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Does Sustainable Entrepreneurship Make a Difference?

**Report on the Impact of Sustainable Enterprises
on Lifestyles of their Customers**

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Table of Contents

Abstract	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Background.....	6
3. Results	8
3.1. Kartoffelkombinat	8
3.2. Som Energia.....	12
3.3. Retenergie.....	15
4. Discussion	18
5. Summary and Conclusion.....	21
References.....	21



Abstract

The present paper reports on the impact of sustainable enterprises on the lifestyles of their customers. To evaluate and measure the impact on lifestyles we conducted online surveys among customers of three selected sustainable enterprises, including Kartoffelkombinat (Germany), Som Energia (Spain) and Retenergie (Italy). Altogether we received more than 900 responses from the customers of the three cooperatives. Overall, the empirical results show a positive change towards sustainable lifestyles and consumer behaviour. There are two main findings: First, the results indicate that being a customer and member of the selected cooperatives has an influence on the focus area, i.e. food consumption in the case of Kartoffelkombinat and energy consumption in the case of Som Energia, and Retenergie respectively. Second, surprisingly and interestingly, we can also observe positive spill-over effects to other areas of sustainable lifestyles. We assume, that changes in one area of consumption lead to reflections and changes in other areas, especially in the case of cooperatives like Kartoffelkombinat, Som Energie, and Retenergie, which inform, educate and involve their customers and members to a large extent.

1. Introduction

There are many approaches that governments and industry can take to reduce environmental degradation. However, one of the most difficult issues to address is how to change the day-to-day behaviour of individuals.

(McDonald, Caroline J., Alevizou, Young, & Hwang, 2012, p. 445)

New enterprises have emerged focusing on sustainable products and services that offer economic, ecological and social value, taking into consideration pressing environmental and social problems.

At the same time, the cooperative as an organisational form of business is experiencing a resurgence in popularity.

The present study is conducted as part of Work Package IV of the EU-InnovatE research project. It raises the following questions: Does sustainable entrepreneurship make a difference? More specifically: Do sustainable enterprises have an impact on the lifestyles of their customers?

The aim is to find out about the sustainable lifestyles of customers and the changes induced by novel sustainable products and services. To this end, the sustainability behaviour of customers is investigated in order to learn about the influence of sustainable enterprises on the lifestyles of their customers towards more sustainable choices.

Subsequently, the report sheds light on potential governmental actions supporting the evolution and development of such enterprises paving the road for a green and social Europe 2020.

Out of the 20 in-depth case studies of EU-InnovatE three sustainable enterprises, Kartoffelkombinat, Som Energia and Retenergie, have been selected for the quantitative online survey investigating customer lifestyles. The three selected enterprises come from different countries, act in different industries but share the particularity of using a cooperative organisational form of business. We assume that the organisational form of a cooperative influences the impact of the enterprise on the lifestyle of its customers, due to the strong involvement of customers in the sustainable business.

We proceed as follows: First, background information on theory, methodology and analytical strategy is provided. Second, the evaluation of the three surveys are presented and analysed. Third, the results are discussed and implications on further research are given.

In the following, the three selected cooperatives are introduced:

Kartoffelkombinat is a registered cooperative, which is located close to the city of Munich (Germany). It was founded in 2012 by Daniel Überall and Simon Scholl with the aim to establish a community-supported agriculture (CSA). CSA is an alternative, community-based organization uniting consumers and producers. In CSA systems consumers pay their contributions upfront. This supports local farmers and enables them to plan properly and focus on production. In return, each community member gets his or her share of the yield on a regular basis (Cooley & Lass, 1998). Kartoffelkombinat currently represents the biggest CSA project in Germany and supplies about 700 households in Munich with fresh, locally and organically grown vegetables on a weekly basis. The cooperative is also offering lectures, discussions and other events, involving and educating its broad community. Some members are actively involved in the CSA structure for example by helping out with packing and delivering the vegetable crates.

Som Energía is a renewable energy cooperative, which was started in 2010 by students and professors of the University in Girona (Spain). The cooperative produces renewable energy from its own plants relying on wind, photovoltaic, biogas and biomass. Som Energía acts as an energy provider for its 21,000 members. All over Spain there are local groups representing and promoting Som Energía.

Retenergie was founded by Marco Mariano in 2008 in Racconigi, Piedmont (Italy) with the aim to promote a shift to 100 % renewable energy. It is dedicated to the production of renewable energy from plants built and owned by the members of the cooperative. Besides selling energy to its 770 members, it provides services such as energy audits, change of energy providers and management of purchasing groups for photovoltaic plants. The members are either “ordinary members”, who subscribed a minimum share capital of 50 euro, or “investor members”, who subscribed tranches of social lending to support the investment and receive an annual interest rate.

2. Background

Theoretical overview

What makes people consider social and environmental issues when making consumer decisions? Which role do sustainable companies and especially cooperatives play in this context?

