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ATTITUDES OF PUPILS AND STUDENTS TOWARDS LIFELONG LEARNING

ABSTRACT

In the paper we present the results of the study on young people's attitudes towards lifelong learning. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 Croatian university students from various study programmes and 100 pupils of a secondary school from Opatija. The aims of the study were to gain an insight into the participants' knowledge of and attitude towards lifelong learning, and to examine whether there are any differences between the pupils' and the students' opinions. Two questionnaires were used to collect data. One was presented to the pupils and the other to the students. The results show that the students know more about lifelong learning than pupils, and that most participants are interested in future learning. While more than half of the pupils did not consider lifelong learning to be necessary, the majority of students, on the other hand, saw it as important for their future. Recommendations and possible practical implications of the study are discussed in the final part.

Keywords: *lifelong learning, pupils, students, attitudes, knowledge*

ODNOS DIJAKOV IN ŠTUDENTOV DO VSEŽIVLJENJSKEGA UČENJA – POVZETEK

Članek predstavlja rezultate raziskave, ki je analizirala odnos mladih do vseživljenjskega učenja. Študija je bila izvedena na vzorcu 100 hrvaških univerzitetnih študentov različnih programov ter 100 dijakov srednje šole iz Opatije. Cilj študije je bil pridobiti vpogled v znanje o vseživljenjskem učenju in v odnos udeležencev do njega ter hkrati preveriti, ali pri tem obstajajo razlike med dijaki in študenti. Pri pridobivanju podatkov sta bila uporabljena dva vprašalnika, eden za dijake in drugi za študente. Rezultati so pokazali, da študenti o vseživljenjskem učenju vedo več kot dijaki ter da pri večini udeležencev obstaja zanimanje za nadaljevanje učenja v prihodnosti. Medtem ko več kot polovica dijakov vseživljenjskega učenja ne doživlja kot nujnega, je večina študentov prepričana, da je pomembno za njihovo prihodnost. V zaključku članka so podana priporočila in nakazani možni praktični nastavki raziskave.

Ključne besede: *vseživljenjsko učenje, učenci, študentje, vedenje, znanje*

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INTRODUCTION

As a basic principle which guides today's education policy, lifelong learning has several objectives: the economic growth and development, personal growth and satisfaction, social inclusion, and the development of democracy (Aspin, Chapman, 2001; Aspin, Chapman, Evans and Bagnall, 2012).

There are many definitions of lifelong learning which, despite their differences, share some common elements. Lifelong learning is seen as a continuous learning process that takes place throughout one's life, irrespective of the life period in which one finds oneself. It has a positive effect on the development of the individual and can be realised through various forms of learning (Dave, 1976; Delors, 1996; European Commission, 2001; Watson, 2003; Yang, Valdés-Cotera, 2011).

The European Commission (2001, p. 9) defines lifelong learning as the following: "Learning throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within personal, civic, social and/or professional activities of individuals". Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of the lifelong learning was given by Dave: "Lifelong learning requires that education is seen in its totality. It covers the formal, non-formal and informal forms of education and tries to integrate and articulate all structures and stages of education along vertical and horizontal dimensions" (Dave, 1976 in Pastuović, 2008, p. 254). Titmus later also included the unintentional (accidental) experiential learning within the concept of lifelong learning (Titmus, 1989 in Pastuović 2008, p. 254). The horizontal dimension includes all the manifestations of learning, from formal to experiential, while the vertical includes all stages of life from birth to death.

Although we do not need to further specify the advantages of the lifelong learning concept, there are many sceptics who question its humanistic, holistic and human-rights orientation. Critics claim that it is a western concept, which is tied exclusively to the economy, skills and employability (Ouane, 2011). Torres (2011) also mentions that it is foreign to the southern countries, and that focusing on the learning will result in the elimination of teaching and teachers, and, furthermore, that lifelong learning is an excuse to shift responsibility and education costs from the state to the individual. Ouane (2011, p.p. 34–35) suggests that there are three ways through which the criticism could be countered: achieving a clearer clarification of the concept, emphasising the fact that lifelong learning is the key to education for all, and encouraging the policy makers to be more active in its promoting.

Lifelong learning is one of the most important tasks of the modern educational system. It represents a challenge revolving around the task of constructing a future society that learns in a way which is more complex, democratic, and egalitarian than the one existing in the current information society (Torres, 2011, p.p. 46-48). In order to achieve that, the educational system must prepare and motivate pupils and students for lifelong learning. The individual should therefore first learn how to learn, and, second, develop a positive attitude towards learning.

Pupils and students represent the (future) lifelong learners. Their attitudes, although subject to change, are an important indicator of their understanding and involvement in the lifelong learning activities, and thereby of the trends in the educational practice. It is this type of foundation that makes the research into students' attitudes and knowledge of lifelong learning justified and purposeful.

LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

The extremely strong affirmation of lifelong learning in Europe during the nineties was linked to the expansion of the knowledge society concept, which arose in response to the economic crisis and increased unemployment in Europe (Žiljak, 2005). Its importance is illustrated by a series of international action plans, declarations, documents and conferences.¹

The report of the European Commission (2015, p. 85) for Croatia states that "in Croatia the system of adult education is poorly managed and participation in lifelong learning is extremely poor". This should be a cause for serious critical analysis. Arguments in support of such claims can be found in the low level of participation in tertiary education (according to the data from 2013, only 25.6% of the population aged 30 to 34 years, compared to the EU average of 36.9%), low level of education, which is directly related to the low employment rate, the incompatibility of acquired competences and labour market needs, and horizontal incompatibility (European Commission, 2015, p.p. 85-86). Additionally, according to the data from 2012, only 2.4% of adults aged 25 to 64 are involved in education (compared to the EU average of 9%).

It should be noted, however, that despite the lower percentage of participation in education, when compared to the EU, a more detailed analysis of the Croatian educational structure nevertheless reveals a positive trend. The data from the 2011 census show that the number of individuals with higher educational increased to 22.54%, which does not include the students with Masters and PhD degrees (compared to 7.82% in 2001, including Masters and PhDs). The percentage of citizens who only possess primary education also dropped to 37.43% (compared to 40% with finished, unfinished or no primary education in 2001). Similarly, the share of those with secondary education increased to 33.06% (compared to 47% in 2001).²

1 Recurrent Education: A strategy for lifelong learning (1973); Commission's White Paper Growth, Competitiveness and Employment (1994); White Paper Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society (1995); Declaration V. CONFINTEA conference in Hamburg (1997); Lisbon Strategy (2000); A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000); Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality (2001); Declaration of UNESCO's Conference: A Call to Action Sofia (2002); Adult learning: It is never too late to learn (2006); Action Plan for Adult Education: It is always a good time to learn (2007) et al. (Source: Klapan, Rafajac, Rončević, 2009, p. 115)

2 Population census (2011). State Institute for Statistics. Retrieved from http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/Censu_s2011/census.htm.

On the other hand, the structure of employees³ shows that the most vulnerable workers in Croatia remain those with a low or high level of education, which partially supports the already mentioned horizontal mismatch.

This is partly due to the recent lack of interest, and the educational policy for the application of lifelong learning (Papa, 2006 in Klapan, Rafajac, Rončević, 2009, p. 115). In the last few years, however, the latter has occupied a central place in the educational documents⁴ and reform processes. The *Croatian Qualifications Framework* also represents a significant precondition for the development and regulation of the lifelong learning system. At the same time it should be noted that its use is not mandatory in Croatia and that the registration of professional qualification standards in the Register is slow. The key document directing the current national education policy is *The Strategy of Education, Science and Technology* from 2014. As well as the *Strategy for Adult Education* from 2004, it highlights the concept of lifelong learning as a guarantee for the development of the educational system and society. The current *Comprehensive Curricular Reform for Early, Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education*, based on the *Strategy*, is also proceeding in the same direction.

Modern trends in the concept of lifelong learning in Europe, and consequently in Croatia, are causally related to changes of the learning conditions, and relate to: (1) the role of the new media environment in learning (Matijević, 2008a and 2008b); (2) the understanding of lifelong learning as a key to the competitiveness of Europe (Plantić, 2005; Žiljak 2005), and (3) the application of the concept of lifelong learning in order to achieve sustainable development (Borić, Jindra and Škugor, 2008; Vujičić, 2008; Uzelac, 2008).

Even though the last decade has witnessed an increase in the importance of lifelong learning, a stronger and quicker implementation of the lifelong learning in Croatia is necessary due to the high unemployment rate, ageing of the population, outdated knowledge, technological development, attempts at reviving of the economy, and globalisation of the labour market. Croatia needs to make greater efforts in improving and modernising the educational system, but also in developing of the prerequisites as well as a support system for more intensive involvement of adults in lifelong learning.

3 Available at <http://statistika.hzz.hr/Statistika.aspx?tipIzvjestaja=1>.

4 Croatia in the 21st century - education (2001); White Paper on Croatian Education (2001); Declaration on Knowledge (2002); Croatia Based on Knowledge and Application of Knowledge (2004); 55 recommendations for increasing the competitiveness of Croatia (2004); Development Plan of Education 2005 to 2010 (2005); Strategic Development Framework 2006- 2013 (2006); Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports for the period 2012-2014 (2012) and the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology (2014). More specifically, in relation to adult education created were: Strategy and Action Plan for Adult Education (2004); Regulation establishing the Agency for Adult Education (2006), Adult Education Act (2007); Rules on standards and norms, and the manner and procedure of managing condition fulfillment in adult education institutions (2007). (Revised by the authors according to: Klapan, Rafajac, Rončević, 2009, p. 115)

