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Outdoor Education Perspectives: International Insights within the Field

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Sammanfattning
Abstract

The subject of this project is an analysis of the perception of postgraduate students of “Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Life Master Program” regarding the concept of “Outdoor Education”. The perceptions are introduced and elaborated through interviews with nine Master students from September 2013 till June 2014. One by one, the qualitative data is phenomenologically analyzed and interpretations of the findings are demonstrated to the reader. At the end of this study, five different themes, which have been obtained during this study, are presented. These themes are: the benefits of outdoor education; the practicality of outdoor education, the effects of outdoor education and issues within outdoor education. I argue how perspectives of international students vary depending on their culture.

Nyckelord
Keywords

Outdoor education, International perceptions, Concept, Phenomenology, Postgraduate students, Cultural phenomena, Definition

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INTRODUCTION

Outdoor education as a practice and as a discipline is receiving more and more attention in the face of global and environmental challenges such as pollution, scarcity of food, drought, global warming, and the steadily increasing global population. Outdoor education is a method of teaching and learning about outdoor environment (Gilbertson et al., 2006). As well, outdoor education is a method used to increase environmental concerns. However, the incorporation of such ideas into curriculums and their implementation is a practice shared only by a limited number of countries such as Sweden, Norway and Scotland.

To be better able to expand the understanding and implementation of “Outdoor Education”, we should first have a clear understanding of what is, and what is not, outdoor education. There are many studies and pieces of research on features such as the effects and benefits of the particular types of learning and teaching practices of outdoor education so an analysis of what outdoor education actually means is the first significant step. The researchers commonly emphasize that outdoor education is an experiential education. Apart from that, personal and social development through outdoor learning and problems of this type of learning are described and analyzed by the researchers.

I am starting this phenomenological qualitative study with the assumption that one way to analyze how outdoor education is perceived is to look at, for instance, how students conceptualize the term itself. In this way, the research question is formed as follow *‘what are the international perspectives of students to the concept of outdoor education?’* I have carried out interviews with nine postgraduate students in the field of outdoor education during the 2013-2014 academic year. The interviews are phenomenologically analyzed in order to show the perspectives of these postgraduate students about the concept of “Outdoor Education”. I present this Master’s project to support the results of the research and, at the same time, to offer a more detailed analysis of various aspects of outdoor education. Without doubt, initially, this requires a thorough conceptualization of outdoor education.

Five different themes, which have been obtained during this study, are described and studied. These themes are: the benefits of outdoor education; the practicalities of outdoor education; the problems of outdoor education, outdoor education in general and outdoor education as a methodology. I indicate how these results of this Master’s project are confirmed by the research studies. Afterwards, I discuss how the results of this project contribute to the existing research literature by adding new perspectives such as the practical aspects of outdoor

learning. Moreover, I discuss several challenging results of this study, namely the effects of outdoor education on society, several problems regarding outdoor education and the interaction of outdoor education with other teaching methods. Lastly, I argue whether this piece of research presents international perspectives about the concept of outdoor education and I present a new conceptualization of outdoor education obtained by analyzing the interviews with the nine postgraduate students.

This project consists of five sections. In the *Literature Chapter*, I briefly summarize various conceptualizations of outdoor education and several studies related to this Master's project. In the *Methodology Chapter*, I give a detailed explanation about the data analysis method and the strategy of choosing a sample and data collection tools for this research. In the *Research Chapter*, I clarify what is and what is not outdoor education with some insights from the interviews carried out. I endeavour to demonstrate the connections between the results of this research and similar findings in the research literature. In the *Results and Discussion Chapter*, I briefly summarize findings and several studies from the outdoor educational literature and discuss some of the arguments obtained from the interviews. In the *Conclusion*, I comment on the arguments, make suggestions for future research and also mention some possible impacts of this project.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this research study, I examine various perceptions of the postgraduate students regarding the concept of “outdoor education”. However, it is to be noted that initially I aim to introduce various descriptions of outdoor education that are discussed in the literature of research about this concept. Discussing these definitions will enable us to analyze to what extent views about the meaning, the usage, the function and the value of outdoor education are held by each of the postgraduate students, who come from different socio-cultural contexts from each other. To that end, in this chapter, I present a multi-dimensional conceptualization of outdoor education, along with an introduction to the values assigned to outdoor education and several problems of outdoor learning. I conceptualize outdoor education in terms of its different functions as (1) personal and social development and (2) experiential learning. In relation to that, I frame both intrinsic and instrumental values promoted by these functions as (a) increasing academic achievement, (b) raising awareness towards environmental concerns, (c) increasing ecological resilience and (d) enabling sensory experiences. However, I will begin by explaining why this work is important for the future prospects of outdoor education in different contexts.

1.1 The Importance of the Context for the Prospects of Outdoor Education

Outdoor education is generally defined as a teaching and learning method. However, this conceptualization varies among the scholars (Hammerman et al., 2001; Bartunek et al., 2002; Neuman, 2004; Martin and Ho, 2009; Gilbertson et al., 2006, Szczepanski, 2012). Many scholars explain outdoor education in different ways by emphasizing various functions or meaning. Some of these can be listed as: a process of teaching with the help of outdoor experience; a method of teaching and learning about outdoor environment; a means to more effective learning and as a cultural viewpoint (Hammerman et al., 2001; Bartunek et al., 2002; Neuman, 2004; Martin and Ho, 2009; Szczepanski, 2012; Gilbertson et al., 2006). In accordance with Szczepanski (2012), I believe that the context is an important aspect to understand and analyze in regard to the future prospects of outdoor education. Szczepanski (2012) develops a general description by referring to the culture of the context, and he mentions how it affects the perceptions of people regarding the concept of “outdoor education”. In that sense, outdoor education can also be regarded as an expression of the cultural background in the sense that it is understood in many different ways depending on the context and country (Szczepanski, 2012). For example, while some of the Swedish preschools conduct outdoor education in the forests, some of the Turkish preschools conduct outdoor

education by the seaside. This is because the sea is an important cultural phenomena of Turkish culture according to some provinces while the forest is a significant cultural phenomena of Swedish culture according to some of areas. Regardless, it should be also added that cultural codes differ within the country, and not only in cross-country level. This viewpoint strengthens the main *raison d'être* of my research which is to gather the different perceptions on outdoor education embedded within different cultures. Choosing a sample from a group of postgraduate students who come from many different countries allows me to accomplish this aim. When the surveys with the postgraduate students are analyzed, I will test to what extent their explanations and perceptions are affected by their cultural context. To be able to contextualize my study within the outdoor education field, I will begin by defining outdoor education is understood in general terms.

1.2. Understanding Outdoor Education

The definition of the European Institute of Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning is a vital starting point to understand the concept of outdoor education. The Institute defines outdoor education by embracing its relation with “outdoor activities”, “environmental education” and “personal and social development” (Bartunek et al., 2002). This conceptualization is summarized with the following model:

Figure 1. This conceptual model of outdoor education reprinted from Bartunek et al., (2002), “Outdoor Education: Authentic Learning in the Context of Landscape”, page: 1.



Clarifying these three factors, which are embraced by outdoor education, is significant for a comprehensive understanding of the concept. First of all, environmental education should be taken into account. David Sobel (2005), for instance, puts an emphasis on the relationship

between the community and environment while asserting the importance of environmental education. According to him, environmental education examines natural and constructed environments in addition to their historical background, the social challenges they bring about, and the aesthetics of the community and its environment. One of the main purposes of the environmental education is, thus, to focus on how landscape, social infrastructure and cultural traditions all interact and shape each other (Sobel, 2005). Moreover, Hart (1997) explains another aspect of environmental education. According to him, environmental science, for instance ecology, must be taught to children, and lectures must be directly associated with the local environment. Additionally, every community should plan programs including a description and exploration of the challenges faced by the residents. In this view, environmental education strives to improve the community (Sobel 2005, cited as in Hart 1997). The concerns regarding communal responsibility are reflected in this very function of outdoor education.

Secondly, outdoor activities stem from physical interaction embracing talent acquisition due to interrelated activities such as hiking, camping and boating. These are all connected to people's personal lives in the context of personal development since they improve the kinesthetic capacity awareness of individuals. Outdoor activities can be defined as a way to improve oneself in terms of self-confidence and self-awareness. Personal development occurs when people experience something new or when they overcome a physical barrier, for example going downhill, and/or a psychological barrier created by a challenge through outdoor activities. Thirdly, social development is based on interaction among people via their skill-sets and by getting benefits from the process of team work. The way of acquiring the personal and social development is to establish cooperation among individuals, and to give duties to group members so that they are enabled to work together (Szczepanski, 2012). This function of outdoor education is clearly more interrelated with group co-operation and social and communication skills, which contribute to ecological responsiveness of individuals.

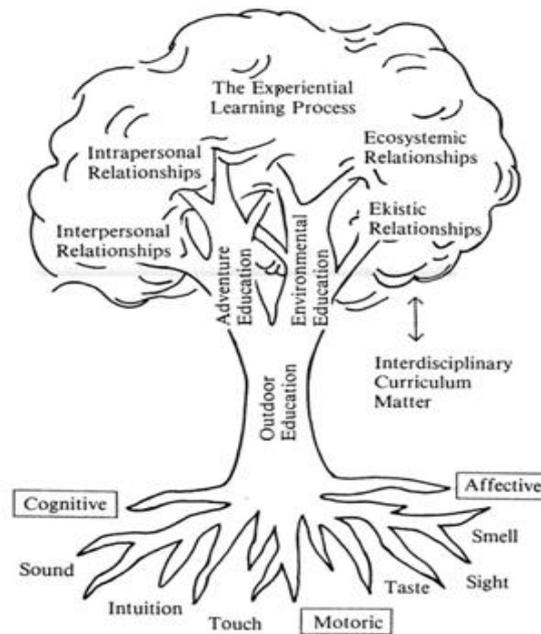
Another description of outdoor education is provided by Hammerman et al (2001) who define outdoor education as a contemporary and advanced syllabus, and as an approach or a methodology for more effective learning. They also draw up an expanded definition of outdoor education in terms of the aims and objectives of the curriculum, which include (a) an extension of the classroom to the outdoors; (b) serial experiences regarding the units of the syllabus enabling interactions with natural materials and living things, which enhances the awareness of nature and life; (c) a program aiming at a strong collaboration among students,

teachers, and outdoor education resource people to create an ideal teaching-learning environment (Hammerman et al., 2001). This conceptualization of outdoor education emphasizes its function as a process of continuing experiences and good collaboration to achieve more effective learning.