There is a myriad of theories explaining behavioural changes. According to Thøgersen (2004, p. 94), environmentally responsible behaviour can be based on social-psychological theories proposing that individuals sense a strong desire to align their attitudes, beliefs, behaviour and words. Festinger (1957) established one of the most prominent among those theories, the theory of **cognitive dissonance**. It implies that all individuals have an inner driver to hold their attitudes and beliefs in harmony and to avoid inconsistencies, so called dissonances.

It is very interesting to look at this parameter and put it in a sustainability behavioural context. A number of experimental studies show that cognitive dissonance can trigger environmentally friendly adjustments in behaviour (e.g. (Dickerson, Thibodeau, & Aronson, 1992) (McMahon, Aitken, Wearing, & Finlayson, 1994)). Thus, we may assume that the desire to behave consistently fosters the sustainability behaviour of individuals. According to Thøgersen (2004, p. 101) two preconditions have to be met: First, the individual needs to have initiated acting responsibly in one area, meaning that a process towards a more sustainable lifestyle has already started. Second, individuals have to be aware of the consequences of their behaviour on other people and nature. Members of a sustainable cooperative likely fulfil both preconditions.

Getting involved in the cooperative's activities evokes interactions with other members. This might lead to comparing oneself with others. **Group effects** and **peer pressure** could foster more sustainable decisions. Furthermore, the group experience could increase the cognitive dissonance sensed when performing non-sustainable behaviours or actions that might be morally scrutinized by other members. In turn, this again triggers changes towards a more sustainable behaviour.

Questionnaire and parameters

In a pre-study, qualitative research was undertaken in the case of the German cooperative Kartoffelkombinat.

Based on the findings obtained through interviews with members and the team of Kartoffelkombinat, as well as a literature review, the questionnaire for the quantitative survey was developed. Overall, it includes 22 standardized questions. By keeping the online survey as short as possible we aimed at increasing the number of respondents.

In the first part of the questionnaire, the respondents are asked about various aspects concerning their membership in the cooperative and their relation with the cooperative community. These questions are firm-specific, and they have been at least partly adapted to the special features of each cooperative. The second part of the questionnaire is identical for all three cooperatives. Questions, similar to those used in commonly known footprint tests (e.g. Brot für die Welt, 2015), have been used to learn about the sustainable behaviour of the members. The respondents are asked to report their behaviour in four categories: food, living/energy, mobility and consumption. After having reflected their behaviour, the respondents are asked about their perceived **sustainable behaviour now and before** joining the cooperative. This is rated on a scale from one (not sustainable at all) to ten (very sustainable).

The individual **percentage change in perceived sustainability behaviour** in each category is calculated in order to see the development compared to the level of sustainability before becoming a cooperative member. To this end, the reported change was put in relation to the perceived level of sustainability before joining the cooperative.

Each of the three cooperatives offers several possibilities of member **involvement**. Concerning sustainability behaviour, we assume that the more actively a member is involved into the cooperative, the more influence the cooperative has on its members and the higher the probability of behavioural spill-over effects on other areas of life. An activity parameter was developed in order to judge the level of involvement of the members. This was achieved by, first, weighting and, second, summing the different activity options. Hence, the activity score of a member is determined by the proportion of activity points, he or she yields out of the maximum reachable points. Furthermore, a set of questions was developed to assess the effect of the community and the perception of cognitive dissonance.

The data was collected in three online surveys, which were conducted by the research teams in the respective countries: TU München for Kartoffelkombinat, ESADE Business School for Som Energia and Politecnico di Milano for Retenergie. The surveys were available online to the members of the cooperatives during May to July 2015.

3. Results

In the following, the results for each of the three cooperatives will be presented. First, socio-demographic characteristics of the members are described in order to get to know the sample. Second, the main results are presented explaining changes in behaviour in the different areas of lifestyles, putting emphasis on the respective contexts of activity of the three cooperatives.

The members judged their sustainability behavior before joining the cooperative and now on a scale from 1 to 10. As each member chooses a different anchor for their level of sustainability before, the average levels of sustainability points have limited explanatory power. The most important result is the average of relative change each individual experienced. This number explains the changes each member made since their point of accession to the cooperative. Finally, further results on possible triggers of such changes are provided.

3.1. Kartoffelkombinat

The online survey regarding Kartoffelkombinat was filled in by 193 members (response rate: 30%). On average the members of Kartoffelkombinat are 38 years old. The oldest member is 72, the youngest is 20 years old. Two thirds are men, one third female. Concerning the members' occupation, 61% are employees and 14% are self-employed. A percentage of 4% is housewife or househusband, 8% are students and 2% are retired. Further 2% are unemployed and 8% of the respondents have some other form of occupation.

On average, members share the vegetable crate with 1.5 people. This means that the average household size is approximately 2.5 persons. 18% have the crate on their own, 46% share it with one person, 19% share it with two persons, 17% of the sample share it with three or more persons. Regarding their membership duration at Kartoffelkombinat, 23% have been members for more than two years, 38% for one up to two years, 39% of the respondents for less than one year.

