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INCLUSIVE GROWTH THROUGH HUMAN RESOURCES COOPERATIVES: IDENTIFYING BEST EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES IN NAGA CITY

By Author(s):

Rovik Lemuel Flores¹, Jomer Bodanio², France Morales³, Ayn Rae Betito^{*4},
Jose San Buenaventura Jr.⁵ & Maria Alida Mores, ENG.⁶

Abstract

This study aimed to identify the best employment practices of a selected cooperative in Naga City and examine their contribution to inclusive growth and decent work. It addressed the problem of limited research on how cooperatives implement fair, equitable, and inclusive employment systems, particularly in local contexts where marginalized groups face persistent barriers to economic participation. Using a descriptive-evaluative research design, the study gathered data through surveys, key informant interviews to assess practices on recruitment, employee development, job security, inclusivity, innovation, and working conditions. The findings revealed that cooperatives demonstrated strong organizational commitment to human capital development and inclusive governance. Recruitment practices were aligned with cooperative values, employee development was supported through training programs, and job security was prioritized. Inclusivity and innovation were actively promoted, while areas such as career advancement communication and member participation in innovation required further improvement. The study concluded that cooperatives in Naga City had matured in their human resource systems, reflecting principles consistent with the Diversity Management Maturity Model (DMMM), Strategic Human Capital Theory, and Stakeholder Theory. These practices enhanced employee satisfaction, organizational resilience, and long-term sustainability. It recommended strengthening communication on career pathways, expanding inclusive innovation programs, and deepening collaboration with the Naga City Cooperative Development Office. These efforts would help institutionalize inclusive employment and position cooperatives as models of participatory development and decent work in the region.

Keywords

Inclusive growth, human resources management, employment practices, cooperation development, job insecurity.

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* Corresponding author: Ayn Rae Betito



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Introduction

All over the world, the call for inclusive growth is becoming increasingly important as nations strive to create societies where every individual has fair access to opportunities, resources, and development. Inclusive growth is not just about economic expansion. It also emphasizes the **equitable distribution of benefits**, ensuring that all segments of society, including marginalized and disadvantaged groups, can participate in and benefit from economic progress. The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly **Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)** and **Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**, highlight the global agenda toward promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (United Nations, 2020). This global framework encourages governments, private sectors, and civil society to work together in fostering fairness, diversity, and inclusivity across workplaces and institutions.

Around the world, studies have shown that inclusive growth positively influences not only the welfare of individuals but also the productivity and sustainability of organizations. According to Thompson (2021), workplaces that embrace fairness, diversity, and inclusion (FDI) tend to experience higher levels of employee engagement, loyalty, and innovation. Similarly, Satyendra (2020) explained that inclusive organizations benefit from diverse perspectives, which lead to better problem-solving and creativity. However, challenges persist globally. Many vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), women, senior citizens, and members of minority communities, continue to experience barriers in employment, such as discrimination, lack of accessibility, and limited opportunities for advancement (Zulmi, 2021). The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that globally, only 36% of working-age persons with disabilities are employed, compared to 60% of persons without disabilities (ILO, 2022). This highlights the continuing inequality that hinders inclusive economic participation.

Internationally, various organizations and governments have implemented policies and programs to promote inclusive workplaces. For example, the ILO's Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) supports companies in improving workplace accessibility and inclusion (ILO, 2021). Countries such as Canada and Australia have enacted employment equity acts that mandate fair representation of marginalized groups in the workforce. Moreover, the European Union has emphasized social inclusion through programs that empower cooperatives, social enterprises, and community-based organizations to create sustainable employment (European Commission, 2021). These initiatives recognize that inclusive employment is not only a moral obligation but also an economic strategy that leads to long-term stability and innovation.

In the Asia-Pacific region, inclusive growth has been a significant concern due to the rapid pace of economic development that often leaves vulnerable groups behind. According to the Asian Development Bank (2022), while the region has achieved remarkable economic progress, inequality remains a major challenge, especially in terms of access to quality jobs and social protection. Inclusive employment policies, therefore, are being integrated into regional development plans to ensure that growth benefits reach all citizens. Cooperatives, in particular, have been recognized as effective mechanisms for achieving social inclusion, as they operate based on democratic participation, shared ownership, and equitable distribution

of benefits. The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA, 2020) asserts that cooperatives worldwide contribute to social justice by empowering their members and promoting community development.

In the Philippine context, inclusive growth and fair employment are key priorities of national development. The 1987 Philippine Constitution, particularly Article II, Section 18, emphasizes that the state shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare. Likewise, Article XIII, Section 3, guarantees full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all. These provisions reflect the country's commitment to social justice and equal treatment in the labor market (1987 Philippine Constitution, 1987). Furthermore, the Labor Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No. 442, 1974) serves as the main legal framework governing employment relations, ensuring just wages, humane working conditions, and security of tenure for Filipino workers.

The government has also recognized the role of **cooperatives** as key partners in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Through **Republic Act No. 6939 (1990)**, the **Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)** was established to promote the viability and growth of cooperatives as instruments of social justice and economic equity. Later, **Republic Act No. 9520 (2008)**, also known as the **Philippine Cooperative Code**, strengthened cooperative principles by promoting autonomy, accountability, and equitable distribution of profits among members. These laws affirm that cooperatives are not only business entities but also social organizations that empower communities, especially marginalized sectors such as farmers, fisherfolk, women, and persons with disabilities. According to the **CDA Annual Report (2023)**, there are over **30,000 registered cooperatives in the Philippines**, employing millions of Filipinos and contributing significantly to local and national economies.

Despite these legal frameworks, inequalities in employment opportunities remain evident. Many workers, particularly those in informal sectors and small communities, continue to experience underemployment, job insecurity, and limited access to benefits. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2023) reported that around 11% of the labor force remains underemployed, and a considerable portion of the population relies on informal jobs that offer little social protection. For persons with disabilities, participation in the workforce remains low. A study by the National Council on Disability Affairs (2022) found that only 20% of employable PWDs in the Philippines are formally employed, often due to workplace discrimination and lack of accessibility.

To address these concerns, several national programs have been developed to strengthen inclusive employment. For instance, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has introduced the Tulong Alalay sa Taong May Kapansanan (TULAY) project and the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) to help vulnerable groups gain work experience and employment opportunities. The Philippine Development Plan (2023–2028) also emphasizes inclusive growth as one of its pillars, highlighting the importance of promoting decent work, social inclusion, and equitable access to economic opportunities for all Filipinos (NEDA, 2023).

At the local level, cooperatives continue to play a crucial role in community development and inclusive employment. In Naga City, for example, cooperatives are actively engaged in providing jobs, livelihood, and financial assistance to their members. The Naga

City Cooperative Development Office (NCCDO) supervises various cooperatives that operate in different sectors, including consumer, transport, and multipurpose cooperatives. These cooperatives not only generate employment but also foster social participation, where members collectively decide on policies, share profits, and support each other's economic welfare. According to the NCCDO Annual Report (2024), cooperatives in the city have helped improve the living conditions of many local residents by providing sustainable sources of income and livelihood.

However, despite the promising role of cooperatives, there is still limited research on how these organizations in Naga City implement best employment practices that ensure fairness, equality, and inclusivity. Questions remain about whether cooperative principles—such as democratic participation, equity, and mutual aid—are fully reflected in their employment systems. Do cooperatives in Naga City uphold inclusive recruitment and fair wage policies? How do they treat members with disabilities or those from disadvantaged backgrounds? Are they aligned with national and international standards for inclusive employment? These are important questions that require deeper academic exploration.

Thus, this study becomes significant as it aimed to identify and analyze the best employment practices of selected cooperatives in Naga City and examine how these practices contribute to inclusive growth. By doing so, the research not only addresses an existing gap in the literature but also supports the Philippines' national efforts to promote equitable and sustainable development. The findings intended to provide valuable insights into how local cooperatives can enhance their employment systems, promote social inclusion, and contribute to the country's broader goals of fairness and productivity.

