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EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH MOTIVATION TO CHOOSE RURAL AREAS FOR LIVING AND WORKING

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Abstract: *The main purpose of this scientific article was to disseminate the results of applied research of authors conducted within postdoctoral training sessions. The main objectives of the paper were: presenting current general economic and social context from Romanian rural areas and the specific problems of rural communities in the context of their integrated sustainable development; assessing the motivations of young university graduates (cycle I, II and III Bologna) to choose a rural area as a destination to live and work. To achieve these objectives has been achieved at national level case study based on an applied research materialized as the original investigation using a questionnaire with nine questions. In the applied / qualitative research were collected and processed 190 questionnaires completed by students, master and doctoral students from 11 higher education institutions in Romania, and the responses from the questionnaires were interpreted in conjunction with economic indicators and social features integrated economic development rural communities. For conceiving this article were made a series of original analysis, respectively they were issued some opinions and personal recommendations based on the experience of the authors as researcher and on the realities captured in the field. In the context of the integrated approach to the development of Romanian rural communities, purpose and outcome of the economical and social process it is need to find and maintain a balance between all parts of the countryside, so as to ensure both a quantitative trend upward (economic growth) and qualitative (sustainable development).*

Keywords: *rural areas, Romania, sustainable development, young people, specialists.*

INTRODUCTION

In the landscape of current research of rural economy, this theme is something new, starting from the current need to convince young people, graduate and postgraduate, of returning to rural areas (especially in the areas of residence) to live and work. This would be a solution for rejuvenation Romanian rural areas, to revitalize them and to ensure their sustainable development.

The main purpose of this research, carried out in a postdoctoral training, was to study in detail the motivations of young professionals (higher education graduate - college, master, doctorate) to return or Romanian rural areas and trying to achieve a "picture" of Romanian rural areas and their sustainable development prospects in terms of returning young professionals to live and work in this area. The main objectives of the research were: acquisition of knowledge and new concepts; developing a case study on the motivation of young professionals to choose the Romanian rural communities as a place to live and work; SWOT analysis of the development of rural areas in Romania resulting from their studies and research carried out; interpretation based on questionnaire responses obtained in connection with integrated sustainable economic development of rural communities; issuing conclusions and recommendations based on synthetic data obtained.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In preparing this article were conducted fundamental research aimed at acquiring knowledge and new concepts and applied research, based on a case study conducted using a tool specific research - questionnaires, formulating hypotheses original conclusions to be drawn synthetic development of personal recommendations (Chirițescu, 2015; Duță, 2008).

Applied research, type quantitative research, was conducted using a questionnaire with nine questions in 11 prestigious universities in Romania on a sample unrepresentative consists of 190 people, representatives of students (particularly the final year), master and doctoral students.

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The main methods of data processing were the statistical and mathematical methods respectively computer assisted processing using quantitative analysis software SPSS and Excel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

During the period February to May 2015 was conducted an applied research based on questionnaire regarding *"Evaluation of the motivation of young future professionals to choose the countryside to live and work"* (Chirișescu, 2015). Original questionnaire with 9 questions of various types - closed, open, with free answers, etc., was completed both directly and online by 190 respondents (students, master and PhD students) in the country. The main purpose of applied research was to obtain information regarding: the desire rural respondents to choose as a destination to live and work after graduation (the 4th question); conditions which should provide rural areas of Romania in order to induce respondents to choose these stable communities as locations of living (question 5 of the questionnaire); the strengths and weaknesses of Romanian rural communities in the poll respondents (questions 6 and 7 of the questionnaire); Romanian rural locations (districts, counties, etc.) where respondents would like to live and work (question 8 of the questionnaire); rural areas of activity in which respondents would like to work (question 9 of the questionnaire).

Consistent with the purpose of research, we aimed to test the following *hypotheses*:

- (1) - the major trend of young professionals is to return or not in rural areas after graduation to live and work;
- (2) - know young students, master and doctoral Romanian rural realities (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities);
- (3) - young specialists decision to return or not in rural areas after graduation to live and work, it is fair and well founded;
- (4) - which should provide rural Romanian to motivate young professionals to return here (possibly in their localities) to live and work;
- (5) - which are the main areas where young professionals would like to work who would choose to return to the countryside after graduation;
- (6) - there is Romanian rural regions / counties / communes / villages that young professionals would like to choose them as places to work and live.

Rural communities, in a sense purely geographical, is "rather territories, than villages and towns with low population density and economic activity diverse and dispersed, relatively independent of direct influences metropolitan areas" as defined initially OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). Subsequently, OECD experts found that "rural economy integrated into the national and international economy, it is no longer synonymous with agriculture, it has diversified" (Gavrilăscu, Giurcă, coordinators, 2000).

