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Educational Tourism in Greece and Its reaction on Covid-19

Master Thesis

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Abstract in Greek

Ο σκοπός αυτής της έρευνας είναι η διερεύνηση της ζήτησης εκπαιδευτικού τουρισμού στην Ελλάδα, των επιπλέον τουριστών μέσω του τουρισμού VFR, των πιθανών τουριστών "επαναληπτών" και της ανθεκτικότητάς του απέναντι στην πανδημία COVID-19. Στην παρούσα έρευνα έχουν επιλεγεί τόσο ποσοτική όσο και ποιοτική προσέγγιση. Διανεμήθηκαν ερωτηματολόγια σε δίκτυα φοιτητών Erasmus στην πλατφόρμα του Facebook και πραγματοποιήθηκαν συνεντεύξεις με μέλη των διοικητικών γραφείων του Erasmus. Είκοσι μαθητές Erasmus που έχουν επισκεφθεί την Ελλάδα για εκπαιδευτικούς σκοπούς συμμετείχαν σε αυτήν την έρευνα και μοιράστηκαν τις εμπειρίες και τις πεποιθήσεις τους απαντώντας στα ερωτηματολόγια. Τρία μέλη των γραφείων διοίκησης Erasmus των Πανεπιστημίων Αθηνών και Θεσσαλονίκης είχαν δομημένες συνεντεύξεις σχετικά με το πώς αντέδρασε ο εκπαιδευτικός τουρισμός κατά την περίοδο της καραντίνας λόγω της νόσου COVID-19. Τα ευρήματα των ερωτηματολογίων έδειξαν ότι οι μαθητές του Erasmus μπορούν να θεωρηθούν ως δυνητικοί επαναλαμβανόμενοι στο μέλλον. Επίσης, κατά τη διάρκεια της παραμονής τους, οι φοιτητές Erasmus δέχθηκαν επίσκεψη από φίλους ή συγγενείς, κάτι που είναι επωφελές από οικονομικής άποψης καθώς άλλαξαν τα πρότυπα δαπανών τους και αύξησαν τις δαπάνες τους. Ο τουρισμός VFR αποδείχθηκε κερδοφόρος για την Ελλάδα, καθώς οι φίλοι και οι συγγενείς είχαν περισσότερες από μία επισκέψεις κατά την περίοδο παραμονής των φοιτητών Erasmus και δεν επικεντρώθηκαν στους καλοκαιρινούς μήνες. Τα ευρήματα των συνεντεύξεων έδειξαν ότι πολλοί εκπαιδευτικοί τουρίστες αποφάσισαν να μείνουν στην Ελλάδα, τον εκπαιδευτικό τους προορισμό και να συνεχίσουν το πρόγραμμά τους. Επιπλέον, όλοι οι μαθητές, τόσο εκείνοι που επέστρεψαν στις πατρίδες τους όσο και εκείνοι που έμειναν, έψαξαν για εναλλακτικές λύσεις, όπως η τηλεπαίδευση, ώστε να μην σταματήσουν τα μαθήματά τους.

Key Word: Εκπαιδευτικός τουρισμός, VFR τουρισμός, επαναληπτές τουρίστες, COVID-19, τηλεεκπαίδευση.

Abstract in English

The purpose of this research is investigation of the demand of educational tourism in Greece, the additional tourists of the VFR tourism, the potential repeaters, and its resilience on the COVID-19 pandemic. In the present research have chosen both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. Questionnaires have been distributed to Erasmus students' networks on Facebook and interviews have conducted with members of the Erasmus administration offices. Twenty Erasmus students who have visited Greece for educational purposes participated in this research and shared their experiences and beliefs by answering the questionnaires. Three members of the Erasmus administration offices of Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki had structured interviews regarding how educational tourism reacted during the lockdown period due to COVID-19 disease. The findings of the questionnaires indicated that the Erasmus students can be considered as potential repeaters in the future. Also, during their stay, the Erasmus students got visited by friends or relatives which is beneficial from an economic point of view as their spending patterns changed and they raised their expenditures. VFR tourism turned to be profitable for Greece as friends and relatives had more than one visit during the period of stay of the Erasmus students and did not focused on the summer months. The findings of the interviews showed that many educational tourists decided to stay in Greece, their educational destination, and continue their program. Furthermore, all students, both those who returned to their home countries and those who stayed, searched for alternatives such as teleducation in order to no stop their courses.

Key Words: Educational tourism, VFR tourism, repeaters, COVID-19, teleducation.

1. Introduction

1.1 History of tourism

Tourism for many years now is considered as one of fundamental elements that contributes to the development of the economy of Greece (Tsartas, Papatheodorou and Vasileiou, 2014). The type of tourism that the majority of Greek destinations develop for several years now is the mass organized tourism. According to Buhalis (2001), at the beginning of the 1950 decade, Greece has experienced a continuous increase in arrival but, as the author noticed, those arrivals peaked during the summer months. The author underlined the advantages of the Greek tourism product, such as the combination of natural, cultural and heritage attractions that Greece can provide and are located all over the country.

1.2 History of educational tourism

Within the last decades, both education and tourism have faced a significant growth which led to the wide recognition of these industries from an economic as well as social perspective (Ritchie, Carr, & Cooper, 2003). The authors cited a quote by Roppolo (1996:191) who supported the idea that 'as countries become more interdependent, their success, growth and economic prosperity will largely depend on the ability of two industries – education and tourism – to create the avenues necessary to support international exchange and learning'. This type of tourism is under development and, according to Goyal (2014), its development depends on increasing demand for knowledge and technical competencies acquisition from the best educational destinations all over the world. According to UNESCO's (uis.unesco.org, 2020) data base in regard of the most preferable educational destinations, first is the United Kingdom, followed by Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, and Netherlands.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this research is to investigate the benefits of Greece through educational tourism from Erasmus students as well as the potential extra tourists it can provide through the VFR and the potential repeaters and its likely contribution to the recovery of the tourism field after the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of this research is the investigation for demand of this type of tourism and its resilience towards the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4 Hypotheses

- Educational tourism in Greece can be a considerable market for Greek tourism
- Educational tourism can be beneficial for Greece through the VFR tourism and the potential repeaters

-Educational tourism is more resilient than other types of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic

1.5 Research questions

- Do educational tourists produce VFR and are there any potential repeaters
- Is educational tourism a motive for tourists to visit Greece
- Do the educational tourists and the VFR contribute to tourism during the whole year
- Can educational tourism contribute to a significantly faster recovery of the tourism industry after the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.6 Limitations

The group of people which is going to participate to the research through the questionnaires are foreign Erasmus students who have visited Greece for educational reasons. The participants are undergraduate, postgraduate or PhD students who have visited Greece for semester courses, internship, or a master's degree program. The regions investigated are Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras, Ioannina and Crete. The students have been to Universities of those cities. The group of people which is going to participate to the research through the interviews are administration members which are working on the Erasmus department of the public Universities of the investigated regions. It is possible the situation regarding Erasmus students' mobility during the pandemic to face significant differences with other Universities which has not be investigated.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Educational tourism

Traveling has always offer to travellers the acquisition of new experiences as well as the chance to open their minds exploring new cultures, new places and how other communities of people live and react. Tourism has given those opportunities to many tourists worldwide, who daily chose to travel around the globe to destinations that satisfy their personal motives for travel. The field of tourism is divided into many categories, giving birth to the occasion to all kind of tourists to please their inner need for travel. One well known kind of tourism is educational tourism. In this category travel is focusing on the learning experience. Such trips could be those who focuses on the learning experience from a cultural or historical perspective of the visiting country or even students visiting a foreign country through exchange programs (Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper, 2003).

2.2 Travel motivations and behaviour of tourists

Abubakar, Shneikat and Oday (2014) underlined the initiative meaning that tourism or voyage got, and more specifically was about the intentional movement for trade and conquest. The authors identified that in present-day, tourism has shifted its meaning to pleasure serving as a symbol of social status. The authors also mentioned the fast growth that tourism has faced due to its influence from hypermedia such as social networks. Educational tourism is consisted of programs of which the participants choose a location to travel, individually or in a group, having as primary motive their participation or the acquisition of a learning experience. According to Sie, Patterson and Pegg (2016), the older adult market has showed its interest on education and cultural trips. Abubakar, Shneikat & Oday (2014) referred to educational tourists as edu-tourists and pointed out that they are about "individuals or groups who travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than 24 h and not more than one year" and declared that their purposes for travel counting among others study, business, leisure and other activities.

Research has been done about individual's motives on why they travel. More specifically, Abubakar, Shneikat and Oday (2014) quoted that "motivation refers to the internal factors that enjoin and integrate a person's or group's behaviour for potential satisfaction". Jang, Cai and L. A. (2002) highlighted that motivation is one of the most important areas of the tourism research and more specifically mentioned the fact that through the examination of push and pull motives, motivations can be explained effectively. Furthermore, Abubakar, Shneikat and Oday (2014) classified tourists into two motivational categories of factors. The one of "push" and the other of "pull". The "push" category is linked with the sociopsychological constructs of tourists as well as their home environment that creates the predisposition for travel. On

the contrary, the "pull" category is about parameters which creates attraction to a given destination. According to Van Vuuren and Slabbert (2012) the tourism industry in order to be maintained or make an improvement to the current status it carries, it strongly relies on the travel decisions the tourists are making and thus reflect their travel behaviour. In between some factors that influence those travel decisions are the culture, the travel motivations, the finances and previous experiences of the tourist. It is also stated that travel behaviour is very crucial for the tourism in all its aspects, the concept of tourism, the industry and the economy. Furthermore, travel behaviour is defined as "travel behaviour can therefore be defined as the way tourists behave according to their attitudes towards a certain product and their response by making use of the product ". (Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2012).

Tourist behaviour is something that many researchers has been investigated in order to discover its factors that influence it. Van Vuuren and Slabbert (2012) underlined the fact that out of all psychological influences that affects the behaviour of tourists, travel motivations might be the most crucial. As stated by the authors, "motivations are the inner state of a person, or certain needs and wants of a person, which forces them to act or behave in a specific way and thus sustaining human behaviour and energy levels of the human body" (Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2012). Saayman and Van der Merwe (2007) pointed the view that when it comes to different tourist attractions or destinations, the motives will be different and also travel motives might differ from one destination to another. Furthermore, Van Vuuren and Slabbert (2012) mentioned Maslow's theory for the premise of motivation and the five categories of motivations that have been identified by Maslow and are also called as basic needs. Those are the physiological needs, the safety needs, the social needs, the self-esteem, and the self-actualisation.

2.3 Positive impacts of educational tourism on the hosted region

Tang (2020) characterized educational tourism as an emerging economic sub-sector that has captured the attention of both policymakers and academicians keeping in mind its potential ramifications on both the education and tourism sectors but also on the economic growth of the host country. Some of the types educational tourism is divided, are heritage tourism, ecotourism, and student exchanges among educational institutions (Smith, 2013). According to Smith (2013), educational tourism has been seen as a way to bridge cultural differences and also to promote the prevention of conflicts. The author mentioned some efforts of governments to raise their interest towards educational tourism. More specifically, the examples of Abu Dhabi and its approach through overseas school trips, Thailand, and its cooperation with foreign universities. Special attention has been given by the author to the explanation of the European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students also known as ERASMUS which has been organized exchange programs over the last twenty years within European Union and countries candidates for EU, like Turkey.

Educational tourism can be considered as a form of tourism in which tourists travel in order to gain new knowledge (Samah & Ahmadian, 2013). The authors in an effort to investigate the implications educational tourism brings to the hosted areas, found out that the attitude of the residents as well as socio-cultural and economic impacts of educational tourism made an important contribution to residents' practice. Through their research, Samah and Ahmadian (2013) came to the conclusion that the interaction of the residents towards international students is affected by the economic benefits that local people as well as small businesses are enjoying through educational tourism, along with opportunities in regards of employment. Furthermore, Samah and Ahmadian (2013) identified that socio-cultural factors have significantly influenced residents' practice due to their contribution to get more educated about other traditions.

Tomasi, Paviotti and Cavicchi, (2020) also supported the idea that educational tourism can benefit economically and socially the hosted region. The authors became more specific by explaining that the residence of the foreign students can contribute to the local economy through their on-campus spending for their studies, off-campus spending clothing, food etc, contribution to the local tourism industry through domestic travel and other tourist activities and the expenditure which are not related to educational tourism and are made by students, friends and family who came and visit as well as the return visits of alumni. Tomasi, Paviotti and Cavicchi, (2020) conclude that international educational tourism can help to the increasing of good and services sales and the related tax revenue and help create new job positions.

2.4 Repeaters in tourism

Gitelson and Crompton (1984) referred to repeat vacationer as "those who return one or more times to a familiar destination for a vacation. The authors stated that when travellers prefer variety and new cultural experiences choose to visit new sites, in contrast with those who want to relax and usually choose to visit familiar sites. Kozak (2006) on his research about the repeaters of tourism, distinguished an association between the past visit of the customers and their level of satisfaction and concluded that customers who had previous experience were in higher levels of satisfaction towards those who had no previous experience. The author also noticed that part of the repeaters will observe both positive and negative changes regarding the quality of the visited destinations, but they have a better chance in the perception of the positive ones (Kozak, 2006).

