

ABSTRACT

The title of the doctoral thesis "**Possibilities of using efficient management to increase effectiveness in cooperative enterprises in light industry**", drawn up by RUS IOAN, PhD student, in view of acquiring the scientific title of **Doctor in Engineering Sciences, Industrial Engineering**.

I. **Appreciations regarding the importance, opportunity and topicality of the doctoral thesis**

The present doctoral thesis is the result of a scientific analysis of the possibilities of efficient management improvement to increase efficiency in cooperative enterprises in light industry.

The principal aim of the thesis is the understanding of tendencies of the light industry market, and the most suitable perspectives in order to competitively approach the future of the light industry, offering solutions to the numerous problems still open in cooperative societies in the field of light industry in Romania.

The principal objective of the doctoral research is to develop policies to improve and develop the management of the craft cooperatives in light industry, in view of efficient utilization of the all the available means to affirm craft cooperative societies as competitive economic agents, promoting active partnerships, in conditions of permanent preoccupation to satisfy the needs of the cooperative members and of communities to which they belong.

The thesis drawn up by the subject area approached, the objectives and their content are of maximum importance, opportunity and topicality in contemporary engineering sciences, since they are a theoretical and practical support for managers at all levels within the structures of the craft cooperatives, for the public authorities, for the researchers concerned with the study of the cooperatives phenomenon, for the teaching staff in universities, and they can be of a real assistance in their involvement in this sphere.

In this context, the preoccupation of obtaining new solutions of improvement and development of an efficient management for the activities in the craft cooperative societies in light industry is entirely justified.

II. **Content of the thesis**

The doctoral thesis is structured in eight sections, preceded by a short introduction, where the reasoning of the author regarding the choice of the theme of the doctoral thesis in relation to the present situation of the cooperative sector is presented.

Each section ends with a preliminary conclusion and the presentation of the author's own contribution regarding the scientific research, analysis and proposals submitted with original content for the subject approached.

Chapter 1. "Importance and nature of cooperatives in contemporary economy" presents: cooperation regarded as a system, international principles of functioning and development of cooperatives, particularities of cooperatives compared to other economic agents, development of the sector of cooperatives at international level, models and types of cooperatives, as well as factors influencing functioning and development of cooperatives.

Cooperation, as a system, integrates various cooperative entities and represents a specific sector of the national economy, functioning by cooperatives and other forms of association of those at territorial and national level.

Cooperatives represent a dual model based on an economic and a social level, which are closely connected and mutually complete each other, thus contributing to increasing the added value of the services provided by cooperatives.

Cooperatives, being part of the social economy, together with other forms of this type of economy (often called 'the third sector'), are largely supported by the European Union. Within the G20 countries, approximately 12% of the occupied population is employed in cooperatives. The cooperative model substantially contributes to the application of the priorities of the 2020 Europe Strategy for an intelligent, durable and inclusion favourable increase. The research in the field confirms that the success and longevity of cooperatives are mainly due to the fact that they are oriented in the first place toward satisfying the needs of the communities in which they work, rather than increasing the profits for the investors.

Chapter2. "Cooperatives in the European Union – dimension, challenges and development" presents: aspects regarding cooperatives – important component of modern economy; structure of economic sectors in the system of European cooperatives; barriers hindering the development the activities of cooperatives, competitive forms of cooperative organizations.

By the treaty regarding the functioning of the European Union, Article 54 the plurality of the business forms was acknowledged, including cooperatives, and in 2003, alongside with the approval by the European Commission of the Regulation regarding the Statute of the European Cooperative Society, the role of cooperatives in the society has been consolidated, and legal possibilities have been provided for trans-frontier cooperation. All these boosted the evolution of this form of activity.

In the European community space, the increase of the market segment of the cooperatives within the economic activities is noted.

In view of ensuring the development of cooperatives, of fully taking advantage of their advantages, the necessity of eliminating the exiting barriers comes up. In this sense, the principal actions that will be taken with the support of all the interested parties (members, authorities, researchers, etc) are: implementation of the suitable support regulations and policies, market regulations, development of government coherent practices and management, and support policies.

