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BEYOND THE GARDEN-SOCIAL INCLUSION OBSERVATORY

RESEARCH STUDY

Introduction

The research was conducted on the framework of the Erasmus+ European project “Oltre il Giardino”. The questionnaire was answered by 604 people in Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal. The number of people was chosen in ratio to the population of each country.

Greece has one of the lowest rates in school drop-out as European and international statistics show. The research aimed to examine the reasons of school drop-out in Greece and identify ways to strengthen people who have not finished their studies. Quantitative research through a questionnaire and random sampling technique were used.

The research

The population

In Greece, the questionnaire was completed by 53 people, 29 women and 24 men (see Chart 1). The ages of the population vary, with young people up to 19 years old being mostly represented (see Chart

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Questionnaire analysis- Greece

2). 52.8% are single, and 30.2% married. 21 out of 53 have one or more children. Greeks comprise 52.8 and 47.2 % are of other nationalities. Almost 80% of foreigners have lived in Greece less than 10 years. The educational level varied with half of them having university studies and 11.3% having no title (chart 3).

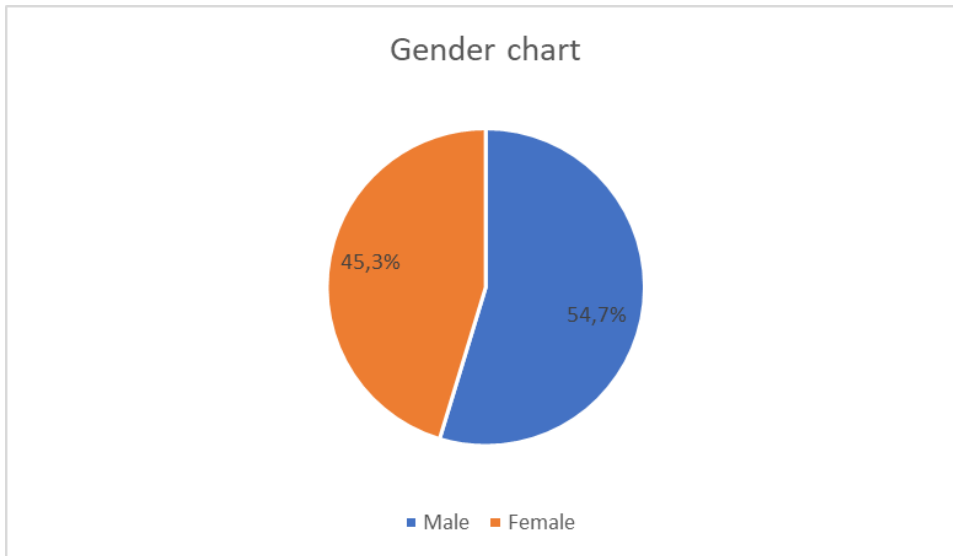


Chart 1: Male, female ratio

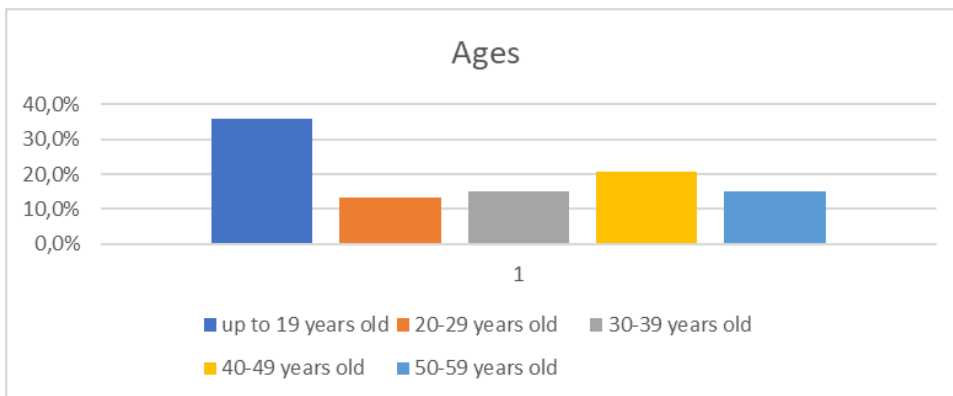
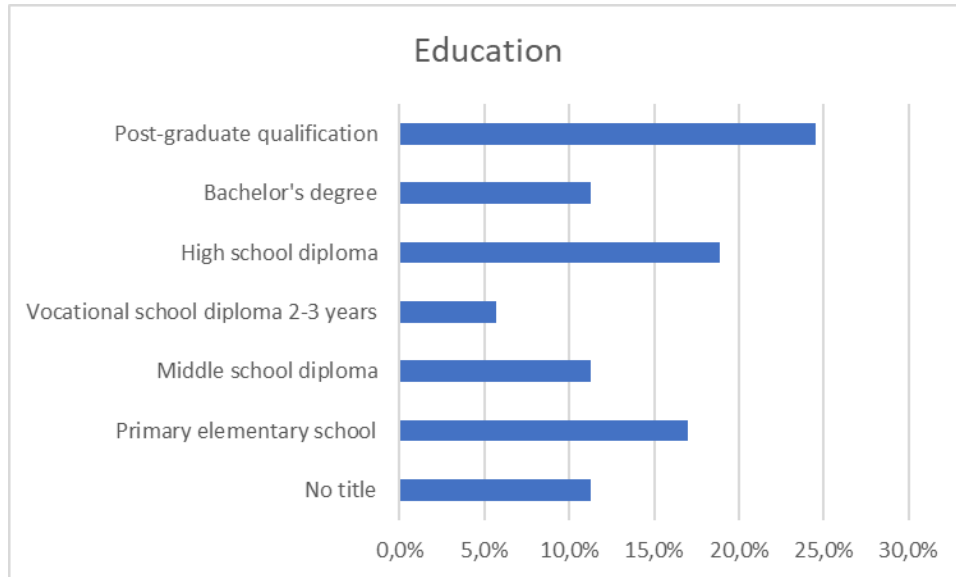


Chart 2: Population ages

