

Organisation Development for Cooperatives' Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract: Cooperatives are value-driven organisations whose principles strongly resonate with the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nevertheless, a persistent gap remains between the values cooperatives promote and the ways sustainability is articulated and enacted in practice. This paper examines how value alignment between cooperatives and the SDGs can be better understood through the lens of Organisation Development (OD), a humanistic and systemic approach to organisational change. The paper develops a conceptual alignment model that integrates OD values, cooperative principles and SDG themes, proposing OD as a theoretically grounded framework for supporting cooperatives in embedding sustainability within their organisational identity. To illustrate the relevance of this model, a qualitative review of mission, vision and values statements from 100 Chilean cooperatives is presented. The analysis reveals limited and uneven references to cooperative principles and sustainability, highlighting the persistence of a values-practice gap. These illustrative findings underscore the need for intentional value alignment processes and demonstrate the conceptual relevance of OD for cooperatives seeking to engage more meaningfully with the 2030 Agenda. The paper contributes by refining the OD values framework, proposing an integrated model of OD-cooperative-SDG alignment, and identifying opportunities for OD-informed approaches to strengthen sustainability integration in cooperative organisations.

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1. Introduction

In 2015, during the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, 193 member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, often described as one of the most comprehensive global political efforts in the history of sustainability governance (Eisenmenger et al., 2020). The agenda is structured around 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, seeking to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, social justice, and environmental protection by 2030 (Meier, 2023; UNGA, 2024).

The implementation of this agenda depends not only on governments and international institutions but also on the active engagement of organisations whose strategies, governance, and everyday practices shape development outcomes. Literature increasingly shows that many organisations explicitly mention SDGs in their reports and public communications while offering limited evidence of concrete strategies, indicators, or governance mechanisms to

support them (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2023; Heras-Saizarbitoria et al., 2022; Scott & McGill, 2018). This suggests the existence of a values-practice gap in sustainability: organisations may symbolically adopt SDG language without fully integrating sustainability into their business models, decision-making processes, or accountability systems.

Within this broader landscape, cooperatives represent a distinctive organisational form whose principles and values are strongly aligned with many SDG themes, including democracy, equity, decent work, and community development (Bhowmik, 2021; Fernandez-Guadagno et al., 2020; García-Parejo et al., 2023; Lafont et al., 2023). Their member-owned structure and historical concern for community position them as potentially powerful actors in advancing the 2030 Agenda (Moxom & Dave, 2019). However, recent research also suggests that cooperatives may experience tensions between promoted values and organisational practices, particularly when navigating market pressures, policy incentives, and resource constraints (Díaz de León et al., 2021; Godfrey et al., 2017). Understanding how cooperatives articulate and enact sustainability is therefore crucial for assessing their contribution to the SDGs.

Organisation Development (OD) offers a useful lens for examining these questions. OD is commonly defined as a planned, systemic, and values-driven approach to organisational change that seeks to enhance both organisational effectiveness and the quality of working life (Burke, 2022; Cheung-Judge & Holbeche, 2015). Rooted in humanistic and democratic values, OD emphasises value alignment, participation, learning, and evidence-based interventions (Burke & Noumair, 2015; Yoon et al., 2021). These characteristics make OD particularly relevant for organisations that aspire to integrate sustainability and the SDGs into their identity and strategy yet face ongoing challenges in translating broad commitments into coherent practices.

The purpose of this paper is therefore twofold. First, it develops a conceptual framework that integrates OD values, cooperative principles, and the SDGs, thus proposing OD as a theoretically grounded approach for strengthening value alignment within cooperatives. Second, drawing on an illustrative qualitative review of mission, vision, and values statements from 100 Chilean cooperatives, the paper examines the extent to which public-facing cooperative discourse reflects alignment with SDG-related themes. The empirical component serves as an illustrative case that reveals the kinds of value-practice gaps that are conceptually significant for the OD framework developed in this paper.

