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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DIFFICULTIES IN THE ARTISANAL PROCESSING AND MARKETING OF LOCAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN SENEGAL: CASE OF WOMEN PROCESSORS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF A GIE

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Abstract

For some time now, we have seen sustained development in agri-food product processing activities with the emergence of small and micro businesses. These processing activities are mainly carried out by women through GIEs. However, locally processed products have great difficulty making themselves known on the market due to several factors. This study thus focuses on the difficulties in the processing and marketing of locally processed products: the case of the GIE Takku Ligueey in Thiaroye. The methodology used consisted of conducting surveys among GIE members and consumers. The study showed a multitude of products manufactured and marketed by the GIE. Made up mainly of women, the GIE has developed artisanal processing and marketing techniques for various local products. Despite their efforts to offer healthy and safe foods to consumers, the women of the GIE encounter many difficulties, particularly in terms of supply, production and marketing.

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Introduction:-

According to statistics from the World Bank (2022), the importance of agriculture remains crucial, it is one of the most important sectors of the Senegalese economy and the main engine of growth in the primary sector, thus representing 15.7 % of GDP in 2022 compared to 14.9% in 2019. The agricultural sector thus offers jobs and income to many Senegalese people and presents significant potential for economic development and poverty reduction. In addition, it provides most of the basic foodstuffs to the Senegalese population, making it a vital sector for the country's food security.

In recent years, we have witnessed sustained development in agri-food product processing activities. These processing activities, whether artisanal, semi-industrial or industrial, are mainly carried out by women through GIEs according to the Senegalese Press Agency (2023).

However, these processing companies, at the artisanal and particular level, are often fragile and unstable and encounter multiple problems such as: supply difficulties (high costs of raw materials, sometimes perishable products), difficulties in accessing markets, foreign competition, factors linked to expensive and difficult-to-access packaging materials, marketing problems among others.

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It is in this context that this study will serve as an instrument of reflection for the women processors of the GIE “Takku Liquey” whose activities are not sufficiently valued on the market and thus to encourage local consumption. We then raise a research problem namely: “How to contribute to the valorization and marketing of locally processed products: case of the “Takku Liquey” GIE of Thiaroye”

Research Objectives:-

This study aims to study the constraints and problems facing the “Takku Liquey” GIE and to propose solutions.

Announcement of the plan

Our work will be structured around two main parts in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. In the first reserved for the methods and tools of research, analysis and interpretation of the results obtained. In the second part, we will present the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained in terms of difficulties and solutions.

Research methods and tools

To carry out this work, we adopted a working methodology structured around 3 essential points: documentary research, a field study and the analysis and interpretation of the data. The documentary study took place at the level of websites, previous dissertation projects, companies working in the field of processing local products but also with organizations such as the ANSD and the World Bank to have the maximum reliable information in real time. The field study focused on collecting additional information through a qualitative study initially through simple observation, a collective interview and an interview guide with professionals. Secondly, we carried out a quantitative study through a questionnaire survey administered to our target in question.

Sampling:

Since our target concerns women processors, particularly the Economic Interest Group “Takku leaguey”, then we surveyed this entire population of women in order to obtain data representative of the group. However, it seemed important to us to access additional information that would allow us to make cuts. This is how we also surveyed a representative group of consumers of GIE products and some specialists in the field.

Sample size:

The 6 women of the “Takku Liquey” GIE represent the field of our study and we therefore believe that these women hold the majority of the relevant information we need. Concerning consumers of GIE products, not knowing the parent population, we used the following Cochran formula to calculate the sample to be surveyed.

So we have:

$$n = t^2 \times p \times (1-p) / m^2$$

n= minimum sample size to obtain significant results

t= coefficient for a given confidence threshold: let's take 95%

p= frequency of appearance of the phenomenon studied: 50%

q= frequency of non-appearance of the phenomenon = 1-p=50%

£²= confidence interval given by the margin of error = +/- 5%

The sample size n must be greater than or equal to $n = t^2 * p * q / \epsilon^2$

Hence $n = 0.95^2 * (0.5 * 0.5) / (0.05)^2 = 90.258$

Thus, we were able to survey 90 consumers representing the size of our sample.

Table 1:- Summary of all people surveyed.

