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Barriers on the Success for Founding Walnut Production Cooperatives in Tuyserkan Township, Iran

Mohammad Abdolmaleky

Agricultural Extension and Education,
Academic Member of Khoramabad Islamic Azad University, Iran

Abstract: This study was conducted to seek the opinion of walnut producers on thebarriers affecting the success of producers to found production cooperativesregarding garden products in Tuyserkan township, Iran. A sample of 234 walnut producers were randomly selected through multistage cluster sampling technique. This study is a kind of descriptive-correlation research which has been accomplished through questionnaire. For determining the validity of questionnaire, the face and content validity was used. Reliability for the instrument was estimated at 0.94. According to factor analysis,barriersto found and develop walnut production cooperatives were categorized into seven groups that those factors explained 65.799% of the total variance of the research variables. The results also indicated thatlack of cultural infrastructures, inadequate knowledge and improper opinions of producers and leaders, improper laws and lowrisk taking, infrastructural barriers had the most effect to found and developwalnut production cooperatives, respectively.

Key words: Barriers · Walnut Producers · Production Cooperatives · Tuyserkan

INTRODUCTION

Changes of the recent age in fields of economy, culture and social relations have led cooperatives to new conditions through which they couldn't go on without consistency. In industrialized countries, the government has paved effective steps through designing frameworks for the development of cooperatives in economic, social andpolitical parts. But developing countries face obstacles along the way such as lack of standardized environmental conditions, the mismatch of expectations and abnormal increases in cooperatives quantitatively. Consequently problems facing cooperatives in developing countries, Iran is also faced with these problems [1]. Experts and sociologists believe that the current conditions of the hand (the slogan of the smaller government for a better future) are seriously considered, so more attention is needed to streng then the cooperative sector and cooperatives for two reasons. First, strongly controlling is exerted on cooperative system andpower trend is from down to up, so responsibilities and controlling costs seem low to the government and finally supervision come to sense widely an accurately. Second, there will be a new counterpart having important role on increasing the production quality and efficiency more than this section. However, during the past years, cooperatives have been able to practice their role and to find its real position on the Iranian economy [2]. Based on further perspective 1404 and regarding this fact Iran should be at first scientific, economic and technology place among the oriental countries, while cooperatives are of social-economic successful patterns being capable to establish instant development and justice and through thinking on this matter achieving this target will be feasible only by promoting human and social capitals; it is necessary to provide the productive forces in rural communities with a background to promote social and economic capitals at agricultural production cooperatives through one of important substrates of stable rural development and employment [3a]. Iran has a long history of rural solidarity and self-help efforts. However, formal cooperatives with the emphasis on the provision of agricultural services for their member were introduced to Iran only about 1940. The agricultural production cooperatives are considered to be the most important organizations that pay attention

Corresponding Author: M. Abdolmaleky, Vahed 5 - EntehayeKucheh- Samat Rast- Kucheh Aryafar Gharbi 5 - Shahrak Niroye Entezami- Tuyserkan, Hamedan, Iran, Postal Code: 65817-59516.

and try to support the rural development in general and the agricultural development in particular, through the activities and services offered for farmer welfare. It is generally believed that successfully managed agricultural cooperatives have a great potential in agricultural development in particular and rural development in general [4]. Farmer organisations have a strong potential for building linkages to interventions/programmes in other sectors. The inter-sector linkages can enable the collective improvement of farmers' livelihoods from a number of government-and donor-supported interventions. Farmer organisations can facilitate a vertical exchange of information, be enabling farmers to access higher levels of management and contribution in decision-making process [5].

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA, 1995) defines a cooperative as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprise". In developedcountries agricultural production cooperatives have significantly contributed to the mobilization and distribution of financial capital; created employment; constituted a forum for education and training; social welfare and poverty alleviation and other socio-economic problems [6].

