

Group Dynamics Among Beef Cattle Farmers in Merak Hamlet, Sumberwaru Village, Situbondo Regency

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Abstract

This research aims to get an overview of group dynamics, measure dynamism, and find out the relationship between livestock group dynamism and the level of ability to carry out beef cattle farming activities. This research was conducted in Merak Hamlet, Sumberwaru Village, Situbondo Regency, from February to April 2024. The population in this study was all members of the livestock group, totaling 24 people. Took Respondents from all group members who participated in grazing their livestock. Regarding data collection, researchers used observation, interviews, and documentation methods. The data was collected and analyzed using descriptive analysis; the second analysis is the dynamic category, and the third is the Spearman Rank correlation analysis. The results of the research show that 1) in one year one adult female cow produces one calf, each member of the group has 4-11 cows, the total number of cattle in Merak Hamlet is 1,442 heads; 2) The dynamism of the cattle farming business is based on goals, structure, function, guidance, cohesiveness, atmosphere, effectiveness, pressure and hidden intentions, on average farmer breeders are satisfied with an average score of 3.916 (78.33%) with a distribution of 22 people (92%), while farmer breeders opinion is quite satisfied as much as 0.08 (8.33%); 3) The relationship between group dynamism and the ability to carry out cattle farming business in livestock groups in Merak Hamlet is of opinion that they are satisfied with an average score of 4.08 (81.66%), while based on The results of the Sperm Rank analysis of dynamic relationships including age have a real relationship to group dynamics where the value of R is more significant than R. Meanwhile, the relationship between ability including age has a real relationship where the value of Rstable is greater than Rstable: age (0.723 > 0.409), formal education (0.689 > 0.409), non-formal (0.789 > 0.409), experience (0.690 > 0.409).

Keyword: *Dynamics Group, Baluran National Park, Livestock Business*

1. Introduction

Baluran National Park has a grazing area that has long played a vital role in the surrounding buffer communities, including Merak Hamlet and Sumberwaru Village. The people of Merak Hamlet have very rapid cattle development due to the availability of large grazing areas around the National Park. Based on management factors, cows released in the grazing regions make farming much more accessible than the cut-and-carry system. Based on the research results by [1], it is stated that breeders with low farming skills tend to choose a more accessible alternative, namely grazing their livestock, rather than giving their livestock feed in cages.

The experience and skills of breeders are determining factors for livestock productivity. The reason is that the knowledge of animal husbandry of the people of Merak Hamlet can be assumed to be minimal, thus making it the main reason for the people of Merak Hamlet to carry out grazing in the Baluran National Park area. The number of beef cattle released into grazing areas is almost 4,000 daily, so the community forms a group of breeders. According to [2], a group is a unit that contains several individuals who can act in a unified way based on a collection of perceptions. This breeder group aims to make the grazing process easier. Every day, there will be an alternating

schedule for the livestock groups to take turns looking after the cows released in the Baluran National Park area.

A breeder group has the same basis: interests, environmental conditions, and similarities in their livestock commodities. Several aspects in common between the members of this livestock group make grazing activities in the Baluran National Park area familiar. According to Salmon et al. 2017, a farmer group is part of a community unit that lives in the same environment and works together to achieve the same goals. To achieve the common goals of a group, there will undoubtedly be many problems related to the natural resources available in the Baluran National Park area. Therefore, livestock groups need management in managing livestock groups and making decisions. Mardikanto [3] states that the main characteristics of a group are having real ties, interaction, and interrelationships among its members, a clear structure and division of tasks, specific rules or norms mutually agreed upon, and shared desires and goals.

Group dynamics is a science that studies group behavior for the advancement of knowledge about the nature of the group, development of groups, interactions between groups and individuals, between group and group others, while group dynamics [4], the target or emphasis in farmer education the way farmers learn from experience, effort self-discovery, and inter-cooperation farmer. The success of a group lies in group dynamics. Group dynamics are forces that emerge from within the group, which is characterized by nine elements, namely 1) group goals; 2) group structure; 3) group assignment function; 4) group development; 5) group cohesiveness; 6) group atmosphere; 7) group pressure; 8) group effectiveness, and; 9) hidden intentions [5].

