

## Research Paper

# Measuring the Social Responsibility of Agricultural Entrepreneurship Corporations in Rural Areas: A Case Study of the Villages of Kashmar, Bardsakan and Khalil Abad

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## ABSTRACT

### Key words:

Agricultural entrepreneurship corporations, Rural entrepreneurship, Social responsibility, Fuzzy Vikor

Social responsibility is a tool for discussing the obligations that a company must fulfil for its society. In this regard, the present study evaluates the social responsibility of entrepreneurship companies from economic, ethical, social, environmental, legal and humanitarian points of view. The research method is descriptive and analytical. The data were collected from 10 rural entrepreneurship companies in the villages of *Kashmar*, *Bardaskan* and *Khalil Abad* using library studies, the SPSS software and the Fuzzy Vikor model. The results of the research indicated strong correlations among the majority of the social responsibility indicators of the studied companies. Of the companies involved in the entrepreneurship, Armaghan cooperative company with  $Q = 1$ , and Negin Yaghoot Food Products Company with  $Q = 0/7$  scored the lowest ranks, but Fakhr Tarshiz with  $Q = 0.256$  and the leading cultivating company of Saleh Kashmar with  $Q = 0.078$  obtained the highest ranks.

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## Extended Abstract

### 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is recognized as one of the key skills in the 21st century. Although entrepreneurship is not the only way to create jobs and increase the incomes of rural people, it is certainly the best and the most productive way. Therefore, with the expansion and development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, the rural population's enjoyment of goods and

services is increased and, finally, economic growth and rural development emerge. Agriculture, as the dominant rural economy, is inherently a very risky and conversional occupation. In such a situation, rural entrepreneurship can be an effective tool for economic diversification. An entrepreneurial activity in each domain is formed on the basis of a sense of need and responsiveness to the economic and social needs of individuals and the community. Therefore, entrepreneurs are responsible for their community by virtue of their different effects on the environment. On this basis, one of the important factors that can be mentioned to highlight the role of agricultural entre-

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preneurs in villages is their social responsibility. In fact, since man is a social being and lives in a community from birth to death, he has to learn how to constantly interact with other people and satisfy his needs in the society. To do this, learning social skills is needed. People learn these skills in the process of socialization, and their proper learning can lead to the formation of social responsibility. Social responsibility toward the community rests on the entrepreneurs' devotion of their time, wealth, and ideas to the society. Accordingly, the main issue in the present research is to measure the social responsibility of agricultural entrepreneurship corporations in rural areas. An emphasis is placed on the ethical, environmental, legal, socio-cultural, economic and humanitarian aspects of entrepreneurship in relation to the environment, customers, employees, community and stakeholders.

## 2. Methodology

This research was conducted with a combination of descriptive and analytical methods and through library (documentary) and field (questionnaire) procedures of data collection. In the library mode, the research topic was developed and analyzed with the help of the existing documents (e.g. books, articles, and reports). In order to analyze the collected data according to the research goals and questions, descriptive statistics (e.g. frequency distribution and mean), inferential statistics (e.g. one sample T-test and Spearman correlation test), the Expert Choice and SPSS software programs and Fuzzy Vikor model were used. The statistical population of the study consisted of the managers as well as the administrators of agricultural entrepreneurship companies. Based on the targeted sampling method, the population was determined to be 80.

## 3. Results

A single-sample T test was performed for each dimension of social responsibility. Regarding the indicators of the legal dimension, social responsibility was seen in compliance with laws, adaptation of activities to local laws and community conventions indicators. In the economic dimension, only introducing a company as a successful company with high profitability was of great social importance, which indicates a low level of accountability in this dimension. In social, ethical, environmental and humanitarian dimensions, the high social responsibility of entrepreneurship companies in rural areas was highlighted in all the indicators. Also, Spearman's correlation test was conducted for the relationship among the dimensions of social responsibility. According to the reviewed studies, the highest correlation was observed among the legal and economic dimensions. , At the next level, the

humanitarian dimension was the most closely correlated one with the other dimensions.

Finally, among the entrepreneurship companies, Armaghani Company with  $Q = 1$  and Negin Yaghoot Food Product Company with  $Q = 0.700$  had the lowest ranks, but Fakhr Tarshiz Company with  $Q = 0.256$  and the leading cultivating company of Saleh Kashmar with  $Q = 0.078$  ranked the highest.

## 4. Discussion

Saleh and Fakhr Tarshiz companies have the highest ranks. These two companies have managed to reach a special position not only in the studied area but also in the province and even in the country. This eminence would not be accessible without the specific measures that they took to create jobs, maintain high product standard and quality, offer appropriate packaging, do precise marketing, have an environmental outlook, and gain a strong local position. Placing these two companies at the top of the social responsibility list shows their combined look to business.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Rodriguez et al. (2015) and Yaacob and Azmi (2012) who have looked at social responsibility in terms of human, humanitarian and Islamic values. The study is also consistent with the research of Tuan (2015) and Akbari and Faham (2016) in such fields as transferring knowledge, teaching methods of work to others, and prioritizing environmental affairs. According to the discussed issues, it is suggested that the effective components should be made available for all company managers through corporate publications or bulletins so as for them to use the experiences of successful managers. It is also suggested that the managers who seek to corroborate social responsibility indicators should be identified and equipped with appropriate hardware tools to have an opportunity for education and knowledge transfer. Finally, various workshops are suggested to be set up to introduce different views about the dimensions of social responsibility in agricultural entrepreneurship and up-to-date methods of dealing with those dimensions in business.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest