Adults and Lifelong Learning Programmes during the Period of the Pandemic

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Abstract

In this paper we attempt to capture the current situation of adult participation in online forms of education and training in Greece, before and after the advent of Covid-19 pandemic. Through a comparative analysis of adult learning indicators derived from ICT Survey, we highlight similarities and differences in the participation patterns between Greece and EU. Additionally, we draw data from a recent national survey in order to shed more light on the case of Greece and the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on adult learning. We provide evidence-based data that due to the advent of the Covid pandemic, and, consequently, the transition from face-to-face to online educational programmes, the already existing inequalities in Greece are widening. We, therefore, provide up-to-date reliable data for policy decision makers in order to develop and implement targeted policies and practices dealing with these forms of disparities.

Keywords: lifelong learning; pandemic crisis; digital skills; adult participation in learning

*1. **Theoretical and conceptual context: facets and basic dimensions***

In a globalised social reality where things are changing rapidly, the issue of adults' participation in lifelong learning remains socially urgent and extremely challenging (Jarvis, 2007). Especially the rising demand for digital skills and qualifications trigger new needs in the context of upskilling and reskilling (Van Laar et al. 2017). At the same time, the pandemic crisis has more than ever accelerated all these developments by imposing new conditions of learning and working in a rapid way. Social distancing, digital learning, digital marketing, e-learning, e-commerce, emergency remote teaching etc. constitute the "body of a new communicative language" reflecting the picture of a complicated reality where new tools of learning and working are emerging. Our approach attempts to highlight the basic facets and dimensions of adults' participation in lifelong learning during the period of pandemic crisis in Greece. Undoubtedly, the high demand for digital skills in learning and work areas is not just the pandemic's consequence. On the contrary, this comes as a result of the conditions shaped by globalisation and the 4th industrial revolution respectively (Van Laar et al. 2017). Both the developments in production basis and the huge attainments in technology and communication have triggered the expansion of digitalisation through the spectrum of global economy. With no doubts, the Mobility of Everything has become the new culture of a globalised world (Shamir, 2005) where capitals, goods, services, ideas, expertise etc. are hypothetically moving freely without borders and restrictions. On a rhetorical level, mobility constitutes one of the most promoted ideological principles depicting the substance of neoliberal version of globalisation. Despite the major role of this 'rhetorical scheme', a huge gap between the privileged and underprivileged has been developed because they are not all able to implement the potential of mobility in real conditions (Hackl, 2018). Actually, only few people can draw and implement upward mobility due to the unequal conditions in the institutional fields of social relations. Hence, we are witnessing a situation where prosperity, growth and social happiness seem to fade away or become a reality for only a few people. Furthermore, the postmodern society seems to be more liquid, uncertain, and insecure (Bauman, 2013), especially for those who are socially 'deframed' and vulnerable.

In our approach, the research into adults' participation in LLL consists of a neuralgic issue due to the significant role of learning in the process of socialisation and social inclusion. Apart from that, learning in all facets and dimensions remains a catalytic mechanism in the development of growth and social cohesion (Green, 2011) for modern democracies, all over the world. Besides, the importance of lifelong learning has been acknowledged within the context of European social policy agenda since 2001 (Council of the European Union).

Despite the fact that measured benchmarks have been set since then (European Union, 2003, 2009, 2021) encouraging EU member-states to adopt measures and practices that promote and facilitate adult participation in education and training, the current overall EU participation rates lag behind the target of 15% to be reached by 2020. Moreover, participation rates widely vary across European countries (Centre for Educational Policy Development of GSEE, 2011, Goulas et al. 2022) with the Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, etc.) leading, while others being at the bottom of the ranking. Greece belongs to the latter group, being ranked in the 26th place among the 27 member-states in 2021, with a participation rate in lifelong learning of only 3.5% (Eurostat, 2022). Covid-19 crisis, with the implementation of a number of restrictions in economic and social activities, is coming to add one more dimension in lifelong learning. The impact of the pandemic on adult education and training is reflected in most European countries. According to the latest data (Goulas et al. 2022) in 2020 the participation rate in lifelong learning programmes fell markedly in 24 out of 27 member-states, compared to 2019.