In addition, Gilbertson et al (2006) also stress that outdoor education is a method of teaching and learning in an outdoor environment and which mainly deals with outdoor activities related to direct and multisensory experiences by integrating nature, community and individuals. They explain that outdoor education increases the physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual levels of the individuals. They also summarize the definition of outdoor education in the following form by using Simon Priest's model (Gilbertson et al., 2006). In Priest's model, outdoor education is perceived as an umbrella encompassing every form of education about the outdoors. In this context, the umbrella of outdoor education encompasses adventure education and environmental education. Priest also realized that students' expectations from learning depend on a lengthy process from researching intrapersonal development to constructing social relationships. Moreover, outdoor education involves developing relationship between natural world and place of human in the natural world (Gilbertson et al., 2006, cited as in Priest 1986).

'For Priest, outdoor education is comprised of six primary points: it is a method for learning; it is experiential; it takes place primarily outdoors; it requires the use of all the senses (holistic); it is based upon interdisciplinary curricula and it is about relationships involving people and natural resources' (Priest, 1986:13).

Figure 2. This Priest model of outdoor education reprinted from Gilbertson and others (2006)



As mentioned above, outdoor education is a teaching and learning method, as well as a means to personal and social development. In addition, Neuman (2004) defines outdoor education as a process, which aims to teach with the help of outdoor experiences. Many things can be experienced in the outdoors such as the opportunity to see elks and feed one. This function of outdoor learning is obviously related with one of the dimensions of conceptualization of outdoor education, which is experiential learning. Several terms of experience are noted down in the research literature as a related part of outdoor education with different versions such as literary experience, personal experience, firsthand experience and sensory experience (Šimon, 2013).

In this chapter, I have discussed the different perspectives of the meaning, usage and function of outdoor education. Increasing cognitive levels of students, developing self-confidence and self-awareness of students, the contribution of outdoor education to the development of social relationships among community, nature and individuals, and serial and multisensory experiences are the main pillars of outdoor education (Bartunek et al., 2002; Hammerman et al., 2001; Gilbertson et al., 2006; Neuman 2004).

From this brief review of the research literature, I reconstruct a multi-dimensional conceptualization which focuses on the functions of outdoor education and discuss how these

functions promote the values associated with outdoor education. In the next section, I will investigate these functions of multi-dimensional conceptualization in detail, most importantly, the embedded values in these conceptualizations and problems of outdoor learning.

1.3.The Values Assigned to Outdoor Education

In this part of literature review chapter, I will present my multi-dimensional conceptualization of outdoor education within the literature in terms of its different functions as (1) personal and social development and (2) experiential learning. In addition, I will clarify the intrinsic and instrumental values that I assign to these functions of outdoor education. In relation with that, I frame instrumental values in the sense of communal tools such as raising awareness about environmental concerns, increasing ecological resilience and enhancing individual capacities in regard to academic achievement. I frame the intrinsic value as the enabling of sensory experiences.

1.3.1 Personal and Social Development

The conceptualization of outdoor education in terms of social and personal development is vital to understand the different perceptions. In the case of social and personal development, the research literature mostly focuses on three instrumental values. For instance, "increasing academic achievement" can be considered as an instrumental value, providing people with individual success."Raising awareness towards environmental concerns" and "increasing ecological responsiveness resilience" can also be seen as instrumental values, which provide benefits to the community. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss how outdoor education functions towards the promotion of these values.

It is important to understand that academic achievement is an individual instrumental value, which is promoted by outdoor education. Thus, outdoor education is mentioned by many authors as a tool to provide better academic performance during the outdoor activities (Fägerstam, 2012; Szczepanski et al., 2006; Openshaw and Whittle, 1993; Magntorn and Helldén, 2005).Outdoor learning ensures more effective learning through connections with real objects and being in a real situation and of course continuous interactions between theory and practice (Szczepanski et al., 2006). Especially, research in ecology points out that students make considerable academic achievements due to making connections with reality, such as during field trips. Openshaw and Whittle (1993) discuss the effectiveness of ecological field trips and argued that students' problems with ecological concepts must be understood through a field trip to see if there is any impact of these trips on solving the

problems. 'Field trips were perceived as a significant part of learning ecology because the students could explore, discuss and link theory to practice' (Fägerstam, 2012, cited as in Openshaw and Whittle 1993:7).

Magntorn and Helldén (2007) carry out a study to understand the effects of outdoor education on learning ecology. 'They conclude that teachers' explanations and summaries of the processes, for instance, energy flow and matter cycling in a new ecosystem, are not fully recognized and understood by students in general' (Fägerstam 2012, cited as in Magntorn& Helldén, 2005:7). However, children can show higher academic performance such as better retention and use of more content-related terms if they have activities in the outdoors (Fägerstam, 2012). For example, when students learn something about the ecosystem in the outdoors, they will be in a real life situation where they will connect reality with these functions. For example, they can observe a tree and then wonder how many ants live in this tree and start to think how this tree gives us oxygen. They build group cooperation and then they try to find other living things to study in the environment. They have fun when they make a puzzle of their environmental ecosystem. It can thus be seen that outdoor education has a positive effect on academic achievement.

As can be seen in the two studies mentioned above, researchers generally analyze the opinions of teachers about the ways in which outdoor education promotes learning for students. However, there is also a need to analyze the perception of students regarding outdoor learning and education in general. In brief, the perceptions of students about their academic achievement provide valuable contribution to education literature.

Raising awareness of environmental concerns as an instrumental value provides benefit to the community. A connection with nature boosts children's interest in environmental concerns. 'There are several studies regarding whether children experience an increased appreciation of nature and a sense of the need for protection of nature' (Fägerstam 2012, cited as in Kollmus & Agyeman, 2002; Sandell & Öhman 2012: 13). There are several studies indicating a relationship between feeling a connection with nature and people's protective behavior to nature. Scanell and Gifford (2010), Vaske and Kobrin(2001) and Gosling and Williams (2010) conclude that people who have a connection with nature show a protective behavior to nature (Fägerstam, 2012). Chen-Hsuan Cheng's and Monroe's (2010) findings show that 'children's connection to nature, their previous experience in nature, their perceived family's value towards nature and their perceived self-efficacy positively influence their interest in

performing environmentally friendly behaviors' (Fägerstam 2012, cited as in Chen-Hsuan Cheng and Monroe 2010:13). All in all, a relationship between experiences in nature and interest in environmental concerns can be considered as an important outcome for the social development of people. Thanks to outdoor learning, environmental concern is increased through experiences of nature and people become more aware of environmental problems such as the extinction of animal species, global warming and drought. They first start to protect and encourage their society to take these problems into account. In this way, it can be seen that social development promote raising awareness towards environmental concern.

On the other hand, increasing ecological resilience as an instrumental value means a younger generation which is better informed when they need to deal with ecological challenges. To clarify, outdoor education assumes a role of re-orienting the younger generation towards alternate worldviews. One of the significant tasks of outdoor education is a reorientation of young people through *an ecological resilience* to deal with the challenges of the future since outdoor education also promotes the use of critical thinking skills (Martin and Ho, 2009). For example, during the outdoor classes, students have to cope with many challenges. They may, for example, on a field trip, sleep outside in 14 degrees below zero in snow caves, built by them, make a snow table on which to eat lunch, go out fishing and make a fire for cooking.

In addition, there are other mechanisms of outdoor education, such as developing group co-operation and boosting self-responsibility, improving social and communication skills and improving self-esteem related with the values explained above. These mechanisms have a positive effect on awareness of environmental concerns and increasing ecological resilience. For example, in order for humankind to cope with many environmental problems such as global warming, drought and pollution, they should increase environmental anxiety and ecologically resilience to face these environmental problems. Society ought to be a union in order to improve social-communication activities which will transmit environmental concerns. Thus it will sustain a co-operation with other societies to make responsive resilience. In addition, people who live in the society should improve themselves to have self-responsibility and self-esteem. Consequently, they feel a sense of responsibility and respect to nature in terms of assessing these two values of outdoor education. As a matter of fact, research results also indicate that some functions of outdoor education, which are mentioned above such as developing group co-operation and boosting self-responsibility, improving social & communication skills and improving self-esteem, are related with personal and

community development in the sense of positive effect on two values of outdoor education and they receive more attention by outdoor educators (Martin and Ho, 2009).

In conclusion, the research literature on outdoor education indicates significant findings related with personal and social education (Nicol, 2007). Different researchers in Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and United Kingdom are of the opinion that outdoor education plays a significant role in achieving educational outcomes related to personal and group development (Martin and Ho, 2009). In particular, raising awareness towards environmental concerns and increasing ecological resilience are distinctive characteristics of outdoor education, which influence personal and social development. In addition to these findings, other values must be emphasized such as promoting social interactions and co-operation, coping with challenges, ensuring physical and cognitive benefits, promoting enthusiasm and creativity.

1.3.2 Experiential Learning

The conceptualization of outdoor education in terms of experiential learning is significant. The values promoted by this function of outdoor education can be summarized as enabling sensory experiences. In this section, I will discuss how outdoor education sustains this.

Several terms of experience are noted down as a related part of outdoor education with different versions such as literary experience, personal experience, firsthand experience and sensory experience (Šimon, 2013). However, one of the most distinctive characteristics of outdoor education is to be conducive for sensory experiential learning. Students experience something by smelling, seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and touching during outdoor classes. For example, students smell different colorful flowers and then deduce how insects are impressed by these flowers. Students see how ants find their food, where they live and what they do to survive in harsh air conditions. Students hear how birds communicate with each other. Students feel the wind to find out from which direction it comes and to find their position. Students taste plants to explore which are edible. Students touch frogs and realize how soft skin their skins are to make them adapt to water. Children's interaction with nature and their cultural phenomena boosts internalized knowledge. According to the learning approach based on sensory experience, children acquire knowledge through connection with nature and the learning is highly effective in this way (Szczepanski et al., 2006).

