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The Role of Organizational Communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja Cooperative in Central Java in Supporting Member Participation

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Abstract

Organizational communication was examined as a mechanism supporting member participation at KPRI Bhakti Praja Cooperative in Central Java, Indonesia. A descriptive qualitative case-study design was employed, drawing on semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation involving five informant categories: board members, supervisors, managers, active members, and less active members. Data were analyzed through condensation, display, conclusion drawing, and verification, supported by source and technique triangulation. Findings identified vertical, horizontal, and cross-functional and cross-level communication connecting cooperative personnel with members. Annual Member Meetings, face-to-face interactions, written correspondence, social media, and WhatsApp facilitated information sharing, internal coordination, and opportunities for feedback. Vertical communication allowed administrators to convey policies and members to express concerns, whereas horizontal communication supported coordination among personnel. Cross-functional exchanges enabled members to contact relevant staff directly regarding services and organizational matters. WhatsApp provided a practical channel for distributing information, while formal meetings supported collective discussion. Accessible information and responsive interactions created opportunities for participation in meetings, service use, and cooperative programs, but did not ensure equivalent involvement among members. Participation also reflected differences in individual needs, interests, experiences, and perceived benefits. The study concludes that reciprocal, accessible organizational communication supports member participation without independently determining engagement in everyday cooperative organizational activities.

Keywords: *Cooperative Governance, Internal Communication, Member Participation, Organizational Communication, Stakeholder Engagement.*

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INTRODUCTION

Cooperatives represent a distinctive form of economic organization in which members simultaneously function as owners, service users, and participants in organizational governance, making collective involvement essential to institutional sustainability. Unlike conventional business enterprises that primarily emphasize managerial authority and financial performance, cooperatives depend on members' willingness to engage in decision-making, utilize organizational services, and support collective objectives. Research on cooperative membership indicates that organizational knowledge and individual motivation constitute important considerations in understanding variations in member participation (Anggraeny et al., 2025). Empirical evidence from Indonesian village cooperatives also demonstrates that service quality, cooperative motivation, and business location are relevant factors associated with members' involvement in cooperative activities (Rahmawati & Rusdarti, 2022). Participation in cooperative governance has received increasing scholarly attention because members' involvement in organizational decisions is closely connected to their evaluations of cooperative membership and institutional satisfaction (Liu et al., 2024). These developments suggest that cooperative sustainability cannot be understood exclusively through economic performance, since organizational relationships, information accessibility, and opportunities for collective engagement also influence membership experiences. Research concerning active membership in business cooperatives further highlights the relevance of shared organizational values in explaining member involvement, reinforcing the need to examine how cooperative institutions maintain relationships with their members (Ghauri et al., 2024).

Recent studies have increasingly approached cooperative participation through organizational openness, communication satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, and the mechanisms that connect members with institutional decision-making processes. Research examining cooperative openness has explored the relationship between members' willingness to communicate and their perceptions of organizational transparency, positioning openness as an important dimension of cooperative relationships (Byrne et al., 2023). Studies of membership-based organizations have also identified internal communication satisfaction as a relevant factor in understanding members' organizational satisfaction and identification, extending communication research beyond the transmission of administrative information (Mustafai et al., 2025). Within Indonesian cooperatives, communication management between administrators and members has been examined as a means of supporting members' involvement as organizational owners, emphasizing the significance of information exchange and cooperative relationships (Indriani & Agustin, 2025). Research on organizational communication strategies in women's cooperatives has further addressed communication practices among members, providing an empirical basis for examining interpersonal interaction and organizational coordination in cooperative institutions (Agisnii et al., 2025). These contributions collectively position communication as a multidimensional organizational process involving information distribution, relationship maintenance, institutional openness, and opportunities for member engagement, although their respective analytical emphases differ according to organizational characteristics and research objectives.

Despite these developments, existing research leaves a specific analytical gap concerning how organizational communication structures and practices support different forms of participation within employee-based cooperatives. Research on platform cooperatives has examined patterns of member involvement in organizational decision-making, illustrating the importance of governance arrangements while addressing an organizational environment distinct from conventional employee cooperatives (Bunders, 2024). Studies concerning public communication, transparency, and digital participation have expanded the discussion of cooperative communication, although their emphasis on institutional reputation does not directly establish how internal communication processes influence members' everyday organizational involvement (Komalawati & Muhtar, 2026). Research on cooperative openness provides insight into organizational relationships but does not independently explain how vertical, horizontal, and cross-functional communication operate together in supporting participation within a specific employee cooperative (Byrne et al., 2023). Indonesian research examining cooperative service quality and member motivation contributes to understanding participation-related factors, yet these variables do not fully describe the interpersonal exchanges and organizational information flows through which members become involved in cooperative activities (Rahmawati & Rusdarti, 2022). The literature considered here consequently provides limited integrated evidence concerning the relationship between communication direction, communication channels, information accessibility, organizational feedback, and members' actual participation in employee cooperative activities. This gap is particularly relevant to KPRI Bhakti Praja Cooperative in Central Java, where the availability of communication facilities must be distinguished from their effectiveness in encouraging members to attend meetings, express opinions, utilize services, and participate in organizational programs.

