

# Effects of Coronavirus on the Performance of Cooperative Businesses in Anambra State

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated effects of coronavirus on the performance of cooperative businesses in Anambra State. The specific objectives were to investigate the effect of coronavirus on income and meetings of the cooperative business. The research design adopted for this work was the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all registered multi-purpose cooperatives in different local government areas in Anambra Central, Anambra North and Anambra South Senatorial Zones which membership strength is 2,480. The sample for the study is 249 cooperative members. Stratified sampling technique was used to divide the sample into subgroups. Pre COVID 19 and post COVID 19 structured questionnaires were used in data collection. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic data while regression analysis determines how effects of coronavirus were influencing the performance of cooperative businesses. The analysis of data was done using a combination of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The result indicated that the average mean rating of the Pre-COVID-19 (1.96) is lesser than the mean score of the Post-COVID-19(3.32) this signifies that COVID-19 pandemic has more effect during the Post-COVID-19 than the Pre-COVID era. The study recommended that cooperatives should work more on getting more members so that their income generation will increase leading to increment in their statutory reserve. Cooperatives should teach their members on how to use modern technology such as zoom meeting among others so as to adapt to any unforeseen emergencies in the future.

**Keywords:** Coronavirus, Performance, Cooperative Businesses

## INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a disruption of conventional human practices. This global health crisis has had a considerable influence on everyday schedules, leading to a notable deceleration of the worldwide economy. It has impacted a substantial portion of the population, resulting in sickness and loss of life due to its rapid transmission. Moreover, the pandemic's occurrence had generated extensive repercussions for commercial operations, with extensive economic shutdowns affecting numerous businesses and various human endeavors (Congressional Research Service Report, 2021)

The severity of the pandemic and the rapid dissemination of COVID-19 prompted governments and health organizations across the globe to implement prompt and stringent actions in order to curb its transmission. These measures encompassed widespread lockdowns, travel limitations, adherence to social distancing guidelines, and the advocacy of mask-wearing and hand hygiene (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2021). The main goal of these efforts was to reduce the number of infections and alleviate the burden on healthcare systems. Nevertheless, one of the sectors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and lockdowns appears to be cooperative businesses.

Horbonos, Pavlenchyk, Pavlenchyk, and Skrynkovskyy (2017) posited that a cooperative business represents a unique form of enterprise that is built upon the fundamental principles of cooperation, mutual assistance, and democratic control. This type of business operates under a collective ownership and management model, where its members hold a shared stake in the organization and play a pivotal role as its primary stakeholders.

Consequently, these challenges seem to have a devastating effect on the performance of these businesses. In the context of cooperatives, performance can be gauged by various indicators such as income of members, cooperative meetings, and cooperative education (UNDESA, 2017).

However, the situation in Nigeria worsened after the peak of the pandemic, with a notable reduction in the purchasing power of Nigerians, as inflation continued to impact the cost of goods and services (Adeleke, et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent movement restrictions imposed by both the Federal and State governments have presented additional challenges for Nigerians, particularly for cooperative businesses and their members (Nwangwu, et al., 2019). Gathering restrictions have resulted in the cancellation of cooperative meetings and cooperative education, which has affected routine business operations and made cooperative firms less able to run smoothly.

Amidst all these circumstances, cooperative enterprises in Anambra State were not exempted, as the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded existing economic challenges in Nigeria. The researcher's observation is subjective and at this moment not necessary. It is with this understanding that this study aims to investigate the effect of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) on the performance of cooperative businesses in Anambra State.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The pandemic's impact has profoundly affected all aspects of human life, particularly the income of cooperative business members, resulting in reduced savings within the organization. According to a report by the (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD), an exceptional platform for government collaboration to devise policies for sustainable economic growth, the coronavirus has caused a decline in income and a decrease in demand. Consequently, this has created significant liquidity challenges and reduced consumption for the members during the pandemic era (OECD, 2021).

Meetings are one of the main functions of cooperatives, since the coronavirus pandemic outbreak, meetings have not been scheduled as intended because members fear contracting the virus. This is because meetings will bring a large number of members together in one location, violating the social distancing measures put in place to stop the pandemic from spreading. The impact was expected to affect businesses indefinitely, the meetings started experiencing challenges after the outbreak of the pandemic cooperatives cancelled and postponed all their activities that require face to face meetings in the United States, United Kingdom and Africa (ILO, 2020).