As seen above, there are a great number of studies showing many connections to experiential learning and outdoor learning. Specifically, when the works on perception of teachers or students are examined, researchers demonstrate a tight relationship between first-hand experience, sensory experience and outdoor learning. During the outdoor learning process, students acquire new experiences as well as sensory and first hand experiences. Scholars must be aware of students' new experiences to understand the students' experience of nature clearly.

1.4 Problems of Outdoor Learning

Although these values of outdoor education clearly contribute to students' learning and community life, outdoor learning has some problems as well. According to some of researchers insufficient fieldwork probably causes poor learning. Afterwards there can be tiny possibility to achieve objectives of subjects for students through outdoor learning (Rickinson, Dillon, Teamey, Morris, Choi, Sanders, Benefield, 2004). This is because there are several factors affecting amount and quality of learning in the outdoors. In the following paragraphs, I will present one by one these factors.

First of all, fear and concern about health and safety are mostly emphasized as significant challenge for outdoor learning. Main reason of such fear is tragic news including students. One example of accidents is the Lyme Bay tragedy that four children died on a trip in 1993 (Thomas, 1999). Also, concern about students' health and safety arise from visiting activities to nature. Increasing concern among students, parents and teaches is well illustrated in this example that a student catching an *E. coli* infection during the open farm trip is reported in 1997 (Rickinson, Dillon, Teamey, Morris, Choi, Sanders, Benefield 2004, cited as in Richardson 2000).

Secondly, the other important issue is teachers' lack of confidence in teaching outdoors. Teachers' knowledge, ability and experiences have effects on the quantity of outdoor learning (Clay, 1999). The example illustrating the issue is called Farmlink Project, which is conducted through long terms trips to farm. Unfortunately, it is concluded that teachers have no enough knowledge about farming (Rickinson, Dillon, Teamey, Morris, Choi, Sanders, Benefield 2004, cited as in Groundwork, 2002b). What is more, a qualitative research is carried out in England to figure out teachers' ability for outdoor lectures. This study indicates that personal limitations are obstacle to conduct a fieldwork (Titman, 1999).

Thirdly, school syllabus requirements are another problem limiting opportunities for outdoor learning. Titman (1999) announces that the fundamental reason for secondary school teachers to do not take children outside is that national syllabus does not provide enough flexibility to teach outside.

Fourthly, shortages of time, resources and support are key factors impeding learning in the outdoors. Harris (1999) mentions that teachers in the south of England cannot apply outdoor learning for their course because of lack of money and time. Also, Michie (1998) notes that time and more works are accepted as challenges by teachers in Australia. 'Tasks such as visiting venues, contacting resource people, preparing resource materials, organizing relief lessons, collecting students' money and using one's out-of school time were all noted as difficulties' (Rickinson, Dillon, Teamey, Morris, Choi, Sanders, Benefield, 2004:44).

Lastly, another barrier for outdoor learning is wider changes within and beyond the education sector. A majority of the number of students and the small number of staff do not provide staff-led small-group teaching, and then learning outside does not seem practical in this case. It is tough to achieve goals of learning, design realistic and equitable strategy while all students have very different background (Clark, 1997).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The general aspect of this project is to understand participants' attitudes by collecting comprehensive information on their opinions and experiences. In this point, this project serves as a qualitative research. Qualitative research has strong theoretical foundations based on various disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy and linguistics. These disciplines assist in acquiring perspectives into qualitative researches and contribute as a methodology for qualitative researches (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Goetz and Le Compte, 1984; Patton, 1987). The common purpose of all these disciplines is to try to understand the perceptions of the individuals in their social environment in a versatile way (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011).

In this project, I propose the idea that one way to analyze how outdoor education is perceived is by understanding how postgraduate students conceptualize the meaning, the content, and the use of Outdoor Education. I aim to understand and analyze not only a static conceptualization and understanding of Outdoor Education, but also divergent perceptions of "Outdoor Education" held by the scholars of various academic disciplines. My research, thus, is related to a phenomenological approach. One example of such studies, using similar kind of methods, is Anette Wickström's phenomenological inquiry. Anette Wickström and Kristin Zeiler have phenomenologically examined the behaviors of parents and interaction between surgeons and parents (Wickström and Zeiler, 2009). Several other authors such as Bennett (1991), Birzer and Smith-Mahdi (2006), Murdoch and Franck (2012) use this method. Qualitative research is a process which explains different human phenomena in a realistic and holistic way in its own very context. Such phenomena can vary from events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies and concepts to all the social processes around us. Qualitative phenomenological approach focuses on phenomena that people generally experience yet do not fully comprehend (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). Everybody may have heard about the concept of 'outdoor education' in their daily life, but not everyone has a detailed understanding of what outdoor education really is. In this chapter, I will investigate how I can accommodate the qualitative methods such as data collection, sampling and data analysis in my research project.

2.2 Data collection Method and Sample

The subject of this project is the perception of students of ‘Outdoor Environmental Education and Outdoor Life Master Program to the very concept of “Outdoor Education” The perceptions are uncovered by collecting data from opinion of the postgraduate students. This project, thus, has only one kind of data, which emerges from perception of the individuals (Le Compte and Goetz, 1984). I use interview as a data collection method because I want to analyze the concept of ‘outdoor education’ from the perspectives of the Master students. Interview is a strong method uncovering experiences, perceptions, emotions and opinions of people (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Interviews examine the continuing social processes in order to identify the process and understand the social structure which created the individual’s perspective (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). So, in several interviews with outdoor master program students in 2013-2014 academic years I looked for answers to the following three questions: How would you define outdoor education? What were your reasons in choosing the Outdoor Education Master program? Do you have a plan about outdoor education in the future?

This phenomenological project uses the non-probability sampling method. In the non-probability sampling, all the members of population do not have an equal chance of being in the sample thus investigators have intentionally chosen a specific part of the population to include in, or to exclude from, the sample. Non-probability sampling does not intend to generalize the samples and it is often used for qualitative research such as ethnographic research, action research, case study etc. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

The method chosen for this project is convenience sampling because I took the sample from the Outdoor Education Master students, who are my classmates since I can contact them very easily. Additionally, they are relaxed during the interviews and I can understand their feelings because we experienced a lot of activities together during the whole year. Convenience sampling is occasionally called “accidental” or “opportunity” and it is a selection from individuals who are all available at the same time. In this sampling strategy, researchers choose the sample from the nearest individuals. This kind of sample does not represent any group except itself and it does not aim at a generalization about the total population (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

I start to research this project by identifying a sample because according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), investigators have to decide on the sampling method at the beginning of the inquiry. Also, I searched all the Outdoor Education Master programs in Europe and finally

found this program in two countries, Sweden and England. Experienced investigators start a study with a whole population and continue with sampling in a descending order (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). I chose several Outdoor Education Master students from the Swedish program to form a sample, taking into account factors such as expense, time and accessibility. These elements often create obstacles for researchers if they wish to acquire data from the total population, so researchers always have to collect data from smaller groups or subset of the whole population (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Investigators often have difficulties in knowing what size their samples must be because there is no one and certain method to decide the numbers of people in the sample. If an accurate size of sample is important for the aims of the research and the nature of the population, then Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) explain a simple way to decide on the number of the sample for the qualitative studies:

'In the qualitative study of thirty highly able girls of similar socio- economic background following an A level Biology course, a sample of five or six may suffice the researcher who is prepared to obtain additional corroborative data by way of validation' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007:105).

I therefore carried out interviews with 11 students and 5 teachers from the whole population taking into account the foregoing information. However, afterwards I could just include interviews from nine students.

2.3 Ethics

Before the starting interviews with the informants, they are informed about their rights. They skip any of the interview questions or they cancel the interview, when they do not want to do. In the report, fact names are written instead of informants` real names to not reveal their identities. What is more, the information, which is gathered through interviews, is just used for the aims of this research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

2.4 The Process of Qualitative Phenomenological Analysis

In my research, all of the postgraduate students come from different countries of the world, with different cultures and different ideas and attitudes. Thus, I had a diverse and rich data to analyze from this sample. In the analysis of qualitative research, diversity of data means creativity and flexibility (Yıldırım and Şimşek 2011, cited as in Strauss 1987). Additionally, I took into consideration the recommendations of Wolcott (1994) when analyzing the data. By following these recommendations, I try to obtain the real meaning of the participants`

expressions and try to quote from their expressions. Wolcott (1994) advises three ways for data analysis. The first is that the investigator should be faithful to the original form of the data and, when it is necessary, can directly quote from the words of the individuals who participated in the inquiry. The second recommendation is that researchers should obtain descriptive and causal results and thirdly that researchers can interpret the data with their understanding (Wolcott, 1994).

I have included several different scholarly approaches about data analysis methods in the following parts of the chapter and I have tried to analyze the data regarding these approaches. I have not just relied on one data analysis method, and I have used my own particular method for data analysis. This is because, the data analysis process must be comprehensive and systematic; however, this does not mean that same data analysis method is valid for every piece of research (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Strauss (1987) explains that data analysis methods cannot be standardized and he emphasizes that the standardization of data analysis can restrict the qualitative researches. Moreover, he explains that standardization has adverse effects on acquiring suitable, rich and deep outcomes (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011 cited as in Strauss 1987).

