

Research Article

The Effectiveness of Coffee Cooperative Unions and Coffee Value Chain Performance: A Case Study of Coffee Cooperatives in Greater Bushenyi

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Abstract

The study investigated the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions on improving coffee value chain performance in greater Bushenyi district. It was limited to; identifying the role of value chain actors and coffee cooperative unions on enhancing coffee value chain performance in the study area, analyzing factors influencing the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions in improving the coffee value chain performance and examine the effect of coffee cooperative unions on coffee value chain performance. The study employed a cross-sectional research design and primary data was collected from 208 respondents. The data was analysed using SPSS version 22.0. The study used questionnaires and interview guide to collect data. The study concludes that value chain actors and cooperative unions play a critical role in enhancing coffee value chain performance particularly training, quality enhancement, market access and input access lead to significant improvements in value chain performance. The study concludes that the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions in improving coffee value chain performance is significantly influenced by access to financial resources, market accessibility, provision of quality inputs, collaboration with value chain actors, and strong member engagement. The study concludes that *market linkage*, *input support*, *training access*, and *credit services* all have a statistically significant positive effect on performance, with *market linkage having the strongest impact*. The study recommends that; cooperative unions should foster transparency, democratic governance, regular meetings, and inclusive decision-making processes to encourage active member involvement, efforts should still be made to advocate for clear coffee sector policies, subsidies, and regulatory frameworks to create an enabling environment.

Keywords

Effectiveness, Cooperative Unions, Value Chain Performance, Bushenyi District

1. Introduction

Globally, coffee cooperative unions play a crucial role in improving the performance of the coffee value chain by empowering smallholder farmers, enhancing quality standards, and facilitating market access [13]. According to Pérez et al.,

cooperative organizations are instrumental in addressing challenges along value chains such as price volatility and market access faced by coffee farmers worldwide [13]. By pooling resources, negotiating collectively, and implementing sustain-

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able practices, coffee cooperative unions contribute to the resilience and sustainability of the global coffee industry [13].

In Africa, coffee production is a significant contributor to the economies of several African countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and others [4]. It is often a major source of foreign exchange earnings and supports millions of smallholder farmers and their families in Africa. Cooperative unions in Africa serve as intermediaries between smallholder farmers and the global coffee market. They aggregate coffee produce from individual farmers, provide extension services, facilitate access to finance, inputs, and technology, and negotiate better prices with buyers [4].

In Uganda, Cooperative unions play a crucial role in organizing smallholder coffee farmers, providing them with access to markets, inputs, extension services, and financial support to enhance performance of coffee value chain [8]. These unions serve as intermediaries between farmers and buyers, helping to improve market access and bargaining power for the farmers. For example, The Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance (UCFA) is one of the prominent cooperative unions in Uganda [8]. It represents over 1.5 million coffee farmers across the country. UCFA works to empower smallholder farmers by providing training on sustainable farming practices, facilitating access to inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides, and connecting farmers to international markets thus improving coffee value chain performance [9]. The Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative, located on the slopes of Mount Elgon in Eastern Uganda, is another example of a successful cooperative union [12]. It has implemented initiatives to improve the quality of coffee produced by its members through training in proper harvesting and processing techniques. Gumutindo has also secured Fair trade certification, allowing its members to command premium prices for their coffee in the global market [12].

Cooperative unions in Uganda, such as UCFA and Gumutindo, play a vital role in providing smallholder farmers with access to international markets [16]. By consolidating the coffee produced by individual farmers, these unions can negotiate better prices and contracts with buyers, ensuring a more stable income for their members which improve value chain performance [8]. Through training and capacity-building programs, cooperative unions help farmers improve the quality of their coffee beans. This includes proper harvesting, processing, and storage techniques to meet international quality standards. Improved coffee quality not only fetches higher prices but also enhances the reputation of Ugandan coffee in global markets [18].

The Greater Bushenyi District in Uganda is a prominent coffee-growing region known for its robust coffee production. Coffee cooperative unions in this district play a crucial role in enhancing the value chain performance by providing various services and support to coffee farmers [7]. These cooperatives aim to improve production, processing, and marketing of coffee, thereby increasing incomes and livelihoods of the farmers. However, the interventions and services provided by

cooperative unions in Greater Bushenyi have led to several improvements in the coffee value chain. For example, through training and better access to inputs, farmers have reported higher yields [2]. This increased productivity has strengthened the supply side of the value chain and also by adopting best practices and utilizing cooperative processing facilities, the quality of coffee has significantly improved [2]. Higher quality coffee fetches better prices on the international market.

