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Member Engagement and Level of Satisfaction in a Revitalized Co-operative Enterprise in Iloilo Province, Philippines

Ma. Rhona P. Beriales¹

ABSTRACT

A co-operative is a member-centered association of individuals with the goal of advancing their economic and social interests. This paper examined member engagement dynamics in a revitalized community-based co-operative in terms of members' perceived value, member patronage and participation. The study also explored the effect of member engagement on the revitalized co-operative operations and member satisfaction. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study involved a survey of 175 respondents chosen purposively from the co-operative members of good standing. Results showed that members joined the co-operative for economic and personal growth, except for the older members' goal which was for socialization. The members' degree of patronage and participation was "very high". The level of satisfaction is "extremely high," and there is a positive correlation between the members' degree of participation, patronage, and level of satisfaction. The practice of transparency in co-op management was the major source of satisfaction among the members.

Keywords: *co-operative member engagement, membership participation, level of satisfaction, co-operative patronage, revitalized co-operative*

Introduction

Cooperation is always deemed a highly important prerequisite for the success of any social endeavor, most especially in co-operative enterprises where membership participation serves as the lifeblood of the organization. Ideally, co-operatives are community endeavors anchored on a common identity, the offering of equal opportunities for socio-economic advancement to its members, and rooted in a particular locality (De Lautour and Cortese 2016). However, there are instances (which normally happen in the Philippines) wherein co-op enterprise formation is not an internal or community initiative but a government-led program. Nevertheless, co-operative enterprises as value-laden organizations operate on the basis of certain principles and established practices that distinguish them from other types of business organizations.

Co-operatives facilitate the provision of social and economic favors for

their members and the community where they operate (Díaz de León *et al.* 2021). Cooperative engagement is a distinctive aspect of co-operative entrepreneurship (MacPherson 2012). The primary goal of the co-operative is to involve its members in resource generation, business operation, and surplus distribution. Compared to private local enterprises, co-operatives engender success from the cooperation of their members (Tremblay, Hupper, and Waring 2019). As such, co-operatives always endeavor to educate members on their roles and responsibilities as shareholders and patrons of the co-op enterprise and the community.

Author's Information

¹Assistant Professor, College of Management
University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV)
mpberiales@up.edu.ph



Engaged members understand and agree with the aims and objectives of their co-operative. Membership participation is a critical factor in co-operative performance and success (Birchall and Simmons 2004, Kusuma *et al.* 2019, Aini, Hafizah, and Zuraini 2012). A high level of engagement implies an adherence to co-operative goals and objectives, patronage of co-operative services, and active participation in co-operative affairs. On the other hand, co-operative governance is weakened by low membership participation (Kleanthous, Paton and Wilson 2019). Moreover, the lack of member engagement leads to elite takeover and failure to realize the goal of the co-operative in helping all its members, especially those in the marginalized sector.

Like any business organization, a co-operative can be vulnerable to failure. Empirical studies on co-operatives provide accounts of co-operative business ventures that failed. Aside from the studies that point out members' reasons for joining the co-operative, the importance of member patronage, and members' level of participation in co-op activities, several studies investigate the sad plight of co-operative failure. However, none of these studies focus on how co-op enterprises that failed were revived after their failure. None of those studies feature the phenomenon of a "revitalized" co-operative.

This paper presents the results of a study that examined how members' engagement affected their level of satisfaction which in turn caused a more positive performance from the co-operative. Specifically, the study sought to address the following questions: 1) What are the members' reasons for joining the co-operative?; 2) What is their degree of patronage of co-operative products and services?; 3) What is their level of participation in co-operative affairs?; 4) What is the level of member satisfaction with the co-operative operation?; and 5) Is there a significant relationship between the degree of patronage and satisfaction level, between degree participation and satisfaction level, and between degree participation and degree of patronage?

