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FACTORS AFFECTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL PRODUCTION COOPERATIVES IN ISFAHAN TOWNSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This study considered the factors affecting on promoting and developing of entrepreneurship in rural production cooperatives in Isfahan for this purpose, descriptive and correlation methods were used. Population included the board of directors and managers of rural production cooperatives (75 members of 15 rural production cooperatives) and all of them were selected as sample group. The research instrument was a questionnaire whose validity was confirmed by the group of experts .Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for evaluating the reliability o f the questionnaire (0.872).Data were analyzed using SPSS and LISREL version 8.5 software. The findings of the study showed that the average of study population entrepreneurship was 2.585 and most subjects(62.8) were in weak and very weak classes. Also, based on the results of one sample T-test, the level of entrepreneurship development in rural production cooperatives in the study area were much lower than average with a significant 95%.Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the factors affecting the development of entrepreneurship in rural production cooperatives. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model was used to investigate the research model's goodness of fit.The results showed that factors affecting the development of entrepreneurship in agricultural production cooperatives are formed of seven distinct factors including social, economic, managerial, marketing, training, psychological and cultural factors.

Keywords: “entrepreneurship”, “factors influencing entrepreneurship development”, “agricultural production cooperatives”, “structural equation models”.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of national economy and a significant percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) is produced by it. In many developed countries, agriculture is a thriving sector led to move in economy as a whole and growth in other sectors (A. Poordaryani et al, 1390). There is no difference, in nature, between agricultural entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship in urban areas. Today, agricultural entrepreneurship is an integral part of economy and entrepreneurial activity is a response to recession and problems in the agricultural sector (Damaynsoon and Askooras, 1996). During the last decade in Europe, the development of agricultural entrepreneurship has been the considered policy to increase the value of agricultural products. Therefore, the restructuring of the agricultural sector as a result of changes in national and international policies has increased the demand for entrepreneurial activity among farmers (Boorch and Forssman, 2001). However, entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector faces many difficulties and limitations including non-economical exploitation, lands breakup, and lack of adequate capital and production facilities. By careful planning, making improvements in its structure and other supportive policies, cooperative company in the agricultural sector can play a role in the integration of the activities, unifying farmers, application

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of technologies, entrepreneurship development in agricultural sector, and finally economizing agricultural production (Golmohammadi et al, 1386).It can be said that if production cooperatives be entrepreneurial in nature, they can help to create sustainable jobs. During the last few years, governments have seriously encouraged entrepreneurship. According to potential of different agricultural sectors in different fields, development of entrepreneurship can be useful in developing these capacities and development of agricultural production cooperatives and proper use of available resources and funds. If entrepreneurship is developed in various fields of expertise in the form of cooperatives, individuals themselves can promote entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship development for the development of production cooperatives in agricultural sector is useful in attracting and transforming the ideas, initiatives and innovations of agricultural graduates in cooperatives and will be the starting point for the creation of sustainable businesses and effective and successful lcooperatives. So considering mentioned cases, the present study was conducted to response to these questions: In recent decades, how has been the entrepreneurship development of rural production cooperatives in Isfahan? Which factors affecting the level of entrepreneurship? And considering these factors, how we can develope repreneurship through cooperative sector. Peng et al (2007) divided the factors influencing entrepreneurship in four categories including demographic characteristics, human capital, financial capital and social capital. These researchers pointed to the impact of different political, economic and social environments in increasing entrepreneur institutions (Collette et al, 2005).

Booms and Kolb (2004) investigated the economic factors influencing entrepreneurship instructural position and personal position. The barriers and opportunities were considered in structural position, and potentials and limitations were considered in the personal position. Structural positions included goods and services, access to credit and loans, existence of competitive market and tax rates. Personal positions included skilled and trained labor force, human capital and income level.

In another classification, economic factors affecting the success of entrepreneurial agricultural enterprises included quantitative factors, geographic location of organization, quality of land, the size of organization, organizational structure and financial incentives for employees. Measurable economic factors included quality of management, leadership style, attitude of staff and non-financial incentives for employees (Jansikoova, 2004).

