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E-Learning Program in archival ethnography: Evaluation of the course: "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt: Archival Ethnography from the perspective of new technologies and the Internet"

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Abstract

The present essay expounds the results following the implementation of the semester course: "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt: Archival Ethnography from the perspective of new technologies and the Internet". The research is conducted to fill the demands of a postdoctoral research of the Laboratory Folklore & Social Anthropology of the Department of History & Ethnology School of Classics & Humanities of the Democritus University Thrace. The main subject of the essay is Archival Ethnography & Readings in the Digital Environment: "Conversing" with the Archives of People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt.

In particular, the aim of this research was to evaluate the first semester course of a one year elearning program which is integrated to a wider research concerning archival ethnography with a special focus on archives of people coming from Mt Pelion who emigrated and worked in Egypt from 1860 to 1960. (Kapaniaris 2014). The region of Mt Pelion in the prefecture of Magnesia belongs to the region of Thessaly, Greece. The aim of the research was to investigate whether the trainees during the first semester were sufficiently supported in order to acquire the theoretical background and other useful skills so as to be able to devise a brief ethnography and a digital narrative on the archives of people coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt, during the following semester course.

Keywords: digital ethnography, archives, ethnography, folklore, anthropology, digital folklore, digital environments, internet, social media, benefaction, migration, people coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt

1. Introduction

The e- learning program "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt: Archival Ethnography from the perspective of new technologies and the Internet" was first introduced during the autumn semester of 2018-19 and was completed in May 2019. The program is implemented with the scientific diligence of the Laboratory of Folklore & Social Anthropology of the Department of History & Ethnology School of Classics & Humanities of the Democritus University Thrace. The aim of the program was to approach the archive ethnography by attempting an interdisciplinary dialogue on the subjects of history folklore and anthropology and IT (Information Technology) (Kapaniaris & Varvounis 2019b). At the same time, the relationships between these sciences and archival ethnography will be explored, as well as in relation to technology and the different digital readings it can offer. The scope of the archival ethnography will be the program "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt: Archival Ethnography from the perspective of new technologies and the Internet", along with multiple files with multi-read levels. (Kapaniaris & Varvounis 2019a:7).

2. Specifications- requirements of the e- learning program

Learners, except for the study material (course book) for each semester, ought to have studied on a fortnight basis on the moodle platform, additional pdf/ ppt files, links on external websites, theory enriched with images and links, additional bibliography and webography, videotaped lectures, examples/exemplary exercises, self-assessment exercises,

case studies, shapes-charts-tables, video presentations. Additionally they were required to answer a quiz with 10 True or False questions, to participate in the forum and alternatively attend the two-hour seminar either physically or via Youtube live or the video saved on the moodle platform. The academic coordinator responsible for each fortnight was different; however, there was one scientific coordinator responsible for the whole semester. Moreover, at the beginning of the semester, a text book for the whole semester was suggested. At the end of the program, in order for the participants to successfully complete the course and acquire the relevant certification, they had to score 60% in a total of 60 questions based on the syllabus studied during all the six-fortnights. (Kapaniaris & Varvounis 2019a:7).

3. Content of the program (cognitive subject)

The first semester of the one-year e learning program "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt: Archival Ethnography from the perspective of new technologies and the Internet" is considered a preparatory one with an eye to help and reinforce the trainees in order to acquire the theoretical background and other useful skills so as to be able (in the following semester) to devise a brief ethnography and a digital narrative. The content of the first semester has covered, on a fortnight basis, the following subjects:

•Egyptian Hellenism and Benefaction: People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt.

• Introduction to Digital Ethnography,

• Introduction to Ethnography

• Basic Principles of Archival Ethnography: Moving from Theory to Practice, Examples of Archives of People coming from Mt Pelion.

• Literature of the Greek Diaspora (dispersion) in Egypt in the early 20th century: The instance of People coming from Mt Pelion.

• Archival ethnography: Exploring the field.

4. Methodology of the research.

The research was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a set of teaching interventions (through the moodle platform) aimed at gaining a theoretical background and other useful skills through an experimental pre-control / post-control project of an e-learning group of archival ethnographers. The next objective set up for the learners during the second semester, was to develop a brief ethnography and a digital narrative on the archives of people coming from Mt Pelion.

