SURVEY ON STUDENTS' INTEREST IN ECONOMIC-GEOGRAPHY CONTENTS ET SOME UNIVERSITIES IN SERBIA

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Abstract: Economic geography is one of the most significant and highly ranked social and geographical scientific branches within the educational system of Serbia. Economy is closely related to population and settlement development and thus incorporated within a substantial number of courses, contributing to the educational role of such content. The paper highlights the importance of economic content within contemporary geographical university education in Serbia. The research has been conducted among the students and professors at four universities in Serbia, and the results have shown that the majority of students show indifference towards the content. Therefore, innovations should be introduced in order their interest to be raised and the quality of education improved.

Key words: economic geography, content, interest, University, Serbia

Introduction

Economic geography is studied within large number of courses at many universities in Serbia. This paper attempts to indicate the extent of usage of economic geography in university lectures, as well as to point out students' interest in the content presentation during the teaching and learning process.

The first part of the paper deals with theoretical analysis of such content, whereas the second part comprises the questionnaire data on content representation, students' interest and their professors' opinion regarding economic geography content.

This type of research, its subject and objectives contributed to the selection of methodological approach to the research. In order to get relevant data necessary for further analysis, the method of questionnaire with controlled sample was employed.

Various aspects of the results attract attention. Subsequent to the estimation of students' interest in economic geography, certain guidelines may be established

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to influence further development of this teaching aspect within educational process. On the other hand, target groups can be more easily determined (age of students, year of study), to which one should pay attention during processing economic content in education. Economic contents have large impact on economy development which largely influences standards of living and the existence of population.

Framework for Economic Geography Study

Contemporary society makes tremendous efforts to have the best and most efficient organisation. Best endeavours to be more efficient and profitable are made (Ilić, 1975). Substantial socio-economical changes have led to considerable changes in agrarian structure of many countries. Those changes made grounds for numerous agrarian-economic, sociological and geographical scientific publications (Tiškjevič, Jaćimović, 1991).

Economic geography is a young science, which has lately been attracting more and more interest of scientific circles and those who deal with a number of practical problems and tasks within many aspects of society (Basic *et al.*, 1973). The first economic-geographical thesis, which is considered to have led to further publishings and independence of economic geography, is the study by L. Guicciardini *Description of The Netherlands* (1567), and much later in the 1760s, M.V. Lomonosov uses the term "economic geography" for the first time (Saushkin, 1970).

Economy has a specific importance in teaching geography. Student has to understand natural and social conditions of market's intensive growth (Rudić, 1982), due to the fact that is more and more common to be active in economy individually, by far less connected to the family than before, and most frequently economic function is established outside the family (Ivkov *et al.*, 2007). Economic geography as a science began developing in the middle of the 19th century, as a part of bourgeois anthropogeography (Bajić, Tomić, 1982).

Nowadays there is a diversity of economic geography definitions, and therefore beliefs about its position in the system of geographic sciences. It is mostly due to specific directions in the development of economic geography within different national geographical schools (Dinić, 1999). Economic geography is the basic socio-geographical science, which studies laws of spatial organisation development, as well as the organisation of primary, secondary and tertiary activities of society under specific conditions of certain socio-economic systems,

which potential development is influenced to a lesser or greater extent by positive and negative geophysical factors (Tomić *et al.*, 1996).

When spoken of the position of economic geography we bear in mind that economic, cultural and political activity of people form synthesis. As economic activity can not be excluded from the other two, it has to be perceived as the integral part of human geography or socio-cultural geography (along with the geography of settlements, political geography and anthropogeography) (Hettner, 1957). How valuable the exchange of different experiences rooted in the traditions of various nations is, can be seen in a well-known fact that multiethnicity in Vojvodina, but also generally in Serbia, has brought many advantages civilisation wise and contributed to the quality of life (Kovacevic et al, 2005). According to Kovalev S.A. and Pokshishevski V.V. geography of tertiary activities should be considered as a separate branch of economic geography, which is developing parallel to population geography, these two being closely intertwined (Tomić *et al.*, 1996).

