



TRANSFORMATION OF FAMILY-BASED ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES IN RURAL AREAS: VIEW ANGLE FROM HUMAN CAPITAL

Izvirni znanstveni članek

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Abstract

The shift in policy focus from agriculture to rural development enables rural families to diversify their economic activities. Household-based resources, particularly human capital, are essential for capitalizing on newly developed opportunities. Locals with sufficient resources seize possibilities in agriculture and emerging economic sectors such as tourism. A case study (33 in-depth interviews) of Caucasus mountain households in Kazbegi and Mestia municipalities revealed the importance of human capital in attaining other types of resources, such as social and financial capital, and, ultimately, in the process of family-based economic development. Local families are encouraged to engage in and embrace contemporary farming practices in order to determine the most effective sustainable livelihoods. Along with long-established industries, households employ traditional knowledge to enter entrepreneurial tourism activities.

Keywords: human capital, rural areas, Caucasus, family-based economic activities, diversification

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PREOBRAZBA DRUŽINSKIH PODJETNIŠKIH DEJAVNOSTI NA PODEŽELSKIH OBMOČJIH: VIDIK ČLOVEŠKEGA KAPITALA

Izvleček

Premik osredotočenosti politike s kmetijstva na razvoj podeželja omogoča podeželskim družinam diverzifikacijo gospodarskih dejavnosti. Viri gospodinjstev, zlasti človeški kapital, so bistveni za izkoriščanje na novo razvitih priložnosti. Lokalni prebivalci z zadostnimi sredstvi izkoriščajo možnosti v kmetijstvu in nastajajočih gospodarskih sektorjih, kot je turizem. Študija primera (33 poglobljenih intervjujev) kavkaških gorskih gospodinjstev v občinah Kazbegi in Mestia je razkrila pomen človeškega kapitala pri pridobivanju drugih vrst virov, kot sta socialni in finančni kapital, in v procesu na družini temelječega gospodarskega razvoja. Lokalne družine se spodbuja, da se vključijo in sprejmejo sodobne kmetijske prakse, da bi določili najučinkovitejše načine trajnostnega preživetja. Poleg že dolgo uveljavljenih dejavnosti gospodinjstva uporabljajo tradicionalno znanje za vstop v podjetniške turistične dejavnosti.

Ključne besede: človeški kapital, podeželska območja, Kavkaz, družinske gospodarske dejavnosti, diverzifikacija

1 INTRODUCTION

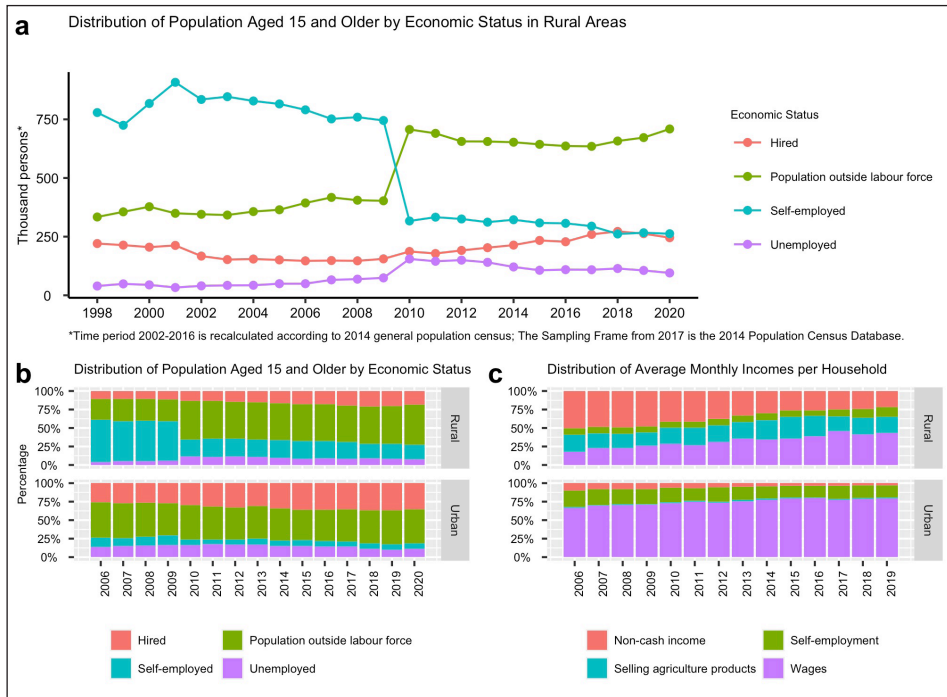
The destruction of the natural-resource-based/extractive industries enabled the development of small businesses in rural and mountainous areas (Siemens, 2013). In light of these changes, rural entrepreneurship and self-employment become an essential component in rural development strategies, including the promotion of family-based economic activities. Evidence suggests that such policies have a positive role in addressing income growth, poverty reduction, and depopulation (Green, Zinda, 2013; Sohns, Revilla Diez, 2017). Programmes and projects supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment encourage locally owned, family-based small businesses and livelihood development in rural areas (Robinson et al., 2004). Furthermore, development strategies are oriented to introduce new opportunities for residents and build on unique and niche local resources (Green, Zinda, 2013). All this not only has a positive impact on the diversification of economic activities and the activation of the local population but also gives pride to members of the community, preserves and gives new life to cultural heritage, and revitalizes the whole living environment (Pato, 2020). Studies also link the advancement of rural entrepreneurship to the provision of “new goods and services” (Andersson et al., 2009) for rural communities, resulting in increased rural economic welfare and quality of life (Wortman, 1990).

