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AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES AND FARMERS' ECONOMIC GROWTH: A CASE STUDY OF COFFEE FARMERS IN THE SOUTH KIVU PROVINCE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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Abstract: *The study pursued to find out the role of agricultural cooperatives management in farmers' economic growth among coffee cooperatives in the South Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The study was guided by four specific objectives which were to assess the influence of cooperatives' human resource management and to value addition on coffee farmers' socio-economic growth in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Agriculture is the term used to refer to the ways and means in which crops and domestic animals sustain the global population by providing food and other products. Cooperatives are people-centered enterprises jointly owned and democratically controlled by and for their members to realize their common socio-economic needs and aspirations. Agriculture based cooperatives provide various services to their members at individual level yet agricultural production cooperatives aim at joining together production resources such as land, money, machinery and other inputs to be used collectively by the cooperative members. A descriptive research design enabled by the use of a case study was used for the research. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected using primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, structured interviews and observation whilst secondary data was collected through books, journals, internet and articles. Data analysis was done using Statistical Package of Social Studies "SPSS" software. The findings affirmed that Cooperatives are means to develop farmers businesses and economies. The farmers within the research area are averagely satisfied with cooperatives performance. It was found that farmers need to be much more involved in planning and management of their organizations' activities. A huge need of education on rights and duties of farmers was felt as there was clear lack of awareness within cooperators, leading to misappropriation of organizations' resources. Last but not least, cooperatives need to diversify their sources of funding and incomes if they will to remain financially sustainable.*

Key terms: *Cooperatives, farmers, advocacy, human resource management, coffee farming*

1.1 Introduction

Alex F. Mc Calla of the California University Davis in his article titled Challenges to World Agriculture in the 21st Century (2001), stated that there are 3 main challenges agriculture is facing in the 21st century. These are: global food security, poverty reduction and sustainable natural resource management. Speaking of the African continent, it is proven to possess the world's largest amount of arable lands with more than half of its people being employed in the agricultural sector. This implies that agriculture is the leading contributor to Africa's GDP. Despite efforts from governments, research, finance institutions and different investors, there is still low amounts of food produced due to the inputs quality, technologies and type of investments among others which has made the 'black continent' rely on importation of food from the Asian, European and American continent. This hasn't stopped Africans from striving for better agricultural outcomes. These efforts have been evidenced by different moves such as the Maputo declaration signed by leaders and country representatives in 2004 where the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) was agreed upon to be rolled out. This commitment was renewed in 2014 but there still are other different country and regional programmes being carried out or designed so as to supplement these efforts to agricultural betterment.

During the 2018 World Food Day Summit hosted in Nigeria, Emmanuel Sanginga of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and winner of the 2018 Africa Food Security prize argued that what is needed for Africa is political and collective will to act, where governments and individuals join and undertake actions leaving behind themselves the practice of mere rhetoric. Having in mind that the doubling of the African population by 2050 will require more jobs to be created especially for the youth, more food produced to feed the continent so as to eradicate hunger as per Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. All of this change worked for is at all levels implemented by farmers either on individual level or in terms of corporate structures.

In East Africa where according to the FAO and World Bank development Indicators, agriculture accounts for 43% of the total GDP in the region. The East African Farmers' Federation bringing together farmers from Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, DR Congo, Rwanda, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Eritrea working together for the betterment of agricultural productivity and socioeconomic impacts through policy analysis, policy implementation, policy monitoring and policy dissemination. Programmes such as The East African Agricultural Productivity Programme (EAAPP) is conceived as a Regional Agricultural Research for Development initiative with the main objective of enhancing regional specialization in agricultural research, enhance collaboration in agriculture training, and technology dissemination, and facilitation of increased transfer of agricultural technology, information and knowledge across national boundaries. Carried out in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, the EAAPP is a ten-year programme with two phases of which phase one, approved in 2009, focused on capacity building with the establishment of the Regional Centers of Excellence (RCoEs) through construction/improvement of infrastructure and human resource development, technology generation and dissemination as well as improving seeds and breeds availability.

