

## Contribution of Applied Culinary Courses to Tourism Education

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### ABSTRACT

For university students studying in the Culinary Programme and Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department, courses that include applied culinary training are an important element in terms of internship, professional development and possible business life. Understanding the perspectives of students on applied culinary courses is of great importance in making the educational processes in educational institutions more effective and efficient. This study seeks to reveal the perspectives of the students who pursue their education in Artvin Çoruh University on applied culinary courses. It presents a complete enumeration; 147 students who studied in the relevant programme and department in the 2022-2023 education year participated in this study. To obtain data, it draws on a 28-item data collection tool, through which the students evaluated the applied culinary education, and, thus, applies the survey method. The perceptions of the participants about the applied culinary courses are analysed by different variables. This study concludes that the students believe that the culinary courses contribute to their education and practical knowledge; that they are willing and enthusiastic to attend these applied culinary courses.

**Keywords:** Applied training, Culinary, Gastronomy and culinary arts, Artvin (Türkiye).

### Introduction

Education covers the different processes needed for all kinds of human development. Education raises a healthy society with a high level of knowledge and an individual and universal culture. All innovation and development initiatives in the field of education concern every segment of society. For this reason, education constitutes the basis of social changes (Doğan, 2015). While education impacts the perspective, performance and competence of individuals, it also offers qualified labour force opportunities to enterprises. Another important output of education is to raise the perspective of individuals on life and contribute to the country's economy by laying the foundations for progress for industries (Hergüner *et al.*, 2002; Baltacı *et al.*, 2012). Vocational education is defined as training intended to prepare the workforce that is not yet expert or semi-expert for specialised jobs and jobs that require expertise (Olcay, 2008).

As in many other areas, education plays a serious role in the field of tourism for countries to achieve economic, social and cultural prosperity (Karakoyunlu and Uslu, 2023). Tourism education intends to allow one to gain knowledge, skills, tolerance, philanthropy, and professional awareness. Besides, it embraces objectives such as increasing efficiency in the field of tourism, providing qualified staff trained for the sector, offering professional training to the serving staff, linking theory and practise through education, drawing attention to the economic development of tourism in the country's economy, and creating a positive tourism awareness among people (Gürbüz and Dağdeviren, 2007). Vocational education in the field of tourism is performed as a part of general education. Since the tourism industry has a social aspect, any education in the tourism field should not only involve vocational education but also acknowledge social goals (Aksu and Bucak, 2012). That said, as in other industries, an area-related training in the tourism field for introducing well-equipped individuals into the sector is likely to contribute both to the satisfaction of customers and to national tourism (Güneş and Koçyiğit, 2018).

Incorporating applied courses on subjects related to the tourism field into the tourism education provided by an institution would highly benefit students, especially on their professional development. Therefore, revealing the perspectives of the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts (GCA) on applied culinary education is considerably significant.

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Research in the literature has addressed the perspective of university students on applied culinary training (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Tayfun and Kara, 2008; Çemrek and Yılmaz, 2010; Kılıç, 2018; Akkuş, 2020). There has been no study on the perspectives of the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA at Artvin Çoruh University (ACU) on applied culinary education. Thus, this study seeks to reveal the perspectives of these university students receiving culinary and gastronomy education on the applied culinary education courses. To that end, this study first conducts an extensive literature review and sheds some light on tourism education, focusing on the tourism education and culinary education (applied training) in Türkiye; then, it presents similar research on this subject. Following that, this study offers the survey performed to reveal the perspectives of the students on applied culinary education; it concludes by discussing the findings.

## Literature Review

### Tourism and Applied Training

The tourism industry is considered a major input and an effective resource for national economies (Alcalá-Ordóñez *et al.*, 2024). While it is valuable for developed and developing countries to be able to take part in the tourism market, it is pivotal for countries that have already taken their place in the market to expand their market shares in difficult competitive conditions. Tourism has a great vital importance for all countries, and it is an industry that shows rapid development and change. Tourism accelerated after the second half of the twentieth century and showed a remarkable growth in the social and economic field; many people have been employed due to this growth. The industry affects many areas directly and indirectly due to its association with many sectors (Esen *et al.*, 2022).

