

## Expanded abstract

# Organizational social capital as a tool to enhance the viability of newly created cooperatives in Costa Rica within the social spin-off between 2019 and 2024

### Objectives

This study investigates the influence of Organizational Social Capital (OSC) on the viability of newly created cooperatives in Costa Rica, within the framework of the Spin-Off Social program of the State Distance University (UNED), whose main objective is to generate a positive impact on territories through business development and social investment. Using a mixed-methods approach, key OSC factors contributing to the operability of these cooperatives are identified to provide practical recommendations that enhance their success. The research combines qualitative and quantitative methods to capture a comprehensive view of OSC dynamics in 23 cooperatives located in underdeveloped cantons of Costa Rica that participated in the program between 2019 and 2023. Data was collected through surveys administered to cooperative members before and during their formation, analyzing perceptions and initial conditions.

A logistic regression model was employed to evaluate the relationship between OSC variables and cooperative operability, complemented by a bivariate correlation analysis to understand interactions between explanatory variables. The results demonstrate that OSC is crucial for the viability of cooperatives. Associative density and civic participation emerge as positive factors influencing operability. Associative density, which measures the quality of connections among members, shows a positive correlation with operability, suggesting that internal cohesion is key to organizational sustainability. Likewise, civic participation in addressing community issues, such as drug trafficking, strengthens social networks and organizational resilience.

An unexpected finding is the negative effect of institutional trust in local municipalities on operability, suggesting that excessive reliance on local authorities may limit self-management. Regarding sustainable practices, environmental projects like waste renewal show a marginal relationship with operability, indicating that, although not decisive, they positively contribute to long-term success.

The study's limitations include the non-random selection of cooperatives, and the use of subjective perceptions obtained through surveys, which may introduce biases. Additionally, the lack of longitudinal information limits the assessment of OSC's impact over time.

Theoretically, this study contributes to understanding the role of OSC in cooperative sustainability in contexts with limited state involvement. Strengthening internal networks and promoting civic participation are effective strategies for enhancing cooperative operability.

Practically, public policies are recommended to reduce institutional dependency and foster organizational autonomy. Furthermore, promoting sustainable practices and social innovation is suggested, although they should not be the sole strategies for ensuring operability.

Cooperatives with high associative density and civic engagement have greater probabilities of being sustainable. Institutional trust, while generally positive, may have adverse effects if it leads to dependency. It is recommended to encourage cooperatives' independence from local authorities by strengthening their internal capacities. This study provides an original contribution by empirically examining how these elements interact in Costa Rican cooperatives, expanding the theoretical framework and providing a basis for future research. The practical recommendations may influence cooperative development policies and strategies at local and regional levels.