

EFFECTS OF ORIENTATION TRAINING PROVIDED TO STUDENTS GOING ABROAD WITH THE ERASMUS PROGRAM

ABSTRACT

This study, which was conducted with data obtained from students studying at Düzce University and benefiting from the Erasmus program, aimed to reveal how orientation training for students going abroad within the scope of the Erasmus Program contributes to students in academic, social and personal aspects.

Research results show that orientation training strengthens social relations between students, provides general satisfaction, and offers benefits in different educational fields. According to the results of the study, students state that the orientation training serves the purpose of introducing the local culture, meeting the authorities, adapting, getting to know international students and exploring the university.

The results of the study show that the duration of orientation training generally varies between two hours and one week, and this time is sufficient for students. However, some students stated that they did not make any personal contribution. This suggests that orientation programs need to be better designed and focus more on students' needs.

In conclusion, the research emphasizes that orientation training helps new students adapt to university life and encourages them to establish social relationships. The content, duration and methods of orientation programs should be arranged in accordance with the needs of the students. In this way, orientation training will help students have a more positive and successful university experience. This research provides an important guide for universities to develop their orientation programs.

Keywords: Erasmus Plus, Orientation Training, Duzce University

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to facilitate the adaptation process of students participating in the Erasmus Program at the point of getting used to and adapting to the countries they go to and to reduce the foreignness of the students, orientation training can be given for one day or more in the first week at the school preferred by the students within the scope of the Erasmus Program

before the academic year begins. In order to reveal the benefits of orientation training for Erasmus students coming to Düzce University, the need to research the training in question has emerged. The issue of investigating the effectiveness, benefits and contributions of these studies and applying them from Düzce University has gained importance due to the increase in foreign students coming recently. In this context, the main problem of the research was determined as the importance of the orientation training organized for foreign students, its contribution to the students, its ability to produce solutions to problems and its applicability at Düzce University. The problem statement of the research was determined as 'What is the contribution of the orientation training provided to Erasmus students who go abroad with the Erasmus Mobility Program from Düzce University?'

The sub-problems of the research were determined as follows:

1. What are the purposes of orientation training?
2. How did the orientation training contribute to the students academically?
3. How did the orientation training contribute to the students socially?
4. How did the orientation training contribute to the students' personal development?

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

It may take time for students who realize mobility within the scope of the Erasmus Program to adapt to the country, university, city and social environment where they will start their education. Orientation training is provided for new students at universities in order to reduce the feeling of foreignness that these students will experience at the beginning, to facilitate adaptation, to foresee the problems they may experience and to inform them about these problems. This research aims to reveal whether orientation training contributes to students' academic, social and personal development and to determine its future applicability at Düzce University.

1.2. IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

It is quite natural for students studying abroad with the Erasmus program to feel alienated from the new environment they are in at the beginning of the process in the universities and cities they go to and to feel anxious in this regard. It is very important to reduce this anxiety and feeling of foreignness and to enable students to adapt to their environment much faster, to reveal the contributions of orientation training that aims to provide benefits in terms of academic, social and personal development, to imply this training at Düzce University if deemed necessary.

1.3. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

A number of assumptions were made for the students interviewed within the scope of the research. While discussing the results of the research, analyzes were carried out within the framework of these assumptions. The following assumptions were determined for this research:

- It is assumed that the interview form used in the research adequately measures the purpose of the research.
- It was assumed that the students participating in the research answered the questions accurately, impartially and sincerely during the interviews.
- It was assumed that the results obtained from the interviews were suitable for the purpose of the research.

1.4. LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

This research is limited to the opinions of students studying at Düzce University who went abroad with the Erasmus + exchange program between 2019-2023 and were able to attend orientation training.

1.5. LITERATURE

In this section of the study, the basic concepts used in the research are explained. After explaining the development of the erasmus program and the concept of orientation education, which constitute the basic concepts of the study, in the world and in Turkey in a historical flow, the connection of the erasmus program with orientation education is mentioned.