Merak Hamlet, Sumberwaru Village, has many regional names, such as Merak, Widuri, Bathok, Air Karang, Lempuyang, Si Rondo, Si Macan, and Balanan. Each region has its livestock group. In this research, the author only focused on the Merak area, which has two large livestock groups with members in each livestock, namely around 20 cage owners. Based on this phenomenon, this research is essential to determine the management patterns of livestock groups in the Merak region. This research aims to 1) Get an overview of the dynamics of farmer groups in beef cattle farming; 2) measure the dynamism of farmer groups; 3) determine the relationship between the dynamism of farmer groups and the level of Ability to carry out beef cattle farming activities.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Material

This research was conducted in Merak Hamlet, Sumberwaru Village, Situbondo Regency, from February to April 2024. The population in this study was all members of the livestock group, totaling 24 people; respondents were taken from all members of the livestock group without exception.

2.2. Method of collecting data

The definition of data collection techniques [6] is that researchers can use methods to collect data. These methods refer to something abstract and cannot be realized in visible objects, but their use can be demonstrated. In terms of data collection, researchers used the following method:

1. Observation Method

Observation or direct observation is carried out by systematically observing and recording symptoms or phenomena that occur at the research location. This research uses the participant observation method, meaning that the researcher is actively involved directly with the daily activities of the farmers being observed or as a research source.

2. Interview Method

An interview is a process of conversation with other people with a specific aim or purpose carried out by two parties, namely the interviewer (the person who asks questions) and the person being interviewed (the person giving the answers to the questions). In this research, researchers used a structured interview method. This means that the interviewer determines the problems and

questions that will be asked to the livestock group to get answers to the hypotheses that have been determined in advance.

3. Documentation Method

In carrying out documentation, researchers use written objects such as books, magazines, documents, results from diaries, and others. Apart from that, researchers also take any objects that exist and are available at the research location to be used as field documentation results.

2.3. Data analysis method

The data collected and analyzed is by the objectives to be achieved, namely 1) To answer the first objective, a description of farmer groups in beef cattle farming using questions that have been prepared in quasi-narrative form and then analyzed using descriptive analysis; 2) To answer the second objective, namely the dynamism of farmer groups and to measure it from respondents with the dynamism categories of very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, quite satisfied and very satisfied; 3) To answer the third objective, namely the relationship between the dynamism of farmer groups and the level of Ability in carrying out beef cattle farming activities, a Spearman Rank correlation analysis was carried out according to instructions from [7].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. A Brief History of the Formation of Livestock Groups in Merak

Two large groups of breeders in the Merak region are differentiated based on their grazing area. The first group grazes their livestock in the western region, and the second group grazes their livestock in the eastern region around the Baluran National Park area. The forest clearing, now c, called the Merak area, occurred in t, the 1970s. Many people flocked to the area to look for a new life, hoping to get a piece of land for their family to live on. In the beginning, the Merak people depended on agricultural activities using forest land, now known as the Baluran National Park; then, one resident had cattle farming and breeding. Because they saw the success of one of these residents, many people also wanted to own livestock, so many people agreed to implement a profit-sharing system or Gaduhan system. This rowing system is very popular with many foreign investors, thus increasing the number of cows in the Merak area.

Seeing the large number of cows in the Merak area gave rise to an idea in the community. The idea is to invite people to graze cows together under guard. This livestock group consists of around 20 pens, with an average of more than seven cows per pen, and can have more than two owners. The total number of cages in Merak Hamlet is around 44 cages. This livestock guarding system takes turns every week. Farmers will get a two-day schedule to help look after their livestock when released into grazing areas. The time for this grazing is around 07.00 WIB to 17.00 WIB. The following is a picture of a cow being released in Merak Hamlet.



