



Original Article

Exploring the Mechanisms of Rural Cooperatives' Roles in the Commercialization of Home-Based Products and the Development of Market-Oriented Businesses among Rural Women (Case Study: Sarab Kalan Village)

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Abstract

Purpose- Although previous studies have examined rural women's entrepreneurship, rural development, and the general functions of cooperatives, less attention has been paid to the specific mechanisms through which cooperatives can transform dispersed home-based production into sustainable, market-oriented economic activities. This study addresses this gap by developing an integrated framework that links product value enhancement, supply chain organization, market identity, sales-network development, and women's capacity for business growth.

Design/methodology/approach- An applied mixed-methods design with a sequential exploratory strategy was employed. First, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The identified components were then validated and refined through three rounds of the Delphi technique involving 24 experts in rural cooperatives, women's entrepreneurship, rural development, business management, and marketing. Subsequently, a quantitative questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was used to assess and prioritize the identified mechanisms. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, and Kendall's coefficient of concordance were used to analyze the quantitative data.

Findings- The findings identified five major mechanisms through which rural cooperatives can support the commercialization of rural women's home-based products: (1) product value enhancement and re-creation, (2) supply chain organization, (3) development of market identity and credibility, (4) strategic and smart linkage to sales networks, and (5) empowerment for business growth and scalability. The Delphi process reached a high level of agreement among experts, with Kendall's coefficient of concordance equal to 0.81. The quantitative assessment further supported the importance of the identified mechanisms, with an overall mean of 4.43 (SD = 0.66) across the 24 indicators.

Practical implications- The findings suggest that cooperatives should provide integrated support throughout the product value chain rather than focusing solely on production. Such support should include product innovation and quality improvement, branding and packaging, access to physical and digital marketing and sales channels, sustainable market connections, business networking, and targeted training in managerial, marketing, and commercial capabilities.

Originality/value: The study contributes to the literature by moving beyond a general assessment of the functions of rural cooperatives and identifying specific mechanisms through which they can facilitate the commercialization of home-based products. By combining qualitative content analysis, Delphi validation, and quantitative prioritization, the study provides a context-specific and integrated framework for understanding the intermediary role of rural cooperatives in connecting rural women's home-based production with market-oriented business development.

Keywords- Rural Cooperatives, Women's Entrepreneurship, Commercialization of Home-Based Products, Market-Oriented Businesses, Value Chain, Rural Development.

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, economic, technological, and market-oriented developments have transformed women's economic participation and entrepreneurship into key components of inclusive and sustainable development (Ekpodile-Domingo et al., 2026). Rural women, drawing on indigenous knowledge, productive skills, and local experiences, participate in the production of agricultural products, handicrafts, food products, and other home-based goods (Cao et al., 2026). However, productive capacity alone does not guarantee an effective presence in the market, as women's entrepreneurship generates greater developmental outcomes when it contributes to increased income, economic independence, and social capital (Mikolic et al., 2026). A significant proportion of rural women's activities nevertheless remains small-scale, fragmented, and informal and, due to weaknesses in value creation, commercialization, and market access, fails to develop into market-oriented businesses (Liu et al., 2026). Therefore, a fundamental challenge is the transition from "home-based production" to an effective and sustainable presence in the market.

In this transition, collective institutions and rural cooperatives can organize individual capacities and connect local producers to markets (Malki et al., 2024). Through the aggregation of production, reduction of supply fragmentation, coordination of resources, knowledge transfer, facilitation of specialized services, and development of communication networks, cooperatives can strengthen the commercialization potential of rural products (Jiang et al., 2025). However, the developmental role of cooperatives becomes more significant when they move beyond supporting production and establish effective linkages among products, value creation, and markets. Quality enhancement and alignment with customer needs, production standardization, packaging, branding, development of sales channels, and connection to physical and digital markets are important mechanisms for transforming home-based products into marketable and competitive goods (Imanuella et al., 2024).

From a process perspective, commercialization results from the interaction among productive capacity, organizational capabilities, and market requirements and, beyond production, requires value creation, identification of market demand,

development of commercial identity, organization of supply chains, and access to sales networks (Garg et al., 2026). Accordingly, cooperatives can act as "Market Development Intermediaries" by promoting collective organization, reducing transaction costs, building trust, and expanding business relationships, thereby narrowing the gap between small-scale producers and markets (Xiang & Hu, 2025). Furthermore, the development of market-oriented businesses requires business management, customer understanding, pricing, marketing, and the effective use of modern sales tools (Lasrado et al., 2026). Thus, commercialization should be understood as an integrated process in which economic, organizational, market-related, and empowerment mechanisms are interdependent.

In Iran, despite programs supporting women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, many products produced by rural women are still offered on a small scale and outside formal market chains. Limited access to markets, weak distribution networks, the absence of appropriate branding and packaging, unstable sales, insufficient market information, and limited specialized services reduce the economic potential of home-based production (Shahabi et al., 2025; Keikha & Jafarian, 2025). Under such circumstances, cooperatives can strengthen links between producers and market actors by aggregating fragmented capacities and expanding economic cooperation (Soltani et al., 2025). However, their effectiveness depends on their ability to move beyond traditional forms of support toward value addition, market development, and the facilitation of sustainable sales networks (Golestani et al., 2026).

Ilam Province, with its agricultural capacities, handicrafts, local products, rural tourism, and indigenous knowledge, provides a suitable context for the development of rural women's home-based products. Nevertheless, fragmented production, the limited scale of activities, weak access to broader markets, and inadequate marketing infrastructure may hinder the realization of these capacities (Jaberi & Savari, 2026; Noorabadi et al., 2023). Although previous studies have addressed rural women's entrepreneurship, rural development, and the general functions of cooperatives, an important research gap remains regarding how cooperatives can specifically facilitate the transition from dispersed home-based production to sustainable,

market-oriented businesses. Existing research has more often examined these issues separately, focusing either on women's entrepreneurial participation, the developmental functions of cooperatives, or general barriers to market access, rather than explaining the mechanisms through which cooperatives can integrate production, value creation, supply-chain organization, market identity, sales-network development, and women's capacity for business growth within a coherent commercialization process (Zare et al., 2025; Golshani & Shiri, 2025).

This gap is particularly important in contexts such as rural Iran, where the persistence of fragmented production and weak market linkages limits the conversion of women's productive capacities into sustainable economic activities. Moreover, product value reconfiguration, supply-chain organization, identity-building and market credibility, connection to sales networks, and empowerment for growth and scalability have received comparatively limited attention as interconnected dimensions of cooperative-mediated commercialization (Rahimi, 2026; Mohammadian et al., 2025; Boleyde et al., 2024). Consequently, there is a need for an integrated framework that not only identifies the relevant mechanisms but also explains how rural cooperatives can function as intermediaries between women's home-based production and market-oriented business development.

Against this background, the present study addresses this research gap by identifying and integrating the specific mechanisms through which rural cooperatives can facilitate the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women in Sarab Kalan Village, Ilam Province. Rather than examining the general role of cooperatives, the study focuses specifically on the mechanisms linking product value enhancement, supply-chain organization, market identity and credibility, sales-network development, and women's empowerment for business growth and scalability. Accordingly, the study seeks to answer the following question: Through what mechanisms can rural cooperatives contribute to the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women in Sarab Kalan Village?

2. Research Theoretical Literature

2.1. Value Chain Theory

Value chain theory is an important framework for analyzing how value is created, transferred, and realized in the production and supply of goods and services. In its classical form, the theory was introduced by Michael Eugene Porter, who conceptualized a firm as a set of interconnected activities that contribute to customer value and competitive advantage. In Porter's model, these activities are divided into primary activities, including inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, and after-sales service, and support activities, including procurement, technology development, human resource management, and firm infrastructure (Porter, 2021). These activities are interconnected, and effective coordination among them can affect value creation, cost, efficiency, and differentiation. A central concept in value chain theory is "value," defined as the amount that customers are willing to pay for a good or service. From this perspective, competitive advantage can be achieved through lower costs or differentiation. Value chain analysis therefore focuses on identifying activities, examining their relationships, and recognizing opportunities for value creation and cost reduction. An important aspect of this approach is the concept of "linkages," which refers to relationships among activities within an organization and between the organization and other actors, such as suppliers and distributors. Effective management of these linkages can improve coordination and efficiency (Porter, 2021).

Subsequent developments extended value chain analysis beyond the firm level to examine relationships among producers, suppliers, processors, distributors, retailers, and other economic actors. In this broader perspective, value creation results from interactions among actors across production and market chains, while concepts such as governance, upgrading, standards, coordination, and value distribution have become important dimensions of value chain analysis (Gereffi, 2018; Kamran, 2020). Accordingly, value chain theory provides a basis for understanding how interconnected activities and relationships among actors contribute to value creation, market performance, and efficiency (Walters & Rainbird, 2020).

In the present study, value chain theory provides a basis for explaining how rural cooperatives can contribute to the creation and enhancement of value in women's home-based products. Activities such as quality improvement, standardization,

packaging, branding, distribution, and marketing are considered interconnected components of the value-creation process. Thus, the theory helps explain how cooperatives can coordinate different stages of production and market access and facilitate the transition from fragmented home-based production to market-oriented businesses.

2.2. Social Network Theory and Business Networks

Social network theory is based on the assumption that the behavior and actions of individuals and organizations cannot be explained solely by their independent characteristics. Rather, relationships, linkages, and communication structures among actors are also fundamentally important. This approach has its roots in classical sociology and has developed through the works of Georg Simmel, Jacob L. Moreno, and, subsequently, Mark Granovetter, Ronald S. Burt, and other theorists (Borgatti et al., 2021). Georg Simmel was among the first scholars to consider relationships among individuals as an independent subject of social analysis. From his perspective, society is formed through patterns of interaction among individuals, and forms of relationships, such as dyads and triads, influence social structure and action (Simmel, 2019). Jacob L. Moreno also provided a foundation for the systematic study of social network structures through the development of sociometry and the analysis of relationships among group members (Moreno, 2018). In his well-known article on “The Strength of Weak Ties,” Mark Granovetter highlighted the role of connections among relatively distant individuals and groups in the dissemination of information, access to opportunities, and network expansion. According to Granovetter, weak ties can connect individuals to different clusters and social groups, thereby increasing the flow of information and opportunities within a network. Another important concept in Granovetter’s work is “social embeddedness,” which emphasizes the influence of social relationships on economic actions (Granovetter, 2020).