A study conducted by Önder and Balcı [1] examined the effects of the Erasmus Student Learning Mobility Program, which allows Turkish students to study in Europe. In the study, a survey was used on Turkish students who benefited from the Erasmus Program in 2007. The conceptual validity of the survey was evaluated by factor analysis, and its reliability was

evaluated by Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient and item-total correlation coefficients. In addition, evaluations were made in the study according to variables such as the participants' gender, age, whether they attended the Erasmus Intensive Language Course, whether they received orientation training in Turkey and whether they received orientation training in Europe. In these evaluations, t-test was used according to gender and whether or not they received orientation training in Turkey and Europe, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used according to the age variable. The results showed that the participants who received orientation training were more satisfied with the financial opportunities and that the program contributed more to the individual development of the participants who received orientation training in Turkey.

A study conducted by Özdem [2] aims to determine the opinions of students studying abroad through the Erasmus program from Giresun University about the program, their suggestions to the faculty members, the university's management staff and the Erasmus Coordination unit, and their recommendations to other students who want to study abroad. In the study, structured interview technique was used through the interview form created as a method. As a result, almost all of the students who participated in the interview stated that they did not receive an orientation program at the university they attended with the Erasmus program. They stated that the importance of the orientation program should be explained to the students and their participation should be ensured by informing them of the date and time of the orientation program in advance. As a result of the study, based on the students' opinions, it was found that the importance of an orientation program for study abroad students should be emphasized and the dates and times of this program should be announced in advance to ensure the participation of the students. In addition, the study provides information that can guide students who want to study abroad by identifying recommendations for other students.

In studies conducted by Ünal [3] and Sancak [4], the majority of the students included in the study stated that the university units they attended did not provide sufficient information about the Erasmus Program. It was stated that when students receive orientation training, they are informed in advance about financial and academic opportunities such as accommodation and education. This information makes it easier for students to adapt to the university and its environment. Orientation training is therefore important. In this study conducted by Ünal [3], it was revealed that there was a significant difference between those who received orientation training and those who did not among the students who went abroad within the scope of the Erasmus Program. In the study, it was seen that most of the students stated that they did not receive orientation training at the university they went to. Students stated that they did not receive the orientation program because they did not prefer to receive it or because the program was organized shortly before the arrival of the students. As a result, half of the students who participated in Ünal's study stated that they did not receive any orientation training at the university they went to with the Erasmus exchange program.

In a study conducted by Çepni, Aydın, and Kılınc [5], the problems experienced by students who studied abroad within the scope of the Erasmus Exchange Program through the students enrolled in the undergraduate program at Karabük University and solution suggestions for these problems were presented. According to the results of the study, students encountered various problems such as accommodation difficulties, cultural differences and insufficient financial opportunities. These problems can be addressed by increasing adaptation and orientation activities prior to the Erasmus program and strengthening the financial opportunities provided. In this context, the researchers suggest that orientation activities should be intensified to help students adapt better and minimize problems. It is also recommended to provide more support to students in terms of financial opportunities, such as increasing scholarship opportunities.

In a study conducted by Saban, Çeneberci, and Çenberci [6], it was aimed to determine the level of awareness of the Erasmus Student Learning Mobility Program among undergraduate students at NecmettinErbakan University AhmetKeleşoğlu Faculty of Education and to examine students' attitudes in terms of various variables. According to the results of the study, it was suggested that Erasmus Student Learning Mobility Program coordinators should regularly hold seminars and information meetings to introduce the program. In these meetings, it was emphasized that the necessity and importance of the program should be explained, information should be provided by making use of the experiences of Erasmus students, and language preparation courses should be organized to ensure the language proficiency of students going abroad. In addition, it was suggested that university and department coordinators should inform students about the academic environment of the destination country and explain the importance of the courses, an orientation study about the destination country should be carried out by the university Erasmus learning mobility program coordinator and department coordinators should be subjected to regular training by the University Erasmus Coordinator.

In a study conducted by Kumcağız et al. [7], 112 foreign students were surveyed to determine the problems experienced by foreign students studying at OndokuzMayıs University according to their grade levels.

