



Institutional Strengthening of Academic-Based Cooperatives: Results of a Cross-Disciplinary Replication Study in Malaysia

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Abstract

International community service (PKM) is a tangible form of university involvement in strengthening academic-based cooperative institutions. This activity was carried out through collaboration with ANGKASA Kuala Lumpur, the parent organization of cooperatives in Malaysia, which has long experience in the development of modern cooperatives. Community Service (PKM). This study involves the fields of economics, law, health, and technology, to identify best practices in the institutional management of cooperatives in higher education. The purpose of the activity is to increase the capacity of cooperatives of universities in Indonesia through multidisciplinary synergy, covering the fields of economics, law, health, and technology. The implementation method includes literature studies, field observations, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and the preparation of cooperative internationalization action plans. The results show that university cooperatives in Indonesia still face challenges in the form of limited governance, lack of innovation in business units, and low utilization of digital technology. Through collaboration with ANGKASA, a model of strengthening cooperatives, developing preventive health business units, implementing governance according to modern legal principles, and integrating digital technology for member services was obtained. In conclusion, international PKM is a strategic step to encourage Indonesian university cooperatives to be globally competitive. The findings show that cooperative digitalization systems, cross-field institutional integration, and strengthening of internal regulations are the foundations for the success of cooperatives in Malaysia. It provides strategic recommendations in strengthening the institution of academic cooperatives in Indonesia

Keywords: college cooperatives, internationalization, economy, law, health, technology

INTRODUCTION

Cooperatives are one of the pillars of economic development based on the principles of togetherness and economic democracy. In the context of higher education, cooperatives have a strategic function as a means of economic empowerment for lecturers, educational staff, students, and alumni. However, higher education cooperatives in Indonesia face various challenges such as low management professionalism, limited business units, and minimal digitalization (1)(2).

On the other hand, Malaysia has successfully developed university cooperatives through the support of ANGKASA (Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Berhad),



which acts as a national cooperative federation.(3) This presents an opportunity for Indonesian university cooperatives to internationalize, learn from Malaysia's experience, and adapt best practices.

This international PKM activity aims to:

1. Improving the institutional capacity of university cooperatives in Indonesia.
2. Strengthening international networks with Malaysian cooperatives.
3. Developing a multidisciplinary cooperative model: economics, law, health, and technology.

Cooperatives are economic entities that prioritize the principles of family, togetherness, and active participation of their members (4). In the context of higher education, cooperatives not only function as business units, but also as strategic vehicles for developing entrepreneurial competencies, cross-disciplinary learning, and improving the welfare of the academic community (5). The existence of campus cooperatives can even strengthen the implementation of the tridharma of higher education, especially in the aspects of community service and the application of research results in an applicable manner, because cooperatives can become real laboratories for the integration of economic and academic activities (6).

However, the reality is that most university cooperatives in Indonesia still face stagnant growth. Common problems include weak business model innovation, limited integration across disciplines, and low managerial capacity. Furthermore, the limited use of information technology and the absence of internal policies supporting the campus cooperative ecosystem exacerbate these conditions.

In contrast, Malaysia has shown significant progress in developing technology-based and highly competitive academic cooperatives. The country has successfully promoted university cooperatives to become productive entities closely linked to academic and research activities. Cooperatives such as the Universiti Malaya Cooperative (KUMa), USM Berhad Cooperative, and the Malaysian Ministry of Health Staff Cooperative (KOPKES) are not only active in the trade and services sectors, but also serve as examples of cross-disciplinary integration in modern cooperative management (7).

Therefore, it is important to conduct a model study of campus cooperatives in Malaysia. This study is expected to inspire reforms in the institutional structure of cooperatives in Indonesia, particularly in addressing the challenges of the digital era and the increasingly complex needs of academic integration.



METHOD

This activity involved a cross-disciplinary team from several private universities in Indonesia, consisting of lecturers and students from the Faculties of Economics, Law, Public Health, and Information Technology. Data collection was conducted through direct observation of cooperative activities and the use of digital systems, semi-structured interviews with cooperative administrators and members, and panel discussions involving the study team and cooperative partners in Malaysia. Additionally, documentation in the form of Articles of Association/Bylaws (AD/ART), financial reports, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) were reviewed to understand the cooperative's overall management mechanisms.

1. Workshop/Capacity Building

- Joint training activities with cooperative partners (for example, Indonesian university cooperative administrators) with resource persons from ANGKASA Kuala Lumpur.
- Output: increasing the human resource capacity of university cooperatives.

2. Benchmarking / Best Practice Study

- Comparing cooperative practices in Malaysia (ANGKASA) with university cooperatives in Indonesia.
- Output: strengths & weaknesses comparison table → becomes the basis for development strategy.

3. Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- Involving cooperative members (lecturers, students, alumni) in designing internationalization programs.
- Output: action plans that truly meet members' needs, not just top-down.

4. Mentoring/Coaching

- After the pilot study, mentoring was carried out at university cooperatives in Indonesia (for example, KPN Kopertis X/LLDIKTI 17).
- Output: ada *transfer knowledge* real from Malaysia to Indonesian university cooperatives.

5. Evaluation and Reflection

- Using questionnaires or interviews with PKM participants (cooperative administrators, members, lecturers, students) to assess the benefits of the activity.
- Output: documentation of evaluation results that can be published.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (Times New Roman, Bold, Uppercase, 12pt size)

1. Workshop/Capacity Building

- Joint training activities with cooperative partners (for example, Indonesian university cooperative administrators) with resource persons from ANGKASA Kuala Lumpur.



Figure 1. Joint training activities.

Table 1. Results of the Capacity Building Workshop on the Internationalization of Higher Education Cooperatives

Workshop Aspects	Activities Carried Out	Results/Output	Impact on Partners
Economic Material	Presentation of university cooperative business strategies by ANGKASA Kuala Lumpur	Participants understand the digital cooperative business model & business diversification	Improving the insight of cooperative managers in designing competitive business units
Legal Material	Discussion on cooperative regulations in Indonesia & Malaysia	Identify regulatory differences and opportunities for regulatory harmonization	The management received legal references for strengthening cooperative institutions.
Health Material	Best practice study of Malaysian cooperatives that have health business units (clinics/pharmacies)	Participants gain an overview of the management of cooperative-based health business units.	Providing inspiration for the development of health business units in university cooperatives



Technology Material	Introduction to cooperative digital applications (mobile app, e-payment, marketplace)	Participants learn about examples of technology implementation in cooperative services.	Increasing the motivation for digitalization of university cooperatives in Indonesia
Group Discussion	FGD between participants (lecturers, students, cooperative administrators)	A draft action plan for the internationalization of cooperatives based on multidisciplinary principles has been created.	Cross-sector collaboration: economics, law, health, technology
Workshop Evaluation	Distribution of participant satisfaction questionnaires	85% of participants found the activity relevant and useful	There is evidence of knowledge transfer from international partners to university cooperatives.

2. Benchmarking / Best Practice Study

Comparing the practices of the ANGKASA Malaysia cooperative with university cooperatives in Indonesia is important so that the PKM article has a stronger analysis.

Table 2. Comparison of ANGKASA Malaysia Cooperative Practices with Higher Education Cooperatives in Indonesia

Comparative Aspects	ANGKASA Malaysia Cooperative	Higher Education Cooperatives in Indonesia	Analysis Notes
Institutional	National legal entity, umbrella organization for cooperatives throughout Malaysia with	Generally still local/university in nature, regulations follow the rules of the Ministry of Cooperatives and the Ministry of	Indonesia needs institutional strengthening to be on par with the national/international level.



	clear and strong regulations	Education, Culture, Research and Technology	
Membership	Members of various cross-sector cooperatives (more than 13,000 cooperatives)	Membership is limited to lecturers, staff and university students.	Need to expand member base and wider partnerships
Business fields	Business diversification: education, health, finance, digital technology, retail	Generally focus on savings and loans, canteens, consumer cooperatives	It is necessary to develop strategic businesses according to the needs of the academic community.
Digitalization	Already adopted digital technology: online cooperative applications, e-payments, cooperative marketplaces	Mostly still manual, digitalization is limited to finance	A digitalization roadmap for university cooperatives is needed
Health Business Unit	Have clinics, pharmacies and cooperative-based health services	Not many have developed health business units	Great potential because it is relevant to health colleges (FK, TLM, Nutrition)
International Collaboration	Actively establishing cross-country cooperation, becoming the representative of Malaysian cooperatives in the world	Still very limited, rarely carry out international partnerships	International PKM can be a gateway for collaboration



Socio-Economic Impact	Making a real contribution to the welfare of members and the wider community	The impact is still limited to the campus environment	Broader orientation is needed so that the benefits are felt outside of higher education.
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CONCLUSION

The comparison results show that **Higher education cooperatives in Indonesia still need institutional strengthening, business diversification, and adoption of digitalization.** to be able to develop on par with cooperative practices at the international level, such as **SPACE Malaysia.**

The advantages of ANGKASA lie in:

1. **Strong institutions** as a national federation of cooperatives.
2. **Wide membership** across sectors and professions.
3. **Diversification of business units**, including health, education, and digital technology.
4. **Active international collaboration** which increases global competitiveness.

In contrast, university cooperatives in Indonesia are still limited to the campus, with primary businesses in savings and loans and consumption, and minimal digital innovation.

THANK-YOU NOTE

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