IDENTIFICATION OF KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF VIETNAMESE COFFEE EXPORT ENTERPRISES

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Abstract: Under globalization's current conditions, competition is the trigger for exporting enterprises' goods and services activities. It also is determinative for business development and the essential requirement for overall business prosperity, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Therefore, this paper aims to identify and analyze the critical success factors of Vietnamese coffee export companies. This paper uses the Bayesian Belief Networks (BBNs) method to identify the factors that could achieve success in coffee exporting. This research develops four scenarios to identify the root causes of export success and then intervenes in these leverage points to achieve success in coffee exporting. The finding shows that the market choice, the quality of exported products, the economic status of the host country (importers), and the financial capacity of the export enterprises are the major influencing factors to the success of Vietnamese coffee exporters.

Introduction

Export trade is essential to economic growth in developed and developing countries (Agustin et al., 2020). In economies with different development characteristics, the part of Export enterprises is shown to various degrees. However, the reality shows that international trade's importance is growing when the scope of activities is expanding, reflected through the number of businesses, activities in many industries, fields, and its existence as an indispensable part of each country's economy. Firstly, Export trade creates jobs and reduces unemployment (Ramukumba, 2014). Because they participate in business in all industries and sectors of the economy with a wide variety of products, they can secure job opportunities for many different types of workers in other regions. Second, Export trade is vital in stabilizing and promoting economic growth (Mehrara and Oskoui, 2007). In most economies, Export trade allows for financial stability. Therefore, Export trade is considered a shock absorber for the economy in significant domestic market fluctuations. Thus, the contribution of Export trade to the economy's total output is immense. Third, Export trade exploits and promotes international relationships, contributing to market restructuring (Royer et al., 2017). There are always products over productivity for the domestic market or

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elements in the economy's global supply chain. If the products only exist in the domestic market, international markets will not be used, reducing the business's efficiency. Therefore, Export trade is crucial in promoting export trade development and contributing to economic restructuring. Fourth, Export trade drives a dynamic economy (Sturgeon et al., 2012).

Coffee export has emerged as a necessary agricultural export in export trade activities in Vietnam, with a net export value of US$3 billion per year, accounting for 10% of total farm product exports, although representing only 1.2% of the total amount of all commodities, goods and services exports (Vân, 2019). The main export destinations of Vietnamese coffee are Germany, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Japan and America. However, most coffee export firms are small and medium-sized in Vietnam, with limited resources and managed by a few expert managers (Thich et al., 2015). Despite their limitations, many Vietnamese coffee export firms still attempt to expand abroad. The reasons Vietnamese coffee export firms engage in the international expansion include the following: to exploit the unique products they possess, to potentially reduce costs by developing scale economies and leveraging resources to various customers, to alleviate competitive pressures at the domestic market, and to acquire new coffee products or coffee market knowledge (Thich et al., 2017b).

Many researchers have studied the factors that affect exporting, and these studies have provided valuable insights into many of the characteristics associated with export success. However, more attention should be given to identifying factors that enrich the competitive advantages in export markets. Thus, this study aims to identify the critical success factors that can improve Vietnamese coffee firms' export performance using the Bayesian Belief Networks tool. This research also helps to identify the leverage points which would be intervened to achieve the superior export performance of Vietnamese coffee.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have focused on export performance and trying to answer what factors influence the enterprise's export performance (Rua et al., 2018). It can be explained that export success can be considered a "multi-indicator" as some variables should be jointly adopted to measure it. The first research mentioned the criterion to classify the approach to study export success factors by Aaby and Slater (1989). This study has ranked factors influencing export activity and success into three essential groups: competence, strategy and firm characteristics. Gerschewski et al. (1997) mentioned that the factors play an essential role in a firm's export activities' success, including export market selection, competitive pricing, packaging characteristics, new product development, promotional efforts and distribution network. These factors would be considered "Marketing Policy Elements" (Erdil and Özdemir, 2016). Also, many studies mentioned variables related to "Firm-Specific Factors" as the core factors for the firm's export success, such as export market planning, management control, quality of export staff, foreign market connections, product

quality control and financial strength (Erdil and Özdemir, 2016). The export success also depends on the "External Factors" of the firm. These can be named relations between export and import countries, multilateral and bilateral trade agreements, countertrade arrangements, export subsidies, national credibility in the overseas market, tax incentives, import tariffs, foreign economy stability, and low risk in export market operations, market potential, and so on (Fernández-Olmos et al., 2017).