S. Ilečić (1952) points out that "economic geography studies distribution of production, expenditure and traffic, i.e. entire economy in certain countries and regions, always as part of the entire context of those areas, analysing how social and natural factors influence, intertwine and compete with it". There is a close connection between economic geography and other geographic disciplines, as well as other related studies considering that economy is a borderline between geography and other disciplines (economic, social, historical, legal etc.) (Miletić, 2007). Among other definitions of economic geography the one by J. Ilic is particularly prominent: Economic geography is a science which studies and establishes laws and conditions of territorial distribution, organisational development (mutual connection and causation) and the importance of structure and extent of economic activity in the given territory. It establishes, analyses and gives prognosis of the territorial quantitative, structural and functional characteristics of the economy of the given territory (Tomić *et al.*, 1996).

Prominent Russian economic geographer J. Saushkin believes that the most important task of economic geography is to study territorial complex (region), its formation in the past, further directions of development, and the laws of evolution and thinking, correlation between regions as well as the work distribution between countries and regions (Tomić *et al.*, 1996). V. E. Den considers that economic geography is entirely economic science, with no specific object of study, but it is an addition to economic history and a contrasting addition to political economy (Anuchin, 1972). According to P. George the objects of study of economic

geography are forms of production and the places in the world where different products are spent. To be more precise it is a social science. It studies specific organisational forms of production process, traffic and exchange as well as the expenditure of certain groups of people (Tomić *et al.*, 1996). Supporters of most geographic schools treat economic geography as a branch of social, cultural or human geography, adding to its framework population and settlement geography, political geography and historical geography. Geographers from Soviet Union and other socialist states identify economic geography with social geography due to the opinion that economic activity is the foundation of all social-geographic activities and processes (Ilić, 1975).

If wider perspective on position of economic geography within the system of geographic sciences in general is taken into consideration, one has to know that it, along with other branches of social geography, makes one of the two existing subsystems of geographic sciences system (Tomic *et al.*, 1996). Knowing the fact that as a general rule all scientific disciplines are divided into three parts, therefore economic geography as well, there are:

– Theoretical economic geography, which deals with theoretical methodological problems of the discipline, to be exact studies the laws of production distribution.
– General economic geography, in which study object is the production distribution worldwide.
– Regional economic geography which studies production distribution in certain countries or regions (Dinić, 1999).

Growing demand and importance of contemporary economic-geographic studies for spatial and urban planning, studying modern socio-economic processes, village transformation etc. contributes to the affirmation of geography as a science and application of data resulting from geographic research to various aspects of social life (Miletić, 2007).

Research Methodology

Tasks and objectives of the research

The main aim of the research is to establish the position and the role of economic geography, as well as to highlight the huge educational and teaching importance of such content within the teaching process.

The complex task of the paper should answer the following questions:

– To what extent are students and professors satisfied with the representation of economic geography content at their faculties;
– What is the level of students' interest in economic geography content;
– Are students and professors of the opinion that such content is interesting, modern, applicable to practical affairs and that appropriate literature is available;
– What is the rate of knowledge acquisition in connection with such content;
– What is the role of economic geography content and its significance level within the teaching process?

Sample

The sample for this research has been appropriately selected. According to the main objective and the tasks of the research, the total sample is divided into two sub samples: sub sample I consisting of 504 students and sub sample II consisting of 40 professors. The sample selection was based on different gender and age structure, year of study (for students), faculty, place of university and scientific domain (professors).

The sample comprises individuals from four universities: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac and Nis, and the following faculties: Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Novi Sad (20% of the total number of students and 25% of all employed professors at this department); Faculty of Geography, Belgrade (20% of the total number of students and 25% of all employed professors); Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography, Niš (20% of the total number of students and 25% of all employed professors at this department); Faculty of Sciences, Department of Ecology and Tourismology, Kragujevac (20% of the total number of students and 25% of all employed professors at this department).

