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Enhancing Member Participation Through Socialization: A Study of Koperasi Merah Putih

Nur Aini*[1], Hendra Riofita[2]
Pendidikan Ekonomi, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia
e-mail: [1]nuraini43121@gmail.com, [2]hendrariofita@yahoo.com

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*Corresponding author

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of socialization in encouraging member participation in the Red and White Cooperative. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a literature review design, examining various scientific sources such as journals, articles, and previous studies relevant to the research topic. The results of the study indicate that socialization plays a very important role in increasing cooperative member participation. Socialization functions as a means of delivering information, education, and building members' awareness regarding the objectives, benefits, and operational mechanisms of the cooperative. Through effective and continuous socialization, members gain a better understanding of their rights and obligations, which encourages them to actively participate in cooperative activities, such as attending member meetings, contributing to capital, and utilizing cooperative services. In addition, socialization also enhances members' motivation and sense of belonging toward the cooperative. However, its implementation still faces several challenges, including low member interest, limited resources, and diverse member backgrounds. Therefore, innovative and adaptive socialization strategies are required, such as the use of digital media and interpersonal approaches. This study concludes that socialization is a key factor in increasing member participation, which ultimately contributes to the success of the cooperative.

Keywords: *Socialization; Member Participation; Cooperative; Red and White Cooperative.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran sosialisasi dalam mendorong partisipasi anggota pada Koperasi Merah Putih. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain kajian literatur, yang menelaah berbagai sumber ilmiah seperti jurnal, artikel, dan penelitian terdahulu yang relevan dengan

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topik penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sosialisasi berperan sangat penting dalam meningkatkan partisipasi anggota koperasi. Sosialisasi berfungsi sebagai sarana penyampaian informasi, edukasi, dan pembentukan kesadaran anggota mengenai tujuan, manfaat, dan mekanisme operasional koperasi. Melalui sosialisasi yang efektif dan berkelanjutan, anggota memperoleh pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang hak dan kewajibannya, yang mendorong mereka untuk berpartisipasi aktif dalam kegiatan koperasi, seperti menghadiri rapat anggota, berkontribusi pada permodalan, dan memanfaatkan layanan koperasi. Selain itu, sosialisasi juga meningkatkan motivasi dan rasa memiliki anggota terhadap koperasi. Namun, pelaksanaannya masih menghadapi beberapa tantangan, termasuk rendahnya minat anggota, keterbatasan sumber daya, dan latar belakang anggota yang beragam. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan strategi sosialisasi yang inovatif dan adaptif, seperti penggunaan media digital dan pendekatan interpersonal. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa sosialisasi merupakan faktor kunci dalam meningkatkan partisipasi anggota, yang pada akhirnya berkontribusi pada keberhasilan koperasi.

Kata Kunci: *Sosialisasi; Partisipasi Anggota; Koperasi; Koperasi Merah Putih.*

INTRODUCTION

Cooperatives constitute one of the most important pillars of national economic development, particularly in improving community welfare through the principles of mutual cooperation and kinship. In the Indonesian context, cooperatives function not only as economic institutions but also as instruments of community empowerment, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). One form of cooperative that has developed within society is the community-based cooperative, such as Koperasi Merah Putih, which plays a significant role in strengthening local economies. However, the success of a cooperative is largely determined by the level of participation of its members. Recent work on the Red and White Village Cooperative shows that its establishment and socialization are treated as a strategy for building independent and prosperous villages (Zahro et al., 2025), and that optimizing its role depends on how well prospective members understand its purpose from the outset (Fathoni & Indriana, 2025). More broadly, research on why households join cooperatives and why members take part in cooperative marketing underlines that membership and participation are choices that must be actively encouraged (Dendup & Aditto, 2021; Wakweya, 2021).

Member participation is a key factor in cooperative success because cooperative members hold dual roles as both owners and users of cooperative services. According to research conducted by Irawan et al., member participation has a positive influence on cooperative success, indicating that the higher the level

of member participation, the better the performance of the cooperative. Such participation may take the form of capital contributions, attendance at member meetings, utilization of cooperative services, and involvement in decision-making processes (Putri & Irham, 2022).