The method followed during the implementation of the research was a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research. In particular, the PRE POST data collection tool was used for quantitative research: A questionnaire through a google form was used as a tool for collecting data. This questionnaire was conducted twice, before the teaching interventions (time: PRE) and at the end of the teaching interventions (time: POST). This tool mainly investigated the cognitive subject, the objectives and the expectations related to the professional improvement and finally, the influence of ICTs throughout the process (informational literacy).

The questions were mostly closed-ended and referred to the evaluation of several factors of the method with Likert's 5-level scale sub-questions. Regarding the qualitative research, fieldwork research/diaryof teaching interventions, were used: Throughout the process of teaching interventions by the teacher, the researcher, acting as an observer, held detailed diary notes as a fieldwork observational tool. The teaching interventions were recorded in video and later posted on the platform allowing detailed recording, thus enhancing research with the use of quality tools as well (Robson, 2007: 306-307).

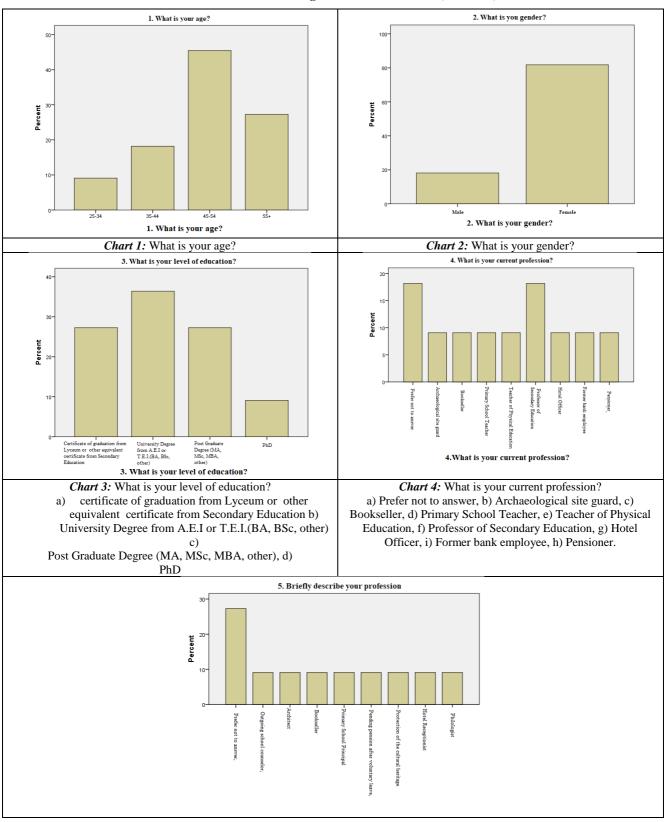
5. Procedure of the research – Distribution of the questionnaire

The present research was conducted from 1 October 2018 until the end of January 2019. The target group related to the research was people who attended the e- learning program: "People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt: Archival Ethnography from the perspective of new technologies and the Internet" (winter semester 2018-19). In order for the tool to be distributed to the participants (target group of the research), Google forms were used in two separate stages. A) initial stage (pre-test) ie, before attending the course so as to capture the expectations and opinions of the participants on a number of issues; b)final (post-test) ie, after the completion of the course so as to capture the final opinion after the completion of the participation. All trainees participated voluntarily, their responses of the individuals were respected and there was absolute confidentiality. Completion time is estimated at 8 min.

6. Participants in the research

The sample of this research depicts the final linking between the two time-phases of the research and finally the participation of those who completed the questionnaires for each phase, successfully. The final sample consists of 11 individuals with the following characteristics:

- Main age group: 45-54 with 45% participation rate followed by the 55+ age group with 27,3% participation rate.
- In terms of gender, 18.2% were men, while female participation was higher with a final participation rate of 81.8%
- Regarding the level of education: 27,3% stated that they hold a certificate of graduation from Lyceum, 36,4% holding a university degree from Higher Education (AEIs/TEIs), 27,3% holding post-graduate titles, while one individual holding a PhD title, participated in the sample as well.
- Regarding the participant's profession, 36.4% of the participants, which is the highest rate, are working in the field of education, while the remainder are people involved in various professions.
- Finally, apropos the country of residence, the vast majority of the participant's (90%) live in Greece and their specific residence is Volos and the region of Mt Pelion.