By introducing the concept of “structural holes,” Ronald S. Burt focused on the position of actors located between disconnected segments of a network. From this perspective, gaps between network groups create opportunities for intermediary actors. “Structural constraint,” “brokerage,” and “social capital arising from network position” are among the important concepts in this approach. An actor positioned

between less connected parts of a network can benefit from access to diverse sources of information and communication opportunities (Burt, 2017).

Within the network approach, concepts such as nodes, ties, density, centrality, distance, network structure, clusters, cohesion, strong and weak ties, structural holes, and brokerage positions are important. “Centrality” indicates the position and accessibility of an actor within the network structure. Its various forms, including degree, closeness, and betweenness centrality, are used to analyze the position of actors. “Density” refers to the proportion of existing ties relative to the possible ties within a network (Hakansson et al., 2021). In economic and organizational contexts, this theory has been extended to the concept of “business networks.” From this perspective, firms and organizations are embedded in a set of relationships with suppliers, customers, competitors, public institutions, and other actors. Network relationships can facilitate the flow of information, knowledge, resources, trust, and opportunities (Nohria & Eccles, 2018). Therefore, an actor’s performance depends, to some extent, on the structure and quality of relationships, its position within the network, and its capacity to access and utilize available resources. Trust, norms of reciprocity, and commitment are also important elements in some network approaches, as they strengthen the continuity of relationships, cooperation, and resource exchange within networks (Scott, 2020).

In this study, value chain theory provides a basis for explaining how rural cooperatives can intervene in the process of creating, enhancing, and realizing the value of women’s home-based products. Within this framework, activities such as quality improvement, standardization, packaging, branding, distribution, and marketing can be analyzed as interconnected links in the value chain. In contrast, social network theory and business network theory explain the capacity of cooperatives to establish and strengthen linkages among women producers, markets, customers, supporting institutions, and other economic actors. Integrating these theoretical perspectives makes it possible to analyze the role of cooperatives from two complementary dimensions: intervention in the value-creation process and network building to facilitate access to resources and markets. Accordingly, the integrated framework of this study considers the transition of

women's home-based products from fragmented production to market-oriented businesses as the result of interaction between value chain mechanisms and network mechanisms within the context of rural cooperatives.

2.3. Research Background

-Grangeiro et al. (2026), in a study entitled "Informal Women's Entrepreneurship in the Global South: Evidence from Brazil," found that external support and incentives are among the most important motivations for women to start businesses, while economic necessity is the main driver of their entrepreneurial activities. Therefore, the role of economic motivations was found to be greater than that of social motivations.

-Rajeev et al. (2026), in a study entitled "Agency, Technology, and Women's Entrepreneurship: A Policy Evaluation," found that the implementation of the Common Service Centers policy within the framework of the "Digital India" program strengthened women's capabilities and agency and created entrepreneurial opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, over time, women demonstrated greater improvements in entrepreneurial capabilities and returns to scale than men. These findings highlight the role of technology and supportive policies in empowering women and promoting their effective participation in business.

-Lopez-Toro et al. (2026), in a study entitled "Entrepreneurial Success in Conflict Zones: Women, Indigenous People and Informal Entrepreneurship in Colombia," found that indigenous status and formal business registration were among the most important determinants of entrepreneurial success. In particular, indigenous status had the greatest effect on business performance. In addition, gender and the level of participation in production and marketing affected entrepreneurial success. The negative effect of being female became positive at higher levels of sales.

-Nannetti & Operti (2026), in a study entitled "Equalizing Networking Opportunities: How Women Can Leverage Incubators in Entrepreneurship," found that participation in incubators and accelerators has a greater impact on women-owned businesses and contributes to reducing the innovation gap between women and men. Women strategically use these centers to strengthen individual resources, establish relationships with key stakeholders, and gain access to role models and mentors. In contrast, men tend to

use them in a more purposeful and transactional manner to acquire technical and business knowledge.

-Tabatabaeeamid & Shahraki (2026), in a study entitled "Qualitative Analysis of Barriers to the Development of Rural Women's Digital Businesses in Golestan Province," identified five major barriers: "lack of supportive policies," "lack of technical and vocational training," "traditional attitudes toward women's roles," "absence of an appropriate financial model," and "shortage of digital equipment." Each of these barriers had a frequency exceeding 70% and was identified as an important constraint on the development of digital businesses among rural women.

-Dolatabadi et al. (2025), in a study entitled "Identifying Drivers of Empowerment for Women Entrepreneurs Against Institutional Threats Using Meta-Synthesis Method," concluded that establishing effective relationships and creating strong social networks can contribute to the empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

-Alaeddinivandi & Soleymanipour (2025), in a study entitled "Factors Affecting the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women with an Emphasis on the Production and Processing of Medicinal Plants (Case Study: Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province)," found that, among the five factors examined, government support, economic attitudes, and rural women's skills accounted for the largest share of the variance in women's economic empowerment. In contrast, factors such as local support and infrastructure development did not have a significant effect on women's economic empowerment.

-Golshani & Shiri (2025), in a study entitled "Strategic Analysis of Entrepreneurship Development in Rural Women's Microcredit Funds (Case Study: Badrah County)," identified several strategies for entrepreneurship development in rural women's microcredit funds in Badreh County. These included encouraging and motivating fund members to establish family-based and collaborative businesses in agricultural products and handicrafts; designing and implementing training courses to enhance members' technical and specialized competencies and enable them to exploit agricultural and handicraft opportunities; and introducing and promoting successful female role models and entrepreneurs in cooperative and participatory businesses at the national, provincial,

and local levels to help change societal attitudes toward women.

A review of the research background indicates that previous studies have examined various factors, including institutional and government support, education and skills training, technology, networking, individual capabilities, social attitudes, and market access, in relation to the development of rural women's entrepreneurship. However, most of these studies have examined the factors affecting women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment separately and have paid less attention to the mechanisms linking home-based production to its transformation into sustainable, market-oriented businesses. Furthermore, the role of rural cooperatives as intermediary institutions for market development and their contribution to establishing this linkage have received limited integrated attention.

Accordingly, the novelty of the present study lies in providing a process-oriented and mechanism-based perspective on the role of rural cooperatives in the transition from home-based and fragmented production to market-oriented businesses among rural women. The study explains this role through five complementary mechanisms: product value re-creation, supply chain organization, market identity-building and credibility creation, strategic connection to sales networks, and empowerment for growth and scalability.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Geographical Scope of the Research

Sarab Kalan is a rural settlement located in Zangvan Rural District of Karezan District, Sirvan County, Ilam Province, western Iran. The village is situated at approximately 33°34'24" N and 46°43'04" E. Administratively, it falls within Zangvan Rural District and Karezan District of Sirvan County. According to the 2016 General Population and Housing Census, Sarab Kalan had a population of 739 people living in 197 households. These characteristics identify Sarab Kalan as a relatively small rural community and provide an appropriate geographical and demographic context for examining the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented economic activities among rural women.

Sarab Kalan also has notable historical and cultural significance. The village is associated with the remains of the historical city of Sirvan, which is reported to date back more than 1,600 years. The

archaeological site includes remnants of fortified structures, towers and walls, underground spaces, and one- and two-story buildings constructed primarily of stone and lime. The historical settlement is reported to have developed around a permanent water spring and to have covered an area of approximately 100 hectares. This historical and cultural context distinguishes Sarab Kalan from many ordinary rural settlements in the region and constitutes an important contextual characteristic of the study area.

Given its rural setting, population size, and historical-cultural context, Sarab Kalan provides the geographical setting for the present case study. The study examines the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives can facilitate the commercialization of women's home-based products and support the development of market-oriented businesses. The characteristics of the study area are therefore considered as contextual information for interpreting the study findings, while the empirical assessment of the identified mechanisms is based on the qualitative and Delphi stages described in the research methodology.

3.2. Methodology

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and employs an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design in terms of approach. The selection of this design is consistent with the nature of the research problem, which involves exploring the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women. Accordingly, the study began with a qualitative phase. After identifying and extracting the components and mechanisms associated with the phenomenon under investigation, the qualitative findings served as the basis for designing and implementing the quantitative phase. Thus, the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives can transform rural women's home-based products from fragmented and market-limited production into marketable products and market-oriented businesses were first identified. These components were then refined, assessed, and prioritized in terms of importance using the Delphi technique.

In the qualitative phase, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires administered to experts with knowledge and experience in the fields of cooperatives, women's entrepreneurship, rural

development, business management, and marketing. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Following transcription and repeated review of the data, meaning units relevant to the research problem were identified, and initial codes were extracted. Similar codes were then organized into subcategories based on conceptual proximity and, through constant comparison, classified into main categories and mechanisms. At this stage, efforts were made to identify the various dimensions of the role of rural cooperatives in value creation, production and supply organization, market identity-building and credibility creation, connection to sales networks, and women's empowerment for business growth and scalability. The findings of this phase formed the basis for developing the closed-ended Delphi questionnaire.

In the quantitative phase, the Delphi process was conducted in three rounds. In the first round, data obtained from the interviews and open-ended questionnaires were analyzed, and an initial set of components and mechanisms related to the role of rural cooperatives was extracted and categorized. In the second round, the identified components were presented to the experts in a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The experts assessed the importance of each component in the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women. In the third round, the results of the previous round were provided to the experts as feedback, and they were asked to reassess the importance and priority of the components. The purpose of this stage was to increase the convergence of opinions, refine the components, and achieve final agreement regarding the main mechanisms. Quantitative data were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, and Kendall's coefficient of concordance. The mean was used as the basis for assessing the importance and ranking of the components, whereas Kendall's coefficient of concordance was used to assess the degree of agreement among the experts regarding the priority of the mechanisms.

The study population consisted of experts with knowledge and experience in the fields of cooperatives, women's entrepreneurship, rural development, business management, and marketing. Participants were selected in consideration of the multidimensional nature of the research problem. The commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-

oriented businesses among rural women are not limited to increasing production or providing financial resources. Rather, they require simultaneous attention to production and quality, value creation and supply chain organization, market and marketing, branding, sales networks, empowerment, and institutional support.

