

Value Chain Review: An Agribusiness Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This work is to review the notions and concepts of value chain utilized by various researchers particularly, in the sector of agriculture business. The very first section of this paper investigates different concepts of value chain and how these concepts have been changed throughout the history. The second part of the paper seeks to review supply chain management and conclude to distinguish value chain from supply chain in the sector of agriculture business. For this purpose, different and existing literatures are reviewed to recognize what stages and scopes are considered in a value creation process (value chain) review. Eventually, a determined concept of value chain is identified to assess agriculture business analysis of value chain. It is recommended to analyze and establish a methodological framework along with objective indicators for assessing and benchmarking competitiveness and performance within agribusiness value chains.

KEYWORDS: agribusiness, concepts, supply chain, value Chain

1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous explanations have been anticipated to clarify the idea of the production value chain commodities whichever product or service (Ferranti, 2019). The notion of agriculture business as a conceptual construct was naturally linked with the concept of value chain since its conception (Mac Clay & Feeney, 2019). The notion of value chain seems to have a multitude of different definitions depending on both the study subject and the researchers' context (Gereffi et al., 2001). Over the years, the idea has been evolved by various fields and perspectives that have concentrated on it.

The notion of value chain is evolving continuously (Mac Clay & Feeney, 2019). The Filier approach developed in the late 1960s that concentrated on the ties among companies within national borders intended for the cultivation and marketing of agricultural products. The new analysis of the Anglophone Global Commodity Chain concentrated on production processes that are fragmented but interconnected globally. Even in this continuous development, the notion of a certain number of actors performing value adding activities remained at the idea of value chain analysis (Gerreffi et al., 2001; Kaplinsky & Morris, 2002).

The typical and unique approach to the concept of value chain is the notion of Filiere. It was developed in France during the 1960s, by the French National Institute for Agriculture Research (INR) and the French Agriculture Research Center for International Development (CIRAD). This notion was used to explain agriculture product chains, through the analysis of inputs and outputs, and a quantitative measure of cost, prices and value added (Bellú, 2013; Bertazzoli et al., 2011; Faße et al., 2009; Kaplinsky and Morris, 2002).

The idea of Filiere proposes an organizational view on value chains, looking for to define the process that arises in the production and distribution of agriculture commodities. It is primarily descriptive and confidently static, showing quantities at one moment of time, however lacking precision in describing how the relationships change and progress, the appearance and withdrawal of actors and the growing or shrinking of physical and economic flows (Faße et al., 2009; Kaplinsky and Morris, 2002; Nang'ole et al., 2011). In this context, French researchers sought to establish an analytical framework to investigate the growth of vertical integration and contract manufacturing in France's agricultural industry during the 1960s.

During the 1980s, the concept of the value chain began to gain attention within the field of strategic management. Scholars in this discipline started examining the concept from the perspective of activities and processes occurring within organizational boundaries. The inspiring works were the one of Michael Porter, analyzing the idea of value chain related to the gain of competitive advantages by the firms (Bertazzoli, et al., 2011; Faße et al., 2009; Kaplinsky and Morris, 2002). According to Porter's model, any value chain is comprised of nine activities, five of which are core or primary, and four secondary or supporting. The primary activities are those which contribute directly to the formation of products or services. These activities include inbound and outbound logistics; operation, marketing and sales and purchaser services. Rather the secondary or supporting activities are those that do not explicitly participate in the processing of the output however are still necessary to generate the output itself. These activities include infrastructures, human resource management, procurement etc. (Ferranti, 2019). The main limitation of porter's analysis is that his value chain approach is confined to the firm level, overlooking the analysis of up-or downstream activities beyond the company (Faße et al., 2009).

The Global Commodity Chain (GCC) is one of the central concepts established in the mid-1990s. Gereffi (1994) describes that (GCC) are embedded in systems of production which give rise to specific patterns of organized profession. In such global chains, big corporations operate concurrently in many different countries, not in an independent or segmental manner but as part of their global strategies for production and distribution. (GCC) include three major dimensions according to Gereffi's (1994) proposed framework: an input-output structure a territoriality; and a governance structure. Gereffi (1994) places governance at the center of his research, defining

two distinct types of (GCC) governance structures: producer-driven and buyer-driven commodity chains. The first form of (producer-driven) governance relates to chains in which transnational companies or other large integrated industrial enterprises play a central role in managing relations between production systems. The second (buyer-driven) case relates to chains in which large retailers and trading companies play a major role in creating decentralized networks of production in a variety of exporting countries everywhere in the globe.

