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Social policy

This study examined whether the actions of the Support the Farmer Project, i.e. the assistance provided by project workers and the professional help obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments, were found to be useful. In addition, this study investigated the correlation between the professional help obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments and the psychosocial stress and perceived work ability of the respondents. The professional help obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments included, for example, psychotherapy, relationship therapy, and expert financial and legal services. Finally, the study also analysed the factors that were associated with a possible improvement in working ability.

According to the results, the actions of the Support the Farmer Project have benefited the agricultural entrepreneurs who responded to the survey. Of the agricultural entrepreneurs who responded to the survey, 87% were satisfied with the professional help obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments, and three out of four felt that the assistance provided by regional project workers was sufficient. Younger farmers under the age of 40 in particular felt that they had received adequate assistance from project workers.

Respondents to the survey felt that the professional help obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments was beneficial in terms of psychosocial stress – particularly in terms of their own coping and personal relationships. Of the respondents, 82% felt that the professional help was quite or very beneficial for their own coping, 65% felt that it was beneficial for their personal relationships and 56% that it was beneficial for relationships with other people.

Two new variables were created for psychosocial stress for the purposes of further research: the perceived social benefit of professional help and the perceived occupational benefit of professional help. In relation to the background variables, it was found that men felt that they gained more occupational benefit from the professional help obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments than women. There was no correlation between gender and social benefit. A correlation was found between age and the variables measuring both social and occupational benefit, as younger respondents felt that they had benefited more from the professional help obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments than older generations. In addition, the type of service obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments was linked to the variables for both social benefit and occupational benefit.

Perceived work ability clearly improved as a result of the professional help obtained by means of outsourcing service commitments. Before the professional help, respondents rated their work ability as 4.9 on a scale of 0 to 10, compared to 6.9 after receiving professional help. Of the respondents, 45% felt that their work ability improved thanks to the professional help they received. The improvement in work ability was analysed by means of three variables. The first variable measured the social benefit, i.e.

whether the professional help received was beneficial in terms of coping and social relationships. The second variable measured the occupational benefit, i.e. whether the professional help received was beneficial in terms of the farm's finances, management and job satisfaction. The third variable measured whether the professional help received from project workers was felt to be adequate. Contrary to assumptions, the other background variables used in the study, such as the type of farming or access to occupational healthcare, were not associated with an improvement in work ability. The results supported the integrated work ability concept used in the study.

Keywords: work ability, work ability risk management, work disability, early intervention, occupational-social rehabilitation, psychosocial stress, agricultural entrepreneurs, effectiveness, Support the Farmer Project