Purposive sampling was employed. The criteria for selecting experts included relevant expertise and experience, familiarity with the research topic, and willingness to participate in all Delphi stages. The experts were selected from among faculty members and researchers in relevant fields, specialists in executive agencies involved in rural development, cooperatives, women's affairs, and business support, experts in business management and marketing, and managers and practitioners of rural and women's cooperatives.

In total, 24 experts participated in the study, and the same individuals participated throughout all Delphi stages. Of these participants, 18 were men and 6 were women. Regarding age, the highest frequency was observed in the 40–50-year age group. Furthermore, 16 participants held doctoral degrees, while 8 held master's degrees. Regarding professional experience, all participants had at least 10 years of relevant experience, and the largest proportion were employed at universities and academic and research centers (Table 1).

Given the mixed-methods approach of the study, data were collected in two qualitative and quantitative phases. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used. The questions focused on identifying the mechanisms and approaches through which rural cooperatives can contribute to the commercialization of rural women's home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses. In designing the instrument, issues such as quality improvement and alignment of products with market demand, production aggregation and standardization, product development and innovation, packaging and branding, supply chain organization, the creation and expansion of in-person and digital sales channels, the development of communication networks, and the strengthening of women's managerial and business capacities were taken into consideration. However, the questions were designed in an open-ended format to allow for the identification of new and unforeseen mechanisms.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Research Experts

No.	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	18	75
		Female	6	25
2	Age	30–40 years	5	20/8
		40–50 years	9	37/5
		50–60 years	8	33/3
		Over 60 years	2	8/3
3	Education	Master's degree	8	33/3
		Doctoral degree	16	66/7
4	Professional experience	10–15 years	6	25
		16–20 years	9	37/5
		More than 21 years	9	37/5
5	Organizational/professional affiliation	Universities and academic and research centers	10	41/7
		Executive agencies related to rural development, women's affairs, cooperatives, and business support	9	37/5
		Rural and women's cooperatives, rural businesses, and specialists and experts in entrepreneurship, business management, and marketing	5	20/8

Following the analysis of the qualitative data, the extracted components were formulated as items for the Delphi questionnaire. The experts assessed the importance of each item using a five-point Likert scale. In the final round, feedback from the previous round was provided to the experts to enable them to reconsider their judgments, refine their perspectives, and reach greater consensus. Ultimately, qualitative content analysis identified five main mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to commercialization: product value re-creation, supply chain organization, market identity-building and credibility creation, strategic connection to sales networks, and empowerment for growth and scalability. These mechanisms formed the basis for assessment, importance evaluation, and prioritization during the Delphi stages.

In the qualitative section, data analysis was conducted through a process of coding and categorizing concepts. Initially, the data were read thoroughly and repeatedly, and meaning units related to the role of rural cooperatives in the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women were identified. Subsequently, initial codes were extracted, and similar codes were grouped into subcategories. Finally, through constant comparison of the categories, the main

mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to commercialization were identified.

In the quantitative section, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for each component. The mean of the experts' responses served as the basis for assessing the relative importance and ranking of the identified components and mechanisms. Furthermore, Kendall's coefficient of concordance was used to examine the degree of agreement among the experts regarding the priorities. This coefficient indicates the degree of convergence among the rankings provided by the evaluators on a scale ranging from zero to one, with higher values indicating greater agreement. In the present study, Kendall's coefficient of concordance in the final round was 0.81, indicating a high level of agreement among the experts. Therefore, the Delphi process was terminated after the third round.

To enhance the validity of the findings obtained during the qualitative phase, the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, were employed. Credibility was ensured through the systematic review and coding of the data, continuous examination of codes and categories, and assessment of the conceptual coherence of the extracted mechanisms. To ensure transferability, the characteristics of the expert population, selection criteria, sampling method, and stages of data collection and analysis were described

transparently. This approach allowed judgments to be made regarding the applicability of the findings in similar contexts. Dependability was addressed through the systematic implementation and documentation of the stages of data collection, coding, and analysis. Furthermore, to ensure confirmability, efforts were made to ensure that the results were directly grounded in the data and perspectives of the experts. The researchers also sought to avoid imposing their assumptions on the identification and interpretation of the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to commercialization.

In the quantitative section, the validity of the components was supported through the implementation of three Delphi rounds, obtaining feedback from the experts, reconsidering their judgments, and examining the degree of convergence among their perspectives. Following qualitative content analysis and refinement during the Delphi stages, the final components were classified into five main mechanisms: product value re-creation, supply chain organization, market identity-building and credibility creation, strategic connection to sales networks, and empowerment for

growth and scalability. Accordingly, the structure of the quantitative instrument and the assessment of its reliability were developed based on these five mechanisms.

In addition, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to examine the reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The results showed that the alpha coefficients for the five main mechanisms were within acceptable and desirable ranges. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.91 for the mechanism of product value re-creation, 0.89 for supply chain organization, 0.88 for market identity-building and credibility creation, 0.87 for strategic connection to sales networks, and 0.86 for empowerment for growth and scalability. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall questionnaire was 0.90, indicating appropriate internal consistency and desirable reliability of the research instrument. Accordingly, the research instrument demonstrated the necessary capability to assess and prioritize the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women (Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability of the Mechanisms Through Which Rural Cooperatives Play a Role Based on Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Dimension	Number of Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha
Product value reconfiguration	6	0/91
Supply chain organization	5	0/89
Market identity-building and credibility creation	4	0/88
Smart connection to sales networks	5	0/87
Empowerment for growth and scalability	4	0/86
Overall questionnaire	24	0/90

4- Findings

4-1. Results of the Qualitative Stage; Identification and Extraction of the Mechanisms of Rural Cooperatives' Role-Playing

In the first stage, with the aim of identifying and formulating the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives can contribute to the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires from experts in the fields of cooperatives, women's entrepreneurship, rural development, and marketing. The focus of this stage was on how women's home-based production could transition from dispersed production to products

with the potential for market supply, sales, and continuity. Following transcription, the data were analyzed using conventional qualitative content analysis. First, meaning units related to the research objective were identified and initially coded. Subsequently, conceptually similar codes were compared and organized into subcategories. Thereafter, through continuous comparison of codes, categories, and themes, common patterns were identified and the main mechanisms were formulated. The analysis of qualitative data showed that the role of rural cooperatives in transitioning women's home-based products from dispersed production to market-oriented businesses is multidimensional and is not limited to input provision or distribution. Based on the themes extracted from experts'

perspectives, this role was explained through five mechanisms: “product value re-creation,” “supply chain organization,” “market identity-building and credibility creation,” “strategic connection to sales networks,” and “empowerment for growth and scalability.” These mechanisms form a chain of complementary actions extending from enhancing product value to market access and business growth. The first mechanism, product value re-creation, refers to actions that increase the commercial potential of products. These include quality enhancement, alignment of product characteristics with market needs and demand, innovation, improvement of design and packaging, and enhancement of attractiveness and marketability. The second mechanism, supply chain organization, is based on the aggregation and coordination of dispersed production, process standardization, supply coordination, and improvement of the flow of materials and products. These actions strengthen supply capacity and support a more sustainable market presence. The third mechanism, market identity-building and credibility creation, concerns establishing a professional and distinctive identity for products, brand development, identity-oriented packaging design, and enhancement of the product image. These actions aim to increase customer trust and market credibility. The fourth mechanism, strategic connection to sales networks, emphasizes establishing and expanding linkages between women’s products and market opportunities. It encompasses in-person and digital sales channels,

connections with markets and sales intermediaries, and the development of communication and business networks. The fifth mechanism, empowerment for growth and scalability, focuses on strengthening women’s knowledge, skills, and managerial and commercial capacities. These include planning, decision-making, and marketing skills that can support the continuity and expansion of their economic activities.

The overall findings of this stage indicate that, if a rural cooperative actively performs a role in these five areas, it can transform from a service-oriented institution into an intermediary institution for market development. In this role, it establishes linkages among women’s productive capacities, value chain requirements, support resources, and market opportunities. From this perspective, commercialization results from the coordination of interventions related to the product, supply, market identity, customer access, and business capabilities. Accordingly, the five identified mechanisms were used as the initial analytical framework. They formed the basis for developing the items of the closed-ended questionnaire and entering the refinement and validation process across three Delphi rounds. At this stage, the final importance and priority of the mechanisms were not determined. Instead, the conceptual structure derived from the qualitative data was formulated. Accordingly, Table 3 presents the main mechanisms and the themes associated with each (Table 3).

Table 3- Main mechanisms of rural cooperatives’ role in the commercialization of home-based products and development of market-oriented businesses among rural women in the qualitative stage

Row	Main Dimension of Barriers	Overall Theme
1	Product Value Re-creation	A set of actions aimed at increasing product value and commercial potential, including quality enhancement, alignment of the product with market needs and demand, innovation and design improvement, packaging, and increasing the product’s marketability and attractiveness to customers.
2	Supply Chain Organization	A set of actions related to aggregating and coordinating women’s dispersed production, standardizing processes, coordinating supply, reducing production dispersion, and improving the flow of materials and products within the supply chain, with the aim of increasing supply capacity and ensuring regular market presence.
3	Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	A set of actions to establish a professional and distinctive identity for women’s products, develop the brand, design identity-oriented packaging, enhance the product image, and increase its trustworthiness and credibility among customers and in the market.
4	Smart Connection to Sales Networks	A set of actions to establish and expand women’s and their products’ access to markets, including the development of in-person and digital

Row	Main Dimension of Barriers	Overall Theme
		sales channels, establishing connections with markets and sales intermediaries, and expanding communication and business networks.
5	Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	A set of actions related to strengthening women's knowledge, skills, and managerial and commercial capacities, including decision-making, planning, marketing, and business development, with the aim of sustaining economic activity and providing the necessary capacity for its growth and expansion.