Kartoffelkombinat offers several forms of involvement into the cooperative: recruiting new cooperative members, reading the cooperatives' news, participating in online discussions, taking part in gardening or packing vegetables crates or attending events.

Several motivations for joining the cooperative have been identified. 97% of the members identify themselves with the concept and goals of the cooperation. 91% of the respondents agree that Kartoffelkombinat enables them to gain control over their food. Half of the community highly values the exchange with like-minded people.

Main results

According to their self-perception the members of Kartoffelkombinat presented a clear improvement concerning the sustainability of their food consumption during their membership. Compared to the level of sustainability before becoming a cooperative member, the average relative improvement of the individuals in the area of food is plus 53%. This means that members now perceive their behaviour in the area of food 53% more sustainable than before joining the Kartoffelkombinat.

On a total scale from one (not sustainable at all) to ten (very sustainable) members rated the sustainability of their food consumption with 5.44 points on average before joining the cooperative. However, now they perceive their behaviour with 7.46 points. A total improvement of 2.02 points can be seen. This underlines that the sustainability of the behaviour of the average member is very high in the area of food, which is the field of activity of Kartoffelkombinat.

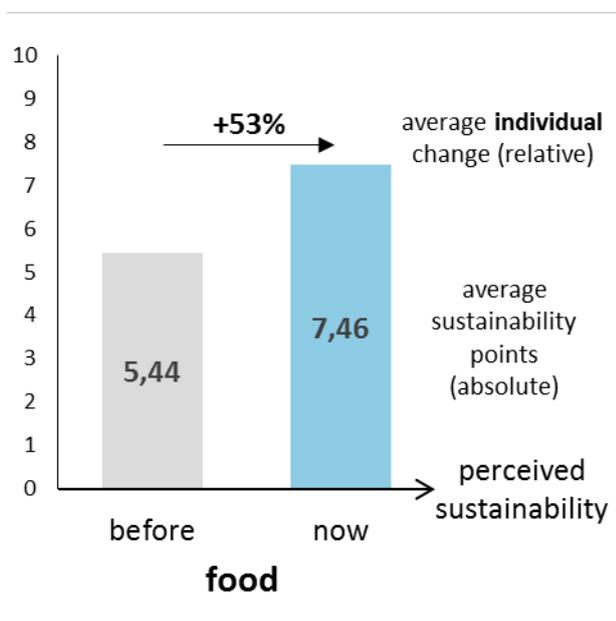


Figure 1: perceived sustainability of the members of Kartoffelkombinat: food

The following figures will illustrate further aspects of the members' sustainability behaviour in the area of food.

As figure 2 shows, 7.5% of the members are vegans (no products of animal origin), 8% vegetarians, 6.5 % are pescetarians (no meat, except fish) and 19.5% are flexitarians (rarely eat meat). The remaining 58.5% of the members (still) do eat meat.

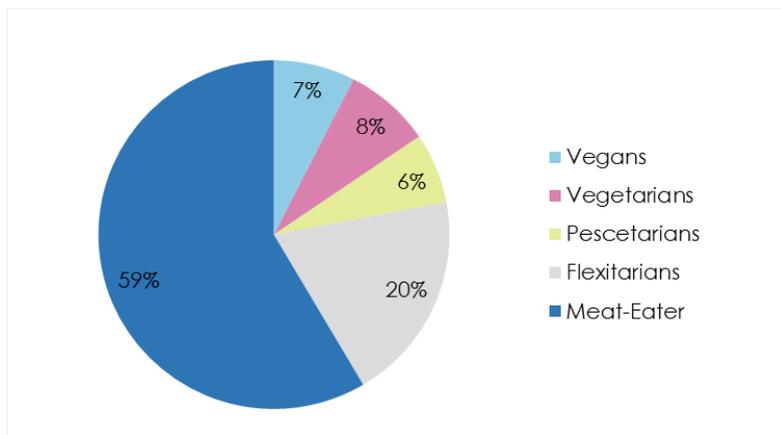


Figure 2: Meat consumption of the members of Kartoffelkombinat

Figure 3 visualizes to which extent the cooperative members buy food of organic origin. Accordingly, 44% of the members buy almost exclusively food of organic origin. 36% purchase the major part and 17% half of their food in organic quality. Only 3% buy occasionally and none of the members of Kartoffelkombinat never buys organic food. This level of organic food consumption is above the average German organic food consumption.

