

**FACTORS INFLUENCING COOPERATIVES SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THEIR HOST
COMMUNITIES IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The essence of cooperative society appears to have in recent times been recognized, especially as the key for developing and alleviating the plight of many. The paper examined the factors influencing cooperatives social responsibility to their host communities in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The theoretical anchor is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) theory. The survey research design was used and the sample size which was statistically drawn from the population of 1,412 using Taro Yamane formula is 312. Multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in the distribution of sample. The major instrument of data collection was questionnaire. The generated data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages and mean ratings on a 5-point likert-scale, while the hypothesis was tested using Pearson correlation analysis. The findings revealed that the factors influencing the provision of social responsibility by cooperative societies of tertiary institutions in Kaduna State to their host communities were non-availability of funds, inefficiency of management committee, negative attitudes of cooperative members, and behaviour of the host communities. However, the coefficient result of the hypothesis indicates that unavailability of fund was significant at 5% of level and a major challenge to the cooperatives in applying social responsibility mandate to their host communities. The paper therefore recommended that cooperatives in tertiary institutions should make issue of monthly dues a must to enable it solve the problem of non-availability of funds. Host communities should through their traditional and religious heads made to be patient and create a peaceful atmosphere to enable cooperative societies do their work.

Keywords: cooperatives, host community, influencing factors, social responsibility

Introduction

Cooperatives are business enterprises with dual objective of promoting the social and economic well-being of its members. In contemporary human society, there is interdependence among many groups, and the social environment of cooperative business has increased. Consequently, cooperative has to be concerned about their social responsibility and social responsiveness to the society in which they operate. As a business venture, cooperatives tend to consider the social implications of their decisions and activities in their host communities (Karthikeyan, 2012).

The need for social responsibility articulates cooperative interest in making contributions to a better society. According to Barnett (2007), social responsibility is a form of corporate investment characterized by a dual orientation towards the improvement of social welfare and stakeholder relations. Ajayi (2016) observes that the need for social responsibility includes peaceful cooperation between organizations and host

communities, elimination of distrust or disharmony, and development. It also promotes stability and development in the society (Gambo, 2016). The essence of social responsibility which is the principle of cooperative is concern for the community's sustainable development through policies accepted by the members.

Arguably, some activities of tertiary educational institutions have some negative operational impacts on their host communities which demand some level of social responsiveness as a way of cushioning the effects. Some of these negative impacts includes the fact that these host communities may have to live with increase in crime rates or cultism; compulsory acquisition of their land without adequate compensation and increase in the cost of living due to higher demand pull (Igbinedion & Ovbiagele, 2012). They also point to the gradual but sustained erosion of highly cherished community social values and culture and threat to community peace, amongst others.

Studies have explored cooperatives attitudes or behavior towards social responsibility in different places. Members have certain responsibilities and privileges as owners of their cooperatives, but lack of understanding and active participation in the affairs of cooperative usually lead to unnecessary failure or inefficiency. It is argued that where membership understanding can improve on good ideas from one cooperative to another or by other means, cooperatives serve their members and host communities more effectively (Korzan, 2000; Amahalu, 2006). In other words, where this is lacking the objectives of the cooperative suffer set-backs by these factors. Asogwa and Onuh (2014) found that despite efforts of Kogi State University (KSU) in carrying out considerable cooperative social responsibilities in their host communities, the people were not yet satisfied.

Importantly, factors such as agitations, strife, misunderstanding etc have been identified as hinderances to most cooperative societies in carrying out tangible social responsibility projects that could contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic lives of members of their host communities in different places (Yahaya, 2012; Igbinedion & Ovbiagele, 2012). It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the factors influencing cooperatives social responsibility to their host communities in Kaduna State, Nigeria. However, it presents a hypothesis that unavailability of fund is not a major challenge to tertiary institution cooperatives in applying social responsibility mandate to their host communities in Kaduna State.

