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Women's Participation in Kenya Dairy Cooperative Decision-Making Processes

Caroline Minoos Mukeku
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

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Caroline Minoos Mukeku

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Review Committee

Dr. Lynn Wilson, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Gary Kelsey, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2024

Abstract

Women's Participation in Kenya Dairy Cooperative Decision-Making Processes

by

Caroline Minoos Mueku

MA, University of Nairobi, 2010

BCom, Daystar University, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

April 2024

Abstract

Women contribute immensely to the dairy production workforce in Kenya, yet they lack access and control over production services and resources. They are also underrepresented in the decision-making processes of dairy cooperatives. Constraining women from reaching their maximum potential diminishes their ability to influence and participate in societal change. Although researchers have investigated this issue, few studies have focused on this topic. The purpose of this general qualitative study was to describe barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives. The research question was focused on factors that inhibit women's participation in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. The theoretical framework for this study was Golla's women's economic empowerment theory. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 dairy cooperative leaders who were purposively selected from ten cooperatives. Data were analyzed qualitatively using inductive thematic analysis. Findings indicated economic, personal agency, policy and legal, sociocultural, and systemic barriers that hinder women's participation in decision making processes. This study promotes new knowledge that stimulates conversations for policymakers and key stakeholders regarding mechanisms to establish gender-just leadership systems, that contribute to positive social change through the implementation of policies that support empowerment of women in the dairy sector and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 on gender equality, as adopted by United Nations member states in 2015.

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Dedication

To my husband Jehoshaphat Nyari, children Amanda, Godsfavour, and Adiel,
parents Mr. Samson and Mrs. Agnes Mukeku, and finally, my BFF Esther.

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I sincerely appreciate Dr. Lynn Wilson, my mentor and chair, and Dr. Gary Kalsey, my second committee member, for all the encouragement, mentorship, guidance, critical thinking, and support through this academic journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Equitable representation and participation of women is key to the advancement of gender equality and democracy. Notably, the capability of women in Kenya to participate in agricultural cooperative organizations often rests upon their ability to own and access land, natural resources, and livestock. Statutory laws that influence the ability of Kenyan women to be involved in dairy cooperative activities include Sessional Paper No. 02 of 2019 on National Policy on Gender and Development, Kenya's constitution, and the Cooperative Act. Many dairy cooperative societies have been formed in villages using farmer-focused approaches, with the possibility that these cooperatives serve as a source of additional income and centralized locations for resolving personal, social, and economic issues. More importantly, rural women not only benefit economically through dairy cooperatives, but their ownership and participation in management also helps them learn by inference and improve their capacity for self-sufficiency. Gender equality and women's empowerment remain a concern in Kenya (Katothya, 2017).

Kenya has yet to attain the two-thirds threshold as per Kenya's 2010 constitution, which established a gender quota system for women's representation in leadership, as the pace of change has been uneven, with 23% of membership rate of women in dairy farmer cooperatives; this is below the 30% constitutional threshold, with 15% of women in leadership positions (East Africa Dairy Development [EADD], 2018). As a result, their views remain unrepresented, affecting overall sustainable development (Njuki et al., 2016). Significant resources have been invested through programs and projects to improve dairy farming and development in Kenya, including revamping the extension

sector, providing information, and establishing cooperatives as one-stop shops where farmers can access dairy-related services.

This chapter includes background information and overview of issues. I discuss the purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background

Agriculture remains a key driver of economic growth and development in Kenya, contributing to 27% of the gross domestic product (GDP; Central Bank of Kenya, 2022). The agriculture sector in Kenya employs over 40% of the total population and more than 70% of the rural populace. Kenya has a vibrant dairy industry that is among the largest subsectors of agriculture which contributes to 12% of the country's agricultural GDP, with a reported annual growth rate of 4.1% compared to 1.2% for agriculture. The dairy sector is estimated to include 1.8 million smallholder farmers, which makes up about 80% of agricultural producers (Kenya Dairy Board, 2015). The dairy sector, therefore, is a key contributor to addressing challenges of hunger, poverty, and food insecurity in Kenya. Gender equality and women's empowerment impacts control, distribution, and benefits of resources and services in Kenya's dairy sector (Farnsworth, 2015; Gallina, 2016; Katothya, 2017; Lodiaga, 2020; Tavenner & Crane, 2016). Women undertake most of the dairy husbandry work, including milk hygiene, water provision, manure removal, fodder and feeds, equipment hygiene, milking, and delivery of milk (Farnsworth, 2015). Non-dairy activities such as building cow sheds, booking veterinary services including artificial insemination (AI), collecting milk payments from formal marketplaces like

cooperatives, attending extension training, and participating in meetings for community development and dairy cooperatives are typically handled by men (Nyongesa et al., 2016).