Some reasons confirm that exporting agricultural products is even more difficult than shipping the products to other sectors. First, coffee firms possess different attributes and advantages than firms running in other sectors (Thich et al., 2015). Therefore, export strategies found to be right for industrial or service companies may not work for coffee export firms; it is a mistake to assume that imitating industrial or service companies' strategies will result in the success of coffee farming firms (Thich et al., 2015). The most apparent difference between firms running in industrial or service sectors and coffee export firms are their size. Most coffee export firms are small and medium-sized (lacking capabilities, market power, and other resources). In contrast, industrial or service sector firms are considerably more powerful (Abban et al., 2013). Therefore, coffee export firms are suggested to need more resources than industrial or service enterprises (Wubante, 2020). Moreover, prior research has shown that firms running in the agricultural sector in general and the coffee field in particular usually lack the finance and management skills required for successful internationalization (Royer et al., 2017), lack information about foreign market opportunities (Borrella et al., 2015), and shortage of managers with international experience to support successful overseas expansion (Reardon and Gulati, 2008) compared to industrial or service companies. Therefore, many managers of coffee firms are reluctant to expand global markets (Borrella, 2015).

This study's primary goal is to identify the factors that achieved success in coffee exporting through the achievement and exploitation of Vietnamese coffee firms' positional advantage over their competitors in the international coffee export market. However, the sources of factors in the successful Vietnamese coffee export context are not well understood. This has been reflected in the existing literature (e.g., Thich et al., 2017a; Pascucci, 2018; and Do et al., 2019). A simple model of success factors in coffee exporting is the basis for investigation, as shown in Figure 1.

In this study, four independent variables will be used to analyze the success of coffee export.
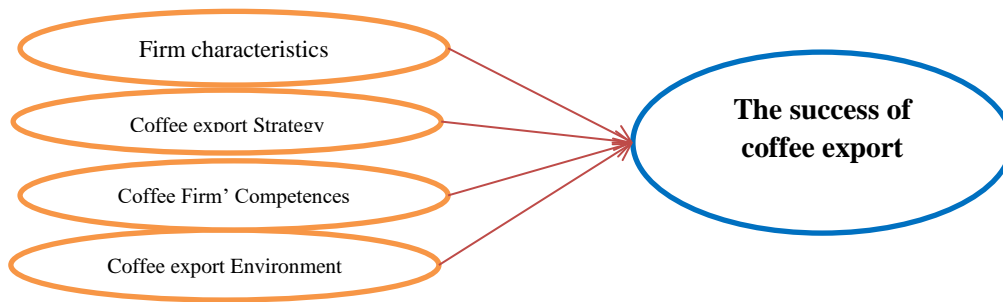
Figure 1: Proposed Model

Research Methodology

The success of coffee export is the primary development of the Vietnamese coffee sector impact caused by firm characteristics, strategy export, firm's competences and environmental coffee export.

BBN's model is a graphical model representing the causal loop diagrams that show relationships between variables and their conditional probabilities. BBN's model has been applied in many real-world problems and recently is also one of the most powerful methods for reasoning under uncertainty, such as competitiveness (Thich et al., 2017a), natural resource management (Singto et al., 2020), risk assessment (Kondakci, 2010), climate change (Richards et al., 2013), ecosystem service, environment (Sun and Müller, 2013), and many others fields.

Applied a Bayesian Belief Network (BBN) in identifying critical success factors for small and Medium coffee export enterprises has many advantages. For instance, missing data in the data set does not solve any problem in developing BBN's model. The causal loop diagrams that present relationships between the variables are identified by applying a BBN. Building a BBN's model requires little effort and consumes time even though it combines a data set and users' prior knowledge. It is also easy to add new variables to the practical model.

