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ASSESSMENT OF BASIC SKILLS OF LOW QUALIFIED ADULTS IN TURKEY FOR LABOR MARKET: NEEDS ANALYSIS

Abstract:

Today, the structure of employment and the number of unemployment in many countries are an important indicator of the country's level of economic development and social development. Unemployment is one of Turkey's most important social and economic problem. Functional relationship between employment and the education/skill level is quite weak in Turkey. In addition, people who have vocational education do not have the qualifications demanded by the labor market, while on the other hand, there is a qualified intermediate shortage in the enterprises. A detailed investigation of these problems will be useful in developing policies for unemployment. In this study, it is aimed to reveal the problems and needs for basic skill assessment processes, which is one of the problems experienced by the public and private institutions. This study is a deeply qualitative research to expose existing problems to improve the basic skills of low-qualified adults. Semi conducted interviews were made with 6 job and occupational consultant from ISKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), 5 job experts from Trabzon Chamber of Commerce and Industry and 5 vocational education experts from Public Education Center.

Results of this study showed that there is no systematic approach for institutions dealing with employment affairs in Turkish organizations. In addition, business and vocational consultants faced lack of vocational training in the process of guiding the unemployed applicants to jobs.

Keywords:

Problems at Employment in Turkey, Skills Problems, Need Analyses, Assessing Unemployment

JEL Classification: J64, C18, E24

1 Introduction

Unemployment is one of the major social and economic problems in Turkey (Kanca 2012, Özsağır 2000, Yanbaşı 2014). Many studies have been carried out to reduce unemployment and new policies have been produced. There are various reasons for unemployment and the mismatch in demand in the labor market is one of the most important factors increasing unemployment rate. Unemployment in Turkey is observed mostly in the areas that are in the lower socioeconomic levels. Because these individuals do not have sufficient education and equipment, they have less chance of finding a job.

Public and private organizations use several methods that are not effective and valid in determining the knowledge and skill levels of the target groups (Desjardins and Rubenson 2011, Right 2016). One of the most important problems encountered is the inability of the unemployed to have sufficient skills demanded by the labor force and the inability to measure the skills of the unemployed.

Traditional measurement tools form a profile with data such as age, gender, work experience, personal experiences, and educational information of individuals. The use of this data in the job orientation process does not meet the expectations of Labor market. Labor market expects to create a skill-based profile (Pecze 2019). Skill assessment scales or tools are generally used to support job seekers, and to assist public employment services.

The skill assessment process will contribute to vocational and personal training, it will improve procedures in recruitment processes with scientific processes and help achieve employment in the desired direction (Right 2016, Bakhshi et al. 2017). Successful skills evaluations and approaches used in training can be successful as a result of a multidisciplinary approach (Luca and McMahon 2006). Disciplines such as educational science, data analysis, information technologies, business and management, measurement and evaluation are areas used in employment-oriented processes. Public and private institutions involved in employment-oriented processes cannot use all the disciplines and perform processes such as quality control, reporting and monitoring at the desired level.

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the problems and needs for basic skill assessment processes, which is one of the problems experienced by the public and private institutions working for employment.

2 Methodology

In this study qualitative approach was used to reveal the problems and needs for basic skill assessment processes, which is one of the problems experienced by the public and private institutions.

Researching individuals in their natural environment in a qualitative research includes collecting and analyzing data in rich vocabulary set for understanding people's experiences (Merriam 1998, Labuschagne 2003). In qualitative research, the field of study is defined as the data collection environment of the researcher (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). In this study, skill assessment data

was collected from 6 business and professional consultant from İŞKUR (Turkey Business Association), 5 business experts from Trabzon Trade and Industry Chamber and 5 business experts from Public Education Center

2.1 Data collection tool

Semi-structured interviews were used as data collection tool in the study. Interview is a data collection (investigation) technique through verbal communication (Karasar 2005). Stewart and Cash (1985) defined the interview as “a mutual and interactive communication process based on the style of asking and answering questions for a predetermined and oriented purpose”. In the semi-structured interview technique, the researcher prepares general questions before starting the interview. Questions on skill assessment are made through face-to-face interviews. With this way, the subject can be discussed deeply between the interviewed expert and the researcher (Patton 1990, Karasar 2005, Punch 2005). With semi-structured interviews, it is possible to learn not only the answer but also the reasons for the answers. The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews in the study were recorded with a voice recorder and transcribed into word processing programs.

2.2 Analyzing Data

Content analysis method, which is one of the qualitative data analysis methods, was used in the study. The basic process in content analysis is to gather data similar to each other within the framework of certain concepts and themes and to organize and interpret them in a way that the reader can understand (Patton 2002).

The main purpose in content analysis is to reach the “concepts and relationships” that can clarify the collected data. For this purpose, the collected data must first be conceptualized, organized in a logical manner according to the emerging concepts, and the data clusters which constructs background of main themes.

In content analysis, data is analyzed in 4 stages (Yıldırım ve Şimşek 2008):

1. Coding of data,
2. Finding themes,
3. Organizing codes and themes,
4. Identification and interpretation of the findings.