The paper contributes to both cooperative studies and OD scholarship in three ways: (1) Conceptually, it updates and synthesises OD values and highlights their relevance for SDG-oriented organisational change. (2) Empirically, it documents how cooperatives present sustainability and cooperative identity in their mission, vision, and values statements, revealing patterns of limited or partial alignment with the SDGs. (3) Practically, it introduces an OD-informed alignment model that connects OD values, cooperative principles, and the SDGs, offering a starting point for cooperatives and OD practitioners who seek to embed the 2030 Agenda into organisational purpose, governance, and strategy.

To contextualise these issues, the following section examines the SDGs and their relationship to organisational values and sustainability practices, with particular attention to cooperatives.

2. Cooperatives, Values and Sustainability

The 2030 Agenda structures its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into five broad pillars: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships. These pillars are intended to guide organisations in articulating development pathways that integrate social, environmental and economic concerns (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2023; Morton et al., 2017). This guiding structure enables organisations to connect their internal values with their strategic commitments to sustainable development.

2.1 *The SDGs and the role of organisations*

Although organisations worldwide are increasingly referencing the SDGs, research suggests that their actual integration remains inconsistent and often quite shallow. Studies reveal that many organisations use SDG terminology symbolically, especially in mission and sustainability reports, without embedding these goals in operational strategies, internal processes or measurement frameworks (Ferrero-Ferrero et al., 2023; Heras-Saizarbitoria et al., 2022; Scott & McGill, 2018). Such findings reinforce concerns that organisations may be engaging

in SDG washing, that is, adopting the language of sustainability without aligning their practices to the values underlying the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, several authors highlight structural challenges that constrain progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic has widened inequalities and disrupted financing flows, particularly in countries already facing high poverty rates (Saxena et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021; Song & Jang, 2023). Others point to tensions between the Agenda's emphasis on economic growth and the need to reduce material resource use, as well as to the voluntary, non-binding character of the SDGs and the complexity created by their numerous targets and indicators (Eisenmenger et al., 2020; Li, 2023; Morton et al., 2017; Spangenberg, 2017). These concerns underline the importance of governance arrangements and organisational capabilities that can translate broad global goals into context-sensitive strategies.

2.2 Cooperativism and its link with SDGs

Cooperatives operate on a value-based framework governed by principles such as democracy, equity, solidarity, and community concern (ICA, 2024). These guiding principles closely align with several SDG themes, positioning cooperatives as organizational structures capable of integrating sustainability into economic and social practices (Alarcón & Álvarez, 2020; Bhowmik, 2021; Ghauri et al., 2022; Lafont et al., 2023). Consequently, cooperatives are well-placed to contribute significantly to the advancement of these objectives at local, national, and global levels (Moxom & Dave, 2019).

Nevertheless, the relationship between cooperatives and the SDGs is not inherent. Studies show that cooperatives vary in how they enact their principles and articulate their social purpose. Some adopt cooperative forms opportunistically, responding to external incentives rather than internalised values (Godfrey et al., 2017). Other studies show that cooperatives tend to contribute to specific SDGs depending on their sector and member priorities (Díaz de León et al., 2021; González & Alonso, 2022; Martinez-Leon et al., 2020).

Several studies have attempted to connect cooperative principles with specific SDGs across diverse contexts. For example, research in India's handloom weaving sector, Colombian cooperatives, Nova Scotian cooperative networks and Andalusia's olive oil cooperatives all identify relationships between particular cooperative principles and selected SDGs, most commonly those related to poverty reduction, gender equality, decent work, responsible production and community development (Bhowmik, 2021; Díaz de León et al., 2021; González & Alonso, 2022; Shen et al., 2019). Although these studies illustrate the potential for cooperatives to contribute to the SDGs, their findings tend to be sector-specific and fragmented, which limits the development of a more holistic framework for assessing alignment. Bibliometric work by Lafont et al. (2023) suggests that different cooperative types collectively contribute to all 17 SDGs, but their findings also reinforce the need to better understand how these contributions are distributed across sectors and organisational models.