The most important agriculture cooperatives types in Iran are agricultural production cooperatives [4]. In Iran, although, there are many cooperatives in rural area, but, it is alleged that cooperative does not play asignificant role in ruraldevelopment [7]. Agricultural production cooperatives are certainly a major contributor to agricultural development in many countries. But, there are a number of barriers to effectively using agricultural production cooperatives as a tool for agricultural development in Iran. There are some barriers at the national, local and organizational levels towards agricultural production cooperatives. Dependency of cooperatives to government and lack of cultural capacity for group collaboration, lack of resources, lack of cooperatives leaders' knowledge, were an important element contributing to limited production cooperatives in agricultural development and rural development as well [8].

The role of cooperatives as a critical dimension of market structure in agriculture must periodically be assessed to determine the future viability of the cooperative form of business [9].

There are many studies dealing with barriers to found and success of agricultural cooperatives. Amini and Ramezani [10] concluded, in their study of "evaluating effective factors on the success of poultry-farm cooperatives in Tehran province," that the cooperatives have been successful to achieve desired goals in the statute and they indicated that some elements have the most effect on success of agricultural production cooperatives including the performance of cooperatives, managers' technical competences, membership records in cooperative associations, the rate of participation at cooperative issues, the rate of profitability from cooperative members, quality of given trainings knowledge on members, number of training periods and managers' human talents, respectively, in deed there is a direct and significant relationship among these union positive and significant relationship variables and the success of cooperative companies.

Zar'anzhad and Sharifi [11] studied "reviewing the trend of managers and members of Ilam cooperatives to effective factors on improving the productivity in these cooperatives", they also pointed out that boosting financial power and using efficient forces influence promoting the productivity in these cooperatives.

Safari, *et al*. [12] found out, in a study named "effective factors on success of the top cooperative companies", that certain elements influence the success of cooperatives including standards, trends, principles, written methods of performance and stressing on performing them by employees and members, establishing a proper informative system on the rate of balance, the amount of buying, selling, updated information, contiueous training, holding educational courses in the fields of investment and financial affairs, marketing at level of director general and the board, active participation of members, determining criteria for evaluating the performance and reward, selecting the top experienced managers aware of the rules with high education, sufficient initial capital, holding educative courses, applying the advanced methods of production, creating a rich culture and supporting it fully, pondering needs appropriately at the beginning of establishing cooperatives, considering the demands of agents and providingthem rapidly, modifying laws and regulations and executing them properly.

The results of Karami and Agahi's [13b] researches,in a study entitled as "evaluating the role of creativity on success of cooperatives", had been: the impact

innovation, accessing to information, the system of effective and fast offers, regarding the views of society and connecting with the cooperatives. Didi [14] in research as "low communication of fishing Cooperatives on the management of coastal resource " concluded that the homogeneity of members and stability of small groups had a considerable impact on the success of cooperatives, as well as he emphasized role of partnership on the utilization of resources and corporate success.

International labour organization [15] considered social properties of human force within the company effective, in a publication entitled "Progress and development of cooperatives', on success of cooperatives social such as recognition, participation, knowledge, education level, quality of human resources and familiarity with the organization's goals and the role of government policies in the success of government policies.

Bruynis *et al*. [16] in research as "critical factors on success of early-emerged agricultural marketing cooperatives", considered the management and the establishment of formal conditions a positive effect on the success of cooperatives. In this study, some factors help promoting cooperatives such as management quality, keeping touch with customers, members' interests, rate of members 'trust, retaining members, conducting the board of directors.

