

Educational Level and Training of Human Resources in Farm Cooperatives in the Knowledge-Based Society: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

This work analyzes the importance of education and training in economic endeavors in the light of the changes brought about by globalization and new technologies. It focuses on the changes that education and training are causing in the organization: specifically in worker profiles and organizational structures. It also justifies the need for education and training in cooperatives because of their particular form of democratic management. An important element in this article is the empirical study, where we analyze the education and training of people involved in olive oil-producing cooperatives in the most important olive oil production area in the world, Jaén, Spain. Prior to our analysis of education and training, we first demonstrate the importance of cooperation in the Spanish olive oil sector. The thesis underlying this work is that the poor level of formal education and the lack of specific training represent a serious obstacle to the business development of these societies. After looking at the central problem of this study, we analyze the formal education of the various groups making up cooperatives (members, elected boards, managers and workers), as well as the specific training (offered by the firm itself or by other bodies), in terms of the number of courses attended or made available to the members. In this article we also pose the following question: are professionalization of the cooperative and education in cooperative values enough to solve the problem of management in cooperatives? Finally, we draw some conclusions from this study.

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