While family-based economic activities provide opportunities for further economic development, questions have been raised about increasing income inequality among households. Notably, poor rural households find it especially difficult to rise out of poverty because of their limited capabilities to expand income from diversified activities (Salifu, 2019). Scoones (1998) argued that the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies depends on the primary material and social, tangible, and intangible assets that people own. Drawing on an economic metaphor, livelihood resources can also be defined as “capital”, which forms the basis for deriving various productive streams to generate livelihoods. Among other assets, human capital plays one of the primary roles in the further economic development of the household (Xue, Kerstetter, 2018). The issue of developing and maintaining human capital is especially acute for rural and mountainous settlements, as these areas are particularly vulnerable to their scarcity. Economically active people often migrate from such settlements to urban areas in order to harness more job opportunities and economic potential (North, Smallbone, 2006).

Importantly, in many countries, self-employment in rural areas is a prevalent livelihood practice (Eliasson, Westlund, 2013, p. 490); Georgia is no exception in this regard. In Georgia, 42 per cent of the population was living in rural areas, according to the last General Population Census in 2014 (Hakkert, 2017). Notably, over the last 15 years, the proportion and the absolute number of self-employed people in rural areas have gradually decreased (see Fig. 1a). However, self-employment still plays a significant part, accounting for 20 per cent or more (self-employed people who are not market-oriented and who produce agricultural goods primarily (more than 50 per cent) for their own consumption will no longer be considered as self-employed under the ILO’s (International Labour Organization) new standard (Geostat, 2020)) of the rural population (see Fig. 1b). According to the Households Incomes and Expenditures Survey in 2019, 57 per cent of the average monthly income of the rural households consists of self-employment, selling agricultural products, and non-cash income (see Fig. 1c). Overall, the majority of the households in rural areas rely on family-based livelihoods.

In 2017 adoption of the Georgian National rural development strategy, indicating a switch in “general policy orientation” (Hodge, Midmore, 2008) from agricultural to rural development, triggered one of the significant shifts in Georgia’s rural and mountainous livelihood practices. The latter were supported by government entities (e.g. Enterprise Georgia’s micro and small business support programme) and international donors (e.g. the LEADER programme) with the intent to promote sustainable non-agricultural activities, diversification of the rural economy, and reinforcement of local community participation to tackle poverty and inequality. One of the latest empirical study results confirmed that mountain households have embraced alternative economic opportunities through integrating additional agricultural, non-agricultural, and tourism activities as a source of income. Some of the families could diversify their economic activities by maintaining agriculture while adding tourism to supply this new market with their local products (Salukvadze, Backhaus, 2020).

Figure 1: Distribution of the population in Georgia by economic status (a; b) and by type of household's average income (c).



Source: Household's Incomes and Expenditures Survey, Labour Force Survey (2017–2019) (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2020a, 2020b).

Note: The data for 2010–2019 are recalculated according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) standards adopted at the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians; The data for 1998–2009 are in line with the ILO's standards adopted at the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

In light of the changes presented above, this article provides an in-depth understanding of the role of human capital in the process of family-based business transformation. Ultimately, an understanding of human capital during the livelihood changes will be revealed.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

A thorough review of the literature shows a considerable number of papers studying the issues related to setting up a small family-based business in rural areas. In the

literature, the factors shaping the development of new economic activities by rural households are studied from various perspectives. Notably, this issue is getting attention in research fields such as entrepreneurship (Munjal, 2019; Pato, 2015), self-employment (Tuijl, 2016; Wang, Li, Lien, 2016), farming (Alsos, Ljunggren, Pettersen, 2003), livelihood strategies (Scoones, 1998), and diversification studies (Khai, Danh, 2014). Although each of the terms mentioned covers a broad range of economic activities (e.g. wage employment, remittance, migration), they also incorporate those that focus on small family businesses. Consequently, from a broad perspective, examining the role that human capital plays in starting economic activities in rural households will ensure that the paper provides a vivid picture.

According to Scoones (1998), human capital refers to the skills, knowledge, ability to carry out labour, and good health and physical capability that are essential for successfully pursuing different livelihood strategies. Flora et al. (2015) proposed the definition of human capital in the community context, also focusing on the skills and abilities of people to advance and magnify owned and external resources. Despite the common understanding of the concept, the operationalization of human capital differs in the studies; more precisely, authors employ various measurements, such as formal, informal, and traditional human capital.