Structure of the sub sample I (students)

The obtained data show that there were 504 questionnaire respondents, out of which 152 males (30.16%) and 352 females (69.84%). Oscillations in percentage figures between male and female respondents are due to the fact that the total female student population at the selected universities is almost two and half times larger than the male student population.

The largest number of respondents belongs to the age group 21-25, 60.3% (18.7% males and 41.7% females), the second age group is under 20 with 27% of the respondents (7.3% males and 19.6% females), the third age group is 25-30 with 10.9% respondents (3.4% males and 7.5% females) and the last age group over 30 with only 1.8% respondents (0.8% males and 1% females). The respondents' structure by the year of study is selected to cover approximately the equal number of students for each year, i.e. to be the valid representation of the total number of students at each year of study.

The share of the respondents at certain years of study is the following: students at the first year 23.2% (7. 3% males and 15.9% females), students at the second year 21.6% (6.3% males and 15.3% females), students at the third year 24.4% (6.0% males and 18.5% females), students at the fourth year 17.1% (6.2% males and 10.9% females), and graduates 13.7% (4.4% males and 9.3% females).

The largest share of the respondents 61.9% (19.8% males and 42.1% females) are the students at the University of Novi Sad, since the Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management in Novi Sad enrols the largest number of students compared to other faculties included in the research. The percentage of students who study at the University of Belgrade is 30.6% (6.5% males and 24.1% females), then at the University of Niš 3.4% (1.6% males and 1.8% females) and at the University of Kragujevac 4.2% (2.2% males and 2.0% females).

Structure of the sub sample II (professors)

The data indicate that the total number of professors in the questionnaire is 40, (18 or 45% males and 22 or 55% females). It has been observed that the majority of respondents (42.5%) belong to age group 36-50 (20.0% males and 22.5% females).The second largest age group is 21-35 with 30.0% of the respondents (12.5% males and 17.5% females) and the third age group is over 50 with 27.5% respondents (12.5% males and 15.0% females).

As it has been already pointed out, the majority of the respondents 37.5% (17.5% males and 20.0% females) are employed at the University of Novi Sad. The percentage of professors employed at the University of Belgrade is 35.0% (15.0% males and 20.0% females), the percentage of professors employed at the University of Niš is 12.5% (5.0% males and 7.5% females) and the percentage of professors employed at the University of Kragujevac is 15.0% (7.5% males and 7.5% females).

The processed data indicate the following: 45.0% of professors (27.5% males and 17.5% females) covers social and geographical content, 40.0% of professors (10.0% males and 30.0% females) covers tourism content, and 15.0% (7.5% males and 7.5% females) covers regional content in their lectures.

Instrument of the research

The instrument applied in this research is a closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 10 questions divided into four parts. The first part consists of questions related to social and demographical characteristics of the respondents, the second part refers to the pleasure and interest of the respondents, the third part to estimation and the fourth part to ranking the tourism content. The instrument utilised in the third part is the form of a scale for the respondents to grade the level of interest, modern features and applicability of the content and also to indicate whether there is appropriate literature for the content available. The answers are given by circling a number at five point Likert scale ranging from 5 (not at all) to 10 (extremely). In the fourth part the respondents rank their acquisition pace of the content. The grades range from 1 (the fastest) to 5 (the slowest pace and most difficult content).

Research procedure

The research was conducted individually through distribution of questionnaire forms to the respondents and followed by an explanation how to fill in the form. Then the respondents were filling in the forms themselves and personally handed them in to the interviewer. The questionnaire forms were anonymous.

The obtained data were further processed in statistical SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) programme. Software package SPSS is one of the widely used statistical packages in the world applied to almost all types of the research (Vuković *et al.*, 2002).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The following results were obtained upon the request that the respondents grade their interest in economics within economic geography content:

Students' opinion

Interest in economic content (Figure 1) was graded as follows. The highest percentage of the student respondents, 27.58% (7.5% males and 20,0% females)

graded the economic content with the grade 7. Slightly lower percentage, 25.79% (7.9% males and 17.9% females) graded it with the grade 8, while 15.9% of them (2.8% males and 13.1% females) graded it with the grade 6. Grade 5 was given by 9.5% of students (2.8% male and 6.7% females) and the top grade 10 was given by only 7.1% of students (2.8% males and 4.4% females).