Figure 1. Releasing cattle into grazing areas

3.4. Geographical location

Sumberwaru Village, Banyupatih District, Situbondo Regency, has several hamlets, including Merak Hamlet. Merak Hamlet is a hamlet located in the Baluran National Park area. Merak Hamlet has several regions: Widuri, Bathok, Air Karang, Lempuyang, Si Rondo, Si Macan, and Balanan. Every area in Merak is located around the coast and is within the Baluran National Park conservation area. There are two routes to enter Merak Hamlet; the first route is the same as the access to Bilik and Sijile beaches. The access road is to enter through Karangtekok Hamlet and then pass through the Watunumpuk post, where at this post, visitors will be charged a tourist fee to go to the Bilik beach area. Visitors will follow the straight road built by the government and will get to the Bilik Beach tourist attraction first, and if they want to go to Merak, they can continue straight along the road so they will find the first area, namely Merak. The second route is via the Bama Beach tourist route. Visitors enter via the Baluran National Park route, and then from Bama Beach, they can continue straight to find the Balanan area. However, this second route is only for some of the public; usually, only local people who cross this area are familiar with the road terrain.

3.5. Overview of Group Dynamics in Beef Cattle Farming Business

Generally, breeders in Merak Hamlet run their livestock business using a group system, and all breeders who are members of the livestock group are directly involved in joint decision-making. The activities carried out by livestock groups in Merak Hamlet are based on elements of group dynamics. Group dynamics include goals, structure, task functions, coaching and development, cohesiveness, atmosphere, effectiveness, pressure/tension, and hidden intentions. These dynamic elements are based on the members' strengths within the group, such as self-confidence as a member that they are members of the group they are not forced, and the type of activity is evident, trust in the leader, that the chosen leader is fully trusted to move the group, trust in the rules that rules made based on mutual agreement for group members to obey. [5] stated that members' strengths are the basis for developing beef cattle farming to increase production and productivity.

According to the livestock group in Merak Hamlet, the dynamics are built through the cooperation of members who trust each other, relate to each other, and coordinate or communicate between one member and another member or between members and group administrators. Group cooperation is the main thing and can be agreed upon by members in every group activity. The livestock group activities in Merak Hamlet are carried out to shepherd and advance the group's efforts to increase livestock production and income. Every task carried out by group members and administrators must always be open, trust each other, and maintain the togetherness of members and administrators to establish a cooperative relationship. Any collaborative relationships with different parties can be conveyed in group meetings, and all members will know about them. This can be embedded because it has become an agreement in the group rules [8]. This collaboration is built with awareness or motivation from the start, especially the personal formation and characteristics of members, so that the cooperative relationship becomes strong and each member has a goal to achieve together, namely the welfare of the members [9]. This can be seen through the dynamic elements that exist within the livestock groups in Merak Hamlet.

The group aims to improve and develop business capabilities to increase production and productivity, create sustainable conditions, and actively participate with related parties in grazing livestock. The function of livestock groups is to act as a learning class, production unit, and vehicle for cooperation [10]. According to the members, the tasks carried out by the livestock group in Merak Hamlet are the activities carried out by the management towards the mental development of members and their cooperation in responding to innovation and new technology, significantly increasing the yield and production volume of the beef cattle business, which can be applied with experience to achieve the goal, namely achieving welfare of group members. Coordination or communication built by management and members always prioritizes member activity participation, member cooperation, member-friendly relations, mutual trust, and openness, as well as respect and appreciation for the activities produced. The tasks carried out by

group members were found to be various activities, including activities to carry out their responsibilities and obligations during grazing. Group members who receive a herding schedule are obliged to herd the cows of other group members to be released into the forest, apart from being responsible for the cow's whereabouts [11]. In contrast, in the forest, they reach their pen again.