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Questionnaire analysis- Greece



Chat 3: Educational level

Findings

Main causes of drop-out

62,3 of the population researched in Greece have dropped out of school. The first observation is that the sample in Greece consisted of young people of foreign origin who have left school due to war, financial reasons and family hardships. Therefore, one of the largest percent of school dropouts are victims of the refugee crisis who did not have the chance to finish or even attend school.

Approximately half of the population are of non-Greek nationality and 65% of them speak Greek with many difficulties. Difficulty speaking the local language seems to be one of the reasons people usually do not complete studying.

According to the answers given by the sample the main causes of dropout

- Emigration (30.3%)
- Survival (need to work) (24.2%)
- War/ national country situation (15.2%)

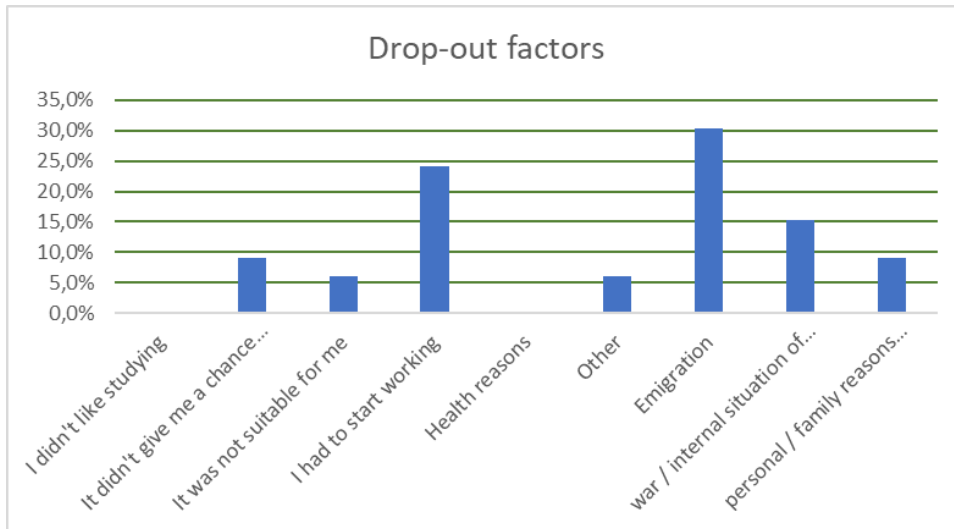
Other causes of dropout have been

- Education put barriers to work

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Questionnaire analysis- Greece

- It didn't give them a chance to work
- It was not suitable for them
- Health reasons
- personal / family reasons / commitments



Lifelong learning

More than 70 % of the respondents believe that stopping studying has had an influence in their life. When asked about attending and finishing a training course, responders believe that they can finish training that will help them find a better job.

