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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Contribution of Employees on The Cooperative Businesses

Zulfadil[1*], Futy Resnia[2], Rosyeti[3]

[1]Faculty of Economic, The University of Riau, Jalan Bakti IV No.37A RT 03 RT 11 Kelurahan Tangakerang Barat, Kecamatan Marpoyan Damai, Kota Pekanbaru, Provinsi Riau, Indonesia.
Email: Zulfadil@unri.ac.id
[2]University of Riau, Jalan Bakti IV No.37A RT 03 RT 11 Kelurahan Tangakerang Barat, Kecamatan Marpoyan Damai, Kota Pekanbaru, Provinsi Riau, Indonesia.
Email: Futy@gmail.com
[3]Faculty of Economic, The University of Riau, Jalan Bakti IV No.37A RT 03 RT 11 Kelurahan Tangakerang Barat, Kecamatan Marpoyan Damai, Kota Pekanbaru, Provinsi Riau, Indonesia.
Email: rosyetti@unri.ac.id

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR (*):
Zulfadil
(Zulfadil@unri.ac.id)

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ABSTRACT

The role of cooperative is important for Indonesian Economic, especially for low and medium level of society incomes. This study investigates the contribution of employees on cooperative business. The study objects are secondary cooperatives where their members are primary cooperatives. The sample were selected based two criteria, as such (1) the cooperative businesses were active and (2) the cooperative performed members' annual forum since last three years. Out of 22 secondary cooperatives in the Riau Province, there were six of them satisfied the criteria. The respondent of this study is cooperative boards and employees. The study conducted for six months, from October of 2022 to April of 2023. This study findings indicated that role cooperative boards on the cooperative business development were 71% which were more dominant compared to those of employees which was only 29%. The cooperatives' businesses did not develop at all and nearly stagnant since last three. Almost all Indicators which were growth of assets, internal equity, business' volume, and net profits, applied in this study were negative. Low role (contribution) of the employees on the cooperative business development, seen main cause of the bad cooperative financial performances. This study concluded that, in descriptive approach, there weas relation between employees' contribution and cooperative businesses performances. For the cooperatives to develop in the future, the role/contribution of the employees need to be increased.

Contribution/Originality: The result this study contributes to existing literature especially practice of cooperative business development.

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1. Introduction

The development and performances of cooperative organization become main topic of researches since last twenty years ago (Dyahrini et al., 2019). It is due to the cooperative organization has significant impact on global economy (Lidasan et al., 2018). Based on the State Decree number 25 year of 1992, cooperative as its named is a business's entities which owned by members individually or by cooperative entities, running with democratic manner for members; and societies' welfare (Kementerian Koperasi Dan Usaha Kecil Dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, 2019).

The level and members create two forms of cooperatives in Indonesia. There are primary cooperative and secondary cooperative. The objective of cooperative is to increase members' and families' welfare especially and societies' welfare in general. In high competition of the business, goal and high performance of cooperative are not easy be achieved. This organization requires a combination of internal resources, best practices of cooperative management, and entrepreneurship spirit. However, cooperative organizations faced several challenges from external resources. Thus, it is needed to study in the area of cooperative performances, included factors that affected. This study specially tried to investigate the contribution the employees of cooperative business; current and future cooperative business development.

In literature, among, variables found that affected cooperative performances were social capital and member participation (Liang et al., 2015), participation leadership, organizational culture, and innovation (Audah et al., 2019), good cooperative governance (Marlina, 2019), entrepreneurship orientation (Morshidi, 2020), leadership (Darmawan et al., 2022; Dyahrini et al., 2019), strategic management practices (Singh et al., 2021), human capital (Rabialdy, 2021; Ramli et al., 2014), modernization (Siregar et al., 2022), intellectual capital (Azzahra, 2018; Mutiarni et al., 2023), human resource development (Martini et al., 2017) and human resource management (Muplihah & Arifiana, 2022).

As an important player in the Indonesian economic system, cooperatives have some differences compared to other economic players; privately-owned businesses and state-owned businesses (Jaya, 2022; Wuryani, 2020). The differences rest on the following aspects; organizational instruments, principle, purposes, and philosophy. Cooperative entities consist of three actors of organizational managements. They are members' annual forum, cooperative boards, and cooperative controlled-boards. Each of these cooperative organizational managements have different functions.

