

Beekeepers' perceptions about the importance of honey exhibitions and protection of geographical origin of honey – A case of Istria (Croatia)

Mišljenje pčelara o važnosti manifestacija meda i zaštiti zemljopisnog porijekla meda, primjer Istre (Hrvatska)

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ABSTRACT

Events dedicated to agricultural products are becoming increasingly attractive to visitors and / or tourists and an important part of destination promotion. "Honey Days" in Pazin is the annual regional exhibition of honey that was most recently in February 2013, held for the eighth time. The purpose of the study was to determine participants' (beekeeper's) opinions on this exhibition in order to plan future exhibitions that will meet the demands of participants and to become a better tourist product of the destination, Istria. The survey was conducted during the exhibition in February 2012 by pupils of Gymnasium and Vocational School Juraj Dobrila in Pazin. A total of 34 beekeepers, all participants of the exhibition, were included in the survey. The survey contained a total of 31 open and close-ended questions. Questions were related to socio-demographic characteristics, beekeeping methods, and motives of participation. The dates about the protection of geographical origin of honey obtained by this primary research were compared with research conducted in 2011 and 2012 with the attendees of the school of beekeeping held in Pazin in May 2011 (when 40 questionnaires were collected) and in May 2012 (when 29 questionnaires were collected). The conclusion is that participants generally consider participation in this or similar exhibitions very important. The majority of respondents expressed that building relationships with other producers and promotion were the most important motives for making decisions about participation in this event. Protecting the geographical origin of honey, according to participants in the study, is very important for beekeepers. It could be concluded that the exhibition "Honey Days" in Pazin plays an important role in the promotion of honey and other bee products and beekeeping in general, but also that this event can be developed into an attractive and interesting product for rural tourism.

Keywords: beekeepers, exhibition, honey, Istria, rural tourism, promotion, geographical origin

PRODUŽENI SAŽETAK

Manifestacije posvećene poljoprivrednim proizvodima postaju sve zanimljiviji proizvod destinacije jer privlače sve veći broj posjetitelja. „Dani meda“ u Pazinu regionalna je izložba meda koja je u veljači 2013. godine održana 8. puta. Istraživanje koje je provedeno u veljači 2012. u okviru izložbe „Dani meda“ imalo je za cilj utvrditi mišljenje sudionika, pčelara, o motivima i elementima koje smatraju važnim kod donošenja odluke o sudjelovanju na izložbi. Za potrebe istraživanja prezentiranog u radu kreiran je anketni upitnik. Anketni upitnik se sastojao od 31 pitanja otvorenog i zatvorenog tipa. Pitanja su bila o socio-demografskim karakteristikama ispitanika, koliko dugo se bave pčelarstvom, koje proizvode od pčela proizvode, na kojem tipu košnice proizvode, na kojem području pčelare te jesu li sudjelovali na izložbi/ocjenjivanju do sada – ovom ili nekom drugom. Navedena pitanja korištena su za segmentaciju u istraživanju važnosti motiva i razloga kod donošenja odluke o sudjelovanju na izložbi za što su unaprijed ponuđene tvrdnje, na koje su ispitanici trebali odgovoriti zaokruživanjem ocjene od 1 do 5, ovisno o tome koliko pojedinu tvrdnju smatraju nevažnom ili važnom. Anketiranje su proveli učenici Gimnazije i strukovne škole Jurja Dobrile u Pazinu. Ispitano je ukupno 34 pčelara, sudionika izložbe. Poznavanje motiva i razloga zbog kojih pčelari sudjeluju na izložbi, važno je radi daljnjeg razvoja ove izložbe. Osim toga, budući su pčelari uglavnom obiteljska poljoprivredna gospodarstva iz bliže regije ovakve manifestacije imaju utjecaj i na razvoj okolnih ruralnih područja. Važnost istraživanja očituje se kroz prepoznavanje najvažnijih elemenata manifestacije od strane samih sudionika te najvažnijih motiva sudjelovanja na izložbi „Dani meda“. U radu je također, dan prikaz rezultata ocjenjivanja na svim izložbama „Dani meda“. Pitanja o važnosti označavanja oznakama zemljopisnog porijekla razmatrana su i kroz rezultate ankete provedene u okviru Pčelarske škole u Pazinu, provedene u svibnju 2011. i u svibnju 2012. godine. U 2011. godini polaznici Pčelarske škole bili su pčelari s višegodišnjim iskustvom i oni koji tek počinju, odnosno, oni koji su ranije sudjelovali na izložbama i oni koji još nisu, dok su u anketiranju 2012. godine sudjelovali polaznici Pčelarske škole koji još nisu sudjelovali na izložbama. Zaključak je da većina sudionika smatra vrlo važnim sudjelovanje na ovoj ili sličnim izložbama. Prema mišljenju sudionika motiv „izgradnja odnosa s ostalim proizvođačima“ na prvom je mjestu prema rangu, nakon čega slijedi promocija. Kao najmanje važan motiv kod donošenja odluke o sudjelovanju ocijenili su „upoznavanje s konkurencijom“. U odgovorima na pitanja o važnosti označavanja meda oznakama zemljopisnog porijekla sudionici istraživanja istaknuli su ovakvo označavanje kao vrlo važno. Za kvalitetno planiranje manifestacija važno je znati motive sudionika te uočiti nedostatke u planiranju. Manifestacije ovakvog tipa imaju utjecaj na širu zajednicu, a ne samo na učesnike manifestacije te je iz tog razloga važno znati motive sudionika. Do sada kod nas nisu u dovoljnoj mjeri istraživane manifestacije na ovakav način. Smatramo da je ovim istraživanjem pružen kvalitetan uvid u percepciju manifestacije od strane učesnika, što može poslužiti kao obrazac za buduća istraživanja. Naime, manifestacije koje se temelje na resursima ruralnih prostora važan su element ruralnog turizma i promocije područja u kojem se realiziraju.

