

Determinants of Leadership Legitimacy in Sustainability of the Dairy Goat Project by the Dairy Goat Farmers' Association in Central and Eastern Provinces of Kenya

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Abstract

This study was designed to identify factors that determine leadership legitimacy in the member groups of the Dairy Goat Association of Kenya. The research design was a correlational survey while the target population was 106 member groups of the Dairy Goat Association of Kenya in Eastern and Central provinces. Embu, and Murang'a counties in Eastern and Central provinces respectively, were selected through cluster sampling, while proportional stratified random sampling was used to select two samples of 47 group chairpersons and 251 followers. Structured interview schedules were used to obtain data from the group chairpersons and their followers. Chi-square and contingency coefficient were used to test the validity of the set hypothesis, at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of statistical significance. The results indicated that: Contribution to group development; leader competency in dealing with group administrative matters; respect from group members; appreciation leader shows for efforts of other group members; trustworthiness; commitment to group goals and values; leader does not impose his/her ideas on other members, and popularity of leader among group members were significant determinants of leaders' level of legitimacy at $p \leq 0.01$. Therefore, for leadership to be legitimate and sustainable, in Dairy Goat Association of Kenya, it should evolve from the groups.

Keywords: Farmers' groups, leadership legitimization, project sustainability, participation.

1. Introduction

The highlands of Central and Eastern Kenya have a generally high population density, ranging from 450 people / Km² to 700 people in some counties like Kiambu, upper parts Embu and Meru (Kariuki & Place, 2005). The increasing population density has progressively resulted into shrinking of grazing areas to the extent of not being able to sustain one dairy cow. Development agencies have therefore, been promoting dairy goats among farmers' groups in the Kenyan highlands, where the population density and pressure on land is increasing. A particular emphasis has been given to dual-purpose (meat and milk) goats obtained by crossing Alpine and Toggenburg with the indigenous breeds (Maigua, 2006). It is on this premise that in 1992, the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) in collaboration with the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Livestock Development, introduced the dairy goat project to farmers' groups in Central and Eastern provinces of Kenya. The project focuses on upgrading the indigenous goat breeds by use of exotic bucks and does of German alpine breeds. The operation involves sharing of one exotic buck by a group of about 20 farmers by rotation. (Dairy Goat Association of Kenya [DGAK], 2001)

To facilitate participatory management of the project, an association comprising of 106 farmers' groups involved in the dairy goat keeping was proposed in 1993. In 1994, the Dairy Goat Association of Kenya was registered. Members of DGAK's management committee were drawn from the member groups. The association adopted the project objective of poverty alleviation through: Promotion and maintenance of high quality goats through organized breeding, preservation of breeding materials like semen, and inspection and registration in the Kenya studbook; marketing of dairy goats and their products through organized sales and public auctions; promotion of group participation in the organizational, financial, technical and administrative management of the project and training of agricultural staff and goat farmers in various aspects of goat husbandry (DGAK, 2001)

However, in 1998, GTZ, the major funding agency, withdrew part of its financial and logistical support from the project. In 2001, all components of the project except the secretariat were handed over to DGAK. Possible consequences of such organizational change characterized by decline in resources include: Increasing conflict because of competition for few resources; lack of leadership as leaders become scapegoats of internal group tension; increasing group tension among group members; loss of trust as leaders lose confidence in their followers, and decreasing morale due to infighting (Cameroon, Freeman & Mishra, 1993). On the contrary, these dysfunctional consequences have been minimal in the Dairy Goat Association of Kenya [DGAK]. Since its

registration in April 1994, DGAK had not only grown to become established as an economically viable national farmers' association but its capacity as a service provider, in the field of extension, marketing and quality control, and input supply had been enhanced. The group members have continued to obtain livelihoods such as better milk yields, and higher incomes from the sale of high quality goats and their products from the dairy goat project. By 2013, the association's networks had even extended to Coast and Western Provinces of Kenya, and the number of DGAK member groups had risen to 1300 with a membership of 16,000 farmers owning 45,000 upgraded goats ((Kariuki, Okore & Indetie, 2013). This credible growth in capacity of DGAK and sustainability of the dairy goat project by the member groups has been attributed partly to the virtue of the groups having legitimate leadership (GTZ, 2006).

