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Cooperative for Sustainable Peace-Building and Survival Strategy of Post COVID-19 in Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study underscored the avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative principles intrinsic in sustainable peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria, which has not been the focus of any study. Data for the study were collected through simple random sampling technique in which 216 cooperatives were randomly selected and questionnaire were filled and returned. Using mean rating of 5-point Likert scale analysis and a theoretical mean value of 3.0 was taken as a criterion to judge. The One-sample t-test result revealed that avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative principles assist cooperatives on effective peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria. This revealed that cooperative governance is more open and democratic, keeping the capital in the local community, member motivations is a key driver of future participations, there is focusing of fairness for those who are most disadvantaged, desire for reward and self-advancement and equitable distribution of dividends based on patronage. The study recommends that cooperatives required pursuing both economic and social objectives for peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria. Cooperatives should provide a pool of funds from which disadvantaged members take loans and ensuring that members receive the lowest prices. Also, cooperative should generate returns that could be shared as dividends based on patronage to members periodically.

Keywords: Cooperative, peace-building, cooperative principles, Coronavirus (Covid-19)

1. Introduction

Cooperative is the practice of organizing into group business under cooperative principles for promotion of members. In Africa and elsewhere cooperative is an economic and social reality wherever they function as profit or non-profit organizations. Levi and Davis (2008) recognize cooperative enterprises as the unconventional economics entities; too socially focused for mainstream economics and business. Cooperative in post covid-19 is a unique organization and strategic business models. Cooperative movement brings together over 800 million people globally and supports the livelihood of an estimated 3 billion people while providing direct employment to around 100 million (ICA, 2008). This is due to dual function or relationship of dual benefits in which they simultaneously serve both an economic and a social purpose. NCBA (2019) noted that business operations of cooperative; buys and products or services just like any other business the difference is that a cooperative is owned and governed by its members, the people who use it, rather than by stockholders.

The profit from business operations is reinvested in the cooperative or distributed to its members in form of patronage rebate which makes the business peaceful and surviving. This seek complete identity of its members as patrons and operated for them and by them is what differentiate cooperative business enterprise from other businesses as (Laidlaw, 2000) emphasized that it is a business enterprise that aims at complete identity of the component factors of ownership control and use of service. Prakash (2003) noted that cooperative put people first. This could be attributed to the peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in various Nigerian settings and communities where cooperative business is part of economic system. The role of cooperative in peace-building and survival strategy in Nigeria and elsewhere is unquantifiable. There is hardly a country in the world; cooperative organizations do not exist to perform both social and economic roles. Dickson (2005) opined that a well-run cooperative provides a pool of funds from which individual members take loans to meet respective needs. Many cooperative businesses are investment in business venture, stocks or real property which generates returns that could be shared as dividends to members periodically, depending on any surplus that accrues to the fund. Far from having passed their self-by period, cooperatives are responding to the needs and demands of the market. Furthermore, they are also meeting the new and unsatisfied requirements of the people (Skurnik, 2002). The question is, can cooperative be a sustainable peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in

Nigeria? The response can easily be found in avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative business principles. Cooperative has seven (7) International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) principles upon which they are established. These principles propel on the peace-building and survival strategy in Nigeria and are as follows: Open and voluntary membership, Democratic member control, Member economic participation, Autonomy and independence others are Education, training and information, Cooperation among cooperatives and Concern for the community. It is contingent upon these cooperative business principles that its avalanche opportunities would be x-rayed as peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In cooperative the benefits of membership are more likely to be realized through patronage though, numerous hybrid forms have emerged that seek to overcome some of the inherent weaknesses of the cooperative business model which look forward to a capital gain on their investment over time. Besides, cooperatives also suffer from a potential difficulty in demonstrating the benefits of membership and a lack of common interest amongst members. This is a common problem where membership is highly diverse (Mazzarol, 2009).

There is also the control problem caused by member interests not being aligned with those of the cooperative management in post covid-19 era. Usually, cooperative aims to return value to its members by offering competitive prices to them as suppliers or customers and not always on profit or dividends. A cooperative only returns value to the members while they maintain patronage of the cooperative but the covid-19 pandemic must have affected great deal. Despite the hook ups cooperatives have demonstrated possible panacea to conquering hunger, alleviating poverty and giving hope to the less-privileged in Nigeria. The study therefore centers on avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative principles as it contributesto peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria.

1.2. Objective of the Study

The major objective of this study is to ascertain cooperative as sustainable peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria. The specific objective is to:

- Assess avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative principles on peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria.