Ultimately, the study aligns with the global movement toward decent work and inclusive growth. It supports the United Nations' advocacy for inclusive economies and complements the Philippine government's commitment to ensuring fair employment opportunities for all citizens. On a local scale, it can help the Naga City government and cooperative organizations strengthen their programs and policies to promote equal treatment, workplace diversity, and shared prosperity among members. Through this research, cooperatives can be encouraged to serve as models of inclusive employment, demonstrating how community-based organizations can lead the way toward a more just, participatory, and inclusive society.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to identify the best employment practices of a selected cooperative in Naga City to determine their role and contribution in promoting inclusive growth and decent work.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the current employment practices of cooperatives focusing on recruitment, employee and development, and job security.
2. To assess the level of implementation of employment practices along inclusivity, innovation, and working conditions.

3. To propose strategic recommendations for strengthening the employment practices among cooperatives in partnership with the Naga City Cooperative Development Office.

Scope and Delimitation

This study focused on identifying the best employment practices in one cooperative in Naga City. It looked into how these cooperatives provide job opportunities and treat their workers, following fair labor practices. The study also included the role of the Naga City Cooperatives Development Office (NCCDO) in monitoring and supporting these cooperatives.

The scope was limited to cooperative members, workers, and staff of the said organizations. Other business establishments or cooperatives outside Naga City were not part of the study. This study focused only on a sample of the human resource cluster of cooperatives and did not cover other clusters such as transportation, agriculture, financial and the like. The time frame of data collection only covered the current operational year of these cooperatives or consequently the 1st semester of the school year 2025-2026.

This study was aligned with the UNC Research Agenda on Inclusive Growth and Human Resource Development.

Literature Review

Agbayani-Caballero (2021) emphasized that creativity and innovation are vital for the sustainability of multi-purpose cooperatives. The study explained that an innovative climate in cooperatives strengthens their capacity to survive market challenges and enhances member participation. The findings revealed that cooperatives that promote a culture of innovation perform better in terms of productivity and member satisfaction. This relates to the current study because human resource cooperatives also rely on innovation to develop inclusive employment practices. By encouraging creativity among members, cooperatives can build systems that support fair employment and skill growth. The impact of Agbayani-Caballero's study shows that innovation is not only for business gain but also serves as a foundation for sustainable and inclusive cooperative growth.

Akdere and Egan (2020) studied the relationship between transformational leadership and human resource development. Their research linked leadership behavior with employee learning, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. The findings indicated that when leaders practice transformational leadership, employees become more motivated and committed to the goals of the organization. This study aligns with the present research because human resource cooperatives also depend on leadership that values employee development and inclusiveness. In the context of Naga City cooperatives, applying transformational leadership can lead to more effective teamwork and improved employment systems. The study's impact highlights that inclusive leadership directly contributes to long-term cooperative stability and worker empowerment.

Brown, Jones, Meadows, and Murphy (2021) discussed how cooperation builds resilience among organizations. Their case studies demonstrated that organizations that maintain strong cooperative relationships can better withstand social and economic disruptions. They found that shared goals, transparent communication, and collective

decision-making are key elements of resilience. This finding supports the present study since human resource cooperatives in Naga City aim to achieve inclusive growth by fostering teamwork and shared responsibility. The impact of this study lies in its proof that cooperative resilience not only protects an organization from crises but also improves the overall employment condition of its members.

Buyucan (2019) examined operations management and performance of agricultural cooperatives and found that efficient planning, proper record-keeping, and continuous training improve cooperative productivity. The study concluded that operations management influences both financial outcomes and member satisfaction. This is relevant to the current study because human resource cooperatives also need efficient management systems to sustain inclusive employment. Similar to agricultural cooperatives, human resource cooperatives depend on systematic processes and skill improvement. The findings imply that effective management practices can enhance both organizational performance and inclusivity within the cooperative sector.

Chungyas and Trinidad (2022) analyzed the strategic management practices and business performance of cooperatives in Ifugao, Philippines. They discovered that cooperatives with clear strategic plans and participatory governance achieved better performance outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of aligning organizational goals with member interests. This is similar to the goal of the present study, which seeks to identify the best employment practices that balance cooperative growth and member welfare. Their findings highlight that proper strategy and inclusiveness in decision-making can enhance cooperative success. The impact of this study demonstrates how planning and participatory management can create a sustainable and equitable cooperative environment.

The Cooperative Development Authority (2022) published its annual report titled “Showcasing Feats Conquering Limits,” which presented the achievements and challenges of cooperatives in the Philippines. The report showed that cooperatives that invested in training, digitalization, and inclusive programs achieved stronger community impacts. It also highlighted how inclusive employment and cooperative education lead to higher member engagement and lower turnover. This report directly connects to the present study since it offers factual evidence on how cooperatives contribute to inclusive growth in local economies. The CDA findings emphasize the national importance of supporting human resource cooperatives as engines of employment, equity, and development.

Dimas, Lyne, and Bailey (2022) focused on institutional issues affecting the financial performance of rice cooperatives in the Philippines. Their study found that weak governance and lack of accountability often reduce cooperative profitability and member trust. However, when governance structures are improved, financial performance significantly increases. This is relevant to the current research because strong institutional practices are necessary for inclusive employment in human resource cooperatives. The similarity lies in the emphasis on transparency and accountability as foundations for sustainable cooperative systems. The impact of their findings shows that inclusive employment cannot thrive without good governance and responsible management.

Espinosa (2019) explored the connection between employee engagement and job performance in the Panabo Multi-Purpose Cooperative. The findings revealed that employees who felt recognized and included performed better and remained loyal to their organizations.

The study emphasized that engagement is an outcome of supportive leadership and fair treatment. This is closely related to the present research because human resource cooperatives depend on member motivation and equal opportunity. Espinosa's findings confirm that inclusiveness in employment practices directly affects productivity and job satisfaction. The impact of this study lies in its practical message: promoting inclusivity improves both individual performance and organizational growth.

Geroso and Maguate (2023) assessed the organizational, social, economic, and financial management performance of cooperatives. Their research concluded that cooperatives that maintain balance across these aspects tend to be more sustainable. They found that economic performance cannot be separated from social and organizational harmony. This study supports the present research by showing that inclusive practices in employment contribute to balanced cooperative development. The connection is clear—human resource cooperatives must treat social welfare and business growth as equally important. The impact of this study demonstrates that inclusive growth is the result of managing both financial goals and social responsibility effectively.

Isaac, Nizeyimana, and Nyiransabimana (2020) conducted a Rwandan case study showing that cooperatives act as pillars of inclusive development. They discovered that cooperatives generate employment, reduce poverty, and promote equality in local communities. Their findings align with the current research because human resource cooperatives also aim to create equal opportunities and fair employment. The study's impact shows that cooperatives can drive inclusive growth not only economically but also socially. This proves that when members participate actively and share benefits fairly, the whole community experiences progress.

Jeong, Lee, and Lee (2021) analyzed cooperative governance and its impact on decision-making and member satisfaction. The study found that when cooperatives adopt transparent and democratic governance structures, members feel more valued and engaged. This directly supports the current study's goal of identifying best employment practices that strengthen cooperative participation. The similarity lies in promoting inclusiveness and transparency. The impact of their findings shows that good governance helps human resource cooperatives create better working environments and fairer employment systems.

Kim, Park, and Seo (2023) examined the governance of social enterprises and cooperatives in relation to economic sustainability. Their research found that inclusive governance increases economic resilience and community trust. This is closely linked to the present study since human resource cooperatives rely on trust-based systems for employment growth. The findings suggest that cooperatives that value inclusion and participation can sustain themselves financially even during market challenges. The impact of this study demonstrates that inclusion is not only a moral principle but also an effective business strategy.

Ramizo et al. (2024) studied Naga City cooperatives and their policies to optimize operational efficiency and performance. They found that well-structured policies, continuous member training, and inclusive participation contribute to strong cooperative performance. Their findings are highly related to the present research since both focus on Naga City cooperatives and inclusive employment. The similarity lies in promoting inclusive systems that improve performance and equality. The impact of their work highlights how well-

designed employment policies can help local cooperatives sustain inclusive economic growth.

