

**Professional Leadership Supported by Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism: Innovative Employment Model \***

**Turizmde bilgi ve iletişim teknolojileri destekli mesleki liderlik: İnovatif istihdam modeli**

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The concept of career leadership is a concept that can be used to prevent unemployment. This concept needs to be better understood in widespread use of the Internet, especially when the importance of information and communication technologies is on the rise. It is possible to deliver changing labor market demand characteristics to young graduates with the help of information technology besides Internet. The fact that the unemployment rate in Turkey is among the most intense university graduated young people have seen is the reason why this project has been prepared. This project is being carried out for 50 graduates in order to reduce the basic problems in the labor force market, increase employment, facilitate the transition from school to work life, and educate the leaders of their fields. The pre-test and post-test results of 50 undergraduates have been evaluated. As a result of the training, it can be said that the average arithmetic values of the participants in career leadership have increased. Findings show how crucial entrepreneurial training, motivational courses and the usage of information and communication technologies are. In this training process, it has become understood that young people should increase their training especially in leadership and entrepreneurship. In addition to the standard courses, it can be said that self-confidence boosting topics and activities are required for newly graduated university students.

**Keywords:** Informatics, Technology, Tourism, Leadership, Unemployment.

**Jel Codes:** L80, O10, J20, J60.

Kariyer liderliği kavramı, işsizliği önlemek için kullanılacak bir kavramdır. Bugün bu kavram, İnternetin yaygın kullanımının bilhassa da bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin öneminin artmasıyla daha iyi anlaşılması gerekmektedir. İnternetin yanısıra, bilgi teknolojisinin yardımıyla genç mezunlara değişen işgücü piyasası talep özelliklerini sunmak mümkündür. Türkiye’de işsizliğin en yoğun üniversite mezunları arasında olması bu projenin onlar üzerinde hazırlanmasının sebebidir. Bu proje, işgücü piyasasındaki temel sorunları azaltmak, istihdamı artırmak, okuldan iş hayatına geçişi kolaylaştırmak ve alanlarındaki liderleri yetiştirmek için 50 mezun öğrenciyle yürütülmektedir. 50 lisans öğrencisinin ön test ve son test sonuçları değerlendirilmiştir. Değerlendirme sonuçlarına göre katılımcıların aritmetik ortalamalarının, kariyer liderliği alanında arttığı gözlemlenmiştir. Bulgulara bakılarak bilişim teknolojilerinin kullanılmasının, alınan güdüsel eğitimlerin ve girişimci eğitimlerinin çok önemli olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu eğitim sürecinde gençlerin özellikle liderlik ve girişimcilik eğitimlerini arttırmaları gerektiği anlaşılmıştır. Standart kurslara ek olarak, yeni mezun üniversite öğrencileri için özgüven artırıcı konuların ve etkinliklerin gerekli olduğu söylenebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bilişim, Teknoloji, Turizm, Liderlik, İşsizlik.

**Jel Kodları:** L80, O10, J20, J60.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The unemployment problem experienced in the tourism sector can be solved through effective cooperation between tourism organisations and enterprises. Therefore, labour supply and demand sources should form an innovative model by using information technology. A chronic problem can only be solved by a systematic process and efficient collaboration. The unemployment rate of highly educated young people continues to be an issue for many countries. The unemployment rate among the youth population (15-24 years) was 19.4% with an increase of 1.7 percentage points whereas for 15-64 age group, the rate was 10.4% with an increase of 0.7 points (TÜİK 2016). The purpose of this project is to prepare young university graduates who struggle to find employment in the business sector and to help them secure employment as soon as possible. Furthermore, it aims to educate university students in a way that provides them the foundation they need to become leaders in their industries. Additionally, they are provided quality counseling services through university lecturers in order to increase their productivity. At the end of the project, trainees will be monitored in their new business roles and supported wherever necessary. Another goal is to increase the cooperation between the university and the tourism sector in order to find solutions for problems in an academic sense. Lastly, the goal is to facilitate the employment of new graduates by providing them with efficient use of information and communication technologies.

Today, the internet is widely used and effective use of the internet is crucial in order to reduce youth unemployment. It seems that the solution to job preparation and job search processes via the internet takes less time than more traditional methods. For example, these days, businesses fulfill workforce needs faster by using e-human resources management applications. Furthermore, enterprises that provide electronic career counseling serve their employees with customized web pages, as well as internet sites established for this purpose. (Doğan, 2011: 64)

25 unemployed females and 25 unemployed males, between the age of 20 – 28, unemployed graduates of tourism departments of universities, living in rural areas with low income backgrounds are the target group of this project.

The persons who will benefit from the project are institutions, all individuals, and organisations that are affected by the employment problems in the tourism sector.