Apart from the challenge of low productivity, agriculture especially in the developing

countries has other challenges such as lack of access to modern agricultural technologies, poor access to agricultural funds, feeble access to high quality agricultural inputs, high taxes on agricultural activities and more though these may vary from one country to another or from one region to another. In order to overcome the different difficulties or challenges for greater productivity, one of the tools farmers have used all over the world is the creation of farmers' cooperatives or agricultural service cooperatives. The difference between these two resides in the fact that agro-based cooperatives provide various services to their farmer-members at individual level yet agricultural production cooperatives aim at joining together production resources such as land, money, machinery and other inputs and used collectively by all the cooperative members who of course are farmers. (ASOP Congo, 2016)

This is a system that has been observed in Israel as an example already between 1909 and 1910 through what the Israeli people call Kibbutz or Kibbutzim. This is a system developed in Israel literally meaning, "gathering or clustering" where agricultural based communities were formed so as to share costs of production and production challenges and attain better agricultural yields or productivity. The United States Department of Agriculture (1990) in its article titled Cooperatives benefits and limitations stated that Agricultural cooperatives enable farmers to democratically have more ownership and control, on a business enterprise for procuring their supplies and services (inputs), and for marketing their products (outputs). They voluntarily organize to help themselves rather than rely on the government. They can determine objectives, financing, operating policies, and methods of sharing the benefits. This basically lets us understand that cooperatives lead farmers to access services and advantages they would not achieve or attain individually.

According to Okem and Stanton (2016), the cooperative form of organization in Africa has its link to pre-colonial Africa although the modern form of internationally recognized cooperative organizations was introduced by the colonial powers. In Africa, the cooperative movement has evolved over the years and historically, the evolution of cooperatives on the continent can be placed into four historical periods: pre-colonial Africa, colonial Africa, post-colonial Africa and the era of liberal capitalism (Okem and Stanton, 2016).

Though these cooperatives existed, they all didn't work similarly but rather had some specificity that differentiated one epoch to the other. For example, in one hand, for the colonial epoch it is demonstrated that cooperatives in Africa were not bottom-up structured organizations and Nyagah (2012) rather presents the Kenyan scenario as the establishment of cooperatives that solely benefit the British settlers and the economic evolvement of the British Crown. On the other hand, the cooperatives in post-colonial Africa seem to have a different objective and characteristic.

Getnet and Anullo (2012) argue that during the post-colonial epoch, African leaders of the newly independent African countries saw cooperatives as a means of improving social cohesion and fast-tracking economic development in their respective countries. Satgar (2007) goes even further arguing that the African leaders of then considered the existing cooperatives as extensions of their states and the first leaders' generation never attempted at changing the organizational forms of cooperatives but rather, were actively involved in supporting the development of cooperatives.

Though cooperatives have been argued all over the world to have advantages and

disadvantages, one of the aims of this study was to help us figure out whether agricultural cooperatives are efficient and relevant today for the developing nations and especially for the DR Congo farmers who have been targeted to make up the case study for the paper.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), also known as to be the ancient Zaire is an African country situated in central east Africa. The country is very rich in natural resources, renewable as well as non-renewable ones and the country's economy is essentially agricultural based at 70 %. Located in the eastern part of the Democratic republic of Congo (DRC), the South Kivu province occupies 3 % of the area of the country that is 69, 130 km². It is bordered to the east by Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania to the north by the North Kivu the west by the Maniema and South by Maniema and Katanga provinces. The South Kivu has two types of climate: an equatorial climate with rains throughout the year in one part of the province and a tropical climate with a rainy season and a dry season in another part. The average annual temperatures range from 11°C and 25°C. Transport infrastructure in the South Kivu just as all over the country is a considerable challenge due to its dilapidated and poor status. Road infrastructure is severely wanting which leads to inadequate movement of people and goods from one place to the other. It is hard to move goods or even people themselves due to the poor state of roads. It is also worth mentioning that the South Kivu has an airport in Bukavu and some airstrips, though they are mostly in poor condition. The province's main waterways are the lake Kivu and the Tanganyika river that offer great opportunities for the disposal of agricultural products in all seasons. This all however requires a mark up to avoid collisions.