Despite contributions of women to dairy production, direct market benefits and control are often tampered by cultural and gender norms and practices that benefit men in terms of control of resources (e.g., production assets and cow ownership), decisions related to animals in terms of buying and selling, information on available extension and veterinary services, inputs, training services, and commensurate income from the sale of milk. It therefore means that since the burden falls mainly on women, any mitigation interventions and strategies should consider the impact that their participation and contribution in the dairy sector may have (Tavenner & Crane, 2016).

When women participate in dairy management governance systems, decision-making becomes more inclusive, a wider range of perspectives are heard, and alternate approaches involve addressing agricultural policies that affect dairy farmers (Women Economic Forum, 2022). To address gender equality issues in the dairy sector, there is a need to recognize social differentiation and positioning (Njuki & Sanginga, 2013). Women and men occupy various positions socially that affect their capacities to participate in development and change.

Women play an important role in the production, distribution, and processing functions of the dairy value chain and are likely to remain more food insecure than men, hence the need for empowering women for sustainable agricultural development. Most dairy animal husbandry management tasks are handled by women, including feeding, and

watering animals, providing healthcare for animals, removing waste, and providing food for milking. Women constitute most of the daily labor force.

The global gender gap in 2023 was reported to have been closed by 68.6% (Women Economic Forum, 2023). This implies it would require another 131 years to reach full gender parity (Women Economic Forum, 2023). Kenya ranked 77 out of 146 countries that were rated in terms of their progress towards gender parity with an index score of 0.708 out of a possible 10 marks, meaning that much improvement is required to fully achieve gender equality (Women Economic Forum, 2023). Three layers of legislation that affect the legal status of women in Kenya include international laws and treaties, the constitution, and the statute law.

Kenya is a signatory to international and regional conventions, declarations, treaties, and protocols enforcing the rights of women. Government performance related to this obligation is yet to be assessed (Katothya, 2008). To ensure domestication and implementation of the protocols and treaties, the Kenyan government launched a proposed constitutional reform in November 2020 through the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI). The proposed reforms were aimed at ending gender inequalities by making provisions for equal representation of women in political systems and provision of equal economic opportunities in Kenya (Kevins, 2020). This constitutional review process faced a setback in 2021 when a high court ruled the amendment unconstitutional. Despite legal conditions prescribing consideration and inclusion of women in national, local, and community leadership and governance roles, women remain underrepresented and disempowered (Obure, 2020).

This general qualitative study involved identifying factors that prohibit women from participating in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. Results from this study may contribute to strategic thinking and development of interventions by stakeholders and policymakers to build mechanisms and methods of accountability that promote gender-just leadership systems, strengthen economic empowerment of women not only in the dairy sector but also nationally, and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-5) agenda.

Problem Statement

The problem this study addressed was underrepresentation of women in terms of decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. Women contribute immensely to agriculture cooperatives, yet they are denied benefits of making decisions and management of affairs of cooperatives (Rao et al., 2016). The EADD (2018) reported representation of women in dairy-based cooperatives as members and in leadership positions was 23% and 15%, respectively, which is below the constitutional threshold of 30%. Such a low level of representation prevents women from fully realizing their potential and enjoying benefits that accrue from being a member of dairy cooperatives (Farnworth, 2015; Gallina, 2016; Katothya, 2017).

Development and implementation of poverty reduction programs cannot be accomplished without participation of all stakeholders, which includes women, and therefore require changes in structures to ensure women access and control resources, services, opportunities, and public services. Since women constitute almost 50% of Kenya's population, status and advancement of men and women are important for the

welfare of all citizens. To sustain and enhance the standard of living, women must take an active role in the production of dairy goods and governance (Obure, 2020).

Additionally, women contribute significantly to agricultural systems, especially the extensive dairy farming systems of production; hence, their participation as members of dairy cooperatives provides an opportunity to bring in new ideas, perspectives, and knowledge that lead to benefits for all stakeholders, thereby influencing success of organizations as well as the public (Katothya, 2017).

Despite existing laws and legal frameworks that govern dairy cooperatives and advocate for equal benefits for all members, challenges continue to hinder women in terms of leadership, access, control, and benefits from services, as well as input supply, information and education, and improved dairy production technologies (Lodiaga, 2020; Marciana, 2017).

In agriculture, women contribute to food safety and security, yet they lack access to resources and opportunities and are not represented in leadership of cooperatives. Their ability to thrive and societal contributions to development are affected. These patterns hinder the progress of society because they limit opportunities of 50% of Kenya's population. Constraining Kenyan women from reaching their maximum potential therefore limits their ability to influence and participate in societal change.

Although researchers have investigated underrepresentation of women, few studies address factors that inhibit women from participating in decision-making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives.

Lack of adequate information that describes barriers that prevent women's participation in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya, including historical and cultural influences, as well as information that would help address underrepresentation of women in governance systems was the basis of this general qualitative study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to describe barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives. The larger purpose of this study was to contribute to greater inclusion of women in decision-making processes as well as inform development and implementation of policies that empower women in agricultural cooperatives. The study will add to the body of knowledge that will advance gender equality goals to increase women's agency, resources, and achievements in Kenya's agricultural sector, as well as contribute to global goals of promoting gender equality.

