Evaluation of the Changes and Achievements Perceived in Graduate Tourism Education on the Basis of Transformative Learning Theory

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Abstract

It is seen that postgraduate education gains importance to have new information, skills and experiments in a constantly changing and transforming world. Postgraduate education in a field that shows a need for high-quality labor, such as the tourism industry, is expected to comply with this structure and create a transforming effect on the learners. This study aims to evaluate the personal changes, skills and learning outcomes that the students studying in postgraduate programs of tourism can perceive as a result of the educational process on the basis of Transformative Learning Theory, and has been built according to the qualitative research model. As the data collection technique, the interview technique was employed to the study group which consists of 34 people who were designated through a purposeful sampling method. From the data obtained, totally eleven main codes and six groups of themes derived. The findings showed that postgraduate tourism education generally provides the expected academic and vocational gains; however, they are not at a level that is effective in causing a transformation in individuals. On the other hand, it was detected that some transformations occurred in a small part of the study group in compliance with the transformative learning theory. Critical thinking, self-expression and showing empathy are remarkable among the new knowledge and skills defined as an achievement. Interrogative manner, acting self-confident, and being kind to different thoughts and cultures became prominent as the new personality traits. Such findings indicate the necessity of new researches on the relation between perceived achievements and graduate tourism education. It will be beneficial for the researchers in the future to focus on the methods to improve the quality of education in postgraduate tourism education and it can be suggested to implement such researches in mixed patterns.

Keywords: Tourism education, graduate education, transformative learning, transformation

Lisansüstü Turizm Eğitiminde Algılanan Değişimlerin ve Kazanımların Dönüştürücü Öğrenme Kuramı Ekseninde Değerlendirilmesi
Öz

Sürekli değişmekte ve dönüşmekte olan bir dünyada yeni bilgi, beceri ve deneyimler kazanmak için lisansüstü eğitimin önem kazandığı görülmektedir. Turizm sektörü gibi yüksek nitelikli işgücü ihtiyacı sergileyen alanlardaki lisansüstü eğitimin de bu yapıya uygun nitelikte olması ve öğrenenler üzerinde dönüştürücü etki yaratması beklenir. Turizm alanında lisansüstü öğrenim görmekte olan öğrencilerin, eğitim süreçleriyle edinildiğini algıladıkları beceriler ile tanımlayabildikleri öğrenme kazanımlarının Dönüştürücü Öğrenme Kuramı temelinde değerlendirilmesini amaçlayan bu çalışma, nitel araştırma modeline göre kurgulanmıştır. Veri toplama tekniği olarak yüz yüze görüşme tekniği kullanılmış olup, amaçlı örneklem yöntemiyle seçilmiş 34 kişilik çalışma grubuna uygulanmıştır. Verilerden on bir ana kod ve altı tema grubu oluşturulmuştur. Bulgular, lisansüstü turizm eğitiminin beklenen akademik ve mesleki kazanımları sağladığını, fakat, Dönüştürücü Öğrenme anlamında bir dönüşüm doğuracak düzeyde etkili olmadığını göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, çalışma grubunun küçük bir bölümünde, Dönüştürücü Öğrenme Kuramı'yla uyumlu bazı dönüşümler saptanmıştır. Kazanım olarak tanımlanan yeni bilgi ve beceriler arasında eleştirel düşünebilme, kendini ifade edebilme ve empati yapabilme dikkat çekicidir. Yeni kişilik özellikleri arasında sorgulayıcılık, özgüvenli davranma, farklı düşüncelere ve kültürlere karşı hoşgörü öne çıkmıştır. Bu bulgular, algılanan kazanımlar ile lisansüstü turizm eğitimi ilişkisini inceleyen yeni araştırmaların gerekliliğini göstermektedir. Gelecekteki araştırmaların, lisansüstü turizm eğitiminde eğitimin niteliğini artırma yöntemlerine odaklanması ve bu tür çalışmaların karma desenli tasarlanması önerilebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Turizm eğitimi, lisansüstü eğitim, dönüştürücü öğrenme, dönüşüm.

INTRODUCTION

The need for continuous learning; renewing outdated knowledge and skills; coping with ordinary crises; creating differences in order to gain new advantages in the competitive environment; approaching our problems and our lives from very different perspectives than before; transforming according to the conditions of life and gaining different identities. All of these skills are actions that can emerge in response to the conditions and problems imposed by today's world. Especially in countries with unstable socio-economic conditions and economic structures, and in economic structures such as the tourism sector that are based on delicate balances and are very sensitive to external factors (Samırkaş & Bahar, 2013), it is necessary to be able to identify individual development needs that play a key role for organizational success. In a world of the 4th Industrial Revolution, new knowledge, technologies and skills brought by the social, political and economic structures affected and completely changed by the digital transformation, complex problems are emerging in many countries (de Falco, 2019). This can also change the structure and components of individual needs and individual development.

The tourism sector has the largest income and export level in the world economy after the chemical industry and the energy sector. Since the effective use of human capital can provide a significant advantage in a competitive environment, it can be said that there is a high need for quality communication and interaction between employees, customers and organizations in tourism activities (Kuzu, 2020). Therefore, this need will trigger the need for qualified personnel. The unique structure of the tourism sector with its positive and negative aspects makes businesses in this sector heavily dependent on human resources in order to survive and compete (Sezerel & Tonus, 2017). This structure makes it imperative to aim for achievements beyond undergraduate tourism education. As emphasized by the World Tourism Organization in recent years, qualified manpower is the basic component of this sector. It is important for higher education institutions to respond to this need by renewing curricula with new departments and programs (Cited in Ribeiro et al., 2020). At this point, it is important that the learning outcomes in tourism education are in line with the educational objectives determined in line with the needs and problems of the sector. Naturally, the biggest task in this process falls to the undergraduate and graduate programs of universities.

In many countries around the world, studies on different learning and education models emphasize the importance of lifelong learning philosophy and adult learning and define the new roles of universities. In addition to what numerous studies and evaluations have presented, especially regarding the functionality of Transformative Learning Theory in today's conditions (Duffy et al., 2020; Jacobs, 2019; Johnson and Olanof, 2020; Upenieks, 2019), the new functions of universities, which have assumed many functions in today's societies, regarding the 4th generation university profile, also emphasize the phenomenon of graduate education. Considering all these, it is expected that the learning outcomes of individuals receiving graduate education in the field of tourism will be effective and efficient enough to lead to a transformation in the lives of individuals and meet the expectations of the sector.

