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Encouraging Digital Competence
for VET Learners in Europe

2021-KA226-2FF4477E Erasmus+ project

Research Summary, CY

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1. DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODOLOGY

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF TASKS

The development of the preliminary investigation was coordinated by SYNTHESIS. Different types of research were carried out (including field research) in order to understand the demotivation of VET learners regarding learning digital competences:

-Reports and questionnaires related to the actions, strategies and tools already carried out by counsellors and trainers.

-Questionnaires filled out during orientation sessions and related to training. Learners answered questions such as what discourages them, what could motivate them, what makes it difficult for them to access training, why they think it is not important, etc.

-Previous research on the same or analogous fields.

-Research on existing training programmes and pedagogical models.

Each partner produced a report of their country following the model prepared by SYNTHESIS, who was responsible for writing the conclusions in terms of common elements and specific characteristics.

1.2. PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OUTLINE

The preliminary investigation outline was based on 2 layers of investigation:

1. Primary Research in the form of Field Research (questionnaires, focus groups)
2. Secondary Research in the form of Desk Research (literature review)

The types of research design utilised were exploratory research design and causal research design.

Exploratory Research Design refers to research conducted when it is necessary to **understand the general nature of the problem**, identify possible alternatives to the solution, as well as relevant variables that need to be taken into account, relating to the phenomenon demotivation in VET learners and the factors contributing to it.

Causal Research Design refers to research aimed at **determining the relationship between a cause and effect**. It is also known as explanatory research, and it can help establish causal links between demotivation of VET learners and possible causes, therefore informing potential interventions to boost the learning process and the acquisition of digital competences.

The preliminary investigation was carried out in 3 phases:

For Primary Research:

1. Preparatory Phase: identification of suitable participants (VET learners, VET teachers, VET stakeholders)
2. Implementation Phase: administration and collection of questionnaires, delivery of focus groups (either online or phase to phase)
3. Processing Phase: collection and summary of findings (per partner)

For Secondary Research:

1. Preparatory Phase: Collection of existing data (literature review)
2. Processing Phase: Processing of data, input of findings onto the template
3. Iterative Phase: Review and partner feedback & brief discussion

Final Phase:

Integration of the findings of Primary Research & Secondary Research will be combined into a final report created by SYNTHESIS, and will be included in the Methodology document, which is one of the main Intellectual Output of the project.

1.3. QUESTIONNAIRES

Three types of questionnaires have been designed: one for Learners, one for VET Teachers / Instructors, and one for Stakeholders / Providers.

The three questionnaire models are attached below.

Primary Research Template Questionnaire Template for VET Learners

Demographic Information:

Age group
Gender

Background Information:

1. Are you currently a VET learner?
2. Have you been a VET learner in the past?
3. Are you thinking of becoming a VET learner in the future?
4. Have you ever dropped out of a VET course or learning programme?

VET learning experience:

5. What were the reasons that made you drop out of the course / learning program (you can choose more than one)?
 - Lack of time
 - Lack of motivation
 - Poor Quality of the training programme
 - Lack of financial stability and/or resources
 - Poor connection with the instructor
 - Poor facilities
 - Personal / family reasons
 - Other (please indicate) _____
6. Did you seek out support before dropping out?
7. If yes, how was your request handled?
It was handled well, it was handled poorly, it was not answered at all
8. If no, what were the reasons that prevented you from seeking support before dropping out?
 - Embarrassment
 - Confusion as to whom to contact
 - Inability to explain effectively
 - Not interested in receiving support
 - Not interested in continuing with the course / training program
9. During a VET programme / course have you ever felt demotivated?
10. How would you describe feeling demotivated?
 - An overall lack of motivation for all things and tasks
 - A lack of motivation only in relation to attending / completing the VET training / program
 - Feeling bored
 - Feeling unheard
 - Feeling unimportant
 - Feeling overwhelmed
 - Having difficulty in communicating with other VET learners and/or the instructor

11. What in your opinion contributed to those feelings of demotivation?

- The VET teacher / instructor
- The rest of the VET learners
- The content of the training
- Difficulty of the training
- Delivery of the training and teaching methods
- Personal circumstances
- Outside events (not related to the VET environment)

12. What would have changed these feelings of demotivation for you?

- Better communication with the VET learners
- Better communication and support by the VET teachers / instructors
- Better scheduling
- Better delivery of the training and different teaching methods
- Monetary or other awards and benefits associated with the VET learning / training
- External support (by family, friends, etc)
- Support offered by the VET provider
- One to one support sessions
- A change in personal circumstances
- Other (please indicate) _____

13. From your experience with VET learning so far, it is easier to become demotivated when dealing with what type of content?

- Theoretical
- Technical
- Both
- Other (please indicate) _____

Primary Research Template

Questionnaire Template for VET Teachers / Instructors

Demographic Information:

Age group:

Gender:

Years of experience in the VET sector:

Background Information:

1. Are you currently a VET teacher/ instructor?
2. Have you been a VET teacher / instructor in the past?
3. Are you thinking of becoming a VET teacher / instructor in the future?
4. How would you rate your experience as a VET professional?
Very positive, positive, neutral, negative, very negative

VET teaching experience assessment:

5. Have you experienced learners quitting the training or failing to commit to it?
6. What percentage do these learners represent in your experience?
0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, more than 75%

What are the reasons -in your opinion- contributing to the above?

