

ABSTRACT

MALTESE SELECTED STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELEMENTS AND VALUES IN THE CO-OPERATIVE CONCEPT

Purpose: The objective of the paper is to determine the major perceptions of three selected Maltese stakeholders regarding the elements and values of the co-operative concept.

Methodology: Primary data for this research was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews conducted with representatives of selected co-operative stakeholders consisting of thirteen co-operative representatives, four co-operative institutional bodies representatives and five co-operative experts.

Findings: The findings of this paper indicate that many Maltese respondents are, as yet, deficient in their understanding of the elements and values of the co-operative concept. This could be attributable to various as-yet-ongoing limitations such as misconceptions about the particular adaptability of the co-operative structure to socially oriented entities, deficiencies in relevant education and training, regulatory framework restrictions, and insufficient promotion of the co-operative model.

Practical Implications: The paper implies that, for a clearer understanding of the elements and values of the co-operative concept, major co-operative stakeholders need to prioritize in particular the significance of socially relevant elements - which are meant to be entrenched within such concept – over the mere registration of annual surpluses.

Value: It is hoped that this paper contributes towards co-operative stakeholders achieving a better understanding and appreciation of the elements and values of the co-operative concept, and thus enable themselves to apply better such a concept both in their own interest and in that of the co-operative movement. Furthermore, lessons may easily be learnt from this Maltese case for application to other co-operative movements, especially in other small European states.

Keywords, Co-op misconceptions, Malta, labour-managed firms, economic development

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