Researches have been conducted regarding the behaviour that repeaters grow. On his research on this issue, Kozak, (2001) linked the loyalty towards a destination with the multiple visits it has gathered. The author clarified that the loyalty for a specific destination might

arising from economic reasons and for the convenience and not specifically for the destination. As important factors to visit or not a destination that have been visited again, Kozak (2001) reported the first-hand experiences if they got satisfied through that visit and the familiarity. Oppermann (2000) noticed that many of the repeat vacationers declared that they felt they identified in a high level with the visited destination.

2.5 Visiting friends and relatives tourism

Asiedu (2008) on his study about tourism and its considerable expansion, inferred that the motivations of individuals regarding tourism have also been expanded. The author supported the view that the type of tourism which is mainly aiming to visit friends and/or relatives, also known as VFR tourism, is equally in demand among other types of tourism such as tourism for business and health tourism. Visiting friends or relatives is motivating and influencing many trips made by tourists (Griffin, 2013). According to Backer (2012), it is possible that visiting friends and relatives tourism is the oldest form of travel, explaining that this purpose for travelling was always considered to be important out of a social perspective.

Visiting friends and relatives type of tourism have a characteristic that distinguishes it from other types of tourism. According to Griffin (2013), the participants are divided into two categories, the one of the hosts and the one of the guests. The author further mentioned that the experience of being a host is making the individual to increase its participation to local activities which as a result for the residents to be more informed regarding the community they live in and also built potentially in a better way their personal networks. Ramachandran (2006) having search the VFR tourism, argued that that type of tourism not only increase the total number of tourists on a destination, but also increases in a local level the awareness regarding tourism. The author explained further that hosts on VFR tourism will know where to go with their visitors or suggest them to go visit having as result to distribute the money spent not only to expected choices but all over the community.

Visiting friends or relatives is a type of tourism which is also contribute to destination's economy like every other type. In their research about VFR's market, Lehto, Morrison, and O'Leary, (2001) noticed that the economic value of this specific type of tourism has been underestimated. More specifically, the participants of VFR tourism make a considerable contribution to local economy such as the restaurants and the national airlines. Backer (2007) supported the view that VFR travellers can be considered as economic contributors to the local economy due to their spending throughout the community and not only in tourism categories. Griffin (2013) identified the spending patterns of VFR visitors as similar to those of the pleasure and entertainment category and supported the view that they usually contribute to the tourism activity of the destination. The author also added that VFR visitors

also contribute to the hotel industry, especially when there is not enough space at the host's home.

VFR tourism has been proven through researches that it contributes to the local economy. Many researches though have been focused on the host of the VFR's and how its economic behaviour changes while the visit of friends or relatives. Backer (2007) underlined the fact that an individual having the role of the host for a friend or relative leads him to undertake tourism activities such as sight-seeing, leisure shopping and in general activities that would not usually undertake. Shani and Uriely (2012) also supported the view that if there have not been VFR, the host would not proceed to those extra expenditures. Yousuf and Backer (2017) on their research concludes that the motives of the hosts on undertake an activity differ according the relationship they have with the guest, if belongs to the friend category or the relative category. The authors concluded that hosts getting visited by friends, emphasized on their guests' recreational aspect.

Visiting friends and relatives is a type of tourism which is difficult to measure its size. This is mostly due to the segmentation it is done. Griffin (2013) analysed that VFR, pleasure, business and other are the four main motivation categories when it comes to measure tourism. The author explained that the challenge that VFR is getting through because of this segmentation is affecting the measuring of its actual size, when travellers who are about to visit friends or relatives, declare those trips into the pleasure category. Munoz, Griffin and Humbracht (2017) on their research about visiting friends and relatives type of tourism, observed that when a trip is having more than one destinations and one of them is having as purpose of visit a VFR experience, it is likely for the travellers not to refer to the influence that VFR tourism is having on their decision making regarding that trip.

Griffin (2013) on his research regarding the VFR tourism discovered that this type of tourism has been less easy to get effected on a period of uncertainty. On his defence about this view, the author mentioned the outbreak of the SARS virus on 2003 and compared the visitor going to Ontario for pleasure with those who were visiting this destination for a VFR experience. The VFR tourists had less decrease than the tourists travelling for pleasure. Griffin (2013) also underlined the fact that the recovery too had a significant difference between those two types of tourism as the recovery on VFR tourism was faster than travelling for pleasure, making VFR tourism seem as a more stable and reliable form of tourism.

Researches have been made about the visiting friends or relatives type of tourism regarding its relationship with seasonality. Griffin (2013) concluded that this type of tourism is getting the least related with seasonality giving the opportunity to restaurants and attractions to operate the months beyond season having as result the provision of support towards the tourism infrastructure and to benefit the destination. Lehto, Morrison, and O'Leary, (2001) referred to that type of tourism as a "moderator to compensate for seasonal variations" as in their research came to the conclusion that VFR tourism has a more equally distribution of travels through the year. Seaton and Palmer (1997) observed that this type of tourism not only have a more equally distribution throughout the year, but also peaks in months which are usually low in tourism.

2.6 COVID-19 and tourism

According to World Health Organization, on 31st of December 2019 in Wuhan, China, the WHO China Country Office was got informed about case of pneumonia with unknown etiology, or else unknown cause, (World Health Organization, 2020). The outbreak of the COVID-19 with starting point the city of Wuhan in China and the growing amount of information as well as concerns regarding this issue made its impact worldwide in the field of mental health (Torales et al., 2020). As reported by the authors, the intensive surveillance, epidemiological investigation, and the closure of the markets on January were some of the measures that the Chinese health authorities took in order to combat the COVID-19 disease. The World Health Organization on March 11 proceed to the announcement that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic.

On 26th of February, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Greece showed up from a Greek woman returning from Italy (Greek Ministry of Health, 2020). Not having any suitable pharmaceutical treatment that combats COVID-19 or the vaccine for this virus, the most efficient strategy that the government of Greece will follow (Sakellidis et al., 2020). On 23rd of March, the Prime Minister announced the curfew and set Greece into lockdown in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 (General Secretariat for Civil Protection, 2020). Moris and Schizas (2020) noticed that the upcoming concerns not only for the preparation needed regarding the pandemic but also for the economic impacts that will affect a country which is already harmed economically and is in a period of recovery.

2.7 COVID-19 and educational tourists

The coronavirus disease brought massively many changes in everyday life of all individuals. COVID-19 had spread widely all over the globe, starting from China, which government's demand was not to pause the teaching and learning processes within the country. Online education took very quickly the place of face-to-face education in order to adopt to the new

demands (Bao, 2020). The decisions made by the governments having as goal the reduction of the COVID-19 spread were a massive barrier not only for the face-to-face teaching and the exams procedure, but also affected the mobility of Erasmus students due to the restrictions that needed to be followed (Gonzalez et al., 2020). Nicolau et al., 2020 on their research regarding COVID-19 and due to the obliged quarantine and the restrictions regarding the social distancing implemented by the governments, digitalization of services, and work from home became a part of new reality. The authors added that universities are one of the fields which integrated the new data into their operating modes.

Williamson, Eynon and Potter (2020) referred to the coronavirus pandemic as a severe problem regarding the political, economic and social field and not only a problem that involves the public health. One of the moves made in the effort to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 was the change from face-to-face education to distance education (Al Lily, 2020). Tzifopoulos (2020) described the situation of the distance education as teaching through e-learning platforms, which hosted the virtual classes for the time period needed. Negash et al. (2008) classified e-learning types into six categories. Type IV is called e-learning with virtual presence and with e-communication and in which the instructor and the learner do not have physical meetings, but they do meet each other virtually while they have content delivery. Furthermore, in this type of e-learning, e-communication is having an extensive use and, as the authors said, virtual class is mediated by e-learning technologies.

COVID-19 pandemic forced students and teachers to turn into alternatives in order to not stop the learning process. Distance learning through e-learning platforms was the most preferable method. Though, students faced many difficulties trying to adopt to the new habits. In a research about how teleducation during the COVID-19 crisis, Nicolau et al. (2020) identified that regardless the fact if the students were from public or private educational sector, they did face some difficulties with regard to the technological and supplies needs such as Internet connectivity, electrical power and the possession of digital competences. The online evaluation was one more concern while using e-learning methods due to the lack of supervision by the teachers if the students are following strictly the instructions while they are having their evaluation tests and also because the teachers was in the need to rebuild the on-site evaluation from the beginning following the new directions (Gonzalez et al., 2020). Bao (2020) stated that students who were self-isolated were lacking self-discipline, suitable learning materials, or good learning environments.

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease around the globe was a situation which affected all aspects of individuals' everyday lives (Bilecen, 2020). Among the fields that were affected is education, which needed to be transformed very quick and become digitalized in order to in

order to adopt to new needs and way of living. Students had to deal with the new changes of their educational lives, but international students had to deal this experience far away from their homes or home countries. Bilecen (2020) highlighted the problem that international students faced while the COVID-19 pandemic as many of them were not able to return to their homes either immediately or at all because of the closed borders and the suspension of international flights. Brammer and Clark (2020) mentioned that the economic difficulties which followed by the pandemic and affected every individual, burdened even more international students who got excluded in their study country. Crawford et al. (2020) on their research about how 20 countries and their educational systems reacted on the new demands due to the digital needs COVID-19 pandemic, mentioned that in Australia the respond to international students about the flight restrictions were a priority. The author also stated that in United Kingdom, international students and their support, due to the separation and distance of their friends and family, was one of the liabilities of the Universities.

3. Methodology

3.1 Types of research

Fundamental

According to Kothari (2004), fundamental research has a main concern the generalisations as well as the formulation of a theory. The author mentioned that types of research that are dealing with natural phenomenon, has to do with pure mathematics or dealing with human behaviour in order to make generalisations regarding this issue are examples of fundamental research. To sum up, fundamental research is focusing on the finding of information which has a broad base of applications and hence adds to the already existing organized body of scientific knowledge.

This research is about the finding of the power of the market share of educational tourism, its annually contribution on tourism, the extra tourists it can bring though the VFR and the potential repeaters and its contribution to a faster recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. This research is based on previous studies on educational tourism, its importance and its sustainability towards the pandemic, seeking the demand for educational tourism in Greece today from an economic perspective as well as how sustainable this type of tourism is regarding the pandemic. The present research is a fundamental type of research as it collects data and add them to the existing ones regarding educational tourism.

3.2 Philosophical perspective

Interpretivism

Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) identified a fundamental distinction that interpretive and positivist world views have and it is observed on the former's primary presumption of social constructionism. In fact, the authors stated the opinion that "interpretivism asserts that reality, as well as our knowledge thereof, are social products and hence incapable of being understood independent of the social actors that construct and make sense of that reality". Furthermore, having an interpretive perspective, it underlines the importance of subjective meanings and social-political as well as symbolic action in the processes over humans use in order to construct and reconstruct their reality (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). Moreover, the authors stated the notion that interpretive research philosophy has contributed on the

revealing of the underlying connections in between different parts of social reality with the examination of the social rules and meanings which are making social practices possible.

The research follows the interpretivism as philosophical perspective considering this a most suitable approach for the investigation of educational tourism.

3.3 Methodological approach

Quantitative

Burns and Bush (2005) referred to quantitative research as a type of research comprising the utilization of structured questions which have predetermined options for response and using a big number of respondents. The authors stated that in quantitative research the procedure for the gathering of the data is formalized and usually the sample that is used is sizable representative of the population. Regarding the format of the data as well as the sources, the authors declared that in a quantitative research are well defined. The gathering of the data and the formatting of those data are is done following an orderly procedure which in the most part its nature is numerical (Burns and Bush, 2005). As stated by Kothari (2004), quantitative research has its basis on the measurement of quantity or amount.

Qualitative

Burns and Bush (2005) expressed the view that qualitative research has to do with the collection, analysis and interpretation of data using observation of what people are doing and saying. The form of the observations and statements is qualitative or non-standardized. Due to that fact, the data gathered have the possibility to get quantified, but it is necessary to go through a translation process.

The purpose of this research is to identify the demand for educational tourism by foreign students and investigate the resilience of this type of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research regarding the foreign students is achieved through quantitative research, and the research regarding the sustainability of this type of tourism regarding the pandemic is achieved through quantitative research.

3.4 Data collection

Primary data

Primary data, according to Burns and Bush (2005) “are information that is developed or gathered by the researcher specifically for the research project at hand”.

Secondary data

Regarding secondary data, Burns and Bush (2005) stated that “secondary data have previously been gathered by someone other than the researcher and/or for some other purpose than the research project at hand”. According to Hox and Boeije (2005), data which have gathered in a prior period of time by other researcher or not for the same purposes than research are likely to get used for some social research questions. Those kinds of data can be official statistics, administrative records, or other accounts kept routinely by organizations.

The source of data for this research will both be primary and secondary data. Previous researches gave information to construct the present one in order to investigate educational tourism in Greece.

Questionnaires

In quantitative research methods, the dominant type of research that is well known and strongly established for many years now, is that of questionnaire. According to (Singh, 2007) questionnaires tend to be always self-administered which is a type of questionnaire that allows the respondents to fill the out by themselves. Within the completion process of a self-administered questionnaire, each respondent needs to read each question and answer itself as there is no interviewer to ask the questions (Bryman, 2016). Due to the absence of the interviewer, this type of questionnaire needs to be especially easy to follow and its questions have to be particularly easy to answer. Bryman (2016) identified three key points in order to keep the questionnaires targeted and fulfil their purpose. First, he recommends the researcher to use more close questions as compared to open questions are easier to answer. Second, he suggests acquiring an easy-to-follow design so to decrease the possibility of the respondent to skip filter questions or accidentally not reply to a question. Third, he advises to keep the questionnaires short so to avoid the fatigue of the respondents.