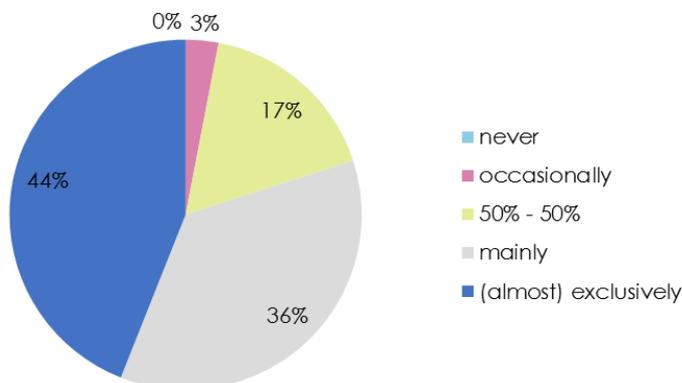


Figure 3: consumption of organic food of the members of Kartoffelkombinat

Interestingly, people did not only report about changes in the area of food, but perceived a spill-over of their sustainable behaviour to other areas of lifestyles as well. In the area of living and energy a relative individual improvement of 15% on average is reported. Before joining Kartoffelkombinat members rated their behaviour with 6.10 points, now with 6.50 points on average (+0.40 points). Members perceived a relative improvement of 13% for the sustainability of their consumption behaviour. In this area members perceived their behaviour with 5.97 points before they have joined the cooperative and with 6.49 now (+0.52 points). In the area of mobility the relative individual change is 5% on average. The absolute change is 0.12 points as members gave themselves 6.10 points before they have joined Kartoffelkombinat and 6.22 points now.

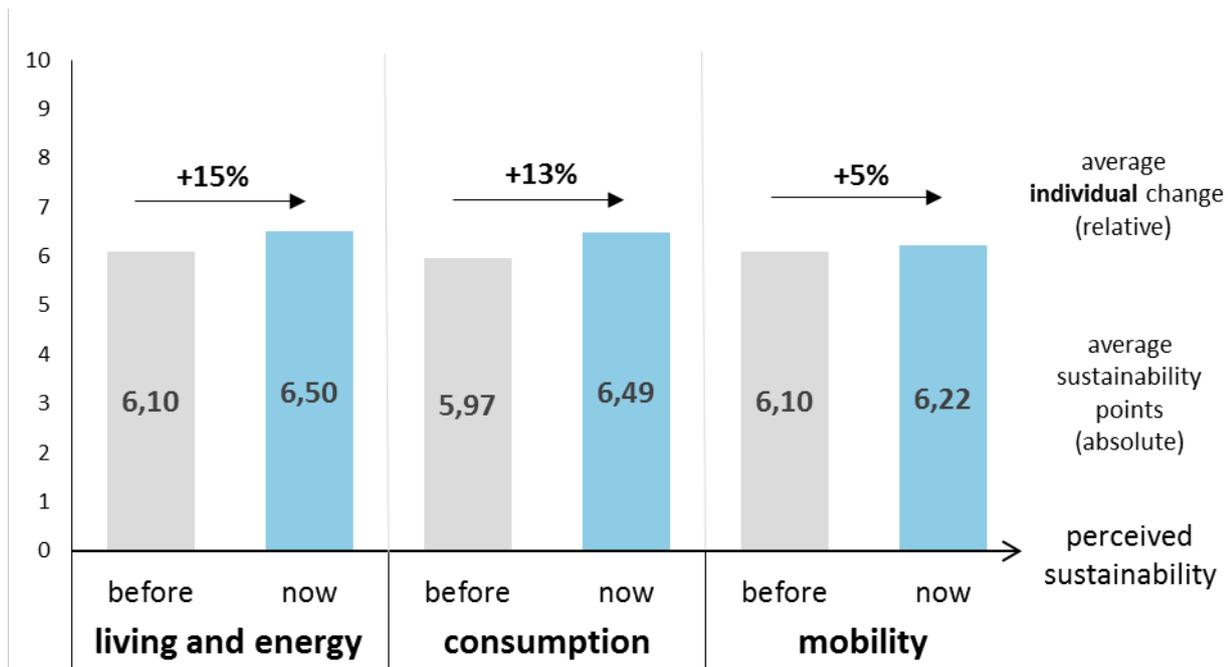


Figure 4: sustainability behavior of the members of Kartoffelkombinat: living and energy, consumption and mobility

Further results

Important triggers for sustainability behaviour are cognitive dissonance and group effect.

The following results indicate that Kartoffelkombinat members feel certain cognitive dissonance when comparing different forms of behaviour: 76% have a bad conscience when making environmentally unfriendly purchasing decisions. 88% try to reconcile their behaviour

with their principles. 70% agree that it is possible to consider sustainability issues in all aspects of life.

The community at Kartoffelkombinat also influences the members. 75% think that being a member of Kartoffelkombinat enhances their awareness for social, ecological and economic issues. 36% agree that co-members have motivated them to change their own behaviour with their impulses. 32% agree that some co-members take on the function as a role model. 5% of the respondents compare themselves with co-members and 6% agree that they sometimes feel pressured by their co-members.

3.2. Som Energia

In the case of Som Energia 623 members filled out the online survey (response rate of 3%). The average age at Som Energia is 46 years. The oldest member is 79, the youngest member is 23 years old. Two third are male, one third female (similar to Kartoffelkombinat). Concerning the members' occupation, 66% are employees and 15% are self-employed. 2% are students, 11% are retired, and 6% are unemployed. None of the members of Som Energia reported being a househusband or housewife.

Members of Som Energia can get involved with the cooperative in different ways: recruiting new cooperative members, following the news published by the cooperative, participating in discussions in the online forum, being part of a local group, taking part in events like the general assembly or educational speeches.

There are different motivations why people are part of the cooperative. 92% enjoy consuming renewable energy in an alternative way to the traditional and prevailing production and consumption system. 89% support Som Energia because they can identify themselves with its values and objectives. 69% appreciate exerting control over the type of energy they consume. 45% like being part of the Som Energia community. 44% value the high quality of Som Energia as renewable energy provider. 28% appreciate the exchange with like-minded people. 9% have made new friends at Som Energia.

Main results

Reaching an increase of 18%, members most improved the sustainability of their behaviour in the area of living and energy, which constitutes the core area of Som Energia. This means that members now perceive their behaviour in the area of living and energy 18% more sustainable than before their membership at Som Energia. On a total scale from one (not sustainable at all) to ten (very sustainable) members rated the sustainability of their behaviour in the area living and energy with 6.06 points on average before joining the cooperative. Now they perceive their behaviour with 6.79 points (+0.73 points). With Som Energia as energy provider all members opted for green electricity. 94% try to use as little water and energy as possible. In addition, 11% have installed solar panels on their houses for self-supply. 95% generally try to avoid waste and recycle resources.

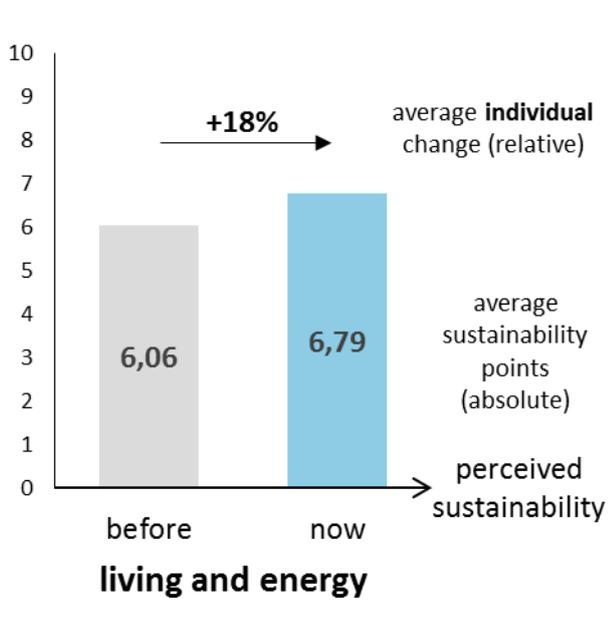


Figure 5: sustainability behaviour of the members of Som Energia: living and energy

Interestingly, spill-over effects from the area of living and energy to other areas of sustainable lifestyles can be observed as well. In the area of food a relative improvement of 11% is recorded. 6.03 points was the perception of the sustainability behaviour before and 6.45 points after joining Som Energia (+0.42 points). Members perceived a relative improvement of their sustainability behaviour of 7% for both the area of consumption and mobility. In the area of consumption, members awarded themselves 6.49 points before they have joined Som

Energia and now 6.79 points (+0.3 points). In the area of mobility an improvement from 6.16 points before to 6.4 after joining the cooperative is recorded (+0.24 points).

