

Research Paper

Identifying the Difficulties of Horticultural Product Distribution Channels (Case study: The Central Fruit and Vegetable Organization of Tehran Province)

*Morteza Akbari¹, Mohammadreza Asadpour², Mohammad Karimian-Ravandi³, Shahab al-din Hosseini Koupaei⁴

1. Associate professor, Department of Technological Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Entrepreneurship, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.
2. Ph.D student, Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management and Economics, University of Tarbiat Modares, Tehran, Iran.
3. Master of Business Management, Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management and Accounting, University of Tehran, Qom, Iran.
4. Master of Islamic Human Resource Management, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Accounting, University of Tehran, Qom, Iran.



Citation: Akbari, M., Asadpour, M.R., Karimian-Ravandi, M., & Hosseini Koupaei, Sh. (2019). [Identifying the Difficulties of Horticultural Product Distribution Channels (Case study: The Central Fruit and Vegetable Organization of Tehran Province) (Persian)]. *Journal of Rural Research*, 10(3), 408-423, <http://dx.doi.org/10.22059/jrr.2019.250670.1216>

doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22059/jrr.2019.250670.1216>

Received: 03 Feb. 2018
Accepted: 25 June 2019

ABSTRACT

The challenges and disadvantages of distribution channels diminish the effectiveness and efficiency of distribution channels, which affects the profits for distributors, manufacturers, and reduces customer satisfaction. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the problems of the distribution and marketing of these products. This study was conducted using a qualitative research method and a semi-structured interview to analyze the main research problems. It is a case study, and its statistical population consists of the managers of the Organization of Fruit and Vegetable Fields and several managers of transportation and horticultural products distribution companies in *Tehran*. The sample consists of 18 managers, selected using the snowballing method. Data was collected via a semi-structured interview. The results showed the problems of distribution and marketing channels are categorized into two categories of direct and indirect. Direct factors are including transportation, warehousing, maintenance, and distribution. Indirect factors are including imports, traditional agriculture, and enforcement policies. The results also showed that unconditional mediators, lack of a formal and regulated distribution system, and worn and inefficient transportation systems are significant problems of horticultural product distribution channels.

Key words:

Distribution channel, Agricultural products, Fruit and vegetable fields, Mediation

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The main task of a fitted distribution system is the distribution of return definitions for goods and services at the level of the market, and this part makes a connection between the manufactur-

ing and consumption sector. Therefore, depending on the position and function of the distribution sector in an economic system, this section can be considered a deterrent factor in growth or the economy (Armstrong, 2008). In most countries with a mechanized agricultural system, marketing and distribution channels are more important than production, and focusing on the distribution systems,

* Corresponding Author:

Morteza Akbari, PhD

Address: Faculty of Entrepreneurship, University of Tehran, Farshi Moghadam St.(16th St), North Kargar Ave, Tehran, Iran. postal code: 14398143141

Tel: +98 (912) 6115241

E-mail: mortezaakbari@ut.ac.ir

especially those distribute perishable goods, is related to community health (Urde et al., 2013).

Accordingly, the central questions of the research are: what are the main reasons for the failure of the distribution system in the agricultural sector? And what is the role of each of the factors in the failure of distribution channels in this section? Although many studies have been conducted on the field of agricultural and horticultural products, very little is known about the distribution and marketing of such products despite their great importance and basic problems that exist in these fields. Therefore, this research aims to scrutinize the principal and the secondary factors analyzing the issues of the agricultural product distribution to provide a complete picture of the problems in this sector. The other purpose of this research is to explain the main challenges and issues that indirectly affect the distribution systems of these products.

2. Methodology

The present study was conducted using a qualitative method based on interviews. This research has centered on the Central Organization of Fruit and Vegetables of *Tehran* and transportation companies related to the distribution of agricultural products. The statistical population of the study consisted of managers and staff working in the central organization of fruit and vegetables and a number of transportation and distribution companies in *Tehran* province. It uses the snowball sampling method. In the sample, we have tried to select managers and staff who are in dealing with the seasonal distribution of agricultural products and have a background and experience and an interest in this area.

3. Results

The results of the study showed that unconditional mediation, the lack of a formal and regulatory system of distribution, and the worn-out and dysfunctional transportation system are the main problems of distribution channels of agricultural products.

4. Discussion

To analyze the data obtained from the interviews, we used the theme analysis method. The results of the encoding and summarizing process are illustrated in the [Table 1](#):

5. Conclusion

After collecting data, analytical methods were investigated. Finally, analyzing the interviews, we categorized the damages of the distribution channels into two direct and indirect categories, each of which had six and three factors as serious injuries and dilemmas, respectively. The distribution channels of agricultural products were expressed.

Acknowledgments

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest

Table 1. Selective coding results.

Minor characteristics (minor themes)	Main features (main theme)
High cost, inefficiency, market failure, inefficient communication networks, low safety, unbalanced coverage, inadequate capacity	Transportation network
Non-standard warehouses, Inadequate storage conditions, High costs of refrigerated storage	Non-standard warehouses, Inadequate storage conditions, High cost of refrigerated storage
Insecure and unsafe physical distribution, Heather went on at the time of distribution, the asymmetry of supply and demand, the lack of transport insurance	Distribution and broadcast
Lack of diversity, lack of solidarity, lack of attractiveness for consumers, undesirable design	Package
Monopoly of power in the sale and distribution of certain products, price bubbles, inconsistencies in the pricing system, the sovereignty of dealers, unfair distribution of income	Intermediaries
Degradability, quality, and grading, low resistance to seasonal changes, price fluctuations	Feature and product type

Source: research findings, 2018