Ključne riječi: pčelari, izložba, med, Istra, ruralni turizam, promocija, zemljopisno porijeklo

INTRODUCTION

The exhibition "Honey Days" in Pazin is a regional exhibition of honey and bee products that was held for the eighth time in February 2013. The exhibition's aims are to popularize and promote beekeeping through different approaches. Thus, at the exhibition there are children's drawings and literary works from kindergarten to the primary school level, different multimedia events and performances, as well as the evaluation of honey, the main event of the exhibition. According to the literature and from our own experience, it is known that events are important motivators of tourism (Getz, 2008, Hall and Sharples, 2008; Brščić et al., 2011).

Despite the long tradition of the organization of events with agricultural products, to our knowledge, there is very little research on these types of events in Croatia, and no research focusing on honey exhibitions, more precisely, with the participants in the exhibition. On the other hand, there is an emerging interest in this topic in the scientific community, as well as by event organizers. Planned events have their purpose and according to Getz (2008), what was once the initiative of individuals or communities is becoming an area of professionals and businesses. Consequently, there is a need for research and science-based approaches, because the aim of the event is to meet a number of strategic objectives that are "too important to be left to amateurs" (Getz, 2008).

The purpose of the study presented in this paper is to determine beekeepers' opinions of the motives and importance of participation at the event "Honey Days" in Pazin in order to contribute to the better planning of future events and for creating a higher quality tourism product for the destination Istria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of event

It is known that events have multiple benefits for both entrepreneur exhibitors, who participate in it, as well as the region in which it is organized (Hall and Sharples, 2008 p. 6). The primary function of food events is to create opportunity, the ability to present the products so the products at the event become available to more consumers. In the literature it is emphasized that another important function of the events is the promotion of products, manufacturers, and destination in order to build the brand values, maintaining or building good relationships with existing customers, attracting new consumers, educating consumers, and promoting new future events (visitation). In terms of producers, another function also includes the promotion of improved production methods and product quality, as well as the promotion of sustainable agricultural development (Hall and Sharples, 2008, p.15).

At the "Honey Days" exhibition, the main products offered from beekeeping production are different kinds of honeys; thus this event can be classified as a food event. However, different products for beekeeping, such as hives and other equipment for beekeeping production, are also sold. Thus, this event is not only a food event or exhibition, but a place where people talk and learn about beekeeping and taste the products of beekeeping, a very important role of this event.

For a tourist destination, events can have very important role. Che et al. (2005) and Hall and Sharples (2008, p. 334) indicated that events generally reinforce the "sense of place" and thus their importance is greater because "most successful agricultural and food tourism ventures benefit from being located within regions with strong place-based identities located near large, urban, visitor-generating areas" (Che et al., 2005, Hall and Sharples, 2008, p. 334). In addition, place-branded foods and their qualities can and are promoted by such events (Hjalager and Corigliano, 2000, Hall et al., 2003).