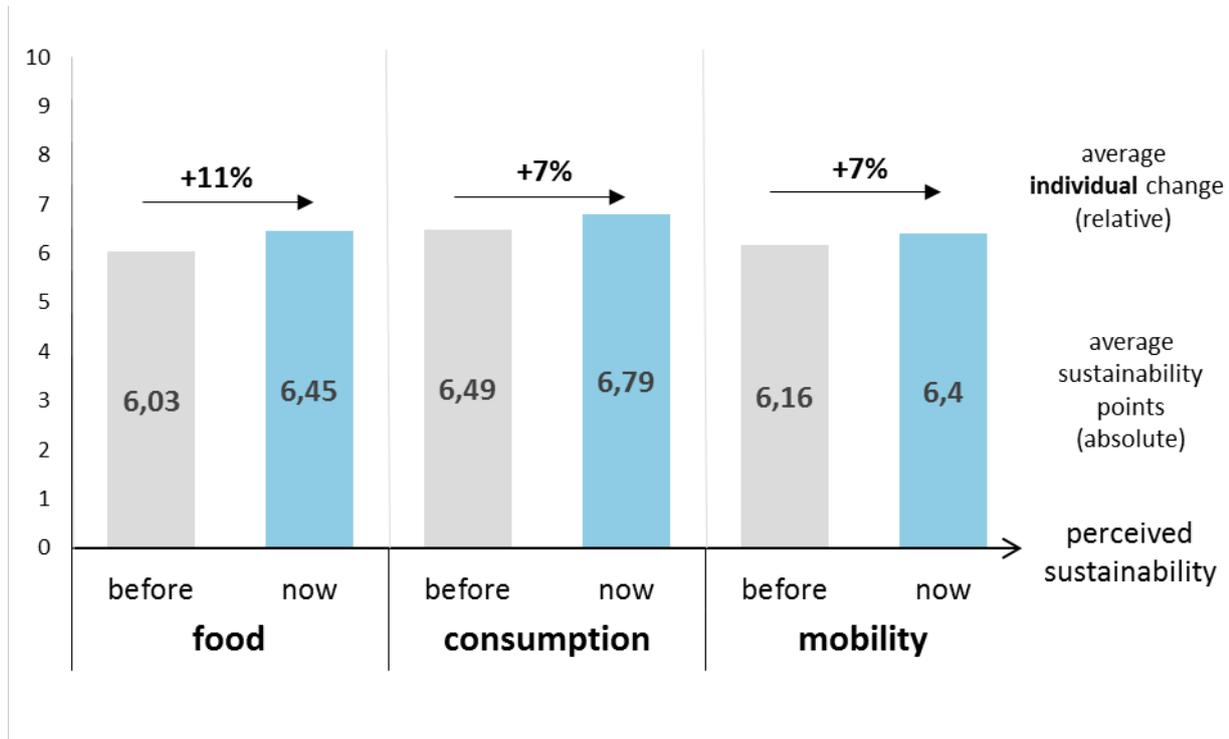


Figure 6: sustainability behaviour of the members of Som Energia: food, consumption, mobility

Further results

The triggers for sustainability behaviour, cognitive dissonance and group effect, were also examined for Som Energia. The following results suggest that Som Energia members feel some cognitive dissonance: 14% have a bad conscience when making environmentally unfriendly purchasing decisions. 67% always try to reconcile their behaviour with their principles. 19% agree that it is possible to consider sustainability issues in all aspects of life.

Members at Som Energia are also influenced by the community. 84% think that being a member of Retenergie enhances their awareness for social, ecological and economic issues. 10% agree that co-members have motivated them to change their own behaviour with their impulses. 13% agree that some co-members take on the function as a role model. 3% compare themselves with co-members. However, peer group pressure by co-members was not reported in the case of Som Energia.

3.3. Retenergie

The online survey by Retenergie was answered by 114 members (response rate of 15%). On average, the members at Retenergie are 50 years old. The oldest member is 73, while the youngest member is 28 years old. About three quarter are male, one quarter female. Half of the members work as employees, 27% are self-employed, 2% of the members are housewives or househusbands, 5% are retired, 12% unemployed, and 4% have some other form of occupation. There are no students among the members. Regarding the duration of membership at Retenergie most of the members (86%) joined the cooperative within the last year. 10% have been members for one up to two years. 4% have been members for more than two years.

Retenergie offers different activities in order to involve its members: being an investor member, holding cooperative stocks, taking part in a Photovoltaic Purchase Group, participating in a Technology Purchase Group, attending social events of the cooperative or financing the new project of the cooperative.

People are motivated by different reasons to be a member of Retenergie. 89% support Retenergie because they can identify themselves with its values and objectives. 16% like being part of the Retenergie community and participate in the activities of the cooperative. 16% value the reduction of energy costs. 8% are motivated because Retenergie allows them to understand their energy consumption and how to reduce it. 86% are motivated because they can help to produce renewable energy. 75% appreciate that Retenergie brings forward innovative projects on renewable energy. 4% are motivated because Retenergie allows them to have their own photovoltaic system at an affordable price.

Main results

As opposed to Kartoffelkombinat and Som Energia, the greatest change was not reported in the core area of activity but in the area of food. The average relative improvement of the individuals in the area of living and energy is 7%. On a total scale from one (not sustainable at all) to ten (very sustainable) members rated the sustainability of their living and energy behaviour with 6.85 points on average before joining the cooperative. Now they perceive their behaviour with 7.24 points (+0.39 points).

Figure 7 will further illustrate the sustainability of the members' behaviour in the area of living and energy. 87% try to save water and energy. 100% try to avoid waste and recycle resources. All members of Retenergie use green electricity.

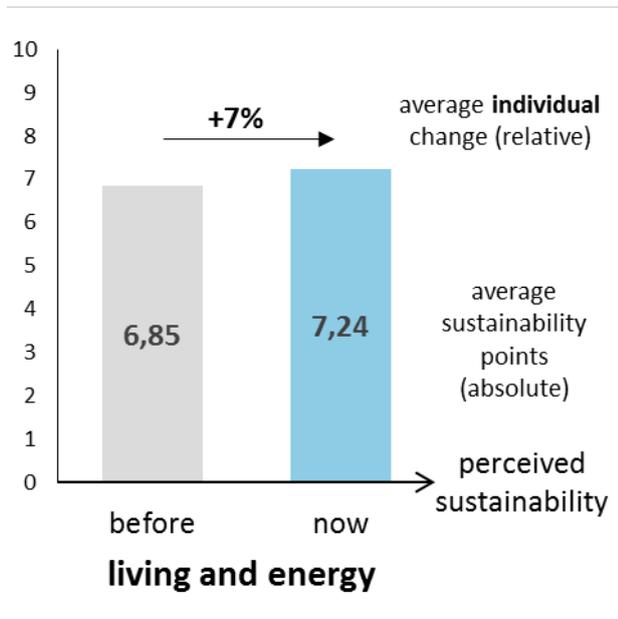


Figure 7: perceived sustainability of the members of Retenergie: living and energy

