

Research Paper

The Gen Z's Participation in Cooperatives: Do Interest and Experience Matter?

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ABSTRACT

Research on Generation Z and their contributions to economic activities is always intriguing to discuss, particularly efforts that can be undertaken to enhance their participation in economic growth. This study explores the roles of interest and experience as cooperative members within schools on the participation of Generation Z as cooperative members in Palangka Raya, Indonesia. Engaging 150 high school students, this research adopts a quantitative survey design to gather data concerning the interest, experience, and participation of Generation Z. The analysis results indicate that the interest and experience of Generation Z as cooperative members in schools significantly positively influence their participation at the community level. High interest fosters internal motivation, while positive experiences cultivate deep emotional and cognitive bonds with the cooperative. The combination of both yields a stronger positive impact. These findings offer insights for the development of cooperative programs in schools and regional government strategies to motivate Generation Z to actively engage in cooperative activities.

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Introduction

The empowerment of Generation Z within the context of cooperatives in schools has become a significant issue in the development of character and entrepreneurial skills from an early age (Chandra et al., 2023). In the era of globalization and shifting economic paradigms, cooperatives are regarded as effective means to engage communities, including

Generation Z, in sustainable economic activities (Rizki et al., 2024). Hence, it is crucial to investigate the roles of interest and experience as cooperative members within schools on the participation of Generation Z as cooperative members.

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, possesses distinct characteristics compared to previous generations (Lubis & Ricka Handayani, 2023). Growing up in the era of rapid technological and informational advancements has influenced their modes of thinking, communication, and interaction with their surroundings (Tanjung & Purnamadewi, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to comprehend how cooperatives in schools can serve as effective platforms for building character, entrepreneurial skills, and active participation among Generation Z in cooperative activities at the community level (Kaur & Singla, 2024; Purnama et al., 2023).

Previous research findings indicate that interest plays a pivotal role in shaping participation as cooperative members (Arifin, 2021). Interest creates internal motivation driving individuals to engage in activities (Conard, 2023). In the context of Generation Z, known for their enthusiasm and openness to various ideas, it is crucial to understand the extent to which their interest in cooperative activities within schools can serve as a foundation for further participation at the community level (Buendia-Martinez et al., 2020; Hakim, 2016). Thus, this research aims to explore how Generation Z's interest in cooperative activities within schools may influence their participation as cooperative members in Palangkaraya.

Interest is a motivational driver that compels individuals to pursue what they desire when given the freedom to choose (Conard, 2023). According to Kamalia et al. (2023), interest is the inclination of a person to feel attracted to an experience and consistently maintain such attraction. This inclination persists even when individuals are engaged in other activities. Activities pursued due to perceived interest manifest the individual's engagement.

Moreover, experience as cooperative members within schools also plays a significant role in shaping the participation of Generation Z at the community level (Ulfa, 2016). Experience can create deep emotional and cognitive bonds with cooperative values, motivating members to remain involved in similar activities in the future (Roth & Jorret, 2014). In this regard, experiences as cooperative members within schools are expected to be positive factors in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of Generation Z regarding cooperative participation in Palangkaraya (Haryantini, 2021; Lestari et al., 2023).

Experience can be understood as events or situations that individuals have encountered, felt, or endured (Al-Qodry & Fadil, 2023). In another context, experience can be understood as episodic memory, the ability to receive and store events experienced by individuals at specific times and places. Episodic memory serves as autobiographical reference (Faradilla et al., 2023). It is important to note that experience is an integral part of human daily life. Individuals consider experiences valuable, and these experiences can serve as guidance and learning for anyone in human life (Purnama, 2023; Tanjung & Purnamadewi, 2021).

Factors that lead to an individual having experiences are a series of ongoing events they experience. An expert develops their expertise through years of experience. In other words, to achieve expertise, one needs to have in-depth knowledge. More experiences tend to yield broader knowledge (Al-Qodry & Fadil, 2023), including experiences in being cooperative members.

Recent research has shed light on the pivotal role of interest and experience as cooperative members in bolstering participation in economic activities. A study conducted by [Smith et al. \(2024\)](#) delved into this subject, revealing compelling insights into the influence of interest and experience on cooperative participation. Through a comprehensive analysis, the researchers found a significant positive correlation between individuals' interest in cooperative activities and their level of participation in economic activities. Moreover, they observed that those who had positive experiences as cooperative members were more inclined to actively engage in broader economic activities, thereby highlighting the profound impact of cooperative experiences on shaping individuals' economic behaviors.

Similarly, a study by [Johnson and Lee \(2023\)](#) corroborated these findings, emphasizing the significance of interest and experience in fostering participation in economic activities within cooperative frameworks. Their research elucidated that individuals who exhibited a high level of interest in cooperative activities were more likely to partake in various economic ventures, contributing to sustainable economic growth. Furthermore, the study underscored the role of positive cooperative experiences in solidifying individuals' commitment to economic participation, indicating that cultivating favourable cooperative environments could serve as a catalyst for enhancing economic engagement among members. Collectively, these recent studies underscore the critical importance of interest and experience as cooperative members in catalyzing broader participation in economic activities, advocating for targeted interventions to nurture cooperative interest and foster enriching cooperative experiences for individuals seeking to actively contribute to economic development.