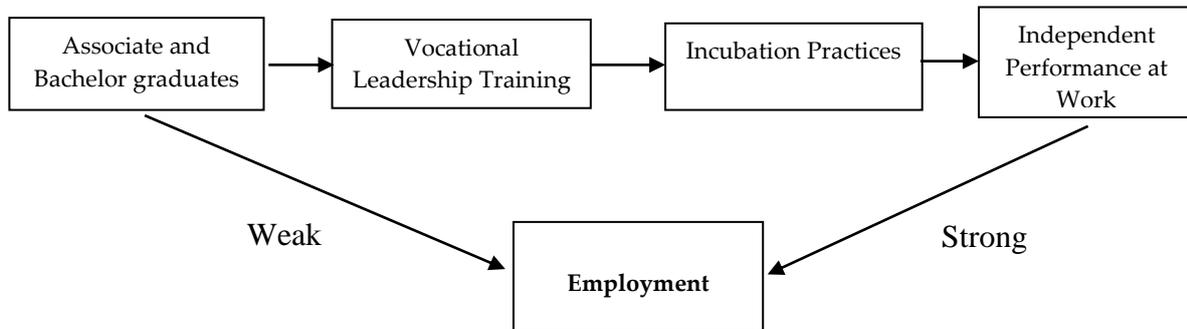
## **2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

For this project, the plan is to provide theoretical training in order to improve leadership skills and professional awareness. These trainings will be classified under three basic headings. Firstly, the project trainees were given professional leadership training as can be seen in Figure 1. Although this training is theoretical, it has been enriched with practical examples. Information technology has also been used effectively.

A total of 160 hours of theoretical training were provided as follows: instruction in entrepreneurship (90 hours), leadership (36 hours) and information technology (34 hours). It was assumed that the participants were already proficient in vocational courses since they had either a vocational degree or an undergraduate degree in tourism. Therefore, the

theoretical education curriculum was formed by emphasising courses that were lacked by participants and other courses required by the sector.

As seen in figure 1 below, the aim of this training module is to transfer orientation, in the sector, of undergraduate and associate degree graduates to a strong channel of relationship from a weak relationship channel.



**Figure 1.** Innovative Employment Model Process

Based on vocational leadership training, for an individual to succeed, the individual must have the following qualities: self-confidence, willingness to work and job achievement, fulfillment of responsibilities and a good grasp of information technologies.

### **2.1. The Role and Importance of the Entrepreneurship Course**

It is inevitable that entrepreneurship training is given to industry leaders as it increases employment prospects and contributes to the growth of the economy.

According to Raposo and Paco (2011), the aims of entrepreneurship education are as follows:

- To have worthwhile information about entrepreneurship,
- By using the given techniques capacity increase examination of the business situation and establishment of action plans,
- Identify and promote entrepreneurial skills,
- Support all aspects of entrepreneurship and develop empathy,
- Develop a good attitude towards change
- Encourage beginners and other entrepreneurs.

In accordance with Albert et al (2004) amongst the most common entrepreneurial training objectives include the following substances:

- To learn the knowledge, concepts and techniques with regards to the field of entrepreneurship.
- Use of case analysis techniques and action

Acquiring skills in the synthesis of their plans: this purpose aims to encourage knowledge, analysis and synthesis skills of accounting, finance, marketing and general management using a holistic approach.

- Identify and promote entrepreneurial spirit, talent and skills: This goal aims at, in entrepreneurship, raising awareness of talent, interest, potential and consciousness of individuals and supporting their new career opportunity.

The goal of entrepreneurship training is to bring out a number of hidden features towards entrepreneurship potential and improve self-awareness. To prevent those who have entrepreneurial qualities from pursuing the wrong thing is to realise a more efficient use of their resources. Education is a necessary condition for entrepreneurial inclination, but solitarily is not enough. (Balaban & Özdemir, 2008).

## **2.2. The Importance and Role of Leadership Course**

Moreover, people with leadership qualities have a say in their profession and can motivate people who they work with and together can achieve success consequently. Hence, leadership and motivation lessons are important for this project. Leadership as a concept is the process by which one person influences and directs the activities of others in order to achieve specific individual or group goals while the leader is a person that drives group members towards a certain individual or group aim under certain circumstances. (Koçel, 2001: 465).

Cook et al. (1997: 463) describe the concept of leadership as follows: guidance, energisation and the process of helping employees voluntarily connect to the vision of the leader. Factors such as a plan that can not cover all possible situations, extremely dynamic and variable environment, organisation growth trend, and most importantly variable human factors, unforeseeable and complex structure reveals the necessity for efficient leadership in order to accomplish organisational goals. (Arıkan, 2001:253).

Information and communication technologies-assisted education's role and importance:

The tourism sector is one of the business sectors where information and communication technologies are used heavily. It has now become impossible to sell a travel ticket without using information technology anymore. Various front office softwares and travel agency related computer program training is vital for those who aim to become leaders in their profession.

