

ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS AND MARKETING PREFERENCES OF MEMBERS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER ORGANIZATION: THE CASE OF TURKEY

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Abstract

This paper reviews the organizational awareness and marketing preferences of members of producer organizations in agriculture. The main material of this research consisted of surveys applied to 360 producers determined via the Proportional Sampling Method in Uşak province, Turkey. According to the research results, each of the producers was a member of at least one Producers' Organization (PO). 59.1% of producers were interested in the PO, and 33.6% of them think that crops should be marketed by the Agricultural Development Cooperative. The ratio of member producers marketing their products through the POs was 19.7%. Only 38.4% of members were satisfied with the selling price of products. The POs in the region were generally successful, and the most successful one was also the Agricultural Development Cooperative with 72.3%. In the study, marketing prices, satisfaction with being a member of the POs, and satisfaction with the organizational management variables were tested by the Chi-square, and it was viewed that there was no significant difference among them. The study is important in increasing the effectiveness of the POs in all areas of agriculture and improving the organizational awareness of their members.

Key words: *marketing, members and membership, organizational awareness, producer organizations, selling price, variables*

INTRODUCTION

When the inclinations of individuals to act together are examined in working life, it is considered that organizational structure is of great importance. The organization of individuals has become a more important issue with civilization. Today, we are all witnessing that the people are organized in every field in particular and take active charge in the organizational structure [10]; [9].

In Turkey, the small scale of most agricultural enterprises, weakness in their competitive powers, and their insufficiency in marketing shares slow down the organizational activities. In addition, the low education level, the weak organizational awareness and managerial skills of rural people also become effective over organizational developments [29]; [12]; [5].

In societies that rural settlements dominate, the PO is more important [7]; [15]. Developing the rural people in all respects, equipping them

with education and information, and preserving the heaviness of agriculture in the economy will only be possible with the organization of the producers. In other words, the PO is needed to protect the social and economic interests of the rural people [13]; [11].

The POs are formal rural organizations whose members organized themselves with the objective of improving farm income through improved production, marketing, and local processing activities [21]; [14]. The PO is an activity having social and economic targets. These organizations are of capital importance in keeping the culture of democracy alive, creating employment opportunities, activating resources, investing, fighting poverty, and economic and social development [20]; [28]. Several organizations take on the task of protecting the interests of rural people in Turkey [1]. These organizations were

established for protecting the social, economic, and professional interests of rural people [24]; [4]. In particular, Agricultural Cooperatives, Chambers of Agriculture, Stud Breeders Association, Producer Associations, and Agricultural Credit Cooperatives are the organizations established for stated purposes.

In Uşak province, where the research was conducted, there are 73 Agricultural Development Cooperatives, 34 Irrigation Cooperatives, 1 Sugar Beet Growers Cooperative, 6 Chambers of Agriculture, 3 Stud Breeders Associations, 8 Producer Associations, 23 Agricultural Credit Cooperatives, 6 Taking Services to Villages Associations and 1 Uşak Region Livestock Farming Cooperatives Association.

In Uşak, the research region, the first PO took place with the establishment of the first sugar beet sugar factory in 1925 [19]. This organizational activity, which started with the Sugar Beet Growers Cooperative, later spread to all branches of agriculture [6]. In order that Uşak province, which has an important potential in plant and animal production, could be more active in agriculture, the producer should have sufficient knowledge about the POs and improve organizational relations.

The principal purpose of this study is to detect the producer's knowledge level about POs and to reveal statistically the rating of the relationship among parameters. The POs are agricultural cooperatives, chambers of agriculture and associations.

So that the producers can sufficiently suck advantage out of the POs, their organizational awareness must primarily improve and the organizational problems must be solved [17]; [8]. Thus, productivity will increase in the region, agricultural marketing will get easy, rural migration and unemployment will reduce.

In Uşak province, no previous study conducted about the PO has been come across previously. From this point of view, the study is important in respect to being original, scoping important data, and shedding light on other researches to be conducted on similar issues.

It is thought that this study, in addition, will also serve as a model for organizational studies in other sectors and contribute to the

creation of new policies in this regard.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

The main material of this research consisted of primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through surveys from the producers determined by the Proportional Sampling Method in the Uşak province.

