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ABSTRACT
This research explores the contribution of cooperatives to the socio-economic development of Rwanda. In this regard, the researcher took a case study of two cooperatives; those are COTRAGAGI and COVAMU cooperatives in Ngororero district of western province of Rwanda. COTRAGAGI is an agricultural cooperative of Mountain tea planters. COVAMU is a cultural cooperative of people who make hand crafts. The main objective of this research was to assess the contribution of cooperatives to socio-economic development of Rwanda. The population of the study in the first case study (COTRAGAGI) cooperative was 1282 cooperative members, in the population the sample was eighty (80) respondents’ cooperative members and 9 key informants (Administrators) of the cooperative. In the second case study (COVAMU) cooperative, the population was 100 cooperative members, in which the researcher took 43 respondents and six (6) key informants. This study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The research instruments included the questionnaires for quantitative data and interview guide for qualitative data. The findings were analyzed based on the frequencies and percentages which were presented in tables and then interpretations were given after. The research highlighted the activities executed by the cooperative members; benefits of the cooperative members from the cooperatives; challenges and constraints faced by the cooperatives; strategies taken by the cooperatives for mitigating these challenges and constraints and suggestions of these cooperative members for improvement of cooperatives. The results and findings revealed a significant contribution of cooperatives to the socio-economic development of Rwanda; such as paying taxes; fighting against ignorance, hunger and poverty, develop the country and promotion of family planning; training people; people in cooperatives are able to resolve their problems; and promotion of trade competition. Finally the researcher gave recommendations for improvement of cooperatives; for example, he recommended that the government of Rwanda and development agencies should continue supporting cooperatives financially, by material, trainings and find markets for the products of cooperatives.