Conceptual Explanations

The Concept of Cooperative

Cooperation or cooperative derived its origin from French words "Espirit de corps" which means working together. However, Asaolu (2004) argues that the word is derived from a Latin dictum "OPERATE" meaning to work, and the prefix "co" meaning together. In this case, two major approaches have been used to describe cooperative societies. These are economic and social aspect, and social/cultural background of the movement. However, the major emphasis in cooperative is on self-help. Thus, people cooperate because they realize that it is extremely difficult to achieve some goals by working alone. Reeves (2003) opined that the best way of pushing back the limit of economic problem of scarcity is by working together. This is because more can be achieved when people coordinate their efforts with each other and take concerns and talents of others into consideration.

Cooperative is a concept which has been in existence since the beginning of man. People learned that by working together, they can accomplish more than the totality of each individuals' effort. Early human society recognized the advantages of collective hunting, fishing, gathering food, living, worshipping, cooking and providing shelter together in groups and meeting individual and group needs collectively (Ibrahim, 2001). This could in the widest sense reveal that cooperation means more than working together. It is as old as man. The cradle of cooperation in the crude sense is the family which extends to the larger community. That could be mere mutual assistance which is mainly characterized by give and take concept. In this method, the people involved are "mutual" among who are stark illiterates, and the association is unstructured, short-time existence and absence of legality, mainly engaging in productive venture without effective management.

Modern scientific cooperatives originated on the benchmark of the industrial revolution in Europe spanning a century (1750-1850). As such, they are formal, legal entities and undertakings as a body cooperate and adhering to the internationally acceptable principles. The modern scientific cooperative business enterprise

could be established in all economic systems, be it socialist or communist, capitalist/free market, as well as mixed economic system. It could be formed by business persons, workers, rich, poor and averagely poor. The flexible peculiarities of cooperative have provided room to accommodate diverse views from persons and group of persons on the singular definition of this popular term. In his contribution, Chukwu (1990) opines that cooperation is an economic system with a social content. Its idealism entails both economic which covers business transactions expressed mainly in monetary terms, and the social which deals with the direct link on the relationship among the people that make up the society, particularly as it affects the membership and the personal relations.

In its absolute sense, cooperative has flexible peculiarities in which it could be organized in many instances. The cooperative business enterprise is not all comers' affairs unlike other conventional business units. This is due to its emphasis on human being much more than capital; hence cooperative is not profit-oriented but people-oriented venture (Gambo, 2016). As such, a certain due process is observed to qualify for membership namely; willingness, law-abiding character, commonly felt needs, and productivity.

Cooperative is an assemblage of persons in which case it could be deliberate or coincidental, short-term or permanent group, organized or unstructured, formalized or informal, the obvious parameter being that two or more people are working hand in hand. According to Chukwu (1990), the group is referred to as sociological group. In this sense, before the coming together of two or more persons can give rise to "group," several characteristics regarding the group must exist as follows:

- i. **Common Goals:** This is vital as it could be very pivotal in binding all individual members together on the heartfelt objectives that their social and economic welfare can only be improved by team work rather than individual participation. Thus, the cooperative business enterprise is formed intentionally to achieve not only social interest, but also economic goals.
- ii. **Long-term Operations:** Cooperative being business unit should adhere to the concept of unending activity. This means that it has to carry on business even when the founders are satisfied with their commonly felt needs. This is imperative since cooperative engages in capital-intensive and long-term projects that could span a long time before maturity is attained.
- iii. **Existence of Effective Communication:** This facilitates the working together of members as group. It could be highly effective when the members are educated and equally share mutual understanding among them.
- iv. **Sharing Roles:** This is related to the expected participation either by individual as members or a group as a segment of the entire group. In essence, the individual can play such roles as having executive positions as officers, the president, treasurer, financial secretary, and general secretary. Among the group, three segments of individual members could be collectively formed as a committee in handling special activities with their specialized skills. The entire roles are complementary to each other to achieve the common goals.