Interviews

Interview is considered to be the leading technique to collect data when it comes to qualitative methodologies (Cooper, Schindler & Sun, 2014). According to Cooper, Schindler and Sun (2014) categorized interviews according to the amount of people participated within the interview, their level of structure, the interviewer's proximity towards the participant and how many interviews as a total conducted throughout the research. Interview is a qualitative type of research that have the ability to be conducted either individually or in groups. The authors stated that the conduction of an interview needs a trained interviewer or skills that the interviewer have acquired through experience. As skills are defined the ability of the interviewer to make the respondents feel comfortable, to seek for details while interviewing and not make the respondent feel harassed, keep a neutral attitude and also encourage the participant to an open talk, to listen carefully, to follow the participant's reasoning and export information by long lasting detailed and descriptive dialogue. The researcher has to choose over three categories of interviews. Unstructured interviews do not have certain questions, the topics which will be discussed do not follow certain order and each interview adapts to the participant. Semi structured interviews at the beginning contain some certain questions and subsequently the interviewer follows the participant's thoughts. Structured interviews are consisted of a guide quite similar to a questionnaire in which the order of the questions as well as the way they are asked are getting directed by the interviewer.

The data in this research will be collected through questionnaires which will be answered by Erasmus students who have visited Greece for educational purposes in order to investigate their experiences and through structured interviews to specific Erasmus administration offices of Universities around Greece.

3.5 Participants and research process

In the present research, the data were collected through the method of questionnaire which distributed to foreign Erasmus students and also through the method of structured interviews with members of the Erasmus administration offices of Universities of the investigated regions in Greece. The sampling was conducted online and the regions responded were Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras and Ioannina. More specifically, the respondents of the questionnaires were asked to share their experience as Erasmus students visited Greece. The sample taken and is on regard of the students is consisted by Erasmus students having visited Greece for educational purposes. As educational this research is considering semester courses, internship, and master's degree. The questionnaires were posted on Facebook groups of the ESN network of each University of the investigated regions. In this research, the part of the questionnaires follows the method of simple random sample. In this type of sample, Cooper, Schindler and Sun (2014) stated that "the simple random sample is considered a special case in which each population element has a known and equal chance of

selection". Regarding the short time given for this research, the number of participants is not large, and the attendance was not the expected.

Through the structured interviews, the members of the Erasmus administration offices of the Universities were asked to have a discussion about the challenges they had to get through and the current situation they faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample that is on regard of the interviews is consisted of administration members which are working on the Erasmus department of the Universities of the investigated regions. The interviews were private with each interviewee at a day and time it was convenient. The other part of the research that concerns the interviews, the sample belongs to the nonprobability category of samples and more specifically, from the purposive sampling category, the judgement sampling. This type of sampling suites most to this part of the research due to its targeting to the investigated individuals. Using this type of sampling, the research focuses on participants which are believed to be representative on the subject (Dick, Thomas and Halvorson, 1997). Regarding the short time given for this research, the number of the interviewees is not large as most of the contacted potential interviewees were on vacation. Two out of three interviewees preferred to answer via email the questions as the week given for the research's interviews, was their first week after vacation and they haven't had enough time to schedule an interview. It is important to be noted that the interviews were conducted in Greek and were translated in English in order to be used for the Findings chapter and the Discussion chapter. Full context of the interviews will be on an Appendix.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis of the questionnaires

The part of the research which involves the use of questionnaires have gathered quantitative data. The data got analysed using the method of univariate analysis. This method of analysis has to do with the description of the distributions' characteristics on variables. According to Blaikie (2003), univariate descriptive analysis is a method in which the characteristics of some phenomenon regarding the distributions are summarized on variables. The author stated that univariate descriptive analysis' utilization is the representation of the characteristics that some social phenomenon has (Blaikie, 2003). Blaikie (2003) identified four ways to achieve that and are the following:

- by counting the frequency with which some characteristic occurs
- by grouping scores of a certain range into categories and presenting these frequencies in pictorial or graphical form
- by graphing and/or calculating the spread of frequencies around this centre point

The author associated the description of characteristics and the establishment of relationships as the answers to "what" question. For a researcher, in order to take a step forward and answer the "why" question, an explanatory analysis which coming along with the notion of causation need to be done. The author expressed the view that "explanations are supposed to tell us why certain things occur together or follow one another in time" (Blaikie, 2003).

The data gathered through the method of questionnaires. The questionnaires were posted in Facebook groups that are consisted of Erasmus students who visited Greece for educational reasons. The questionnaire conducted through the Google Drive platform and the data gathered translated into an Excel file. Questions 1-15 and 25, excluding question number 9, have their own diagrams regarding the answers that the participants gave. Questions 16-26, excluding question number 25, their answers have been interpreted though cross tabulation tables in accordance with question number 9.

Data analysis of the interviews

For the analysis of the collected data through the method of the interview, the initial and crucial step for the researcher is to code them. According to Bryman (2016), coding is defined as a process "whereby data are broken down into component parts, which are given names". The coding process includes the review of transcripts and/or field notes proceeding to the naming of parts that might be important for the investigated subject. According to Flick (2013) coding is a categorizing strategy that has been used the most in qualitative data analysis. The process following is the naming and the creation of categories of all data segmentation. Lune and Berg (2017) stated that content analysis is a process which can be considered successful by using coding frames. The utilization of coding frames is the organization of the collected data and the identification of findings when the open coding process is finished. As open coding, Bryman (2016) referred to a process in which the researcher is breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data. It is about a process of coding in which, according to Bryman (2016), yields concepts, which in turn are getting grouped and turning into categories. When it comes to a hypothesis test through qualitative data analysis, Lune and Berg (2017) stated that if a hypothesis is valid it is also falsifiable, or -as the author called it- "nullifiable." The collected data are through personal interviews and have been analysed through the open coding method. After the interviews were recorded, were also recorded in writing so they were easier to edit and analyse. After the careful reading of the interviews, commonalities got revealed between the respondents' answers. Through the examination of those commonalities, the four issues analysed in the research have been emerged.

Participants	University	Date of the interview	Duration of the interview
P1	National Technical University of Athens	24.08.2020	10.51'
P2	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	25.08.2020	Answered by email
P3	Harokopio University	27.08.2020	Answered by email

3.7 Ethics

As Cooper and Schindler stated (2001), ethics are norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others and always have as goal in research to ensure that no one is harmed or suffers adverse consequences from research activities. According to Burns and Bush (2005), ethics may be defined as a field of inquiry into determining what behaviours are deemed appropriate under certain circumstances as prescribed codes of behaviour that are set by society. The authors also linked ethical behaviour with each individual's personal philosophy. More specifically, with deontology which has to do with the rights of the individual and teleology, which has to do with the analysis of a given behaviour regarding its benefits and costs to society.

Burns and Bush (2005) identified the importance confidentiality and anonymity could have for a potential respondent in order to participate in a research. More specifically, the authors strongly believe that through the promise of confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher can gain a potential respondent's trust. As confidentiality, Burns and Bush (2005) referred to an agreed condition where only the researcher knows the identity of the respondent but has no permission on identify the respondent with any information gathered by the research. By the anonymity, the authors are referring to a condition where the research isn't interested about who the respondent, but the focus is on the information that can be gathered from him while he is and will remain anonymous or unknown.

The protection of the respondents as well as the validity of the research is arising through the guarantee of the privacy of the respondents. Cooper and Schindler (2001) referred to some practises that the researcher could use to protect confidentiality of the respondents. Firstly, the researcher could gather signed, nondisclosure documents. Additionally, it is important to make sure no-one will have access to the respondent identification. One more way to ensure the respondent about its privacy, is to let him know that the reveal of its information will be only with a written consent. Lastly, it would be important the concealing of data subsets.

According to Cooper and Schindler (2001), another important issue in every research regarding the cooperation between the researcher and the respondent is that of the informed consent. More specifically, the authors stated, “securing informed consent from respondents is a matter of fully disclosing the procedures of the proposed survey or other research design before requesting permission to proceed with the study” (Cooper and Schindler, 2001). The authors identified two significant cases where a consent form with details about the types of limits will be necessary, the one where the data could harm the respondent and the one where the researcher would not offer full protection of confidentiality.

This research assured all the participants, both from questionnaires and interviews that no identity will be exposed. Firstly, questionnaires were anonymous and were set so that each participant could fill only one time the questionnaire. Furthermore, in the description of the questionnaire, it was declared that its use is for academic purposes only. Regarding the interviews, each interviewee had to fill and sign a consent form in which confidentiality and anonymity were promised by not sharing the names of the participants.

4. Findings

4.1 Analysis of data

Questionnaires

The first part of the research is conducted through the distribution of questionnaires to Erasmus student networks on Facebook groups. All the individuals who participated in this survey are students, and more specifically the sample regarding this part of the research is consisted of 18 Erasmus students who have visited Greece for educational purposes.

The part of the research followed the method of questionnaires. The sample is consisted of 20 Erasmus students who visited Greece for educational purposes. Fifteen of the students were undergraduate and five were postgraduate. Seventeen of the students of the sample belong to the age group of 18-24 and three to the age group of 25-34. Out of the total 20 Erasmus students of the sample, eleven were male and 9 were female. The majority of the students declared as academic field humanities, law and social sciences, and Athens as the city who got visited the most. The semester courses were the educational purpose of visit that most of the students preferred and as period of residence, the 3-6 months is the choice that got selected the most. Ten out of the total twenty students selected other as type of accommodation. Regarding the questions when students needed to rate, eleven rated their experience in Greece as very good, twelve said that Greece was very attractive to them in order to choose it as educational destination and thirteen stated that the cost of living was nor high neither low. As top three reasons that the participants of the survey got attracted from Greece and made them chose it as educational destination are the climate, the friendly people, and the economic reasons. Nineteen out of the twenty students of the sample declared that their image towards Greece changed after their visit for educational purposes. Finally, eleven out of the total twenty students of the sample said that they have never been to Greece before their trip for educational purposes.

Hypothesis 1

-Educational tourism in Greece can be a considerable market for Greek tourism

Hypothesis 1 is related with questions 16, 17,18,19 and 20. Through the responses of those questions, we come to the following conclusions and are accompanied by the corresponding correlation tables.

Table 4.i represents the period of residence of the students and their attitude towards a visit to Greece in the near future after their stay for educational purposes.

Period of residence Would you consider visiting again Greece in the near future?	No	Yes	Total
1-3 months	1	1	2
3-6 months	0	11	11
9-12 months	0	7	7
Total	1	19	20

According to the table 4.i, 2 Erasmus students resided for 1-3 months and one of them would visit Greece again and one not. All of the students who stayed 3-6 months and 9-12 months, were all positive to the question if they would visit again Greece in the near future. From these answers, it is concluded that most of the students of this sample would return as repeaters. It is evident that the only negative answer towards a future visit to Greece derives from a student who resided the shortest period.

Table 4.ii represents the period of residence of the students along with the visit of friend or family during their stay to Greece for educational purposes.

Period of residence During your stay, did you had any friends or family visit?	No	Yes	Total
1-3 months	1	1	2
3-6 months	7	4	11
9-12 months	1	6	7
Total	9	11	20

According to the table 4.ii, 10 of the students got visited from friends or family and 8 of the students not. It is evident that most of the students that got visited were stayed for 3-6 months and 9-12 months having four Yes out of the 3-6 months group and five Yes out of the 9-12 months group. Regarding the period of residence of the students, most of the visits are from the group of 9-12 months of residence.

Table 4.iii represents the period of residence of the students along with the duration of the visit of friends and family. In this table, question 17 got also into account as it analyses the students who answered Yes, they had visit from friends or family.

Period of residence Clarify the duration of their visit	1-3 days	3-6 days	6+	Total
1-3 months	0	1	0	1
3-6 months	1	2	1	4
9-12 months	2	3	1	6
Total	3	6	2	11

According to the table 4iii, the one student that stayed 1-3 months responded positively about getting visited by friends or family and clarified that their visit lasted between 2-6 days. In the groups of 3-6 months and 9-12 months stay, the duration of stay by friends and family are more than 1-3 days, and more specifically 2 of the students that stayed for 3-6 months stated that the duration was 3-6 says and one stated more than six days and three out of five students that stayed 9-12 months stated that the duration of visit was 3-6 days. Over half of the students who declared that they got visited by friends or family belong to the 9-12 months of residence.

Table 4.iv represents the period of residence of the students along with the time during their stay that friends and family visited the students. In this table, question 17 got also into account as it analyses the students who answered Yes, they had visit from friends or family. As a total number of the answers is 9 and not 10 because this question was not obliged, and one student chose not to answer.

Period of residence Clarify when did they visit you	December - February	June - August	March - May	September - November	Total
1-3 months	0	1	0	0	1
3-6 months	0	2	1	0	3
9-12 months	2	0	2	1	5
Total	2	3	3	1	9

According to the table 4.iv, 2 of the students replied that they got visited on the winter season, 3 of the students during the summer months, also 3 of the students got visited on spring and one of the students during the autumn months. As a total, 6 out of 9 students got visited out of summer season. Regarding the period of residence of the students, those who declared they stayed 9-12 months, they got the chance to get visited within the year and not during the summer months.