- Lack of time
 - Poor performance
 - Lack of commitment
 - Lack of motivation
 - Lack of financial Resources
 - Difficulties in interpersonal communication
 - External factors (work, family, etc)
 - Personal factors (personal problems, struggles, illness)
 - Poor quality and/or delivery of the training
7. Have you observed students / learners becoming demotivated?
 - What are the reasons -in your opinion- that lead to learners becoming demotivated?
Poor understanding of the learning material
 - Poor engagement in the learning process
 - Inefficient delivery of the training
 - Poor communication, rapport, or connection to the rest of the learners
 - Poor communication, rapport, or connection to the trainer / instructor
 - Difficulty with grasping new information and/or performing tasks / assignments
 - Difficulties with technical competences
 - Personal Circumstances
 - Lack of support by the learner's environment (family, friends, etc)
 - External situations

8. Did you take any corrective measures / initiatives to address demotivated learners?

9. What kind of measures / interventions did you offer for demotivated learners?

- One to one support sessions
- Additional support within the class / group
- Additional learning material
- Change of delivery method or teaching method
- Events / meetings or other group activities
- Other (please indicate) _____
- None

10. How successful were these interventions?

Highly successful, successful, not successful, completely unsuccessful

11. What other interventions would you propose for demotivated learners?

(Please indicate).

Primary Research Template

Questionnaire Template for VET Stakeholders / Providers

Background Information:

1. What is your role within the VET sector?
 - VET provider
 - VET policy maker
 - Government or Public Authority
 - VET sector regulating body

VET Stakeholders / Providers Experience Assessment:

2. How would you rate the VET sector in your experience?
Very satisfactory, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, severely lacking
3. What are the main issues / problems / concerns in the sector?
 - Lack of funding
 - Lack of regulations
 - Poor quality of learners
 - Poor quality of teachers / instructors
 - Limited awareness about the sector
 - Poor quality of facilities / means of delivery for VET trainings
 - External social, political, financial conditions
 - Other (please indicate) _____
4. Are you aware of demotivation of learners as negative factor within the sector?
5. How important would you say demotivation of learners is?
Very important, important, not very important, not important at all
6. Have you taken measures to address demotivation of learners?
7. What measures / interventions / initiatives have you taken to address learners' demotivation?
 - Improved facilities
 - Flexible scheduling
 - Academic support services
 - Personal mentoring or other support
 - Benefits / Awards associated with trainings
 - Links between employment and VET training
 - Media and communication campaigns
 - Research into the issue
 - Policy changes
 - Other (please indicate) _____
8. What other suggestions you have to address demotivation of learners on your (stakeholder / provider) part? (Please Indicate)

2. PRIMARY RESEARCH SUMMARY, CY

The summary of participation of the results of the questionnaires in Cyprus is reflected below. Detailed conclusions of the results are also included below with the final conclusions included in the Transnational Report.

2.1. VET LEARNERS

2.1.1 VET learners profile

NUMBER OF LEARNERS: 13
GENRE: 10 females and 3 males
AGE GROUP: From 21 to over 35

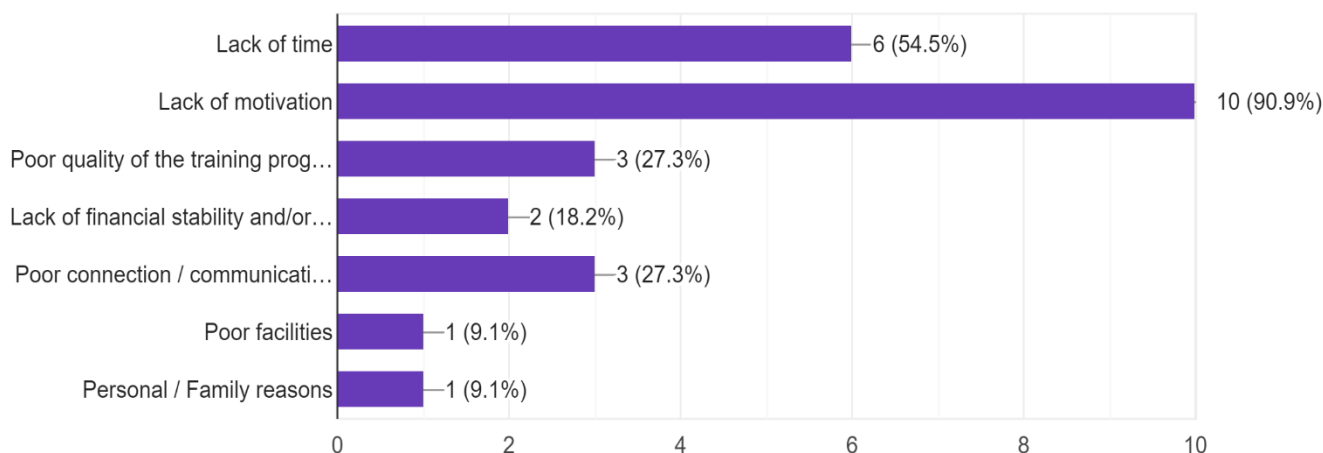
ACADEMIC SITUATION:

- 61.5% are currently VET students
- 69.2% have been VET students in the past
- 69.2% are also thinking of remaining / becoming VET students in the future
- 84.6% have dropped other studies

The following reasons were offered for dropping out of VET courses:

What were the reasons that made you drop out of the course?

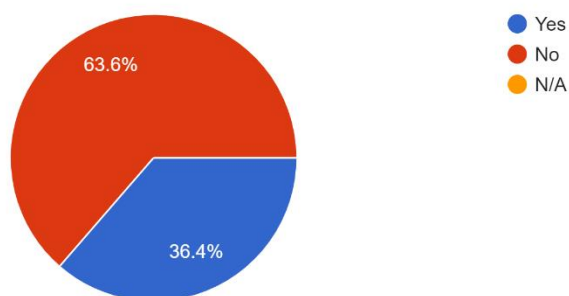
11 responses



Regarding support requested and support received:

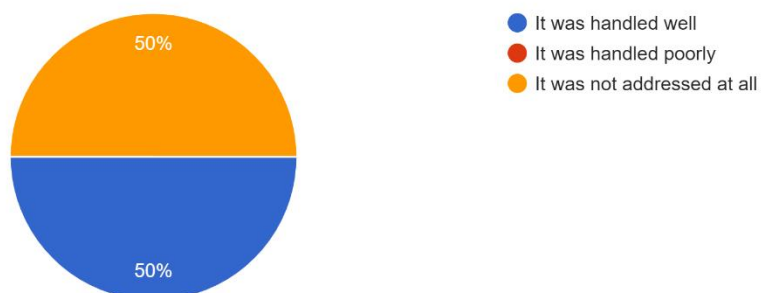
Did you seek support before dropping out?