Actors surveyed	GIE	Consumers
Men	0	20
Women	6	70
Total	6	90

Analysis and interpretation of results

Presentation of the “Takku Liquey” GIE

“Takku Liquey” is an economic interest group (EIG) based in Thiaroye Gare, founded by a group of 6 women entrepreneurs engaged in the processing and marketing of local products. Initially, their aim was to contribute to family income by transforming a local cereal: millet into different products such as 'arrow', 'thiakri', and 'sankhal'.

Today, the GIE has evolved by marketing, in addition to products derived from millet, canned vegetables and traditional drinks.

For the manufacture of products, the process remains artisanal and the GIE works using different equipment in particular: kitchen utensils serving as small equipment, cooking equipment (pots, saucepans, etc.), food safety equipment (hats, gloves, aprons, etc.) and storage equipment (a freezer) to keep drinks cool. However, the millet is milled by a miller located in the center of the market. The raw materials used in processing are either purchased at the Thiaroye market or other local markets or from traders coming from Mboro. And for packaging the products, the women use different recycled containers. For products derived from millet, they use plastic bags, for canned vegetables they use old mustard pots and for traditional drinks plastic bottles, most of the time recycled or purchased at the market.

Organization and operation

The following organization chart shows us the organization of the “takku leaguey” GIE.

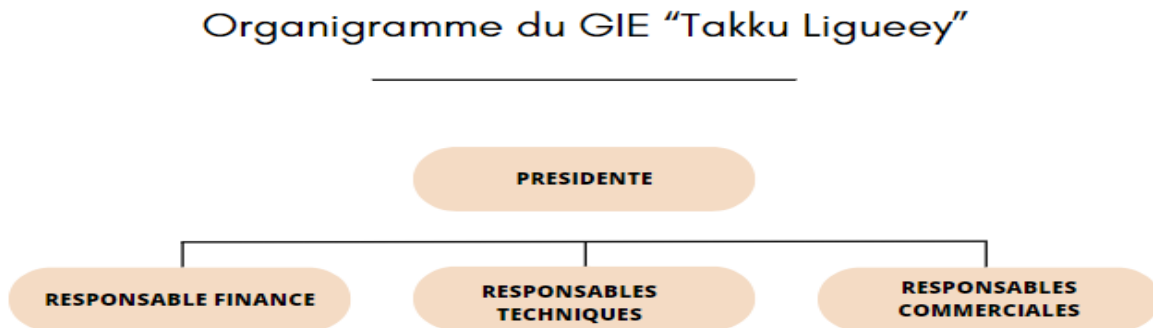


Figure 1:- GIE organization chart.

Source: Our 2023 surveys.

The organization of the “Takku Liguey” GIE is made up of:

- of a president elected by the members of the GIE: aged 45, she has a secondary level of study (baccalaureate) and is thus responsible for coordinating and correlating all the activities of the GIE: she has the power to act name of the entire GIE.
- From a finance manager: aged 42, she attended the Koranic school and has a secondary level of education (Baccalaureate). It thus takes care of monetary flows: inflows and outflows of money.
- Two technical managers: respectively 43 and 42 years old, they are responsible for the supply and production of finished products. They both attended French school and have primary school education.
- Two sales managers: aged 42 and 39, having attended the Koranic school and completed French school and primary education.

Analysis of products locally processed by the GIE

Overview of the products marketed by the GIE

The results of our surveys show that most consumers of GIE products live either in the Thiaroye area or in neighborhoods close to the market (Thiaroye station, Thiaroye police, Thiaroye tali diallo, Guinaw rail, Yeumbeul etc...) and the majority of GIE customers obtain their products from the market itself. We therefore asked each consumer the different products they are used to buying and they responded differently. The responses we collected show that each consumer's purchase varies depending on their preferences.