Chapter 3. "Cooperation in Romania – component of social economy", presents: conceptual framework, theoretical concepts of cooperative phenomenon, principal characteristics of cooperative actions, methodological considerations, diagnosis analysis of the present situation and of the trends in crafts cooperatives, crafts cooperatives, National Union of Crafts Cooperation.

In this chapter the main trends recorded in the cooperative system in Romania are analyzed. It is an exploration and explicative study of the cooperative phenomenon in Romania and its positioning in the social economy system. The data analysis is centred on the crafts cooperatives in Romania.

The characteristics differentiating cooperatives from commercial societies are related to the aim of their activity, their administration, profit sharing and the way of recovering investment. These characteristics are: the aim, the right to vote, investment recovery, profit.

In Romania, a descending trend has been noticed in cooperatives, regarding the number of members, of employees, production value etc.

As far as production value is concerned, cooperatives produce approximately 3% of the GDP.

The functioning framework of the cooperative system is provided by Act No. 1/2005, regarding organization and functioning of cooperatives, which required a large administrative process at entering in force to adapt the existing structures to the new requirements.

Currently, crafts cooperatives produce approximately 2% of the GDP.

In this chapter economic indicators are analyzed (total product; retail; investments; intercommunity deliveries, export), as well as financial and patrimonial indicators (total revenues; gross income; assets; corporal immobilization).

Chapter 4. “Analysis of economic activity and of the staff in crafts cooperative societies”, approaches problems regarding: social-economic context, economic indicators recorded by the members of the National Union of Crafts Cooperatives, financial results recorded by SCM and preliminary conclusions.

In this chapter the economic indicators, the financial results and the staff activity in the crafts cooperative sector have been analyzed, and depending on the results of this analysis of the economic activity, financial results and staff activity, practical solutions have been identified regarding improvement of activity in the sense of business development and competitiveness increase of crafts cooperatives.

The economic indicators recorded by the associated members of the NUCC, and which have been analyzed are: synthetic indicators, investment activity, innovation activity, inter-community deliveries and or/export, production potential as well as organizational situation.

Considering the typology of activities run by the reporting crafts cooperative entities, it is recommended for the associated members to make detailed analyses, possibly multi-annually, adapted to their real possibilities. Depending on the results of these analyses, practical solutions could be identified to improve activity, in the sense of business development and increase of competitiveness, both internally and on inter-community and extra-community level.

Chapter 5. “Research, processing, analysis and interpretation of empirical data regarding management in crafts cooperative societies”, presents aspects related to : development, processing data from questionnaires and reporting results (motivation of results, developments and testing questionnaires, drawing up questionnaires, testing questionnaires); processing, analysis and interpretation of data from the questionnaire and reporting results; research methodology used; Pearson correlation coefficients; computer program for correlation coefficients calculation; research results; analysis of criteria from the questionnaire (criteria referring to planning, paternity, financial resources and other resources) and preliminary conclusions.

To make the research, partial observation has been applied by sampling and inquiries, and for the analysis of the human resources management at the cooperatives level in Romania the significant factors in the field have been selected, which then were coded.

The distribution of the correctly completed and received questionnaires is shown in tables and graphs, depending on the type of the cooperative society, and the number of personnel, respectively.

For data processing, a computer programme has been devised in MATLAB programming medium, which calculates the linear correlation coefficient between two variables.

The research shows that the human resources management activity in cooperative societies is absolutely necessary at the level of all cooperatives, but especially in small cooperatives, since these cannot clearly define the problems that they have to face, nor do they have the possibility of solving them.

Chapter 6. “Management efficiency in cooperative societies in light industry”, approaches the following aspects general elements regarding management efficiency assessment; efficiency of

decisional processes rationalization in the management of cooperative societies; performant management – key to increasing competitiveness of cooperative societies in light industry - (concept of performant management and competitiveness of cooperative enterprises, analysis and evaluation of cooperative enterprises management in light industry and their level of competitiveness, management re-planning– adapting management systems to increase cooperative enterprises competitiveness in light industry); participative management of cooperative enterprises in light industry (multidimensionality of participative management of cooperative enterprises, rationalization methodology of the body of participative management, case study regarding participative management rationalization in crafts cooperatives), and preliminary conclusions.