1.3. Hypothesis

The following hypothesis guided this study:

- H_0 : Avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative principles does not assist cooperatives on effectivepeace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria.

2. Review of Related Literature and Conceptual Framework

This study investigates the effectiveness of cooperative business principles in peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria. This is to determine avalanche opportunity of rang of cooperative business principles therein as it collectively contributes toward peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria.

2.1. Concept of Cooperative

The act of organizing into group business under cooperative principles for promotion of members is called cooperative. Cooperatives are involved in creating an alternative to other economic system such as capitalist and socialist economies. As a survival strategy, the main purpose of cooperativism is pursuing the possibility of building a democratic economic alternative system for welfare of the members and those who use the service as in cooperative society. According to a Global Federation of Cooperatives, International Cooperative Alliance defines cooperative in terms of enterprise as 'an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise'.

The essence of cooperative enterprise is to meet the collective interest of its members and for community development. It curbs chaos and promotes peace that brings about strategy for societal development. Also, cooperative curbs youth restiveness in the society. Therefore, the understanding of the above definition of cooperative shows that cooperativism promote peace-building and survival strategy through its cooperative principles as envisaged therein hence cooperative as a peaceful business.

2.2. Concept of Cooperative Principle

Principle is a governing law of conduct, a general or fundamental truth. It is also a comprehensive or a fundamental law. Principle is a guiding policy, a philosophy, a practice which is highly respected or an idea which is regarded a valid independent of time and circumstances, a generalization accepted as true after having been deducted from facts in its own contribution (ICA, 1995). It is therefore, accepted that principle regulate the conduct of an organism or organization making it different from other organizations. Based on the above, cooperative principles are those practices which are essential that is absolutely indispensable to the achievement of the cooperative movement purpose. It constitutes guiding policies to the cooperators. Cooperative principle also constitutes the guidelines established for the proper functioning of the cooperative society. The understated cooperative principles are geared towards sustainable peace-building and survival strategy wherever it exists:

2.2.1. Cooperative Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

This implies that cooperatives are open to all persons capable of joining and utilizing their services. Membership must be persons who are prepared willingly to accept the responsibilities of being a member. There is devoid of discrimination in gender, social status, race, political affiliation or religious belief. Cooperatives are autonomous organizations where members come together voluntarily in order to achieve joint interests and joint aspirations in the field of economic, social and culture, regardless of gender, socio-cultural and religious body which is owned jointly and democratically controlled (Salleh et al, 2008).

2.2.2. Cooperative Principle: Autonomous and Independence

Cooperatives are self-help organizations owned and managed independently by their members. If they are involved in any contractual agreement with other organizations including government, cooperatives are bound to comply with democratic norms by their members and maintain their cooperative independence and autonomy (ICA, 1995). In any circumstance or deal cooperative must ensure autonomy and independent status.

2.2.3. Cooperative Principle: Democratic Member Control

Cooperative is governed by principle of democracy in which a 'one-member-one-vote' rule exists. The inability of any member to concentrate power through their accumulation of share ownership ensures that the cooperative will not be easily taken over or have its democracy eroded. Cooperative is therefore democratic in nature with all members having one vote and one value. According to Bacchiega and De Fraja (2004) in a cooperative each member has one vote of equal value regardless of his or her actual capital contribution. This impacted on the democratic principles of the cooperative as Mooney (2004) argued that the cooperative enterprise remains one of the few institutions in the United States that has a 'semblance of democratic governance'.

2.2.4. Cooperative Principle: Member Economic Participation

Cooperative members contribute equitably to capital of their cooperative organization. This is because part of that contributed capital is usually the common property of the members of cooperative which portray peace in communities. Members are usually allowed to receive as compensation, limited sums, if any on capital subscribed as a condition of holding membership (ICA, 1995 in Birchall, 2004). This is attributed to cooperative focused on the maximization of members benefits rather than the maximization of shareholder returns. According to Mazzarol (2009) cooperative seeks to target the greatest areas of member need rather than the most lucrative market opportunities. The customers or suppliers and typically members and owners of the cooperative rather than third parties, cooperative therefore seek lower prices as customers and higher prices as suppliers.

More so, cooperative offer members enhanced market access and reduced market risk. Cooperative give members superior financial benefits from enhanced pricing and greater access to resources. The farmer uses the producer's cooperative to help him lower his input costs and raise his bargaining power within the market to secure premium prices for his produce. Even the worker who sells his labour uses consumer cooperative to help lower the input costs of his food and clothing so as to enhance the 'profit' generated from the sale of his labour within the open market (Warbasse, 1937 in Mazzarol, 2009).