According to the results of the study, statistically significant differences were found in the language problems, socio-cultural problems, orientation problems and personal problems sub-dimensions of the Adjustment Problems Scale according to the grade levels of foreign students. However, no significant difference was observed in the financial problems dimension. In addition, it was determined that 1st and 2nd grade students had difficulties and problems in language perception, while 3rd and 4th grade students had a higher level of language skills over time. The reason for the

decrease in socio-cultural problems as the grade level increased was related to the students' participation in social activities as they progressed to higher grades and their foreign language proficiency increased over time.

Sarıtaş [8] conducted a comparative analysis by examining the views of Turkish and foreign students participating in the European Union Erasmus program within the scope of his master's thesis and aimed to make a general evaluation on the satisfaction with the Erasmus program and to provide information about the functioning of Erasmus practices of Turkey and other countries in the EU Higher Education Policies in the membership process. Within the scope of the research, the data obtained from 57 Turkish and foreign students in five major cities were analyzed using t-test and Mann Whitney U test. The results show that Turkish and foreign students participating in the Erasmus program think that the orientation training provided at the host university is sufficient. In addition, it was concluded that social organizations should be organized to enable students to integrate with local students and other Erasmus students and adapt more easily to the environment they are in, activities outside the university should be organized for students who have difficulty in making friends, and students should be provided with more information about the culture of the host country in order to have less adaptation problems. Likewise, in order to minimize the difficulties experienced in the academic field and to facilitate students' adaptation to the education system of the host university, information about the host university's education system should be provided and a complete counseling service should be provided to students by the university.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS / EXPERIMENTAL DETAILS / METHODOLOGY (ARIAL, BOLD, 11 FONT, LEFT ALIGNED, CAPS)

In this section, the methodology followed to achieve the aim of the study is explained in detail. Firstly, the model of the study, the study group, data collection tools, data collection, data analysis techniques and the research process are summarized. In addition, the main question and sub-questions of the study and the main argument of the research question are also explained in this section.

2.1. RESEARCH MODEL

This study is based on qualitative research methods and techniques. Qualitative research is an approach that uses an inductive approach in social science research, emphasizing descriptive data collection techniques in natural settings and the perspectives of research subjects [9]. There are many definitions of qualitative research. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek [10], qualitative research is defined as a process in which qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used to reveal perceptions and events in a realistic and holistic manner in a natural environment. The most basic feature of qualitative research is to try to explain the events, phenomena, norms and values researched from the perspective of the people being researched [11]. According to another view, qualitative research is one of the processes of producing knowledge to understand people's lifestyles, stories, behaviors, organizational structures and social change [12].

In qualitative studies, the aim is not to reach generalizable results through numbers, but to present a descriptive and realistic picture of the subject under investigation. In terms of the validity and reliability of the research results, it is important to present the data as detailed and direct as possible. The study of such situations will form the basis for further research [10]. This study was examined within the scope of 'phenomenology' or in other words 'phenomenological', one of the qualitative research designs. A phenomenological study is the combination of the lived experiences of several people about a phenomenon or concept around a common meaning [13]. This design is used when examining phenomena that one is aware of but does not have in-depth and detailed knowledge.

In this study, more detailed and deeper information was sought by using the interview technique, which is considered one of the most powerful data collection techniques. An interview is a form of controlled and purposeful verbal communication between the researcher and the subject of the research [14]. As one of the techniques frequently used in qualitative research, the interview provides the interviewees with the opportunity to express themselves openly, and the researcher with the opportunity to understand the inner worlds of the interviewees, to examine and understand their feelings, thoughts and experiences in depth through the expressions of the other party [15], [16]. In the interviews conducted with the semi-structured interview form, it was tried to reach in-depth and detailed information within the scope of the research. With this study, it is aimed to shed light on the applicability of the orientation program for Erasmus+ orientation students coming to Düzce University by examining the impact and contribution of the Erasmus+ orientation program on them through the experiences of the students and to examine the orientation training in more detail.