In Greater Bushenyi district, Ankole Coffee Producers Cooperative Union has been a model of success, demonstrating how organized efforts can lead to substantial improvements in the coffee value chain. Their initiatives in training, market access, and value addition have set a benchmark for other cooperatives in the region [7].

2. Problem Statement

In an ideal scenario, Coffee Cooperative Unions would play a pivotal role in driving positive change within the coffee value chain [16]. They would effectively coordinate and support coffee farmers, ensuring access to markets, inputs, extension services, and financial resources [16]. Through collective action and collaboration, cooperative unions would facilitate the adoption of best practices in coffee farming, quality assurance, and sustainable production methods to enhance the performance of coffee value chain [16]. This would lead to increased productivity, improved coffee quality, higher incomes for farmers, and overall development of the coffee value chain. However, the reality often presents various challenges and constraints that hinder the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions as these may include inadequate resources and capacity within the union, limited market access, poor infrastructure, low adoption of modern farming techniques, and governance issues [18]. Additionally, external factors such as price fluctuations, climate change, and market volatility further exacerbate the factors that affect coffee farmers and cooperative unions which affect value chain performance [18].

Although literature exists on the general benefits of agricultural cooperatives, a specific knowledge gap persists regarding the effectiveness of Coffee Cooperative Unions (CCUs) in improving coffee value chain performance in Uganda [20]. Many studies focus on cooperatives' broad role in agriculture without specifically addressing the contributions of CCUs [16]. Additionally, comprehensive studies that examine both internal dynamics (such as governance, capacity, and member participation) and external factors (such as market access, regulatory environment, and international trade requirements) influencing CCU effectiveness are lacking [10]. This study sought to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of Coffee Cooperative Unions (CCUs) in improving the coffee value chain performance in Uganda with reference to coffee cooperative unions in greater Bushenyi.

3. Research Objectives

The general objective of the study was to; investigate the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions on improving coffee value chain performance in greater Bushenyi district. The specific objective was to; analyze factors influencing the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions in improving the coffee value chain performance in greater Bushenyi district.

4. Justification of the Study

Coffee remains Uganda's leading agricultural export and a major source of income and livelihood for millions of smallholder farmers, especially in regions such as Greater Bushenyi, which includes districts like Bushenyi, Sheema, Mitooma, Rubirizi, and Buhweju. Despite its potential, Uganda's coffee sector continues to face challenges related to low farm-gate prices, poor value addition, limited access to export markets, and weak farmer bargaining power [5, 18]. These challenges underscore the importance of strengthening collective action mechanisms such as coffee cooperative unions, which have historically played a central role in empowering farmers, promoting fair trade, and improving participation in the coffee value chain.

Coffee cooperative unions are critical in mobilizing producers, facilitating access to agricultural inputs, enhancing quality control, promoting post-harvest handling, and linking farmers to national and international markets. They also contribute to capacity-building, financial inclusion, and sustainability practices, all of which are essential components for value chain upgrading [14]. However, the extent to which these unions have effectively contributed to improving the performance of the coffee value chain in Uganda, particularly in Greater Bushenyi, remains insufficiently studied and documented.

Greater Bushenyi is one of Uganda's key coffee-growing regions with a long-standing history of cooperative involvement. Yet, empirical evidence assessing the effectiveness of these cooperatives in enhancing value chain performance is limited. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of existing cooperative structures will provide a basis for policy formulation and development interventions aimed at revitalizing Uganda's coffee sector [17]. Moreover, with the Uganda Coffee Roadmap targeting an increase in annual coffee exports from 6 million to 20 million 60kg bags by 2030, strengthening local cooperatives is seen as a strategic tool for achieving this ambitious goal [6].

5. Significance of the Study

The study will be significant to different stakeholders:

Coffee farmers

Understanding the effectiveness of Coffee Cooperative Unions is crucial for coffee farmers as it directly impacts their livelihoods. By identifying the challenges and opportunities

within the coffee value chain, farmers can better leverage the support and services provided by coffee cooperative unions to improve their productivity, access to markets, and income. Insights from this study can empower farmers to make informed decisions about their farming practices, leading to improved livelihoods and resilience against external shocks.