This study uses the Bayesian Belief Networks (BBN's) method to consider the Vietnamese coffee export's success model. Figure 2 expresses the steps of this study.
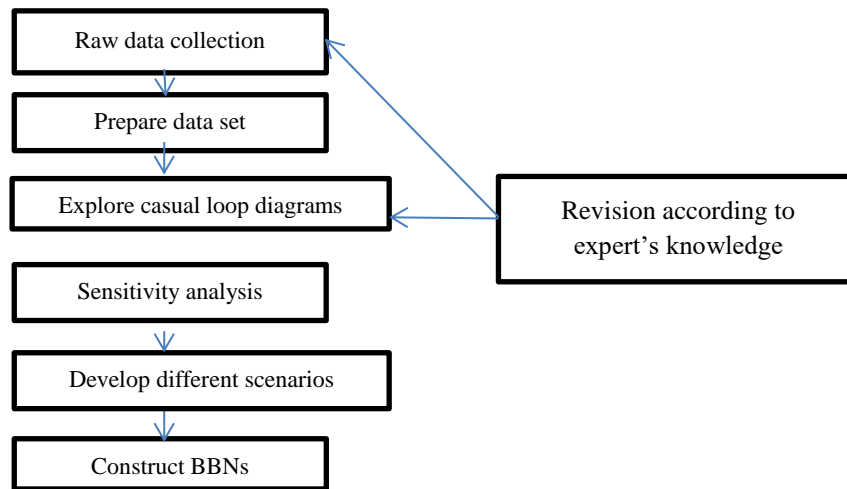
Figure 2: Steps of study

First, the raw data were collected based on the knowledge and experiences of coffee experts working for coffee export enterprises and policymakers in the export-import sector. These people were asked to form groups to discuss setup model variables and a causal loop diagram showing the relationships between variables in the model. Then, they were asked to develop a causal loop diagram that was then sending it for expert revision before a BBN model was built. This research applied the BBN model for sensitivity analysis for different scenarios. Netica (www.norsys.com) software was used to build a BBN network and sensitivity analysis, while Vensim software was used to set up a causal loop diagram.

Research Results

Causal Loop Diagram (CLD) helped participants conceptualize the natural world and understand how interactions among all the system variables. CLD is particularly useful in uncovering a system's underlying feedback structures and identifying high and low-leverage intervention points. In CLD, the arrows indicate the direction of influence that connects different components, and 'S' was used to indicate the same principle of a pair of variables. In contrast, 'O' signs show an opposite direction (Schaffernicht, 2010). The complete causal loop model of the success of coffee export consists of the interactions of four causal loop subsystems using standard variables (firm characteristics subsystem, coffee export strategy subsystem, firm competencies subsystem, and coffee export environment subsystem). It reveals the complex interdependence of many factors influencing Vietnamese coffee export enterprises (Figure 3).
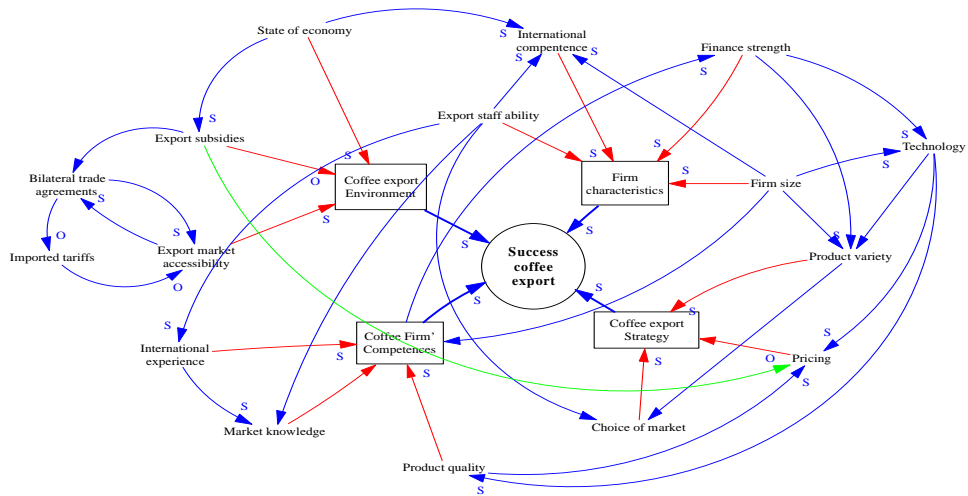
Figure 3: The complete causal loop model of Vietnamese coffee export factors

CLD is then converted to the graphical diagram of a BBN. It is called an influence diagram of the causal map, a directed acyclic graph consisting of nodes and links. It also cannot contain two-way arrows, cycles or feedback loops. Figure 4 comprehensively shows the factors affecting the success of Vietnamese enterprises in exporting coffee.