Research Question

What factors inhibit participation of women in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya?

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The selected theoretical framework for this study was the women's economic empowerment framework by Anne Marie Golla, Anju Malhotra, Priya Nanda, and Rekha Mehra, which involves building empowerment from the concepts of agency and control over resources, one's personal self, and decision-making. The theory is used to measure

women's economic empowerment (Golla et al., 2011). Women are considered economically empowered when they can succeed and advance economically and have the power to make and act on economic decisions, which helps them to advance and achieve their personal goals and ambitions. Golla et al. (2011) argued women require the following to thrive and advance economically: resources and skills to compete in the marketplace, fair and equal access to economic institutions, the ability to make and act on decisions, the ability to control resources to succeed.

Golla et al.'s women's economic empowerment framework was used to explore Kenyan women's economic gains and successes and investigate access, control, and ownership as key building blocks that they can draw from to succeed socially and economically and contribute to the development of institutions like dairy cooperatives. Traditional practices related to norms and institutions within social systems influence distribution and use of resources among men and women. To achieve economic advancement and build women's power and agency within the dairy sector, institutions may approach economic empowerment by working either to enhance resources that are available to women or redefine gender norms that define participation of women in decision-making processes in those institutions.

The women's economic empowerment framework was used in this study to explain the importance of economic power in terms of breaking gender equality barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in terms of governance systems in dairy cooperatives in Kenya.

Nature of the Study

I used a general qualitative research design. I gathered data from interviews with male and female leaders of dairy cooperatives in Kenya who were identified through my networks. The general qualitative approach was important in enabling me gain insights regarding a phenomenon by exploring its complexity, depth, and richness. I employed only primary data collection methods. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 dairy cooperative leaders who were purposefully selected from 10 dairy cooperatives in the Rift Valley region, specifically Nandi, Bomet, Kericho, and Uasin Gichu Counties. These regions were purposively selected since they are the regions in Kenya with the largest number of registered dairy producers in cooperatives with extensive dairy farming systems (Kenya Dairy Board [KDB], 2021). These 20 participants were at least 21 years old, were members of a cooperative for at least 5 years, held leadership positions at dairy cooperatives for at least 2 years or have been leaders in the past, and were able to write and read in English or Swahili. I ensured female leaders who met criteria were purposefully selected. An interview guide in both English and Swahili with the same questions for all participants was used to confirm that all participants answered the same questions.

Before collecting data, I obtained Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval number (#12-08-21-0758500), and National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) permit number (#NACOSTI/23/30678). I conducted face-to-face interviews and ensured basic safety protocols were adhered to.

During data collection, confidentiality of participants was maintained by ensuring interviews were conducted in private spaces and consistently.

After conducting interviews, I transcribed all 20 audio recorded interviews verbatim to organize contents of interviews and effectively analyze data. Interviewees were contacted by phone for member checking after transcription and initial coding. During phone conversations, I offered to share my perspectives of their responses for them to confirm whether my interpretations were accurate. Thematic data analysis was done by reading sets of data and identifying patterns and meanings in data to obtain common themes.

Thematic data analysis was used to identify themes that were important and answered the research question. This process entailed familiarization with data sets (transcripts and notes from in-depth interviews) and setting categories based on key concepts for data analysis. Patterns and themes were identified via codes across interviews. I created a code book to track codes from interview transcripts. Codes were used to assess common meanings that recur throughout data. The final list of themes was further defined to help me understand data. NVivo-14 was used to organize, analyze, and visualize information via tools for classifying, sorting, and arranging information in a manner that supported identification of themes and patterns across data. Findings may contribute to positive social change by providing insights regarding the problem of women's underrepresentation in Kenyan dairy cooperative decision-making processes.

Definitions

Access: Access to factors which affect production which include time, labor, land, inputs, credit, marketing facilities, training, information, and publicly available services and benefits.

Agency: Ability to develop personal goals, make meaningful and informed choices, and act to achieve desired results (Farnworth et al., 2018).

Cooperative: Autonomous group of people with the voluntary intention of addressing their needs and goals through a cooperatively owned and democratically run enterprise (Smith, 2014).

Extensive Dairy Farming Systems: Type of farming systems in which little farming resources and less labor are used but there is a larger land area, which often results in a lower productivity yield.

Gender equality: Equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women, men, girls, and boys. Gender equality implies that interests and needs and priorities of both men and women are taken into consideration, recognizing diversity of groups.

Gender Leadership: This is a form of leadership that involves challenging gender and power stereotypes in organizations. It is intentional in terms of breaking social and gender barriers and promotes inclusive form of leadership.

Leadership positions: Leadership positions can either be executive, management or supervisory positions in the context of dairy cooperatives. The highest decision-making leadership positions are those in executive roles.