People (personnel) underlie service quality in tourism, which is a labour-intensive industry. Thus, qualified human resources trained in the tourism industry and related sectors add value to existing and potential investments (Cankül, 2016). Personnel, who are considered as the most valuable resource of the enterprises in the sector, have an important share in the quality and successful development and profitability of the enterprises (Leslie and Richardson, 2000; Busby and Gibson, 2010). Further, qualified manpower provides a competitive advantage to enterprises, supports their sustainability, and thus represents an integral aspect of tourism development plans (Mayaka and King, 2002). The need for qualified manpower is further fuelled by the fact that the tourism product in the tourism industry is a compound product, that its production and consumption occur simultaneously and it constantly evolves. It is essential that any tourism product produced is presented with the least margin of error to the consumer. Therefore, the workforce involved in the production process of a tourism product should have a service quality standard awareness (Unur and Köşker, 2015).

To provide a qualified workforce with knowledge and skills to the service industry and to boost the efficiency and productivity of personnel, education emerges as a valuable asset. Vocational education, the most important level of education after basic education, as well as related training, prepares individuals who will need to have expertise in their fields and special qualifications in their jobs. Tourism vocational education is provided to those who plan to work in the field of tourism and seek to specialise in this field. The key purpose here is to prepare individuals for the tourism industry, equip them with knowledge and skills, boost their potential to work in enterprises operating in the industry and related sectors, and help them learn professional principles (Olçay, 2008; Sarıbiyik, 2019).

Culinary education, practical training and applied courses, which are integral to tourism vocational education, effectively shape the intention of interested students in joining the tourism industry. Students in tourism and related departments and programmes who receive culinary education and take courses on cuisine can find the opportunity to implement their theoretical knowledge into practise, improve their teamwork and take responsibility (Yıldırğan *et al.*, 2016). This section of the study presents an outlook into tourism education in Türkiye, culinary education (applied training) and similar research subjects.

### An Outlook into Tourism Education in Türkiye

Tourism education in Türkiye was first introduced through the touristic courses for waitressing that opened in Ankara in 1953 with the cooperation of the Ministry of National Education and the General Directorate of Press and Broadcasting and Tourism; courses with a similar curriculum were offered in the same way in 1955 at the Commercial High School in Izmir. In addition, the opening of tourism guidance courses by different associations during the same period can be considered within the context of tourism education. These courses are regarded as non-formal education; the first formal education in the field of tourism, on the other hand, was given in Ankara between 1961 and 1962. With the establishment of the Ministry of Tourism in 1963, the importance attached to tourism education grew. Academically, the first tourism education was conducted by the School of Teaching in Commerce and Tourism, established in the 1960s to meet the need for teachers in commercial high schools (Solmaz and Ulama,

2014). 4-year undergraduate education at the university level started in 1967 at the Ankara Teaching School of Commerce, and then the first tourism department was opened at Izmir University in 1969 (Bayraktaroğlu, 2013; Solmaz and Ulema, 2014).

Non-formal education on tourism in Türkiye was first provided with short-term courses, and then given at the secondary education level and later at the higher education level. Although the original reason for starting tourism education was to train personnel for enterprises, such education later focused on making personnel qualified and knowledgeable and allowing them to actively use their skills. Thus, a process has begun where vocational education can carry out the research and planning required by the tourism industry and related sectors, increase the productivity of enterprises, follow the developments and innovations in the industry and the world, and enable the discovery of scientific methods (Aymanıkuy and Aymanıkuy, 2002).

Regarding non-formal education, among the institutions that actively perform activities in Türkiye are the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Tourism Development and Education Foundation (TUGEV). The Ministry carries out various training activities related to the field of tourism. The General Directorate of Research and Education affiliated to the Ministry undertakes extensive professional tourism activities both at home and abroad. Non-formal education in Türkiye is provided through "*on-the-job training courses*" which include the headings of front office, housekeeping, food and beverage services, training educational managers, food production and home staying. Training programmes on tourism awareness feature personal development seminars and seminars to create awareness on home staying. International tourism training programmes abroad are conducted by the Ministry and are based on the sharing of information and experiences between countries in accordance with bilateral and multilateral agreements. TUGEV, founded in 1985, serves to ensure that Türkiye effectively harnesses its existing and potential tourism opportunities. To achieve this, TUGEV is engaged in tourism education activities through on-the-job trainings and programmes conducted jointly with universities (Solmaz, 2019; Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2023; The Tourism Development & Education Foundation, 2023).