RESEARCHING THE ATTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE TOWARDS LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Three extensive Eurobarometer surveys have been conducted at the EU level on the attitudes of EU citizens (including youth⁵) towards lifelong learning: in 1997, 2003 and 2005.⁶ Main findings of all three studies have generally been the same: citizens believe that lifelong learning is important, but answers vary from country to country. The first study, conducted in 1997, states that 72% of young people expressed the intention to continue learning in order to enhance their qualifications (54%) or general knowledge (45%). It is commendable that 68% of young people considered professional training necessary (Eurobarometer 112, 1997). The results of the 2003 Eurobarometer show that younger and better qualified people learn in different ways, with the young people from Finland, Sweden and Iceland in the lead, and the young people from Greece and Portugal at the bottom (Eurobarometer 185, 2003). The third study, conducted in 2005, examined the attitudes of citizens of the 10 new EU member states towards lifelong learning. The results revealed a positive trend: a percentage of citizens (93%) who defined lifelong learning as important increased when compared to the previous survey. The young and highly educated individuals differentiate the least between the skills important for either personal or public life: 60% of young people believe that foreign language skills are useful in private life, and 75% believe that they matter in public life. 92% of the young people rated learning for learning's sake as useful. Young people are willing to attend professional training programmes (44%), but are less ready to bear the costs of learning than those aged 55-59. Less than 49% of the young people think that it is the digital environment that has offered the highest number of learning opportunities during the last five years (Eurobarometer 231, 2005).

The lifelong learning in Croatia has been examined by a number of authors. While some examined the views of the students, there no research that would examine the views of the secondary education pupils towards the concept of lifelong education has been carried out until now. The results of one of the first studies on students' attitudes towards and their vision of lifelong learning (Klapan, 2004, p.p. 142 - 148) reveal that most students perceived lifelong learning as useful and necessary for survival. Students do not perceive our society as a "learning society" and believe that future learning will be marked by the impact of technology and individual learning. Four years later, in the survey carried out with pedagogy undergraduates, Klapan, Rafajac and Rončević (2009, p. 113) concluded that the students value lifelong learning, believe that it applies to all age groups, and are willing to invest in their further education. When exploring how much the university professors, 1st to 4th grade primary school teachers, educators and students of preschool and primary education understand and

5 Aged 15-24.

6 Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/index#p=1&search=lifelong learning>.

apply the contents of lifelong learning for sustainable development, Borić, Jindra and Škugor (2008, p.p. 318–324) concluded that the majority of the students (60% or more) possesses a clear idea of what is expected of them during the lifelong learning for sustainable development. More than 80% of the students from both programmes believe that the biggest obstacle to the promotion of lifelong learning for sustainable development is the limited familiarity with the concept. Rajić and Lapat (2010) investigated the attitudes of future 1st to 4th grade primary school teachers, based on the analysis of 61 student papers on lifelong learning. About two-thirds of the students displayed a good understanding of the concept. Half of the students believe that lifelong learning is essential, 39.34% believe that it has a significant impact on the quality of their work, and 34.43% believe that it impacts the development of personal skills. Less than 81.97% confirmed the intention to participate in a non-formal education (seminars, workshops, courses). 52.46% of them would choose informal education (self-education), and 32.79% plan to continue their education through a doctoral program (Rajić and Lapat, 2010, p. 57). In their paper Horvat and Lapat (2012, p.p. 135–136) present the results of their research on the knowledge and attitudes of 1st to 4th grade primary school teachers and future teachers. Student responses show that 47% of them list career advancement as one type of professional training. Only 3% are ready to enter a doctoral programme, 51% have not even considered it, while 45% are undecided. Jukić and Ringel examined the views on lifelong learning and the implementation of training programmes in the Osijek Regional Centre of the Croatian Employment Institute. The results show that the participants aged 35 and less are more inclined to continue further education in the future (75%). The youngest (up to 25 years of age) prevail among the latter and make up 47.2% of all the participants who intend to participate in further education in the future (Jukić and Ringel, 2013, p. 32). Klapan, Šaravanja and Mašić (2015, p.p. 91–92) conducted research into students' self-assessment of the key competencies and found that the students at the University of Mostar believe that they have successfully developed all eight key competences (see European Parliament and the Council of Europe, 2006) through the course of their life and schooling. The highest score (good or very good) was generally given to the evaluation of the competences that are closely related to their future professions.

AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The main aim of this research is to gain an insight into the pupils' and students' knowledge of and the attitudes towards lifelong learning, as well as highlight possible differences between the two. The key assumptions are that students know more about lifelong learning than pupils, that most participants believe lifelong learning is necessary for their future (over 70%), and that they are interested in the continuing of their learning in the future (more than 60%). The paper examined the following: the pupils' and students' knowledge of lifelong learning, where they learned about this

concept, the needs and desires of the pupils and students for certain forms of lifelong learning, the key barriers to lifelong learning, the attitudes towards the importance of the different ways of promoting lifelong learning, and the opinions of pupils and students regarding the individual aspects of lifelong learning and its importance for their future.