According to Vilken (1979), the phenomenon of entrepreneurship is related to the personality, and social and cultural conditions of individuals. This researcher states that economic, cultural, and psychological factors are effective in creation of entrepreneurship.

Studying the influential factors in encouraging entrepreneurial activity among farmers shows that three major factors are involved including personal characteristics of entrepreneur farmers, farm situation and environmental factors (Dobson 2002).

Gilred (1384) in a study aimed at determining factors affecting development of women's entrepreneurship and including a population of 139 entrepreneur's women showed that personality and human capital related to personal factors, relationship with close, experienced and trusted friends related to network factors, and cultural, political and technological factors related to environmental factors have been confirmed more important than other studied components. In his study, Hezarjaribi (1384) considered some researchers' views on psychologicall aspects of entrepreneurship. The results can be summarized as follows:

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Risk, need for achievement, innovation, creativity, self-confidence, high perseverance, idealism, pioneering**,** opportunism, being result-oriented, being future-oriented, being self-oriented, being pioneer in getting information, planning and evaluating competitors, flexibility, high capacity, not following hierarchy, idea developer, positive thinking, having lateral and vertical thinking to create new ideas and develop them.

Investigating the factors affecting on entrepreneurship promotion in zanjan's agricultural cooperatives, Donyai et al (1389)showed that according to perspective of cooperative managers, providing financial and tax support, reforming banking regulations and making it compatible with entrepreneur's conditions**,** and providing National Entrepreneurship Development document are the most important factors should be considered in promoting entrepreneurship in agricultural cooperatives. Also, according to the analytical results of study, there is a significant relationship between cooperative managers 'entrepreneurship score, education level of director's board, entrepreneurship score, the success of cooperatives, and the number of cooperative members.

Aimed at providing factors affecting rural empowerment in entrepreneurship development in Malayercity, Motiilangaroodi et al (1391) showed that ten factors are effective in increasing rural power in developing entrepreneurship. These factors in their priority arrangement are: persistence factor, organizational factor, finance, education, role models, personal autonomy, previous experience, creativity, sense of accomplishment, and internal control locus. Also, from the perspective of control group in this study, effective factors are: Organizational factor, economic and financial resources factor, skills and knowledge factor, family factor, self-respect factor, infrastructure and social participation factor.

According to the literature review of entrepreneurship and theoretical research in this field, it can be concluded that economic, social, psychological -personality, behavior of management, marketing and education are the most important factors affecting the development of entrepreneurship. Factors affecting the development of entrepreneurship are effective in production cooperatives. Development of entrepreneurship in this study is measured by using four main aspects: modernism, dealing with change, risk taking and competitiveness.

Methodology

This research is an applied and field survey. Data was collected by descriptive and non-experimental method. Descriptive and correlation methods were used to achieve research objectives. Population included the board of directors and managers of rural production cooperatives in Isfahan –have at least2 years work experience. The data showed that population consist of 75 subject from15 rural production cooperatives. All of the subjects were selected as sample group and questionnaire were distributed among them for data collection.

The data were collected by library and field research methods. In this study, field data collection was done by a mixed method (interviews and questionnaires) and a researcher made questionnaire was designed as follows: This questionnaire included closed questions that a variety of answer related to asked area was prepared and inserted. The answers for each question were reasonable and completely independent and separate from the answers of other questions. In this questionnaire, "five point likert scale" were used for assessing variables. This scale measures the presence or absence of a variable, degree of importance and even the relative weight. In this study, content validity and factor validity was used for assessing questionnaire

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validity. Views of several university faculty and experts were asked for evaluating apparent validity and necessary reforms was performed based on their opinion. Also, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability.
In the pilot study, the questionnaire was tested with 30 subjects and the scale validity and reliability were tested. Minor modifications were performed and some items were modified and some others were replaced and the questionnaire was adjusted totally. After completing the questionnaire, items were tested again, and their reliability was determined as described below(Table 1).

