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STRENGTHENING CHAIRMAN'S LEADERSHIP TO IMPROVE FARMERS GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

Ait Maryani* and Dedy Kusnadi

Department of Agriculture, Bogor Agricultural Development Polytechnic, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia

*E-mail: aitmaryanistpp@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to analyze descriptively the role of leadership, the effectiveness of farmer groups, group internal factors, and group external factors, and analyze the relationship between leadership roles, group internal factors, and group external factors with the effectiveness of farmer groups. The study was conducted in Garut Regency, West Java from June to November 2019. The study population was farmers who were members of farmer groups in the study area. The sample of 80 people was selected using a proportional random sampling technique. The research instrument has fulfilled the validity and reliability test. The research variables consist of farmer's characteristics, external factors, the leadership of chairman, and group effectiveness. Farmer's characteristics consist of education, land area, business experience, membership period, cosmopolitan behavior and motivation. Data analysis techniques used descriptive statistical analysis and Rank Spearman's correlation test. The results of the study of the relationship between the leadership of the chairman with the effectiveness of farmer groups can be concluded that the majority of farmers (45.50%) are of medium age and between 35 years and 54 years. The formal education of farmers is mostly (48.75%) of junior high school graduates. The majority of land managed by farmers (40%) is narrow and less than 0.30 hectares. Most group members (53.75%) have business experience between 10 years and 25 years. Most group members (48.75%) have been members for more than 8 years. Cosmopolitan attitudes and motivations of the majority of farmers in the medium category. External factors of group members, leadership roles, and group effectiveness are in the medium category. The development of group effectiveness can be done through strengthening the chairman's leadership, business experience, cosmopolitan behavior, motivation, and external factors of the group.

Keywords: Leadership, farmers group, group effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

The process of agricultural development is always endeavored by the Government to run optimally by carrying out various policies. One such policy is implemented through a program of growing and developing farmer groups. The formation of farmer groups is a strategic step to improve the quality of human resources. This program is expected to increase the income and welfare of farm families. Through the assistance of farmer groups, information and technological innovation can be disseminated to farmers smoothly so that it can be adopted by farmers. Farmer groups can carry out their functions as production units, learning classes, and a vehicle for cooperation. Farmer groups are the optimal communication media for farmers.

Farmer groups need leaders who have good leadership. Leadership is a role that can manage, direct, influence, and move the group to achieve common goals. To achieve that, farmer groups must be effective. The leadership role of the head of the farmer group is closely related to the effectiveness of the group. According to Pradiana *et al.*, (2020), the leadership role of the head of the farmer group is highly dependent on the ability to manage group members. The effectiveness of the group is reflected by good collaboration between the leader and group members in trying to achieve the goals.

Some of the group's goals include increasing income,

morale, and satisfaction of group members. These goals are expected to be effectively achieved if the role of group leadership appears optimal. This study aims to analyze descriptively the role of leadership, the effectiveness of farmer groups, group internal factors, and group external factors, and analyze the relationship between leadership roles, group internal factors, group external factors with the effectiveness of farmer groups.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the fostered area of the Agricultural Counseling Center, Garut Regency, and West Java, Indonesia. The study period is from June to November 2019. The research uses a quantitative approach with numerical data as the basis of analysis. This research is a descriptive correlational type of research, which is a type of research to describe and test the relationship between variables. All members of farmer groups from five farmer groups form the study population. Based on the Slovin formula, 80 samples were obtained. The sampling technique uses proportional random sampling.

Research data consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data obtained by observation and direct interviews with respondents. Secondary data is supporting data obtained from farmer groups, agricultural extension centers, agriculture offices, and the village government. Research instruments in the form of a list of questions and statements that have been prepared. This research

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents on the Leadership Role Variables

Indicator	Category	Total	%
Help members meet needs	Low (< 50)	8	10.00
	Medium (50–< 75)	65	81.25
	High (≥ 75)	7	8.25
Facilitating group members in achieving goals	Low (< 50)	21	26.25
	Medium (50–< 75)	49	61.25
	High (≥ 75)	10	12.50
Realize group values	Low (< 50)	15	18.75
	Medium (50–< 75)	38	47.50
	High (≥ 75)	27	33.75
Represents the opinions of group members in interacting with other group leaders	Low (< 50)	15	18.75
	Medium (50–< 75)	46	57.50
	High (≥ 75)	19	23.75