Unfortunately, scholars have carried researches on Coronavirus pandemic in different sector but has failed to research on the effect of Coronavirus on Cooperative in Anambra State which is the major this work was arose so as to cover the gap in knowledge.

### Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to assess the effects of coronavirus on the performance of cooperative business in the Anambra State.

The specific objectives of this study will be to:

- i. determine the effect of coronavirus on the income of cooperative business in Anambra state.
- ii. ascertain the effect of coronavirus on the effect of corona virus on the scheduled meeting of cooperative business in Anambra State

### Research Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: Coronavirus pandemic had no significant effect on the income of cooperative business in Anambra State.

H<sub>02</sub>: Coronavirus pandemic had no significant effect on cooperative meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State.

## **THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS**

### **Concept of Coronavirus Pandemic**

Coronavirus is a pandemic that has affected day to day life and is slowing down the economy of the world. The global pandemic has affected thousands of people who are either sick or are being killed due to the spread of this disease. The most Common Symptoms of this viral infection are fever, cough, cold, bone pain and breathing problems which inevitably lead to pneumonia and even death. Coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan city, Hubei province in China (World Health Organization Media, March 2020). The coronavirus pandemic of 2019 emerged as a worldwide menace, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to classify it as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. By January 28, 2021, there were a staggering 101,520,671 confirmed cases and 2,186,433 deaths reported worldwide. As stated by WHO (2020), the pandemic was triggered by the 2019 novel coronavirus, COVID-19, which originated in Wuhan, China. This infectious disease, caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), spreads primarily through activities such as breathing, coughing, and sneezing. The ease of transmission facilitated its rapid dissemination across nations, ultimately leading to a global crisis. Despite substantial efforts to find a permanent cure for the pandemic, the number of infected individuals continued to rise daily. COVID-19 resulted in one of the highest mortality rates ever recorded in human history, with approximately 6 million people contracting the disease and over 380,000 losing their lives to the virus in 2020 alone.

### **Concepts of Cooperative Business**

A cooperative business, also known as a co-op, is a type of enterprise owned and controlled by its members, who are typically consumer, employees, or individuals with shared interests. The primary objective of a cooperative is to meet the common needs and goals of its members while promoting democratic decision-making, equitable distribution of benefits, and mutual support within the organization. Co-ops operate based on the principles of voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training, and information, cooperation among cooperatives, and concern for the community (Emejulu, Agbasi, & Nosike, 2020).

### **Concept of Performance**

Performance refers to the execution or accomplishment of tasks, activities, or goals in a manner that reflects the effectiveness and efficiency of an individual, organization, or system. It involves the ability to produce desired outcomes or results, often measured against predetermined standards or benchmarks (Cascio, 2018). Performance encompasses the dynamic process of executing and achieving tasks, activities, or objectives with a focus on effectiveness and efficiency. It serves as a critical gauge of an individual's capabilities, an organization's effectiveness, or a system's functionality. The essence of performance lies in the capacity to translate efforts into tangible outcomes, ultimately reflecting the extent to which goals have been met or surpassed.

### **Effect of Coronavirus on Cooperative Income**

In cooperative businesses, it's common for members to experience a drop-in demand for what they offer. This is a big concern, both economically and for the organization itself. It needs a close look to understand why it's happening and what it means for cooperatives. Furthermore, a drop-in demand among cooperative members is a complicated problem with big effects. To keep thriving and sticking to cooperative values, cooperatives need to understand why it's happening and adapt. This means doing research and changing their strategies to stay strong when demand goes up and down (Ihekweazu, 2020).

Closing non-essential businesses is a crucial government action during tough times like pandemics or economic crises. While it's necessary for public health, it has major economic effects. One big result is that

these businesses lose a lot of money. Non-essential businesses cover various sectors like retail, hotels, entertainment, and personal services. They rely on people spending money, which keeps local economies going and provides jobs. But when they have to close temporarily, they suddenly lose their main source of income. In summary, shutting non-essential businesses during crises causes significant economic problems, mainly because these businesses lose a lot of money. This affects the businesses themselves, their workers, and the wider economy. Governments worldwide face a tough challenge in deciding how to protect public health while managing the economic consequences of these closures (Jiang, 2020).