Miles and Huberman (1994) examine the process of the phenomenological data analysis in the three phases, namely data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions and verification. In the data reduction step, researchers focus on the data and encode it. When they are encoding, they use the significant concepts and themes according to the research question. In that way, data is more simple and compatible with the research question. In the second phase, the processed data is visualized with charts, tables and shapes by the researchers. According to Miles and Huberman, the visualization of data is important with regard to emphasizing the relationship between concepts and themes and reaching outcomes based on the relationship between concept and themes. In the last phase, researchers interpret, compare and confirm the concepts, themes and the relationship between them. In that way, it is possible to make sense of the results of the research (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Giorgi (1985) clarifies the phenomenological method for the qualitative data analysis with some advice by Fisher & Wertz (1979). Five significant phases of data analysis are outlined by Giorgi (1985). The first one is reading to obtain a general overall impression of all the texts. The second one is rereading the texts for understanding '*Units of meaning*'. The third is the conversion of units of meaning into expressions that give implicit and explicit meaning. The

fourth one is the synthesis of the converted units of meaning into an expression of the participant's total experience, which Giorgi (1985) calls the '*situated level description*'. The last phase is referred to as a *general description* where the studies on each individual description are combined to obtain a more general meaning of the phenomenon (Bennett, 1991).

Focusing on the kinds of strategy suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994); Giorgi (1985) and advice from Wolcott (1994); Strauss (1987); Coffey & Atkinson, (1996). I have phenomenologically analyzed the qualitative data. In this section, I intend to describe my own data analysis method. The fundamental aim of my data analysis is to show regulated and interpreted findings to readers. I have firstly described the data gathering from the participants, so readers can obtain first-hand information about the perspectives of the participants. Then, I have encoded and classified the data because examination of the classified data is easy and I can also easily uncover themes due to the encoding. Lastly, I have associated data with several themes and have interpreted them one by one. Moreover, I try to be faithful to the original data and most times have directly quoted from the expressions of the individuals who participated in my research project.

2.5. Issues with Data Collection and Presentation

Firstly, it is problematic whether discovered conceptualization according to the interview questions works well in the sense that the interviews took place before specifying a comprehensive conceptualization examining outdoor literature. This means that the framework of the interview is not very much in accordance with the literature review. However, I still believe that the data acquired through interviews still works very well within the context of the conceptualization presented in this project because the findings of this Master's project clearly reflects the scholarly conceptualizations about outdoor education.

Secondly, the personal aspect is problematic in the sense that the interviewer is very close to the field and the participants. Hence, students may explain answers to questions thinking what should be correct answers instead of thinking what they want to say. Since I intended to reveal the students' real thoughts during the interviews, I avoided interfering with the participants' opinions during the interviews, no matter whether they answered correctly, partly correctly or in a completely wrong manner.

Lastly, as I mention in the literature chapter, the main *raison d'être* of my research is to gather different perceptions of outdoor education embedded within different cultures. Although

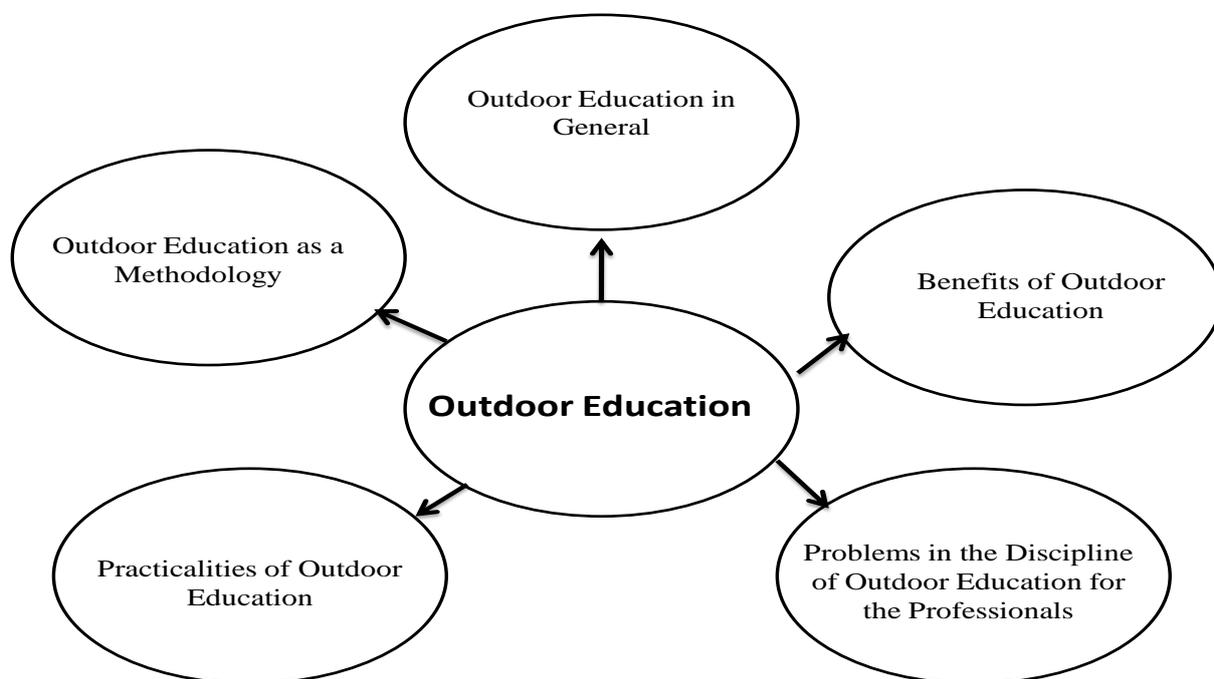
choosing a sample from a group of postgraduate students coming from many different countries allows me to accomplish this aim, one issue which is still problematic is that all the students belong to a Swedish context, as that is where they are being educated. However, my claim can still be considered valid since the many varieties of opinions from the students show that the cultural background of the students does vary and it does affect their perceptions.

3. WHAT IS AND IS NOT OUTDOOR EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM INTERVIEWS

In general, the studies on the perspectives and perceptions towards the meaning, function and importance of outdoor education point to the experiential, emotional, and didactic values ascribed to it. What I am mostly interested here, though, are the details and some of underrepresented understandings of the meaning of outdoor education for the students within the field of “Outdoor Education”. Hence, I aim at offering something beyond the conventional understanding of outdoor education, which is mostly reflected as a research field, its several problems such as requiring to be prepared, practical issues, sometimes being challenging and, its use for practical aspects such as enabling the learning no matter what the conditions are, in many different contexts and countries. In the end, I shall examine the value conflicts that the professionals have when it comes to deciding over pursuing either outdoor or indoor education within their curriculum.

In this chapter, I will start by presenting the general perspectives towards outdoor education from the postgraduate students within this field. I have allocated five different interview themes to analyze how and to what extent meaning, function and intrinsic& instrumental values of outdoor education are accommodated and discussed through the perceptions of scholars in the field. Figure 3 shows five different themes about different aspects of outdoor education which were created according to the interviews with scholars in the field. To follow, I will focus on the general understanding of outdoor education, followed by its methodological considerations, benefits and the conflicts which have arisen regarding this topic. Although the interviews took place before a comprehensive conceptualization examining outdoor literature was specified, my conceptualization and choice of interview themes still work together. This is because the results of interviews reflect a well-structured conceptualization of outdoor education according to the students' perceptions. What is more, literature does not allow to make supisingly differences with sharing of values. Despite of the fact that I and the informants are participated in the same program and we work on almost same sources. Thus, the values of the literature and expressions of the informants are often similiar.

Figure 3: Obtained Themes at the end of the Analysis



3.1 Outdoor Education in General

When postgraduate students are asked about their general remarks on outdoor education, they generally refer to one of the aspects presented in the literature review, and that is sensory experiences. Postgraduate students tend to appeal to their emotional experiences. For example, they are amazed by being in a beautiful landscape and they enjoy playing in an outdoor drama. They are excited to pursue something beyond the conventional indoor class setting, relaxed to listen to birds and they feel sunshine, and they get happy to have interaction with nature and their friends. In this section, I discuss how general perceptions of students on outdoor education generally point to the value of sensorial experiences and I emphasize the specific values that the interviewees greatly acknowledged, such as fun, relaxation and excitement.

Although some values such as fun, relaxation and excitement are referred to by the participants, most of them emphasized the value of “fun”.

I think I am goanna do them like really willing to do them with mine children, when I work with children. The other reason would be because they were fun. Everybody had a good time laughing, jumping and following over. I think when you have fun then you remember things more (Alan).

The value of “fun” is referred as an aspect of the sensory experiences by participants mainly through their expressions. Postgraduate students generally specify outdoor activities asentertainment.For them, individuals have fun when they experience something other than the conventional classroom setting, when they are out in a natural environment and when they are in connection with their surroundings, for instance with plants and animals. Likewise, similar outcomes are proposed by the outdoor education literature. Fägerstam (2012) puts forward the notion that children have an opportunity to experience the feeling of entertainment during the outdoor classes because outdoors is an unusual place to have classes.When the attitudes of children are explored, it is seen that they really enjoy doing an outdoor activity such as biking, jumping and kayaking. Also, postgraduate students emphasize that outdoor education is exciting and this can be seen in the following quotation:

[...]I was very excited because it was about sleep I think. I built the snow cave [...]and sleeping in the snow cave, is something you only see in documentaries. I never thought about building as now cave and sleeping inside actually. When it snowed some season, we were staying in the house. You will go for 20 minutes and play with the snow and then come back again because it is snowing, it is cold and all the stuff. Building house, snow cave, sleeping in there minus 10 or 14. In my mind it was something really extreme but I was excited (Robin).

The postgraduate students stress another value, "excitement", which is another aspect of the sensory experiences. They express that they become excited to engage in learning in an outdoor class setting since outdoor education is considered as an opportunity to learn beyond the traditional class teaching. What is more, doing extreme sports (outdoor education embraces challenging activities such as skiing, canoeing and jumping), having new experiences, being a part of an activity, going for an excursion and on top of that, preparing something such as outdoor equipment, food and map for a fieldtrip is very exciting for the students. Additionally, learning outside is really intriguing for children due to amazing landscapes and being in connection with the outdoors. In the end, going out of the classroom without knowing exactly what is awaiting them makes children curious.

