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APPROACHING THE ENTREPRENEURS' POINT OF VIEW FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract:

Entrepreneurship is an important factor in economic development and the reduction of unemployment in any country. In Greece, entrepreneurship faces various challenges over time, which are usually influenced by the functioning of public administration and legislation. On the other hand, the reformation of the public sector does not seem not to be fully in step with the development of entrepreneurship. Structural and operational weaknesses due to both external and internal factors make it necessary to identify for these factors to lead to the restructuring of public administration. A quantitative data analysis is therefore of interest, which will be drawn from targeted questionnaires addressed to entrepreneurs involved in winemaking, a dynamic industry, with high growth rates in the last twenty years. The purpose of this work is to investigate the point of view of the entrepreneurs in the wine industry, regarding their transactions with the public sector. According to the satisfaction levels of entrepreneurs, the public administration needs improvement at both structural and functional levels, in order to contribute to the further development of entrepreneurship.

Key words: *Public Administration, Entrepreneurship, Certification Systems*

1. Introduction

For many decades, there has been talk about the effectiveness of Public Administration and its complex legislative system resulting in multi-level bureaucracy. Comparisons are also expected with corresponding public bodies both of the European Union and other developed countries such as America and Canada (Scholl et al., 2016).

Simultaneously, public administration faces new challenges such as the decade-long economic crisis, the global health crisis of Covid-19, the migration issue, and the recent war in Eastern Europe. While the demographic deadlock seems to be increasing continuously in the coming years (Park et al., 2024).

Therefore, it is logical for public administration to be one of the dominant factors in the development of every country, both economically and socially. Based on its effectiveness and efficiency, the state can address long-standing problems as well as those that

continuously arise through innovation by improving the quality of services it offers to the entrepreneur and, by extension, to the citizen (Hartley et al., 2013).

Moreover, multifaceted public administration serves the public interest and must meet the infinite needs of society through a meritocratic and transparent system (Karyotakis et al., 2015).

In most developed countries and many developing countries, continuous scientific research is conducted, and various systems are proposed to improve the services provided by the state to the citizen, both for central public administration entities and organizations supervised by the public sector, such as those of Corporate Entrepreneurship (Funco et al., 2023). These studies mainly focus on the citizen who is a client of public organizations to identify the problems that plague their relationship.

All studies focus on the modernization of human-centered public administration and the adoption of innovative practices that will respond to contemporary social and business trends (Klein et al., 2010). With the continuous asynchronous and synchronous training of employees and executives, recruitment with modern meritocratic procedures, implementation of service targeting in a common database, and continuous evaluation of all personnel, the extroversion of public administration will be achieved to a great extent (Benmohamed et al., 2024).

Thus, beyond simplifying the legal framework, which will inevitably lead to reducing bureaucracy, public administration is oriented towards adopting various processes and procedures borrowed from total quality systems and management principles. In this way, it will improve its productivity and increase the efficiency of its resources, both human and material, which are nevertheless finite (Kassa and Ning, 2023).

Despite the challenges faced by public administration, it continues to play a crucial role in both citizen welfare and the promotion of entrepreneurship (Kao, 1989). The adoption of entrepreneurial principles by senior public administration officials positively influences the achievement of goals, while a creative culture and strategy are developed where staff participate in decision-making both for goal setting and for the work environment (Vivona, 2023).

The adoption of entrepreneurship processes in organizations of various sizes and types has long been a subject of extensive research (Burgelman, 1983; Miller, 1983; Gartner, 1985). Since then, various models have been proposed related to corporate entrepreneurship in the public sector and its impact on organizational performance (Kearney et al., 2007).

2. Literature review

The administrative reform of the country is one of the key points of Greek public administration, aiming at the apparent need for citizens to be treated as citizen-clients and enjoy high-quality administrative services so that public administration becomes flexible, outward-looking, and quality-oriented (Moschoti, 2019).

The public administration is called to use valuable tools and practices, derived from dynamic management, in order to maximize its effectiveness and productivity. This does not

mean its privatization, but its recovery through the application of modern practices, without political expediency and outdated tendencies (Roussides, 2012).

Total quality management and the tools it provides are proposed by Karavasilis (2012) as an approach for the New Public Management model and the Common Assessment Framework of public organizations. Through the required processes, the needs and expectations of citizens interacting with public organizations will be identified, so that the sought transformation can be more successful. In this comprehensive framework, the adoption of e-governance is a critical factor for achieving the goals.