Table 4.v represents the period of residence of the students along with the times that got visited by friends or family. In this table, question 17 got also into account as it analyses the students who answered Yes, they had visit from friends or family.

Period of residence How many times did your friends and/or family visit you while your stay in Greece?	1-3	2-3	3+	Total
1-3 months	1	0	0	1
3-6 months	3	1	0	4
9-12 months	3	0	2	5
Total	7	1	2	10

According to table 4.v, the majority of the students got visited 1-3 times during their stay in Greece for educational purposes. One of the students who stayed for 3-6 months stated that got visited 2-3 times and two of the students who stayed 9-12 months declared that got visited more than three times during their stay. The group of 9-12 months residence have gathered half of the students who got visited by friends or family during their stay.

Hypothesis 2

-Educational tourism can be beneficial for Greece through the VFR tourism and the potential repeaters

Table 4.vi represents the period of residence of the students along with question 21 and if the students if they undertook more activities while the visits of friends and family. In this table, question 17 got also into account as it analyses the students who answered Yes, they had visit from friends or family.

Period of residence Did you undertake more activities when friends and/or family came and visit?	No	Yes	Total
1-3 months	0	1	1
3-6 months	1	3	4
9-12 months	1	4	5
Total	2	8	10

According to table 4.vi 8 out of 10 students replied that they undertook more activities when friends and/or family visited them. Particularly, one of the students is from the group that stayed 1-3 months, three from the 3-6 months residency, and the rest four of the group of staying 9-12 months.

Table 4.vii represents the period of residence of the students along with question 22 and if the students spent more money when friends and family came and visit them. In this table, question 17 got also into account as it analyses the students who answered Yes, they had visit from friends or family.

Period of residence Did you spend more money when friends and family came and visit?	No	Yes	Total
1-3 months	1	0	1
3-6 months	1	3	4
9-12 months	1	4	5
Total	3	7	10

According to table 4.vii, seven out of ten students seem to have spent more money on the visits of their friends or family. More precisely, three of the students belong to the group who stayed 3-6 months and the rest four of the students to group of 9-12 months residency. Four out of total seven students who declared they spent more money while they got visited by friends or family belong to the group of 9-12 months of residence.

Table 4.viii represents the period of residence of the students along with question 23 and if the students arranged trips or excursions to places nearby their houses when they got visited by friends and family. In this table, question 17 got also into account as it analyses the students who answered Yes, they had visit from friends or family.

Period of residence Have you arranged trips or excursions to places nearby your house when friends and family came and visit?	Yes	Total
1-3 months	1	1
3-6 months	4	4
9-12 months	5	5
Total	10	10

According to table 4.iii, all the students of the sample replied positively to the question if they arranged trips or excursions nearby their houses when they got visited by friends and family.

Table 4.ix represents the period of residence of the students along with question 24 and if the students would consider visiting again Greece in the near future with their friends and/or family. In this table, question 17 got also into account as it analyses the students who answered Yes, they had visit from friends or family.

Period of residence Would you consider visiting again Greece in the near future with your friends and/or family?	No	Yes	Total
1-3 months	0	1	1
3-6 months	1	3	4
9-12 months	1	4	5
Total	2	8	10

According to table 4.ix, eight of the total number of the students declared that they would consider visiting again Greece in the near future with your friends and/or family. The rest two of the students were negative about a future visit to Greece in the near future with their friends and/or family. Half of the students who declared that they would visit again Greece in the near future with friends and/or family belong to the group of 9-12 months of residence.

Table 4.x represents the period of residence of the students along with the students' perspectives on the importance of their educational experience abroad for educational purposes.

Period of residence How important is to you that you studied abroad?	Important	Nor Important neither unimportant	Very important	Total
1-3 months	1	0	1	2
3-6 months	4	1	5	10
9-12 months	2	0	6	8
Total	7	1	12	20

According to table 4.x, seven out of total eighteen students of the sample declared that it is important to them that they studied abroad, one of the students said that it is neutral and ten out of the eighteen students said that it is very important. Half of the students who declared their experience of studying abroad as very important belong to the group of 9-12 months of residence.

Interviews

The gathered data from the personal interviews have been analysed through the coding method (Bryman, 2016; Flick, 2013; Lune and Berg, 2017). Their analysis ends with the following issues:

- The increase of incoming Erasmus students to Greece for educational purposes
- The majority of the incoming students derive from collaborations between Greek and foreign Universities
- Educational tourists decide to residence to a foreign country during COVID-19 pandemic
- Flexible nature of this type of tourism and the provision of its services

The raise of incoming Erasmus students to Greece for educational purposes

Participant P1 was positive when got asked if the number of the incoming Erasmus students have been increased in the year 2019-2020 compared to other years.

Participant P1 declared:

“Yes, we had an increase in the number of individuals entering the Erasmus+ program, run by the European Educational Programmes Office of the National Technical University of Athens, which is under the direction of studies.”

Participant P2 has noticed a small increase in the number of the incoming Erasmus students for the academic year 2019-2020.

Participant P2 stated:

"The number of incoming students for the academic year 2019-2020 was slightly higher compared to previous years."

The majority of the incoming students derive from collaborations between Greek and foreign Universities

Participant P1 has observed that most of the incoming students are from associate Universities.

Participant P1 mentioned:

"Yes. The overwhelming, the overwhelming majority".

Participant P2 stated that the incoming students derive strictly from associate Universities.

Participant P2 stated:

"All incoming students are from associate Universities, as the mobility requires a transfer, Bilateral or Inter University agreement".

Participant P3 was strongly positive when got asked if most of the incoming students derive from associate Universities.

Participant P3 replied:

"Yes".

Educational tourists decide to residence to a foreign country during COVID-19 pandemic

Participant P1 declared that some of the students decided to stay in Greece in order to complete their courses.

Participant P1 said:

"Yes. At first when the lockdown took place, there were some students from the winter semester who had not completed their studies and remained in order to complete them. We had the arrivals from, for the spring semester where we had started the registrations, the students had found courses etc, and there were some who stayed because it was for the annual program. That is, the students would leave in September".

Participant P2 stated that most of the incoming students resided in Greece during the period of lockdown.

Participant P2 mentioned:

“Most of the students remained in Thessaloniki”.

Participant P3 noticed that half of the incoming students chose to stay in Greece despite the lockdown.

Participant P3 declared:

"From our incoming students, 50% remained in Greece while the rest returned to their country".

Flexible nature of this type of tourism and the provision of its services

Participant P1 declared that all the students completed their program either by their stay in Greece or through teleducation programs while they returned to their home countries.

Participant P1 said:

"Um, we did not have anyone who interrupt its studies. The return of some students and the continuation of their studies by teleworking and then coming back to Greece to give exams to some courses, yes. Interruption of studies, we did not have. Except for two female students, if I remember correctly, who, um, do not even start their mobility. In the spring semester".

Participant P2 had many of the students attending a mobility program returned to their home countries and asked for a remotely way of having the course.

Participant P2 stated:

"Most students remained in Thessaloniki. Some students returned to the home countries and cancelled their mobility program, however there was a large percentage who returned to its home country but completed their mobility program remotely (online)".

Participant P3 stated zero cancelations and 100% completion of the mobility programs of the students' either by staying or remotely.

Participant P3 declared:

"From our incoming students, 50% remained in Greece while the rest returned to their country. But they all attended their classes electronically or did their internship via telework and completed their mobility program".

4.2 Summarize of findings

From the questionnaires, the findings arising are that most of the students would visit again Greece in the near future alone and with friends or relatives. More than half of the sample's students declared that they got visited by friends or relatives while staying in Greece for educational purposes. The majority of the students who got visited, stated that their guests

stayed for 3-6 days, and the most selected periods of visit are during summer and spring. Seven out of ten of the students that were hosts for their friend or relatives declared that got visited 1-3 time, undertook more activities with their guests, spent more money and arranged trips or excursion during the period of visit. Finally, twelve out of the total twenty students of the sample referred to their educational experience as very important.

By coding the interviews, four categories have emerged and are the following:

In the first category, the increase of incoming Erasmus students to Greece for educational purposes, it emerged that the majority of the participants agreed that they have noticed an increase in the number of incoming Erasmus students who choose to visit Greece for educational purposes.

In the second category, the majority of the incoming students derive from collaborations between Greek and foreign Universities, all of the participants agreed that the vast majority of the incoming Erasmus students to Greece derives from associated Universities.

In the third category, educational tourists decide to residence to a foreign country during COVID-19 pandemic, all of the participants declared that a large number of the incoming Erasmus students decided to stay in Greece during the lockdown period regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the fourth category, flexible nature of this type of tourism and the provision of its services, all of the participants faced the need for teleducation and not only the students who decided to go back to their home countries. Furthermore, the participants noticed an arising need from the Universities and the students for the option of teleducation also for the year 2020-2021.

All four categories are associated with hypothesis 3, Educational tourism is more resilient than other types of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is not rejected as educational tourists enjoyed the services they booked either by staying or with the alternative of remotely.

5. Discussion

5.1 Connection with the literature

VFR tourism and its economic contribution

One of the findings arising from the questionnaires is that the on a majority, students who got visited by friends and family spent more money during that time period. Compared to previous researches, Lehto, Morrison, and O'Leary (2001) referred to the visiting friends and relatives type of tourism as underestimated, while it is a type of tourism which contributes significantly to the local economy of the visited destination. As Backer (2007) noticed that this type of tourism support in an economic way in general the community they visited, and they do not focus only on the touristic side of it. Furthermore, on his research about VFR tourism and its relationship with sustainable tourism development, stated that the spending pattern of a VFR traveller is similar to traveller for pleasure and entertainment.

In the present research, the findings are not in absolute agreement with the findings of the researches mentioned above, as only the majority of the students declared that they did spend more money while they had friends or family visit.

VFR tourism - the host's behaviour

The findings of the present study showed that when a student is getting visited by friends or relatives and becomes a host, its economic behaviour changes. The majority of the students claimed that when they became hosts for their friends or relatives they undertook more activities, and all of the students who got visited arranged trips or excursions with their friends or relatives. In relation to previous researches, Backer (2007) supported the view that when an individual is getting visited and so is becoming a host, is proceeding into have activities that normally would not choose. Also, Yousuf and Backer (2017) came to the conclusion that a host's role is focusing on his guests' entertainment.

In this research, the findings agree with those of the previous researches as the students when they had the role of the host while the visit of friends or relatives, as a majority undertook more activities and all of the students arranged trips or excursions nearby their house.

VFR tourism and seasonality

The findings of the research through the questionnaires for this study showed that friends and relatives who visited the students who came to Greece for educational purposes, did not come solely in the summer months. More specifically, most of the visited periods of the year were in spring and in summer, and third in preference is the winter months. In an earlier of Griffin (2013), VFR type of tourism is a type of tourism which is not strongly related with seasonality. Lehto, Morrison, and O'Leary, (2001) observed that this type of tourism has a more equally distribution of travels yearly. Seaton and Palmer (1997) also supported the more equally distribution and added that despite that, its peak is in summer months.

The findings of the present research are in absolute agreement with the previous researches as most of the students declared that they got visited within the summer and spring months, followed by the visits that winter months gathered.

Students reside in host countries during COVID-19 pandemic

The findings of this research indicate that many of the Erasmus students who have already visit Greece for educational purposes stayed in Greece when the quarantine was imposed as a measure for the decrease of the spread of COVID-19. In regard with other researches that have been made on this subject, Bilecen (2020) noticed that many international students haven't the chance to go back to their home immediately or not at all as a result of the borders who started to getting closed and the suspension of international flights. In the research about this issue, Brammer and Clark (2020) and Crawford et al. (2020) also referred to international students who faced difficulties while staying in their study country and not their home or home country.

In the present study, the findings agree with those of previous studies as in previous studies it has been noted that international students stayed at their countries of study, which is the same situation that has been described by the participants of the interviews.

Students and teleducation

The findings of this research suggested that all of the Erasmus students who were already in Greece for educational tourism, both those who stayed and those who went back to their home countries, had the need for teleducation. Regarding some other studies, Nicolau et al., 2020 referred to the arising need for teleducation after the closing of the universities and also the speed of adaptation to new data. Al Lily, 2020), Tzifopoulos (2020) and Bao (2020)

referred to teleducation as a measurement for the reduction of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and also as the new reality for university students.

The findings of this research are in absolute agreement with those of the previous researches as the Erasmus students who either stayed in Greece during quarantine or went back to their home countries and continued from distance their studies, used teleducation.

5.2 Connection with the research questions

Regarding Hypothesis 1, Educational tourism in Greece can be a considerable market for Greek tourism, the related questions are number 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20. To all those questions have been created tables of contingency with question number nine which is about the period of residence of the students. The conclusions arising through those questions are that most of the students would come back to Greece, so they can be considered as potential repeaters. Furthermore, more than the half of the students' sample have been visited by friends or family. Most of the students got visited for more than six days by friends or family. The periods within the year that gathered most of the visits of the students are March-May and June-August. Most of the students who got visited was in a range of 1-3 times by friends or family. Summing up all of the above, the hypothesis 1, Educational tourism in Greece can be a considerable market for Greek tourism, is not rejected.