The fieldwork was done in the period 2012-2013.

The previous research conducted and books published about the POs; the statistics and publications of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Turkish Statistical Institute, and the provincial and central organizations of the POs also formed the secondary data sources of the research. Both primary and secondary data contain the latest up-to-date information on the subject.

Methods

The research was conducted in six districts and their villages including the central district of Uşak province. The provinces of Turkey were divided into zones according to their agricultural potential within the scope of the Agricultural Extension Development Project. According to this, 72 zones were deemed suitable for Uşak province within the scope of this Project. These zones were also considered as the most homogeneous zonal distribution in conducting our research and surveys.

The Proportional Sampling Method was used in determining the sampling size. In this method, the formula presented below was used [18]; [22].

$$n = \frac{N_p(1-p)}{(N-1)\sigma^2_{p_x} + p(1-p)}$$

where:

n = Sampling size,

N_p = The number of total units belonging to the sampling frame,

p = Ratio of the studied feature on in the number of total units,

$\sigma^2_{p_x}$ = Variance.

According to the formula, the sampling volume was calculated as 360 for an error margin of 5% and a confidence interval of 95%.

Before conducting the survey, the producers were provided informed consent and this consent was verbal. Thus, loyalty and confidence in the research were brought into. The surveys were conducted face-to-face with the farmer members. The surveys forms; consisted of the problems of the POs, members' interest in the PO, opinions about the supervision of the POs and the government-the PO relations, preferences about the marketing of the products, opinions about the POs to market products, satisfaction status with the selling price of products, opinions on the evaluation of products and the success of the POs, etc.

After necessary controls and calculations in the filled survey forms, the data obtained were entered into the computer. A general database was created in the Microsoft Excel package program for the data entries, and a general coding plan was made according to the questions asked. Thus, the data were entered into the computer according to this coding plan and analyzed in a computer-based statistical package program. Analysis results were given in tables and supported by comments. In the analysis, in addition, it was also benefited from descriptive statistics (mean, percent, etc.) in evaluating the findings.

In the study, in addition, members' age, education, position in the PO, participation in general boards, interest in the PO, marketing of products and the advantages of the POs, satisfaction with being a member, the reason for participation in general boards, satisfaction with the management of the PO, supervision of the POs, satisfaction with product prices, the POs to market products were examined, and the relationships among variables were tested by Chi-square.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Members' interest in POs

In the study, members' interest in the PO was examined, and given in Table 1. According to this, 33.6% of members responded "Some of them are interested".

The ratio of those responding "All of them are interested" was detected at 5.8% and the ratio of those responding "None of them is interested" was also 16.9%.

Table 1. Members' interest in POs

Members' interest	Number of members	(%)
Some of them are interested	121	33.6
Only a few people are interested	71	19.7
None of them is interested	61	16.9
No idea	55	15.3
Non-responders	31	8.6
All of them are interested	21	5.8
Total	360	100.0

Source: Research results.

Supervision in POs

When the question "Who should supervise the POs" is examined; the ratio of stating "Only the government should supervise" was detected as 43%, that of stating "The internal supervision should be carried out by their own organs and the external supervision should be carried out by the government" was as 28,6%. 2.8% of the members didn't respond to this question (Table 2).

Table 2. Members' point of view on supervision of POs

Members' point of view	Number of members	(%)
Only the government should supervision the PO.	155	43.0
Internal supervision should be carried out by own organs and external supervision should be carried out by the government.	103	28.6
Only independent organizations should supervise the PO.	40	11.1
Only the supervising board should supervision the PO.	33	9.2
Only top organizations should supervise the PO.	19	5.3
Non-responders	10	2.8
Total	360	100.0

Source: Research results.

Government-PO relations

When the intervention of the government in the POs was analyzed, 5.8% of them responded "The government should not interfere in the POs at all" and 38.6% of them responded "The government should intervene in the POs when required". The ratio of those responding "The PO should be an institution of the government" is also 16.7% (Table 3). It was thought that those responding to this question believed that the PO was an independent and autonomous institution.