The structure of the economy of South Kivu province has not changed much over the last three to four decades. The primary sector dominated by agriculture for the last 10 years (67 % of the annual GDP), representing over 70 % of provincial GDP, with an annual average contribution to growth estimated at 2.9 % for the period 2009-2014. Agriculture is characterized by an essentially rain fed production, based on food crops (maize, rice, cassava, etc.) and industrial crops (cinchona, coffee, oil palm, etc.). Let us note that in recent times, the agricultural sector has been tremendously boosted due to the involvement of NGOs, research institutions and private investors that are coming up with different strategies and technologies for the improvement of agricultural productivity.

However, despite different trumps such as environmental and economic potential; the favourable climatic conditions enjoyed by the country food's production remain deficient for all crops constituting the people's staple diet.

The unmet by local production is filled by products imported from other African, Asian, and European and even American countries; the case of sugar, milk, rice, salt, cooking oil among others. To fill in the gap, different provinces also are complementary and supply each other in food stuffs. For instance Irish potatoes, beans and other vegetables as well as legumes from North Kivu and North Katanga are exported to places such as Kinshasa and Bukavu (DSCR, 2011). The economy of the South-Kivu is 80 % based on agricultural activities, fishing, as well as business of small and medium enterprises. Agricultural activities are mostly carried out by households and thus are not efficiently supported or taken care of thus agriculture is done on small surfaces of lands with rudimentary tools or machines, with limited utilization of modern seeds and poor cropping skills involving retrogressive cultural techniques of holding agriculture. In as much as the above-mentioned is the case, agriculture

is favoured by the climate, which relies on a rainy season of 9 months.

Over the last decades, an increase in the number of NGOs aiming at assisting social groups or social set ups in their activities is growing noticeably, which is leading to an improvement in the day-to-day's lives of the communities by offering them skills, knowledge, material items, loans and quite efficient assistance. Modern types of farms are rare but are present at a small if not medium scale. They are mainly oriented towards the cultivation at an industrial scale, focussing on a variety of crops including coffee, tea, sugarcane, Irish potatoes, cassava, beans, carrots, maize, and cinchona. However, most have disappeared mainly because of looting by the belligerents, of insecurity, of falling agricultural prices, aging plantations by lack of maintenance, the poor conditions of rural roads, the lack of fertilizers among other reasons. Livestock done on large and small scale, poultry and fishing, although practiced traditionally, are very prosperous in the province.

In regard to the mining sector, tin, wolframite, monazite, diamond, gold, coltan-tantalite (coltan), limestone, methane gas, thermal waters, and cassiterite are mined and operated mainly in an artisanal or a primitive mining way. This also contributes to the people's economy. Companies such as the SOMINKI and CIMENKI are involved in the mining of these resources. This sector experiences fraud on the part of operators of various origins. The local industry is still at a development stage with a situation whereby a number of companies that once carried the pride of the province ended up closing down or are few steps to closing down due to low firms' dysfunction. These include a cement plant, a sugar company, oil mills, soap factories, tea and coffee factories that transformed coffee for local consumption and exported green coffee to the international market, Cinchona factories, tobacco factories and beverages factories. There are in the region of South Kivu some modern companies such as BRALIMA a brewery that is involved in beer and soft drinks' production feeding the entire eastern Congo, PHARMAKINA which is a pharmaceutical company specialized in the production and exportation of quinine salt from the Cinchona tree.

It should be noted that there is a significant presence of micro-finance institutions that are widespread in the province and grant loans to economic operators and the public allowing them to improve their economic activities and income. The South Kivu has a rich tourism potential with the Kahuzi-Biega National Park and 13 protected areas where lay mountains covered by forests, a flora and rare wildlife including mountain gorillas, which attract tourists from all over the world. Insecurity caused by the wars and poor governance is what makes most of these sites to be hardly operational, rarely visited or poorly exploited.

