

MOTIVATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE FOR STUDYING AGRICULTURE

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Abstract: *The paper explores the motivation of young people for studying agriculture at Križevci College of Agriculture in Croatia. Particular focus is placed on students' motivation to study agriculture and to standards in the quality of studying in general. The survey was conducted over a nine-year period from 2013/14. to 2020/21. on a appropriate sample of 413 freshmens. The results of the research show that the College needs to improve marketing promotion and quality of the students' standard. However, students have a very positive assessment of the reputation, tradition, and historical background of the College, which greatly influences the level of students' overall interest in studying. In addition, the professional study of agriculture enables students to acquire professional knowledge and create practical skills and experiences, which increase their chances for instant employment.*

Keywords: *motivation, students, Križevci College of Agriculture, survey*

INTRODUCTION

Recently, topics related to the motivation of young people for a certain studies have become popular as well as many academic institutions are increasingly researching and analysing student's motivation for the chosen study in order to respond to student's needs in the future [6]. From the sociological point of view, motivation or need for achievement is acquired through the learning process, [1] in childhood through the process of socializing into the culture. Motivation is a behaviour directed towards a goal that arises needs caused in a person and the reason for behaviour is the accomplishment of needs [7]. The cause of a certain human behaviour are the internal psychological drivers that encourage someone to an activity, so the performance of an individual depends not only on his ability, but also on his motivation. However, not every motivation derives from the same factor, but according to Vujić [10] motivation is a collective term for all factors that cause, amplify, organise, and direct human behaviour. Petz [8] claims that only recent theories of motivation have clarified why a person's behaviour in life is not in line with his desires and interests: for example, someone may be most attracted to studying agriculture and still enrolls in another faculty. Someone's latest decision depends on several factors, not just how much one is attracted to a specific goal. In the final decision, someone chooses the goal for which is mostly motivated. Student motivation, or lack of it, is a major factor why some students are more successful than others. Motivation falls into two basic categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation comes from a person's environment. Intrinsic motivation comes from internal sources. Intrinsically motivated students are more likely to stay in school, achieve conceptual understanding, and be well adjusted. One of teachers' role is to help students be intrinsically motivated and to learn [2].

The system of higher education in the Republic of Croatia is conducted through professional and university studies [11]. Currently, 1358 accredited study programs are being conducted, of which 1206 are university studies, and 265 are professional studies [12]. There are 15 faculties in the field of agriculture and among them, Križevci College of Agriculture (KCA, picture 1) is the oldest one [13].

So, the object of this paper is the research of students' motivation and interest for studying agriculture at KCA which delivers full-time and part-time high education study courses in accordance with the Bologna process [14]. The courses have professional programme orientation and are structured according to a two-cycle education system. KCA

delivers three-year undergraduate professional course: *Agriculture* on bachelor level and two-year specialist graduate professional courses: *Sustainable and organic agriculture* and *Management in Agriculture* on master level [13]. The aim of the paper is to analyse the data obtained through student surveys about young people's interest in agriculture and motivation to study.



Figure 1: Križevci college of agriculture

Source: www.vguk.hr

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological basis of the paper is longitudinal research through a survey which had been conducted over a nine-year period within the students' generations from 2013/14.-2020/21. on an appropriate sample of 413 freshmen. According to Giddens [3], survey aims to collect data that can be statistically processed. Also, a survey involves an obtaining information directly from respondents, and the results are interpreted using statistical analysis [1]. Unlike the sociological survey, the student survey [15] is a grading method to determine the satisfaction of enrolled students with the study program, services, resources, and other different aspects of their academic experience. Student survey, from a student perspective, can show what is happening at a particular point in a particular college, surveys are best suited for concise and simple questions. Student's survey called *Initial survey for students* consisted of a total of 46 questions of which not all have been interpreted for the purposes of this paper. The questions in survey were processed by the method of descriptive statistics, which includes the analysis of the distribution of frequencies and percentages and are presented in tables and graphs [4].