In other point of view, cooperative organization has dissimilar objective compared with other types of organizations which is as a social organization (Rabialdy et al., 2023). The cooperative principles consist of (1) open and voluntary based-memberships, (2) democratic based organization (one man one vote), (3) limited compensation on equity, (4) fairly based allocation of net profit, (5) education and training, and (5) business networking. Also, the cooperative' philosophy is "from, by and for members". In addition, the goal of cooperative organization is to increase members' and their family welfares (Adnyani, 2016; Rabialdy et al., 2023).

like other economic players, the success of cooperatives depends on resources availability. Barney (1991) mentioned that firms' resources include all assets, capabilities, organizational procedures, firm attributes, information, knowledge, etc.

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which controlled by the firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Also, researchers found that intangible resources has contributed on agricultural cooperative organization (Ishak & Omar, 2023).

Above discussion acknowledged that the contributions of cooperative organization to the economic development are significant. Based the foregoing researches, there were two aspects needed to be underlined. First, almost all researches focused on primary cooperatives, none of them on secondary cooperatives. Second, none of the researches put attention on the employee of the cooperatives. In addition, this study focused on secondary cooperative and tried to investigate the contribution of employees on the cooperative businesses located in Province Riau, Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Resource Base Theory

Resource-based view theory was developed by Barney (1991) which indicates that organizational resources as a part of the resource-based view were essential on competitive advantage when it implemented through several strategies to improve efficiency and effectiveness. It has supported by argument from Lyn and Muthuveloo (2019) that organizational resources become main components for organizational performance. This theory suggests the valuable, scarce, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable capital had competitive advantages and superior efficiency, rather than an enterprise without resources and skills (Barney, 1991; Ishtiaq et al., 2020; Pattnaik & Sahoo, 2018).

In this context, several researchers has grouped organizational' resources into physical capital, human capital and organizational capital resources (Barney, 1991; Marino, 1996). Each of these resources perform differently for the organization. Based on the RBV, this theory sees organization as a bunch of assets and capabilities and any company should look up from internal perspective to carefully explore companies' resources and combines them to gain core competencies and competitive advantages (Barney, 1991).

Wernerfelt (1984) argued that resources and products are two sides of the same coin. Most products require the services of several resources and most resources can be used in several products. By specifying the size of the firm's activity in deferent product markets, is possible to infer the minimum necessary resources commitments. Conversely, by specifying a resources profile for the firm, it is possible to find the optimal product-market activities.

2.2. Human resources for cooperative performance

Penrose (1995) as a pioneer of resource base view of the firm stated that the relevant environment, that is set of opportunities for investment and growth that its entrepreneurs and managers perceive, is different for every firm and depends of its specific collection of human and other resources. The growing experience of management, knowledge of resources and other potential for using them in different way, create incentives of its own resources more profitability. Also, the existing human resources provide both an inducement to expand and a limit to the rate of expansion.

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In the context of cooperative organization, human resources as one of unique resources are motor among other physical and organizational resources (Martini et al., 2017). It brings the organization to set up the performance, since it has positive and significant relationship to the cooperative performance (Rabialdy, 2021; Ramli et al., 2014). Human resources of the cooperative organization were grouped into three which are members' annual forum, cooperative boards, and cooperative-controlled boards. These three groups are so called as "cooperative organizational management". Each of them plays differently roles on controlling and developing performance of cooperatives organizations.

Furthermore, the contribution of human resources on organization is essential, especially for cooperative organization (Dwi & Dini, 2021; Jayac & Elly, 2023; Sihombing, 2024). Human resources affect organizational efficiency, and are a major expense for companies in doing business (Dwi & Dini, 2021). Also, the contribution of human recourse are looking as a motor, thinker, and planner for cooperative development (Fuji et al., 2021). In literature, human resource has positive and significant relationship to the cooperative performance (Fuji et al., 2021; Rabialdy, 2021; Ramli et al., 2014). For instance, in the research conducted by Fuji et al. (2021), the relationship cooperative ' management has an effect on the increasing performance of MMS cooperative in Rancaekek, Indonesia.

In other point of view, measuring performance as a business entity, like cooperatives is very important, due to with the performance measurement of cooperative managers are able to know the effectiveness and efficiency of revenue cost, asset use, an operational process of the cooperatives management organization (Fuji et al., 2021; Martini et al., 2017). Also, the development and sustainability of cooperatives are looking on how members and societies receive benefit and feel welfare are increased (Goncalves, 2015; Martini et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the development of measurement of cooperative performance are still in debate (Ernita et al., 2020; Jaya, 2022; Martini et al., 2017; Rabialdy et al., 2023). For instance, in a research conducted by Rabialdy et.al (2023) that financial and non-financial performance are used two evaluate cooperative performance in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Jaya (2022) used balance scorecard to measure the development of cooperative organization.