As highlighted before the average relative change was highest in the area of food with 25%, and thus a strong spill-over effect could be observed (figure 8). On average, members perceived their behaviour with 6.39 points before and 7.57 points after joining Retenergie (+1.18 points). In both areas of consumption and mobility, a relative individual improvement of 5% is recorded. In the area of consumption, members awarded themselves on average 6.97 sustainability points before, and 7.23 sustainability points after they have joined Retenergie (+0.26 points). The same amount of absolute change was reported in the area of mobility as the members perceived their behaviour with 6.45 before they have joined Retenergie, and with 6.71 points now.

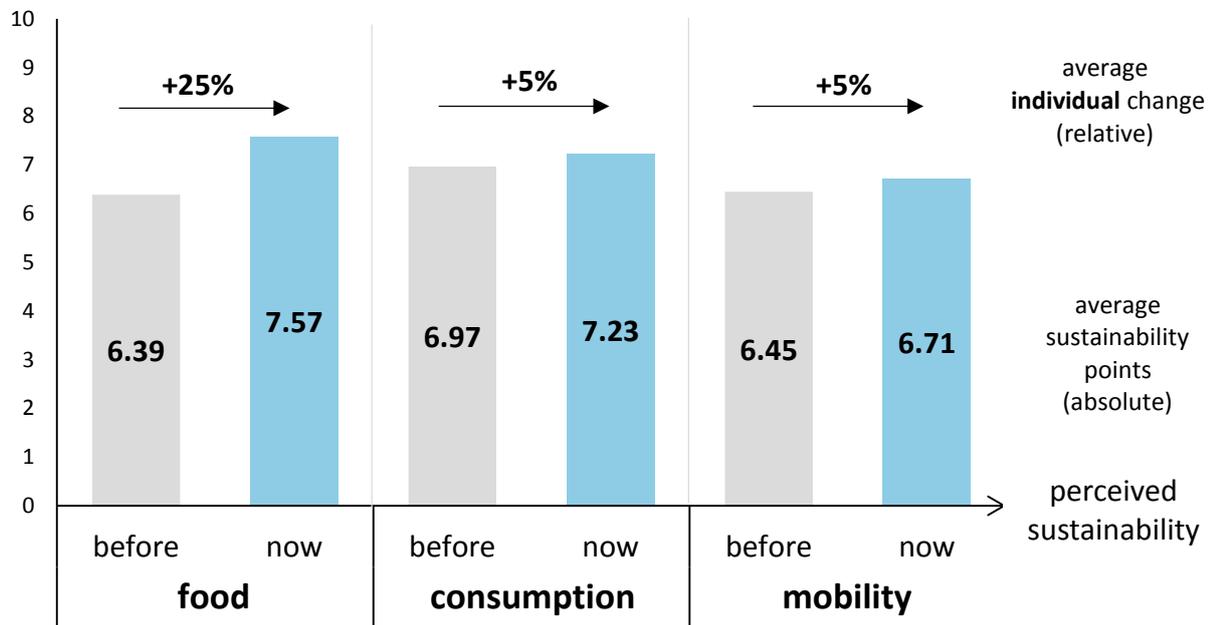


Figure 8: perceived sustainability of the members of Retenergie: food, consumption and mobility

Also at Retenergie, cognitive dissonance and group effect serve as triggers for sustainability behaviour. Cognitive dissonance is reported as follows: 26% have a bad conscience when making environmentally unfriendly purchasing decisions. 85% always try to reconcile their behaviour with their principles. 10% agree that it is possible to consider sustainability issues in all aspects of life. Furthermore, the members feel influenced by the community in the following ways: 63% think that being a member of Retenergie enhances their awareness for social, ecological and economic issues. 10% agree that co-members have motivated them to change their own behaviour with their impulses. Whereas 17% compare themselves with co-members, only 1% agrees that some co-members take on the function as a role model. Another 1% agrees that they sometimes feel pressurized by their co-members.

4. Discussion

The two main findings of the study regarding the impact of sustainable enterprises on the lifestyles of their customers are as follows: First, there is an improvement concerning the sustainability of the members' behaviour in the respective fields of activity of the cooperatives. Second, there are positive spill-over effects from the field of activity of the cooperative to other areas of the members' sustainable lifestyles.

Where do the changes come from?