Two questionnaires were used during the data collection process; one for the pupils (*Pupils' Attitudes and Knowledge of the Lifelong Learning Concept*) and the other for the students (*Students' Attitudes and Knowledge of the Lifelong Learning Concept*). The questionnaires differ in the selection of the education level and the choice of lifelong learning forms, in which the participants might be interested in the future. Each questionnaire is comprised of ten different questions, two of which are open-ended.

The study was conducted on the sample of 100 students from various study programmes at different Croatian universities, and 100 pupils of the four-year Opatija secondary school. Students' responses were collected online, while pupils' responses were collected in person, in order to fulfil the pre-set quota of 25 pupils per grade. Both samples included a higher percentage of female respondents (61 female pupils and 73 female students). Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the students according to their study programme.

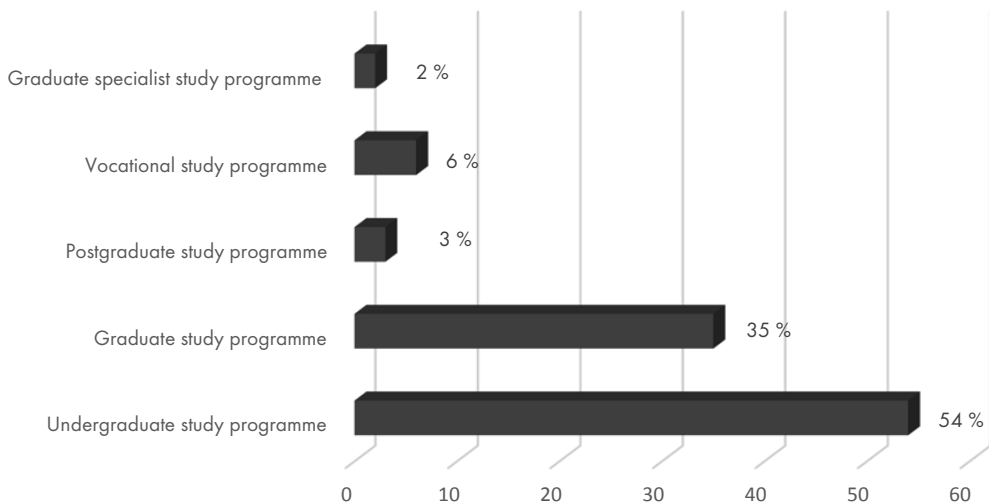


Figure 1: Breakdown of students by study programme

With regard to the faculties and colleges, by far the greatest number of students attends the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka (Table 1).

Table 1: The number of participants by the faculties they attend

| Name of faculty | Number of participants |
|---|------------------------|
| Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka | 63 |
| Faculty of Law in Rijeka | 7 |
| Faculty of Economics in Rijeka | 6 |
| Specialist Nursing Study Programme at the Technical College in Bjelovar | 6 |
| Faculty of Science in Zagreb | 4 |
| Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka | 3 |
| Polytechnic of Rijeka | 3 |
| Faculty of Electrical Engineering Osijek | 2 |
| Faculty of Kinesiology in Zagreb | 2 |
| Faculty of Agriculture in Osijek | 2 |
| Faculty of Economics in Zagreb | 2 |

Descriptive statistics were used to process and interpret the data. Values are expressed in percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Knowledge of the Lifelong Learning Concept

Most of the pupils rated their knowledge of the lifelong learning concept as satisfactory, while most of the students rated their knowledge as good. However, it is interesting that almost the same percentage of pupils (23%) and students (22%) rated their knowledge as very good (Figure 2).

Interestingly, the increase in the students' educational level does not positively correlate with the increase in the grade given to their knowledge of the lifelong learning concept. This trend does not appear with the pupils, however, as those in the higher grades assessed their knowledge higher, whereas the pupils in the lower years gave the lowest scores (Figure 3).

In order to gain a more detailed insight into the actual knowledge of the concept, and reduce the level of subjectivity in the evaluation, the participants were asked to try to define lifelong learning. From the total of 100 students, 32 did not provide any definition whatsoever, which suggests that they are not familiar with the concept. The definitions that were provided, on the other hand, mostly repeat the phrase "learning throughout life" ("any activity through which we learn and are educated, which will help us throughout life to acquire greater knowledge and skills", "education we need throughout our entire life", "constant learning at any age, from childhood to old age", "continuous learning", "learning throughout life", "learning about things that are present in both our current and future life", "all acquired knowledge, whether or not we are learning from someone or by ourselves", etc.).