Furthermore, member participation is widely regarded as the primary factor supporting the success of cooperative enterprises because members contribute to organizational management, capital formation, and the utilization of cooperative services. Without active member participation, cooperatives face difficulties in developing and may even risk failure. Therefore, increasing member participation remains one of the main priorities in cooperative management. This view is consistent with systematic reviews linking cooperative governance to cooperative performance (Jamaluddin et al., 2023) and with frameworks that place human resource management at the centre of cooperative functioning (Voigt & von der Oelsnitz, 2024).

In practice, however, the level of member participation in cooperatives often encounters various obstacles. One of the primary causes of low participation is the limited understanding among members regarding the objectives, benefits, and programs of the cooperative. Research has shown that members' understanding of cooperatives is an important factor influencing their level of participation. This finding suggests that the information and knowledge possessed by members play a crucial role in determining their involvement in cooperative activities (Irawan, Supriyanto, & Ayuniyyah, 2023).

Within this context, socialization plays a highly important role. Socialization can be defined as the process of disseminating information, education, and understanding to members regarding cooperatives, including their objectives, benefits, work programs, and members' rights and obligations. Through effective socialization, members can develop a better understanding of the importance of their involvement in the cooperative, thereby encouraging greater participation. Previous studies have also emphasized that the socialization of cooperative programs is a crucial strategy for enhancing member participation. Cooperative managers need to actively socialize cooperative programs so that members develop a positive understanding of the cooperative, which in turn can increase their motivation and participation. Thus, socialization functions not only as a means of information dissemination but also as a mechanism for building awareness and motivation among members. Cooperative education and training have been shown to improve the performance of agricultural marketing cooperative societies (Manumbu et al., 2023), which supports treating socialization not as a one-off

announcement but as member education, and training that improves members' understanding of the cooperative organization has likewise been linked to higher participation (Wahyuningsih, 2024).

In addition, cooperative education, as an integral component of socialization, also exerts a significant influence on member participation. Research has shown that cooperative education increases members' active participation because it enhances their understanding of the functions and benefits of cooperatives (Manumbu et al., 2023; Wahyuningsih, 2024). This finding indicates that structured and continuous socialization can improve the quality of member participation. Furthermore, research by Silaningsih et al. demonstrated that member participation has a positive and significant effect on cooperative performance. In other words, the success of a cooperative is highly dependent on the extent to which members actively engage in cooperative activities. Therefore, efforts to enhance member participation through effective socialization are of paramount importance (Silaningsih et al., 2022).

On the other hand, research by Putri and Irham also revealed that cooperative success is closely linked to member participation in various aspects, including capital formation, business activities, and decision-making processes. This further reinforces the notion that member participation is a determining factor in cooperative success. In the context of Koperasi Merah Putih, the challenges faced are similar to those encountered by cooperatives in general, namely the relatively low level of member participation. This condition may be attributed to ineffective socialization regarding cooperative programs and benefits, resulting in members not fully understanding the importance of their involvement. Consequently, appropriate socialization strategies are required to enhance member participation (Putri & Irham, 2022).

Effective socialization should not be conducted solely through formal member meetings but can also be implemented through various communication channels, such as training programs, counseling activities, social media platforms, and interpersonal approaches. Through intensive and continuous socialization efforts, members are expected to develop a deeper understanding of cooperatives and become more motivated to participate actively (Irawan, Supriyanto, & Ayuniyyah, 2023).

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that socialization plays a vital role in encouraging cooperative member participation. Effective socialization can enhance members' understanding, awareness, and motivation to become actively involved in cooperative activities. Member participation in governance is

closely linked to member satisfaction with the cooperative (Liu et al., 2024), while contractual and relational governance mechanisms shape how strongly members commit to their cooperatives (Zeng et al., 2023). Therefore, research examining the role of socialization in promoting cooperative member participation, particularly within Koperasi Merah Putih, is essential in order to identify effective strategies for increasing member participation and ensuring cooperative success.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a literature review method using a descriptive-qualitative approach. This method was selected because it enables researchers to examine, analyze, and synthesize various scholarly findings relevant to the research topic. The literature review was conducted through a systematic search of a wide range of academic sources, including journal articles, books, conference proceedings, research reports, and other scholarly publications related to the subject under investigation.

