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# 6ο Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Προώθηση της Εκπαιδευτικής Καινοτομίας

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**16-18**  
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**2020**  
Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας



ΕΕΠΕΚ



6<sup>ο</sup>  
ΔΙΕΘΝΕΣ  
ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ  
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΩΘΗΣΗ  
ΤΗΣ **ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΗΣ**  
**ΚΑΙΝΟΤΟΜΙΑΣ**

*Πρακτικά  
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ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΗ ΕΝΩΣΗ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΩΘΗΣΗ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΙΝΟΤΟΜΙΑΣ

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# Comparative study among trainers and trainees of the Patras PVTI regarding distance learning

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## Summary

The purpose of this study is to compare attitudes and views of the trainers and trainees of the Patras PVTI (Public Vocational Training Institute). Initially, the theoretical frame of the operation of the PVTI combined with the transition to distance learning due to the coronavirus pandemic is presented. The research and its results follow. The research questions are about the personal views of the trainers and the trainees regarding distance learning, the way trainers communicate remotely with the trainees and vice versa, as well as whether the working relationship, education level, specialty and sex of both groups play any role in the distance learning education. The results have shown that trainees do not use the asynchronous platform (eclass) of the Patras PVTI while the percentage of trainers using it is almost more than double (25.0%). The majority of their communication takes place via emails or Facebook groups. Finally, while in trainers there is no significant differentiation regarding the working relationship, level of education, specialty and sex, in trainees there are differentiations when it comes to the education level and sex.

**Keywords: asynchronous, synchronous, distance learning, education, training, PVTI**

## Introduction

The present study compares two researches: the research among 111 trainers of the Patras PVTI (Giotopoulos & Katsonis, 2020) and the research among 421 trainees of the Patras PVTI (Giotopoulos, 2020). The time frame in which the questionnaires were received is the spring semester of 2020 (2020A).

## Theoretical frame

The structures providing professional training and education are detailed in the Greek legislature. In the law 4186/2013 (Greek Government Gazette (ΦΕΚ 193/Α/17-9-2013)), the structure and operation of the VTIs (public and private ones) are described in detail.

The sector of the Professional Education and Training, as it has been defined, refers to the following sections of education: a) Upper Secondary Vocational Education, b) Initial Education and Training (IVET), which is provided by the Vocational Training Institutes, c) the Continuing Vocational Training, which is provided by accredited public and private Centers of Vocational Training (Zarifis, et al., 2013, p.21).

Public and private VTIs provide initial vocational training mostly to graduates of the second cycle of Secondary Education and to graduates of Continuing Vocational Training, aiming at incorporating them into the labor market. Graduates of Vocational Upper Secondary Schools can enroll (at the third semester of a similar specialty), as well as graduates of Unified Upper Secondary Schools and foreign citizens (holders of a language certificate). Attendance consists of five semesters in total, divided in four semesters of theoretical and practical training of up to 1,200 training hours in total and in one semester of obligatory apprenticeship or assistantship of 960 hours in total, which can be continuous or segmented (CEDEFOP, 2014, p.28-29). Each VTI can focus on one sector or more i.e. applied arts, tourism, transportation, food and drink, chemical industry, IT communications and networks, vesture and footwear, while each sector includes several specialties. After the successful attendance of all the

training semesters, a Certificate of Vocational Training is issued. This certificate allows them to take part in the (practical and theoretical) vocational training certification examinations of the National Accreditation Examinations conducted by the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Training (EOPPEP) through which they receive a certificate of upper secondary training. VTI graduates receive an EQF Level 5 Vocational Training Certificate, according to the European Qualifications Framework and the Hellenic Qualifications Framework which is under the jurisdiction of EOPPEP (CEDEFOP, 2014, p.28-29).

The isolation to which our country was driven initially, along with the vast majority of other countries due to the coronavirus (Covid19) has repercussions in several sectors in the public and private sphere (Girón-Pérez M.I. et al., 2020; Barnouin, 2020). Public education was dragged into an abrupt adjustment to new rules. Consequently, words like distance learning, synchronous and asynchronous education became widely known while materializations in both platforms have already begun on a large scale.

What is happening in Greece (but worldwide as well) is recognized as Emergency Remote Teaching and is about moving teaching to an alternative way of classroom instruction due to emergencies (CRLT, 2020; DavisonCollege, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; McMurtrie, 2020; TEMPLE, 2020).