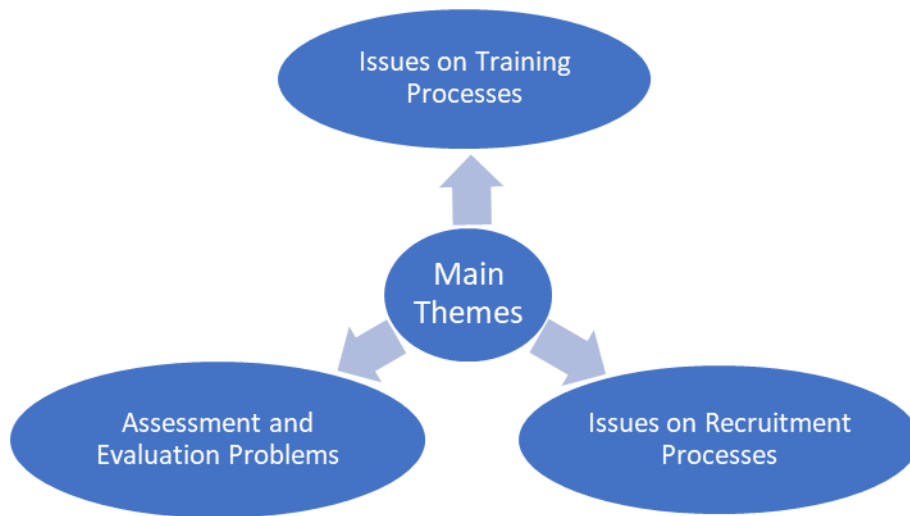
In the first stage of data analysis, codes were created by considering the data in the 16 interviews in the sample over the datasets. First level codes obtained as a result of data analysis are given in Table 1.

Table 1. First Level Codes Obtained from Analysis.

FIRST LEVEL CODES	
CODE	FREQUENCY
Personal statement	13
literacy insufficiency	12
Drop out education and training	6
Lack of basic skills	14
Lack of working skills	13
Deficiencies at training model	8
Insufficient preliminary assessment	7
Problems in forming homogeneous education groups	6
Lack of information in directing to job	12
Pre-requisite for trainings	8
Individual attitudes and perceptions	12
Lack of skill assessment test	11
Uncertainty of training calendars	6
Informing problems of individuals	7
Lack of personal information	9
lack of customized assessment tools	12
employer expectations	9
Inadequate support in business consulting processes	6
Inadequate communication with other institutions	7

18 first level codes are obtained from analyses of semi conducted interviews. At second stage of analyses suitable themes were determined. 3 main themes obtained from analyses of first level codes (Fig.1): 1- Issues on Training Processes ,2- Assessment and evaluation problems,3- Issues on Recruitment Processes. Shape-1 shows themes of analyzed data.

Figure 1. Main themes obtained from analyzed data.



Needs of labor market related with basic skill assessment is shaped under three main categories. Needs arises from training process, recruitment process and assessment-evaluation process. Table 2 shows the theme and the codes associated with these themes.

Table 2. Themes and associated codes.

Issues on Training Processes	Issues on Recruitment Processes	Assessment and Evaluation problems
literacy insufficiency	Personal statement	Personal statement
Drop out education and training	Lack of working skills	Insufficient preliminary assessment
Deficiencies at training model	Insufficient preliminary assessment	lack of customized assessment tools
Insufficient preliminary assessment	Lack of information in directing to job	Individual attitudes and perceptions
Problems in forming homogeneous education groups	Pre-requisite for trainings	Lack of skill assessment test
Pre-requisite for trainings	Individual attitudes and perceptions	Inadequate communication with other institutions

Individual attitudes and perceptions	Lack of skill assessment test	
Uncertainty of training calendars	Uncertainty of training calendars	
Lack of personal information	Informing problems of individuals	
Inadequate communication with other institutions	Lack of personal information	
	employer expectations	
	Inadequate support in business consulting processes	

After the coding of data, finding themes, organizing the codes and themes, the analyzed data is made ready for the identification and interpretation of the findings.

3 Results and Conclusion

The needs of institutions in today's labor market to measure the basic skills of their target groups are categorized under three main themes. First theme is Issues on training process. Under this theme results of the study showed that assessment and evaluation are big problems for organizing and planning training facilities.

It is stated that there is an insufficient preliminary evaluation process in the training and recruitment processes of the individuals and the preliminary evaluation data used are composed of personal information and personal statements registered in the system. In addition, another important problem is that the education groups formed in the process of gaining job proficiency and vocational education are not homogeneous, that is, the education groups are composed of individuals with different knowledge levels.

Second theme is related with issues about recruitment process. Job and occupational consultant and job experts stated that Insufficient preliminary assessment, lack of personal skills level information and lack of information in directing jobs are main problems that they face.

Skill level determination tools appeal to the target audience in general. There is not any assessment tool specially developed for groups of a particular nature. Another result obtained from the analysis is that employers want job candidates to have basic skills and competencies, regardless of the quality of the job.

Third main problem obtained at this study is assessment and evaluation problems. Labor market and, institutions supporting labor market have problems determining individuals' current skill and academic level. Lack of skill assessment tools and customized

assessment tools are main problems that institutions faced with. One of the important results revealed in the study is that public and private institutions working on employment processes state that they do not cooperate adequately with higher education institutions to solve existing problems and to compose useful models. Also results of this study will lead researchers and institutions dealing with employment to develop systems and to produce effective policies for reducing unemployment and managing employment. Higher education institutions believe that the problems faced by the employment institutions will be solved by combining experts in this discipline and many disciplines (West 2000, Jacob 2015). Involving all institutions with experts from many disciplines will contribute to the composing new policies related to employment processes and the creation of new models.

4 Acknowledgement

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