The need for individuals who play an active role in the processes of acquiring and imparting knowledge and skills, such as professionals working in the tourism sector, educators and university students, to comprehend the world correctly and make the right decisions is in line with the critical role of Transformative Learning Theory. Today's world is possible with individuals who are able to update their knowledge and skills quickly and effectively and adapt quickly to the conditions, and this needs to be defined within the framework of formal education. In addition, there is insufficient research in the relevant literature, both on graduate education practices in tourism and on Transformative Learning Theory. Hence, the main purpose of our study is to evaluate the skills, changes and gains that graduate students in the field of tourism think that they have acquired through their educational processes on the basis of Transformative Learning Theory. As mentioned below, such transformations involved in perceived achievements, changes and gains which can be perceived by individuals cover both daily-social and professional-academical lives' all fields.

In this context, answers to the following research questions, which were determined on the axis of the basic components of the Transformative Learning Theory regarding personal and professional life as a whole and related, are sought:

- What are the students' opinions about the graduate education they have received?
- How has the graduate education received by the students created a conflict with the old knowledge, skills and views learned and acquired in their previous lives?
- What kind of new knowledge and skills do the students think their education has provided them with?

- How do students think that the education they have received has led to a transformation in their personality traits and individual lives?

- What are the students' evaluations of their old habits or views that were broken after the conflicts and dilemmas caused by the education they received?

Graduate Education in Tourism

Graduate education, which refers to the highest level of the formal education process, includes education programs that aim to train scientists, researchers and qualified human resources, which provide the title of scientific expertise or doctor of science after the completion of undergraduate education (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010). When we consider at the change in the functions of universities, which are the main source of graduate education, we come across the 4th generation university phenomenon. The 4th generation university differs from previous generation universities in its mission, role, method and product components. The main difference is defined in the function of contributing to the regional economy with the goal of ensuring proactive economic development. Therefore, graduate education processes in 4th generation universities should succeed in playing a leading role in the development of the local economy, in addition to the mission of education, research and knowledge processing in previous generations (Kuzu, 2020). In achieving this, not only undergraduate educational activities but also graduate education should have a special place, because it would be wrong to aim to improve the quality of university products and scientific researches without improving the quality and competencies of researchers as learner and practitioner.

Upon considering the definition of the process to its functions, graduate education has functions such as disseminating science and art, identifying social problems and producing appropriate solutions, and training high-level labor force. Apart from classical functions, it can be argued that graduate education has become a necessity due to factors such as the increase in the number of undergraduate graduates, developments in economic activities and technological transformations (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010). Therefore, the same findings can be made in terms of the tourism sector and tourism education. The fact that the World Tourism Organization draws attention to qualified and educated human resources in the tourism sector reminds the role of universities for a qualified workforce. Developments in telecommunication technologies and global crises have made it necessary for professionals in the tourism sector to acquire new skills and develop new strategies in communication and social media (Ribeiro et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, especially in developing countries such as Türkiye, the basic need for the tourism sector to be permanent and to increase its revenues is the development of tourism education at all levels, and the need for graduate education is also important in this context (Okumuş & Yağcı, 2005; Unur & Köşker, 2015).

Graduate education in tourism is a must for students who want to improve themselves following their undergraduate education and learn about the sector in an academic dimension. In Tarcan İçigen et al.'s (2018) study on the graduate education of managers in the tourism sector, it was found that the participants' perceptions of the education they received were positive and they were generally satisfied. At the same time, it was stated that the education received contributed to both their personal and professional development. Considering the provisions of the relevant legislation and classical function definitions (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010), the main learning objectives of graduate programs in the field of tourism can be considered to gain the ability to conduct scientific studies on the needs and problems in the field of tourism, to correctly identify the problems of the sector and to offer solutions, to think critically and to exhibit creativity when needed.

In line with these goals, it is clear that individuals who participate in graduate education processes in the field of tourism will experience some change processes that will take place at the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Naturally, such processes are expected to lead to new principles, skills and views in the lives of learners. Some recent studies have revealed the chronic problems of tourism education in Turkish universities. Tourism education is plagued by favoritism in the selection of courses and academic staff, inexperienced academics, low-qualified students, and various bureaucratic obstacles (Kırlar Can et al., 2021), and with the solution of these problems, it will be possible to transition to a more qualified graduate education model.

Transformative Learning

It can be argued that Mezirow's philosophy of transformative learning can define all our actions related to decision-making and learning in post-childhood processes. Transformative learning, which adult educators such as Mezirow and Merriam attach great importance to because of the critical function it plays in individual development, encompasses transformations and achievements that can be accomplished in the upper stages of adult development. According to some, it is not possible to achieve this before early forties, whereas according to

others, such a transformation is possible through a combination of formal education and life processes during youth (Jacobs, 2019; Malkki, 2010). In Mezirow's (1997) definition, transformative learning is a learning that leads to a change in the meaning/reference framework that constitutes the individual's life and makes the individual radically question his/her previous life. This completely changed framework encompasses the values, beliefs and attitudes in the individual's life, which refers to the individual with its cognitive and emotional components.

Based on the classical definition of transformative learning, our transformative learning experience can be triggered by encountering a new situation that conflicts with our knowledge and thoughts that form the basis of our current worldview. Having to reconcile this new information, which will enable us to create a new perspective in our future actions, with our old perspective will ignite the fuse that puts us into a transformational phase (Jacobs, 2019; Johnson & Olanoff, 2020). The roots of this learning process, which Mezirow defines as a form of "meaning making", can be traced back to the work of Freire and Habermas. In this process, the individual evolves towards a broader and more inclusive worldview by reinterpreting and redefining his/her old experiences and knowledge with new expectations and perspectives (As cited in Izmirli, Odabaşı & Yurdakul, 2012; Jacobs, 2019; Mezirow, 1997). Therefore, the transformative learning model has a special place in Constructivism, Humanism and Critical Social Theory due to its multi-dimensional and multi-source structure (Jacobs, 2019). As a matter of fact, the fact that it can be applied in a wide range of fields such as business administration, teacher training, medical education, organizational management, community development, sustainability education and environmental awareness-raising trainings in recent years shows that it can play an effective role in solving many different social problems (Jacobs, 2019; Weinberg et al. 2020). For example, Katz's (2019) transformative learning model proposal for the adaptation of Open Education Resources to undergraduate education is a transformation that will enable students to get rid of costly textbooks.