The results obtained by the data analysis indicate that the interest in economic content is relatively low since the percentage of the respondents giving the highest grades (8, 9 or 10) was only 47%. Mean value of the interest in economic content is 7.40, whereas standard deviation is 1.35 (Table 1).

The data referring to the interest in economic content by the year of the study (Table 1) show that the highest interest is among the second year students since their mean grade given is 8.01. The lowest mean grade is given by graduate respondents and it is 7.06.

Table 1. Interest in Economic Content by the Year of Study (descriptive analysis)

		Number	mean value	standard deviation	standard error	min mark	max mark
The interest for content of economic	1st year	117	7,11	1,318	0,122	5	10
	2nd year	109	**8,01**	1,330	0,127	5	10
	3rd year	123	7,42	1,268	0,114	5	10
	4th year	86	7,29	1,282	0,138	5	10
	Advanced student	69	7,06	1,434	0,173	5	10
	Total	504	7,40	1,358	0,060	5	10

According to one-way ANOVA (Table 2) it has been established that there is statistically significant variation, the level of significance $p < 0.01$, among students at different years of study. The application of *Scheffe post hoc* test confirmed that there is statistically significant variance, the largest being between students at second and third year of study.

Table 2. Interest in Economic Content by the Year of Study (ANOVA analysis)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
The interest for content of economic	Between Groups	59,365	4	14,841	8,531	**0,000**
	Within Groups	868,063	499	1,740		
	Total	927,429	503			

If data on interest in economic content are observed by the place of the university (Table 3) it may be perceived that the students from Niš express the highest interest which is confirmed by their mean grade of 8.06, while students from Belgrade express the lowest interest in economic content with the lowest mean grade of 7.19.

Table 3. Interest in Economic Content by the Place of the University (Descriptive analysis)

		Number	mean value	standard deviation	standard error	min mark	max mark
The interest for content of economic	Novi Sad	312	7,47	1,393	0,079	5	10
	Belgrade	154	7,19	1,258	0,101	5	10
	Niš	17	**8,06**	1,560	0,378	5	10
	Kragujevac	21	7,48	1,167	0,255	5	9
	Novi Sad	504	7,40	1,358	0,060	5	10
	Total	312	7,47	1,393	0,079	5	10

One-way ANOVA (Table 4) indicates that there are some variances in *interest in economic content* between students from different universities, but they are not statistically significant, at the level of significance $p<0.01$. The application of *Scheffe post hoc* test confirmed that there isn't any statistically significant variance between students from different universities.

Table 4. Interest in Economic Content by the Place of the University (ANOVA analysis)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
The interest for content of economic	Between Groups	15,414	3	5,138	2,817	**0,039**
	Within Groups	912,015	500	1,824		
	Total	927,429	503			

Professors' opinion

Interest in *economic content* (Figure 1) has been graded in the following manner. The highest percentage of respondents among professors, 32.5% (17.5% males and 15.0% females) gave the grade 8. The grade 7 was given by 30.0% (12.5% males and 17.5% females), the grade 6 by 17.5% (10.0% males and 7.5% females), the grade 5 was also given by 17.5% (5% males and 12.5% females), the grade 9 was given by only 2.5% (2.5% females), while the grade 10 was not given by any of the professors. The results obtained in data analysis indicate that the percentage of professors who gave high marks (9 or 10) is extremely low, and that the majority of them consider that the students are mostly not interested in economic content.

Mean value of interest in economic content is 6.85, with standard deviation 1.14 (Table 5). Extremely low main value indicates that the professors consider that the interested in economic content among students is very low.

The analysis of interest in economic content by the place of the university (Table 5) shows that professors from Novi Sad give slightly higher grades (mean grade 7.53) than professors from Belgrade who grade their students with lower grades (mean grade 6.21).

