



BUILDING ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH CAMPUS COOPERATIVES: A CASE STUDY FROM MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Campus cooperatives play a strategic role in empowering the economic self-reliance of academic communities and surrounding populations. In Malaysia, campus cooperatives have evolved into sustainable economic institutions that not only serve internal campus needs but also contribute to broader economic development through innovation, integration of the tri dharma of higher education, and technological adoption. This study aims to examine Malaysia's experience in developing campus cooperatives as a tool for economic empowerment and to explore its potential implementation in Indonesia. Using a literature review and case study approach, the research analyzes policies, management models, and operational practices of campus cooperatives in several leading Malaysian higher education institutions. Findings indicate that the success of Malaysian campus cooperatives is driven by professional governance, strong support from university leadership, integration of digital technology in operations, and active participation of students and lecturers in cooperative business development. The study recommends that Indonesian higher education institutions can adopt Malaysia as a benchmark for establishing independent and sustainable campus cooperatives. Key strategies include institutional strengthening, entrepreneurship training, and digital transformation of cooperatives. By emulating Malaysia's best practices, Indonesian universities can foster a culture of economic self-reliance and collaborative enterprise within their academic ecosystems.

Keywords: campus cooperative, economic self-reliance, benchmarking, Malaysia, digital cooperative
terjemahkan dalam bahasa indonesia

ABSTRAK

Koperasi kampus memiliki peran strategis dalam memberdayakan kemandirian ekonomi masyarakat akademik dan masyarakat sekitar. Di Malaysia, koperasi kampus telah berkembang menjadi lembaga ekonomi berkelanjutan yang tidak hanya melayani kebutuhan internal kampus, tetapi juga berkontribusi pada pembangunan ekonomi melalui inovasi, integrasi tri dharma perguruan tinggi, serta pemanfaatan teknologi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengalaman Malaysia dalam mengembangkan koperasi kampus sebagai sarana pemberdayaan ekonomi, sekaligus mengeksplorasi peluang penerapannya di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi literatur dan studi kasus, penelitian ini menganalisis kebijakan, model pengelolaan, dan praktik koperasi kampus di beberapa perguruan tinggi unggulan di Malaysia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan koperasi kampus di Malaysia didukung oleh tata kelola yang profesional, dukungan kuat dari pimpinan perguruan tinggi, penerapan teknologi digital dalam operasional, serta keterlibatan aktif mahasiswa dan dosen dalam pengembangan usaha koperasi. Studi ini merekomendasikan agar perguruan tinggi di Indonesia dapat menjadikan Malaysia sebagai referensi dalam membangun koperasi kampus yang mandiri dan berkelanjutan melalui penguatan kelembagaan, pelatihan kewirausahaan, dan transformasi digital koperasi. Dengan meniru praktik terbaik Malaysia, perguruan tinggi di Indonesia dapat menciptakan budaya kemandirian ekonomi dan kewirausahaan kolektif dalam ekosistem akademiknya.

Kata kunci: koperasi kampus, kemandirian ekonomi, studi tiru, Malaysia, koperasi digital

INTRODUCTION

As an academic cooperative, the campus cooperative holds a strategic role in fostering the economic empowerment and independence of the academic community and its surrounding society (Suryana, 2019). Functioning as a business entity founded on the principles of kinship and mutual cooperation, the campus cooperative serves not only as a unit for fulfilling daily consumption needs but also as a vehicle for entrepreneurship education, community service, and sustainable economic development (Nasution, 2022). Amidst the dynamics of the global economy and advancements in



information technology, the campus cooperative is increasingly relevant as an instrument for inclusive and participatory campus-based economic development.

Malaysia stands out as a nation that has successfully cultivated professional and sustainable campus cooperatives. In Malaysia, these cooperatives extend their services beyond the internal needs of students and faculty, actively contributing to the economic empowerment of the community through service innovation, technological integration, and synergy with the Tri Dharma of Higher Education (the three pillars of higher education: education, research, and community service) (Abdullah et al., 2021). A robust and digitally-based management model for campus cooperatives has been a key factor in enhancing their efficiency, transparency, and competitiveness (Mazlan & Norizan, 2022).