Group structure is the status of the division of tasks in the order of power in a group where the structure is related to decision-making and the flow of communication. In this research, information was obtained that there was no livestock group structure in Merak Hamlet. This is because the livestock group is not legally registered. The nature of the livestock group in Merak Hamlet is a livestock group for cooperation.

Group coaching and development is a process or act of developing knowledge and skills, attitudes of members, and development directions and policies that are more easily conveyed and disseminated through group members. The coaching or motivation of group members is more directed towards increasing farming production. In contrast, group development involves expanding the abilities of farming group members, especially in carrying out their functions and duties. What can be found in livestock groups in Merak Hamlet is that their duties as members carry out grazing activities according to a mutually agreed schedule, and the results are from the members, by the members, and for the members.

Group cohesiveness is a state or condition where members' activities build high enthusiasm and deep loyalty to the group so that together, they give each other a sense of life, being themselves, and being creative [12]. Group cohesiveness is a condition where member activities build high enthusiasm and a deep understanding of loyalty to the group so that emotional ties between members know each other and will give rise to solid cohesiveness. In the livestock group in Merak Hamlet, the association becomes more critical because each member has the same rank, the same obligations, and the same rights, especially in every group activity. The atmosphere displayed can give an impression to all members, especially unity, which is a bond of strength and togetherness. Community cohesion must also mean raising people's awareness and Ability to participate actively in their community. A politically isolated society is not empowered, meaning that not all of its aspirations and potential are channeled. Political aspects are also found in community empowerment [13].

The group atmosphere is unity, a bond of strength and exclusive nature, dynamic together, and ness by group members and administrators. In the livestock group in Merak Hamlet, the association becomes more critical because each member has the same rank, the same obligations, and the same rights, especially in every group activity. The atmosphere displayed can give an impression to all members, especially unity, which is a bond of strength and togetherness. Farmer group members will not be effective in carrying out their duties and obligations, controlling, directing, and collaborating with the leader, meaning that existing relationships like this allow members to communicate the results of their thinking between the leader and members. The atmosphere displayed in the livestock group in Merak Hamlet prioritizes a safe and friendly atmosphere.

Group effectiveness is a process of providing work motivation that is carried out continuously to achieve group goals efficiently and can achieve specific goals set together. Farmer group members will not be effective in carrying out their duties and obligations, controlling, directing, and collaborating with the leader, meaning that existing relationships like this allow members to communicate the results of their thinking between the leader and members. In this case, effectiveness provides work motivation, which is directed at planning and preparing group activities and their implementation, which is effective and can be completed according to members' expectations.

Group pressure or tension is a misunderstanding between members or differences of opinion that result in a separation between fellow members. It becomes an obstacle in the process of activities to achieve common goals. Tension or pressure in a group/organization occurs because internal and external factors influence it. Internal factors include conflict/differences of opinion, authoritarianism, and competition. Meanwhile, external factors include challenges, attacks, and

sanctions. These things often happen in a group. However, this situation in the livestock group in Merak Hamlet was motivated from the start because the group was formed spontaneously or on the members' initiative, prioritizing aspects of group dynamics in achieving goals. The goal to be achieved is the welfare of the members. Therefore, the members' agreement to maintain friendship and kinship can be guaranteed, and they are collective in their opinion that it is better to create and carry out activities rather than create conflict between group members and administrators who have no personal benefit.

Hidden intent is a movement process by management or members with other parties to bring about programs or create new businesses for the group. Growing motivation based on kinship becomes the group's common goal in achieving its goals. Members can learn about programs/activities without realizing it through member meetings presented by the governing body, and members can decide whether to accept them. This means that whether the program or activity is received depends on the decision of the member meeting because it is the members who implement the program or activity. So far, the implementation of activities in livestock groups in Merak Hamlet adheres to the principle of kinship, namely from members, by members, and for members.