There has been a direct proportional increase in the number of non-formal and formal education institutions serving in the field of tourism education in Türkiye. It is not clear whether such an increase, which is determined by quantitative data, also increases qualifications. Studies on this subject reveal that the establishment location and infrastructure problems of educational institutions are the foremost problems experienced in tourism education. Besides, there is a shortage of teaching staff who pursue a career in tourism educational institutions and whose experience matches with the field. Other problems, respectively, are as follows: the insufficiency of physical spaces, poor physical conditions and inadequate tools for the practise areas, problems related to curriculum and foreign language teaching, internship, and problems experienced by students during the internship. Another major problem is the difficulty in finding opportunities for the application of theoretical courses. In addition, the high number of students in the related programmes and departments can create employment and career problems (Avcıkurt and Karaman, 2002; Karaman *et al.*, 2012; Gürdoğan and Atabey, 2012; Bayraktaroğlu, 2013; Akkuş, 2020). As clear from these evaluations and the above-mentioned problems, practical education has a great importance in the trainings given in the field of tourism. For this reason, more emphasis should be paid to practical courses in tourism education so that students can be fully prepared for the industry and related sectors. The practise areas of universities should mainly encompass their own laboratories and also other facilities such as guest houses and practise hotels; students should be assigned to relevant facilities, institutions, organisations and enterprises to gain experience (Akkuş, 2020).

### **Culinary Education (Applied Training)**

As part of the culinary education in the field of tourism in Türkiye, formal education is offered in the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA. The basic education levels of these departments are high school, associate, undergraduate, and graduate degrees. The first education at the high school level was offered in 1985 in the Mengen district of Bolu province. The first education at the associate degree level in the Culinary Programme was given at Abant İzzet Baysal University in the Mengen district (Bolu) in 1997. The first Department of GCA at the undergraduate level was opened at Yeditepe University in 2003 (Şengün, 2017; Aksoy and Şahin, 2018). Following that, departments related to gastronomy were introduced at İzmir University of Economics in 2008, Okan University in 2009, and Gazi University and Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, which are state universities, in 2010. With the introduction of these departments, the departments of Food and Beverage Management in the schools that provide tourism education at the college level across the country have gradually evolved into the departments of GCA (Görkem and Sevim, 2016; Keleş, 2017). The education in the formal education programmes of these departments features theoretical and practical courses. Although there are differences in the curricula of these universities, courses given can be broadly categorised under basic nutrition, menu planning, food safety, world and local culinary practises, culinary practises, pastry and bakery arts, food production processes, business, marketing, cost and management (Sarıoğlan and Ertopcu, 2019). As this industry is labour-intensive and the related sectors show similar characteristics, practical training is pivotal. From this point of view, an on-the-job training model should be embraced in the courses to meet the practical training needs of students and consequently to increase the satisfaction of

students receiving vocational education in tourism before moving on to their professional lives, to allow them to gain experience in the industry and related sectors, and to be fee ready (Baltacı *et al.*, 2012).

### Research in the Relevant Literature

Existing research in the relevant literature has attempted to evaluate the culinary skills of culinary and gastronomy students, determine their proficiency levels in the kitchen, examine the physical conditions of the place where the course is given, and assess the competency of the instructor lecturing the course, as well as the perspective towards applied courses. It follows that applied courses are closely linked to the sector. This part of the study presents some of the previous research in the literature on culinary education, applied education, and applied courses in the relevant programmes and departments of universities providing tourism education.

A study performed to determine the attitudes of students receiving tourism education regarding applied culinary education and the customer satisfaction with the service offered by students as part of applied culinary courses, administered a survey to 170 students within the part of the study related to students (Akkuş, 2020). The results showed that the participants felt an ambivalence towards the applied culinary courses before attending, but their opinions were more favourable when they were asked about this again after the courses. The difference between the average scores was about the opinions of the participants on the necessity of applied culinary courses. In this regard, after attending the relevant course, more participants stated that the course was necessary and the course duration should be prolonged.

Another research (Kılıç, 2018) that proposes a practise hotel model for tourism education institutions to offer a correct applied training to tourism students concluded that the perceptions of the students on the practise hotel were generally positive. The results of this study demonstrated that performing the applied parts of the courses given in these education institutions in hotels helps students acquire the necessary skills and creates a more efficient educational environment both for the instructors lecturing the courses and the students. Also, the applied courses conducted in the practise hotel help students overcome the problems related to internship, become realistic about the conditions in the industry, and track their professional development.