The concept of (GCC) formed the basis for Gereffi's that already developed the concept of Global Value Chain (GVC), which defines the role of governance in international production relations. This illustrates the coordination of internationally divided or disintegrated chains, which are interconnected production systems at the same time. A fundamental component in the concept of (GVC) is the role of leading players, or lead companies, in coordinating and developing institutional mechanisms of inter-firm ties. Human relationships and information irregularity are central concepts in its study of this (GVC) context (Faße et al., 2009; Trienekens, 2011).

Value chain is a dynamic, multidimensional notion with economic, technological, and sociological implications. The attempts to analyze the idea from a single perspective may lead to conclusions that are biased or at least incomplete. It is essential to accurately describe objectives on motivations which contribute to a value chain analysis. It helps to understand where the research or analyze is heading, and what the main issues are to be discussed (Mac Clay & Fenney 2019). The value chain defines the full range of activities performed to get a commodity to its ultimate target from the initial input-supply level, through different processing stages, and involves disposal after being used (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) [UNIDO, 2009].

From a standard and very clear perspective, a classic value chain is expressed as "the full range of activities which are required to bring a product or service from conception, through the different phases of production (involving a combination of physical transformation and the input of various producer services), delivery to final consumers, and final disposal after use" (Kaplinsky & Moris, 2001, Pg. 4).

Bellu (2013) described a value chain as interdependent economic operations and a set of vertically connected economic agents. The researcher suggests that the notion of value chain is comprised from the relationship of a series of tasks that necessarily have to be done and a set of actors who execute them in various stages. Gereffi et al. (2001) concentrate on the complexity and richness of the value chain concept and the form of analysis that may emerge from this viewpoint. Concentrating on the chain or organizational linkage as the unit of study (rather than the company), important questions arise, such as, governance, power, and chain' dynamics. Similarly, Donovan et al., (2015) examine different concepts of value chains in perspectives of a group of activities, a group of players, and strategic linkages in order to better respond to the demands of customers.

Stevenson and Pirog (2008) outlined the main characteristics of a value chain as follows:

- Appropriate for situations where economies of scale are combined with complex, differentiated products that add value in the marketplace.
- Capacity to combine cooperation and competition to achieve collaborative advantage and adapt quickly to market changes.
- Emphasis on high performance and strong trust throughout the network.
- Emphasis on shared vision, information transparency, and shared decision-making among strategic partners.
- Commitment to the welfare of all participants in the value chain, including fair profit margins, fair wages, and long-term business agreements.

Mac Clay & Feeney, (2019) summarized the generic value chain concept as inputs and outputs along with activities that create a transformation; agents that accomplish certain activities along with vertical and horizontal links; value adding activities along with value allocation; a finishing product or a set of finishing products; a group of customers at the final stage of the chain; challenges and opportunities which are shared by all the actors; governance mechanisms and power relationships.

1. Literature Review

1.1.1 Value chain Analysis: Key Elements

Kaplinsky & Morris (2001) and Mitchell et al. (2009) explained value chain analysis as a strategic tool that has wide scope of usage such as enhancing competitiveness, reduction of poverty, economic development and achieving the relationship of network of input suppliers, producers, traders, processors, and distributors.

Furthermore, value chain analysis consider the demand of market, quality standards, local, regional, national, dynamics of markets and world impact on the chain as well as it describe constrains and opportunities for the performers of the chain. In the same context Freis, (2007) and Chidiebere, (2017) defined value chain analysis as an evaluation of the players and factors affecting an industry's performance and relationships between actors to recognize the key constraints that an industry has, in order to enhance production, productivity and competitiveness and how such constraints be addressed.

Kaplinsky & Moris, (2001, Pg. 4) defined value chain analysis as “the full range of activities which are required to bring a product or service from conception, through the different phases of production (involving a combination of physical transformation and the input of various producer services), delivery to final consumers, and final disposal after use”. Haggblade et al. (2012) also defined value chain analysis as a network of competing vertical distributional channels that connect input suppliers, farmers, processors, distributors and end

users, conversion of raw materials using the infrastructure which include opportunities and constrains of its institutional environment.