Table 3. Members' vision on government and PO relation

Government and POs relations	Number of members	(%)
The government should intervene in the POs when required	139	38.6
The government should encourage, but not interfere in the POs	124	34.4
POs should be institutions of the government	60	16.7
The government should not interfere in the POs at all	21	5.8
Non-responders	16	4.5
Total	360	100

Source: Research results.

34.4% of the members requested that the government should encourage the POs. 16.7% of the members also thought that the POs should be an institution of the government.

Marketing preferences of members of POs

In Table 4, the members' marketing preferences for their products were examined and the ratio of POs to take charge in the marketing of products marketing only through traders was detected 53.4% and that of POs to take charge in the marketing of products marketing only in the marketplaces was 11.3%.

Which POs should agricultural products be marketed by?

In the study, it was also researched which POs should the products be marketed by, and the ratio of the members responding "Agricultural Development Cooperative" was determined at 33.6%, that of those responding "Agricultural Credit Cooperative" was 20.8% and that of

those responding "Producer Association" was 16.7% (Table 5).

Table 4. Members' marketing preferences

Marketing preferences	Number of members	(%)
Traders	179	53.4
Agricultural Development Cooperative	39	11.6
Marketing in the marketplace	38	11.3
Trader/Marketing in the marketplace	20	6.0
Stud Breeders Association	14	4.2
Agricultural Credit Cooperative	13	3.9
Agricultural Development Cooperative/Trader	11	3.3
Agricultural Development Cooperative/Trader/Agricultural Credit Cooperative	6	1.8
Stud Breeders Association/Trader	6	1.8
Trader/Agricultural Credit Cooperative	4	1.2
Agricultural Development Cooperative /Trader/Marketing in the marketplace	3	0.9
Agricultural Development Cooperative/ Marketing in the marketplace	1	0.3
Stud Breeders Association/Trader/Marketing in the marketplace	1	0.3
Total	335	100.0

Source: Research results.

Table 5. Members' PO preferences in the marketing of agricultural products

POs	Number of members	(%)
Agricultural Development Coop.	121	33.6
Agricultural Credit Cooperative	75	20.8
Producer Association	60	16.7
Chamber of Agriculture	45	12.5
Non-responders	39	10.8
Stud Breeders Association	18	5.0
Irrigation Cooperative	2	0.6
Total	360	100.0

Source: Research results.

Members' satisfaction with selling price of agricultural products

69.72% of the members market their products.

In the research, the members' satisfaction status with the selling prices of products was examined, and the ratio of those responding "I am very satisfied" was detected at 2.8%, those responding "I am satisfied" was at 10.8%, those responding "I am partially satisfied" was at 24.7%, those responding "I am not satisfied" was at 24.7% and those responding "I am not at all satisfied" was 32.2%. 4.7% of the members did not respond to this question (Table 6).

Table 6. Members' satisfaction with selling prices of agricultural products

Satisfaction level	Number of members	(%)
Not at all satisfied	116	32.2
Partially satisfied	89	24.7
Not satisfied	89	24.7
Satisfied	39	10.9
Non-responders	17	4.7
Very satisfied	10	2.8
Total	360	100.0

Source: Research results.

In Table 7, the reasons for the members' dissatisfaction status with the product prices were examined. Accordingly, 42.2% of the members alleged the unstable product prices as a reason for dissatisfaction. 14.5% of the members also responded "The deduction is high".

Table 7. The reasons for members' dissatisfaction with selling prices of agricultural products

Reasons	Number of members	(%)
Unstable product prices	152	42.2
Non-responders	93	25.8
Too high deduction	52	14.5
Paying a late of the product amount	31	8.6
Payment noncash	30	8.3
Other	2	0.6
Total	360	100.0

Source: Research results.

The most important reason for price instability was that the sector in which the product was marketed was generally the private sector and this sector was also the determining power. In addition to the government taking the necessary measures in this regard, it would be also beneficial for the POs to take a more

active part in marketing.

Evaluation of agricultural products via POs

Members' opinions regarding processing by the POs instead of marketing products were also examined and the ratio of those responding "Product prices increase" was identified as 51.1%, the ratio of those responding "Job opportunities arise" was 26.4%, and the ratio of those responding "Members have a voice in the industry sector" was also 10% (Table 8).