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on Group Effectiveness Variables

Indicator	Category	Total	%
Increased revenue	Less improved	7	8.75
	Quite increased	64	80.00
	Greatly increased	9	11.25
Moral of members	Low (< 50)	7	8.75
	Medium (50–< 75)	52	65.00
	High (≥ 75)	21	26.25
Member satisfaction	Low (< 50)	10	12.50
	Medium (50–< 75)	63	78.75
	High (≥ 75)	7	8.75

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on farmer's characteristics variables

Indicator	Category	Total	%
Age (years)	Young (< 35)	6	7.50
	Medium (35 – 54)	45	56.25
	Old (> 54)	29	36.25
Education	Elementary school	25	31.25
	Junior high school	39	48.75
	Senior High School and College	16	20.00
Land Size (Ha)	Narrow (< 0.30)	32	40.00
	Intermediate (0.30–0.54)	21	26.25
	Large (> 0.54)	27	33.75
Experience (years)	Low (< 10)	7	8.75
	Medium (10–25)	43	53.75
	High (>25)	30	37.50
Membership Period	New (< 5)	18	22.50
	Medium (5–8)	23	28.75
	Long time (> 8)	39	48.75
Cosmopolitan behavior	Low (< 1.1)	32	40.00
	Medium (1,1–1.2)	38	47.50
	High (> 1.2)	10	12.50
Motivation in groups	Low (< 50)	9	11.25
	Medium (50–< 75)	64	80.00
	High (≥ 75)	7	8.75

instrument has passed the validity test and instrument reliability test.

The research variables consisted of farmer's characteristics (X1), external factors (X2), group leader leadership (X3), and group effectiveness (Y). Internal group factors in this study consisted of age, land tenure, formal education, membership period, cosmopolitanism, business

experience, and group motivation. External factors include the availability of farmers' information, the intensity of counseling, access to innovation, community legitimacy, and means of communication. The leadership of the farmer group leaders is reflected in activities including helping members meet needs, facilitating group members in achieving goals, and realizing group values. Group

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on External Factor Variables

Indicator	Category	Total	%
Information Availability	Low (< 50)	31	38.75
	Medium (50-< 75)	42	52.50
	High (≥ 75)	7	8.75
Intensity of Extension	Low (< 50)	11	13.75
	Medium (50-< 75)	57	71.25
	High (≥ 75)	12	15.00
Access to innovation	Low (< 50)	7	8.75
	Medium (50-< 75)	71	88.75
	High (≥ 75)	2	2.50
Legitimacy	Low (< 50)	11	13.75
	Medium (50-< 75)	63	78.75
	High (≥ 75)	6	7.50
Communication Facilities	Low (< 50)	50	62.50
	Medium (50-< 75)	18	22.50
	High (≥ 75)	12	15.00

Table 5: Relationship between Internal, External, Leadership Roles and the Effectiveness of Farmer Groups

Variables / Sub variables	Correlation coefficient
Age (years)	0.035
Education	- 0.064
Land Size (Ha)	0.491**
Experience (years)	0.212*
Membership Period	- 0.084
Cosmopolitan behavior	0.266*
Motivation in groups	0.351*
External factors	0.543**
Leadership	0.435**

Information: *significance of 0.05
**significance of 0.01

effectiveness includes increasing member income, better member morale, and group member satisfaction. Data analysis techniques used descriptive statistical analysis and Rank Spearman's correlation test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role of Leadership

The leadership of the farmer group leaders is reflected in activities including helping members meet needs, facilitating group members in achieving goals, and realizing group values. Another role is to represent the group in interacting with other group leaders (Table 1). The group leader helps members to meet their needs fairly. The result showed that the respondents' assessment of the actions of the group leader in meeting the needs of members most (81.25%) said it was enough. Field observations show that the chairman has limitations in recording and knowing the needs of the members. Members' needs for production facilities, namely fertilizer and seed, vary greatly. This causes members to judge the chairman as unfair. Provision of farming production facilities should be managed well by the farmer group management (Harniati & Anwarudin, 2018a). However, some members provide their seeds and fertilizers so that planting time and crop care are not uniform.

