

REVIEW



on a dissertation for obtaining the "**DOCTORATE DEGREE**" in Higher Education
3.0. Social, business and legal sciences, Professional Field 3.8. Economics Scientific
Specialty - "Organization and management (agriculture and sub-sectors)"

Author of the dissertation: Jelena (Miroslav) Milanovich

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Thesis topic: Competitiveness of distribution systems of agricultural products in
Serbia

Reviewer: Assoc.Prof. Dr Keranka Nedeva,

Agricultural University, Plovdiv, 3.0. Social, business and legal sciences,
Professional Field 3.8. Economics Scientific Specialty - "Organization and
management, appointed as a member of the Scientific Juri by order RD-16-
267/05.03.2020 from Rector of the AU-Plovdiv

1. The relevance of the topic under the consideration

Serbia has untapped agricultural resources represent a significant economic
potential for the further development of the whole economy. The chances of
development of agrarian sector of Serbia are favorable agro-ecological conditions
and relatively good availability of natural resources, mainly agricultural land.

One of the key elements of competitiveness in the field of agriculture is the
distribution of agricultural products. The way in which agricultural products will be
distributed depends on the potentially achievable competitiveness of the agricultural
product. Order processing, commodity handling, warehousing, inventory
management, transportation, product marketing and customer contact, or their more
detailed analysis, are the starting points in considering the overall effects of
distribution activities on the competitiveness of agricultural products. Just as it is
necessary to carry out an analysis when selecting a particular distribution method, it
is also important to determine the characteristics of the distribution mode to
determine their capabilities to be exploited, as well as the shortcomings to be
eliminated or other options selected.

The concept of integrated rural development in the context of sustainable
development, represents complex paradigm for the development of a rural area.

based on available capital - physical, financial and human. This concept implies balanced development of rural areas through the integration of socio-economic development with environmental requirements and the principle of equitable distribution of public goods.

Thanks to all of the above, dissertation research on "Competitiveness of the distribution of agricultural products in Serbia" is a recent study.

In this context I believe that the topic chosen addresses important and relevant research questions to clarify the overall economic role

2. Purpose, tasks, hypotheses and methods of research.

Subject to study the competitiveness of the distribution system of agricultural products. The object of study is the distribution system of agricultural products in Serbia.

The main goal of the doctoral dissertation arises from the need to provide new knowledge in the field of competitiveness of the agricultural distribution system in the Republic of Serbia, by determining the influence of distribution channels and elements of physical distribution of agricultural products on the competitiveness of agricultural holdings and finding such a model that will increase the competitiveness of the agricultural distribution system in the Republic of Serbia.

The main aim of the dissertation research is to analyze the factors that determine the competitiveness of the distribution system of agricultural products and to propose a model for raising these competitiveness.

In order to achieve the main goal solve the following research objectives:

- Clarifies nature of the distribution system and its role in achieving development and competitiveness of agriculture;
- Worked out a methodology for analysis and evaluation of the factors determining the competitiveness of the distribution system;
- The factors determining the competitiveness of the distribution system in agriculture;

Test patterns study the competitiveness of the distribution system and provides a working model for raising her

In the thesis examined the following working hypotheses: H_{01} - The development of the distribution system has affects its level of

competitiveness; H₀₂ - The development of distribution channels influences the level of competitiveness the distribution system of agar products.

In the thesis developed two models of the factors affecting the competitiveness of distribution systems that are tested for authenticity:

Scientific research methods

The theoretical part of the thesis, the following methods:

- Critical analysis of literature on the definition of terms related to the subject and the object of study;
- Descriptive analysis;
- Qualitative analysis;
- Quantitative analysis;
- Comparative method;
- Analysis and synthesis.
- Surveyed 126 respondents from the Republic of Serbia through a questionnaire in the period from July 1 to November 1, 2018= The questionnaire contains 12 questions, each describing elements of the physical distribution of agricultural products and 15 questions describing the competitiveness of the distribution system.

The goals, objectives and methods of the study are set out logically and consistently.

3. Visualization and presentation of the obtained results.

PhD thesis consists of 196 pages. It uses 18 figures and 146 tables. In the thesis are cited 137 literary source. The used figures, schemes and tables present in detail the information gathered from the dissertation research.

The results show that the PhD student has in-depth theoretical background, knowledge and ability for independent scientific research.

4. Discussion of the results and the references.

The disertation contains specific results and emperical evidence that objectively demonstrates the effectiveness of using different types of the personal selling strategy has on improving the development of the agriculture and food industry of Serbia.

Jelena (Miroslav) Milanovic has made an in-depth analysis of the researched

problem in a theoretical aspect. An extensive literature review of the problem dedicated to the distribution channels of agricultural products has been made.

The doctoral student has made a thorough theoretical substantiation of the thesis. A retrospective analysis of the concept of competitiveness as a conceptual definition is made. The evolution of views is shown - from the theory of trade to the theory of competitiveness. The factors influencing competitiveness, the approaches for measuring competitiveness, the specifics of competitiveness in agriculture, as well as the way in which it contributes to rural development are identified and analyzed.