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the survey was conducted on 398 full-time students and 15 part-time students equally represented by male and female students. Respondents are first-year students of KCA, course *Agriculture*. Agriculture is commonly defined as an economic activity of growing plants and animals, primarily to produce food for human consumption (primary agricultural production). In addition, agriculture includes the so-called domestic processing, i.e., processing of agricultural products on one's own farm, on a smaller scale and without complexed means and equipment [4].

The place of residence of the students is mostly a countryside (55%) and a relatively equal number of students come from a town (12%) or a small town (14,1%). Other students live in a city (18,6%). Also, students live mostly at mixed households which include agricultural and non-agricultural activities equally (37%), "pure" agricultural households (22%), and non-agricultural households (22%), and a small proportion of them do not live in a family farm at all (20%). Students mostly complete secondary agricultural schools (47%). In addition, students, and young people in general, who come back to the countryside bring with themselves freedom of choice, learning new things, modern agricultural production, etc.

Table 1.

Overview of academic years, number of respondents, gender and students' status.

Academic years/Generations	Number of respondents	Gender		Students' status	
		Male	Female	Full-time student	Part-time student
2013/2014	65	31	34	64	1
2014/2015	66	38	28	64	2
2015/2016	75	42	33	71	4
2016/2017	60	30	30	59	1
2017/2018	56	26	30	54	2
2018/2019	17	8	9	17	0
2019/2020	33	20	13	30	3
2020-2021	41	22	19	39	2
2013-2021	413	205	208	398	15

Source: Author, 2021

Furthermore, satisfaction with studying at KCA among students, includes questions about how they found out information about KCA, the reason for choosing this college, attractive elements of studies and general attitudes related to it. Most respondents (29%) knew about KCA before, the vast majority of respondents found out about the College via the Internet (23%)[13] or by the friend's recommendation (22%). These communication channels are the most important for the promotion of the College, in general. But, while making the decision to study at KCA (figure 2), the largest number of students made such a decision primarily because of the nature of the work they do. Second and third reason for studying agriculture is because they failed to enrol in the desired study, or it was easier for them to study at KCA and then continue their studies somewhere else. So, students reported that "having a good job or career" was the extrinsic motivator for them to study agriculture.

Therefore, it is sociologically significant that agriculture is being studied by future young farmers living in the countryside in a mixed agricultural household and they are interested in continuing to develop agriculture as a part of their profession.

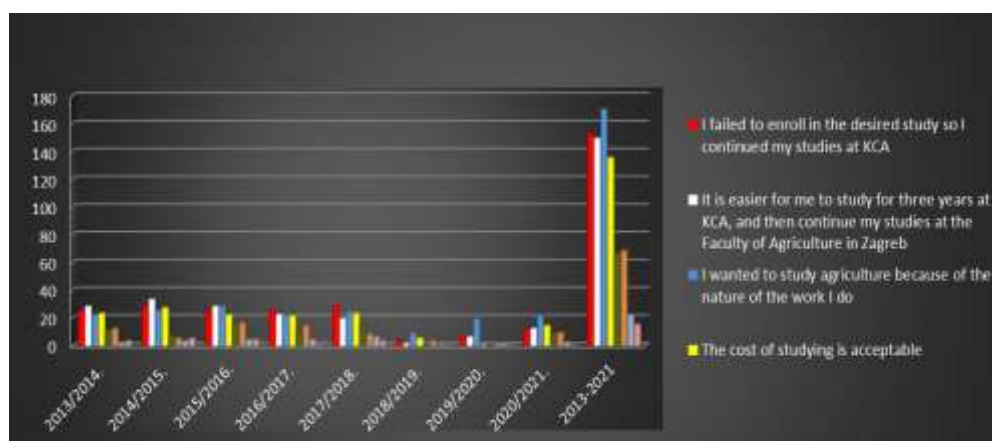


Figure 2. Why did you decide to study at KCA?

Source: Author, 2021

The most attractive segments of KCA (figure 3) are good location (20%), reputation, tradition, and historical significance of the institution (18%). In addition to that, students will recommend studying at KCA to their friends and acquaintances.