Ringor, Angeles, and Castaño (2022) analyzed compliance and marketing practices for the sustainability of multipurpose cooperatives. Their study found that marketing strategies aligned with cooperative values improve long-term viability. The results indicate that cooperative success depends on both compliance with regulations and inclusivity in operations. This aligns with the current study's focus on best employment practices that follow cooperative principles. The impact of their findings supports the idea that cooperatives can achieve inclusivity and competitiveness at the same time.

Vivit and Morales-Garma (2023) studied social audit performance among cooperatives in Cagayan, Philippines. They discovered that cooperatives that comply with Republic Act 9520 demonstrate higher transparency and accountability. This compliance ensures better protection of member rights and fair labor practices. This study directly supports the present research, as social audits are part of ensuring inclusive employment. The impact of their findings proves that following laws and ethical standards leads to sustainable and equitable cooperative management.

Finally, Madzivire and Maruta (2021) examined strategic partnerships in cooperative development in Zimbabwe. Their findings showed that collaborations with government and private sectors enhance cooperative capabilities and resources. This relates to the current study as partnerships can also strengthen human resource cooperatives in Naga City. The impact of their research demonstrates that inclusivity extends beyond internal operations; it also involves building cooperative networks that support shared growth and equality.

Theoretical Framework

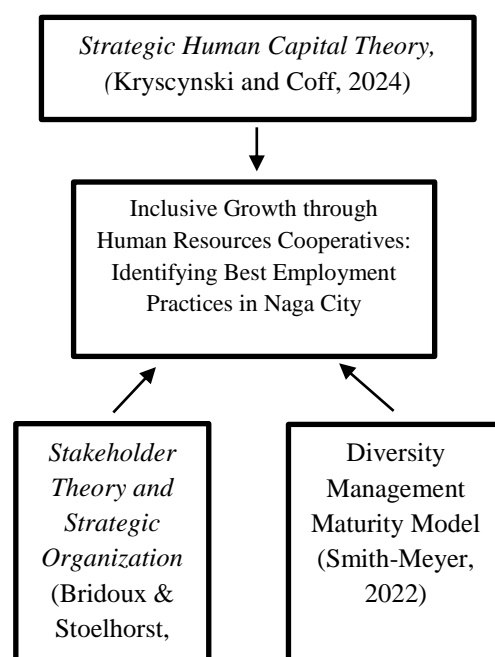


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

This study builds on Gary Becker's (1993) foundational Human Capital Theory, which positioned employees as valuable organizational assets whose development through education, training, and fair treatment leads to improved performance and productivity. More recently, Kryscynski and Coff (2024) have advanced this theory by emphasizing strategic human capital perspectives, including firm-specific investments, unit-level human capital resources, and value creation mechanisms—concepts directly applicable to cooperative organizations.

Strategic Human Capital Theory, as advanced by Kryscynski and Coff (2024), extends Becker's (1993) foundational **Human Capital Theory** by focusing on how organizations strategically develop, manage, and retain valuable human resources to achieve sustained competitive advantage. While Becker emphasized that investments in education and training enhance individual productivity and earning potential, the strategic approach examines how organizations create firm-specific capabilities through their workforce and capture the value generated by human capital investments. In their 2014 study, Bridoux and Stoelhorst explored how fairness perceptions influence stakeholder cooperation, arguing that organizations must design governance systems that reflect moral legitimacy to sustain engagement. Their 2016 research emphasized stakeholder heterogeneity, showing that differences in preferences and power require adaptive strategies to balance value creation and distribution. More recently, they advanced behavioral stakeholder theory, highlighting how informal mechanisms—such as trust, reciprocity, and shared norms—complement formal structures in maintaining long-term stakeholder alignment and organizational resilience.

The Diversity Management Maturity Model (DMMM) was developed by Bouten-Pinto (2018) and later refined by Smith-Meyer (2022) to provide a structured approach to assessing how organizations evolve in implementing diversity and inclusion. The model presents several stages of maturity that organizations undergo—from basic compliance with equality laws to the advanced integration of inclusive values into their culture and strategic objectives. It recognizes that inclusion does not happen overnight; rather, it develops progressively as the organization matures in its diversity management practices. The model emphasizes leadership commitment, policy implementation, inclusive culture-building, and continuous improvement as the main elements in achieving a fully inclusive organization.

In relation to this study, the DMMM serves as an important framework for assessing how far cooperatives in Naga City have progressed in integrating inclusive employment practices. It helps identify whether cooperatives are still in the early stages of compliance or have already reached strategic and cultural integration of inclusivity. By applying the DMMM, the study can determine the maturity level of HR practices in promoting fairness, equality, and inclusiveness among cooperative members and employees. This is significant because cooperatives, as people-centered organizations, are expected to be models of equity and participation. In her 2016 work, Bouten-Pinto explored the role of reflexivity in managing diversity, emphasizing that inclusive leadership and critical self-awareness are essential for embedding diversity into organizational culture. Her 2018 doctoral research introduced the concept of “culturewise practice,” showing how diversity practitioners navigate institutional constraints to promote inclusion across different maturity stages. Smith-Meyer (2022) later refined the model by integrating strategic diversity planning and maturity

assessment tools, enabling organizations to benchmark their inclusivity progress and align diversity goals with long-term strategy.

Stakeholder Theory, as advanced by Bridoux and Stoelhorst (2022), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how organizations create and sustain value through cooperative relationships with multiple stakeholders. The theory posits that organizational success depends on designing governance structures and management practices that balance stakeholders' economic interests with their moral sentiments regarding fairness and equity. Unlike traditional shareholder-focused models, stakeholder theory recognizes that value creation emerges from the cooperation of interdependent parties—employees, members, managers, and communities—who must simultaneously work together to generate value while navigating competing interests in how that value is distributed. Bridoux and Stoelhorst emphasize that cooperation can be sustained through both formal mechanisms (such as contracts, policies, and property rights) and informal mechanisms (such as organizational culture, norms of fairness, and trust), which stakeholders perceive as legitimate and just.

In the context of this study, Stakeholder Theory is particularly significant because cooperatives are fundamentally stakeholder-centered organizations where members serve multiple roles as owners, workers, and beneficiaries. The theory explains why fair employment practices are not merely ethical obligations but strategic necessities for sustaining member cooperation and organizational performance. When cooperatives implement practices that stakeholders perceive as fair, they strengthen trust, enhance member participation, and foster long-term commitment, all of which contribute to inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Conceptual Framework

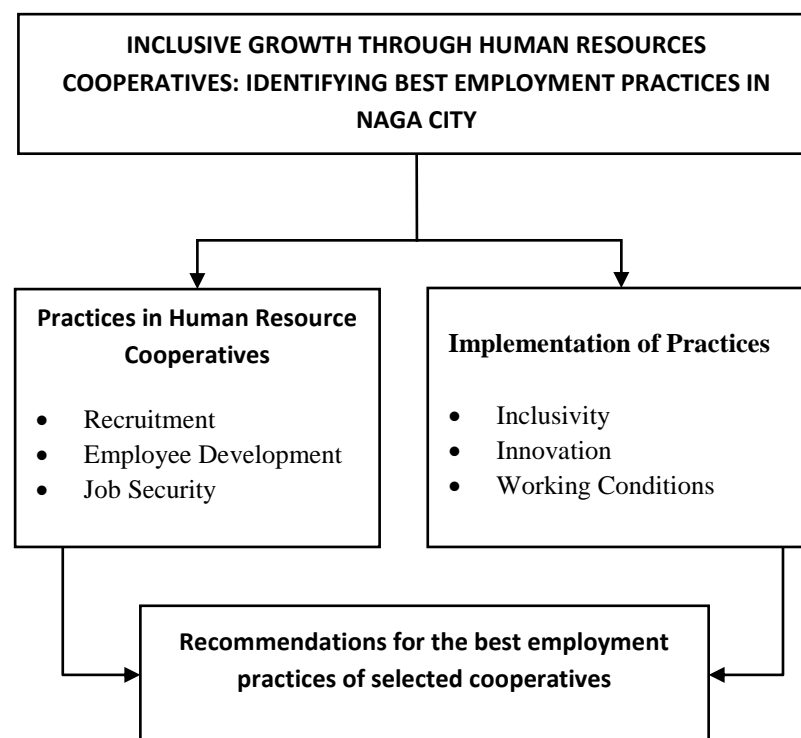


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates how the study is carried out to identify the best employment practices among selected cooperatives in Naga City and their contribution to inclusive economic growth. The process begins with examining practices in human resource cooperatives, particularly focusing on key areas such as recruitment, employee development, and job security. These operational aspects serve as the foundation for understanding how cooperatives manage and sustain their workforce.