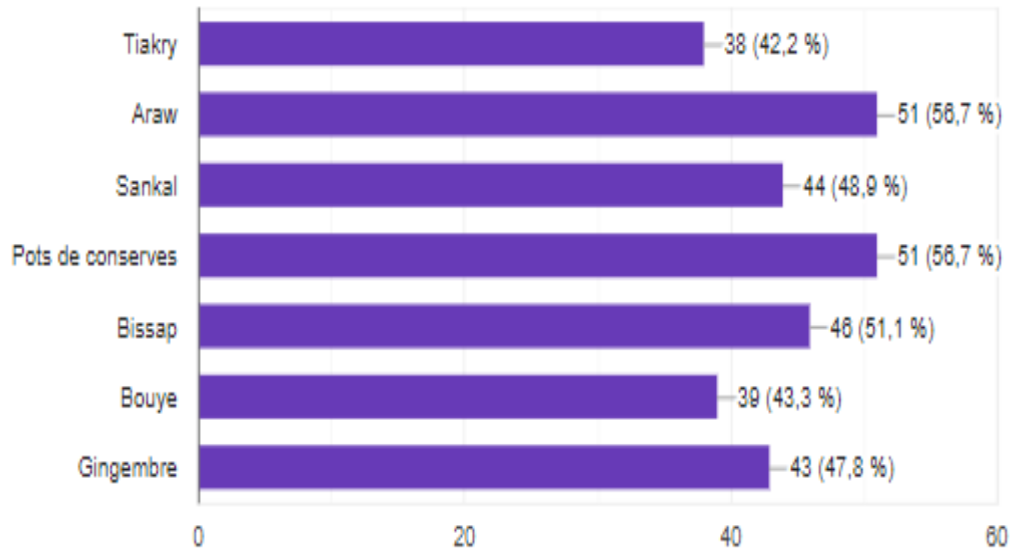


Figure 2:- Consumption of GIE products.

Source: our surveys, 2023

Through Figure 2 relating to the consumption of GIE products, we can classify the different GIE products into four categories (star product, dilemma, cash cow, dead weight) using the BCG matrix which is a tool strategic analysis tool designed by Boston Consulting Group.

We note that among the 90 consumers surveyed, the "arraw" and the canning jars represent the company's star products because they have the largest market shares and are growing rapidly. Each of its 2 products is thus consumed by 51 people in total and has a market share equal to 56.7% alone. Then, we can consider products between 47 and 51% to be cash cow products given that they have a significant market share but experience slower market growth with a rate of 51.1% for juice. Of "bissap" consumed by 46 people out of 90, a rate of 48.9% for "sankal" consumed by 44 people in total and a rate of 47.8% for ginger juice consumed by 43 people out of the 90 consumers surveyed. Finally, we can consider "thiakri" and "bouye" juice as being the dilemma products given that these products have a low market share compared to other products while they are in markets with growth quite fast. Bouye juice is thus consumed by 39 people out of 90, which represents a percentage of 43.3%, and thiaki by 38 people, or 42.2%. If they succeed in increasing their market share, they can become star products.

The majority of consumers also judge that the quality of GIE products is good.

Overview of the quality of GIE product containers

On the consumer side, when asked how they find the quality of the GIE product containers, the majority, 67% of consumers find that the containers are of poor quality, 25.6% find that the quality is very poor and the rest, 7.7%, find that the quality of the containers is quite good.

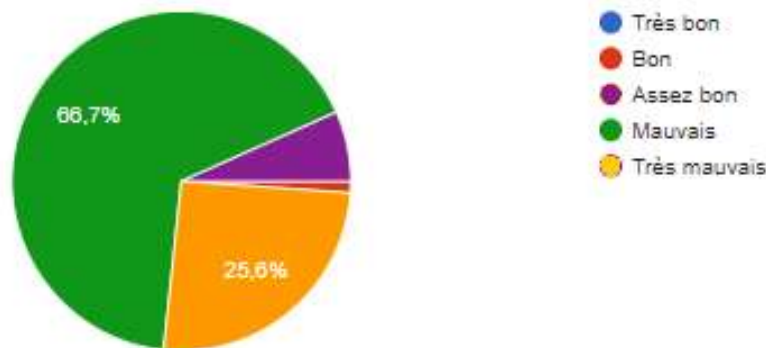


Figure 7:- Consumer opinions on the quality of GIE containers.

Analysis of the constraints and problems facing the GIE

Difficulties linked to production

In carrying out their activities, women encounter many difficulties linked to production. Among these, we first have supply problems. Indeed, the fluctuation of prices represents a handicap for women because they most often vary according to supply and demand or the seasons, but the GIE sells its products according to the total cost of production. When prices increase, the cost of acquiring raw materials also increases, which impacts the selling price of products.