2.2.5. Cooperative Principle: Concern for the Community

Cooperative membership is viewed as offering a greater opportunity to develop the local community by engaging in self-help. Collaboration through cooperative could provide new services to the community and increase the benefits to members (Krivokapic-Skoko, 2002). Cooperative is a business entity that seeks to generate benefits to its members in the community in the form of enhances access to markets or to goods and services. While, the original Rochdale Principles placed an emphasis on pecuniary benefits to members as investors, they also focused on the generation of employment opportunities for the unemployed, the creation of affordable housing and to create a community that was self-supporting (Fairbairn, 1994 in Mazzarol, 2009).

These principles continue into the modern-day cooperatives. Historically, the cooperative has placed a key role in fostering economic development in farming communities and providing both enhanced prices for produce and lower input costs through collaborative purchasing and mutual finance and insurance (Doyon, 2002). Cooperatives do not only seek to address problems in their communities, but also identify new problems and their members display a greater focus on achieving social benefits. According to Heriot and Campbell (2006) in rural areas cooperative demonstrate a successful model for regional enterprise that can be applied to the economic development of poor or disadvantaged communities. The elements required for effective economic development are sense of community amongst the members.

2.2.6. Cooperative Principle: Education, Training and Information

Cooperative engages in education, training and information dissemination to both its internal community of employees and members as well as wider community. A cooperative improves its member's access to knowledge and information as well as making a significant contribution to the local community in which it is based (Birchall, 2004; Skurnik, 2002). The cooperative is well placed to enjoy enhanced communication flows among members and this can result in the cooperative being more responsive to member/customer needs. Cooperative needs to be headed by good leaders and to focus on education programs targeted at their members. Cooperative is therefore viewed as an important tool in the alleviation of world economic disadvantage and poverty. The knowledge of how best to utilize the resources

inputs such as land, machinery, technology, personnel, materials is a skill that greatly improves business performance. About (58%) of cooperatives in France provided services in the areas of health care, education, home and residential care for the disabled or elderly as well as child care and environmental protection (Mancino and Thomas, 2005). In cooperative there is the ability to supply or transfer technical skill and technology, building up the local business skills through education, training and mentoring.

2.2.7.Cooperative Principle: Cooperation among Cooperative Organizations

Cooperation refers to the joining together of individual efforts for a common end. This is any kind of collaborative work among individual members and cooperative organizations towards achieving organizational goals. Cooperative has both social and economic solidarity. This means that the cooperatives are involved in mutual help among cooperative organizations. The hypothesis is that the social and economic activities of cooperatives are based on cooperation. Therefore, cooperative organizations provide for their members most effectively and support the cooperative agenda by working together through local, regional, national and international structures for greater opportunities in cooperative development.

2.3.Concept of Peace-building

The term 'peace-building' originated in the field of peace studies more than forty year ago. In 1975 Johan Galtung coined the term in his pioneering work 'Three Approaches to Peace: Peace-building, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping'. Peace-building is an activity that aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the culture and structured conditions that generate destructive conflict. According to Lederach (1997) peace-building is a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates and sustains the full array of process, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships. Peace-building is a multidisciplinary, cross-sector technique or method which becomes strategic when it works over the long run and at all levels of society to establish and sustain relationships among people.

The School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University (2013) stated that peace-building is a term used within the international development community to describe the process and activities involved in resolving violent conflict and establishing a sustainable peace. Peace-building is about dealing with the reasons why people fight in the first place and supporting societies to manage the differences and conflict without resorting to violence. The concept of peace-building was further developed and clarified in a series of subsequent documents, among those the Brahimi Report on UN peace operations and Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

2.4. Essentials of Peace-Building through Cooperatives

Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is a progress and working together as cooperative is a success. This provides you with reasons why peace-building in conflict zones and conflict resolution in general are important for creating a safe and normal environment. There is strong indication on prosperity, happiness and tolerance as stated below:

2.4.1.Prosperity

Inverse of prosperity is evidence of failed societies in less developed countries. Take the continent of Africa for example. It has been plagued with war for centuries as a result of that misery, poverty and lack of development characterized Nigeria. Peace-building is one of the major factors in creating a prosperous society and people. It would be difficult for a nation to prosper where sounds of bombs and bullets dominate the air. Therefore, prosperity is essential component of peace-building which cooperative stand for.