In this remarkably complex and heterogeneous setting, young professionals (graduates) can produce real change radically in terms of how community development, their specialization (where applicable, depending on the type of villages), ways administrative management, changing the structure of the rural economy, namely its diversification etc.

The new philosophy of the rural areas is based on the concept of local sustainable and integrated development (economic, social, ecological, cultural, etc.) which requires both a solid non-agricultural rural economic component and an agricultural component (or forest, if applicable) important. The issue of sustainable rural development policies encapsulated the economic and social development of local communities (rural) in a harmonious ensemble (Chirișescu, 2013).

Sustainable rural development is part of the concept and at the same time, part of a strategy of economic and social sustainable development. This new principles, concepts and features of sustainable rural development are relatively difficult to understand rural community members (Berea, Stoica, Brăgaru, 2010). In this context, the role of youth with higher education who would come to work and live in rural areas would be to: deciphering the "mysteries" of new models of sustainable rural development; presentation of potential solutions to ensure economic growth at the local level, both in agriculture and non-agricultural, development and implementation of viable investment

projects; promote the concept of community development with active involvement of all local public and private actors; implementation of development measures, social cohesion and inclusion etc. (Dona, Florian, 2010; Chirițescu, 2015).

Community development in rural areas can be a process to create the conditions for economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and with total confidence possible in initiative of communities (according to the UN definition, 1955).

According to Professor Dumitru Sandu, 2010, community development refers to voluntary changes "to" "by" and "for" the community. Therefore, community development processes are changes in a community based on participation of community members, including the solutions implemented such baggage ancestral knowledge of its members, their spirit of initiative and self-help, their capacity for social innovation.

Based on the results obtained by administering questionnaires were able to highlight a number of motivations of young specialists in terms of choice the place to live and work. Below we present the answers to the questionnaire of the 190 respondents included in our study. Analysis and processing of information was done by developing models of answers that are still represented in tabular summary of the answers given by the interviewed subjects / respondents to 9 questions from the questionnaire.

Question 1 "Is you ..." has three possible answers: a) student; b) master; c) PhD student and model answers is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the question 1 from the questionnaire

Possible answer	Number of respondents	%
a) student	147	77.37
b) master	23	12.10
c) PhD student	20	10.53
Total	190	100.00

From Table 1 and common experience in relation to potential respondents during investigations, it can be seen that the most receptive were students who responded to the questionnaire in particular in the virtual mode (online).

Question 2 "Field of study: ..." had more predetermined responses and a free response. Based on the responses we identified several areas were prevalent, as can be seen from Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the question 2 from the questionnaire

Answer	Number of respondents	%
a) economic	96	50.53
b) agricultural	20	10.53
c) technological / industrial	17	8.95
d) juridic	3	1.56
e) touristic	31	16.32
f) other	23	12.11
TOTAL	190	100.00

Question 3 "Do you have residence in the bulletin / identity card in ..." had two answers "urban" or "rural" and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the question 3 from the questionnaire

Possible answer	Number of respondents	%
Urban	109	57.37
Rural	81	42.63
Total	190	100.00

As can be seen in Tables 1, 2 and 3 can be mouldable as a dominant profile of respondents student category, the field of economic study, residence areas. The initial objective was to choose as many young people residing in rural bulletin, but unfortunately in recent years there has been a sharp decline in the number of young rural acceding to university courses; the main reason is lack of financial resources.

Question 4 "After graduation we want to work in the environment:" had two answers all "urban" or "rural" and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the question 4 from the questionnaire

Possible answer	Number of respondents	%
Urban	132	69.47
Rural	62	30.53
Total	190	100.00

As it was easy to predict most of urban respondents chose as the location to work and live after graduation. This question have been asked and answered briefly justify chosen and the main reasons identified were:

Table 5. Justification responses to the 4th question from the questionnaire

Answer / motivation	Number of respondents	%
a. Urban	132	69.47
- Well-paid jobs	56	42.42
- More chances to find a job in the studied area	12	9.09
- Personal development opportunities	57	43.18
- There are social services	25	18.94
- Well-developed infrastructure	36	27.27
- Already employed in urban areas	15	11.36
- Is domicile locality	27	20.45
b. Rural	62	30.53
- More chances to find a job in the studied area	14	22.58
- Tangible and intangible cultural heritage locally	11	17.74
- Health benefits	15	24.19
- Already employed in rural areas	12	19.35
- Is domicile locality	14	22.58

Note: the sum of responses is greater than the total number of respondents (190) because some respondents selected several areas.