Most respondents (61.26%) rated the head of the farmer group in facilitating group members to achieve their goals including the medium category. The efforts made by the chairman to achieve the group's goals include giving direction on the objectives to be achieved in farming activities, especially rice. Furthermore, the group leader always spearheaded the implementation of farming activities. The results of interviews and observations in the field are known to be only part of the group's goals that have been achieved. This is caused by late till age, the water regulation system is disrupted and planting time is not synchronous. After searching, it turned out that some members were not present at the meeting so information did not arrive.

The head of the farmer group seeks to realize group values by accommodating the aspirations of members, maintaining closeness with the members, and making agreements about the values in the group. The results showed that the majority of respondents (47.50%) rated it sufficiently. Most group values have been realized. Group meetings are held twice a month so that the head of the farmer group and group members are close enough. Members respect and uphold the good name and try to obey the rules that have been made together. The group

leader still does not fully accommodate the aspirations of group members. The marketing of rice production is still largely done individually.

The results showed that the majority of respondents (57.50%) considered the actions of the chairperson to be quite representative of the group when meeting with other groups. The interaction between the chairperson and other groups is carried out in the context of coordinating the implementation of plant pest control especially rats and rice planting simultaneously. Rat pest control is coordinated in an integrated manner by agricultural instructors by involving all members of the group in the village in a stretch of rice fields. The meeting of all the heads of farmer groups resulted in an integrated schedule of pest control and simultaneous planting.

Group Effectiveness

The degree of achievement of the objectives of the farmer group is used as a measure of the effectiveness of the group. Some of the group's goals are to increase member income, better member morale, and group member satisfaction. The increase in income of group members is focused on the average yield of lowland rice production during one rice planting season. Profits are calculated from income fewer costs incurred. The increase is obtained by comparing current yields with rice production in the previous season. Most of the group members (80%) stated that the income was quite increased.

The results showed that most of the morale of group members (65%) were in the moderate category. The morale of members of the group can be seen from the participation of members in planning, implementing, and evaluating activities. Measurement is based on the frequency of attendance of members at each meeting and activities carried out by farmer groups. The participation of group members in carrying out group work programs can increase knowledge and skills both in the field of planning, and implementation of farming activities in line with Anwarudin & Dayat, (2019).

Member satisfaction is the success of achieving personal goals outside the group's goals. The results showed that most respondents (78.75%) expressed quite satisfied. From the results of interviews with several group members stated that after becoming a group member, they could participate in most of the activities that constitute group work programs so that they could add insight. One of the advantages of being a group member is the kinship between members. Farmer groups become a vehicle for learning and a means of communication with fellow group members and with other parties in line with the report Anwarudin & Maryani (2017), Maryani *et al.*, (2020)) and Suji & Kumar (2020).

Farmer's Characteristics

Farmer's characteristics in this study consisted of age, land tenure, formal education, membership period, cosmopolitanism, business experience, and motivation (Table 3). The results showed that the age of group

members ranged from 18 years to 72 years. Most group members (56.25%) are of medium age, between 35 years and 54 years. When viewed from productivity, most group members are at a productive age so that they can support business activities. However, if we look closely, the age conditions of farmers are very few young farmers and more old farmers. These results are in line with previous studies (Anwarudin, 2017; Anwarudin *et al.*, 2020a; Anwarudin *et al.*, 2020b; Anwarudin *et al.*, 2020c). The reason for that is because the younger generation is less interested in agriculture (Wardani & Anwarudin, 2018). Efforts that can be made to increase the portion of young farmers in agriculture include involving rural youth in the agricultural community (Harniati & Anwarudin, 2018b) and give examples of successful people from agricultural businesses (Anwarudin and Haryanto, 2018). Thus the sustainability of agriculture can be maintained (Dayat and Anwarudin, 2020).

The formal education of most group members (48.75%) of junior high school graduates. This shows that most members can read and write so they can access information from various media. The education level of farmers from this study is better than previous research reports that the majority of farmers have an elementary school education (Liani *et al.*, 2018; Saputra *et al.*, 2018). The majority of land managed by farmers (40%) is narrow less than 0.30 hectares. Land managed by farmers, consists of paddy fields and land (fields). Farmers tend to plant rice on paddy fields and crops on dry land. Palawija planted such as peanuts, corn, sweet potatoes and cassava.