These literature-driven contributions make possible a clearer connection between the actions of cooperatives, guided by their values and principles, and the accomplishment of the SDGs. At the same time, they point to the need for mechanisms capable of assessing whether cooperatives' stated values and missions translate into sustainability-oriented practices. Analysing mission statements and organisational narratives provides one way of exploring how cooperatives represent their purpose and identity in relation to sustainable development (Shen et al., 2019). Yet these analyses often reveal gaps between promoted values and actual practice, which reinforces the need for tools that can support cooperatives in aligning their identity and strategies with the SDGs.

Given these challenges, evaluating cooperatives' alignment with the SDGs requires understanding how values are embedded in organisational culture and daily practice. This provides a foundation for considering Organisation Development (OD) as a framework that can assist cooperatives in addressing value alignment challenges and translating their principles into sustainable development outcomes. Building on these insights, the next section examines OD as a values-driven approach that offers conceptual and practical tools for strengthening coherence between cooperative identity, organisational practice and the SDGs.

3. Organisation Development and Cooperatives

Having established the conceptual connections and challenges linking cooperatives and the SDGs, it becomes necessary to consider frameworks that can support value-driven organisational change. Organisation Development (OD) offers one such framework. OD is grounded in humanistic and democratic values and provides tools for aligning organisational identity, practices and strategy with broader social purposes. As Rogers and Hudson (2011) argue, sustainability requires changes in thinking and practice at every level of the organisation, drawing on shared experiences and collective learning.

OD's foundations help address the values-practice gaps noted in the previous section by emphasising planned, systemic and participatory approaches to organisational change. The approach is built on the premise that organisational sustainability requires coordination across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of performance. It is therefore useful for supporting cooperatives wishing to integrate the SDGs into their principles, values, business models and management practices.

One of the earliest conceptualisations underpinning OD is the triple bottom line framework (Elkington and Rowlands, 1999), which proposes that sustainable performance depends on balancing environmental, economic and social considerations (Keller, 2012; Laszlo & Castro, 2011; Rogers & Hudson, 2011; Sala, 2020). The environmental dimension draws attention to resource limits and ecological resilience. The economic dimension highlights the importance of preserving natural, social and financial capital. The social dimension focuses on equity and the cultivation of socially responsible behaviour within and beyond organisations. This framework reinforces the idea that sustainability requires multi-level integration across organisational systems.

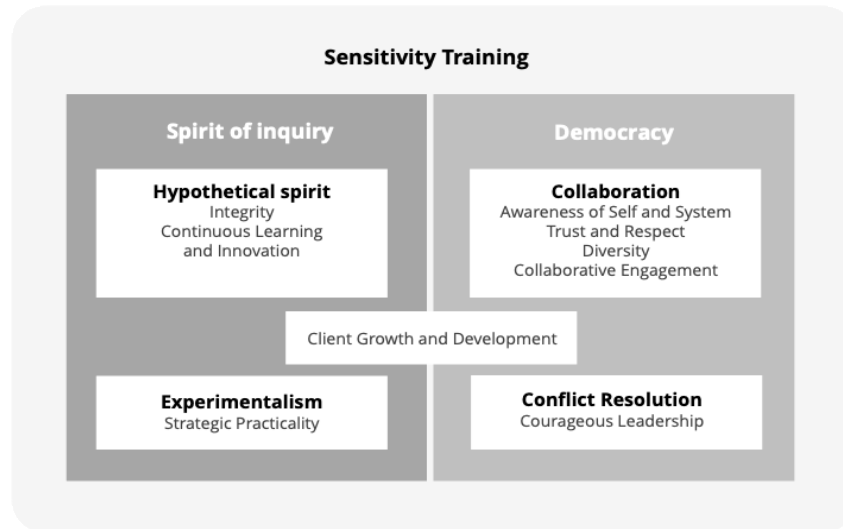
Some may argue that existing approaches such as Human Resources Management (HRM), Total Quality Management (TQM), business process re-engineering or lean production could also be used to integrate sustainability in organisations. However, these models have often prioritised efficiency, cost reduction and shareholder value at the expense of humanistic considerations (Foster, 2013). Scholars of HRM highlight tensions between organisational efficiency and care for employees, noting that many HR practices are shaped by performance-oriented logics rather than underlying values (Foote, 2001; Holden & Napier, 2013; HRM, 2024; Mariappanadar, 2012; Rees, 2026; Valecha, 2022). This limits their suitability for addressing sustainability as a values-driven endeavour. In contrast, OD offers a more holistic and balanced approach, integrating economic and social dimensions and emphasising organisational learning, participation and long-term development (Mohd Shukree et al., 2023).