According to Lawal (2006), cooperative enterprise is a kind of business for mutual benefit of members. Cooperative enterprise satisfies the needs and interest of their members, rather than maximizing profit which may be the target of other form of business organization. The cooperative business is to afford members particularly the poor, to come together to promote their socio-economic well-being a feat which a single individual working alone cannot achieve if it is possible at all for him to do so.

In a related development, Epetimehim (2006), viewed cooperative enterprise as a business owned and controlled by the people who use its services: They finance and operate the business or services for their mutual benefit. By working together, they can reach an objective that would "be unattainable if acting alone. Similarly, Akinwumi (2006) explains that cooperatives depend on the unified efforts of large number of small individuals. Furthermore, Onuoha (1986), states that cooperatives are business of patrons whose motive is to obtain the goods and services they require at lower cost through their joint undertaking.

Until 1995, a giant step was taken by the International Cooperative Alliance (I.C.A.) to issue a new list of principles of cooperation for the beginning of the 21st century at Manchester congress. The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) which is the world apex body of cooperative movement at its centenary congress and General Assembly in Manchester (1995) gave the whole picture of a cooperative organization as "an

autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise". A co-operative society pools together human resources in the spirit of self and mutual help with the object of providing services and support to members. The Co-operative principles under which a co-operative society operates and carries out its business, according to ICA (1995) are: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Autonomy and Independence; Member Economic Participation; Education, Training and Information; Co-operation among Co-operatives and Concern for the Community.

Social Responsibility Explained

According to Elvis (2011), being socially responsible means that people and organizations must behave ethically and with sensitivity toward social, cultural, economic and environmental issues. Striving for social responsibility helps individuals, organizations and governments have a positive impact on development, business and society with a positive contribution to bottom-line results. Elvis (2011) notes that Social responsibility is an ethical framework which suggests that an entity, be it an organization or individual, has an obligation to act for the benefit of society at large. Social responsibility is a duty every individual has to perform so as to maintain a balance between the economy and the ecosystems. A trade-off may exist between economic development, in the material sense, and the welfare of the society and environment, though this has been challenged by many reports over the past decade. Social responsibility means sustaining the equilibrium between the two. It pertains not only to business organizations but also to everyone whose action impacts on the environment. This responsibility can be passive, by avoiding engaging in socially harmful acts, or active, by performing activities that directly advance social goals.

In his own contribution, Peterson (2000) notes that businesses can use ethical decision making to secure their businesses by making decisions that allow for government agencies to minimize their involvement with the corporation. For instance, if a company follows the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines for emissions of dangerous pollutants and even goes an extra step to get involved in the community and address those concerns that the public might have; they would be less likely to have the EPA investigate them for environmental concerns. "A significant element of current thinking about privacy, however, stresses "self-regulation" rather than market or government mechanisms for protecting personal information".

According to some experts like Elvis (2011) and Peterson (2000), most rules and regulations are formed due to public outcry, which threatens profit maximization and, therefore, the well-being of the shareholder; and that if there is not outcry, there often will be limited regulation. Some critics argue that corporate social responsibility (CSR) distracts from the fundamental economic role of businesses; others argue that it is nothing more than superficial window-dressing, or "green washing". Others argue that it is an attempt to preempt the role of governments as a watchdog over powerful corporations though there is no systematic evidence to support these criticisms. A significant number of studies have shown no negative influence on shareholder results from corporate social responsibility (CSR) but rather a slightly negative correlation with improved shareholder returns. Some studies have shown strongly positive correlations between a CSR-type commitment to sustainability and company performance in the long-term.