According to the literature, "a sense of place" is intrinsic to rural communities and represents a combination of factors, such that communities feel a sense of ownership (Giles et al., 2013), and according to Aitken and Campelo (2011), 'a sense of place' is created by the interactions of rights, roles, relationships, and responsibilities. Due to this, there is a need for different marketing strategies in the branding of products owned by a company that employs marketers to raise its profile product, or in branding rural areas that are defined by the people living there (Giles et al., 2013).

One of the marketing strategies of agricultural producers is participation in exhibitions. Medals won at exhibitions are important for the further promotion of agricultural producers, entrepreneurs, exhibitors, and the region as well, because the medals can be incorporated into further marketing strategies of individual producers. An example is the case of winemakers, who use medals as important part of their image (Hall and Mitchell, 2008; Hall and Sharples 2008, p 334). Regions that organize food events have economic benefits from the organization and as such, events are recognized as a tool for local economic development - especially if they are organized in rural areas (Hall and Sharples 2008, p. 335, Bršćić et al. 2011). In addition, some studies indicate that food and wine festivals and events promote "the authenticity of destinations" (Park et al., 2008, Robinson and Clifford, 2012) and authenticity is very important for consumers, especially with regard to the impact of the globalization of food production.

The globalization of food production in recent decades has led to a decreasing knowledge on the part of consumers about the origins of food and raw materials used in food production. The response to globalization is a trend towards increased interest in local food, and generally, the origin of food has become important to consumers (Guerrero et al., 2009). As a food product with health benefits, honey is often in the focus of consumers' attention. Hence, it is important for its producers - beekeepers - to emphasize the origin of honey and highlight its local specificity (Stolzenbach et al., 2011).

Considering the globalization of food production, the products that are recognized as authentic and that include the culture and specificity of areas in which they are produced become more interesting to consumers, particularly tourists. The role of the place and the producers in the food production system, as response to the globalization of food production, is very important because producers, through local events, become a tourist attraction. Consumers, through local events, become a part of the local food system and its products. Thus tourists, as consumers from outside the region, are connected with local food systems by purchasing them in their home environment (Hall Sharples, 2008, p. 28, Hegarty and Przeborska, 2005).

Consumers of a local manifestation

By organizing events in the region, the local population is not only influenced by tourism activities, but becomes part of the tourism product (Scheyvens, 1999; Simmons, 1994, Panyik et al., 2011). On the other hand, food and wine events, as well as honey events for example, can have an important role in promoting the region by creating loyal consumers of certain food products (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012).

Consumers of traditional foods are mostly people who care about their health (Teagasc, 2004, Vanhonacker et al., 2010) and honey can be put into the category of "traditional" because beekeeping in these areas has a long tradition. Since the observed event is dedicated to honey, which has well-known nutritional value, it is assumed that these consumers are one of the target groups of consumers.

Generally, food products and services that are 'typical' of a destination may have an influence on the visiting of destination (Sedmak & Mihalic, 2008, Robinson and Clifford, 2012), and the food has a special role in the creation of new tourism products "as a form of special interest tourism "(Hall et al., 2003, Mak et al., 2012). Domestic food and wine with geographical indication (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012), for example those that represent the local landscape and culture, are becoming essential elements in creating the experience of these products, and we believe that this also can be applied to the case of honey and other bee products. Presented at the special exhibition, they can be a basic element for attracting visitors to the region where event is organized.

METHODOLOGY

The study presented in the paper was conducted in February 2012 at the seventh annual "Honey Days" exhibition in Pazin. For research purposes a questionnaire that consisted of 31 open and close-ended questions were created. The questions were focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, beekeeping practice (i.e. how long they have been beekeepers; which products they produce; which types of hives they use for production; and where they produce (locations)), and motivation to participate in the exhibitions (whether they participated in the exhibition/evaluation thus far – on this or any other exhibition). These questions were used to clearly divide and reveal the importance of motives and reasons for making the decision to participate in the exhibition. For the evaluation of the extent to which the event is important, we offered, in advance of the event, evaluative statements to which the respondents had to respond by ranking them from 1 to 5, depending on how much each statement the respondent considered irrelevant or important. In this evaluation, a mark of 1 means that the offered statement is completely irrelevant for them in making decision about participation, while a mark of 5 means it is extremely important. Statements on the form included: image building; promotion; sales of its products; get acquainted with the competition; building relationships with other producers; and the competitive nature of the event.