OD is commonly defined as a planned change process that encompasses the organisation as a whole, placing particular emphasis on culture and leadership (Burke, 2022). Its core purpose is twofold: first to assist leaders in addressing specific organisational needs for change and second to increase member participation in decisions that affect their work. Built on a long tradition of applied and values-driven interventions, OD draws on multiple theories and approaches that support sustained organisational transformation (Burke & Noumair, 2015; Cheung-Judge & Holbeche, 2015; Kwon & Kwon, 2023). These foundations are reflected in OD's core values, which emphasise inquiry, collaboration and democratic participation as mechanisms for strengthening organisational culture and decision-making. Drawing on the legacy of sensitivity training, Burke (2015) identifies four central values that characterise OD practice: the hypothetical spirit (ongoing questioning and testing of assumptions), experimentalism (learning through action), collaboration (participatory approaches to change) and conflict resolution (constructive engagement with differences). Complementing these, Yoon et al. (2021) identify nine contemporary OD values: awareness of self and system, continuous learning and innovation, integrity, courageous leadership, trust and respect, diversity, collaborative engagement, strategic practicality and client growth and development. Together, these values express a coherent and humanistic orientation that remains foundational to OD work.

Integrating these perspectives allows for a holistic view of how OD values interact in practice. The model presented in Figure 1 synthesises Burke's foundational values with the more recent values identified by Yoon et al. (2021), showing how core humanistic principles provide the basis for contemporary organisational development priorities. This integrated framework highlights the continuity of key themes in OD, including learning, participation, integrity

and systemic awareness, and provides a foundation for analysing how OD can support cooperatives in aligning their principles and practices with the SDGs.

Figure 1. Proposal of OD Values Framework



Source: Authors' elaboration based on Burke (2015); Yoon et al. (2021)

Value alignment has long been recognised as central to organisational change. Burnes and Jackson (2011) argue that successful change depends on the alignment of three elements: the individuals involved in the intervention, the objective guiding the intervention and the approach used to enact it. Barrett (2017) expands this perspective by identifying four conditions necessary for cultural change: personal alignment, where individuals' behaviours are consistent with their values; structural alignment, where organisational policies and procedures reflect stated values; values alignment, where employees' personal values resonate with organisational values; and mission alignment, where individuals experience coherence between their sense of purpose and their roles. This aligns closely with the challenges identified in the previous section, where cooperatives may express strong value commitments yet struggle to embed them systematically across organisational structures and practices.

As noted in earlier sections, cooperatives often articulate strong normative commitments, yet their practices may not always reflect these values consistently. Building on the OD values framework, the alignment between OD values, cooperative principles and cooperative values can be mapped by identifying shared themes and underlying intentions (see Table 1). This mapping underscores the conceptual compatibility between OD and cooperative identity, positioning OD as a suitable framework for supporting cooperatives in integrating the SDGs into their organisational practices. As Trottier and Chinoperekweyi (2022) observe, organisations today must pursue social and ecological purpose alongside economic goals, a balance that OD is well equipped to support.