2.4.2.Happiness

Only the most inhuman among us enjoy war, tension and conflict. In many parts of Nigeria people yearn for peace and cooperation but both are far fetch. The monster especially created out of politics or economic quagmire as a result of leadership problem is eating deep into human existence. Cooperative is good in bringing happiness to people through its principles and practice which necessitates conflict resolution led to peace and understanding, making everyone happier and more satisfied.

2.4.3. Tolerance

This is an important aspect of peace-building. Tolerance increases through communication between two or more sides engaged in conflict which can only be achieved if they are motivated to reach an agreement and end the violence. Cooperative principles and practice make agreement to be reached where communication must continue which is why peace-building in conflict areas is so important.

2.5. Coronavirus Symptoms

This affects different people in different ways. Most common symptoms are fever, dry cough and tiredness. There are also known fewer common symptoms like aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, a rash on skin or discoloration of fingers or toes. According to WHO (2020) serious symptoms are difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure and loss of speech or movement. All of the above will reduce the

rate at which people come together to solve a common problem. Notwithstanding strong indication that emerged the virus is now a new normal as people are wittingly adjusted to obey covid-19 protocol for more cooperative actions to survive.

3. Theoretical Framework: Theory of Cooperation

The great English economist Alfred Marshall, who was a major supporter of cooperative enterprise and an early President of the Cooperative Congress, noted in 1889 that cooperatives are both strong, functional business, fervent and proselytizers over their principles (Robots, 1947). Cooperative uniqueness is in their principles which make it a peace-building business and survival strategy. At the early stage, people are ready for change, have high expectations and can easily result to conflict if they do not feel tangible benefits of cooperation. Peace-building and survival strategy through cooperation is the root of benefit. Otite and Ogionwu (1994) described cooperation as groups made up of individuals whose inter-related tasks and specialties enable the total aggregate to achieve set goals; perform complementary and reciprocal functions, and satisfy complementary needs. It is the citizens of the countries where peace-building is underway, with support from their governments, who assume the responsibility for laying the foundations of lasting peace and survival through cooperation. Theories of cooperation suggest that human behaviour, involving cooperative exchanges, is motivated by desires for reward and self-advancement (Mazzarol, 2009). Based on this, the success of peace-building and survival depends on the cooperation which is considered to be more concerned with promoting peace and interest of members (Judy, 2010). In addition, cooperation is based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality and solidarity. Most focus on cooperation has taken place within the context of strategic alliance formation or strategic networking. Fehr and Schmidt (1999) therefore suggest that in addition to trust there must also be a perception of fairness or procedural justice. If cooperative is to be sustained as a peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria there is need for trust and fairness working with people. This will no doubt significantly reduce the risk of relapse into conflicts.

4. Methodology

Being a fact-finding study, survey plan research design method was used in sourcing of data, questionnaire administration, retrieval and data analysis. Descriptive survey study was adopted as simple random sampling technique was used in which 216 cooperatives were randomly selected in different parts of Nigeria and the questionnaire were administered, filled and returned some electronically but not without encumbrances coupled with covid-19 pandemic.

4.1. Model Specification

Based on the above stated objective; avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative principles on peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 were assessed and evaluated using mean rating of 5-point Likert scale analysis. A theoretical mean value of 3.0 was taken as a criterion to judge (≥ 3.0 effective and < 3.0 ineffective) was used. Hypothesis was tested using One Sample T-test of inferential statistics.

S/N	Avalanche Opportunity of Range of Cooperative Principles	Mean (X)	Remark
1	Cooperative provide a much wider and more equitable distribution of capital with the community	2.48	Ineffective
2	Cooperative pursues both economic and social objectives	2.32	Ineffective
3	Cooperative governance is more open and democratic	3.56	Effective
4	Cooperative exemplify the ownership-society	2.55	Ineffective
5	Cooperatives keep the capital in the local community rather than siphoning it off to a few centers of financial power	4.27	Effective
6	Cooperative focused on ensuring that its members receive the lowest prices rather than seeking to make a profit	2.43	Ineffective
7	The importance of member motivations is a key driver of future participation in cooperative	3.20	Effective
8	There are shared goals, values and a sense of community whereby members identify with each other and show mutuality	4.30	Effective
9	Cooperative generate a strong sense of community identity among members	3.91	Effective
10	The ability to engender commitment and loyalty from members is dependent on the cooperative enterprise	3.70	Effective
11	Cooperative is motivated out of the same desire for reward and self-advancement	4.05	Effective
12	Selfish individuals seeking to free-ride or cheat the system are reduced by cooperative behaviour	3.30	Effective
13	Cooperative is influenced significantly by considerations of morality, fairness and mutual obligation	3.89	Effective
14	There is the focusing of fairness for those who are most disadvantaged within society	4.07	Effective
15	There is equitable distribution of dividends based on patronage	4.23	Effective
	Group Mean (X)	3.48	Effective