In 1992, Osborne and Gaebler first mentioned the term “entrepreneurial public administration”, referring to the methodology that these organizations should implement to improve their productivity and efficiency through a strategic approach to the strategic behavior of public employees.

The approach of applying specific technical tools already successfully applied in the private sector will contribute to maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector. Such tools include Goal Setting, the Common Assessment Framework, and the Total Quality Management System (Boukouvala, 2023).

The Common Assessment Framework partially contributes to understanding the concept of quality culture among middle management executives of the second degree of local government, while the most crucial factor seems to be the organizational culture of the organizations themselves (Tsolaki, 2011).

The bureaucratic nature of organizations often constitutes an inhibitory factor that prevents the adoption of the entrepreneurial approach concept and the application of internal marketing in these organizations (Papasolomou, 2006). To investigate whether internal control significantly affects the performance and innovation of public organizations, the structural equation modeling approach (PLS 4) was used. The research results concluded that there is a high correlation between these factors, so they can be used as indicators for their quantification (Philipou et al., 2006).

Public sector improvements were analyzed by considering the adoption of Corporate Entrepreneurship (CE) and its impact on Innovative Performance (IP), as it presents positive results in the private sector. The research confirms the positive relationship between CE and IP and the significant positive relationship between organizational support factors and CE (Khirfan and Khasawneh, 2024).

3. Methodology

3.1 Data

For data collection, the spatial area of the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Region was selected, as it has:

Wine labels with the highest sales in the domestic and international markets.

Several of the country's most important wineries

A satisfactory number of wineries and representation as small, medium, large, and very large businesses operate.

A great reputation for wine production since ancient times

Furthermore, in this area, there is an increased possibility of collecting very valid and timely data.

To achieve the research goal, i.e., to investigate the opinion of winemaking entrepreneurs from their transactions with public services, a 40-question questionnaire was developed. The survey is designed to be administered through a Google Form, as indicated by a link in the document, which suggests an online administration period. The exact timeframe for this administration isn't provided in the document but is likely specified during the survey's launch.

Additionally, for greater reliability of the results, there was telephone communication and simultaneous completion of the questionnaire to better understand the questions and the available answers. Out of the approximately 50 wineries operating in the Region, 33 completed questionnaires with reliable and representative answers were collected. The rest either operate at a reduced capacity or did not wish to respond.

3.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is aimed at assessing various aspects of businesses, particularly those in the winemaking industry. It is structured into multiple sections that gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The structure includes questions about production, certifications, investment activities, and the businesses' interactions with public services.

The first section focuses on business details, such as the annual production of different types of wine (white, rosé, red) and whether the business owns its facilities. It also asks about the number of permanent employees and the presence of export activities. These questions are straightforward, requiring either numerical input (e.g., production volumes) or binary responses.

The second section addresses certifications and what types of certifications they hold. It uses both multiple-choice questions and Likert scale-type questions to assess satisfaction levels with certifications and the likelihood of continuing with them.

Another section explores the businesses' involvement in investment programs and their satisfaction with the results. This section also includes Likert scale questions to measure the likelihood of future program participation.

Further, the questionnaire evaluates perceptions of public services and their interaction with the business. It seeks opinions on the quality of service provided by public organizations, using a Likert scale to gauge satisfaction and the perceived effectiveness of these services.

The questionnaire also investigates the use of digital governance and the impact of post-COVID changes on business interactions with public services, again employing a Likert scale for these evaluations.

The respondents are primarily individuals in managerial or leadership roles within the winemaking businesses, such as business owners or those responsible for operations and quality control. Their role necessitates a deep understanding of both production processes and the strategic decisions around certifications and interactions with public institutions. This profile ensures that the answers provided are informed and reflective of the businesses' actual practices and perceptions.

3.3 Statistical Analysis

Initially, a descriptive analysis was used to better analyze and present the profile of the businesses, in conjunction with subsequent analyses. Non-parametric techniques were employed for data analysis because most of the variables are categorical and ordinal, and the sample size is relatively small (Pallant, 2023). The non-parametric techniques used are the Friedman test and the Mann-Whitney U test.

The Friedman test is a non-parametric method analogous to one-way ANOVA with repeated measures. It is used when we have the same sample (in our case, the winemakers) and we record their opinions under three or more conditions.

The Mann-Whitney U test is used to identify differences between two independent groups (in our case, certified and non-certified producers) regarding a continuous variable (in our case, overall satisfaction) (Pallant, 2023).