Participation: Joint consultation during decision making and goal setting through which organizations attempt to foster or increase commitments to collective objectives.

Women's Economic Empowerment: Agency of women and girls to manage and profit from economic gains as well as knowledge, resources, and changes that are necessary to enter and compete fairly in marketplaces.

Women's Empowerment: Women taking charge of their own lives and acquiring authority. It involves raising awareness, boosting self-esteem, having more options, access to, and control over resources, and taking action to change structures and institutions that support and uphold inequalities and prejudices based on gender.

Assumptions

I assumed inclusion of various respondents from different geographical zones in Kenya would yield variations in data sets that were necessary to achieve a specific depth in terms of concepts and themes. I also assumed participants were knowledgeable about women's representation and engagement in decision-making activities in dairy cooperatives and were able to respond to all questions fully and with depth. My final assumption was all participants witnessed the phenomenon that was studied, so inclusion criteria for men as well as women were applicable for the study.

Scope and Delimitations

This study was focused on factors that inhibit women's participation in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. As a general qualitative study, the research involved a small sample of participants, including male and female members of cooperative boards. All 20 participants were at least 21 years old, members of a

cooperative for at least 5 years, held leadership positions at dairy cooperatives for at least 2 years or have been leaders in the past, and were able to write and read in English or Swahili. I did not address participants who were part of other subsectors in Kenya's agricultural sector. I reached an intended limited sample size of 20 participants for depth of insight and accuracy.

Limitations

Selection of participants was not representative, given the geographical vastness of Kenya's dairy landscape due to the county government system. I therefore sampled cooperatives whose members practice extensive dairy farming systems in the Nandi, Bomet, Kericho, and Uasin Gichu counties in the Rift Valley region. Despite the low prevalence of COVID-19 cases, necessary safety protocols involving wearing masks, social distancing, and ventilation were considered. All participants preferred face-to-face interview sessions. An unprecedented delay in the approval process for data collection by NACOSTI, was expected, but the permit process took a shorter time than anticipated.

Significance

This study will have several significant social change implications for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. This study fills a gap in understanding factors that inhibit empowerment of women and their participation in decision-making activities in the dairy sector. The study includes evidence regarding women as key contributors to the agricultural sector as well as effects of women's empowerment on the dairy industry. This research was used to address an under researched area involving gender equality in

terms of women's economic empowerment in terms of decision-making and leadership processes in dairy cooperatives.

The Kenyan government benefits from this study since it includes insights that will enable development of policies that assist in developing accountability mechanisms that enable farmer-led organizations to promote gender-just leadership. Sustainable development in Kenya cannot be achieved if women in agriculture, especially in the dairy sector, continue to be disempowered. Therefore, increasing involvement of women in governance systems of dairy cooperatives is a very important goal for a growing economic nation like Kenya. Adoption of recommendations from this study will be used to address needs for dairy cooperatives, the Kenya Dairy Board, county governments, and nonprofit organizations to focus on developing policies, implementation frameworks, and programs that empower women in the dairy sector. Findings from this study are significant to knowledge and applications regarding relationships and importance of women's economic empowerment and participation in the achievement of the SDG-5 agenda on gender equality, hence leading to positive social change.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the problem of the study, which is underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. I further described key points of the investigation, the social problem, as well as positive change implications. Chapter 2 includes literature on rights of women and their participation, contributions of women to dairy systems, women and membership in cooperatives, participation in decision-making processes, and income access.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In Kenya, there still are gender disparities in terms of management and governance of dairy cooperatives. Women still do not have the ability to access or control production resources (such as capital, knowledge, and assets), services (such as training and dairy inputs), or make decisions regarding management of dairy cooperatives. Women are underrepresented in leadership positions, preventing them from fully using their potential and enjoying benefits that accrue from being members of a dairy cooperative. The purpose of this general qualitative study was to describe barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives. In this chapter, I present my literature search strategy, theoretical framework, and key themes including legal frameworks that influence governance of cooperatives as well as women's empowerment and participation in dairy cooperatives.

Literature Search Strategy

I reviewed literature from the following databases: EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, ERIC, ResearchGate, and the Walden University Library. A database plan was used to guide the literature search process. The following is a complete list of every search term I used in the study: *dairy management, women's economic empowerment, Kenyan legal structure, international law, gender in dairy, discrimination and women, women's rights, building bridges initiatives, gender-just leadership and gender, financial inclusion, women and entrepreneurship, cooperatives, gender equality, gendered leadership, and women in decision-making*. My search for these terms led me to existing literature I could review. I searched for information new articles using similar terms.

Theoretical Foundation

This study was guided by the theory of women's economic empowerment by Golla et al. The theory is used to measure women's individual, household, community, and institutional economic empowerment (Golla et al., 2011). It was created to define and offer methods for measuring the economic empowerment of women. It is derived from the empowerment theory, which involves giving people and communities the ability to improve their lives by gaining political, social, and personal power (Rapport, 2002). The Marxist sociological theory is the source of the empowerment theory.