Question 5 "What conditions should be met in rural areas of Romania to determine your location to choose as stable living?" had multiple choice of answers; the respondents were asked to choose the significant responses to them. The tabulation of results is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of the question 5 from the questionnaire

Answer	Number of respondents	%
a) developed urban infrastructure (water, sewage, gas etc.)	124	65.26
b) doorways modernized (roads)	170	89.47
c) more developed communication infrastructure	120	63.16
d) provided social services (schools, kindergartens, hospitals etc.)	128	67.37
e) modern system of local government	74	38.95
f) better paid jobs	159	83.69
g) infrastructure for leisure well developed	96	50.53
h) general standard of living of the inhabitants	81	42.63
i) the existence of friends, relatives, co-workers etc. in the area	74	38.95
j) other reasons	20	10.53

On questions 6 "What are the strengths of the last villages where you've been (home, where I live grandparents or parents, occasional visits)?" And 7 "What are the weaknesses of the last villages where you've been (home, where living grandparents or parents, occasional visits)?" the answers were free, wanting to capture the respondents' awareness of the realities of Romanian rural communities. The results of the two central questions processed (systematized and slightly reworded) are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of the question 6 and 7 from the questionnaire

Answer	Number of respondents	%
a. Strengths	190	100.00
- Fresh air, cleanliness and low emission	96	50.53
- Running water	79	41.58
- Relatively good transport infrastructure	68	35.79
- Satisfactory communication infrastructure	68	35.79
- Green and wonderful landscapes	65	34.21
- Natural and anthropic tourism potential	64	33.68
- Sewage	59	31.05
- Quietly	55	28.95
- Healthy food (organic, biological)	49	25.79
- Proximity to town	48	25.26
- Stable and harmonious social relations (acquaintances, friends, family, community members)	44	23.16
- The safety of citizens	38	20.00
- Investment opportunities, including family farms	34	17.89
- Ensuring basic social services	28	14.74
- Well-managed communities	26	13.68
- Adequate educational infrastructure	20	10.53
- Well-developed agriculture	16	8.42
- Did not answer	18	9.47
b. Weaknesses	190	100.00
- Underdeveloped urban infrastructure	76	40.00
- Poorly developed transport infrastructure	74	38.95
- Jobs few and poorly paid	64	33.68
- Lack of opportunities for recreation and entertainment	48	25.26
- Improper educational infrastructure	43	22.63
- Below average standard of living, poverty	42	22.10
- The aging rural population	36	18.95
- Underdeveloped communications infrastructure	35	18.42
- Migration of rural population	33	17.37
- Lack health infrastructure	31	16.31
- Deficient public administration	31	16.31
- Relatively large distance from the city	25	13.16
- Passivity of inhabitants	23	12.10
- Depopulation of communes and villages	17	8.95
- Degradation of heritage	10	5.26
- Did not answer	22	11.58

Given that 62 respondents (30.53%) opted for the countryside to work and life after graduation, on average 50 respondents (26.31%) identified one or more strengths of rural communities Romanian (the last villages where they were - the home where I live grandparents or parents, occasional visits) and 39 respondents (20.53%) identified one or more of the same weaknesses rural communities. As can be seen from Table 7, in terms of strengths were mentioned more intangible elements (clean, quiet, no pollution, green landscapes, etc.), while the weaknesses mentioned more tangible and measurable elements (infrastructure, employment, etc.).

Question 8 "There are in Romania any location in the countryside where you would like to live and work?" had two answers "Yes" or "No" and the first version was requested more details on

the region, county, town / village identified the respondent, wishing to highlight any preferences for certain regions or counties. Centralization of responses is shown in Table 8. It is interesting to note that although only 62 respondents chose the countryside as a destination to live and work after graduation, a number of respondents identified 83 rural areas attractive the same objective.

Table 8. Results of the question 8 from the questionnaire

Possible answer	Number of respondents	%
Yes	83	43.68
No	102	53.68
Did not answer	5	2.64
Total	190	100.00

În ceea ce privește *locațiile* ”... din mediul rural unde v-ar place să trăiți și să munciți?”, au fost enumerate:

- Regiunea Sud - Muntenia, județele Argeș, Călărași, Dâmbovița și Ialomița;
- Regiunea Sud - Est, județele Tulcea, Constanța, Buzău și Vrancea;
- Regiunea Sud - Vest - Oltenia, județele Gorj și Vâlcea;
- Regiunea Centru, județele Sibiu, Brașov și Alba;
- Regiunea Nord - Est, județul Suceava;
- Regiunea Nord - Vest, județul Maramureș;
- Regiunea București - Ilfov, județul Ilfov.

