

## The Need Analysis for Further Education of the Retired and Elderly

*Yavuz Erişen,  
Mehmet Şahin,  
M.O.Kurtkan Kapıcıoğlu,  
Selcuk University – Turkey*

### Abstract

The ever changing and new conditions all over the world have deep impact on social and individual life. In this context, new knowledge, skill and attitude have to be adapted and adopted in parallel with these new conditions. The rapid improvement and sophistication in technology has compelled education to go beyond the present limit and cover a whole lifelong. Although every individual is liable to have problems of adaptation at every age phase, the crucial phase seems to be for the retired and elderly individuals. The fact that population of the retired and elderly in Europe exceeds the young population is one of the main reasons for giving more emphasis on the problems of this groups. It seems essential to teach the members of this groups how to survive and adapt to new conditions effectively. It is another fact that the retired and elderly individuals tend to feel themselves passive and unable. To eliminate this spiritual problem requires social security, medical care and social care. Education has been one of the main solutions devoted to the problems of this groups, as it will meet many of their needs. E-culture has been playing a major role currently. The individuals have come to face to face with the cash dispensers at once although they have not met even the computers in their life. If they are introduced to e-culture, they will be able to order their needs from the supermarkets and they will be able to pay even their taxes online without being involved in any queue. They will be able to buy their tickets when they intend to have a trip. Furthermore, this new case will help them to have communication with other people, to enrich their world of experience and spirit, to have wider vision as they will feel they are of use, have a role, need to acquire new skills and enjoy their time more efficiently. In this way, they will be able to not only manage their lives but also lead to changes. This will, in the end, lead to additional

production thanks to their new skills and capacity. Compared to that of the European countries, Turkey has a younger and more dynamic population nature. However, the important of the whole population represents the this groups. One of ten is to be regarded as an individual who is to be involved in the lifelong education process for efficiency and adaptation. The problem is that Turkey does not have policies to meet the needs of this group in the lifelong learning stage. The white papers prove this efficiency adequately enough.

This study is an effort to determine the needs of the retired people in the central city and neighbouring towns in Konya. It is a descriptive study using qualitative techniques. The findings will determine the suggestion for both policy makers and for the related educational organisations.

**Key words:** Need analysis, further education, education for elderly and retired

### Problem

It is a general fact that people pass through different turning points throughout their lives. Retirement is one of the significant turning points determining the passage from middle age into old age as well. In most countries, retirement and old age are thought together. In developed countries, in particular, the age of retirement is 60 and over. This is a period when an individual is often believed to be old. According to WHO, the period between 65 and 74 is considered to be the period of old age. However, in the countries where the population of old age is lower, this limit is taken as 60 years of age (Emiroğlu, 1992).

According to WHO and United Nation's data, due to the longevity of life expectancy and decrease in the rate of birth, the population of those who are 60 years old and over is increasing rapidly in the world. United Nations announced that 21<sup>st</sup> century will be "the century of the retired and elderly" all over the world. As in the whole world, the portion of the retired and elderly within the community is increasing in Turkey as well. According to the data by the Statistics Institution (TUIK, 2008), the number of the retired people exceeded one million within the population of 70 million of Turkey, which comprises almost 10% of total population. Such a figure is over the population of one hundred million in Switzerland, Denmark, Finland and Bulgaria. In fact, retirement countries like Switzerland, Denmark, Finland and Bulgaria. In fact, retirement an early age applied in the previous years in Turkey has had an impact on the figure. In other words, while total 8 million are not composed of the population of 60 year-old and over, the retired population at 60 and over can be expressed with millions. Again, the rate of 60 year-old and over was 10% of the population in the year 2007. The calculations were made with the assumption that current demographic trends will go on. In this case, it is indicated that

century will be the century of the retired and elderly in parallel with the expectations all over the world.

This century has been a turning point in human history in terms of changes in the age structure of world population. A rapid increase in the rate of the retired and elderly in the population has had a deep impact on every aspect of a society from health to social security, from environmental issues to education, to labour opportunities, social and cultural activities to family life (DPT, 2007).