Regarding Hypothesis 2, Educational tourism can be beneficial for Greece through the VFR tourism and the potential repeaters, the related questions are number 21, 22, 23, 24 and 26. To all those questions have been created tables of contingency with question number nine which is about the period of residence of the students. The conclusions arising through those questions are that the majority of the students had more activities while they got visited by friends or family and also, they spent more money during the period of visit. All of the students declared that when friends and family came and visit, they arranged trips or excursions to places nearby their houses. Most of the students would come back and visit Greece with their friends and family. Finally, most of the students considered their experience of studying abroad as very important. Summing up all of the above, the hypothesis 2, Educational tourism can be beneficial for Greece through the VFR tourism and the potential repeaters, is not rejected.

The hypothesis associated with the interviews is the following:

Educational tourism is more resilient than other types of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic

The third hypothesis got answered through the third and fourth categories arising from the interviews which are “ “educational tourists decide to residence to a foreign country during COVID-19 pandemic” and “flexible nature of this type of tourism and the provision of its services”.

All participants who took place in the investigation through interviews were fully informed about how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the reception of incoming Erasmus students as they all are members of the Erasmus administration offices of Universities. The participants supported the view that during the COVID-19 pandemic, all foreign Erasmus students who participated in educational programs, both those who stayed and those who returned to their home countries, have completed their courses through the use of teleducation. As Zheng (2020) suggested during the pandemic and the post-pandemic period, educational methods who do not require physical appearance. Also stated that countries who got affected by the virus, such as China, offered their courses online in order to adapt to the current challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought.

6. Conclusion

The aim of the present research is the investigation of Greece's benefits through educational tourism from Erasmus students as well as the potential extra tourists it can provide through the VFR and the potential repeaters and its likely contribution to the recovery of the tourism field after the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of this research is to investigate the demand of this type of tourism and its resilience towards the COVID-19 period. The research is focused on semester courses, internship and master's degree as it came across as the common points of the participants which were undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD students as well as the restriction of one year maximum residence in a place in order to be considered a tourist.

This research had three hypotheses which are the following:

- Educational tourism in Greece can be a considerable market for Greek tourism
- Educational tourism can be beneficial for Greece through the VFR tourism and the potential repeaters
- Educational tourism is more resilient than other types of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And four research questions which are the following:

- Do educational tourists produce VFR and are there any potential repeaters
- Is educational tourism a motive for tourists to visit Greece
- Do the educational tourists and the VFR contribute to tourism during the whole year
- Can educational tourism contribute to a significantly faster recovery of the tourism industry after the COVID-19 pandemic?

This survey is based on fundamental type of research and follows as philosophical perspective the interpretivism. The methodological approach chosen for this research is quantitative and qualitative research and the data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Twenty foreign Erasmus students took part in the survey through the questionnaires. The criteria for the selection of the participants were to be undergraduate, postgraduate or PhD students and to have visited for educational purposes the one of the investigated regions which are Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras, Ioannina and Crete. The collected data were analyzed through diagrams and tables of contingency. Three members of the Erasmus administration offices of Universities in Athens and Thessaloniki were interviewed. As criterion of the selection of the interviewees was the job position as they are directly aware about the

difficulties the Erasmus students had to deal with during the pandemic as well as the current situation. The data gathered by the interviews were analyzed through the method of coding. The collected data through the questionnaires conclude to the following:

The hypothesis 1, Educational tourism in Greece can be a considerable market for Greek tourism, and the hypothesis 2, Educational tourism can be beneficial for Greece through the VFR tourism and the potential repeaters are both not rejected. The Erasmus students who visited Greece for educational purposes, as a majority, declared it was the first time that they visited Greece, and thus educational tourism was their motive. Most of the students declared that they would visit Greece again alone and with friend or relatives. More than half of the students got visited by friends and family during their stay, they undertook more activities in the period of visit, spent more money and arranged trips or excursions with their guests. Most of the friends or relatives who visited the students stayed for 3-6 days, chose to go and visit not only the summer months, but also during the winter, and most of them declared that their visits range between one and three times. The hypothesis 1 and the hypothesis 2 are related with Research Question 1, Do educational tourists produce VFR and are there any potential repeaters, Research Question 2, Is educational tourism a motive for tourists to visit Greece, and Research Question 3, Do the educational tourists and the VFR contribute to tourism during the whole year, and according to the findings they are reply positively to all of them.

The hypothesis 3, Educational tourism is more resilient than other types of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic, is not rejected. All of the participants of the interviews declared that a large percentage of students who were already in Greece for educational purposes decided to resident during the lockdown and to complete their student obligations. The hypothesis 3 is related with research question 3, Can educational tourism contribute to a significantly faster recovery of the tourism industry after the COVID-19 pandemic, and in regard on the findings its reply is positive as many of the educational students never returned to their home countries.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

1.Are you a student?

Yes

No

2.Type of student

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

PhD

3.Age

18-24

25-34

34+

4.Gender

Male

Female

Other

5.Academic field

Humanities, law and social sciences

Science and technology

Health and life sciences

Health and computer science

6.Choose the visited city/village of Greece

Athens

Thessaloniki

Patras

Ioannina

Crete

7.Name the University/Enterprise hosted you

Open-ended question

8.Choose the educational reason for which you chose Greece

Semester courses

Internship

Master's degree

9.Period of residence

1-3 months

3-6 months

6-9 months

9-12 months

10.Choose the type of accommodation you chose for your stay

Student dorm

Hotel

Hostel

Air BnB

Other

11.How would you rate your experience

Very good

Good

Nor good neither bad

Bad

Very bad

12.Name three of the reasons that made you choose Greece over other educational destinations
(maximum 3)

Climate

Friendly people

Economic reasons

Political reasons

Been there before

Suggestion from friend or family that been there before for educational reasons

Good reputation of the Universities

Good reputation of the workforce environment

13.How attractive was Greece to you to come and live/study here?

Very attractive

Attractive

Nor attractive neither unattractive

Unattractive

Very unattractive

14.Cost of living

High

Nor high neither low

Low

15.Have you ever been to Greece for other than educational purposes?

Yes

No

16.Would you consider visiting again Greece in the near future?

Yes

No

17. During your stay, did you have any friends or family visit?

Yes

No

18. Clarify the duration of their visit.

1-3 days

3-6 days

6+ days

19. Clarify when did they visit you

December – February

March – May

June - August

September - November

20. How many **times** did your friends and/or family visit while your stay in Greece?

1-2

2-3

3+

21. Did you undertake more activities when friends and/or family came and visit?

No

Yes

22. Did you spend more money when friends and family came and visit?

No

Yes

23. Have you arranged trips or excursions to places nearby your house when friends and family came and visit?

No

Yes

24. Would you consider visiting again Greece in the near future with your friends and/or family?

No

Yes

25. Did the image of Greece change after your stay?

No

Yes

26. How important is to you that you studied abroad?

Very important

Important

Nor important neither unimportant

Unimportant

Very unimportant

APPENDIX B

Interviews

1. In contrast with other years, would you say you were expecting more students on 2019-2020?
2. Do you cooperate with some Universities abroad? If yes, with which ones?
3. The majority of the hosted students are from those Universities?
4. During the COVID-19 pandemic, was a time period where some students were already here? Did they return to their homes before completion of the agreed period of residence? Did you have any cancelations? Mostly for those who attended courses or internships?
5. Did you notice any recovery signs? Did the students search for alternatives? (e.g. teleducation)

APPENDIX C

Bilingual interviews

PARTICIPANT 1

Participant 1/ P1

Myself/ M

M/Σας πήρα για τη συνέντευξη.

I called you for the interview.

P1/ Ωραία. Το μέιλ που σου έστειλα το είδες;

Nice. Did you see the mail I sent you?

M/Ναι ναι έχω πάρει τη φόρμα συγκατάθεσης ευχαριστώ πολύ.

Yes I've received the consent for, thank you very much.

P1/ Ωραία, φόρμα που είναι σου κάνει ή δε σου κάνει; Όπως την έχω στείλει γιατί δεν έχει υπογραφή.

Nice, the form it is it's okay or not? As I sent it because it does not carry any signature.

M/Το ξέρω το ξέρω είναι λίγο δύσκολο τώρα με τα σκάνερ και όλα αυτά με ενδιαφέρει που έχετε βάλει τον τίτλο. Μου είναι ok.

I know I know it is a bit difficult now with the scanners and all this I am interested in you have put the title. I'm ok.

P1/ Ωραία, πρόσεξε τώρα να δεις τι γίνεται. Εγώ 31 Αυγούστου θα είμαι στο γραφείο.

Good, look what happens no. I'll be in the office on August 31st.

M/ Τέλεια. Μου κάνει, ναι.

Perfect. It works for me, yes.

P1/ Οπότε, στις 31 να την εκτυπώσω, να την υπογράψω, να τη σκανάρω, να στη στείλω. Και ενδεχομένως, δεν ξέρω αν 31 προλαβαίνεις να την έχεις στα χέρια σου αν σου ζητηθεί, δεν ξέρω.

So, on the 31st I can print it, sign it, scan it, send it to you. And possibly, I do not know if you manage to have it in your hands if you are asked, I do not know.

M/ Ναι, ναι, ναι, μου κάνει, μου κάνει γιατί ούτως ή άλλως αυτά τα αρχεία τα κρατάω για δική μου χρήση και να ξέρω ότι μεταξύ μας εμείς είμαστε εντάξει. Οπότε ναι με ενδιαφέρει.

Yes, yes, yes, he does it to me, it works for me because either way these files are for my own use and to know that between us, we are okay. So yes, I'm interested.

P1/ Άρα μια χαρά τότε.

So we're fine.

E/ Ναι, ναι, ναι.

Yes, yes, yes.

P1/ Πολύ ωραία.

Very nice.

M/ Τέλεια. Ωραία. Τέλεια.

Perfect. Nice. Perfect.

P1/ Οκ. Όποτε είσαι έτοιμη.

Okay. Whenever you are ready.

M/ Εγώ είμαι έτοιμη. Να σας ξεκινήσω με τις ερωτήσεις;

I am ready. Should I get started with the questions?

P1/ Ωραία. Βεβαίως να ξεκινήσουμε.

Nice. Sure we shall start.

M/ Ωραία. Θα ήθελα για αρχή να μου πείτε αν συγκριτικά με άλλες χρονιές φέτος είχατε αύξηση φοιτητών, για τη χρονιά δηλαδή 2019-2020. Αύξηση εισερχόμενων.

Nice. To begin with, I would like you to tell me if in contrast with other years, would you say you were expecting more students on 2019-2020? Increase of incoming students.

P1/ Ναι είχαμε αύξηση εισερχόμενων στο πρόγραμμα Erasmus+ που τρέχει το γραφείο Ευρωπαϊκών Εκπαιδευτικών Προγραμμάτων του Πολυτεχνείου, το οποίο υπάγεται στη διεύθυνση σπουδών.

Yes, we had an increase in the number of individuals entering the Erasmus+ program, run by the European Educational Programmes Office of the National Technical University of Athens, which is under the direction of studies.

M/ Ωραία, ωραία. Είναι σχετικά μεγάλη αυτή η διαφορά δηλαδή; Θα τη λέγαμε σημαντική ή είναι;

Nice, nice. Is this difference relatively large, that is? Would we call it important or is it?

Σκ/ Κοίταξε, υπάρχει μία τάση τα τελευταία 3-4 χρόνια, ε ανοδικής ζήτησης από φοιτητές του εξωτερικού να έρθουνε στις σχολές του Πολυτεχνείου.

Look, there is a tendency in the last 3-4 years, with an increasing demand from foreign students to come to the National Technical University of Athens' schools.

M/ Ωραία.

Nice.

P1/ Στο πλαίσιο αυτής της αύξησης δηλαδή ήταν, συμπεριλαμβανόταν και το 19-20 και είναι, όλο και αυξάνεται.

In the context of this increase, that is, it was, 19-20 is included and it is, it is increasing.

M/ Κατάλαβα. Ωραία. Εμ, υπάρχουν, έχετε κάποιες συνεργασίες με ξένα Πανεπιστήμια; Είναι συγκεκριμένα;

I get it. Nice. Um, are there any collaborations with foreign Universities. Are they particular?

P1/ Έχουμε συνεργασίες με ξένα Πανεπιστήμια σε όλη την Ευρώπη. Και εκτός Ευρώπης με τη διεύθυνση του προγράμματος Erasmus+ και στο, και στις υπόλοιπες χώρες, εκτός ευρωπαϊκής ένωσης και ευρωπαϊκού εδάφους γενικότερα. Είναι με όλα τα μεγάλα Πολυτεχνεία, αλλά και με άλλες σχολές και άλλα Πανεπιστήμια που έχουν παρεμφερείς σπουδές με το Πολυτεχνείο σε όλη την Ευρώπη.

We have collaborations with foreign Universities throughout Europe. And outside Europe under the direction of the Erasmus + program in, and in other countries, outside the European Union and European territory in general. It is with all the major Polytechnics, but also with other faculties and other Universities that have similar studies with the Polytechnic throughout Europe.

M/ Ωραία.

Nice.

P1/ Δηλαδή, είναι πολλά. Πρέπει να είναι κοντά στις ενδεχομένως, δε θυμάμαι τον ακριβή αριθμό, αλλά άμα πούμε κοντά στις 300 συνεργασίες, ε είμαστε μέσα. Σχετικά κοντά.

That is, there are many. It must be close to the possible, I do not remember the exact number, but if we say close to 300 collaborations, we are in. Relatively close.

