

## STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF GRADUATES REGARDING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF JOBS IN AGRIBUSINESS

Liviu MARCUTA, Ionut PACURAR, Agatha POPESCU, Alina MARCUTA

University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest of Bucharest, 59 Marasti Boulevard, District 1, 011464, Bucharest, Romania, Phone: +40213182564, Fax:+40213182888, Emails: liviumarcuta@yahoo.com; ionut.pacurar@usamv.ro; agatha\_popescu@yahoo.com alinamarcuta@yahoo.com

*Corresponding author:* alinamarcuta@yahoo.com

### Abstract

*The objective of the current study was to identify the perception of the graduates of the Engineering and Management of Agricultural Businesses specialization within the Faculty of Management and Rural Development regarding the attractiveness of the agribusiness field. In the framework of the research, the answers were obtained from the graduates of the 2021 promotion, belonging to the form of distance education, based on a questionnaire. From the total of applied questionnaires, a response rate of 87% resulted. The number of valid answers was 128. Information collected based on the questionnaire was statistically processed, resulting in information regarding the perception of the importance of the agribusiness sector, regarding the desire to work in this field or regarding the motivation of choosing to pursue higher studies in the analyzed field. The research methodology also assumed the bibliographic study regarding the place occupied by agriculture and agribusiness in the Romanian economy, regarding the labor force in this field and the development possibilities. The obtained results highlighted the fact that agribusiness is an attractive field, in which the majority of graduates want to work as employees or as business owners (68%). The reasons for choosing to carry out the activity in the field of agribusiness are diverse, from the awareness of the importance of agriculture in ensuring food security, to the attractiveness of the income obtained or the ownership of agricultural land and the development of a business.*

**Key words:** agribusiness, graduates, motivation, attractiveness, workforce

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of agribusiness in economic, social and environmental development, although it is a current topic, was addressed by Adam Smith and David Ricardo who considered that the wealth of nations is determined by the value of production, but also by the structure of the branches of an economy [13, 15].

Starting from the fact that agriculture represents one of the important sectors of activity for Romania, and which until now has undergone important changes both in terms of the property structure, but especially in the approach to the production system, aligning thus the general trends of modernization and becoming more and more competitive, more adapted to market realities, more complex and more sophisticated due to the new technologies that include digitization in the production, storage, distribution and sales systems, we consider that it represents an

important field that can to attract an important part of the labor force [17]. The place occupied by agriculture and agribusiness is due both to the agricultural potential of Romania, but especially to the investments made in this sector, both in equipment and in infrastructure. An important element that contributed to the development of the sector was represented by the awareness that added value has a high potential in terms of improving business profitability. The concept can be applied both at the global business level, but also at the local business level [3, 6, 7]. On the other hand, the agricultural potential must be doubled by the development of complementary, modern, sustainable businesses that can compete with other existing businesses at the community and global level, which are part of a large industry, and which must keep up with the permanent changes in technology that makes the difference between the existing players on the market, to face the competition of the

existing prices on the global markets, and last but not least to take into account the preferences of the consumers which are in continuous change.

All these considerations have contributed to the emergence of stronger, more professional, more informed, more competitive and adaptable market players to the needs and profile of the modern buyer, players capable of adapting to buying and consumption behaviors, so as to in the face of increasingly high competition. In addition to the producers, the agribusiness market is also formed by the companies of input for agriculture, distribution, marketing, etc. that make this sector a complex one characterized by numerous connections [5]. These links are established with various other business categories located both vertically and horizontally and which include different fields: banking, financial, commercial, educational, etc. [14]. Therefore, between agriculture and agribusiness there is a strong synergy that allows the development of many areas, which can contribute to increasing incomes and reducing poverty in rural areas [2].

Some economists believe that vertical development was influenced by factors that had a negative effect on local economies, small farmers, with social and environmental implications (insufficiently regulated globalization, tariff barriers, low transport costs, intensive use of technology and inputs, etc.) [12], effects that had to be counteracted through various policies and measures. Increasing the competitiveness of small farmers is one of the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy [4], which encourages the increase in the employment rate of the population in the rural environment, which will lead to economic growth and sustainable rural development [16].