Since 1994, South Kivu has been experiencing a situation of war and armed conflicts and this situation resulted in tragic consequences in the lives of the population of the province millions of deaths, refugees and displaced persons. Basic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, ports, schools, medical facilities and economic activities or installations (factories, fields, farming, tourist parks, rare animal species) destroyed or damaged. The displaced often live in overcrowded and in deplorable hygienic conditions. Some benefit from humanitarian aid and get tarps to sleep and some food, particularly from the World Food Programme (WFP). The persistence of armed conflict and pockets of resistance of local armed groups remain uncontrolled. These are such as the Mai-Mai and others. There also are foreign militia groups which include the Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR), especially in rural areas. They have

worsened the state of insecurity as well as difficulties of movement of goods and people leading to reduced crop and livestock production. Unemployment rose and household income decreased.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Co-operatives are owned, controlled and operated for the benefit of their members. Most corporations are controlled based on the number of shares owned, and distribute profits based on investment. However, co-ops operate on the basis of one member, one vote, and return dividends based on patronage. Cooperatives take a number of forms. Ahmad (2005) argued that today, in an era when many people feel powerless to change their lives, cooperatives represent a strong, vibrant, and viable economic alternative. Cooperatives are formed to meet peoples' mutual needs. They are based on the powerful idea that together, a group of people can achieve goals that none of them could achieve alone.

A cooperative should be 'an enterprise' where people join in order to address a specific issue, a specific problem is to be solved by this specific enterprise. Cooperatives are rising in numbers but with questionable management quality leading to expropriation of the cooperatives resources by a few individuals (Prakash, 2005). The above assumptions and information are what majorly informed this research, as it sought to carry out an assessment of whether cooperatives were really a solution to the socio-economic challenges faced by farmers especially those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

1.3 Research Objectives

Main objective

The main objective of this study was to find out the role of agricultural cooperatives in farmers' socio-economic growth among coffee cooperatives in the South Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Specific research objectives are as follow:

- I. To assess the effectiveness of human resource mobilization on coffee farmers' socio-economic growth in South Kivu, DRC.
- II. To examine the role of advocacy on coffee farmers' socio-economic growth in South Kivu, DRC.

1.4 Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Altman M. (2010) argues that co-operatives have evolved significantly over the past two hundred years and are increasingly becoming of importance to economies and societies

throughout the world. This is irrespective of level of socio-economic development we can observe globally. Co-operatives have been tested in different communities and in different economic sectors and they seem to have made proof of themselves. The theoretical framework for this study is therefore anchored on the premise that co-operatives accord members' the opportunity, protection and empowerment as well as essential elements in uplifting them from degradation and poverty. As cooperatives foster economies of scope and scale, they increase the bargaining power of their members, providing them, among other benefits, higher income and social protection (Somavia, 2002).

It is extolled that in a number of ways, cooperatives play important role in global and national economic and social development. With regard to economic and social development, cooperatives promote the "fullest participation of all people" and facilitate a more equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization. They contribute to sustainable human development and have an important role to play in combating social exclusion yet promoting economic and social inclusion. Thus the promotion of cooperatives should be considered as one of the pillars of national and international economic and social development (Levin, 2002).

Human resources in agricultural cooperatives

Sivarama Krishna (1995) defined human resource management as the utilization of human resources to achieve organizational objectives. He further argued that even though a country may possess abundant and inexhaustible natural and physical resources, unless there are men who can mobilize, organize and harness nature's them for production of goods and services, the country cannot make rapid strides towards economic and social advancement. Human resources is important to organizations in myriad of areas, ranging from strategic planning to company image. It plays a big role in improving the company's bottom line with its knowledge of how human capital affects organizational success; it is an important component for the success of any organization. Therefore, when the issue of cooperatives human resource management is mentioned, it plays a crucial role in the implementation of strategic management in cooperatives because it is believed that one of the major strengths of a cooperative lays in its membership. The more members you have the stronger you become though this theory can still be argued.

According to the Society for Human Resource Management SHRM (2007), Change Management Survey Report, "the top two obstacles encountered during the major organizational changes are communication breakdown and employee's resistance. Kayani (2008) argues that human resource development has been considered as one of the most important area of research. The aim of the human resource development policy is based on the development of the human resource. The role of development of human resource is to improve the quality of life. Various economists argue that the human resources of a country determine the character and growth it's economic and social development. Not gold and silver but, only the human resource of a nation can make a nation great and strong.