Added to this are the problems linked to suppliers: the GIE does not have fixed suppliers due to the variation in prices and the delivery delays to which they sometimes experience. The delivery of raw materials also represents an obstacle for the GIE given that the women take care of it themselves, which is very difficult given that they do not have vehicles at their disposal to facilitate transport. The fact that women sometimes depend on 'bana bana' from Mboro also represents an obstacle because this leads to additional costs and a loss of control over the supply chain.

Furthermore, women processors also encounter processing problems: such as inaccessibility to the necessary equipment and materials: they lack adequate and modern equipment to carry out their processing activity. Added to this is a double workload because women have to manage both family and professional responsibilities. This leads to excessive workload and exhaustion that may limit their ability to transform.

The lack of in-depth training also constitutes a limitation for women because they still carry out the processing in an artisanal manner and according to their traditional know-how. This also leads to slight injuries caused during the various activities during processing. The GIE also encounters problems regarding the availability of containers. Indeed, sometimes it is difficult for women to have enough containers given that there is a dependence on those that are in use. Furthermore, the GIE only has one freezer to keep the juices cool, which limits storage capacity and creates a risk of stock shortages. In addition, the high cost of electricity for preserving drinks also represents a barrier because it constitutes a limit for the GIE which does not benefit from any subsidy and which generates low income.

Difficulties related to marketing

Women processors face different obstacles that hinder their ability to market their products successfully. Among these obstacles, we have limited access to markets. Indeed, the GIE having only one distribution channel depends entirely on the Thiaroye Gare market which is a fairly small market to sell their products. Women have difficulty accessing other markets such as large and medium-sized stores due to their small size and lack of resources needed to reach these markets.

Added to this is an inaccessibility to financing. The GIE encounters enormous difficulties in obtaining financing for the exercise of its activities and it is not in collaboration with any association to benefit from financial or material assistance. Competition from local and imported products also represents a real constraint for the GIE, particularly imported products because many consumers have prejudices about local products, most often caused by a bad experience. Indeed, imported products have a better reputation and more visibility than many local products.

Furthermore, the lack of experience in marketing and sales techniques represents a very big obstacle for the GIE because women are incapable of properly promoting their products effectively and therefore lack visibility. In addition, the GIE does not have a delivery service: the women make the deliveries themselves.

Nowadays, technology occupies a very important place in our society, limited access to modern technologies represents a significant constraint for women given that their absence on social networks considerably limits their ability to reach a wider audience. We also have the poor presentation of GIE products which does not encourage their purchase due to the lack of information and the quality of the containers which many consumers consider poor (see figure 7).

Difficulties linked to organization

GIE members face a certain number of difficulties linked to the organization of their business. These obstacles can hinder their entrepreneurial success and their ability to demonstrate their potential. In the organization of "Takku Liguey", women encounter many problems, the main one of which is a lack of financial resources. Indeed, the members of the GIE have great difficulty accessing financing, which considerably limits their activities because they

have difficulty purchasing the necessary equipment. The women of the GIE also encounter internal conflicts. Furthermore, women who do not have management skills are limited with regard to the organization of their business because they do not have the necessary knowledge to effectively manage the operations of the GIE. Added to this are internal conflicts: in any company, there can be misunderstandings between colleagues, most of the time caused by disagreements or rivalries between women. These conflicts impact the organization of the company given that it is important to work in a good social climate and in harmony.

Analysis of the proposed valorization strategies

At the end of this study, the following proposals are formulated with regard to the GIE and the State:

For the women of the “Takku Ligueey” GIE

In order to contribute to the promotion of GIE products, we offer them different strategic axes:

Promote innovation and diversification

The results of our analysis show that 67% of consumers find the containers of the various products to be of poor quality. Focusing on the presentation of the product, particularly the packaging, is a marketing strategy that will improve the visual appearance of the product. Indeed, attractive packaging attracts the attention of consumers. When a product is well presented, it stands out from the competition.

In addition, the quality of product packaging plays an important role in preserving the quality of the finished product. For better conservation and presentation of products, we suggest that GIE members move towards more appropriate and attractive containers which will encourage consumers to purchase their products.

In addition to the packaging which is the primary packaging, secondary packaging will better secure the GIE's products and differentiate them from the competition. It will also facilitate product handling.