At the level of Romania, agriculture is an important sector, and this also results from the degree of occupation of the population. At the level of this branch, the employed population totals almost 850,000 people on January 1, 2022. Out of all of them, 54% were men, that's the majority (about 97% work in the

private sector). The difference is represented by the population working in the public sector (2.8%) or mixed (0.2%). Of the total employed population existing in Romania, approximately 11% work in agriculture and in other fields complementary to agriculture.

Thus, on January 1, 2022, the population employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing was 846,500 people, of which 54% were men and 46% were women. Of these, 96.8% work in the private sector, 3% in the public sector, and 0.2% in the public or mixed sector. It is thus established that the share of the population employed in agriculture and related fields is almost 11% of the total employed population. In relation to the professional status, the population in agriculture represented almost 16%.

In relation to the form of wages, we note that a significant proportion of the people who work in agriculture are private entrepreneurs, i.e. self-employed workers (53%), followed by unpaid workers as a result of the fact that they carry out their activity on their own farm (31%). Employees represent 15%, and those who own the businesses as owners reach only 1%.

Of the total population employed in agriculture, the largest share is owned by the South-West Oltenia region (19%), and the smallest shares by the South-East (9%) and Center (10%) regions. Except for Bucharest, with 1%). The other development regions have relatively equal shares, between 11-14%.

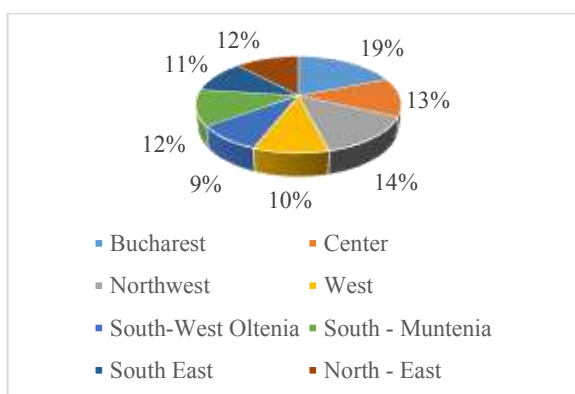


Fig. 1. Employment rate, by region, on January 1, 2022  
 Source: own processing [9, 10].

From the statistical data on the employed population, we find that in the South-West

Oltenia and North-East regions 17% of them work in the agricultural sector.

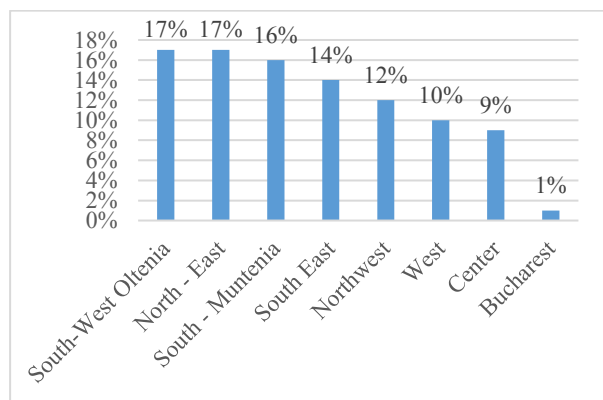


Fig. 2. The population employed in agriculture and complementary fields, by region, on January 1, 2022 (%)

Source: own processing [9, 10].

Also, in the South-Muntenia region, 16% of the employed population works in agriculture. The regions with the lowest shares of the population employed in agriculture are: West (10%) and Center (9%).

Considering the importance of the agricultural and agribusiness sector and the attractiveness of this field that contributes to ensuring the food needs and ensuring food security, the purpose of the paper was to identify what was the motivation of the students regarding the choice of the field of study and what were their expectations regarding the choice of a future job in the field of agribusiness.