The practical significance of this research arises from the possibility that cooperative members may receive organizational information without becoming actively involved in the activities or decisions communicated to them. Research on cooperative governance emphasizes the relevance of member participation to organizational satisfaction, indicating that opportunities for involvement deserve attention alongside the formal availability of cooperative services (Liu et al., 2024). Evidence concerning active cooperative membership also suggests that shared values and the perceived relevance of organizational objectives are important considerations when interpreting differences in members' willingness to participate (Ghauri et al., 2024). Studies examining cooperative knowledge and motivation further demonstrate the need to distinguish members' understanding of cooperative activities from their individual reasons for becoming involved (Anggraeny et al., 2025). Preliminary information concerning KPRI Bhakti Praja indicates that administrators, managers, and members communicate through Annual Member Meetings (Rapat Anggota Tahunan, RAT), direct conversations, letters, social media, and WhatsApp, although accessible information does not necessarily result in equivalent participation among members. Some members reportedly considered organizational information accessible while remaining less involved in particular programs because of differences in their needs

and interests, suggesting that communication accessibility and actual participation require separate examination.

The present research is positioned within organizational communication studies by examining how communication practices within an employee cooperative relate to members' opportunities and willingness to participate in organizational activities. Previous research on communication management between cooperative administrators and members has emphasized the importance of institutional relationships and information exchange, providing a relevant foundation for investigating the communication processes operating within KPRI Bhakti Praja (Indriani & Agustin, 2025). Studies of organizational communication strategies in cooperative institutions have also examined interactions among members, although their organizational settings and analytical orientations differ from the employee-based cooperative examined in the present research (Agisnii et al., 2025). Research on membership organizations has connected internal communication satisfaction with membership satisfaction and identification, offering a complementary perspective that does not directly establish how communication practices support specific forms of cooperative participation (Mustafai et al., 2025). Investigations of member participation in platform cooperative governance further demonstrate the relevance of organizational decision-making arrangements, while leaving the communication practices of conventional employee cooperatives as a distinct empirical concern (Bunders, 2024). The proposed novelty lies in integrating vertical, horizontal, and cross-functional communication with the examination of direct and mediated communication channels, information accessibility, feedback opportunities, and member participation within KPRI Bhakti Praja. This analytical position distinguishes the research gap, which concerns the insufficient integration of communication processes and participation in the selected literature, from the study's intended contribution of explaining how these processes operate within a specific employee cooperative in Central Java.

This study aims to analyze the role of organizational communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja Cooperative in Central Java in supporting member participation in cooperative activities and organizational processes. The investigation specifically seeks to identify the forms and directions of communication established among administrators, managers, supervisory personnel, and cooperative members. It also examines the use of direct communication, formal meetings, written correspondence, and digital media in distributing organizational information and providing opportunities for member feedback. Particular attention is directed toward identifying communication barriers and understanding how differences in information accessibility, member interests, and organizational interactions relate to participation in meetings, service utilization, and cooperative programs. The study is expected to contribute to organizational communication scholarship by clarifying the relationship between communication structures, interpersonal exchanges, and member involvement within an employee-based cooperative organization. Its practical contribution is directed toward providing an analytical foundation for improving communication coordination, organizational transparency, feedback mechanisms, and member engagement strategies at KPRI Bhakti Praja Cooperative.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative case-study design to examine the role of organizational communication in supporting member participation at KPRI Bhakti Praja Cooperative in Central Java Province. The inquiry focused on information exchange and interaction among administrators, managers, and members, corresponding to the organizational relationships investigated in cooperative communication research (Indriani & Agustin, 2025). Informants were selected purposively according to their involvement in and knowledge of cooperative communication, representing five categories: board members, supervisors, managers, active members, and less active members. The inclusion of members with different levels of activity enabled the examination of variations in organizational participation, a concern also addressed in research on cooperative knowledge and member motivation (Anggraeny et al., 2025). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation, with interviews examining communication patterns, communication channels, organizational barriers, and the relationship between communication practices and member participation. The investigation considered interactions among members and across organizational roles, reflecting the emphasis on interpersonal communication strategies in cooperative organizations (Agisnii et al., 2025).