Study of the value chain analysis needs clear and concise dimensions, and scholars must clearly articulate the scope and influence of the value chain prior to a review of their scholarly work. This is necessary in order to determine the measurement and dimensions of the value chain, and also to identify the products, stakeholders, activities and concerned markets, to establish a strong focus. It is important to define the chain's boundaries across the products and geographical boundaries, and mapping the chain is helpful in getting the overall picture of the chain, which is one of the crucial initial steps in value chain analysis.

Value chain analysis is comprised of two main steps (Brown et al., 2010). The first step is to evaluate the current market in order to place the chain analysis in the correct context and the second step is to mapping of the value chain to answer six main questions. The questions include: a) who are the key customers and what are their product requirements in terms of varieties, quantity, packaging, delivery schedules, grades and standards? b) Who are the key actors in the chain and what are their roles? c) What are the activities and process along the chain? d) What is the flow of product, information and payment along the chain? e) What are the logistic issues? f) What are the external influences such as, ordinances, regulatory requirements and policies? The framework of value chain analysis which is developed by Kaplinsky & Morris (2001) consists of four steps such as mapping the chain actors, assessing the governance structure, upgrading of the product and analyzing the profit margin.

1.1.2 Mapping

Value chain analysis normally starts with the direct mapping of activities in the chain from the pre-production input suppliers to the final consumption of goods or services (Stamm & Drachenfels, 2011). Mapping enables an obvious understanding of the series of activities and the significant performers and associations included in the value chain. Both qualitative and quantitative expression are implemented through graphs to present number of actors in the chain and their bonds and entirely processes of the chain from input supply to industrial processing and marketing (UNIDO, 2009).

Value chain map indicates the product's movement from raw materials to target markets through different players, their positions and how the industry works (McCormick 2001). Value chain mapping makes it easier to identify limitations and constraints at various chain levels and potential opportunities that may not be clearly apparent (Anandajayasekaram & Gebremedhin, 2009). It also helps explain the process an agricultural product follows from the farm gate to the final consumer. The first step in evaluating the value chain is to map the main processes and activities in the chain (Mmasa & Msuya, 2012).

Regarding value chain mapping, a number of studies have been conducted in the agribusiness sector. For instance, Masamha et al. (2018) conducted a study entitled Mapping Cassava Food Value Chains in Tanzania's Smallholder Farming Sector. The findings indicated weak linkages among value chain actors. Similarly, Adeoye et al. (2013) employed a value chain approach to map the plantain value chain in Southwestern Nigeria to gain insight into the network, linkages, role distribution, flows, volume, value addition, and constraints among plantain value chain actors. Findings showed that actors were constrained by limited access to credit, high transportation costs, poor market access, and inadequate storage facilities, among others.

1.1.3 Governance

Governance addresses the role of coordination and partnerships in identifying cost-effective opportunities and assigning responsibilities among key actors (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2000). Based on governance structures, value chains can be categorized into two types: buyer-driven and producer-driven value chains. Buyer-driven chains are typically labor-intensive and play an important role in global trade and agriculture. In buyer-driven governance structures, buyers undertake lead coordination roles and influence product specifications. On the other hand, producer-driven value chains are more capital-intensive. In this governance type, key producers control critical technologies, influence product specifications, and play the lead role in coordinating linkages. Some chains may involve both producer-driven and buyer-driven governance (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2000).

Governance of agricultural commodities is often buyer-driven. For instance; Mishra and Dey (2018) argue that governance in sugarcane, potato, cotton, poultry, milk, and rice value chains is characterized by informal markets driven by non-retail traders. The authors identified buyer-driven governance structures in these value chains. Uddin et al. (2019) conducted research to examine how governance can improve efficiency and effectiveness among Tilapia and Pangas value chain actors in Bangladesh. They found that value chain governance in Tilapia and Pangas chains is influenced by multiple internal and external factors. The authors further recommended strengthening governance mechanisms across the value chain from production to consumption.