Moreover, the existing statistics at the European level highlight the fact that in Romania, the share of higher education graduates is below the average recorded in the E.U. (which is about 41%). Compared to 2019, when they represented approximately 26% of the total population, in 2020 there was a decrease of one percent, and in 2021 another 2%. The tendency of the European Union is to increase the share of higher education graduates by 4%. Therefore, we find that Romania is still far from the desired levels related to the level of education of the population. Moreover, at the level of the E.U. occupies the last place, after Bulgaria, Hungary and Italy. However, it should be noted that in terms of agriculture and agribusiness, in recent years there has been an increase in the attractiveness of this field

among high school graduates who wish to continue their higher studies.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology involved the realization of an empirical study based on a questionnaire consisting of 12 questions, which was applied to the graduates of the Agricultural Business Engineering and Management specialization (distance learning) within the Faculty of Management and Rural Development belonging to the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine from Bucharest. The questionnaire was applied in June 2022 to the graduates, who were aged between 22 and 57 years and who answered the voluntary and anonymous questionnaire. The response rate was 87%, resulting in a number of 128 respondents.

The first part of the questionnaire (3 questions) contained socio-demographic information, and the second part contained questions regarding the field of activity in which the respondents were active at that time or will be active, the usefulness of higher education, the desire to develop a business in the field of agribusiness, etc.

The 9 questions were the following:

- (4) What were the reasons for choosing a faculty that prepares you in the field of agribusiness?
- (5) Do you currently have a job?
- (6) Is your current job in the field of agribusiness?
- (7) If yes, what position do you hold within that company?
- (8) Do you own a business in the field of agribusiness, but do you work in another field?
- (9) After finishing the faculty, do you want to work in the field of agribusiness?
- (10) What position do you want to occupy in the company?
- (11) Do you consider that higher education will help you in your future work in the field of agribusiness?
- (12) What is the motivation for choosing a job in agribusiness?

In order to collect empirical data, the omnibus questionnaire was used, which included questions grouped according to the following themes: biographical data; factual data regarding the choice of undergraduate degree program; factual data regarding choosing a job in agribusiness; factual data regarding the future job. Those questions that referred to the subjective evaluation of some aspects related to the study subjects or personal experiences related to them, considered little relevant to the research objective, were removed from the questionnaire. The sociological survey was a census type, due to the fact that it allowed each person to answer the questions, thus avoiding measurement errors specific to the use of probabilistic samples, which due to the exclusion of a certain number of respondents leads to the appearance of measurement errors [1, 3, 8, 11, 12]. The obtained results were the basis for establishing the conclusions regarding the perception of the graduates regarding the field of agribusiness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Starting from the 3 questions that aimed to establish demographic information, we were able to establish the profile of the respondents. It is found that of the 128 graduates, 52% come from the rural environment, and 48% from the urban environment. Of these, 41% are women, and 59% are men.

Table 1. The socio-demographic characteristics

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	53	41
Man	75	59
<b>Age</b>		
20-34	48	38
35-45	37	29
45-55	26	20
55-65	17	13
<b>Residence environment</b>		
Urban	61	48
Rural	67	52

Source: Own calculation.

Regarding the age groups, the largest share is represented by young people between the ages of 20 and 34 (38%), followed by the 35-45

age group (29%), by the 45-55 age group years (20%) and the 55-65 age group (13%). The second part of the questionnaire had 9 questions that aimed to determine the motivation of following the courses of a specialized faculty, but also the expectations of the graduates regarding the labor market in the field of agribusiness.

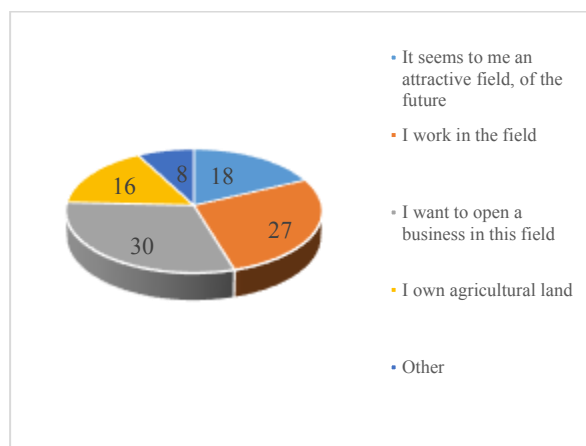


Fig. 3. Frequency of responses regarding the motivation for choosing professional studies (%)  
 Source: own processing.