Next, the study investigates how these practices influence various factors contributing to economic growth, which include inclusivity, innovation, and working conditions. By assessing these factors, the research seeks to determine how effective employment practices translate into broader organizational and community development.

The final step involves formulating recommendations for the best employment practices based on the findings. These recommendations aim to enhance cooperative policies and programs, ensuring that employment systems are equitable, innovative, and growth-oriented.

Through this operational flow, the study links internal cooperative practices with external socioeconomic outcomes, ultimately supporting inclusive growth through human resource management.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the study describes in detail how the research was conducted. This section includes conceptual and operational definitions of the variables used in the study.

Research Design

This study used a quantitative-descriptive research design to show how best employment practices are carried out by human resources cooperatives in Naga City, such as in hiring, benefits, working conditions, and training opportunities. It also explored employment practices and perceptions of inclusive growth, which includes job security, development, and working conditions of the members.

To make the study more complete, the researchers also questioned leaders and other stakeholders. This helped explain the real situations and experiences that numbers alone cannot show. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data will give a clearer picture of how employment practices may support inclusive growth. In this way, the study can provide useful insights and recommendations to improve employment systems in Naga City through cooperatives.

Respondents/Participants of the Study

The respondents of this study included members and employees of the selected human resource cooperative in Naga City. These individuals were chosen based on their willingness to participate, direct involvement in the daily operations, policy implementation, and management of employment practices within their organizations. The inclusion of supervisors and staff ensured a balanced perspective from both management and workforce.

levels. With the help of the cooperative agency, the selection of respondents was also done through purposive sampling, with a total of eighty-three (83) respondents focusing on those with at least six months of active membership or employment to ensure familiarity with the cooperative's employment systems and practices.

Data Gathering Tools

The primary data-gathering tool used was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers based on existing literature and validated by experts in human resource management and cooperative studies. The questionnaire was divided into two major parts: Employment Practices and Implementation of Practices. For Employment Practices—which covers recruitment, employee development, and job security—a 5-point Likert scale was used, ranging from *Not Practiced (1)* to *Highly Practiced (5)*, to assess the extent to which these practices are carried out within the cooperatives. Meanwhile, for Implementation of Practices—which includes inclusivity and innovation—a separate 5-point Likert scale was used, ranging from *Not Implemented (1)* to *Highly Implemented (5)*, to determine the degree of application of these practices. To supplement the quantitative data, key informant interviews (KIIs) were also conducted with cooperative officers from the Naga City Cooperatives Development Office (NCCDO) to obtain qualitative insights on implementation strategies and support mechanisms.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first sought permission from the cooperative management and the Naga City Cooperatives Development Office to conduct the study. Upon approval, an endorsement was provided to further explain the purpose of the research and to secure informed consent from the respondents. Questionnaires were then distributed personally and electronically, as agreed between the cooperative management and the researchers. The researcher ensured that confidentiality and anonymity were practiced throughout the process. Once collected, responses were then reviewed for completeness and accuracy.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data will be organized and analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Weighted mean and standard deviation will be used to determine the level of practice and implementation of each component—recruitment, employee development, job security. The results will be interpreted using descriptive categories such as *Highly Practiced*, *Practiced*, *Moderately Practiced*, *Less Practiced*, and *Not Practiced*. Weighted mean and standard deviation will also be used for variables such as inclusivity, innovation, and working conditions. The results will be interpreted using descriptive categories such as *Highly Implemented*, *Implemented*, *Moderately Implemented*, *Less Implemented*, and *Not Implemented*. For qualitative data from interviews, thematic analysis will be applied to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights related to cooperative employment practices and the role of NCCDO. The findings will then be triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the best employment practices contributing to inclusive growth among cooperatives in Naga City.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were observed to ensure that all respondents are treated with respect and fairness. Before gathering data, the researcher asked for permission from the cooperative leaders and secure informed consent from all participants. The purpose of the study, their rights, and how the information will be used were clearly explained. Respondents also had the right to refuse or stop their participation at any time without any consequence.

Responsible research practices will be strictly followed in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. All statistical and qualitative tools will be applied accurately to avoid any form of data manipulation or misrepresentation. The study will also ensure that all findings are presented objectively, without introducing personal or institutional bias, to uphold the integrity and credibility of the research.

Confidentiality will be observed by not revealing the names of participants or their cooperatives in the report. Codes or pseudonyms will be used instead. The information collected will only be used for academic purposes and will be kept safe to avoid misuse. The researcher will also ensure that no question or activity will cause harm or discomfort to the respondents. Finally, the study will follow the ethical guidelines set by the university and align with the principles of honesty, respect, and integrity in research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the best employment practices of selected cooperatives in Naga City and their contribution to promoting inclusive growth and decent work. The data gathered were analyzed and interpreted based on the specific objectives of the study, focusing on two key areas: (1) employment practices, which include recruitment, employee development, and job security; and (2) implementation of practices, which covers inclusivity, innovation, and working conditions. The discussion highlights how cooperatives apply fair and equitable employment systems, the extent of their inclusivity initiatives, and the level of innovation embedded in their workplace policies. Results are presented in a way that reflects both the strengths and challenges of cooperatives in managing their workforce, providing a clearer understanding of how these organizations uphold decent work standards and contribute to local socio-economic development.

Section I: Employment Practices

Table 1.1

1.1 Assessment of Employment Practices in Terms of Recruitment

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Rank	Description
1. Job openings are announced clearly and fairly.	4.7	3	HP
2. Applicants are chosen based on skills and qualifications	4.8	1	HP
3. The hiring process follows clear steps.	4.6	4	HP
4. Everyone has a fair chance to apply.	4.5	5	HP
5. Job descriptions are clearly defined and aligned with cooperative goals.	4.7	2	HP
Overall Weighted Mean	4.66		HP

Legend:

4.21–5.00 *Highly Practiced (HP)*

3.41–4.20: *Practiced (P)*

2.61–3.40: *Moderately Practiced (MP)*

1.81–2.60: *Less Practiced (LP)*

1.00–1.80: *Not Practiced (NP)*

The data in Table 1.1 provides a comprehensive evaluation of employment practices within the organization, specifically focusing on recruitment. The overall weighted mean of **4.66** places indicators for best recruitment practices firmly within the "**Highly Practiced**" category, as all other indicators scored above a weighted mean of at least 4.5.

This data suggests that the organization places a premium on merit-based hiring, ensuring that selection decisions are grounded in objective criteria rather than subjective biases. Such a practice not only promotes fairness but also enhances the quality of hires, contributing to organizational effectiveness. It also reflects a strong alignment between recruitment efforts and the strategic direction for the organization. Clearly articulated job roles help attract suitable candidates and set accurate expectations, which is crucial for long-term employee engagement and performance. This highlights the cooperative's commitment to transparency and equal opportunity, ensuring that all potential applicants are well-informed and have access to available positions. For the lowest ranking indicator, while still within the "Highly Practiced" range, this slightly lower score may suggest room for improvement in

streamlining or communicating the procedural aspects of hiring. This may point to subtle gaps in perceived inclusivity or accessibility that the organization could explore further to ensure that all individuals, regardless of background, feel equally empowered to pursue opportunities.