Some of the papers focused only on formal education, including school, university education attainment, and post-school training (Wang, Li, Lien, 2016). Several authors observed specific formal education, such as entrepreneurial education (Anosike, 2019; Sánchez, 2013), which promotes entrepreneurship-specific competencies and entrepreneurial intention. In addition to the quality of human capital, attention has been paid to the quantity of human resources, especially in the process of households' economic activities diversification (Bhandari, 2013; Khai, Danh, 2014). Other studies, alongside formal education, integrated informal human capital (Meccheri, Pelloni, 2006; Skuras et al., 2005) to explore how work experience (e.g., running economic activities, employment in the business) and tacit knowledge have effects on enhancing livelihood strategies. The latter is closely related to the traditional and local knowledge that has been passed from one generation to another (Munjal, 2019; Pato, 2015).

The reviewed studies mainly addressed the question of whether human capital plays a role in the enhancement of households' economic activities (McElwee, Bosworth, 2010; Skuras et al., 2005; Stockdale, 2006) and are limited in terms of further investigation. Khai and Danh (2014) claimed that the higher the education level is, the more it contributes to the diversification of income sources. The Alsos, Ljunggren and Pettersen (2003) study findings correspond with those of the mentioned authors in claiming that the livelihood diversification into non-farm activities depends on the household member's level of education, particularly completion of university. Up to now, fewer attempts have been made not only to test hypotheses but to explore the function of the human capital in the process of starting or expanding economic activities. The local knowledge helps local families create services shaped by authentic

characteristics demanded by the foreign and domestic tourist market. Tourists are looking for unique tourist destinations to experience traditional culture (Munjal, 2019). The study by Meccheri and Pelloni (2006) found out that education and work experience are prerequisites for ensuring access to financial resources. In some cases, specific skills, such as cooking and building skills, make it easier to transition to new economic activities (Xue, Kerstetter, 2018). There is a relatively small amount of scientific literature describing and investigating the ways in which households gain various forms of human capital.

The reviewed literature showed the crucial role of human capital in forming the new household's livelihoods; however, a lack of in-depth understanding of the issue was observed. As such, this article is an attempt to provide insights into the rural household's pathway to gaining and using human capital for their micro-entrepreneurial activities.

3 METHODOLOGY

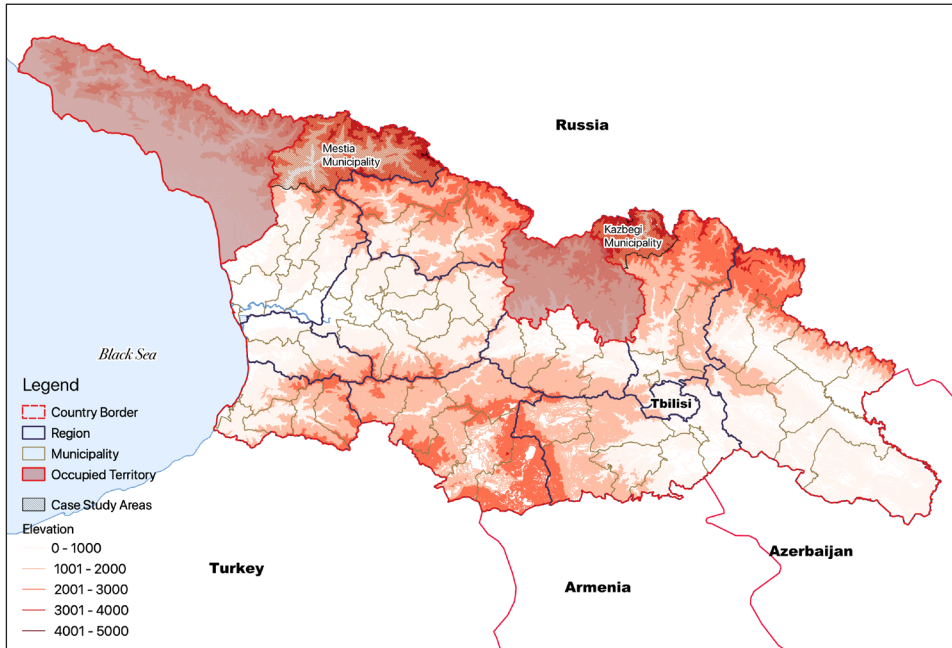
This study employed a transformative mixed methods research design (Driscoll, Salib, Rupert, 2007) to explore the households' economic activities in mountain areas from both qualitative and quantitative methodological orientations. The information collected via in-depth interviews was analysed according to the principle of qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000), hence quantifying the qualitative data into numerical forms (Chang et al., 2009; Miles, Huberman, Haldaña, 2019; Tashakkori, Teddlie, 1998).