Percentage distribution bar chart (Chart 1-5)

Chart 5: Briefly describe your profession:

a) Prefer not to answer, b) Outgoing school counselor, c) Architect d) Bookseller e) Primary School Principal f) Pending pension after voluntary leave, g) Protection of the cultural heritage, h) Receptionist in hotel, i) Philologist.

7. Evaluation questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of three question sets. The questions are grouped as follows: A. Demographic data reported, B. Aim and expectations, C. Knowledge, skills and competences in ICTs. **Section a** included: a) Age, b) Gender, c) Education, d) Profession, e) Residence

In Section B were included: a) A set of questions where aim - data obtained are captured. It includes 8 questions that are graded using a 4-digit scale (likert scale) where the value 1 corresponds to the I am Very Interested option and the value 4 to not interested At All. The section concludes to an open-ended question other. b) A set of questions where expectations – data improved are recorded. It includes 8 questions that are graded using a 4-digit scale (likert scale) where the value 1 corresponds to the Utterly Desirable option and the value 4 to Udesirable. The section concludes to an open-ended question other.

In Section C were included: a) A set of questions where experience is evaluated in terms of participation and mainly thematic content. It includes 6 questions that are graded using a 4-digit scale (likert scale) where the value 1 corresponds to the Very Good option and the value 4 to Not Good At All.

b) A set of questions where knowledge and skills are assessed based on participation. It includes 5 questions that are graded using a 45-degree scale (likert scale) where the value 1 corresponds to the Advanced Level option and the value 5 to I Don't Any Knowledge/Skills

It is obvious, that in all questions using the likert scale, the value 1 corrsponds to the more positive answer or, in general, to the answer that depicts high expectation, desire, goal, knowledge and ability while a decrease in scale value indicates a lower assessment of the above.

8. Results

In the following units, the results of the research are presented. Initially, the evaluation of endeavor is presented in two phases: starting and ending application phase. The presentation is realized by reporting the distribution of answers for each question and each pair of time application following the likert scales. At the same time, supporting graphs are presented and in particular comparative percentage distribution bar charts. In order to make the results more comparable and also to determinate any statistically significant difference in pre and post-procedure assessments, inspection pairwise is applied on average values in the sample. Answers have been matched to each subject placed under inspection in pairs of questions before and after the procedure. The research question essentially examined is: Are there any significant differences in learners' rating regarding their expectations and their final assessment after the intervention has taken place?

The presentation of the variables is based on the original structure of the tool. The inspection concerns average value control by applying a t test to paired observations an on a level of significance p = 0, 05.

Moreover, answers are monitored irrespective of gender in order to ascertain whether or not there is a different behaviour between the two genders. Given that in this case the likert score is used as a continuous variable, the inspection is related to the degree of dependence of the variables of the questionnaire with parametric t test for independent samples. The level of significance being used again is p = 0, 05. The analysis of the sample was done using the Statistical Package (SPSS 20).

8.1 Aim – Expectations

In this part of the research, the aim and expectations (pre and post) of the six-month course were investigated. More specifically, the investigation focuses on the motives and expectations of participants in the semester course associated with new knowledge and skills of the subject, skills in information and communication technologies, the certificate of participation, access to educational resources etc which trainees would acquire during their studies. Overall, a general observation that we can draw from the results suggests a high concentration of response rates in the "I am interested" and "I am very interested" options. This shows a high rate of expectations and expected goals but also a high rate of achievement of the original goals and expectations. Compared to other response distributions, a lower concentration of positive expectations is found in the choices regarding "acquiring a certificate" and "competitive advantage at the workplace" of trainees. Although the cumulative distribution of the "I'm interested" and "Very interested" answers in relation to the answers

"Neutral" or "Not at all" do not change substantially before and after the procedure however, a small drop is recorded in the rates of " Very Interested" after the procedure compared to the before the procedure.