Concept of Cooperative in Tertiary Institutions

According to Reeve (2004), the concept of cooperative in tertiary institutions began in the United Kingdom (UK) in the late 1800s; in the United States of America (USA) in 1906 and in Canada in 1957. He pointed out that this is now practised in more than 60 countries around the world, and that it operates on most continents in associations similar to those like the Southern African Society for Cooperative Education (SASCE). Carlson (2000) stresses that although the term cooperative may have originated in the USA, the concept, namely the idea of an integrated curriculum that includes experiential learning, did not. Other terms used in relation to cooperative in tertiary institutions include cooperative education, professional practice, apprenticeship, articles, candidature, co-op, field-based learning, internships or interns, project-based learning and school-to-work (Groenewald, 2004).

Educational institutions, especially the tertiary ones ought to bear some levels of social responsibilities to the society that accommodate their existence and operations. Social responsibility, in the words of Nichols, McHugh and McHugh (1997), is the concern corporate institutions have for the welfare of the society which sustains their operations. The ability of most tertiary educational institutions to deliver on these subsidiary objectives defines their social responsibility.

Cooperative in tertiary institutions entails educating and training to help improve the cooperatives job performance and ensure higher job satisfaction among workers of the cooperatives (Ugwu, 2014). He stressed that education and training are at the heart of cooperative for utilization, productivity and commitment for work motivation and growth. Despite this, many cooperatives have failed in their respective institutions because their members need for education and training were either not identified and provided for or was not regarded an indispensable part of cooperative functions.

The cooperatives in tertiary institutions help to improve cooperative growth and development, quality manpower in cooperative. The importance of studying cooperative in schools and tertiary institutions could as well be known as cooperative education and is at the heart of cooperative for work motivation, growth, development, commitments in cooperative because it is said that once a cooperative is always a cooperative. To Wessels (2007), cooperatives in higher institutions of learning enhance confidence, self-perception and improved social skills, greater practical knowledge and skills. It creates avenue for cordial relationship between the co-operate organization and its host community, as well as opens avenue for development. According to Breen and Hing in Wessels and Jacobsz (2013), cooperative education partnerships benefit universities since it enhances the range and quality of educational offerings, and the university status and reputation in the discipline, thereby enhancing the status and reputation of the cooperative education partnership.

Concept of Host Communities

In a consultative round-table discussion on the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), organized by Spaces for Change, a Lagos-based public policy and advocacy organization, Braide (2013), a communication specialist who was also involved in the implementation of the Niger Delta Amnesty Program defined a 'host community' as a community where the oil is extracted from, and houses the facilities for the exploration and extraction of oil. Eke (2013) took a different view; as she defined it to mean a community that is impoverished as a result of exploration of petroleum products. To her, the petroleum companies and facilities may not be resident in that community, but they are affected by the activities of the company and of those facilities. Despite various views on what a host community is, the forum agreed to the fact that communities deserve a special attention, at least for the sake of the raw deal they endure as a direct result of oil exploration and production activities.

A host community is a fundamental component in situating an organization. It is the geographical area that housed an institution. Literature on the host community (also often referred to as the 'residents' or 'local community') has been an essential part of the general institutional cooperatives discourse.

A host community can be made up of indigenous first nation people, long term colonial residents, recent domestic and new migrants. This is then coupled with the obvious demographic segmentation of age, gender and life cycle. Furthermore, within the host community, there will be various groups made up of varying value positions (Hanrahan, 2008). According to some scholars (Reisinger & Turner, 2003; Mason, 2003; Murphy & Murphy, 2004), the host community is likely to have individuals and groups with several different value positions, political persuasions and attitudes to socio-cultural phenomena, which may influence activities within their dormain. Asuch, they can instigate disagreement or violence when their perceived right is not met or granted by the corporate organization in its land.

Research on host attitudes toward tourism and sustainability has also been undertaken by many authors like Harris et al; Martin and Uysal; Milman and Pizam, Pearce in Hanrahan (2008). Majority of these works have focused on the fact that economic benefits positively affect host perceptions of tourism, while the effects on social and environmental issues have been negative. On the other hand, the non commitment of tertiary institutions to social responsibilities to their host communities has often resulted to strife and agitations. Studies have indicated that negligence to social responsibility has led to conflicts between host

communities and corporate organizations (Abu & Audu, 2016; Ismail, 2009). This implies that when institutions fail to do what is expected of them to their host communities, avoidable problems become inevitable.