Table 1 - Calculation of the reliability and validity of the concepts used in the study

The sample	Variable	Cronbach Alpha	KMO	Barttelets	Sig
Members of the Board and Manager	Economic Factors	0.837	0.748	257.699	0.000
	Social factors	0.851	0.727	295.981	0.004
	Cultural factors	0.798	0.643	893.053	0.000
	Management factors	0.912	0.826	243.146	0.000
	Marketing factors	0.910	0.789	326.128	0.000
	Educational factors	0.859	0.809	398.123	0.000
	Psychological Factors	0.897	0.812	456.780	0.000

Source: Findings

According toTable1,the concepts used in this study have high reliability. This shows the internal correlation between variables to assess mentioned perceptions has higher liabilities. Also table shows Bartlett's test is significant at a very high level and KMO value is at an acceptable level. Data were analyzed using SPSS and LISREL version 8.5 software. In addition, descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency, percentage, standard deviation, mean and exploratory factor analysis and inferential statistics such as confirmatory factor analysis was used to analyze the research data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Previous experience and knowledge about the principles of entrepreneurship

Results showed that 59.77% of the respondents had no previous experience in the field of entrepreneurship and 40.23% have had previous experience in the field of entrepreneurship. The results showed that 47.56% of the subjects had a history of participating in classes or courses in entrepreneurship. Knowledge of half of the subjects (50%) about entrepreneurial principles was in medium level.
Entrepreneurship measurement in cooperatives in order to accomplish the aims of the study was essential. Therefore, for assessing the level of entrepreneurship in rural production cooperatives, the questionnaire that was designed in Donyaii et al (1389), Ahmadpur Darianiet al (1390) and Harandizadeh (1389)studies was used and necessary changes performed for adapting to the

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situation and nature of rural production companies. In this regard, the level of entrepreneurship was examined with14 questions using five points Likert scale and managers' view was analyzed. The results obtained are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Evaluation of entrepreneurship in agricultural cooperatives from manager's perspective

Factors	Mean	Standard deviation	C.V	Ranking
Modernism	2.62	0.53	0.202	1
Risk taking	2.85	0.66	0.231	2
Pioneering in creating change	2.44	0.98	0.401	3
Competitiveness	2.43	0.98	0.403	4
The The total score of entrepreneurship	2.585	0.787	-	-

Source: Findings

In order to measure the respondents' entrepreneurship characteristics, standard questionnaire of entrepreneurs personality characteristics measurement consisted of 14 items was used based on Likert scale. Then, four features including modernism, pioneering, risk taking and competitiveness was measured. After proving the existence of a good correlation between the measures of each index and the indices of the major concepts in this section, factor analysis was used for weighting. Then, based on entrepreneurship characteristics, respondents were divided into five groups. The findings of the study showed that the average score of the study population entrepreneurship was 2.585.As shown in Table(3),most subjects(62.8)were in weak and very weak classes.

Table 3 - Frequency distribution of entrepreneurship in rural production cooperatives in Isfahan city (75 = n)

Factors	Variable levels	Frequency	Frequency Percent	Cumulative percent
Entrepreneurship Level	Low	20	26.9	26.9
	Very low	27	35.9	62.8
	Average	24	33	95.8
	High	4	4.2	100
	Very high	0	0	-
Total		75	100	-

Source: Findings

Factors affecting development of entrepreneurship in rural production cooperatives in Isfahan

As can be seen in Table 4, a 32-items questionnaire on Likert scale was used for ranking the

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entrepreneurship development strategies in rural cooperatives in Isfahan. The results showed that effective advertising for new customers with a mean of 4.62, direct andimmediate selling with an average of 4.62, fairly division of the benefits among employees with an average of 4.71and standard deviation of 0.71, and proper use of formal knowledge along with local knowledge with an average of 4.4 and standard deviation of 0.69 are in first, second, third and fourth highest ranking place, respectively. Also, the effects of employees'comments on supervisors and manager's decisions with a average of 3.5 and standard deviation of 1.08, providing supportive actions for exporting agricultural products with an average of 2.23and standard deviation of 0.817, and familiarity with local markets with an average of 3.5 and standard deviation of1.32 were in the lowest priorities, respectively.

