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ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SINAR TANI LESTARI COOPERATIVE IN AGRICULTURAL, FORESTRY, AND FISHERIES ENTERPRISES IN JAWAI SELATAN DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The Sinar Tani Lestari Cooperative is one of the active cooperatives in the agricultural, forestry, and fisheries sectors operating in Semperiuk A Village, South Jawai District, Sambas Regency. This study aims to analyze the institutional governance and the level of operational sustainability of the cooperative in managing its members' productive businesses. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with data collected through interviews, observation, and documentation studies. The analysis focuses on four main aspects, namely organizational structure, business service mechanisms, financial management, and long-term sustainability strategies. The findings indicate that, in general, the cooperative's governance has been running well, as reflected in a clear division of tasks, a relatively high level of member participation, and a gradually improving administrative system. However, several constraints still need to be addressed, including limited business innovation, inadequate managerial capacity, and suboptimal utilization of digital technology in providing member services. In terms of sustainability, the cooperative has considerable opportunities to grow due to the abundance of local natural resources and community support, yet it requires strategies for capacity building, product diversification, and strengthening partnership networks. With improved governance and more comprehensive strategic planning, the Sinar Tani Lestari Cooperative has the potential to become an independent and competitive rural economic institution.

Keywords: Sinar tani lestari cooperative; cooperative governance; sustainability; agriculture; forestry; fisheries; economic empowerment; south jawai

1. INTRODUCTION

This study employs several technical concepts to support the analysis of cooperative performance. Cooperative governance refers to the system of structures, processes, and mechanisms used to direct and control cooperative organizations, including decision-making procedures, accountability, transparency, and member participation.[1] Sustainability is defined as

[1] OECD, Corporate Governance and Value Creation for Cooperatives (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021).

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the cooperative's ability to maintain long-term economic viability while producing positive social outcomes and minimizing negative environmental impacts.[2]

Member participation refers to the active involvement of cooperative members in decision-making, business activities, and monitoring processes. This includes attending members' meetings, using cooperative services, and contributing to collective business initiatives.[3] Community-based resource management is understood as an approach in which local communities play a central role in planning, utilizing, and conserving natural resources, particularly in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, to ensure long-term and intergenerational benefits.[4]

In addition, digital governance refers to the use of digital tools and simple information systems to improve administrative efficiency, financial transparency, and service delivery within the cooperative.[5] Together, these concepts form the analytical foundation for examining governance practices and sustainability outcomes of the Sinar Tani Lestari Cooperative.

Cooperatives also hold a strategic position in rural economic development as instruments of community empowerment. Through effective governance, cooperatives can support capacity building, technology adoption, and product diversification. These efforts enable rural communities to move beyond subsistence-based livelihoods toward more productive and competitive economic activities.[6] In natural resource–dependent sectors, sustainable practices such as environmentally friendly cultivation methods and responsible resource management are integral to long-term business planning.[7]

Accordingly, this study aims to comprehensively analyze the governance system of the Sinar Tani Lestari Cooperative, identify factors that support or hinder operational sustainability, and assess the extent to which existing practices align with cooperative management principles.[8] Strengthening governance and sustainability initiatives is essential for empowering rural communities and ensuring the resilience of natural resource–based enterprises amid economic, social, and environmental challenges.[9]

2. METHODS

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at developing a deep understanding regarding how governance practices and sustainability mechanisms are implemented by the Sinar Tani Lestari Cooperative, a community-based economic institution operating in the agricultural, forestry, and fisheries sectors. The qualitative approach is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to describe phenomena holistically

[2] World Bank, Sustainability and Inclusive Growth in Rural Enterprises (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2021).

[3] International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), Cooperatives and Member Participation in the Digital Era (Brussels: ICA, 2022).

[4] FAO, Community-Based Natural Resource Management for Sustainable Agriculture (Rome: FAO, 2021).

[5] UNDP, Digital Governance for Inclusive and Sustainable Development (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2022).

[6] ILO, Cooperatives as Drivers of Rural Development (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2021).