This study uses BBN model of successful coffee export to test different scenarios by manipulating the influential variables at the second hierarchical level, which illuminates essential factors for achieving the success of coffee export.
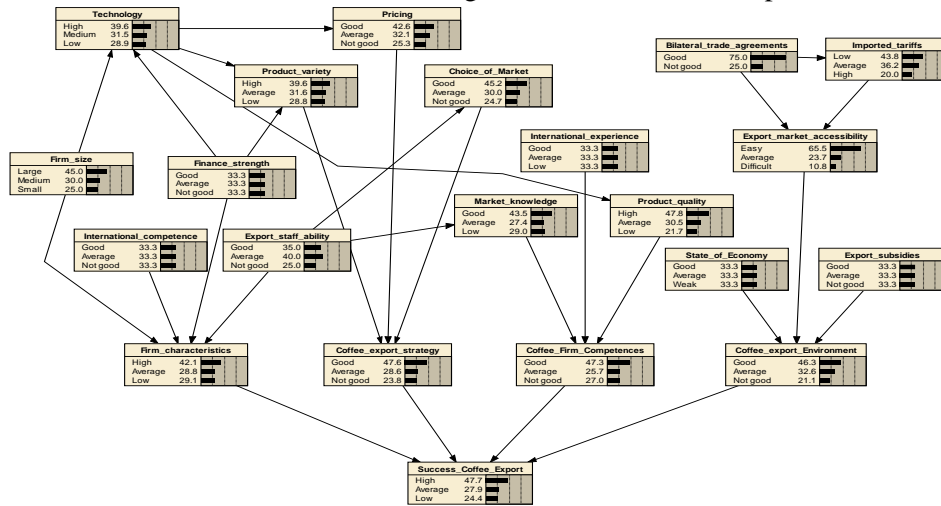

Figure 4: Baseline scenario of successful coffee export using BBN model

Sensitivity analysis can help recognize the significant components of the priority problems (Richards et al., 2013). Sensitivity analysis was performed using the BBN to categorize the significant variables within the identified system in identifying the success factor of Vietnamese SMEs in the coffee export sector. The critical nodes for achieving the success factors of coffee export include the firms' characteristics, the coffee export strategy, the coffee firm's competencies, and the coffee export environment. Consequently, the sensitivity analysis of success factors for coffee export reveals that the coffee export strategy is the most crucial factor for Vietnamese SMEs in coffee exports, with 1.82%, followed by coffee firm competencies and export environments with 1.26% and 1.01%, respectively. In contrast, the coffee firm characteristic is the least important in achieving coffee export success, with only 0.95%.

Table 1. Sensitivity of 'Success_Coffee_Export' to a finding at another node

Node	Entropy reduction (%)
Coffee_export_strategy	1.820
Coffee_Firm_Competences	1.260
Coffee_export_Environmen	1.010
Firm_characteristics	0.945

After implementing BBN model, the performance sensitivity analysis examines how factors impact coffee success. This research develops four scenarios to identify the root causes of export success.

Scenario 1: In the first scenario, we considered increasing the coffee export strategy level by changing the factors that directly impact the export strategy level (such as coffee product variety, choice of the market to export, and price of the coffee product). Among these influence factors, the market choice has the most significant influence, with 2.68%. In comparison, the price of coffee export products has the most negligible impact on the level of export strategy, with only 1.45% (see Table 2). Therefore, market choice is the critical factor for enhancing export strategy. It can be explained that if the company has a good selection of export markets, they can provide their products following customers' needs and wants.

Table 2. Sensitivity of 'Coffee_export_strategy' to a finding at another node

Node	Entropy reduction (%)
Choice_of_Market	2.68
Product_variety	2.09
Pricing	1.45

A sensitivity analysis of the model showed that the most influential parameters for achieving success in exporting coffee enterprises were the coffee export strategy directly impacted by market choice, variety of products, and price of coffee export. Therefore, if the states of the following variables in the map that impact the factors influencing the coffee export strategy are set up thus Choice of Market = good; Product variety = high; Pricing = good, the probability that a higher level of coffee export strategy will occur and rise from 47.6% (see Figure 4) to 75.1% (see Figure 5). If the level of strategy suitable for coffee export increases, the probabilistic result will be that the level of success in coffee export will increase from 47.7% (see Figure 4) to 54.5 (see Figure 5).
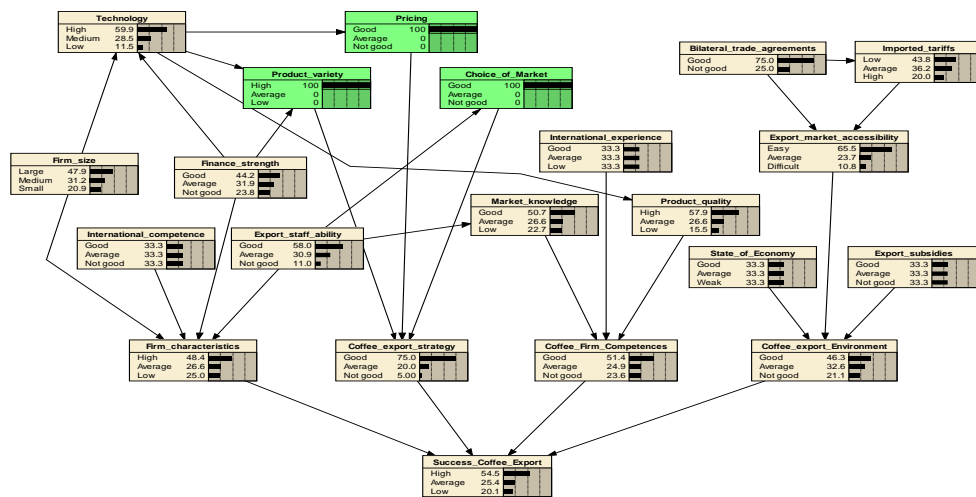