The second part of the theoretical statement sets out the main factors determining the distribution network in agriculture. The different types of distribution channels and the elements of the physical distribution of agricultural products are considered, as well as the modern technologies applied in the distribution and logistics sector.

The analytical part of the dissertation is an analysis of the specifics of the agricultural sector, the advantages and challenges of the researched sector in Serbia. The doctoral student seeks a connection between the main factors that lead to a higher competitiveness of the distribution system of agricultural products, as well as its impact on rural development, by using the comparative advantages of the region.

The analytical part of the dissertation ends with the formulation of reasoned and logically consistent conclusions about the researched problem.

The doctoral student seeks the connection between the potential of rural areas and achieving competitiveness of agriculture and resp. the rural area. Attention is paid to the role of the state for competitive agriculture in Serbia and occupying a worthy place in the market of agricultural goods in the Balkans, respectively. Europe and the world in agricultural exports and distribution policy.

The PhD student has performed a scientifically based, in-depth SWOT analysis of market activities in Serbia.

In the third part of the dissertation the methodological settings of the research are determined. This part of the dissertation examines preliminary theoretical and empirical results from previous research. A questionnaire is developed and defined based on the experience in this field in order to determine the influence of all factors on the competitiveness model of the system for distribution of agricultural products. The doctoral student conducted an extensive own study with 126 respondents from the territory of the Republic of Serbia, in the period from July 1 to November 1, 2018.

The **doctoral** student describes research statistical approaches and methods measuring the **impact** of all elements of the distribution system of agricultural products, set out in the fourth part. Two methods were used to study the relationships between the factors determining the competitiveness of distribution channels - the method of multiple correlation and the method of regression analysis, which are tested for reliability (model 1 and model 2):

The PhD student studies the impact of various elements of the physical distribution of agricultural goods on the competitiveness of the entire distribution system within Model 1: The level of order processing, The level of cargo management, supply, The level of storage management, The level of transport management, and within Model 2: The level of turnover and the maintenance of effective contact with customers are extremely influential on the level of competitiveness of the system for distribution of agricultural products.

The dissertation concludes with a conclusion, which summarizes the results of the study and possible directions for further research on the system of distribution of agricultural products in Serbia.

The results of the testing of the research hypotheses show a direct dependence and determining role of the complex impact of the different physical distribution channels on the competitiveness of the distribution system as a whole.

The list of all literary sources used in the dissertation is rich and sufficient to clarify the object and subject, scientific proof and confirmation of the main working hypothesis.

5. Contributions to the dissertation.

I accept the scientific contributions presented by the doctoral student from which the following may be mentioned:

The contribution of the doctoral dissertation is reflected in the results which showed that the level of distribution channels and the level of physical distribution elements influence the level of competitiveness of the system of distribution of agricultural products in the Republic of Serbia. The results also form the basis for further research in this field, both in the field of agriculture and other areas of economy.

The following contribution moments of scientific and applied nature can be distinguished in the dissertation:

1. The essence of the competitiveness of the distribution system as an element for sustainable development of agriculture is clarified;
2. A conceptual framework for assessing the competitiveness of the distribution system with agricultural products in the Republic of Serbia has been developed;
3. The competitiveness of the distribution system with agricultural products in the Republic of Serbia is analyzed and evaluated;
4. It is established which factors are critical in the organization and development of the distribution system with agricultural products;
5. Models of competitive distribution systems are formulated, which can be used in practice.

6. Critical remarks and questions.

I have no critical remarks on the work of the doctoral student, but I can offer the following recommendation: in future research to further develop and deepen the analysis of his chosen topic. Agriculture is a specific sector and the study and improvement of the competitiveness of the sub-sector is related to the specifics of the region and the study of good approaches and practices of countries with developed and highly competitive agricultural sector needs to continue and expand even more future.

I have the following question for the PhD student:

What are the new expected trends in the market of agricultural distribution policy, which will lead to changes in the marketing concepts imposed by farmers in Serbia?

7. Published articles and citations.

Jelena (Miroslav) Milanovich has one independent publication and six co-authored, which covers the required minimum for publishing activities for scientific degree Doctor

The presented materials correspond to the topic of the dissertation research. The presented abstract objectively reflects the structure and content of the dissertation.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the scientific and applied by the doctoral student various methods of research, correctly performed experiments the summaries made and conclusion drawn, I believed that the submitted dissertation work meets the requirements of the Application of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff the Republic of Bulgaria and the regulation of the agricultural University for its application which gives me a reason to evaluated **POSITIVE**.

I allow myself to propose to the venerable Scientific Jure also vote positively and to award to **Jelena (Miroslav) Milanovich** the education in scientific degree Doctor in organization and management

Date: 09.07.2020
Plovdiv

Reviewer:
Assoc.Pof. Dr Keranka Nedeva