Data analysis followed the stages of data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification to systematically organize and interpret the qualitative evidence (Miles et al., 2020). Interview findings were organized into analytical categories encompassing vertical communication, horizontal communication, cross-functional and cross-level communication, organizational communication media, and member participation. These categories facilitated the examination of organizational information flows and opportunities for feedback without assuming that information accessibility necessarily generated active participation, a distinction relevant to research on cooperative openness and member relationships (Byrne et al., 2023). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing accounts from board members, supervisors, managers, active members, and less active members to identify similarities and differences in their descriptions of organizational communication. Technique triangulation involved comparing interview findings with observations, documentation, and other supporting information to assess the credibility and consistency of the evidence, consistent with established principles of qualitative trustworthiness (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Conclusions were developed by relating the categorized evidence to communication practices, organizational barriers, and member participation, followed by verification against the available data to maintain consistency between the research objectives and empirical interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organizational Communication Patterns and Internal Coordination at KPRI Bhakti Praja

Organizational communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja Cooperative in Central Java operated through vertical, horizontal, and cross-functional exchanges connecting board members, supervisory personnel, managers, staff, and cooperative members. The findings indicated that communication occurred through formal organizational procedures and routine interpersonal interactions, allowing information to circulate across different positions within the cooperative structure. These exchanges facilitated the dissemination of organizational policies, coordination of cooperative activities, clarification of member concerns, and maintenance of relationships between administrators and members. The coexistence of several communication directions indicates that organizational interaction was not restricted to the hierarchical transmission of instructions but also accommodated reciprocal exchanges and operational coordination. Organizational communication theory identifies information exchange, coordination, and the establishment of shared understanding as essential functions supporting institutional activities and relationships among organizational participants (Kartini et al., 2024). Research on communication strategies within cooperative organizations similarly emphasizes the importance of interpersonal interactions in sustaining organizational relationships and facilitating communication among members (Agisnii et al., 2025). The communication structure identified at KPRI Bhakti Praja consequently represented an organizational mechanism for connecting administrative responsibilities with member needs, although the availability of these exchanges did not necessarily indicate equivalent participation among all cooperative members.

Vertical communication constituted a fundamental component of organizational interaction because it connected cooperative leadership with members through downward information delivery and upward feedback. Downward communication involved the dissemination of information concerning cooperative policies, available services, organizational programs, and activities requiring members' attention or participation. The findings indicated that board members and management personnel communicated organizational matters through established communication procedures, enabling members to obtain information relevant to their relationships with the cooperative. This process provided an informational foundation for participation because members required knowledge of organizational activities before deciding whether and how to become involved. Previous research examining communication management between cooperative administrators and members has emphasized the importance of maintaining information exchange and organizational relationships to support opportunities for member participation (Indriani & Agustin, 2025). The evidence from KPRI Bhakti Praja supports the interpretation that downward communication facilitated information accessibility, although it did not establish that the distribution of organizational messages independently increased members' attendance or involvement in cooperative programs.

Upward vertical communication was reflected in opportunities for members to communicate opinions, questions, criticisms, and aspirations to cooperative administrators concerning organizational policies and service experiences. The findings documented an instance in which a member raised

concerns about cooperative loan policies during an organizational communication forum and subsequently received a response from the cooperative. This interaction demonstrated that members were not positioned exclusively as recipients of organizational decisions because they could communicate concerns and request explanations from those responsible for cooperative management. The exchange also illustrated the existence of an institutional feedback opportunity, although the available evidence did not establish whether the member's concerns resulted in subsequent modifications to loan policies. Research concerning organizational openness in cooperatives has highlighted the relationship between members' willingness to communicate and their perceptions of institutional openness, indicating that accessible communication structures have relevance beyond formal information distribution (Byrne et al., 2023). Studies of cooperative governance have also examined the role of member involvement in organizational decision-making and its relationship with membership satisfaction, reinforcing the significance of opportunities for members to participate in institutional processes (Liu et al., 2024). The findings suggest that upward communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja supported members' ability to express concerns and engage with administrators, while the actual influence of individual feedback on organizational decisions remained dependent on processes not fully documented in the available evidence.

The interaction between downward information delivery and upward feedback demonstrated that vertical communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja possessed a reciprocal character rather than functioning exclusively as an instrument of managerial direction. Administrators and managers communicated organizational information, while members retained opportunities to seek clarification, communicate service-related needs, and present their perspectives on cooperative activities. This arrangement supported an organizational relationship in which communication could accommodate both institutional requirements and individual member concerns, although the extent of participation in these exchanges varied according to the available accounts. Research on internal communication satisfaction in membership-based organizations has demonstrated the relevance of communication experiences to members' satisfaction and identification with their organizations, providing a conceptual basis for understanding reciprocal communication as a relational process (Mustafai et al., 2025). The available findings nevertheless did not establish the frequency of vertical communication, the number of members submitting feedback, or the extent to which particular suggestions influenced subsequent administrative decisions. The principal communication patterns and their documented organizational functions are summarized in Table 1, distinguishing the empirical evidence from interpretations concerning their potential contribution to organizational coordination and member involvement.

Table 1. Organizational Communication Patterns at KPRI Bhakti Praja

Communication Pattern	Empirical Evidence	Organizational Function
Vertical Communication	Board members and management conveyed policies, programs, and service information to members; a member raised concerns about loan policies and received a response.	Facilitated downward information delivery and upward communication of member aspirations, questions, and concerns.
Horizontal Communication	Administrators, supervisory personnel, managers, and staff exchanged information to coordinate organizational activities and member services.	Supported internal coordination, information sharing, and implementation of organizational responsibilities.
Cross-Functional and Cross-Level Communication	Members could communicate directly with managers or staff concerning cooperative services, information requests, and organizational needs.	Provided flexible access to relevant personnel and opportunities for direct clarification of service-related matters.