This paper concerns with studying and investigating barriers contributing to the success for founding and developing walnut production cooperatives, Therefore, the primary purpose of the present study was to identify barriers to found walnut production cooperativesas perceived by Tuyserkan`s walnut producers, Iran. The specific objectives of this study were to: (1) describe the demographic profile of Tuyserkan township walnut producers, (2) identify perceptions and attitudes ofwalnut producersto take part in cooperatives and 3) identify barrierson the success of walnut producersto found and develop production cooperatives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in the township of Tuyserkan, located in the west part of Iran. Statistical sample in this study was drown randomly from 600walnut producers. A number of 234producers were selected through multistage cluster sampling based on their level of performancec haracteristics. The research design for this study was a survey design [17]. From a review of the literature, the researcher developedan instrument to collect data. The survey was dividedinto two sections. The first section was designed togather data on personal characteristics of walnut producers, included gender, age, years of work experience, level of education, income and etc. The second sectionwas designed to gather data about the producers' perceptions and attitudeswith respect to the participation and membership in the walnut production cooperatives. Respondents wereasked to rate their viewpoints concerning these variable on a five point Likert-type scale:(5 = very much, 4 = much,3 = moderate, 2 = low and 1 = very low). Face and contentvalidity of the questionnaire were established using apanel of experts consisting of faculty members in the department of agricultural extension and education in Khoramabad Islamic azaduniversity and extension officers. Questionnaire reliability was estimated by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Reliability for the instrument was estimated at 0.94. The data were collected between March, 2013 and May, 2013. Aftergathering and encoding information from thequestionnaires, data was obtained for analysis. Datacollected were analyzed using the statistical packagefor the social sciences (SPSS, 19). Beside descriptivestatistics, analytical statistics (factor analysis and ANOVA test) were employed for detailed analysis. Variables used in "the factor analysis" included nineteenbarriers onfounding and developingwalnut production cooperatives. Respondents were asked to rate their viewpoints concerning these variables on a five point Likert-type scale: (5 = very much, 4 = much, 3 = moderate, 2 = low and 1 = very low).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics: The first objective was to describethe demographic profile and socio-economic demographiccharacteristics of walnut producersof Tuyserkantownship, Iran.The findings showed thatmajority of the all respondents were male (93.8%). Average age of respondents was 46.76 years. The minimum age of respondents was 27 and the maximum age was 65. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of them were married. Data showed that average household size in study area was 6 members in a family. Regarding respondents'education levels, majority of there spondents (82.1%) were High School and less. Fifty-three percent of the producershad more than 9 years of work experience and the rest under 9. Their averagework

experience was 12.48 years. Study also revealed that principaloccupation of the27% of the respondents wasonly "walnut garden holding". 41% of them were as "garden holder and farmer" and the rest were as"garden holder and rancher". Findings of the study also showed that their average of garden land holding was 0.6 ha. Majority of them (93.6%) owned less than1 ha walnut garden land. Two-thirds(63%) of the producers sell their products in local markets. The average of their total monthly income was 9 milli on Rial per month. 70.5% of the respondents had less than 100 million Rial incomeyearly (Table 1).

The second objective of this study was toidentify perceptions and attitudes of the walnut producers to take part in cooperatives.To evaluate respondents'attitude about participation in agricultural production cooperatives, they were asked to rate their viewpoints on a five point Likert-type scale:(5 = quiteagree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree and 1 = quitedisagree)concerning twenty given items.According to the sum of scores of each respondent, they were placed in three classas follows: negative, neutral and positive.Pondering revealed that 72.2% had positive attitude and interest for participation and membership inwalnut production cooperatives. Results of the descriptive analysishave been shown in details (Table 2).

Table 1: Some demographic characteristics of respondents

Feature	Percentage
Gender	
Male	93.8
Female	6.2
Age (years)	
Up to 35	12.8
36–45	37.6
46–55	39.3
Over 56	10.3
Average	46.76
Level of Education	
Illiterate	14.5
< High School	44.8
High School/GED	22.6
College	17.9
Work Experience	
Up to 9	47
10–19	29.5
20–29	11.5
30–39	12
Income(Million Rial)	
Up to 100	70.5
100 – 200	23.1
200 – 300	3.8
300 – 400	2.6

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on attitude of the respondents about participation in walnut production cooperatives

Respondents' attitude	Scores	F (%)
Negative	20-47	6 (2.6)
Neutral	47-73	59 (25.2)
Positive	73-100	169 (72.2)