Table 8. Members' point of view on evaluation of agricultural products by POs

Members' opinion	Number of members	(%)
Crop prices increase	184	51.1
Job opportunities arise	95	26.4
Members have a voice in the industry sector	36	10.0
Profit is distributed at the end of the year	25	6.9
Non-responders	14	3.9
Other	6	1.7
Total	360	100.0

Source: Research results.

Success levels of POs

In this part of the study, the success status of the POs was researched and they were examined into five groups according to their success. Accordingly, the Agricultural Development Cooperative ranked 1 with 10.9%, the Sugar Beet Growers Cooperative ranked 2 with 10.7% and the Stud Breeders Association ranked 3 with 10% in a very successful group. The Agricultural Credit Cooperative ranked 1 with 66.3% in the successful group. This was followed by the Producer Union with 61.8% and the Agricultural Development Cooperative with 61.4% (Table 9). The Irrigation Cooperative ranked 1 in the unsuccessful (31.3%) and very unsuccessful (28.1%) groups. In general, the POs in the research region were successful. Because, 72.3% of the members of the Agricultural Development Cooperative, 37.5% of the members of the Irrigation Cooperative, 68.8% of the members of the Agricultural Credit Cooperative, 58.7% of the members of the Sugar Beet Growers Cooperative, 68.6% of the members of the Stud Breeders Association, 67.7% of the

members of the Producer Associations and 52.8% of the members of the Chamber of Agriculture considered as successful the

cooperative or association which they established.

Table 9. Success levels of POs

POs	Number of members	Very successful (%)	Successful (%)	No idea (%)	Unsuccessful (%)	Very unsuccessful (%)
Chamber of Agriculture	218	3.7	49.1	1.8	31.2	14.2
Agricultural Credit Co.	163	2.5	66.3	1.2	19.6	10.4
Stud Breeders Assoc.	140	10.0	58.6	5.7	17.1	8.6
Agricultural Devel. Co.	101	10.9	61.4	4.0	8.9	14.8
Sugar Beet Growers Co.	75	10.7	48.0	6.7	17.3	17.3
Producer Associations	68	5.9	61.8	1.5	20.5	10.3
Irrigation Cooperative	32	9.4	28.1	3.1	31.3	28.1

Source: Research results.

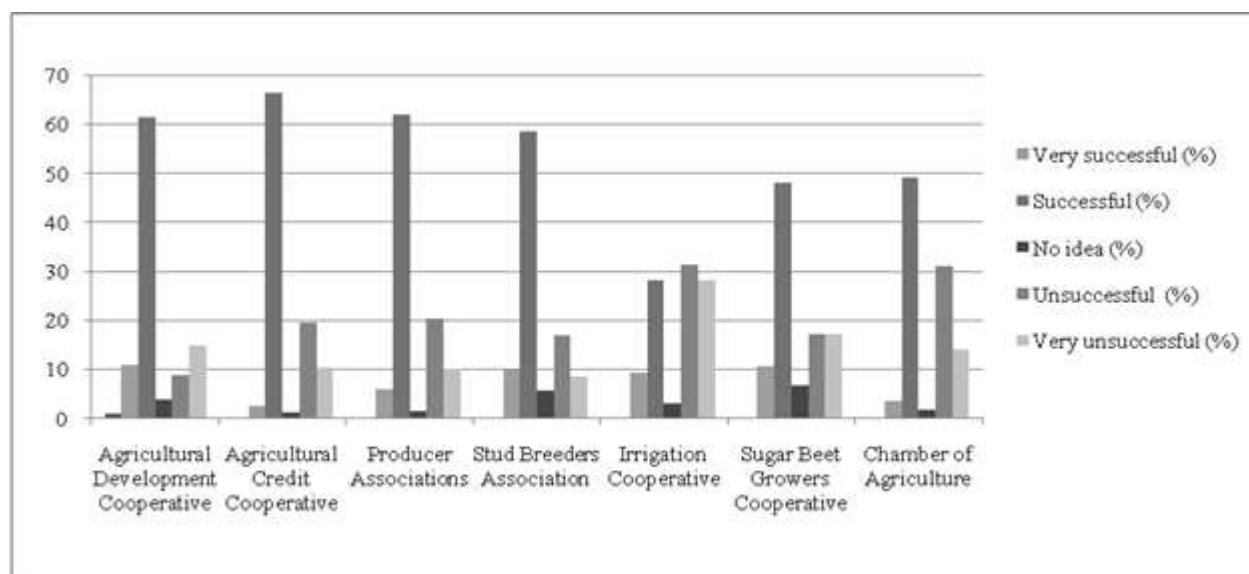


Fig. 1. Success graph of the POs

Source: Own results.

