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## Community colleges and music education in the direction of lifelong learning

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### Abstract

“Lifelong learning” (LLP) was introduced as a European Union project in the 1990s, and remains a current research topic in the field of education due to the emergence of new educational paradigms. Public education centers, are institutions that serve the aims of LLPs. Within community colleges, it is important for music education, which has an active role in both individual and community development, to be given according to LLP strategies. The study examined Kadıköy Public Education Centre music courses according to the variables of age, education, preference and socio-economic status. Suggestions are made regarding development via activities and projects devoted to social development in the field of music in the information era by considering the opportunity provided by LLP.

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### 1. Introduction

LLP, which has gained global importance in the information era, is a process in which education continues formally and informally without being limited to any institutions. This is an era directed by rapid change and transition, increasing communication, intensifying interaction, developing technology and scientific information. In order for education to be effective and to achieve the expected outcomes, it has to be compatible with such innovations. Therefore, it is important that the principles, targets and practices of education should be reviewed (Ertürk, 2008). The low quality and limited availability of education in some countries have necessitated policies to address these shortcomings. While developing educational policies, international standards and statistical data should be evaluated as well as national analysis and conditions (Çolakoğlu, 2002).

LLP is relevant to all education fields related to personal, social and professional needs. Public education centers (PECs), which play an important role among common education institutions in our country constitute important institutions that provide opportunities within the LLP process.

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Public education is defined as a regular, systematic and organized education effort directed towards adults and people who do not attend schools (Celep, 2003:9).

Within Turkey, the Ministry of National Education Management of Apprenticeship and Vocational Training has been charged to carry out the Secretariat of Lifelong Learning Executive Committee. This is anticipated to be established with a “Lifelong Learning Strategy Document”, which was accepted with the decision of the Higher Planning Council on 05.06.2009 within the Lifelong Learning Activity Plan for the period 2009 to 2013. Public education centers that are within the Management of Apprenticeship and Vocational Training in Turkey have a different importance (Gönültaş, 2010, p7). These centers have two main duties: “carrying out education activity” and “providing/supporting the education activity”. They are put into service in cities and towns by the Ministry of National Education to create equal (Yıldırım, 2009). Lifelong learning is defined as providing opportunities to student as locally as possible, in the place the student lives, in a proper enough way (MNE, 2005), supported by information and communication technologies, as in Europe’s extensive and compatible lifelong learning strategy. PECs create opportunities for local people by providing these services. PECs are the education, teaching, production, counseling, information retrieval, learning, cultural and artistic centers of their localities, and have the characteristics of multifunctional community centers found in western countries (Yıldırım, 2009).

LLP is an approach that encourages the use of information in a current, relevant, modern, contemporary and effective way. Among the targets of this approach are the transmittal of the information era terminology such as removing the obstacles faced by individual, and developing desire, motivation, positive attitude and behaviors in all parts of the society (Yıldırım, 2009). At this point, music education in PEC becomes more important in the process of LLP because art education and thus music education is an indispensable part of human life, with its individual, social, cultural, economic and educational functions.

Music education needs to be steadily and consistently reframed in terms of conceptual foundations and theoretical models (Uçan, 1997). It is important for the music education activities that are carried out in over 900 PECs all over Turkey to be conducted in accordance with the targets and principles of LLP. Music education has an indispensable place in the structural integrity of a human being. Approaches with are not conscious enough for this field may cause some indefiniteness. The aim of this study is to examine the question of “What kind of a music education should be given in support of LLP strategies?”, and to determine the regulations that are necessitated by the changes and by the LLP.

The research examined music courses hosted at public education centers in Kadıköy, Turkey. The current situation was determined according to the variables of age, education, socio-economic status and the course preferences of the attendees in LLP.

## **2. Method**

The universal screening model was used in the research. Universal screening models are conducted in a population consisting of many factors. The aim is to reach a general decision about the population by taking the whole population or samples from the population (Bailey, 1982, cited by; Kınca, 2010, p. 110).

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS (version 17 for Windows). The study examined the views on LLP and the demographic characteristics of 89 people attending courses at public education centers in Kadıköy, Turkey. In order to summarize the demographic characteristics of the attendees, the frequency (F) and percentages (%) of the variables were calculated. To evaluate the attendees in the scope of LLP, the average and the standard deviations of their scores were calculated in order to determine their views on the themes examined. The independent groups - test was used to determine whether or not the evaluation differ according to socio-economic status and music course preference. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether it differs according to age and education; and the post-hoc Scheffe (meaningful differences) test was used to determine which groups have differences.