Source: results of research

Analytical Statistics: The third objective was to identify barriers on the success forfounding and developing walnut production cooperatives. Exploratory Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to summarize the variables of the research to a smaller quantity and to determine the factors affecting the success of producersto found agricultural production cooperatives and the obtained factors were subjected to VARIMAX rotation. PCA is a form offactor analysis, which first looks for a linear combination of variables that extracts maximum variance from variables and then identifies a second linear combination to explain the remaining variance, leading to orthogonal, or uncorrelated, factors [18]. The value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkinmeasure of sampling adequacy (KMO) was 0.72. Nelson and Thompson [19] reported that KMO values of 0.6 and above are required for goodfactor analysis. Using the eigenvalue greater than one rule, the PCA suggested the presence of seven factors, which accounted for 65.799% variance in scores. The seven factors extracted and named in this study as follows: (1) lack ofcultural infrastructures(2) inadequate knowledge and improper opinions of producers and leaders, (3) improper laws and low farmers'risk taking, (4) infrastructural barriers, (5) insufficient capital resources and information delivery systems, (6) legal supports and insufficient profitability, (7)dependency to government and distrust in cooperative structure (Table 3).

The first factor was called the "lack of cultural infrastructures". This factor had the most eigenvalue (3.802) among the other factors. Also this factor explained 19.011% of the total variances of the variables. "lack of producers' cultural capacity for group collaboration"was the most important (M = 4.68) cultural problems for the success to found walnut production cooperatives. Allahdadi and Aref [8] indicated that there are some barriers at the national, local and organizational levels towards agricultural production cooperatives. Lack of cultural capacity for group collaboration was an important element contributing to limited production cooperatives in agricultural development and rural development as well.

Table 3: Results of factor analysis for barriersto found walnut production cooperatives and the variable of each factor

Barriers to found production cooperatives	Mean± SD	Factor Loading	Eigenvalues	Variance(%)	Cum(%)
Lack of cultural infrastructures			3.802	19.011	19.011
Unsuitable socio-cultural performance of existed cooperatives	4.61±0.92	0.782			
Reluctance of the producers to found cooperatives	4.07±1.28	0.706			
Lack of producers'cultural capacityfor groupcollaboration	4.68±0.84	0.599			
Prevention of governmental organs to found cooperatives	4.58±0.84	0.505			
Inadequateknowledgeand improper opinions of producers and leaders			2.597	12.986	31.996
Insufficientproducers' trustin cooperatives	4.67±0.79	0.775			
Insufficient producers' knowledgeon cooperatives	4.55±1.04	0.675			
Lack of definite aims for cooperatives	4.44±0.88	0.653			
Directors'inattentionto the indigenous knowledge	4.64±0.77	0.522			
improper laws and low risk taking			1.755	8.777	40.773
time-consuming rules	4.54±0.87	0.801			
Low producers'rate ofrisk taking	4.42±1.02	0.592			
Infrastructural barriers			1.465	7.326	48.099
Inadequateeducation of cooperative members	4.62±1.05	0.823			
Trend of cooperatives to jobbingand broking	4.28±1.42	0.693			
Insufficient capital resources andinformation delivery systems			1.265	6.327	54.426
Lack of enough capital resources	4.58±1.82	0.855			
Inadequate producers' awareness on cooperatives	4.30±1.35	0.757			
Legal supports and insufficientprofitability			1.206	6.032	60.458
Insufficient efficiency of cooperatives	4.28±1.36	0.855			
Lack oflegal supports on cooperatives	4.12±1.48	0.753			
Dependency to government anddistrust in cooperativestructure			1.068	5.341	65.799
Suspicion of members on board of directors and inspectors	3.88±1.36	0.749			
Suspicion of members on financial affairs	3.97±1.30	0.662			
Dependency to the government	4.04±1.30	0.620			

Source: results of research

Farmers' organizations may be important instruments for empowerment of farmers and encouragement of their participation [20].

Also,"unsuitable socio-cultural performance of existed cooperatives" and "prevention of governmental organs to found cooperatives" and "reluctance of the producers to found cooperatives"were the other barriers that limit founding cooperatives to help walnut producers to success in their operations.

In Iran, although, there aremany cooperatives in rural area, but, it is alleged that cooperative does not play a significant role in agricultural development in particular and rural development in general [8]. Prakash [21] revealed that there are some of the problems faced by agricultural production cooperatives in Iran which have been common among the majority of the cooperatives such as, unclear and inadequate government policies on the development of agricultural cooperatives.