2.2. STUDY GROUP AND DATA COLLECTION TOOL

The aim of the study is to reveal whether orientation training contributes to students in terms of academic, social and personal development and to determine its prospective applicability at Düzce University. In this context, students studying at Düzce University and who previously went to another educational institution abroad with the Erasmus Plus program constitute the study group of the article. Convenience Sampling was used in the selection of the study group. Convenience Sampling Method is a method in which the researcher turns to the easiest items that the researcher can reach to form the sample from the target population [16]. With this sampling method, students who benefited from the program between 2019 and 2023 and volunteered were included in the group. Participants before 2019 were not included in this study in order to keep the information up-to-date. In this study, more detailed and deeper information was obtained by using the interview technique, which is accepted as one of the most powerful data collection techniques. In the interviews conducted with a semi-structured interview form, it was tried to reach in-depth and detailed information within the scope of the research. Nine volunteer students who were in Latvia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, Belgium and Poland between 2019-2023 with the Erasmus Program and participated in the orientation program were interviewed. Diversity was tried to be ensured by interviewing students going to different countries. Based on the confidentiality of the participants, the students were coded as K1, K2.

2.3. DATA MEETING

After obtaining the necessary ethics committee permissions from Düzce University, the study was conducted with volunteer students in September of the 2023-2024 academic year. The students participating in the study were interviewed and informed about the purpose of the study and the interview days and times were arranged. Interviews were conducted in the university environment. Before the interview, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research, explained that the research would be conducted in a trust-based framework, and assured that the data would remain confidential and would not be shared with third parties. Before the interview, permission was requested from the participants to record audio recordings and all participants gave their consent. The interviews lasted an average of 30 minutes.

2.4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data obtained in the study were analyzed using the content analysis method. Content analysis allows in-depth analysis of the data obtained through participant interviews, file and document review and aims to reach concepts, themes and relationships that were not previously evident. Content analysis is carried out in four stages: coding, finding themes, organizing codes and themes, describing and interpreting the findings [10]. While conducting content analysis in this study, interviews were first conducted and transcribed. The direct quotations in these interviews were read two or three times and codes were generated.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. FINDINGS

The opinions of the students who participated in orientation training in Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Latvia, Belgium, Czech Republic and Poland with the Erasmus Program are presented below.

Table 1. Frequency data of the participants' answers to the question 'Which trainings were given in the Orientation Education?'

Themes	Codes	f
Understanding the Quality of Education	Health Insurance	1
	Getting to know the country	1

Legal Procedures	2
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Learning about	
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Events	2
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Culture Recognition	3
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Introductions, Mingling	4
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Learning the functioning	5
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Getting to Know the City	6
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Getting to Know the School	8
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The opinions of the students interviewed within the scope of the research on which trainings were given during the orientation training were analyzed. According to the results obtained, with one coding, it was stated that orientation training was given on "health insurance". With one coding, it was determined that training was given on "getting to know the country". Another answer given by the students during the orientation training was "legal procedures" with two coding frequencies. This was followed by "information about the activities" with two coding frequencies. Among the trainings given in the orientation training, "getting acquainted and getting to know each other" was included with a coding frequency of three.

Then, it was determined that the students' views on the training given in the orientation training were "learning the functioning" with a frequency of five coding. It was observed that the students answered the same question as "getting to know the city" with a frequency of six coding. Finally, the students answered the question of which trainings were given in the orientation training as "getting to know the school" with a frequency of eight coding.

Within the scope of the research, the answers given by the students regarding the trainings given during the orientation training were grouped under nine themes: "health insurance, getting to know the country, legal procedures, learning about the Events", getting to know the culture, meeting / mingling, learning the functioning, getting to know the city, getting to know the school".

When the codings made on the statements about which trainings were given in the orientation training of the students participating in the research are examined, it is seen that the code density is mostly in the theme of "getting to know the school".

When the contents of the coding of the participants' opinions on the suggestion for improving the Erasmus+ program and program implementation are examined, their statements are summarized as follows.

P1 'Getting to know the city, getting to know the school, health insurance'

P2 'It was given for us to have information about the city where the university is located, about the university, to meet and socialize with other students, to have the information we need in daily life, so that we can get used to and adapt to the university, city and society more easily.'

P3 'School introduction.'

P4 'It was given for students to get to know the university better, to know where to go if they encounter any difficulties, to learn about the opportunities of the university and how to benefit from them. Generally, an orientation program was held for a week so that students could adapt to the environment more easily.'