Coffee cooperative unions

This study will provide valuable insights into its performance and areas for improvement. By identifying challenges and opportunities, Coffee cooperative unions will tailor its programs and interventions to better meet the needs of its members and enhance its effectiveness in supporting coffee farmers. The findings of this study will inform strategic planning, resource allocation, and capacity-building efforts within Coffee cooperative unions, ultimately strengthening its role as a key player in the coffee value chain.

Local community members

The significance of this study extends to the broader local community in Greater Bushenyi District. A thriving coffee sector benefits not only coffee farmers but also other community members who may be indirectly involved in coffee production, processing, or trade. More effective coffee cooperative unions would mean increased economic opportunities, improved infrastructure, and overall socio-economic development in the local community.

Government/policy makers

For government officials and policy makers, understanding the effectiveness of Coffee Cooperative Unions is crucial for shaping policies and programs that support the sustainable development of the coffee sector. Insights from this study can inform policy interventions aimed at addressing systemic challenges, strengthening institutional capacities, and promoting inclusive growth within the coffee value chain.

Future researchers

This study will serve as a foundation for future research endeavors in the field of coffee value chain development and cooperative management. Researchers will build upon the findings of this study to explore specific aspects of coffee cooperative union's performance, conduct comparative analysis with other cooperative unions, or investigate the long-term impacts of interventions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of cooperative unions in improving value chain performance within the coffee sector.

6. Materials and Methods

This study adopted a *mixed-methods research approach*, combining both *quantitative and qualitative* research methods [3]. The rationale behind using a mixed-methods approach was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions and their influence on the performance of the coffee value chain in Greater Bushenyi.

The study employed cross-section design which was applied to all objectives. This approach combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehen-

sive understanding of a research problem [3]. Mixed-methods research was conducted in sequential phases, where one type of data collection follows the other, or concurrently, where both types were collected simultaneously. Quantitative methods were applied to coffee farmers to collect numerical data while qualitative methods were applied to key informants to qualitative data which was in form of verbatim statements.

This design leveraged the strengths of both methodologies to address complex research questions, allowing for a more nuanced analysis and richer insights than either method alone could provide [15]. This design was suitable for the study because it provided a fuller picture of the research problem by capturing both numerical trends and detailed narratives. The mixed-methods design also provided a more complete picture of the cooperative union's impact by combining numerical data with rich, contextual information.

The study was conducted around greater Bushenyi District, located in the western region of Uganda. It encompasses five districts: Bushenyi, Buhweju, Rubirizi, Sheema, and Mitooma. The district is positioned between approximately 0.4 °S to 1.2 °S latitude and 30.1 °E to 30.4 °E longitude. To the north, it is bordered by the districts of Kasese and Kamwenge, Mbarara and Ibanda Districts to the east, to the south, it is adjacent to Ntungamo and Rukungiri Districts, to the west, it borders the Democratic Republic of Congo, separated by Lake Edward and Queen Elizabeth National Park.

The District experiences a tropical highland climate characterized by two rainy seasons; March to May and September to November. The average annual rainfall ranges from 1200 mm to 1600 mm, which supports robust agricultural activities. The district has soils which are predominantly deep, well-drained, and have relatively high clay content. They are suitable for perennial crops like coffee.

The district was chosen because it is a significant coffee-producing region in Uganda, making it an ideal location to study the coffee value chain [18]. The presence of a well-established coffee sector allows for a comprehensive analysis of cooperative unions' impact on value chain performance. The district also had several active cooperative unions that have been instrumental in the agricultural sector. Studying these existing cooperatives provided practical insights into their operations, challenges, and successes in improving the coffee value chain [19].

The target population for a study on the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions on improving the coffee value chain performance in Greater Bushenyi District should include various stakeholders involved in the coffee value chain. These include; coffee farmers (both cooperative and non-members), cooperative leaders and managers, local government officials and extension workers, coffee processors and buyers.

Stratified sampling technique was chosen because ensures that all subgroups of coffee farmers are represented in the sample. This was crucial if the population was heterogeneous and farmers from different strata might have different characteristics or experiences and it also further ensured that the

sample was not biased towards any particular group and resources were utilized efficiently by focusing on key segments of the population.

Purposive sampling was employed to select key informants who were believed to be providing technical support because these people were expected to have high level of expertise on the phenomenon under investigation.