A study administered a survey to 97 students to reveal the attitudes and opinions of the students in the Department of Tourism and Hotel Management and the Department of Cookery in Afyon Vocational School, Afyon Kocatepe University on the course titled "Applied Culinary Courses" (Çemrek and Yılmaz, 2010). The findings of this study ascertained differences in the answers of the students of these two departments to the following statements: *"I like how the lecturers of the applied culinary courses treat us."*, *"The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life)."* and *"Applied culinary courses are not essential."*

A different study (Tayfun and Kara, 2008) applied a questionnaire to 214 students to assess the attitudes of students who study at the Faculty of Commerce and Tourism Education at Gazi University and attend the courses of school experience I-II towards these courses. The results of their study determined that the attitudes of the male students, compared to the female students, towards the courses of school experience were more positive, except for the statement that *"I went off the teaching profession because of school experience."* Besides, regarding the departments of the students, it was observed that the attitudes of the students of the department of accounting towards the courses of school experience were more positive than that of the students of other departments, except for the statements that *"I went off the teaching profession because of school experience."* and *"I believe that the course of school experience is not necessary."*

### Research Methodology

This section presents information on the research purpose and significance, research universe and sample, and data collection method and data analysis.

### Research Purpose and Significance

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the perspectives of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in ACU on applied culinary courses. The reason for selecting the institutions, departments and programmes for study in this research is the interests of the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA, as well as the contributions of the authors to the applied culinary education in this programme and department. Students who receive culinary and gastronomy education within tourism should attend the applied culinary courses as part of the curriculum of the programme and department at the university level, but this in itself is not enough. It is essential that the relevant students are actively engaged in practical culinary education in their programmes and departments, and that their perspectives on this education are occasionally determined. Understanding the perspectives of students receiving education on culinary and gastronomy on practical

culinary education is pivotal to render the courses and trainings more effective and to achieve more efficient outcomes. Besides, the lack of any study similar to this on the relevant departments and students in the literature emphasises the significance and uniqueness of this study.

In line with its purpose and significance, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives of the university students studying culinary and gastronomy towards the applied culinary education?
2. Do the perspectives of the university students studying culinary and gastronomy towards the applied culinary education differ by demographic variables (gender, age, department)?

### **Research Universe and Sample**

The universe of this study consists of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in ACU on applied culinary courses. As the researchers believed that it would be possible to reach the entire universe, a complete enumeration, instead of sampling, was performed. A total of 153 students pursuing their education in the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in 2022-2023 voluntarily participated in this research and completed a survey. The survey forms that were invalid or not complete, obtained through a process from March 5 to April 15, 2023, were eliminated; the remaining 147 surveys were evaluated.

### **Data Collection Method and Data Analysis**

This study draws on a survey to obtain data. The scale named "School Experience Lessons Scale of Attitude" contains 25 items, 16 of which are positive and 9 are negative. The scale previously developed by Kılınc and Salman (2007) and used by Cemrek and Yılmaz (2010) and Tayfun and Kara (2008) was used to determine the opinions of students studying at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA about the contribution of the applied culinary courses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

The first part of this two-part survey presents statements that follow a 5-point Likert-type scale to determine the participants' opinions on the contribution of the applied culinary courses, and range from "(1) Strongly Disagree", a negative statement, to "(5) Strongly Agree", a positive statement. The second part of this survey includes information on the demographic characteristics of the participants (gender, age, programme/department).

The surveys used in this research were tested through reliability analysis, and the Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0.76 for 25 items in the reliability analysis. It is stated that the Alpha value should have a value between 0 and 1, and a minimum value of 0,500 is considered acceptable (Coşkun *et al.*, 2017). These being said, the surveys used in this study can be regarded as reliable. Based on the data obtained, the demographic characteristics of the participants in this study are presented as percentages and frequencies. This study further benefits from the difference tests to reveal the possible differences in the perspectives of the students towards the applied culinary courses based on the demographic characteristics, with a main purpose to determine the perspectives of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA on the applied culinary courses. The skewness and kurtosis values were considered in testing the normality of the data; as the skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptance range (-2 to +2), it was reasonable to use parametric tests for the difference tests. To analyse the possible differences, an independent sample t-test was performed based on the variables of gender, age, and marital status.