There have been a great many evaluations and studies over the impact of aging of the population on socio-economical structure in the world and international action plans have been prepared. The 1<sup>st</sup> Aging Assembly was organized for the first time in Vienna in order to determine related politics in 1982. "Vienna International Aging Action Plan" adopted in the assembly was created by General Assembly of United Nations. Detailed recommendations were presented dealing with the outcomes categorized in five items as independent participation, care, respectful life and improving oneself. The fifth objective "Health for Everyone" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by World Health Organization is directly related to the elderly. It put an emphasis on the fact that elderly individuals should be regarded as a significant resource in the development of a society at the Conference of International Population and Development, articulated by Turkey as well, in Cairo. Also, "Aging: International Action Plan" was prepared by United Nations on 8-12 April 2000 in Madrid, in order to improve the life quality of the elderly, to supply social adaptations and create some policies within this sense (DPT, 2007; Bilir, 2008).

A good analysis of the change in the population of Turkey and its relations, as in the world, will be helpful in the solutions of the effects of aging phenomenon before they turn into a problem for a country. It requires that the phenomenon of retirement and old age and the policies should be reviewed in this sense in Turkey as well.

There have been various researches showing that people in the period of retirement and old age have difficulties in adaptation to society. People in this group often start to isolate themselves from the world (Ülmanur & Ülmanur, 2005). The income of the people decrease in the period of retirement and old age when their labour life ends, their living conditions become harder and a loss of their social roles starts to appear. If a person has something valuable in his retirement will contribute to it; otherwise, it will take what he has out of his life and turn into a social injury. A great many researches conducted in this sense show that individuals in this period are at the high-risk group in terms of diseases (Aydemir, 1999). The fact that the retired and elderly support their retirement with an integration of them with the community, an increase in their functionality and improvement in their life quality will enable them to

survive this period successfully and increase the social value of the retired and elderly.

The issue "to what extent aging affects productivity" has mostly been discussed, and, as known to many of us, most of the artistic, philosophical and scientific works are produced by people over 65 (Kutsal, 2008). It is indicated that there is no significant finding showing a negative relation between aging and working performance and productivity; on the contrary, there are some findings that performance increases in this period when suitable conditions are supplied (Remenark & Berggren, 2006). One of the basic studies to be carried out in providing the retired and the elderly with a contribution to the development of the country, realizing their adaptation to a rapidly changing society and helping them succeed to lead a healthy life in every aspect is the efforts of "training" (Hodkins et. al., 2008). However, it is true that such applications that help them benefit from life long education for the retired and elderly over 60 in Turkey are not at a desired level and that studies determining the needs of this group cannot be carried out effectively or have never been done (MEB, 1996). From this perspective, and taking the intense efforts carried out in the world into consideration in this sense, it is of importance that the activities of life long education should be extended and point dealing with the needs of individuals in the period of retirement and age in Turkey.

### The Purpose of the Study

This study was carried out to determine the needs of the retired at the age 60 and over in the central towns of Konya and the level of importance of the needs in the context of life long education.

### Method

Qualitative research methods were used to carry out the study. Qualitative research is defined (Yildirim & Şimşek, 1999) as "a type of research where qualitative data collection methods as observation, interview and document analysis are used, and a qualitative process is followed to expose perceptions and events in a real and integral way in their natural environment". The data collected through interviews in the research. 54 retired people, 60 years of age and over, volunteered to take place in the study. The researchers collected interviews personally and it took almost 2 month to complete it. Known there are a number of retired people although they are still under 60, the of the research was limited to the retired people who are 60 years old or over. Thus, the parallelism with the studies abroad done for 60 years old or over maintained in terms of comparison and contrast.

