; (Lindeman, 1926; Yeaxlee, 1929), the interest and attraction to lifelong learning has been increased lately by endeavoring much more planned and organized compared with previous one.

In order to evaluate and measure the attitude and the tendency towards lifelong learning, distinct range of scales was carried out such as teachers, students and academic staff. Inquiries investigating in this part were mostly incorporates studies, which were held in academic occasions. Coşkun and Demirel researched the lifelong learning tendency of college students in their studies. It was deducted that the average lifelong learning scales of students were low in this research which was eager to clarify whether university, class level and gender differs or

not. In addition to this, the distinguished difference among university, class level and gender has been justified statistically (Coşkun and Demirel, 2012). The lifelong learning levels of 231 vocational school students have been examined carefully. The lifelong learning sufficiency scale which was belonging to Şahin (2010) has been operated as a sample scale. According to this research's results, the level of lifelong learning sufficiency was determined in satisfactory level. There was not any existence of reasonable differences between divisions. The higher the class level exists, the more the lifelong learning sufficiency has increased accurately (Şahin, 2010; Karakuş, 2013).

3. Method

In this section of research, choosing sample and research environment, collecting data tools, validity and credibility data, analysis tools and methods have been entailed precisely.

The Aim of Research: This research has been held in order to determine the distinctions between demographic structures of students and different related departments, in terms of emphasizing the lifelong learning tendencies.

Selection of Environment and Sample: Hitit University Sungurlu Vocational School students have constituted the base of the study. However, samples have selected randomly from students who responded the survey questions about lifelong learning tendency completely from 5 different accurate departments.

The Hypothesis of Research: What it is examined in terms of testing those relations is below;

H1. There is a strong association between demographic variance and lifelong learning scale scores.

H1.1. There is a rational connection between the gender of students and lifelong learning scale scores.

H1.2. There is a certain difference between lifelong learning scale scores with self-leadership and ages of students.

H1.3. There is a reasonable dissimilarity between the kind of high schools where students graduated and lifelong learning scale scores.

H1.4. There is an exact difference between the time which students have spent there and lifelong learning scale scores.

H2. There is a particular distinction between students' departments studying at and lifelong learning scale scores.

Collecting Data Tools: The lifelong learning scale score, which used in this project, was composed by Coşkun in 2009 as a sample of PhD. The validity and credibility of this measurement tool has realized on 2100 individuals as a mixture of 600 pilots and 1500 actual implementation. The term of scale consists of motivation, perseverance, the absence of organizing learning and the absence of curious (Coşkun, 2009). Since 148 students constitute the mass of this study as students from different departments, those who participated in research were selected from students of vocational schools randomly.

Information of Validity and Credibility: Validity and factor analysis have accomplished of the scale. It was observed that all requirements were extremely valid and reliable for Cronbach’s alpha value at 0.89.

4. Findings

Basic statistics which are descriptive and analysis results were mentioned in this section.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of demographic structure

Variable	Category of Variable	f	Percent(%)
Gender	Male	58	39.2
	Female	90	60.8
Age	18-19	27	18.2
	20-21	91	61.5
	22+	30	20.3
Department	Computer Programming	38	25.7
	Child Development	37	25.0
	Foreign Trade	23	15.5
	Management	20	13.5
	Health Programmes	30	20.3
Time Within the University	1	48	32.4
	2	86	58.1
	3++	14	9.5

Table 2 emphasizes the demographic structure which is affected by sample. 60.8% of this sample is female. Moreover, 61.5% of example includes age range of 20-21 and 58.1% of subjects have been continuing the university over 2 years.

Table 2. T-test results according to gender

Scale/size	Gender	N	X	S	sd	t	p
Scale	Male	58	2.27	0.711	146	2.331	0.112
	Female	90	4.56	0.796			
Motivation	Male	58	5.19	0.904	146	1.710	0.039
	Female	90	5.39	0.559			
Perseverance	Male	58	4.61	0.829	146	1.702	0.704
	Female	90	4.84	0.787			
Deficiency	Male	58	3.82	1.222	146	1.368	0.153
	Female	90	4.13	1.400			
Absence of curious	Male	58	3.71	1.089	146	2.032	0.134
	Female	90	4.11	1.244			

The difference in accordance with gender presents only mean scores of sub-dimension motivation ($t(146)=1.710$, $p=0,039$). Results of females are constantly higher ($X=5,39$).

Table 3. Results of ANOVA considering departments

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sum of Scale	Between Groups	3.012	4	.753	1.260	.289
	Within Groups	85.469	143	.598		
	Total	88.480	147			
Motivation	Between Groups	5.165	4	1.291	2.612	.038
	Within Groups	70.679	143	.494		
	Total	75.844	147			
Perseverance	Between Groups	2.223	4	.556	.846	.498
	Within Groups	93.937	143	.657		
	Total	96.159	147			
Deficiency	Between Groups	7.556	4	1.889	1.058	.379
	Within Groups	255.207	143	1.785		
	Total	262.763	147			
Absence of Curious	Between Groups	4.732	4	1.183	.820	.514
	Within Groups	206.296	143	1.443		
	Total	211.028	147			

When Levene test results have been clarified in order to observe the homogenous test results, it was recorded that variations were not distributed equally for sub-dimension motivation ($p < 0.05$). In addition, it was noticed that there was not a clear distinction among lifelong learning scale scores of departments statistically.

