

Sustaining the Cooperatives: The Role of Exploration

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Abstract: *The cooperative sector serves as a potential economic player that ensures economic growth. The world is progressively recognizing the numerous benefits of this industry especially on the social and economic aspects. Cooperatives nowadays are exploring means to guarantee a positive impact on the sustainability of their organizations. This industry serves as a powerful tool to alleviate living conditions of the members at the same time sustains economic growth; however, an extremely changing and competitive environment currently challenged this industry. This research work finds its essence through the genuine efforts to contribute knowledge to the current scenario. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of resources on the sustainability of multi-purpose cooperatives. This study employed mixed method research design. The survey conveniently selected a total of 641 cooperative officers among the 75 cooperatives in Bukidnon. The researcher conducted interviews with five officers holding key positions and focus group discussions among 30 members from five cooperatives. The findings show that exploration has a significant impact on sustainability. Limitations of this study include the proposed indicators of exploration; composed of freedom, risk-taking and rewards which were assessed by the conveniently selected cooperative officers of Bukidnon. Over-all the study implies that if multi-purpose cooperatives create a supportive atmosphere where cooperative officers are encouraged to explore new ideas and strategies; sustainability will possibly come at hand.*

Keywords: Sustainability, Exploration, Cooperative, Reward, Risk-taking, Freedom

1. Introduction

Organizations are exploring mechanisms to guarantee that they last long to continually provide them their needs and assist them increase their income. The challenges faced by the organizations nowadays are becoming more numerous and challenging. These are evidently brought about by the changing and unpredictable environment the organizations are in which ranges from the physical, social, technological and political aspects.

One of the current objectives of organizations is to promote sustainability, so as to create favorable conditions, to guarantee the responsible behavior and to employ creation (European Commission, 2012). Researchers investigating sustainability believe that the issues determining this concept is crucial not only for the future of the ecology but also for the present and future success of the economy (United Nations, 2008).

Cooperatives serve as watering holes to individuals, more dominantly in places where the absence of big spending power does not attract private investment to harness local skills and resources that can uplift the local economy. Furthermore, cooperatives serve as significant economic players that contribute to sustained economic growth. Cooperatives can make a significant contribution to the economy (DFID, 2010). In highly developed countries, governments recognized the social and economic benefits of cooperatives and had encouraged cooperative development with access to low-cost capital markets (Mellor, 2009). Cooperatives often have risen from the grassroots, and spread nationally. In the United States, the rural electric distribution and farm credit systems are dominated by cooperatives with the support of the government (Haggblade et al., 2007).

However, given these entire positive outlooks, cooperatives continue to face currently numerous challenges arising from sustainability issues. One challenge faced by many cooperatives is over-regulation by government compared to other private sector players (Allred, 2013). The cooperative sector in the Philippines, given their past performance has proven to immensely contribute towards the realization of the national goals (Cooperative Development Authority, 2011). In the country, however, although cooperatives continue to enjoy the trust and confidence of their members many face credit crunches. Cooperative movements encountered common problems such as lack of education and training, lack of capital, inadequate business, lack of loyal membership support, vested interest and graft and corruption among leaders, mismanagement, and lack of government support (Sibal, 2011). In rural areas like Bukidnon, cooperatives are confronted with appalling issues of extinctions and mismanagement and is, in fact, becoming prevalent nowadays. Out of 382 registered cooperatives in Bukidnon, more than 32% or 126 are already in their dissolution stage or are bound for dissolution (Cooperative Development Authority, 2016).

The organizations see exploration as a crucial factor to immensely contribute to their sustainability. In searching for sustainable ways of doing business, creativity and innovation, and Exploration plays a crucial role (Winn et al., 2011; Hall and Wagner, 2012). Proposed common theoretical and practical approaches to sustainability often imply change, innovation or adjustment of an entity about its supporting environment (Faber et al., 2005).

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The proposal of this study is supported by 2 models; Qualitative Model of Sustainable Leadership by Seijaaka, et

al. (2015) and 360 degrees Organizational Sustainability Model of Hollingsworth (2009).

