Determining Competitive Advantage of Communities in a Rural Setting

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Abstract

This study provided a framework for determining the competitive advantage of the communities in the rural areas using principal component analysis. The profiles of the municipalities in the province of Southern Leyte, Philippines were analyzed, and principal components identified. The data included density, total land area, revenue classification, number of literate residents, number of gainful workers, average household size, number of residents with academic degrees, number of hazards present and the rate of population increase. The results identified four indices as factors of competitive advantage, which included the general demographic index, crowding index, family size index, and hazard exposure. This paper concluded that competitive edge in rural areas is a function of general demographic factors, crowding, family size, and exposure to hazard. Demographic and geographical factors are vital to improving the competitive advantage of municipalities in the rural setting. Attaining competitive advantage in the rural environment means municipalities must have robust performance in literacy, population, the productivity of its citizens. Those municipalities should likewise perform well in controlling crowding and at the same time have the ability to mitigate the possible effects of natural hazards. The focus of determining competitive advantage away from economic indicators provides opportunities for looking at how communities in the rural see what they define as success.

Keywords: Geographical economics; Local governance; Philippine studies; Social sciences; Climate studies

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