Furthermore, the GIE could expand its range of products and undertake the processing of other products that are part of Senegalese eating habits with the aim of offering more varieties to consumers.

Extensive advertising through social networks

A presence on social networks will allow the GIE to promote its products to a wider audience. The power of social networks will make it possible to promote and widely disseminate all the products of women processors. The networks will also allow them to create a direct link with customers and increase the visibility of their products. They will be able to answer various questions, receive comments and establish personal relationships with customers. In addition, social networks will allow partnerships with other players in the food industry or local restaurants.

Participation in trade fairs

Fairs in Senegal are important commercial and cultural events that provide a platform for the presentation and promotion of various products and services.

Fairs and exhibitions thus offer a conducive environment to showcase GIE products. Through the fairs, the GIE will benefit from increased visibility, direct sales opportunities, networking and promotion of their various products.

Women can thus participate in various fairs such as the International Fair of Agriculture and Animal Resources (FIARA), the Dakar International Fair (FIDAK) and the Dakar Farmers Market (DFM) which are fairs that promote local products. and expand their business opportunities.

The GIE can also take the opportunity to organize free tasting sessions to allow visitors to taste and appreciate the quality of the products. The fairs will thus make it possible to receive customer feedback in real time. This can help adjust the taste of products, their presentations and women's marketing strategies. The media and the press, often attracted by this type of event, can also help to popularize GIE products through reports and an interview on the GIE in question.

Fairs represent an important source of visibility for the GIE “Takku Ligueey” and will allow members of the GIE to have a good address book.

Develop partnerships

Finding as many partners as possible is a powerful strategy for promoting local products because it allows mutually beneficial agreements to be concluded. Partnerships will strengthen the credibility of the GIE, access new markets and reduce risks. The “Takku Ligueey” GIE can thus develop several partnerships with cooperatives or local farmers to more easily source raw materials. A good relationship between the GIE and local producers can contribute to stable supply and product traceability.

Cooperation also makes it possible to maximize the benefits and strengthen the visibility of the GIE. Women processors can also cooperate with local and national authorities to benefit from grant programs, training or other forms of government support. Furthermore, the GIE can also benefit from the support of Non-Governmental Organizations 5 (NGOs) working in economic development and food security through financing, training or advice on compliance with the standards of market access programs. Also, GIE members can consider collaboration with financial institutions to benefit from loans or guarantees for development projects. Collaboration with partners can significantly contribute to improving the competitiveness of GIE products on the market.

Creating a blog for more visibility

Creating a blog offers a flexible platform to inform and engage consumers with the aim of giving more value to local products.

Creating a blog will allow you to share images and videos that will visually show the products, their aspects and their use which can arouse the interest of consumers. A blog will make it easier to purchase GIE products and allow GIE members to tell the story behind the products highlighting traditional producers and production methods. Consumer testimonials through the blog will also help build consumer trust and product credibility. In addition, through the blog, GIE members can provide recipe ideas and usage tips for local products.

Setting up an after-sales service

A well-managed after-sales service is a key element in building consumer confidence. It thus helps to create a positive brand image and encourage customer loyalty through the processing of complaints and the management of returns. By providing good after-sales service, the GIE will improve the consumer purchasing experience. This is because customers are more likely to continue purchasing products if they know they will have support if something goes wrong.

In the event of problems with a product, the GIE can therefore offer rapid repairs or replacements. This will show the commitment of GIE members to customer satisfaction. Carrying out after-sales service can also be a competitive advantage for the GIE because most traders do not provide after-sales service.

Local distribution

Women can partner with other local businesses like small restaurants, or local food stores to increase the visibility and availability of their products.

They can organize special events and grant a discount to customers above a certain purchasing volume.

Implementation of a quality management system

A quality management system is essential for promoting local products because it helps to guarantee the consistency, reliability and conformity of products, which improves their quality and attractiveness on the markets. Quality management also aims to meet customer expectations and improve processes while ensuring that products or services conform to specified quality standards.

Quality management will establish clear quality standards and standardized procedures for production, which will ensure that products are of good quality, thus meeting consumer expectations. Quality management also aims to minimize production errors and non-conformities. Fewer defective products mean less waste and quality-related costs thereby contributing to profitability.

A quality management system also ensures compliance with local and international quality and food safety standards, which facilitates access to other markets. Furthermore, the implementation of this system strengthens the reputation of the GIE's products and contributes to the promotion of the brand.