Ernita et al. (2020) used member participation as one of performance evaluation for cooperative organization. Researcher used (1) attendance activity, (2) payment in time saving the donation, (3) total of rest income transaction, (4) the using of credit, (5) visiting giving critics and suggestions. Lastly, Martini et al. (2017) evaluated cooperative organization performance with four indicators: (1) excelling cooperatives, (2) cooperative growth, (3) financing facilities for cooperatives, and (4) product marketing and partnership of cooperatives. However, the achievements of the organizations depend on the performance of its human resources (Suryawan et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the successes of a company in realizing business opportunities in investments and growths seen by entrepreneur and manager, were difference between one company and another, and are depended on human resources and other specific resources (Penrose, 1995). Therefore, performance of cooperative can be evaluated by variety instruments and cooperative business must be managed and developed professionally by professional human resources.

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3. Research Method

The objective of this research is to investigate the contribution of employees on the cooperative businesses. This research used to portraited cooperative profile, cooperative boards and employees' profile, and cooperative financial performances. The target of this research is secondary cooperative organizations located in Riau Province, Indonesia. The respondents were selected by using purposive sampling method which consist by two criteria (1) active cooperative organizations, and (2) cooperative organization who have conducted an annual meeting in the last three years. Out of 22 secondary cooperatives in the Riau Province, six of them are satisfied with the criteria. Meanwhile, the respondents of this research are 26 of cooperative boards and 29 cooperatives' employees from 6 selected cooperative organizations.

The primary data was collected by questionaries. It distributed to cooperative boards and employees separately. Also, this research is measured two sub variable that are contribution on current business and future development of the business. In order to measure the current cooperative business, this research used three indicators; (1) function of planning, (2) function of organization and (3) function of controlling. In addition, the future business development is measured by (1) customer and members' satisfaction, (2) capital sources potentials, (3) business prospect, (4) new market, (5) demand, and (6) competition intensity.

Furthermore, the secondary data were collected through documented technic. The data concerning non-financial profile of cooperatives, cooperative financial reports, as well as cooperatives' boards and employees' profiles were collected from all cooperatives surveyed. To measure Cooperative businesses performance, this research used "growth" in four indicators that Net Profit (NP), Members' Equity (ME), Assets Total (AT), and Business Volume (BV).

Lastly, the data concerning the employees' contribution on the cooperatives' businesses, the cooperative general profile, boards and employees' profile, as well the cooperatives financial performances were analyzed comprehensiveness with descriptive approaches, and it was presented in research results and Discussion.

4. Results and Discussion

The result of this research presented in five sections. Firstly, is secondary cooperatives' profile. Secondly is cooperatives' boards and employees' profiles. the third is the contribution of employees on the cooperatives' current businesses' management. The fourth is the contribution of employees on cooperatives businesses future developments. The fifth is the contribution of employees on the cooperatives' business as wholes.

4.1. The Cooperative Profiles.

The age of secondary cooperatives varied between 40-60 years old. The oldest among them was founded in 1960. As seen the Table 1, there were only two of cooperatives that had 2 business units and employed managers. The cooperatives' businesses did not develop at all and nearly stagnant since last three years. The causes might that the cooperative businesses were dominantly directed by the cooperatives' boards rather than those of managers and employees.

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Tabel 1: The Profiles of Secondary Cooperatives' Businesses

No	Cooperative Name	Cooperative Businesses classification				
		Credit Union	Mini Marke	Production	Distribution	Services
1	GKPRI-Riau	√	-	-	-	-
2	PKPRI-Kab. Kampar	√	-	-	-	√
3	Puskoppabri-Riau	-	-	√	-	-
4	Puskud-Riau	-	-	-	√	-
5	Puskopau-Kota Pekanbaru	-	-	-	-	√
6	PKPRI- Kota Pekanbaru	√	-	-	√	-
Percentage		37.5%	-	12.5%	25%	25%

Most of cooperatives' boards were reluctant to delegate cooperatives' businesses to the managers or employees. They might though that the existence of managers decreased their power over cooperatives' businesses. It was also acknowledged that was not easy to hire qualify manager, due to the cooperatives ability to offer attractive compensation. This might reasonable since most professional managers asked for high-standard compensation, which means some part of cooperative boards' incentives must be shared to employed managers. Another research finding was that the cooperative boards had no enough skills in business practices. None of them had businesses skill and experiences.