85% believe that going to school and studying has and will help them improve their lives in the future.

Lifelong learning courses

The choices in training courses the sample have answered are interesting. The first observation is that no one would choose gardening and agriculture. A quite significant percentage (24.5%) report not to have any interest in studying, whereas 18.9% would attend a language course.

In the following table, the activities chosen by the sample are presented in detail.

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Questionnaire analysis- Greece

Language skills	18,9%
IT / digital skills	11,3%
Creativity / artistic skills	9,4%
Soft skills	1,9%
Cooking	1,9%
Communication / marketing	3,8%
Gardening / agriculture	0,0%
Manual skills	5,7%
Psychology / pedagogy	0,0%
Driving / driving license	3,8%
Sports skills	1,9%
Mathematical / scientific skills	1,9%
General culture	1,9%
Other	1,9%
Does not indicate / does not specify	11,3%
No/ nothing	24,5%

Table 1

However, when asked specifically, more than 70 percent think digital studies are very important, and approximately 60% rate garden maintenance high. Language training was again rated very high, whereas music, cinema, entertainment, YouTube, cooking and wine tasting did not receive high scores. Acquiring skills in the areas of craftsmanship, mechanics or plumbing is thought useful but answers vary.

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Questionnaire analysis- Greece

<i>In particular, how much do you think could be useful a path of acquiring skills in the following areas? (1-10)</i>	
Answerers:	
Digitization	7,6
Garden maintenance	6,4
Foreign languages and cultures	7,9
Music, cinema and entertainment	5,8
Youtuber, influencer	4,2
Courses of craftsmanship, mechanics or plumbing	5,9
Cooking, sommelier and wine tasting courses	5,4
Art, literature and creative writing	5,4

Table 2

The reasons behind participation are mostly work related. Increasing career opportunities, finding a job are more important than knowledge itself. An important finding is that the sample are not seeking for certifications, that is validation of knowledge.

Having relationships with other people is a crucial factor for participation. Soft skills such as improving teamwork, using worktime effectively and problem-solving skills are also important although they were low-rated in a previous question, indicating that the term soft skills was not important for them.

Important aspects of life and future

As far as what matters more in life family and love come first, followed by job and friends. Studying comes last. Most of the population are optimistic about the future believing they can do better and ameliorate their lives. Although they show a feeling of not having control on their lives they believe they can do much more with their lives.

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Questionnaire analysis- Greece

The Corona virus pandemic

It should be mentioned that the questionnaire was answered in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic. The population who answered the questionnaire seem worried about the Covid-19 pandemic but not too worried. Although half of them report no problems during the pandemic, the other half have had mostly anxiety and sleeping problems. 43.4 % report their lives have gotten worse, while on the contrary 45.3% report it was not affected.

Conclusion

In Greece, factors that have affected school dropout and early school leaving are the economic crisis and the high levels of humanitarian migration.


The analysis of the qualitative data gathered in Greece verifies the literature research conducted before setting up the questionnaires. Individual, family, social and systemic factors seem to cause and affect drop-out of studying.

The most important finding is that people are willing to participated in training courses, seem to be able to use new technologies, and believe lifelong learning will help them get their lives on track, find a job, find a better job and improve their relationships with other people.

The results of the quantitative analysis of the research highlighted the importance of lifelong learning in the integration and reintegration of vulnerable social groups. Continuing education can be compensatory, ie it can make up for the lack of formal qualifications (eg high school diploma) but in general it can compensate for the lack of cultural skills and essential professional qualifications. Lifelong learning can help prevent occupational and social degradation. The provision of such preconditions opens new paths and gives opportunities to individuals.



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