A woman is considered economically empowered when she can succeed and advance economically and has the power to make and act on economic decisions, which helps her to advance and achieve her personal goals and ambitions. For women to succeed economically, they need to have equal economic chances as their male counterparts as well as required resources to compete effectively and efficiently in the marketplace. For women to advance economically, they must have the capacity and agency to earn an income, resources, and abilities to compete in the market, as well as equitable access to economic institutions that will improve their lives and their families. Women achieve economic advancement when they possess agency and control and have access to resources (Golla et al., 2011).

For women to have economic power, they must be able to act and decide how much money is spent and resources are managed. Resources serve to enable women to achieve economic success or exercise agency and power. Resources determine how much authority and agency women exercise. In addition to financial capital, resources also

comprise social, physical, human, and financial capital. The extent to which women engage in decision-making depends on these factors (Golla et al., 2011).

Women's economic empowerment is dependent on structural circumstances within communities, households, and individuals, as well as perceived realities and gender norms. Two key principles govern activities that women undertake in relating to other individuals within their social environment and how resources are used and distributed. These two principles are gender norms and institutions. Gender norms are social constructs that involve specifying roles, activities, taboos, expectations, and behaviors that a particular community deems appropriate, as well as conduct that is prohibited for men and women (Golla et al., 2011). Gender norms, involving public spaces, types of professions and positions of leadership, and managing money, influences the behavior and treatment of women in communities. Most African societies are patriarchal, with men being seen as heads of households, main owners of property, holders of positions of power and social privilege, and political authority and other positions involving decision-making. The existence of patriarchy is concealed by socialized and covert behaviors that have a detrimental impact on participation and representation of women as important decision-makers in governing bodies. Roles that men and women play at home, in communities, and the economy are determined by gender norms, which can also limit women's access to and control over inputs, financial resources, information, and productive assets.

Institutions are key determinants of women's economic empowerment, including market structures, education systems, marriage systems, and policy and legal measures

that affect their control and agency (Golla et al., 2011). Cooperatives are institutions established by members that are motivated by the demand for joint business and benefits of economies of scale. Cooperative members frequently work to better social, cultural, and economic environments in which they operate (Otieno, 2020). Cooperatives have the capacity to receive technical, financial, and other support from governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders; therefore, they are perceived as strong institutions for promoting sustainable development. Through cooperatives, poverty issues are addressed through provision and equitable distribution of food, skills development, resource allocation, and financial inclusion among citizens. As an open and democratic organization, cooperatives encourage participation of their members involving matters related to their management and business, making them promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment in communities.

Representation of women in governing marketing structures like dairy cooperatives puts them in stronger negotiating positions with milk processors, which enables them to earn extra income through sale of milk. It also promotes their economic empowerment by either influencing changes in gender norms or institutional policy reviews and equal promotion and distribution of available resources. Leadership positions are an avenue to improving economic status of women as well as agency in terms of positions they hold. Women in leadership positions can influence economic activities that help them improve their lives and their families.

The women's economic empowerment theory has been utilized by other researchers to explain how participation by women in decision-making has uplifted and

empowered them economically. Through activities carried out in the community, women can empower themselves and rise to the level men are at. Brigid (2010) stated that communities that embrace inclusiveness and active involvement of women in the development agenda report more visible improvements. The possible success is visible since women actively participate in raising awareness in many ways to reach the main goal of food security, health, education, the environment, and any other development agenda. Understanding the plight of women in rising to positions of power and decision making is important in ensuring that appropriate development interventions and policies are developed to propel them economically. The resources should be utilized appropriately to ensure they meet the goals they have been projected to. Economic empowerment of women is beneficial to the long-term growth of both a community and society (Lodiaga, 2020). The considerations for the participation of women in entrepreneurship and dairy productive systems strengthens the economy required for societal stability (Obure, 2020). A clear path to achieving gender equality in Kenya is to advocate for women's economic empowerment in the public sector, particularly in leadership roles in the dairy cooperatives.

Golla's theoretical work on women's economic empowerment framework allowed me to look at women's economic gains and successes and investigate access, control, and ownership as key building blocks that women can draw from to succeed socially and economically and contribute to the community's sustainable development. Traditional practices related to gender norms and institutions within a social system influence the distribution and use of resources, which, from a gender lens, can prohibit or

contribute to the expectations of how women represent and advocate for themselves in public structures. To achieve this, women's economic gains and successes within the dairy sector foster their agency and choice on what to access, share, and distribute among themselves and others.

The women's economic empowerment framework was used in this study to explain the importance of economic power in breaking gender equality barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in the governance systems of dairy cooperatives in Kenya.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Legal Framework and Statute Law on Women's Rights

Nations and states are embodied by international human rights laws and commitments by all participating nations. Kenya has not lagged and has accepted international human rights conventions as well as guidelines for gender parity and women's empowerment, all of which have an impact on national and state laws and policies.

