

Chapter 50

Multiple Exploration of Entrepreneurs' Suggestions for Agricultural Development of Local Regional Units in Greece

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present article is to evaluate the factors which are considered to be important for the agribusiness development of a local economy, with data derived from the entrepreneurs' perspective. For this purpose, an appropriate methodology was designed, in order to include the most of the aforementioned factors. Emphasis was given to questions which can illustrate the level of technological innovation with actions and initiatives like digital marketing, innovative ability and others. Therefore, a questionnaire was created and was then applied to many regions in northern Greece. In respect of data analysis, the contribution of Correspondence Analysis (CA), a method from the multidimensional statistics field, was crucial because it easily revealed the characteristics that intensively differentiated themselves. The above methodologies and their special characteristics facilitated also the implementation of SWOT analysis. In the case of the Regional Units examined in the current research, the positive and negative factors-points were easily revealed and presented.

INTRODUCTION

The agribusiness sector is facing many challenges worldwide, as the globalization affects its structure and access to markets. Having already many additional problems due to the complexities and uncertainties linked to the sector, it is nowadays even more essential to try to cope with and implement new methods and technologies. One major example of these complexities is the global production networks (Hampton et al., 2007).

The present chapter is the beginning of a new research with a principle goal to help the administrations of the local authorities or/and central government evaluate their performance in aiming to pursue rural economic development. In their effort to contribute to this field, one of the most important actions is to implement initiatives that can assist the agricultural enterprises to develop and stabilize strong entrepreneurship values. Another important activity in the same direction, is to evaluate and record the current situation in their local regional unit. This can be succeeded with the utilization of suitable instruments that collect information from the entrepreneurs themselves.

The above suggestion to collect information, can be realized with an effort to measure the factors that enhance agricultural development from the entrepreneurs' perspective. In order to collect the relevant information, the research presented here, is based on data obtained by a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire that created by the authors, contained a section about demographics and another one concerning the entrepreneurs' perception of the existed local agricultural development's actions-factors. The main goal is to provide an important tool that administrators of the local authorities could use to make decisions, with an aim to improve the economic climate, and furthermore to pursue development.

For the analysis of the data, Correspondence Analysis, a multidimensional statistical methodology, is mainly used, as the most suitable for discovering correspondences (Benzecri, 1992) between the variables. It is an exploratory methodology of data analysis that does not assume any distribution of the data and puts forward possible trends that exist in the data graphically (Greenacre, 2007), as well. The results are presented on graphs that represent the configuration of points in projection planes formed by the first principal axes (Lebart et al., 1984, p. 44). This approach enables the researcher not only to analyze the phenomenon in a more holistic way, but also to highlight potential issues and questions that have not been previously identified. Two proposed tables, which enable the evaluation of ordinal data in a different aspect, will also be utilized (Moschidis, 2006; 2009).

The methodology utilized for the determination of the relationships of the different characteristics, is S.W.O.T analysis. The specific technique is used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses/Limitations, Opportunities, and Threats involved in any business project (Piercy & Giles, 1989). It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective (Helms & Nixon, 2010). In the present case it can be used as a measure for evaluating and presenting the factors that can contribute to the economic development of a local regional unit.

The research had started from regional units from Northern Greece, with a view to be generalized in national level. The study concluded in some interesting results; firstly, in some distinguished factors for the agricultural growth that should be taken into consideration by the authorities, and secondly in the realization that there appeared to be no differences in the opinions of entrepreneurs with different demographic backgrounds. The methodology used, seemed to be perfectly suitable to extract the elements that distinguished as from the present chapter.

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