The sample size was derived from a formula by Anderson et al. [1] as follows: $n = z^2(pq)/d^2$

Where n is the minimum sample size; Z is 1.96 at 95% confidence level; P is the population proportion i.e. assume that the proportion of coffee producers in the area 85%. While d is the margin of error (acceptable error) which is assumed to be 0.05 and q is a weighting variable computed as (1-P, 1-0.85).

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times (0.85 \times 0.15)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 208$$

Questionnaires were used to collect data, this also enabled the collection of quantifiable data that can be statistically analyzed. The questionnaire briefly described the objective of the survey, emphasizing the focus on effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions on value chain performance. It further collected information on demographic characteristics like age, gender, education level, and household size, the size of the farm, type of coffee grown, and years of farming experience and finally gathered information on specific objectives.

An interview guide was also another a crucial tool to collect qualitative data, designed to ensure systematic and comprehensive data collection from key informants. When investigating the effectiveness of Coffee cooperative unions on value chain performance, an interview guide ensured that all interviews cover the same topics, allowing for comparability of response, guarantees that all relevant aspects of the topic were addressed and allowed for probing where respondents don't give adequate answers and follow-up questions to explore issues in depth. This instrument were used to obtain qualitative data that was reported in form of verbatim statements. This tool targeted, cooperative leaders, agricultural extension agents and local government official leaders.

Data was analyzed using two methods that is qualitative and quantitatively.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22.0) was used for analyzing quantitative data. Basic descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and percentages were calculated to summarize demographic characteristics and key variables. Inferential statistics; Statistical tests such as t-tests were used to analyze differences between groups or to assess the relationship between variables. Quantitative data was analyzed by computing statistics such as Mean, Percentage, and Frequency distribution. Descriptive statistics measures such as means, standard deviation and frequency distribution were used to analyze continuous and nominal data at Univariate level. Inferential statistics were applied to generate and

interpret any significant associations between dependent and independent variables at both bivariate and multivariate level. Qualitative data was analyzed in verbatim statement form based on study themes.

The ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Research and Ethics Committee of Bishop Stuart University.

Informed consent: Participants must be fully informed about the nature, purpose, and potential risks and benefits of the research before agreeing to take part. This included detailed information, voluntary participation, and the ability to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality and anonymity; Researcher protected participants' data and personal information from unauthorized access and disclosure. Ensuring that participants' identities are not linked to their data in any public report.

Minimizing harm: Researcher strived to minimize any potential physical, psychological, or social harm to participants through identifying and mitigating potential risks associated with the research.

Respect for respondents: Respecting the autonomy and dignity of all participants, including special considerations for vulnerable populations (for example, children, prisoners, individuals with cognitive impairments).

Conflict of interest: Researcher disclosed any potential conflicts of interest that could affect the research process or findings through managing and mitigating conflicts to maintain objectivity and trustworthiness.

7. Study Results

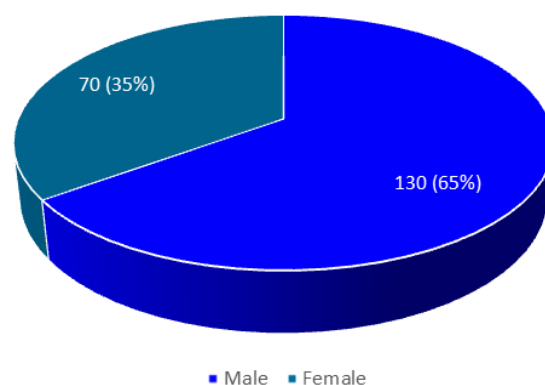


Figure 1. Sex of respondents.

As shown in Figure 1 above, 65% of the respondents were males and 35% were female. The dominance of *male respondents* means that *men are more actively involved* in coffee cooperative unions. This could indicate that *coffee production, processing, or decision-making roles* in the coffee value chain are male-dominated. The results also imply that *lower representation of females* points a *gender gap in access* to membership and leadership in cooperatives.