2. Methodology

Our aim is to establish a mapping of lifelong learning in Greece, focusing on distance (online) modes, while highlighting socio-economic factors that contribute to the exclusion of certain population groups from access to online lifelong learning, with particular reference to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, where possible. The questions raised are the following: how the economically active population responded to the challenge of lifelong learning during the pandemic, the extent to which the active population participated in programmes and training schemes, the adult learners' attitudes towards the upcoming distance forms of education and training programmes and how the different socio-economic subgroups perceive the impact of pandemic on lifelong learning. Our goal is the fullest possible and scientifically sound presentation of the current situation, with a view to formulating concrete proposals for policy interventions based on valid and up-to-date research data.

For this purpose, we use firstly the main European instrument for monitoring adult participation in lifelong learning from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). This indicator measures participation in education and training within a time range of 4 weeks (preceding the survey). However, the usage of such a short- range tool may cause problems in the measurement. The period of 4 weeks (1 month) probably excludes from the participation rates cases where respondents have participated in a training programme but at a time earlier than 4 weeks, while measurements with a longer time 'window' for monitoring, such as a period of 12 months (Eurostat, 2016, Karalis, 2020), are considered more appropriate to determine the actual participation in lifelong learning programmes. The need to expand time range for lifelong learning participation to be measured more efficiently has been acknowledged by European Union (2021). In particular, in the new strategic framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training, the European target for lifelong learning has been set as follows: 'by 2025 at least 47% of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months', while the monitoring indicator shall be applied for the first time in 2023 (European Union, 2021). However, the Labour Force Survey is the only one up to date that provides data at European level on an annual basis, thus offering the possibility of comparing European Member States and capturing trends in the study of their development over the years. In fact, in a relevant study (Goglio and Meroni, 2014), which compares the participation rates in education between the two main European surveys (Labour Force Survey and Adult Education Survey), it seems that the differentiation of the reference period (4 weeks compared to 12 months) significantly affects the participation rates in education, however, the ranking of Member States does not seem to vary significantly.

In order to focus on online forms of education and training, we derive data from the European Survey on the use of Information and Communication Technologies in households (ICT) that provides comparable data on adult participation in online education and training between Greece and European Union. In particular, we look into disparities based on gender, age, employment status, educational attainment level, household income in quartiles and the degree of urbanisation. Moreover, we have drawn data from a recent national survey conducted by Metron Analysis on behalf of the Centre for Educational Policy Development of GSEE (KANEP/GSEE) regarding the participation of adults in education and training programmes during the pandemic in Greece (reference period March 2020-July 2021). This quantitative research was conducted in July 2021 through computer-assisted telephone interviews, using a structured questionnaire addressing economically active population of the country aged 25-65 years old.

The sample population has been formed by Random-digit dialing (RDD) method using regional quotas. The final sample size was 1,001 participants and the results were weighted based on age and gender distribution of the country's total active population, allowing for generalisation of results. Furthermore, we performed a series of correlations based on the chi-square statistic ($\chi 2$) in order to examine possible impact of demographic (gender, age) or socio-economic characteristics (educational attainment level, working status, teleworking during pandemic) on participation and overall Greek adults' perception of lifelong learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Findings

The participation rates of adults in education and training programmes in our country remain at low levels throughout the decade 2010-2020 in comparison with all other European member-states, although in the context of the European agenda a specific measurable objective has been set in the field of lifelong learning since 2010, in order for Member States to increase their rates, so that by 2020 the European average shall be at least 15%. In Greece, on the basis of the official monitoring indicator[1], the participation rate of adults in education and training programmes is around 3-4% in the decade 2010-21, a value that is far from the benchmark but also from the European average, which reached 10.8% in 2021 (Table 1).