Horizontal communication represented another significant component of internal coordination because it enabled organizational personnel to exchange information concerning cooperative activities and the implementation of member services. The findings identified communication among

administrators, supervisory personnel, managers, and staff, particularly when organizational responsibilities required cooperation, clarification, or the exchange of operational information. Although these actors occupied different formal positions within the cooperative structure, the observed horizontal dimension concerned coordination within comparable work processes rather than the hierarchical delivery of instructions to members. Such coordination supported the practical implementation of organizational activities because service-related information needed to be communicated among personnel responsible for different aspects of cooperative operations. Research on organizational communication climate in cooperatives has emphasized the importance of internal interaction for supporting administrative performance and organizational relationships, indicating that communication quality extends beyond direct exchanges between leaders and members (Maoereta & Setiawan, 2023). Studies of internal communication in membership organizations have further demonstrated the relevance of communication experiences to organizational satisfaction and identification, reinforcing the importance of examining internal relationships alongside external member interactions (Mustafai et al., 2025). The horizontal communication identified at KPRI Bhakti Praja can therefore be interpreted as an enabling mechanism for organizational coordination, although the available evidence does not establish its frequency, operational efficiency, or measurable contribution to service outcomes.

Cross-functional and cross-level communication provided additional flexibility by allowing cooperative members to communicate with managers or staff responsible for particular organizational services without consistently following a lengthy hierarchical sequence. The findings indicated that members could seek information, communicate service-related concerns, or request clarification directly from personnel whose responsibilities were relevant to their immediate needs. This arrangement reduced dependence on strictly sequential communication procedures and enabled information requests to reach operational personnel more directly, although the available evidence did not establish comparative differences in response times or resolution outcomes. The flexibility of these exchanges distinguished cross-functional communication from horizontal coordination because it connected individuals occupying different functional responsibilities or organizational positions. Research concerning communication management in cooperatives has emphasized the significance of maintaining relationships between administrators and members through accessible information exchange and opportunities for interaction (Indriani & Agustin, 2025). At KPRI Bhakti Praja, cross-functional and cross-level communication consequently supported organizational accessibility by providing alternative interaction pathways, while its effectiveness remained dependent on whether the personnel contacted could provide appropriate information or assistance.

The communication patterns presented in Table 1 demonstrate that vertical, horizontal, and cross-functional exchanges performed complementary organizational functions rather than operating as independent or interchangeable processes. Vertical communication facilitated the distribution of organizational information and the expression of member aspirations, whereas horizontal communication supported the coordination necessary for implementing cooperative activities and services. Cross-functional and cross-level communication extended these arrangements by allowing members to contact personnel associated with particular responsibilities, creating additional opportunities for clarification and organizational interaction. The relationship among these patterns indicates that communication accessibility depended not only on formal organizational structures but also on the availability of practical channels through which members and personnel could exchange information. Research on cooperative openness has emphasized the relevance of institutional receptiveness and member perceptions in understanding organizational relationships, suggesting that communication structures should be evaluated through their capacity to facilitate meaningful interaction (Byrne et al., 2023). Research examining participation in platform cooperative decision-making similarly highlights the importance of distinguishing formal opportunities for involvement from patterns of actual member participation, particularly when decision-making influence is distributed unevenly (Bunders, 2024). The findings from KPRI Bhakti Praja indicate that the presence of multiple communication pathways created opportunities for information exchange and interaction, although differences in members' interests, needs, and experiences could affect whether those opportunities developed into active participation.

The organizational communication characteristics identified at KPRI Bhakti Praja demonstrate that the cooperative maintained a combination of formal information flows, internal coordination

mechanisms, and flexible interpersonal exchanges. The documented interaction concerning loan policies showed that members could raise organizational concerns, while communication among internal personnel and direct access to managers or staff supported the circulation of information across organizational functions. These arrangements provided a foundation for maintaining cooperative relationships by connecting administrative decisions, operational responsibilities, and the informational needs of members, without establishing a direct causal relationship between communication practices and participation levels. Research on cooperative communication emphasizes that institutional openness and opportunities for interaction are relevant to organizational relationships, although the existence of communication structures alone cannot determine the degree of individual member involvement (Byrne et al., 2023). The principal contribution of organizational communication in this case was therefore reflected in three interconnected functions: providing information, facilitating the expression of member aspirations, and supporting coordination and access across organizational roles. The effectiveness of these functions in encouraging participation also depended on the communication media available to members and the barriers affecting information reception and organizational engagement, providing the analytical basis for examining communication channels and accessibility in the subsequent section.

