

Abstract:

At present, horticulture enterprises are exposed to a hard competition. Altogether, the supply has grown faster than the demand. The faster concentration on the retail side also contributes to increasing competition. The production sector is indicated by a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises. Cooperation as a strategic alternative offers a chance just for such enterprises to react to changed competitive conditions. Though, according to expert opinion this possibility is used not enough. The examination deals with the question which factors enterprises prevent to cooperate. Furthermore also are examined, which factors are important for a successful, long-lasting cooperation. For the explanation economic and social factors play an essential role. Cooperation as a phenomenon is a rather complex problem. This makes it necessary to use different methods of empirical social research. Furthermore the examination is focused on a special group of enterprises: direct selling ornamental plants. Different theoretical concepts are use for the explanation of cooperation. Besides the contingency approach and the inducement contribution theory the transaction cost theory is more frequently used quite recently. On basis of these different approaches a theoretical framework was worked out for the examination. This framework is used as a background for the empirical investigation. Competitive thinking, the high priority for independence and distrust hinders horticultural enterprises to cooperate. Therefore, the personality of the executive is an important factor explaining cooperation. The findings stress the great importance of situational factors for cooperation in horticulture. Particularly the competitive situation of horticultural enterprises contributes fundamentally to the formation of cooperation. Besides this social, trade-specific and special situational factors were identified. The conclusive connection between the structures of the cooperation and the behaviour of the people involved has a strong influence on the effectiveness of cooperation.