The Qualitative Model of Sustainable Leadership of Sejjaka, et al. (2015) suggests five essential contributory factors for sustainable business. The factors include social capital, personal value, resourcefulness, resilience, and strategic flexibility. According to the model's proponents, businesses become sustainable hence successful not because of their skills and ability to start on their own volition but on their ability to consider the environment in which they operate. This model recognizes *Personal value* which is linked to *exploration*. *Exploration* includes giving rewards and entrusting freedom. These abovementioned indicators may positively contribute to the formation of personal values. Personal values are the general expression of what is most significant to each an individual's person (Thum, 2013). This model also significantly emphasized the importance of the atmosphere rather than the individual contributions alone in attaining sustainability.

The 360 degrees Organizational Sustainability Model of Hollingsworth (2009) emphasizes four different inter-related resources to determine sustainability which includes; the organization itself, human resources, community, and the environment. For an organization, the reality is that if any of the other three resources are not truly sustainable, neither is the organization. This model raises vital aspects such as the development of human resource, wellness or work-life balance in the organization, attainable ambitions of the people, desirable communities, neutral environment, and economic value generation.

The concept of sustainability is increasing in importance among organizations, in fact, has been entirely embraced as a responsibility (European Commission, 2012; Radu, 2015; Delai and Takahashi, 2013; Salzman et al., 2005; Asif et al., 2011). There are numerous ways to adopt sustainability among companies to continuously win the trust and support of the clients, shareholders and the community. There is a growing body of literature that recognizes three central aspects in sustainability reporting; these are; economic, social, and environmental. Recently, related literature has paid attention to the sustainability-related innovation practices, primarily on new ways to manage product in a more sustainable manner (Hallstedt et al., 2013; Wagner, 2008; Klewitz and Hansen, 2013). The United Nations (2005) acknowledged the three components of sustainability: economic, environmental, and social as these were emphasized in their Triple Bottom Line model or the overlapping circles of sustainable development.

On the other hand, the Four Factor Theory of Team Climate for Innovation by West (1990) also supports the idea that *exploration* is a major component of innovation since this theory embraces four team climate factors facilitative of innovation. According to this theory, innovation is enhanced if the following is attained: members understand and value vision; members perceive they can propose new ideas and solutions without being criticized; presence of a stimulating debate of solutions; and members perceive support for innovation (Hülshager et al., 2009).

Sustainability and Exploration

Ideas for sustaining corporate growth and profits are not discovered overnight, more so in a closed room. Exploring new markets and competitions form these ideas. A company culture that allows employees to explore indicates courage to fight challenges thereby contributing to organizational performance and sustainability (Clinton and March 2015; March 2016; Neves & Eisenberger, 2014).

This current study revolves around the thesis that resources impact the sustainability of multi-purpose cooperatives in terms of its economic, social, and environmental aspects.

The *economic aspect of sustainability* of this study was measured in terms of; access to affordable loan services with terms and conditions that are favorable to members, financial assistance to family and own needs, financial assistance to support livelihood, aid in generating employment, regular distribution of dividends, dividends that are, at least, not decreasing, profitable business, increase in the number of members yearly, credible auditor/ audit committee that regularly checks financial statements, and policies on savings and loans that are strictly implemented.

The *social aspect of sustainability* of this study was indicated in the following domains: opportunities for members to gather and bond among themselves, involvement in community activities, health-related benefits for the members, seminars/training to members, linkages with business or financial organizations, gender equality in empowering people especially women, equal treatment and access to persons with disabilities, equal treatment and access to indigenous group, human rights, ethical conduct and standards, as well as credible and effective grievance system and committee.

The *environment aspect of sustainability* in this study was measured in terms of; proper waste management system, production or purchases of locally manufactured products, 4 Rs (reduce, recycle, re-use, recover), risk management system in case of natural disasters, policies involving cleanliness, policies involving environmental care, electricity & water usage, and involvement to seminars concerning environmental issues if available.