A significant drop in the European average is recorded in 2020 (14.8% fall), which is most likely related to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on adult participation in lifelong learning programmes. Nevertheless, one year later (2021) the participation rate recovers, with the European average returning to pre-COVID levels. The same does not apply, however, in the case of Greece. The Covid impact on the national participation rate takes place in 2021, recording a decrease of 14.6% in comparison with 2020; a reduction rate similar to the EU average, only with a one-year delay. Therefore, unlike the European average rate, no reverse trend of adult participation in education and training programmes rate has been recorded so far in Greece.

This finding comes in accordance to a recent national survey conducted in July 2021 by Metron Analysis on behalf of KANEP/GSEE regarding the participation of adults in education and training programmes during the pandemic in Greece (reference period March 2020-July 2021). Specifically, according to this survey data (Table 2), 22% of working-age people (aged 25-65 years old) have attended a lifelong learning, training or further education programme, since coronavirus first appeared in Greece (Goulas et al., 2022)[2]. More precisely, within a time span of one year during the pandemic (that is July 2020-July 2021), the recorded participation rate is 19.3%. This figure is comparable to the ones from previous nationwide surveys (Karalis, 2020), according to which the participation rate in lifelong learning activities in years 2018 and 2019 was 36.7% and 35.1% respectively. Given that both surveys have similar sample size and use similar sampling techniques and similar definitions for measuring adult participation in education and training, thereby allowing comparison of rates over time, we can conclude that the advent of the pandemic in Greece eventually led to a marked decline in adult participation in lifelong learning programmes.

It is imperative to note that during the reference period of our study, 9 out of 10 people who have participated in education and training during the pandemic in Greece, have attended exclusively distance learning programmes (e-learning) (Table 3). Therefore, the findings of the survey presented in this paper may apply to distance forms of adult learning programmes.

The profile analysis of the participants reveals major disparities that indicate the existence of significant inequalities in terms of adults' access to education and training during the pandemic period in Greece (Table 4). Adult participation in education and training reveals a statistically strong relationship with the level of education, X^2 (2, N = 999) = 81.742, p = .000: the higher the level of education, the higher the participation rate in educational programmes. 28.3% of adults with high educational attainment (ISCED 5-8) have participated in education and training during the pandemic in Greece, while the participation rate of those with low to medium educational levels is statistically significantly lower (2.0% and 5.8% respectively). In other words, a university graduate has almost five times higher participation rate than a higher secondary/post-secondary non-tertiary education graduate and almost fourteen times higher than someone who has only completed up to lower secondary education. There are also statistically significant discrepancies between the different categories of employment status, with public sector employees having a significantly higher participation rate (31.6%) in contrast to the unemployed and the self-employed ones (11.8% and 13.1% respectively), X^2 (3, N = 999) = 36.966, p = .000.

[1] The participation rate of people aged 25-64, who have participated in an education or training programme in the last 4 weeks preceding the survey. The monitoring indicator is based on the Labour Force Survey.

[2] The indicator refers to the percentage of economically active persons aged 25-65, who have attended any organized education or training programme (with the involvement of an instructor/educational institution) since the advent of Covid-19 pandemic in Greece (March 2020 – July 2021).

In other words, job stability and safety is an important distinguishing factor in terms of participation in lifelong learning activities, with those with high job stability having significantly more chances of participating in education and training. Finally, the teleworking factor also seems to have a major impact on the participation in education and training programmes, since employees who have been working remotely (either exclusively or partly) record higher participation rates (36.5% and 30.4% respectively) compared to those who have been working exclusively on-site (13%), X^2 (3, N = 753) = 49.880, p = .000. The chi-square tests reveal that neither gender nor age appear to be statistically significant factors of participation in lifelong learning.