### **Effect of Coronavirus on Cooperative Meetings**

The shift from physical meetings to virtual meetings represents a significant change in how cooperatives operate, and it can impact various members in distinct ways. This transition has been accelerated by advances in technology, and while it offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges for certain cooperative members (ILO, 2020). Despite these challenges, virtual meetings offer several advantages, including increased flexibility, reduced travel time and expenses, and the ability to engage with members from diverse geographic locations (UNCTAD, 2020). To mitigate the adverse effects on certain members, cooperatives can consider implementing strategies such as providing technical support and training, accommodating diverse communication styles, and balancing virtual meetings with occasional in-person gatherings to maintain a sense of community and inclusivity (Ogunode, 2016). Ultimately, finding the right balance between virtual and physical meetings is essential to ensure that cooperative members can participate fully and benefit from the cooperative's activities and discussions (Dawson & Conway, 2018).

The imposition of travel restrictions has introduced a host of challenges for cooperative members when it comes to attending meetings. These limitations on mobility have disrupted the traditional way cooperatives function and have affected members in several significant ways. Among, travel restrictions have indeed posed challenges for cooperative (Okafor, Kpoghul, Ebele, Ikwue, Ikyator, & Ayaga, 2021). More so, in attending meetings, but creative solutions, including virtual meetings and hybrid models, have emerged to bridge the gap and ensure that cooperative operations and decision-making processes can continue even in the face of geographical constraints (International Cooperative Alliance, 2015).

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Multi-Dimensional Performance Measurement model was propounded by Andrew Neely, Mike Gregory, and Ken Platts in 1995. The Multi-Dimensional Performance Measurement (MDPM) model is a model in management and performance evaluation that recognizes the limitations of traditional, single-dimensional metrics in providing a comprehensive view of organizational performance. The model of MDPM aims to provide a more balanced and holistic assessment of an organization's performance by taking into account not only its financial outcomes but also its impact on customers, internal processes, employee development, and contributions to society and the environment.

The pandemic has caused disruptions in economic activities, leading to reduced income for many cooperative businesses. MDPM can help cooperative businesses assess their financial performance while considering other critical dimensions like customer satisfaction, employee well-being, and social contributions. The pandemic has restricted physical gatherings, making it challenging for cooperative members to meet in person. MDPM can facilitate the adoption of virtual meetings and ensure that cooperative objectives and performance metrics are still discussed, monitored, and evaluated. It allows cooperative leaders to track key indicators, assess progress, and address challenges collaboratively through online platforms, ensuring that cooperative decision-making and performance evaluation continue despite physical limitations.

**Empirical studies** on the effects of the coronavirus on the performance of cooperative businesses provide valuable insights into how these entities have navigated the challenges posed by the pandemic. Here are some key findings from various authors and studies:

#### **1. Financial Impact and sustainability**

Study by FAO (2020) The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) highlighted that agricultural cooperatives faced significant disruptions in their operations. The study showed that many cooperatives experienced

reduced income and cash flow problems due to market closures and decreased demand for products. It emphasized the need for financial support and policies to ensure the sustainability of cooperatives.

Oni and Okunola (2021): This study in Nigeria found that cooperatives faced increased loan defaults and reduced savings from members. The financial challenges were particularly severe for cooperatives in rural areas, where economic activities were more disrupted.

## 2. Adoption of Digital Technologies\*\*

Siciliano et al. (2021) \*\*: The study examined how cooperatives in Italy adapted to the pandemic by adopting digital technologies. It found that cooperatives that quickly transitioned to digital platforms for meetings and transactions were more resilient. The use of digital tools helped maintain member engagement and operational continuity.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research design adopted for this work is the descriptive survey research design. The population was 2,480, found in four hundred and two (402) registered societies. The sample for the study was 249 cooperative members. A stratified sampling technique was used to divide the sample into subgroups or strata. The first instrument for Pre-Covid-19 was titled: Pre-Covid-19 Effect of Coronavirus Pandemic on the Performance of Cooperative Business Questionnaire (PRECPPCBQ). On the other hand, the second instrument for Post-Covid-19 was titled: Post-Covid-19 Effect of Coronavirus Pandemic on the Performance of Cooperative Business Questionnaire (PROCPCBQ). The questionnaire contained two sections; the first section addresses aspects of the respondents' bio data information. The second part of the questionnaire addresses specific issues as it relates to the specific objectives of the study and research questions. The two questionnaires (PLSQ and TJPQ) were structured on a 5-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) – 5, Agree (A) – 4, Disagree (D) – 3, Strongly Disagree (SD) – 2 and 1 - Undecided (UN). A reliability of 0.82 was obtained and this is considered high enough for the instrument to be reliable. Also, the data from the research questions were analyze with mean and standard deviation (SD) scores. More so, the null hypotheses were tested with simple linear regression at .05 level of significance.