### 3. Findings

Table 1. ANOVA (N=89) test which has been applied in order to determine whether the perception of the attendees regarding the evaluation of PECs in terms of LLP differs in accordance with the variable of age and education

The evaluation of PECs in terms of LLP	Age	n	$\bar{X}$	sd	ANOVA		Meaningful difference (Scheffe)
					F	P	
01. Do you think PEC is included in LLP process?	10-16 (1)	23	2.17	0.65	1.19	0.308	-
	16-20 (2)	36	2.25	0.69			
	20 and over (3)	30	2.43	0.57			
02. Do you think you will be able to use the education you have in PEC all your life?	10-16 (1)	23	2.30	0.70	1.08	0.343	-
	16-20 (2)	36	2.31	0.58			
	20 and over (3)	30	2.50	0.51			
03. Do you think the education you have in PEC has provided an effective professional development?	10-16 (1)	23	2.22	0.60	0.01	0.987	-
	16-20 (2)	36	2.22	0.64			
	20 and over (3)	30	2.20	0.48			
04. Do you think PEC carries out mutual projects with the institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?	10-16 (1)	23	1.65	0.57	0.47	0.628	-
	16-20 (2)	36	1.53	0.65			
	20 and over (3)	30	1.67	0.66			
05. Do you think it will be useful for PEC to carry out mutual projects with the similar institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?	10-16 (1)	23	2.17	0.65	4.18	0.019	3 -1, 2
	16-20 (2)	36	2.26	0.62			
	20 and over (3)	30	2.68	0.56			
06. Do you think a sufficient level of employment is provided following the education you have in PEC?	10-16 (1)	23	2.13	0.69	3.57	0.032	1 - 2, 3
	16-20 (2)	36	1.89	0.71			
	20 and over (3)	30	1.63	0.62			
07. Do you think PEC has developed and renewed them sufficiently in the direction of LLP?	10-16 (1)	23	2.52	0.51	3.35	0.040	1 - 2, 3
	16-20 (2)	36	2.14	0.64			
	20 and over (3)	30	2.17	0.59			

\*Difference  $p < .05$  meaningful in the level of 05

Average scores (Level of Agreeing):

1.00 – 1.66 : Disagree

1.67 – 2.33 : Agree

2.34 – 3.00 : Totally agree

It was found that the age of participants was related to significant differences in three statements regarding the evaluation of the PEC courses in the scope of LLP:

- The group aged 20 and over (Group 3), think that it will be useful for PEC to carry out mutual projects with similar institutions abroad in the direction of LLP compared to other age groups ( $\bar{X}$  10-16 age=2.17;  $\bar{X}$  16-20 age=2.26 and  $\bar{X}$  20 and over=2.68).

- Attendees aged from 10 to 16 (Group 1) think that a sufficient level of employment is provided following the education they have in PEC compared to other groups ( $\bar{X}$  10-16 =2.13;  $\bar{X}$  16-20 =1.89 and  $\bar{X}$  20 and over=1.63).

- Attendees aged between 10 and 16 (Group 1) think that PEC has developed and renewed itself sufficiently in the direction of LLP compared to other groups ( $\bar{X}$  10-16 =2.52;  $\bar{X}$  16-20 =2.14 and  $\bar{X}$  20 and over=2.17).

Table 2. ANOVA(N=89) test which has been applied in order to determine whether the perception of the attendees regarding the evaluation of PECs in terms of LLP differs in accordance with the variable of educational status

The evaluation of PECs in terms of LLP	Educational Status	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	ANOVA		Meaningful Difference (Scheffe)
					F	P	
01. Do you think PEC is included in LLP process?	Primary	19	2.16	0.77	1.23	0.298	-
	School/Secondary School (1)	40	2.25	0.63			
	High School (2)	30	2.43	0.57			
02. Do you think you will be able to use the education you have in PEC all your life?	Primary	19	2.42	0.69	0.22	0.802	-
	School/Secondary School (1)	40	2.33	0.57			
	High School (2)	30	2.40	0.56			
03. Do you think the education you have in PEC has provided an effective professional development?	Primary	19	2.37	0.68	1.00	0.373	-
	School/Secondary School (1)	40	2.20	0.56			
	High School (2)	30	2.13	0.51			
04. Do you think PEC carries out mutual projects with the institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?	Primary	19	1.63	0.60	0.02	0.982	-
	School/Secondary School (1)	40	1.60	0.63			
	High School (2)	30	1.60	0.68			
05. Do you think it will be useful for PEC to carry out mutual projects with the similar institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?	Primary	19	2.32	0.67	1.32	0.274	-
	School/Secondary School (1)	40	2.30	0.65			
	High School (2)	30	2.53	0.57			
06. Do you think a sufficient level of employment is provided following the education you have in PEC?	Primary	19	2.32	0.75	5.75	0.005*	1 - 2, 3
	School/Secondary School (1)	40	1.78	0.62			
	High School (2)	30	1.70	0.65			
07. Do you think PEC has developed and renewed them sufficiently in the direction of LLP?	Primary	19	2.68	0.48	7.46	0.001*	1 - 2, 3
	School/Secondary School (1)	40	2.18	0.59			
	High School (2)	30	2.07	0.58			