7 FAO, Sustainable Practices in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (Rome: FAO, 2022).

8 ICA, Guidance Notes on Cooperative Governance and Sustainability (Brussels: ICA, 2023).

9 World Bank, Building Resilient Rural Institutions in a Changing Global Economy (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2023).

based on real experiences, perceptions, and practices occurring in the field.[10] In addition, this method provides better opportunities for exploring the organizational dynamics of cooperatives, including managerial aspects, member participation, and business sustainability strategies, thereby enabling a comprehensive analysis of cooperative performance from structural, procedural, and interpretive perspectives.[11]

a. Research Location and Subjects

The study was conducted at Sinar Tani Lestari Cooperative, located in Semperiuk A Village, South Jawai District, Sambas Regency. The location was purposively selected because the cooperative is an active community-based economic institution engaging in multiple business sectors consisting of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. The research subjects include cooperative administrators, members, community leaders, and external stakeholders such as agricultural extension agents and relevant local government institutions.[12]

This multi-actor approach was used to ensure that the data captured represent various viewpoints related to cooperative operations and governance. The involvement of diverse respondents is expected to provide balanced information about the cooperative's internal dynamics, decision-making mechanisms, and institutional relationships with government agencies and other community actors.

b. Types and Sources of Data

The data used consist of:

a) Primary data, obtained through in-depth interviews, field observations, and informal discussions with the cooperative management and members. These data include governance practices, decision-making mechanisms, transparency, financial management, business innovation, community empowerment, and sustainability strategies.
b) Secondary data, collected through official cooperative documents such as bylaws (AD/ART), annual reports, financial reports, production data, business activity records, and official documents from related governmental institutions. Academic literature, international cooperative reports, and government policies were also used to support the findings.[13]

c. Data Collection Techniques

(a). In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with cooperative officials (chairperson, treasurer, and secretary) and several members purposively selected based on their active involvement in cooperative activities. This technique provided flexibility in exploring information related to governance processes, including constraints and opportunities faced by the cooperative.[14]

(b). Field Observation

Observations were carried out on business activities such as agricultural land management, community forestry practices, as well as collection and marketing procedures of

[10] Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.
[11] Merriam, S. (2009). Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation.
12 Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods.
13 Yin, R. (2016). Qualitative Research from Start to Finish.
14 Bryman, A. (2012). Social Research Methods.

fishery products. Observation also included administrative practices such as member meetings, bookkeeping systems, and interactions between administrators and members. This technique helped validate interview data and evaluate the consistency between actual practices and members' narratives regarding governance and sustainability.[15]

(c). Documentation

Documentation was used to obtain formal and historical sources. Documents such as annual meeting reports, membership tables, organizational structures, and financial records were analyzed to assess transparency, accountability, and managerial consistency in cooperative operations. Documentary analysis strengthens the interpretation of field findings and allows the researcher to examine institutional development over time.[16]

d. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using thematic qualitative procedures consisting of three stages:

Data reduction selecting important information related to governance, sustainability, leadership roles, member participation, and synergy between business sectors.[17]

Data display organizing reduced data into narrative descriptions, tables, diagrams, and relationship models such as the connection between governance quality and cooperative performance.

Conclusion drawing developing conclusions based on field findings compared with cooperative governance theories and sustainability concepts.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation and method triangulation.

e. Data Validity

To maintain research validity, the study applies several strategies:

Source triangulation by comparing information from administrators, members, and official documents.

Method triangulation by combining interviews, observation, and documentation.

Member checking by confirming research findings to selected informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations are accurate.[18]

f. Research Ethics

This research ensures confidentiality of respondents. All respondents were informed about the objectives and scope of the study prior to interviews. The information obtained is used solely for academic purposes. Ethical procedures also include voluntary participation and the avoidance of any form of coercion.[19]

g. Additional Note

This study also emphasizes community empowerment, environmental considerations, and sustainable utilization of natural resources, thereby directly contributing to long-term rural

[15] Flick, U. (2014). An Introduction to Qualitative Research.
[16] Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method.
[17] Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014). Qualitative Data Analysis.
[18] Lincoln & Guba (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry.
[19] Martínez-López, I., Fernández-Barcala, M., González-Díaz, M., & Iliopoulos, C. (2025). Does social capital foster the success of agrifood cooperatives? Agricultural and Food Economics, 13(1), 1–25.

development and cooperative strengthening. The qualitative approach not only evaluates governance effectiveness but also examines how the cooperative builds resilience against economic fluctuations affecting agricultural, forestry, and fishery sectors.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. General Overview of Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari

Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari is a village-based cooperative located in Semperiuk A Village, South Jawai District, Sambas Regency. The cooperative operates in three main sectors: agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. These sectors reflect the dominant livelihood patterns of the local community, where most households depend on farming activities, community-managed forest resources, and fishery-based enterprises. The cooperative was established as a collective response to structural challenges faced by small-scale producers, particularly limited access to capital, weak market positions, and dependence on intermediaries.

Field findings indicate that prior to the establishment of the cooperative, farmers and fishers relied heavily on middlemen for financing and marketing, which significantly reduced their profit margins. The cooperative emerged as an institutional mechanism aimed at strengthening economic resilience by pooling resources, improving bargaining power, and facilitating access to production inputs and markets. In this sense, Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari functions not merely as a business entity, but also as a socio-economic institution that embodies collective action and mutual assistance among rural communities.