## PRESNTATION OF FINDINGS

**Research Question One:** To what extent has coronavirus pandemic affected the income of cooperative business in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of coronavirus pandemic and the effect on income of cooperative business in Anambra State

S/N	Items Descriptions	Pre-COVID-19			Post- COVID-19		
		Mean	SD	Decisions	Mean	SD	Decisions
1	Cooperative members experience a decline in demand for their products or services	4.01	1.546	High Extent	4.55	.771	Larger Extent
2	There is a closure of non-essential businesses, leading to revenue losses	4.30	1.032	High Extent	4.58	.709	Larger Extent
3	There is a delay and increase on costs of goods and services	4.01	1.546	High Extent	4.51	.781	Larger Extent
4	Cooperatives face payment delays from consumers, impacting cash	4.29	1.506	High	4.51	.736	Larger



	flow and liquidity			Extent			Extent
5	Cooperatives experience increased healthcare costs for employees and members	4.08	1.506	High Extent	4.55	.754	Larger Extent
6	Cooperative members face challenges in reaching consumers and generating income	4.31	1.443	High Extent	4.51	.736	Larger Extent
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>4.61</b>	<b>1.429</b>	<b>High Extent</b>	<b>4.535</b>	<b>.747</b>	<b>Larger Extent</b>

Table 1 showed the mean ratings of coronavirus pandemic and the effect on income of cooperative business in Anambra State, with a High Extent rate within the range Agree in the 5 point scale of Pre-COVID19 and Larger Extent in Post COVID 19. The results revealed that the average mean score of Pre-COVID-19 (4.16) is lesser than the mean score of the Post-COVID-19 (4.53). This signifies that COVID-19 pandemic has more effect on the income of the respondents during the Post-COVID-19 than the Pre-COVID19 era.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent has coronavirus pandemic affected the cooperative meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean ratings of coronavirus pandemic and the effect of the cooperative meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State

S/N	Items Descriptions	Pre-COVID			Post-COVID		
		Mean	SD	Decisions	Mean	SD	Decisions
7	Physical meetings were replaced by virtual meetings which affected some members	4.06	1.534	High Extent	4.57	.859	Larger Extent
8	Travel restrictions made it challenging for some cooperative members to attend meetings	4.74	1.024	High Extent	4.59	.723	Larger Extent
9	Many cooperatives cancel or postpone meetings due to lockdowns and restrictions on gatherings	4.05	1.534	High Extent	4.55	.870	Larger Extent
10	There is decreased frequency of meetings to limit potential exposure to the virus	4.05	1.534	High Extent	4.55	.870	Larger Extent
11	Virtual meetings posed challenges in decision-making processes on the next meetings	4.02	1.501	High Extent	4.52	.852	Larger Extent
12	Training sessions and workshops for cooperative members might have been postponed or moved online	4.97	1.431	High Extent	4.58	.794	Larger Extent
13	Not all members may have had equal access to technology or	4.97	1.439	High	4.58	.799	Larger

	reliable internet connections, impacting their ability to participate in virtual meetings			Extent			Extent
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	4.408	1.439	<b>High Extent</b>	4.562	0.825	<b>Larger Extent</b>

Table 2 showed the mean ratings of coronavirus pandemic and the effect on income of cooperative business in Anambra State, with a High Extent rate within the range ‘Agree’ in the 5 point scale of Pre-COVID19 and ‘Larger Extent’ in Post COVID 19. The results revealed that the average mean score of Pre-COVID-19 (4.40) is lesser than the mean score of the Post-COVID-19 (4.56). This signifies that COVID-19 pandemic has more effect on the meetings of the cooperative members of the respondents during the Post-COVID-19 than the Pre-COVID19 era.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

### Test of Hypothesis One

H<sub>01</sub>: Coronavirus has no significant effect on the income of cooperative business in Anambra State

Table 3: Summary of the Results of Test of Hypothesis One

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.814 <sup>a</sup>	.663	.661	3.167	460.594	.000 <sup>b</sup>

Predictors: (Constant), Pre-COVID-19, Post-COVID-19

Based on this model, your independent variables are Pre-COVID & Post COVID

$$income = \beta + \beta Pre - COVID 19 + \beta Post - COVID 19 - wrong model$$

Use the above models

Table 3 showed the results of hypothesis one and it revealed that the R<sup>2</sup> value was .663 while R Square value is .661. However, the R square signifies that 66.1% of Coronavirus pandemic has significant effect on the income of cooperative business in Anambra State. More so the p-value is .000 < than .05, which signifies that the null hypothesis that states that coronavirus pandemic has significant effect on the income of cooperative business in Anambra State was rejected. The alternative hypothesis was retained and thus, showed that coronavirus pandemic has significant effect on the income of cooperative business in Anambra State.