Muplihah and Arifiana (2022) argued one of factors of the successful organization is influenced by human resource itself.. In the short run, cooperatives' businesses may scarify profits, but in the long terms, the existences of qualified managers enable cooperatives' businesses to growth and sustain. Another research finding was the lack of businesses' networks. Azhari et al (2017) stated that the lack of engagement from members, the cooperative's management's low capability, unprofessionalism are caused the cooperative unable to achieve the goals.

Martini et al. (2017) stated humans are the most important development resources among other resources that must constantly build capacity and power as implementers and drivers of cooperative' development. Cooperatives' boards, managers and employee's knowledge, however need to be upgraded through training in area of business management and entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, most cooperatives did not facilitate training for their employees and members since last 3 years.

The research also found "low members' participation" in internal equity. The cooperatives' businesses were very much depended on external capital. Up to some level, cooperatives' businesses should rally on internal equity rather than on those of debt. The benefit of the internal equity is included low cost of capitals that is needed for businesses' developments. Debt as a dominant-external capital burdened high risk, especially fixed interest.

Based on cooperative decree of number 25 Year of 1992, secondary cooperatives were founded together by at least 3 primary cooperatives. Table 2 portrayed the members of secondary cooperative in the Riau Province 2019-2021.

Based on the data in Table 2, the member of secondary cooperatives within last 3 years has not increased at all. The members were potential resources for cooperative to

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develop, especially in internal capital mobility. The research found that majority of cooperatives' members did not enjoy benefits of being members. Among benefits for being members were business networks at all levels. The networks were not existed.

Tabel 2: The Secondary Cooperatives' Members in the Riau Province year 2019-2021

No	Cooperative Name	Years		
		2019	2020	2021
1	GKPRI – Riau	110	110	119
2	PKPRI – Kab. Kampar	26	26	28
3	PUSKOPPABRI – Riau	7	7	7
4	PUSKUD – Riau	325	325	328
5	PUSKOPAU – Kota Pekanbaru	6	6	6
6	PKPRI – Kota Pekanbaru	38	38	24
Total		512	512	512

4.2. The Cooperatives' boards and employees' profiles

Out 35 respondents, 23 of them were employees, whereas 12 persons were cooperatives' boards. The youngest of the cooperative boards was 55 years old, and those of employees were 38 years old. Douglas and Roberts (2020) stated that older employees may be viewed as less motivated and less growth potential and assumed to be coasting towards retirement**.** The employees' main jobs were related to administrative tasks. In the gender perspectives, research found that majority of cooperative boards and employees were men. The level of education of most of board of cooperative and employee were high school graduated, and only some of them had university graduated.

Furthermore, only some of them had background in economic and businesses educations. Suryawan et al (2022) believed if the human resource want to improve the workability, then education and training must be increased. By achieving certain educational levels, employees have skill and knowledge needed in their works. Even though the board of cooperative and employee level of education were relatively low, but their experiences in cooperatives were satisfactory. The Majority of them have in cooperative businesses for more than 15 years. The more experiences someone have, the more ability they may pose for the organization to develop. In line with Alnoor (2020) which concluded that a higher level of skill has more changes in innovation, have a more efficient way of production and ultimately it helps to produce a quality product.

4.3. The Contribution of Employees on the Cooperatives' Current Businesses Management

The contribution of employees in cooperative current businesses used 3 indicators which were functions of planning, organizing and controlling. Data on the employees' contribution were based on both the cooperatives' boards and employees' perceptions as showed in Table 3.

The average contribution of the employee on cooperative current business was categorized as "low" at 23.3%. There was not different between boards and employees' perceptions. Both boards and employees acknowledged the contributions of employees were only 23,3%. These meant that contribution of cooperative board was about 76,7%. The highest contribution employees were at PUSKUD Riau with the average as of 30,1%.

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This Highest contribution was related with existence of managers and supported by 9 employees. The total numbers of PUSKUD-Riau members were 328 in 2020. The PUSKUD-Riau was also succeeded with business network among secondary and primary cooperatives. The lowest contribution of employees was showed at PKP-RI Kampar, which was recruited manager. The business was not developed all.