### **Methodology – Purpose of research**

The present study aims to investigate the views of adult trainers and trainees of the Patras PVTI regarding the synchronous and asynchronous education. The research was realized by distributing and collecting e-questionnaires from March 20 up to March 24, 2020.

### **Research questions**

The research questions asked were about the views of the adult trainers and the trainees of the Patras PVTI regarding distance training and more specifically:

1. What are the personal views of the trainers and trainees regarding distance learning?
2. Which way do trainers use to communicate with the trainees and vice versa?
3. Do the working relationship, education level, specialty and sex of the participants play any role in distance learning?

### **The research sample, the methodology, the distribution and collection**

The structured questionnaire for the trainers (Cohen et al., 2008, p. 418) consisted of 16 questions divided into two sections. The first section with the demographic data had 7 questions while the second section which was about the research had 9 questions. Of those 9 questions, 3 were multiple choice, 4 were Yes/No questions while the last two questions were open-ended, free text questions (Cohen et al., 2008, p. 419) so that the respondents could record their personal point of view. Of the 111 trainers in total, 63 responded with the participation percentage being: 56.8%.

The questionnaire of the trainees consisted of 17 questions divided into two sections. The first section with the demographic data had 6 questions while the second section (about the research) had 11 questions. Of the 11 questions, 5 were multiple choice, 4 were Yes/No questions while the last two were open-ended, free text questions so that the respondents could record their personal point of view. Of the 421 trainees in total, 170 responded with the participation percentage being: 40.4%.

The researches took place between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the lockdown of the educational institutes due to the corona virus pandemic (Greek Government Gazette (ΦΕΚ) 701/B/4-3-2020; Greek Government Gazette (ΦΕΚ) 728/B/8-3-2020; Greek Government Gazette (ΚΥΑ) Δ1α/ΓΠ.οικ.20021/21.3.2020) in the spring semester of 2020. The questionnaire was digital and was created using Google forms. It was then sent and collected through a specific link. The data was processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

AGE	N	PERCENTAGE
20-25	0	0,0%
26-30	6	9,5%
31-35	10	15,9%
36-40	9	14,3%
41-45	12	19,0%
46-50	12	19,0%
51-55	8	12,7%
56-60	6	9,5%
60+	0	0,0%

Age distribution of trainers

AGE	N	PERCENTAGE
20-25	100	58,8%
26-30	9	5,3%
31-35	11	6,5%
36-40	16	9,4%
41-45	13	7,6%
46-50	11	6,5%
51-55	8	4,7%
56-60	1	0,6%
60+	1	0,6%

Age distribution of trainees

**Picture 1. Age distribution of trainers and trainees**

According to the above chart, 38.0% of the trainers are aged 41 to 50 years old, while 58.8% of the trainees are aged 20-25 years old.

76.5% of the trainees has graduated from Lyceum (Giotopoulos, 2020) while half the trainers of the Patras PVTI hold a master's degree and an additional 14,3% holds a doctoral or postdoctoral degree (Giotopoulos & Katsonis, 2020).

**Table 1. Answers to the question "Which are the ways of communication between trainers and trainees?"**

	Trainers' way of communication with the trainees	Trainees' way of communication with their trainers
email	52.0%	65.4%
Facebook/Messenger	28.5%	45.3%
Viber Group	17.5%	12.3%
eclass	25.0%	10.6%
edmodo	6.0%	3.5%
TOTAL	129.0	137.1

According to the above table, where respondents could choose more than one question, trainees use email and Facebook/Messenger as a way to communicate with their trainers while they do not prefer e-class which is used by trainers at more than twice as high a percentage.

Up to now, distance communication of the trainees with the trainers took place mainly via email (65.4%) and Facebook/Messenger groups (45.3%). As regards the ICT certification

(Information and Communication Technologies), 72.4% does not hold an ECDL-type (European Computer Driving License) certification.