The basic stages of the transformative learning process define the products of this process and the change experienced. The process starts with a confusing dilemma that triggers the criticism and questioning of the emotions and basic assumptions that constitute identity. In the following stages, after the discovery of new roles and relationships, new action plans including new competencies and different perspectives are formed, beliefs, values and attitudes related to a new worldview are born in the individual (Akçay, 2012; Jacobs, 2019; Katz, 2019). Two key concepts in this transformation process are "critical reflection" and "perspective transformation". Mezirow (1997), who argues that this process will result in the individual gaining independent thinking skills, defines the main learning outcomes on instrumental, communicative and emancipatory axes (As cited in Aboytes & Barth, 2020).

Critical reflection is a component of critical thinking skills. By questioning one's own ideas, feelings and actions, it enables the individual to comprehend contradictions and differences from other people's beliefs, values and attitudes (Blalock & Akeh, 2018). Perspective transformation, on the other hand, is the acquisition of new perspectives instead of the old ones after the confusing dilemma (Akçay, 2012; Çimen and Yılmaz, 2014; Malkki, 2010). A study examining the internship experiences of Chinese and Spanish trainee teachers who experienced the critical stages of this traumatic process showed that the transformative learning process played a role in the formation of trainee teachers' professional identity (Zhu, Iglesia & Wang, 2020). At the end of such a process, radical changes in an individual's moral, political and professional profile are inevitable, as their perspectives, habits, beliefs, values and behaviors as a whole undergo change. This is because not only a change at the intellectual level but also a transformation in actions and relationships must occur (Aboytes and Barth, 2020; Mezirow, 1997). Based on the fact that learning is lifelong, such a process of change can be ensured to occur repeatedly at different stages of life and at different age periods (in periods related to formal and non-formal education), or such processes can be triggered and directed through different educational models (distance education, on-the-job training, non-formal education, etc.) that are becoming widespread today. For example, in Çimen and Yılmaz's (2014) experimental study involving pre-service teachers at two state universities in Ankara, environmental education based on transformational learning theory was applied to develop environmental awareness, and significant transformations were found in the views, feelings and attitudes of the experimental group towards the environment. Boonphadunga and Seubsang's (2021) research on pre-service teachers also showed that transformative learning practices can make a great contribution to improving pre-service teachers' classroom management and teaching competencies.

At this point, the role of the educator comes into play. According to Mezirow, the role of educators in this direction is expected to take place in three stages: enabling learners to focus on questioning their feelings, beliefs and behaviors, evaluating the results of questioning and critical reflections, and testing their validity by presenting alternative perspectives (As cited in Akçay, 2012; Boonphadunga & Seubsang, 2021). Akçay, 2012;

Boonphadunga & Seubsang, 2021; İzmirli, Odabaşı & Yurdakul, 2012). As a result, it is possible to summarize the basic concepts of Transformative Learning Theory with the statements illustrated in Figure 1, which indicate the individual's large-scale cognitive transformation.
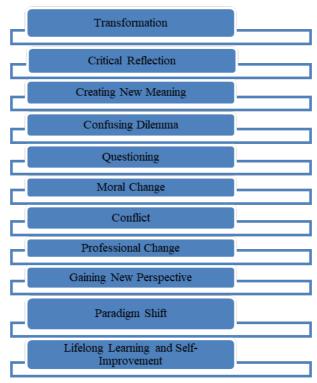
Transformation

Critical Reflection

Creating New Meaning

Confusing Dilemma

Questioning

Moral Change

Conflict

Professional Change

Gaining New Perspective

Paradigm Shift

Lifelong Learning and Self-Improvement

Figure 1. *Literary codes that can be derived from transformative learning theory*

Graduate Education in Tourism and Transformative Learning

What needs to be emphasized at this point is not the nature and types of new needs, skills and knowledge specific to the period and conditions we live in. The main issue is that all individuals, regardless of their field and profession, may have to undergo transformations in today's conditions as in the Transformative Learning Theory, and graduate education processes are capable of triggering such transformations.

The need for educators' roles of guidance, facilitation and evaluation is clear. This points to a bidirectional need that young people at different stages of the formal education process may also face: To transform by transforming. Moreover, Mezirow's roles of questioning, critical reflection, and alternative perspectives are appropriate for graduate programs in tourism education to meet the need for innovative individuals. In today's world, where identity and character formation can extend into early 40s, graduate studies can be expected to take on multifaceted functions and play the role of the main stage for transformative learning processes. Indeed, the value of individuals with the ability to transform themselves is different in the management of workload and stress that arise in the tourism sector, which is based on multifactorial balances at national and international levels.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness of transformative learning, which may not yield the same results for every individual and every system, depends on individuals having equal opportunities in terms of access to information, freedoms and communication opportunities, and their personality traits being suitable for critical reflection (Akçay, 2012; İzmirli, Odabaşı & Yurdakul, 2012; Malkki, 2010). Therefore, it is wrong to see this theory as a magic wand for all personal development programs and formal education processes. In recent years, research has been conducted examining some teaching methods and topics that can trigger transformative learning. For example, traumatic experiences arising from the unique nature of foreign language teaching and the encounter of foreign language learners with different cultural values related to the language learned can lead to transformations in learners. As a matter of fact, research on the fact that language teaching can lead to such transformations with its effects on both cognitive and affective levels has become widespread (Arı & Kurnaz, 2018). In addition, there are studies that argue that instead of a tourism education based on a classical pedagogical understanding, a tourism education that is in line with the transformative spirit of travel, liberating the individual, emotion-oriented and encouraging critical reflection is possible (Kırlar Can et al. 2021; Walker & Manyambai 2020). In conclusion, there is a need for further studies on the possible transformative effects of tourism education and education methods..

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, a qualitative research design was employed. All qualitative research is concerned with how meanings are constructed, and the primary purpose of this "basic qualitative research" type study is to identify and interpret meanings based on the research questions. In this model, the findings collected by applying the interview technique based on purposeful sampling are thematized and described through inductive data analysis (Merriam, 2018). Therefore, the process that started with the application of the interview form developed in accordance with the purpose of the research to the selected participants was finalized by classifying and describing the findings through codes and themes. In terms of structural features, this research is within the scope of the general survey model. Research in the general survey model identifies and describes a situation that existed in the past or present (Karasar, 2019).