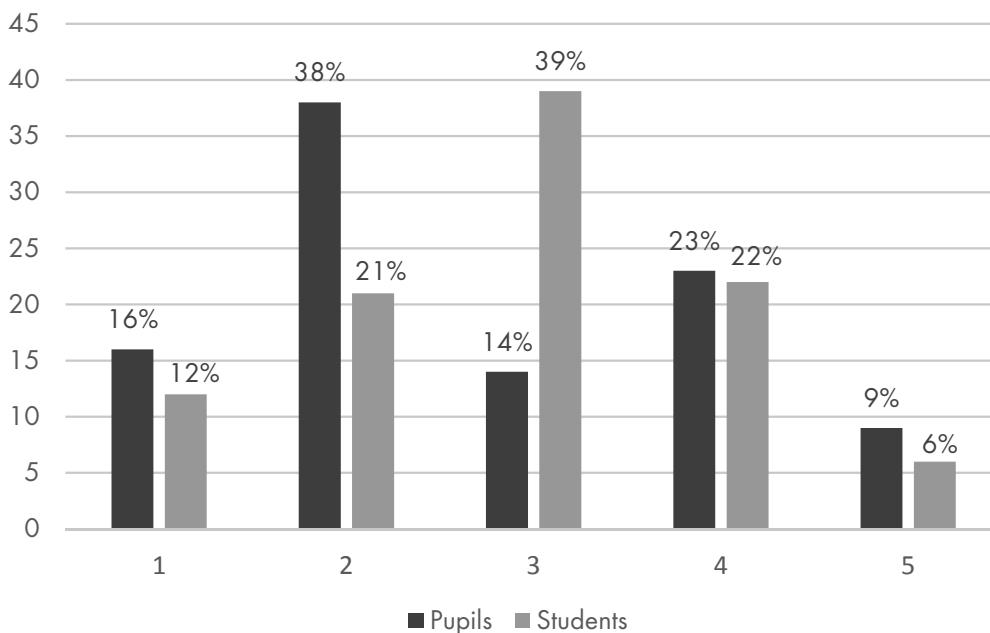


Figure 2: Participants' self-assessment of their knowledge of lifelong learning

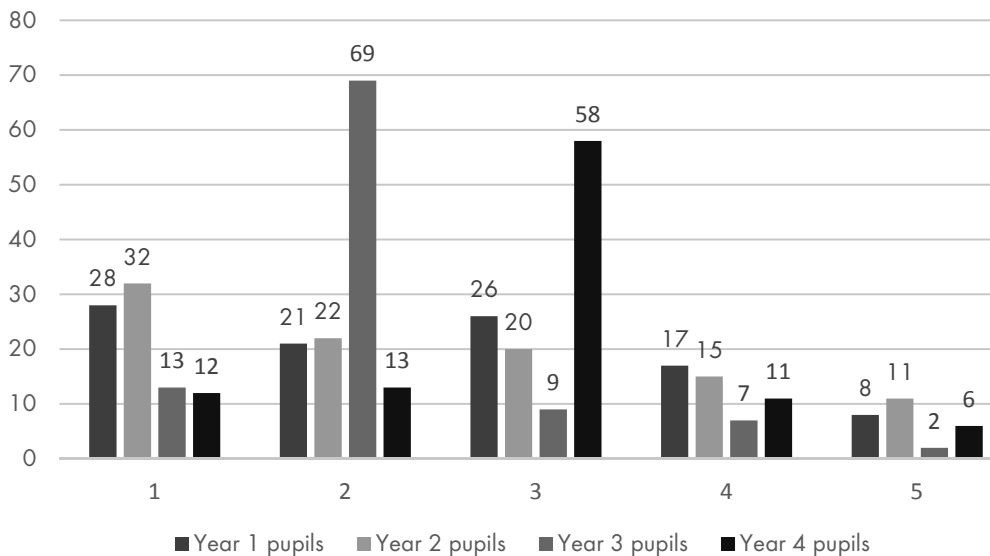


Figure 3: Pupils' self-assessment of the knowledge of lifelong learning by year

When it comes to the students, only 12 did not provide the answer to the question. The students' definitions describe the concept of lifelong learning more accurately, precisely, and clearly ("constantly improving and perfecting our knowledge", "education that never stops and is constantly expanded", "the concept of never being too old or 'too smart' to stop learning", "the concept of extending the duration of education from the young to all ages, through seminars, additional education", "education which is never finished, but is complemented throughout life, while its topics are not necessarily tied to a particular profession, but also include ecology, civic education etc.", "education of the individual that happens during his whole life, through professional training, formal and non-formal education, and which never stops. It is important for the sake of improving and developing one's knowledge and adjusting it according to the current findings" and others).

On the basis of this data we can conclude that students know more about lifelong learning and their average grade, good, is more objective than the sufficient grade which the pupils gave themselves.

The Ways in Which the Participants Learned of Lifelong Learning

As seen in the Figure 4, the only source of learning about the lifelong learning concept with which the number of pupils exceeded that of the students, is through parents or other family members. Most of the participants learned of the concept on the Internet.