P5 'Before going to the country where I will do Erasmus, I was informed about the country and visa procedures by the Hungarian consulate. When I went to Erasmus, I was given information by the university explaining the city, its culture and life styles, and then I was told about university education, instructors and departments.'

P6 'The university campus was introduced. I was told about the academic calendar and the duties of the International Relations Office. Information was given about the student card, eduroam and sports activities. Information was given about some country rules, banking and legal residency.'

P7 'The university was introduced, our classes and syllabus were shown. We were shown around the city center and had lunch. Then I was helped to buy a ticket for the bus valid for six months.'

P8 'It was more of an orientation program than an education; it was an event where students met each other, mingled with each other, and also explained the functioning of the courses at the university, exams, absenteeism and that there was one last step left for registration since we were Erasmus students.'

P9 'A training was given on how international students can benefit from the services (language courses, sports, etc.) within the school.'

4. Table 2. Frequency data for the participants' answers to the question 'How long was the Erasmus orientation program?'

Themes	Codes	f
Duration of Erasmus Orientation Program	2 hours	1
	5 hours	1
	2 days	1
	2,5 hours	2
	1 day	2
	1 week	2

Table 2 shows the distribution of the students participating in the study according to the duration of the Erasmus Orientation program. The answers of the students participating in the study to the question about the duration of the Erasmus orientation program were analyzed. According to the results obtained, it is two hours with one coding, five hours with one coding, two days with one coding, 2.5 hours with two coding, one day with two coding frequencies and one week with two coding frequencies.

5. Table 3. Frequency data regarding the participants' answers to the question 'For what purpose was the Orientation Training given?'

Themes	Codes	f
Understanding the purpose of education	Introducing Local Culture	1
	Meeting with authorized persons	3
	Adaptation	3

Information about the process	4
Getting to know the city	4
Recognizing international students	6
Getting to know the university	7

The opinions of the students participating in the research on the purpose of orientation training were analyzed. According to the results obtained from the research, it was stated that 'introducing the local culture' with one coding and 'meeting with authorized persons/units' with three coding. The next most frequently coded phrases were 'adaptation' with three codings, 'informing about the process' with four codings, and 'getting to know the city' with 4 codings. The orientation training includes 'getting to know international students' with 6 codings and 'getting to know the university' with seven codings.

When the contents of the participants' coding of the purpose of the orientation training are examined, the data obtained are summarized as follows.

P1 'It was given to recognize international students and to get to know the city.'

P2 'It was given for us to have information about the city where the university is located, about the university, to meet and mingle with other students socially, to have the information we need in daily life, so that we can get used to and adapt to the university, city and society more easily.'

P3 'School introduction.'

P4 'It was given for students to get to know the university better, to know where to go if they encounter any difficulties, to learn about the opportunities of the university and how to benefit from them. Generally, an orientation program was held for a week to help students adapt to the environment more easily.'

P5 'It was done so that we could adapt to the city and education system where we will do Erasmus faster and easier.'

P6 'Introduction and information'

P7 'Meeting other erasmus students, getting to know the university and meeting my coordinator'

P8 'As I mentioned above, the program was organized mostly for the students to get to know each other, to get acquainted with each other, to explain the general understanding and functioning of education at the university, and to indicate who to contact when we have a question.'

P9 'Introducing international students to the school, explaining how to reach certain units, introducing them to each other and introducing the local culture (such as food culture and dances).'

6. Table 4. Frequency data of the participants' answers to the question 'How did the Orientation Training contribute academically?'

Themes	Codes	f
Understanding the academic contribution of education	No contribution	2
	Learning different	3
	Education styles	

Adaptation to the process more easily	3
Learning about the structure of the school and the educational process	5

The opinions of the students interviewed within the scope of the orientation training regarding the academic contributions of the orientation training were examined. According to the research results, the answer was given as 'it did not contribute' with two codes. This is followed by the answer 'learning different education styles' with three codings. Participants' answers to this question include 'adapting to the process more easily' with three codes and 'obtaining information about the structure of the school and the educational process' with five codes.