### **The Ethical Principles of the Research**

For the methods and data collection tools used in this study, the approval of the Scientific Research and Publications Ethics at ACU has been obtained (document date and number: 10.05.2023-E-18457941-050.99-90880).

### **Findings**

#### **Findings on the Demographics**

To show the demographic profile of the participants in this study, information on gender, age, and the departments in which they studied is provided below (Table 1). A total of 147 people participated in this study. Of these participants, 74.8% were women and 25.2% were men. 74,1% of the participants were aged between 17 and 21 years, whilst 25,9% were aged between 22 and 26 years. Also, 59.9% of the participants studied in the Culinary Programme, whereas 40.1% were students of the Department of GCA.



**Table 1.** Frequency analysis by the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Women	110	74,8
Men	37	25,2
Total	147	100
<b>Age</b>		
17-21	109	74,1
22-26	38	25,9
Total	147	100
<b>Program/Department</b>		
Culinary	88	59,9
GCA	59	40,1
Total	147	100

In the following tables, one may find the answers of the participants to the statements in the survey form, which range from "(1) Strongly Disagree", a negative statement, to "(5) Strongly Agree", a positive statement. The analyses performed on these answers show that an answer close to 1 indicates a negative answer, which implies that the participant strongly disagrees with the statement, and that an answer close to 5 indicates a positive answer, implying that the participant strongly agrees with the statement.

### Findings on the Perspectives of the Participants towards the Applied Culinary Courses

Examining the perspectives of the students studying at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA, this study finds that the students think that the applied culinary courses are essential ( $\bar{x}$ :4,67). The students also reflected that they like how the lecturers treat us in the applied culinary courses ( $\bar{x}$ :4,36), that the lecturers who instruct the relevant course are supportive and encouraging ( $\bar{x}$ :4,31), and that the lecturers are experienced in the kitchen ( $\bar{x}$ :4,36). The opinion of the participants that the applied culinary courses are not essential is not widely accepted ( $\bar{x}$ :1,42). Furthermore, the students believe that the applied training they receive matches with the practises they will encounter in the sector ( $\bar{x}$ :2,68). In a broad sense, Table 2 demonstrates that a positive perspective towards the applied culinary courses is pronounced among the students.

**Table 2.** Perspectives of the participants towards the applied culinary courses.

Attitudes of the students towards the applied courses	Av.	S.D.
I think that applied culinary courses are essential	147	4,67 0,931
I like my profession thanks to the applied culinary courses	147	4,27 1,095
The attitudes and behaviours of the kitchen personnel in the sector reduced their interest in my profession	147	2,77 1,293
I go to great lengths not to attend the applied culinary courses	147	2,5 1,702
The culinary practises in the industry are different from what I learn in the applied culinary courses	147	2,68 1,199
The duration of the applied culinary courses is too long	147	1,99 1,138
The duration of the applied culinary courses is not enough	147	3,53 1,454
I have gained more experience in the kitchen than I got from the applied culinary courses	147	4,01 1,147
The observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses are better than mine	147	1,86 1,151
I think I have improved myself thanks to the applied culinary courses	147	4,22 1,039
I like how the lecturers treat us in the applied culinary courses	147	4,36 1,098
I think I have improved myself in food preparation, cooking, and presentation because of the applied culinary courses, like my profession	147	3,97 1,227
Thanks to the applied culinary courses, I have improved some of my culinary skills	147	1,62 1,087
Through the applied culinary courses, I can understand the culinary activities in the industry better	147	4,28 0,964
I think that when starting or working in the kitchen department in the sector, I can easily adapt to any type of work	147	4,01 1,101
I think I have improved myself in the subjects of quality, hygiene and cost thanks to the applied culinary courses	147	3,89 1,165
The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life)	147	4,01 1,159
I have improved some of my skills in life thanks to the applied culinary courses	147	2,02 1,357
Thanks to the courses, I will be able to overcome my excitement when I am in front of the clients in the kitchen	147	4,11 1,061
The lecturers who taught this course were supportive and encouraging	147	3,8 1,209
The lecturers who taught the course are experienced in the kitchen	147	4,31 1,012
I can incorporate what I have learned in the applied culinary courses into my everyday life	147	4,31 1,046
I can incorporate what I have learned in the applied culinary courses into my career	147	4,26 1,092
Applied culinary courses are not essential	147	3,96 1,181
	147	1,42 1,085

### Gender-Related Findings

Table 3 presents the differences in the perspectives of the students towards the applied culinary courses by the variable of gender within the scope of this study, which probes into the attitudes of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in the field of tourism at the associate's and undergraduate level on applied culinary courses.