Pupils who stated that they heard of the lifelong learning concept in class, through individual subjects, listed them as: Family Business, Psychology, Entrepreneurship and Management, Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility, Croatian, English and home-room classes. Students learned of lifelong learning as a part of the following subjects: Didactics, Developmental Psychology, Physiology of Sport and Exercise, General Pedagogy, Educational Psychology, Croatian Mediaeval and Renaissance literature, Methodology of Language Education, Adult Education, Adult Education and Local Development, Educational Policy, Adult Education in the Concept of Lifelong Learning and others.

Familiarity of the Students with Different Forms of Lifelong Learning

Only 28% of the pupils provided a response to this question, mainly citing foreign language courses, college enrolment and the reading of professional literature. As much as 89% of the students answered this question, citing foreign language courses, computer training, workshops, seminars and conferences, postgraduate studies, and non-institutional self-education as possible forms of lifelong learning.

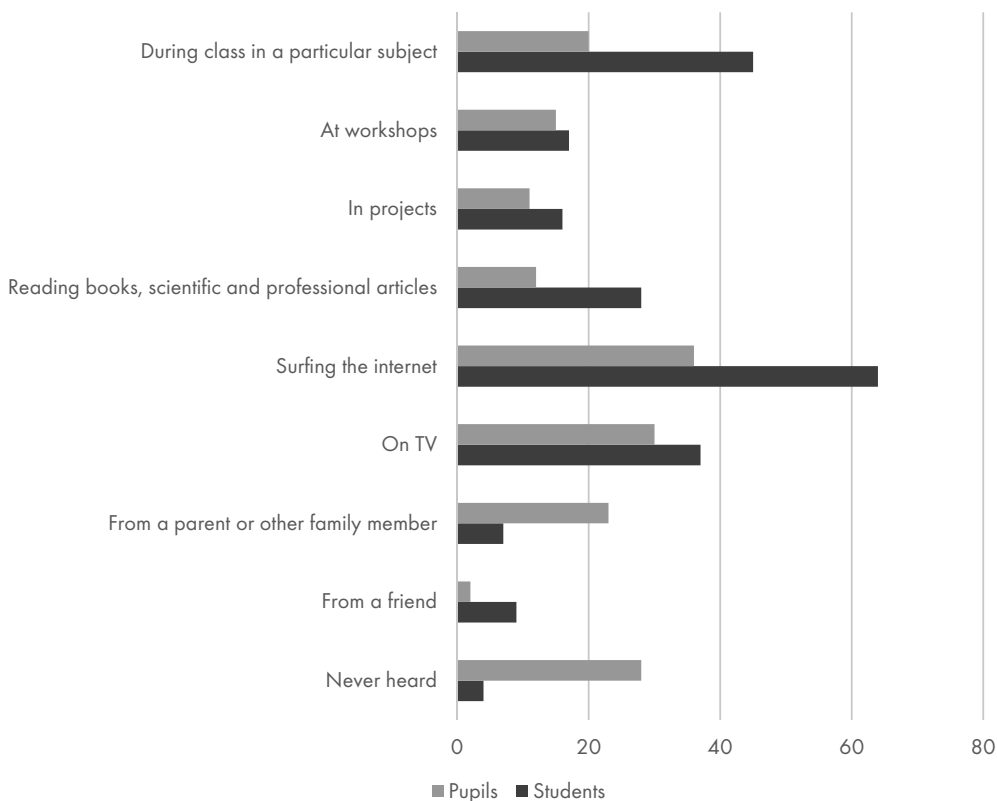


Figure 4: The ways in which the participants learned of lifelong learning (multiple answers possible)

Attitudes towards Lifelong Learning

The majority of the pupils and students have an affirmative attitude towards lifelong learning. The degree of agreement with all the claims was higher with students than with pupils. Most pupils (66%) and students (88%) agree that lifelong learning includes training in various forms. However, most of the pupils and students disagreed with the statement that lifelong learning is necessary for their future. Specifically, 26% of the pupils did not agree with this statement, and as many as 23% do not see lifelong learning as necessary. Additionally, 11% did not feel that they know enough about the subject. On the other hand, 59% of the pupils believe that lifelong learning increases their chances of employment, and 62% believe that it affects the development of their competencies, raising the questions of how valued and how profitable learning and working is considered to be (Table 2).