Theoretical framework:

The proponent of this theory was Litz (1996). In general, the conviction that corporations are not only legal entities with responsibilities but also moral entities, and they hold ethical obligations comparable to those of citizens in a society has two meanings (Kasreheh, 2016). First, it is a general name for any theory of the corporation that emphasizes both the responsibility to make money and the responsibility to interact ethically with the surrounding community. Second, corporate social responsibility is also a specific conception of that responsibility to profit while playing a role in broader questions of community welfare.

As a specific theory of the way corporations interact with the surrounding community and larger world, corporate social responsibility (CSR). As a specific theory of business ethics, a package of four obligations the corporation holds as an independent ethical actor in society; the responsibilities are economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. The four obligations it is composed of are discussed hereunder:

The economic responsibility to make money is the obligation business version of the human survival instinct. Companies that don't make profits are—in a modern market economy doomed to perish. Of course there are special cases. Non-profit organizations make money (from their own activities, as well as through donations and grants), but pour it back into their work. Also, public/private hybrids can operate without turning a profit. In some cities, trash collection is handled by this kind of organization, one that keeps the streets clean without (at least theoretically) making anyone rich (Kasreheh, 2016). For the vast majority of operations, however, there has to be profits. Without them, there's no business and no business ethics.

The legal responsibility to adhere to rules and regulations. Like the previous, this responsibility is not controversial. What proponents of CSR argue, however, is that this obligation must be understood as a proactive duty (Gambo, 2016). That is, laws aren't boundaries that enterprises skirt and cross over if the penalty is low; instead, responsible organizations accept the rules as a social good and make good faith efforts to obey not just the letter but also the spirit of the limits. In concrete terms, this is the difference between the driver who stays under the speed limit because he can't afford a traffic ticket, and one who obeys because society as a whole is served when we all agree to respect the signs and stoplights and limits. The ethical responsibility to do what's right even when not required by the letter or spirit of the law. This is the theory's keystone obligation, and it depends on a coherent corporate culture that views the business itself as a citizen in society, with the kind of obligations that citizenship normally entails (Gambo, 2016). When someone is racing their Porsche along a country road on a freezing winter's night and encounters another driver stopped on the roadside with a flat, there's a social obligation to do something, though not a legal one. The same logic can work in the corporate world. The philanthropic responsibility to contribute to society's projects even when they're independent of the particular business. A lawyer driving home from work may spot the local children gathered around a makeshift lemonade stand and sense an obligation to buy a drink to contribute to the neighborhood project (Ajayi, 2016). Similarly, a law firm may volunteer access to their offices for an afternoon every year so some local school children may take a field trip to discover what lawyers do all day.

Taken in order from top to bottom, these four obligations are decreasingly pressing within the theory of corporate social responsibility. After satisfying the top responsibility, attention turns to the second and so on. At the extremes, the logic behind this ranking works easily. Even among individuals promoting a strong sense of corporate responsibility for the surrounding community, there may have been no clear answer to the question about the proper course of action. Regardless, corporate social responsibility means every business holds four kinds of obligations and should respond to them in order: first the economic, then the legal, next the ethical, and finally the philanthropic.