Participants

In qualitative research, sample size does not have the same function as in quantitative research. The aim is not to generalize to the universe, but to get more in-depth information from a small sample. For this reason, some researchers argue that the sample size in qualitative research should be determined according to the data collection method used. For example, in the in-depth interview method, a study group of 30 people is considered as sufficient (Başkale, 2016). The study group of this research, which collected data through in-depth face-to-face interviews, consisted of 34 people.

In qualitative studies, it is important to determine the suitability of the study group size for data collection processes and the adequacy of participation. If the researchers realize that collecting more data does not contribute to the analysis, the application can be terminated. Thus, it is accepted that the optimal study group size has been reached (Merriam, 2018). In this study, it was observed that the average size of the study group in the relevant literature was around 15 people, but it was thought that this might not be sufficient for the structure of this study. The study started with a goal of 25 participants; when it was seen that the similarities in replies increased too much after the 30th participant, data collection was ended after 34 participants.

In order to increase the validity of the purposive-intentional sample, students in the last semesters of both master's and doctoral education processes (in terms of experience accumulation) were selected. Through snowball sampling, which is one of the types of purposive sampling, those who were willing to contribute and who could express themselves among the candidates who met the criteria were selected (Merriam, 2018). Purposive-intentional sampling is based on those whom the researcher believes will find answers to the research questions and is not randomly selected but consists of participants determined according to certain criteria (Altunışık et al., 2010; Merriam, 2018).

The study group consisted of 12 master's and 22 Ph.D. students who were conducting graduate studies in the field of tourism. These students are conducting their graduate studies in eight different state universities in Türkiye. The study group was selected among successful graduate students at the university where the researchers work and participants who could be reached through their volunteer friends. Table 1 presents the profile of the study group.

Table 1. Participant Information

Gender	(f)	%	Age	(f)	%	Graduate Phase	(f)	%	Department	(f)	%
Female	21	61,7	20-24	1	3	Ph.D.	22		Tourism Management	16	
Male	13	38,3	25-29	11	32,3	Master's	12		Gastronomy	10	
Total	34	100	30-34	17	50	Total	34	100	Tourist guiding	8	
			35-39	4	11,7				Total	34	100
			40-44	1	3						
		Total		34	100						

As seen in the Table 1, the majority of the study group which is predominantly female, is between the ages of 25-34 (82.3%). Besides, the majority of them are doctoral students and continue their graduate studies in the departments of "Tourism Management", "Gastronomy" and "Tourist Guiding".

Data Collection Tool and Data Collection Process

The data of this study were collected through interview method. Interview technique is the collection of research data through oral communication (Karasar, 2019). "Face-to-face interview" was preferred as a data collection method among the interview types; a semi-structured interview form consisting of 14 questions was applied as a data collection tool. Face-to-face interviews were conducted through forms printed on paper. This format has more advantages than telephone or computerized applications (Tymms, 2017) and is more suitable for the purpose of this research.

In addition to basic demographic information, the interview form included 8 open-ended questions to identify the basic facts about transformative learning and literary codes in Figure 1. Open-ended questions are often preferred in qualitative research based on the interview technique because they enable in-depth information gathering (Tymms, 2017). In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview forms. The semi-structured interview technique can be applied more flexibly and can provide access to a wider range of data. The aim of this method is not to reach definitive answers, but to enable the participant to describe his/her perceived world in his/her own words (Merriam, 2018).

In accordance with the purposive sampling approach, in the process of identifying suitable candidates, those who were deemed to have adequate communication skills were selected from among the researchers' own graduate students, and then prospective participants were identified from their circle of friends. Firstly, the comprehensibility of the questions was tested by preadministration as a pilot implementation via applying the interview questions to two people of the study group. After some changes were made to the sentence structures in questions 8 and 13, in order to get clarity, the main interviews started then.

Within the scope of internal validity or trustworthiness criterion, for participant confirmation, the data collected by face-to-face interview technique were written and organized on papers and then read to the participants at the end of the interview to confirm their responses. Upon the request of a total of two participants, some corrections were made to the recorded responses. Participant 10 corrected the sentence fragments in her answers to questions 9 and 14. Participant 28 further expanded and elaborated on her answers to questions 11 and 13. The other participants approved what was written without requesting any corrections or changes. Most of the interviews were conducted in the researcher's room in the university building, while some were conducted in graduate school classrooms and other convenient locations on the university campus. The interviews lasted 40-45 minutes on average, and the entire implementation was completed in 17 days. After each 3-4 completed interviews, the status of the data and the course of the research were evaluated by looking at the course and structure of the obtained responses.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of qualitative studies, descriptive analysis or content analysis is generally applied. Content analysis refers to creating themes in accordance with the relationships between the codes derived from the findings with an inductive approach. Three types of coding can be applied in this model: Coding based on concepts in the literature, coding based on research data, and general framed coding reflecting the combination of these (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). In this study, "general framed coding" was applied on the axis of content analysis. For this purpose, while creating the themes, both the literary codes in Figure 1 were utilized and the codes based on the findings were evaluated. Thus, the functionality of the analysis was increased by ensuring that both the basic concepts in the literature and the results based on direct data were used together. The details of the analysis process are described in the Validity and Reliability section.

Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, the criterion of "trustworthiness" is recommended instead of the concepts of validity and reliability in quantitative research. Within the scope of credibility, "purposive sampling", "participant confirmation" and "researcher triangulation/diversification" were used in this study. Participant confirmation refers to the verification of the data and report by contacting the participants at the end of each interview; researcher triangulation refers to the involvement of more than one researcher in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data (Başkale, 2016; Merriam, 2018). In this context, a suitable study group was determined on the basis of purposive sampling in accordance with the basic qualitative research model; the data collected were verified by the participants. In addition, in order to create researcher triangulation, another academic working at Mersin University Faculty of Tourism and conducting graduate courses supported the interview and analysis processes. In these processes, both researchers participated in the data collection and analysis processes consecutively.

In a good qualitative research, a sincere explanation of how the obtained results are reached is an indicator of reliability or consistency. In this method, called the audit technique, it is necessary to describe the analysis process and how the findings were reached, as if recording in a ship's logbook (Merriam, 2018). The analysis process of this study can be summarized as follows:

1- The author of the study and an experienced researcher from the Faculty of Tourism, who supported data collection and analysis, independently carried out the process of creating themes and codes. 34 forms were shared and codes were defined; two rounds of analysis were completed by exchanging the finished forms. While the first researcher identified a total of 15 main codes, the second researcher created 12 codes. It was seen that the difference was due to the detailed recording of the problems related to graduate education, and in order not to deviate from the research purpose, a consensus was reached on the code "inadequacy of graduate education". Afterwards, it was understood that the other codes were close to each other at 90% level and the main code list in Table 2 was created.