Thus to question no. 4. *What were the reasons for choosing a faculty that prepares you in the field of agribusiness?* the answers were open-ended, noting that a significant proportion of the choice of field of study was determined by the desire to open a business in this field (30%), by the fact that some of the graduates already work in the field, but they do not have specialized studies (27%), because they find the field of agribusiness attractive (18%) or because they own agricultural land (16%), and 8% of respondents had other reasons (recommendations from parents, acquaintances, desire to pursue higher studies, etc.).

From question no. 5 *Do you currently have a job?* it turned out that 76% of those questioned have a job, of which 66% are men and 34% are women. Of the 24% who do not currently have a job, 58% are women, and 42% are men.

To question no. 6. *Is your current job in the field of agribusiness?* the answers highlight the fact that 48% of the respondents work in this field, the rest working in various other fields of activity. Some of them own

agricultural land, although they are employed in other fields.

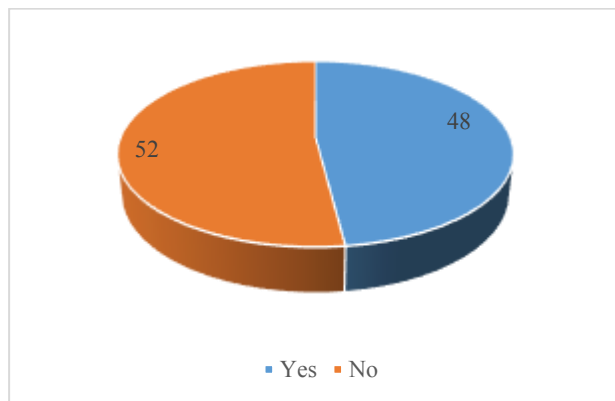


Fig. 4. Frequency of responses regarding the field of activity (%)  
 Source: own processing.

To question 7. *If yes, what position do you hold within that company?* the answers highlighted the fact that 66% of the respondents who work in a business are employed or own the business being employed in their own company, while 34% of them are the owners of the agricultural or agribusiness business.

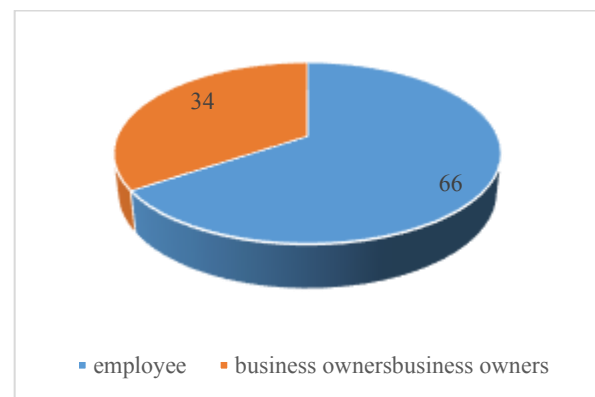


Fig. 5. Frequency of answers regarding the position held within the business (%)  
 Source: own processing.

From the answers given to question no. 8. *Do you own a business in the field of agribusiness, but do you work in another field?* it turns out that the 34% who declared themselves to be owners of agricultural businesses are administrators or just own that business, but work in another field different from the agricultural one.

To question no. 9. *After finishing college, do you want to work in the field of agribusiness?* among the 67 graduates who work in other

fields of activity, 43 want to work in businesses that are in a direct relationship with agribusiness..

To question no. 10. *What position do you want to occupy in the company?* 68% answered that they want to start a business in the agribusiness field, whether only as landowners or as farmers.

The answers given to question no. 11. *Do you think that higher education will help you in your future work in the field of agribusiness?* highlighted the fact that the majority of graduates (94%) believe that the knowledge acquired in college will help them in starting a business or in developing the activity in a professional company. A percentage of 6% do not know yet, but no graduate considered that their studies will not help them in their future career (Figure 6).