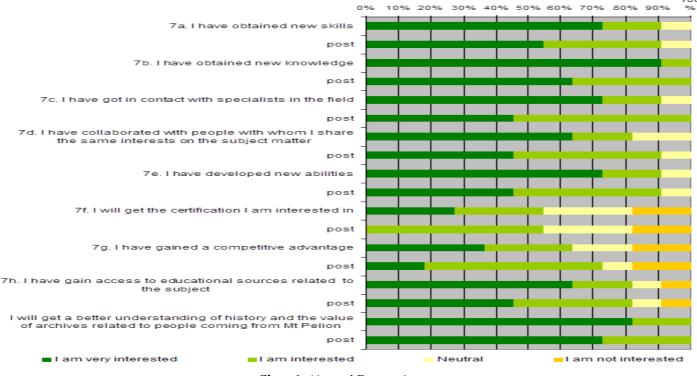
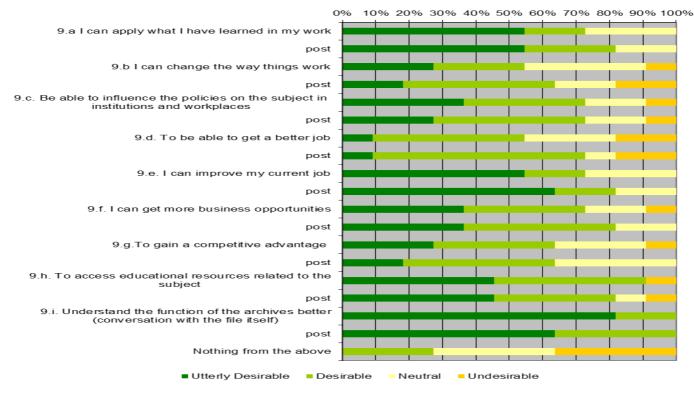


Chart 6: Aim and Expectations ~ 100~

8.2 Additional Aim- Expectations in relation to workplace

Listed below are the complementary aims before and after

the procedure related to the utilization of the knowledge and skills acquired in the training program, in their workplace.





Again, the overall overview depicts a high concentration of responses to choices that are utterly desirable or desirable, which means that the set of options describes elements that are assessed as important in terms of the aim set by the trainees. An exception is found in the options "Finding a way to change the way things work", and in the "Finding a Better Work" option where the overall distribution reveals a more moderate attitude. Last but not least, the option "None of the above" - "I watched the program from personal interest" and "I do not care about the connection to my workplace" which was evaluated only in the end, mainly gathered neutral and negative answers.

8.3 Exploring the cognitive subject of the course

In this part of the research were investigated (pre-post), the teaching objects of the six-fortnights of the cognitive subject related to ethnography and the people coming from Mt Pelion, and are reported in the bar charts in detail.

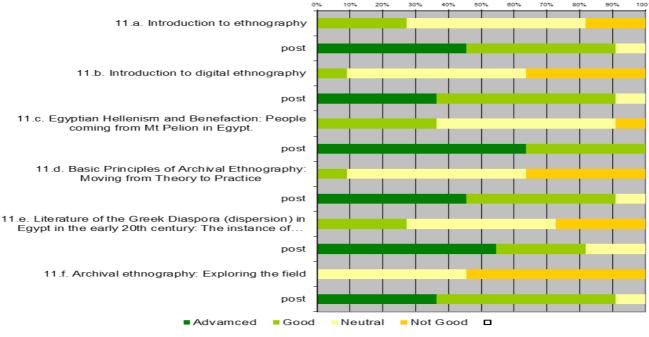


Chart 8: Investigation of aims and expectations in terms of the cognitive subject of the course

Self-assessing the knowledge and skills in the proposed categories, it appears that individuals originally declare mainly the answers "neutral" or "not good" while after intervention the highest rates appear in the first two options. Improvement also occurs in the answers of the next section by deleting the option " no knowledge" and an increase in the first two options.