Leadership plays an important role in maintenance of projects' participatory structures (Ghai & Vivian, 1995). Effective leadership is crucial for the success of any organization, while reliable social organization is a basic principle in project design for sustainability (Curtis, 1991). For leadership to be effective, it must be legitimate. Legitimacy refers to the widespread acceptance of a group leader by the group members. Such a leader is likely to better steer the course of development in the group, as legitimacy and developmental capacity are related. Leadership is legitimate when it has evolved from its own group, and it is important power because it provides vision that can help to bring about a better life for all in the society (Englebert, 2000). The right to lead comes from the consent of the followers, and it amounts to a conditional agreement between the leader and his or her followers. According to the followers perception of their leader's legitimacy, he/she should be committed to the group's goals, uphold the values and standards important to the group and respect the authority granted to him or her (Hollander, 1980). Contrastingly, a leader whose acceptance or legitimacy is contested is likely to resort to authoritarianism, intimidation, or manipulation, and to exercise power rather than to seek authority. The consequence is frustration, anger, and even aggression on the part of the leader followers ((Blondel, 1980). The latter consequence has been minimal in the DGAK.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine factors important to leader's legitimization in the Dairy Goat Association of Kenya member groups, with the aim of identifying those that have outstanding influence on leaders' legitimacy. Such information will be useful in guiding the emerging groups on selecting group leaders that are likely to steer the groups' agricultural development to higher productivity.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study sought to determine:

1. Criteria and methods used in selecting leaders
2. Leaders' level of legitimacy across the DGAK groups
3. The extent to which the criteria and methods used in selecting leaders influence the level of leaders' legitimacy.

The hypothesis tested was that there is no statistically significant relationship between criteria and methods used in selecting leaders, and the leaders' level of legitimacy.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The research design was a correlational survey, with the data collected at one point in time to determine the extent to which criteria and methods used in selecting leaders were related to level of leaders' legitimacy in the Dairy goat association of Kenya groups. The design was appropriate for the study because the independent variables could not be manipulated by the researcher. The study also dealt with human beings who are free to choose what they would or not participate in (Privitera & Wallace, 2011). The independent variables of the study were criteria and methods use in selecting leaders while the independent variable was level of leaders' legitimacy.

2.2 Study population

The population of the study consisted of 106 farmers' groups with a membership of 2199, which existed before or were formed during the initiation of the project. These were distributed within Embu County in Eastern province, and Nyeri, Murang'a, Kirinyaga and Kiambu counties in Central province. The target population which was also the accessible population was the group chairpersons and their followers in Embu and Murang'a counties.

2.3 Population and sampling

Cluster sampling was used to select two counties: Embu in Eastern Province and Murang'a in Central Province. The two study sites had a population of 47 dairy goat groups with a membership of 865. The entire population of

the 47 groups' chairpersons was studied while a sample of 251 chairpersons' followers was selected through proportional stratified random sampling. A further randomly selected sample size of 69 group constitutions covering members' conduct and project operations was also obtained from the 106 DGAK groups, to provide clues on leadership legitimization variables considered important by the groups.

2.4 Data Collection and analysis

Two sets of interview schedules containing closed and open ended questions, one for the group chairperson and the other for his or her followers were used to collect data. Content analysis of the groups' by-laws was done to identify common themes on leadership legitimization across the groups. The data collection instruments were suitable for the study because some of the respondents had low or no literacy levels. The Interview schedule for group chairpersons solicited their personal attributes while that of the leader followers mainly dwelt on the evaluation of the group chairperson by his/her followers. An average score was computed from the interviewed leader followers of a particular group, to obtain the mean legitimization attributes of the leader. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences software, while descriptive statistics and Chi-square were used to present the findings of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Personal attributes of Group Chairpersons

Table 1: Group Chairpersons' Personal attributes (N = 47)

Variable	No.	%	Mean	SD	Range
<i>Gender:</i>					
Men	37	78.72	-	-	-
Women	10	21.28	-	-	-
<i>Marital Status:</i>					
Married	45	95.70	-	-	-
Widowed	1	2.15	-	-	-
Separated/Divorced	1	2.15	-	-	-
Age (Calendar Years)	-	-	56.15	12.71	29 - 80
Years of formal Schooling	-	-	7.85	3.25	1 - 15
<i>Current Occupation:</i>					
Fulltime Farmer	32	68.08	-	-	-
Part-time Farmer	15	31.92	-	-	-
Income (Ksh.) per year	-	-	90,950.75	50,308.00	60,000– 479,000.00

All the 47 group chairpersons responded to all the questions in the questionnaire. Among those studied (78.7 %) were men while 21.3 % were women, revealing gender disparity in leadership composition in DGAK groups. This trend of low number of women leaders may be attributed to the traditional role expectations and biased community attitudes against women. The greater proportion (95.7 %) of the leaders were married and living with their spouse while the rest (4.3 %) were single through divorce and widowhood.

