

Qualitative Analysis of Challenges Facing Fruit Processing Industries in Kermanshah Province Using NVivo Software

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The development of agricultural processing during post production processes has the advantages of reducing production as well as post production waste management, enhancing agricultural commodity value, and improves employment status. The geographical location of Kermanshah province coupled with quality of water and soil properties and diverse climatic conditions gives the province a unique potential in fruit processing industry. Interestingly, Kermanshah province is known for its orchard farming activities. However, during the recent decade orchard farmers are somehow discouraged to expand their orchard farming activities due to lack of processing. Studies show that there is a need for small local processing plants across Kermanshah province. However, during the past a few years, more than 20 fruit processing factories has been given business certificates through the Office of Industry and Mining to launch their business activities. Surprisingly, only five of these factories are actually running and doing business. Therefore, it became apparent as to why these factories have run out of business considering that the province have many potentials for fruit processing plants across the region. The result of this study has implications for rural development practitioners in general and orchard farming in particular.

Methodology

The exploratory nature of this study encouraged the researchers to utilize qualitative research method. Qualitative paradigm seeks to unfold what is hidden in the data. In other words, qualitative researcher takes a deep and narrow look at the context of his study while the quantitative researcher takes a wide and shallow perspective at the context of his study. This study therefore took a deep and narrow perspective to study the current challenges facing fruit processing. Using purposeful sampling, experts and organizations as well as managers of fruit processing plants participated in this study. Data collection methodology comprised of deep interviews with participants. A total of 8 experts agreed to appear in the interview that lasted 10 hours in total. The interview process continued until no further information emerged

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during the interview process. Thus a theoretical saturation was reached. Data was analyzed using content analysis and for the ease of categorizing and arranging the categories NVivo qualitative data analysis was used. A total of 8 categories and 31 concepts emerged as a result of data analysis. These categories and concepts represented the challenges facing fruit processing industries in Kermanshah province. The trustworthiness of findings was tested using triangulation techniques such as peer review and member check as well as different data collection procedures.

Results

Results revealed that challenges facing fruit processing industry in Kermanshah can be grouped into 8 categories. Namely, market constraints, work labor problems, managerial challenges, impacts of cash subsidies and economic sanctions imposed by international forces, lack of coordination between organizations serving agricultural industry, extensive paperwork during certificate issuance, lack of support from government bodies, and a lack of strategic planning from fruit processing industries. The market constraints were mainly due to lack of consumer trust on products being processed. Moreover, managers indicated that they have to buy the raw materials in cash but they have to sell them in instalments. Work labor problems were mentioned several times because experts believed that the culture of work is very weak in the province. Managerial problems were due to poor management strategies and lack of feasibility study. Impact of cash subsidies and economic sanctions emerged as a result of increased production cost. Lack of coordination between organizations serving agricultural industry was due to weak managerial capabilities in agricultural industries with fruit processing plants. Extensive paperwork during certificate issuance emerged as result of lack of experience on behalf of experts working in certificate departments. Lack of support from government bodies was another challenge facing fruit processing plants. This was due to challenges in accessing credit. Lack of strategic planning from fruit processing plants emerged as a result of not having a pre-plan guideline so that potential new starters can refer to and follow the procedures.

Conclusion

Overall it can be concluded that fruit processing industry in Kermanshah province is facing a major challenge from market and marketing procedures. The result of this study has practical implications as well as theoretical implications. First, Policy-makers should be cognizant of the challenges facing fruit processing industries mentioned in this study. Moreover, rural development practitioners can be made aware of the challenges in order to launch development schemes in Kermanshah province in the hope of making fruit processing industry a viable enterprise across Kermanshah region. Finally, more attention should be made on the four challenges as major roots in marketing problems.

Keywords: challenges, industry, NVivo, processing, qualitative study.

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