The utilization of technology in cooperative management represents a significant innovation that bolsters operational efficiency and administrative transparency for cooperatives at both the campus and community levels (Suhartini et al., 2021). Furthermore, the active involvement of students and faculty in cooperative management is a critical determinant in achieving campus-based economic self-sufficiency (Fauzi et al., 2022). Therefore, this study aims to examine Malaysia's experience in developing campus cooperatives as a means of economic empowerment and to explore opportunities for their implementation in Indonesia. The findings of this research are anticipated to provide recommendations for higher education institutions in Indonesia on establishing autonomous and sustainable campus cooperatives through institutional strengthening, entrepreneurship training, and the adoption of cooperative digitalization (Winarno et al., 2020).

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach combining a literature review (library research) and a case study to investigate Malaysia's experience in developing campus cooperatives as a vehicle for economic empowerment. The literature review was conducted by examining various sources, including books, scholarly journals, ministerial reports, and Malaysian government policies pertaining to the management of campus cooperatives. Concurrently, the case study method was utilized to gain an in-depth understanding of the management practices at several leading higher education institutions in Malaysia.

Primary data were acquired through direct observation, interviews with cooperative management, and internal cooperative documentation. Secondary data were collected from cooperative annual reports, official websites, and previously published research findings. The analysis was performed qualitatively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, using source triangulation to enhance the validity of the findings. This approach was selected for its capacity to provide a comprehensive understanding of the campus cooperative management models that contribute to sustainable economic development. It also facilitates the identification of key success factors that can be replicated by higher education institutions in Indonesia (Winarno et al., 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that campus cooperatives in Malaysia have evolved into economic institutions that not only serve as internal campus service units but also contribute significantly to the economic empowerment of the surrounding community. Campus cooperatives such as ANGKASA (The National Cooperative Movement of Malaysia) and those at universities in Malaysia have successfully implemented professional management models. This success is underpinned by a strong commitment from university leadership and the active participation of students and faculty in cooperative management (Abdullah et al., 2021). The management model of campus cooperatives in Malaysia demonstrates that they can become hubs for developing an



independent and sustainable economic ecosystem, both within the campus and on a broader scale, including the local community.

A key innovation in the management of Malaysian campus cooperatives is the utilization of information technology in their operational systems. The implementation of digital applications for financial transactions, inventory management, and transparent reporting has made a tangible contribution to enhancing the efficiency and accountability of cooperative management (Mazlan & Norizan, 2022). Furthermore, the developed digital systems enable cooperatives to extend their service reach to alumni, the local community, and business partners, thus expanding their role beyond just the campus community. The active participation of students and faculty in various aspects of cooperative management is a crucial factor in building economic awareness and entrepreneurship from an early stage (Fauzi et al., 2022). Through direct involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of cooperative ventures, students gain practical experience in managing a sustainable, people-centric economy.

From the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the success of campus cooperatives in Malaysia is supported by professional governance, technological integration, and a strong synergy between the university and the community (Suryana, 2019). This illustrates that campus cooperatives can be an effective vehicle for implementing one of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, namely community service. Considering Malaysia's experience, campus cooperatives in Indonesia have significant potential to be developed into independent and inclusive economic institutions, provided there is institutional strengthening, an increase in digital literacy, and the integration of cooperative activities into the higher education curriculum (Winarno et al., 2020). Therefore, universities in Indonesia can look to Malaysia as a reference for building sustainable campus cooperatives through a participatory approach and the utilization of digitalization as a foundation for a campus-based economy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of campus cooperative management in Malaysia, it can be concluded that campus cooperatives hold significant potential as an instrument for the economic empowerment of the academic community and the surrounding society. In Malaysia, campus cooperatives have evolved into professional economic institutions that not only serve the internal needs of the campus but also contribute to sustainable economic development through service innovation, technological integration, and synergy with the Tri Dharma of Higher Education (the three pillars of higher education). The success of campus cooperatives in Malaysia is underpinned by transparent governance, strong support from university leadership, the utilization of technology in cooperative operations, and the active participation of students and faculty in the management of the cooperative's ventures.

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