Peter Davis (2006) asserts that the range and depth of human capital could hardly be

matched and certainly not surpassed by any other organization of comparable size to the co-operative and that it provides a unique and potentially powerful competitive advantage. This is why it has been recommended that in many developing countries, the co-operative movements take up the responsibility for the training of their staff and for educating as well as informing their members. Through management training and members' education, an economically viable co-operative movement providing better services to members could be developed, with greater participation by the members in the affairs of their co-operatives. He concludes that the co-operative human resource management function's overriding goal is the facilitation of these relationships into a coherent market and community led strategy

Khumand & Saluja (2013) suggest that effective human resource management becomes the key to building excellence in service organizations. Sound management practices are imperative for running the co-operative. There has to be large investments made in developing good human resources in the co-operatives. Every co-operative should be required to spell out, in broad terms, its human resource development policy in its by-laws. The policy should cover all stakeholder, members, and employees, Board of Directors and should specify manpower planning, recruitment procedures, and professionalization. An amount of 2 percent of the annual budget of the society should be reserved for training and member education and skill up gradation at all levels. Policy-makers in government ministries/departments and development agencies should be made aware of cooperative HRD and other co-operative development policies.

Azhar & Batool (2004) state that if a nation is to compete successfully in this competitive environment, human resource must be developed and trained to become experts in all the necessary areas. In order to increase the productivity of the nation, we have to increase the productivity of each individual. A deep analysis of all the basic productivity factors like input, output, labour, capital and technology among others reveals that more than half of these factors are related to the quality of the work force.

Agricultural co-operatives are not exempted from these realities, being supply organizations, human resource is used both in terms of institutional management and production activities. The more efficient the individuals are in management and in production the more efficient services are provided and the institution grows.

Marketing impact on farmers' economic development

Maclaran et al. (2010) divided marketing thought into two schools early also referred to as the traditional concept of marketing and the modern theory of marketing. Shaw et al. (2010) wrote the early schools of marketing thought that were established to answer questions that arose in the process of describing and explaining marketing as a scientific field of knowledge.

In the mid 20th century, there was a paradigm shift in marketing theory, as a result of which the traditional concepts were replaced by new "modern" ones, including: marketing

management, marketing systems, consumer behaviour, micromarketing, social exchange and the history of marketing (Jones et al., 2010).

According to the traditional concept, marketing means selling goods and services that have been produced. Thus, all those activities that are concerned with persuasion and sale of goods and services are called marketing. This concept of marketing emphasizes on promotion and sale of goods and services and little attention is paid to consumer satisfaction. This concept has the following implications:

- (a) The main focus of this concept is on product, i.e., we have a product and it has to be sold. So, we have to persuade the consumers to buy our product.
- (b) All efforts of the marketing people are concentrated on selling the product. They adopt all means like personal selling and sales promotion to boost the sales.
- (c) The ultimate goal of all marketing activity is to earn profit through maximization of sales.

The modern concept of marketing considers the consumers' wants and needs as the guiding spirit and focuses on the delivery of such goods and services that can satisfy those needs most effectively. Thus, marketing starts with identifying consumers' needs then plan the production of goods and services accordingly to provide him the maximum satisfaction. In other words, the products and services are planned according to the needs of the customers rather than according to the availability of materials and machinery. Not only that but all activities (manufacturing, research and development, quality control, distribution, selling etc.) are directed to satisfy the consumers. Thus, the main implications of the modern concepts are:

- (a) The focus of this concept is on customer orientation. The marketing activity starts with an assessment of the customers' needs and plans the production of items that satisfy these needs most effectively. This also applies to all other marketing activities like pricing, packaging, distribution and sales promotion.
- (b) All marketing activities like product planning; pricing, packaging, distribution and sales promotion are combined into one as coordinated marketing efforts. This is called integrating marketing.
- (c) The main aim of all effort is to earn profit through maximization of customer satisfaction. This implies that, if the customers are satisfied, they will continue to buy, and many new customers will be added. This will lead to increased sales and so also the profits.