The research data were derived from secondary literature sources obtained from electronic journals, e-books, reference books, and other relevant scientific documents. The literature search was carried out through various academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and other reputable scholarly sources. The selected literature was chosen based on its relevance, source credibility, and alignment with the focus of the study.

The data collection process consisted of several stages, namely literature identification, source selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, data organization, and information classification according to the research themes. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using content analysis techniques. This involved identifying key concepts, discovering patterns of thought, comparing findings from previous studies, and interpreting insights emerging from the various literature sources.

Data analysis was conducted systematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected information relevant to the objectives of the study. In the data presentation stage, the findings were organized into thematic categories to facilitate understanding and analysis. Finally, conclusions were drawn by synthesizing the various findings to generate a comprehensive understanding of the research subject.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study employed source triangulation by comparing information obtained from different references.

Through this approach, the research is expected to provide a more in-depth, systematic, and objective understanding of the phenomenon under investigation based on the development of the available scientific literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Tabel 1. Literature Review Related to the Research Topic

No.	Researcher & Year	Research Focus	Method	Research Findings	Implications for the Present Study
1	Irawan et al. (2023)	The influence of member participation on cooperative success	Quantitative	Member participation has a positive and significant effect on cooperative success.	Demonstrates that increasing member participation is a key factor in achieving cooperative success.
2	Sugiharsono (2010)	The role of member participation in cooperatives	Descriptive	Member participation determines the success of cooperative business activities.	Socialization is necessary to enhance members' awareness and encourage active participation.
3	Musfiroh	Cooperative education and member participation	Quantitative	Cooperative education improves members' understanding and participation.	Socialization, as a form of education, plays an important role in increasing member participation.
4	Silaningsih et al. (2022)	Cooperative performance and member participation	Quantitative	Member participation has a significant effect on cooperative performance.	Socialization can serve as a strategy to improve cooperative performance through increased member participation.
5	Putri & Irham (2022)	Member participation in savings and loan cooperatives	Quantitative	Member participation contributes to the sustainability of cooperative business activities.	Socialization helps increase member involvement in business-related activities.
6	Novitasari (2013)	The role of member participation in cooperative development	Descriptive	Member participation enhances the growth and development of cooperative	Socialization is required to strengthen member loyalty.

				enterprises.	
7	Ramadhani et al. (2025)	Optimization of cooperatives through member participation	Literature Review	Member participation is the dominant factor in cooperative success.	Socialization serves as a primary strategy for increasing member participation.

Based on the literature review presented in Table 1, it can be concluded that all studies demonstrate a strong relationship between member participation and cooperative success. This finding confirms that cooperatives cannot develop effectively without the active involvement of their members. Therefore, effective strategies are required to enhance member participation, one of which is socialization.

Discussion

Member participation is one of the primary indicators of a cooperative's success. Within a cooperative, members hold dual roles as both owners and users of services; therefore, the sustainability and growth of the cooperative depend heavily on the level of member involvement. Based on the findings of the literature review presented earlier, member participation is closely associated with cooperative performance and success. Consequently, strategic efforts are needed to enhance such participation, one of which is through socialization (Putri & Irham, 2022).

1. The Role of Socialization in Enhancing Members' Understanding

Socialization plays a fundamental role in improving members' understanding of cooperatives. A lack of understanding is often one of the main causes of low member participation. Many members do not fully comprehend the objectives, functions, and benefits of cooperatives, causing them to remain passive in cooperative activities. Previous studies have demonstrated that cooperative education and socialization programs are effective in increasing members' knowledge. When members understand their rights and obligations, as well as the benefits they can gain from cooperative membership, they are more likely to participate actively. Socialization conducted systematically through training programs, seminars, and counseling sessions can help members develop a comprehensive understanding of cooperative principles.

In the context of Koperasi Merah Putih, socialization efforts should focus on delivering information that is relevant to members' needs. For example, members should be informed about the cooperative's role in improving economic welfare, business opportunities that can be developed through cooperative support, and the profit-sharing system (Sisa Hasil Usaha or SHU). With a clear understanding of these

aspects, members are more likely to develop the awareness necessary to contribute actively to cooperative activities (Manumbu et al., 2023; Wahyuningsih, 2024).