Organizational Communication Media, Information Accessibility, and Communication Barriers

Organizational communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja was maintained through several channels, including Annual Member Meetings (Rapat Anggota Tahunan, RAT), face-to-face interactions, written correspondence, social media, and WhatsApp. These communication channels connected cooperative administrators, managers, and members through formal organizational activities and routine exchanges of information concerning cooperative services and programs. The findings indicated that the cooperative did not depend exclusively on a single communication medium because different organizational activities required different forms of interaction and information delivery. Annual Member Meetings functioned as formal communication forums, whereas interpersonal exchanges provided opportunities for more direct clarification of individual concerns and service-related questions. Written correspondence and digital platforms complemented these interactions by providing additional means of distributing organizational information beyond scheduled meetings. Research on communication strategies within cooperative organizations has similarly emphasized the relevance of combining direct interaction and communication media to maintain organizational relationships and facilitate information exchange among members (Agisnii et al., 2025).

Annual Member Meetings represented a formal communication mechanism through which KPRI Bhakti Praja could address organizational affairs and provide members with opportunities to participate in collective discussions. The findings indicated that these meetings formed part of the cooperative's established communication arrangements, connecting the dissemination of institutional information with opportunities for members to express their perspectives. Unlike routine information exchanges, RAT provided an organizational setting in which communication concerned collective matters associated with cooperative management and membership responsibilities. The availability of this forum was relevant to participation because members required opportunities to obtain information and communicate opinions concerning organizational activities. Research examining communication management between cooperative administrators and members has emphasized the importance of reciprocal information exchange in creating opportunities for members to participate as organizational owners (Indriani & Agustin, 2025). Studies of cooperative governance have also highlighted the relevance of member involvement in decision-making processes, indicating that formal opportunities for participation constitute an important component of cooperative organizational relationships (Liu et al., 2024). The evidence from KPRI Bhakti Praja nevertheless did not establish meeting attendance rates, the frequency of individual contributions, or the extent to which particular discussions influenced institutional decisions, limiting conclusions concerning the effectiveness of RAT beyond its documented communicative function.

Face-to-face communication provided a more immediate form of interaction between cooperative personnel and members, particularly when organizational information required clarification or members wished to communicate specific service-related needs. The findings indicated that members could approach administrators, managers, or staff directly to ask questions, communicate concerns, and obtain explanations concerning cooperative activities. This interaction reduced dependence on

scheduled meetings and enabled communication to occur through ordinary organizational encounters, although the available evidence did not quantify the frequency or duration of these exchanges. Personal communication also offered opportunities for reciprocal feedback because members could respond to explanations and seek further clarification when organizational information remained uncertain. Research on internal communication in membership-based organizations has identified communication satisfaction as relevant to organizational identification and membership satisfaction, supporting the interpretation of interpersonal exchanges as relational practices rather than merely administrative transactions (Mustafai et al., 2025). At KPRI Bhakti Praja, direct communication consequently functioned as an accessible mechanism for maintaining member relationships, although its contribution to participation depended on members' willingness to initiate interactions and the responsiveness of cooperative personnel.

WhatsApp constituted a frequently used digital communication channel at KPRI Bhakti Praja because it enabled practical and rapid distribution of information concerning cooperative activities. The findings indicated that this platform complemented face-to-face communication and formal organizational meetings by allowing information to circulate without requiring members to be physically present at the cooperative office. Its use demonstrated an organizational adjustment toward more flexible communication practices, particularly for messages that could be distributed through existing digital networks. The availability of WhatsApp also provided an additional means of maintaining contact between cooperative personnel and members, although the research did not document message frequency, response times, or the proportion of members actively using the platform. Social media represented another digital communication medium available to the cooperative, extending the range of channels through which organizational information could be disseminated. Research examining communication, transparency, and digital participation in cooperative organizations has emphasized the relevance of digital interaction for institutional relationships, providing a comparative basis for considering the communicative role of online platforms (Komalawati & Muhtar, 2026). The documented functions of the communication media and the limitations identifiable from the available evidence are presented in Table 2 to distinguish established communication practices from aspects that were not directly measured.

Table 2. Organizational Communication Media and Identified Barriers

Communication Media	Documented Function	Identified Limitation or Consideration
Annual Member Meetings (RAT)	Formal communication of organizational affairs and opportunities for collective discussion and member aspirations.	The availability of meetings did not establish the extent of attendance or active involvement among members.
Face-to-Face Communication	Direct clarification of cooperative services, organizational information, and members' questions or concerns.	Interaction depended partly on members' willingness to communicate and seek explanations.
Written Correspondence	Supplementary channel for distributing organizational information to cooperative members.	Specific difficulties concerning the delivery or reception of letters were not documented.
Social Media	Additional digital medium for disseminating cooperative information and maintaining organizational contact.	Platform-specific participation and information reception were not measured.
WhatsApp	Frequently used channel for practical and rapid distribution of cooperative information.	Information accessibility did not necessarily result in members' active involvement in cooperative activities.