Table 4 - Ranking of entrepreneurship development strategies in rural production cooperatives

Variable	Mean	S.d	C.V	Ranking
Effective advertising for finding new customers	4.62	0.57	0.123	1
Direct Selling of products	4.62	0.65	0.14	2
Fair division of profits among the staff	4.71	0.71	0.150	3
Proper use of formal knowledge along with local knowledge	4.43	0.69	0.155	4
Stabilization of agricultural products prices	4.61	0/75	0.162	5
Familiarity with regional and national markets.	4.68	0.78	0.166	6
Support of families with a positive view to entrepreneurship	4.23	0.72	0.170	7
Modern methods of training in cooperative	4.32	0.78	0.180	8
Satisfaction of work income	4.32	0.807	0.186	9
Support and encourage of friends	3.79	0.77	0.203	10
Providing entrepreneurship education programs to improve the ability of managers and employees of cooperatives	4.43	0.908	0.204	11
Appreciating and encouraging employees	4.28	0.903	0.210	12
Access to computers and the Internet in a cooperative	4.35	0.95	0.218	13
Tendency of cooperative members to group work	4.18	0.923	0.22	14
Adequate financial investment in the cooperative	4.18	0.925	0.221	15
Strong desire to do great things	4.35	0.970	0.222	16
Short term skills development classes	4.36	0.979	0.224	17
High self-reliance and confidence	4.31	0.97	0.225	18
Providing insurance for entrepreneurs	3.73	0.817	0.227	19
cooperative manager's leadership skills	3.81	0.89	0.233	20
Communication with executive members	3.51	0.86	0.245	21
Toleranting employee's failures and mistakes in	3.41	0.86	0.252	22

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innovative activities				
High interest to self-employment activities	3.41	0.86	0.252	23
Having the spirit of teamwork	3.76	0.98	.0260	24
Bankruptcy rules	3.46	0.98	0.269	25
Access to information and appropriate marketing and economic Statistics	3.01	0.82	0.272	26
Establishment and strengthening counseling centers in various fields	3.31	0.95	0.287	27
High motivation for finding new sources	3.6	1.09	0.302	28
The use of private innovation	3.5	1.08	0.308	29
Effects of staff view in supervisors and managers making decisions	3.5	1.08	0.308	30
Preparing suitable ground and supportive measures for exporting agricultural products	2.23	0.817	0.366	31
Familiarity with local markets	3.5	1.23	0.377	32

Source: Findings

Factor analysis was used for evaluating the internal consistency and classifying the factors affecting entrepreneurial development in the study area, and determining the amount of variance explained by each factor.

KMO and Bartlett's Test:

In this study, KMO value was equal to (0.835). this indicated that condition data for factor analysis was good. Bartlett amount equaled to 621.954 which was significant at 1%. So data were suitable for factor analysis.

Determining the number and factors:

For determining the number and factors in this study, the factors were considered that their eigenvalues were greater than 1. Therefore, four factors were extracted that their eigenvalues were greater than 1. The number of extracted factors with eigen value of each, percentage of variance and cumulative frequency of variance percentage is shown in Table (5).

Eigen value:

It represents the proportion of each factor in total variance of variables; in cases the amount is great, the factor is more important and effective. Table (5) shows that the first factor had the highest proportion (15.634%) in explanation of variables' total variance. Overall, four factors have explained 70.862% of variables' total variance.

Factors cycle:

In the present study, Vrimayks method was used for this purpose. In this step, variables with factor loading greater than 0.50 were assumed to be significant. these variables are shown in Table (8). It is worth mentioning that after the rotation (Vrimayks), 7 variables were excluded from the analysis due to low loading (less than 0.5) and absence of significant correlations with other variables.