**Table 3.** Results of the t-test by the gender of the participants.

Statements	Variable	Av.	S.D.	t	p
The observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses bother me.	Women	1,75	1,05	-1,92	<0,05
	Men	2,22	1,35		
I can incorporate what I have learned in the applied culinary courses into my everyday life.	Women	4,40	0,96	2,35	<0,05
	Men	3,84	1,34		

On the gender of the participants, this study determined statistically significant differences in some statements by gender ( $p < 0,05$ ). Indeed, the statements where statistically significant differences between the male and female participants were identified are as follows: "*I am bothered by the observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses.*" and "*I can incorporate what I have learned in the applied culinary courses into everyday life.*" Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the female students were more relaxed and less bothered by the observations in the applied culinary courses, compared to their male counterparts ( $\bar{x}:1,75$ ;  $\bar{x}:2,22$ ). The female students also showed a more positive perspective on the statement that pertains to incorporating what is learned in the courses into everyday life, compared to the male students ( $\bar{x}:4,40$ ;  $\bar{x}:3,84$ ).

### Age-Related Findings

Table 4 presents the differences in the perspectives of the students towards the applied culinary courses by the variable of age within the scope of this study, which probes into the attitudes of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in the field of tourism at the associate's and undergraduate level on applied culinary courses.

**Table 4.** Results of the t-test by the age of the participants.

statements	Variable	A	D	t	p
I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses	17-21	4,19	1,00	2,85	0,05
	22-26	3,50	1,37		
The observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses bother me	17-21	1,66	0,92	-3,03	0,05
	22-26	2,45	1,50		
The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life)	17-21	1,83	1,20	-2,62	0,05
	22-26	2,58	1,62		

The variable of age is dichotomised into 17-21 years and 22-26 years in this study. Probing into the perspectives of the participants towards the applied culinary courses by age, this study reports that the students had mostly similar perspectives; however, significant differences between these two age groups were found in three statements ( $p < 0,05$ ). The students aged between 17 and 21 years had more positive perspectives, compared to those aged 22-26, towards one of these statements, which reads "*I believe that I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses.*" ( $\bar{x}:4,19$ ;  $\bar{x}:3,50$ ). That is, the belief that the students gained experience was more pronounced among the participants in the younger age group. Regarding the statement that "*I am bothered by the observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses*", where a difference was identified by age, the participants aged between 22 and 26 years more often expressed that they were bored, compared to those aged between 17-21 ( $\bar{x}:2,45$ ;  $\bar{x}:1,66$ ). Another difference was found in the following statement: "*The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life).*" Although both age groups did not totally agree with this statement, the participants aged between 22 and 26 were more moderate compared to those in the 17-21 age group ( $\bar{x}:2,58$ ;  $\bar{x}:1,83$ ).

### Programme / Department-Related Findings

Table 5 shows the differences in the perspectives of the students towards the applied culinary courses by the variable of programme/department within the scope of this study, which probes into the attitudes of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in the field of tourism at the associate's and undergraduate level on applied culinary courses.

**Table 5.** Results of the t-test by the programme/department of the participants.

Statements	Variable	Av.	S.D.	t	p
I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses.	Culinary	3,80	1,22	-3,03	<0,05
	GCA	4,34	0,94		
I think I have improved myself thanks to the applied culinary courses.	Culinary	4,08	1,11	-2,19	<0,05
	GCA	4,44	0,87		
The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life).	Culinary	2,25	1,47	2,70	<0,05
	GCA	1,68	1,09		

A significant finding is that the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA, regardless of the department/programme they study, had similar attitudes and opinions in their answers to the statements on the applied culinary courses. There were statistically significant differences by the variable of programme and department in some statements ( $p < 0,05$ ). In fact, the students of the Department of GCA had more positive perspectives towards the statements that "*I believe that I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses.*" and "*I think I have improved myself thanks to the applied culinary courses.*" compared to the students of the Culinary Programme. Moreover, although both of the student groups agreed with the statement that "*The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life).*", the students of the Culinary Programme had more positive opinions than the students of the Department of GCA ( $\bar{x}:2,25$ ;  $\bar{x}:1,68$ ).