11 responses



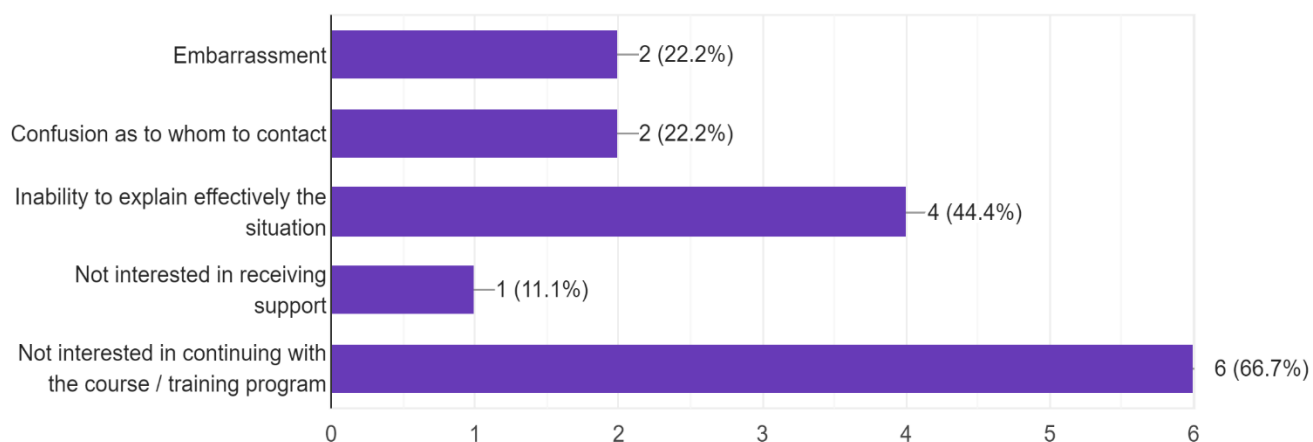
If yes, how was your request handled?

4 responses



If no, what were the reasons that prevented you from seeking support before dropping out?

9 responses

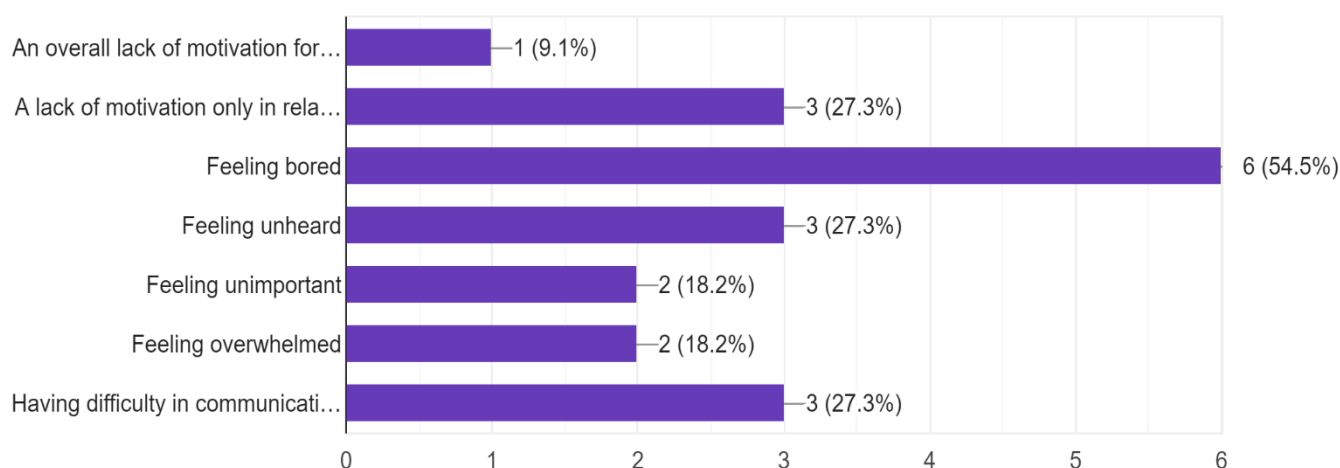


2.1.2 VET learners' results summary

Regarding the feeling of demotivation, 90.9% of survey participants have felt demotivated, citing the below input:

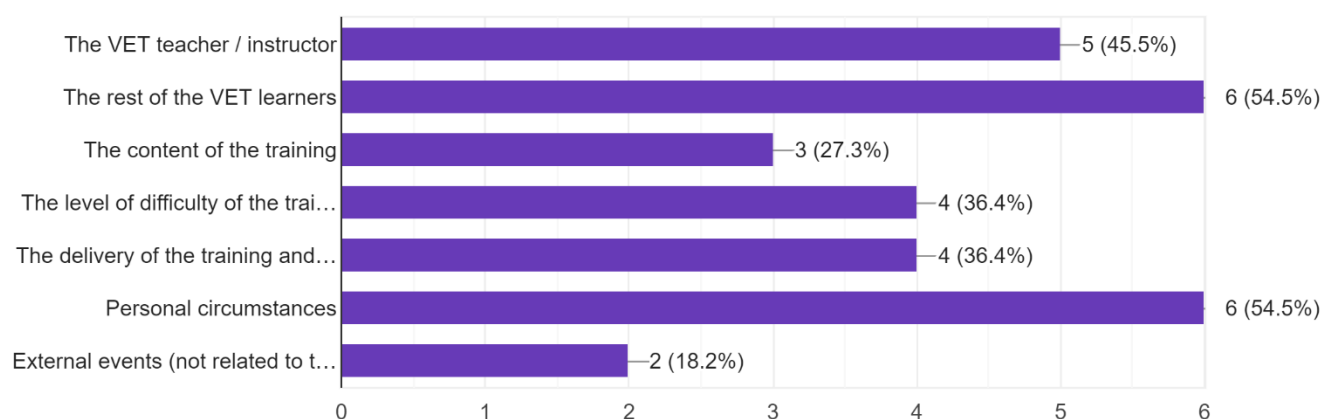
How would you describe feeling demotivated?