When recruitment practices are conducted fairly and systematically, employees feel valued and motivated, which leads to stronger commitment and productivity. This also minimizes biases and favoritism, fostering a culture of equality and professionalism. Practically, such recruitment standards ensure that cooperatives attract the right talent capable of contributing to innovation, efficiency, and overall performance. Thus, the high level of recruitment practice observed not only reflects adherence to cooperative principles but also signifies the cooperative's strategic capacity to align human resource management with long-term institutional goals.

The results align with the findings of Jeong, Lee, and Lee (2021), who emphasized that effective governance and transparent decision-making within cooperatives enhance member satisfaction and organizational performance. A well-structured recruitment process contributes to cooperative governance by ensuring that competent individuals are selected based on qualifications rather than favoritism. Similarly, Mutuku and Karani (2022) noted that upholding cooperative values, such as fairness and equality, fosters loyalty among members and strengthens organizational integrity. Supporting these views, empirical evidence from Nguyen and Tran (2021) demonstrated that well-managed cooperative membership processes positively impact members' economic outcomes in Vietnam, while Mbatha and Ngcobo (2021) found that structured cooperative education and fair employment practices promote youth participation and entrepreneurship in South Africa. Together, these studies reinforce that transparent recruitment fosters trust, inclusivity, and sustained cooperative development.

It is recommended that the cooperative should broaden recruitment channels to ensure opportunities reach diverse applicant pools, including internal staff, community partners, and digital platforms such as the company website, Facebook groups, and JobStreet postings. Standardizing timelines and formats will reduce barriers, while inclusive language and accessibility options in job postings will reinforce fairness. This approach will build trust in recruitment processes and attract talent aligned with cooperative values.

Table 1.2

1.2 Assessment of Employment Practices in Terms of Employee Development

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Rank	Description
1. Presence of clear job description outlining your employee responsibilities.	4.32	2	P
2. Availability of opportunities for skill enhancement or professional development.	4.45	1	HP
3. Awareness of the criteria for promotion or career advancement within the cooperative.	4.18	4	P
4. Awareness of how the job security within the cooperative is rated.	4.07	5	P
5. Compensation is fair and competitive with similar roles in other organizations.	4.25	3	P
Overall Weighted Mean	4.25		P

Legend:

4.21–5.00 *Highly Practiced (HP)*

3.41–4.20: *Practiced (P)*

2.61–3.40: *Moderately Practiced (MP)*

1.81–2.60: *Less Practiced (LP)*

1.00–1.80: *Not Practiced (NP)*

The results reveal that employee development within the cooperative is generally *practiced* (Overall Weighted Mean = 4.25). Among the indicators, the availability of opportunities for skill enhancement or professional development obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.45, described as *highly practiced*. On the other hand, awareness of job security and promotion criteria were rated lower (4.07 and 4.18, respectively).

As the only one item classified as "Highly Practiced", this suggests that the cooperative places strong emphasis on upskilling and continuous learning. Such investment in employee growth is a vital driver of both individual performance and organizational innovation. The second highest ranking data result shows a solid foundation in role clarity, which is essential for setting expectations, guiding performance, and fostering accountability. While still within the "Practiced" range, our third highest ranked item suggests that employees perceive their pay as generally fair, though there may be room for improvement in

benchmarking compensation against industry standards to ensure retention and satisfaction. In relation to awareness for the criteria to promotion, this points a potential gap in transparency regarding career progression pathways. Employees may benefit from clearer communication and structured frameworks for advancement to boost motivation and long-term engagement. Last and least ranked, though still categorized as "Practiced," this result reflects uncertainty among employees about their long-term stability within the organization. Addressing this concern through open dialogue and policy clarity could help reinforce trust and commitment.

The results imply that the cooperative's effort to promote employee growth is effective but can be strengthened through clearer promotion pathways and job security policies. When employees understand how their performance leads to career advancement, motivation and productivity tend to increase. The findings highlight the importance of structured capacity-building programs, not only to enhance technical skills but also to foster a sense of belonging and long-term commitment. Strengthening communication regarding advancement criteria and employment stability can further boost employee confidence, retention, and overall organizational success.

Santini et al. (2021) emphasized that continuous improvement systems within cooperatives strengthen employee competencies and align workforce capabilities with organizational objectives, leading to sustained performance growth. Similarly, Geroso and Maguate (2023) found that well-structured employee development programs contribute significantly to cooperative efficiency by improving both operational and financial management outcomes. In practice, Madzivire and Maruta (2021) highlighted how strategic partnerships enhance cooperative training programs, promoting innovation and capacity building. Likewise, Quinones (2023) noted that financial management success in cooperatives depends largely on consistent staff development and training that empower employees to handle evolving operational challenges.

It is recommended that a formal job security framework must be developed and communicated to employees, outlining stability factors such as performance, tenure, and cooperative growth. Integrating these discussions into onboarding and performance reviews, supported by visual tools like infographics and timelines, will strengthen employee confidence, reduce turnover anxiety, and encourage long-term engagement in cooperative development.

Table 1.3

1.3 Assessment of Employment Practices in Terms of Job Security

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Rank	Description
1. Level of confidence in the long-term stability of your position at this cooperative.	4.47	1	HP
2. There are rules that protect from unfair dismissal.	4.28	5	P
3. Long-term employment is encouraged.	4.36	3	HP
4. Contracts and job terms are explained clearly.	4.41	2	HP
5. Level of reassurance gained from cooperative-sponsored learning initiatives.	4.32	4	P
Overall Weighted Mean	4.37	—	HP

Legend:

4.21–5.00 *Highly Practiced (HP)*

3.41–4.20: *Practiced (P)*

2.61–3.40: *Moderately Practiced (MP)*

1.81–2.60: *Less Practiced (LP)*

1.00–1.80: *Not Practiced (NP)*

The results indicate that job security in the cooperative is *highly practiced* with an overall weighted mean of 4.37. The highest-rated indicators include confidence in long-term stability (4.47), clear explanation of contracts and job terms (4.41), and encouragement of long-term employment (4.36). However, the slightly lower scores on protection from unfair dismissal (4.28) and reassurance from learning initiatives (4.32) imply that while the environment promotes stability, there is room to strengthen employee protection policies and ensure that training programs also reinforce security and confidence in the organization.

This data shows that the cooperative has established a strong foundation for ensuring employee stability and protection, fostering a reassuring work environment. Employees also

feel secure in their roles and trust the cooperative's commitment to sustained employment. Such confidence is a critical factor in employee morale, retention, and productivity. This reflects the cooperative's transparency in employment agreements, which helps prevent misunderstandings and builds trust between management and staff. With encouragement on career longevity, employees not only benefit through stability but also strengthen institutional knowledge and continuity within the organization. Although still within the "Practiced" range, this suggests that while learning initiatives are present, their impact on perceived job security could be enhanced. Strengthening the link between training and long-term career prospects may further boost employee confidence. Despite being categorized as "Practiced," this result may point to a need for clearer communication or stronger enforcement of protective policies. Employees may benefit from more visible safeguards and grievance mechanisms to ensure fairness in employment termination.

The findings imply that the cooperative effectively fosters an atmosphere of security and trust, which is essential for employee retention and motivation. When workers feel protected by fair policies and clear employment terms, they are more likely to invest effort, remain loyal, and perform efficiently. Enhancing legal safeguards and linking learning initiatives with long-term employment benefits can further solidify employees' sense of stability. This sustained job security not only benefits the workforce but also contributes to organizational resilience and cooperative growth in the long run.