The mean age for all leaders was 56.15 years resulting from a wide range of 29 years for the youngest and 80 for the oldest leader. This indicates that the members of the DGAK groups had no preference for a particular age in choosing their leaders. However, a greater proportion, (68.1 %) of leaders was above 50 years.

The mean years of formal schooling for all leaders was 7.85, with a range of 1 to 15 years. The general notion is that all leaders had some basic education, which may be an important criterion in the choice of leaders. When leaders' mean years of formal education was compared with that of their followers (6.21), it was found out that the former was slightly above that of their followers. This may mean that leaders whose education is above their followers were preferred in the Dairy Goat Association of Kenya.

Majority of the leaders (68.08%) were fulltime farmers while the rest were part time farmers, whose second and/or third occupation comprised of teaching, business, clergy and clerical work. The income earned from the above occupations had a wide range of Kenya shillings 60, 000 to 479,000.00 per annum, indicating a wide disparity.

3.2 Criteria and Methods Used in Choosing Leaders by DGAK Groups

Responses by the leader followers on all the criteria for selecting leaders were measured on a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 for very untrue, 2, untrue, 3, Not sure, 4 true and 5, very true of him/her. Table 2 revealed that group leaders had contributed moderately to groups' development, as portrayed by a mean of 3.45. Mean scores for individual group leaders ranged from 1.3 to 4.3, an indication that every leader had at least made some contribution to group development, with the majority having offered much help as indicated by a mode of 3.5.

Table 2: Criteria and Methods Used in Choosing Leaders by DGAK Groups (N = 47)

Variable	No.	%	Mean	SD	Range
Contribution to group development	-	-	3.45	0.70	1.3 – 4.3
Competent in dealing with Dairy Goat group administrative matters	-	-	4.31	0.45	3.0–5.0
Respected member of the group	-	-	3.98	0.76	2.0– 5.0
Knowledgeable in Dairy goat keeping	-	-	2.90	1.02	1.0– 4.8
Appreciates effort of other group members	-	-	4.00	0.68	1.8– 5.0
Trustworthy	-	-	4.21	0.48	3.5 -5.0
Committed to goals and values of the group	-	-	4.12	0.34	3.0 -5.0
Does not impose his own ideas on others	-	-	4.00	0.38	3.0 - 4.8
Popular among group members			4.42	0.86	2.5 -5.0
<i>Procedure for Selecting Leaders</i>					
Consensus	11	23.4	-	-	-
Elections	36	76.6			
Source of authority					
From the group	46	97.90	-	-	-
From both group and the Ministry of Livestock Development (legitimate authority)	1	2.10			

Note¹. Groups were the focus and unit of analysis of the study. Although responses were obtained from 251 chairpersons' followers, these were used in the calculation of individual group leaders' means.

This may be an indication of the importance of a member's contribution to group development if one desires to be the chairperson. The mean score on perceived competency in group administrative matters for all leaders was 4.31. Individual group leaders' score ranged from 3.0 to 5.0, which shows that all leaders were at least competent while majority were either competent or very competent as indicated by the group mean. Thus, competency in administrative matters of the group is an important factor for any group member to achieve the leadership status.

Extent to which the leader was the most knowledgeable group member on dairy goat management techniques, showed an almost "Not sure" level of perception as explained by a mean of 2.90. A relatively larger proportion (48.6%) of leaders was perceived as not being experts compared to those perceived on the contrary (38.7%). This may be an indicator that a group member need not necessarily be a technical expert in order to lead the dairy goat farmers' groups. In addition, the presence of the dairy goat Para-technicians and their relatively high availability to the groups may have overridden the technical competency requirements for any leader.