**Table 2. Answers to the question “Which is the working relationship of the trainers and trainees”**

	Working relationship of trainers	Working relationship of trainees
Public servant	11.1%	5.3%
Full-time (substitute) - ΙΔΑΧ (Private -Open Ended contract)	9.5%	8.2%
Hourly –short time – parttime	76.2%	17.1%
Unemployed	1.6%	68.8%
Total	98.4	99.4

As regards the working relationship, 1.6% of the trainers states Unemployed while the respective percentage of trainees is 68.8%. Moreover, 76.2% of the trainers work full-time or short-time while 17.1% of the trainees work part-time.

When asked whether an ebook should be available for each subject to operate as a guide, 82.5% of the trainers and 91.8% of the trainees the answer was affirmative. Once the relevant material has been uploaded on the eclass platform they can have an immediate cooperation with their trainers (63.0%). Trainees do not own a personal computer (10.6%), only 10.6% owns a smartphone while 4.7% of the participants does not have an internet connection.

Two open-ended questions follow, aiming at recording optionally and more detailed the view of the trainers and trainees. In the question “How do you consider the distance learning class should be conducted? Write your opinion freely.” 42 of the 63 trainers answered. Participation percentage of respondents: 59.2%.

91 out the 170 trainees responded. Participation percentage of respondents: 53.5%.

**Table 3. Answers to the question “How do you consider the distance learning class should be conducted? Write your opinion freely”.**

	Trainers	Trainees
Asynchronous education platform (eclass type specifically, only trainers answered)	59.5%	42.8%
Synchronous education platform (not a specific one)	59.5%	45.0%
With questionnaires and questions/answers	7.1%	0.0%
With team projects	7.1%	0.0%
Sending material via email	0.0%	7.6%
Using an ebook as a guide	0.0%	5.4%
Total	133.3	101.1

In the last question of the questionnaire, also an open-ended one, titled “Improvement Recommendations – Comments”, 22 out of the 63 participants responded. Participation percentage of the trainers who answered: 34.9%. From the trainees, 35 out of the 170 participants responded. Participation percentage of trainees who answered: 20.6%.

**Table 4. Answers to the question “Improvement Recommendations – Comments”**

	Trainers	Trainees
Training trainers in both the synchronous and asynchronous education platforms	31.8%	0.0%
Acquiring equipment and software for the specialties	22.7%	0.0%
Operation of a synchronous education platform	18.2%	14.7%
Operation of an asynchronous education platform	72.7%	11.7%
Total	145.4	26.4

54.1% of the trainees do not know about the asynchronous education while on the contrary, 57.1% know about the synchronous education. However, 62.4% does not know the difference between the two kinds. From the above results it is concluded that trainees do not know what the synchronous education is (as a term or a meaning), since 62.4% does not see any difference between the two types. 65.9% knows the eclass-type platforms as the Patras PVTI uses an eclass asynchronous education platform that promotes and supports to both trainers and trainees.

The recorded view of a trainer presented here unchanged is quite interesting: “I do not consider that distance learning can substitute classroom instruction and should be selected only in extreme cases. It does not offer the possibility for the total of educational techniques to be applied as classroom instruction does i.e. how wrong a role play game can go in distance learning! Moreover, there are objective difficulties due to societal factors that distance learning cannot overcome (VTI trainees come from low social classes, with a weak educational profile and without the necessary PC equipment)”.

### Conclusions

Both researches demonstrate that both trainers and trainees (while in a smaller percentage), consider that teaching should be conducted using both a synchronous and an asynchronous platform. However, in the recommendations for improvements and comments, the most important finding is that trainers believe they should be trained to both the asynchronous and synchronous education platforms.

As regards the comparison among trainers using SPSS, there was no significant differentiation regarding a) the working relationship, b) the education level, c) the specialty and d) the sex (Giotopoulos & Katsonis, 2020).

However, statistically there was a considerable differentiation regarding the sex, as male trainees know less about the synchronous education compared to female trainees (Giotopoulos, 2020). Additionally, there are statistically important differentiations depending on the education level. As regards the asynchronous education, trainees that hold a master’s or doctorate degree are more familiar with synchronous education compared to the rest of the trainees. Moreover, there are also statistically important differences between the asynchronous and synchronous education, as trainees with a master’s or a doctorate degree know about more than the rest of the trainees (Giotopoulos, 2020).

The views and attitudes of the trainees, after a critical period of time has passed, during which they can familiarize themselves with the synchronous education platforms, could be a subject for future research. This way the acquisition of digital skills and their use in facilitating the educational procedure can be evaluated.

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