The second factor was called the "inadequate knowledge and improper opinions of producers and leaders". This factor that its eigenvalue was 2.597 explained 12.986% of the total variances of the variables. "insufficient producers' trustin cooperatives", "directors' inattention to the indigenous knowledge" and "insufficient producers' knowledge on cooperatives" were important barriers in the above-mentioned factor.

Directors of the cooperatives should share producers' indigenous knowledge and consider their ideas and opinions towards improving the cooperative activities [22]. Through using mass media such as radio and TV educational programs, agricultural extension and education services in terms of importance, usefulness, aims and structure of the cooperatives, adequate knowledge and awareness should be delivered to the producers in order to enhance rate oftheir trust in cooperatives [8], [21], [22].

The third factor was called "improper laws and lowrisktaking". This factor that its eigenvalue was 1.755 explained 8.777% of the total variances of the variables.

The existence of clear and adequate government policies on the development of agricultural cooperatives, for example about cooperative management, inputs supply, marketingetc., can facilitate and enhance a better trades for producers and enabling them to access higher levels of income [7], [21].

Table 4: F-test results to compare individual barrierstofound walnut production cooperatives by respondents` demographic characteristics

	F-Values			
Barriers	Age	Level of education	Years of experience	Main job
Lack ofcultural infrastructures	2.65*	0.150	0.46	5.85**
Inadequate knowledge and improper opinions of producers and leaders	2.13	0.501	0.37	0.46
Improper laws and low risk taking	3.77**	3.130*	5.12**	0.19
Infrastructural barriers	1.06	0.460	0.32	0.61
Insufficient capital resources and information delivery systems	2.78*	2.930*	2.56*	0.11
Legal supports and insufficient profitability	1.98	2.850*	2.141	0.98
Dependency to government and distrust in cooperativestructure	2.67*	2.78*	2.59*	0.18

*P=0.05,**P=0.01

The forth factor was called "infrastructural barriers". This factor that its eigenvalue was 1.465 explained 7.326% of the total variances of the variables. In this factor,"inadequate education of cooperative members" and" trend of cooperatives to jobbing and broking" are the mentioned barriers that prevent to develop and found walnut production cooperatives. Delivering needed information through proper trainings and extension-educational programs is an important factor to found and develop successful agricultural production cooperatives [22]. In the rest factors,"lack of enough capital resources" is the most important barrier for the success to developproduction cooperatives(M=4.58). Lack of capital resourcesis one of the challenges of agricultural production cooperatives and one of the effective variables in thefailure of these cooperatives in Iran [8], [22].

ANOVA tests were used to determine if significant differences existed between factor scores of the barriersaffecting the success of walnut producers to found and develop production cooperatives when grouped by selected attributes of respondents. Respondent`s view regarding the barriers to develop walnut production cooperatives differed significantly by respondent`s age for the factors "lack of cultural infrastructures" (F = 2.65; p=0.05), "improper laws and low risk taking" (F = 3.77; p=0.01), "insufficient capital resources and information delivery systems" (F = 2.78; p=0.05) and "dependency to government and distrust in cooperativestructure "(F = 2.67; p=0.05). The findings indicated that the factor scores of the barriers to develop walnut production cooperatives differed significantly when examined by their level of education for the factors "improper laws and low risk taking" (F = 3.13; p=0.05), "insufficient capital resources and information delivery systems" (F = 2.93; p=0.05), "legal supports and insufficient profitability" (F=2.85; p=0.05) and "dependency to government" (F=2.78; p=0.05). Respondent`s view differed significantly by respondent`s main job for the factors "lack of cultural infrastructures" (F = 5.85; p=0.01), In addition, three factors "improper laws and low risk taking","insufficient capital resources and information delivery systems" and"dependency to government and distrust in cooperative structure" were affected by respondents` age, level of education and years of experience (Table 4).