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Rating of Avalanche Opportunity of Range of Cooperative Principles Effectiveness on Peace-building and Survival Strategy of Post Covid-19
N = 216
Source: Field Survey, 2020

The data contained in the table indicated that cooperative principles are effective in eleven out of 15 items on its avalanche opportunity on peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria. The measuring variables rated > 3.00 are effective with the grand mean of 3.48. From the One-sample t-test all the 15 variables measuring avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative principles were significant at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative principles does assist cooperatives on effective peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria.

5. Summary of Findings

Cooperative governance is more open and democratic was 3.36, cooperatives keep the capital in the local community rather than siphoning it off to a few centers of financial power 4.27, importance of member motivations is a key driver of future participation in cooperative 3.20, there is shared goals, values and a sense of community whereby members identify with each other and show mutuality 4.30, cooperative generate a strong sense of community identity among members 3.91, ability to engender commitment and loyalty from members is dependent on the cooperative enterprise 3.70, cooperative is motivated out of the same desire for reward and self-advancement 4.05, selfish individuals seeking to free-ride or cheat the system are reduced by cooperative behaviour 3.30, cooperative is influenced significantly by considerations of morality, fairness and mutual obligation 3.89, there is the focusing of fairness for those who are most disadvantaged within society 4.07 and there is equitable distribution of dividends based on patronage which was 4.23. The volume takes on a wide perspective, looking at both Western and Eastern cooperatives. The new role of cooperatives in advanced economies is explored. Carlo and Roger (2004) acknowledged that as a result of the gradual withdrawal of public entities, owing to state budget constraints cooperatives are increasingly turning into new welfare services providers in a number of countries. Cooperative principles were meant to foster among other things trust, ownership-society and self-advancement. Prakash (2003) has noted that cooperative principles are the philosophical attributes upon which cooperative movement is built. Certain ethical values such as openness, honesty, democracy, equality and social responsibility are the bases for cooperative principles which reflect the aspirations, peace-building and survival strategy behaviour of the host communities in post covid-19. Cooperative principles are therefore cogent and undeniable fact in the peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion and Policy Implications

Obviously, cooperativism is the act of organizing into cooperative which is a peaceful business enterprise in post covid-19. The concept of peace-building which originated in the field of peace studies was one of the three approaches to peace. Cooperativism for sustainable peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 means economic activity that aims to resolve injustice by transforming peasant and unpleasant conditions that cause poverty or generate conflict into a better life situation. Cooperativism creates peaceful relationships of post covid-19 in Nigeria through the avalanche opportunity of range of cooperative business principles.

Some of the avalanche opportunity include selfish individuals seeking to free-ride or cheat the system are reduced by cooperative behaviour, strong sense of community, ability to engender commitment, member motivations, desire for reward and self-advancement, there is also considerations of morality, fairness and mutual obligation to help most disadvantaged within society. The cooperative governance is more open and democratic which enable cooperatives to keep the capital in the local community rather than siphoning it off to a few centers of financial power. Finally, cooperative through avalanche opportunity of range of its principles is germane for sustainable peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 which its effectiveness has been demonstrated in Nigeria. This study therefore recommends that for purpose of sustainable peace-building and survival strategy of post covid-19 through cooperativism, that:

- Peace-building and survival strategy is an important aspect of nations building which cooperative should help to achieve by providing a much wider and more equitable distribution of capital within the community in the post covid-19.
- Nigeria government financial and economic support is necessary.
- Member based organizations like cooperative required pursuing both economic and social objectives.
- Cooperative should provide a pool of funds from which disadvantaged members take loans to meet respective economic needs.
- Cooperative should exemplify ownership-society.
- In pursuance of peace and strategic survival in Nigeria, cooperative required focusing on ensuring that its members receive the lowest prices rather than seeking to make profit at their detriment.
- Peace-building and survival strategy is an economic response stimulus, growth and well-being of the people therefore cooperative should generate returns that could be shared as dividends to members periodically in the post covid-19.

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