When the participants' responses regarding the academic contributions of orientation training are examined, the contents of the coding are as follows.

P1 'It did not contribute because there was no information about the lessons'

P2 'Academically, I had a general knowledge about the university, its achievements, faculties, and the studies the university does.'

P3 'I had the opportunity to compare the teaching methods of the university I went on Erasmus with my own university.'

P4 'I knew the facilities of the school in advance and benefited from them. Having information about the structure of the school and the faculties made it easier for me to benefit from them when I needed anything.'

P5 'I learned about different education styles. I improved my foreign language skills in practice by studying in a foreign language. I saw the education system and learned about the exam styles. When I returned, I was able to integrate the knowledge I gained into my department.'

P6 'I got information about course selection and academic calendar.'

P7 'It helped me to adapt more easily because I learned the location of my classes and met my professors.'

P8 'I had concerns before Erasmus about adapting to different teaching styles and grade evaluation criteria. But this orientation meeting played an important role in making these worries disappear.'

P9 'It was not academy-oriented. Therefore, it did not contribute anything.'

7. Table 5. Frequency data of the participants' answers to the question 'How did the Orientation Training contribute socially?'

Themes	Codes	f
Understanding the social contribution of education	Getting to know the City	2
	Learning about Social Activities	2
	Discovering different cultures	2
	Adaptation to Social Environment	2
	Getting to know different students	9

The opinions of the students whose opinions were taken within the scope of the research were examined regarding the social contribution of education. According to the results obtained, it was stated that it contributed to 'getting to know the

city' with two codings, followed by 'learning about social activities' with two codings and 'discovering different cultures' with two codings. The other answers given for the social contribution of orientation education were 'adaptation to the social environment' and 'getting to know different students' with two codings.

The answers given by the students participating in the research to express the social contributions of the orientation training are summarized as follows;

P1 'They gathered all international students together and made us get to know each other and the city. This really helped a lot socially.'

P2 'Socially, I met other erasmus students and got information about social activities to be done.'

P3 'I met my first erasmus friends at the orientation day and my erasmus process continued with them.'

P4 'I had the opportunity to meet other students before the classes started. I made friends from my department, which gave us the opportunity to explore the city and the school together. I adapted to the environment more quickly.'

P5 'I met new people by constantly interacting with different cultures both in the classroom and in social spaces. I had the opportunity to learn their cultures and languages. I traveled to new countries and got to know different cities and cultures closely.'

P6 'I learned about the rules, sports activities and special days in the country I was in. I had the opportunity to meet some friends.'

P7 'I met my friends that I was friends with during Erasmus.'

P8 'I can say that the cultural exchange, which is at the core of the Erasmus+ program, made it easier for me. The reason for this is that no matter how good my foreign language level is or how good I am in human relations, I always thought that I might have problems in getting along with other students at first because we were still getting to know each other. But thanks to this orientation program, I had the opportunity to have a preliminary acquaintance with students from different cultures, which eliminated my doubts about not being able to communicate or get along.'

P9 'It helped me make friends.'

8. Table 6. Frequency data for the participants' answers to the question 'How did the Orientation Training contribute to your personal development?'

Themes	Codes	f
	No contribution	1
	Gaining different experiences and perspectives	1
Understanding the personal contribution of the training	Gaining information about the city and its culture	2
	Improving Communication Skills	2
	Increasing self-confidence	3
	Contributing to language development	4

The opinions of the students participating in the study on the personal contributions of orientation training were examined. According to the results obtained from the research, there is the expression 'it did not contribute' with one coding. This is

followed by 'gaining different experiences and perspectives' with one coding, 'gaining knowledge about the city and its culture' with two codings and 'increasing communication skills' with two codings. In order to express the personal contributions of the training, 'increasing self-confidence' with three codings and 'contribution to language development' with four codings were mentioned.

The responses of the students participating in the study regarding their views on the personal contributions of the orientation training are summarized as follows.

P1 'I started to speak a lot of English with the first orientation program. It gave me self-confidence.'

P2 'In terms of personal development, I learned about the history, current location and status of the Czech Republic and South Bohemia University. I also learned about Czech culture and life.'