2- The creation of themes required a longer effort and the researchers worked in parallel in this process. For example, since it took a long time to define the codes forming the themes of "new habits", "new personality traits", "new knowledge and experiences", the derived codes were shared instantly. After the codes forming the other themes were completed, they were merged and the similar ones were eliminated. At this stage, a complete harmony was achieved in all 6 main themes. The level of agreement in the codes of the themes "broken prejudices" and "graduate education" remained at 70%, and the codes were corrected after discussions and rereading of 16 forms.

3- In the final stage, the interview forms were returned and the initial notes were compared with the codes created. In this context, it was seen from the responses in forms 3,11,19,22 and 31 that the codes "gaining self-confidence" and "being patient" should be added to the theme of "new personality traits".

Research Ethics

All the ethical procedures were implemented in this study. Such principles and related procedures may be defined in two aspects: Participants and researchers. In this research process, all the participants were informed about the research's aim and scope initially, then their all responses were confirmed through confirmation statements after the interviews. There is only one author of this study and there is no need to practice any ethical procedure.

FINDINGS

First of all, when we consider at the codes obtained from the collected findings, we can say that a structure parallel to the literary codes presented in Figure 1 has emerged. Table 2 shows the themes and sub-components generated based on the findings. Before moving on to the findings related to the research questions, it can be said that the participants have a perception of transformation close to the theoretical components of the Transformative Learning Theory. As a matter of fact, the themes developed based on these codes will be more helpful in defining such a transformation. Table 2 shows the themes organized in a way to provide a detailed description and classified in 6 subgroups.

Table 2. Main Themes and Subcomponents

Themes	
<u>New Knowledge Areas</u> - Tourism sector - Writing articles and papers - Accommodation services - Tour management - Economy - Hunting tourism - Business management	<u>New Habits and Hobbies</u> - Book Reading - Monitoring current developments in the tourism sector - Researching recipes for different foods - Conducting research on topics of interest
<u>New Skills and Experiences</u> -To be able to conduct scientific research -To be able to publish scientific publications - Ability to think fast - Tour organization	<u>Old Prejudices and Habits Which Are Broken</u> - Old study methods and long study period - Prejudgmentalism - Believing everything you hear without question - Aversion to different foods and culinary cultures - Dislike of different cultures and people - Hostility towards foreign tourists

- Ability to empathize	- Not accepting tourism as a science
-Establishing social relations	- Intolerance of criticism
- Communication	
- Making a presentation	
- Hygienic work	
- Critical thinking	
- Self-expression	
- Lecturing	
New Personality Traits	Graduate Education
-Gaining different perspective	- Outdated course material
- Learning to question	- Inadequate research and scientific work techniques
- Critical thinking	- Course content and methods indistinguishable from undergraduate education
- Gaining self-esteem	- Insensitivity to students' demands
- Tolerance	- Sufficient and comprehensive course topics
- Patience	-Ability to think more scientifically than in undergraduate education
	- Gaining the ability to think and work scientifically
	-More functional and developmental knowledge acquisition compared to undergraduate education
	- Inadequacy of academics

In the light of the themes shown in the Table 2, the findings according to the research questions are presented below:

1- What are the students' opinions about the graduate education they have received?

Although the findings show that the majority of the students have positive opinions about the graduate education process, the content and axis of the negative opinions heavily question the effectiveness of graduate education.

Table 3. Opinions on Graduate Education

Positive Opinions
Course topics are adequate and comprehensive
Scientific thinking skills have been gained
The habit of scientific study was born
More functional and developmental information compared to undergraduate education
Negative Opinions
Course material is outdated
The scientific research methods taught are inadequate
Course content and teaching methods are no different from undergraduate education
Faculty members are insensitive to students' demands
Faculty members are academically inadequate

A total of 11 students expressed both positive and negative opinions, 4 students expressed entirely negative evaluations, and the remaining 19 students expressed entirely positive opinions. Table 3 shows these findings. When we consider the distribution according to demographic and academic profile, it is seen that primarily female students expressed more negative opinions than male students. While the majority of male students defined graduate education as adequate and developmental, the majority of female students emphasized the deficiencies related to course content and scientific research techniques.

As an example of positive evaluations, participant-33's response is as follows:

P33: "The courses and topics I took during the training were very good. In particular, it was very useful to learn about Industry 4.0, which is one of the most important issues in business management today, and the advantages, disadvantages and people affected by it."

However, the most emphasized negative situation is the inadequacy of the way scientific research methods courses are taught and their content. Approximately 40% of master's students and half of doctoral students stated that their graduate education process was inadequate. In addition, those who stated that they received graduate education for personal development stated that they gained new knowledge and skills, but two of them emphasized inadequacy in terms of content and methodology.

The responses of P17 and P25 reflect their views on the content and curriculum of the educational processes.

P17: "Economics, politics, destination management, sustainability and scientific research methods courses should definitely be taught and explained properly in graduate education. Because a student or a tourism professional should be able to make economic forecasts while listening to the news or following the agenda of the country and analyze what is meant by the information provided. When choosing courses, students should be asked why they are doing graduate education in the first place, and students should be guided to choose the right courses. Courses should be determined according to the needs of the society, not according to the lecturer. [...]"

P25: "What did the courses I took contribute to me? I filtered which subjects I lacked, which courses I could not get efficiency from. The courses I took during the graduate education process were necessary. They made positive and productive contributions in terms of how to conduct research and how to collect data. But there were also places where they were insufficient. Research methods and techniques were mostly theoretical and superficial."

The following response example emphasizes the views that question the adequacy of academic staff:

P20: "I did my bachelor's degree at another university and my master's and doctorate at another university. I had the opportunity to evaluate both universities. I do not think that the lecturers of the university where I did my MA and PhD are very competent in graduate education. In the PhD, except for one lecturer, the lectures were no different from graduate education in the form of lectures. At this point, the job falls to the candidate.[...]"

As can be seen from the above responses, the level of students' expectations is not compatible with what the graduate education process can offer, and students are seemed to be at a level to express clear demands about this situation.

2- How has the graduate education received by the students created a conflict with the old knowledge, skills and views learned and acquired in their previous lives?

Table 4 shows the findings on graduate students' experience of conflict and dilemma.