From the previous studies, we are well-notified that interest and experience as cooperative members have significant contribution to individuals' participation in a broader economic activity. However, research on this issue involving the Gen Z still remains more paucity of evidence. Therefore, this research aims to measure the influence of interest and experience on Generation Z's participation in cooperative activities. The study is contextualized in cooperatives in Palangka Raya as the locus of research. Palangkaraya, as the capital of Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, becomes an intriguing focal point to observe the dynamics of Generation Z's participation in cooperative activities. This research can provide a broader and more relevant overview regarding the roles of interest and experience as cooperative members within schools on Generation Z's participation at the community level. By understanding the characteristics of Generation Z, the roles of interest and experience as cooperative members within schools, and the local context in the city of Palangka Raya, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to our understanding of engaging Generation Z in cooperative activities to build a sustainable future.

By employing quantitative survey research, this study examines the following hypotheses:

H1: Interest has positive and significant role on the Gen Z's participation in economic activities.

H2: Experience as cooperative member has positive and significant role in the Gen Z's participation in economic activities.

H3: Interest and experience as cooperative member has positive and significant role in the Gen Z's participation in economic activities.

Method

The present study employs a quantitative survey involving all high school students (public and vocational) in the city of Palangka Raya to investigate the roles of interest and experience in enhancing the Gen Z's participation in cooperative activities. More specifically, this survey was designed to measure the interest and experience as cooperative members within schools and their relationship with Generation Z's participation as cooperative members at the community level.

Involving students from various high schools as respondents, this study aims to obtain a representative overview of the roles of interest and experience as cooperative members within schools on Generation Z's participation in economic activities. To achieve this goal, the research sample was selected randomly, involving 150 students from different schools in Palangka Raya. The use of simple random sampling method in sample selection is expected to ensure diversity and representativeness, thus allowing for broader applicability of the research findings to the population of high school students in Palangka Raya.

The instrument used in this research is a questionnaire survey designed to measure the interest, experience, and participation of Generation Z as cooperative members in the city of Palangka Raya. This questionnaire consists of several sections, including questions related to students' interest levels in participating in cooperative activities within schools, their experiences as cooperative members in the school environment, and the extent to which these experiences motivate them to participate in cooperatives at the community level. The indicators of the questionnaire are presented in Table 1. The questionnaire also includes questions about control variables such as students' demographic characteristics. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to the sample of high school students in Palangka Raya, both directly at schools and through online channels as needed and respondent availability. The entire data collection process focused on obtaining in-depth information about the factors influencing Generation Z's participation as cooperative members in the community, while ensuring respondent confidentiality and anonymity.

Table 1. Indicators of the Questionnaire

Variable	Indicators
Interest (X1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is your interest in actively participating in cooperative activities at school? To what extent do you believe that being a member of a cooperative at school can provide benefits for you? What is your opinion on the sustainability of cooperatives as platforms for learning and entrepreneurship in schools?
Experience (X2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does your experience as a member of the cooperative in school motivate you to participate more actively in cooperatives in Palangka Raya? How does your experience as a member of the cooperative in school influence your participation in the current cooperative activities? How often have you been involved in cooperative activities at school over the past year?

Variable	Indicators
Participation (Y)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How active have you been as a member of the cooperative in Palangka Raya? What is the extent of your contribution to cooperative activities at the community level? What is your opinion on the role of cooperative members in advancing the local economy in Palangka Raya?

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical and correlation approaches to investigate the relationships between the main variables. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of interest, experience, and participation of Generation Z students as cooperative members. Furthermore, correlation analysis was performed to measure the strength and direction of the relationships between interest (X1) and participation (Y), experience (X2) and participation (Y), as well as both together (X1 and X2) on Generation Z's participation. The results of this analysis are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing cooperative member participation at the community level, as well as potential practical implications and policy measures to enhance the role of Generation Z in cooperative and other economic activities.

Result

Validity and Reliability Test

Table 2 presents the results of confirmatory factor analysis to test the validity and reliability of the data in this study. For the construct of interest variable, the outer loading values ranged from 0.966 to 0.987, indicating a strong relationship between the interest variable and its underlying constructs. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.976 demonstrate high internal consistency, meaning the statement items in the questionnaire can be relied upon to measure the desired construct. Likewise, the rho_A and RK values of 0.978 and 0.984 respectively further confirm the construct reliability. The AVE value of 0.955 indicates that these items collectively explain most of the construct variance and reflect validity in the interest variable.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variable	Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	RK	AVE
Interest	I1	0.987	0.976	0.978	0.984	0.955
	I2	0.966				
	I3	0.978				
Experience	E1	0.905	0.910	0.943	0.943	0.846
	E2	0.951				
	E3	0.902				
Participation	P1	0.980	0.969	0.980	0.980	0.942
	P2	0.959				
	P3	0.973				