Table 2: Participants' level of agreement with the statements on lifelong learning

| Statements | | 1+2 | 3 | 4+5 | 6 |
|--|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Lifelong learning is a constant process. | PUPILS | 16% | 12% | 60% | 12% |
| | STUDENTS | 8% | 4% | 86% | 2% |
| Lifelong learning is necessary for my future. | PUPILS | 23% | 26% | 40% | 11% |
| | STUDENTS | 20% | 11% | 64% | 5% |
| Lifelong learning covers training in various forms. | PUPILS | 9% | 12% | 66% | 13% |
| | STUDENTS | 8% | 2% | 88% | 2% |
| Lifelong learning impacts the development of my competences. | PUPILS | 11% | 14% | 62% | 13% |
| | STUDENTS | 10% | 8% | 78% | 4% |
| Lifelong learning increases possibility of employment. | PUPILS | 13% | 19% | 59% | 9% |
| | STUDENTS | 12% | 12% | 70% | 6% |
| Lifelong learning is learning for the future. | PUPILS | 10% | 16% | 63% | 11% |
| | STUDENTS | 12% | 13% | 70% | 5% |

* Frequencies are expressed as a percentage, on a scale 1 + 2 = completely disagree + disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 + 5 = agree + strongly agree, 6 = do not know well enough to answer

The Desirability of the Ways Employed in Order to Promote the Concept of Lifelong Learning

Pupils' and students' opinions on the promoting of lifelong learning do not differ greatly. The only difference concerns the promotion of lifelong learning in class. Less than 24% of pupils consider promotion taking place as a part of their compulsory subjects undesirable, while 27% consider it undesirable when taking place as a part of their elective subjects and advanced classes, with a high share of those who are undecided on this question. On the other hand, 67% of students have a positive attitude towards promotion of lifelong learning as a part of their compulsory subjects, and 76% displaying a positive attitude towards promotion of lifelong learning as a part of their elective subjects or advanced classes. When it comes to all other ways of promoting lifelong learning, more than half of the pupils and students considered them desirable, with differences being observed in the order of desirability. Pupils believe that the best way to promote lifelong learning are workshops and projects, followed by TV and the Internet. Students, however, believe that the best way of to promote lifelong learning are workshops and projects, followed by the Internet and elective subjects or advanced classes (Table 3).

Table 3: Participants' attitudes towards the desirability of the ways in which lifelong learning is promoted

| Ways of promoting lifelong learning | | 1+2 | 3 | 4+5 |
|---|----------|-----|-----|-----|
| As a part of obligatory subjects | PUPILS | 24% | 32% | 44% |
| | STUDENTS | 9% | 24% | 67% |
| As a part of elective subjects and advanced classes | PUPILS | 27% | 27% | 46% |
| | STUDENTS | 9% | 15% | 76% |
| At workshops and projects | PUPILS | 19% | 24% | 57% |
| | STUDENTS | 4% | 7% | 89% |
| On TV | PUPILS | 20% | 25% | 55% |
| | STUDENTS | 7% | 24% | 69% |
| On the Internet | PUPILS | 19% | 29% | 52% |
| | STUDENTS | 5% | 16% | 79% |

* Frequencies are expressed as a percentage, on a scale 1 + 2 = completely undesirable + undesirable, 3 = neither desirable nor undesirable, 4 + 5 = desirable + entirely desirable

Pupils' and Students' Interest in Various Forms of Lifelong Learning

Research shows that pupils are interested in enrolling in undergraduate (74%) and graduate study programmes (73%). Additionally, it reveals that the percentage of those who intend to enter a postgraduate study programme (46%) is nearly identical to the percentage of those who are not sure (41%). Precisely half of the pupils expressed interest in attending various courses and seminars, workshops, and other forms of self-education. These results are worrisome and suggest that half of the pupils are not aware of the need to invest in themselves, their knowledge and skills outside of the college education. Consequently, this raises the question of how well the educational institutions prepare pupils for further education and the labour market. On the other hand, students are more aware of the importance of lifelong learning. In fact, 67% of them intend to enter a study programme on a higher education level, and are also interested in self-education (84%). In addition, almost all students (92%) will be attending courses and seminars (Table 4 and Table 5).

Table 4: Pupils' interest in some of the forms of lifelong learning in the future

| Forms of learning | 1+2 | 3 | 4+5 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Enrolling in an undergraduate study programme | 74% | 18% | 8% |
| Enrolling in a graduate study programme | 73% | 18% | 7% |
| Enrolling in a postgraduate study programme | 46% | 41% | 13% |
| Enrolling in a specialist study programme | 32% | 48% | 20% |
| Attending various courses and seminars | 50% | 33% | 17% |
| Attending workshops | 47% | 32% | 21% |
| Self-education | 46% | 30% | 24% |

* Frequencies are expressed as a percentage, on a scale 1+2 = very likely that I will be interested + I will probably be interested 3 = not sure, 4+5 = very unlikely that I will be interested + it is not likely that I would be interested

Table 5: Students' interest in some of forms of lifelong learning in the future

| Forms of learning | 1+2 | 3 | 4+5 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Enrolling in an educational level that is higher than the current one | 67% | 22% | 11% |
| Attending various courses and seminars | 92% | 6% | 2% |
| Attending workshops | 75% | 20% | 5% |
| Self-education | 84% | 11% | 5% |

* Frequencies are expressed as a percentage, on a scale 1+2 = very likely that I will be interested + I will probably be interested 3 = not sure, 4+5 = very unlikely that I will be interested + it is not likely that I would be interested

Obstacles to Lifelong Learning

The largest number of students considers the underdeveloped awareness of lifelong learning (87%), lack of financial resources (85%), and lack of faith in the benefits of lifelong learning (83%) to be the key barriers to lifelong learning. Pupils, on the other hand, believe the lack of motivation for learning (63%), unwillingness to learn (54%) and lack of financial resources (53%) to be the main barriers.