The communication channels summarized in Table 2 illustrate how KPRI Bhakti Praja combined formal, interpersonal, written, and digital mechanisms to maintain relationships with cooperative members. Written correspondence provided an additional channel for organizational information, complementing RAT and direct conversations without requiring all communication to take place through electronic platforms. Social media and WhatsApp extended the cooperative's

communication options, although the available findings did not establish differences in their effectiveness or the extent of member engagement associated with each platform. Research addressing cooperative development in the digital era has highlighted the importance of maintaining institutional identity and relevance amid technological changes, supporting consideration of digital communication as part of broader organizational adaptation (Suprapto et al., 2025). The evidence did not identify specific delivery failures associated with letters or social media, making it inappropriate to characterize these channels as ineffective solely because some members participated less frequently in cooperative activities. The complementary use of different media was consequently more evident than their comparative effectiveness, suggesting that information accessibility should be examined through members' experiences rather than inferred from the number of communication channels available.

Communication barriers at KPRI Bhakti Praja were associated primarily with differences in how members received, interpreted, and responded to organizational information. The findings indicated that information was not always understood uniformly, while some members paid less attention to organizational messages or participated less frequently in cooperative activities. These conditions suggest that communication effectiveness depended not only on the availability of information but also on whether messages received sufficient attention and were considered relevant to members' circumstances. The use of multiple communication channels provided opportunities to reach members through different forms of interaction, but the existence of these channels did not eliminate variation in information reception. Research concerning organizational openness in cooperatives has examined the relationship between members' openness and their perceptions of institutional openness, emphasizing that organizational communication involves reciprocal relationships rather than unilateral information dissemination (Byrne et al., 2023). The findings at KPRI Bhakti Praja similarly indicate that accessible communication opportunities required active engagement from members before information exchange could develop into meaningful organizational interaction. The available evidence nevertheless did not identify particular technical problems, demographic characteristics, or individual communication preferences as established causes of these barriers, limiting the interpretation to differences documented in members' attention, understanding, and involvement.

The distinction between information accessibility and member participation became particularly evident when some members reported receiving cooperative information satisfactorily while remaining less involved in particular activities. This pattern indicates that providing information was a necessary organizational function but did not independently determine whether members would participate in meetings, programs, or cooperative services. Differences in individual needs and interests were identified as considerations affecting members' willingness to engage, suggesting that participation decisions involved motivations extending beyond communication availability. Research on cooperative knowledge and member motivation has examined their relevance to participation, providing an analytical basis for distinguishing access to organizational information from members' reasons for becoming involved (Anggraeny et al., 2025). Research concerning values congruence and active membership in business cooperatives further demonstrates the relevance of organizational alignment when interpreting membership engagement, although the present study did not directly measure members' value congruence (Ghauri et al., 2024). Communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja can therefore be understood as an enabling condition for participation rather than an independent mechanism capable of producing equivalent involvement among members with different needs and interests.

The findings indicate that effective organizational communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja required coordination among formal meetings, interpersonal interactions, written information, and digital communication channels. Annual Member Meetings provided opportunities for collective discussion, while direct conversations enabled clarification of individual concerns and more immediate exchanges between members and cooperative personnel. WhatsApp, social media, and letters complemented these arrangements by extending the available means of distributing organizational information, although their comparative effectiveness was not established through systematic measurement. The principal communication barriers concerned differences in members' attention, interpretation, and willingness to respond to available information rather than a documented absence of communication facilities. Research on organizational communication strategies within cooperatives supports the relevance of maintaining multiple communication mechanisms, while studies of organizational openness emphasize that access to information must be accompanied by opportunities

for reciprocal interaction (Agisnii et al., 2025). The practical implications involve maintaining accessible communication channels, providing opportunities for clarification and feedback, and presenting organizational information in ways that address members' differing informational needs without assuming that all members will respond identically. These findings establish the basis for examining how communication accessibility, opportunities for interaction, and individual member interests relate to participation in cooperative governance, service utilization, and organizational programs.

The Role of Organizational Communication in Supporting Member Participation and Cooperative Governance

Member participation at KPRI Bhakti Praja was reflected in several forms of organizational involvement, including attendance at Annual Member Meetings, expression of aspirations, utilization of cooperative services, and participation in organizational programs. These activities represented different dimensions of membership because involvement extended beyond formal decision-making to include service-related interactions and engagement with cooperative activities. The findings indicated that organizational communication provided members with opportunities to obtain information, communicate their concerns, and maintain relationships with cooperative administrators and personnel. Such opportunities were relevant to participation because members required access to organizational information and interaction channels before becoming involved in cooperative activities. Research examining cooperative participation has emphasized that member involvement encompasses organizational activities, decision-making processes, and the utilization of cooperative services, demonstrating its multidimensional character (Lubis et al., 2025). Studies of cooperative governance have further identified the relevance of participation in institutional decision-making to membership satisfaction, indicating that involvement also carries relational and evaluative significance (Liu et al., 2024). The evidence from KPRI Bhakti Praja consequently supports an interpretation of participation as an organizational relationship expressed through different forms of involvement rather than exclusively through attendance at formal cooperative meetings.