Exploration in this study is composed of *risk-taking*, *freedom*, and *reward*. *Risk taking* can be helpful to organizations as it represents willingness to withstand uncertainty and mistakes as one explores new ideas, advocates unpopular positions, or tackles enormously challenging problems, in order to increase the likelihood of accomplishment (Neves and Eisenberger, 2014; Goncalo et al., 2013; March, 2016). When people in the organization enjoy the *freedom* or autonomy to act on their own and decide on what they believe is right for the organization for as long as it is within their scope of work, they can exercise more creativity (Alves et al., 2007). A *reward* is a significant factor under resources that have a positive impact on the organization. Employees are likely to demonstrate creativeness if their efforts are being recognized or rewarded (Serrat 2010; Zhou and Shalley, 2008; Baer, 2010; 2012;).

3. Objectives of the Study

This study intends to examine the Impact of the Climate for Creativity and Innovation composed of Resources, Motivation, and Exploration on the Sustainability of Multi-purpose Cooperatives in Bukidnon as assessed by the officers; specifically it desires to uncover;

- 1) The extent of Exploration among multi-purpose cooperatives in terms of:
 - Freedom;
 - Risk-taking
 - Rewards
- 2) The level of Sustainability among multi-purpose cooperatives in terms of:
 - Economic
 - Social
 - Environment
- 3) The impact of Exploration on the Sustainability of Multi-purpose Cooperatives

4. Methodology

Research Setting

The setting of the study was in Bukidnon, a province in Northern Mindanao. The province is composed of 4 districts with 22 cities and municipalities distributed as follows; District 1 with 6, District 2 with 5, District 3 with 8, and District 4 with 3. All in all, the province has a total of 382 registered cooperatives however as of December 2016, only 256 of them are active, 126 were either dissolved, in the process of dissolution, or are bound for dissolution.

Research Design

This study utilized mixed method, specifically; causal-comparative research design highlighting both quantitative and qualitative approach. This research design measures the impact or the cause through quantifying the percentage increase in the sustainability that can be contributed by Exploration as well as how the relationship works between the variables. The researcher through the inputs of an expert in statistics used statistical software to draw information for variables of interest through descriptive and inferential statistics. This study explored stepwise multiple regressions to assess the relationship and impact of a dependent variable and several independent variables.

Respondents and Sampling Procedure

A total of 641 cooperative officers from the four districts of Bukidnon served as respondents in the quantitative data gathering of this study. This study made use of the technical definition of cooperative officers as cited in RA 9520 (Cooperative Code of the Philippines). As detailed, this includes; board of directors, committee members created by the general assembly, manager or chief executive officer, secretary, treasurer and members holding other positions as provided by their bylaws. These groups serve as the most relevant source of information as they regularly meet on a monthly basis or as the need arises to generate and discuss ideas, solutions, and strategies for the betterment of the cooperative.

This study utilized convenience sampling. This technique also known as availability sampling, is a non-probability sampling where the basis of the selection is the convenience in accessibility and proximity to the researcher. This sampling technique was employed in this study because a significant number of the cooperative officers will only be attained through scheduled or mandated meetings or seminar-workshops. Participants were also invited to bring questionnaires to their co-officers who have not attended the said activity.

The sample size was determined using two (2) stage proportional sampling. Eighteen (18%) of the total population or 623 was the desired sample size and 18% also of the population in every district was targeted to come up with the total sample size. After coming up with the total sample size, the distribution of questionnaires took place. As a result, 641 survey instruments were subjected to analysis from 75 multi-purpose cooperatives of Bukidnon.

As determined, this research employed qualitative data gathering by selecting credible key informants in the cooperative industry. Their current positions in the cooperatives and the number of years spent in the cooperatives were the basis of their expertise towards this scholarly work. To sum, there were five officers holding key positions interviewed of which three are present chairpersons of established cooperatives in Bukidnon with one of them as the chairperson of the Provincial Cooperative Development Council (PCDC) of Bukidnon and the remaining two officers currently served as member of the Board of Directors. The key officers of this study have served an average of 30 years in the cooperative industry and 20 years average as cooperative officers.

Focus group discussion (FGD) was also utilized to assess the sustainability aspect of the multi-purpose cooperatives in Bukidnon as perceived by the members to match and compare results with that of the officers. Five cooperatives with six members each of good standing totaling to 30 participants were conveniently selected to participate.

