

# Sustainability Practices And Maturity Level Of Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative In Batangas Province

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## Abstract

In the face of increasing demands for sustainable development, agricultural cooperatives must balance economic growth with environmental stewardship and social responsibility. This study examined the relationship between sustainability practices and maturity level of the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC) in Batangas Province. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 197 managerial and operational personnel through a structured questionnaire. Key variables in assessing sustainable practices included environmental practices, economic adaptability, and social engagement, alongside maturity dimensions such as strategic, operational, tactical, production, and financial management. Findings revealed that sustainability practices were implemented to a significant extent, while the cooperative demonstrated a moderate to high level of organizational maturity. Notably, Spearman's rho analysis showed a highly significant positive relationship between sustainability practices and maturity level, indicating that stronger sustainability integration contributes to enhanced organizational capability. However, gaps were identified in structured sustainability policies, environmental initiatives, and monitoring mechanisms. The study concludes that sustainability is a critical driver of cooperative maturity and long-term resilience. It recommends the institutionalization of sustainability frameworks, strengthened environmental programs, and improved evaluation systems. These findings provide practical insights for cooperatives, policymakers, and development practitioners aiming to achieve sustainable and competitive agricultural systems.

**Keywords:** *sustainability practices, organizational maturity, agricultural cooperatives, economic adaptability, social engagement, environmental practices*

## Introduction

Sustainability has increasingly become a central concern in modern business operations, particularly in the agricultural sector where economic growth must be balanced with environmental protection and social responsibility. Agricultural cooperatives play a significant role in supporting farmers, improving livelihoods, and promoting sustainable development (Candemir et al., 2021). In the Philippines, cooperatives contribute substantially to socio-economic development and are encouraged to adopt sustainable practices under the framework of Republic Act No. 6939 (Ramizo et al., 2024).

The Sorosoro Ibara Development Cooperative (SIDC), one of the largest agricultural cooperatives in the Philippines, serves as a model for sustainable agricultural development. Its diversified operations, including feed milling, contract growing, and financial services, demonstrate its capacity to support both economic growth and community welfare (De Guzman, 2021; SIDC, 2024). However, despite its maturity, the cooperative faces challenges in integrating sustainability practices across all operational areas, particularly in environmental and strategic dimensions (Hilario, 2022).

Globally, agricultural cooperatives are recognized for their role in promoting sustainable practices, improving market access, and enhancing farmer resilience (Lei Deng et al., 2021). Locally, there is a growing need for cooperatives to align their practices with sustainability standards and improve their maturity levels to remain competitive (Sanggalang, 2023; Ouazzani-Chahidi et al., 2019).

This study aims to explore sustainability practices and assess the maturity level of SIDC across its branches in Batangas Province. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How may the profile of the agricultural business cooperative be described in terms of:
  - Business group
  - District
2. To what extent are sustainability practices manifested in terms of:
  - Environmental practices
  - Economic adaptability
  - Social engagement
3. What is the level of maturity of the cooperative in terms of:
  - Strategic management
  - Operational management
  - Tactical management
  - Production management
  - Financial management
4. Is there a significant relationship between sustainability practices and maturity level?
5. What challenges are encountered by cooperative personnel?
6. What strategic decision-making activities may be proposed based on the results?



## Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a **descriptive-correlational research design** to examine the relationship between sustainability practices and the maturity level of the cooperative.

### Participants

The respondents of the study were the 197 out of the 332 managerial and operational employees of Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative across its branches in all districts of Batangas Province. A **purposive sampling technique** was used. They were selected based on their involvement in cooperative operations and sustainability practices.

### Research Instrument

Data were collected using a **structured questionnaire** developed and adapted by the researcher. The instrument consisted of two main parts:

- Assessment of sustainability practices
- Evaluation of maturity level

The questionnaire utilized a **Likert scale** to measure the extent of agreement of the respondents.

### Data Collection Procedure

The researcher distributed the questionnaires to selected managerial and operational cooperative employee. Responses were gathered, organized, and prepared for analysis to ensure accuracy and completeness of the data.

### Data Analysis

**Descriptive statistics**, particularly frequency and percentage for profiling respondents and weighted mean to assess sustainability practices and maturity level, were used to summarize responses. **Spearman's rho correlation** was also used to determine the relationship between variables.

## Results

### Section 1: Profile of the Cooperative

The cooperative operates across different business groups and districts, indicating a diversified structure that supports its operational capacity and service delivery.

## Section 2: Sustainability Practices

Findings revealed that sustainability practices are generally **manifested to a significant extent** across:

- Environmental practices
- Economic adaptability
- Social engagement

This indicates that the cooperative is actively implementing sustainability initiatives, although some areas may still require enhancement.

## Section 3: Maturity Level

The cooperative demonstrated a **moderate to high level of maturity** in:

- Strategic management
- Operational management
- Tactical management
- Production management
- Financial management

This suggests that the cooperative has established systems and processes but still has room for further development.

## Section 4: Relationship Between Variables

Statistical analysis showed a **highly significant relationship** between sustainability practices and maturity level. This implies that improved sustainability practices are associated with higher organizational maturity.

## Section 5: Challenges Encountered

Respondents identified several challenges, including:

- Limited structured sustainability policies
- Need for stronger environmental initiatives
- Difficulty in monitoring and evaluating sustainability programs

## Discussion

The results support the idea that sustainability practices are essential in enhancing organizational maturity. Cooperatives that integrate sustainability into their operations tend to exhibit stronger management systems and long-term viability (Geroso & Maguate, 2023).



The significant relationship between sustainability practices and maturity level aligns with previous studies emphasizing the importance of sustainability in improving organizational performance and resilience (Estrella, 2023). SIDC's strengths in economic and operational aspects demonstrate its stability, while gaps in environmental practices indicate areas for improvement.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the need for structured sustainability frameworks, improved monitoring systems, and stronger environmental initiatives. These improvements can help cooperatives achieve higher levels of maturity and competitiveness.

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative demonstrates a significant level of sustainability practices and a moderate to high level of organizational maturity. The strong relationship between these variables confirms that sustainability is a key driver of organizational development.

However, challenges such as limited policies and environmental initiatives must be addressed. The study recommends strengthening sustainability strategies, enhancing monitoring systems, and integrating sustainability into all aspects of operations.

These findings provide valuable insights for cooperatives, policymakers, and future researchers aiming to improve sustainability and organizational performance.

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