8.4 Investigation in terms of familiarity with Information and **Communication** tools (oral literacy)

Again, the overall picture portrays a high concentration of response rates to the advanced or middle-level options,

which means that the set of options describes elements that are assessed as important in terms of the aim set by the

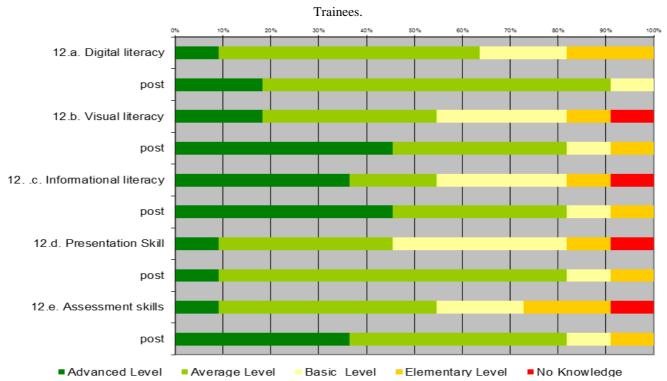


Chart 9: Investigation in terms of familiarity with Information and Communication tools (oral literacy)

		MT	N	TA	t	βε	Р
Pair 1	7a. I have obtained new skills	1,3636	11	,67420	-,614	10	,553
	Post	1,5455	11	,68755			
Pair 2	7b. I have obtained new knowledge	1,0909	11	,30151	-1,399	10	,192
	Post	1,3636	11	,50452			
Pair 3	7c. I have got in contact with specialists in the field	1,3636	11	,67420	-1,000	10	,341
	Post	1,5455	11	,52223			
Pair 4	7d. I have collaborated with people with whom I share the same interests on the subject matter	1,5455	11	,82020	-,430	10	,676
	Post	1,6364	11	,67420			
Pair 5	7e. I have developed new abilities	1,3636	11	,67420	-1,150	10	,277
	Post	1,6364	11	,67420			
Pair 6	7f. I will get the certification I am interested in	2,3636	11	1,12006	-1,399	10	,192
	Post	2,6364	11	,80904			
Pair 7	7g. I have gained a competitive advantage	2,1818	11	1,16775	-,430	10	,670
	Post	2,2727	11	1,00905			
Pair 8	7h. I have gain access to educational sources related to the subject	1,6364	11	1,02691	-1,406	10	,190
	Post	2,2727	11	1,00905			

8.5	Comparison	of average	value responses	s pairwise
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Pair 9	7g. I will get a better understanding of history and the value of archives related to people	1,1818	11	,40452	-,430	10	,676
	coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt						
	v7 u post	1,2727	11	,46710			
Pair 10	9.a I can apply what I have learned in my work	1,7273	11	,90453	,430	10	,676
1 all 10	Post	1,6364	11	,80904	,430	10	,070
Pair 11	9.b I can change the way things work	2,2727	11	1,00905	550	10	500
Pair II	Post			1,00903	-,559	10	,588
D : 10		2,3636	11		420	10	(7)
Pair 12	9.c. Be able to influence the policies on the	2,0000	11	1,00000	-,430	10	,676
	subject in institutions and workplaces	2 0000	11	0.42.99			
D : 12	Post	2,0909	11	,94388	(14	10	5.50
Pair 13	9. d. To be able to get a better job	2,5455	11	,93420	,614	10	,553
	Post	2,3636	11	,92442			
Pair 14	9. e. I can improve my current job	1,7273	11	,90453	1,000	10	,341
	Post	1,5455	11	,82020			
Pair 15	9. f. I can get more business opportunities	2,0000	11	1,00000	,559	10	,588
	Post	1,8182	11	,75076			
Pair 16	9.g. To gain a competitive advantage	2,1818	11	,98165	,000	10	1,000
	Post	2,1818	11	,75076			
Pair 17	9. h To access educational resources related to the subject	1,7273	11	,90453	-,559	10	,588
	Post	1,8182	11	,98165			
Pair 18	9.i. Understand the function of the archives	1,1818	11	,40452	-1,491	10	,167
	better (conversation with the file itself)						
	v9 u post	1,3636	11	,50452			
Pair 19	11.a. Introduction to ethnography	2,9091	11	,70065	4,667	10	,001
	Post	1,6364	11	,67420	,,		
Pair 20	11.b. Introduction to digital ethnography	3,2727	11	,64667	5,487	10	,000
1 411 20	Post	1,7273	11	,64667	0,107	10	,000
Pair 21	11. c. Egyptian Hellenism and Benefaction:	2,7273	11	,64667	8,964	10	,000
1 all 21	People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt.	2,7275	11	,04007	0,704	10	,000
	Post	1,3636	11	,50452			
Pair 22	11.d. Basic Principles of Archival Ethnography:	3,2727	11	,64667	6,708	10	,000
1 dll 22	Moving from Theory to Practice	5,2727	11	,04007	0,700	10	,000
	Post	1,6364	11	,67420			
Pair 23	11. e. Literature of the Greek Diaspora	3,0000	11	,77460	5,590	10	,000
1 all 25	(dispersion) in Egypt in the early 20th century:	5,0000	11	,//+00	5,570	10	,000
	The instance of People coming from Mt Pelion.						
	Post	1,6364	11	,80904			
Pair 24	11.f. Archival ethnography: Exploring the	3,5455	11		8,032	10	,000
1 all 24	field.	5,5455	11	,52223	0,052	10	,000
		1 7772	11	61607			
	Post 12.a. Digital literacy	1,7273 2,4545	11	,64667	2.200	10	0.50
Dair 25			11	,93420	2,206	10	,052
Pair 25	Post	1,9091	11	,53936			