As an example of how feelings of excitement is mentioned in the literature, Gilbertson (2006) identifies outdoor education as exciting and intriguing. He explains that outdoor education is an art and it is needed to create interesting and exciting activities. A class must have a lot of exciting activities and places to visit; for instance, a lecture at the night can be exciting. Listening owl and reindeer, learning how the eyes can adapt to dark, taking the students to examine night sky are often exciting for them. Apart from this, the following quotation describes how outdoor learning provides relaxation for students:

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It was when we were canoeing in the lake. So second time we went to lake with canoes. It was very sunny and it was cold, It was very good weather. So we were just stop in the middle of the lake. Lying in the canoes, think about nothing, just be relax, beautiful sun. That was really good moment because for me really difficult to forget about things I had in my mind. That time I really forgot about everything, I just forgot about I was in the world (Diana).

The last value of "relaxation", which is an aspect of the sensory experiences, is referred to by some of the participants. They emphasize that outdoor education ensures them to acquire a relaxed feeling when they are in nature. Lying in the canoes in the middle of the lake, feeling the sunshine and listening to birds are the experiences which lead to such feelings. Likewise, Moore (1996) states that the experiences of children when being outdoors is accompanied by a feeling of relaxation and points out that children have more positive feelings when they are outside (Szczepanski 2012, as cited in Moore 1996). Also, outdoor education is perceived as a passion by the students. In this sense, if people believe in outdoor education as a philosophy, they become passionate about learning or teaching outside. Wistoft (2012) obtained similar results as well. One of the most important outcomes of her studies is the enhancement of the participants' desire to learn with the outdoor program and the teachers' passion for teaching in the outdoors (Wistoft, 2012).

In conclusion, it is important to see that students experience several sensations such as excitement, relaxation, entertainment, passion and amazement through outdoor learning. These characteristics of outdoor learning are referred to in the literature chapter as sensory experiences. To reiterate, sensory experience is considered as an intrinsic value, which is promoted by outdoor education. Many interactions between sensory experiences and outdoor learning are indicated by research studies as well as by the postgraduate students. Szczepanski et al., (2006) put forward the notion that, according to the learning approach based on sensory experience, children obtain knowledge through connection with nature and such learning is highly effective (Szczepanski et al., 2006). As I clarify in this paragraph, there is a strong correlation between the value of sensory experiences of outdoor education and the postgraduate students' emotional experiences towards outdoor education in general.

3.2 Outdoor Education as a Methodology

When the postgraduate students are asked to clarify the definition of outdoor education in a more detailed way, they refer to some of the values that I presented in the literature review such as ecological resilience, environmental concern and sensorial experiences. Primarily, most of them express the common opinion that outdoor education is an excellent teaching and learning method. In detail, they refer to outdoor education as a method with such properties as being flexible, adaptable, sensorial, adventurous and experiential. They also mention it as a research area and a part of informal education. In this section, I discuss how students stress these values referred to in the research studies. A direct quotation describing outdoor education as a methodology can be seen in the following:

I would say that outdoor education from my own perspective is a kind of method or kind of tool that mainly teachers can use to improve the learning process of the children. And Yah I think that it is some method because I think you can use it in different subject you can make use of outdoor education in language math English or whatever subjects you are teaching and yah that is all (Diana).

Postgraduate students express a common definition of outdoor education before they emphasize some of the values discussed in the literature review. Thus, it is important to mention students' general definitions at the beginning of this section. The expressions of the participants about the definition of outdoor education can be summarized as an approach to learning and teaching that takes place by using whatever is in the outdoors. One example is

Neja Šimon (2013)'s work in which teaching documents are analyzed to indicate the place of outdoor education in the Slovenian curriculum. The question of *where* is mentioned in the Slovenian curriculum that can be a sign of application of outdoor learning. As in this study, postgraduate students mostly give a place the expression of "outdoors" in their discourse. Also, some impressions are pointed out by participants of this master project. Outdoor education obviously happens outside in nature or in the city center. Even though the learning does not necessarily have to happen in the natural environment, going to a park or a marshland or a lake and using that as a study for learning can be extremely effective i.e. just the location of the study of outdoor education.

In regard to the general definition of outdoor education, students refer to some of aspects of the research literature which explain outdoor education as a method with properties such as flexibility, adaptability, being sensorial, adventurous, experiential, and also as a research area and a part of informal education. This quotation shows a student's expression about using more senses in the outdoors:

Senses when you are outdoors you can learn with five senses. You can learn with smelling. I read somewhere that the more senses you use when you learn something easier will be remember. So you just learn with your eyes that will be much more difficult to remember when you learn that if you learn with your eyes and ears. If you learn with your eyes and mouth it will be easy to remember that will be ok. Last one is feelings. When you are outdoors, you feel a lot of things (Diana).

Most of the master students highlight the value of literature review, which describes sensory experience, emphasizing the usage of more senses during an outdoor activity rather than during being just indoors. Outdoor education has a lot of activity requiring using the senses. For instance, on an excursion to the observation of a lake ecosystem, children get the chance to listen to birds, see different kinds of insects, smell flowers, test several plants and touch frogs. Also, participants in this research thesis share different ideas from their own study of the research literature, for example, the notion that children use as many senses as possible outside and thus can remember more. Eva Änggård (2010) points out students' sensory experiences when describing an outdoor lecture focusing on the behavior of the leader and her students. She points out that the outdoor leader encourages the children to use all their senses and invites them to feel, see, touch, listen and smell rather than just read about things. In this way, outdoor learning becomes closer to what both Rousseau (1972) and Fröbel (1826)

proposed, which is that students ought to have feelings about a subject to achieve better learning. The teachers' tasks are not only to teach the name of birds, but also to invite them to experience nature with their senses and have feelings for it (Änggård, 2010). Moreover, another important value is experiential learning through outdoor activities. The excerpt below shows how students experience something in the outdoors in the following part.

But also that is more conducive for experiential learning, so rather than sitting in the classroom and it seems artificial. You are reading theory from the books. You get a goal outside and you get to have experience. Your different senses are engaged so you could smell things, you could feel things. You could learn through doing rather than by hearing, or listening or seeing examples of how other people have done it. You can experience it for yourself. I think that experiential knowledge or learning by experiences is very important that we do not rob the kids the opportunity of discovering something for themselves (Daniel).

It is important to mention that the Master students' expressions relate to the value of experiential learning that I emphasize in the literature chapter as being an important aspect of outdoor education. They clarify outdoor education as conducive for experiential learning that allows children to have experiences outside combining different senses and they also obtain knowledge by actually doing rather than just listening or seeing. Moreover, when students are outside, they are curious about subjects, they are excited to get knowledge and they start to discover answers of their own questions. That is why children have to experience by themselves during the outdoor activities. Furthermore, outdoor education offers new experiences; students accumulate huge amounts of new experiences that are just available outdoors such as building a snow cave, and doing cross-country, downhill and canoeing.

Šimon (2013) reaches similar results when focusing on the Slovenian national curriculum. He discovers the term 'experience' in the Slovenian national curriculum, which is noted down with different versions and is considered as a related characteristic of outdoor education (Šimon, 2013). Likewise, Fägerstam (2012) aims to show students' attitude during outdoor teaching in a part of her doctoral thesis. The results of this research show that the children are glad to develop interaction, variation and to have first-hand experiences. Also, she discovers that, according to the perceptions of teachers, outdoor learning increases the educational potential through having fun during the lecture, raising interest in the subject, enhancing the cooperation of the students, and promoting experiential learning and participation of students (Fägerstam, 2012). All in all, many studies in the literature point to the relationship between

outdoor education and experiential learning (Šimon, 2013; Fägerstam, 2012; Szczepanski, 2012; Bartunek, 2002; Louv, 2008).

Other values of the literature review are also mentioned by the Master student participants in this research. They perceive outdoor education as a significant work-field because of the fact that there are many studies about this way of learning conducted in different countries around the world. Also, there is a consensus among the Master's students about many aspects of outdoor education such as effectiveness, practicality and beneficence and they give many examples of such from research into outdoor literature. The values of environmental concern and ecological resilience demonstrate that outdoor education is an important work-field for developing communities in terms of raising a strong and ecologically conscious generation. There are so many serious environmental concerns today such as pollution, global issues, limited resources and rapidly increasing global population; thus, outdoor education is receiving more and more attention and it is taken more seriously by countries such as England, Scotland and Sweden. Moreover, outdoor literature research studies highlight the fact that students increase their awareness of nature through outdoor activities (Fägerstam, 2012), and they are able to discuss solutions to these environmental problems. Also, with the help of outdoor education, students acquire ecological resilience so that they can deal with challenges or tough conditions (Martin and Ho, 2009). These characteristics make outdoor education an important work-field.

The value of resilience is stressed by participants through some of their expressions about the flexible and adaptable characteristics of outdoor education. According to the postgraduate students, outdoor education provides flexibility to use different tools for learning. For instance, when children are in nature or in the schoolyard, they do not need any special tools for a geometry lecture such as rulers, triangles, projectors or other tools. Children use whatever they have around them, for instance, they make triangles with real objects, using their imagination. Also, the postgraduate students believe that outdoor education is adaptable since outdoor education is not only connected with natural subjects. Teachers and students can adapt subjects to the environment that they have around them thanks to imagination and their experiences. In the same way, the research literature about outdoor education shows the same consensus about the flexibility and adaptability of outdoor education as do the postgraduate students. Neill (2008) suggests that outdoor education brings more flexible and adaptable learning by presenting some expressions of the participants in his research, for example: 'I am adaptable and flexible in my thinking and ideas, I am flexible and adapt my

thinking easily when plans change' (Neill, 2008:373). Also, Martin and Ho (2009) specify that one of the significant tasks of outdoor education is to reorient a generation through *an ecological resilience* to deal with challenges of the future. Ecological resilience would help people overcome difficult living conditions of the future and provide an adaptation of people to these conditions to make them happy (Martin and Ho, 2009). For example, during the outdoor classes, students have to cope with so many challenges such as sleeping outside in the below 14 degree in the snow caves, which are built by them, making a snow table to eat lunch, going out fishing and making fire to cook something when they are in field trips. To sum up, how people can easily adapt to new environments and how people can be flexible under different conditions with help of outdoor education is illustrated in the research literature.