Elements that beekeepers consider before making the decision to participate in events were also offered as statements to evaluate from 1 to 5, according to how irrelevant or important to them they are. As elements of the event, the following statements were offered: the maintenance of the event (tradition); media coverage of events; predicted number of visitors (domestic and foreign); the cost of participation

at the event (salaries, fees, travel costs); technical support of the event organizer; knowledge about financial support of sponsors; knowledge about financial and organizational support of the county; familiarity with financial and organizational support of local government; knowledge of the organizers - the host - the community, sponsors, media partners, other participants; knowledge of the visitors profile (age, gender, profession, education, income, state/city of arrival); and knowledge of visitors motives for visiting (vacation, fun, learning through exhibitions, tasting food and beverage, quality time with family and friends, etc.).

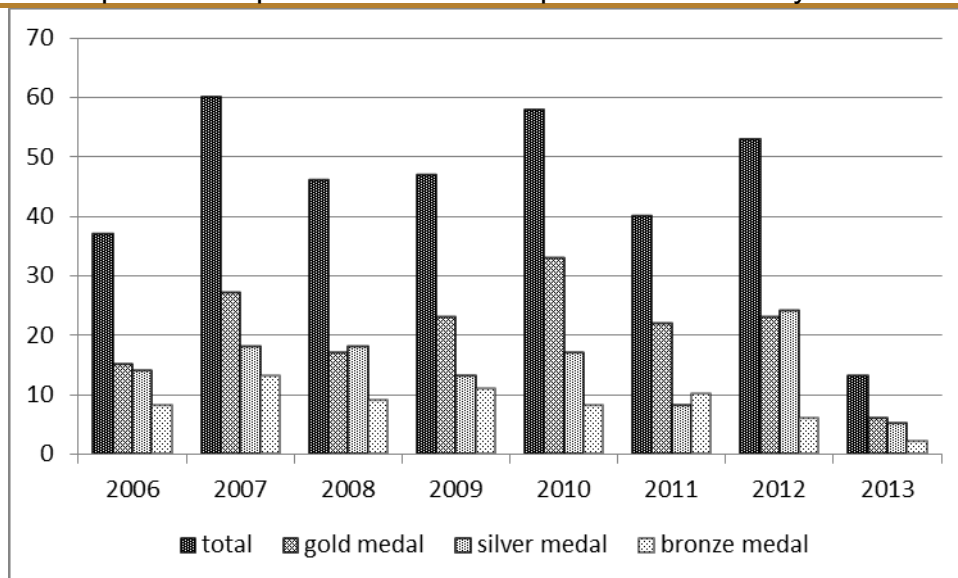
Beekeepers were also asked about the importance of getting the geographical indication labels for their product.

The survey was conducted in the form of interviews performed by the students of the Gymnasium and Vocational School Juraj Dobrila in Pazin. The survey covered a total of 34 beekeeper participants in the exhibition. The data obtained were analyzed using standard statistical methods of descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA). For the analysis of the data, statistics programs SPSS and MS Excel were used. The data obtained by this primary research were compared with research conducted in 2011 and 2012 with the attenders of school of beekeeping held in Pazin in May 2011 (where 40 questionnaires were collected) and in May 2012 (where 29 questionnaires were collected). Also the review of sensory evaluations from 2006 to 2013 on the exhibition "Honey Days" in Pazin were presented.

RESULTS

In the past eight years, the "Honey Days" event has evaluated a total of 354 honey samples. The most samples were assessed in 2007 with 60 samples, and the least were in 2013, with just 13 samples (Figure 1). It is important to note that 2006 was not the first official event evaluation of honey in the region. Honey has been evaluated since 1998, but through 2005 this was done at the event "Vinistra" in Poreč. In 2006, the official evaluation and annual event was moved to Pazin and organized as a specialized beekeeping event with honey evaluation and exhibition (Brščić et.al, 2011). The reason for such a small amount of samples assessed in 2012 was that the year was very dry a it was a very bad year for honey production. year in 2012 which is why it was quite a bit of honey production in particular honey of the acacia.