4-2. Results of the Second Delphi Stage; Assessment of the Importance of the Mechanisms of Rural Cooperatives' Role-Playing

Following the identification of the findings from the qualitative content analysis, the extracted themes and indicators were used as the basis for developing the closed-ended Delphi questionnaire. Accordingly, the five mechanisms of “product value re-creation,” “supply chain organization,” “market identity-building and credibility creation,” “strategic connection to sales networks,” and “empowerment for growth and scalability” were operationalized through 24 indicators and presented to the experts. Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale, and the mean and standard deviation were calculated for each indicator. According to the results of Table 4, the means of the indicators ranged from 4.29 to 4.60. Consequently, all indicators derived from the qualitative stage were considered highly important. The highest mean was assigned to “creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels,” with a value of 4.60. This was followed by “enhancing quality and aligning the product with market needs and demand,” with 4.58, and “aggregating and coordinating women's production for regular market supply,” with 4.56. The lowest mean was related to “diversifying and improving product characteristics in accordance with the market,” with a value of 4.29. As this stage focused on assessing importance, its results were used as feedback for the experts in the third stage. The degree of agreement and final prioritization were determined in the subsequent stage.

In the first mechanism, namely product value re-creation, the primary focus was on increasing the commercial potential of home-based products by modifying characteristics directly related to market acceptance. The mean of this mechanism was 4.41, and all six of its indicators were rated as highly important. “Enhancing quality and aligning the product with market needs and demand,” with a mean of 4.58, ranked first. “Improving product

packaging and appearance,” with 4.46, “innovation and improvement of product design,” with 4.42, and “increasing product marketability and professional presentation,” with 4.38, followed. In addition, “receiving and communicating market feedback for product improvement,” with 4.33, and “diversifying and improving product characteristics in accordance with the market,” with 4.29, were also assessed. The standard deviations of the indicators ranged from 0.58 to 0.73. This pattern indicates that, from the experts' perspective, the primary condition for enhancing the commercial value of a product is its compatibility with market expectations. Actions such as improving appearance and design and obtaining market feedback support this process.

The second mechanism, supply chain organization, had a mean of 4.43, and all five of its indicators received high importance ratings. “Aggregating and coordinating women's production for regular market supply,” with a mean of 4.56, received the highest score within this mechanism. This was followed by “standardizing the production process and product characteristics,” with 4.47, and “coordinating the timing and volume of product supply,” with 4.44. “Increasing the capacity to respond to continuous and larger orders,” with 4.38, and “establishing common procedures for supply control and management,” with 4.31, followed. The standard deviations of the indicators ranged from 0.59 to 0.72. These results indicate that, from the experts' perspective, reducing dispersion and transforming individual producers' capacities into coordinated and manageable supply constitute essential components of the cooperative's role in supply organization. These measures can strengthen responsiveness to continuous demand and support a more regular market presence.

In the third mechanism, market identity-building and credibility creation, a mean of 4.44 was obtained, and all four indicators were rated as highly important. “Developing the brand and creating a distinctive identity for rural women's products,” with a mean of 4.54, received the highest score.

“Designing identity-oriented and professional packaging,” with 4.43, “enhancing the product image and credibility among customers,” with 4.41, and “building trust through introducing the origin and characteristics of the product,” with 4.36, followed. The standard deviations of these indicators ranged from 0.61 to 0.71, indicating relatively limited dispersion in the experts’ views. From this perspective, the marketability of a product does not depend solely on its technical characteristics. Rather, how the product is represented and how market recognition and trust are established also affect its economic value. The cooperative can support a shared or local identity, create coherence in packaging, and clearly present product characteristics and origin. These measures can facilitate the differentiation of women’s products in a competitive market environment.

The fourth mechanism, strategic connection to sales networks, obtained the highest mean among the five mechanisms, at 4.47. “Creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels,” with 4.60, recorded the highest mean among the 24 indicators. “Establishing connections with stores, bazaars, and exhibitions,” with 4.52, and “using social networks and digital marketing tools,” with 4.48, ranked next. In addition, “expanding women’s communication and business networks” had a mean of 4.39, while “developing connections with intermediaries and distribution networks” had a mean of 4.34. The standard deviations of the indicators ranged from

0.55 to 0.72. The lowest dispersion was related to creating and expanding sales channels, while the highest was related to connections with intermediaries. These results highlight the importance of market access in the experts’ assessment. The cooperative can reduce the limited direct access of small-scale producers to customers and sales opportunities by developing in-person and digital pathways and facilitating connections with market actors.

In the fifth mechanism, empowerment for growth and scalability, a mean of 4.41 was obtained. “Strengthening business management and development skills,” with a mean of 4.51, received the highest score, followed by “increasing women’s ability in marketing and customer communication,” with 4.46, “strengthening economic planning and decision-making skills,” with 4.35, and “creating the necessary capacity for activity development and scalability,” with 4.32. The standard deviations of the indicators ranged from 0.62 to 0.73. These results indicate that empowerment within the framework under study is not limited to general training. Rather, it encompasses the development of practical capabilities for managing economic activities, interacting with the market, and planning for development. Therefore, cooperative training and advisory services become aligned with the logic of commercialization when they strengthen women’s practical capabilities to sustain and develop their economic activities ([Table 4 and 5](#)).

Table 4. Assessment of the importance of the components of the mechanisms of rural cooperatives’ role-playing in the second Delphi stage

Components	Component / Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
Product Value Re-creation	Enhancing quality and aligning the product with market needs and demand	4.58	0.58
	Innovation and improvement of product design	4.42	0.66
	Improving packaging and product appearance	4.46	0.64
	Increasing product marketability and professional presentation	4.38	0.71
	Diversifying and improving product characteristics in accordance with the market	4.29	0.73
	Receiving and communicating market feedback for product improvement	4.33	0.69
	Mechanism Mean	4.41	0.67
Supply Chain Organization	Aggregating and coordinating women’s production for regular market supply	4.56	0.59
	Standardizing the production process and product characteristics	4.47	0.63
	Coordinating the timing and volume of product supply	4.44	0.65
	Establishing common procedures for supply control and management	4.31	0.72

Components	Component / Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
	Increasing the capacity to respond to continuous and larger orders	4.38	0.68
	Mechanism Mean	4.43	0.65
Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	Developing the brand and creating a distinctive identity for rural women's products	4.54	0.61
	Designing identity-oriented and professional packaging	4.43	0.67
	Enhancing the product image and credibility among customers	4.41	0.69
	Building trust through introducing the origin and characteristics of the product	4.36	0.71
	Mechanism Mean	4.44	0.67
Smart Connection to Sales Networks	Creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels	4.60	0.55
	Establishing connections with stores, bazaars, and exhibitions	4.52	0.60
	Developing connections with intermediaries and distribution networks	4.34	0.72
	Using social networks and digital marketing tools	4.48	0.64
	Expanding women's communication and business networks	4.39	0.69
	Mechanism Mean	4.47	0.64
Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	Strengthening business management and development skills	4.51	0.62
	Increasing women's ability in marketing and customer communication	4.46	0.65
	Strengthening economic planning and decision-making skills	4.32	0.70
	Creating the necessary capacity for activity development and scalability	4.32	0.73
	Mechanism Mean	4.41	0.68
Total Questionnaire	24 indicators	4.43	0.66

Table 5- Status of the identified mechanisms and indicators at the end of the second stage and their entry into the third Delphi stage

Row	Main Mechanism of Rural Cooperatives' Role-Playing	Number of Indicators	Mean of the Mechanism in the Second Stage	Status at the End of the Second Stage
1	Product Value Re-creation	6	4.41	Confirmed and entered the third Delphi stage
2	Supply Chain Organization	5	4.43	Confirmed and entered the third Delphi stage
3	Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	4	4.44	Confirmed and entered the third Delphi stage
4	Smart Connection to Sales Networks	5	4.47	Confirmed and entered the third Delphi stage
5	Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	4	4.41	Confirmed and entered the third Delphi stage
Total	Five main mechanisms	24	4.43	Confirmation of the five-dimensional structure and entry into the third Delphi stage

Overall, the mean of the 24 indicators was 4.43, and the total standard deviation was 0.66. Comparison of the mean scores of the mechanisms showed that

strategic connection to sales networks, with 4.47, was at the highest level, followed by market identity-building and credibility creation with 4.44,

supply chain organization with 4.43, and product value re-creation and empowerment for growth and scalability, both with 4.41. At the indicator level, the three components with the highest mean scores were, respectively, creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels, enhancing quality and aligning the product with market needs and demand, and aggregating and coordinating women's production for regular market supply. In contrast, diversifying and improving product characteristics in accordance with the market had the lowest mean. Nevertheless, it remained within the high-importance range.

These findings also indicate that the cooperative's role in commercialization is chain-like in nature. Product value creation, supply organization, market credibility, sales access, and business development capacity are complementary components of a single process. Accordingly, the findings of the second stage supported the adequacy of the five-dimensional structure derived from the qualitative stage and indicated that none of the 24 indicators required removal for continuation of the process. However, the proximity of the mean scores at the mechanism level indicates that the differences in their importance at this stage were insufficient to determine definitive priorities. Therefore, all 24 indicators were transferred to the third Delphi stage without deletion. This allowed the experts to reconsider their judgments based on statistical feedback and enabled the assessment of the convergence of their views and the final prioritization of the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to commercialization.

4-3- Results of the Third Delphi Stage; Reaching Consensus and Final Prioritization of the Barriers

In the third Delphi stage, the results obtained from the second stage, including the mean importance ratings of the identified indicators and mechanisms, were provided to the experts as statistical feedback. The purpose of this stage was to provide an opportunity to reconsider previous judgments, increase the convergence of viewpoints, and reach final agreement on the importance and priority of the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives can contribute to the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women. In this stage, the same 24 experts who had participated in the previous rounds re-evaluated the 24 indicators organized into five main mechanisms: product

value re-creation, supply chain organization, market identity-building and credibility creation, strategic connection to sales networks, and empowerment for growth and scalability. The experts conducted this reassessment with awareness of the results of the previous stage.

To examine the degree of agreement among the 24 experts regarding the priority of the 24 indicators, Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) was calculated. The results showed a Kendall's W of 0.81, with $\chi^2(23) = 447.12$ and $p < 0.001$. The degrees of freedom were 23, corresponding to the 24 indicators included in the analysis. The high value of Kendall's W indicates a high level of agreement among the experts in ranking the indicators. The statistically significant result indicates that the observed agreement was greater than would be expected by chance. Accordingly, the third Delphi stage provided evidence of a high level of convergence among the experts' judgments regarding the importance and priority of the 24 indicators.