The mechanism of collaboration, which is presented in the literature review, is mentioned by the Master student participants. They point out that the group dynamic must work well, and that each group must have a cohesion so that outdoor education can be conducted in accordance with the purpose of general education. Regarding this point, it is important to mention what outdoor literature states. As indicated in the literature chapter, there are some mechanisms of values in which group co-operation, and social and communication skills thrive. The emphasis of the literature on 'group co-operation' is clearly related to the findings of this Master's project. Students together construct a shelter or build a snow cave to sleep all night inside it, write a story and develop ideas for the sake of being a union.

As well, the postgraduate students refer to terms from the research literature such as experiential, sensorial, flexible, adaptable methodology and a significant research area. They also consider outdoor education to be an adventure and part of informal education. The following excerpt is a good example to show this relationship.

During the Omsberg [excursion] I cut my finger very bad [...] and I do not know how to stop to bleeding because it is bleeding all the time you can see the blood in the sink. There were a lot of blood and I do not know how to stop bleeding. Emily told me: you need to give some pressure and you can stop bleeding. Every day I pressured very hard. That is kind of unforgettable because it is very useful very practical. I know what happened what I should do after I cut my finger (Angelina).

As it is seen in the quotation above, outdoor education can entail obtaining informal knowledge when the need arises. As well, children can receive information which has no place in the curriculum, but which is acquired from the environment where children grow up and which can be related to local history. For instance, students may walk around discussing old buildings which are in their neighborhood or absorb tips about making bread from a classmate during an outdoor field trip. Loynes, Michie and Smith (1997) also present a definition of outdoor education which shows a link with informal education. They explain that outdoor education is a method of improving people and is used by many diverse institutions in formal and informal education sectors. Tiffany (1995) sorts several items having themes about what informal outdoor education is such as having totally voluntary participants, the fact that it works in the society around it and that it develops students' performance (Loynes, Michie and Smith, 1997).

Moreover, the Master's students stress that outdoor education often involves adventure. When it comes to primary school education, the classroom has many times a negative atmosphere for pupils. Every child sometimes feels the school as a prison and he or she want to be outside and want to run or exercise outside. In this connection, generally outdoor activities are exciting from the beginning to at the end for children. In the same way, Rubens (1997) specifies that many scholars emphasize the tight relationship between outdoor education and adventure education. Hopkins and Putman (1993) provide a long explanation of outdoor education as a significant foundation to provide the conceptualization of adventure education (Rubens, 1997).

As has been stated, most of the postgraduate students highlight several aspects of the literature review conceptualizing outdoor education as a teaching and learning methodology and considering its several features such as its being flexible, adaptable, sensorial, adventurous, experiential, and as a significant work-field and as a part of informal education. In other words, the values of literature, which are increasing ecological resilience, raising awareness towards environmental concern and enabling sensory experiences directly or indirectly, are referred to by postgraduate students. I will summarize several connections between the expressions of the postgraduate students and the values stated in the literature.

The first point the Master's students referred to was that some the main reason to consider outdoor education as a flexible and adaptable methodology is that outdoor education can be applied in any conditions and can be adaptable to every class subject. For example, teachers can use outdoor education for a biology class in the case of lack of equipment or in the face of harsh weather conditions. The research literature proposes that same notion: that outdoor

education allows pupils to adapt to challenging conditions and encourages them to find positive solutions in the face of these conditions.

The other point according to postgraduate students is that outdoor education is a significant work-field and is receiving more attention by different countries around the world. This is because outdoor education is the only way to arouse students' awareness of nature and provide sustainable development for posterity. The research literature emphasizes that in order to fight environmental problems such as global warming, drought and decrease of forests, people have to increase their environmental concern. This can only be achieved when people increase awareness of nature thanks to outdoor education.

The last point is about sensory experiences. Postgraduate students state the idea that outdoor education allows the use of many senses during the outdoor classes because students can smell flowers, touch frogs and see how birds migrate. The body of research literature holds the same point. For example, when students are outdoors for a biology class, they feel the wind and try to find their way, they smell flowers and understand how insects are affected by them, touch spores and comprehend how many plants grow.

3.3 Benefits of Outdoor Education

When participants are asked different aspects of outdoor education to discover their deeper understanding of the meaning of outdoor education, they reflect some of the values described in the literature review. They generally clarify their beliefs about benefits of outdoor education such as promoting social interactions, providing emotional well-being, increasing physical benefits, ensuring more effective learning, requiring the use of creativity and also receiving more chances to do more things- doing group work, developing friendships as well as learning subjects, providing cooperation and making pupils more enthusiastic and engaged with each other. Most of the master students emphasized increasing social interaction owing to outdoor education and this can be seen in the following direct quotation:

When we went to Omsberg, we had more time in the evening. We got to sit around and just be class and get to know each other even more. I just make real connection, when we were playing board games and stuff. So, it was really nice to have this opportunity to go on the trips because I think, after the trips whole class came together a lot more. We were more united and more friendships we made. All the activities were great but for me that was main thing that I was enjoy from course was going on the trip everybody connecting together and

having fun. Even though it was rain, it did not matter because we were together and it was fun [...]ski trip [...]that was great. That was amazing (Alan).

The value of social and communication skills raised in the literature review is reflected through the Master's students' comments. Improving social interaction skills through outdoor activities is especially highlighted by the postgraduate students. During the excursions or the field trips in the outdoors, students can be a part of teams, which builds co-operation and also friendships among them. For instance, they sleep in the same shelter, make a fire and cook something together. Moreover, when students are going a bit further or more far away on their own such as a ski trip, canoeing or building a snow cave, it can be seen that everyone needs the other person's help. In this way, it is not important that students are from different countries, have different cultural backgrounds or speak different languages, they can be united to build cooperative relationships. Likewise, Szczepanski (2012), specifies that outdoor learning increases students' social interaction. Also, Martin and Ho (2009) express that acquired social and communication skills thanks to outdoor learning are significant in increasing students' environmental concern. For instance, in order for communities to cope with many environmental problems such as global warming, drought and pollution, they should be united by social-communication activities which will transmit environmental concern. To sum up, outdoor education provides better connection among students and communities to unite them for a common purpose.

Apart from this, emotional well-being has been quoted as another beneficial aspect of outdoor education:

[...]And also for doing outdoor programs, I change myself a little bit. I am being more optimistic because people really easygoing. We did together, we share the feelings together. I touch a lot of times during the program to be honest. Outdoor education changed some of my life style. I could be optimistic and I want to do some exercises that are the most important things. I want to do some exercises and I want to experience more about nature. I want to get close to the nature. I am sure that it brings a lot of things to me. I am really appreciated for the opportunities (Angelina).

Postgraduate students highlight another aspect of literature body, which reflects the value of resilience during their discourses. They clarify this idea by explaining that outdoor education

makes people more optimistic, and encourages them to tell the truth, and can change their life styles by getting close to nature to experience and share feelings, and to feel safe. Also, when people are outside, they cannot know what will happen next. Thus, people have to face all the conditions by staying optimistic. Likewise, ecological resilience, which aims to make people flexible in difficult conditions and happy to live with these conditions, is mentioned in the literature chapter. Wells pointed out the growing body of knowledge emphasizing the learning out of the doors and its effects on physiological well-being (Wells, 2000 as cited in Szczepanski 2012). Louv introduces some study outcomes showing that there is a good relationship between nature and self-confidence, time management, decrease in stress and other positive results (Louv, 2008).

The direct quotation shows academic achievement of students due to outdoor education in the following part:

Also cognitively is because you learn new words, new vocabulary skill and creativity (Alan).

As it is seen in the paragraph above, participants pay attention to one of the literature values, which is academic achievement. Students talk about more effective learning thanks to outdoor education. Typically in the classroom a lot of students are not engaged in the lesson and they are not excited about learning. However outdoor education is away to awaken the senses, ensure more positive experiences, make people more enthusiastic and more engaged so that learning then becomes easier from the positive attitude. Outdoor learning through experiences is much more effective and more active than just passively learning with text books.

The body of research literature mentions outdoor education as a tool to provide better academic performance during the outdoor activities (Fägerstam, 2012; Szczepanski et al., 2006; Openshaw and Whittle, 1993; Magntorn and Helldén, 2005). Outdoor learning ensures more effective learning through connections with real objects and being in real situations and of course continuous interactions between theory and practice (Szczepanski et al., 2006). Especially, research in ecology shows that students make considerable academic progress due to making connections with reality, such as field trips, during outdoor learning (Openshaw and Whittle, 1993). For example, when students learn something about the ecosystem in outdoors, they will be in the real situation and will connect real objects through these functions. They are interested in flowers and they are impressed by the beauty of flowers.

They can work out how insects are affected by these flowers due to their beauty and nice smell. It can be obviously seen that outdoor education has a positive effect on academic achievement and of course provide an increase in students` academic performance in this example.

As is known, people have different intelligences such as naturalistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, existential intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, bodily- kinesthetic intelligence and linguistic intelligence. Each intelligence means a different way of learning; thus, when teachers work with different intelligences, they have to work with different ways of learning. If children have a kinesthetic intelligence, they have to learn by moving and doing, they can learn better outside. So, definitely, including outdoors in your teaching practice is very important.

On the other hand, outdoor education improves language skills as well, because children must communicate with each other so many times when they are outside and they recognize how others express their feelings in a reflection part. Likewise, Raadik-Cottrell and Cottrell (2010) mention research results describing students who learn through outdoor activities have better language skills (Raadik-Cottrell and Cottrell, 2010). Moreover, the study demonstrates how students transfer their vocabulary and descriptive language skills, for example when they are learning the name of animals or are describing what is around them (Nilsson, K., Sangster, M., Gallis, C., Hartig, T., de Vries, S., Seeland, K., Schipperijn, J., 2011). In the classroom, children study knowledge through the books or with the teachers. Teachers explain what they should learn and students learn these facts; however, when it comes to outdoor activities, students learn something that they do not expect to learn like having special experiences. Nobody knows what children can find in nature, nobody knows what they are really curious about in nature and they could learn something not mentioned in the books.