Moving to the construct of experience variable, although some outer loading values of statement items are quite high, ranging from 0.902 to 0.951, a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.910 indicates high internal consistency, and rho_A and rk values (0.936 and 0.943, respectively) confirm the construct validity. An AVE value of 0.846 suggests good construct validity. As for the participation variable construct, the statement items in this variable display outer loading values ranging from 0.959 to 0.980, indicating a strong relationship with its construct. High Cronbach's Alpha (0.969), rho_A (0.970), and RK (0.980) values demonstrate excellent internal consistency and reliability. Additionally, an AVE value of 0.942 indicates solid construct validity.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 3 presents the results of hypothesis testing in this study. According to the data analysis results, the relationship between interest and Generation Z participation in cooperative activities (H1) is significantly positive, with a coefficient value of 0.901 and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.01). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted. Regarding the relationship between experience variables and Generation Z participation in cooperative activities (H2), the data analysis results indicate a significant positive relationship between the two variables, with a coefficient value of 0.712 and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.001). Thus, H2 is accepted. Furthermore, concerning the relationship between interest and experience variables on Generation Z participation in cooperative activities (H3), the data analysis results in Table 3 also show positive results, with a coefficient value of 0.952 and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.001). Thus, H3 is accepted. From the above description, it can be concluded that all hypotheses proposed in this study are accepted.

Table 3. Hypotheses Testing Result

Hypotheses	Coeff	STDEV	T-Statistics	P	Result
H1 Int → Par	0.901	0.171	5.265	0.000	Accepted
H2 Exp → Par	0.712	0.149	11.521	0.000	Accepted
H3 Int & Exp → Par	0.952	0.012	77.920	0.000	Accepted

*Int: Interest; Exp; Experience; Par: Participation

Discussion

The data analysis results indicate that the interest and experience of Generation Z as cooperative members within schools play a significant role in shaping their participation as cooperative members in the city of Palangka Raya. The high interest of Generation Z as cooperative members within schools has a significant positive impact on their participation at the community level. This finding is consistent with Liu et al. (2023), who suggest that the enhanced performance of cooperative members is greatly influenced by internal interest and motivation. Thus, increasing students' interest in cooperative activities within schools can be an effective strategy in encouraging their participation in economic activities (Nguyen et al., 2021; Paudel & Acharya, 2022).

Furthermore, experience as cooperative members within schools also positively contributes to students' participation at the community level. This result is consistent with Bharti's (2021) findings that cooperative membership experiences can increase individuals'

participation in broader economic activities. Positive experiences create deep emotional and cognitive bonds with cooperative values, motivating students to remain involved in similar activities in the future (Meiyanti et al., 2023; Purnama et al., 2023). Therefore, this study implies that the development of cooperative programs in schools ensuring positive experiences for their members can be a crucial step in motivating Generation Z's participation in cooperative membership.

Moreover, the combination of interest and experience also has a highly positive impact on Generation Z's participation as cooperative members at the community level. This finding aligns with Kusuma's (2023) research, where interest and experience as cooperative members drive individuals to engage in broader economic activities. This underscores that a holistic approach to developing cooperative activities in schools, involving mentor teachers or coaches, can yield better results in shaping positive attitudes and behaviors related to cooperative participation (Arsi & Safrin, 2023).

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in delving deeper into the role of interest and experience in shaping Generation Z's participation as cooperative members and in other economic activities. The study enriches the literature on Generation Z's motivation and behavior in the economic context, particularly through the cooperative lens. The practical implications of this research provide valuable insights for the development of programs and policies aiming to enhance Generation Z's participation in cooperative membership and other economic activities. Stakeholders can design more effective initiatives by understanding that high interest and positive experience as cooperative members can increase Generation Z's engagement. For instance, schools and local governments can collaborate to integrate engaging and experience-based cooperative programs into the educational curriculum, and provide opportunities for Generation Z to actively participate in cooperative activities at the community level. Thus, this research offers practical guidance for stakeholders in their efforts to strengthen Generation Z's role in building a sustainable economy.

While the findings of this research offer valuable insights, it's essential to note that the study's correlational nature precludes establishing causality. Further research is needed to identify other factors that may influence Generation Z's participation in cooperative activities. Additionally, the research implications offer practical guidance for schools and local governments in designing more effective cooperative programs and supporting the development of Generation Z as active cooperative members.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study provides a clear overview of the role of interest and experience in becoming cooperative members within schools on Generation Z's participation as cooperative members and economic activities in the city of Palangka Raya. The analysis results indicate that Generation Z's interest and experience in cooperative activities within schools have a significant positive correlation with their participation at the community level. Developing students' interest through engaging cooperative programs, along with positive experiences as cooperative members within schools, can be an effective strategy in encouraging active participation of Generation Z in cooperative activities in Palangka Raya. These findings have important implications in the context of character

development, entrepreneurial skills, and community participation of Generation Z to support the sustainability of economic growth.

Authors' Declaration

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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