In order to compare the extent of inequalities in adult participation in online education and training activities between Greece and EU and to monitor the effect of Covid-19 crisis on them, we use the ratios of participation rates for specific population subgroups based on age, gender, working status, educational attainment level, etc. Greece seems to face greater disparities in adult participation in online programmes based on age, working status, educational attainment level, household income in quartiles and degree of urbanisation in comparison to EU-27 during the whole period 2019-2021 (Table 5). Moreover, in EU-27 the ratio of participation rates of the subgroups studied in Table 5 is declining overtime indicating that the observed differences in participation rates have been reduced with the advent of pandemic, only with the exemption of income factor where the gap in participation rates between those in the highest quartile and those in the lowest quartile has increased by 21.1% during 2019-2020. In Greece, nevertheless, differentiation in adult participation in online educational activities by age group, educational level as well as household income has been magnified. Indicative is the fact that the gap in participation rates between those with high formal education and those with low formal education has increased by 50% with the advent of the pandemic. The gap of participation rates between employed and unemployed persons, though, seems to be closing in Greece too with the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. This finding is of particular interest, since relevant research in the past (Karalis, 2017) suggested that economic crisis in Greece was a serious deterrent factor for a further development of adult education leading to a widening of the gap in participation rates between those in employment and those in unemployment. However, the same seems not to be the case with Covid-19 crisis, during which the unemployed population seems to have increased participation in online educational activities.

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the various sections of the population under study in different ways. All in all, the impact of the pandemic on the decision to attend lifelong learning programmes, regardless of whether they have attended a programme or not, is considered negative for 4 in 10 respondents (38.3%). The rate of perceived negative impact on unemployed persons (49%) is statistically significantly higher than the corresponding rates of employed persons (employees and self-employed), X^2 (6, N = 998) = 26.752, p = .000 (Table 6). Moreover, people with a high educational attainment level have statistically significantly higher rates of perceived positive impact (31%) than those with low and medium educational levels (5.9% and 12.5% respectively), X^2 (4, N = 999) =55.975, p = .000 (Table 7).

The main reasons given for the negative impact of the pandemic are primarily the inability to attend with physical presence which was the preferred way (25.8%), but also the bad psychology during the pandemic that made many respondents unwilling to deal with such issues (22.5%) (Table 8). On the contrary, the option of remote learning is highlighted as one of the main positive effects of the pandemic (18.5%) that intensified involvement in lifelong learning programmes, while primarily making more leisure time (39.1%) giving individuals an incentive to seek ways of creative engagement and participate in training courses. In fact, 15% of respondents say they were more in the mood for creative work during the pandemic.

As for the preferred way to attend, almost 6 in 10 respondents would prefer to attend similar programmes in person in the future, compared to 4 in 10 who prefer distance learning. Here again the level of education is a distinguishing factor, with people with higher educational attainment tending to prefer distance learning programmes (46.9%) in contrast to people with a low and medium educational level who would choose this mode of attendance at a rate of 20% and 33.3% respectively, X^2 (4, N = 998) =27.476, p = .000 (Table 9).

4. Conclusion - Discussion

Summarising the above, the participation of adults in lifelong learning programmes remains at extremely low levels in our country, compared to other European countries, both overall and in terms of attending online training courses. Despite the increase in participation in online learning, with the advent of the pandemic, the overall participation in lifelong learning seems to have decreased significantly. In contrast to EU-27 which seem to have already recovered from the Covid-19 impact, Greece still presents a marked drop in adult participation rate in education and training, while already existing inequalities appear to be widening, converting into different forms compared to the ones we have been traditionally aware of so far. This finding is associated with other sociological considerations and assumptions (Mills and Gale, 2007, Faist, 2010) attempting to identify the facets and aspects of educational, social and cultural inequalities in contemporary ‘risk societies’ (Beck, 2010).

In particular, they show that the existence and functioning of inequalities are related to an extremely complex and dynamic process which the more crystallised it may appear to be, the more 'changeable' it turns out to be. In that respect, identifying, highlighting, interpreting, analysing and ultimately drastically and effectively addressing primarily 'horizontal' inequalities (Stewart, 2000) is an intense, contradictory and extremely dynamic process that, above all, requires a solid and rational approach before any other ideological or political management.

In fact, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic factor on participation in education and training programmes is differentiated among socio-economic groups with different positions within social hierarchies. For instance, individuals with a low or even medium level of education, as well as individuals belonging to the unemployed population, recognise the pandemic as a constraint in their participation in training programmes.