Table 4. ANOVA results considering students' ages

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sum of Scale	Between Groups	.948	2	.474	.785	.458
	Within Groups	87.533	145	.604		
	Total	88.480	147			
Motivation	Between Groups	1.696	2	.848	1.658	.194
	Within Groups	74.148	145	.511		
	Total	75.844	147			
Perseverance	Between Groups	1.103	2	.551	.841	.433
	Within Groups	95.056	145	.656		
	Total	96.159	147			
Deficiency	Between Groups	.751	2	.376	.208	.813
	Within Groups	262.012	145	1.807		
	Total	262.763	147			
Absence of Curious	Between Groups	2.835	2	1.417	.987	.375
	Within Groups	208.193	145	1.436		
	Total	211.028	147			

There was no reasonable difference between ages of students and lifelong tendency scale scores statistically.

Table 5. ANOVA results considering time which students spend in schools.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sum of Scale	Between Groups	.695	2	.347	.574	.565
	Within Groups	87.786	145	.605		
	Total	88.480	147			
Motivation	Between Groups	.231	2	.115	.221	.802
	Within Groups	75.613	145	.521		
	Total	75.844	147			
Perseverance	Between Groups	.674	2	.337	.511	.601
	Within Groups	95.486	145	.659		
	Total	96.159	147			
Deficiency	Between Groups	.066	2	.033	.018	.982
	Within Groups	262.697	145	1.812		
	Total	262.763	147			
Absence of Curious	Between Groups	3.038	2	1.519	1.059	.350
	Within Groups	207.990	145	1.434		
	Total	211.028	147			

It was justified that this test did not culminate in with an enormous difference between time (year) which students spend in schools and lifelong tendency scale scores statistically.

Table 6. ANOVA results considering kinds of high schools where students graduated

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sum of Scale	Between Groups	.307	2	.154	.253	.777
	Within Groups	88.173	145	.608		
	Total	88.480	147			
Motivation	Between Groups	.477	2	.238	.459	.633
	Within Groups	75.367	145	.520		
	Total	75.844	147			
Perseverance	Between Groups	.688	2	.344	.523	.594
	Within Groups	95.471	145	.658		
	Total	96.159	147			
Deficiency	Between Groups	1.172	2	.586	.325	.723
	Within Groups	261.590	145	1.804		
	Total	262.763	147			
Absence of Curious	Between Groups	2.211	2	1.105	.768	.466
	Within Groups	208.817	145	1.440		
	Total	211.028	147			

It was noted that there was not any existence of marked dissimilarity between varieties of high schools where students graduated and lifelong tendency scale scores statistically.

5. Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

“The term of lifelong learning could be defined as it enables society to update their knowledge, wisdom and skills, which is required to survive. Moreover, it supports individuals in order to acknowledge fluxional innovations in time and to broaden their horizons in terms of individual, vocational and intellectual levels of those” (Akkoyunlu,

2008).

In an accurate research which was held by Coşkun and Demirel, it was aimed to determine the lifelong learning tendency of people considerably. In the research, it was emphasized that average scores which were acquired from the scale is lower than average scale scores. “In this manner, it was observed that not only students were not willing to participate a various activities centered around lifelong learning, but also they had a problem with organizing

lifelong learning activities definitely. In addition, it was recorded that the concept of curious which is an essential determinant of lifelong learning has not been inside of students considerably (Coşkun and Demirel, 2012).

In another research which examines the lifelong learning sufficiency of vocational school students, it was mentioned that the situation of students was found in a great position. "From the perspective of sub-dimension of scale, communication sufficiency in native language, social and citizenship sufficiency, initiative and entrepreneurship satisfactoriness, cultural awareness and expression satisfactoriness, having learning ability, digital adequacy, mathematical and scientific adequacy were observed in a good level" (Karakuş, 2013). Also in such a study that students were selected from vocational schools by Arsal (2011), the lifelong learning tendency of students (nominees for being teachers) was determined and there was no exact or significant difference between them.

When the results of this research were analyzed, the lifelong learning tendency scale scores of college students were regarded as incredibly at high level. With reference to this information, the lifelong learning skills of students were quite fine. In the study, variables were compared in accordance with gender, age, graduated high school and time that students have spent in schools. There was a relationship between only gender and lifelong learning statistically based on these variables. Moreover, regarding to this relationship, it was asserted that comparing with men, women has higher levels in terms of lifelong learning scale. Nevertheless, there was no exact difference among departments of students and their lifelong learning scale scores considerably.

It was emphasized that lifelong learning skills are able to alter and therefore, giving importance to a range of strategies in Parkinson. These strategies are; communication expectations, burden of learning responsibilities of students, maintaining the motivation of students, providing an opportunity like learning outside of school as well and teaching students how to learn. Also in higher education, by utilizing such strategies that providing students to manage their own education process, using active learning methods in education, ensuring that students could able to solve their own problems immediately, encouraging students to make self-assessment can have beneficial advantageous for universities. Considering all these activities in the education life, not only it prepares students to life as lifelong learners, but also it gives an opportunity of being a better learner during education life (Parkinson, 1999).

This research is restricted with the students of Hitit University Sungurlu Vocational Higher Education School. Nonetheless, it was considered that there would be more comprehensive, widespread and intriguing results if there was a bigger and wider environment to observe.

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