4. Results/findings

First, we will present the basic descriptive elements of the sample that comprise the profile of the surveyed wineries in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace.

Overall, from the 33 businesses, it is found that the average number of permanent employees is 14.58, while an average of 172,212 bottles of white wine, 25,915 bottles of rosé wine, and 5,279.255 bottles of red wine are produced.

The next Table shows the percentages regarding export activity, the hiring of an oenologist, certification, the production of certified organic wine, and the production of wines with a PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and/or PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) indication.

Table 1. Business profile regarding various aspects of the production process

		Percentage
Export Activity	YES	60.6%
	NO	34.4%
Certification	YES	33.3%
	NO	66.7%
Oenologist	External collaborator	39.4%
	Employee	39.4%
	Without oenologist	21.2%
Certified organic wine	YES	18.2%
	NO	81.8%
PDO or PGI indication	NO	27.3%
	PGI	66.7%
	PDO or PGI	6.1%

From Table 1, it is evident that out of the total businesses, 60.6% reported having export activities, in contrast to 34.4% that do not. Additionally, it appears that only one-third of the sample wineries (33.3%) reported having some form of certification, while two-thirds stated they do not.

For those who reported having certification, that is, from the 11 total businesses, 7 have only the 22000 certification, two businesses have the 22000 and 9001 certifications, and one business has three certifications, 22000, 9001, and 14000. Almost all businesses with certification (10 out of 11) stated that it is very likely they will continue to be certified in the coming years, while one business stated it is moderately likely to continue having certification. Regarding whether they have a dedicated department for certification, 9.1% answered affirmatively, 54.5% answered that they do not have such a department but collaborate with an external consultant, and 36.4% answered that they do not have such a department but have a quality manager.

Among the businesses that stated they are not certified (22 out of the 33 businesses), the reasons for this are that it is not necessary for them (59.1%), financial reasons (22.7%), while other reasons were cited by 18.2% of the businesses. Regarding whether these businesses plan to get certified in the future, 40.9% answered that it is moderately likely, while 36.4% answered that it is not at all or slightly likely (18.2% and 18.2%, respectively).

Subsequently, the responses of businesses regarding investment programs were recorded. Out of the total businesses in the sample, 33.3% stated that they have never participated in any investment program, while the same percentage stated that they have participated only once. 6.1% reported participating twice, and finally, 27.3% reported participating more than twice in an investment program.

Among the businesses that have participated at least once in an investment program (22 out of 33 businesses), 45.5% reported being quite or very satisfied, while 9.1% reported being not at all or slightly satisfied with the investment programs.

Regarding the possibility of winemakers applying for new investment programs, 45% of the total businesses stated that it is very likely they will apply for new investment programs. This percentage increases to 54.5% for those who have already participated at least once. For those who have never participated in any investment program, this percentage is 27%.

4.1 Satisfaction from public agencies

Regarding the agency with which they are most satisfied, a non-parametric Friedman analysis was conducted. The Friedman test results show a statistically significant difference in the satisfaction levels of wine producers with various public agencies (Tax Office, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, Regional Authority, Municipality, Insurance Bodies) ($\chi^2(5, N=33)=19.779, p<0.001$). The effect size was moderate ($r=0.36$), based on Cohen's scale (1988), where $r=0.1$ is a small effect, $r=0.3$ a moderate effect, and $r=0.5$ a large effect. Examination of median values showed that both 'Regional Authority' and 'Ministry of Agriculture' have a median value of 4, while all other agencies have a median value of 3. Post-hoc tests (Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons) revealed statistically significant differences between 'Insurance Bodies' - 'Regional Authority' ($p<0.05$) and between 'Municipality' - 'Regional Authority' ($p<0.05$).

Table 2. Satisfaction percentage of citizens from their transactions with public organizations

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very
Tax Office	3%	9.1%	48,5%	27.3%	12.1%
Ministry of Agriculture	0%	6.1%	36,4%	33.3%	24.2%

Ministry of Development	6.1%	12.1%	33,3%	30.3%	18.2%
Regional Authority	3%	9.1%	24,2%	39.4%	24.2%
Municipality	6.1%	15.2%	36,4%	33.3%	9.1%
Insurance Bodies	3%	24.2%	42,4%	18.2%	12.1%
<i>Overall Mean Satisfaction (Sum of respective columns) = 20.636 (SD=4.615) Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.753</i>					

Based on multiple comparisons, it emerges that among public agencies, the Regional Authority appears to provide the highest satisfaction to wine producers in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. For all other agencies, wine producers indicate moderate satisfaction.