The study was carried out in two mountainous destinations of Georgia – Kazbegi and Mestia municipalities (in 2018) (see Figure 2).

An in-depth interview method was employed to explore 33 local households' experiences of starting new economic activities or scaling up existing ones. The discussion guideline was developed based on the sustainable rural livelihood concept (Chambers, Conway, 1991). It should be highlighted that Sakdapolrak's (2014) criticism based on Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1972) on the livelihood approach was incorporated. This is manifested in the fact that the presented study overcomes the lack of temporal dynamics of livelihood analysis and extends focus on long-term social change rather than only studying the current situation. The main discussion topics included households' economic activities, the role of human capital in developing livelihood practices, the ways households gain human capital, and outputs of their activities. Such an approach covers all the pathways and provides an answer to the central question of how human capital shapes and is shaped by households' livelihoods.

The predefined households' characteristics, such as geographical distribution, demographic characteristics, and economic activities, were employed to reach the maximal variation (Patton, 2015) of interview partners (see Table 1).

Figure 2: The research areas Kazbegi and Mestia municipalities.



Source: Gugushvili et al., 2019.

Table 1: Distribution of interviewees by gender, age, and municipality.

Municipality	Kazbegi		Mestia		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Age					
<=29	1	1	0	0	2
30-39	1	4	1	2	8
40-49	3	0	1	2	6
50-59	4	1	5	2	12
> 60	1	1	1	2	5
Total	10	7	8	8	33

The obtained audio recordings were transcribed and, afterward, processed and analysed using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDA). The hybrid approach of the qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014; 2000) was applied, incorporating inductive category development and deductive category assignment.

Based on the research purpose, at the first stage, main categories, such as economic activities, types of human capital, and sources of human capital, were developed. Sub-codes were created based on the locals' narratives; first, they were coded closely to the interview texts, followed by merged and generalized codes at the later stage. The definition and explanation of the codes and subcodes were documented in the memos. The code agreement was achieved by applying two analysis techniques: (i) the coding system was reviewed by an external colleague working in the same field, and (ii) coding was reviewed by the author two times after a period of three or four weeks.

The quantified qualitative information allows for observing the scale of each thematic category and intersections between categories and interview partners. The coded segments were explored and presented in the forms of crosstabulation, 2-dimensional heatmap, a map utilizing initial MAXQDA special mixed-methods tools, such as crosstab, a code relation browser, MAXmap, and, at a later stage, the Rstudio package ggplot2 (Wickham, 2016).

4 RESULTS

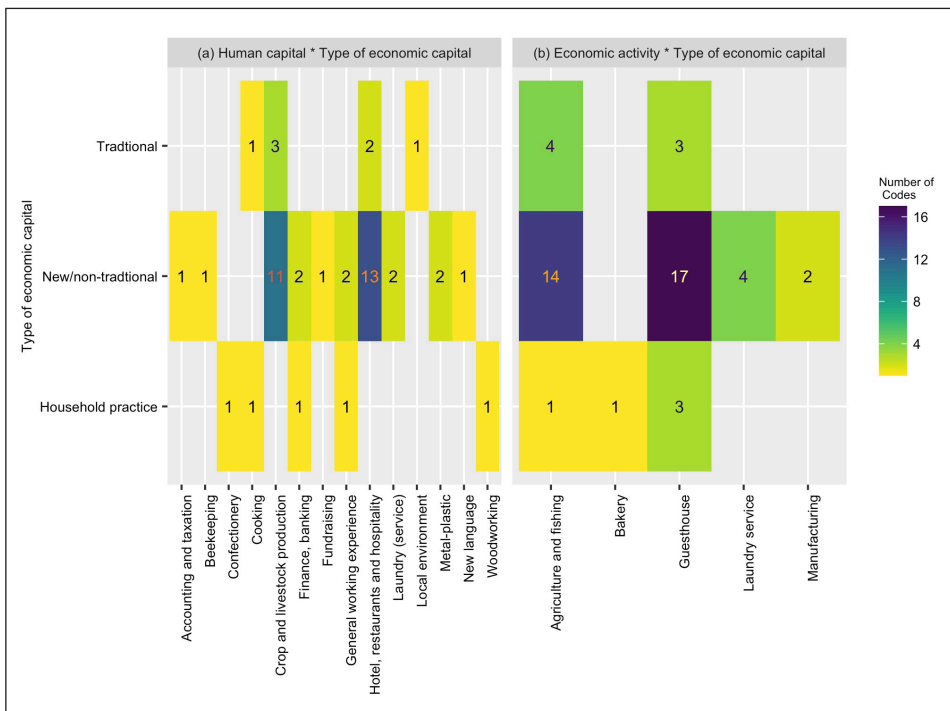
The findings are based on the narratives of the interviewed rural households primarily involved in the hospitality industry, agriculture, and fishing. Alongside the mainstream economic activities, the research presents the story of the pioneers who introduced new economic activities, such as metal-plastic manufacturing, wood workshops, and laundry services. Besides covering two main mentioned economic activities, the study covers a wide range of sub-economic sectors, in particular non-traditional agriculture (e.g., lettuce farming), livestock farming, fishing, greenhouses, and beekeeping. The continual growth of the hospitality business in both study areas made it especially significant to explore rural households' adaptation processes of the guesthouse establishment.