Figure 1. Number of evaluated honeys in the period 2006-2013
Slika 1. Broj ocijenjenih medova u razdoblju 2006-2013

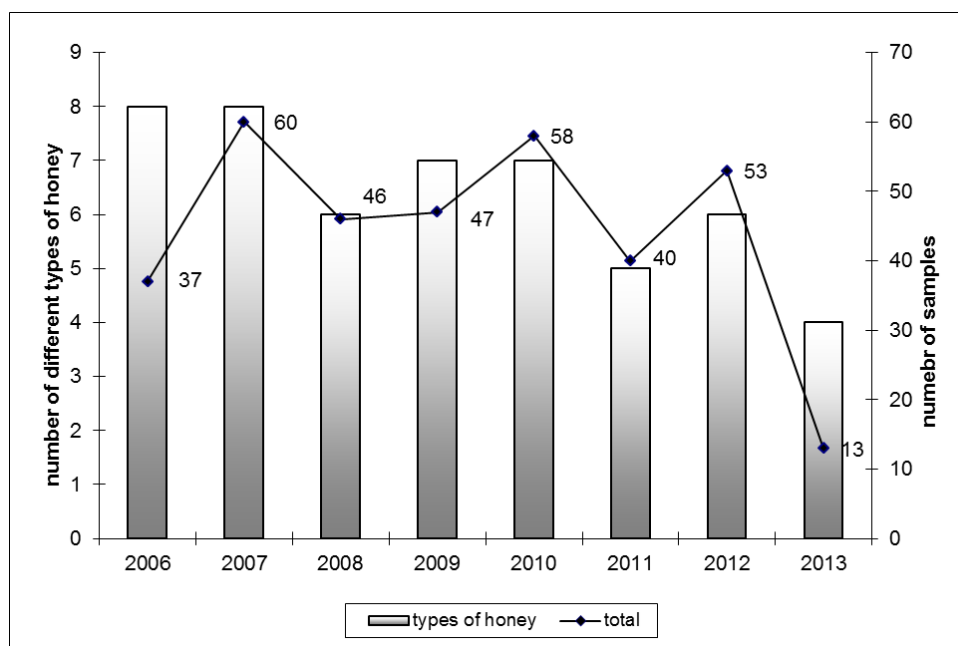


Source: Records of the sensory evaluation in the period 2006-2013, Izvor: Zapisnici senzornog ocjenjivanja u razdoblju 2006-2013,

The number of honey varieties submitted for evaluation over the years has not increased. On the contrary, in 2006 and 2007, 8 different types of honey were evaluated, including: acacia, chestnut, honeydew, meadows, linden, ivy, and floral honeys. In 2012, 6 different types of honey were rated, including: acacia, floral, honeydew, chestnut, chestnut honeydew, and sage (Figure 2.). In all evaluations the most prevalent honey type was acacia honey, varying in proportion from 30% (in 2009) to 63% (in 2010).

Figure 2. The total number of evaluated and different types of honey in the period 2006-2013

Slika 2. Ukupan broj ocijenjenih i različitih vrsta meda u periodu 2006-2013



Source: Records the sensory evaluation in the period 2006-2013,

It is obvious that the evaluation did not lead to a diversification in the production of different types of honey, and the reason for this may be the natural spread of plants in the region. However, diversification in different honey products offered on the exhibition is evident. There has been an increasing number of different honey products packed in different packaging as souvenirs (e.g. specific packages of honey, bees wax, etc.) as well as honeys with various additives (e.g. honey with nuts, honey mixed with cinnamon, chocolate, etc.) became available during the years of the event.

Characteristics of the sample

From a total of 34 participants, 73.5% were men and 26.5% were women. Most of the respondents belonged to the age category of 46-55 years (35.3%), followed by the category of 26-35 years (20.6%), 36-45 years (14.7%) and 56-55 years (14.7%), older than 66 years (11.8%) and less than 25 years (2.9%). According to education, most respondents had secondary education (55.9%), followed by respondents with a college degree (26.5%), while 17.6% of respondents had higher education. It is interesting that 70.6% of respondents had additional education in beekeeping.

Respondents (beekeepers) were engaged in beekeeping for an average of 25 years (SD = 19.07). 20.6% of respondents were engaged in beekeeping for 40 or more years, and 58.8% for 20 years or more.