Analytical Framework

It is ideal for a co-op to identify the members' reason for joining the co-operative and align their goals with those of the co-operative. Furthermore, co-operatives are finding ways to position themselves to be more successful while attracting potential members (Mojo, Fischer, and Degefa 2017). As such, the evaluation and re-evaluation of members' reasons for joining the co-operative are very important since they can form the bases for determining the types and quality of services to be offered that address membership expectations.

Member engagement in co-operative endeavors is critical for its long-term success. Engagement connotes a sense of purpose, belonging, and commitment to an organization (Pellikaan 2021). It means supporting wholeheartedly the goals of the organization. Engaged membership underpins the co-operative identity (Noble and Ross 2021). Co-operative members must be actively engaged in co-operative operations and instituting proposed changes (British Columbia, Ministry of Finance 2015). Co-operative engagement can be in the form of commitment (Zinken and Rossi 2016) and entail exchanging members' resources for co-operative benefits. Truly engaged members maintain an emotional connection to the organization. This connection goes beyond participation, and it transcends transactions (Santelli 2017).

An engagement assessment conducted among the co-operative members is necessary as this will solidify the assumptions in strategy formulation. Though all co-operatives aim for high member engagement, the term is too broad and is difficult to measure. However, member engagement means any or a combination of the following:

- a) Members' acceptance of the organization's mission and vision. Members join because they associate themselves with the organization's values and objectives (Freeman, 2013). They see personal advancement or the perceived value of being one with the organization.
- b) Patronizing organization products and services. Product promotion refers to the enterprise's activities to communicate and promote its products to the target market (Kotler *et al.* 1999). The co-operative's success depends largely on how much members patronize the products and services of the co-operative. While most business enterprises focus on using membership cards to attract patronage (Liebermann 1999), the universally accepted co-operative principles bind the members to patronize the business of the co-operative (Co-operative Development Authority [CDA] 2021).
- c) Participation in the undertakings of the co-operative. Various studies prove the co-operative's success is due to its members' active participation and continuous patronage (Juga and Juntunen 2018, Fulton and Adamowicz 1993). The degree of member participation shows the level of interest in understanding the organization (Santelli 2017). Member participation is the key to achieving a 'co-operative advantage'.
- d) Member expression of the level of satisfaction. The level of member satisfaction serves as a tool in the co-operative's quest to sustain member engagement. If members join, participate and patronize the co-operative, it is imperative to know how satisfied they are with the conduct of co-operative affairs. The members should examine the annual report and observe whether the co-operative meets their needs (McKee 2021). The members gather to discuss matters on co-operative operations during the general assembly. The level of member satisfaction may affect the way they engage in co-operative endeavors. The compatibility of the services provided to the members, the quality of human resources in the management team, the appropriate exercise of power and control through policies, and the overall development of the co-operative and the community at large are factors that lead to member satisfaction (Figueiredo and Franco 2018).

The analytical framework of the study is informed by the input-transformation/throughput-output process of the open systems theory. The previous co-operative conditions, as indicated by fiscal problems, membership concerns, and operational difficulties, provide the context for co-op revitalization. Membership engagement, which forms the input variable, is indicated by members' perceived value (reason for joining), member patronage, and member participation in co-operative activities. Revitalized co-operative performance becomes the transformation or throughput variable. It is indicated by the number of members, products and services, income, and net surplus. The output of revitalization efforts is seen in the level of membership satisfaction as categorized per co-operative principle. Good governance initiatives of the co-op management form the feedback loop.

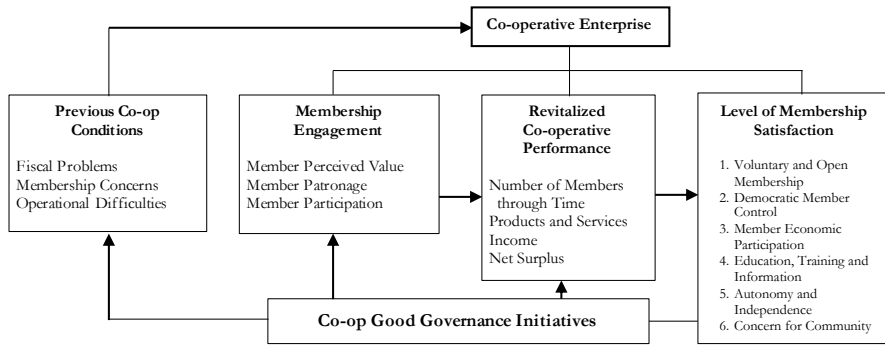


Figure 1. Research framework for analyzing the member engagement and level of satisfaction in a revitalized co-operative enterprise in Iloilo Province , Philippines