11 responses



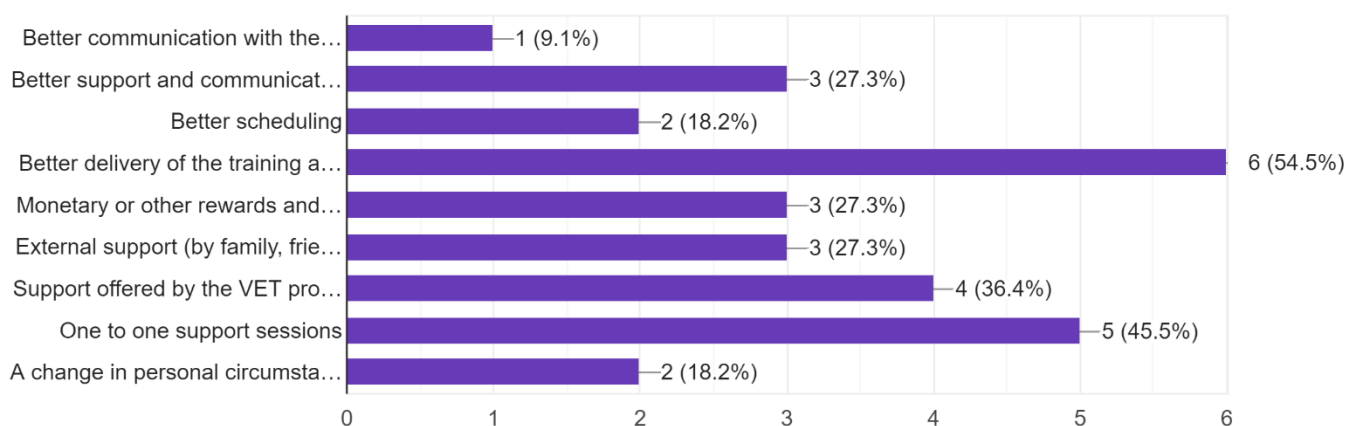
What -in your opinion- contributed to those feelings of demotivation?

11 responses



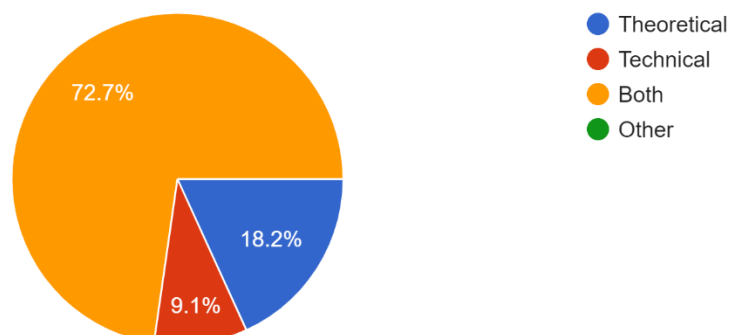
What could have changed those feelings of demotivation for you?

11 responses



From your experience with VET learning so far, it is easier to become demotivated when dealing with what type of content?

11 responses



2.2. VET TRAINERS

2.2.1 VET Instructors / Teachers / Trainers profile

NUMBER OF TRAINERS: 4
 ROLE IN THE SECTOR: Teacher / Instructor / Trainer
 AGE GROUP: From 31 to 45
 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: Less than 5 to more than 10

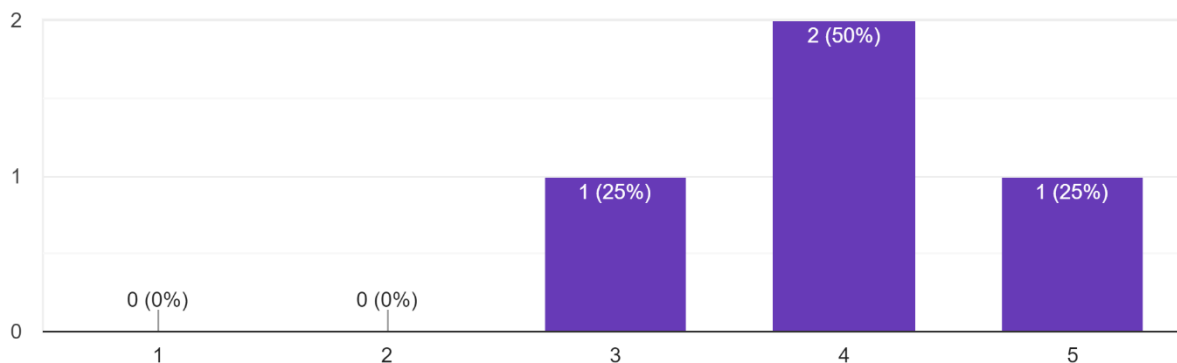
ACADEMIC SITUATION:

- all of them are currently teaching

2.2.2 VET trainers' results summary

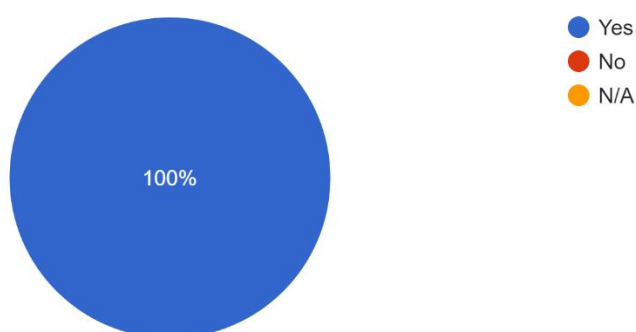
How would you rate your experience as a VET professional so far?