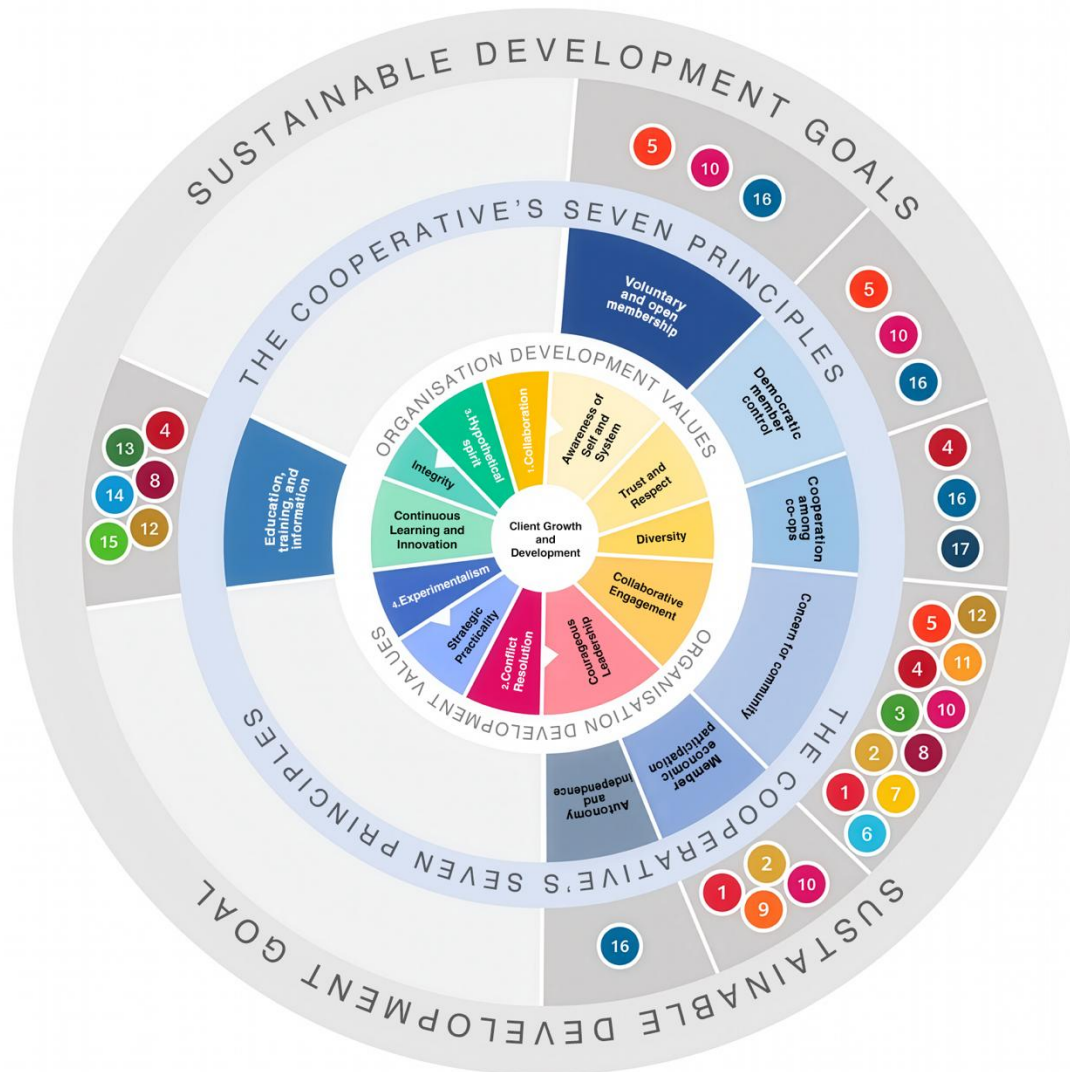
Table 1. OD values and Cooperatives principles & values alignment.