Organizational communication supported member participation by establishing channels through which cooperative information could be distributed and members could communicate their expectations or concerns. The findings showed that board members and management personnel conveyed information concerning cooperative policies, services, and programs, while members retained opportunities to seek clarification and express their perspectives. The documented interaction concerning loan policies demonstrated that a member could raise an organizational concern and receive a response from cooperative personnel, illustrating the reciprocal character of communication within the institution. This exchange provided evidence of accessible feedback mechanisms, although it did not establish whether the expressed concern influenced subsequent decisions or resulted in changes to cooperative policies. Research on communication management between cooperative administrators and members has emphasized the importance of reciprocal information exchange in providing opportunities for members to participate as organizational owners (Indriani & Agustin, 2025). Studies of participation in cooperative decision-making similarly distinguish the availability of governance structures from actual patterns of member involvement, reinforcing the need to examine how communication opportunities are utilized rather than assuming that their existence produces participation (Bunders, 2024).

The relationship between communication openness and member participation was particularly relevant because KPRI Bhakti Praja combined formal communication arrangements with opportunities for direct interaction across organizational levels. Members could communicate through Annual Member Meetings, contact cooperative personnel directly, and obtain information through written or digital channels, providing several pathways for maintaining organizational involvement. These arrangements reduced dependence on a single communication mechanism and created opportunities for members with different informational needs to interact with the cooperative. Research concerning organizational openness has examined the relationship between members' willingness to communicate and their perceptions of institutional openness, suggesting that reciprocal interaction constitutes an important dimension of cooperative relationships (Byrne et al., 2023). The findings nevertheless indicated that the availability of communication channels did not automatically generate equivalent participation because members differed in their interests and willingness to engage with cooperative

activities. Research on active membership in business cooperatives has addressed the relevance of shared organizational values to member involvement, indicating that participation decisions involve considerations extending beyond the availability of institutional communication (Ghauri et al., 2024). Communication openness at KPRI Bhakti Praja can therefore be understood as an enabling organizational condition that provides opportunities for participation while leaving the extent of actual involvement dependent on individual circumstances and members' evaluations of cooperative activities.

Differences between active and less active members provided further evidence that participation was not determined exclusively by access to organizational information. The findings indicated that some members considered cooperative information accessible and communication satisfactory but remained less involved in particular organizational activities because their interests and needs differed. This pattern demonstrates that the reception of organizational messages and the decision to participate represented related but distinguishable processes, although the available evidence did not quantify participation differences between member categories. Research on cooperative knowledge and member motivation has identified these factors as relevant considerations in explaining participation, providing an analytical basis for understanding why informational access may not produce uniform involvement (Anggraeny et al., 2025). Previous studies of village cooperatives have also examined the relationships among service quality, cooperative motivation, business location, and member participation, indicating that engagement is associated with multiple organizational and individual considerations (Rahmawati & Rusdarti, 2022). The distinction identified at KPRI Bhakti Praja suggests that communication effectiveness should not be evaluated exclusively through the presence of accessible information channels because their contribution to participation also depends on how members interpret the relevance of the information received.

Member participation was also influenced by the relationship between individual needs, perceived organizational benefits, previous experiences, and opportunities for involvement in cooperative activities. The findings suggested that members who received comparable organizational information could demonstrate different levels of engagement because their reasons for participating were not necessarily identical. Members' utilization of cooperative services, for example, represented an important form of institutional involvement but did not necessarily indicate an equivalent willingness to attend meetings or participate in organizational decisions. Research on service quality and cooperative participation provides a relevant comparison by demonstrating that service-related experiences constitute an important consideration when examining members' organizational involvement (Azizah et al., 2024). Studies concerning participative leadership, helping behavior, and trust in cooperative organizations further illustrate the relevance of interpersonal and organizational relationships to membership loyalty, although loyalty should not be treated as identical to participation in governance (Suwangsih et al., 2025). Evidence from research on cooperative service quality and institutional governance similarly distinguishes membership loyalty from the specific behaviors through which members participate in organizational activities (Nurdin et al., 2025). The findings consequently indicate that organizational communication should be interpreted as a mechanism that facilitates awareness, interaction, and opportunities for engagement rather than as an independent determinant capable of producing uniform participation among members.

Cooperative governance requires communication arrangements that enable members not only to receive organizational information but also to communicate concerns and obtain responses from personnel responsible for institutional decisions. The documented interaction concerning loan policies demonstrated that KPRI Bhakti Praja provided an opportunity for members to express service-related concerns within an organizational communication forum. The significance of this practice lies in its capacity to connect members' experiences with cooperative administration, although the available evidence does not establish the subsequent influence of those concerns on decision-making outcomes. Research examining participation in platform cooperative governance has highlighted the need to distinguish opportunities for involvement from actual decision-making participation, providing a comparative basis for evaluating the depth of cooperative member engagement (Bunders, 2024). Research on participatory accountability in savings and loan cooperatives further identifies accountability as a relevant governance concern, suggesting that communication mechanisms can be examined in relation to how members obtain explanations and engage with institutional responsibilities (Yusma, 2026). At KPRI Bhakti Praja, the findings establish the existence of opportunities for communication and feedback but do not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that members exercised

equivalent influence over cooperative decisions or that all expressed concerns resulted in documented corrective actions.