4 responses



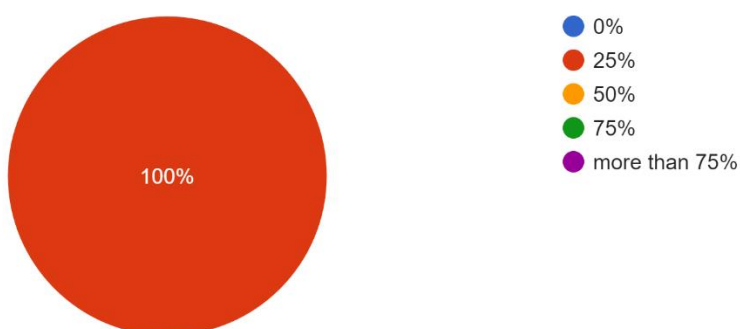
Have you experienced learners quitting the training or failing to commit?

4 responses



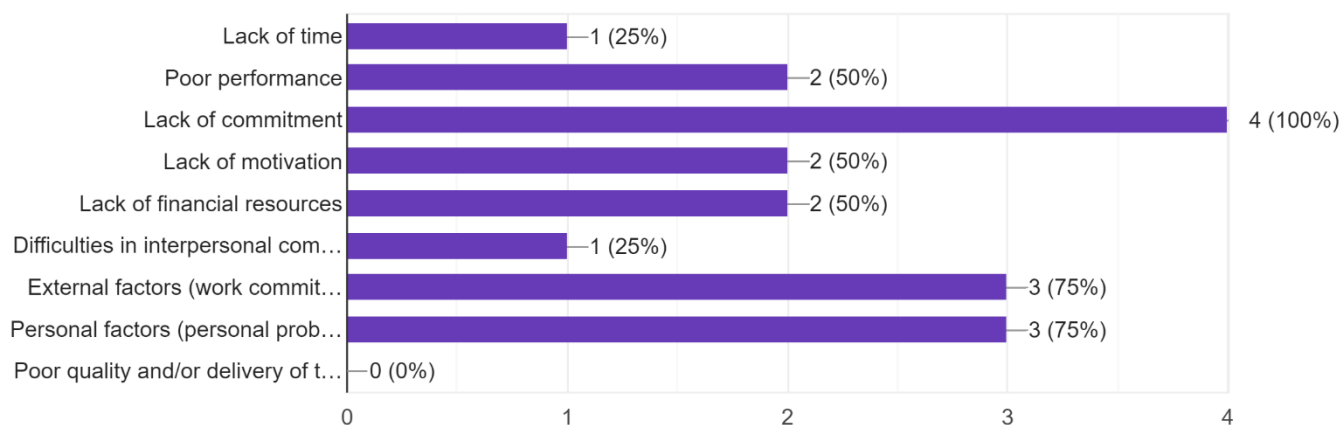
What percentage do these learners represent in your experience?

4 responses



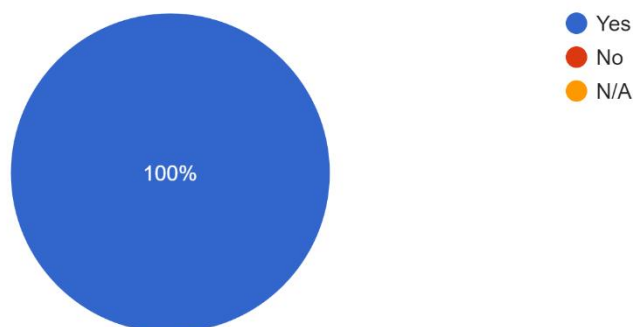
What are the reasons, in your opinion, contributing to the above?

4 responses



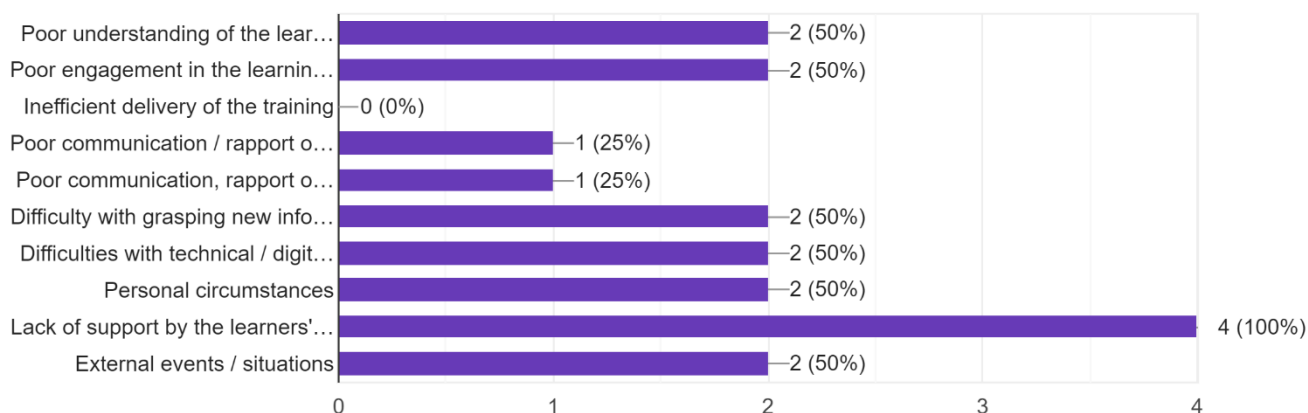
Have you observed students / learners becoming demotivated?