The behavioural changes could be attributed to the level of involvement and the identification with the group, which is a special feature of cooperatives such as Kartoffelkombinat, Som Energia, and Retenergie. Members of cooperatives are not merely customers but owners at the same time. The exchange within the group facilitates the perception of cognitive dissonance. The results show that the group effects exerted within the cooperatives are of a positive kind, i.e. the influences perceived is rather constructive than burdensome or stressful. Peer group pressure is hardly experienced by the members. The relevance of the influence exerted by the group is also backed by the motivations for being part of the cooperatives, which have been indicated by the members (see above). Therefore we may conclude that members of cooperatives are more likely to change towards a more sustainable behaviour than non-members. As explained by Thøgersen (2004, p. 101), the process towards a more sustainable lifestyle is enabled by socio-environmental awareness and a starting point. Being an active member of a cooperative could represent such an initial point and may activate such a process. The cooperatives examined in this study offer a broad range of activities to their members, evoking commitment and fostering the exchange of opinions and information among members. Being a member of a cooperative and the exchange with the community trigger more sustainable behaviour in the field of activity of the cooperative, e.g. energy supply in the case of Som Energia. Additionally and most importantly, the involvement into the cooperative raises the awareness for general social and environmental issues. The perception of cognitive dissonance induces positive spill over effects, i.e. the sustainable behaviour is applied to further areas of lifestyle such as food, mobility and consumption.

The greatest individual change in perceived sustainability behaviour tends to be stated in the respective area of activity of the cooperative, i.e. food for Kartoffelkombinat (+53%) and living and energy for Som Energia (+18%). The involvement in the cooperative fosters the exchange and reflection of one's decision concerning food or, respectively, energy issues respectively. On the contrary, the members of Retenergie did not report the highest change in the field of living and energy (+7%), the cooperative's core field, but in the area of food (+25%).

When analysing the behavioural changes in general, it also has to be taken into consideration that the sometimes minor changes reported by some of the respondents might also be explained by their already high sustainable behaviour before joining the cooperative. This can lead to the perceived minor changes during the time of membership. For instance, members of Retenergie could possibly have had a renewable energy provider and a responsible use of water and energy resources previous to their entry into the cooperative. Hence, it is possible that the selected cooperatives attract people who are already rather conscious about sustainability aspects of their lives. This could also apply to Retenergie members, which might have already been particularly concerned about energy consumption before becoming a member. In addition, when reflecting their changes, members might not have sufficiently considered that changing from a conventional energy provider to a renewable energy cooperative already implies a substantial evolution.

Looking at the high levels of individual relative change in the area of food at Kartoffelkombinat and Retenergie, it can be noticed, that making changes in this field of consumption might be easier and more tangible than in other areas such as mobility where the behaviour is often subject to external factors. This is also confirmed by Ritch (2014), who lists food as a likely starting point of sustainable behaviour.

Shortcomings

There are some shortcomings, which have to be considered in the interpretation of the empirical results. A significant limitation is that behaviour is registered by means of self-report. Hence, the study relies only on the perception of the members themselves. There is a considerable risk of retrospective bias as it is questionable whether respondents, with hindsight, can correctly estimate the changes that occurred in their behaviour. People's judgement of change is very subjective. On the one hand, there is the risk of social-desirability influences, manipulating the responses towards a more positive direction. On the other hand, people with high environmental consciousness could judge their behaviour and improvements more critically than people with less awareness of sustainability issues. The limited scope of the questionnaire did not allow for a complete footprint test. The study only attempts an approximation. This excludes the possibility of comparisons with populations external to the study, i.e. benchmark comparisons. Furthermore, the study puts the focus on the individuals' behaviour itself and not on the absolute impact of their behaviour on the natural environment, e.g. carbon emissions. Thus, the impact cannot be measured quantitatively. Last, but not least, language and culture play a role. The original questionnaire was developed in German and then translated to English, Spanish and Italian. Due to limited time and resources we did not make a backward translation to meet the highest methodological standards. Hence, the loss of certain nuances of meanings and original intentions must be taken into account. In addition, the different national and cultural backgrounds of the participants might have influenced their answers.

Implications for further research

The study affirms that the organizational form of the cooperative plays a special role for changes towards a more sustainable behaviour. Thus, we recommend further research regarding the role of cooperatives as incubators and accelerators of sustainable lifestyles. In addition to that, we suggest looking into sustainable enterprises, which do not operate as cooperatives. What difference do they make? Do they have the same (less/more) impact on the sustainable lifestyles of their customers? Can we observe positive spill-over effects there as well (or not)?

5. Summary and Conclusion

Summing up two main findings of the study regarding the impact of sustainable enterprises on the lifestyles of their customers we may say: There is an improvement concerning the sustainability of the members' behaviour in the respective fields of activity of the cooperatives. Furthermore, there are positive spill-over effects from the field of activity of the cooperative to other areas of the members' sustainable lifestyles. The results suggest that these changes depend on different levels of involvement into the cooperative, enhanced by the perception of cognitive dissonance and the effects the group exerts on individuals.

The qualitative and quantitative results revealed that the organizational form of the cooperative plays a special role concerning these behavioural changes. Due to numerous possibilities of involvement, mutual influence concerning a more sustainable lifestyle is very likely. These findings provoked interest to engage in further research regarding the role of cooperatives and sustainable enterprises in general as incubators and accelerators of responsible living. We conclude that sustainable entrepreneurship does make a difference. In this context we acknowledge the special role of sustainable cooperatives as initiators and accelerators on the path towards a sustainable future of consumption.

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