International Law and Commitments

Kenya has endorsed and adopted major international conventions, protocols, and treaties related to gender equality and empowerment of women (Ogato, 2013). The ratification of such laws and commitments commits Kenya, through the 2010 constitution, to recognize these instruments as an integral part of the laws of the land.

Such international protocols ratified include the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1984. Kenya

has adopted the principles of 1995's Beijing's Platforms for Action (BPA) as well as the political declaration and outcome document post-Beijing+5 in 2000. Kenya also endorsed the SDG 2030, which outlines through Goal 5 the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. Among other key international laws that recognize the rights of citizens are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1990, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, and the Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR). Gender discrimination is prohibited in the equal enjoyment of political rights, as stipulated by the UDHR. The right to engage in public and political life without facing discrimination is a fundamental human right that is reaffirmed by the ICCPR. The CEDAW upholds women's nondiscriminatory rights to vote and hold public office. The CEDAW outlines the official legal acknowledgment of equal treatment and status for men and women, as well as the acts that constitute discrimination. It also outlines the steps that must be taken to end all forms of discrimination.

Kenya ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance in 2010 and the Maputo Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2010. These documents uphold the principles of equal participation and the use of quotas and affirmative action to encourage the effective and equitable participation of women in political spheres. Despite the enactment and development of legal frameworks and laws pertaining to women's rights, the Kenyan government still faces obstacles in fully implementing these laws and protocols. It should be noted that although advancements in

women's rights indicate some improvement in certain areas, the process is still moving very slowly.

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights was ratified by Kenya. In addition, Kenya is a part of the African Union and the East Africa Community, both of which have policies addressing gender issues in their constituent nations. Agenda 2063 of the Africa Union places women and girls at the center of Africa's development agenda and calls for a more inclusive society where women and girls are involved in decision-making in all aspects of development. Despite this, Kenya has no documentation in the 2010 Constitution that gives provision for the domestication and allocation of funds for the enactment of such treaties and declarations.

Kenya is yet to fully domesticate and implement the provisions in CEDAW, which is among the important international declarations on the rights of women (Darooka, 2012). Like most African states, Kenya is deeply patriarchal. Therefore, the rights of women continue to be subjugated daily owing to this phenomenon. Discrimination of women regardless of their economic, educational, or professional status, as well as the socioeconomic processes, continue to be compromised by patriarchal influences (Matangaro, 2013).

Constitution and the Statute Law

The primary legal framework for equal opportunities in appointment and elective bodies is Kenya's 2010 constitution, which also establishes automatic application of international laws ratified by the state in Kenya. The 2010 Kenyan Constitution's Chapter 4 demands the abolition of all forms of marginalization and discrimination based on

gender by guaranteeing men and women an equal right to protection and benefits (Golla, 2020). Therefore, every individual in Kenya has an equal right to, access to, and benefit from services and opportunities in the cultural, social, political, and economic spheres. The law is a vital tool for advancing women's and girls' rights to equality and justice. A well-functioning legal framework is a fundamental part of promoting gender equality in the process of development. The international community and other development stakeholders, like civil society organizations, have been working together for decades on programs intended to improve the rule of law.

Farmer-dairy cooperatives are guided by by-laws, regulations, and laws that are implemented by the members. Since 2010, Kenya's constitution has established a gender quota. To guarantee that "not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender," the state is required by Article 27(8) of the constitution to implement laws, policies, and other measures, including affirmative action programs (Government of Kenya, 2020). Notably, there are no explicit provisions in Kenya's constitution to guarantee the respect of the two-thirds gender rule, particularly regarding positions held by women.

The constitution enumerated several notable accomplishments for women, such as citizenship, equal rights prior to, during, and following marriage, the abolition of gender-based discrimination in land-related matters, and gender parity in politics, specifically concerning appointed roles. Despite the deliberate efforts of the Kenyan government to promote gender equality, such as the transfer of gender units to county governments, the pace of policy and legislative framework implementation remains slow because of

insufficient funding and capacity allocated to gender at the national and county levels (Odary, 2020). More so, there are still large implementation gaps, particularly in areas pertaining to the ability of women in leadership and decision-making roles.

Numerous strategies and initiatives have been implemented to increase the number of women in leadership roles. The creation of leadership development programs by development partners; the establishment of the National Gender Equality Commission (NGEC); the creation of a national strategy to assist women in elective politics; the establishment of leadership curricula and training courses within government training institutions; the launch of a democracy fund to assist women in political arenas; the involvement of female leaders in advocacy and media; and mentorship programs at higher education institutions are a few examples.