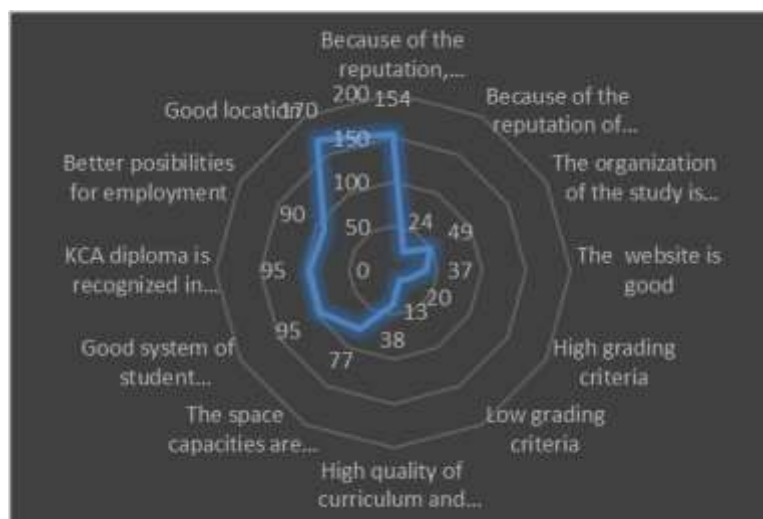


Figure 2. What elements of studying at KCA do you find attractive?

Source: Author, 2021

Also, they are very optimistic (91%), and think that they will complete their studies within the set deadline. The greatest interest of students over the nine-year period is to study *Plant production* (43%), while the *Management in agriculture* wants to study a slightly smaller number of students (38%). On the other hand, the course *Zootechnics* is the least attractive course for students (19%). The reason for this is most likely a decrease in the number of family livestock farms in North-West part of Croatia. Furthermore, concerning the student standard, it is important to analyse questions about student accommodation during their studies, meals, and study funding. Most of them live with their parents (41%) while studying and in a rented apartment (34%). There are fewer people living in a rented room (14%), and elsewhere (6%). Most respondents during their studies are financed by their parents (52%) or by their parents and themselves equally (28%). A slightly smaller number of them receive a municipal scholarship (7%), while the smallest number of students receive a city scholarship or some other form of financial assistance during their studies. Student meals are organized at local hotel “Kalnik”, so 79% of students eat there. Students believe that the student standard could improve in terms of the quality of food preparation, the choice of offered dishes and the services of the restaurant staff.

CONCLUSION

Based on data obtained from the survey, some general conclusions can be drawn. KCA students mostly come from agricultural high schools and rural place of residence, which points to the fact that residence is closely related to the interest in studying agriculture because rural areas are far more suitable for agricultural activities than urban ones. Also, the motivation for studying agriculture is related to student’s type of household in which they live. Most students had previously heard of KCA, found it online, through a friend’s recommendation or people living in the neighbourhood. Great majority of students would recommend studying at KCA to a friend or acquaintance, which means that students are the most important in spreading recommendations to the next generations of future students. Furthermore, most students decide to study at KCA because they failed to enrol in the desired first choice study or it was easier for them to study at KCA and then continue their studies elsewhere. It can be concluded that KCA by itself is not so attractive, but students choose it in the absence of an alternative. Still, very attractive segments of KCA

are location, reputation, tradition and historical significance of the institution and better employment opportunities for students. Most students think that they will complete their studies on time, which leads to the conclusion that students have a collective opinion, agreeing that it is easy to study at KCA. After completing the first year of study, most students want to enrol to plant production and management in agriculture but in recent generations the situation has changed, and Management in agriculture course is becoming the one that students want to enrol mostly. Regarding the quality of studying, it is important to improve students' standards related to student nutrition, accommodation, and financing. It is also important to improve and expand the survey with more different questions and continue with researching students' needs and wishes and implement the results of research in plans and strategies of KCA to ensure the best interest of young people in agriculture in all segments of work and organization of college.

In conclusion, motivation for studying is extremely important for KCA students because it is the driver which leads to the goal, i.e., the successful completion of studies. because they see themselves in their rural environment where they want to continue working, creating, and contributing to the development of agriculture in general. Educating young people to organize knowledge-based agriculture in the future is key to developing sustainable agricultural production [9]. Young and highly educated people are the most important bearers of social capital, and it is very important to keep them in the rural area [5].

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