	OD Values	Co-ops Seven Principles	Co-ops Values
Spirit of Inquiry	Hypothetical spirit		
	Integrity		
	Continuous Learning and Innovation	Education, training, and information	
	Experimentalism		
	Strategic Practicality		
	Client Growth and Development*		
Democracy	Collaboration		
	Awareness of Self and System	Voluntary and open membership	Self-help and self-responsibility
	Trust and Respect	Democratic member control	Democracy
	Diversity	Cooperation among co-operatives	Equality and equity
	Collaborative Engagement	Concern for community	Solidarity
	Conflict Resolution		
	Courageous Leadership	Member economic participation Autonomy and independence	

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Burke (2015); Yoon et al. (2021)

Figure 2 illustrates the relationships between OD values, cooperative principles and SDG commitments. At the centre of the model is organisational growth and development, a core aspect of OD that connects and informs the other values. The overlap among the different value sets reflects the complexity and interconnected nature of organisational change, emphasising that no single value operates in isolation. The SDGs are positioned within the model according to the primary value themes they relate to, including human development, organisational learning, democratic participation and community well-being. The model suggests that a comprehensive understanding of these values is necessary for cooperatives to implement the SDGs effectively.

Figure 2. OD Values, Cooperatives Principles and SDG alignment



Source: Authors' elaboration based on De la Casa (2021); Yoon et al. (2021); Shen et al. (2019); Burke (2015)

However, conceptual alignment between OD, cooperative values and SDGs does not guarantee that cooperatives will consistently embody these values in practice. As discussed previously, some cooperatives may adopt cooperative status opportunistically or face pressures that lead to value dilution (Godfrey et al., 2017). In such cases, organisational sustainability values must be cultivated at all levels in order to meaningfully engage with new initiatives and development objectives (Vargas-Hernández, 2021). OD can therefore serve not only as a framework for supporting cooperatives in intentionally engaging with the SDGs but also as a means of helping cooperatives realign with their foundational values when these have been weakened by external or internal pressures.

If cooperatives aim to integrate the SDGs into their mission, vision and strategic practices, the values alignment framework developed here offers a useful guide for designing and implementing effective OD interventions. The following section examines these issues empirically through a qualitative review of mission, vision and values statements from 100 Chilean cooperatives, based on Shen et al.'s (2019) approach.

4. Illustrative Analysis: Insights from 100 Chilean Cooperatives

To illustrate the types of value-practice gaps discussed in the previous sections, an exploratory qualitative review was conducted of mission, vision and values statements from 100 Chilean cooperatives. The purpose of this analysis is illustrative rather than comprehensive: it examines how cooperatives publicly communicate their organisational identity and whether their self-descriptions reflect alignment with cooperative principles and sustainability themes associated with the SDGs.

4.1 Approach

Cooperatives with publicly accessible websites were identified through the official Chilean Cooperative Registry. Mission, vision and values statements were extracted and coded thematically with NVivo, focusing on explicit and implicit references to cooperative principles, sustainability and SDG-related themes. This approach captures how cooperatives position themselves through their public discourse. Because the analysis draws only on website statements, the findings speak to discursive commitments rather than internal operational practices.

4.2 Key Patterns in SDG-Related Discourse

A striking initial observation was that none of the 100 cooperatives made explicit reference to the SDGs or the 2030 Agenda in their mission, vision or values statements. This mirrors broader international trends in which organisations symbolically engage with sustainability while overlooking specific targets or governance mechanisms.

When implicit themes linked to individual SDGs were examined, just over half of the cooperatives (61 percent) referenced at least one SDG-related theme. These references tended to cluster around goals such as good health and wellbeing, responsible consumption and production, and poverty reduction. However, the depth of these references was limited: most statements mentioned broad aspirations, such as community wellbeing or environmental care, without specifying actions, indicators or strategic commitments. Only one third of the cooperatives explicitly mentioned any aspect of sustainability at all, and such mentions were typically general rather than connected to recognised sustainability frameworks.

Taken together, these patterns suggest that while some cooperatives articulate concerns that overlap with SDG themes, sustainability is not consistently integrated into their organisational identity or public narrative.