Table 4. Conflict in Old-New Knowledge and Skills

Experience of Conflict	(f)	%
It has created conflict in knowledge, beliefs and opinions	8	24
It has not created a conflict	26	76
Total	*34*	*100*

According to the findings in the Table 4, 8 of participants stated an experience of conflict, but the rest. Both female and male students (4 each) stated that they experienced conflict between the knowledge and views from their previous experiences and the knowledge and views gained during their graduate education. In the master's-Ph.D. distribution of the responses, it was observed that the majority of the participants who stated that they experienced conflict were participants in the doctoral process. 3 master's students and 5 Ph.D. students responded positively to this question.

P1, one of the male participants who stated that he had experienced conflicts, emphasized that he had conflicts especially regarding his religious beliefs, indicating that the basic references related to his worldview were questioned:

P1: "The courses I took and the theses I wrote in my graduate education did not cause any conflict with the values and ideas I had in my previous life, except for one important issue. However, the process that I think led to a conflict regarding my religious belief took place in the Philosophy of Science course I took during my doctoral program. The way the course was taught allowed me to freely present ideas and freely question the topics[...] The sources we read on the history of religions and the perspective on science in the same period both affected me as a person coming from a conservative society and made me question my religious belief at some point."[...]

And participant P15's response points to the conflict between practice and theory:

P15: "The personal observations and experiences I have gained in my social life have often clashed with the scientific backgrounds I have learned in my graduate studies. The best example of this was when I had to unconditionally accept the scientific background of the topic I was studying in my first research study."[...].

The vast majority of participants (76%) stated that they had not experienced a conflict that could be a trigger for a possible transformation. The examples of P6 and P11 presented below reflect this.

P6: "When you already have graduate education, you understand that the education you receive in undergraduate education is simpler and more understandable. It is understood that graduate education is more

academic.[...] In general, I did not have any conflict of opinion. I just did not have enough knowledge about academics and academic education."

P11: "The courses taken in graduate education (master's and doctorate) do not differ from the courses taken in undergraduate education. Therefore, it did not lead to a conflict regarding the values I hold. The thesis did not cause a conflict in the same way."

3- What kind of new knowledge and skills do students think they have gained with the education they have received?

Considering that graduate education should have different and effective outcomes, the participants were asked about their new knowledge, skills and experience. All but one of the participants in the master's program responded positively to this question, while three of the participants in the doctoral program stated that they did not gain anything. Therefore, the majority of the participants (30 people) said that they gained something from their graduate education. Table 5 shows the areas of new knowledge, new skills and experiences reported to have been gained by these respondents.

Table 5. New Achievements

New Knowledge Areas	New Skills and Experiences
- Tourism sector	- To be able to conduct scientific research
- Writing articles and papers	- Scientific publication
- Accommodation services	- Fast thinking
- Tour management	- Tour organization
- Economy	- Ability to empathize
- Hunting tourism	- Establishing social relationships
- Business management	- Effective communication
	- Making a presentation
	- Hygienic operation
	- Critical thinking
	- Self-expression
	- Lecturing

As seen in the Table 5, the new areas of knowledge mentioned by the participants include academic subjects related to the tourism sector, and thus, it is seen that some knowledge gains are realized on top of the knowledge provided by undergraduate education.

A more comprehensive list of outcomes has been identified pertaining to "skills and experiences". It can be posited that these emerge not only within professional and academic realms but also extend to perspectives on life and interactions with others. Conversely, four of the participants have indicated that postgraduate education has not contributed any value to them.

The responses of P18 and P27 point to intellectual gains such as being able to think critically and develop empathy towards differences:

P18: "One's perspective changes inevitably. As we read, we start to look at events and situations from a different and wider perspective. As I read articles and encounter different opinions of different authors, I realized that I started to be less certain. Different reasons and results can be obtained by looking at the same event from different angles."

P27: "Getting to know new cultures, which is one of the main purposes of tourism, was one of the factors that changed my perspective on life. On a large scale, I learned that I should examine the cultures of people in other countries before questioning their behavior. I started to approach people in my country, which hosts many cultures, more moderately."

Among the participants who emphasized academic knowledge and skills, the responses of P20 and P26 stood out:

P20: "I definitely gained something. I learned how to make analyses; I learned how to do academic work. In my master's degree, I preferred to write my thesis in the field of marketing because I considered myself incomplete in the field of marketing. But I learned that this was a wrong strategy over time. Later, thanks to the necessary readings and research, I determined that my field of interest was human resources and organizational behavior."

P26: "By participating in activities on tourism, I had the opportunity to gain new knowledge both personally and by communicating with experts in the field. By participating in congresses, symposiums and

conferences, it helped me to contribute to the literature by preparing studies related to the field and presenting my thoughts. It gave me the habit of reading books, magazines, articles and news carefully."

4- What kind of transformation do students think the education they have received has led to in their personality traits and individual lives?

This question was used to determine the perception of a dimension that plays a key role in terms of Transformative Learning Theory. 11 of the doctoral student participants and 8 of the master's student participants stated that they had experiences that meant a change in their personality traits and transformation in their lives. The majority of these were female participants (14 female, 5 male). The responses regarding permanent change and transformation were categorized as habit, hobby and personality trait. Table 6 shows the new habits and personality traits mentioned by those who have experienced such a situation.

Table 6. Transformation Status of Graduate Education

New Habits and Hobbies	*New Personality Traits*
- Book Reading	- Gaining different perspectives
- Monitoring current developments in the tourism sector	- Learning to question
- Researching recipes for different foods	- Critical thinking
- Conducting research on topics of interest	- Gaining self-confidence
	- Tolerance
	- Patience

In the Table 6, 4 themes have been conducted as new habits&hobbies, and 6 themes have been determined as new personality traits. In this context, participant P27's response is one of the responses that indicates a wide-impact personality transformation and shows that the individual is able to move to a stage of self-criticism that accompanies the ability to act from different perspectives. P14's response, on the other hand, describes a change that leads to the disappearance of a prejudice that is entrenched at both academic and social levels:

P27: "First of all, graduate education showed me that there are things I need to question in every aspect of my life. The education I received started to remind itself in every step I took. I started to measure the accuracy of my actions and speech.[...] I was not afraid to change and I did not avoid explaining the things I thought were wrong to those around me by giving a logical explanation. Graduate education did not only help me learn scientific knowledge; it caused me to criticize my own life with that knowledge."

