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Trainees' perception of vocational training institutes degree apprenticeship

An empirical approach

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Vocational
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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate how the degree apprenticeship of the vocational training institutes (VTIs) enhances the labor market and enables the trainees to detect the knowledge and skills that are acquired during the training. In addition, this study tries to detect through work-based learning whether the workplace function as a learning place and whether the trainees are satisfied by the experience during the degree apprenticeship.

Design/methodology/approach – In total, 129 graduates by various VTIs in the wider area of Patras (Western Greece), who completed the degree apprenticeship, participated in the survey.

Findings – The findings of this study highlighted the difficulties that the graduates of VTIs face when they look for a job in the economic crisis era that Greece faces. However, this study also highlighted the satisfaction that the trainees denoted about the knowledge and the vocational and social skills that they acquired during the degree apprenticeship. Additionally, the trainees are satisfied by the workplace where the degree apprenticeship took place because it became a learning environment.

Practical implications – This study is evidence of a need for developing the degree apprenticeship programs in Greece as a means of enhancing the transition from training to work.

Originality/value – This research is the first and serious recording of the trainees' opinions regarding their degree apprenticeship, during their studies in VTIs. The presented professional and social skills could use as guidelines for the implementation of new practices and educational policies in training during the educational process. Additionally, the degree apprenticeship programs will be further linked to the educational institution and the educational community will benefit from the trainees' experience. These new degree apprenticeship practices will be implemented in the following years in all the VTIs in Greece.

Keywords Work-based learning, Trainees, Workplace, Labour market, Degree apprenticeships, Higher education skills, Vocational training institutes (VTIs)

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Unemployment in the Greek society concerns many citizens and they even characterize it as the most important problem in the country (Eurobarometer, July 2017). Unemployment rates have skyrocketed to 23.6 percent (2016) due to the economic crisis and the structural weaknesses of the Greek economy, while in the category of young people (18-25 years), Greece has the highest unemployment rates in the European Union with 47.3 percent (CEDEFOP, 2017). Jobs are mostly part-time, short-term and mostly low-wage, but demand more and more skills from candidates (Pouliakas, 2014).

Therefore, a research focusing on evaluating the degree apprenticeship regarding the improvement of the employability of students is a contribution to the attitudes of young people who are studying in public and private vocational training institutes (VTIs) and are preparing to get trained. This research reveals the trainees' satisfaction regarding the workplace and the knowledge and skills they have gained during their degree apprenticeship. It also highlights the importance of degree apprenticeship, both in finding work and in comprehending the theoretical knowledge that trainees gained during their studies in the VTIs. More particularly, the purpose of this research was to evaluate the



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