A dimension of literature body reflected as personal and social development is mentioned by postgraduate students. During the interviews, they tend to appeal the effects of outdoor education on people`s awareness of nature in their daily lives, in community life and in the changes occurring in society. The following quotation shows the implications of outdoor learning on daily life.

One of the books that I read it said that there is a new initiative, called "green hour"[...]I do not know if it is like ministry of the forest who started this initiative, or a government initiative, but they encourage the children to spend one hour outdoors each day. I think, ever

since I read that I was thinking about adding membership at the gym Campushallen but I thought if I should be spending hours outside every day, then I just keep exercising outside rather than in the gym. Rather than get any gym membership, I go for a run every day or at least a walk to make sure that I spend at least one hour outside each day. Even though I am outdoors, I enjoy the outdoors [...] I think since September this program; I realize how important it is to spend a little bit of time outside each day. I really included that as a part of my life styles. So that is one change (Daniel).

Outdoor education has a great effect on daily life. It can be seen how people's daily lives can change through learning outside; using bikes, walking more, being closer to nature and being respectful to nature. It changes many aspects of how people see something in life; people feel strong, for example, to go to the forest for a weekend, to stay there and to think about going for a canoe trip. So, going outside, cooking outside and sleeping outside become normal things for them.

In this context, outdoor learning plays an important role in changing the behavior patterns of humans in a community. People develop their awareness of nature. People think about outdoors as a place, where they can have fun, where they can relax, where they can learn. Moreover, they can realize something by looking at trees and how they are changing day after day, how many ants there are in this tree, how many birds live in this tree, how many leaves have to give us oxygen. So, people become aware of the stages that are important to protect life in this planet. People realize that they have to change their behavior to continue living in this planet. Outdoor learning is the only way that people are directly affected by and at least in this way that can be affordable. As it is mentioned in the literature chapter, a connection with nature boosts children's interest in environmental concerns. Most of the outdoor preschool aims invite the children to be aware of nature and ensure that they have a feeling for nature (Änggård, 2010). There are several other studies indicating that children's experiences in nature increase appreciation and a sense of protection for nature (Fägerstam 2012, cited as in Kollmus & Agyeman, 2002; Sandell & Öhman 2012). In the end, outdoor learning supports children to be aware in the face of environmental concerns.

Outdoor activities can be combined with community life too. For example, an outdoor school has a garden to raise vegetables, the school organizes a market, parents buy the vegetables and students get some money to fund a school newspaper.

Also, the Master's students mentioned that outdoor education is physically beneficial for people and this can be seen in the following quotation.

[...]In my opinion it includes so much but I think one of the most important parts of outdoor education is that you get the kids outside, so they get the benefits of being outside; fresh air and there is a lot of benefits with spending time outside (Daniel).

There are a lot of benefits of spending time outside. Children who play often in nature indicate more physical development and they have good health (Grahn, et al. 1997, Fjortoft 2001 as cited in Szczepanski 2012). Students generally use their fine motor skills and develop muscles when they are outside. For example, when children are running around, climbing or skiing, they can use growth muscle and when children are looking at insects or leaves, they use their fine motor skills. So, students get physical development when they are outside. Also, it can be obviously seen that being outside decreases stress because getting fresh air, seeing sunshine, being able to move anytime and connection with nature reduces stress in people. Moreover, students have some physical challenges in the outdoors such as sleeping outdoors, moving downhill and resisting cold weather. Students work out their limitations by coping with these challenges, for instance, nobody knows that they have the ability to move downhill before doing it.

The following quotation shows being creative through the outdoor activities.

When you are outdoors, you have to think on your feet, you have to come up and you do not have materials, you have to find them outdoors. That is being creativity. That connects to learning because if you have to be creative with material that you have and that the skill you can use it for the future. If you are outdoors, you think that I cannot do anything now. You can remember back to on your creative. That will give you skills for the future; you can use that in the future to be creative and in other situations. [...]creativity is just being open mind, just being open to new ideas, have to do things. I think outdoors is great for that because through outdoor education, you can come up new idea yourself (Alan).

The research results point out that interaction with nature allows children to be more creative (Crain, 2001). For instance, Louv(2008) mentions a more creative game for children in the places consisting of green areas. Some of the Master's students, as well, explain that learning

outside requires being creative. When students work with materials from nature, they need more imagination, and more creativity, for example, making tools with natural materials such as wood or wool. They do not need to have huge amount of equipment, and they just need to use their creativity. Also, nobody can exactly know what will happen next when they are outside so they must create solutions to problems.

The following quotation describes how outdoor education ensures having more options for pupils' activities.

I think that outdoor education gives chance to do many things. For example you want to teach math. You can come up with some activities. You can help children work each other, get closer and develop their friendship. If you focus activities on something has to do everyday life. If you want to learn math, maybe you can count thing or keep your going to shop and want to buy something. You can get the children to do the math, to see what they learning and how they learning that are useful for them (Derek).

As seen in the paragraph above, participants mention that outdoor education provides chances to do many different things in the outdoors. It also helps not only school class learning, but also focuses on other areas like social behavior or environmental awareness through an outdoor activity. So many different things can be learned by the students from a wide aspect. They acquire social interaction, physical benefits as well as academic knowledge.

3.4 Practicalities of Outdoor Education

When participants are asked to mention different methods of conducting outdoor education, they mention several practicalities of outdoor education. For example, outdoor education can be applied no matter what the conditions are, in many different contexts and countries, and it is feasible for everybody. In this section, I indicate how students refer to the value of flexibility, focusing on several practical ways of conducting outdoor education. Most of the Master's students mention that teachers could carry out lectures no matter what the circumstances are in the outdoors, and this can be seen with this direct quotation.

I didn't expect that I would find myself having classes outdoors even in snow, even in a rain. I expected something like one day weather is ok we will go outside. I saw in the beginning. I thought something like that but now it has completely changed now I know that no matter the

weather we can go outside and have really nice experience. The weather is not a problem finally (Bella).

First, as it is seen in the paragraph above, outdoor education is perceived by master students as a feasible learning method for every condition. Outdoor learning can be applied no matter what the weather conditions are. If children have the opportunity to be outside and the motivation to be outside, they can do everything outdoors.

Second, outdoor education can be applied in every country in the world, because a country does not need to have any special quality to conduct an outdoor activity. Outdoor activities happen outside the school building, and do not necessarily require a connection with a natural landscape. Also, the teacher can use whatever the community offers to students. For instance, when students visit a museum, it will be again outdoor learning.

Third, outdoor education is for everyone no matter age or gender. Outdoor learning is not only for children and older people can be a part of outdoor activities too. Although some people can be really good at outdoor activities while some people may not, everybody could be still included in the activities by an adaptation of the level of the activity.

In conclusion, students specify that outdoor education can be applied no matter what the conditions are, in many different contexts and countries, and lastly it is feasible for everybody. Similarly, literature points out related perspectives such as the fact that outdoor education is flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions. Students face many different and difficult situations during this way of learning. Due to this characteristic of outdoor learning, they would be more flexible and strong in the face of these conditions (Martin and Ho, 2009).

3.5 Problems in the Discipline of Outdoor Education for the Professionals

Participants reflect on several aspects of literature review such as the point that outdoor learning is experiential, sensorial, flexible, adaptable, and practical. Apart from these aspects, students point out some of its problems as well. When students are asked about possible problems during outdoor learning, they try to explain some problems, for example outdoor education requires to be prepared with good equipment; sometimes it is practically problematic; it is challenging occasionally, like going on extended hikes or going on long walks; it cannot be easily applied in every country and lastly it must be balance with other forms. The following excerpt explains some of the occurring problems during the outdoor lecture.

[...]One of them was first day when we were trying building wind shelters. I was feeling completely cold and I was not able to do things. I just wanted to cry because I feel so much pain everywhere and also I was feeling really cold when we were sleeping outdoors in Mela. In the beginning I was excited and I was not feeling that much pain before when I started to realize that I was feeling cold. I just put everything together and go house. I think the cold was the worst experience. Some of teacher told us that when you feel cold, you cannot do anything else. You only think about that you are feeling cold. If the children do not have protect good clothes to be outdoors, they are not going to be comfortable because they are going to be cold and they are going to be concrete underplay. They are going to think that I just want to go indoors. This is outdoors, it is horrible, and I am freezing. I think one important thing is when you are going to outdoors; you need really good clothes because it is really cold (Diana).

First, one of the problems of outdoor education is not being prepared with good equipment. Students should be prepared for all the difficult weather conditions during an outdoor activity, for example they have to have special equipment such as raincoats, snow shoes and waterproof trousers for outdoor learning. There must be enough material for everybody to participate in an outdoor activity too, so everybody can be glad and can work together. Also, if students are not provided with appropriate information about how to use the materials in a secure way, this kind of learning becomes more risky and an accident may happen such as hurting yourself or falling from a canoe. The following quotation shows some practical problems of outdoor education.

[...]I think also when it comes to school there is a problem to make the children having the mentality that they are going to outside and do something serious. The teacher has to work a lot on this before going outside. You need something more educational practice about how to handle situations when something happened with students outside. At least from my experience at school kids think that it is not so important to be, it is not a lesson. You have to firstly make clear for the student. It is as much as important to us least to say in the classroom (Carolina).

Secondly, the other problem of outdoor education is also related to the practical aspects of outdoor learning. Outdoor learning should be accepted as a lecture or an educational practice rather than just being seen as a trip. So, outdoor activities have to be taken more seriously by students. Sometimes outdoor teachers have students who are not focused on the tasks, or they

are out of eye-sight. So, there has to be a certain amount of trust and outdoor teachers really have to make their expectations clear ahead of time. Also, teachers must be strongly motivated to go outside in order to apply this method. Children should be interested in the activities coming into the place because carrying out an outdoor activity requires imagination and inspiration. It could be a problem for outdoor education, if both children and parents are not interested in it. In the case when children are not motivated to go outside and parents have really negative attitudes towards allowing their children to go outside, then teachers have to work twice as hard to change the parents' opinions and to motivate children.