4.2 Satisfaction of businesses in various sectors from the public sector

Regarding the sector from which winemaking businesses derive the highest satisfaction, the results of the Friedman test conducted show a statistically significant difference in satisfaction ratings among wine producers from various sectors ($\chi^2(3, N=33)=21.348, p<0.001$), with a moderate effect size ($r=0.22$) according to Cohen's scale (1988). Post-hoc tests (Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons) revealed statistically significant differences between 'Public services are business-friendly' - 'E-governance has helped business' ($p<0.05$) and between 'Public services are business-friendly' - 'Improvement in transactions in the post-Covid era' ($p<0.05$), in terms of satisfaction reported by businesses from the public sector.

Table 3. Satisfaction percentage of businesses from their transactions with public organizations in various sectors

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very
Immediate response to requests	0%	3%	51.5%	30.3%	15.2%
Improvement of transactions in the post-Covid era	0%	0%	45.5%	33.3%	21,2%
E-governance has assisted the business	0%	3%	27.3%	36.4%	33.3%
Public services operate in a business-friendly manner	3%	12. 1%	42.4%	33.3 %	9.1 %
<i>Overall Mean Business Satisfaction (Sum of respective columns) = 14.667 (SD=2.824) Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.856</i>					

Based on multiple comparisons, it emerges that wine producers indicate that public services are not business-friendly, while at the same time both e-governance and the post-COVID period (which essentially correlates to some extent with e-governance) contribute to higher satisfaction levels.

4.3 Factors Requiring Improvement in the Public Sector

Regarding the factor that requires the most improvement, Friedman's test results indicate a statistically significant difference in the perceived need for improvement among

various areas ($X^2=28.663$, $p<0.001$), with a strong effect size ($r=0.45$) according to Cohen's scale (1988). Post-hoc tests (Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons) revealed statistically significant differences between 'Reduction of bureaucracy' and 'Legal framework change' ($p<0.01$), and between 'Reduction of bureaucracy' and 'Adoption of quality management systems' ($p<0.05$), regarding the factor in the public sector identified by businesses as needing the most improvement.

Table 4. Satisfaction percentage of businesses from their transactions with public organizations in various sectors

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very
Reduction of bureaucracy	3%	3%	6.1%	21.2%	66.7%
Change in mindset of public employees	0%	6.1%	15.2%	39.4%	39.4%
Legal framework change	9.1%	15.2%	30.3%	27.3%	18.2%
Continuous evaluation of services and personnel	0%	6.1%	21.2%	39.4%	33.3%
Implementation of goal-setting	0%	9.1%	21.2%	36.4%	33.3%
Adoption of quality management systems in the public sector	3%	24.2%	18.2%	33.3%	21.2%
Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.856					

Based on multiple comparisons, wine producers state that bureaucracy is the primary and most significant factor needing improvement in the public sector. Among the surveyed wine producers, only one out of 33 indicated awareness of whether the public service they deal with is certified. Regarding errors made by public services, 48.5% reported they occur 'Sometimes,' while 51.1% stated that when errors do occur, they are also 'Sometimes' promptly recognized and resolved

4.4 Satisfaction from Public Entities Regarding Certification

To investigate if there are significant differences in the overall satisfaction reported by wine producers based on whether they have certification for their products, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for independent samples was conducted. The test was found to be significant (U Mann-Whitney = 71, $z = -2.118$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that there are indeed differences in median satisfaction levels between wine producers with some certification and those without.