The experience of farmers varies between 5 years and 55 years. Most group members (53.75%) have business experience between 10 years and 25 years. This condition shows that there are relatively many experienced farmers and tend to contribute to their growing knowledge. This is supported by the majority of group members (48.75%) who have been members for more than 8 years. Thus group members feel a sense of belonging to the farmer group. Most members of farmer groups already have an open nature as evidenced by always trying to find information in the field of farming they practice. The results showed that most members entered into group members based on external parties and their desires.

External Factors

External factors of farmers include information availability, the intensity of counseling, and access to innovation, community legitimacy, and means of communication (Table 4). The information needed by farmers is not yet available adequately. Information sources obtained by farmers came from agricultural extension agencies, radio, brochures/posters, newspapers/magazines, Sinar Tani and Trubus.

Intensity Counseling tends to be carried out routinely every 2 weeks. The implementation of the counseling according to Putri *et al.*, (2019) was in accordance with the standard of training and visits that had lasted a long time.

Most farmers attended the extension activities. Counseling methods often use a group approach with lecture and demonstration techniques. Some of the materials that have been delivered at the extension activities include control of rat pests, superior seeds, fertilizing, and post-harvest. Access to innovation mostly comes from direct sources such as research institutes, extension services, experts, and advanced farmers in line with previous research reports.

Community legitimacy shows the existence of groups can be used as an example in improving the economy and carrying out social activities. Thus, legitimacy is considered sufficient. Most farmers have utilized communication facilities such as telephone/mobile phones. Communication tools have been used for communication with members of other groups and agricultural extension workers. Interaction of farmers with other farmers and group leaders is done verbally. Letters are usually used for communication and official activities.

Relationship between Internal, External, Leadership Roles and the Effectiveness of Farmer Groups

Several indicators of internal factors of group members have a real relationship with group effectiveness (Table 5). These indicators are land area, business experience, cosmopolitan, and group motivation. Other indicators such as age, education, and time of membership have an unreal relationship with group effectiveness. The more land planted by group members the more it can increase the income of group members. This relates to crop yields and the diversity of commodities cultivated so that the source of income gained is greater and more numerous. The main commodities planted by members are paddy rice, while other commodities are crops and fruits.

Farmer's business experience is aligned with the effectiveness of farmer groups. The relationship between the two variables is positive which means that the more experience the farmer has, the higher the income, group morale, and member satisfaction. However, this did not occur during the membership period. Whereas the longer the membership, the longer the experience. Field observations show that most farmers have been members of farmer groups for a long time. This allows farmers who are long-time members to keep abreast of technological developments in the field of farming they manage. Farmers who have long been members of the group often have a role as group leaders in achieving their goals. The group leader is demanded to help meet the needs of farmers as group members. The group leader has another role which is to represent the group to interact with other group leaders. Farmers who have long been members of the group have a role to foster cooperation with other groups related to agricultural business (Dayat *et al.*, 2020).

Cosmopolitan has a real and positive relationship with group effectiveness. The more often a farmer visits information sources, advanced farmers, and exhibitions, the higher the group's effectiveness. Cosmopolitan farmers have wide associations, are fast looking for information

and innovation (Harniati *et al.*, 2018). Information that is often sought for includes new high yielding seeds, how to control pests and diseases, and selling prices. Innovations that are often sought include planting, fertilizing, and integrated pest control in harmony with the report Putri *et al.*, (2019).

Group motivation has a positive relationship with the three indicators of group effectiveness, namely increasing income, member morale, and member satisfaction. This shows that the effectiveness of groups can be built by increasing farmers' motivation. The importance of this farmer's motivation has been conveyed by Effendy, (2017) that motivation can be a positive impetus for farmers to pursue agricultural business. Motivation makes a person do and do an action to achieve something that is desired. Observations in the field show that members who have high motivation for groups, the leadership role of the group leader are increasingly lacking, especially in facilitating the achievement of goals and realizing group values according to recommendations Dwidienawati *et al.*, (2020).

