Social Intra-Organizational Factors Affecting Farmers’ Participation in Rural Production Cooperatives in Boyerahmad County

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Extended abstract
1. INTRODUCTION
Approximately half of the world's population lives in the rural areas of developing countries, while the majority of them are small farmers whose livelihood is through agriculture. With regard to the low efficiency of their activities and due to some reasons like lack of using new technical knowledge and machines, cooperation and team work are very useful to enhance their efficiency and improve their economic status. One of the cooperatives that play a vital role in people's lives in general, villagers’ and farmers’ in particular, is Rural Production Cooperatives (RPCs) as one of the main ways to overcome the problems of agriculture. Furthermore, one of the most important factors in the success of cooperatives are those that researchers have referred to as the participation of cooperative members and managing the affairs of the cooperative. The general objective of the study was to examine the social structure of organizational members' participation in cooperatives in the central part of Boyerahmad Town. The specific objectives of the study include (a) assessing the member's participation in cooperative affairs and (b) preparing predictive models and social structures that affect organizational members' participation in cooperative affairs.

2. METHODOLOGY
A survey research method was used in this study. The research population consisted of the members of RPCs in Boyerahmad Town (N= 1809). About 317 of them were selected as the research sample using the Patton table and stratified random sampling technique. A pre-structured questionnaire was designed with different questions under 9 parts in the Likert type. Some experts of the field verified the face validity of the questionnaire. Also, a pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the research tool. The calculated reliability (r=0.54-0.91) was within an acceptable range. Moreover, to substantiate the construct validity of the questionnaire, factor analysis was run. The results of KMO test (0.513-0.834) confirmed the construct validity of the questionnaire. Some statistical techniques such as independent samples t-test and logistic regression were also used to analyze the data.

3. DISCUSSION
One of the objectives of the present study was to evaluate the participation RPCs in Boyerahmad Town. The participation was checked through seven questions in the form of a questionnaire with seven options. RPC’s members who participated in the study were divided into four groups with low participation, medium participation, good participation, and excellent participation based on Integrated Systems Digital Network (ISDM) method. Regarding the participation of cooperative’s members, the results showed that, the most frequency was observed in the class of intermediate participants with a frequency of 164 (51.6%). Furthermore, from the cooperative’s members studied, 21.7% were in the class of good partnership and 20.7% had excellent participation. In addition, the results indicated that about 57.6% of the sample were categorized as lower-middle participation who were regarded as semi-active participants, and 42.4% were categorized as good and excellent participation who were considered as active participants. We also evaluated the mean of the factors contributing to different levels of the through independent sample t-test. The results of this study showed that, the mean of each level of participation, show significant differences in the level of one percent. Moreover, in order to investigate the factors affecting participation in
RPCs logistic regression was used. Logistic regression results showed that, the factors such as satisfaction with the services provided by the cooperative, board accountability, knowledge and awareness of the members about the principles and laws of the cooperative, social capital of board, and attitudes to cooperation and teamwork are affect farmers' participation in RPCs in Boyerahmad Town.

4. CONCLUSION
The results indicated that the majority of members of the cooperative were semi-active participants. The affairs of the rural production cooperatives (RPCs) were examined via logistic regression whose results showed that, the factors such as satisfaction with the services provided by the cooperative, board accountability, knowledge and awareness of the members about the principles and laws of the cooperative, social capital of board, and attitudes to cooperation and teamwork had the greatest effect on the participation of farmers in cooperatives respectively. Thus, it is concluded that, the improvement of the factors mentioned can be expected to increase the participation of members in RPCs.

Keywords: Agriculture, Boyerahmad, logistic regression, RPCs.

References


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