Methodology

The Zarraga Multi-Purpose Co-operative (ZMPC) was chosen purposively since it was observed to be a case of a revitalized co-operative in as much as there are no documented cases yet in Western Visayas and the rest of the country of a co-operative that was reactivated after its failure. Moreover, the current empirical literature on co-operative enterprises likewise shows the absence of such studies.

The study used a mixed methods approach. Primary data were generated through a survey conducted in 2015 from among 175 respondents purposively selected using the following criteria: 1) respondents should be regular co-operative members; 2) they have been members for at least three years, and 3) the regular co-operative members should be in good standing. The total number of respondents constitutes 34.65% of the total 506 members of the co-operative. The improvements in co-operative performance were observed and recorded from the same year until 2019.

The survey used a questionnaire checklist, was subjected to a reliability test, and yielded a Cronbach's Alpha reliability result of 0.811. The result was higher than 0.70, thus, it was considered reliable (Fraenkel and Wallen 2009). The first part of the checklist focused on the respondents' profiles, including their age, sex, length of membership, type of member, occupation, and position in the co-operative. The second part involved respondents' reasons for joining the co-operative. The third portion was an evaluation of members' participation in the co-op's affairs and operations, which included a ten-item checklist of various modes of co-op member participation rated as follows: 1 (never), 2 (seldom), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often) and 5 (always). The same rating was used when respondents assessed their patronage of co-operative services and products using a ten-item checklist in part four of the instrument. Part five of the questionnaire checklist was on the evaluation of members' satisfaction with co-operative management using a twenty-item checklist. This part aimed to ascertain the level of satisfaction of the members on co-op management categorized according to the practices observed per co-op principle. A Likert scale was used to rate the level of satisfaction that involved choices ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), to 5 (strongly agree).

Primary data and information generated from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, which include frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The mean was used to determine the members' engagement regarding reasons for joining the co-operative, members' participation, patronage, and their level of satisfaction with co-op management. Spearman's rank correlation was used to measure the relationship

between the degree of patronage and degree of participation, the degree of patronage and level of satisfaction, and the degree of participation and satisfaction.

The survey was conducted in 2015, and other information regarding the improvement in the co-operative operations covers the years 2015-2019. The secondary data involved official co-op documents and records.

Results and Discussion

Brief Description of the Co-operative

The study's case is the community-based Zarraga Multi-Purpose Co-operative (ZMPC) which was formally organized and registered at the Co-operative Development Authority on February 19, 1991. It was put up primarily to help address the needs of the marginalized farmers in the central part of the Province of Iloilo, Philippines. As of 2015, the co-operative had a total of 506 members. The co-operative provides agricultural production inputs and farm equipment; marketing of agricultural produce; savings and credit services; consumer goods; and facilities and chair rental.

Previous Co-op Conditions

From 1993 to 1996, ZMPC suffered major losses due to fiscal irregularities. In 1996, the co-op closed its business operations. However, despite its failure, some committed members worked for its revival, and the coop reopened in 1997. After a long negotiation process, a government-owned bank gambled a PHP 1M credit line for rice production. From then on, the co-operative, through its members, emphasized the ideals of cooperation and the principle of transparency.

Profile of Respondents

The total number of regular members at the time of the survey was 506. One hundred seventy-five (175), or 34.65%, participated in the survey. The total number of respondents participated in the survey was 175 (34.65%) regular members.