Table 6: Participants' attitudes toward possible obstacles to lifelong learning

| Claims about the obstacles to lifelong learning | | 1+2 | 3 | 4+5 |
|---|----------|-----|-----|-----|
| Lack of willingness to study. | PUPILS | 20% | 26% | 54% |
| | STUDENTS | 8% | 16% | 76% |
| Lack of belief in the benefits of lifelong learning. | PUPILS | 22% | 27% | 51% |
| | STUDENTS | 6% | 11% | 83% |
| Awareness of lifelong learning is not developed enough. | PUPILS | 15% | 32% | 53% |
| | STUDENTS | 4% | 9% | 87% |
| Individuals do not possess sufficient funds for lifelong learning. | PUPILS | 18% | 29% | 53% |
| | STUDENTS | 3% | 12% | 85% |
| Lack of cooperation on the part of the institutions that implement lifelong learning. | PUPILS | 16% | 42% | 42% |
| | STUDENTS | 5% | 25% | 70% |
| Lack of motivation for lifelong learning. | PUPILS | 12% | 54% | 63% |
| | STUDENTS | 7% | 13% | 80% |
| There are too few available projects and workshops on the subject of lifelong learning. | PUPILS | 25% | 34% | 41% |
| | STUDENTS | 10% | 17% | 73% |

* Frequencies are expressed in percentage, position 2+1 = does not completely represent + does not represent, 3 = neither represents or not represents, 4+5 = represents + completely represents

CONCLUSION

Research has shown that pupils' and students' understanding of the concept of lifelong learning differs from each other, and that students possess a higher level of familiarity with the concept. This conclusion is confirmed by the pupils' (38% assessed their knowledge as sufficient) and students' self-assessment (39% assessed their knowledge as good), as well as by the accuracy, precision and clarity of their definitions and listed forms of lifelong learning. Inquiry into participants' interest in lifelong learning shows that most pupils are interested in continuing their education at a university level, but also that half of them are not likely to attend courses, seminars, and workshops or engage in self-education. Students, on the other hand, are more aware of the importance of lifelong learning and a great majority of them intend to pursue university education (67%), as well as non-university education (92% would attend a course or a seminar). The most serious

obstacle to lifelong learning, according to the students, is the low level of the awareness of lifelong learning (87%), while for the pupils it is the lack of the motivation to learn (63%). The opinions expressed on the subject of the importance of lifelong learning for the future indicate that a large number of pupils do not possess a particular attitude towards this subject (26%), and every fifth pupil does not consider lifelong learning to be important for his or hers future (23%). Most students, on the other hadn, in consistence with the other results, assess the impact of lifelong learning on the future of an individual as important.

Based on the findings and results of the study, it can be concluded out of the three initial assumptions, two were confirmed by the analysis: students are more familiar with the concept of lifelong learning than pupils, and more than 60% of the participants are interested in continuing their education in the future. This is in agreement with the 1997 Eurobarometer survey results, according to which 72% of young people intend to continue learning. Since more than 70% of participants do not consider lifelong learning as necessary for their future, the third assumption is rejected. This attitude is very different from the attitude of 93% of the EU citizens, who consider lifelong learning to be very important for their future (Eurobarometer, 2005).

In order to obtain more representative results, it would be necessary to include a larger number of both pupils and students in future studies. Due to the fact that the students of social sciences and humanities are relatively well versed in the subject of lifelong learning, and that their responses significantly contribute to the positive results, it is recommended to extend the study to the students of other sciences (using the same quota sample as for the pupils). It would also be desirable to formulate a larger number of questions in order to avoid the limitations of the study and the participants' subjectivity.

While it is impossible to generalise the conclusions obtained in this study due to already mentioned limitations, the results can be used to make recommendations about the measures required in order to create the preconditions for the continuity of learning throughout life. These are related in particular to the role of schools and education in the development of a positive attitude towards (lifelong) learning and the raising of the awareness of its necessity. Additionally, it is recommended to (1) include the topics on lifelong learning with all study courses, regardless of the faculty, (2) develop teachers' professional training programmes so as to educate them about the forms and the importance of promoting the concept of lifelong learning as a part of all school subjects, (3) accelerate the adoption of a rulebook on the recognition and assessment of non-formal and informal learning, in order to popularise these forms of learning, and (4) initiate stronger promotion and more frequent organisation of events that would allow the general public to learn about the different forms, possibilities and advantages of lifelong learning.

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