1.1.4 Upgrading

Upgrading refers to the process of acquiring new skills and entering new markets within a value chain (Humphrey, 2004). Upgrading is closely linked to innovation processes (Piao et al., 2019). Humphrey and Schmitz (2002) argue that innovation can be viewed as upgrading, as it involves improving productivity and adding value to products and processes. Islam and Polonsky (2020) found that upgrading improves performance, employment, and economic development within supplier organizations.

There are four types of upgrading in organizations: process upgrading, product upgrading, functional upgrading and chain upgrading. Process upgrading refers to improving the efficiency of internal processes. Product upgrading relates to the introduction of innovative, higher-quality, and more cost-effective goods and services. Functional upgrading relates to increasing profitability by changing the mix of activities carried out within the industry or relocating activities to different links in the value chain. Chain upgrading involves using skills and knowledge gained from existing value chains to create new value opportunities (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2000). Upgrading involves improvements in products as well as investments in human capital. These include producing higher-value products, improving productivity, acquiring new functional capabilities, and transferring competencies from one value chain to another (Ponte & Sturgeon, 2014).

Upgrading is used as a concept to identify ways in which actors can improve their role in a value chain by strengthening horizontal and vertical relationships, enhancing activities and functions, and improving overall performance (Kaminski et al., 2018). For instance, Islam and Polonsky (2020) validated scales for economic upgrading in global value chains and evaluated its impact on the performance of supplier companies. They found that all four types of upgrading are critical for supplier manufacturing performance. Similarly, Felix et al. (2020) explored youth capacity upgrading in the agribusiness sector. They found that youth operators were key factors in the value chain and that youth capacity upgrading was positively correlated with financial performance and the development of the shrimp value chain.

1.1.5 Profit Margin

Profit margin is one of the profitability ratios widely used to gauge the extent to which a firm is generating profit. It reflects the percentage of sales converted into profit. Kaplinsky and Morris (2001), and Rich et al. (2011) highlight that profit margin analysis helps assess how benefits are distributed within a value chain by examining profits and margins to identify who benefits from participation. Kalauni and Joshi (2020) conducted a study to analyze the existing large cardamom value chain in Nepal. The findings revealed that farmers obtained high returns and profit margins per unit of cardamom and showed strong engagement in the cardamom industry.

The concepts of value chain and value chain analysis can be summarized based on the definitions reviewed above. The value chain concept refers to a network of actors, including private, public, and service providers, along with value-adding activities involved in delivering a commodity from production to final users. Value chain analysis is an evaluation of actors and factors affecting industry performance and inter-actor relationships, aimed at identifying key constraints in order to enhance production, productivity, competitiveness, and to address these constraints.

2. Supply Chain

Supply chains play a vital role in companies as they ensure the delivery of products and services to end users and contribute to the financial success of the entities involved (Barbosa and Pinto, 2020). Nonetheless, managing such structures is complex due to multiple data and information flows, diverse organizational characteristics, and often conflicting goals (Barbosa and Pinto, 2020). In addition, the high level of uncertainty associated with supply chain operations increases its complexity further. The supply chain is commonly defined in the literature as a network of organizations involved in producing and delivering products or services (Monczka et al., 2015). The supply chain involves producers, vendors, transporters, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers (Roespinoedji et al., 2019).

Supply chain management aims to improve resource movement and utilization, enhance quality control across the supply chain, reduce risks related to food security and adulteration, and respond to changes in market demand for food attributes (Dunne, 2001). Christopher (1998) and Alawamleh et al. (2018) define supply chain management as the integrated scheduling, execution, coordination, and monitoring of business processes required to produce and distribute goods that meet customer requirements efficiently. Similarly, Pant and Mahapatra (2018) state that supply chain management includes the exchange of products, information, and finance between suppliers and customers. They further elaborate that companies have historically focused on managing material and information flows in supply chains.

Supply chain management is one of the crucial areas of operation management for improving the company's performance (Patel, 2017). Kamble et al. (2019) argue that lack of industrialization, weak management capacity, information inaccuracy, and inefficient supply chains are major challenges in agricultural supply chains. Therefore, supplying fruits to markets requires careful attention and coordination. Several factors affect the quantity of fruits supplied to the market, including extension services, market information, fruit prices, distance to markets, access to credit, storage facilities, fruit varieties, input costs, and farmers' socio-economic characteristics.