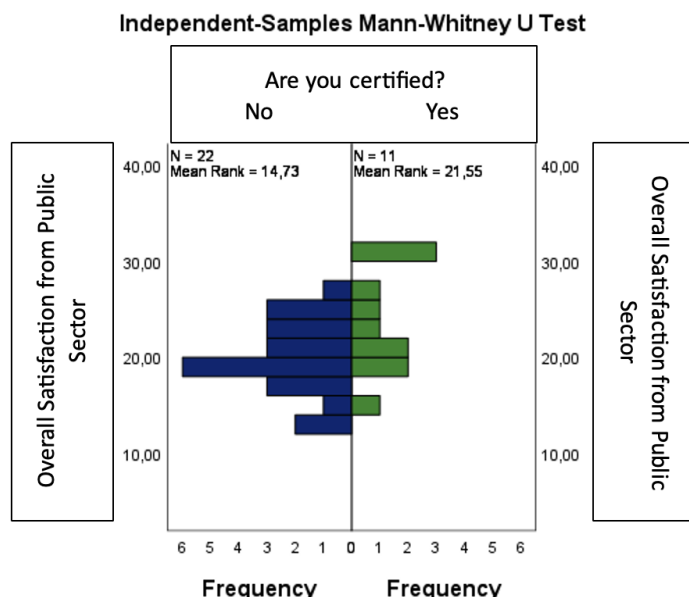


Fig. 1. Satisfaction of certified and non-certified businesses

The effect size is $r=0.36$, which is considered to indicate a moderate effect, according to Cohen's criteria (1988). The median satisfaction values for each of the compared groups are $Md=23$, $n=11$ for those who have some form of certification, and $Md=18.5$, $n=22$ for those who do not have any certification.

Therefore, we can conclude that wine producers who have some form of certification appear to report higher overall satisfaction from public sector.

5. Discussions

The purpose of the research was twofold: firstly, to ascertain the satisfaction rate of businesses during their transactions with public entities, and secondly, to investigate the issues and inhibiting factors present in the public sector that hinder the development of entrepreneurship and service provision.

Through the literature review, a rich body of research emerges in the field of implementing total quality management in the public sector, a quality management system. Within this context, the research explores to what extent these systems can contribute to increasing the productivity of public organizations. Additionally, research has been conducted on whether management principles successfully applied in private enterprises could effectively be applied in the public sector (Savvas & Bassiliades, 2009).

This study focused on businesses, particularly in winemaking, to gather essential data for research. This sector is highly dynamic, engaging extensively with public sector services while also contributing significantly to the agricultural and economic development of the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace region.

Furthermore, this choice is reinforced by descriptive analysis indicating that winemaking businesses in this specific area exhibit strong export activity (Agostino & Trivieri, 2012). Most of these businesses produce wines that are certified, organic, or labeled as PDO/PGI.

According to the non-parametric analysis conducted among public organizations having the most transactions with businesses, it is evident that winemakers express higher satisfaction from collaborating with regional services such as the Directorates of Agricultural Economy and Veterinary Services, and the Directorates of Development, compared to other services. This suggests that these specific services operate at a level that promotes entrepreneurship and citizen service. This dual outcome likely reflects both the organization of these services and the effective training and behavior of their staff, as the combination contributes to their positive evaluation.

As for the overall perception of entrepreneurs regarding the Public Sector, it appears to be positive, and public services are generally viewed favorably towards entrepreneurship. However, this climate could be further improved through the adoption of various measures, so that entrepreneurs consider public services as supporters of their developmental path, reducing obstacles and uncertainty.

Analyzing the problems faced by entrepreneurs in relation to the public sector, it is reasonable that the large Greek bureaucracy occupies the first place (87.9%), which complicates their business operations. Meanwhile, the legal framework does not seem to be as extreme, yet it remains a significant inhibiting factor in the development and operation of businesses.

Among the proposals arising from winemaking entrepreneurs themselves for improving or reforming the public sector, it emerges that continuous evaluation of services and personnel is a crucial factor (Boukouvala, 2023).

Additionally, implementing target-setting measures across the entire public sector will further aid in the improvement of provided services. Therefore, these measures, which have already begun to be implemented in the public sector, should be entrenched and enhanced to serve as the starting point for reforming public organizations, benefiting not only entrepreneurs but all citizens. Simultaneously, entrepreneurs consider the change in mindset of public servants to be highly significant, which evidently relates to behavior and possibly the empathy of certain public employees.

Finally, entrepreneurs believe that the public sector should adopt systems and principles that have been successfully applied in the private sector over the past decades. Among the most significant systems is the implementation of total quality management, aiming to monitor and control all processes and procedures of public sector services.

In Greece, despite carrying several historical pathologies, the public sector is making a concerted effort to reform and improve its framework, despite the continuous challenges it faces, through institutional interventions that will contribute to the enhancement of the services provided.

6. Conclusions

This study emphasizes the importance of creating an environment in the public sector that is supportive of entrepreneurship, with a focus on reducing bureaucracy and improving

service efficiency through total quality management systems. The findings reveal that entrepreneurs, especially winemakers in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, generally hold a positive view of public services, with certain regional departments standing out for their cooperative approach.

Nevertheless, further improvements are necessary, both in reducing bureaucratic obstacles and in evaluating public services, while the adoption of private sector practices could significantly enhance public sector performance. By fostering a cultural shift that emphasizes empathy and service orientation, the public sector can better meet the needs of entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to broader economic and regional development.

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