In terms of age, most of the participants are 38 to 47 (28.60%). Meanwhile, in terms of occupation, most of the respondents are employed (33.10%), farmers (18.90%), and entrepreneurs (16.60%). Nineteen (19) were engaged in farming and business, 15 were plain housewives, 11 were retired employees, and 6 were both employed and engaged in farming. The occupational features of the respondents conform with the major products offered by the co-operative such as agricultural products, specifically farm inputs and consumer goods.

Table 1. Respondent's Profile

Variables	Categories	Frequency	%
Age (years)	18-27	6	3.40
	28-37	34	19.40
	38-47	50	28.60
	48-57	49	28.00
	58-67	25	14.30
	68 and above	11	6.30
Occupation	Employed	58	33.10
	Farmer	33	18.90
	Entrepreneur	29	16.60
	Farmer and Entrepreneur	19	10.90
	Plain Housewife	15	8.60
	Retired Employee	11	6.30
	Employed and Farmer	6	3.40
	Employed and Entrepreneur	4	2.30
Total		175	100.00

Membership Engagement

Members' Perceived Value

Table 2 presents the members' perceived value, which involves their reasons for joining the co-operative. The top three highest ranking reasons are as follows: 1) to avail of loans offered by the coop (20.6%); 2) to gain knowledge during seminars and training facilitated by the co-operative (15.4%), and 3) to be more involved in a certain community activity (14.3%). These results affirm the findings of previous studies, which showed that members join the co-operative to gain knowledge (Oseni 2012) and avail of loans (Oluyombo 2010). By meeting members' needs, co-ops can be effective instruments in helping the members achieve their own personal goals and, simultaneously, improve their quality of life (Akerle and Adekunmbi 2018).

Table 2. Members' Reason for Joining the Co-operative

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
to avail loan	36	20.6
to gain knowledge during seminars and training facilitated by the coop	27	15.4
to be more involved in a certain community activity	25	14.3
to earn interest on capital	21	12.0
to share/impart technical skills/expertise to the coop	19	10.9
to earn interest on savings	16	9.14
to deposit a share on capital for the co-op to provide loan to the needy coop members	15	8.57
to earn a patronage refund	10	5.71
to socialize or for recreation	5	2.86
others (for advocacy, to help and be helped)	1	0.57

When grouped according to age, the members who were 68 years old and above joined the co-operative for socialization and recreation purposes (2.86%). This appears to be a novel finding considering that previous empirical data hardly mention socialization as a reason for joining the co-operative. Based on several studies, the members join the co-operative due to influence, nature of the co-operative, socio-psychological support (Laurett and Franco 2018), education and information, business support, networking (Ghauri, Mazzarol, and Soutar 2021); savings (Nedanov and Zutinic 2018, Wossen *et al.* 2017); loan, avail dividend and patronage refund, employment opportunities, livelihood training, procurement, and/or access to production machinery and acquisition of real property (Hermanson *et al.* 2021). Others who cannot join co-operatives miss out on the favorable outcomes of collective action (Blekking *et al.* 2021). However, people may perceive the value of joining a co-operative as soon as it proves its strength.

Patronage of Co-operative Products and Services

Table 3 indicates the respondents' degree of patronage of the products of the co-operative. The members stated their "very high patronage" on loans/credit (Mean=4.22) and purchase of consumer goods (Mean=4.48). Such findings are supported by co-op records that indicate an increasing number of annual loan transactions by at least 15% and an increase in sales of grocery items by an annual rate of at least 20% for the years 2015 to 2018. Moreover, the growth in the net surplus from 2018 to 2019 was 15%. The patronage refund distributed to the members for 2019 was around PHP 3M, and the same amount was given out for members' interest on capital. The high level of members' patronage of loans and consumer goods can be due to the fact that most members are either gainfully employed or self-employed as entrepreneurs. Most of these loans were for entrepreneurial and farming purposes. Such findings further indicate members' favorable attitudes towards their co-op's products and services. Dakurah, Goddard, and Osuteye (2005) observed that the members' positive attitude towards their co-operative leads to patronage.