4.3 Representation of Cooperative Principles

A similar pattern emerged regarding the seven cooperative principles. Only around one third of cooperatives referenced any principle in their public statements, and explicit mention of the term “cooperative principles” appeared only once. References tended to focus on principles that are most visible in members’ daily experiences, such as education and training, cooperation among cooperatives and concern for community. By contrast, principles related to governance or economic participation were largely absent, likely because these operate mostly through internal structures rather than external communication.

These findings suggest a fragmented representation of cooperative identity, where some values are foregrounded rhetorically while others remain implicit or unarticulated. This uneven representation raises questions about whether all cooperative principles are consistently embedded in organisational culture and practice.

4.4 Interpretation

Across both sustainability and cooperative identity, the findings reveal notable gaps between the theoretical alignment established in the literature and the values communicated by cooperatives themselves. The absence of explicit SDG references, the limited depth of sustainability discourse and the partial representation of cooperative principles all point to a broader issue: cooperatives may express value-laden intentions yet struggle to articulate or operationalise these commitments coherently.

These patterns echo previous research indicating that cooperatives can drift from their foundational identity under market pressures or policy incentives. They also reinforce the argument developed in earlier sections: value

alignment is neither automatic nor guaranteed, even within organisational forms that are structurally predisposed toward social purpose.

Importantly, these findings do not reflect deficiencies unique to cooperatives but illustrate the kinds of value-practice gaps that the OD-cooperative-SDG alignment framework is designed to address. By revealing inconsistencies in how cooperatives articulate purpose, identity and sustainability, the illustrative analysis underscores the relevance of OD as a mechanism for supporting more intentional value alignment and for strengthening the integration of the SDGs into cooperative strategy and practice.

5. Discussion

Taken together, the illustrative results confirm the persistence of a values–practice gap in how cooperatives publicly communicate their identity and commitments. Although the literature highlights substantial theoretical alignment between cooperative principles and the SDGs (Bhowmik, 2021; Fernandez-Guadafío et al., 2020; García-Parejo et al., 2023; Lafont et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2019), such alignment is meaningful only when it is enacted in organisational practices and embedded in daily activities. Without this translation from principle to practice, cooperatives are unlikely to generate significant contributions to the 2030 Agenda.

The absence of explicit SDG references in all 100 mission, vision and values statements examined reflects this misalignment. This pattern mirrors broader findings showing that organisations often engage superficially with global sustainability agendas (Heras-Saizarbitoria et al., 2022). Several explanations may account for this absence. Some statements may have been formulated prior to the launch of the SDGs in 2015, which would make their omission structurally understandable. Others may reflect a lack of awareness or clarity about the SDGs among cooperative leaders. A third explanation, suggested by the literature on cooperative identity, is that some cooperatives may be experiencing a drift from their foundational principles. These possibilities are not mutually exclusive and collectively highlight a broader challenge of embedding sustainability into organisational identity.

Implicit SDG-related themes were present in some statements, but unevenly and with limited depth. Only 61 percent of cooperatives referenced at least one SDG-related theme, and only one third mentioned sustainability explicitly. This suggests that sustainability remains peripheral rather than central to how cooperatives narrate their purpose. A similar pattern emerged with respect to cooperative principles. Only a minority referenced them directly, and foundational principles such as voluntary membership or member economic participation were rarely mentioned. This may reflect the internal nature of these principles: they structure governance and economic participation but are less visible in daily interactions or external communication. By contrast, principles such as concern for community or cooperation among cooperatives were mentioned more frequently because they are part of outward-facing identity work. This uneven representation indicates that some cooperative values are more readily articulated than others.