There are 173 multi-purpose cooperatives with 3,460 officers. The breakdown of the 641 survey respondents were as follows; 129 in District 1, 145 in District 2, 262 in District 3, and 105 in District 4. Out of 256 active registered cooperatives only 173 (68%) are operating as multi-purpose cooperatives.

Research Instruments

The survey instrument was categorized into two parts. First part contains questions which assessed the extent of *Exploration* of multi-purpose cooperatives in Bukidnon. The second part contains 29 questions which assessed their *Economic, Social, and Environmental Sustainability*.

Exploration was assessed using a questionnaire containing variables influenced by Ekvall's (1996) dimensions of organizational climate that help, stimulate, or block creativity and innovation. Exploration contains the variables; Risk-taking, Freedom, and Reward. Sustainability, on the other hand, is assessed in the economic, sociability, and environmental aspects. The Sustainability questionnaire is

influenced by the Questionnaire for Apex Cooperative Organizations by the United Nations Organization, Social Policy and Development Division (2009) in the social sustainability aspect of the multi-purpose cooperatives.

The Focus Group Discussions of this study decided for 6 questions to measure the sustainability aspect of the cooperatives. The questions were lifted from the validated and pre-tested questionnaire; in particular, two (2) questions to assess the economic impact, 2 for the social impact, and 2 for the environmental impact. The questions were also transcribed into Visayan dialect and were duly certified and evaluated by an expert.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Validity implies the extent to which the research instrument measures, what it is intended to measure. Reliability refers to the degree to which scale produces consistent results upon repeated measurements (Surbhi, 2017).

In establishing the validity of the survey instrument, it went through face validity review, initial content validation, and in-depth content critique and analysis by experts in the field of cooperatives, research, and organization. After the inputs of experts and finalization of the questionnaire, the reliability was determined through pretesting at selected cooperatives at Cagayan de Oro city with 30 cooperative officers and 15 members as respondents. Thirty (30) cooperative officers participated in Part 1 of the survey questionnaire. Part 2 of the questionnaires were equally participated by cooperative officers and members to check on the congruency of the answers in terms of sustainability, 15 out of the 30 officers were asked to continue with the part 2 while the members answered the remaining 15.

Part I of the instrument which assessed Exploration resulted to be highly reliable with .963 Cronbach's alpha while part II which assessed the sustainability of multi-purpose cooperatives comprising of 29 items resulted to be highly reliable with .973 Cronbach's alpha. These results imply all items determine the construct of the study.

Data Gathering and Procedure

The researcher coordinated with the chairperson of the PCDC in Bukidnon for relevant data such as population size and scheduled activities of the Municipal Cooperative Development Councils to have efficient and effective data gathering procedures. The researcher sought consent from the chairperson of the PCDC to gather data among cooperative officers of Bukidnon. She also sought the cooperation and consent of CMU - College of Business and Management for convenient and efficient gathering as they were focusing their extension activities on cooperative officers during the data gathering period. These were initiated to get a significant number of respondents and to request representation in distributing questionnaires to their cooperatives. The survey instruments included a statement seeking consent from participants to participate in the survey otherwise they have the option to return them.

After retrieval, the researcher submitted the quantitative data for statistical treatment and analysis. For credible results,

confirming the statistical outputs with the qualitative data gathered from key informants took place.

In conducting the FGD, the researcher conveniently selected five cooperatives from the 75 multi-purpose cooperatives whose officers participated in the previous data gathering activity. In selecting the six members in each selected cooperative to participate, certified letters signifying that they are active members and in good standing were sought. Members were also asked to confirm their consent to participate. A designated secretary and videographer joined in every conduct for documentation. The encoded transcriptions were then brought back to the participants for signatures expressing agreement on the document.

Statistical Technique

The researcher sought the expertise of a professional statistician throughout the analysis of the data with the use of statistical software for organizing the data. The software calculated both the descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency were used to describe and determine the level of Exploration. Sustainability was also exemplified in a descriptive scheme such as percentage and mean. Stepwise multiple regressions were utilized to assess the impact Exploration on the sustainability of multi-purpose cooperatives.

5. Results and Discussions

The extent of exploration in terms of:

- Freedom
- Risk-taking
- Reward

Freedom

Table 1 furnishes the data on the extent of exploration among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers in terms of freedom.