Table 3. Members' Degree of Patronage of Co-operative Products

Activities	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Loan	4.22	1.21	Very High
Consumer goods	4.48	0.87	Very High
Farm inputs	2.74	1.67	Moderate
Trucking services	2.00	1.43	Low
Member-Savings-Operation (MSO) transaction	4.04	1.59	High
Agricultural drying services	1.76	1.31	Very Low
Palay and other agricultural products trading	2.41	1.60	Low
Rental of catering/event materials (e.g. chairs/tables, etc.)	1.88	1.31	Low
Free member counseling / seminars	3.26	1.50	Moderate
Airline ticketing services	1.69	1.32	Very Low
Overall Mean	2.85		Moderate

Scale: 4.21-5.00: Very High, 3.41-4.20: High, 2.61-3.40: Moderate, 1.81-2.60: Low, 1.00-1.80 Very Low

The service which had “very low patronage” were agricultural drying services (Mean =1.76) and airline ticketing services (Mean=1.69). This can be explained by the fact that not all the members are farmers. Besides, farmer-members sell their rice produce immediately after harvest. Thus, they do not need agricultural drying services. Airline tickets were also salable, but co-op members seldom purchased airline tickets as compared to non-members.

Member Participation in Co-operative Activities

Table 4 shows the respondents' degree of participation in co-op activities. Based on the overall mean of 4.17, there was “high participation” among the respondents in co-op activities. There was “very high participation” in terms of continuous capital build-up (Mean=4.31); patronizing the products and services of the co-operative (Mean=4.47); attendance in regular and special meetings (Mean=4.48), and making oneself knowledgeable of and compliant with the co-operative policies (Mean=4.47). The increase in the capital build-up was due to the increased membership as well as an increase in loan transactions. A part of member borrowing is retained for capital build-up. Furthermore, the co-op has a policy that capital build-up, purchases from the grocery store, and attendance in ownership meetings are necessary for a member to be considered in “good standing”, which is the primary requirement for members who avail the co-op's loan services. The ownership meeting is a venue where the members are updated with the undertakings of the cooperative, be updated and approve co-operative policies. Lastly, the cooperative members indicate their participation through education and training activities. Various training activities are conducted for co-operative officers while livelihood trainings are provided to co-operative members who are entrepreneurs and farmers to improve their productivity.

Table 4. Members' Degree of Participation in Co-operative Activities

Activities	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Continuous Capital Build-Up (CBU) of the co-operative	4.31	0.94	Very High
Patronize the products and services of the co-operative	4.47	0.80	Very High
Do Member-Savings-Operation (MSO) transactions at least once in every quarter	4.07	0.98	High
Participate in the election of officers	3.87	1.55	High
Attend in the regular and special meetings	4.48	0.85	Very High
Attend education and training activities if invited	3.97	1.22	High
Pay the loan obligations as it becomes due	4.36	0.94	Very High
Participate in the discussion and give suggestions during the meeting	3.47	1.15	High
Make oneself knowledgeable and abide the co-operative policies	4.47	0.81	Very High
Promote the success story and the aims of the co-operative to others to encourage more members	4.17	0.62	High
Overall Mean	4.17		High

Scale: 4.21-5.00: Very High, 3.41-4.20: High, 2.61-3.40: Moderate, 1.81-2.60: Low, 1.00-1.80 Very Low

Members' Level of Satisfaction

The members' level of satisfaction was assessed based on the co-operative principles specified in the Philippine Co-operative Code of 2008, also known as RA 9520 (Co-operative Development Authority 2021): voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy, and independence.

Voluntary and Open Membership

One of the unique characteristics of the co-operative is that membership is open and voluntary. The results in Table 5 show that members are extremely satisfied with the way the co-operative conducts screening on potential members (Mean=4.66). The fate of the co-op relies on the quality of its members.