A supply chain generally represents raw material and component manufacturers, product assemblers, wholesalers, retailers, and transport companies involved in the manufacture and distribution of a product to the end user (La Londe & Masters, 1994). Similarly, Lambert et al. (1998) identified the supply chain as the association of companies that sell goods or services. Russell et al. (2009) state that the supply chain covers all transformation activities of goods and services from raw material stages to end users, as well as related information flows. The researcher described the supply chain as an interconnected network of business

processes and activities aimed at ensuring customer satisfaction. This integration enables companies within the supply chain to collaborate in meeting end consumers' specific needs.

Deveshwar and Rathee (2010) state that most supply chains focus on cost and productivity, aiming to move goods efficiently and effectively from manufacturing to end consumers. In other words, the main objective of distribution network management is to eliminate inefficiencies, unnecessary costs, and excess inventories across the supply chain.

In conclusion, Mentzer et al. (2001) state that the supply chain consists of various firms, including both upstream (supply) and downstream (distribution) actors, as well as consumers. All these definitions of supply chain include the final consumers as part of the supply chain. Thus, a supply chain can be defined as an interaction between three or more entities (organizations or individuals) that are directly involved in the upstream and downstream flows of products, services, finance, information, and value from a source to end customers.

3. Conclusion of Value Chain versus Supply Chain

The supply chain refers to the integration of operations involved in acquisition, transfer, and logistics processes, whereas the value chain refers to a sequence of business activities through which value is added to products and services to maximize customer value. Similarly, a supply chain involves interdependent activities that begin with raw material processing and end when the product reaches the final consumer. On the other hand, a value chain is a collection of activities aimed at generating or adding value to a product. Both channels strive to provide quality goods for the consumers at a fair price. In addition, a supply chain is defined as a business management system that minimizes costs and maximizes customer satisfaction by delivering the right product at the right place, price, and time. On the contrary, a value chain is a means of achieving competitive advantage by enabling firms to outperform competitors while meeting consumer needs. The following table further distinguishes between the value chain and the supply chain

Table 1. Difference between value chain and supply chain

Reference	Supply Chain	Value Chain	Measurement
Porter (1985); Kaplinsky and Morris (2001); Christopher (2016)	Focuses on efficient flow of materials, products, and information from suppliers to consumers.	Focuses on value creation, product differentiation, and enhancing value for the end consumer.	Main Focus
Porter (1985); Mentzer et al. (2001)	To ensure cost efficiency, timely delivery, and reliable operations across the chain.	To analyze how value is added at each stage and how competitive advantage is created.	Purpose

Kothandaraman and Wilson (2001); Christopher (2016)	Process-driven and operations- oriented (focus on logistics, production, distribution).	Market-driven and consumer-oriented (value determined by final customer).	Orientation
Gereffi et al. (2005); Chopra and Meindl (2019)	Includes logistics, transportation, inventory management, sourcing, and delivery.	Includes governance, coordination, innovation, upgrading, and power relations among actors.	Scope of Analysis
Porter (1985); Mentzer et al. (2001)	Procurement, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, logistics.	Product development, differentiation, branding, upgrading strategies.	Vital performance s Highlighted
Kaplinsky and Morris (2001); Chopra & Meindl (2019)	Uses supply chain optimization, cost analysis, inventory control, logistics modelling.	Often uses value chain mapping, governance analysis, upgrading analysis.	Analytical Tools
Gereffi et al. (2005); Humphrey and Schmitz (2002)	Governance is less emphasized; focus is mainly on operational coordination.	Explicitly considers power dynamics, lead firms, standards, compliance, and coordination.	Governance and Power Relations
Porter (1985); Christopher (2016)	Ensuring efficiency, responsiveness, and cost minimization in the flow of goods.	Achieving higher value addition, competitiveness, and differentiation in the market.	Ultimate Objective
FAO (2007); World Bank (2011)	Used to optimize logistics: storage, cold chains, transportation, procurement, and distribution.	Used to analyse actors, functions, margins, constraints, and upgrading in agri-food systems.	Typical Use in Agribusiness