Thirdly, another problem is that outdoor education is sometimes challenging, like going on extended hikes or going on long walks. In a whole class of pupils, all have different physical abilities. It is always a lot more challenging for children if teachers overestimate what the pupils are able to do. Teachers have to keep in mind that the pupils have a wide range of physical abilities and they should take that into account when they are planning an outdoor lesson. So, if outdoor teachers are planning a 5 kilometer walk through the woods to learn about different species of trees, they need to make sure that everyone in their class is physically capable of doing that 5 kilometer walk, or adjust their plans accordingly.

The above points are possible negative aspects of outdoor education but they can all be solved through good planning. Outdoor education requires more work and more organization but teachers teach for the students to learn and enjoy more when they are outside. There are different waves of enthusiasm and energy and it can make teachers more enthusiastic and more energetic for teaching.

The following direct quotation shows that outdoor education cannot be easily applied in every country.

Another one could be legislation like regulation. Scandinavia is not a big deal like people doing outdoor education in the school, some preschool and university. In Ireland it is a big deal. People do not do it because regulations are so high. That obviously, would affect outdoor education that depending on the way of the world obviously. In Ireland regulation is so high, people are afraid to go outside in case of people damage them, take my child fall over when you are outside. I want money from you because I have to go to doctor or something. You know that is really big thing. When I am doing everything in Sweden, this never happened in Ireland. Because of regulation (Alan).

Fourthly, outdoor education cannot be applied for every subject; every person and every country. Going outside, staying outside and working outside creates legal problems in some countries, so teachers cannot use the same type of outdoor learning in every country. Outdoor education cannot help children in every case in all the subjects. Some of the children learn better outside but the others learn better inside. Some people cannot focus on language subjects outdoors, they need to focus in the classroom. Some people cannot understand math inside the classroom by just writing and reading so they need something more practical. Outdoor learning is beneficial for children and they learn some subjects with outdoor education but not with every subject. When they have math problems to learn some parameters, they cannot learn from outdoor activities. They need to sit in the classroom and calculate.

Also, most of the participants mention the conflicts of outdoor education in other forms. They try to expose the implications of outdoor education on the learning of students during the interviews, by also mentioning a balance between indoor and outdoor education. This balance is described in the following quotation:

There is a balance between the indoors and outdoors. You can learn equally indoors and outdoors. If one person believes that just outdoors is the best for everything, I think, that could impede. You have to have a balance like the outdoor is not going to be best solutions to do every single activity in the curriculum. No matter if it is preschool curriculum, primary school curriculum or our curriculum that we follow. I think being outdoors is not always the best solutions many times. That could impede it if you just have a teacher ok we need to do everything outdoor. This is most important way to teach. That is not right because can have a negative impact (Alan).

Although outdoor education is appropriate for sensible and experiential learning, teachers should not do everything in the outdoors. It is not beneficial to teach only outdoors because each student learns in his or her own way. If teachers work all the time inside the classroom, they only help the students who learn best in the classroom. There is a lot of research to support this idea that there must be a balance between indoor and outdoor education. If teachers combine these two teaching methods, they offer better opportunities for children to learn better. Moreover, teachers should plan what and when to teach students in the outdoors or indoors.

4. THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It is important to consider whether this research achieves its main goal, which is to uncover international perspectives of students to the concept of outdoor education. The results of the analyses indicate that outdoor education is perceived in many different ways by students, who are from different countries. For instance, according to some postgraduate students that come from Western Europe and the Far East, outdoor education cannot be applied by every country or at least in their countries. However, according to other postgraduate students that come from Eastern Europe and South Europe, outdoor education can be applied by every country. As it is seen in this example, outdoor education is perceived variously by students coming from different countries. On this point, outdoor education can be defined as a cultural phenomenon.

When it comes to the results of this research, five different themes, those have been obtained during this study, such as the benefits of outdoor education, practicalities of outdoor education, problems of outdoor education, outdoor education in general and outdoor education as a methodology are examined. With regard to general aspects of outdoor education, some values such as fun, intrigue, amazement, passion, relaxation, happiness and excitement are emphasized by the postgraduate students as well as with regard to the benefits of outdoor education such as providing emotional well being, increasing physical benefits, ensuring more effective learning, requiring the use of creativity and also giving more chances to do more things and the effects of outdoor education on people's awareness to the nature, on their daily life, on the community life and on the changing society.

Moreover, the notion that outdoor education is flexible, adaptable, sensorial methodology, and the belief that it is adventurous, experiential, and also as a research area and a part of informal education is shown in the results as well. Furthermore, practical aspects of outdoor education are specified. For example, outdoor education can be applied no matter what the conditions are, in many different contexts and countries, and it is feasible for everybody. Lastly, the problems of outdoor education are stressed, for instance outdoor education necessitates preparation; outdoor education has some practical problems; outdoor education cannot be applied by every country and there are the conflicts of outdoor education with other forms such as indoor education.

It can be seen that findings of this research is quite similar to what the research literature says about the concept of outdoor education. By and large, researchers have stressed outdoor

education as an experiential education. Apart from that, the effects of outdoor education on personal and social development and its various problems are mentioned by several scholars as well. Most of the findings of this master project are supported by these research reports. In addition, various different perspectives of students beyond the outcomes of literature reports are presented, such as the practicalities of outdoor education and its problematic aspects.

On the one hand, those practicalities of outdoor education seen as positive by the postgraduate students are that this learning may be applied no matter what the conditions are, in many different contexts and countries, and is feasible for everybody. On the other hand, the features of outdoor learning which are considered as possible problems by the participants are that it cannot be applied in every condition, in every context and country, and it cannot be appropriate for everybody. However, identifying outdoor learning in consideration of these aspects is an important overview to develop insights into this type of learning. Outdoor education uses nature as a rich source of experimental equipment. Hence, there are plenty of possibilities to do so many things in the outdoors. For instance, students have a chance to observe how birds move to other countries. Students investigate birds migrating when they face harsh weather conditions and after they try to reason why birds have to do it since birds cannot fly when weather is very windy or birds cannot fly when birds get wet because of the rain or snow. As it is seen in this example, the migration of birds can be observed in almost every country when weather conditions are difficult. What is more, geography and math can be learned as well as biology. People do not need to be a specific age to witness migrations of birds because everyone can observe birds: children, young people, adults and old people. In spite of these practical qualities of outdoor education, there are certain problems which arise.

Outdoor education has some problems as well. For instance, group management is more difficult when children are outside compared when they are in the classroom; there are more risks going outside; it requires more work for the teachers to teach outdoors. Thus, it is just easier to stay in the class and teach from text books; some children do not have the support because of their parents' principles; there is more opportunity for the kids to get into trouble or not having enough attention paid to them. There are possible negative aspects of outdoor education but they can all be taken care of through very good and detailed plans. Outdoor education requires more work and more organization but teachers teach for the students in order to make learning more effective and they could enjoy more as well by taking the children outside. Enthusiasm and energy can be contagious and this all makes students more enthusiastic and more energetic for learning. On the other side, some of these problems of

outdoor learning can be added as significant aspects in the literature for example outdoor education requires to be prepared with good equipment; sometimes it is practically problematic; it is challenging occasionally, like going on extended hikes or going on long walks; it cannot be easily applied in every country. Despite these problems of outdoor education, it is receiving more attention in countries around the world.

Participants mention that outdoor education has a broad and significant work-field and there are many research papers about the background of outdoor education to support outdoor learning and teaching. This method as a practice and as a discipline has received more attention in the face of global and environmental issues such as pollution, scarcity of food, drought, global warming, and increasing global population. To be clear, thanks to outdoor learning, students increase their awareness of nature through their experiences in the natural environment. Environmental concern is apparent in the results pertaining to environmental problems. Students are more aware of environmental issues in a positive way. For example, they start gaining a protective behavior to nature, they are keen to solve these environmental problems and they disseminate their ideas. From this perspective, outdoor education plays a vital role for the future development of countries. Apart from the fact that outdoor education is regarded as a work-field, postgraduate students explain a balance between indoor education and outdoor education.

Postgraduate students have doubts whether outdoor education by itself is the best way of teaching and learning. Even if there are plenty of very good reasons to carry out a lecture in the outdoors, there is a belief that outdoor teaching must be balanced with indoor teaching. To clarify, there are different intelligences (i.e. visual, kinetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic and logical) which implies that there must be that number of teaching methods. If some students learn by moving and doing, it is important to teach them via the outdoor method. Other students learn better just by listening to their teacher. In this case, it would be appropriate to teach in the classroom. Last of all, to be beneficial to all students having different intelligences, the teachers should keep a balance between outdoor and indoor learning.

5. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the concept of outdoor education is perceived in many different ways by postgraduate students. Briefly, it can be defined as a cultural opinion since a student's definitions of outdoor education show changes depending on the culture in which the student works and lives. The *raison d'être* of this project, which is to find out international perspectives, is successfully attained through analyzing students' opinions.

What is more, the results of this master project are tied with a great quantity of previous studies. However, I can present new perspectives on the further side of previous research. Several practical aspects of outdoor education and its various problems can be added to the research literature. These problems and features of outdoor learning provide a new outlook on outdoor education.

When it comes to another possible impact of this study it must be considered that, generally, researchers work on the opinions of teachers about the ways in which outdoor education promotes learning for students. However, there is also a need to work on the perception of students on outdoor learning and education in general. This is because students can express their understanding of how outdoor learning works for them as well. In this Master's project, perceptions of students about their academic achievement provide a valuable contribution to the education literature.

Thanks to this research, international perspectives on the concept of outdoor education are uncovered by interviewing several people who come from different countries such as Ireland, Canada, China, Greece and Spain. I would like to recommend the researchers to carry out investigation in other countries from different continents such as Africa. Scholars could conduct research on how outdoor activities can change depending on different countries, whether outdoor education is actively encouraged in other countries by an examination of the national curriculums and which type of education countries had in previous times. In the future researchers should continue to conduct such studies because dissemination of outdoor education will be extremely important in the sense of environmental issues. This project can be considered as a basis to encourage further research in the field of outdoor education.

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