M/ Α, κατάλαβα. Εμ, θα μπορούσαμε να πούμε ότι το μεγαλύτερο μέρος των φοιτητών που δέχεστε είναι από τα συνεργαζόμενα Πανεπιστήμια;

Oh I get it. Em, could we say that most of the students you admit are from partner Universities?

P1/ Ναι. Το συντριπτικό, το συντριπτικά μεγαλύτερο μέρος.

Yes. The overwhelming, the overwhelming majority

M/ Ωραία. Αλλά παρ' όλα αυτά εσείς βλέπετε και από Πανεπιστήμια εκτός, ίσως και Πανεπιστήμια εκτός Ευρώπης;

Nice. But still you see from Universities outside, maybe Universities outside Europe?

P1/ Από Πανεπιστήμια εκτός Ευρώπης στο πλαίσιο της διεθνούς. Εκεί ακόμη ενώ έχουμε συνεργασίες με διάφορα, με διάφορες χώρες, εμ, και σε άλλες ηπείρους, δεν είναι, εμ, πως θα μπορούσα να το πω σωστά, εεε, ακόμη πολύ ενεργοί οι φοιτητές. Αλλά εκεί υπάρχουν άλλα θέματα που δεν έχει γίνει αυτό. Πιο πολύ, δηλαδή μετακινούνται σε αυτά μέλη ΔΕΠ, εκεί έχουμε πολλές συνεργασίες. Οι φοιτητές λίγο λιγότερο. Απ' ότι με την κλασική κινητικότητα που αφορά στο, στην Ευρωπαϊκή ήπειρο ως το πούμε έτσι.

From Universities outside Europe in the context of the international. Even there while we have collaborations with various, with different countries, em, and on other continents, it is not, em, that I could say it correctly, er, the students aren't very active. But there are other issues getting in the way. Most of all, that is, faculty members move to them, we have many collaborations there. Students a little less. From the classic mobility that concerns, on the European continent, so to speak.

M/ Ναι, ναι, ναι. Εμ, τώρα θέλω να σας ρωτήσω λίγο για τον κοροναϊό. Ε, τώρα κατά τη διάρκεια του κοροναϊού είχατε ήδη υποδεχθεί φοιτητές; Δηλαδή όταν έγινε το lockdown, είχατε φοιτητές εδώ;

Yes, yes, yes/ Um, now I want to ask you a bit about COVID-19. Em, now during the coronavirus you have already received students? That is, when the lockdown took place, you had students here?

P1/ Ναι. Καταρχάς όταν έγινε το lockdown, υπήρχαν κάποιοι φοιτητές από το χειμερινό εξάμηνο οι οποίοι δεν είχαν ολοκληρώσει τις σπουδές τους και παρέμειναν να τις ολοκληρώσουν. Είχαμε τις αφίξεις από το, για το εαρινό εξάμηνο όπου είχαμε ξεκινήσει εγγραφές, τα παιδιά είχανε βρει μαθήματα κλπ, και ήταν και κάποιοι που παρέμειναν διότι ήταν για ετήσιο. Δηλαδή θα φεύγανε Σεπτέμβρη τα παιδιά.

Yes. At first when the lockdown took place, there were some students from the winter semester who had not completed their studies and remained in order to complete them. We had the arrivals from, for the spring semester where we had started the registrations, the students had found courses etc, and there were some who stayed because it was for the annual program. That is, the students would leave in September.

M/ Ναι. Ε, είχατε επιστροφές; Δηλαδή σταμάτησαν το πρόγραμμα και φύγανε; Γύρισαν στις χώρες τους;

Yes. Ε, did you have returns? That is, they stopped the program and left? Did they return to their countries?

P1/ Εεε, δεν είχαμε κανέναν που διέκοψε σπουδές. Επιστροφές και συνέχιση των σπουδών τους με τηλεργασία και μετά ξανά επιστροφή Ελλάδα για να δώσουνε κάποια μαθήματα, ναι. Διακοπή σπουδών, δε είχαμε. Εκτός από δύο φοιτήτριες, αν θυμάμαι καλά, οι οποίες, εμ, να μην ξεκινήσουν καν το, την μετακίνησή τους. Στο εαρινό εξάμηνο.

Um, we did not have anyone who interrupt its studies. The return of some students and the continuation of their studies by teleworking and then coming back to Greece to give exams to some courses, yes. Interruption of studies, we did not have. Except for two female students, if I remember correctly, who, um, do not even start their mobility. In the spring semester.

M/ Το πρόλαβα, ναι, κατάλαβα.

I got it, yes, understood.

P1/ Ναι. Αλλά αυτές ήταν φοιτήτριες της σχολής χημικών μηχανικών οι οποίες ενδεχομένως να είχαν εργαστήρια, πειράματα, οπότε άλλη ιστορία εκεί.

Yes. But these were students of the school of chemical engineering who may have had laboratories, experiments, so another story there.

E/ Κατάλαβα, ναι.

Understood, yes.

P1/ Αλλά διακοπή ολοκληρωτική δεν είχαμε από κανέναν.

But we did not have a complete cessation from anyone.

M/ Διακοπή ολοκληρωτική όχι. Και ακυρώσεις ήτανε μόνο αυτές που είπατε τώρα δηλαδή.

Complete cessation no. And cancellations were only those that you said now.

P1/ Ναι, ναι, ναι. Είχαμε ακόμη να φανταστείς φοιτητή ο οποίος έκανε τη διπλωματική του, εε μέρος της διπλωματικής του για την ακρίβεια, ο οποίος δεν μπόρεσε να ταξιδέψει γιατί τον πρόλαβε ο κοροναϊός, αλλά ξεκίνησε και έκανε και λογικά πρέπει να έχει ολοκληρώσει, θα το δω επιστρέφοντας την διπλωματική του από τον τόπο διαμονής του. Ας πούμε, μου το επιβεβαίωσαν και ο καθηγητής του εδώ και ο καθηγητής του στο Πανεπιστήμιό του.

Yes yes yes. Imagine that we still had a student who did his diploma, ee part of his diploma to be precise, who could not travel because of the coronavirus, but he started and he did and logically he must have finished, I will see when I get back the diploma from his place of residence. Let's say, both his professor here and his professor at his University confirmed it to me.

M/ Κατάλαβα. Εμ, οι φοιτητές, δηλαδή όλοι αυτού κατά κύριο λόγο ήταν για μαθήματα, σωστά; Όχι για πρακτική άσκηση.

Understood. Em, the students, that is, all of them were mainly for classes, right? Not for internship.

P1/ Είχαμε κατά κύριο λόγο για σπουδές. Είχαμε όμως και κάποιους για πρακτική άσκηση. Τώρα, όσοι είχανε ήδη προλάβει να είναι εδώ ή εκείνες τις μέρες θα έρχονταν, ολοκλήρωσαν την πρακτική άσκηση. Για όσους ήταν να είναι μετά την εντολή του Υπουργείου να μη γίνουν άλλες κινητικότητες, νέες κινητικότητες μέχρι 30, μέχρι τη λήξη της, του 2020, απ'το τρέχον πρόγραμμα μιλάμε έτσι, απ'το πρόγραμμα Erasmus+ 2019-2020. Αυτοί τις ακύρωσαν, μάλλον, τις μετέφεραν από 1/1/2021. Κάναν μια προσωρινή παύση ας το πούμε και μετά θα τις ξανά κάνουν, εμ, σε νέο πλαίσιο.

We had mainly for studies. But we also had some for internships. Now, those who had already managed to be here or in those days would come, completed the internship. For those who were after the order of the Ministry not to make other mobilities, new mobilities until 30, until the end of 2020, from the current program we speak like this, from the Erasmus + 2019-2020 program. They canceled them, probably, they transferred them from 1/1/2021. They made a pause, let's say, and then they will do it again, in a new context.

M/ Οπότε υπάρχει άλλη συμπεριφορά δηλαδή από τους φοιτητές των μαθημάτων και άλλη από τους φοιτητές της πρακτικής;

So is there another behavior, that is, from the students of the courses and another from the students of the internship?

P1/ Ναι και είναι διαφορετική, ναι, ναι.

Yes and it is different, yes, yes.

M/ Εμ, και να ρωτήσω, πότε παρατηρήσατε ανάκαμψη των φοιτητών; Δηλαδή, ξανά είδατε ότι επικοινωνούν, θέλουν την τηλεργασία, ψάχνουν τα μαθήματα, νέους τρόπους.

Em, and let me ask, when did you notice student recovery? That is, you saw again that they communicate, they want teleworking, they are looking for lessons, new ways.

P1/ Αυτό ήρθε, εε, σταδιακά ξεκίνησε, εε, μισό λεπτό να σκεφτώ. Πρέπει να ήταν εκεί κοντά στον, από τον Απρίλη και μετά που πρώτα ξεκίνησαν τα Πανεπιστήμια να μας ρωτάνε αν θα δεχτούμε αιτήσεις και αν μπορούμε να τους δώσουμε, εμ, μία, αα, περαιτέρω προθεσμία, πιο μακρινή σε σχέση με τα προηγούμενα χρόνια, λόγω της κατάστασης γιατί δεν υπήρχαν υπάλληλοι στα γραφεία ήταν εκ περιτροπής και δεν μπορούσαν να είναι τυπικοί. Και μετά σιγά σιγά άρχισαν να έρχονται πρώτα nomination, οι επιλογές δηλαδή από τα ξένα Πανεπιστήμια φοιτητών και οι φοιτητές να επικοινωνούν μαζί μας για τις αιτήσεις τους. Δηλαδή, όλο έγινε, εε, κανονικά στις προθεσμίες αλλά δώσανε πολύ μεγαλύτερο χρόνο για την επεξεργασία τους φέτος.

That came, uh, gradually started, uh, half a minute to think. They must have been there near, since April, when the Universities first started asking us if we would accept applications and if we could give them, um, aa, a further deadline, longer than in previous years, due to the current situation because there were no employees in the offices were rotating and could not be formal. And then little by little the nominations started to come first, that is, the choices from the foreign Student Universities and the students to contact us for their applications. That is, everything was done, uh, normally on time, but they gave a lot more time for their processing this year.

M/ Αλλά είδατε ότι πολύ γρήγορα επανήλθαν και αυτοί που δεν μπόρεσαν να έρθουν λόγω lockdown και αυτοί που ενδιαφερόντουσαν αλλά επίσης δεν μπορούσαν να έρθουν. Υπήρχε δηλαδή ζήτηση, δεν είναι ότι πάγωσε.

But you saw that very quickly they came back and those who could not come due to lockdown and those who were interested but also could not come. In other words, there was a demand, not that it froze.

P1/ Ναι, ναι, όχι, όχι, κανονικά. Σαν να μην είχαμε καμία ανωμαλία φέτος. Το μόνο πράγμα που ζητούσαν όλοι και τα International offices αλλά και οι φοιτητές ήταν το εξής, εάν, σε περίπτωση που χρειαστεί, το Πολυτεχνείο θα μπορέσει να υποστηρίξει την τηλεκπαίδευση, εε, και αν θα μπορέσουν εκτάκτως για το 2020-2021 να μεταφέρουν τις ειδικότητές τους όσοι έχουν επιλεγεί από το χειμερινό στο εαρινό, ώστε τυχόν, λόγω ενός lockdown τοπικού σε εμάς ή στις χώρες προέλευσης να μη χάσουν την ευκαιρία αυτή τα παιδιά να κινηθούν.

Yes, yes, no, no, normally. As if we did not have any irregularities this year. The only thing that everyone was asking for, both the International offices and the students, was whether, if necessary, the National Technical University of Athens will be able to support e-learning, eh, and whether they will be able to transfer the specialties for 2020-2021 those who have been selected from winter to spring, so that, perhaps, due to a lockdown local to us or in the countries of origin, children do not miss this opportunity to move.

M/ Κατάλαβα. Άρα δηλαδή μιλάμε για, αυτή τη στιγμή για ένα μικρό κομματάκι τουρισμού το οποίο δεν πάγωσε. Είχε κινητικότητα.

Understood. So we are talking about, at the moment, a small piece of tourism that did not freeze. There was mobility.

P1/ Όχι, όχι καθόλου, ίσα ίσα. Ίσα ίσα συνεχίζει κανονικά.

No, not at all, on the contrary. It just continues normally.

M/ Κανονικά σα να μην έγινε ποτέ. Ωραία.

Normally as if it never happened. Nice.

P1/ Ναι, ναι, ναι. Ακόμη και από χώρες που είχαν πολύ μεγάλο πρόβλημα στην αρχή.

Yes yes yes. Even from countries that faced a huge problem in the beginning.

M/ Ναι, κατάλαβα.

Yes, I see.

P1/ Κανονικά, έχουν, επιλέξαν, κάνανε τις επιλογές των φοιτητών τους, μας στείλανε τα nomination, εε, είμαστε σε επικοινωνία με τους φοιτητές για τις αιτήσεις, τώρα έχουν ολοκληρώσει. Κανονικότητα όλα. Μόνο που γίνανε λίγο πιο μετά σε σχέση με τα προηγούμενα χρόνια και αυτό κυρίως γιατί δεν μπορούσαν στο εξωτερικό να μαζευτούν όλοι οι εμπλεκόμενοι μαζί για να επιλέξουν φοιτητές ή γιατί μετά σε δεύτερο χρόνο οι φοιτητές δεν μπορούσαν να βρουν εγκαίρως τα μέλη ΔΕΠ για να τους υπογράψουν τις αιτήσεις που χρειαζόταν οπότε εκεί εννοείται βέβαια δώσαμε άπλετο χρόνο σε όλους.