2. Socialization as a Means of Enhancing Awareness and Motivation

In addition to increasing understanding, socialization also plays an important role in building members' awareness and motivation. Members' awareness of the importance of cooperatives significantly influences their level of participation. Individuals with a high degree of awareness tend to be more actively involved in cooperative activities, such as attending members' meetings, contributing capital, and utilizing cooperative services.

Effective socialization does not merely provide information; it also serves to motivate members. This can be achieved by demonstrating the tangible benefits that other members have gained from participating in the cooperative. For instance, testimonials from members who have successfully increased their income through cooperative involvement can provide psychological encouragement for others to participate.

Motivation can also be strengthened through interpersonal communication. Cooperative managers should establish strong relationships with members in order to foster a sense of belonging toward the cooperative. When members perceive themselves as an integral part of the organization, they become more motivated to participate actively. This emphasis on relationships is consistent with wider evidence that trust and social pressure shape member commitment in agricultural cooperatives (Hao et al., 2024) and that behavioural determinants underpin trust and commitment in horticultural cooperatives (Mausch & Fuchs, 2024). Trust and relationship quality are also central to cooperative competitiveness (Hardana & Pratiwi, 2023); in cooperative banking, relational trust and satisfaction mediate the relationship work that produces customer loyalty (Damberg et al., 2022), and loyalty in cooperatives has been examined through the service-dominant-logic view (Klafke et al., 2022).

3. The Relationship Between Socialization and Forms of Member Participation

Member participation in cooperatives can take various forms, including participation in decision-making, capital contribution, and involvement in cooperative business activities. Socialization plays an important role in encouraging each of these forms of participation. First, regarding decision-making, socialization can increase member attendance at general meetings. Member meetings constitute the highest decision-making forum within a cooperative, where each member has

voting rights. However, low attendance rates at such meetings often represent a significant challenge. This problem is commonly caused by a lack of awareness regarding the importance of member meetings. Through effective socialization, members can better understand that their attendance directly influences the direction of cooperative policies and decisions.

Second, in terms of capital participation, socialization can strengthen members' confidence in investing their resources in the cooperative. Many members hesitate to contribute capital because they lack sufficient information regarding the cooperative's financial management practices. Through transparent socialization and communication, members are more likely to develop trust and become willing to contribute to the cooperative's capital base.

Third, with regard to business activities, socialization can encourage members to utilize cooperative services more actively. For example, in savings and loan cooperatives, members are more likely to make use of available services when they understand the procedures and benefits involved. Consequently, socialization contributes directly to increasing the economic activities of the cooperative and enhancing its overall performance. This is in line with findings that participation in governance improves member satisfaction with cooperatives (Liu et al., 2024) and that contractual and relational governance mechanisms support member commitment (Zeng et al., 2023).

4. The Effectiveness of Socialization Methods

The effectiveness of socialization is largely influenced by the methods employed. Socialization conducted through conventional means, such as formal meetings, is often less effective due to time constraints and limited member participation. Therefore, innovation in socialization methods is necessary.

One effective approach is the utilization of digital media. In the modern era, social media platforms can serve as effective channels for disseminating information to cooperative members. Information can be delivered quickly and accessed conveniently by members at any time. Furthermore, digital media can reach members who are unable to attend cooperative activities in person. Digitalization changes how members encounter and join cooperative services (Kartikawati & Nurhasanah, 2025), so socialization strategies that still rely only on face-to-face meetings risk missing members who now expect digital channels, and members' continued use of new technologies is itself a form of sustained participation (Jia et al., 2023). Work on platform cooperatives likewise shows that digital arrangements create both new opportunities and new dilemmas for worker-member participation

(Mannan & Pek, 2024).

In addition, participatory approaches can enhance the effectiveness of socialization. Under this approach, members are not merely passive recipients of information but are actively involved in the communication process. This can be achieved through group discussions, interactive forums, and other collaborative activities. Such methods enable members to develop a deeper understanding of the cooperative and foster a stronger sense of ownership toward the organization (Kartikawati & Nurhasanah, 2025; Jia et al., 2023).

5. Challenges in Implementing Socialization Programs

Although socialization plays a highly important role, its implementation is often accompanied by various challenges. One of the primary challenges is the low level of member interest in participating in socialization activities. This may result from members' busy schedules or a lack of awareness regarding the importance of such programs.