According the Marketing Schools (2012), when it comes to cooperatives, the business may decide to have cooperative marketing that is any agreement to combine marketing efforts, and thus it can appear in many forms. Complementary companies, as well as direct competitors, can create effective and mutually beneficial cooperative marketing campaigns. Depending on the cooperatives policies, the organization can market for the members' product that has the major advantage of giving credibility to the product or rather the members market for their own products. This may therefore vary from one cooperative society to another, depending on the institution policies. Different institutions may also decide to have a common marketing plan or strategy; this is called a cooperative marketing campaign. Cooperative marketing campaigns are developed by broadening horizons and by discovering (and sharing) common ground with other companies.

For instance, Delta Airlines and American Express both benefit if a salesman regularly purchases airline tickets on his or her American Express card. Therefore, both have an incentive to send direct mail offers for new credit cards to consumers who make an upper-middle class income. American Express offers, “membership rewards points,” while Delta Airlines (and many others) gives free tickets for redeemed points. Cooperative marketing campaign managers and staff can’t simply work up a direct mail piece and call it a partnership; many more steps are involved. Each company must have clearly outlined responsibilities, and must agree to make a financial investment in the partnership that’s equal to each partner’s benefits from the campaign. This doesn’t mean that each partner has an equal stake, but it does mean that each partner needs to put in its fair share for what it expects to receive out of the partnership. Marketing Schools (2012)

How does marketing work in an agricultural coop?

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) (2000), agricultural cooperatives perform many functions in terms of marketing services. They may assemble the products of a number of producers into larger lots to facilitate more efficient handling and more competitive sales, and then grade and ship these lots to market. Some marketing cooperatives perform first-stage processing such as ginning cotton or hulling nuts while others vertically integrate by processing products for the consumer or industrial markets.

Marketing cooperatives enable producers to:

- 1) Correct market failure where prices are too low or buyers have left the market;
- 2) Provide a service not available otherwise;
- 3) Gain market power (negotiating power) against much larger buyers;
- 4) Spread risks and costs; and
- 5) Have enough volume to operate a processing plant efficiently or enough to meet the demands of buyers.

The National Cooperative Bank (2005) stated that marketing cooperative activities leads to various advantages both on members’ levels, consumers’ level and on the institutional level. For the cooperative members these advantages go from access to quality products and services, fair prices, excellent customer service, trustworthiness, community support to cooperative values and ethical business practices. For the workers the marketing may lead to Employment or access to markets and support for value added processing; cooperative values and ethical business structure, community support. Last but not least for the consumers it leads to Access to quality products and services made by the owners, supporting producers/workers, community support

Saab (2012) presents advantages and disadvantages of marketing in an Agricultural Cooperative as follow:

Advantages of cooperative marketing:

1. Proper Reward of Production: Bargaining power of society is greater than the single

farmer. So a farmer will get the fair reward of his product.

2. Storage Facility: A co-operative marketing society will also provide the facility of storage to its members. The resources of the society will be adequate to provide this facility.

3. No Middleman: The major benefit of this co-operative marketing society is that a farmer will save himself from the middleman. So the income of the farmer will increase and his economic condition will improve.

4. Elimination of Speculation: A co-operative marketing agricultural product and eliminates the speculation and wastage of product.

1.5 Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive research design. This study was conducted in the territories of Kabare and Idjwi in South Kivu, two territories from one of the 26 provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The target population was the coffee farmers in the two territories as mentioned above.

For the sample size determination, the researcher chose to apply a particular formula in order to calculate the sample size. Yamane (1967) provides a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes. This formula was used to calculate the sample sizes as shown below. A 95% confidence level and P =0.5; Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision.

In our case;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} = \frac{6516}{1+6516(5)^2}$$

The sample size was constituted of 115 people selected from the 3 coffee cooperatives. Methods and Data Collection tools (Instruments) were questionnaires, focus group discussions, observation and structured interviews to obtain a balanced qualitative and quantitative data. The information gathered was entered or coded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and the Microsoft Excel software. This was in order to generate graphs, tendency charts, frequency tables, cross table and percentages which were statistical output used to reflect the data in a simple and understandable manner. The qualitative data was presented in verbatim quotes.