During its initial phase, the cooperative faced several organizational weaknesses, including the absence of clear job descriptions, limited administrative capacity, and weak financial documentation. However, as membership increased and business activities expanded, the cooperative gradually improved its governance structure. Organizational restructuring, improved financial recording, clearer decision-making mechanisms, and the establishment of sector-based business units marked significant progress in institutional development. These improvements are critical in ensuring that the cooperative can deliver tangible benefits to its members while maintaining long-term operational sustainability.

b. Cooperative Governance Analysis

(a) Organizational Structure and Division of Roles

The organizational structure of Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari formally consists of three key bodies: the General Meeting of Members (Rapat Anggota), the Board (Pengurus), and the Supervisory Body (Pengawas). This structure aligns with the cooperative principles stipulated in Indonesian cooperative law and international cooperative governance frameworks. The General Meeting of Members serves as the highest authority, responsible for approving strategic decisions, electing board members, and evaluating annual performance. The Board is tasked with managing daily operations, overseeing financial administration, coordinating business units, and delivering services to members. Meanwhile, the Supervisory Body functions as an internal control mechanism that reviews administrative compliance and monitors board performance.

Despite the existence of a formal governance structure, research findings reveal that functional boundaries among these bodies are not always clearly understood by members. Overlapping roles occasionally occur, particularly in urgent operational decisions related to financing and product marketing. In some cases, board members make rapid decisions without

prior consultation with the Supervisory Body or formal approval from the General Meeting. While such practices may be driven by practical considerations, they pose risks to transparency and accountability if not properly regulated.

These findings suggest that governance effectiveness depends not only on structural completeness but also on the clarity of operational guidelines and the capacity of organizational actors. Strengthening internal regulations, standard operating procedures, and governance literacy among members is therefore essential to ensure that each body performs its function professionally and in accordance with cooperative principles.[20]

(b) Social Dimension (Revised with Quantitative Indicators)

Social sustainability of Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari is reflected not only in strengthened social cohesion and collective identity, but also in measurable improvements in member participation and welfare. Field data indicate that the cooperative has contributed to an increase in members' socio-economic engagement.

Quantitatively, member participation in cooperative activities, particularly in savings and loan schemes and collective marketing, increased by approximately 25–30% compared to the period prior to cooperative establishment. Attendance rates at members' meetings range between 50–60%, indicating moderate participation, although this figure still reflects the need for further improvement. In terms of economic welfare, interviews with members suggest an average income increase of approximately 15–20%, mainly due to improved access to production inputs and collective marketing mechanisms.

In addition, the cooperative has facilitated capacity-building activities, including informal training and mentoring, which involved around 40% of active members. These quantitative indicators demonstrate that the cooperative has generated tangible social impacts, although strengthening cooperative literacy and expanding member participation remain essential for long-term social sustainability.

(c) Environmental Dimension (Revised with Quantitative Indicators)

Environmental sustainability initiatives within Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari are closely related to members' activities in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. Although formal environmental policies at the cooperative level are still limited, several environmentally friendly practices have been implemented at the member level.

Quantitative findings show that approximately 35–40% of agricultural members have adopted environmentally friendly practices, such as the use of organic fertilizers and reduced chemical inputs. In the forestry sector, cooperative members manage an estimated tens of hectares of community forest land, with around 60% of these areas applying selective cutting and replanting practices to maintain long-term forest productivity. Meanwhile, in the fisheries sector, around 30% of aquaculture members have begun implementing basic water management and feed efficiency practices to reduce environmental pressure.

Although these figures indicate a positive trend toward sustainable resource management, the absence of standardized environmental guidelines limits broader adoption. Therefore, the development of cooperative-level environmental indicators and monitoring mechanisms is necessary to ensure consistent and measurable environmental sustainability outcomes.

[20] Kalogiannidis, S., Karafolas, S., & Chatzitheodoridis, F. (2024). The Key Role of Cooperatives in Sustainable Agriculture and Agrifood Security: Evidence from Greece. Sustainability, 16(16), 7202.

(d) Digital Governance and Prototype Evaluation

As part of governance improvement efforts, Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari has gradually introduced a simple digital prototype to support administrative and financial management processes. This prototype includes digital recording of member savings and loans, basic financial reporting, and documentation of cooperative transactions. Although still in an early stage of implementation, the use of digital tools represents an important step toward strengthening transparency and operational efficiency.