Additionally, limited resources often constitute a significant obstacle. Many cooperatives face constraints in terms of financial resources and personnel, making it difficult to conduct intensive and continuous socialization activities. As a result, socialization efforts are frequently implemented in a less than optimal manner.

Another challenge relates to differences in members' educational backgrounds and levels of understanding. Cooperative members typically come from diverse social and educational backgrounds; therefore, information delivery methods must be adapted to their varying levels of comprehension. Failure to do so may reduce the effectiveness of socialization programs (Putri & Irham, 2022).

6. Strategies for Optimizing Socialization in Koperasi Merah Putih

To address these challenges, appropriate strategies are required in the implementation of socialization programs. First, cooperatives should develop well-planned and sustainable socialization programs. Socialization should not be conducted sporadically but should become an integral component of the cooperative's operational agenda.

Second, cooperatives should utilize a variety of communication channels, both direct and digital. A combination of conventional and modern communication methods can enhance the effectiveness of information dissemination. Third, cooperatives should strengthen the capacity of their management teams in conducting socialization activities. Cooperative leaders and administrators should possess effective communication skills to ensure that information is conveyed

clearly and persuasively. Fourth, cooperatives should actively involve members in socialization activities. Member participation in the dissemination process can strengthen their sense of ownership and responsibility toward the cooperative. Fifth, cooperatives should regularly evaluate their socialization programs. Such evaluations are essential for assessing the effectiveness of socialization efforts and identifying areas for improvement in future initiatives (Putri & Irham, 2022).

7. Implications for Cooperative Success

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that socialization has significant implications for cooperative success. Effective socialization can enhance members' understanding, awareness, and motivation, which ultimately leads to higher levels of participation. High levels of member participation generate positive outcomes for cooperative performance, including increased capital accumulation, greater business activity, and improved member welfare. Therefore, socialization can be regarded as a strategic investment for cooperatives. Recent Indonesian work similarly frames the optimization of cooperatives as proceeding through member participation (Ramadhani et al., 2025), while international evidence links cooperative functioning and equity strategies to participation and commercialization (Cheyo et al., 2024), shows that members' savings decisions through deposits and shares influence the choice of financial cooperatives (Kamau et al., 2024), and identifies determinants of the economic performance of rural collective-owned cooperatives (Wang & Wang, 2024). Cooperatives have also been analysed as social innovation agents in efficiency and profitability comparisons with joint stock companies (Meliá-Martí et al., 2024), which further supports treating participation-building as a performance-relevant investment.

In the context of Koperasi Merah Putih, increasing member participation through effective socialization may serve as a key factor in achieving the cooperative's primary objectives, namely improving the welfare of its members and the broader community. Consequently, cooperative management should devote serious attention to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of socialization programs as an essential component of organizational development (Putri & Irham, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review and the discussion presented in this study, it can be concluded that socialization plays a highly important and strategic role in encouraging cooperative member participation, particularly within

Koperasi Merah Putih. Socialization serves as the primary mechanism for disseminating information, enhancing understanding, and building members' awareness regarding the objectives, benefits, and operational mechanisms of the cooperative. Effective and continuous socialization has been proven to increase member participation across various dimensions, including attendance at member meetings, contributions to cooperative capital, and involvement in cooperative business activities. This finding indicates that the more effective the socialization process, the higher the level of member participation.

Furthermore, socialization plays a significant role in strengthening members' motivation and sense of ownership toward the cooperative. Members who understand and experience the benefits of cooperative membership are more likely to become actively involved and assume greater responsibility in supporting the sustainability of the organization. Therefore, socialization contributes not only to increased participation but also to enhanced member loyalty.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of socialization efforts continues to face several challenges, including low levels of member interest, limited organizational resources, and differences in members' educational and socio-economic backgrounds. Consequently, innovative, adaptive, and sustainable socialization strategies are required. These may include the utilization of digital media, interpersonal communication approaches, and the enhancement of cooperative managers' communication capacities. Overall, it can be concluded that socialization is a key factor in increasing member participation, which ultimately contributes to the success and sustainability of cooperatives. Therefore, the management of Koperasi Merah Putih should optimize socialization activities as an integral component of its cooperative development strategy.

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