Leader followers' mean responses on their leaders popularity ranged from 3.00 to 5.00, with 2.1% of the leaders obtaining a "Not Sure" evaluation, while majority (97.9%) were perceived to be popular. The group means of 4.42 shows that most of the leaders were very popular.

For a leader to get along well with his followers, the association's constitution emphasized the need for the group chairperson to appreciate the effort of other group members as a way of motivating them to participate in the dairy goat and other group activities. Individual leaders mean score ranged from 1.80 to 5.00. Majority (85.1%) were perceived to be providing encouragement while the rest were not. The mean for all leaders was 4.00, which may be an indication of the group members' preference for leaders who use positive behavior reinforcers.

Followers rating of their leaders on the extent to which they were respected by the other group members showed that leaders were moderately high in referent power as shown by a mean score of 3.98, with a range of 2.00 to 5.00 points for individual group leaders. The range of scores reveal that generally, a few leaders (8.6%) were perceived not to be the most respected members of the groups while majority (87.2%) were perceived on the contrary. On the same token, results on trustworthiness gave a mean of 4.21 from a range of 3.5 – 5.0 indicating that all leaders were at least trustworthy. The chairpersons were also expected to be committed to the goals and values of the group. The mean commitment was 4.12, resulting from a range of 3 to 5 which showed that all the leaders were generally committed Does not impose his/her will on others

Leaders from 46 groups (97.9%) were reported to have been appointed by group members while in one (2.1%), appointment was by both group and the Ministry of Livestock (legitimate authority). This shows that all leaders had legitimate sources of authority.

Of the many leader legitimization methods, only two featured in this study i.e. elections and consensus, whose proportions were 76.6% and 23.4% of the total number of groups respectively. These methods may be an indication of the groups favor for democratic methods of choosing their leaders.

4.3 Leaders' level of legitimacy

Level of legitimacy was a composite dependent variable comprising of the degree to which the group chairperson was accepted as a group member, leader, and spokesperson (Hollander and Julian 1978). The group chairperson's followers were asked to rate their level of willingness in having the chairperson continue in the three stated roles. Responses were based on a 5 point rating scale ranging from 1 for extremely unwilling, to 5 for extremely willing. Two hundred and fifty one followers evaluated a total of 47 group chairpersons. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Responses showed that the role as a group member is of primary importance (Mean = 4.42). However, in 3 groups (6.4 %) the members were unwilling to have the chairperson continue being a member while the rest were more than "much willing".

Table 3: Responses on Dimensions of and Level of Leader Legitimacy (N =47)

Dimensions of leader legitimacy	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Acceptance as group member	4.42	0.86	1.5 –5.0
Acceptance as group leader	4.23	0.54	2.5 - 5.0
Acceptance as Spokesperson	4.37	0.43	3.5 - 5.0
Level of Legitimacy	4.34	0.39	3.5 - 5.0

Level of acceptance of the chairpersons as group leaders was slightly lower than that of a member (Mean = 4.23). However, the findings indicate that all followers had a generally high level of acceptance for the current leadership. Besides this, the findings may also be revealing that, although it is important to be a group member, there may be other important factors affecting a leader's legitimacy.

The level of acceptance of the chairpersons as the group spokespersons by followers gave a group mean of 4.37. Individual chairpersons' score ranged from 3.5 to 5.0. The general acceptance as the group spokespersons was therefore, secondary to that of a group member, but superior to that of a leader. However, the range of scores for acceptance as spokesperson portrays a much higher baseline implying that, all the followers had a much higher level of acceptance for their leader as a spokesperson than for the other dimensions of leader legitimacy. Notwithstanding, all leaders had high mean scores on the three dimensions. These findings tally with those of Hollander and Julian (1978), and emphasize the need for a leader's high level of legitimacy on all the three dimensions.

The three dimensions of leader legitimacy were utilized to compute the level of legitimacy. The results gave a group mean of 4.34 while individual leaders scored between 3.5 and 5.0 points. The group mean shows that generally, all followers were at least "very willing" to have their leaders continue as group members, leaders and spokespersons. The range of scores also shows that in all the groups, followers were generally willing to have their leader continue in the three roles. Thus no leader rejection was observed.