Methodology

Survey research design was used. Kaduna Polytechnic is in Kaduna State, North-Western Nigeria. Kaduna is one of the education centers in Nigeria, with many colleges and most recognized universities; notably, the Nigerian Defence Academy; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria; Kaduna State University; Federal Polytechnic, Kaduna; Nigerian College of Aviation Technology, Zaria; College of Education Gidan Waya-Kafanchan; Shehu Idris College of Health Sciences and Technology-Makarfi; School of Nursing-Makarfi; Institute of Leather Research-Zaria; Federal College of Education-Zaria; National Open University of Nigeria; National Water Resources Institute, Kaduna; Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology, Zaria; National Teachers Institute, Kaduna and School of Midwifery-Kafanchan (Wikipedia, 2016). These schools have different cooperative societies, such as College of Admin/Business Studies Coop Investment & Credit Society Ltd, Central Admin Investment/Credit Cooperative Society Ltd, Trust Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd, College of Environmental Studies Investment & Credit Cooperatives Society Ltd, College of Admin Studies & Social Science Investment Cooperative Society Ltd, ABU Staff Cooperative Society Ltd, NuBa Staff Multi-purpose Cooperative Society, KPT/KAP Staff Cooperative Society, KASU Staff Multi-purpose Cooperative Society, KADSCOE Staff Investment Cooperative Society, SOMID Staff Cooperative Society, School of Nursing (SON) Staff Thrift Cooperative. The population is one thousand, four hundred and twelve (1,412) these registered cooperative members and the sample size is three hundred and twelve (312), which was statistically determined using Taro Yamene (1967). The multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in the distribution of the sample. Questionnaire and secondary sources such as journal, textbooks, internet and organizational publications are used in data generation. Out of the 312 questionnaires administered, 281 which represent 90% response rate were returned and used for analysis. Data was analyzed using table of descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages and mean ratings on a 5-point Likert-scale, while hypothesis was tested using Pearson Moment Correlation analysis.

Results and Discussion

The result of the personal data of the respondents shows that majority 143(50.9%) fell within 41 to 51 years, with age mean of 43-yrs. This suggests that they are adults and matured. It was also revealed that majority 149(53.0%) were females, while 132(47.0%) were males. However, the highest educational level of many 110(39.1%) were HND/B.Sc., implying they were learned and knowledgeable enough to answer questions on the study objectives. Again, majority 161(57.2%) of the study participants were married and the prevalent religious affiliation of the respondents was Islam 187(66.6%). Further still, majority 196 (69.7%) of the respondents had about 6-10 years cooperative membership, with an average mean of 8 years. This implies that they were committed to cooperative association and the essence of working together for the accomplishment of a task. This aligns with the finding of Ibrahim (2001) that human society recognizes the advantages of providing individual and groups' needs collectively.

Factors Influencing Provision of Social Responsibility to Host Communities

The factors influencing the provision of social responsibility by cooperative societies of tertiary institutions in Kaduna State to their host communities are shown to comprise non-availability of funds ($x=4.03$); inefficiency of management committee ($x=3.80$); negative attitudes of cooperative members ($x=4.78$), and behaviour of the host communities ($x=4.34$). However, the coefficient result of the hypothesis indicates that unavailability of fund was significant at 5% of level of significance. As such, the P-value (.021) is less than the correlation coefficient at (1.320). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate accepted; implying that unavailability of fund is one of the challenges in applying the social responsibility mandate by cooperative societies of tertiary institutions of Kaduna State to their host communities. This aligns with the findings of Uzoka and Eze (2015) that monetary donation and non-monetary donations were statistically significant and influential in explaining the level of host community's confidence in Zenith Bank corporate social responsibility in Abakaliki.

Conclusion

The study concludes that cooperative societies in Kaduna State are making efforts in carrying out their social responsibilities, but still have lots more to do especially in the areas of economic and impactful projects that could enhance peaceful cooperation and mutual relation with their host communities. However, unavailability of funds; inefficiency of management committee, youth restiveness; hostile attitude and inter community agitations of the host communities are restraining the cooperatives from carrying out their social responsibilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Cooperatives in tertiary institutions should make issue of monthly dues contributions a must to enable them solve the problem of non-availability of funds.
2. The government should be releasing funds/subventions to tertiary institutions on time and help in curtailing youth restiveness or hostile attitude of host communities to enable cooperatives carry-out their social responsibility.
3. The host communities should through their traditional and religious heads made to be patient and create a peaceful atmosphere to enable the cooperative societies do their work.

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