CONCLUSIONS

Agricultural cooperatives are part of a dynamic environment. Cooperatives have also played an important role in rural communities, where they are an integral part of the social fabric [9]. Cooperatives have played an important role in the development of agriculture in industrialized countries as suppliers of farming requisites, marketers of agricultural commodities andproviding services such as gain storage and transport. It appears that many of these agricultural cooperatives are adapting their operationto the rapidly changing economic environment characterized by technological change, industrialization of agriculture and growing individualism. Theoretical considerations and empirical evidence suggest that individual farms are more productive and more efficient than agriculturalproduction cooperatives [8].

The rural cooperatives in Iran in the recent years have diversified themselves into various areas of socio-economic activities. For certain activities, the success of which is based on the ability of the grassroots institutions to tackle them with their participatory and people-based approach, the cooperatives are considered to have an advantage over other organizations. In Iran the cooperatives are considered as the most effective organizations in rural agriculture. Similarly, because of their vast network and reach, the rural cooperatives are considered best promoters for rural development in Iran

[23]. This study was intended to draw thebarriers to develop and found walnut production cooperativeas perceived by Tuyserkan walnutproducers, Iran. An importantfinding of the study was that several factors dealing withthe developing and founding cooperatives to help walnut producers. Factorswere extracted from PCA including the first factor wascalled "lack ofcultural infrastructures" and explained 19.011% of the total variance and was considered as the most effective factor. Based on the findings of the present study "lack of producers' cultural capacity for group collaboration" was the most important cultural barrier and motivator factor todevelop production cooperatives. In addition, "unsuitable socio-culturalperformance of existed cooperatives", "prevention of governmental organs to found cooperatives", "reluctance of the producers to found cooperatives" were the other most important factors in this area.

The rural cooperatives in Iran in the recent years have diversified them selves into various areas of socio-economic activities. For certain activities, the success of which is based on the ability of the grassroots institutions to tackle them with their participatory and people-based approach, the cooperatives are considered to have an advantage over other organizations [23]. So, it is recommended that government should strengthen legal framework of cooperatives and establishmore effective people-based approaches to draw attention to educating and promoting the cooperation among producers and theirparticipation in the process of developing country through cooperative proliferation.

According to the results of the research "inadequate knowledge and improper opinions of producers and leaders", "improper laws and low risk taking", "infrastructural barriers", "insufficient capital resources and information delivery systems", "legal supports and insufficient profitability", "dependency to government and distrust in cooperativestructure" were the other factors contributing to develop a production cooperative, respectively, based on the opinion of the respondents. Regarding mentioned results, it is also recommendedthat responsible government ministries (cooperative and Jihad-e-agriculture) shouldutilize ways to make producers aware of the philosophy and capabilities of cooperation in orderfor drawing their participation through formal, informal and mass training, give managerstraining methods of participation management to achieve targets of cooperative through cooperation from members, deliver needed information through proper trainings and extension-educational programs, persuade them taking part in educational programs related to practical cooperative activities, share producers' indigenous knowledge and consider their ideas and opinions towards improving the cooperative activities.

It is recommended that cooperative ministry persuades and support to found new cooperatives through giving staff and members of cooperative companies training at level of cooperative companies existed in each city with means of educated cooperative agents who are representatives of these companies in province unions. Moreover, organizing cooperatives in a frame of unions in order to improve institutional capacities of cooperative department, providing facilities, needed financialre sources, consider as much as the presence of active managers with abilities in management and planning in order to promote efficiency and effectiveness of cooperative activities with altogether, make frequently agricultural production cooperatives aware of new regulations through cooperative department andbe sure that the regulations are related and coordinated withgiven terms on cooperatives.

Government in Iran shouldestablish strong cooperative unions for barter, providing internal and external marketing materials, hold training courses in the field of marketing inputs and outputs for managing directors and board of directorsto improve the cooperative performance [22].

Factors identified in this study that contribute to found and develop walnut production cooperatives will help leaders and producers tobecome more successful for developing better production cooperatives in Tuyserkan township. The other states in Iran can also consider and adopt similar strategies in a frame of a handout to those are to establish agricultural production cooperatives so that they are familiarized with barriers on founding and developing of agricultural production cooperatives and they can make necessary predictions on explanation plan to be ableto found their own specified cooperative companies.

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