The research reveals that the local households employ both traditional and non-traditional forms of human capital in the process of initiating new economic activities. Based on the human capital and strategies of gaining human capital, three main categories were distinguished: (i) new/non-traditional, (ii) household practice, and (iii) traditional. Based on the data analysis, new/non-traditional human capital is an essential facet of starting a family business, which the households gain through various means. Importantly, new/non-traditional human capital refers to the knowledge and skills that are new for the study areas. It appeared that the households are equipped with a wide range of non-traditional forms of human capital, including knowledge of crop and livestock farming, hospitality, laundry, metal-plastic manufacturing, and foreign languages. Another type of human capital is the household practice, which consists of family members who acquire human capital in their own or a neighbouring household. Such respondents live in a family where they are able to familiarize themselves with new, non-traditional forms of human capital. Such households are

distinguished in the study areas through practicing non-typical economic activities of the region. The third type, traditional human capital, is mainly passed down from one generation to another, which reveals the common knowledge and practice of hospitality, crop and livestock management, and the local environment.

Crosstabulation of the two-family codes, namely economic activities and types of human capital, shows that locals integrate non-traditional crops or practices (14 code intersections) (see Figure 3b) in traditional fields, such as agriculture. In this regard, they diversify their livelihoods and respond to the changing market requirements or customer preferences. Along the integrating new methods in the agriculture locals maintain traditional practices. Part of it, such as knowledge of local environment helps farmers to put successfully into practice new agricultural crops and methods. According to the findings of the research, traditional and household practice (6 code intersections) (see Figure 3b) have an important role in the sphere of hospitality. The practices, which are part of the locals' lifestyle in hosting the guests, cooking, and woodworking (see Figure 3a), turned out to be vital assets for starting a family business in tourism (e.g., open guesthouses).

Figure 3: Crosstabulation of human capital, economic activity and type of human capital.



Source: In-depth interviews collected by research team.

In a way, this happened after the fall of the Soviet Union... When a guest came, whoever visited, everyone was obliged to show hospitality [free of charge]; whether a guest was from Tashkent, Saint-Petersburg, Warsaw, or Budapest – the natives of Eastern Europe... In my family, for example, the influx of tourists from democratic countries started in 1996, and we became a democratic state as well. That's when, by default, all that switched to paid services.

(Mestia, Guesthouse)

Possession of human capital is not a given, but the opposite; families try numerous strategies to equip themselves with new skills and knowledge. The acquisition of non-traditional human capital is distinguished by a variety of strategies, which also depend on pre-existing human capital and the specifics of economic activities. **Formal education** plays its part in introducing new knowledge to the residents of study areas. It is presented in a variety of ways, including to students studying in another region, or through international, national, and local programmes that provide subject-focused trainings on-site. The latter encourages and supports people in adopting fresh human capital in new (e.g., tourism) or traditional (e.g., agriculture) economic activities.

After graduating from Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Economics, I worked for 25–30 years as the head of the Financial Division – currently, preparing financial reports and other official documents [for my family business].

(Mestia, Guesthouse)

There are forms of knowledge and skill acquisition that show local people's great motivation to discover new methods or new economic activities and then use them as their livelihood practice. To achieve this, locals use every possible **self-learning** means to acquire the desired knowledge through books, the internet, or online tutorials. Some of the interested people put in extra effort (time, money) in order to test different methods in practices they are **learning by doing**. Like other strategies, learning by doing is a way to put into practice new economic activities. Along with the positive side of this, especially in agriculture, its disadvantages are clearly observed. Due to the different natural environments of the mountain region, attempts to use methods tried in other places are sometimes unsuccessful. The poor economic condition makes it difficult for the population to cope with the amount of finances and time.

The research revealed two main types of communication (**sharing the experience and inviting specialists**) between local residents and professionals in different fields. At the initial stage of planning a business or on particular occasions where they are unable to cope with the challenges themselves, locals use a social network of professionals to find a solution. The study found several cases where locals shared information and experiences with their neighbours. This is a core custom to spread good

practices in the region after the introduction of new rural agriculture or other new economic practices for the selected beneficiaries by rural development programmes. For introducing knowledge on new economic activities, it has been revealed that there is a practice where locals invite an external specialist from another region or the capital to the settlement to share specific skills. The specialists themselves take part in the family business and teach the locals how to develop the product or provide services.

I had an idea [start laundry service]. When I was working as a receptionist in the Rooms hotel, I have noticed that several times staff encountered challenges in laundry service delivery. ... The guest was complaining about this matter. At that time, I thought about why we do not have a local laundry service. Around us, there are a lot of guesthouses, demand for this service.