P14: "In my master's degree, I prepared a thesis on the evaluation of accommodation facilities in terms of their suitability for people with disabilities. Therefore, some of the studies I read during the thesis preparation process affected my approach to people with disabilities in my social life. For example, people with disabilities do not like it when we fall into the misconception that they need help in everything, and this is an annoying situation they often encounter. I now try to remember this when I meet someone with a disability."

Participants P3 and P6 are among the best examples reflecting the transformations that can arise from gains at the professional and personal levels. In these examples, it is seen that critical thinking, questioning and learning by researching attitudes can be gained:

P3: "Living a life of research and learning may be the most important development I have gained on this path. I try to see the real and scientific side by not being fixed-minded, not believing everything I hear or investigating what is going on behind what I hear and see. This makes a difference for me."

P6: "Of course, it has a lot to gain in terms of education and sector development. When you do not improve yourself, the fact that you have a graduate education will become meaningless for your environment. Before graduate education, I was not in an effort to do much research in the field, but this has improved me and I am constantly trying to learn new information."

5- What are the students' evaluations of the old habits or views broken after the conflicts between old and new knowledge and ideas caused by the education they received?

This research question also includes findings that can be considered as signs of important transformations in terms of Transformative Learning Theory. The identification of old habits and attitudes that have been broken may indicate a change in a person's character or attitudes. 6 master's and 11 doctoral students (17 participants in total) reported such an experience. Four of these were men and the rest were women. Table 7 presents the findings of those who responded positively to this question.

Table 7. Broken Prejudices and Habits

- Old study methods and long study period
- Prejudgmentalism
- Believing everything you hear without question
- Intolerance of criticism
- Aversion to different foods and culinary cultures
- Dislike of different cultures and people
- Hostility towards foreign tourists
- Not accepting tourism as a science

As seen in the Table 7, there are 8 themes defined as broken attitudes and/or habits. Some examples of responses presented below show that graduate education in tourism has contributed to reducing or eliminating reservations and prejudices against diversity in some individuals. For example, P10 and P34 describe transformations in structures that are closed and prejudiced towards different cultures and ways of life:

P10: "I was not very open to trying new flavors and having new experiences before. The gastronomy tourism I am working on is based on the need to be the opposite, to be open to new flavors and experiences. This has helped me to be open to innovation, not only in food and drink, but in many areas, to not show excessive resistance and to get rid of my prejudices."

P34: "[...] The information I learned broadened my horizons and made me look at life from different perspectives. My prejudices against foreign tourists were broken. While I used to think that many tourist models were hostile to Turks and our country, this prejudice has disappeared."

An example of a response pointing to the emergence of questioning, acceptance of criticism and the ability to think critically together came from P17:

P17: "Before, I was very upset when I was criticized. Now, I can be happy when I am criticized. I say, "How nice that they have made it better." Also, before, when I read and learned something, I would say, "OK, this is true," and memorize the information. Now I think more critically; I question more; I ask the questions, "According to what and according to whom?"

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When we consider the characteristics and functions of graduate studies, we see functions such as disseminating science and art, defining social problems and producing appropriate solutions, and supporting the training of high-level workforce. Graduate education has become a necessity due to factors such as the increase in the number of undergraduate graduates, economic crises and technological transformations (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010), and the role of graduate education in the new generation university concept has become more critical, and the tourism sector has become one of the fields with the highest need in this regard. In this context, Mezirow's approach, which encourages learners to question, critically reflect and alternative perspectives, is in line with the structure of the workforce profile needed in many branches of tourism education. For example, innovative and creative individuals needed in fields such as hotel management, travel and guiding can be trained through graduate education programs that can achieve transformative change.

In today's environment where learner-centered lifelong learning is becoming more widespread, graduate studies can serve as the main stage for transformative learning processes. The findings of this study showed that the study group, which participated in the graduate education process in the field of tourism, was able to achieve gains close to some of the learning objectives envisaged for the tourism sector in general. In particular, the achievements of being able to make academic publications, give lectures, communicate effectively, think critically, empathize and tolerate differences are noteworthy.

The research findings show that there is not enough indication of the existence of perspective transformation, which is a key component in the transformative learning process. In other words, there are no signs of a transformation equivalent to Mezirow's definition of meaning/reference frame. In terms of external factors, this may be due to the fact that a purposeful and planned transformative education model is not implemented in graduate education practices, and in terms of internal factors, it may be due to the individual characteristics of the learners. It may be due to the fact that the educator-teacher roles in the graduate education process are focused on the acquisition of certain academic knowledge and skills instead of directing to questioning and criticizing. On the other hand, although no real transformation can be mentioned, most of the participants described learning experiences that left important traces and signaled cognitive and emotional changes, albeit limited. Among those who reported gaining new character traits (new habits, ways of thinking and attitudes) and new skills, gaining self-

confidence, gaining a critical perspective and gaining academic skills stood out. It was also found that some participants were able to engage in critical reflection.

Participants' reasons for pursuing graduate studies were predominantly focused on academic goals. In addition, a significant group (21%) stated that they pursued graduate education for personal development purposes, and all of them stated that they gained new knowledge and skills during their graduate education. Therefore, it can be said that this study group was able to fulfill the function of the graduate education process to gain certain knowledge and skills. In Aydemir and Çam's (2015) qualitative study, the reasons for gaining an academic career, competence and prestige were also emphasized as goals.

Regarding the quality of graduate education, it was observed that female students expressed more negative opinions than male students. The majority of male students defined graduate education as adequate and developmental, while female students emphasized the deficiencies in course content and scientific research techniques. The most emphasized negative situation among both male and female students is the inadequacy of the content and the way scientific research methods courses are taught. Approximately 40% of master's students and half of doctoral students stated that their graduate education process was inadequate. This situation may not be related to the expectations from graduate education, but may indicate the deficiencies that the participants were able to identify with their knowledge and awareness of the content and methodology. As a matter of fact, the points raised by the participants who expressed negative opinions also showed that they had a high level of expectation from graduate education and that they had the cognitive competence to evaluate this educational process. In addition, all of the participants who stated that they received graduate education for personal development stated that they gained new knowledge and skills; two of them described the education as inadequate in terms of content and methodology. Considering at some quantitative studies from abroad, Ruhanen and McLennan (2012) found that in their study on graduate students in tourism, students demanded an education that provides active learning with an emphasis on practice and hoped to gain work experience during their education. Kazmina et al. (2020) emphasized the need to train innovative individuals in tourism education. In Leshchenko et al.'s (2021) empirical study on graduate students, it was emphasized that the ability to conduct scientific research focused on digital transformation and information society should be gained. Such parallel findings may indicate that the quality of graduate education is not aligned with the transformations in learners' expectations or societal needs.