Table 5. Students' Interest in Economic Content – Answers by the Place of the University (descriptive analysis)

		Number	mean value	standard deviation	standard error	min mark	max mark
The interest for content of economic	Novi Sad	15	**7,53**	0,834	0,215	6	9
	Belgrade	14	6,21	1,122	0,300	5	8
	Niš	5	7,40	0,548	0,245	7	8
	Kragujevac	6	6,17	1,169	0,477	5	8
	Novi Sad	40	6,85	1,145	0,181	5	9
	Total	15	**7,53**	0,834	0,215	6	9

According to one-way ANOVA (Table 6) it has been established that in professors' opinion from different universities, there is a statistically significant variation, with the level of significance $p < 0.01$. The application of *Scheffe post hoc* test confirmed that there is statistically significant variance, being the largest between professors from Novi Sad and Belgrade.

Table 6. Students' Interest in Economic Content – Answers by the Place of the University (ANOVA analysis)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
The interest for content of economic	Between Groups	16,976	3	5,659	5,970	**0,002**
	Within Groups	34,124	36	0,948		
	Total	51,100	39			

The responses of professors by their domain (Table 7) point out that the highest grades are given by the professors whose courses are socio-geographical (mean grade 7.17), whereas professors who teach regional courses give economic content the lowest grades (mean grade 6.33).

Table 7. Students' Interest in Economic Content – Answers by Professors' Domain
(Descriptive analysis)

		Number	mean value	standard deviation	standard error	min mark	max mark
The interest for content of economic	Social geography	18	**7,17**	1,249	0,294	5	9
	Regional geography	6	6,33	1,211	0,494	5	8
	Tourism	16	6,69	0,946	0,237	5	8
	Total	40	6,85	1,145	0,181	5	9

One-way ANOVA (Table 8) confirmed that there is no statistically significant variance between professors teaching different geographical domains, the level of significance $p<0.01$, concerning the students' interest in economic content.

Table 8. Students' Interest in Economic Content – Answers by Professors' Domain
(ANOVA analysis)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
The interest for content of economic	Between Groups	3,829	2	1,915	1,499	**0,237**
	Within Groups	47,271	37	1,278		
	Total	51,100	39			

By means of the data analysis from the measurement variable in which the pace and easiness of mastering economic content within economic geography were graded from 1 (the easiest and fastest) to 5 (the most difficult and slowest) the following results were obtained.
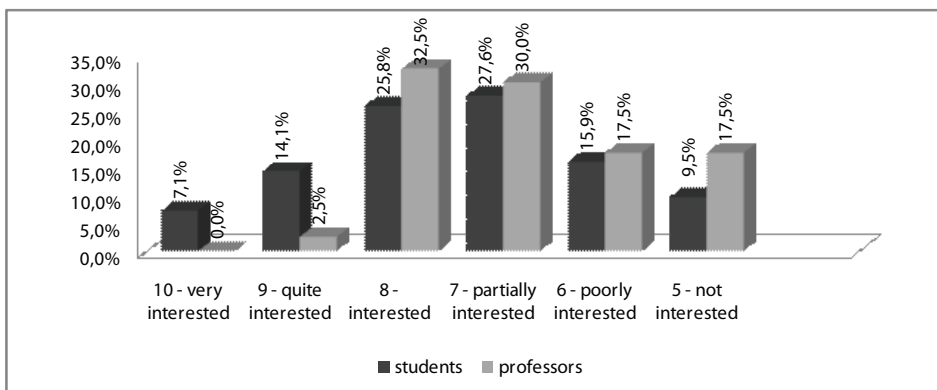

Figure 1. Interest in Economic Contents – Opinions of Students and Professors

Students' opinion

Data analysis related to *economic content* (Figure 2) indicates that the highest percentage of students, 63.6% (19.3% males and 44.3% females) gave the grades 3, 4 or 5, which meant that economic content is mastered with more difficulty than other social-geographical content. There is a small portion of students, only 15.7% (3.2% males and 12.5% females) who graded mastering economic content with grade 1, and only 20.6% (7.5% males and 13.1% females) gave the grade 2.