Regarding locations "... in rural areas where you would like to live and work?" they were listed: South – Muntenia Region, counties: Argeș, Călărași, Dâmbovița and Ialomița; South – Eastern Region, counties: Tulcea, Constanța, Buzău and Vrancea; South – West Oltenia Region, counties: Gorj and Vâlcea; Central Region, counties: Sibiu, Brașov and Alba; North – East Region, Suceava county; North – West Region, Maramureș county; Bucharest – Ilfov Region, Ilfov county.

Question 9 "What are the activities in rural areas who would like to work?" had several answers possible (areas considered relevant in the context of this research) and a free response (other, requesting specification the preferred domain). Replies (see Table 9) were seconded field of tourism / tourism and public administration.

Table 9. Results of the question 9 from the questionnaire

Answer	Number of respondents	%
a) Agriculture, including animal husbandry	26	13.68
b) Public administration	37	19.47
c) Services, including social	21	11.05
d) Industry	24	12.63
e) Tourism / agrotourism	59	31.05
f) Trade	23	12.10
g) Others	20	10.53
Did not answer	12	6.31

Note: the sum of responses is greater than the total number of respondents (190) because some respondents selected several areas.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the landscape of current research of rural economy, this theme is something new, unique, starting from the current need to convince young people graduate and postgraduate of returning to rural areas (especially in the areas of residence) to live and work. This would be a solution for rejuvenation Romanian rural areas and to ensure their sustainable development prospects. Personal

teaching experience of over 15 years in the Romanian university strengthened its credibility in the success of this research and the subsequent realization of research results.

Rural issue has been and continues to be one of the most important and complex issues of economic, social, political, cultural, moral, environmental, etc. of our country. Significant structural changes and the essential changes that have occurred in recent decades in Romania, affected towards rural Romanian state, namely the village of peasant agriculture and Romanian (Oțiman, 2006). Although the potential solutions for rural development through multi-activity by processing agricultural products farm and business diversification is not doctrine entirely new, being included from the beginning in the text of the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, they have become but realities widely Romanian rural areas (Storey, 2009).

In the area of agricultural policies and tools for implementing them, Romania is still in a constant search for and attempt to respond to challenges set mainly short term and the conditionalities imposed by international financial institutions or international organizations to our country has adhered.

The concept of "integrated rural development", promoted herein, refers to addressing rural communities in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the links and how to influence key areas in the life of a community, namely: economic development, education, housing, health care, environmental issues, etc. (Kuhnen, 2011; Chirițescu, 2013)

Romanian rural area represents an area with a great variety of physical aspects (relief, soil and subsoil, infrastructure), economic (population, standard of living, resources, production, efficiency and effectiveness), social (inclusion, health, education level, poverty) and environmental (degree of pollution, water quality, air). Unfortunately, the rural population is aging, low skills, structures 'obsolete' and people seem uninterested in their own future; Under these conditions, the solution for real development to reduce disparities in rural - urban and Romania - Europe is the youth returning "home" from studies abroad or in big cities. This category of demographic resources, had become labor in rural areas could change the Romanian village, rebuilt it from the ground and turning it into a civilized place to work and live.

Based on the assumptions set out above, taking into account the development potential of Romanian rural area and given both own research results and European trend on sustainable rural development, we can issue the following recommendations:

- in Romania, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive program of investment in agriculture, rural development and land reclamation, financed both from own funds and with funds raised (European). It is also required special programs for small farms, subsistence and semi-subsistence, covering early retirement and system life annuity, helping young people to establish in rural areas and start up businesses, establish the system of direct payments, taking into account EU recommendations, etc. Only then we can talk in the future about modern agriculture and the real sustainable development of rural Romanian areas;
- to achieve its goals and fulfill its objectives, sustainable rural development must focus primarily on the development of rural communities (in this case, the communes and villages), having regard to all components of physical, economic, social, ecological, cultural, educational, etc. thereof;
- sustainable rural development, the main theme of this research can not be achieved without innovation, modern technology, computerization and modernization, ICT development, networking knowledge and technology transfer etc. In developing this absolutely necessary elements for implementing a real process of sustainable rural Romanian devoltare must involve all stakeholders or "forced", be they local or central public authorities, education and research institutions, ministries etc.;
- new vision of integrated economic development of Romanian rural communities should be followed by construction of a coherent and based on rural realities (of land) for sustainable rural development. Solving the major problems of Romanian rural area is possible in terms of implementing horizontal policies of development that integrate land policy, fiscal policy and lending in agriculture policy, socio - professional development policy of basic services, environmental policies, policy educational and public health, etc. All this must be

accompanied by constant upgrading of the local government sector in all fields and social infrastructure - urban and economic.

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