Kenya's political life and processes are organized based on norms and values that promote male dominance. Aggression, long campaign hours, and the use of political party nominations to minimize women's unpaid responsibilities are just a few of the factors that contribute to an electoral environment and system that discourage women from participating. Women in leadership roles are now the exception rather than the rule due to a combination of factors including financial constraints, a failure to leverage women's voting power and numerical strength. One possible explanation for the manipulation of women's voting power and numerical strength to serve patriarchal agendas is the influence of gender-biased electoral systems.

In September 2020, the Chief Justice of Kenya recommended that the President of Kenya suspend the parliament due to its disregard for the constitution and legal norms

when implementing the two-thirds gender rule. In October 2020, the President unveiled the Bridging Bridges to a New Kenyan Nation, commonly known in Kenya as the BBI Report, which was formed to address vital issues for the economic and political prosperity of Kenya. Despite the nullification of the BBI initiative in August 2021, the BBI report had the potential to make provisional amendments to the current 2010 constitution on aspects of corruption, adverse elections, ethnic resentment and struggle, inclusivity, lack of national ethos, devolution, safety and security, shared prosperity, rights, and responsibility. For peaceful coexistence, the BBI report attempted to address the growing disparity between the rich and the poor, as well as ethnic minorities and vulnerable groups (Obure, 2020).

Regarding gender inclusivity, the BBI report suggested implementing a political representation system to implement the two-thirds gender rule in parliament and other institutions, guaranteeing that the nation's executive branch adheres to this principle. To achieve political parity between the sexes, the BBI report had forced political parties and associations to comply with the gender rule and other inclusionary measures found in the constitution through their party structures. As Odary (2020) asserted, even though the BBI aimed to improve women's economic well-being through entrepreneurship and job opportunities, the shared prosperity proposal would not advance gender equality measures or the concepts of access, ownership, and control over resources. Because these proposals did not aim to give women control over essential productive resources like land, they were counterproductive (Odary, 2020). Obure (2020) stated that to empower women to participate in the political process in a sufficient and high-quality manner, it

was necessary to establish to gender-responsive messaging, policies, and procedures as well as support initiatives to bolster political parties, grassroots organizations, and institutions.

One section of the statute that establishes the legal foundation for representation and leadership is cooperative law. The Cooperative Societies Act of 1997, the Cooperative Societies Act of 2004 (collectively referred to as the Cooperative Act), and the Cooperative Rules of 2004 comprise this body of legislation. The cooperative act and rules do not refer to gender-specific guidelines, e.g., sex disaggregation and therefore gender blindness, with the consistent use of masculine language. The Cooperative Act gives cooperatives authority and autonomy on issues related to governance systems and structures, as well as membership, through the development of by-laws and policies. The cooperative's bylaws, for example, might include extra requirements for leadership and membership, but they might not specifically address gender-inclusive leadership and membership. To catalyze this, the Ministry of Trade and Cooperatives in Kenya is advocating for the development of gender-sensitive policies in all cooperatives with the aim of enabling women to access services, products, and opportunities.

Since cooperatives are member-driven, the by-laws are developed and adjusted by the ratifications and votes of their members. The lack of language in the Cooperative Act regarding gender discrimination in bylaws means cooperatives may be able to enact rules that prevent women from serving as leaders or members. The three legal tiers provide Kenyan women with a wide range of legal protections. The 2010 constitution reform introduced the minimum one-third representation of each sex in leadership positions.

While this might not have been explicitly directed to cooperatives, the cooperatives have a significant potential to influence the representation and participation of women in the cooperative movement in Kenya.

The Kenya Agricultural Sector Gender Policy 2021 was designed to promote gender equality in the agricultural sector for greater and equitable production, food security, growth, and national development. The goal of the policy is to make sure that it provides a platform for private and public sector actors to address gender issues in Kenya's agricultural sector. Some of the policy's primary goals include promoting equitable access to and control over agricultural resources, opportunities, and benefits for men and women, as well as improving support and responsibility for gender mainstreaming in the industry (Waithanji, 2021).

The primary obstacle to this policy's implementation is the ambiguity surrounding the roles of the county and national governments. Other impediments include a lack of funding, expertise, and human capital.

Women's Empowerment and Participation in Dairy Cooperatives

The economic empowerment of women is of great importance in raising their status and voice in society. Indeed, when financial and marketing services are developed directly targeting women, their collective bargaining power is strengthened, therefore cooperatives have a catalytic role in building the business and marketing enabling environment for women to thrive (Ravichandran et al., 2021). Women contribute a large extent to the dairy production roles in terms of milk collection, marketing, and livestock hygiene. Membership in a dairy cooperative is dependent on the volume and quality of

milk supplied. The participation of a woman in leadership in a dairy cooperative is to some extent dependent on her capacity and consistency in supplying dairy milk, as well as her involvement in other cooperative management and supervisory activities.