The practical implications of these findings concern the need to align organizational communication practices with differences in members' informational needs, interests, and opportunities for participation. Annual Member Meetings can continue serving as formal forums for communicating organizational matters and receiving member aspirations, while direct interpersonal exchanges provide opportunities to clarify individual concerns and service-related questions. WhatsApp, social media, and written correspondence offer complementary channels for distributing information, although their effectiveness in encouraging engagement depends on whether members receive, understand, and consider the messages relevant to their circumstances. Communication strategies should consequently distinguish routine information delivery from opportunities for active interaction, enabling cooperative personnel to identify whether members require clarification, additional information, or responses concerning particular organizational activities. Research on communication transparency and digital participation in cooperatives demonstrates the relevance of integrating communication practices with institutional relationships, providing a basis for considering accessible digital media alongside interpersonal communication (Komalawati & Muhtar, 2026). Studies of collective action in cooperative organizations also emphasize the relevance of coordinated member involvement in pursuing shared objectives, suggesting that organizational communication should support collective understanding rather than operate exclusively as an administrative announcement mechanism (Ahmad et al., 2024). For KPRI Bhakti Praja, strengthening communication would involve maintaining accessible channels, encouraging reciprocal exchanges, and improving the clarity of organizational responses while recognizing that participation decisions remain influenced by members' individual priorities and perceived benefits.

The findings establish that organizational communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja supported member participation through information provision, opportunities for expressing aspirations, and accessible interaction with cooperative personnel across organizational roles. Vertical, horizontal, and cross-functional communication performed complementary functions by connecting institutional information delivery, internal coordination, and members' access to organizational services and decision-related discussions. The evidence indicates an enabling rather than exclusively causal relationship between communication and participation because accessible information and available interaction channels did not necessarily result in comparable levels of involvement among active and less active members. Research on cooperative organizational performance has examined broader institutional determinants, providing a useful distinction between the communication processes identified in this case and organizational outcomes that were not directly measured (Kusmiati et al., 2023). The qualitative case-study design and the absence of quantified participation measurements limit statistical generalization and prevent conclusions concerning the magnitude of communication effects across the wider cooperative membership. The study contributes to organizational communication research by demonstrating how multiple communication directions, complementary information channels, organizational openness, and individual participation considerations interact within an employee-based cooperative, while providing a practical foundation for strengthening communication accessibility and opportunities for member engagement.

CONCLUSION

Organizational communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja Cooperative in Central Java supported member participation through information sharing, internal coordination, reciprocal interaction, and accessible relationships between cooperative personnel and members. Vertical communication facilitated the dissemination of organizational policies and programs while providing opportunities for members to express aspirations, raise concerns, and request clarification regarding cooperative services. Horizontal communication supported coordination among administrators, supervisory personnel, managers, and staff, enabling the exchange of information necessary for organizational activities and service delivery. Cross-functional and cross-level communication provided members with more flexible access to cooperative personnel, reducing dependence on formal hierarchical communication procedures. Annual Member Meetings, face-to-face interactions, written correspondence, social media, and WhatsApp performed complementary communication functions, with WhatsApp facilitating practical and rapid information dissemination. These communication arrangements created

opportunities for members to attend meetings, express opinions, utilize cooperative services, and participate in organizational programs, although their availability did not produce equivalent levels of involvement among members. The findings establish that organizational communication functioned as an enabling condition rather than the sole determinant of participation, as members' needs, interests, previous experiences, and perceived organizational benefits also influenced their willingness to engage in cooperative activities.

Strengthening reciprocal communication at KPRI Bhakti Praja requires integrating formal meetings, interpersonal interactions, written information, and digital communication channels according to members' informational needs. Cooperative administrators and managers should maintain transparent communication concerning organizational policies, services, and programs while providing accessible opportunities for members to communicate questions, suggestions, and concerns. Annual Member Meetings should continue functioning as collective communication forums, supported by face-to-face interactions and WhatsApp to facilitate information delivery and feedback beyond scheduled organizational activities. Communication strategies should also recognize differences between active and less active members by improving the clarity, relevance, and accessibility of organizational information rather than relying exclusively on the frequency of message distribution. Cooperative personnel should strengthen feedback mechanisms and communicate responses to members' concerns to support organizational openness, institutional relationships, and meaningful participation. The study contributes to organizational communication scholarship by explaining how communication directions, complementary media, and opportunities for interaction support participation within an employee-based cooperative, although its qualitative case-study design limits statistical generalization and causal interpretation. Future research should involve more diverse cooperative members and employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches to examine the relationships among organizational communication, member satisfaction, service quality, cooperative motivation, perceived benefits, and participation across different cooperative institutions.

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