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Table 5 - A view of research factors and the contribution of each

Factors	Eigenvalue	Percentage of explained variance	Cumulative frequency of variance percent
First factor	2.481	15.634	15.634
Second factor	2.307	11.068	26.702
Third factor	2.166	9.245	35.947
Fourth factor	1.953	10.500	46.447
Fifth factor	1.883	10.013	56.46
Sixth factor	1.231	8.002	64.462
Factor seventh	1.023	6.400	70.862
Total	-	70.862	-

Source: Findings

Given the amount of exploratory factor variances percentage, economics factor with 15.634 had highest share of the factors affecting the development of entrepreneurship in rural production cooperatives in Isfahan city. After the economic factors, variables that are classified as social groups with 11.068% of the variance are in second place. Management, marketing, education, psychological and cultural factors are in other rankings, respectively.

Table 6 - Cycled factorial coefficients

Index	Variable	Factor loading
Economic	Stabilization of agricultural products prices	0.875
	Satisfaction of work income	0.812
	Adequate financial investment in the cooperative	0.726
	Preparing Suitable ground and supportive measures for exporting agricultural products	0.702
social	Tendency of cooperative members to group work	0.748
	Providing insurance for entrepreneurs	0.732
	Bankruptcy rules	0.612
Management	Fair division of profits among the staff	0.756
	Appreciating and encouraging employees	0.712
	Cooperative manager's leadership skills	0.698
	Tolerating employee's mistakes and failures in innovative activities	0.659
marketing	Effective advertising for new customers	0.802
	Direct selling of product	0.752
	Familiarity with regional and national markets.	0.712
	Familiarity with local markets	0.645
Education	Using modern methods of education in cooperative	0.798
	Implementing educational programs to improve the entrepreneurial skills of cooperative's managers and employees	0.712

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	Access to computer and Internet in the cooperative	0.702
	Short term skills development classes	0.679
Psychology	High self-reliance and confidence	0.746
	High interest to self-employment and activity	0.735
	high motivation for finding new sources	0.712
	Using personal innovation	0.654
Cultural	Having the spirit of teamwork	0.802
	Appropriate use of formal knowledge along with local knowledge	0.612

Source: Findings

Data were analyzed using LISREL software version 5.8 to evaluate the construct validity of the questionnaire and fitness of measurement and structure pattern related to factors affecting development of entrepreneurship in rural production cooperatives. Table 7 shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis. Fitness indices suggest a good fit of the model to the observed data. If goodness of fit index (GFI=0.911) and adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI=0.901) is much closer to 1, this indicates a good fit of the model. Because this parameter is a measure of average difference between observed data and model data. Also, in case that the residual root mean standard (RMS=0.476), which is an important index for measuring the average residual, is smaller, the model shows a good fit. On the other hand, chi-square (X2=529.122) and significance level (P = 0.012) and the t quantities (significance level 0.05), indicating no significant difference between observed data and model. Overall, the results of the residual variance and covariance evaluation in the data context -that includes SRMR, RMR and GFI - show that error variance and covariance is well-controlled. Results show that the values for substitution patterns of the indices NNFI, NFI, CFI and IFI in the model is calculated more than 0.9 that is a significant amount. Finally, RMSEA index shows that measurement error in the model is controlled (Table 7). Pattern strength Coefficient equals 0.92, indicating an acceptable fit in fitted data (Murphi et al, 2008).

According to the results inTable 8, we can conclude that economic, social, managerial, marketing, training, psychological and cultural factors measure separate dimensions of factors affecting entrepreneurship in rural production cooperatives in the Isfahan city.