4 responses



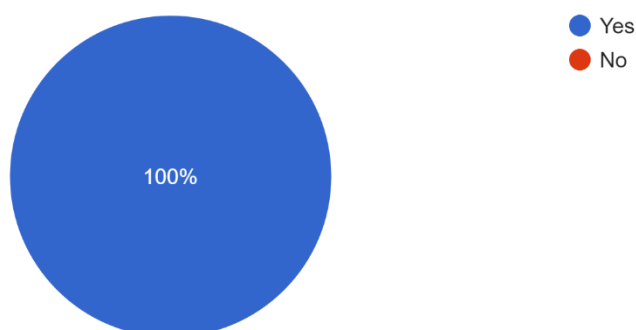
What are the reasons -in your opinion- that lead to learners becoming demotivated?

4 responses



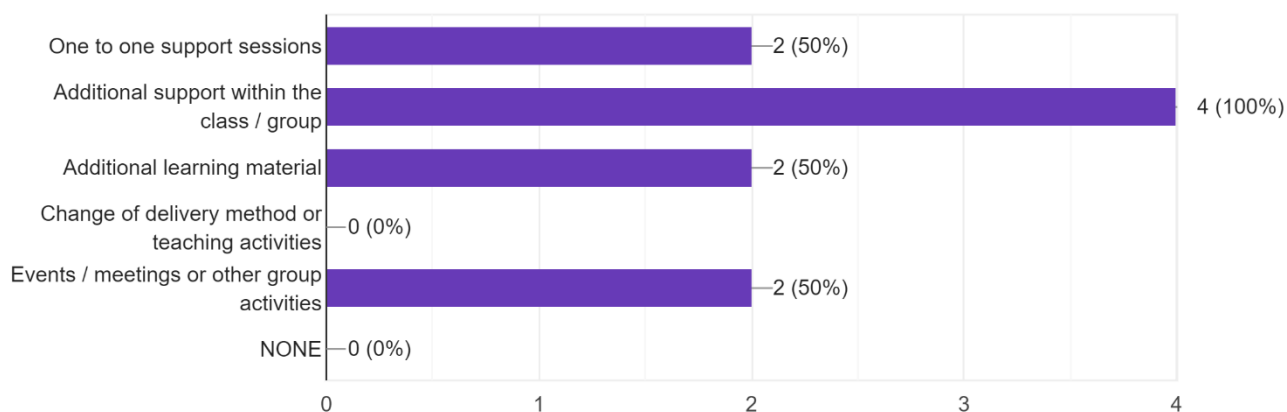
Did you take any corrective measures / initiatives to address demotivated learners?

4 responses



What kind of measures / interventions did you offer for demotivated learners?

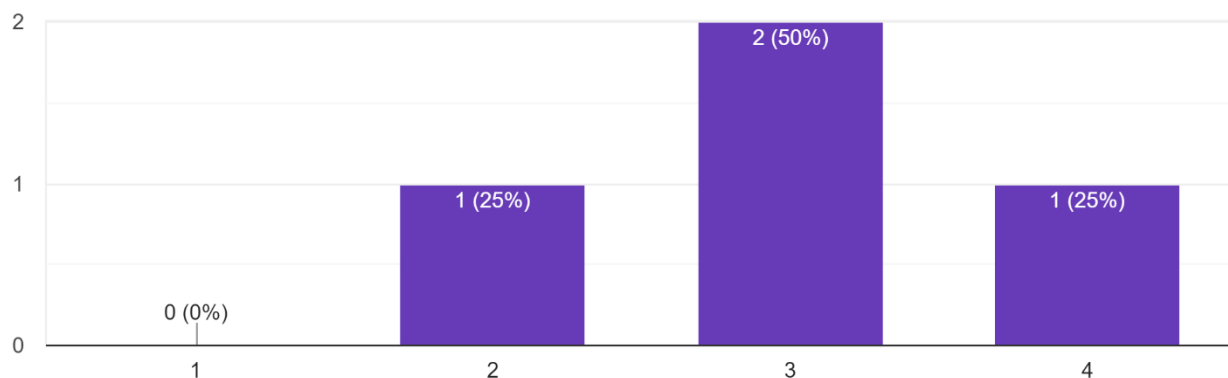
4 responses



2.2. VET TRAINERS

How successful were these interventions?