1.6 Results and Discussions

The influence of cooperatives human resource

The researcher sought to understand the knowledge the respondents had, before actually joining the cooperatives. The findings are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Knowledge of the respondents on the cooperatives before joining them

Knowledge	Frequency	Percent
Very little	61	53.0
Little	18	15.7
Average	14	12.2
High	12	10.4
Very high	10	8.7
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field data, 2019

The respondents indicated that they had very little knowledge about the cooperatives and how they operated before they actually joined them. Some of them joined because they had been influenced by other people who were members of the cooperatives, whereas some were basically seeking market for their products hence found cooperatives to be the best openings to meet their goals. This was indicated by 53% (61) of the respondents involved in the study. Very few individuals knew what the cooperatives were and all that was involved in them. This implied that cooperatives did not create adequate awareness to the people, some of whom would end up being their customers.

The researcher sought to understand how satisfied the respondents were with their cooperatives, in the attempt to find out whether or not, the cooperatives delivered their best to their clients. Most respondents rated the satisfaction with their cooperatives at average, that is, between 41 to 80%, and indicated that they would not give them 100%. This was indicated by 50.4% (58) of the respondents involved in the study. In fact, 20.9% (24) of the respondents rated the satisfaction at 0 to 20% stating that the cooperatives would only frustrate them, and that they offered very little in terms of quality services to their clients. When asked on how long the respondents had been members of their cooperatives, most of the respondents indicated that they had been members for a period of 6 to 10 years. This was long enough to be equipped with the requisite information informing the study, and on the effective of these cooperatives. Below is a sampled response from respondent 005.

“I registered in the cooperative 10 years ago, when my I wanted to cultivate coffee. I can say for sure we have worked well with the cooperative, although challenges cannot miss in everything and everywhere.” Translated from 'Mashi'

Source: Respondent 005 (2019)

Some other respondents indicated that they were not members of cooperatives, while some had left the cooperatives after they had been frustrated. This was adopted from the following responses.

“I can't join a cooperative. I would rather do my things on my own. I have interacted with a lot of people who always cry of poor

services, delayed payments among other challenges. I am not sure whether I am ready to take the risk.”

Source: Respondent 047 (2019)

“I was a member of a cooperative, but I opted to work independently. I can’t say the cooperatives are bad. They have helped people. But I just thought it would be better to seek independence.”

Source: Respondent 034 (2019)

Table 4.7 Respondents having room for capacity building in their cooperatives

Had	Frequency	Percent
Yes	97	84.3
No	18	15.7
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field data, 2019

Most cooperative societies had capacity building for their members on how to improve the quality of their products, sustainable farming and other areas. This was so, as 84.3% (97) of the respondents indicated that their cooperatives had room for capacity building. This motivated farmers in carrying out their farming activities and sustained the supply of coffee in the market. The farmers indicated that they had even advised other people who had less value to coffee farming to start loving it and venturing into it. A few individuals indicated that their cooperatives did not offer capacity building services. This was as presented in table 4.7 above.

Table 4.8 Means of carrying out capacity building in respondents’ cooperatives

Means	Frequency	Percent
Workshops	11	9.5
Exchange visits	47	40.9
Trainings	57	49.6
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field data, 2019

Various cooperatives utilized workshops, trainings and exchange visits/ bench marking. Most importantly, the respondents indicated that they were being trained (49.6% (57) of the respondents). These were carried out in various groups by agricultural extension officers, who trained farmers on various varieties of coffee and which one strived better in their areas. They also were taken out to bench mark with other farmers from other areas, who had performed exemplary, and workshops were also utilized within the cooperative amenities or other stations. This was as presented in table 4.8 above.

Table 4.9 Frequency of carrying out capacity building in respondents cooperatives

Frequency	Frequency	Percent
Monthly	54	47.0
Quarterly	40	34.7
Semi-annually	11	9.6
Annually	10	8.7
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field data, 2019

The respondents indicated that the capacity building occurred on monthly, quarterly, bi-annually and annually. However, most of the cooperatives reached out to their members on monthly basis, giving them new developments in coffee farming, prices and market changes, training them on effective farm practices from planting to post harvest. This was indicated by 47% (54) of the respondents involved in the study, while 34.7% (40) indicated that capacity building was carried on quarterly basis. This was by implication that the farmers had adequate access to information from the cooperatives. This was as presented in table 4.9 above.