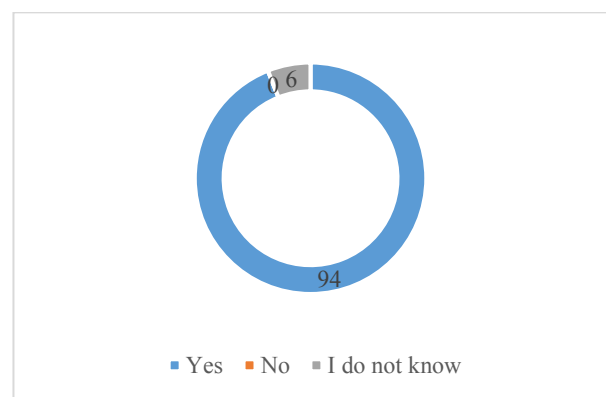


Fig. 6. Frequency of responses regarding the usefulness of studies (%)  
 Source: own processing

The open answers offered to question no. 12 *What is the motivation for choosing a job in agribusiness?* highlighted the fact that most of the respondents consider the field to be important for providing food and maintaining food security (28%). Also, 25% of the graduates believe that there is still a potential for development in this field. A share of 14% of the respondents believe that the income from agriculture is attractive and motivates them to open a business or work as employees in agribusiness, and 12% are motivated by the ownership of agricultural land. A percentage of 21% of graduates have other reasons (family tradition, taking over businesses from their parents, etc.) (Figure 7).

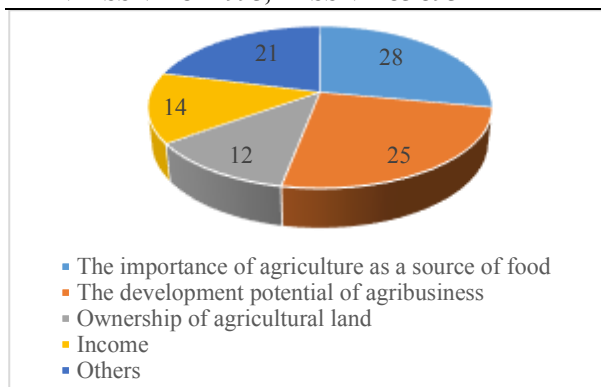


Fig. 7. Frequency of responses regarding the motivation for choosing a job in the field (%)

Source: own processing.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the field of agribusiness is an important one in the economy of any country considering the fact that it is the one that provides food for the population, the raw material necessary for different sectors of activity, being in close relation with the industrial sector. At the same time, at least as far as Romania is concerned, this sector ensures the employment of an important part of the labor force. The agribusiness sector is the one that can contribute to ensuring food security in a future that is faced with numerous economic, social and political threats and that must ensure the wound of a growing population, in the conditions of the reduction of the areas intended for agriculture as a result of the less controllable results of global warming and its consequences. Therefore, the field of agribusiness is an important one not only at the local level, but also globally.

The present study highlights the fact that the graduates of the Agricultural Business Engineering and Management specialization at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Bucharest consider the field of agribusiness to be attractive and have a high potential for development. Most of the graduates chose this field of training out of the desire to consolidate their knowledge or to acquire knowledge with the aim of opening a business. Many of them own agricultural land and want to exploit it, even if they work in another field of activity.

The share of women among graduates is high, as is the case in the employment rate, even if the share of women who do not have a job is 4% higher than that of men.

The respondents are interested in the field of agribusiness, their motivation being linked to both employment opportunities and the possibility of opening a business that they can develop both independently and in parallel with their current occupation.

Although the results of the research are not exhaustive, they can provide us with information about the human resource in this sector, but it can also be useful to the decision-makers both in terms of the educational offer, but also in the elaboration of rural development policies.