The findings of this stage, consistent with the results of the second stage, indicate that strategic connection to sales networks, market identity-building and credibility creation, supply chain organization, product value re-creation, and empowerment for growth and scalability constitute the five main mechanisms related to the commercialization process of rural women's home-based products. Among these, mechanisms directly related to market access, demand creation, regular supply capacity, and enhancement of product credibility were considered more important. This pattern is also consistent with the results of the second stage, in which creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels, enhancing quality and aligning the product with market needs and demand, and aggregating and coordinating women's production for regular market supply received the highest mean importance ratings.

Accordingly, the results of the third stage indicate that the role of rural cooperatives in the commercialization of home-based products cannot be defined solely in terms of product supply or distribution. Cooperatives can act as intermediary institutions between producers and markets by enhancing product value and marketability, organizing dispersed production, creating market identity and credibility, connecting producers to sales channels, and strengthening women's

managerial and commercial capabilities. These five mechanisms collectively form a chain of complementary interventions. This chain begins with product preparation and improvement, proceeds through production organization and the creation of market credibility, and culminates in market-oriented business development through connection to sales networks and strengthening women's growth capacity. Therefore, given the high level of agreement among the experts ($W = 0.81$) and confirmation of its statistical significance, the

third Delphi stage was considered the final stage of the assessment, consensus-building, and prioritization process for the mechanisms identified in the study. Consequently, the five main mechanisms and 24 indicators resulting from the qualitative and Delphi stages were established as the final framework for explaining the role of rural cooperatives in the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women (Table 6).

Table 6- Results of Kendall's Concordance Test

Statistical Indicator	Value
Number of experts (N)	24
Number of final indicators (K)	24
Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W)	0.81
Chi-square value (Chi-Square)	447.12
Degrees of freedom (df)	23
Significance level (p-value)	<0.001

4-4. Comparison of Indicator Ranks in the Second and Third Stages

To assess the stability of the experts' judgments and examine the effect of statistical feedback, the ranks of the 24 identified indicators in the second and third Delphi stages were compared. In the third stage, the means from the second stage were provided to the same 24 experts so that they could reconsider their previous judgments. Comparison of the ranks makes it possible to assess the convergence of viewpoints. The results of Table 7 show that changes in the ranks of the indicators were limited and that no indicator was removed from the final structure. The majority of the indicators retained their ranks or experienced only limited shifts. Therefore, the statistical feedback in the third stage mainly resulted in a partial refinement of the ordering of the indicators and did not alter the conceptual framework of the study.

At the level of the main mechanisms, 'strategic connection to sales networks,' with a mean of 4.47 in the second stage, showed the highest initial mean importance. It was followed by "market identity-building and credibility creation," with 4.44, "supply chain organization," with 4.34, and the two mechanisms of "product value re-creation" and "empowerment for growth and scalability," both with 4.41. This ordering indicates that the experts attached greater importance to mechanisms related to market access, credibility creation, supply organization, and enhancement of product

marketability. Kendall's coefficient of concordance in the third stage was 0.81 and statistically significant. Therefore, the priority structure demonstrated a high level of convergence. At the indicator level, "creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels," with a mean of 4.60, "enhancing quality and aligning the product with market needs and demand," with 4.58, and "aggregating and coordinating women's production for regular market supply," with 4.56, had the highest mean importance ratings. These three indicators represent complementary commercialization capabilities. This synergy indicates that the success of cooperatives depends on linking product readiness, supply capacity, and sustained market access. In contrast, "diversifying and improving product characteristics in accordance with the market," with a mean of 4.29, had the lowest mean. Nevertheless, this indicator still had high importance.

Comparison of the two stages shows that the feedback from the second round did not result in a fundamental change in the experts' judgment pattern. The retention of ranks or limited shifts in the indicators, together with the high Kendall's coefficient of concordance, indicates an appropriate level of expert consensus. Product value re-creation through quality and packaging enhancement increases product marketability. Supply chain organization through production aggregation and standardization strengthens the ability to respond to

regular demand. Identity-building and credibility creation enhance customer trust. At the same time, connection to sales networks expands access to in-person and digital markets, while women's managerial and commercial empowerment increases the capacity for business growth and scalability.

Overall, rather than redefining the conceptual framework, the third Delphi stage primarily served to consolidate, refine, and validate the identified priorities. The retention of the high importance of all 24 indicators, the limited changes in ranks, and the concordance coefficient of 0.81 provide appropriate evidence of the stability and convergence of the experts' judgments.

Accordingly, the study's five-dimensional framework represents a complementary set of commercialization requirements in which product improvement, supply coordination, identity and trust creation, sales channel development, and strengthening managerial capabilities are pursued in an integrated manner. This finding highlights the necessity for cooperatives to move beyond their traditional role of supply and distribution toward a role as market-development intermediaries. In this role, they link women's productive capacity, support resources, and market opportunities and create the conditions for the formation of market-oriented businesses (Table 7).

Table 7- Comparison of the Ranks of Indicators of the Mechanisms of Rural Cooperatives' Role-Playing in the Second and Third Delphi Stages

Row	Main Mechanism	Indicator	Mean in the Second Stage	Rank in the Second Stage	Rank Status in the Third Stage
1	Smart Connection to Sales Networks	Creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels	4.60	1	Limited change / final rank to be entered
2	Product Value Re-creation	Enhancing quality and aligning the product with market needs and demand	4.58	2	Limited change / final rank to be entered
3	Supply Chain Organization	Aggregating and coordinating women's production for regular market supply	4.56	3	Limited change / final rank to be entered
4	Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	Developing the brand and creating a distinctive identity for rural women's products	4.54	4	Limited change / final rank to be entered
5	Smart Connection to Sales Networks	Establishing connections with stores, bazaars, and exhibitions	4.52	5	Limited change / final rank to be entered
6	Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	Strengthening business management and development skills	4.51	6	Limited change / final rank to be entered
7	Smart Connection to Sales Networks	Using social networks and digital marketing tools	4.48	7	Limited change / final rank to be entered
8	Supply Chain Organization	Standardizing the production process and product characteristics	4.47	7	Limited change / final rank to be entered
9	Smart Connection to Sales Networks	Expanding women's communication and business networks	4.39	9	Limited change / final rank to be entered
10	Product Value Re-creation	Increasing product marketability and professional presentation	4.38	10	Limited change / final rank to be entered
11	Supply Chain Organization	Increasing the capacity to respond to continuous and larger orders	4.38	10	Limited change / final rank to be entered
12	Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	Designing identity-oriented and professional packaging	4.43	6	Limited change / final rank to be entered

Row	Main Mechanism	Indicator	Mean in the Second Stage	Rank in the Second Stage	Rank Status in the Third Stage
13	Supply Chain Organization	Coordinating the timing and volume of product supply	4.44	5	Limited change / final rank to be entered
14	Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	Enhancing the product image and credibility among customers	4.41	7	Limited change / final rank to be entered
15	Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	Building trust through introducing the origin and characteristics of the product	4.36	12	Limited change / final rank to be entered
16	Smart Connection to Sales Networks	Developing connections with intermediaries and distribution networks	4.34	14	Limited change / final rank to be entered
17	Product Value Re-creation	Innovation and improvement of product design	4.42	8	Limited change / final rank to be entered
18	Product Value Re-creation	Improving packaging and product appearance	4.46	9	Limited change / final rank to be entered
19	Product Value Re-creation	Receiving and communicating market feedback for product improvement	4.33	15	Limited change / final rank to be entered
20	Product Value Re-creation	Diversifying and improving product characteristics in accordance with the market	4.29	24	Limited change / final rank to be entered
21	Supply Chain Organization	Establishing common procedures for supply control and management	4.31	16	Limited change / final rank to be entered
22	Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	Increasing women's ability in marketing and customer communication	4.46	9	Limited change / final rank to be entered
23	Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	Strengthening economic planning and decision-making skills	4.35	13	Limited change / final rank to be entered
24	Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	Creating the necessary capacity for activity development and scalability	4.32	17	Limited change / final rank to be entered

4.5. Analysis of the Importance of the Main Dimensions

To determine the relative importance of the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women, the findings of the qualitative and quantitative stages of the study were examined. These mechanisms include product value re-creation, supply chain organization, market identity-building and credibility creation, strategic connection to sales networks, and empowerment for growth and scalability. These dimensions were initially identified through qualitative content analysis and were assessed and refined in terms of importance during the Delphi stages. The results

showed that all five mechanisms were highly important and that the role of cooperatives was multidimensional and complementary. The proximity of the mean scores also indicates that the commercialization of home-based products cannot be reduced to a single intervention.

In the second Delphi stage, "strategic connection to sales networks," with a mean of 4.47, ranked first. This mechanism emphasizes the creation and development of in-person and digital sales channels, connections with stores, bazaars, and exhibitions, and the use of social networks and digital marketing tools. At the indicator level, "creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels," with a mean of 4.60, obtained the highest score among the study indicators. Therefore, from the experts' perspective, cooperatives can play an

effective role in commercialization when producers' access to markets is transformed from sporadic and individual contact into sustained interaction.

"Market identity-building and credibility creation," with a mean of 4.44, ranked second. Within this mechanism, "developing the brand and creating a distinctive identity for rural women's products," with a mean of 4.54, was the most important indicator. Professional and identity-oriented packaging, enhancement of the product image, and the creation of customer trust were also important. This finding confirms that commercialization is not merely an increase in sales volume but also requires the creation of perceived value and the establishment of trust in the product.

"Supply chain organization," with a mean of 4.43, ranked third. "Aggregating and coordinating women's production for regular market supply," with a mean of 4.56, received the highest score within this mechanism. Production and product-characteristic standardization, coordination of the timing and volume of supply, and establishment of common supply control and management procedures were the other components of this dimension. From this perspective, the cooperative

has an organizing and intermediary role that transforms dispersed production into coordinated supply.

"Product value re-creation," with a mean of 4.41, jointly ranked fourth. Its most important indicator was "enhancing quality and aligning the product with market needs and demand," with a mean of 4.58. Innovation, design improvement, and packaging were other components of this mechanism. Accordingly, cooperatives can reduce the gap between the logic of home-based production and market requirements by transferring market information and facilitating product modification.