Beekeeping practice

Beekeepers had an average of 80 production hives (SD = 56), while the beekeeper with the largest number of hives had 220. The most commonly used types of hives were the standard LR (Langstrot Rut) hive used by 61.8% of respondents and the AŽ (Alberti-Žnidaršič) hive used by 20.6% respondents, followed by a combination of AŽ and LR hives (8.8%), LR and Farrar hives (5.9%) and only Farrar hives were used by 2.9% of respondents.

Participation at the event

From the total number of respondents, 67.6% of them had already attended "Honey Days" exhibitions in the past, with an average of three attendances, while 32.4% of respondents were participating in the exhibition for the first time. In total, 26.5% of respondents participated in other exhibitions in the country or abroad.

Most respondents considered important or extremely important participation in the exhibition, and the average score was 4.44 (SD = 0.85). In the evaluation of importance, there were no significant statistical differences between gender, age, education, beekeeping experience, the number of hives that beekeepers work with, the type of hive, and if and how many times they participated at the exhibitions.

Motives for participation in the exhibition "Honey Days"

Motives of beekeepers who participated in the exhibition were different. For easier evaluation, we offered beekeepers (participants) statements that we consider the most common motives (according to the literature). The results of our evaluation of the statements are displayed in Table 1. According to the respondents' opinions, the most important motive is building relationships with other producers, but all motives were rated as more or less important, and none as unimportant.

Table 1. The motives of the respondents (beekeepers) in making decisions about participating in the exhibition "Honey Days"

Tabela 1. Motivi ispitanika (pčelara) kod donošenja odluke o sudjelovanju na izložbi „Dani meda“

Rank		Average	SD
1.	Building relationships with other producers	4,41	0,78
2.	Promotion	4,17	1,21
3.	Image building	4,14	1,13
4.	Sales of own products	3,91	1,29
5.	The competitive nature of the event	3,61	1,33
6.	Acquainted with competition	3,61	1,41

Source: Survey in February 2012

Izvor: Anketa, veljača 2012

A statistically significant difference in the answers given by respondents was only apparent in the case of the relation of the respondents who had been to other exhibitions and the motive "acquainted with competition", where $F = 4.814$ and $p = 0.036$.

Respondents who had also participated in other exhibitions/events considered the motive "building relationships with other producers" in 11.1% of cases to be extremely important, in 22.2% important, while in 33.3% cases neither important nor unimportant, and in 33.3% cases totally irrelevant. To contrast, respondents who had not participated in other exhibitions in 44.0% of cases considered the motive "building relationships with other producers" extremely important, in 28.0% of cases important, while 12.0% of them thought that the motive was neither important nor unimportant, for 8.0% of them this motive was not very important, and finally, in 8.0% of cases it was totally irrelevant.

In other motives referred to in Table 1, there was no statistically significant difference in relation to gender, age, education, years of beekeeping, the number of hives, and whether they had participated in this exhibition before.

Table 2. Elements of events ranked according to importance, as evaluated by respondents

Tabela 2. Elementi manifestacije poredani prema važnosti, prema ocjeni ispitanika

Rank		Average	SD
1.	Familiar with the motive of arrival of visitors (leisure, entertainment, learning through exhibitions, tasting food and beverages, quality time with family and friends ...)	4,18	1,0
2.	Media coverage of events	4,06	1,15
3.	Technical support to the event organizer	4,00	1,15
4.	Acquainted with the organizer, the host - the community, sponsors, media partners, other participants	3,94	1,04

5.	Forecasting the number of visitors (domestic and foreign)	3,94	1,25
6.	Familiar with the profile of visitors (age, gender, profession, education, income, country/city of arrival)	3,82	1,03
7.	Familiar with the financial and organizational support of the County	3,82	1,17
8.	Tradition of the event (how many year the event is organized)	3,76	1,30
9.	Familiar with the costs of participation at the event (the stand costs, costs of arrangement/decoration)	3,73	1,27
10.	Acquainted with the financial and organizational support of local government	3,68	1,27
11.	Familiar with the financial support of sponsors	3,47	1,21
12.	Staff costs for the event (salaries, fees, travel costs)	3,03	1,45

Source: Survey in February 2012

Izvor: Anketa, veljača 2012

Depending on how many years the respondents are engaged in beekeeping, how many hives they have, how many times thus far they have been at the event, or if they have been on other events, there were no significant differences in relation to the elements listed in Table 2.

In relation to gender, age, education, and previous participation in the evaluations and events, there were significant differences from the average values referred in Table 2 because of analysis of variance (ANOVA) showing that $p < 0,05$.