In contrast, highly educated people believe that the Covid-19 pandemic has created opportunities for them to participate in training programmes through the flexibility offered by e-learning programmes. After all, this is the population group that still has increased participation rates, while the rest of the population (people with a low or medium level of education, unemployed) are significantly under-represented both in terms of all education and training programmes over time, and distance learning programmes during the period of the pandemic. Although distance learning mode has been found to be one of the most important facilitating factors to participation in education and training, (Karalis, 2016, 2020, Mavropoulos et al. 2021), we conclude that this may not be the case for all individuals, but it only applies to specific subgroups, that is highly educated people. The fact that low educated people seem to resist to on-line technology-based learning and appear to prefer the traditional face-to-face instruction, may trigger further differentiation of participation patterns in lifelong learning. Consequently, it is confirmed that the advent of the pandemic intensified the exclusion from education and training programmes of both the unemployed population and those with a low and medium level of education. In principle, the same irrationality is reproduced at social level that encourages the participation of the privileged and obviously highly qualified in lifelong learning, while at the same time excluding or discouraging all those at a disadvantage in institutional areas of education and employment (Karalis, 2020). Undoubtedly, factors such as inequalities in the socio-economic background, quality differences in educational and cultural capital, asymmetries created by geographical and regional features also contribute to this irrationality (Brown, 2013).

In fact, there is an imperative need for targeted and realistic political interference, aiming at increasing the adult participation in lifelong learning overall as well as in the forms of e-learning, contributing to the strengthening of those population groups that appear to be excluded from lifelong learning over time, while the period of the pandemic exacerbated the already existing problem. In particular, specialised interventions must be urgently developed, along with accompanying political measures reaching those who are less engaged: people over 45 years old, the unemployed population, people with a low and medium level of education, those with low incomes and those living in rural areas of the country, in an attempt to prevent the reproductive role of inequalities through lifelong learning (Karalis, 2020), which by its nature and location could play a completely different role in reducing educational, professional and social inequalities by feeding back into the demand for empowerment and social cohesion (Edwards et al. 2001, Green, 2011, Biesta and Leary, 2012). In this sense, and due to the intensity of inequalities caused by the pandemic through distance education, it is imperative, more than ever, to redefine the role and mission of lifelong learning and, above all, to reorganise its dynamics with the prospect of rationalising both existing shortcomings and supporting the weakest and most vulnerable groups in society.

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Table 1. Participation rate (%) in education and training programmes (2010-2021), Population aged 25 to 64 years.

Year	EU-27	Greece
2010	7,8	3,3
2011	8,1	2,8
2012	8,2	3,3
2013	9,9	3,2
2014	10,1	3,2
2015	10,1	3,3
2016	10,3	4,0
2017	10,4	4,5
2018	10,6	4,5
2019	10,8	3,9
2020	9,2	4,1
2021	10,8	3,5

Data source: Eurostat – Labour Force Survey

Table 2. Participation in Lifelong Learning Programmes in Greece, 2020-21.

	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Participation in lifelong learning programmes from the advent of coronavirus onwards (March 2020-July 2021)	220	22,0%	780	78,0%	1000	100,0%
Participation in lifelong learning programmes the last 12 months (July 2020-July 2021)	193	19,3%	807	80,7%	1000	100,0%

Survey conducted by: Metron Analysis. Contracting authority: Centre for Educational Policy Development of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP GSEE)

Table 3. Mode of attendance (Frequency Rates).

	N	%
Physical presence on-site	13	6,7%
Exclusively distance learning programmes (e-learning).	175	90,7%
Both modes of attendance (blended learning)	3	1,6%
N/A	2	1,0%
Total	193	100,0%

Note: Data refer to economically active population aged 25-64 years old that have participated in lifelong learning programmes during the 12-month period of July 2020-July 2021.
Survey conducted by: Metron Analysis. Contracting authority: Centre for Educational Policy Development of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP GSEE)

Table 4. Adult Participation in lifelong learning programmes during the pandemic period (July 2020-July 2021) demographic and socio-economic variables.