The mean value of mastering economic content is 3.1, the standard deviation is 1.35 (Table 9). The data analysis regarding the student grades by the year of study (Table 9) shows that the students at the first year of study have the lowest mean values (2.73) and master economic content the fastest, whereas graduate students have the highest mean values (3.32), i.e. master such content with more difficulty.

Table 9. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering by the Years of Study (descriptive analysis)

		Number	mean value	standard deviation	standard error	min mark	max mark
Pace and easiness of mastering economic contents	1st year	117	**2,73**	1,25	0,116	1	5
	2nd year	109	3,28	1,37	0,132	1	5
	3rd year	123	3,18	1,34	0,122	1	5
	4th year	86	3,07	1,41	0,152	1	5
	Advanced student	69	3,32	1,32	0,159	1	5
	Total	504	3,10	1,35	0,060	1	5

By means of one-way ANOVA (Table 10) it has been deduced that students at different years of study do not express significant variations (the level of significance $p < 0.01$) regarding the pace and easiness of acquiring the knowledge *on economic content*.

Table 10. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering by the Years of Study (ANOVA analysis)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Pace and easiness of mastering economic contents	Between Groups	23,806	4	5,951	3,316	**0,011**
	Within Groups	895,623	499	1,795		
	Total	919,429	503			

The application of *Scheffe post hoc* test also confirmed that there is no statistically significant variance between students at different years of study.

If data are observed regarding the place of the university (Table 11), it is perceived that it is the easiest for students from Niš to master economic content (mean value 2.76), whereas students from Novi Sad master such content with most difficulty (mean value 3.13).

Table 11. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering by the Place of the University (descriptive analysis)

		Number	mean value	standard deviation	standard error	min mark	max mark
Pace and easiness of mastering economic contents	Novi Sad	312	3,13	1,372	0,078	1	5
	Belgrade	154	3,08	1,326	0,107	1	5
	Niš	17	**2,76**	1,348	0,327	1	5
	Kragujevac	21	2,95	1,284	0,280	1	5
	Novi Sad	504	3,10	1,352	0,060	1	5
	Total	312	3,13	1,372	0,078	1	5

Similarly to previous instances, the variations in grades are minor and statistically insignificant, which is confirmed by one-way ANOVA (Table 12).

Table 12. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering by the Place of the University (ANOVA analysis)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Pace and easiness of mastering economic contents	Between Groups	2,740	3	0,913	0,498	**0,684**
	Within Groups	916,688	500	1,833		
	Total	919,429	503			

Professors' opinion

The data analysis referring to *economic content* (Figure 1) indicates that more than a half, i.e. 52.5% (25.0% males and 27.5% females) of the total respondents among the professors assume that students master economic content slowly and with difficulty and thus gave the grades 4 and 5. Only a small percentage of professors, 15% (2.5% males and 12.5% females) assume that students master economic content easily, thus giving them the highest grade. It is also determined that most professors grade economic contents with grades 1 and 2 or 4 and 5, and that few of them, only 12.5% (5% males and 7.5% females) give the grade 3.

The mean value regarding the pace of mastering economic content is 3.33, the standard deviation is 1.47 (Table 13). Data observed regarding the place of the university (Table 13), show that professors from Niš assume that students easily and quickly master economic content (mean value 1.40), whereas professors from Kragujevac assume that the students master it with great difficulty (mean value 4.33)

Table 13. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering by the Place of the University - Professors' Opinion (descriptive analysis)

		Number	mean value	standard deviation	standard error	min mark	max mark
Pace and easiness of mastering economic contents	Novi Sad	15	3,20	1,52	0,393	1	5
	Belgrade	14	3,71	1,27	0,339	1	5
	Niš	5	**1,40**	0,55	0,245	1	2
	Kragujevac	6	4,33	0,82	0,333	3	5
	Novi Sad	40	3,33	1,47	0,233	1	5
	Total	15	3,20	1,52	0,393	1	5

One-way ANOVA (Table 14) shows that there is statistically significant variance regarding professors' opinion upon pace and easiness of mastering *economic content*, the level of significance p<0.01. This statistically significant difference is perceived by application of post hoc Scheffe test between responses, i.e. professors' opinion from the University of Kragujevac and the University of Niš, as well as professors' opinion from the University of Belgrade and the University of Niš.