These patterns illustrate the central challenge addressed by the OD-Cooperative-SDG alignment model developed earlier in this paper. The model is premised on the idea that alignment between organisational values, identity and practice is neither automatic nor guaranteed, even in organisations founded on strong normative commitments. The illustrative findings show how cooperatives may express broad aspirations related to community or wellbeing yet struggle to articulate or operationalise these values in ways that align with cooperative principles or the SDGs. They also demonstrate how gaps in public discourse can signal deeper issues related to organisational culture, leadership coherence and strategic direction.

Rather than interpreting these gaps as deficiencies, we argue that they point to opportunities for intentional organisational development. OD provides tools for diagnosing and strengthening value alignment, facilitating reflective dialogue, redesigning structures and supporting leadership practices that reinforce sustainability-oriented identity. In this sense, the empirical illustration does not aim to generalise beyond the sample but to demonstrate the types of misalignments that OD interventions are equipped to address. The findings therefore reinforce the conceptual model by showing why value alignment is necessary and why OD offers a suitable framework for supporting cooperatives seeking to integrate the SDGs more meaningfully into their mission, governance and practice.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Cooperatives, SDGs and OD Alignment

This paper set out to examine how cooperatives can strengthen their contribution to the 2030 Agenda by aligning their identity, practices and values with the SDGs. Prior research has emphasised both the global relevance of the SDGs (Eisenmenger et al., 2020; Ghauri et al., 2022; Helfaya & Bui, 2022; Meier, 2023; UNGA, 2024; Wymer, 2023) and the participatory ethos underlying their formulation (Shulla et al., 2021). Scholars consistently highlight that organisational engagement is essential for achieving the SDGs, and that leadership commitment and value alignment are key determinants of meaningful implementation.

Cooperatives have long been recognised as value-driven organisations grounded in democratic governance, solidarity and concern for community (Fernandez-Guadagno et al., 2020; Miribung, 2020; Moxom & Dave, 2019; Ratner, 2013; Woodin, 2023). These characteristics suggest a strong conceptual resonance with the SDGs and position cooperatives as important actors in advancing sustainable development locally and globally (Alarcón & Álvarez, 2020; Bhowmik, 2021; Lafont et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2019). However, despite multiple scholarly attempts to link cooperative principles with the SDGs, there remains no widely adopted framework to guide cooperatives in assessing or planning their contributions.

This study argues that OD provides a compelling theoretical and practical foundation for addressing this gap. OD is a values-driven, participatory and systemic approach to organisational change, and its core values closely align with the normative foundations of cooperativism and the SDGs (Chinoperekweyi & Trottier, 2022; Foster, 2013; Lawler, 2017; Mohd Shukree et al., 2023). By highlighting the congruence between these three domains, we propose that OD offers a promising pathway for helping cooperatives integrate the 2030 Agenda into their mission, governance structures and daily organisational practices.

6.2 Implications for Theory and Practice

This paper makes three main contributions. First, it updates and synthesises the OD values framework, showing how OD's humanistic and democratic foundations align with sustainability and SDG-oriented organisational change. This contributes to OD scholarship by reaffirming the relevance of OD values in contemporary debates on organisational purpose and sustainability.

Second, it introduces an alignment model (Figure 2) that conceptually integrates OD values, cooperative principles and the SDGs. Rather than offering a prescriptive intervention method, the model provides a conceptual foundation from which new OD-based tools and methodologies can be developed. It also offers a lens through which cooperatives can reflect on the degree of alignment between their stated identity and their sustainability ambitions.

Third, the paper offers an illustrative analysis of 100 Chilean cooperatives' mission, vision and values statements. The findings reveal partial and inconsistent references to sustainability and cooperative principles, indicating a persistence of the values–practice gap. This empirical illustration strengthens the argument that intentional OD interventions may help cooperatives more effectively articulate and enact their sustainability commitments.

Overall, this study positions OD as an integrative framework capable of supporting cooperatives in aligning their organisational identity with the SDGs. By foregrounding value alignment as a prerequisite for meaningful sustainability engagement, the paper opens new avenues for research on OD-informed cooperative development and offers practical insights for cooperative leaders seeking to embed the SDGs within their organisations.

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