"Empowerment for growth and scalability" also jointly ranked fourth, with a mean of 4.41. Strengthening business management and development skills, with a mean of 4.51; increasing marketing and customer communication capabilities, with a mean of 4.46; strengthening economic planning and decision-making, with a mean of 4.35; and creating development and scalability capacity, with a mean of 4.32, were the four indicators of this mechanism. Accordingly, empowerment in this study extends beyond general training and encompasses women's practical capacity for economic activity (Table 8 and 9).

Table 8- Mean Importance of the Main Mechanisms of Rural Cooperatives' Role-Playing in the Commercialization of Women's Home-Based Products

Main Mechanism of Rural Cooperatives' Role-Playing	Mean Importance (out of 5)	Relative Position in the Second Stage	Overall Interpretation
Smart Connection to Sales Networks	4.47	1	The most important mechanism; indicates the importance of creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels and developing connections with markets, stores, exhibitions, intermediaries, and distribution networks
Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	4.44	2	Emphasizes the creation of a distinctive identity, brand, professional packaging, enhancement of the product image, and creation of trust and credibility in the market
Supply Chain Organization	4.43	3	Indicates the importance of aggregating and coordinating production, standardization, regulating the timing and volume of supply, and increasing the capacity to respond to continuous orders
Product Value Re-creation	4.41	4 (joint)	Emphasizes quality enhancement, alignment of the product with market needs, innovation, design, packaging, diversification, and the use of market feedback
Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	4.41	4 (joint)	Includes strengthening business management and development skills, marketing, customer communication, planning and economic decision-making, and activity development capacity
Overall mean of 24 indicators	4.43	—	Indicates the high importance of the five mechanisms of cooperatives' role-playing as a whole from the experts' perspective

Table 9- Process of Identifying, Assessing, and Establishing the Mechanisms of Rural Cooperatives' Role-Playing across the Different Stages of the Study

Main Mechanism of Role-Playing	First Stage; Qualitative Identification	Second Stage; Importance Assessment	Third Stage; Agreement and Final Priority Assessment
Product Value Re-creation	Identification of 6 indicators related to quality, innovation, design, packaging, marketability, diversification, and market feedback	Importance assessment of 6 indicators by experts; mechanism mean of 4.41	Reassessment of evaluations and examination of expert agreement; retention of all 6 indicators in the final structure
Supply Chain Organization	Identification of 5 indicators related to production aggregation, standardization, supply coordination, supply management, and response to orders	Importance assessment of 5 indicators by experts; mechanism mean of 4.43	Reassessment of evaluations and examination of expert agreement; retention of all 5 indicators in the final structure
Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	Identification of 5 components	Importance assessment of 4 indicators by experts; mechanism mean of 4.44	Reassessment of evaluations and examination of expert agreement; retention of all 4 indicators in the final structure
Smart Connection to Sales Networks	Identification of 6 components	Importance assessment of 5 indicators by experts; mechanism mean of 4.47	Reassessment of evaluations and examination of expert agreement; retention of all 5 indicators in the final structure
Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	Identification of 4 indicators related to business management, marketing, economic planning, development, and scalability	Importance assessment of 4 indicators by experts; mechanism mean of 4.41	Reassessment of evaluations and examination of expert agreement; retention of all 4 indicators in the final structure
Total	Identification of 24 indicators across five main mechanisms	Importance assessment of 24 indicators; overall mean of 4.43	Assessment of expert agreement; none of the 24 indicators removed and the five-dimensional structure established with $W = 0.81$

The results of Table 9 show that the process of identifying and establishing the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to commercialization was conducted as a sequential exploratory mixed-methods process. In the first stage, qualitative content analysis of the experts' views led to the identification of five main mechanisms and 24 indicators. In the second stage, the importance of all indicators was assessed on a five-point scale, and the overall mean importance of the indicators was 4.43. In the third stage, feedback from the previous stage was provided to the experts, and their evaluations were reassessed. Kendall's coefficient of concordance, equal to 0.81, indicated a high level of agreement among the experts. None of the 24 indicators was removed from the final structure. Therefore, the final structure of the study comprises five complementary mechanisms and 24 indicators. Together, these provide a framework for explaining the role of rural cooperatives in the

commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women.

4-6. Final Ranking of the Indicators

Following the qualitative stage and three rounds of the Delphi process, and after reaching a high level of agreement among the experts, the final structure of the role of rural cooperatives in the commercialization of women's home-based products was established in the form of five main mechanisms and 24 indicators. These mechanisms include "product value re-creation," "supply chain organization," "market identity-building and credibility creation," "strategic connection to sales networks," and "empowerment for growth and scalability." The mean importance scores obtained in the second Delphi round were used to assess the initial relative importance of the mechanisms and to provide statistical feedback to the experts. The third Delphi round was then used to reassess the

indicators, examine the convergence of expert judgments, and establish the final prioritization.

According to the mean importance scores from the second Delphi round, “strategic connection to sales networks,” with a mean of 4.47, had the highest initial importance among the five mechanisms. This mechanism emphasizes creating and expanding pathways for rural women’s products to access markets through in-person and digital sales channels, stores, markets, exhibitions, distribution networks, and digital marketing tools. At the indicator level, “creating and expanding in-person and digital sales channels,” with a mean of 4.60, received the highest score among the 24 indicators. “Market identity-building and credibility creation,” with a mean of 4.44, showed the second-highest initial importance. Its importance is related to the role of cooperatives in creating a distinctive identity for products, strengthening the brand, improving packaging, enhancing product image, and establishing trust and credibility in the market. Among these indicators, “developing the brand and creating a distinctive identity for rural women’s products,” with a mean of 4.54, received a high importance score.

“Supply chain organization,” with a mean of 4.43, showed the third-highest initial importance. The indicator “aggregating and coordinating women’s production to ensure regular market supply,” with a mean of 4.56, was among the highest-rated indicators in the study. Product standardization, coordination of the timing and volume of supply, and increasing the capacity to respond to continuous orders were also identified as important components of this mechanism.

The two mechanisms of “product value re-creation” and “empowerment for growth and scalability” both obtained a mean of 4.41 in the second Delphi round.

Product value re-creation emphasized improving quality and aligning products with market needs, while empowerment focused on strengthening management, marketing, planning, and business development capabilities. These results indicate that commercialization requires complementary attention to both product marketability and women’s managerial and business capacities.

In the third Delphi round, the second-stage results were provided to the same experts as statistical feedback, allowing them to reconsider their judgments. The final prioritization was therefore established after this reassessment and the examination of expert agreement. Kendall’s coefficient of concordance was 0.81, with a statistically significant chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 447.12$, $df = 23$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a high level of convergence among the experts. None of the 24 indicators was removed during the third-round reassessment. Thus, the final framework retained all five mechanisms and 24 indicators, with the second-round mean scores serving as descriptive evidence of relative importance and the third-round reassessment providing the basis for final prioritization and confirmation of the framework.

Overall, the final findings indicate that the role of rural cooperatives in commercialization encompasses five complementary mechanisms: enhancing product value, organizing supply, building market identity and credibility, connecting producers to sales networks, and strengthening women’s capacity for business growth and scalability. Together, these mechanisms provide an integrated framework for explaining how rural cooperatives can facilitate the transition from dispersed home-based production toward market-oriented businesses (Table 10 and Figure 1).

Table 10. Initial Relative Importance of the Main Mechanisms Based on Mean Scores in the Second Delphi Round and Their Final Prioritization after Third-Round Reassessment

Row	Main Mechanism of Rural Cooperatives’ Role-Playing	Number of Indicators	Mean Importance	Final Rank
1	Smart Connection to Sales Networks	5	4.47	1
2	Market Identity-Building and Credibility Creation	4	4.44	2
3	Supply Chain Organization	5	4.43	3
4	Product Value Re-creation	6	4.41	4
5	Empowerment for Growth and Scalability	4	4.41	5
6	Five Main Mechanisms	24	4.43	–

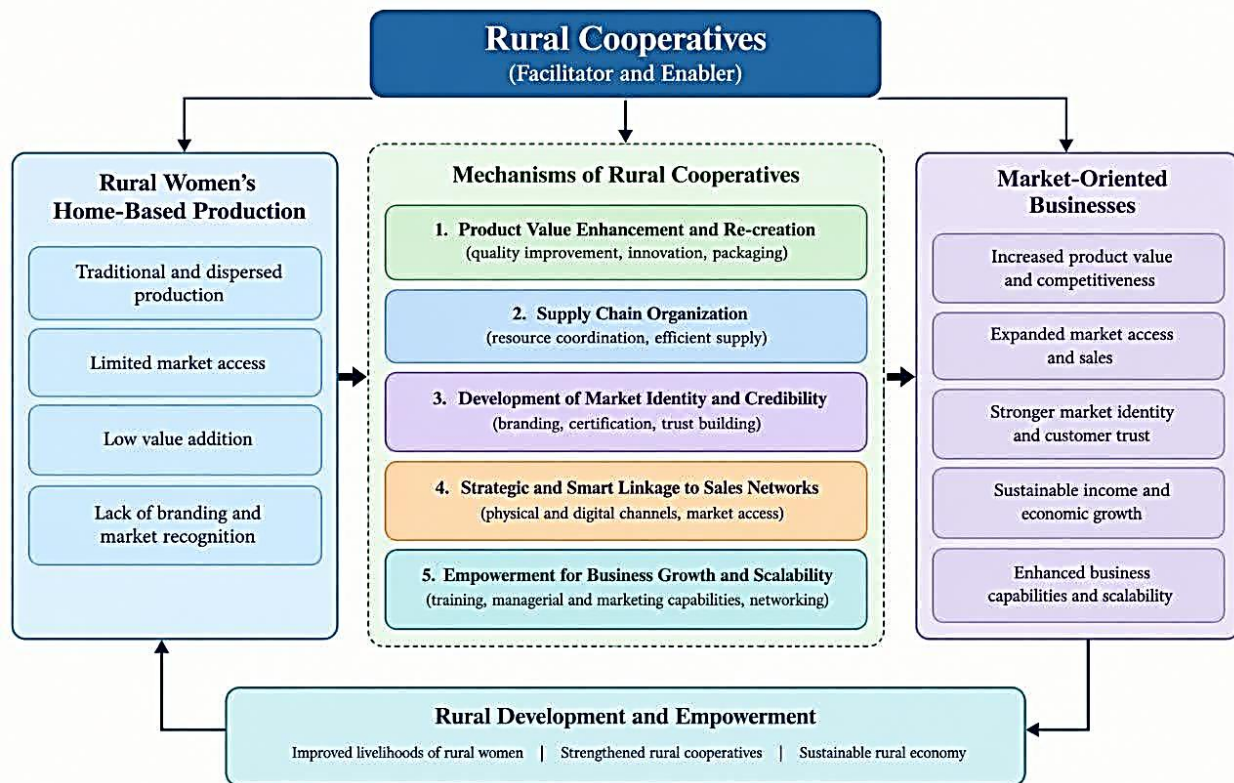


Figure 1. Final Model of the Mechanisms of Rural Cooperatives' Contribution to the Commercialization of Home-Based Products and Development of Market-Oriented Businesses among Rural Women