Table 1: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean Distribution of the extent of exploration among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers (Freedom)

Range	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
4.51-5.00	5 - Very Large extent	82	12.84
3.51-4.50	4 - Large extent	275	42.85
2.51-3.50	3 - Moderate extent	187	29.23
1.51-2.50	2 - Little extent	74	11.49
1.00-1.50	1- None	23	3.59
Total		641	100

Overall Mean : 3.50

Description : sometimes practiced only

Standard Deviation : 0.92

Results show that almost 13% of the cooperative officers experience freedom to a very large extent. Almost 43% of the officers experience freedom to a large extent. More than 29% of them experience freedom in a moderate extent. More than 11% of the officers experience freedom in a little extent. And almost 4% of them perceived that they do not experience freedom at all.

The overall mean of the responses of this variable under exploration is 3.50 which implies that only sometimes the cooperative officers of Bukidnon experience freedom. All the indicators under this consistently imply moderate demonstration which means do not get much the desired freedom which in a way signals being too controlled or regulated. In particular, they do not experience much freedom in terms of their functions at work in their desired manner, in deciding on issues and situations that concern them, and even in choosing the people they want.

Risk-taking. Table 2 furnishes the data on the extent of exploration among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers in terms of risk-taking.

Table 2: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean Distribution of the extent of exploration among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers(Risk-taking)

Range	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
4.51-5.00	5 - Very Large extent	80	12.53
3.51-4.50	4 - Large extent	204	31.83
2.51-3.50	3 - Moderate extent	309	48.15
1.51-2.50	2 - Little extent	43	6.76
1.00-1.50	1- None	5	0.73
Total		641	100

Overall Mean : 3.49
 Description : sometimes practiced only
 Standard Deviation: 0.72

Results show that almost 13% of the cooperative officers experience favorable risk-taking environment to a very large extent. Almost 32% of the officers experience favorable risk-taking environment in a large extent. More than 48% of them experience favorable risk-taking environment in a moderate extent. Almost 7% of the officers experience favorable risk-taking environment in a little extent. And 0.73% of them perceived that they do not have favorable risk-taking environment.

The overall mean of the responses of this variable under exploration is 3.49 which implies that only sometimes the cooperative officers of Bukidnon experience risk-taking. This also means that the officers do not much feel the provision of an environment that seriously supports risk-taking activities. Particularly they do not understand each other well in terms of failures that resulted from risk-taking activities thus blaming each other is observable and in case of failures, the readiness to extend help is not much observed. On the other hand, the cooperative officers are often encouraged to try new things and strike at opportunities at all times.

Reward

Table 3 furnishes the data on the extent of exploration among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers in terms of reward.

Table 3: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean Distribution of the extent of exploration among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers (Reward)

Range	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
4.51-5.00	5 - Very Large extent	59	9.20
3.51-4.50	4 - Large extent	128	19.97
2.51-3.50	3 - Moderate extent	177	27.61
1.51-2.50	2 - Little extent	194	30.32
1.00-1.50	1- None	83	12.90
Total		641	100

Overall Mean : 2.82
 Description : sometimes practiced
 Standard Deviation : 1.12

Results show that more than 9% of the cooperative officers enjoy rewards in a very large extent. Almost 20% of the cooperative officers enjoy rewards in a large extent. Almost 28% of them enjoy rewards in a moderate extent. More than 30% of the officers enjoy rewards in a little extent. And almost 13% of them perceived that they do not enjoy reward at all.

The overall mean of the responses of the exploration of this study is 2.82 which implies that only sometimes the cooperative officers of Bukidnon experience the provision of rewards, all the indicators under this consistently implies moderate demonstration which means they do not put much emphasis on rewards in their organization. Particularly, they do not experience much fair and valuable reward system, they do not get much appealing incentive/ rewards to their useful ideas and suggestion, and there is not much recognition at work for giving useful ideas and solutions.

The level of Sustainability among multi-purpose cooperatives in terms of:

- Economic
- Social
- Environmental

Economic

Table 4 provides the data on the level of sustainability among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers in terms of Economic.