## Conclusion and Discussion

This study is intended to reveal the perspectives of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary and the Department of GCA on the applied culinary courses in Artvin Çoruh University. The findings of this study reveal that the applied culinary courses are essential, that these courses boost love for their profession, and that they become more interested and gain experience for the industry thanks to these courses. Regarding the duration of the courses, most students stated that the courses were not too long, and their indecisiveness on the duration of the courses was prominent. Most of the students reflected that they have improved themselves in product preparation, cooking techniques, presentation, quality, hygiene, and cost thanks to the applied courses they attended. The participants also reported that gaining experience through these applied culinary courses had a calming effect on their tension and increased their self-confidence in the industry. They further stated that they were not bothered by the observation of the lecturers instructing the course, and that the approach of the lecturers towards the students during the courses was positive. The study by Kılıç (2018) reported that the perceptions of the students towards practise hotels are positive and that working in practise hotels allows them to be successful both in the courses and in the industry itself. The findings of this study are congruent with the findings of Kılıç's study on the perceptions of the students that receive tourism education at the undergraduate level in Eskişehir Osmangazi University towards practise hotels.

Based on the analyses by gender, although the female and male students stated that they were not too bothered by the observations in the applied culinary courses, the female students said that they were more concerned with such observations than their male counterparts. Also, more often than their male counterparts, the female participants reported that they could incorporate the information they learned in the applied courses into everyday life. The study by Çemrek and Yılmaz (2010) with the students of the Programme of Tourism and Hotel Management and the Culinary Programme observed no difference by gender in the statements similar to the ones in this study; however, this study ascertained statistically significant differences in some statements ( $p < 0,05$ ). The reason for this may be that this study draws on a different universe and sample, and the number of participants in the studies is different.

The students aged between 17 and 21 years believed that they gained experience through the applied culinary courses more often than those aged between 22 and 26 years. Furthermore, statistically significant differences by age were found both regarding the observations in the courses and the use of the information they learned in the sector ( $p < 0,05$ ). The 17-21 age group stated that they were bothered by the observations in the courses less than the 22-26 age group. This may be because older participants were less likely to like being under observation. Similarly, this study determined that the 17-21 age group believed that the information they have learned will be useful in the sector, more than the 22-26 age group did.

On the variable of department, the students of the Department of GCA reflected that they gained work experience and improved themselves thanks to the applied culinary courses, more than the students of the Culinary Programme. Besides, the students of the Department of GCA expressed more positive opinions about the usefulness of the information they received in the applied culinary courses in the sector than the students of the Culinary Programme. This difference can be attributed to the fact that the students of the Department of GCA have less experience in the relevant sector compared to the students of the Culinary Programme. This finding supports the results obtained from Çemrek and Yılmaz conducted in 2010. Kim et al., (2007) found that the level of interest



of students in tourism programmes depends on their knowledge acquisition and experience in the field of tourism. They, thus, concluded that the students interested in studying in the field of tourism should be provided with a practical rather than theoretical education. Their findings are congruent with the findings of this study.

Education is crucial in meeting the need for qualified manpower in enterprises and institutions in the service sector. Providing most training as practical training will keep the industry alive and render all stages of the industry dynamic. It is important for the participants and practitioners to attach more importance to applied courses in educational institutions and to provide all the requirements, especially physical facilities.

The students in this study reflected that they liked the applied culinary courses and that these courses prepared them for their profession in the future. They stated that the durations of the culinary courses were too short, that they could apply the information they obtained in culinary education in their careers as well as in everyday life and that these courses improved their skills. They also believed that the lecturers who instructed the courses were competent, encouraging and supportive of themselves. A striking finding of this study is that the participants expressed that the culinary courses contributed to them, and they generally disagreed with the negative statements in the survey. Thus, it is reasonable to claim that the students are eager and enthusiastic to attend the applied culinary courses.

This research was conducted with a limited sample of ACU, which may be considered a limitation. Future studies with the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA or those of different departments may follow a larger or a different sample; this can allow researchers to compare the results of this study, adding important insights into the relevant literature.

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