(Kazbegi, Laundry service)

It should be highlighted that small and medium private companies are also a source of non-traditional human capital. Locals, through their accumulated work experience, familiarize themselves with the particular economic sector. They are equipped with special skills or identify a needed supportive service, which is the inspiration for a start-up's ideas. The experience gained in the households is also diverse, especially the knowledge saturated with specific local knowledge. The competence acquired in the family includes the preparation of traditional food, hosting the guests, and the knowledge of the natural environment.

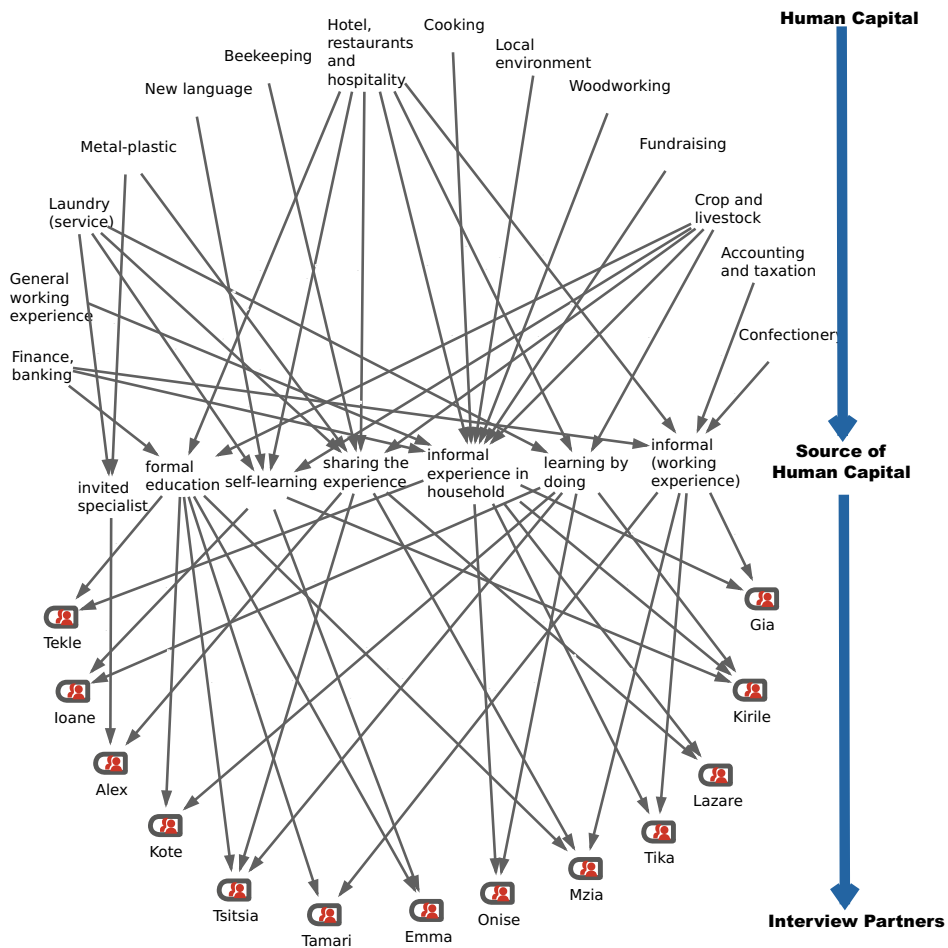
The analysis of the coded narratives disaggregated by interview partners showed that the locals apply different combinations of knowledge, skills, and experience acquisition methods (see Figure 4). Each source of human capital shows how household members try to diversify their livelihood practices. Some combine formal education and work experience in local private enterprises; others mix self-learning, formal education, and learning by doing. By any means obtained, human capital enhances the readiness of households to commence new micro-entrepreneurial activities.

The way it was earlier, here, in Kazbegi, we were only harvesting potatoes. Then, I once harvested lettuce leaves, and it grew. I did not know how to do it. Then, I learned something myself and developed further... I separated them from each other (lettuce leaves) and it grew wonderfully. Then I took various studies, training classes, all of that and learned how to manage and look after that. Furthermore, it evolved from harvesting lettuce leaves to market gardening.

(Kazbegi, Agriculture)

Interview partners highlighted the importance of human capital, as the accumulated capacity is a prerequisite to accessing or gaining another type of capital. Locals

Figure 4: Network map of human capital, source of human capital and interview partners.



Source: In-depth interviews collected by research team.

are provided with the opportunity to obtain financial support to strengthen their economic condition through international or governmental programmes. It is essential for the applicant to have a clear business plan, budget, several additional formal documents, and access to e-platforms to apply for funding. The difficulty of the application procedures differs depending on project requirements. It should be mentioned that young household members mostly take the lead in the procedures for uploading and submitting documents online.