Figure 5: Baseline scenario 1 of successful coffee export using BBN model

Scenario 2: A sensitivity analysis of the model showed that product quality has the most significant influence on the firm competencies with 5.08%, followed by the international experience of coffee enterprises and market knowledge with 3.02% and 1.12%, respectively (see Table 3). Therefore, the quality of the coffee product should be considered a vital factor for success in exporting Vietnamese enterprises' coffee.

Table 3. Sensitivity of 'Coffee_Firm_Competences' to a finding at another node

Node	Entropy reduction (%)
Product_quality	5.08
International_experience	3.02
Market_knowledge	1.12

In this scenario, we considered how to effectively increase Vietnamese coffee enterprise competencies by changing influence factors. The scenario analysis presented in Figure 6 shows that the conditional probability of enterprise competencies has the highest value when International experience and market knowledge are set up at 100% good, and the product quality is set up at 100% high. In this scenario, the probability (that is, good enterprise competencies) increases from 47.3% (see Figure 4) to 84.0% (see Figure 6). This increase is attributed to increasing export coffee's success from 47.7% (see Figure 4) to 54.5% (see Figure 6).
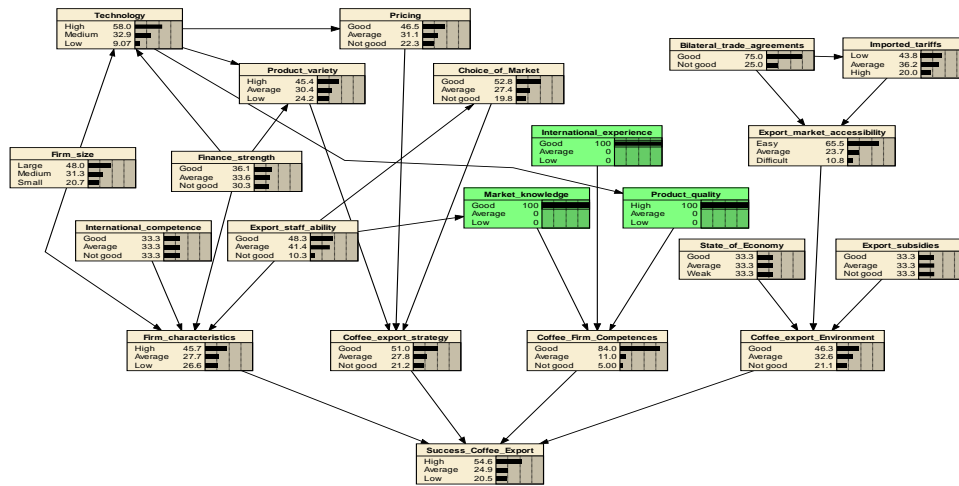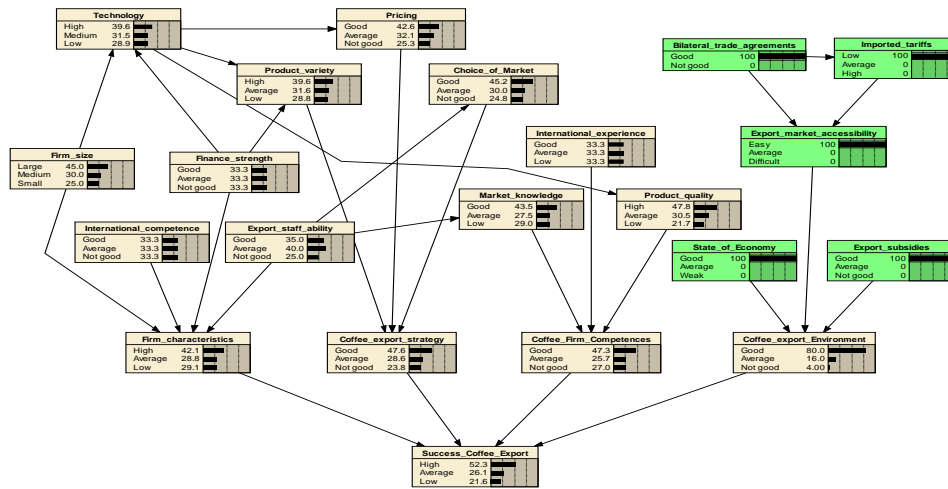