		Have participated in a lifelong learning programme during the period (July 2020-July 2021)			Chi square tests of independence
		Yes	No	Total	
Gender					
Males	N	93	435	528	χ^2 (1) = 1.860 p=.173 n = 999
	%	17.6%	82.4%	100.0%	
Females	N	99	372	471	
	%	21.0%	79.0%	100.0%	
Total	N	192	807	999	
	%	19.2%	80.8%	100.0%	
Age group					
25-34	N	48	197	245	χ^2 (3) = 2.771 p=.428 n = 999
	%	19.6%	80.4%	100.0%	
35-44	N	60	222	282	
	%	21.3%	78.7%	100.0%	
45-54	N	47	189	236	
	%	19.9%	80.1%	100.0%	
55-64	N	37	199	236	
	%	15.7%	84.3%	100.0%	
Total	N	192	807	999	
	%	19.2%	80.8%	100.0%	
Educational Attainment					
ISCED 0-2	N	1	49	50	χ^2 (2) = 81.742 p=.000 n = 999
	%	2.0%	98.0%	100.0%	
ISCED 3-4	N	20	325	345	
	%	5.8%	94.2%	100.0%	
ISCED 5-8	N	171	433	604	
	%	28.3%	71.7%	100.0%	
Total	N	192	807	999	
	%	19.2%	80.8%	100.0%	
Employment Status					
Self-employed	N	26	172	198	χ^2 (3) = 36.966 p=.000 n = 999
	%	13.1%	86.9%	100.0%	
Employee in Public Sector	N	75	162	237	
	%	31.6%	68.4%	100.0%	
Employee in Private Sector	N	63	255	318	
	%	19.8%	80.2%	100.0%	
Unemployed	N	29	217	246	
	%	11.8%	88.2%	100.0%	
Total	N	193	806	999	
	%	19.3%	80.7%	100.0%	
Teleworking scheme					
Working on-site	N	55	368	423	χ^2 (3) = 49.880 p=.000 n = 753
	%	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%	
Working remotely	N	72	125	197	
	%	36.5%	63.5%	100.0%	

Both ways	N	34	78	112	
	%	30.4%	69.6%	100.0%	
Suspended	N	3	18	21	
	%	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%	
Total	N	164	589	753	
	%	21.8%	78.2%	100.0%	

Survey conducted by: Metron Analysis. Contracting authority: Centre for Educational Policy Development of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP GSEE)

Table 5. Ratio of participation rates of adults in online education and training[1] of several population subgroups in Greece and European Union (27 countries), 2019-2021.

	EU27				Greece			
	2019	2020	2021	rate of change 2019-21	2019	2020	2021	rate of change 2019-21
Age groups								
25-34 years old/ 55-64 years old	2,9	2,4	2,3	-22,1%	3,3	3,0	3,8	17,5%
25-34 years old/ 45-54 years old	1,6	1,6	1,4	-11,4%	1,6	1,6	2,1	29,2%
25-34 years old/ 35-44 years old	1,3	1,2	1,2	-10,7%	2,2	1,3	1,6	-28,2%
Gender								
Males/ Females	1,1	1,0	0,9	-15,7%	1,1	1,1	0,8	-32,7%
Working status								
Employed/ Unemployed	1,5	1,3	1,3	-15,2%	2,8	1,7	1,8	-34,1%
Employed/ Retired or not in the labour force (excluding students)	3,3	2,7	3,0	-10,0%	11,0	7,5	4,8	-56,1%
Educational attainment level								
with High formal education/ with Low formal education	5,5	5,0	4,7	-14,5%	16,0	26,0	24,0	50,0%
with High formal education/ with Medium formal education	2,5	2,5	2,6	2,9%	4,0	4,3	3,4	-14,3%
Household income in quartiles[2]								
Fourth quartile/ First quartile	1,6	1,9	:	21,1%	2,5	3,4	:	37,1%
Fourth quartile/ Second quartile	1,7	1,7	:	0,5%	1,7	2,7	:	60,0%
Fourth quartile/ Third quartile	1,3	1,3	:	1,1%	1,0	1,3	:	26,3%
Degree of urbanisation[2]								
Cities/ Rural areas	1,7	1,6	1,6	-7,1%	2,5	2,0	2,0	-20,0%
Cities/ Towns and Suburbs	1,2	1,3	1,3	3,8%	1,3	1,1	1,0	-20,0%

Note 1. Individuals aged 25-64 years old that have used the internet in order to do an online course (of any subject) or to use an online learning material during the first trimester of the year of reference.
Note 2. All variables are referring to individuals aged 25-64 years old, except of Household income in quartiles and Degree of urbanisation that refer to total population aged 16+ years old.
Data source: Eurostat - ICT Survey.