Democratic Member Control

The co-operative is owned and controlled by its members. Based on Table 5, the item on promoting trust between members and co-op management, which involves presenting clearly all the policies concerning co-operative operations, was rated "extremely satisfied" by the respondents with the highest mean rating (Mean=4.72). This shows the importance of co-op management's gaining membership trust and developing trust among members themselves. The co-operative calls for ownership meetings to present the financial status of the co-operative as well as to review the targets.

The second highest is on equipping with safety devices to protect its properties (Mean=4.69). This showed that the co-operative is effective in protecting the investment of its members.

Member Economic Participation

The result shows that the co-op provides the agreed benefits to its members (Mean=4.70). This favorable result encouraged more investment and higher patronage from the members. This extreme satisfaction among the members can encourage additional new members. In fact, the co-operative increased its membership recently: the year 2016 – 524 members, the year 2017 – 616 members, the year 2018 – 703, and the year 2019 – 874 members. This implies that the satisfied members shared their pleasant experiences with non-members in the community and serves as a major consideration of the non-members to join.

Education, Training, and Information

The co-operative conduct one-on-one interviews with the member-borrower to screen the loan applicants. It provides clear guidelines for providing loans (Mean=4.70). This is followed by a background check-up and credit investigation of members who would like to avail of a loan. Computers and closed-circuit television (CCTV) are used as new technologies to protect the records and other properties of the co-operative. Other members stated they are extremely satisfied since the co-operative keeps members' records for easy access (Mean=4.58). Aside from the interest on capital and patronage refund, the co-operative provides hospitalization benefits to members.

Autonomy and Independence

The co-operative members expressed that they are extremely satisfied with how the co-op reached its annual targets (Mean = 4.66). Every year, the co-operative sets target and evaluate performance through the conduct of quarterly member evaluation, membership campaign, literacy training among officers and members, financial performance, technological development, human resource management, and credit and risk management.

Concern for the Community

The co-operative participates in peace and order advocacy, supports environmental awareness activities, engages in health and wellness undertaking, carries out assistance for the "poorest of the poor" members of the community and participation in community development programs. The co-op members are extremely satisfied with those activities related to concern for the community (Mean=4.64).

Table 5. Members' level of satisfaction with the co-operative operations

Co-operative Principles	Items/Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Voluntary and Open Membership	Requires orientation seminar before membership	4.62	0.78	Extremely Satisfied
	Conducts membership screening	4.66	0.61	Extremely Satisfied
	Membership is based on members' willingness to join	4.63	0.58	Extremely Satisfied
Democratic Membership Control	Products offered are based on members' real and felt needs	4.62	0.56	Extremely Satisfied
	Provides prompt service to its members	4.59	0.58	Extremely Satisfied
	Solicits suggestions among its members or any matter that may affect co-op operations	4.47	0.71	Extremely Satisfied
	Ensures balanced financing of its short-term and long-term loans	4.55	0.70	Extremely Satisfied
	Promotes trust between members and co-op management by clearly presenting all the policies concerning co-operative operations	4.72	0.53	Extremely Satisfied
	Management is headed by skilled officers and competent management staff.	4.61	0.77	Extremely Satisfied
	Co-op is equipped with safety devices to protect its properties	4.69	0.51	Extremely Satisfied
	Co-op is saving its resources while undertaking its daily operation (efficient).	4.59	0.58	Extremely Satisfied
	Co-op elicits trust among its member by regularly providing the accurate financial status of the co-operative.	4.67	0.54	Extremely Satisfied
	Member Economic Participation	Provides the agreed benefits of its members.	4.70	0.57
Education, Training, & Information	Provides clear guidelines in providing loan	4.70	0.54	Extremely Satisfied
	Updates and safely keeps members' records for easy access.	4.58	0.70	Extremely Satisfied
	Uses new technologies in its daily operation.	4.57	0.64	Extremely Satisfied
Autonomy & Independence	Implements strict and fair screening in providing loans.	4.65	0.55	Extremely Satisfied
	Effective in reaching its annual targets.	4.66	0.54	Extremely Satisfied
	Successful in addressing the expectations of its members.	4.64	0.56	Extremely Satisfied
Concern for the Community	Implements programs for the benefit of the community.	4.64	0.60	Extremely Satisfied