In summary, the terms value chain and supply chain are sometimes used interchangeably in agribusiness literature; however, they represent distinct analytical perspectives. The value chain emphasizes on how value is created, enhanced, and captured at each stage of production and marketing, emphasizing governance structures, coordination mechanisms, upgrading opportunities, and the role of end-market demand in shaping competitive advantage. Originating from Porter's (1985) strategic management framework and later expanded by Kaplinsky and Morris (2001), the value chain approach is concerned with the qualitative dimensions of value addition, including product differentiation, innovation, and power relations among actors. In contrast, the supply chain perspective concentrates on the efficient movement of materials, information, and products from suppliers to

consumers. It prioritizes cost minimization, operational efficiency, logistics optimization, and timely delivery, as highlighted in supply chain management literature (Mentzer et al., 2001; Christopher, 2016). While the supply chain addresses how products flow, the value chain addresses how value is generated and distributed. In agribusiness, the value chain approach is therefore more suitable for analysing actor roles, margins, constraints, and upgrading prospects, whereas supply chain management is more relevant for optimizing procurement, transportation, storage, and distribution processes.

3. Methodology

The methodology is designed to support the study's objective, which is to clarify how value chains have been conceptualized over time by various researchers, how these conceptions differ from supply chain management, and what analytical components are commonly found in agribusiness value chain research. The evolution, definitions, and uses of value chain concepts are examined in this review using a narrative, concept-driven literature review technique, with an emphasis on the agriculture industry.

The design of this article is a qualitative narrative review, as it allows for a thorough analysis of conceptual developments, theoretical differences, and analytical frameworks across the literature. This design is suitable for identifying common analytical elements used in agricultural value chain research, tracing definitional evolution, and synthesizing conceptual discussions.

We looked through the PROQUEST, EBSCO, and JSTOR databases as well as SCOPUS to find and examine the idea of "agribusiness value chain methodologies." With an emphasis on peer-reviewed English-language journal articles, the search was limited to publications between 2005 and 2021 in the fields of business, economics, and agriculture, focusing on value chain studies.

4. Conclusions

The value chain has developed from a firm-level analytical tool into a thorough framework for analyzing how value is generated, coordinated, and distributed across various actors in agriculture systems, as the review of value chain concepts demonstrated. Initial concepts, such as Porter's strategic value chain, focused on internal processes and competitive advantage. In contrast, later approaches especially those developed by Kaplinsky, Morris, Gereffi, and others shifted attention toward governance structures, upgrading pathways, market dynamics, and the influence of global buyers. This evolution reflects the increasing complexity of agricultural markets and the need to understand both economic and institutional factors that shape value creation.

The review similarly exposes clear differences between the value chain and the supply chain. While the supply chain emphasizes operational efficiency, logistics, and the physical flow of goods, the value chain focuses on

value addition, market responsiveness, power relations, and strategic coordination. These differences are particularly relevant in agribusiness, where smallholder participation, quality standards, post-harvest processes, and market relationships determine not only efficiency but also the competitiveness and equity of the system.

By analyzing current literature, this review identifies the principal elements commonly considered in agribusiness value chain researches. these includes actors and functions, governance mechanisms, value distribution, constraints and bottlenecks, upgrading strategies, and institutional environments. These components form the basis for a robust analytical framework appropriate for measuring agribusiness value chains in both local and worldwide contexts.

Generally, the review highlights the importance of adopting a value chain perspective that goes beyond logistics and cost considerations to incorporate market orientation, power dynamics, and opportunities for innovation and upgrading. Such an approach delivers a more holistic understanding of agribusiness systems and supports the design of interventions that enhance competitiveness, increase value capture for producers, and strengthen the overall resilience of agricultural markets.

In “In conclusion, advancements in organizations play a vital role in enriching the body of literature. This is particularly significant for the agri-food sector, as developing countries enter global food value chains as primary producers, often with little or no value added and under poor conditions for the actors involved. The advancement viewpoint is interesting for upgrading value chains within the food sector, providing tools to scale-up in universal markets.

Using these instruments, approaches, and conceptual frameworks for analyzing agribusiness value chains, and with a better understanding of their multidimensional nature, further analysis should be focused on to modify and develop a methodological framework and objective indicators to measure and benchmark competitiveness and performance in agriculture business value chains.

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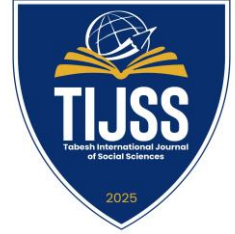
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