Chapter 7. “Management improvement and development policies in crafts cooperative societies”, describes: social-political and economic context; general view regarding the situation of the crafts cooperative sector (as far as production potential is concerned, in investment, innovation, export); swot analysis; perspectives and previsions for the year 2022, at national and global level; strategic foresight (general objectives and strategic priorities, directions proposed for 2018-2022 at the level of crafts cooperative sector); anticipated policies and preliminary conclusions.

Chapter 8.” Final conclusions, personal scientific contribution and future research directions”

8.1. Final conclusions

As a result of research conclusions and results in cooperative management segment, a series of proposals have been made, in view of increasing effectiveness and efficiency of specific activities:

- Improvement and modernization of informational system allowing collecting, transmission and archiving data in view of using those to devise and implement strategies.
- Clear defining of management objectives in each cooperative society.
- Permanent updating of management strategies and policies.
- Providing continuous training and improvement of management and execution staff.
- Establishing assessment forms for satisfaction at work of the staff and periodic analysis of this process.
- Development of partnerships with specialized suppliers in the specific fields of cooperative societies.
- Increased attention for management ethics and consolidation of leadership process.
- Systematization of management efficiency indicators and determining correlation between these and efficiency of cooperative societies.
- Identification of major problems and opportunities of cooperative societies in light industry at the present stage.
- Assessment of economic efficiency of cooperative societies as a result of management improvement.
- Improvement of assessment methodology of cooperative societies’ competitiveness by introducing the performant management component.

8.2. Personal scientific contributions

Original scientific contributions of the author and the novelty character in the field are:

1. the concept according to which cooperatives represent a dual model based on an economic component and a social one, in strict relation and complementing each other, is reasoned, thus contributing to the increase of the added value of activities and services offered by cooperatives.
2. documentation, study and development of a synthesis of literature to clarify the economic and social role of cooperative societies.
3. the cooperative system applied in the world, in Europe and in Romania is explained.
4. four 'cooperative models' are analyzed, taking into consideration the development differences of the cooperative phenomenon in various countries: mutual model, sociological, intermediary, quasi-public model.
5. the share of light industry in Romania in basic macro-economical indicators in national economy, which is significant, is analyzed (for example, the share of light industry in GDP is on average 2%, in total production volume - 7%, in export – approximately 24% etc.);
6. proposes the use of management techniques and methods in an efficient manner, specific to performant management to reach organizational objectives and to provide long-term success by improving management and economic performances.
7. proposes the use of a new type of management, based on the value system specific to market economy to increase competitiveness of all cooperative societies, including those in light industry.
8. uses the scenario method, which combines quantity and quality approaches (pessimistic variant, only leader cooperative societies will resist due to an adequate management, and entering certain niche market; the variant which involves restructuring of the sector, determining its development level, resulting from successful key factors, and the most important thing, increasing the social importance of the sector; the optimistic variant involves devising a radical concept of development of the home light industry) to assess the opportunities of increasing the competitiveness of light industry enterprises in Romania.
9. points out the important role of correct management, assessment of the management of light industry cooperative enterprises in market economy conditions, in the development of light industry in Romania. To provide a quality assessment of management, the strategic analysis matrix "7S" management model" has been applied, and the identified moments were the following: lack of a clear strategic outlook for development, existence of cumbersome organization charts, lack of management subsystems, staff with inadequate skills, poor corporative culture etc.;
10. proposes the development of informational system in light industry cooperative enterprises, to maximize the decision making process , based on complete and appropriate information;
11. as a result of a case study, proposes the use of modern methods and techniques, of decisional nature (diagnosis, delegation, brainstorming, Delphy technique etc.) to improve the participative decisional process in cooperative societies.

8.3. Future research directions

The following directions are proposed:

1. Application of the improvement methodology of the cooperative societies' informational system, by the following stages: definition of the area and requirements of the study; development of a preliminary study; presentation of the existing informational system; development of a new informational system; presentation of the advantages of the new informational system.
2. Development of a new strategy including new objectives, for the carrying out of which, new activities are required.

3. Assessment of management efficiency by granting the cooperatives' potential and their components the utmost importance, adequately delimiting the share granted to the effective results obtained in the current period.