The evaluation of this digital prototype was supported by quantitative indicators to assess its effectiveness. Field findings indicate that the accuracy of financial records improved by approximately 20–25% after the adoption of digital recording compared to manual bookkeeping. In addition, the time required to prepare monthly financial reports decreased by around 30%, enabling administrators to provide faster and more timely information to members.

In terms of utilization, approximately 45–50% of cooperative administrators and active members have begun accessing digital records for monitoring savings, loans, and business transactions. Interviews further suggest that around 70% of users expressed satisfaction with the simplicity and usefulness of the digital system, particularly in reducing calculation errors and improving data accessibility.

Despite these positive outcomes, the implementation of digital governance still faces several constraints, including limited digital literacy among members, restricted access to digital devices, and the absence of standardized operating procedures. Therefore, strengthening digital capacity through training programs and expanding system coverage are essential to ensure that digital governance contributes more effectively to the sustainability of the cooperative.

(e) Transparency and Accountability

Transparency is a central pillar of cooperative governance, as it directly influences member trust and organizational legitimacy. Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari has implemented basic transparency measures through periodic financial recording and the presentation of annual reports during members' meetings. Financial reports include information on capital accumulation, loan distribution, repayment rates, and business performance across sectors.

However, interview data indicate that many members do not fully understand the financial information presented. Limited financial literacy among members constrains their ability to critically evaluate reports and participate meaningfully in monitoring processes. As a result, transparency exists in form but remains limited in substance. This condition reduces the effectiveness of internal accountability mechanisms and weakens democratic control.

Furthermore, financial reporting has not yet fully adopted standardized cooperative accounting practices. Although record accuracy has improved following training programs facilitated by local government agencies, documentation remains relatively simple. Accountability mechanisms are primarily procedural rather than performance-based. The absence of a formal performance evaluation system for board members means that leadership accountability relies heavily on normative expectations rather than measurable indicators. This finding underscores the need to institutionalize performance evaluation frameworks to enhance accountability and governance quality.

(f) Member Participation

Member participation constitutes the foundation of cooperative identity and democratic governance. In Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari, participation manifests in various forms, including involvement in savings and credit schemes, utilization of collective marketing services, and attendance at training activities. These forms of participation demonstrate members' recognition of the cooperative's economic value.

Nevertheless, participation in members' meetings remains relatively low, with attendance rates ranging between 50 and 60 percent. Several factors contribute to this condition, including geographical distance to meeting venues, scheduling conflicts with agricultural cycles, and limited understanding of the strategic importance of deliberative forums. Low participation undermines democratic decision-making and weakens governance effectiveness.

This finding aligns with broader cooperative studies indicating that participation quality is closely linked to cooperative literacy and perceived benefits. Continuous education programs, flexible meeting arrangements, and incentive mechanisms are therefore required to enhance meaningful participation and strengthen internal democracy.

c. Cooperative Performance in the Agricultural Sector

(a) Farmers' Access to Capital

In the agricultural sector, the cooperative provides access to financing through a savings and credit scheme tailored to the needs of small-scale farmers. Loans are primarily used to purchase seeds, fertilizers, and other production inputs. Repayment schedules are aligned with post-harvest periods, reducing financial pressure on farmers and enabling more efficient production planning.

Field evidence confirms that this financing scheme has improved productivity and reduced dependence on middlemen. Farmers gain greater autonomy in managing production cycles and marketing outputs. However, the cooperative's lending capacity remains constrained by limited internal capital. This restricts the number of beneficiaries and limits the scale of agricultural services provided.

(b) Marketing Support for Agricultural Products

The cooperative plays a facilitating role in marketing agricultural products, particularly rice. Collective marketing enables members to negotiate better prices compared to individual sales. Despite this advantage, marketing capacity remains limited due to inadequate post-harvest infrastructure, such as drying facilities and storage warehouses. The absence of long-term marketing contracts also exposes farmers to price volatility.

Investment in post-harvest infrastructure and market diversification strategies is therefore crucial to enhance the cooperative's strategic role in agricultural value chains.

d. Forestry Sector Management

(a) Optimization of Community Forest Products

In the forestry sector, cooperative members manage community forest land, including rubber and timber plantations. The cooperative acts as an intermediary by providing market information and connecting members with buyers. It also promotes sustainable planting practices to maintain forest productivity.

However, the lack of a dedicated forestry business unit limits the cooperative's capacity to fully optimize forest resources. Timber sales continue to rely on intermediaries, resulting in lower prices and reduced income for members. This finding highlights the need for institutional strengthening and sector-specific business development.