The level of legitimacy composite variable was coded as follows: - 3.0 to 6.9, Low; 7.0 to 10.9, Moderate; 11.0 to 14.9, High. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Group Chairpersons' Levels of Legitimacy (N=47)

Category	Number of groups	Percent
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	3	6.4
High	44	93.6
Total	47	100.0

To establish whether criteria and methods of choosing leaders were statistically and significantly related to the leaders' level of legitimacy, the two variables were cross-tabulated. The results are shown on Table 5.

The results revealed statistically significant relationship between Leaders' level of legitimacy and contribution to group development ($p = 0.0001$); leader competency in dealing with group administrative matters ($p = 0.010$), respect from group members ($p = 0.004$), appreciation leader shows to other group members ($p = 0.012$), trustworthiness ($P = 0.01$), commitment to group goals and values ($p = 0.001$) and, leader does not impose his/her ideas on other members ($p = 0.003$). The findings attest to the theory forwarded by Hollander (1993 & 2009). The results also partly agree with the findings of Hollander and

Table 5: Relationship between Criteria and Methods Used by DGAK in Selecting Leaders, and Level of Leader Legitimacy (N = 47).

Independent Variables	Chi-square calculated	Chi-square critical	Df	Contingency coefficient(c)	Significant p
Contribution to group development	23.48	5.99	2	0.577	.000*
Competent in dealing with Dairy Goat group administrative matters	6.65	3.84	1	0.376	.010*
Respected member of the group	10.90	5.99	2	0.434	.004*
More Knowledgeable on Dairy goat management	2.00	5.99	2	0.206	.368
Appreciates effort of other group members	8.82	5.99	2	0.397	.012*
Trustworthy	9.29	5.99	2	0.401	.010*
Committed to goals and values of the group	9.43	5.99	2	0.481	.001*
Does not impose his/her ideas on others	8.82	3.84	1	0.433	.003*
Popular among group members	24.51	5.99	2	0.596	.000*
Legitimization procedure	0.82	3.84	1	0.132	.364
Source of authority	0.04	3.84	1	-0.031	.831

* Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Julian (1978). Variables that were contrary to the concepts and findings of the above authors are: Leaders' knowledge or expertise on Dairy goat management, legitimization procedure, and source of authority. The discrepancy in the findings may be attributed to the fact that for expertise, many leaders were relatively low although they were keeping dairy goats. This trend may be as a result of the groups being served by a relatively large number of DGAK technicians who provided all the expertise on management of dairy goats whenever any member of the DGAK needed it. As such, expertise on dairy goat management may not have been a prerequisite to leadership legitimization.

Under legitimization procedure, only two methods featured- elections and group consensus, with the former being predominant. The presence of a very weak relationship with leader legitimacy may be an indication that none of these methods had an edge over the other in terms of group perception on their democratic value. The relationship between source of authority and level of leader legitimacy was not only very weak but also negative ($c = -.031$, $df = 1$). This may be due to the fact that, source of authority was almost a constant in that out of 47 leaders, only one had been sanctioned by both group and legitimate organization.

The hypothesis which stated that "there is no statistically significant relationship between criteria and methods used in selecting leaders and leaders' level of legitimacy" was therefore rejected, because significant relationships were found between the latter and contribution to group development, competency in dealing with group administrative matters, respect from group members, appreciation leaders show to other group members Trustworthiness, commitment to group goals and values and, leader does not impose his/her ideas on other members contribution to group development.

5. Conclusions

The group chairpersons in the Dairy Goat Association of Kenya groups were instrumental to group development, managed group affairs well, were respected by their followers, appreciated their group members, were trustworthy, committed to group goals and values, and did not impose their ideas on other group members. The chairpersons' expertise on dairy goat management was less pronounced, probably because their technical expertise was not significantly different from that of their followers. The group members chose their chairpersons through democratic methods and consequently, all leaders' were moderately to highly legitimate. Therefore, not all factors assumed to be related to a leader's legitimacy might hold true for all organizations. Some are universal while others are specific to certain circumstances under which the group operates.

6. Recommendations

The researchers recommended that:

1. To be legitimate and sustainable, leadership in Dairy Goat Association of Kenya should evolve from the groups. External interference in terms of imposing leaders on the groups or influencing group members' choices of their leaders is likely to lead to rejection of leaders and consequently, to the collapse of groups.
2. Due to the situational nature of leadership, the study should be replicated to other member groups of the

Dairy Goat Association of Kenya outside the two provinces in which the study was carried out. This will establish a leadership effectiveness framework relevant to their situation.

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