### Findings

In order to comment on the educational needs depending on the views of the retired in the research, individual characteristics of the subjects were analysed of the participants:

- > 24% were women and 76% were men.
  - > Almost 5.5% were living alone and 95.5% were living with his/her spouse or a member of family.
  - > %70.3 were 60-64, %20.4 were 65-69, %9.3 were 70+ aged.
  - > 24% were a graduate of a primary school, 38.8% graduated a secondary school, 22.2% were a graduate of a high school and 15% were a graduate of a higher education.
  - > 88.2% thought that their income was not adequate.
  - > 0.8% of women and 26.8% of men had a paid job.
  - > 16.6% of unemployed women and 30% of unemployed men expressed that they wanted to work if they could have a chance.
  - > 62.9% of them saw themselves good enough to lead a healthy life.
  - > None of the participants were a member of a social-cultural organization (e.g. non-governmental organizations).
  - > 72.2% had no ability to use a computer or the Internet.
  - > 53.7% expressed that they would be able have social responsibility in sharing his/her knowledge and experience.
  - > Only 3% expressed that they joined a public education courses within the sense of life long education.
  - > 70.3% indicated that they had a difficulty in adaptation to the society.
  - > 61.1% expressed that they could join a free educational activity in order to improve themselves with the ideas of adaptation to the society, finding a job, as a leisure time activity, being beneficial for the society and so on.
- As given in the figures, a great majority of the participants giving their ideas as problem in adaptation to society. As an example, a great majority cannot use computer and the Internet technology, which is one of the most significant for individuals to improve themselves in a world at such an age of knowledge. In addition, more than half have been seeking for a source to share knowledge and experience and are willing to improve them in this way. In this case, they deprive of an educational activity to do it.
- The data compiled through interview carried out to determine educational needs of the participants and the level of importance of these needs mentioned were analyzed and given below. As for the participants;

- All of them thought that they had educational needs to keep physical and mental health efficient and they considered it as an important need.
- A great majority wanted to have enough knowledge and skills about communication technologies, computer and the Internet use, expressing that it was an urgent need.
- More than half thought that they needed more education in religious affairs and expressed that it was an important need.
- Nearly half of them indicated that they were in need of improving vocational skills or attaining new occupations in order to increase their income and that it was an important need.
- Almost half of them expressed that they could have an education on some activities (handicraft arts, gardening, husbandry, cooking, home cake and repair etc.) in order to have a contribution to their income and deal with leisure time activities, and they considered it important at the same level.
- Fewer than half of them indicated that they needed knowledge about the politics and practices and opportunities of the state concerning the retirement and emphasized that such a need was of importance.
- Almost a fifth indicated that they needed an education over banking practices and using ATM card using, considering it important.
- Being especially women, nearly a fifth thought that they could have an education over child health, childcare and education and that it was partly important.
- A small number of them expressed that they needed an education on such financial affairs as capital management, donations, renting affairs, planning heritage and indicated that it was partly important.
- Nearly a tenth of them expressed that they were in need of speaking foreign language and thought that it was important.
- Again nearly a tenth of them indicated that they had little information about the voluntary organizations to work at and thought that it was important.

### Discussion, Result and Recommendations

The phenomenon of retirement and aging and studies related to it has been accelerated all over the world. It is thought that the current century will be the century of retirement and old age. The rate of retired and elderly individuals in the total population increases in Turkey as well. The reality that the people in the period of retirement and old age have a problem in adaptation to community and aging healthily, contributing to the development of community makes it increase in the efforts aiming at supplying this group with life long educational activities inevitable. However, in order to fulfill such a need in an effective way,

necessary that the educational needs of this group should be determined in a healthy way. Even so, it is not possible to say that such efforts in Turkey are not adequate enough. As one of the efforts, the findings obtained in the current study show that the retired and elderly are in need of spending their free time at such fields as keeping physical and mental health in particular, communication technologies, computer and the Internet use, religious formation, vocational skills, leisure time activities. In this context, educational policies to meet the needs of the retired and elderly should be extended and the policies should be adopted in this way. Nationwide and local researches could be conducted to determine the educational needs of this group. The government, universities, private organizations (media in particular) and non-governmental organizations should work together in such a research.

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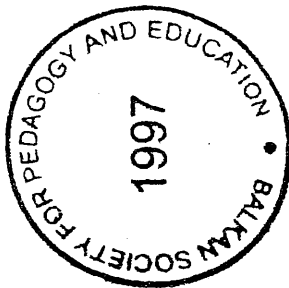
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54006 Thessaloniki/GREECE  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  
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