Collaborative Learning and Firm Upgrading in Uganda’s Fish and Floriculture Clusters and Export Value Chains

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Outline of the Presentation:

- Introduction
- Motivation for Research
- Analytical Framework
- Theoretical Framework
- Conceptual Framework
- Research Questions
- Research Design and Methodology
Introduction:

Upgrading in Clusters and Export Value Chains.

STATIC Model (Approach) based on Structural Attributes (Schmitz, 1995):

- geographical proximity
- territorial synergy
- relational symbiosis
- economies of scale
Introduction (Continued):

DYNA\text{MIC Relational Model (Approach)} based on the Analysis of Socio - Institutional Factors:

Social Capital
- \textit{Trust}
- \textit{Openness}
- \textit{Social Interactions}

Firm Knowledge Absorption Capacity
- \textit{Commitment to Learn}
- \textit{Information Sharing}
- \textit{Coordination and Teamwork}
Emphasis on Inter-Firm Knowledge Flows and Upgrading

Linking Knowledge Flows to Firm Upgrading and Performance with a focus on:

- Firm Competences
- Innovativeness/Upgrading
- International Competitiveness
- Export Performance
Motivation For Research Study

Firm integration into global markets
International competition and export market standards

Upgrading Production and Export Marketing Systems:

- **Low-Road Approach: Cost/Price-Based Strategy (Focus on Cost Control).**
- **High-Road Approach: Focus on Product/Service Quality Improvements.**
Analytical Framework:

Firm embeddedness in Clusters and Value Chains:
Cluster: *A geographic concentration of interconnected firms and institutions* (*Porter, 1990, 1998; Schmitz, 1995*)

- Vertical Clusters: Supply/Value-Chain Relationships
- Horizontal Clusters
- Intra-Cluster Interactions
- Extra-Cluster Interactions
Export Value Chains: A sequence of progressive stages in the production, export marketing, consumption and disposal of a product residue (Gereffi, 1994; Gibbon, 2001)

Types of Value Chains:
- Buyer-Driven Chains
- Producer-Driven Chains
- Commodity Chains
Firm Upgrading in Clusters & Value Chains (Kapslinsky, 2000): Process of making better products more efficiently or movement into more value-adding (skilled) activities with higher returns.

- Process Upgrading
- Product Upgrading
- Functional Upgrading
- Inter-Sectoral Upgrading
Theoretical Framework

Approaches to Firm Innovation/Upgrading in Clusters and Value Chains:

- Linear Approach to Innovation (*Old*)
- Systemic Approach to Innovation (*New*)

Innovation, a product of complex interactions between the various actors and institutions within clusters and value chains.
Theoretical Framework (Cont’d)

Collaborative Learning:
- Joint-Industry Activities
- Public-Firm Interactions
- Firm-University Interactions
- Firm-Supplier Interactions
- Firm-Client Interactions
Theoretical Framework (Cont’d)

Integration of Theories:

- Social Capital (Network) Theory
- Transaction Cost Economic Theory
- Organization Learning Theory
- Firm Competence and Innovation Theory
Conceptual Framework:

- Improved Export Performance
- International Competitiveness
- Firm Competences, Innovation & Upgrading
- Inter-Organizational Learning
- Clusters/Export Value Chains
Conceptual Framework (Cont’d)

Collaborative Learning → Firm Upgrading → Export Performance

Social Capital

Knowledge Absorption Capacity

Firm Upgrading

Firm Competences

Export Performance
Research Questions:

Main Research Question:

“Why are some firms more effective in collaborative learning, knowledge utilization and upgrading than others?”

- Coordination of inter-firm relationships
- Knowledge transfer and utilization
Research Sub-Questions:

1. How does social capital affect inter-firm knowledge transfer?

2. What is the impact of firm knowledge absorption capacity on firm competence development?

3. What is the impact of firm knowledge absorption capacity on innovation and upgrading?
Research Questions:

4. Do firm competences enhance innovation and upgrading?

5. Does firm innovation/upgrading enhance export performance?
Research Design and Methodology:

Empirical Analysis in the Floriculture and Fish Export Sectors in Uganda.

Towards a Methodological Triangulation:
- Cross-sectional research design
- *Case study methodology*
- *Firm survey methodology*
Research Design and Methodology

- Study population
- Sampling
- Primary & Secondary sources of data
- Data collection instruments (in-depth interview guides and survey questionnaires)
- Measurement of Variables (mapping patterns and measurement scales)
- Reliability and Validity of data
- Data analysis and hypotheses testing
Rational of the Study

Theoretical Contributions

Methodological Implications

Managerial Implications

Public policy Implications

Further Research