Table 14. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering by the Place of the University - Professors' Opinion (ANOVA analysis)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Pace and easiness of mastering economic contents	Between Groups	26,985	3	8,995	5,603	**0,003**
	Within Groups	57,790	36	1,605		
	Total	84,775	39			

The grades of professors by their scientific domain (Table 15) demonstrate that professors who teach touristic content assume that students more quickly and easily master economic content (mean value 2.94), whereas professors who teach regional content assume that students master economic content less easily (mean value 3.83).

Table 15. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering by the Professors' Domain - Professors' Opinion (descriptive analysis)

		Number	mean value	standard deviation	standard error	min mark	max mark
Pace and easiness of mastering economic contents	Social geography	18	3,50	1,47	0,345	1	5
	Regional geography	6	3,83	1,33	0,543	2	5
	Tourism	16	**2,94**	1,53	0,382	1	5
	Total	40	3,33	1,47	0,233	1	5

Variation in grades are minor and statistically insignificant, which has been confirmed by one-way ANOVA, the level of significance $p<0.01$ (Table 16).

Table 16. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering by the Professors' Domain - Professors' Opinion (ANOVA analysis)

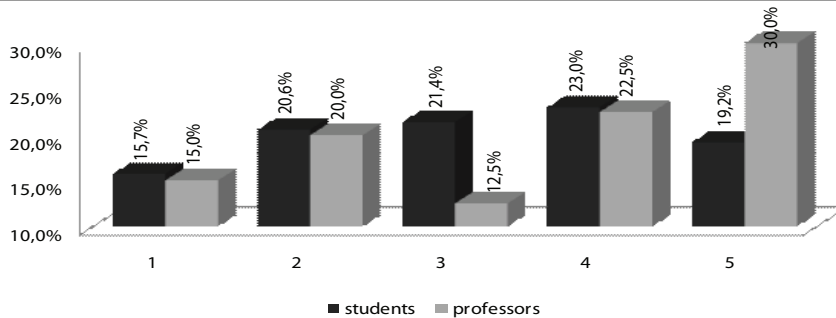|		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Pace and easiness of mastering economic contents	Between Groups	4,504	2	2,252	1,038	**0,364**
	Within Groups	80,271	37	2,169		
	Total	84,775	39			

Figure 2. Ranking Economic Contents According to the Pace and Easiness of Mastering - Opinions of Students and Professors

Conclusion

The analysis of the data obtained from students and professors at four universities in Serbia was the start-up form for estimating the representation status of economic content as well as the interest of students in contents related to economic geography. The processed data showed that the students' interest in such content was not

high, and that more than 50% of students gave these contents low grades. The opinion of the professors corresponds to the opinion of the students since they also emphasize low interest of students in economic contents, especially professors from Kragujevac who graded the interest of students with extremely low grades.

The analysis of data referring to the pace and easiness of mastering economic content shows that students acquire economic content with difficulty and it takes more time to master it as opposed to other contents. Such results may be justified by the fact that economic content is rather complex, it contains numerical data so it is difficult for students to master it. One of the reasons for low interest of students in economic content is the lack of adequate and contemporary literature. Students often use old literature which does not contain the most recent facts.

Interest could be attracted if the students, within the courses, were involved in practical research work which would entail finding the most recent data in connection with the subject being taught at that moment. Each subject can be interesting if presented adequately, therefore students have to be enthused and more involved in the work.

Economic geography is gaining importance worldwide, and its complexity is reflected in the numerous issues which connect it to other scientific disciplines. Its very complexity made the science dealing with economy extensive and in many ways multidisciplinary, consequently relatively difficult to acquire in university education.

Economic development leads to higher income and higher standard of living of the population. Therefore, economic content should have growing importance in university education in the future. Also, great interest should be shown for experience and research of other countries, which will be the subject of the following research by the authors.

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