Table 6. Participants' Perceived impact of pandemic period on the decision to attend lifelong learning programmes by Educational Attainment Level (Frequency Rates %).

Perceived impact / Educational Attainment	ISCED 0-2 (N=51)	ISCED 3-4 (N=345)	ISCED 5-8 (N=603)	Total (N=999)	Chi square tests of independence
Affected positively	5.9	12.5	31.0	23.3	χ^2 (4) = 55.975 p=.000 n = 999
Affected negatively	43.1	47.8	32.5	38.3	
I have no opinion	51.0	39.7	36.5	38.3	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Survey conducted by: Metron Analysis. Contracting authority: Centre for Educational Policy Development of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP GSEE)

Table 7. Participants' Perceived impact of pandemic period on the decision to attend lifelong learning programmes by Employment Status (Frequency Rates %).

Perceived impact / Employment Status	Self-employed (N=198)	Employee in Public Sector (N=237)	Employee in Private Sector (N=318)	Unemployed (N=245)	Total (N=998)	Chi square tests of independence
Affected positively	20.2	32.1	21.7	19.2	23.2	χ^2 (6) = 26.752 p=.000 n = 998
Affected negatively	35.9	32.1	26.5	49.0	38.4	
I have no opinion	43.9	35.9	41.8	31.8	38.4	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Survey conducted by: Metron Analysis. Contracting authority: Centre for Educational Policy Development of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP GSEE)

Table 8. Reasons for positive/negative impact of the pandemic (Frequency Rates).

	N	**%**
Reasons for positive impact		
More leisure time	91	39.1%
Convenience of distance learning programmes	43	18.5%
More inclined for creative engagement	35	15.0%
New knowledge gained at work	14	6.0%

Opportunity to enhance knowledge of general interest	14	6.0%
The pandemic has created more such programmes	10	4.3%
More inclined to search for information on programmes	9	3.9%
Digital skills have been upgraded	9	3.9%
The pandemic has created new needs	8	3.4%
Distance learning programmes have become more common	2	0.9%
Other	3	1.3%
N/A	4	1.7%
Total	233	100.0%
Reasons for negative impact		
Unable to attend a face-to-face course which I preferred	99	25,8%
Bad psychology / No mood for training	86	22,5%
Fear of moving / contact with people	71	18,5%
Access to information on programmes got harder	35	9,1%
Lack of time due to increased family obligations	32	8,4%
Lack of time due to increased professional obligations	22	5,7%
Programmes were cancelled / I could not find programmes	19	5,0%
Others at home were using the equipment for tele-work/education	13	3,4%
The pandemic imposed different priorities	11	2,9%
Other	15	3,9%
N/A	9	2,3%
Total	383	100,0%

Survey conducted by: Metron Analysis. Contracting authority: Centre for Educational Policy Development of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP GSEE)

Table 9. Preferred way to attend a programme by Educational Attainment Level (Frequency Rates %).

Preferred Mode of Attendance / Educational Attainment	ISCED 0-2 (N=50)	ISCED 3-4 (N=345)	ISCED 5-8 (N=603)	Total (N=998)	Chi square tests of independence
Physical presence on-site	74.0	63.8	49.9	55.9	χ^2 (4) = 27.476 p=.000 n = 998
Remotely through an online platform	20.0	33.3	46.9	40.9	
N/A	6.0	2.9	3.2	3.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Survey conducted by: Metron Analysis. Contracting authority: Centre for Educational Policy Development of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (KANEP GSEE)