	Post	1,8182	11	,98165			
Pair 27	12c. Informational literacy	2,3636	11	1,36182	1,491	10	,167
	Post	1,8182	11	,98165			
Pair 28	12.d. Presentation Skills	2,7273	11	1,10371	1,491	10	,167
	Post	2,1818	11	,75076			
Pair 29	12.e. Assessment skills	2,7273	11	1,19087	2,170	10	,055
	Post	1,9091	11	,94388			

Looking at the 4-point scale where the value in the range 1-2.5 indicates a high rating with the value of 2.5 denoting the middle of the scale, it follows:

Regarding the stage A of aims and expectations:

- Evaluations of all parameters depict a very high level of initial interest
- The corresponding middle assessments after the procedure, are also in the place of the scale corresponding to high interest as the average of ratings is less than 2.5. There is a small increase related to the initial ones, which is not significant. Regarding the stage B of aims and expectations:
- Evaluations of all parameters depict a high level of interest both initially and after the procedure as well
- . Changes show fluctuations not statistically significant.

Regarding the stage A of knowledge skills and abilities:

- All the data in this section show average ratings related to an improvement in the initial very positive values.
- These changes are statistically significant in all cases and as a result the very positive initial assessments are being even more statistically improved.

Regarding the stage B of knowledge skills and abilities, a similar tendency to improve all the parameters emerges, which is not statistically significant to the evaluations as a whole.

9. Qualitative research

During the implementation of the semester course also evaluated with a quantitative research, a fieldwork research/diary of teaching methods was conducted. From the notes held in the analytical diaries and the videos of the lessons, it emerged that the trainees actively participated in the educational process according to the requirements of the program. This is evidenced by their participation in the platform as well as by the fact that they watched the video lessons on the platform. The participants reacted positively to the alternation of teachers every fortnight, the alternative enriched educational material and the possibility of attending the two-hour lesson either live or remotely via Youtube live with the possibility to intervene (online chat) or later on Youtube through a link provided on the moodle platform. It was also important for the participants, that they were given the opportunity to choose among three separate examination periods the one which was more appropriate for them. Concerning the cognitive subject all the required by the curriculum topics were covered. During the fieldwork research, there was a significant participation. Regarding the digital participation of learners (discussions on moodle platform, monitoring statistics, static YouTube, discussions on YouTube on-line chat) there was a decrease

in the participation rate in the discussions as the end of each fortnight of the semester course was approaching. Possible mandatory engagement activities would increase learners' participation.