4 responses



2.3. VET Stakeholders

2.3.1 Profile of Respondents / Participants

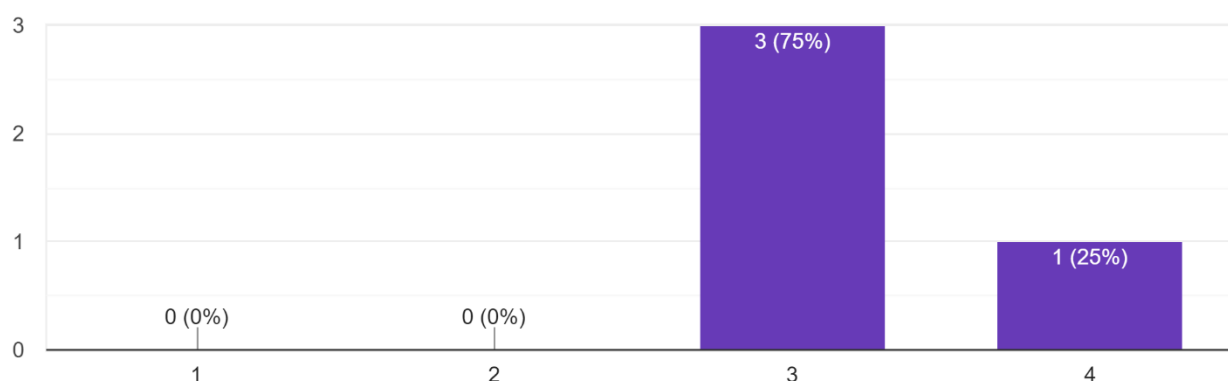
Number of participants: 4

Role: VET providers

2.3.2 Stakeholder Findings

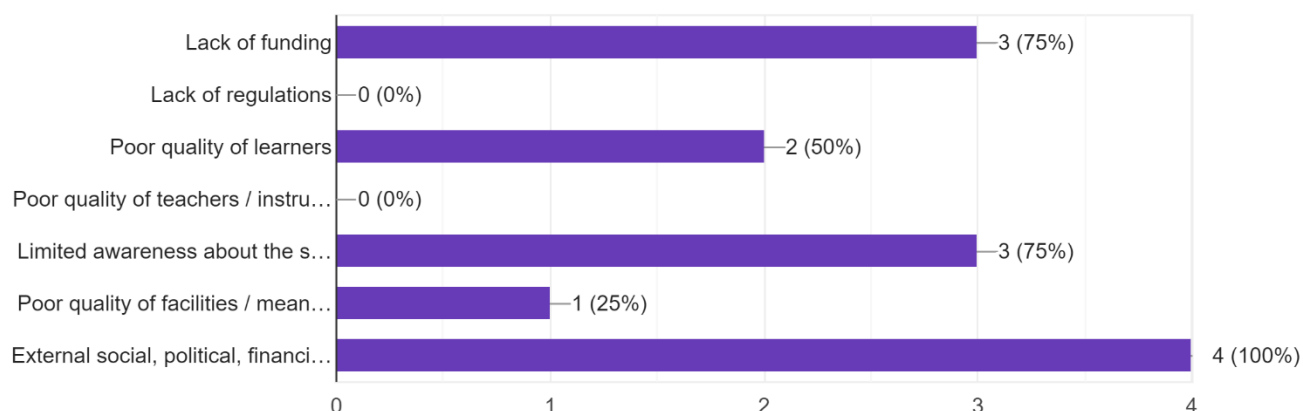
How would you rate the VET sector according to your experience?

4 responses



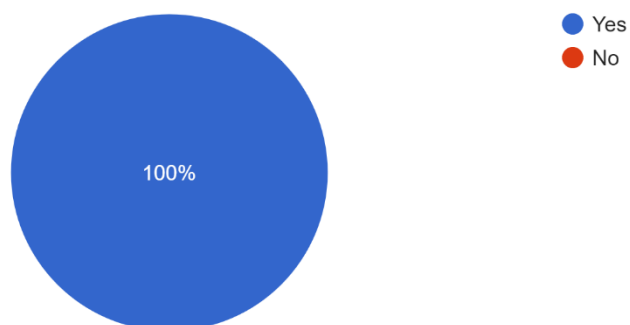
What are the main issues / problems / concerns in the Sector?

4 responses



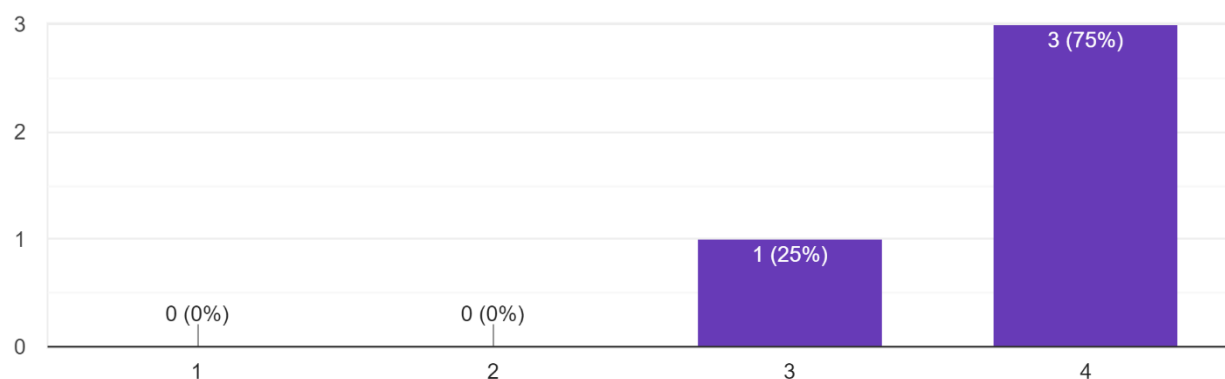
Are you aware of demotivation of learners as a negative factor within the sector?

4 responses



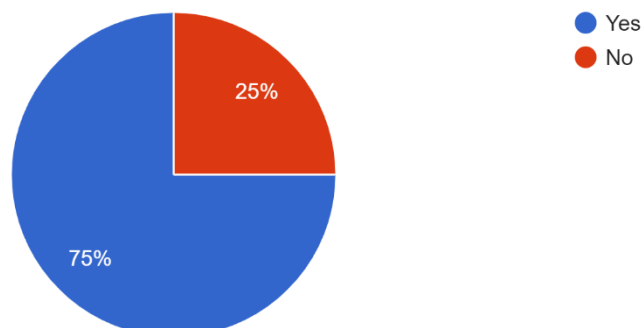
How important would you say demotivation of learners is?

4 responses



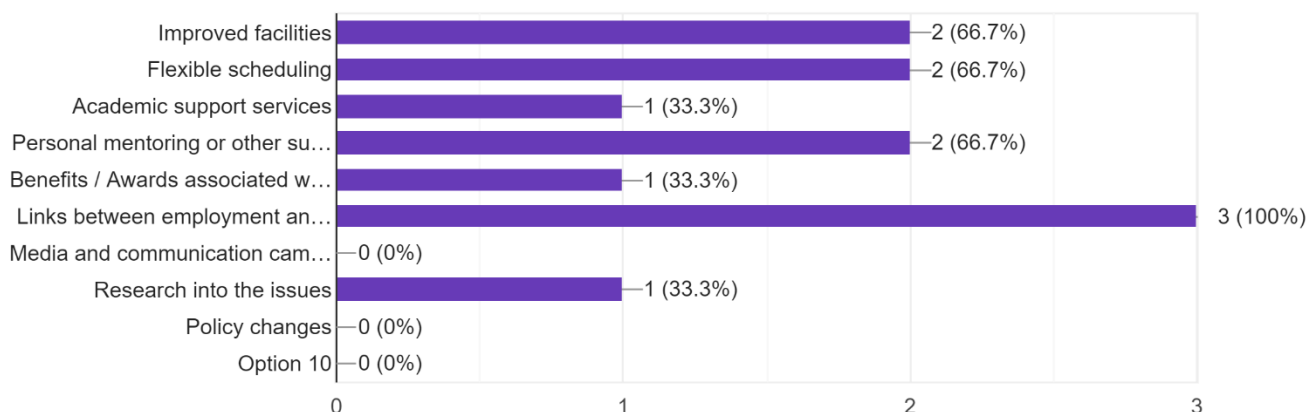
Have you taken measures to address the demotivation of learners?