Tabel 3: The Contribution of Employees on Cooperative Current Businesses Management

No.	Cooperative Name	Employees' Contribution		Averages (%)	Category
		Boards' Perceptions	Employees' Perceptions		
1	GKPRI – Riau	26,0	16,7	21,4	**Low**
2	PKPRI – Kampar	17,3	14,0	15,7	**Very Low**
3	PUSKOPPABRI–Riau	24,0	26,0	25,0	**Low**
4	PUSKUD – Riau	24,7	35,4	30,1	**Low**
5	PUSKOPAU–Pekanbaru	33,0	24,4	28,7	**Low**
6	PKPRI – Pekanbaru	20,0	18,0	19,0	**Very Low**
Averages		**24,2 %**	**22,4 %**	**23,3 %**	**Low**

4.4. The Contribution of Employees on The Cooperatives Businesses Developments.

Cooperative businesses should not only be run as routine activities. Board and employee of cooperatives should explore business opportunities in dynamic environments. As businesses entities, cooperative current businesses must be developed and be diversified. Though, both board and employees should share responsibilities, but contribution of employee should increase. In evaluating employee contribution in developing cooperative current businesses. The data in the Table 4 indicated research finding on the employee contribution toward cooperative businesses developments.

Tabel 4: The Contribution of Employees on Cooperative Businesses Developments

No.	Cooperative Name	Employee Contributions			Category
		Board Perception	Employees Perception	Average (%)	
1	GKPRI – Riau	49,2	33,6	41,4	**Moderate**
2	PKPRI – Kampar	27,8	25,8	26,8	**Low**
3	PUSKOPPABRI –Riau	30,3	36,7	33,5	**Low**
4	PUSKUD – Riau	55,3	56,1	56,7	**Moderate**
5	PUSKOPAU –Pekanbaru	33,3	24,7	29,0	**Low**
6	PKPRI – Pekanbaru	20,8	21,7	21,25	**Low**
Rata-rata		**36,1**	**33,1**	**34,6**	**Low**

The data in Table 4, indicated average contributions of employees of 34,6 %, where those of cooperative boards were 65,4 %. The highest employee contribution was on Puskud-Riau at 56.7 % and the lowest was PKP-RI Pekanbaru at 21,25 %. The low contribution of cooperative employees this research found due to the domination of the cooperative board in the cooperative business development. The data were also showed that the cooperative was hired limited number of employees. There are more employee

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the better cooperative businesses performance, as seen by the one of cooperative sample which is Puskud Riau.

4.5. The Contribution of Employees on the Cooperatives' Business

This section discusses the contribution of the employees on cooperative business; both on cooperative current business and future business development, as seen on the Table 5.

Tabel 5: The Contribution of Employees on Cooperative Businesses

No.	Cooperative Names	Cooperative Current Business Activities		Cooperative Future Development	
		Score	Category	Score	Category
1	GKPRI – Riau	21,4	Low	41,4	**Moderate**
2	PKPRI – Kampar	15,7	Very Low	26,8	**Low**
3	PUSKOPPABRI – Riau	25,0	Low	33,5	**Low**
4	PUSKUD – Riau	30,1	Low	55,7	**Moderate**
5	PUSKOPAU – Pekanbaru	28,7	Low	29,0	**Low**
6	PKPRI – Pekanbaru	19,0	Very Low	21,3	**Low**
Average		**23,3**	Low	**34,6**	**Low**
Contribution of Employee on Cooperative Businesses.		**29,0 % (low)**			

The data on Table 5 summarized data presented on table 3 and 4. The contribution of the employee on cooperative businesses was 29 % which was categorized as low. This research finding indicated that role cooperative boards were 71% which were more dominant compared to those of employees which was only 29%. Furthermore, this research also tried to see relation in descriptive approach between employees' contribution and cooperative businesses performances.

4.6. Cooperative Financial Performance

The data in the Table 6, shown financial performance indicators period of 2020-2022. The indicators consist of growths in Net Profit (NP), members' equity (ME), Assets total (AT), and business volume (BV).