The responses to the conflict experience question, which emphasizes a key dimension in terms of Transformative Learning Theory, showed that the graduate education experience of the study group had a low power to create a conflict in the direction of transformative learning. As a matter of fact, although it was understood that conflicts that could lead to a perspective transformation with critical reflection were not experienced much, a few participants experienced situations that led to serious conflicts with some values and views in their previous lives. There were 5 participants who showed sufficient evidence that the dilemmas and conflicts they experienced led to a real transformation. This group, which constitutes the majority of the 8 participants who stated that they had experienced a conflict between their old lives and their achievements in the graduate education process, emphasized the axes of "renewing the philosophy of life", "courage to question everything" and "tolerance towards differences" that could trigger perspective transformation. The transformation stage is the end point of the Transformative Learning Theory, which is reached by completing the other stages. In the success of the process that starts with a confusing dilemma or conflict, the fact that the instructor and learners are oriented towards the goal of change in cooperation and readiness plays an important role (Akçay, 2012). However, in graduate learning experiences, it may not be common for instructors and educational programs to include such goals. In addition, the majority of those who stated that they experienced a conflict and dilemma were in doctoral education. This may be due to the potential of doctoral education to lead to different, freer and more critical thinking and acting skills compared to master's education. In Nyamunda and Westhuizen's (2018) study on triggering potential entrepreneurship of university students, it was observed that dilemma and conflict experiences yielded more effective results for female students.

In recent years, some studies based on the transformative teaching approach have shown that both the increase in knowledge and skills and the needed individual transformations can be achieved through the cooperation of the instructor and the learners. For example, the characteristic structure of foreign language education can enable learners to be transformed by being influenced by the cultural differences reflected in a foreign language. Moreover, there have been studies showing that transformations begin when foreign language instructors apply new techniques that foster learners' participation and creativity (Arı and Kurnaz, 2018). This feature of foreign language learning can be compared to the interactions created by the multicultural content of the tourism field. As a matter of fact, one of the important findings of this study, "tolerance towards differences" behavior, is a point reached after the participants encountered the food, lifestyle and views of people from different

cultures. Similarly, a study examining the internship experiences of Chinese and Spanish trainee teachers showed that the transformative learning process played a role in the formation of trainee teachers' professional identity (Zhu, Iglesia & Wang, 2020).

The majority of the participants stated that they gained important knowledge and skills during their graduate education. The new areas of knowledge mentioned included topics related to the tourism sector, thus indicating that in addition to the narrow scope of knowledge provided by undergraduate education, knowledge from related fields was also gained. A richer list of gains was identified in the area of skills and experiences, which can be said to have emerged not only at the professional and academic level, but also in a wider range of areas, including life outlook and communication with other people. For example, the ability to think quickly, empathize, establish social relationships, gain a critical perspective, and express oneself are considered to be basic skills that are not only necessary in academic life but also critical for daily life, and can be said to reflect the characteristics of the workforce needed in the tourism sector. In Tarcan İçigen et al.'s (2018) study on tourism sector managers' perceptions of graduate education, it was observed that graduate education contributes to both personal and professional development. Similarly, the transformative education model developed by Tsimane and Downing (2020) in nursing education facilitated the training of nurses who can think critically and make rational decisions.

In our opinion, one of the most important findings of this study is that the majority of the participants (25 participants) stated that they gained positive new character traits and work habits with graduate education. All of the male participants expressed this view. This may be due to the fact that female participants were less inclined or willing to acquire new character traits and habits. The identification of old habits and attitudes that have been broken may indicate a change in character or attitudes. Moreover, half of the participants emphasized that graduate education in tourism eliminated prejudices and preconceptions towards different phenomena, ideas, cultures and tastes. As a matter of fact, this finding is reminiscent of the philosophy of tourism education proposed by Walker & Manyamba (2020), which is emotion-oriented and liberating for learners, stemming from the unique nature of tourism.

The responses to the question on the old habits and worldviews broken indicate the existence of stereotypes against the different and foreign. This is because, among the old habits and attitudes that the participants said they had broken, "prejudice" and "intolerance towards different people and cultures" stood out. Changing such stereotyped attitudes is not easy; it requires the individual to face dilemmas and come to terms with himself/herself and explore new perspectives in the context of transformative theory (Jacobs, 2019), so it may carry clues about the existence of transformative learning. The majority of those who stated this were female students. This may mean that women in the study group are more willing or inclined to abandon old thoughts, habits or attitudes rather than acquiring new personality traits.

In Çimen and Yılmaz's (2014) study on prospective biology teachers, when the effect of transformative learning theory on the experimental group was examined, it was seen that there was a significant difference in knowledge, attitude and behavior changes. In Güler's (2021) qualitative study on the transformative effects of visual art education through music, transformations were observed in undergraduate and graduate students in the direction of developing abstract thinking and creativity, moving away from rote memorization, and provoking metaphorical thinking. Based on these findings, it can be argued that some changes and gains have emerged in this study group, which received graduate education in the field of tourism, regarding some of the issues required by today's conditions and the tourism sector. The experiences of "experiencing dilemmas and conflicts", "acquiring new character traits" and "breaking some old prejudices and habits" and the skill of "critical reflection", which were found in a small part of the participants, showed that a transformation process may have been triggered and certain stages may have been completed, even though it is not yet mature and complete.

Recommendations

Future researchers may be advised to examine the reasons for the prevention or interruption of learning-based individual transformations in terms of various factors through quantitative studies to be conducted in parallel with such qualitative studies. In addition, it has been found that there are very few studies on both graduate tourism education and transformative learning theory in the relevant literature in Turkiye. Therefore, new researches should be encouraged to meet the need for knowledge accumulation in these areas.

Limitations

This research is limited to the perceptions and opinions of 34 participants from Mersin University. Additionally, as a qualitative research design, it is not recommended to derive and disscuss inductive results from that study's findings.

Statements of Publication Ethics

In this article, the writing and ethical rules of the journal, the publication principles of the journal, and the rules of scientific research and publication ethics have been fully complied with. All responsibility for any ethical violations that may arise from this study belongs to the author. The ethical approval document required for research permission was obtained from the Ethical Committee of Social Sciences and Humanities of Mersin University, with the date and number 25.10.2021-173.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this research. The research was carried out without any commercial or financial support from any legal person, institution or organization.

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