4 responses



What measures / interventions / initiatives have you taken in order to address learners' demotivation?

3 responses



Summary and Conclusions:

Overall, it appears that all the engaged parties in the VET sector (learners / stakeholders / teachers) are aware of the issue of demotivation in learners; however, there is disengagement in addressing the issue, which is mainly due to the lack of awareness and communication of the actual reasons that students feel demotivated and are therefore more likely to drop out of courses, and the subsequent lack of appropriate measures to meet the needs of the learners.

Despite the fact that, in many cases, the reasons contributing to demotivation / dropping out are beyond the immediate control of the VET providers / teachers, (personal reasons, family reasons, work reasons, etc), there are interventions that can mitigate those circumstances and give learners a better chance of completing their VET studies and remain committed and engaged throughout the process.

3. SUMMARY SECONDARY RESEARCH

SECONDARY RESEARCH (DESK RESEARCH) IN CYPRUS:

Title: Reactivating Demotivated Learners - The ReAct Approach

Author(s): Thieme A Hennis, Pieter De Vries, Celia Ruiz

Year of publication: 2012

Link:

<https://www.academia.edu/download/39173755/00b7d51adacbc4807e000000.pdf>

Main Findings and/or Points of Interest:

This paper examines and presents the reAct approach as an innovative learning strategy which is developed and used to re-motivate the people who have been disengaged from education and learning. These groups of people experience further hurdles and reduced opportunities not only in learning but also in employment.

The main goal of this approach is to find ways to recover the intrinsic motivation to learn and thereby improve the opportunities for active participation. A crucial element is the development of an innovative learning strategy in which the learner is in control of the learning process, and an active participant rather than a passive receiver. The paper starts with an introduction on the challenge these people with reduce motivation and engagement pose to the society at large and the learning strategy developed to address with this matter. Internet technologies play a key role in the methodology and links to a virtual environment similar to social networks, which is user-configurable and based on the concept of the Personal Learning Environment (PLE).

The ReAct approach is based on a multilateral under the KA3 ICT action of the EU Leonardo program. The KA3 objective is "To support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning". Therefore the project work is situated within lifelong learning contexts and focuses on the use of ICT to develop an innovative methodological approach that will motivate learners, and at the same time, help them to develop their lifelong learning skills. New technologies offer a potential for new approaches and the introduction of elements into training contexts that facilitate the development of changes in the intrinsic motivation of these learners

Title: Motivation for Learning among Students Undertaking Basic Vocational Training and University Studies within the Context of COVID-19

Author(s): Olmedo-Moreno EM, Expósito-López J, Romero-Díaz de la Guardia JJ, Pistón-Rodríguez MD, Parejo-Jiménez N.

Year of publication: 2021

Link: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063268>

Main Findings and/or Points of Interest

The main aim of the present study is to adapt the academic motivation scale (AMS) for use within basic vocational training and university students. Another aim was to analyze the characteristics of the different dimensions of motivation, whilst also examining existing significant differences between the two studied educational stages.

For this, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was conducted, alongside descriptive and inferential analysis of student responses. One of the main findings was that a reduced version of the AMS, made up of five dimensions and 21 items, demonstrated good internal consistency and fit. Further, it was observed that intrinsic motivation is higher in university students, whilst extrinsic motivation is higher during the basic vocational training stage. In addition, we uncovered significant differences between both educational stages with regards to the pleasure felt by students when they improve themselves, learn new things and attend the educational center. Differences also emerged in relation to the importance attributed by students to achieving a good and well-paid job.

With regards to amotivation, significant differences only exist in relation to the motives students have for attending classes and decision making about whether to continue studying the course they are enrolled on. Finally, the study analyzed how the variables sex, age, prior work experience and volunteering experience, and average grade influence the motivation of students undertaking basic vocational training student.

Title: Adaptation of the Educational Motivation Scale Into a Short Form With Multigroup Analysis in a Vocational Training and Baccalaureate Setting

Author(s): Expósito-López Jorge, Romero-Díaz de la Guardia José Javier, Olmedo-Moreno Eva María, Pistón Rodríguez María Dolores, Chacón-Cuberos Ramón

Year of publication: 2021

Link: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.663834>

Main Findings and/or Points of Interest:

The aim of the present study was to adapt the educational motivation scale into an abbreviated version (EMS-SF), in addition to analyzing its psychometric properties for use with vocational training (VT) and baccalaureate students using structural equations. A cross-sectional and ex post facto study was conducted with a sample of 1,159 students from the autonomous community of Andalusia (Spain). IBM SPSS® and IBM AMOS® software programs were used for data analysis.

With regard to the main outcomes, the scale reflected good fit indices in its short form, presenting a more parsimonious and easily understood questionnaire. The questionnaire was reduced from a total of 28–19 items. In the same way, the number of dimensions was reduced from seven to four, facilitating scale understanding and interpretation according to self-determination theory. As a main finding, it was observed that the most relevant items for baccalaureate students pertained to the pleasure derived from discovering things and to overcoming challenges, whereas in VT students, items pertaining to the satisfaction generated from exerting effort, achieving one's best and being well paid were more relevant.

In conclusion, findings urge the need to strengthen intrinsic motivation in VT students with the aim of avoiding demotivation and poor academic performance.