Table 4: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean Distribution of the level of sustainability among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers (Economic)

Range	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
4.51-5.00	5 - Very Large extent	115	17.91
3.51-4.50	4 - Large extent	224	34.99
2.51-3.50	3 - Moderate extent	236	36.83
1.51-2.50	2 - Little extent	60	9.33
1.00-1.50	1- None	6	0.94
Total		641	100

Overall Mean : 3.60
 Description : often practiced
 Standard Deviation : 0.67

Results show that almost 18% of the cooperative officers assessed their cooperatives to be economically sustainable to a very large extent. Almost 35% of the officers assessed their cooperatives to be economically sustainable to a large extent. Almost 37% of them assessed their cooperatives to be economically sustainable to a moderate extent. More than

9% of the officers assessed their cooperatives to be economically sustainable to a little extent. And 0.94% of them assessed their cooperatives as not economically sustainable.

The economic sustainability of the cooperatives of Bukidnon is largely demonstrated with an overall mean of 3.60. Specifically this means that cooperatives provide access to affordable loan services with terms and conditions that are favorable to members. They are also noted to provide financial assistance to family, own needs, and to support livelihood and regularly distributes dividends as scheduled and are, at least, not decreasing. Their members are as well increasing yearly and they are involved in profitable business undertaking. However, some indicators fall on moderately demonstrated. In particular, this means that they do not help much in terms of helping generate employment through hiring people. There were also not much favorable responses in terms of having a credible auditor or audit committee that regularly checks financial. There is also not much strict implementation on imposed policies on savings and loans.

Social

Table 5 provides the data on the level of sustainability among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers in terms of Social.

Table 5: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean Distribution of the level of sustainability among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers (Social)

Range	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
4.51-5.00	5 - Very Large extent	88	13.67
3.51-4.50	4 - Large extent	222	34.56
2.51-3.50	3 - Moderate extent	257	40.07
1.51-2.50	2 - Little extent	58	8.98
1.00-1.50	1- None	17	2.72
Total		641	100

Overall Mean : 3.47
 Description : sometimes practiced only
 Standard Deviation : 0.69

Results show that almost 14% of the cooperative officers assessed their cooperatives to be socially sustainable to a very large extent. Almost 35% of the respondents assessed their cooperatives to be socially sustainable to a large extent. More than 40% of them assessed their cooperatives to be socially sustainable to a moderate extent. Almost 9% of the officers assessed their cooperatives to be socially sustainable to a little extent. And almost 3% of them assessed their cooperatives as not socially sustainable.

The social sustainability of the cooperatives is moderately demonstrated with an overall mean of 3.47. Specifically, this means that there are not much health-related benefits for members, not much provision of seminars or training to members, and not much-established linkages with business or financial organizations, and the presence of a credible and effective grievance system and committee is not much observed. On the other hand, some indicators are largely demonstrated, particularly these imply that there are opportunities for members to gather and bond among themselves, they have experiences on providing services to the community, they practice gender equality in empowering

people especially among women, there are equal treatment and access to persons with disabilities and to indigenous groups, and they demonstrate respect for human rights, ethical conduct, and standards.

Environmental

Table 6 provides the data on the level of sustainability among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers in terms of Social.

Table 6: Frequency, Percentage, and Mean Distribution of the level of sustainability among multi-purpose cooperatives as perceived by the cooperative officers (Environmental)

Range	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
4.51-5.00	5 - Very Large extent	73	11.35
3.51-4.50	4 - Large extent	160	24.98
2.51-3.50	3 - Moderate extent	257	40.13
1.51-2.50	2 - Little extent	136	21.28
1.00-1.50	1- None	15	2.26
Total		641	100

Overall Mean : 3.22
 Description : sometimes practiced only
 Standard Deviation: 0.84

Results show that more than 11% of the cooperative officers assessed their cooperatives to be environmentally sustainable to a very large extent. Almost 25% of the officers assessed their cooperatives to be environmentally sustainable to a large extent. More than 40% of them assessed their cooperatives to be environmentally sustainable to a moderate extent. More than 21% of the officers assessed their cooperatives to be environmentally sustainable to a little extent. And more than 2% of them assessed their cooperatives as not environmentally sustainable.