Figure 6: Baseline scenario 2 of successful coffee export using BBN model

Scenario 3: The export environment is another factor influencing the success of coffee exports by Vietnamese enterprises. Thus, in this scenario, we considered the market environment where Vietnamese companies are looking for a market to sell their product at a reasonable level. A sensitivity analysis revealed that among the influence factors that impact the export environment, the state of the economy in the overseas market (disposable income in the host country) has the greatest influence on the export environment with 4.8%, followed by export market accessibility and the subsidies of Vietnamese government (such as bilateral trade agreements, countertrade arrangements) with 0.86% and 0.69%, respectively (see Table 4). Therefore, the state of the overseas market economy is the crucial element to the export success of Vietnamese coffee enterprises.

Table 4. Sensitivity of 'Coffee_export_Environment' to a finding at another node

Node	Entropy reduction (%)
State_of_Economy	4.80
Export_market_accessibility	0.86
Export_subsidies	0.69

The scenario analysis presented in Fig. 7 indicates that if selected nodes (good state of the economy, good export subsidies and easy export market accessibility) are set at 100%, the conditional probability of export environment increases from 46.3% (see Figure 4) to 80.0% (see Figure 7). As a result of this, the export success also increases from 47.7 (see Figure 4) to 52.3% (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Baseline scenario 3 of successful coffee export using BBN model

Scenario 4: In the fourth scenario, we considered changing firm characteristics, one factor influencing the successful exportability of Vietnamese coffee export enterprises. A sensitivity analysis of the model showed that the firm characteristics are influenced by financial strength, international competence, ability and firm size. According to the sensitivity analysis result (see Table 5), financial strength has the most substantial impact on firm characteristics with 1.73%, followed by international competence and staff ability in export with 1.52% and 1.12%, respectively. In contrast, the firm size has a minor influence with only 0.43%. Thus, in this scenario, financial strength can be seen as a critical factor that can enhance coffee export's success.

Table 5. Sensitivity of 'Firm_characteristics' to a finding at another node

Node	Entropy reduction (%)
Finance_strength	1.73
International_competence	1.52
Export_staff_ability	1.12
Firm_size	0.43

The scenario analysis indicated in Figure 8 shows that the conditional probability of firm characteristics has the peak value when International competence, export staff ability, and financial strength are set up at 100% good, and the company-sized quality is set up at 100% significant. In this scenario, the probability (that is, high enterprise characteristic) increases from 42.1% (see Figure 4) to 80.0% (see Figure 8). This increase is attributed to increasing export coffee's success from 47.7% (see Figure 4) to 55.% (see Figure 8).
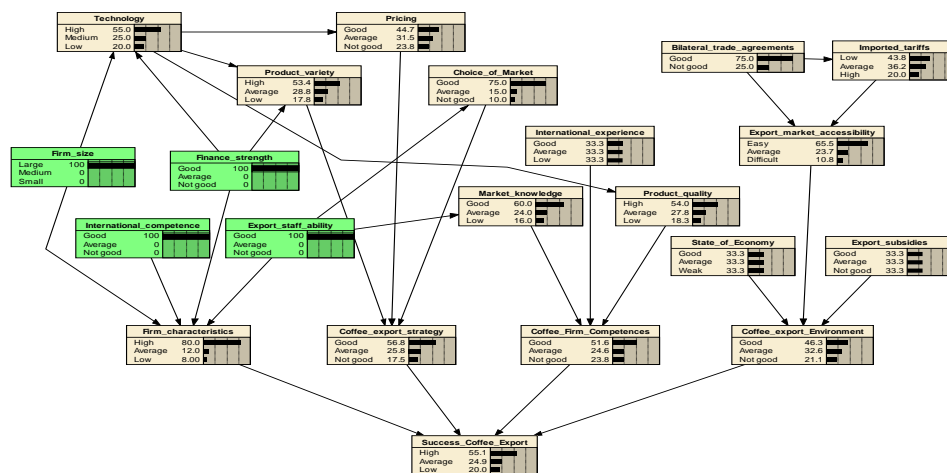