Statistically significant differences from the average values referred to in Table 2 were noticed in the case of the relationship between gender and costs (rank 9. in the Table 2.) ($F = 4.184$, $p = 0.049$). In most cases (44%), women considered as completely irrelevant the element "familiar with the cost of participation at the event", while a large proportion (28%) of men thought that it was important.

Then there were statistically significant differences in the relationship between age and the media coverage of the event (rank 2, Table 2, $F = 3.46$, $p = 0.015$) and the elements of forecasting the visitor numbers (rank 5, Table 2, $F = 3.196$, $p = 0.021$). With respect to the relation of the media coverage of events, 50% of respondents between the ages 19-35 and 56-65 years considered media important in making decisions about participation at the event, while the others believe it is extremely important.

The main differences in the case of the element "forecasting of the number of visitors" were noticed in the age category of 56-65 years, where 40% respondents considered this element completely irrelevant in contrast to other age categories in which the largest share considered it extremely important or important.

In terms of education level, there were significant statistical differences in the responses to the element "familiar with the financial support of sponsors" (rank 11, Table 2, $F = 3.767$, $p = 0.034$). Respondents who had completed secondary education (36.8%) and college graduates (44.4%) in most cases considered this important, while respondents with university degrees found this element irrelevant (33.3%) or neither important nor unimportant (33.3%).

Depending on whether respondents participated before in similar evaluations, there was a statistically significant difference in relation to the element, the tradition of

event (rank 8, Table 2, $F = 4.847$, $p=0.035$). Those who have previously participated in such events considered the tradition of event very important (56.5%), as opposed to those who had not participated on the event before that in 36.4% of cases considered the tradition of event important or unimportant, and a total of 27.3% considered it fully unimportant or not very important.

In the case of the elements media coverage of the event and participation in event before, there were also significant statistical differences (rank 2, Table 2, $F = 5.007$, $p = 0.032$). Of respondents who had previously participated in event, 60.9% considered media coverage an extremely important element in their decision to participate in the event, while those who had not participated before in most cases (63,6%) considered it important.

Similarly, in the case of the “financial support of the County” (rank 7, Table 2, $F = 5.603$, $p = 0.024$), those who previously participated in the event considered this element extremely important (39.1%), while those who had not participated before considered it important (36.4%), and 18.2% of respondents thought that this support is completely irrelevant to their decision-making.

In the case of “forecasting of visitors number” and “number of participants at the event”, there were also significant statistical differences (rank 5, Table 2, $F = 5.211$, $p = 0.029$). 52.2% of those who had previously participated in the event considered it extremely important, while 27.3% of those who had not participated in the event before considered this element either important or unimportant, and 27.3% extremely important.

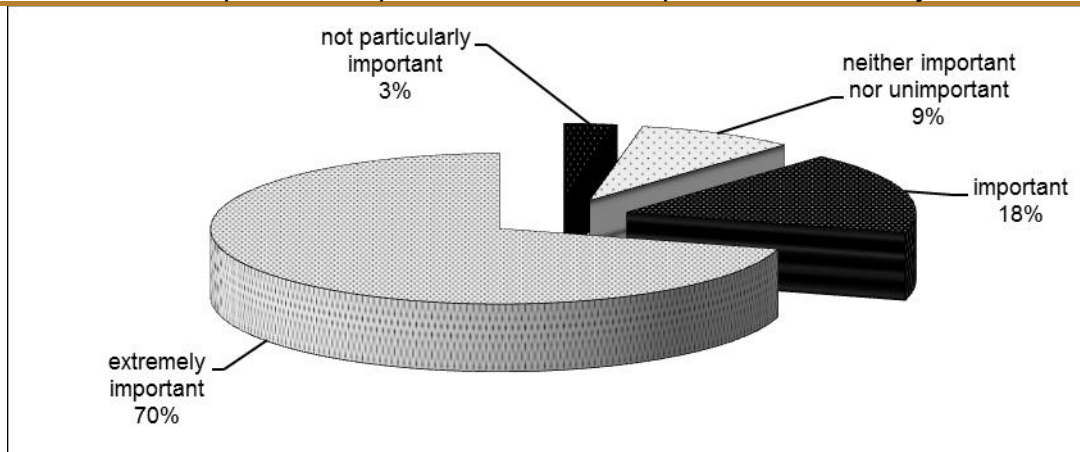
In the relationship between “financial support of sponsors” and “number of participants at the event”, there were also significant statistical differences (rank 11, Table 2, $F = 5.330$, $p=0.028$). In total, 26.1% of those who had participated in the event considered this element extremely important and 26.1% neither important nor unimportant. In contrast, 27.3% of those who had not participated in the event before considered this element as not particularly important and 27.3% of them considered this element important.