\*Difference is meaningful in  $p < .05$  level

It was found that the educational status of the attendees was related to significant differences in responses to 2 statements regarding the evaluation of the PEC courses in the scope of LLP:

- Primary / Secondary School Graduates (Group1), think that a sufficient level of employment is provided following the education they receive in PEC compared to high school and university graduates ( $\bar{X}$  Primary / Secondary School =2.32;  $\bar{X}$  High School=1.78 and  $\bar{X}$  University=1.70).

- Primary / Secondary School Graduates (Group1), think that PEC has developed and renewed itself sufficiently in the direction of LLP ( $\bar{X}$  Primary / Secondary School =2.68;  $\bar{X}$  High School =2.18 and  $\bar{X}$  University =2.07).

Table 3.t test(N=89) which has been applied in order to determine whether the perception of the attendees regarding the evaluation of PECs in terms of LLP differs in accordance with the variable of socio economical status

The evaluation of PECs in terms of LLP	SES	n	$\bar{X}$	sd	t-test		
					t	sd	p

01. Do you think PEC is included in LLP process?	Average	76	2.26	0.64	1.03	87	0.307
	and under High	13	2.46	0.66			
02. Do you think you will be able to use the education you have in PEC all your life?	Average	76	2.34	0.60	1.11	87	0.271
	and under High	13	2.54	0.52			
03. Do you think the education you have in PEC has provided an effective professional development?	Average	76	2.16	0.57	2.26	87	0.026*
	and under High	13	2.54	0.52			
04. Do you think PEC carries out mutual projects with the institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?	Average	76	1.57	0.60	1.49	87	0.141
	and under High	13	1.85	0.80			
05. Do you think it will be useful for PEC to carry out mutual projects with the similar institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?	Average	76	2.38	0.63	0.02	87	0.987
	and under High	13	2.38	0.65			
06. Do you think a sufficient level of employment is provided following the education you have in PEC?	Average	76	1.82	0.67	1.64	87	0.105
	and under High	13	2.15	0.80			
07. Do you think PEC has developed and renewed them sufficiently in the direction of LLP?	Average	76	2.18	0.61	2.43	87	0.017*
	and under High	13	2.62	0.51			

\*Difference is meaningful in  $p < .05$  level

It was found that the socio-economic status of the attendees was related to significant differences in responses to 2 statements regarding the evaluation of the PEC courses in the scope of LLP:

- The attendants with a higher socio-economic status agreed that the education they receive provides effective professional development ( $\bar{X}$  Average and under = 2.16 and  $\bar{X}$  High = 2.54).
- The attendants with a higher socio-economic status agreed that PEC has developed and renewed itself sufficiently in the direction of LLP ( $\bar{X}$  Average and under = 2.18 and  $\bar{X}$  High = 2.62).

Table 4. t test (N=82) which has been applied in order to determine whether the perception of the attendees regarding the evaluation of PECs in terms of LLP differs in accordance with the variable of preference reason

<u>The evaluation of PECs in terms of LLP</u>	<u>Preference Reason</u>	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>sd</i>	<u>t-test</u>		
					<i>t</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>P</i>
01. Do you think PEC is included in LLP process?	Self-improvement	16	2.38	0.50	0.41	80	0.683
	Musical Ins. Improvement	66	2.30	0.66			
02. Do you think you will be able to use the education you have in PEC all your life?	Self-improvement	16	2.25	0.58	0.98	80	0.328
	Musical Ins. Improvement	66	2.41	0.58			
03. Do you think the education you have in PEC has provided an effective professional development?	Self-improvement	16	2.00	0.63	1.60	80	0.113
	Musical Ins. Improvement	66	2.26	0.56			
04. Do you think PEC carries out mutual projects with the institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?	Self-improvement	16	1.69	0.70	0.37	80	0.712
	Musical Ins. Improvement	66	1.62	0.63			
05. Do you think it will be useful for PEC to carry out mutual projects with the similar institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?	Self-improvement	16	2.31	0.60	0.47	80	0.641
	Musical Ins. Improvement	66	2.39	0.63			
06. Do you think a sufficient level of employment is provided following the education you have in PEC?	Self-improvement	16	1.63	0.62	1.75	80	0.084
	Musical Ins. Improvement	66	1.95	0.69			