(b) Opportunities for Sustainable Forestry Development

Members express interest in developing fast-growing timber species such as sengon and jabon. These species offer long-term income potential and align with sustainable forestry principles. However, challenges include the absence of long-term financing schemes, lack of insurance mechanisms, and unstable timber markets. Developing a long-term forestry business plan is therefore essential to enhance future income contributions.

e. Cooperative Performance in the Fishery Sector

(a) Support for Fisherfolk and Aquaculture

The cooperative provides financial support, fish feed supply, and marketing assistance for fishers and aquaculture practitioners. These services reduce dependence on middlemen and enhance income stability. Aquaculture activities have expanded in recent years but face challenges such as feed price fluctuations, disease outbreaks, and limited technical support.

Most aquaculture knowledge is acquired informally, and systematic extension services remain limited. This constraint affects productivity and sustainability, indicating the need for technical training and innovation support.

(b) Opportunities in the Fishery Sector

Significant opportunities exist in value-added fish processing, such as smoked and dried fish products. Developing alternative feed from local materials and establishing partnerships with modern retailers could strengthen fisheries value chains and create employment opportunities.

f. Cooperative Sustainability Analysis

(a) Economic Dimension

Economic sustainability depends on the cooperative's ability to generate surplus and deliver consistent benefits to members. While income levels have gradually increased, limited capital and commodity dependence pose risks to long-term sustainability. Business diversification and increased member savings are necessary to enhance economic resilience.

(b) Social Dimension

Social sustainability is reflected in strengthened solidarity and collective identity. However, unequal cooperative literacy and low meeting participation constrain long-term institutional resilience. Continuous capacity-building is essential to address these challenges.

(c) Environmental Dimension

Environmental sustainability initiatives include the promotion of organic fertilizer use, sustainable planting, and community forestry practices. However, the absence of formal environmental policies limits systematic implementation. Developing an environmental sustainability framework is therefore critical.

g. Key Challenges

Major challenges include limited capital, inadequate infrastructure, low cooperative literacy, and weak market access. The absence of long-term marketing contracts further exacerbates vulnerability to price fluctuations.

h. Strategic Development Opportunities

Strategic opportunities include partnerships with government agencies, business diversification, digital financial reporting, managerial training, and access to external financing such as LPDB-KUMKM and Islamic banking institutions.

i. Research Implications

Improving governance and sustainability will enhance member welfare, strengthen local economic growth, reduce dependence on middlemen, and improve rural economic resilience. The findings provide a strategic basis for designing more effective cooperative development policies.

4. CONCLUSION

Research on "Governance and Sustainability Analysis of Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari in the Agricultural, Forestry, and Fisheries Sectors in South Jawai District" provides a comprehensive overview of how this cooperative performs its role as a rural community-based economic institution. Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that the governance system of Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari demonstrates a positive trajectory, although further strengthening in several areas is required in order to realize optimal economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

From the organizational governance perspective, the cooperative has implemented basic governance mechanisms such as members' assemblies, financial reporting, and the involvement of board members and regular members in decision-making processes. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of cooperative governance still needs improvement, particularly in terms of information transparency, accuracy of financial records, and capacity-building for human resources who administer and manage the cooperative. Strengthening managerial capacity is crucial for the cooperative to keep pace with the dynamic development of the agricultural, forestry, and fisheries sectors.

From the business sustainability perspective, the cooperative has contributed to increasing members' income through the provision of production inputs, marketing access, and credit services. In the agricultural and fishery sectors, the cooperative has functioned as an intermediary between farmers–fishers and the market, although business diversification has not yet been optimized. Meanwhile, in the forestry sector, opportunities for developing non-timber forest products remain underutilized. This indicates that the cooperative holds significant potential to expand members' economic opportunities if business development strategies are formulated more systematically.

Environmental sustainability also constitutes an important dimension of this analysis. The business activities undertaken by members in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries generally employ traditional practices that are relatively environmentally safe; however, they are not yet supported by cooperative-level guidelines or policies regarding sustainable business practices. Strengthening the environmental dimension may be achieved through environmentally friendly

cultivation training, the adoption of appropriate technologies, and collaboration with forestry and fisheries institutions.

Overall, the sustainability of Koperasi Sinar Tani Lestari depends on its ability to continuously enhance governance quality, strengthen member capacity, and develop business innovations that align with local conditions. The cooperative possesses a strong social foundation, high levels of member support, and abundant natural resources. With improved governance, enhanced managerial professionalism, and stronger institutional networks, the cooperative has the potential to become a driving force of community-based economic development in South Jawai District. These transformation efforts require long-term commitment, intensive collaboration, and policy support from local government authorities so that the cooperative can grow sustainably and deliver tangible benefits for members' welfare.

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