The success status of the POs was also given in Figure 1.

Statistical test

In the study, the Chi-square independence test was used in determining the correlation among variables. According to χ^2 independence test:

There was a significant relationship between the members' age and their knowing the advantages of the POs to the other those. While the members thinking that the POs provide an advantage were in the 41-50 age group, those thinking that they do not provide any advantage were also in the 31-40 age group.

Whether the members were willing to become a member of the POs was examined by age groups, and it was detected that those in the 30-50 age group were more willing. When the Chi-square analysis regarding the members'

satisfaction levels with membership was also examined, those being satisfied and very satisfied were in the 41-50 age group, those being partially satisfied were in the 31-40 age group and those being unsatisfied were in the 51-60 age group.

In the study, the distribution of participation in general boards, the most important organ of the POs, according to the members' age groups was examined, and it appeared that there were those not participating in none of the general boards in all age groups. Most of those participating in all of the general boards were in the 41-50 age group, and this meant that young members took interest in the general boards.

In the study, the distribution of the members' satisfaction levels with the management of the organization according to age groups was also

researched, and it was determined that partial satisfaction in all groups came into prominence. It was identified that especially the members in the 41-50 age group were satisfied with the works of the management.

In the research, Chi-square analysis results regarding the members' education levels, knowing the advantages of the POs, satisfaction levels with being a member of the POs and the management, the reasons for their participation in the general boards, and most important problems of the POs were examined, and it was detected that there was not a significant relationship among variables.

Whether or not the members read the articles of association of the PO while becoming a member of the PO, and the relationship of which with educational status was analyzed by khi-square. Accordingly, as the level of education was high, the status of reading the articles of association of the PO was also high.

The relation of the members' participation in the general boards with their education levels was examined, and it was defined that the ratio of those graduating to secondary education from the members participating in all general boards was higher than the others. Likewise, the ratio of reading the articles of association of the PO of the members participating in all general boards was also higher than the others. It was detected that 66.1% of members worked in non-agriculture.

In the research, a chi-square analysis of the relationship between the members' doing/not doing status non-agriculture businesses and the satisfaction levels with being a member of the POs was also performed. According to this, it was identified that the members not doing non-agriculture businesses and farming only were very satisfied with the POs, and among those being satisfied, the retired ones were also in the majority.

In the research, the membership periods to the POs were compared with the organizational and managerial satisfaction levels, and it was identified that the new members were more satisfied. When the members' membership periods and their participation status in general boards were examined, that new members were in the majority among those participating in all of the general boards occurred. When the

members' membership periods to the PO and the POs in which the products will be marketed were examined, it was identified that the agricultural development cooperative was considered more. In addition, it was researched what can be the contribution if the products are processed by the POs, and it was understood that the selling price of the products could increase according to the Chi-square analysis. In addition, marketing prices, satisfaction with being a member of the POs, and satisfaction with the organizational management variables were tested by the Chi-square, and it was viewed that there was no significant difference among variables.

The duty of the members in the PO, knowing the definition and advantages of the PO, reading the articles of association, the satisfaction with being a member, their ideas about problems and inspection, and their preferences in the marketing of products were explored. It was viewed that there was no significant relationship among variables.

In the study, a significant relationship was found between the members' taking charge in the POs and the government's intervening/not intervening in the management of the organization, and most of the chairman of the board stated that the government should intervene when necessary.

When the relationship between the members' participation in the general boards and the satisfaction levels with being a member of the POs was examined, it was determined that those being very satisfied were those participating in all the general boards, and those not being satisfied at all were also those not participating in the general boards at all. When the participation in the general boards and the satisfaction levels with the management of the organization were examined, it was detected that most of those being very satisfied were those participating in all of the boards. Likewise, those not being satisfied and not being satisfied at all with the management of the organization were those not at all participating in the general boards.