Implementation of a Food Safety System (SMSDA)

A Food Safety System will ensure food safety by preventing the risks of contamination, food poisoning and food-borne illnesses. It focuses on identifying, assessing and controlling food hazards.

Implementation of a process to obtain certification

Certifications are issued by regulatory bodies after verifying that products meet specific quality and safety standards. They assure consumers that a company's products are of good quality.

To facilitate access of GIE products to supermarkets and other markets, women processors should consider putting in place procedures to obtain certification, which is an important strategy that will provide official recognition of the quality of the products and their quality. Compliance with standards. Certification will allow the GIE to be more credible and reach more markets and will allow the GIE to distinguish itself from the competition.

For the Senegalese State

To promote the autonomy and development of the activity of women in the GIE, the State can put in place policies and programs aimed at supporting women by several means.

By facilitating access to training

Nowadays, training is fundamental to running a business. Training in business management and food processing techniques will allow women processors to benefit from in-depth knowledge which will help improve their activities, their autonomy and their quality of life.

It is essential for GIE members to have business management skills, particularly in financial management and marketing, to effectively manage the inflow and outflow of money and the promotion of GIE products.

Training in food processing techniques will allow women to better master the basics of processing and acquire new knowledge from the preparation of raw materials to the conservation of the finished product. In addition, this training will considerably improve the techniques of women processors to produce good quality food in compliance with ISO standards.

Training and support will enable women processors to improve the quality of products and master the transformation processes.

Facilitated access to training will allow the women of the GIE to improve the quality of their products and to master the transformation processes for healthy and safe products.

Facilitate access to financing

Access to financing is a crucial strategy for promoting locally processed products by allowing them to gain in quality, diversity, competitiveness and access to markets. This strategy is essential to support the development of the GIE and contribute to its economic growth.

Given that the GIE is facing a real financial problem, benefiting from access to financing would enormously help women on various levels. Grants or loans could thus be used to modernize their processing equipment and acquire good quality equipment and thus increase production capacity. In addition, with the help of funding, the GIE will be able to develop new products and add more varieties to their existing offering. The funds can also be used to improve the packaging of processed products, which will make them attractive and increase their value to consumers. Furthermore, substantial funding will allow women to promote their products through different communication channels.

Access to financing will also allow women to invest in research and development of new processing processes, new technologies or new conservation methods. It can also help cover the costs of certification and compliance with quality and safety standards which is essential for expanding market access.

Facilitated access to the market

The State can create opportunities for access to markets by helping women to establish links with supply chains such as large and medium-sized stores. Furthermore, it can support the export of GIE products by helping processors to comply with international standards.

Raise consumer awareness

Consumer awareness is important to encourage the purchase of GIE products. This awareness can be done through communication campaigns aimed at informing them about the advantages of consuming products locally processed by the GIE through the quality, freshness, availability and accessibility of these products.

Protecting women's rights

The State can put in place laws and regulations aimed at protecting women's rights, including in terms of labor law and social protection. It can also encourage gender equality to promote female entrepreneurship and protect GIE women from unfair competition and dumping of low-priced foreign products.

Conclusion:-

The valorization of locally processed products is a subject of great economic and social importance. Through this thesis, it is possible to see that the women of the GIE play an important role in the processing of local products. They present a variety of local products processed in the local market. Despite the obstacles they face, they remain committed to promoting local consumption and their desire to be autonomous.

The analysis shows that women face many obstacles in carrying out their activities such as limited access to financing, limited access to markets, competition and insufficient training among others. GIE products are not valued enough, which is why they lack visibility among consumers.

In addition, the members of the "Takku Ligué" GIE have not concretely developed strategies to promote their various products. However, through the interview we had with them, the will is real and present. Proposals were suggested to develop adequate strategies such as financing, training and innovation among others. These strategies also include certification, online promotion, training and many more. Each of these strategies represents a valuable tool for increasing the value of local products and positioning them in larger markets.

However, this work base for other women processors in order to be able to meet the aspirations of their GIE and consumers.

However, the development of local quality standards specific to locally processed products, which take into account cultural particularities and traditional practices, is an area worth exploring. At the same time, carrying out research on supply chain management is also an interesting avenue of research in the future.

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