Figure 8: Baseline scenario 4 of successful coffee export using BBN model

Discussion

The assessment of the four scenarios above provides a basis for identifying the critical success factor for particular problems. The Vietnamese coffee export enterprises model has four main leverage points: firm characteristics, export strategy, competencies, and export environment. Thus, identifying the factors influencing these variables will likely amplify the enterprise's success.

Table 1 shows that the export coffee strategy has the most substantial impact on Vietnamese SMEs' success. Causal factors, including market choice, variety of coffee products and pricing, identified a good level of the export coffee strategy. In those causal factors, the market choice influences the export coffee strategy (see

Table 2). Thus, the export coffee strategy can be seen as a vital leverage factor to impact the success of the Vietnamese coffee export enterprises. This finding supports previous research, which shows that the export strategy positively impacts the success of SMEs (Thich et al., 2015; Erdil, 2016; Gerschewski et al., 2020).

Product quality is a vital factor in increasing the competency of an enterprise (see Table 3). Thus, increasing strong competency by improving product quality is the primary intervention for enhancing coffee export success in the international markets, supported by previous findings (Lages, 2000; Thich et al., 2017a).

The BBN simulation (see Table 4) revealed that the state of the economy was found to have the most considerable impact on the coffee export environment. Thus, to enhance coffee export success in the international markets, Vietnamese coffee export enterprises should focus on the state of the economy within the global market.

The financial situation would contribute to better enterprise characteristics. According to Ramukumba (2014) and Thich et al. (2017), finance plays a vital role in Vietnamese coffee firms because exporting coffee products would require huge finance while almost all firms are small and medium-sized (Thich et al., 2017a). The financial situation would contribute to better enterprise characteristics. According to Ramukumba (2014) and Thich et al. (2017), finance plays a vital role in Vietnamese coffee firms because exporting coffee products would require huge finance while almost all firms are small and medium-sized. Therefore, funding needs to be provided to coffee firms by financial organizations. BBN simulation (see Table 5) also revealed that financial strength has the most substantial influence on the immutable characteristic, so it would be seen as a primary intervention point for enhancing coffee export success. Researchers also previously discussed this problem (Sturgeon, 2012; Pascucci, 2018).

With the outline of the critical issues that can be seen as the main success factor of coffee export above, the author developed a modified version model for coffee export after the intervention to leverage points (See Figure 9).
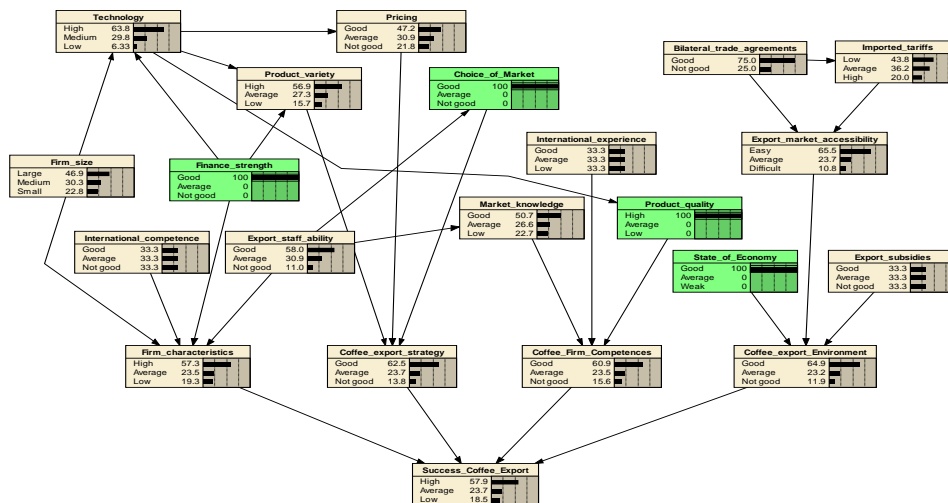
Figure 9: Implementation of intervention for enhancing successful coffee export using BBN

Simulation tests using the model illustrate that market choice, product quality, the state of the economy, and financial strength would be vital factors that could enhance the success of Vietnamese coffee export enterprises. In those four factors, the market choice would be seen as the most critical factor impacting the success of the Vietnamese coffee export enterprises (see Table 1).