The environmental sustainability of the cooperatives is moderately demonstrated with an overall mean of 3.22 All indicators consistently display moderate demonstration. Expressly, there is not much observed practiced in terms of effective waste management system. There is also not much emphasis on the production or purchase of locally manufactured products. Valuing 4 Rs (reduce, recycle, re-use, and recover) is also not much observed. The presence of an effective risk management system in case of natural disasters is not much observed as well. There are also not much policies on cleanliness, environmental care, and community-driven participation instituted. Other environmental care measures are also not much observed such as efficient use of electricity & water usage and sending of participants to seminars or forums concerning environmental issues and awareness.

The impact of Exploration on the Sustainability of Multi-purpose cooperatives

Table 7 presents the stepwise multiple stepwise regression analysis of Resources, Motivation, and Exploration and Sustainability. As analyzed, Climate for Creativity and Innovation composed of Resources, Motivation, and Exploration has a significant impact on Sustainability. Majority of the sub -variables under Resources, Motivation, and Exploration made were analyzed to be predictors. In particular, these are; Challenge, Idea Support, Dynamism

under Resources; Playfulness and Humor, Interpersonal Relations & Conflict Management under Motivation; and Reward; Risk-taking under Exploration.

Table 7: Multiple stepwise regression analysis of Exploration and Sustainability

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.350	.109		3.219	.001
EX_REW	.144	.021	.243	6.790	.000
EX_RSK	.106	.029	.115	3.615	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SUSTAINAB

R = .837 R² = .701 F = 211.726 Sig.0.000

An R² of 70.1 % reflects the amount of variance explained by these variables relative to sustainability while 29.9% of the variance to other factor variables excluded in the study. To generalize, the F-ratio revealed that the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. Exploration has a significant impact on sustainability. Majority of the variables under this made were analyzed to be predictors. These are reward and risk-taking.

Results of key informants' interview as well supported the significant impact of Exploration as expressed in their statements. To sum, key informants in the interview consistently stated that cooperatives need to explore for new ideas and ways particularly for their economic activities. This need arose because they face changes and competitions which are both unavoidable. On the other hand, they have sustained these thoughts as almost all of them relayed that majority of the challenges cooperatives faced today is mainly in their business specifically in terms of competition and increasing their incomes.

Sustainability and Exploration

Ideas for sustaining corporate growth and profits are not discovered overnight, more so in a closed room. Exploring new markets and competitions form these ideas. A company culture that allows employees to explore indicates courage to fight challenges thereby contributing to organizational performance and sustainability (Clinton and March 2015; March 2016; Neves & Eisenberger, 2014). Risk taking can be helpful to organizations as it represents willingness to withstand uncertainty and mistakes as one explores new ideas, advocates unpopular positions, or tackles enormously challenging problems, in order to increase the likelihood of accomplishment (Neves and Eisenberger, 2014; Hurren, 2015; Goncalo et al., 2013; Sternberg, 2008; Clinton and March, 2015; March, 2016). A reward is a significant factor under resources that have a positive impact on the organization. Employees are likely to demonstrate creativeness if their efforts are being recognized or rewarded (Serrat 2010; Zhou and Shalley, 2008; Baer, 2010; 2012).

6. Conclusion

The extent of exploration among multi-purpose cooperatives of Bukidnon is not all times implemented and supported. This further implies that they do not get much

the desired freedom which in a way signals too much regulated, they are not so much taking risks also because they were not provided with an environment that supports risk-takers, and they do not put great emphasis in rewards as a motivational factor in their organizations.

To form the general conclusion, Exploration has a significant impact on sustainability. Specifically, reward and risk-taking are major predictors of sustainability. Support to exploration includes the following; encouraging them to try new ways and not blaming them in case of failure as well as providing rewards which maybe in the forms of recognition or incentives. This implies that when multi-purpose cooperatives strategize efforts to assure cooperative officers are provided a supportive atmosphere to explore new ideas and ways, their cooperatives have a strong possibility to be sustainable or will last long despite unforeseen changes and challenges.

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