In Turkey, the transition from school to work is often a difficult and lengthy process. Young people entering the labor market experience difficulties in finding jobs especially in times of economic stagnation. It is emphasised that the economic crises have had a negative impact on young people with less seniority and less experience in the labor market, both in Turkey and in other countries.(Köseleci, 2012:15)

Both employers and public authorities have duties pertaining to policies for tackling youth unemployment. Of course, there are also some duties for the youth population as well. In terms of labor quality, it is necessary not only to have a high level of education but also to be an individual who has developed himself / herself, has a good command of at least one foreign language, monitors vocational newspapers and magazines regularly, is aware of

developments in the world, is able to adapt to contemporary technologies and should have professional qualifications in his/her field. (Kabaklarlı & Gür, 2011).

The key in the process of restructuring vocational education is adopting and co-shaping suitable recommendations for Turkey's prospects paying attention to the fact-based scientific analysis of concrete data derived from labour, business and education sectors. For studies carried out in this direction to succeed, researchers and policy makers should understand private sector needs and expectations while the private sector should make an effort based on data and analysis.(Köseleci, 2012:39)

Aggarwal (2000), 21st century education; should not be time-dependent nor space-dependent. Result and goal oriented, student-centered, active teamwork-weighted skills and differences must be maintained.

### 3. EVALUATION OF THEORY BASED-EDUCATION PROCESS

#### 3.1. Method and Its Implementation

The pre-test and post-test were conducted with 50 participants on three main topics, which are essential to their success in their profession. The tests consisted of 39 questions in total, of which 20 were about entrepreneurship, 12 about leadership and 7 questions about information and communication technology. The Pre-test was conducted before 3 months of theoretical lectures. Expert faculty members from different universities delivered courses. Young people participated in the first test with an undergraduate degree and work experience qualifications. Grades were evaluated on a 1-10 scale for each question.

The same process took place for the final test after 3 months of theoretical courses. Success or failure was checked by subtracting the first test's data from the last test's data. Significant positive values were obtained in 3 main subjects.

The points given by 50 participants in each question were collected and compiled using the SPSS statistical program. The obtained dataset was converted into available information with the aid of tables. Statistical information on frequency distribution, arithmetic mean and standard deviation are given in the analyses.

### 4. FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

Demographic findings: 8% of the participants in the pre-test and post-test were in the 20-22 age group, 78% in the 23-25 age group and 6% in the 26-28 age group. In terms of gender, participants were 52% female and 48% male. Education levels were 10%, 80% and 10% for associate, undergraduate and master's degrees respectively.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	n	%	Demographic Characteristics	n	%
Age			Education Level		
20-22	8	16	Associate Degree	5	10
23-25	39	78	Undergraduate Degree	40	80
26-28	3	6	Master Degree	5	10
Total	50	100	Total	50	100
Sex					
Female	26	52			
Male	24	48			
Total	50	100			