The conceptual model illustrates an integrated framework explaining how rural cooperatives can facilitate the commercialization of rural women's home-based products and support the development of market-oriented businesses. Rather than conceptualizing cooperatives merely as institutions for production support or product distribution, the model positions them as intermediary and market-development institutions that connect women's productive capacities with value-chain requirements, market opportunities, and business development capabilities. This interpretation is consistent with the qualitative findings and the subsequent Delphi validation, which confirmed five complementary mechanisms as the final analytical structure.

At the core of the model are five interrelated mechanisms. The first, Product Value Enhancement and Re-creation, concerns improving product quality, aligning products with market needs, innovation and design, packaging, marketability, and the use of market feedback. Its importance reflects the need to reduce the gap between traditional home-based production and market

expectations. The second mechanism, Supply Chain Organization, transforms dispersed individual production into a more coordinated supply system through aggregation, standardization, supply coordination, and improved responsiveness to regular and larger orders.

The third mechanism, Development of Market Identity and Credibility, emphasizes branding, professional and identity-oriented packaging, product image, and customer trust. This mechanism demonstrates that commercialization depends not only on producing a marketable product but also on establishing a recognizable identity and credibility in the marketplace. The fourth mechanism, Strategic and Smart Linkage to Sales Networks, connects rural women's products to physical and digital sales channels, stores, bazaars, exhibitions, intermediaries, distribution networks, and digital marketing platforms. This mechanism received the highest overall importance among the five dimensions, with a mean of 4.47, while the creation and expansion of physical and digital sales channels was the highest-rated individual indicator (4.60).

The fifth mechanism, Empowerment for Business Growth and Scalability, focuses on strengthening women's business management, marketing, customer communication, economic planning, decision-making, and capacity for business development. Thus, empowerment is conceptualized not as general training alone, but as the development of practical capabilities required to sustain and expand market-oriented economic activities.

Overall, the model represents commercialization as a complementary and sequential process rather than the outcome of a single intervention. Product improvement enhances marketability; supply-chain organization creates reliable supply capacity; market identity and credibility strengthen differentiation and trust; sales-network development expands market access; and women's business capabilities provide the capacity for continuity, growth, and scalability. The Delphi findings support this integrated structure, with all 24 indicators retained and an overall mean importance of 4.43. Moreover, the high and statistically significant Kendall's coefficient of concordance ($W = 0.81$; $\chi^2 = 447.12$; $df = 23$; $p < 0.001$) indicates substantial convergence among experts regarding the final framework.

Accordingly, the model suggests that rural cooperatives can contribute to the transition from dispersed home-based production to sustainable market-oriented businesses by coordinating product, supply, identity, market access, and business-capacity interventions within an integrated commercialization pathway. This provides the central theoretical contribution of the study: the intermediary role of rural cooperatives lies in connecting production capabilities with the institutional, organizational, and market mechanisms required for commercialization and business development.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study was conducted to explore the mechanisms through which rural cooperatives contribute to the commercialization of home-based products and the development of market-oriented businesses among rural women in Sarab Kalan Village, Ilam Province. The study employed a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used, while validation was conducted through three Delphi

rounds involving 24 experts in the fields of cooperatives, women's entrepreneurship, rural development, business management, and marketing. The findings demonstrated the role of cooperatives through five main mechanisms: product value re-creation, supply chain organization, market identity-building and credibility creation, strategic connection to sales networks, and empowerment for growth and scalability. Therefore, the commercialization of home-based products is not a one-dimensional process but requires the simultaneous coordination of product, supply, identity, market, and human capabilities.

The first indicator was product value re-creation. This mechanism suggests that commercialization begins when a home-based product becomes marketable to customers in terms of quality, design, packaging, innovation, and alignment with market demand. In this process, the cooperative should transfer market feedback to producers so that production can shift from a traditional pattern toward products aligned with market demand. This finding is consistent with [Alaeddinivandi & Soleymanipour \(2025\)](#) regarding the importance of skills and economic attitudes, and with [Golshani & Shiri \(2025\)](#) concerning the need to enhance technical and specialized competencies. However, the present study does not regard skills merely as an individual characteristic; rather, it situates them in connection with market information and product improvement.

The second indicator was supplying chain organization. Cooperatives can transform dispersed production into a collective and reliable capacity by aggregating women's production, standardizing products, controlling quality, and coordinating the timing and volume of supply. This finding is consistent with [Golshani & Shiri \(2025\)](#), who emphasized family-based and participatory businesses. Nevertheless, the difference lies in the level of analysis. That study considers participation as a strategy for entrepreneurship development, whereas the present study views it as a mechanism for the operational coordination of supply.

The third indicator was market identity-building and credibility creation. This mechanism highlights that quality alone is not sufficient for market success. Women's products also require branding, professional packaging, presentation of origin, and a distinctive identity. This finding is consistent with

Lopez-Toro et al. (2026), who reported locality as an important factor in success and as the most influential factor affecting business performance. However, the present study shows that locality becomes an economic advantage when it is made identifiable to customers through branding, packaging, and product storytelling.

The fourth indicator was strategic connection to sales networks. Sustainable access to customers through stores, marketplaces, exhibitions, social networks, and digital tools constitutes a fundamental link between production and income. This finding is consistent with Dolatabadi et al. (2025) regarding the importance of communication and social networks, and with Tabatabaeeamid & Shahraki (2026) concerning educational, policy, and digital barriers. It is also consistent with Rajeev et al. (2026) regarding the role of technology and supportive policies in strengthening women's capabilities and agency. The difference in the present study is that technology is not regarded as an independent objective but rather as part of the mechanism connecting production, marketing, and sales.

The fifth indicator was empowerment for growth and scalability. This mechanism highlights that women need skills in business management, pricing, marketing, negotiation, customer relations, and planning to move beyond initial sales. This finding is consistent with Alaeddinivandi & Soleymanipour (2025) regarding the importance of skills and economic attitudes, and with Nannetti & Operti (2026) regarding the role of incubators, coaching, networking, and access to technical and commercial knowledge. The main difference is that the present study situates this function within the capacity of rural cooperatives.

Overall, the greatest consistency between the findings and the literature was observed in four areas: skills and training, networking, technology and support, and the economic utilization of local capacities. In contrast, some differences were also identified. Grangeiro et al. (2026) emphasized economic motivation and external support in initiating and developing informal entrepreneurship, whereas the present study focuses on transforming existing production into market-oriented businesses. Likewise, the effect of formal business registration emphasized by Lopez-Toro et al. (2026) was not included among the five mechanisms identified in the present study because

this study focused on value creation, supply, market, and empowerment. These differences should be understood primarily as resulting from differences in context, population, and the stage of the entrepreneurial process rather than as direct contradictions between the findings. This distinction highlights the added value of the present study in explaining how dispersed capacities can be transformed into sustainable economic performance.

Therefore, the most important contribution of the present study is the provision of a process-oriented understanding of the role of cooperatives. The five mechanisms are not independent. Value re-creation prepares the product for the market; supply organization enables regular provision; identity-building creates differentiation and trust; connection to sales networks converts created value into customers and income; and empowerment enables continuity and growth.

Overall, the findings indicate that the transition from home-based production to a market-oriented business is not solely the result of increased production but rather the outcome of coordinating five complementary mechanisms along the value chain. Validation of the framework through three Delphi rounds involving 24 experts and quantitative assessment using a five-point scale provided an appropriate basis for formulating this model. Nevertheless, because the study focused on Sarab Kalan Village and on experts' perspectives, the generalizability of the findings should be approached with caution. Future studies can test these five mechanisms in other regions and, by incorporating the perspectives of women and customers, longitudinally assess their effects on sales, income, market diversification, sustainability, and business scale. Ultimately, a rural cooperative can fulfill its role in women's economic development when it evolves from an institution focused on supply and distribution into an active institution for market development, value chain organization, and economic empowerment.

Recommendations

1. Establishing an integrated product development and market preparation system: Cooperatives should create the conditions for improving the quality, design, packaging, and innovation of women's products by monitoring demand and transferring customer feedback. In addition, the local characteristics of products should be

transformed into competitive advantages and marketable value through professional branding.

2. Organizing production and creating an integrated supply chain: Cooperatives should transform women's dispersed capacities into collective and reliable production capacity through production aggregation, standardization, quality control, and coordination of the volume and timing of supply. This measure increases their ability to respond regularly to orders and enter larger markets.

3. Developing sales networks and establishing sustainable market connections: Cooperatives should strengthen women's access to diverse markets by simultaneously developing in-person and digital channels through stores, exhibitions, marketplaces, and social networks. Diversification of sales channels reduces dependence on the local market and the risks associated with women's individual entry into the market.

4. Establishing a commercial empowerment system and supporting business growth: Women's training should focus on practical skills such as pricing, financial management, marketing, negotiation, and customer relations and should be

accompanied by continuous consultation and coaching. Cooperatives should also establish a sustainable network among women, support institutions, educational centers, and market actors to promote business growth and scalability.

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Author Contributions

The authors contributed equally to the development and preparation of this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the authorship or publication of this article.