3.6. Livestock Group Dynamics

Farmer group dynamics are changes in attitudes and behavior of individuals in the group and the group itself. This means that from an attitude that was previously individuals, they can now live in groups and work together [14]. Groups that previously had not been successful and developed because of the lack of dynamism in the group can now achieve predetermined goals because the group acts dynamically [15]. According to [16], group dynamics are relationships that are constantly changing and adapting between members of a group and between groups and groups. Based on the research results, according to group members, the beef cattle farming business is very beneficial for members, namely that it can increase economic value and improve the lifestyle of the livestock group. According to the calculation results, the average dynamic score for beef cattle farming in the beef cattle group in Merak Hamlet is 3.91 or 78.33%, with a distribution of 92% or 22 farmers included in the member category who are satisfied with the dynamics of beef cattle farming, which is executed. The level of member satisfaction with business dynamics can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Level of member satisfaction with the dynamics of the livestock group business

No	Category	Number of people	Presentation (%)
1	Very dissatisfied	-	-
2	Not satisfied	-	-
3	Quite satisfied	2	8
4	Satisfied	22	92
5	Very satisfied	-	-
Total		24	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

The results of the Sperm Rank analysis show that age in the dynamics of beef cattle farming has an Rcount value greater than Rstable ($0.672 > 0.409$), formal education with dynamics has an Rcount value more excellent Rstable ($0.724 > 0.409$), non-formal education with dynamics has a more excellent Rcount value Rstable ($0.634 > 0.409$) and business experience towards dynamics has a value of Rstable greater than Rstable ($0.651 > 0.409$). The results of the Sperm Rank analysis can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Spearman Rank analysis

No	Connection	Account	Rstable α 0.05	Category
1	Age and dynamics	0.672	0.409	Real
2	Formal education and dynamics	0.724	0.409	Real
3	Non-formal education and dynamics	0.634	0.409	Real

4	Experience and dynamics	0.651	0.409	Real
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Source: Primary Data 2024

3.7. Breeders' Ability in Beef Cattle Business

A business capability is a method or form of business that utilizes potential resources owned and operated by a person or several people in the form of raw materials and finished materials on an ongoing basis to achieve goals. A person's Ability in a group is also essential to do a job well. The livestock group in Merak Hamlet was formed because they have a common source of livelihood, can be used for sustainable business activities, and can increase added value for their families [17]. This activity can occur because it has become a tradition passed down from generation to generation from the farmer's family [18]. The livestock activities carried out by this group are beef cattle breeding (purchasing and development), maintenance (providing pens), and grazing in the Baluran National Park conservation area.

Breeding is a cultivation method or technique that can be used to develop and increase the production and productivity of beef cattle farming. In the process, production results and productivity increase along with the implementation of the selection of breeding female cattle and breeding males to obtain good offspring so that members of the breeder group become capable of producing increased production and productivity. Beef cattle breeding activities to increase yields and production quantities are carried out through animal mating in the form of natural mating and injection mating [19].

Maintenance is an action or method by breeders to develop their livestock business by carrying out activities for livestock needs [20]. The maintenance of beef cattle carried out by livestock groups in Merak Hamlet is by releasing them during the day or grazing them in the Baluran National Park area, which can be stabled at night. Therefore, the maintenance and management of beef cattle feed plays a vital role in meeting community needs. Things supporting the success of beef cattle include the person or owner of the livestock themselves, the environment, and the need for feed throughout the year.

A cage is a place or shelter for livestock at night or during the day to feel safe from physical and mental disturbance. Cages are essential, especially for the safety of the livestock itself. The cow pen has a drinking container from which the cow can drink so it doesn't get thirsty. The sizes of the cages owned by Merak Hamlet residents vary; some are 20x10 m², 12x5 m², and 5x6 m², and some are made of bamboo. The size of the cage depends on the number of livestock and the area of empty land owned by the farmer. The livestock pens in Merak Hamlet have an open pen system, but the pens are made under trees, so the livestock also have shade for shelter.