One of the most important factors for the success of the POs is that members own their own organizations and are interested in organizational works. For this purpose, the

members' being interested in organizational studies were also researched and it was understood that only some members were interested in the organizational studies.

Discussions

The discussion section takes an important place in the comparison of scientific research results. In this study also, obtained findings were discussed with those of some research.

In the study, 19.7% of the members stated that they market their products only through POs, and 29.3% of them both through the PO and trader or in the marketplace. In the study conducted by [25], was emphasized that the market share of cooperative organizations was over 90%, especially in Northern European countries.

In the research, when the members were asked which of the POs should market the products, it was revealed that the agricultural development cooperative ranked number one with a ratio of 33.6. Agricultural development cooperatives are established by the members for an economic purpose. [26] reviewed agricultural development cooperatives and the other POs activating in Africa and other regions. In the study, it was stated that during the pre-structural adjustment era, many governments from developing countries supported agricultural development cooperatives and POs. These organizations however often failed to provide desired services to members due to political interference, internal governance, and managerial problems. In the study, it was also emphasized that all the agricultural organizations were not active. In another study conducted by [27], the evidence for improving access to markets, information, and technologies was emphasized, and the conditions that facilitate the success of agricultural development cooperatives in providing such services were examined. In another study, it was emphasized that although agricultural development cooperatives aim to enhance agricultural production and marketing, in some countries such as China, not all members sell their products through agricultural cooperatives [16].

In the study, 51.1% of the members asserted that by the evaluation of products through the

POs product prices will be stabilized and 26.4% of them also that job opportunities will arise. By this means, in the region, it was stated that it will be contributed to the prevention of unemployment, the development of rural areas, and the slowdown of rural migration. [23] explained that the POs assist their members in purchasing, processing, and marketing stages of products, they arise new job opportunities for members and provide training support for them in related fields. In addition, they stated that one of the most important means for the economic and social development of rural areas and agricultural enterprises is the POs.

Although there were POs that did not succeed in the research area, they were successful in general. It was viewed that the satisfaction with the works of the management was effective in the success of the POs. [2], in their study, expressed that 59.3% of the POs they examined were unsuccessful. In the study, the main reasons for the failure were stated as the members' distrust of the POs, that the organizational request did not come from the members, and that the POs were not attached priority in some agricultural supports. In the study conducted in Poland by [3], it was stated that variables such as the leader's strength, previous business acquaintances, the initial selection of members, and the number of members had a significant positive impact on the likelihood of success of the researched organizations. In another study, it was stated that social capital has been the key element in the formation and development of the POs [30].

In this research, it is determined that PO-government relations are weak and the government should not interfere in the POs. In the research conducted by Erbaş (2018), it was emphasized that the government should not interfere in the POs at all. He specified that unions and organizations in the Turkish constitution have to be encouraged and supported. As a principle, it is natural that professional associations may contact politics. But, ideological policies and organic relations with any political party may harm the organization movement and the chambers of agriculture. Political connections should be

related to agricultural policies and producers' problems [11].

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, in which the members' organizational awareness and marketing preferences were investigated, it was revealed that the effectiveness of POs should be increased in all fields.

The research results revealed that most of the members marketed their products through traders. The reason for this was that the POs were insufficient in marketing. Ergo, marketing the crops through the POs is always important for organizational success. In this case, that cooperatives established for economic purposes take a more active role in marketing will be the right choice.

In the research, the members' satisfaction situation with their products' marketing price was also examined, and it was identified that the ratio of the members being very satisfied with it was very low. On the other hand, the rate of those not being dissatisfied was found to be quite high.

The opinions of the members about the processing of the products by the POs showed that price stability would be achieved in the case of the processing of the products by the POs.

In the research region, although the POs were sufficient in numbers, it was viewed that the members did not have enough information about the PO, and their interests in the PO were low. These were important obstacles to effective membership.

Finally, a strong member-PO relationship is needed in order that POs can achieve their purpose and be effective in sustainable rural development. Stronger agriculture is needed for a stronger country, and stronger POs are needed for stronger agriculture.

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