Table 7 - Fit indicators of second-order factor analysis model of factors affecting agricultural cooperative entrepreneurship

The reported amount	Optimum	Index
0.13	Near zero	Residuals mean square RMR
0.923	0.90	GFI fitness index
0.06	0.08 below	Standard residual of Mean square SRMR
0.94	0.90	Softened indicators of fitness NFI
0.93	0.90	Not softened indicators of fitness NFI NNFI
0.95	0.90	Increasing fitness index IFI
0.96	0.90	Comparative fitness index CFI

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0.075	0.08 below	Square root of approximation error variance estimation RMSEA

Table 8 - Confirmatory factor analysis of questionnaire theoretical structure

index	variable	Standardized Factor loading	value t	Cronbach Alpha
Economic	Stabilization of agricultural products prices	0.775	-	0.898
	Satisfaction of work income	0.762	7.752	
	Adequate financial investment in the cooperative	0.826	5.236	
	Preparing Suitable ground and supportive measures for exporting agricultural products	0.772	6.012	
social	Tendency of cooperative members to group work	0.748	-	0.823
	Providing insurance for entrepreneurs	0.732	9.178	
	Bankruptcy rules	0.612	6.098	
Management	Fair division of profits among the staff	0.756	-	0.897
	Appreciating and encouraging employees	0.712	6.203	
	Cooperative manager's leadership skills	0.698	6.561	
	Tolerating employee's mistakes and failures in innovative activities	0.659	8.412	
marketing	Effective advertising for new customers	0.703	-	0.902
	Direct selling of product	0.762	7.456	
	Familiarity with regional and national markets.	0.702	7.069	
	Familiarity with local markets	0.623	8.619	
Education	Using modern methods of education in cooperative	0.716	-	0.853
	Implementing educational programs to improve the entrepreneurial skills of cooperative's managers and employees	0.701	9.942	
	Access to computer and Internet in the cooperative	0.642	8.153	
	Short term skills development classes	0.669	8.197	
Psychology	High self-reliance and confidence	0.723	-	0.868
	High interest to self-employment and activity	0.635	7.463	
	high motivation for finding new sources	0.709	9.325	
	Using personal innovation	0.614	6.753	
Cultural	Having the spirit of teamwork	0.763	-	0.902
	Appropriate use of formal knowledge along with local knowledge	0.703	7.741	

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study showed that, in general, entrepreneurship level in 62.8 percent of surveyed cooperative firms is low and very low. So it can be said that the level of

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entrepreneurship in the study area is lower than average. According to the study results, the cooperatives are strongly influenced by factors such as not enough attention to the advertising, existence of brokers and intermediaries in the sale of products, lack of earning equal profit by all the members, not using the local knowledge and formal scientific knowledge along with local knowledge, lack of price stability, lack of familiarity with national and regional markets and lack of local markets for selling products. In many cases, these problems lead to avoidance or escape of talented and entrepreneurial people from working in agricultural cooperatives. Also, using new methods in cooperative education and training programs to improve the entrepreneurial skills of managers and employees of cooperatives, which in many cases will increase revenue and improve member satisfaction, has not been considered in studied cooperatives. Visiting the cooperatives and other successful and entrepreneur companies and providing job preparation and entrepreneurship training in cooperatives are the factors that will affect the development of entrepreneurial cooperatives. According to the results, we present the following recommendations that are related to studied issue:

- Given that the management is considered as the most important factor affecting the development of entrepreneurship in cooperatives, it is recommended to pay special attention to the topic of human and management factor. Traditional management of cooperatives should be avoided.
- Providing public and professional education and training required for cooperatives and providing entrepreneurial training for staff and managers personally and through the media which can have significant effect on the promotion and development of entrepreneurship.
- Advising on various fields for entrepreneur cooperatives and entrepreneurs seeking to work in agricultural cooperatives.
- For creating an entrepreneurial network in the province, it is recommended to establish entrepreneurship centers in the cities to introduce the province's top entrepreneurs, ease of access to them and ease of communication between companies and individuals.
- Considering the importance of experience in entrepreneurship, it is recommended that entrepreneurship principles make available to people through education
- In order to find the strengths and weaknesses of cooperatives in the field of entrepreneurship, it is recommended that within-provincial and inter-provincial conferences to be held on entrepreneurship different approaches.