**Table 2.** Comparison of Test Results

Questions	Pre-test		Post-test	
	$\bar{X}$	Sd.	$\bar{X}$	Sd.
1. What is your level of knowledge on entrepreneurship?	4,00	1,14	7,92	1,03
2. What is your level of knowledge about writing a business plan?	4,60	,98	7,62	,75
3. What is your knowledge level in Business Modeling?	4,60	1,04	7,94	,71
4. What is your level of knowledge on cost structure?	4,76	1,02	8,22	,70
5. What is your level of knowledge on creative thinking?	5,14	1,06	8,34	,77
6. What is your level of knowledge on cultural diversity	5,24	1,20	8,52	,73
7. What is your level of knowledge on effective presentation?	5,24	,95	8,50	,73
8. What is your level of knowledge about speaking in front of crowd?	5,30	,99	8,72	,83
9. What is your level of knowledge on effective negotiation?	5,22	,93	8,64	,89
10. What is your level of knowledge on marketing techniques?	5,16	1,09	8,62	,83
11. What is your level of knowledge on preparation of financial plan	5,18	1,00	8,50	,93
12. What is your level of knowledge on the balance sheet analysis?	5,24	1,07	8,54	,70
13. What is your level of knowledge on competition analysis?	5,16	1,11	8,44	,76
14. What is your level of knowledge on strategic interaction?	5,26	1,13	8,76	,82
15. What is your level of knowledge on market research and planning?	4,46	1,24	8,50	,88
16. What is your level of knowledge on strategic control?	4,76	,95	8,38	,75
17. What is your knowledge level in production and management planning?	4,92	,96	8,42	,81
18. What is your level of knowledge on process and quality management?	4,88	1,06	8,50	,78
19. What is your level of knowledge in business development?	4,84	1,16	8,58	,90
20. What is your knowledge level on projecting and presentation techniques?	4,84	1,03	8,34	,87
21. What is your level of knowledge about the types of leadership and leadership?	4,98	1,21	8,46	,90
22. What is your level of knowledge about theories of leadership?	4,94	,96	8,96	,83
23. What is your level of knowledge about leadership power use?	5,00	,95	8,56	,73
24. What is your knowledge level on role of power in organisations?	4,90	,94	8,30	,88
25. What is your level of knowledge on motivation in leadership?	4,96	,81	8,38	,80
26. What is your level of knowledge about motivation tools in business?	4,94	1,04	8,46	,88
27. What is your level of knowledge on conflict management?	4,92	1,26	8,46	,81
28. What is your level of knowledge of conflict management in hotel operations?	4,86	1,12	8,62	,75
29. What is your knowledge level in crisis management?	4,96	,97	8,58	,81
30. What is your knowledge level of exit strategies from crisis in management?	5,16	1,14	8,40	,83
31. What is your level of knowledge level in meeting management?	5,00	1,07	8,40	,80
32. What is your level of knowledge level in meeting evaluation?	5,06	1,09	8,36	,87
33. What is your knowledge level in basic computer science in tourism?	4,98	1,09	8,64	,72
34. What is your level of knowledge in computer operating systems?	5,06	1,16	8,72	,80
35. What is your level of knowledge on hardware and installation in computers?	5,22	1,18	8,82	,66
36. What is your knowledge level of the installation of essential softwares?	5,12	1,16	8,50	,81
37. What is your knowledge level in package programs used in tourism?	5,30	1,25	8,70	,78
38. What is your level of knowledge on foil knowledge in terms of tourism?	5,16	1,50	8,82	,80
39. What is your level of knowledge of reservation softwares?	5,52	1,21	8,78	,79

As seen on Table 2, at the end of pre-test, the lowest arithmetic average of 4.00 is on the question of "What is your level of knowledge on entrepreneurship?" The question of "What is your level of knowledge of reservation softwares?" has the highest average with an arithmetic average of 5.52. These results can be explained by the curriculum of education because the participant group had not previously taken any entrepreneurship courses. However, it is meaningful that this result comes out since they took package program trainings in hotel enterprises.

As Table 2 is examined in terms of the post-test results, the question "What is your level of knowledge about writing a business plan?" has the lowest arithmetic average with 7.62 points. The question that has the highest value with an arithmetic average of 8.96 points is "What is your level of knowledge on leadership theories?".

As a result of the training, it can be said that the average arithmetic values of the participants in career leadership have increased.

**Table 3.** Evaluation of Basic Headings of Education

Question Groups	Pre-test		Post-test	
	$\bar{X}$	Sd.	$\bar{X}$	Sd.
Entrepreneurship	4,95	1,05	8,33	,80
Leadership	4,91	1,04	8,48	,83
Information and Communication Technologies	5,11	1,12	8,62	,79
Overall	4,99	1,07	8,47	0,81

When Table 3 is examined, arithmetic mean increased by 3.38 points in entrepreneurship training, 3.57 points in leadership training and 3.51 points in information and communication technologies. In total, there is a difference of 3.48 points of arithmetic mean between the pre-test result and the post-test result.

These increases show how crucial entrepreneurial training, motivational courses and the usage of information and communication technologies are. As a result, the trainings can be said to have been adopted and accepted by the participants. In addition, evidence shows that they have gained more knowledge about the subjects in this process.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of education in preventing youth unemployment is vital. It should not be forgotten that the unemployment problem will diminish if this education encompasses the qualifications required by the labor market. Young people's effective use of entrepreneurship, leadership and information communication technologies plays an important role in having a profession. In this training process, it has become understood that young people should increase their training especially in leadership and entrepreneurship. In addition to the standard courses, it can be said that personal development aids and self-confidence boosting topics and activities are required for newly graduated university students.

Vocational training is a lifelong process. Thus, vocational education institutions should have suitable infrastructure, in addition to qualified educators/trainers who have a grasp of understanding of real-life market circumstances. Vocational training programs should constantly update themselves for new circumstances and young persons must be given knowledge which is useful in their profession. Additionally, career counselors ought to be appointed throughout the transition period, so that problems in the process of practice can be solved more effectively. It is inevitable to activate the professional qualification system in order to prevent unfair competition in all sectors in addition to the tourism sector.

More effort and resources are needed to educate young people as leaders of their profession. If the youth unemployment problem is not resolved, many social, cultural, psychological and economic problems will form the agenda of the country in the future. The presence of information technology and the internet can help in this process. Especially with the help of the internet, easy-accessed information will bring new changes to the supply and demand of labour. Today, in order to not remain unemployed in a globalised world, vocational education and professional leadership are seen as a process to be taken into account together.

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