External factors of farmer groups in this study include the availability of information, the intensity of counseling, access to information, and means of communication. External factors have a real and positive relationship with group effectiveness. The availability of information can be a trigger for increasing members' income and morale. The availability of complete information about farming technology has been able to increase income in each wet season planting season from 6 tons to 8 tons per Ha. The availability of information has been able to provide input to farmers about the appropriate and profitable grain prices. This information has the potential to increase the entrepreneurial capacity of farmers (Matilainen & Lähdesmäki, 2014; Anwarudin *et al.*, 2019; Anwarudin *et al.*, 2020d).

Agricultural extension is carried out by extension agents who benefit from farmers. Regular and intensive counseling supports the improvement of farmers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Increasing farmer behavior has an impact on the capacity of farmers and the application of innovation in the field so that farming is getting better and farmers' incomes are increasing. The use of various counseling methods has been able to facilitate the delivery of information and innovation. Likewise, the extension media can make effective extension activities. The results of interviews and observations in the field with the head of the farmer group, the frequency of extension activities carried out 2 times a month. This gives satisfaction to farmers. The material delivered by the instructor is needed by farmers. The Chairperson as the leader of the farmer group must be able to facilitate learning activities, especially those concerning farming technology that is suitable to the needs of farmers. The head of the farmer group spearheaded the activity. The findings in the field show that the role of the head of the farmer group in helping meet the needs, especially in terms of knowledge of rice farming by implementing an integrated farming program, has been widely obtained

from agricultural extension workers when participating in extension activities in line with previous research (Hauser *et al.*, 2016; Haryanto and Yuniarti, 2017).

Access to innovation and means of communication is significantly related to group effectiveness. The higher farmers access technological innovation, the higher the income of members, member morale, and member satisfaction. The more communication facilities available, the easier it is for farmers to interact with information sources and other farmers. Therefore the means of communication must be available at all times and access to information must be smooth and there are no obstacles as stated Dayat & Anwarudin, (2020).

The role of the chairperson as the leader of the farmer group in facilitating group members to achieve their goals has a real relationship with group effectiveness. The results of observations in the field that in achieving group goals, the head of the farmer group led the activities of rice farming in the hope that all farmers planted simultaneously. As a leader, the head of the group gives an example of carrying out the cultivation of paddy following the recommendations Pradiana and Maryani, (2019). The head of the farmer group in every meeting is always present on time and convey important information about farming. Any information related to the development of farmer groups and farming activities is always conveyed.

The group leader carries out his role by trying to meet the needs of farmers' production facilities. Production facilities needed by farmers such as fertilizer and seeds are fulfilled by farmer groups so that farming activities can be carried out more smoothly. Group values are realized by meeting the understanding between group leaders and members about group values and aspirations of members. Field observations show that young group members, around 16.25%, still do not understand the values that exist in the group.

The leadership of the group leader in realizing the group's values is very significantly related to the group's effectiveness. Based on field observations, it was seen that the group leader gave enthusiasm and motivation to farmers in increasing farm production. The group leader approaches both individuals in the field and during group meetings. When the chairman represents the group in interacting with other group leaders shows a very real relationship with member satisfaction. The results of interviews and observations in the field showed that the group leader had tried to carry out simultaneous planting in one area with another group on the initiative of the head of the farmer group. At the time of the study, rat pests attacked rice plants. For mass prevention, the head of the farmer group coordinates with other groups who own land in one stretch. All group members work together to eradicate rat pests.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study of the relationship between the leadership of the chairman with the effectiveness of

farmer groups can be concluded that the majority of farmers (45.50%) are of medium age, between 35 years and 54 years. The formal education of farmers is mostly (48.75%) of junior high school graduates. The majority of land managed by farmers (40%) is narrow, less than 0.30 hectares. Most group members (53.75%) have business experience between 10 years and 25 years. Most group members (48.75%) have been members for more than 8 years. Cosmopolitan attitudes and motivations of the majority of farmers in the medium category. External factors of group members, leadership roles, and group effectiveness are in the medium category. The development of group effectiveness can be done through strengthening the chairman's leadership, business experience, cosmopolitan behavior, motivation, and external factors of the group.

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