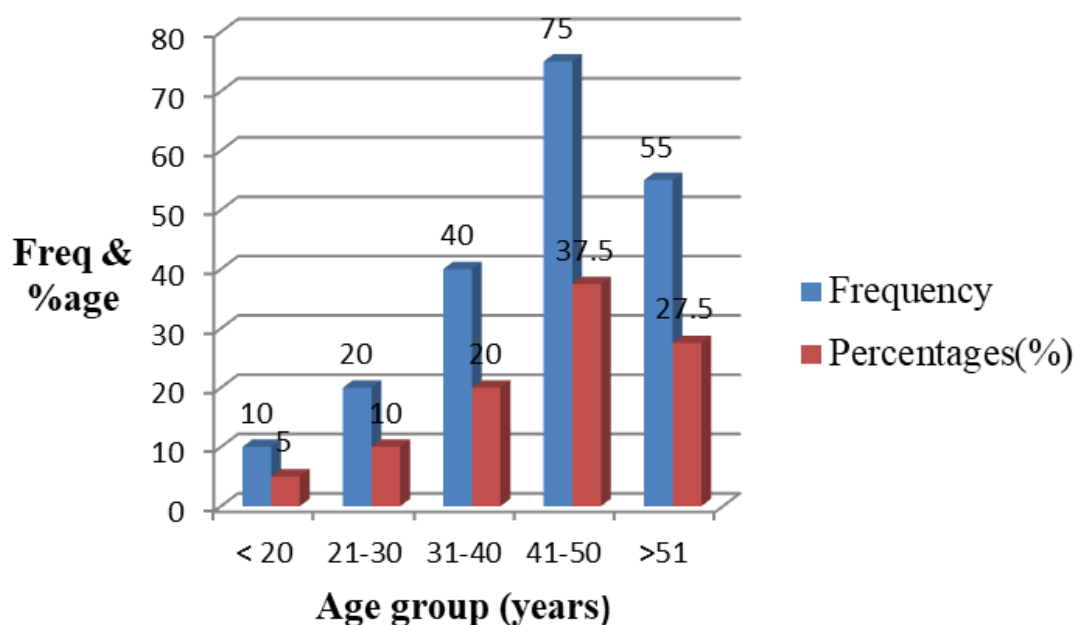


Figure 2. Age group.

The results show that the *majority of the respondents (37.5%) fall within the 41–50 years age group*, followed by 27.5% in the above 51 years group, and 20% in the 31–40

years group. Only a small fraction of respondents were below the age of 30 (15% combined).

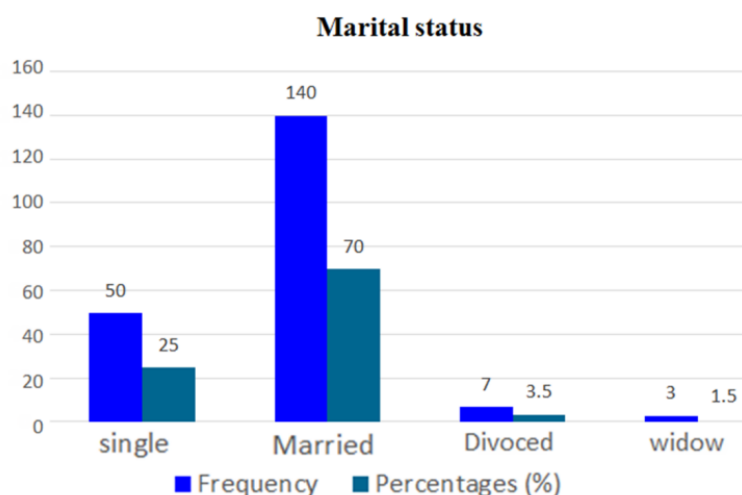


Figure 3. Marital status.

According to the results in Figure 3; majority of respondents were married (140, 70%), this implies that married individuals are likely to have more responsibilities and more invested in long-term benefits like improved market access, better prices, training, and financial stability provided by coffee cooperatives.

Single (50, 25%). A significant minority of the respondents are single, possibly representing younger farmers or youth entering the coffee value chain. An implication that the group are more open to innovation and technology adoption introduced by cooperatives.

Divorced (7, 3.5%). The results show that a small portion of the respondents is divorced. This group faces financial and social vulnerability. If they are members of cooperatives, it shows the unions' potential in offering social and economic support to marginalized groups, which enhances inclusiveness and equity in coffee value chain.

Widow (3, 1.5%). This is the smallest group, showing limited participation. This suggests that widows may face chal-

lenges in accessing or engaging with cooperative services, perhaps due to gender or land ownership barriers.

The results in Figure 4 show that results revealed that secondary forms the majority of the respondents with 50%. Their moderate education level equips them with essential skills like reading, writing, and basic financial literacy.

Tertiary education 25%. This group has post-secondary education, likely including diplomas and certificates in agriculture and business.