P3 'Since I was in an environment where so many international students were together for the first time and I had to use English in my daily life for the first time, my self-confidence increased and of course, although I was not perfect at first, it contributed to the improvement of my English as I practiced. I was able to adapt to the environment easily and my ability to have inter-cultural conversations improved.'

P4 'I don't think it made any contribution to personal development.'

P5 'Living alone in a different country firstly provided self-confidence. Getting to know different cultures and meeting people provided new perspectives. I had the opportunity to improve my foreign language skills. I gained new experiences by traveling to different countries. It contributed in terms of educational and career opportunities.'

P6 'It contributed to self-expression, self-confidence and stress management.'

P7 'It helped me to speak English in a formal environment. It also helped me to be a little more confident as it was the first time I met my friends.'

P8 'At the end of the orientation meeting, a small introductory game was organized by the Turiba University student community. The game was based on students introducing themselves. But to win the game, it was not only about how well and effectively you introduced yourself, but also about greeting the other students with a smiling face before you started to introduce yourself.'

P9 'I got used to the city and the school faster.'

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the research show that the orientation training carried out under the Erasmus Program in Belgium, Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Latvia, Czech Republic and Hungary strengthens social ties between students, creates overall satisfaction and provides benefits in various fields of education. Among the trainings provided in the orientation training, there are important themes such as "getting to know the school", "getting to know the city", "getting to know the country", "legal procedures" and "learning about activities".

Students participating the study, state that orientation training serves the purposes of introducing the local culture, meeting authorized persons/units, adaptation, getting to know international students and getting to know the university. These trainings enable students to make different academic and personal contributions. This result obtained in the study coincides with the study conducted by Şahin [17]. Şahin stated that students had the opportunity to meet people from different cultures and introduce their own cultures through the program.

In the study, the opinions of the students who participated in the orientation training in Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Latvia, Czech Republic and Latvia with the Erasmus Program about the orientation period were also evaluated. The duration of orientation training usually varies between two hours and one week. This period is considered sufficient for students to adapt to the new environment and learn the necessary information. In addition, when the opinions of the students participating in the study regarding the duration of Erasmus orientation are examined, it shows that Erasmus students

may need to allocate more time to the process of adapting to the university and feeling comfortable in a new environment. Conducting these orientation programs at periodic intervals may facilitate the adaptation process of students.

Most of the participants stated that orientation training had academic and personal benefits. Students stated that the orientation training helped them learn about different education styles, adapt to the process more easily, learn about the structure of the school and the education process, and improve their communication skills. However, some students stated that orientation did not contribute to their personal development. This suggests that orientation programs need to be better designed and more focused on students' needs. It is important to adopt diversity, interaction and student-centered approaches in orientation training to increase student engagement, strengthen the impact of training and meet expectations. These results of the study overlap with the study conducted by Önder and Balcı [1]. In their study, Önder and Balcı compared students who received orientation training and those who did not and found that students who received orientation training were more satisfied with the program.

The findings presented in the paper show that orientation training plays an important role during the transition period to university and supports the integration of the students involved in the research. These findings can help universities adopt various strategies to improve orientation programs, meet students' needs and make their university experience more positive.

In conclusion, according to the orientation training conducted in this study, it plays an important role in helping new students adapt to university life, encouraging them to establish social relationships, familiarizing them with the local culture, and facilitating their access to necessary information. The findings of the study can provide guidance for the development of orientation programs at other universities, both in this study and outside of this study, to positively impact students' university experience. Therefore, the content, duration and methods of orientation programs should be tailored to students' needs and evaluated continuously. It may also be useful to implement this orientation training for all international students, not just Erasmus students. In this way, orientation education may help students to have a more positive and successful university experience. In addition, since there are not many studies similar to the Erasmus Program orientation training in the literature, it is thought that this study will contribute to the field and shed light on future studies.

Consent

As per international standards or university standards, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL (WHERE EVER APPLICABLE)

IT WAS ACCEPTED BY DÜZCE UNIVERSITY WITH THE ETHICS COMMITTEE DECISION TAKEN ON 01.06.2023.

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