Table 4.11 Areas where Human resources were developed

Areas	Frequency	Percent
Farm activities	59	51.3
Post-harvest activities	24	20.9
Marketing	28	24.3
Finance management	4	3.5
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field data, 2019

From the findings presented, it was noted that human resources were noted from the study to have developed most in farm activities. This was indicated by 51.35% (59) of the respondents involved in the study. These activities included land preparation, planting, fertilizer application, weed control and harvesting among others, activities which were essential for the growth of high quality coffee trees. Human resources were as well developed in post-harvest activities that involved packaging and transportation of harvested coffee into the factories for processing (24.3% (28) of the respondents). Furthermore, human resources were developed in the marketing of manufactured products on behalf of farmers (20.9% (24) of the respondents). This was as presented in table 4.11 above.

Table 4.12 Presence of established human resource mobilization initiatives in cooperatives

Presence	Frequency	Percent
Yes	37	32.2
No	15	13.0
Not sure	63	54.8
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field data, 2019

From the findings of the study, the respondents however were not sure of whether or not there were established human resource mobilization initiatives in their cooperatives. This was indicated by 54.8% (63) of the respondents who gave 'Not Sure' as a response when asked on the presence of this. This was facilitated by the fact that most farmers were ignorant of the existence of these initiatives, while some cooperatives did not share the information of this with all of their members. However, 32.2% (37) of the respondents indicated that these initiatives were present and that they benefited from them. This was as presented in table 4.12 above.

Table 4.13 Rating of the cooperatives human resource mobilization initiatives

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Very poor	30	26.1
Poor	24	20.9
Average	47	40.9
Good	12	10.4
Very good	2	1.7
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field data, 2019

By implication therefore, when asked to rate the cooperatives' human resource mobilization initiatives, the respondents negatively rated the initiatives. This was indicated by 47% (54) of the respondents involved in the study, while 40.9% (47) of the respondents rated the initiatives as average. This was so as a number of the respondents were ignorant of these initiatives, or rather had never benefitted from any of the initiatives. This was as presented in table 4.13 above.

The study findings agree with the literature as Khumand & Saluja (2013) suggest that effective human resources management becomes the key to building excellence in service organizations. Sound management practices are imperative for running the cooperative and there have to be large investments made on developing good human resources in the cooperatives. Every cooperative should be required to spell out in broad terms its Human Resource Development policy in its by-laws. The policy should cover all stakeholder, members, and employees, Board of Directors and should specify manpower planning, recruitment procedures, and professionalization. A specific or agreed amount of the annual budget of the cooperative society should be reserved for training, member education, capacity building and skill up at all levels. Policy-Makers in government ministries / departments and development agencies shall be made aware of cooperative HRD and other cooperative development policies.

The cooperatives were observed not to create adequate awareness as a significant number of people were not aware of the cooperatives before joining them. The respondents were averagely satisfied with the cooperatives and that the farmers would not carry out farming independently. Capacity building was carried out through trainings on monthly, quarterly, bi-annually and annually bases. The respondents hence rated it as good. Human resources were developed in farming activities, but the respondents were not sure of whether or not there were developed human resources in their cooperatives. They hence averagely rated this as average.

1.7 Recommendations

The researcher therefore made the following recommendations to improve performance of cooperatives and enhance socioeconomic wellbeing of the farmers.

Capacity building was to be enhanced through public forums; exchange programmes, on field trainings, trainings and workshops, to enable the farmers engage in sustainable farming practices and increase their output. The individual farmers were to engage in other income generating activities and farm other crops to ensure that they did not misuse the compensation from the sale of coffee during its season. The marketing strategies of the cooperatives was to be more farmer centred as opposed to how cooperative centred it was. This would facilitate fair pricing and ensure that the farmers were not exploited in terms of the sale of their coffee.

Areas for further research

The contribution of cooperative societies to the development of sustainable agriculture.

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