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واکاوای سازوکارهای نقش آفرینی تعاونی‌های روستایی در تجاری‌سازی محصولات خانگی و توسعه کسب‌وکارهای بازارمحور در میان زنان روستایی (مطالعه موردی: روستای سراب کلان)

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چکیده مبسوط

۱. مقدمه

فعالیت‌های تولیدی زنان روستایی در حوزه محصولات غذایی، صنایع دستی و سایر محصولات خانگی، از ظرفیت‌های مهم توسعه اقتصادی روستاها و تقویت مشارکت اقتصادی زنان به شمار می‌روند. با این حال، برخورداری از مهارت‌های تولیدی به تنهایی برای دستیابی به درآمد پایدار و توسعه کسب‌وکار کافی نیست؛ زیرا پراکندگی تولید، ضعف در ایجاد ارزش افزوده، محدودیت دسترسی به بازار، فقدان هویت تجاری مشخص و ناپایداری شبکه‌های فروش، مانع تبدیل فعالیت‌های خانگی به کسب‌وکارهای بازارمحور می‌شوند. در این میان، تعاونی‌های روستایی می‌توانند با سازمان‌دهی ظرفیت‌های پراکنده تولیدکنندگان، تسهیل ارتباط با بازار و ارائه خدمات تخصصی، نقش واسطه‌ای مؤثری در فرایند تجاری‌سازی ایفا کنند. با وجود مطالعات متعدد درباره کارآفرینی زنان روستایی و کارکردهای تعاونی‌ها، سازوکارهای مشخصی که از طریق آن‌ها تعاونی‌ها تولیدات خانگی را به فعالیت‌های اقتصادی پایدار و بازارمحور تبدیل می‌کنند، کمتر به صورت یکپارچه بررسی شده‌اند. از این رو، پژوهش حاضر با هدف شناسایی و تبیین سازوکارهای نقش آفرینی تعاونی‌های روستایی در تجاری‌سازی محصولات خانگی و توسعه کسب‌وکارهای بازارمحور زنان، در روستای سراب کلان شهرستان سیروان استان ایلام انجام شده است.

۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

چارچوب نظری پژوهش بر تلفیق نظریه زنجیره ارزش و نظریه شبکه‌های اجتماعی و کسب‌وکار استوار است. بر اساس نظریه زنجیره ارزش، ارتقای کیفیت، نوآوری، بهبود طراحی و بسته‌بندی، برندسازی، سازمان‌دهی عرضه و توسعه بازاریابی، فعالیت‌هایی به هم پیوسته‌اند که می‌توانند ارزش اقتصادی محصولات و قابلیت رقابت‌پذیری آن‌ها را افزایش دهند. در مقابل، نظریه شبکه‌های اجتماعی و کسب‌وکار بر

اهمیت روابط میان تولیدکنندگان، مشتریان، توزیع‌کنندگان، نهادهای پشتیبان و سایر بازیگران اقتصادی در دسترسی به اطلاعات، منابع و فرصت‌های بازار تأکید می‌کند. تلفیق این دو رویکرد، امکان تحلیل نقش تعاونی‌ها را هم در سازمان‌دهی فرایند خلق و تحقق ارزش و هم در ایجاد و تقویت ارتباطات اقتصادی فراهم می‌سازد. بر این اساس، تجاری‌سازی محصولات خانگی فرایندی چندبعدی تلقی می‌شود که تحقق آن مستلزم هماهنگی میان ویژگی‌های محصول، سازمان‌دهی عرضه، ایجاد اعتماد در بازار، توسعه شبکه‌های فروش و تقویت توانمندی‌های مدیریتی و تجاری زنان است.

۳. روش تحقیق

پژوهش از نظر هدف، کاربردی و از نظر روش، دارای رویکرد آمیخته اکتشافی متوالی است. در مرحله کیفی، داده‌ها از طریق مصاحبه‌های نیمه‌ساختاریافته و پرسش‌نامه‌های باز از خبرگان حوزه‌های تعاونی، کارآفرینی زنان، توسعه روستایی، مدیریت کسب‌وکار و بازاریابی گردآوری و با استفاده از تحلیل محتوای کیفی بررسی شدند. سپس، مؤلفه‌ها و شاخص‌های استخراج‌شده در سه دور اجرای تکنیک دلفی با مشارکت ۲۴ نفر از خبرگان، با نمونه‌گیری هدفمند، ارزیابی، اصلاح و اولویت‌بندی شدند. ابزار مرحله کمی، پرسش‌نامه بسته مبتنی بر طیف پنج‌درجه‌ای لیکرت بود. برای تحلیل داده‌ها از میانگین، انحراف معیار و ضریب توافق کندانال استفاده شد. همچنین، پایایی کل پرسش‌نامه و ابعاد آن با ضریب آلفای کرونباخ بررسی شد. مقدار آلفای کرونباخ برای کل پرسش‌نامه ۰/۹۰ و برای پنج سازوکار بین ۰/۸۶ تا ۰/۹۱ بود که نشان‌دهنده همسانی درونی مطلوب ابزار پژوهش است.

۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

نتایج تحلیل محتوای کیفی و ارزیابی‌های دلفی، پنج سازوکار اصلی و ۲۴ شاخص را برای تبیین نقش تعاونی‌های روستایی در تجاری‌سازی

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۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

یافته‌ها نشان می‌دهند که تجاری‌سازی محصولات خانگی زنان روستایی صرفاً با افزایش تولید یا فراهم کردن امکان توزیع محقق نمی‌شود، بلکه به هماهنگی مجموعه‌ای از مداخلات در زنجیره ارزش و شبکه‌های بازار نیاز دارد. بر این اساس، تعاونی‌های روستایی می‌توانند از نهادهایی عمدتاً متمرکز بر تأمین و توزیع، به نهادهای واسط توسعه بازار تبدیل شوند؛ نهادهایی که از طریق بهبود محصول، سازمان‌دهی عرضه، ایجاد هویت تجاری، گسترش شبکه‌های فروش و تقویت توان مدیریتی زنان، زمینه شکل‌گیری کسب‌وکارهای بازارمحور را فراهم می‌کنند. با توجه به بالاترین امتیاز اتصال به شبکه‌های فروش، توسعه هم‌زمان بازارهای حضوری و دیجیتال، در کنار تضمین کیفیت و عرضه منظم، باید از اولویت‌های عملیاتی تعاونی‌ها باشد. پیشنهاد می‌شود تعاونی‌ها نظامی یکپارچه برای توسعه محصول و انتقال بازخورد مشتریان، استانداردسازی و جمعیت تولید، برندسازی و بازاریابی چندکاناله و آموزش کاربردی مدیریت و فروش ایجاد کنند. با توجه به تمرکز مطالعه بر یک روستا و اتکای ارزیابی‌ها به دیدگاه خبرگان، تعمیم نتایج به سایر مناطق مستلزم بررسی‌های تکمیلی است. پژوهش‌های آینده می‌توانند با مشارکت مستقیم زنان تولیدکننده و مشتریان و با استفاده از داده‌های طولی، آثار این سازوکارها را بر فروش، درآمد، پایداری فعالیت اقتصادی و مقیاس کسب‌وکار ارزیابی کنند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: تعاونی‌های روستایی، کارآفرینی زنان، تجاری‌سازی محصولات خانگی، کسب‌وکارهای بازارمحور، زنجیره ارزش، توسعه روستایی.

تشکر و قدردانی

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محصولات خانگی شناسایی و تأیید کرد. این سازوکارها عبارت‌اند از: (۱) بازآفرینی ارزش محصول از طریق ارتقای کیفیت، نوآوری، بهبود طراحی و بسته‌بندی و انطباق با نیاز بازار؛ (۲) سازمان‌دهی زنجیره تأمین از طریق جمعیت و هماهنگی تولید، استانداردسازی محصولات و تنظیم زمان و حجم عرضه؛ (۳) ایجاد هویت و اعتبار بازاری از طریق برندسازی، بسته‌بندی حرفه‌ای، معرفی منشأ محصول و تقویت اعتماد مشتریان؛ (۴) اتصال راهبردی به شبکه‌های فروش از طریق توسعه کانال‌های حضوری و دیجیتال، ارتباط با فروشگاه‌ها، بازارها، نمایشگاه‌ها و بهره‌گیری از بازاریابی دیجیتال؛ و (۵) توانمندسازی برای رشد و توسعه کسب‌وکار از طریق تقویت مهارت‌های مدیریت، بازاریابی، ارتباط با مشتری، برنامه‌ریزی اقتصادی و تصمیم‌گیری.

میانگین اهمیت مجموع ۲۴ شاخص برابر با ۴/۴۳ از پنج و انحراف معیار آن ۰/۶۶ بود که اهمیت بالای سازوکارهای شناسایی‌شده را از دیدگاه خبرگان نشان می‌دهد. در ارزیابی مرحله دوم دلفی، اتصال راهبردی به شبکه‌های فروش با میانگین ۴/۴۷ در رتبه نخست قرار گرفت. پس از آن، ایجاد هویت و اعتبار بازاری با میانگین ۴/۴۴ و سازمان‌دهی زنجیره تأمین با میانگین ۴/۴۳ قرار داشتند. بازآفرینی ارزش محصول و توانمندسازی برای رشد و توسعه کسب‌وکار نیز هر دو میانگین ۴/۴۱ را کسب کردند. در سطح شاخص‌ها، توسعه کانال‌های فروش حضوری و دیجیتال با میانگین ۴/۶۰، ارتقای کیفیت و انطباق محصول با نیاز بازار با میانگین ۴/۵۸ و جمعیت و هماهنگی تولید برای عرضه منظم با میانگین ۴/۵۶، بالاترین امتیازها را داشتند. کمترین میانگین، معادل ۴/۲۹، به تنوع‌بخشی و بهبود ویژگی‌های محصول متناسب با بازار اختصاص یافت؛ با این حال، این شاخص نیز از اهمیت بالایی برخوردار بود. در دور سوم دلفی، ضریب توافق کندانال برابر با ۰/۸۱ و از نظر آماری معنادار بود $\chi^2 = 447.12$ ، $df = 23$ ، $p < 0.001$. در این مرحله، هر ۲۴ شاخص در چارچوب نهایی حفظ شدند.



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