As soon as this [Micro and Small Business Support] program started, some idea came up to start the family business. Since we had built a house, we just wanted to renovate it [make it ready for tourists]. My parents shared a business idea, I have written it up for [submission], we got the funding.

(Mestia, Guesthouse, a young member of the household)

Ultimately, in the hospitality sector, the significant role of all three types of human capital was clearly observed in setting up guesthouse services for tourists. The locals provide traditional dishes for guests by employing cooking skills gained within their families, create a home atmosphere using the experience of the long-standing Georgian tradition of hosting guests, and make use of foreign languages studied at educational institutions. The locals' tourism services have been improved by hospitality standards acquired through formal education, such as university programmes and training. Last but not least, tourist services are continually developing based on hands-on experience in their economic activities.

5 DISCUSSION

Changes in economic activities at the family level or rural development at the community level are not explained solely on the basis of a single form of capital (Coleman, 1988; Sutherland, Burton, 2011; Svendsen, Sørensen, 2007). To extend this concept to real-world challenges (such as poverty eradication, support for innovation, and empowerment of local economic activities), decision-makers should address the system of interdependent forms of capital rather than just one of them. Ultimately, the presented article is saturated with the idea that each form of capital plays a role in the transition of family-based economic activities. The results of a case study conducted in a post-Soviet republic offer a more comprehensive understanding of this issue from the perspective of human resources. Households' experience of diversifying their economic activities shows that human capital is needed to obtain financial support from governmental or non-governmental organizations through grants, loans, and other types of assistance. The farmers need the same capital to gain social capital and increase the demand for agricultural products or tourism services. Such real-life examples demonstrate plainly that, due to a lack of appropriate skills and knowledge, not all family members can take advantage of existing/provided opportunities.

The limitations of the sustainable livelihood concept are addressed in this article, specifically the temporal dynamic (Sakdapolrak, 2014) of changing economic activities and livelihood practices. The whole transition phase of family-based economic activities reveals a comprehensive framework, from human resource enhancement to the utilization of the capital by rural households to initiate or extend economic activities. This method produced results that were not achievable within the framework's constraints.

Local households use a combination of traditional and new human capital, similar to how they approach agriculture, to develop tourism services. The study findings are consistent with the writings of various writers who, in their publications, emphasized the value of traditional skills in providing authentic tourist experiences for visitors and traditional industries (e.g. the herb industry) for their regions (Gornik, Potočnik Slavič, 2019; Meccheri, Pelloni, 2006; Munjal, 2019; Xue, Kerstetter, 2018). The presented article agrees with the scholars listed; the study found that cooking skills and hospitality heritage passed down through generations genuinely shape and add value to tourism services. Furthermore, formal education or work experience is also necessary for this process. The opportunity for local families to learn cutting-edge skills in educational institutions, participate in brief theme-focused teaching, and integrate this knowledge with authentic customs results in a distinctly local tourism product (Gugushvili, Salukvadze, Salukvadze, 2019). As a result, services that provide a local experience while still being of high quality are established, attracting visitors and turning them into ambassadors for others.

Local Georgian households are generally considered hesitant to use modern farming methods and technology (Bantsuri, Tsertsvadze, 2020; ISSA, 2017). Interestingly, our findings show that rural families have adopted new crops and agricultural skills in various ways. Engaged farmers are not only passive receivers of further agricultural information; in some situations, they are actively attempting to gain experience and expertise by cultivating (piloting) some crops in their small plots. As a result, local farmers in the study areas mix conventional and modern farming practices, diversifying or expanding their product range.

The presented results are essential to promote the methodological perspectives in future studies. Since human capital studies that only concentrate on or measure formal education are limited (Anosike, 2019; Sánchez, 2013; Wang, Li, Lien, 2016), a holistic and integrated approach incorporates formal education, work experience, and conventional knowledge would create a more accurate picture. According to our conclusions, future research should focus on operationalizing human capital not only through school or university education but also through a broader range of expertise and experience. The study's primary limitation was its sampling, which included interview participants who had changed their economic practices but excluded households that had not. Respondents who have difficulty diversifying their subsistence practices may be included in further investigations, which might assist researchers in better understanding the process.

6 CONCLUSION

The study aimed to observe the whole transformation process of family-based economic practices in rural areas. These results lead to the evidence that locals gain

human capital through various methods, including formal education, self-learning, learning by doing, sharing experiences, inviting experts, informal practices in households, and work experience. Notably, most human resource acquisition strategies present locals as active participants in gaining more current knowledge in the economic area in which they work. Rural households employ various techniques, resulting in a synthesis of traditional and modern skills and experience in the regions' two most important economic sectors, tourism and agriculture. The findings further highlight the significance of human capital as a prerequisite for adopting other types of capital, such as financial and social capital.