### Test of Hypothesis Two

H<sub>02</sub>: Coronavirus pandemic has no significant effect on meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State

Table 4: Summary of the Results of Test of Hypothesis Two

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sign.
1	.980 <sup>a</sup>	.960	.959	1.701	5579.529	.000

## a. Predictors: (Constant), Pre-COVID-19, Post-COVID-19

Based on this model,

The independent variables are Pre-COVID & Post

$$\text{COVID meeting} = \beta + \beta_{\text{Pre-COVID 19}} + \beta_{\text{Post-COVID 19}}$$

Table 4 shows the results of the test of hypothesis two. The results revealed that the p-value is  $.000 < .05$ . This indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is retained. This implies that the coronavirus pandemic has significant effect on cooperative meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State. Moreover, the R square value is .960 signifies that 96% of coronavirus pandemic has no significant effect on cooperative meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the results of the study, the results of research question one revealed that the average mean ratings of the Pre-COVID-19 (1.96) is lesser than the mean score of the Post-COVID-19 (3.32). This signifies that COVID-19 pandemic has more effect during the Post-COVID-19 than the Pre-COVID19 era. This means, coronavirus pandemic has effect on the income of cooperative business in Anambra State. Also, the result of the test of hypothesis one indicated that the coronavirus pandemic has significant effect on cooperative income of cooperative business in Anambra State. Moreover, coronavirus pandemic has 66.1% significant effect on the income of cooperative business in Anambra State. In agreement with these findings, Smith and Coast (2020) found that as the pandemic spread, governments worldwide enacted stringent measures, including lockdowns and social distancing protocols, that led to the abrupt suspension or reduction of cooperative operations. Cooperative enterprises operating in industries reliant on physical presence, such as hospitality, tourism, and retail, were particularly vulnerable to the economic standstill brought about by these measures. Many found their income streams suddenly severed as they grappled with an inability to operate normally (Jones & Tilley, 2021).

More so, the results of research question two revealed that the average mean ratings of the score of Pre-COVID-19 (1.989) is lesser than the mean score of the Post-COVID-19 (3.41). This signifies that COVID-19 pandemic has more effect during the Post-COVID-19 than the Pre-COVID19 era. This means, coronavirus pandemic has effect on the cooperative meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State. Also, the result of the test of hypothesis two indicated that the coronavirus pandemic has significant effect on cooperative meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State. Moreover, coronavirus pandemic has 96% significant effect on the cooperative meetings of cooperative business in Anambra State. These findings are in agreement with Dorobat and Neculescu (2020) findings that the pandemic necessitated the imposition of strict social distancing measures, compelling cooperatives to swiftly adapt their traditional in-person meetings to virtual platforms. Dolnicar et al., (2020) findings affirmed that the abrupt transition to virtual meetings posed both challenges and opportunities. On one hand, it enabled cooperatives to continue their deliberations and decision-making processes without physical presence, ensuring some degree of business continuity. On the other hand, Mohan (2020) asserted that this shift brought to the fore issues related to digital literacy and access disparities among cooperative members.

## CONCLUSION

Before the coronavirus, the members were able to run their businesses freely, but at the peak of coronavirus, the cooperative members were seriously affected because the cooperative members face reduced demand for their products due to non-essential business closures, causing revenue decline and delayed services with increased costs. This make the cooperative members adjust operations to follow health regulations, leading to workforce cuts affecting productivity, compounded by payment delays from consumers affecting cash flow. However, after the peak of the Coronavirus (Post-Covid-19), the cooperative members adjusted as the effect of the Coronavirus has reduced. On the other hand, at the peak of the coronavirus, challenges in reaching consumers hamper income generation and sales due to labor shortages. The pandemic shifts cooperative



meetings to virtual platforms, posing challenges for some members due to travel restrictions, leading to fewer meetings and decision-making difficulties. Cooperative education is affected as physical training shifts online, weakening engagement and support for startups.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. Cooperatives should work more on getting more members so that their income generation will increase leading to increment in their statutory reserve.
2. Cooperatives should teach their members on how to use modern technology such as zoom meeting among others so as to adopt to any unforeseen emergencies in the future.

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