Kapila, Giri, and Bajracharya (2021) emphasized that cooperatives play a vital role in promoting sustainable employment and financial stability, aligning organizational goals with employee welfare. Similarly, Khandker et al. (2022) explained that strong social capital—trust, transparency, and fairness—within cooperatives enhances job satisfaction and reduces turnover by improving perceived job security. Empirical evidence from Nguyen and Tran (2021) in Vietnam revealed that cooperative membership significantly contributes to economic stability and income predictability among members, indirectly ensuring job security. Furthermore, Paudel (2021) found that risk management practices in Nepalese cooperatives contribute to operational efficiency and employee confidence, as members perceive a lower threat of job loss or instability.

It is recommended that cooperative institutionalize safeguards against arbitrary termination by embedding dismissal protection clauses in contracts and handbooks. It is also recommended to conduct awareness campaigns using real-life scenarios and Q&A formats will enhance understanding, while a confidential grievance and appeal system with third-party oversight will ensure impartiality. These measures will reinforce ethical governance and strengthen organizational reputation.

SECTION II. Implementation of Practices

Table 2.1

2.1 Assessment of Implementation of Practices in Terms of Inclusivity

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Rank	Description
1. Everyone is treated equally regardless of background.	4.47	2	I
2. Diversity is respected in the workplace.	4.55	1	HI
3. Cooperative provides a safe and effective way for employees to voice their concerns and suggestions regarding inclusivity and fairness.	4.42	3	I
4. There are rules against discrimination and harassment.	4.40	4	I
5. Cooperative offers policies and benefits (e.g., flexible work schedules, comprehensive leave) that accommodate the diverse needs of its employees.	4.38	5	I
Overall Weighted Mean	4.44	—	I

Legend:

4.21–5.00 *Highly Implemented (HI)*

3.41–4.20: *Implemented (I)*

2.61–3.40: *Moderately Implemented (MI)*

1.81–2.60: *Less Implemented (LI)*

1.00–1.80: *Not Implemented (NI)*

The findings show that inclusivity within the cooperative is *implemented* with an overall weighted mean of 4.44. Among the indicators, “diversity is respected in the workplace” received the highest weighted mean of 4.55, described as *highly implemented*. Meanwhile, the lowest score of 4.38 was noted in the area of flexible and inclusive policies, such as comprehensive leave and work schedules.

This indicates that inclusivity is actively practiced and embedded in the cooperative’s culture, though there remains room for further enhancement to reach the “Highly Implemented” threshold across all indicators. The data also shows a strong organizational commitment to embracing varied backgrounds, perspectives, and identities. An essential foundation for an inclusive and innovative work environment. This suggests that fairness and equity are well practiced, reinforcing a culture where employees feel valued and respected regardless of their personal or cultural differences. It also assumes the presence of accessible

feedback mechanisms, which are vital for maintaining transparency and responsiveness in addressing inclusivity-related issues.

While still within the "Implemented" range, this result may suggest that while policies exist, their visibility or enforcement could be strengthened to ensure employees feel fully protected and supported. Although this is a positive result, it points to opportunities for expanding or tailoring benefits to better meet the varied needs of a diverse workforce, such as caregivers, persons with disabilities, or those with unique cultural or religious practices. The results imply that the cooperative maintains an equitable and respectful environment, which is essential in promoting unity, trust, and productivity among employees. Inclusivity ensures that all members feel valued and heard, leading to greater participation and stronger cooperative culture.

Joseph and Anders (2021) emphasized that financial sustainability in cooperatives is closely linked to inclusivity, as organizations that foster equality and respect for diversity tend to have stronger community trust and member participation. Likewise, Morgan and Lewis (2023) argued that inclusive practices contribute to sustainable development in rural cooperatives by ensuring that all members benefit from collective progress. Empirically, Mbatha and Ngcobo (2021) found that cooperative education promoting equality helps empower marginalized groups, particularly youth and women, to become active participants in the organization. Similarly, Vivit and Morales-Garma (2023) highlighted that compliance with cooperative laws in the Philippines, such as RA 9520, enhances fairness and transparency—key foundations of inclusivity and equal opportunity in cooperative operations.

It is recommended that the cooperative conduct a participatory audit of current benefits to identify gaps in flexibility and relevance. It is also recommended to introduce inclusive offerings such as mental health days, gender-inclusive leave, and hybrid work options, and communicate them clearly during onboarding and HR orientations. Expanding benefits will improve perceptions of fairness, enhance work-life balance, and foster stronger loyalty across diverse employee groups.

Table 2.2

2.2 Assessment of Implementation of Practices in Terms of Innovation

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Rank	Description
1. New ideas are welcomed to improve work.	4.6	3	HI
2. All members are encouraged to suggest improvements.	4.4	5	I
3. Technology helps make our work easier.	4.8	1	HI

4. Training programs offered by the cooperative focus on preparing employees for future skills and innovative roles.	4.7	2	HI
5. The cooperative has a system in place to recognize and reward employees who contribute to innovative solutions or practices.	4.5	4	HI
Overall Weighted Mean	4.6	—	HI

Legend:

4.21–5.00 *Highly Implemented (HI)*

3.41–4.20: *Implemented (I)*

2.61–3.40: *Moderately Implemented (MI)*

1.81–2.60: *Less Implemented (LI)*

1.00–1.80: *Not Implemented (NI)*

The findings show that innovation within the cooperative is *highly implemented*, with an overall weighted mean of 4.6. The results indicate that employees strongly agree that technology plays a key role in improving work efficiency, as reflected in the highest rating of 4.8. Training programs that prepare employees for new skills and changing roles also received a high rating (4.7). Meanwhile, the cooperative’s openness to new ideas and recognition for innovative contributions are rated at 4.6 and 4.5 respectively. The relatively lower score on member participation in suggesting improvements is rated at 4.4.

This indicates that the cooperative has successfully cultivated a culture of innovation, where creativity, technology, and forward-thinking strategies are actively encouraged and supported. This reflects the cooperative’s strong integration of technological tools and systems to streamline operations, enhance productivity, and reduce manual workload. Such a high score suggests that employees recognize and benefit from digital solutions that improve their day-to-day tasks. The data suggests the cooperative’s proactive approach to workforce development, ensuring that employees are equipped with the competencies needed to thrive in evolving roles and contribute meaningfully to innovation. This practice fosters a dynamic environment where employees feel empowered to share suggestions and challenge conventional methods, driving continuous improvement.

These results suggest that the cooperative is effectively integrating innovation into its daily operations, helping employees become more efficient and adaptable to change. This culture of innovation benefits not only the organization but also its members by promoting continuous improvement and responsiveness to emerging needs. Although still within the "Highly Implemented" range, this result could point to subtle gaps in inclusivity or communication. Ensuring that all voices—regardless of role or tenure—are actively invited and valued in the innovation process could further strengthen collaborative creativity. Strengthening communication channels and providing incentives for creative suggestions can

help every member feel more involved, fostering a stronger sense of ownership and collaboration in building a forward-looking cooperative.

Schallmo, Williams, and Tidd (2022) emphasized that innovation thrives in organizations that align their digital strategies with employee engagement and continuous learning. They noted that when cooperatives promote innovation across all levels, it leads to better adaptability and long-term success. Similarly, Srivastava et al. (2023) highlighted that digital innovation improves collaboration, decision-making, and customer interaction factors that are crucial for cooperative growth. Supporting this, Agbayani-Caballero (2021) found that multi-purpose cooperatives with strong innovation climates achieve higher sustainability and member satisfaction. Sotto Geroso (2023) likewise observed that cooperatives in Negros Occidental that encourage employee creativity through training and recognition programs tend to perform better in delivering services and adapting to modern challenges.

It is recommended that the cooperative maintain its strong innovation culture by continuously investing in technology and skill-based training - establishing structured innovation channels such as suggestion boxes, digital forums, and monthly “idea huddles” to encourage member participation. It is also recommended to provide facilitation training for team leads to ensure inclusive brainstorming and recognize contributions beyond implemented ideas. This will broaden ownership of innovation, boost morale, and embed a democratic culture of continuous improvement.