No formal education (10%). This group struggles to understand cooperative documentation, financial records and agronomic training.

Primary education (8%). This group partially engage with cooperative services but still need support to understand market dynamics and cooperative governance.

University education (7%). This group though small in number, serve as managers, policy formulators, innovators linking cooperatives to export markets, certification schemes, and sustainable practices.

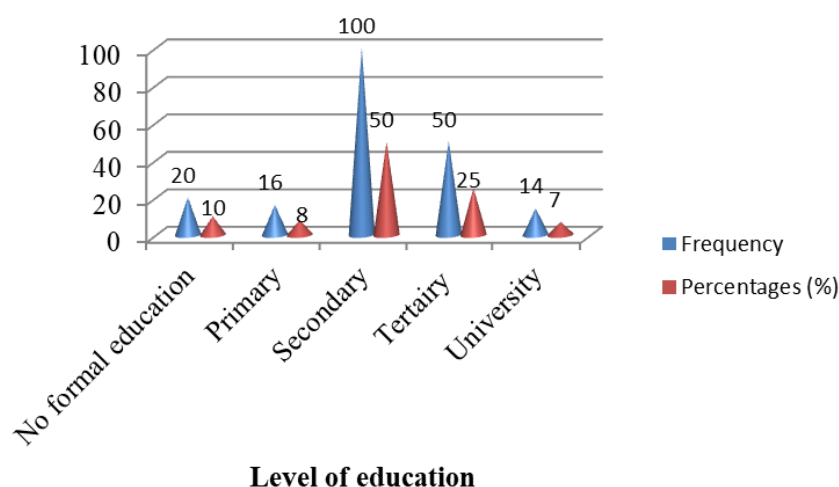


Figure 4. Level of education.

Table 1. Factors influencing the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions in improving coffee value chain performance.

Factor	Chi-square (χ^2)	df	p-value	Sig (p < 0.05)
Access to financial resources	10.24	1	.0014	Significant
Market accessibility	7.89	1	.0049	Significant
Quality inputs	5.13	1	.0235	Significant
Collaboration with other actors	4.56	1	.0328	Significant
Government support	3.41	1	.0650	Not significant
Membership engagement and participation	12.88	1	.0003	Significant
Infrastructure	2.67	1	.1023	Not significant

Access to financial resources has a p-value of 0.0014, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This means coffee cooperative unions with better access to financial resources are *more likely* to be effective in improving coffee value chain performance.

Market accessibility shows a p-value of 0.0049, which is also significant. This implies that unions with improved access to markets are *more likely* to enhance value chain performance.

Quality inputs have a p-value of 0.0235, which is significant. Therefore, unions with better access to quality inputs are *more likely* to be effective in improving value chain performance.

Collaboration with other actors has a p-value of 0.0328, which is significant. This means that strong collaboration with stakeholders makes coffee cooperative unions *more likely* to improve performance.

Government support has a p-value of 0.0650, which is *not significant*. Thus, coffee cooperative unions receiving government support are currently *less likely* to show a statistically confirmed effect on improving value chain performance.

Membership engagement and participation has a highly significant p-value of 0.0003. This means that cooperatives with active member participation are *more likely* to be effective.

Infrastructure has a p-value of 0.1023, which is not significant. Therefore, infrastructure factors are *less likely* to have a meaningful impact on the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions.

In an interview held with agricultural extension agents, it was revealed that; *“The impact of cooperative unions has been significant. They offer storage facilities and drying equipment that smallholder farmers could not afford individually. This reduces post-harvest handling mistakes and mold contamination, which are common causes of loss”*.

In another interview held with cooperative union manager on how have cooperative unions contributed to promoting fair trade and ethical practices within the coffee industry in Greater Bushenyi, it was reported that *“One of the most sig-*

nificant contributions of coffee cooperative unions is their effort to secure fair prices for coffee growers. By organizing farmers into strong groups, unions increase their bargaining power and negotiate better deals with buyers, including access to fair trade markets”.

8. Discussion of Results

The results indicate that access to financial resources is strongly associated with perceived effectiveness which means that financially empowered unions are more likely to perform well in the value chain. They are therefore better positioned to invest in activities like hiring skilled labor, marketing, procurement of inputs, providing timely payments to its members and among others that enhance their performance in the coffee value chain. This concurs with the finding of [10], in his study reported that cooperatives provide financial resources to their members which significantly enhance their performance and proper financial management ensures that funds are used efficiently and transparently which can speed up value chain activities.