A comparison of prior (see Figure 4) and posterior marginal (see Figure 9) of the coffee export success and other important factors that directly influence the success of export, namely the market choice, product quality, the state of the economy and financial strength are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Prior and posterior marginal probabilities under implementing interventions

	Nodes	Prior marginal probability	Posterior marginal probability	Change (% probability)
1	**Success coffee export** (High)	47.7	57.9	10.2
2	**Coffee export strategy** (Good)	47.6	62.5	14.9
3	**Firm characteristic** (High)	42.1	57.3	15.2
4	**Export environment** (Good)	46.3	64.9	18.2
5	**Firm competencies** (Good)	47.3	60.9	13.6

In this intervention, the posterior probability of successful coffee export has high increases from 47.7 to 57.9, and that of firm characteristic also increases from 42.1 to 57.3. The probability of export strategy, export environment and firm competence enhances from 47.6 to 62.5, 46.3 to 64.9, and 47.3 to 60.9, respectively. Thus, the market choice, product quality, the state of the economy, and financial strength are

the leverage points in which it can be intervened to achieve a higher success level for the Vietnamese coffee export enterprise.

Conclusion

This study aims to identify critical success factors for Vietnamese coffee export enterprises by applying BBN's model. The BBN's model was developed to find the most critical factors that impact the success of Vietnamese coffee export enterprises, especially SMEs. The findings show that the coffee export strategy greatly impacted Vietnamese SMEs' success. However, the coffee export strategy is directly impacted by market choice, variety of products, and price of coffee export. Of those four factors, the market choice has the most impact on the coffee export strategy in Vietnamese coffee export. Therefore, the right choice market is a leverage point for intervention to achieve the success of the Vietnamese coffee export enterprises.

Although using the BBN model can help managers identify factors to improve the success of Vietnamese coffee export enterprises in the world market through model sensitivity analysis, the limitation of using this method is that it is not possible to determine the specific level of influence of each factor on the success of enterprises. Therefore, further studies need to focus on determining the specific level of the influence factors affecting the ability to export the success of small and medium enterprises.

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IDENTYFIKACJA KLUCZOWYCH CZYNNIKÓW SUKCESU WIETNAMSKICH PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW EKSPORTUJĄCYCH KAWĘ

Streszczenie: W obecnych warunkach globalizacji konkurencja jest czynnikiem wyzwalającym działalność eksportową przedsiębiorstw w zakresie towarów i usług. Jest to również czynnik determinujący rozwój biznesu i podstawowy wymóg ogólnego dobrobytu biznesowego, zwłaszcza dla małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw (MŚP). Dlatego też niniejszy artykuł ma na celu identyfikację i analizę krytycznych czynników sukcesu wietnamskich firm eksportujących kawę. W artykule wykorzystano metodę Bayesian Belief Networks (BBN) w celu zidentyfikowania czynników, które mogą osiągnąć sukces w eksporcie kawy. W badaniu opracowano cztery scenariusze w celu zidentyfikowania głównych przyczyn sukcesu eksportowego, a następnie skupiono się na tych punktach dźwigni, aby osiągnąć sukces w eksporcie kawy. Wyniki pokazują, że wybór rynku, jakość eksportowanych produktów, status ekonomiczny kraju przyjmującego (importerów) oraz zdolność finansowa przedsiębiorstw eksportowych są głównymi czynnikami wpływającymi na sukces wietnamskich eksporterów kawy.

Słowa kluczowe: eksport kawy, model BBN, czynniki sukcesu

确定越南咖啡出口企业的关键成功因素

抽象的 在全球化的现状下，竞争是出口企业商品和服务活动的导火索。 它也是业务发展的决定因素和整体业务繁荣的基本要求，特别是对于中小型企业（SME）。 因此，本文旨在确定和分析越南咖啡出口公司的关键成功因素。 本文使用贝叶斯信念网络 (BBNs) 方法来确定咖啡出口成功的因素。 本研究开发了四种情景来确定出口成功的根本原因，然后干预这些杠杆点以实现咖啡出口的成功。 研究结果表明，市场选择、出口产品质量、东道国（进口商）的经济状况以及出口企业的财务能力是影响越南咖啡出口商成功的主要因素。

关键词：咖啡出口、BBN 模型和成功因素。