## REFERENCES

- [1]Chelcea, S., 2001, Methodology of sociological research. Quantative and qualitative methods (Metodologia cercetarii sociologice. Metode cantitative si calitative), In Romanian. Economica Publishing House, Bucuresti, pp. 208-289.
- [2]Christiaensen, L., Demery, L., Kuhl, J., 2011, The (evolving) role of agriculture in poverty reduction. An empirical perspective, Journal of Development Economics, 96(2), 239-254.
- [3]Dentoni, D., Hospes, O., Ross, R. B., 2012, Managing Wicked Problems in Agribusiness: The Role of Multi-Stakeholder Engagements in Value Creation, International Food and Agribusiness Management Review Vol. 15, Special Issue B, 2012 <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/142273/>, Accessed on 9.01.2023.
- [4]European Comission, The Common Agricultural Policy At A Glance, [https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-glance\\_en](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/cap-glance_en), Accessed on 9.01.2023.
- [5]Fleet, D.V., 2016, What is agribusiness? A visual description. Amity Journal of Agribusiness, 1(1), 1-6.
- [6]Marcuta, L., Popescu, A., Tindecu, C., Smedescu, D., Marcuta, A., 2021, Food security of the European Union and the influence of Covid-19, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 21(2), 386-392, [http://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.21\\_2/Art46.pdf](http://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol.21_2/Art46.pdf), Accessed on 10.01.2023.
- [7]Mărcuță, L., Ioniță, N., Tudor, V., Mărcuță, A., Tița, V., 2021, Covid crisis and the need to ensure food security and safety in the E.U., Romanian Agricultural Research, No. 38, <https://www.inceda-fundulea.ro/rar/nr38/rar38.46.pdf>, Accessed on 12.01.2023.

[8]Marginean, I., 2000, Design of sociological research (Proiectarea cercetarii sociologice), Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, pp. 208-244.

[9]National Institute of Statistics, INSSE, 2021, Labour force balance in Romania (Balanta fortei de munca), [https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/labour\\_force\\_in\\_romania\\_2021.pdf](https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/labour_force_in_romania_2021.pdf), Accessed on 7.01.2023.

[10]National Institute of Statistics, INSSE, 2022, Labour force balance in Romania (Balanta fortei de munca at January 1st, 2022), [https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/balanta\\_fortei\\_de\\_munca\\_la\\_1\\_ianuarie\\_2022.pdf](https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/balanta_fortei_de_munca_la_1_ianuarie_2022.pdf), Accessed on 7.01.2023.

[11]Partachi, I., Ciomartan, L.V., 2018, Statistical data sources – starting points in statistical analyses. Characteristics of the main official statistical data sources, Romanian Statistical Review - Supplement no. 5, 171-178. [https://www.revistadestatistica.ro/supliment/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/A09\\_rrss05\\_2018\\_ro.pdf](https://www.revistadestatistica.ro/supliment/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/A09_rrss05_2018_ro.pdf), Accessed on 9.01.2023.

[12]Reardon, T., Barrett, C. B., Berdegue, J. A., Swinnen, J. F., 2009, Agrifood industry transformation and small farmers in developing countries, World development, 37(11), 1717-1727.

[13]Ricardo, D., 2004, On the principles of political economy and taxation, Dover Publication In, pp. 320.

[14]Saragih, B., 2001, Agribusiness new paradigm of Agriculture- Based Economic Development, Bogor, Young Entrepreneurs Library (In Indonesian), (Agribisnis Paradigma Baru Pembangunan Ekonomi Berbasis Pertanian, Bogor: Pustaka Wirausaha Muda), <http://www.repository.ipb.ac.id/handle/123456789/42677>, Accessed on 14.01.2023.

[15]Smith, A., 2014, The Nations' Wealth (Avutia Natiunilor), Publica Publishing House, Bucuresti, pp. 410.

[16]Surya, B., Saleh, H., Hamsina, H., Idris, M., Ahmad, D.N.A., 2021, Rural agribusiness-based agropolitan area development and environmental management sustainability: regional economic growth perspectives. In: International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy, <https://www.econjournals.com/index.php/ijeep/article/download/10184/5647>, Accessed on 9.01.2023.

[17]Tindeche, C., Marcuta, A., Marcuta, L., 2014, Importance of the agricultural sector as a branch of the national economy, Scientific Papers Series Management, Economic Engineering in Agriculture and Rural Development Vol. 14(4), 229-305, [http://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol14\\_4/art45.pdf](http://managementjournal.usamv.ro/pdf/vol14_4/art45.pdf), Accessed on 12.01.2023.