The results also revealed that market access positively influences performance of cooperative unions and are seen as more effective and that investment in market linkages and buyer partnerships is highly needed. When cooperative unions secure *better markets*, farmers earn *higher with more stable prices*. This increases *member satisfaction and loyalty*, encouraging farmers to remain in and contribute to the union. This finding is in line with [11] who in their study carried out in Rwanda revealed that cooperatives play a critical role in facilitating market access for smallholder farmers by aggregating their produce and cooperatives that establish strong linkages with buyers, exporters, and other stakeholders in the coffee value chain can access better market opportunities and negotiate favorable prices.

The study findings also revealed that government support enhances coffee cooperative union's effectiveness in improving value chain performance. Government establishes *favorable policies and regulations* that promote the for-

mation, operation, and accountability of coffee cooperatives. The government invests in rural infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and irrigation systems to reduce transport costs and spoilage, electrification supports mechanized processing and storage. Government also helps coffee cooperative unions access *domestic and international markets*. This finding is comparable to the finding of [11] whose study was carried out in Rwanda and his results reported that government supportive policies can help to create an enabling environment for cooperatives to operate effectively.

The study results reported that membership engagement and participation which showed high significant relationship as this influences cooperative performance. When members are *actively involved*, they develop a sense of *ownership and responsibility* for the cooperative's success. High participation fosters *mutual trust*, reduces internal conflicts, and encourages long-term commitment. This unity improves institutional stability and resilience, which are essential for sustained value chain improvements. Cooperatives with an engaged membership can *set minimum price thresholds*, refuse exploitative buyers, and access *direct trade agreements*.

This is in agreement with [5] which reported that it has partnered with the African Fine Coffee Association (AFCA) to support coffee cooperatives in various African countries. This partnership includes initiatives on market promotion, quality improvement, and capacity building, which have collectively improved the performance of the coffee value chain.

The study respondents also established that infrastructure affect coffee value chain performance. Good roads enable easier and faster transportation of coffee from farms to collection centers, processing units, and markets as this *minimizes post-harvest losses* due to delays or damage during transit and facilitates *timely delivery* of inputs (fertilizers, equipment) and outputs (coffee beans). Access to reliable electricity enables coffee cooperative unions to process coffee efficiently and add value through drying, hulling, roasting, and packaging and this supports operation of *wet mills and drying machines*, improving coffee quality. This finding is in agreement with [9] who study results established that good infrastructure, including roads, processing facilities, and storage, is essential for reducing post-harvest losses and ensuring that coffee reaches markets in good condition.

9. Conclusion

The study concludes that the effectiveness of coffee cooperative unions in improving coffee value chain performance is significantly influenced by *Access to financial resources* with p-value = 0.0014, *Market accessibility* with p-value = 0.0049, *Quality inputs* with p-value = 0.0235, *Collaboration with other actors* has a p-value of 0.0328, *membership engagement and participation* has p-value of 0.0003. *Government support* has a p-value of 0.0650 and *infrastructure* has a p-value of 0.1023, though important but did not show a statistically significant impact on value chain performance.

10. Study Recommendations

Government agencies, financial institutions, and development partners should establish tailored financial schemes such as low interest loans, and revolving funds to support cooperative union operations and farmer productivity.

Coffee cooperatives should strengthen linkages with local, regional, and international buyers through direct trade arrangements, digital marketing platforms, and participation in trade fairs.

Cooperative unions should foster transparency, democratic governance, regular meetings, and inclusive decision-making processes to encourage active member involvement.

While government support was not statistically significant in this study, efforts should still be made to advocate for clear coffee sector policies, subsidies, and regulatory frameworks to create an enabling environment.

Local governments and development partners should invest in roads, storage facilities, and communication infrastructure to facilitate coffee movement, reduce losses, and improve market access.

Government in partnership with private sector actors should collaborate with cooperative unions to build their *institutional capacity* and accountability, and provide a policy environment that enables cooperatives to thrive as effective agents in improving coffee value chain performance.

Abbreviations

AFCA	African Fine Coffee Association
CCUs	Coffee Cooperative Unions
ICO	International Coffee Organisation
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal, Industry and Fisheries
UCDA	Uganda Coffee Development Authority
UCFA	Uganda Coffee Farmers Alliance

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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