The protection of the geographical origin of honey

The issue of the importance of the protection of the geographical origin of honey is not directly related to the participation in this exhibition, but indirectly influences the area of promotion and therefore we find important the opinion of beekeepers about this issue.

Figure 3. The opinion of respondents of the importance of labelling honey with the geographical indication label.

Slika 3. Mišljenje ispitanika o važnosti zaštite meda s oznakom zemljopisnog porijekla



Source: Survey in February 2012
Izvor: Anketa, veljača 2012

In answer to the question of “how important they consider the geographical origin of honey”, the average respondents’ rate was 4.56 (median 5, SD = 0.79), implying that respondents considered this important, i.e., extremely important. The opinion of respondents is displayed in relative terms in Figure 3. It should be noted that no one considered it completely unimportant.

The results of the same questionnaire completed by participants of the beekeeping school in Pazin in May 2011 (Bršćić et al. 2011), which was a sort of test of the questionnaire, showed that the participants even in a larger number considered the protection of the geographical origin of honey as extremely important. Of the 40 participants of the school, of which 35 were male (87.5%) and 5 female (12.5%) on a scale of importance from 1 to 7, wherein grade 1 means completely unimportant and the grade 7 extremely important, the results were as follows: 45% of respondents chose the grade 7; 27.5% grade 6; 20% grade 5; and grades 3 and 4 were chosen by one respondent, which amounts to 2.5% for each. Grade 2 was not chosen by anyone, and grade 1 was selected by one respondent (2.5%) This means that grade 5 and above was chosen by 92.5% of the participants of the beekeeping school.

The same survey as the one carried out on “Honey Days” was carried out in May 2012, after the “Honey Days” at the beekeeping school in Pazin, with new participants of the school. Opinions of 29 respondents who had never participated in the exhibition, of which 24 (82.76%) were male and 5 (17.24%) were female, were as follows: 82.76% (24) gave a grade 5; 13.79% (4) grade 4; and 3.45% (1) grade 3. No one chose grades 2 or 1, which means that most of the respondents considered the protection of geographic origin of honey as extremely important.

CONCLUSION

The main conclusion of this research is that over the years the number of honey varieties evaluated and presented at the exhibition has not increased, but the diversification in honey products offered on the exhibition is evident.

According to the sociological characteristics of the research, results show that beekeeping is still predominantly a male profession. The results point out that there is

a small share of young beekeepers, so it is important to make additional effort in educating and raising the interest of young people in beekeeping as a profession. This is important for beekeeping production as well as for the future of the event "Honey Days".

The paper presents the primary research data obtained directly from beekeepers, the participants of the event "Honey Days". We consider their opinion very important and based on knowledge on their motives further development of this event could be planned and improved. Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that building relationships with other producers and promotion are the most important motives when participants make decisions about participation in the event "Honey Days". Furthermore, beekeepers considered the most important elements when they made decisions about participation to be: familiarity with the motives of arrival of visitors, media coverage of events, and technical support of the organizers. It would be advisable for future organizers to consider these guidelines when they organize future events.

Beekeepers present and future (participants of the beekeeping school) considered having a label of geographical indication as extremely important for future honey marketing.

Finally, events that have agricultural products as the focus are becoming more interesting to visitors and tourists and become an important part of destination promotion. These events attract many visitors, both domestic and foreign, in terms of tasting and/or purchasing products and at the event of "Honey Days" products from and for beekeeping attract visitors. As such an event, "Honey Days" has an important impact on the development of rural areas because each year it attracts an increasing number of visitors to the area. It can be concluded that the exhibition "Honey Days" in Pazin plays an important role in promoting beekeeping, honey, and other bee products, as well as the popularization of agricultural areas and rural culture.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the teachers and pupils of Gymnasium and Vocational School Juraj Dobrila in Pazin for their assistance in the survey of beekeepers. We also thank prof. Nikola Kezić, PhD for the information of the honey evaluations. We also want to thank all beekeepers for their cooperation.

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