Scale: 4.21-5.00: Extremely Satisfied, 3.41-4.20: Satisfied, 2.61-3.40: Moderately Satisfied, 1.81-2.60: Slightly Satisfied, 1.00-1.80 Least Satisfied

Significant Relationship Between Degree of Participation, Degree of Patronage, and Level of Satisfaction of Members

Table 6 reports on the data regarding the significant relationship between the degree of patronage and the level of satisfaction. The data shows that there is a relationship between the degree of patronage and the level of satisfaction ($r=0.166$, $p\text{-value}=0.028$). The relationship was also found to have a positive and direct relation but low. The positive direct relation implies that as the degree of patronage increases so does the level of satisfaction. Various studies revealed that co-operative service quality and members' satisfaction relate to co-operative loyalty (Yacob *et al.* 2016, Manik, Sitompul, and Matondang 2020).

Moreover, there is a relationship between the degree of patronage and the degree of participation ($r=0.359$, $p=0.000$). These findings signify that there is a moderate positive correlation between these variables, which implies that as the degree of patronage increases, so does the degree of participation.

Finally, the result indicates that there is also a moderate positive relationship between the level of satisfaction and degree of participation ($r=0.428$, $p=0.000$). This means that as the level of satisfaction increases, the degree of participation moderately increases.

The result of the test revealed a positive correlation among the members' degree of participation, degree of patronage, and level of satisfaction with co-operative operations.

Table 6. Significant Relationship on the Degree of Participation, Degree of Patronage, and Level of Satisfaction of Members

	Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient,		
	Patronage	Satisfaction	Participation
Patronage	1.000	0.166* (0.028)	0.359** (0.000)
Satisfaction	.166* (0.028)	1.000	.428** (0.000)
Participation	0.359** (0.000)	0.428** (0.000)	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study's findings revealed that most co-operative members look for economic benefits in joining the co-operative. The co-op aims to meet not only the economic needs of its members but also their need for socialization and recreation. As member-owners, there is a high degree of patronage of the major co-operative products and very high participation in co-op affairs. It was noted that members were very eager to know and abide by the policies of the revitalized co-op. This is a good indication of responsible membership. These positive attitudes towards the co-operative should be maintained by the management team to promote further growth and development of the co-operative. Moreover, members are extremely satisfied with how the co-operative is being managed.

Co-operative practices that operationalize the co-op principles and elicit satisfaction among the members should be continued by the co-op management. These practices include promoting trust between members and co-op management by clearly presenting all the policies concerning co-operative operations, providing the agreed-upon benefits of members, equipping the co-op with safety devices to protect its properties, and eliciting trust among its member by regularly providing accurate financial status of the co-operative.

Since the main reason for the members to join the co-operative is to avail of a loan, the co-operative must continue to extend its various loan services with the observance of proper background checks on potential member-borrowers. The co-operative must continue conducting regular ownership meetings, officers' seminars and training, and specialized livelihood training among the members to promote self-sufficiency among unemployed co-operative members. Aside from the economic benefits extended to members by the training and seminars, other benefits include knowledge of co-operative policies and good interpersonal relationships among the members, especially the retirees who join the co-operative for socialization purposes. Similar to the recommendation of Tareegn (2017), the co-operative should continue to exercise prudent management of resources, excellent services, and continuous provision of member benefits to maintain members' high level of satisfaction.

Lastly, to promote high member engagement, creative and innovative co-op activities that promote high degree of patronage, participation, and satisfaction should be implemented. These can include increasing product lines of existing consumer and household goods for sale in the co-op based on members' preferences. Member needs and preferences change rapidly, so continuous evaluation of member engagement and requirements is important to make informed decisions on management and business strategies to achieve co-operative growth and sustainability.

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