Normally, they have, they chose, they made the choices of their students, they sent us the nominations, eh, we are in contact with the students for the applications, now they have completed. Normally, everything. Only a little later than in previous years and this mainly because abroad all the parties involved could not gather together to select students or because after a second year students could not find the faculty members in time to sign the applications needed so we gave of course plenty of time to everyone.

M/ Ναι, ναι, κατάλαβα.

Yes, yes, I see.

P1/ Ναι.

Yes.

M/ Ωραία, εγώ αυτά είχα να σας ρωτήσω.

Nice, that's all I had to ask you.

PARTICIPANT 2

Answered via email

1. Συγκριτικά με άλλες χρονιές, είχατε αύξηση φοιτητών για τη χρονιά 2019-2020;

In contrast with other years, would you say you were expecting more students on 2019-2020?

Ο αριθμός των εισερχόμενων φοιτητών για το ακ. Έτος 2019-2020 ήταν ελαφρώς πιο αυξημένος σε σύγκριση με τα προηγούμενα έτη, ωστόσο έγιναν κάποιες ακυρώσεις από φοιτητές του εαρινού εξαμήνου κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας.

The number of incoming students for ac. year 2019-2020 was slightly higher compared to previous years, however some cancellations were made by spring semester students during the pandemic.

2. Υπάρχουν συνεργασίες με ξένα Πανεπιστήμια, και αν ναι με ποια;

Do you cooperate with some Universities abroad? If yes, with which ones?

Μπορείτε να δείτε τις Συμφωνίες στον παρακάτω σύνδεσμο:

You can see the Agreements at the following link:

<https://eurep.auth.gr/en/agreementsform/viewall>

3. Το μεγαλύτερο μέρος των φοιτητών που έρχονται είναι από τα συνεργαζόμενα Πανεπιστήμια;

The majority of the hosted students are from those Universities?

Όλοι οι εισερχόμενοι φοιτητές έρχονται από συνεργαζόμενα Πανεπιστήμια, καθώς η μετακίνηση προϋποθέτει Διμερή ή Διαπανεπιστημιακή Συμφωνία.

All incoming students are from associate Universities, as the mobility requires a transfer, Bilateral or Inter University agreement

4. Κατά τη διάρκεια του κοροναϊού είχατε ήδη υποδεχθεί φοιτητές; Επέστρεψαν πριν ολοκληρώσουν την περίοδο διαμονής τους όσοι ήταν εδώ; Ακύρωσαν όσοι περιμένατε; Κυρίως από φοιτητές που ενδιαφέρονταν για μαθήματα ή για πρακτική;

During the COVID-19 pandemic, was a time period where some students were already here? Did they return to their homes before completion of the agreed period of residence? Did you have any cancelations? Mostly for those who attended courses or internships?

Κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας είχαμε ήδη υποδεχθεί τους φοιτητές που μετακινούνταν για το εαρινό εξάμηνο και επιπλέον υπήρχαν αρκετοί φοιτητές των οποίων η μετακίνηση ξεκίνησε στο χειμερινό εξάμηνο (Σεπτέμβριο) και είτε είχαν γίνει δεκτοί για 2 εξάμηνα ή έκαναν παράταση της περιόδου.

During the pandemic we had already received students who moved for the spring semester and in addition there were several students whose transfer started in the winter semester (September) and were either accepted for 2 semesters or extended the period.

Most of the students remained in Thessaloniki. Some students returned to the countries of origin and canceled their mobility, however there was a large percentage who returned to the country of origin but completed the transfer remotely (online).

Οι περισσότεροι φοιτητές μετακινήθηκαν με τη δράση Erasmus+ για Σπουδές (μαθήματα).

Most students moved with the Erasmus + Study activity (courses).

5. Έχετε παρατηρήσει ανάκαμψη των φοιτητών αυτή την περίοδο; Επικοινωνήσαν για εναλλακτικές λύσεις όπως μαθήματα από απόσταση ή τηλεργασία όσοι ενδιαφέρονταν για πρακτική;

Did you notice any recovery signs? Did the students search for alternatives? (e.g. teleducation)

Προς το παρόν, για το χειμερινό εξάμηνο ο αριθμός των φοιτητών είναι μειωμένος σε σχέση με τα προηγούμενα χρόνια και πολλοί φοιτητές προτιμούν να μετακινηθούν στο εαρινό εξάμηνο καθώς το θεωρούν πιο ασφαλές. Πολλοί από τους φοιτητές και τα συνεργαζόμενα Ιδρύματα ενδιαφέρονται για τους μικτούς (υβριδικούς) τρόπους διδασκαλίας.

At present, for the winter semester the number of students is reduced compared to previous years and many students prefer to move to the spring semester as they consider it safer. Many of the students and the collaborating Institutions are interested in the mixed (hybrid) ways of teaching.

PARTICIPANT 3

Answered via email

1. Συγκριτικά με άλλες χρονιές, είχατε αύξηση φοιτητών για τη χρονιά 2019-2020;

In contrast with other years, would you say you were expecting more students on 2019-2020?

Όχι οι αριθμοί παρέμειναν σχετικά οι ίδιοι σε σχέση με πέρσι και πρόπερσι

No, the numbers remained relatively the same compared to last year and the year before last

2. Υπάρχουν συνεργασίες με ξένα Πανεπιστήμια, και αν ναι με ποια;

Do you cooperate with some Universities abroad? If yes, with which ones?

Οι διαπανεπιστημιακές συνεργασίες μας είναι οι εξής

Our inter-university collaborations are as follows

<https://www.hua.gr/files/2020/BILATERAL-AGREEMENTS-updated.pdf>

3. Το μεγαλύτερο μέρος των φοιτητών που έρχονται είναι από τα συνεργαζόμενα Πανεπιστήμια;

The majority of the hosted students are from those Universities?

Ναι.

Yes.

4. Κατά τη διάρκεια του κοροναϊού είχατε ήδη υποδεχθεί φοιτητές;

During the COVID-19 pandemic, was a time period where some students were already here?

Ναι όλοι οι εισερχόμενοι φοιτητές είχαν ήδη φθάσει μέχρι τα μέσα Φεβρουαρίου. Από τον Μάρτιο μέχρι τον Αύγουστο δεν υποδεχτήκαμε φοιτητές Erasmus+.

Yes, all incoming students had already arrived by mid-February. From March to August we did not accept Erasmus + students.

Επέστρεψαν πριν ολοκληρώσουν την περίοδο διαμονής τους όσοι ήταν εδώ;

Did they return to their homes before completion of the agreed period of residence?

Από τους εισερχόμενους φοιτητές μας το 50% παρέμεινε στην Ελλάδα ενώ το υπόλοιπο επέστρεψαν στην χώρα τους. Όλοι όμως παρακολούθησαν ηλεκτρονικά τα μαθήματα τους ή έκαναν την πρακτική τους μέσω τηλεργασίας και ολοκλήρωσαν την κινητικότητα τους.

Of our incoming students, 50% remained in Greece while the rest returned to their country. But they all attended their classes through teleducation or did their internship via telework and completed their mobility.

Ακύρωσαν όσοι περιμένατε; Κυρίως από φοιτητές που ενδιαφέρονταν για μαθήματα ή για πρακτική;

Did you have any cancelations? Mostly for those who attended courses or internships?

Για το ακαδημαϊκό έτος 2019/20 δεν μας ακύρωσε κανείς.

For the academic year 2019/20, no one cancelled us.

Για το νέο ακαδημαϊκό έτος 2020/21 μέχρι και σήμερα έχουμε σχετικά πολύ λίγες ακυρώσεις από εισερχόμενους φοιτητές, η πλειοψηφία τους θα έρθει στην Ελλάδα να πραγματοποιήσει την κινητικότητα τους για σπουδές.

For the new academic year 2020/21 until today we have relatively few cancellations by incoming students, the majority of them will come to Greece to fulfil their mobility for studies.

5. Έχετε παρατηρήσει ανάκαμψη των φοιτητών αυτή την περίοδο; Επικοινωνήσαν για εναλλακτικές λύσεις όπως μαθήματα από απόσταση ή τηλεργασία όσοι ενδιαφέρονταν για πρακτική;

Did you notice any recovery signs? Did the students search for alternatives? (e.g. teleducation)

Είναι πολύ νωρίς να μιλήσουμε για ανάκαμψη. Οι φοιτητές που θα έρθουν φέτος για τις σπουδές επικοινωνήσαν μαζί μας για εναλλακτικές λύσεις όπως είναι τα μαθήματα εξ αποστάσεως ή το υβριδικό μοντέλο (δια ζώσης & εξ αποστάσεως).

It is too early to talk about recovery. Students who will come this year for studies contacted us for alternatives such as distance learning or the hybrid model (live & distance).

Μέχρι σήμερα δεν είχαμε ενδιαφέρον για πρακτική άσκηση μέσω τηλεργασίας ωστόσο είναι ακόμα νωρίς.

Until today there was no interest in internships via telework however it is still early.

APPENDIX D

Consent form

Φόρμα συγκατάθεσης για συμμετοχή σε έρευνα

Ερευνητές

Δήμα Χρυσαιγή

Ο σκοπός της έρευνας

Ο στόχος αυτής της έρευνας είναι να διερευνήσει τα οφέλη της Ελλάδας μέσω του εκπαιδευτικού τουρισμού από φοιτητές του Erasmus, καθώς και τους πιθανούς επιπλέον τουρίστες που μπορεί να προσφέρει μέσω του VFR και των επαναληπτών και την πιθανή συμβολή του στην ανάκαμψη του τουρισμού μετά την πανδημία COVID-19. Στόχος αυτής της έρευνας είναι η διερεύνηση της ζήτησης αυτού του τύπου τουρισμού και η ανθεκτικότητά του κατά την περίοδο της πανδημίας COVID-19.

Περιγραφή της ερευνητικής διαδικασίας

Στα πλαίσια της έρευνας θα διεξαχθούν συνεντεύξεις από τις οποίες θα αντληθούν πληροφορίες σχετικά με την κινητικότητα των ξένων φοιτητών Erasmus προς την Ελλάδα και πως αντέδρασαν κατά την περίοδο της πανδημίας COVID-19.

Τα οφέλη της έρευνας και τα οφέλη για τους συμμετέχοντες

Πρωταρχικά, επιδιώκουμε να ανακαλύψουμε τα πλεονεκτήματα του εκπαιδευτικού τουρισμού μέσω του VFR και των επαναληπτών καθώς και την ανθεκτικότητα αυτού του είδους τουρισμού απέναντι στην πανδημία COVID-19 αλλά και την συμβολή του στην ανάκαμψη του τουρισμού.

Κίνδυνοι και δυσφορία

Η έρευνα δεν περιέχει στοιχεία που είναι πιθανό να προκαλέσουν δυσφορία ή κινδύνους στους συμμετέχοντες. Ωστόσο, κατά τη διάρκεια των συναντήσεων, οι συμμετέχοντες θα ερωτώνται κατά διαστήματα εάν αισθάνονται άνετα. Τα ονόματα των συμμετεχόντων δεν θα αποκαλυφθούν για να διασφαλιστεί η εμπιστευτικότητα και η ιδιωτικότητα.

Δικαιώματα συμμετέχοντος

Η συμμετοχή είναι εθελοντική και οι συμμετέχοντες μπορούν να υπαναχωρήσουν οποιαδήποτε ώρα χωρίς να δώσουν καμία εξήγηση. Επίσης, η ανάλυση των δεδομένων θα είναι στη διάθεση των συμμετεχόντων εάν το ζητήσουν.

Πρόσβαση στα δεδομένα

Τα δεδομένα που θα συλλεχθούν θα χρησιμοποιηθούν μόνο από τον ερευνητή, τον επιβλέποντα καθηγητή και τους εξεταστές και δεν πρόκειται να κοινοποιηθούν σε τρίτα πρόσωπα. Όλα τα δεδομένα θα χρησιμοποιηθούν μόνο για το σκοπό της ερευνητικής εργασίας και θα διαγραφούν αμέσως μόλις αυτή ολοκληρωθεί.

Ερωτήσεις σχετικά με την έρευνα

Οι συμμετέχοντες έχουν το δικαίωμα να θέσουν οποιοδήποτε ερώτημα σχετικά με την έρευνα πριν, κατά τη διάρκεια και μετά τους συνεντεύξεις. Επιπροσθέτως, οι συμμετέχοντες μπορούν να επικοινωνούν με τους ερευνητές για κάθε επιπλέον πληροφορία μέσω email (Δήμα Χρυσαιγή, hp321907@hua.gr)

Συγκατάθεση

Κατανοώ και συμφωνώ με τα παραπάνω

Ναι

Όχι

Κατανοώ ότι η συμμετοχή μου είναι εθελοντική και ότι μπορώ να υπαναχωρήσω από την έρευνα οποιαδήποτε ώρα χωρίς καμία εξήγηση

Ναι

Όχι

Κατανοώ ότι μπορώ να απαγορεύσω τη δημοσίευση οποιουδήποτε τμήματος των πληροφοριών που έχω δώσει, χωρίς περαιτέρω εξήγηση.