The research findings point to the conclusion that the development policies can adequately address rural poverty and inequality if several types of capital, including human resources, are approached at once. The financial support provided for micro-entrepreneurial activities should be encouraged by bringing new knowledge to the regions and respecting existing knowledge. In addition, the importance of social capital between and among communities should be considered to achieve inclusive rural development and help those who lack resources.

This research was conducted to better understand the transformation of household-based economic activities in rural areas and the role of human capital. However, the current study was limited by the fact that it only examined families who started new economic activities and did not observe locals who did not embrace new opportunities. Future studies on this topic will therefore need to pay more attention to the perceptions and experiences of those who stayed behind.

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PREOBRAZBA DRUŽINSKIH PODJETNIŠKIH DEJAVNOSTI NA PODEŽELSKIH OBMOČJIH: VIDIK ČLOVEŠKEGA KAPITALA

Povzetek

Podeželske družine diverzificirajo svoje gospodarske dejavnosti zaradi premika osredotočenosti politike s kmetijstva na razvoj podeželja. Viri gospodinjstev, zlasti človeški kapital, so ključni za izkoriščanje novih možnosti. Lokalni prebivalci, ki razpolagajo s primernimi viri, izkoriščajo priložnosti v kmetijstvu in novih gospodarskih panogah, kot je turizem. Ugotovitve raziskave temeljijo na 33 poglobljenih intervjujih s podeželskimi gospodinjstvi, ki se ukvarjajo s turizmom, kmetijstvom in ribištvom v občinah Kazbegi in Mestia. V raziskavi so obravnavane tudi dejavnosti, kot so netradicionalno kmetijstvo (npr. pridelava solate), govedoreja, ribištvo, rastlinjaki in čebelarstvo. Raziskava se poglobi tudi v izkušnje tistih lokalnih prebivalcev, ki so se prvi začeli ukvarjati z novimi gospodarskimi dejavnostmi, kot so proizvodnja kovinske plastike, obdelava lesa in storitve pranja perila.

Lokalni prebivalci na podeželju so v literaturi pogosto prikazani kot nezainteresirani za sodobne kmetijske prakse in tehnologije (Bantsuri, Tsertsvadze, 2020; ISSA, 2017). V nasprotju s splošnim mnenjem je raziskava pokazala, da so podeželska gospodinjstva na različne načine sprejela nove pridelke in kmetijske prakse. Zavzeti kmetje niso le pasivni potrošniki novega kmetijskega znanja; z učenjem z delom aktivno pridobivajo izkušnje in strokovno znanje. Za netradicionalno pridobivanje človeškega kapitala so značilni različni pristopi, kot so formalno izobraževanje, samoučenje, učenje z delom, izmenjava izkušenj, povabila strokovnjakom, neformalne gospodinjne prakse in delovne izkušnje.

Lokalna gospodinjstva spodbujajo k sodelovanju in sprejemanju sodobnih metod kmetovanja. Različne dejavnosti diverzificirajo njihove prihodke in jim omogočajo prilagajanje spreminjajočim se zahtevam trga in željam potrošnikov. Poleg vključevanja trenutnih kmetijskih praks domačini uporabljajo tradicionalne tehnike, kot je npr. poznavanje lokalnega okolja, ki kmetom pomaga pri učinkovitem izvajanju novih pristopov. Gospodinjstva uporabljajo tradicionalno znanje za vključevanje v podjetniške turistične dejavnosti poleg že dolgo uveljavljenih panog. Veščine, ki so del načina življenja domačinov, kot so gostoljubnost, kuhanje in obrt, postanejo neprecenljivo orodje za zagon družinskega podjetja v turizmu. Lokalne družine imajo možnost, da se naučijo najsodobnejših veščin v izobraževalnih ustanovah, sodelujejo v kratkem tematskem izobraževanju in povezujejo to znanje z edinstvenimi praksami, kar ima za posledico izrazito lokalni turistični proizvod (Gugushvili in sod., 2019). Posledično se oblikujejo storitve, ki ponujajo lokalno izkušnjo ob ohranjanju visoke kakovosti in privabljajo turiste, ti pa s svojimi pozitivnimi vtisi vplivajo na obisk drugih.

Študija primera iz postsovjetske države omogoča boljše razumevanje tega vprašanja z vidika človeških virov. Izkušnje gospodinjestev pri diverzifikaciji njihovih gospodarskih dejavnosti kažejo, da je človeški kapital pomemben pri pridobivanju finančne pomoči vladnih ali nevladnih organizacij v obliki nepovratnih sredstev, posojil in drugih vrst pomoči. Ugotovitve raziskave kažejo, da je mogoče uspešno obravnavati revščino in neenakost na podeželju le, če se sočasno obravnavajo različni kapitali, vključno s človeškim kapitalom. Finančno podporo dejavnostim mikropodjetij morajo spremljati pobude za prenos novega znanja na posamezna območja ob ohranjanju starih znanj. Poleg tega je treba prepoznati pomen socialnega kapitala v skupnostih in znotraj njih za ustvarjanje vključujočega razvoja podeželja.