Grazing is the activity of releasing cows into a grazing area. Pasture is an area where fodder plants grow and are available to livestock, who can harvest them according to their needs quickly. All residents in Merak Hamlet graze their cows in the Baluran National Park area. In the morning, thousands of cows leave for the Baluran forest and are herded home in the afternoon after the cows are complete and have had enough food.

The average capability score for beef cattle farming in Merak Hamlet, Sumberwaru Village, is 4.08 or 81.16%, with a total distribution of 92% or 22 livestock farmers included in the satisfied member capability category, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Farmer's ability score for the beef cattle business

No	Category	Number of people	Presentation (%)
1	Very dissatisfied	-	-
2	Not satisfied	-	-
3	Quite satisfied	2	8
4	Satisfied	22	92
5	Very satisfied	-	-
Total		24	100

Source: Primary Data 2024

Meanwhile, the results of the Sperm Rank analysis of Ability, namely between age and Ability in running a beef cattle business, have a real relationship where the RScout value is more excellent RStabel ($0.723 > 0.409$), formal education on Ability where RScout is greater RStabel ($0.689 > 0.409$), education formal towards Ability where RScout is greater RStabel ($0.789 > 0.409$), and business experience towards Ability where the RScout value is greater RStabel ($0.690 > 0.409$). The results of the analysis of the relationship between factors that influence members' abilities in the beef cattle farming business in the livestock group in Merak Hamlet, Sumberwaru Village, can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Spearman Rank analysis results

No	Connection	Account	Rstable α 0.05	Category
1	Age and abilities	0.723	0.409	Real
2	Formal education and abilities	0.689	0.409	Real
3	Non-formal education and abilities	0789	0.409	Real
4	Experience and ability of Breeder Members	0.690	0.409	Real

Source: Primary Data 2024

4. Conclusion

Livestock activities carried out by livestock groups in Merak Hamlet include beef cattle breeding (purchasing and development), maintenance (providing pens), and grazing in the Baluran National Park conservation area. From these activities, farmers were satisfied with an average score of 4.08 or 81.66%, with a distribution of 92% or 22 farmers who were confident with the beef cattle farming business. Meanwhile, breeders are very satisfied with an average score of 0.08 or 1.66%, with a spread of 8% or two breeders who are very satisfied with the beef cattle farming business.

The dynamism of the beef cattle business group is built through cooperative relationships between members of the beef cattle group, which creates dynamic relationships through business activities constructed by members, and the success of group activities is based on 1) Self-confidence as a member that is a member of the group is to develop oneself and gain experience, knowledge, and skills and collaborate among members and with group administrators; 2) Trust in rules.

The dynamics of members regarding the beef cattle farming business in the livestock group in Merak Hamlet are, on average, satisfied with an average score of 3.916 or 78.33%; the distribution is 92%, or 22 members are happy with the beef cattle farming business. The relationship between age and the dynamics of the beef cattle farming business has a real relationship where the calculated Rs value is more significant than Rstable, namely $0.672 > 0.409$; formal education and the dynamics of group members in the beef cattle farming business have a real relationship where the calculated Rs value is more significant than Rstable, namely $0.724 > 0.409$, experience and dynamics of the beef cattle business have a real relationship where the calculated Rsvalue is more significant than Rstable, namely $0.651 > 0.409$. Meanwhile, business ability has the following relationship, namely between age and Ability $0.723 > 0.409$, formal education and ability $0.689 > 0.409$, non-formal education and ability $0.789 > 0.409$, business experience and ability $0.690 > 0.409$, meaning that there is a real relationship where the R-value is more large Rstable.

Through research results and observations in the field, the author provides suggestions for livestock groups in Merak Hamlet, which is one of the several groups of livestock located in Peacock territory that must be defended by the community, especially for members of livestock groups. The Livestock Group is a role model for local communities and groups of other livestock in terms of livestock business management.

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