Table 2.3

2.3 Assessment of Implementation of Practices in Terms of Working Conditions

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Rank	Description
1. The cooperative provides a safe and healthy working environment for all employees.	4.70	1	HI
2. The cooperative provides the necessary tools, equipment, and resources for you to perform your job efficiently and safely.	4.62	2	HI
3. The cooperative is effective in ensuring fair and regular working hours, including appropriate overtime compensation.	4.45	3	HI
4. The cooperative implements a clear and fair system for managing employee performance and providing regular feedback.	4.30	4	HI
5. The cooperative's management handles employee grievances and concerns in a timely and impartial manner.	4.10	5	I
Overall Weighted Mean	4.43	—	HI

Legend:

4.21–5.00 Highly Implemented (HI)

3.41–4.20: Implemented (I)

2.61–3.40: Moderately Implemented (MI)

1.81–2.60: Less Implemented (LI)

1.00–1.80: Not Implemented (NI)

The results presented in Table 2.3 reveal that the cooperative's practices in terms of working conditions are highly implemented across all indicators, with weighted means ranging from 4.10 to 4.70. Ranked first is the cooperative's provision of a safe and healthy working environment (WM = 4.70), followed by the availability of necessary tools, equipment, and resources (WM = 4.62). The cooperative's effectiveness in ensuring fair and regular working hours with proper overtime compensation ranks third (WM = 4.45). Managing employee performance and feedback systems ranks fourth (WM = 4.30), while handling employee grievances and concerns ranks last (WM = 4.10), though still described as *Implemented*.

This data suggests that workplace safety and employee well-being are top priorities. A secure and health-conscious environment not only protects employees physically but also contributes to psychological comfort and job satisfaction. This also indicates that the cooperative is well-equipped to support operational efficiency and safety, which are essential for maintaining high performance and minimizing workplace hazards. There is also a reflection of a strong adherence to labor standards and fairness in time management, which helps prevent burnout and promotes work-life balance. While still "Highly Implemented," the slightly lower score may suggest opportunities to enhance the consistency or clarity of performance evaluations and feedback mechanisms. This may point to areas where responsiveness or impartiality in grievance handling could be improved. Strengthening this aspect would further reinforce trust and transparency within the organization.

Overall, the cooperative demonstrates a commendable level of implementation in terms of working conditions. The emphasis on safety, resource provision, and fair labor practices sets a strong foundation for employee satisfaction and productivity. However, enhancing grievance resolution processes and refining performance management systems could elevate the cooperative's practices to an even higher standard of excellence.

The findings align with prior studies emphasizing the importance of supportive working conditions in promoting employee satisfaction and organizational performance. According to Griep et al. (2024), sustainable human resource management requires organizations to uphold fairness, safety, and open communication, as these elements contribute to long-term employee engagement and productivity. Similarly, Dai and Akey-Torku (2020) found that managerial psychology and fair treatment significantly influence job satisfaction, suggesting that effective leadership and a safe environment are crucial components of employee well-being. These perspectives reinforce the present study's results, showing that the cooperative's commitment to providing healthy and fair working conditions aligns with global standards of human resource management.

Overall, the data suggest that the cooperative effectively implements policies promoting employee welfare, fairness, and safety. However, while all areas scored high, the relatively lower mean for grievance handling (4.10) indicates a potential area for improvement. Strengthening mechanisms for addressing employee concerns could enhance trust and further promote a positive organizational climate. In summary, the cooperative demonstrates a well-established and sustainable approach to maintaining favorable working conditions, reflecting a high level of implementation consistent with contemporary HRM practices.

It is recommended that the cooperative streamline grievance procedures to ensure clarity, confidentiality, and timeliness. It is also recommended to introduce impartial mechanisms such as third-party mediation or spokesperson roles, and regularly report anonymized grievance trends to employees. These actions will enhance psychological safety, reduce workplace tension, and build a culture of accountability and fairness.

INPUT-PROCESS- OUTPUT

Input

The study was grounded in a rich set of inputs that shaped its direction and depth. These included the employment systems and practices of a selected cooperative in Naga City, particularly those engaged in human resource services. Key inputs encompassed cooperative members, and staff, who served as primary sources of data. The research was informed by national legal frameworks such as the Philippine Cooperative Code (RA 9520), the Labor Code, and local government initiatives facilitated by the Naga City Cooperative Development Office (NCCDO). Theoretical foundations, namely Strategic Human Capital Theory, the Diversity Management Maturity Model (DMMM), and Stakeholder Theory—served as the conceptual lens for analyzing fairness, inclusivity, and strategic value creation within cooperative employment systems.

Process

The research employed a descriptive-evaluative design to systematically examine employment practices and their implementation. Data were gathered through surveys, key informant interviews, and document analysis, which allowed for both quantitative and qualitative insights. The process involved assessing recruitment, employee development, job security, inclusivity, innovation, and working conditions. These dimensions were evaluated against the maturity stages outlined in the DMMM and interpreted through the strategic and stakeholder-oriented perspectives of the guiding theories. The analysis identified strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement in how cooperatives fostered inclusive growth through employment.

Output

The study yielded a comprehensive understanding of best employment practices among Naga City cooperatives. It revealed that many cooperatives had matured in their human resource systems, demonstrating strong alignment with inclusive values and strategic

workforce development. The findings led to practical recommendations, including enhancing communication on career advancement, expanding inclusive innovation programs, and strengthening partnerships with the NCCDO. Ultimately, the research positioned cooperatives as viable models for inclusive employment and sustainable community development, contributing to both local policy discourse and the broader movement for decent work and equitable growth.

PROPOSED STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AMONG COOPERATIVES IN NAGA CITY

The following section presents the strategic recommendations developed by the researchers based on the statistical findings of the study. These strategic recommendations aim to build on existing strengths while addressing subtle gaps in development and policy clarity to create a more cohesive and future-ready workforce strategy.

PART 1 - Strengthening the Talent Lifecycle through Integrated Recruitment, Employee Development, and Job Security Practices

The cooperative demonstrates a strong foundation in employment practices, particularly in recruitment and job security, both rated as Highly Practiced with overall weighted means of 4.66 and 4.37 respectively. Employee development, while commendable, is rated slightly lower at 4.25, categorized as Practiced.

Part 1 - CURRENT EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

1. Recruitment: Strengthen Equitable Access to Opportunities

Objective: Ensure all applicants—internal and external—have fair, accessible opportunities to apply.

- **Strategic Actions:**

1. Audit recruitment channels to ensure job postings reach diverse applicant pools, including internal staff, community partners, and digital platforms such as the cooperative website, Facebook groups, or Jobstreet postings.
2. Standardize application timelines and formats to accommodate varying access levels (e.g., digital vs. paper-based).
3. Include inclusive language and accessibility options in job announcements.

Expected Impact: Greater trust in recruitment fairness, increased applicant diversity, and stronger alignment with cooperative values.

2. Employee Development: Improve Awareness of Career Paths & Job Security

Objective: Improve employee understanding of job security and career advancement pathways

- **Strategic Actions:**

1. Develop and distribute a job security framework outlining stability factors (e.g., performance, tenure, cooperative growth).
2. Integrate job security discussions into onboarding and performance reviews.
3. Use visual tools (e.g., infographics, timelines) to explain career paths and employment continuity.

Expected Impact: Increased employee confidence, reduced turnover anxiety, and stronger engagement in long-term development.

3. Job Security: Clarify and Enforce Protection Against Unfair Dismissal

Objective: Clarify and enforce safeguards against arbitrary termination.

- **Strategic Actions:**

1. Conduct policy awareness campaigns using real-life scenarios and Q&A formats.
2. Establish a confidential grievance and appeal system with third-party oversight.
3. Include dismissal protection clauses in employment contracts and employee handbooks.

Expected Impact: Enhanced trust in cooperative governance, reduced fear of arbitrary termination, and improved ethical reputation.

PART 2 - Enhancing Inclusivity, Innovation, and Working Conditions in the Cooperative.