Table 6: Cooperative Financial Performances

Coop. Name/ indicator	Year and the growth rate (%) 2020	2021	2022	Growths
Gabungan Koperasi Pegawai RI Provinsi Riau				
NP	Rp. 58,273,290	Rp. 3,168,295	Rp. 2,311,338	(-27.05%)
ME	Rp. 1,911,312,057	Rp. 1,930,061,358	Rp. 1,791,304,912	-7.19%
AT	Rp. 4,907,333,195	Rp. 4,812,351,248	Rp. 4,545,181,634	-5.55%
BV	Rp.366,151,619	Rp. 52,555,308	Rp. 32,958,659	-37.29%
Pusat Koperasi Unit Desa Povinsi Riau				
NP	Rp.	Rp.	Rp.	-9.04%

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	38,055,938	108,698,07	98,867,06	
ME	Rp. 3,043,814,680	Rp. 3,158,574,767	Rp. 3,059,585,828	-3.13%
AT	Rp. 3,158,574,767	Rp. 7,481,377,689	Rp. 6,868,858,029	-8.19%
BV	Rp. 596,019,260	Rp. 265,351,39	Rp. 178,580,36	-32.70%
Pusat Koperasi Purnawirawan dan Wara Kawuri ABRI (PUSKOPPABRI RIAU)				
NP	Rp. 128,992,998	Rp. 111,764,60	Rp. 99,595,11	-10.89%
ME	Rp. 2,016,087,761	Rp. 3,721,076,843	Rp. 2,959,585,093	-20.46%
AT	Rp. 2,051,087,761	Rp. 3,756,076,843	Rp. 3,958,929,248	5.40%
BV	Rp. 311,695,277	Rp. 358,637,76	Rp. 185,490,36	-48.28%
Pusat Koperasi TNI Angkatan Udara PUSKOPAU Lanud Pekanbaru				
NP	Rp. 485,484,282	Rp. 389,478,05	Rp. 204,484,09	-47.50%
ME	Rp. 1,194,044,839	Rp. 1,242,392,512	Rp. 1,585,049,849	27.58%
AT	Rp. 5,656,039,048	Rp. 6,514,966,349	Rp. 5,049,478,494	-22.49%
BV	Rp. 1,748,865,430	Rp. 1,580,927,404	Rp. 1,250,988,624	-20.87%
Pusat Koperasi Pegawai Republik Indonesia Kota Pekanbaru				
NP	Rp. 97,795,122	Rp. 33,392,48	Rp. 8,957,648	-126.83%
ME	Rp. 1,412,649,168	Rp. 1,349,918,197	Rp 1,352,691,045	0.21%
AT	Rp. 1,662,025,683	Rp 1,573,887,295	Rp. 1,565,831,543	-0.51%
BV	Rp. 103,659,800	Rp. 65,014,412	Rp.18,688,048	-71.26%
Pusat Koperasi Pegawai Republik Indonesia Kabupaten Kampar				
NP	Rp. 8,876,628	Rp. 8,681,453	Rp.5,864,882	-32.44%
ME	Rp. 779,290,520	Rp. 808,367,972	Rp 824,462,454	1.99%
AT	Rp. 1,136,223,589	Rp. 1,175,471,267	Rp. 1,169,456,552	-0.51%
BV	Rp. 136,876,555	Rp. 101,131,217	Rp.89,540,949	-11.46%

The Data of the financial growth as indicated in 4 indicators, resulted on 24 data presented on Table 6. As shown, out of the 24 data indicated “negative growth”, where only 6 indicators “positive growths). Most of the negative growths happened on the cooperative with lower employees’ contribution.

5. Conclusion

As was discussed in the previous sections, most cooperative boards worked on the part time bases, low educational level, average elder age and low business experience and skill backgrounds. While employees worked on full time bases, average high level of education, and average younger age. In addition, the current research found that high contribution of employee can increase cooperative performance, and high total number

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of employees in organization can support the organization to toward the cooperative goals. Therefore, all employees worked in cooperative organization should increase the motivation in order to provide high performance for cooperative organization.

For the cooperative to develop in near future, some recommendations need to be considered, such as (1) employees should be empowered through delegating to run cooperatives' businesses. (2), professional manager should be required for cooperative businesses' development. (3), business network seen to be essential, among variety type of cooperative in the Riau Province (4), employee must be developed through training. (5) members' participations in most aspects need to be increased, especially in internal equities.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The study used the research ethics provided the Department of Education and culture Of Indonesia, especially the Directorate of High education Directorate. All procedures performed in this study involving research partner (lecture in the Faculty of Economy the University of Riau) and students in the study program of Magister Management in the same faculty. The data collected from designed respondent both cooperative boards and cooperative employees.

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Conflict of Interest

There was no conflict of interest in this study.

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