10. Conclusions

The conclusions emerged from the quantitative and qualitative research for the semester course: ""People coming from Mt Pelion in Egypt: Archival Ethnography from the perspective of new technologies and the Internet" are related to the results mentioned above. More specifically, in the research, 11 trainees participated in a total of 21 enrolled in both phases (before and after). From the demographic data, 81.8% of the research participants were women and only 18.2% were men. The proportion of higher education graduates was also high as well as of those with postgraduate studies. The percentage of teachers participating in the semester program (36.4%) was also high. Finally, in relation to the residence of the participants, the overwhelming percentage of the participants came from Volos and Mt Pelion, fact related to the accessibility to archival material of people coming from Mt Pelion.

In the part of the research, referring to the participants' goals and expectations (pre-post)ie, why they attended the semester course and this is related to new knowledge and skills of the cognitive subject, information and communication technologies skills, certificates of participation, access to educational resources, etc. that the trainees would acquire during the course of study, a high concentration of response rates in the "I am interested" and "I am very interested" was observed. This shows a high rate of expectations and expected goals but also a high rate of achievement of the original goals and expectations.

Compared to other response distributions, a lower concentration of positive expectations is found in the options for "obtaining a certificate" and "competitive advantage at the workplace" meaning that the participants did not have the motivation to follow the semester course either to acquire the certificate (a qualification) or a an additional qualification that would then serve as a competitive advantage at the participants' workplace. It should also be underlined that a small drop is recorded in the "I am very interested" option after the procedure compared to to the previous percentage, which indicates that the trainees initially participated with greater enthusiasm, which then decreased.

The third section outlines the complementary goals before and after the procedure related to the utilization of the knowledge and skills acquired in the educational program, in their workplace. The results of the survey again show a high concentration of responses to the "utterly desirable" or "desirable" options which means that the set of options describes elements that are assessed as important in terms of the aim set by the trainees. In the fourth section, the participants' opinions regarding the cognitive subjects of the six fortnights related to ethnography are recorded. The results of the research show a significant increase in the interest of the participants after the e- learning teaching interventions in all teaching subjects, which shows the students' interest in the teaching subjects that would lay the foundations for the next semester.

In the last section of the research related to the use of information and communication technologies due to the involvement of learners with digital learning tools, again the overall picture portrays a high concentration of responses to the "advanced" or "medium" options, which means that the set of options describes elements that are assessed as important in terms of the aim set by the trainees. Combined with the qualitative elements of the research, we arrived at the conclusion that although the trainees were initially possessed by enthusiasm for their participation in the semester course, subsequently this enthusiasm decreased. This decrease in enthusiasm was captured both in numbers both in research and in the withdrawal of people initially enrolled. However, due to the fact that the first semester was preparatory for the second semester where the trainees had to deliver a brief ethnography and a digital narrative related to a archive they would choose in relation to people coming from Mt Pelion, they were orientated to carefully focus on several points of the theory, especially those related to methodological issues.

Finally, the trainees reacted positively to organizing their own time and way of study (a key feature of e-learning programs), accessing multiple educational materials and having a variety of options for accessing and distributing learning material and of learning processes as well (weekly quizzes and final examinations).

Certainly the next stage of research in the second semester of the program will be interesting to be associated with this research. It will also be possible in the future to further assess the effectiveness of the e-learning course of the first semester, especially in terms of the knowledge and skills acquired by the trainees, in order to create a brief ethnography and a digital narrative related to the archive they have chosen themselves to work for.

11. Special Thanks

We would like to thank the following teachers who were involved in the first semester (winter semester 2018-19): Maria Gassouka, Professor of Folklore & Gender of the Department of Preschool Education & Educational Sciences Design of the University of the Aegean, Vasilis Dalkavoukis, Associate Professor of the Department of History and Ethnology of the Democritus University of Thrace, Dr. Xanthippi Foulidi, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Preschool Education & Educational Sciences Design of the University of the Aegean, and Dr. Eleni Kontaxi, Special Scientific Staff of the Pedagogical Department of Preschool Education of the University of Thessaly.

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