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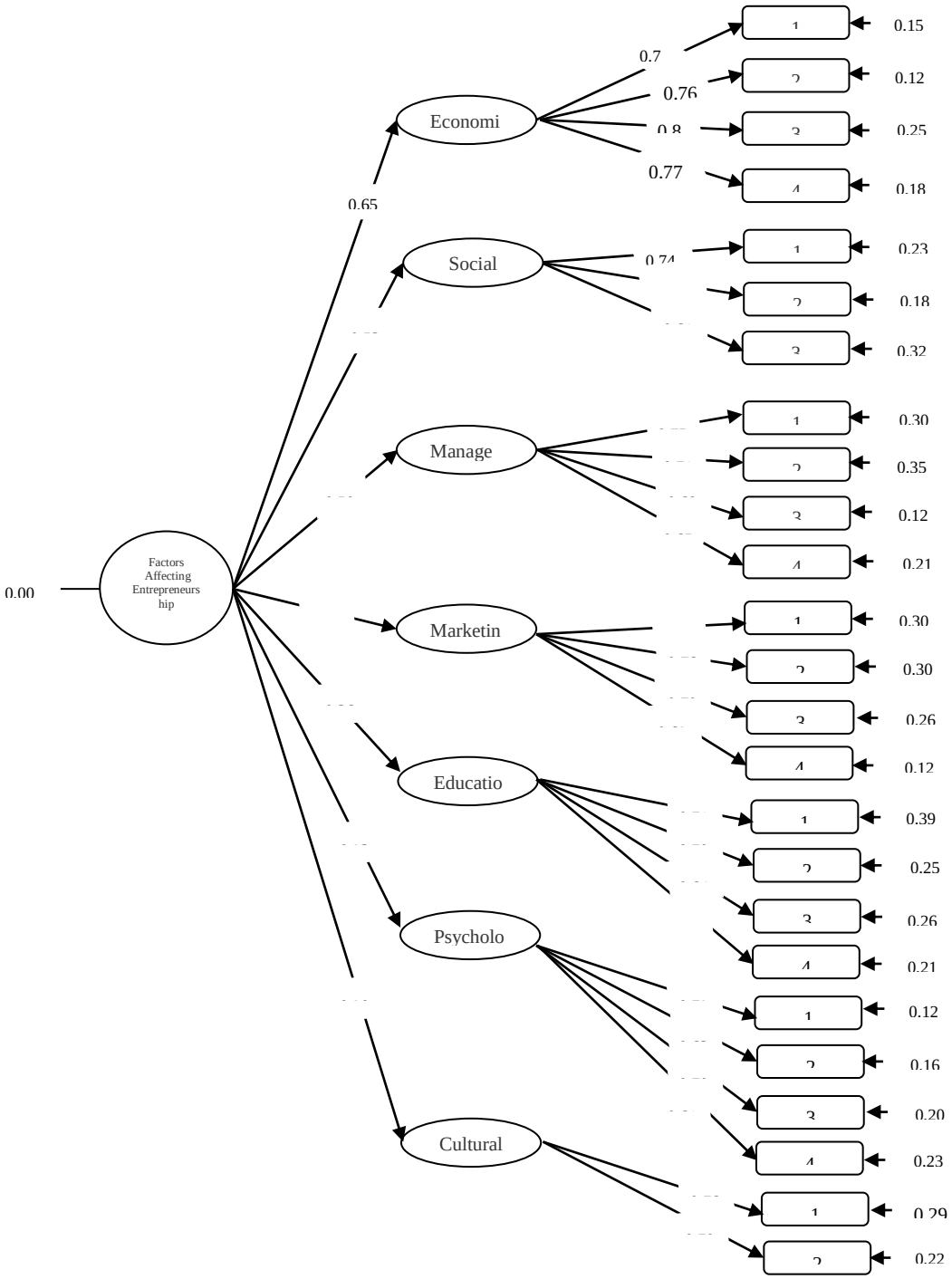

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