Ναι

Όχι

Συμφωνώ να συμμετέχω στη έρευνα και σας επιτρέπω να χρησιμοποιήσετε τις πληροφορίες που θα παρέχω για τους σκοπούς της ερευνητικής εργασίας σας.

Ναι

Όχι

Συμφωνώ να ηχογραφηθεί η συνέντευξή μας.

Ναι

Όχι

Ημερομηνία συνέντευξης:

Τόπος:

Στοιχεία συμμετέχοντος:

Υπογραφή συμμετέχοντος:

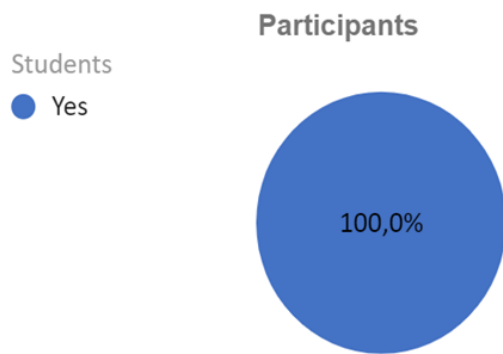
Ερευνητές:

Υπογραφή:

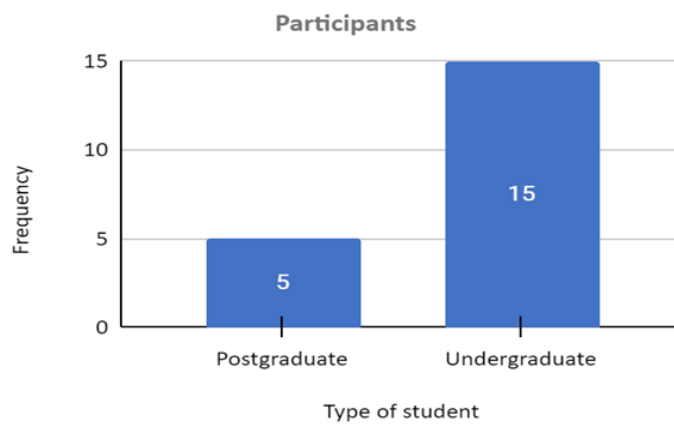
APPENDIX E

Figures

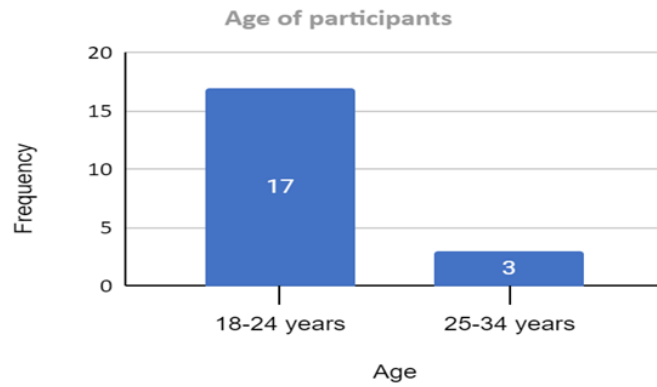
1.Are you a student



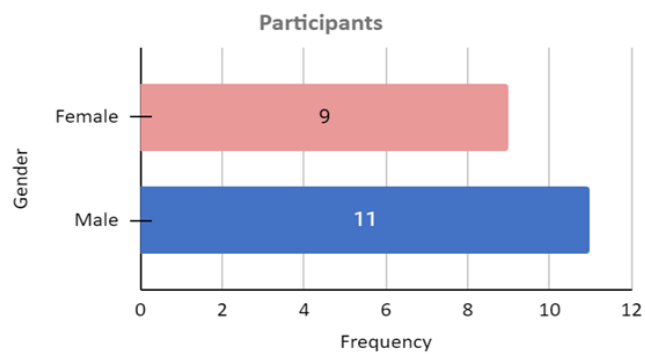
2. Type of student



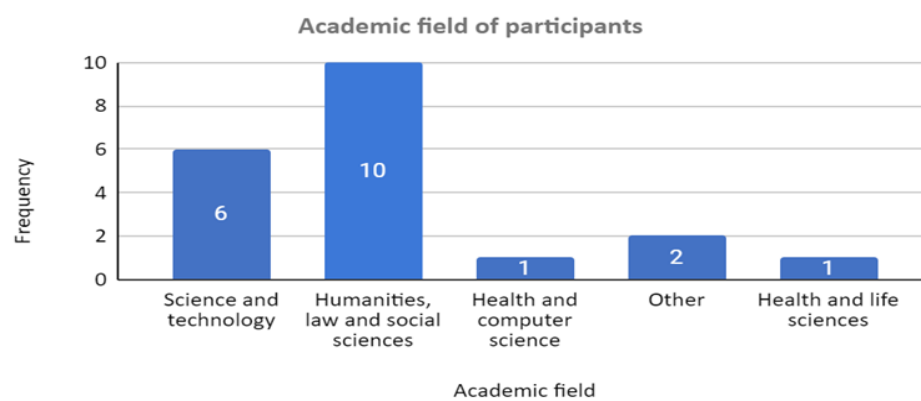
3. Age



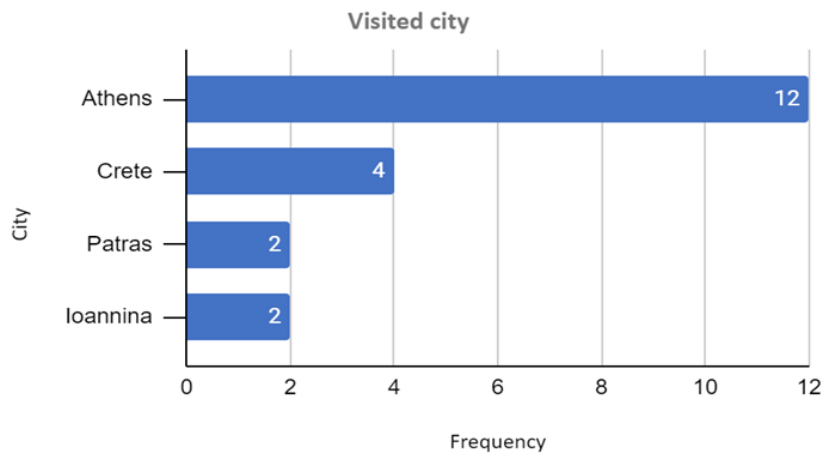
4. Gender



5. Academic field



6. Choose the visited city of Greece



7. Name the University/enterprise hosted you

HMU

Alba

Kapodistrian

West Attica

Hellenic Mediterranean University

University of West attica

HMU Heraklion

University of Crete

Uni Patras

Pireaus

Panepistimio Patron

University of West Attica

Panepistimio Kritis

Technical University of Crete

TUC

NTUA

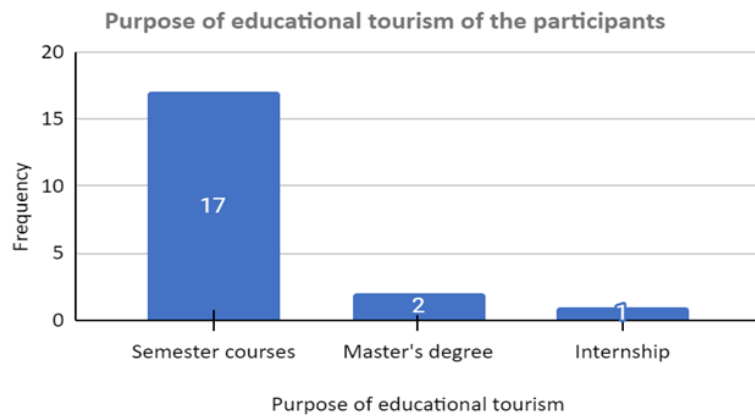
Tuc

Panteion university

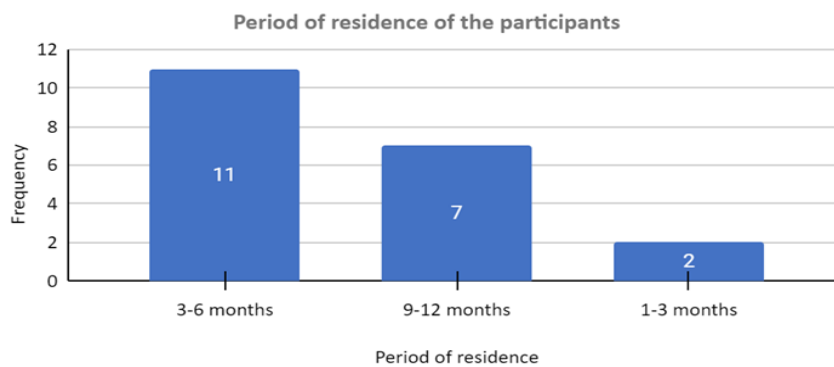
National And Kapodistrian University of Athens

ekpa

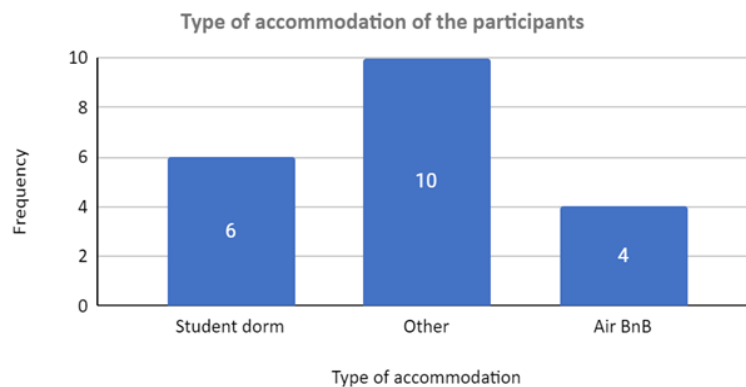
8. Choose the educational reason for which you chose Greece



9. Period of residence



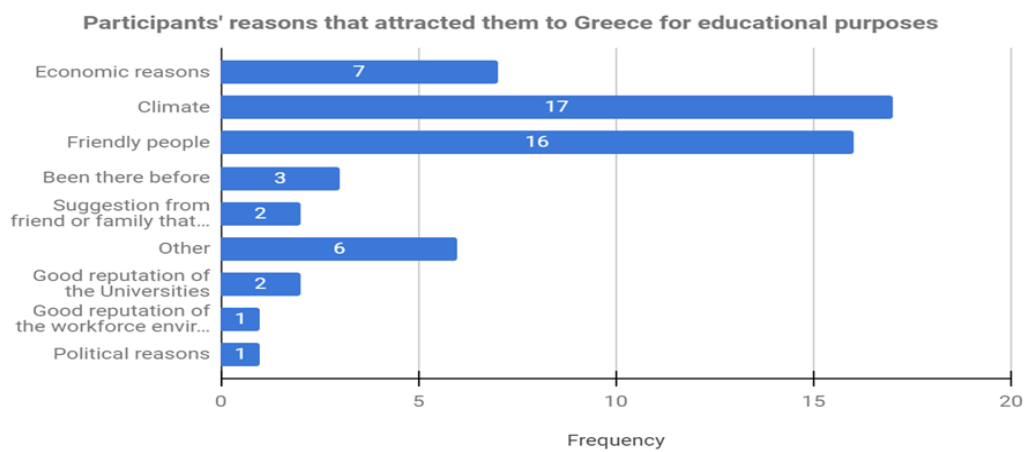
10. Choose the type of accommodation you chose for your stay



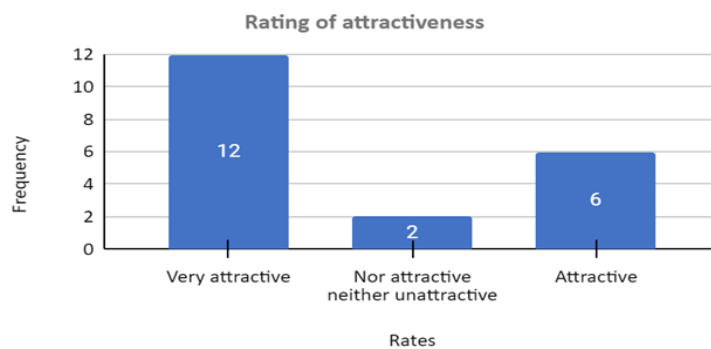
11. How would you rate your experience?



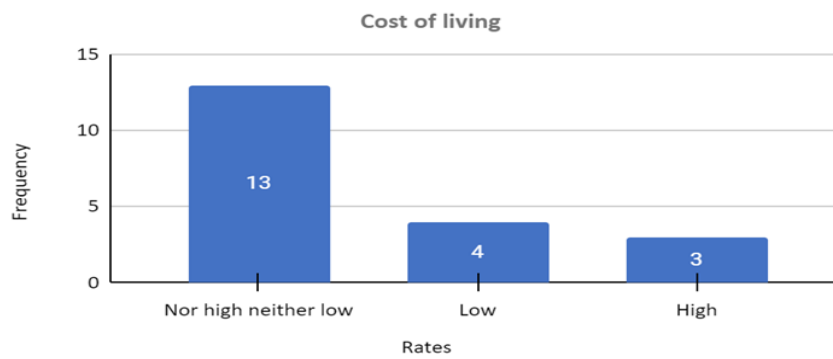
12. Name three of the reasons that made you choose Greece over other educational destinations (maximum 3)



13. How attractive was Greece to you to come and live/study here?



14. Cost of living



15. Have you ever been to Greece for other than educational purposes?



25. Did the image of Greece change after your stay?