07. Do you think PEC has improved and renewed them sufficiently in the direction of LLP?	Self-improvement	16	2.31	0.48	0.58	80	0.561
	Musical Ins. Improvement	66	2.21	0.65			

\*Difference is meaningful in the level of  $p < .05$

It was found that the preference of the attendees did not show any significant differences for any of the statements regarding the evaluation of the PEC courses in the scope of LLP.

When the PEC course evaluations of study participants are taken into consideration, the seven related statements were scored between  $\bar{X} = 1.61$  with  $\bar{X} = 2.38$ .

It is seen that the attendees do not think that PEC carries out mutual projects with overseas institutions in the direction of LLP (Statement 4) ( $\bar{X} = 1.61$ ). The attendees fully agree with the statements 05. *Do you think it will be useful for PEC to carry out mutual projects with similar institutions abroad in the direction of LLP?* ( $\bar{X} = 2.38$ ), and 02. *Do you think you will be able to use the education you receive in PEC all your life?* ( $\bar{X} = 2.37$ ). It is also seen that attendees do not have any perception or views regarding the PEC carrying out mutual projects with overseas institutions, and they perceived the PEC courses in a positive way within the scope of LLP.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

LLP is a process that has developed with the European Union process and is accepted by the whole world. In today's information society, it has been clearly seen that the LLP process should be actively carried out if individuals aim to improve their skills and personal and professional development. Schools, workplaces and individuals have to adopt the quality so that it builds the essence of our society (Bonstingl, 2000). The findings show that the attendees share the view that the institution provides opportunities for the goals and principles of LLP. However while those aged 20 and over think that it will be more useful for PEC to carry out projects with similar institutions, attendees between 10 and 16 think that PEC has developed and renewed sufficiently and provides adequate employment opportunities following the education. Public Community Colleges are incorporated within the LLP process. It is increasingly important for these 900 institutions across Turkey to be associated with LLP and to be restructured in the direction of modern education. The problem of post-education employment is an issue that all countries pay great attention to. PEC should take an active part in the process regulating education and employment problems. It is crucial to provide opportunities for qualified employment that is acceptable both nationally and internationally in this field.

The opportunity to find a job as a result of PEC qualifications should be provided by regulating the professional documentation and certification systems at both national and international levels (Kıran, 2008). It may also be thought that supporting mutual programmes carried out with overseas institutions may also contribute to development within Turkey, in terms of providing personal and social improvement.

The study participants' perceptions of PEC as a means of LLP varied according to their educational background. Primary/secondary school graduates mostly believe that PEC has improved their knowledge, renewed their skills and the opportunity of employment when compared to the high school university graduates.

As the level of education increases, it becomes increasingly important to evaluate the quality the activities within PEC. It should be remembered that programmes for primary/secondary school graduates will provide a basis for them. It may contribute to the improvement of individual's skills, realizing one's ambitions, being successful and thus being appraised. This may make the individual happy, so it is important for LLP to be perceived as a happy way of living (Budak, 2009).

The study participants' perceptions of PEC as a means of LLP varied according to their socio-economic status. High school and university graduates mostly think that PEC has improved and renewed their skills and has provided effective professional development when compared to primary/secondary school graduates. As the cultural accumulation increases individuals increasingly require an educational background that supports their professional and vocational aims. Therefore, it is important for music education to be given punctiliously and supportively.

Regulatory authorities should make the necessary regulations and support this process. It is seen that the perceptions regarding the PEC's evaluation in the scope of LLP differ according to the variable of preference reason.

Although the field of LLP has a history within Turkey, the appliance samples regarding education, which have been recently regulated all over the world, are quite new. Individual's having sufficient information is a situation to develop within the process with necessary regulations. In order to keep-up-to-date, it is important for PEC, which serves the goals and the principles of LLP, to inform the community about this matter and to make the necessary plans regarding education in order to develop an information society.

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