The cooperative has achieved an *Implemented* rating in inclusivity (4.44), with the highest score attributed to respect for diversity (4.55 – *Highly Implemented*). This reflects a strong cultural foundation of mutual respect and openness. However, the relatively lower scores in areas such as anti-discrimination rules (4.40) and inclusive benefits (4.38) suggest opportunities for deeper institutionalization of inclusive practices.

PART 2 - IMPLEMENTATION OF PRACTICES

1. Inclusivity: Expand the Reach of Inclusive Benefits

Objective: Expand benefits and policies that reflect diverse employee need

- **Strategic Actions:**

1. Conduct a participatory audit of existing benefits to identify gaps in flexibility, accessibility, and relevance.
2. Introduce or expand offerings such as mental health days, gender-inclusive leave, and hybrid work options.
3. Communicate these benefits clearly through onboarding, HR orientations, and internal campaigns.

Expected Impact: Increased perception of fairness, improved work-life balance, and stronger employee loyalty across diverse groups.

2. Innovation: Strengthen Member Participation in Improvement Processes

Objective: Strengthen workplace fairness and responsiveness by ensuring timely, impartial resolution of employee concerns.

- **Strategic Actions:**

1. Establish structured innovation channels such as suggestion boxes, digital forums, or monthly “idea huddles.”
2. Provide facilitation training for team leads to encourage inclusive brainstorming and feedback collection.
3. Recognize not only implemented ideas but also active participation in innovation efforts.

Expected Impact: Broader innovation ownership, increased morale, and a more democratic culture of continuous improvement.

3. Working Conditions: Improve Responsiveness to Employee Grievances

Objective: Democratize improvement processes and recognize member contributions.

- **Strategic Actions:**

1. Review and streamline grievance procedures to ensure clarity, confidentiality, and timeliness.
2. Introduce third-party mediation options or and spokesperson role to enhance impartiality.
3. Regularly report anonymized grievance trends and resolutions to build transparency and trust.

Expected Impact: Greater psychological safety reduced workplace tension, and a stronger culture of accountability and fairness.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to one local human resource cooperative operating under the supervision of the Naga City Cooperatives Development Office (NCCDO). As such, the findings may not fully represent all human resource cooperatives in Naga City or other regions with differing organizational structures and management systems. The focus on selected cooperatives restricts the generalizability of the results, as each organization may have unique employment practices, cultural dynamics, industrial expertise and levels of inclusivity.

Data collection relied on surveys and interviews which are subject to the accuracy and honesty of participants' responses. Possible biases may arise from self-reported data, particularly when discussing sensitive topics such as inclusivity, job security, or organizational performance. Furthermore, the availability and completeness of cooperative records may affect the depth of document analysis.

Time constraints and limited access to cooperative offices or internal documents also restricted the comprehensiveness of data gathering. Lastly, since the study conducted within the policy framework of NCCDO, findings may reflect the local regulatory environment and may not be entirely applicable to cooperatives operating under different administrative or governance conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to identify the best employment practices of selected cooperatives in Naga City to determine their role and contribution in promoting inclusive growth and decent work. Grounded in Human Capital Theory, the Diversity Management Maturity Model (DMMM), and Stakeholder Theory, the research examined employment practices across recruitment, employee development, and job security, while assessing implementation levels in inclusivity, innovation, and working conditions.

First, the findings revealed that recruitment practices from the selected cooperative are highly practiced, with clear job announcements, merit-based selection, and alignment with cooperative goals. These systems foster trust and ensure that employment opportunities are accessible and transparent. The high rating in this area reflects a strong foundation for inclusive workforce entry.

Secondly, it was found that employee development is also well-practiced, particularly in providing skill enhancement opportunities. However, the study reveals gaps in promotion awareness and job security perception. These findings suggest that while training is available, the pathways for career growth and long-term stability require clearer communication and structured planning to fully empower cooperative members.

Third, job security is generally perceived as strong, with high confidence in long-term employment and clarity in contract terms. Yet, the relatively lower score on protection against unfair dismissal indicates a need for more robust grievance mechanisms and policy enforcement. Addressing this will reinforce ethical standards and safeguard member welfare.

Fourth, implementation of practices in inclusivity, innovation, and working conditions reflected a workplace that respects diversity and promotes equality, though flexible work policies and accommodations for diverse employee needs could be expanded. Innovation, in particular, received the highest rating, highlighting effective use of technology and recognition systems. Nonetheless, expanding member participation in innovation and improving responsiveness to employee concerns remains present as an opportunity to further strengthen cooperative engagement and resilience.

Lastly, the researchers proposed a comprehensive set of strategic recommendations designed to address identified gaps while building upon existing strengths. These strategies included proposing a creation of promotion and job security frameworks or roadmap, and enhanced learning initiatives for long term roles. They also proposed institutionalizing diversity policies, establishing structured participatory innovation channels, and creating responsive grievance systems and procedures that build psychological safety and trust.

Overall, the cooperatives in Naga City exhibit a commendable level of commitment to inclusive employment. These findings affirm that fostering transparent recruitment, continuous employee development, job security, inclusivity, and innovation contributes significantly to employee satisfaction, organizational resilience, and long-term sustainability. The study underscores the importance of continuous investment in human capital and inclusive governance as pathways to achieving inclusive economic growth at the local level. Through continuous improvement and collaborative support from institutions like the Naga City Cooperative Development Office, these cooperatives can lead the way toward a more just, empowered, and inclusive society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the researchers proposed a comprehensive set of strategic recommendations designed to strengthen employment practices and enhance organizational performance across key dimensions of human resource management. These recommendations are below:

- **Recruitment** - it is recommended that the cooperative should broaden recruitment channels to ensure opportunities reach diverse applicant pools, including internal staff, community partners, and digital platforms. Standardizing timelines and formats will reduce barriers, while inclusive language and accessibility options in job postings will reinforce fairness. This approach will build trust in recruitment processes and attract talent aligned with cooperative values.
- **Employee Development** - it is recommended that a formal job security framework must be developed and communicated to employees, outlining stability factors such as

performance, tenure, and cooperative growth. Integrating these discussions into onboarding and performance reviews, supported by visual tools like infographics and timelines, will strengthen employee confidence, reduce turnover anxiety, and encourage long-term engagement in cooperative development.

- **Job Security** - it is recommended that cooperative should institutionalize safeguards against arbitrary termination by embedding dismissal protection clauses in contracts and handbooks. Awareness campaigns using real-life scenarios and Q&A formats will enhance understanding, while a confidential grievance and appeal system with third-party oversight will ensure impartiality. These measures will reinforce ethical governance and strengthen organizational reputation.
- **Inclusivity** - it is recommended that the cooperative conduct a participatory audit of current benefits to identify gaps in flexibility and relevance. Introduce inclusive offerings such as mental health days, gender-inclusive leave, and hybrid work options, and communicate them clearly during onboarding and HR orientations. Expanding benefits will improve perceptions of fairness, enhance work-life balance, and foster stronger loyalty across diverse employee groups.
- **Innovation** - it is recommended that the cooperative establish structured innovation channels such as suggestion boxes, digital forums, and monthly “idea huddles” to encourage member participation. Provide facilitation training for team leads to ensure inclusive brainstorming and recognize contributions beyond implemented ideas. This will broaden ownership of innovation, boost morale, and embed a democratic culture of continuous improvement.
- **Working Conditions** - it is recommended that the cooperative streamline grievance procedures to ensure clarity, confidentiality, and timeliness. Introduce impartial mechanisms such as third-party mediation or spokesperson roles, and regularly report anonymized grievance trends to employees. These actions will enhance psychological safety, reduce workplace tension, and build a culture of accountability and fairness.

Together in partnership with the Naga City Cooperative Development Office (NCCDO), these recommendations aim to elevate the cooperative's already strong foundation in employment practices. It is even possible for them to conduct a city-wide initiative to benchmark, monitor, and support these inclusive employment practice indicators across cooperatives. These recommendations can not only evolve cooperatives into strategic platforms for equitable development, but also position Naga City as a model for inclusive cooperative governance in the Philippines.

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