Women's Contribution to Dairy Production Systems

In smallholder households, the operations of dairy are primarily a family affair, where all members—women, men, and children—contribute to the milk handling, processing, value addition, marketing, and consumption. For women, Gallina (2016) stated that dairy production is important as a source of regular income and thereby contributes to food security at the household level. Gallina further stated that women are generally involved in the collection, marketing, processing, and value addition processes of milk in the dairy value chain, while men have a greater responsibility for animal husbandry practices like veterinary treatment, artificial insemination, and marketing of live animals for beef.

In 2014, Omondi et al. studied the dairy farming practices in Western Kenya. According to the report, women were largely responsible for fetching water in 48% of dairy farms, milking in 56% of the farms, and marketing the milk in 60% of the farms. Women make all the decisions about running the dairy, including hiring staff, selling, feeding, cleaning, watering, spraying, milking, and using the money from the dairy. Despite this, men dominate among cooperative members (Gallina, 2016).

Dairy milk is regarded a women's product in Kenyan livestock ownership culture since it is an essential food item for the home, but cows are a man's property. According to research by Njuki and Sanginga (2013), men own four times more goats than women

do. This supports the hypothesis that, in traditional livestock ownership cultures, women own milk products while men serve as the primary owners and managers of cattle. Men dominate decision-making, specifically when it comes to the sale of livestock and how money is used, even though decisions are made "jointly" in households headed by both men and women (ILRI, 2009). Involving women as members of cooperatives contributes immensely to an increase in production and higher profitability for both the cooperatives and the household as a family business.

Women and Membership in Dairy Cooperatives

Dairy production and supply determine the membership of an individual in a cooperative society since cooperative profitability margins are influenced by the milk volume and the quality supplied by the members. How much milk is supplied to the cooperative and sold through other informal channels is influenced by the ability of women to control and make decisions regarding the income earned at the household (Krisjanson et al., 2010). Women regularly have more influence and control over the evening milk (EADD, 2018). Njuki et al. (2016) provided an analysis on the impacts of dairy intensification on gender relations and found that while women generally have the final say over decisions regarding milk sales in the evening, men appear to oversee the household's overall dairy income. Given the growing the functions and demands of milk at the household level, decision-making dynamics concerning milk sales and marketing can cause tensions and conflicts (Galina, 2016).

The notions of open, voluntary membership and equal voice in cooperative business governance are supported by cooperative members. Regardless of the amount of

money invested, each cooperative member is entitled to one vote (Lodiaga, 2020). This nature of formal membership functions as the only means by which dairy shareholders are given a legal right to access extension services, inputs, cooperative dividends, credit facilities, and health facilities, as well as the right to be engaged in meetings and considered for leadership positions. With Kenya's Cooperative Act silent on women's representation in formal cooperatives, women continue to suffer low representation in membership at the cooperative. According to a survey conducted in 2009–2010 among 3.6 million cooperative members in eight administrative regions of Kenya, 30% of members were women. (Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Development, 2011). In the dairy subsector, women's representation was reported at 16% in 2009–2010 and 23% in 2018 (EADD, 2018).

Given that women are aware of their ability to take charge of their lives and futures and can recognize, discuss, and resolve issues to assist them in making decisions regarding their future and their development as cooperative members, economic empowerment is the impetus behind cooperatives' potential for social, economic, and political transformation. When women exercise agency and act through increased access to and control over money and productive resources, alongside modifications to institutional structures, such transformative power relations take place (Bill & Melinda Gates, 2019).

The participation of women in cooperatives contributes to strengthening their self-efficacy, determination, and confidence, as well as their capacity to participate in economic activities and make independent decisions that economically enable them to

advance their personal goals, dreams, and agendas (Sharma et al., 2020). Consequently, women's membership in cooperatives enhances their capacity to influence, participate in, and gain from the cooperative activities on terms that value their contributions and enable them to bargain for a more equitable return distribution.

Participation in Decision-Making Structures

The journey of a woman towards leadership is influenced by sociocultural factors that stem from the household and the community (Farnworth, 2015). Key institutional structures of empowerment and transformation include the family, the community formal groups through cooperatives and unions, the informal groups, which include self-help groups and village savings and loan associations, and the state level through political spaces like county or sub-county representatives, senators, and governors (Katothya, 2017). Women's participation at the local level influences the provision and prioritization of services and resources in society, which positively and directly impact their lives and the community (Kaaria et al., 2016).

Dairy cooperatives are institutions established by individuals with similar agendas and interests. In a cooperative, members contribute to build resources collectively, to strengthen their financial power for equitable benefits. Lodiaga (2020) noted that common interests and bonds that unite the members place all members on equal ground. From an empowerment perspective, a cooperative thrives on 'power with' which is the collective power when people come together for change. Lodiaga (2020) further asserted that collaborative power is built and grows because of relationships, mutual respect, shared power, and solidarity. It is therefore estimated that the nature of a cooperative is to

provide an enabling environment where men, women, and youth are empowered to take up transformative social and political positions.

It is customary for women to develop social networks and common interest groups that enable them to support each other in solving daily problems (Rao et al., 2016). Joint engagement in cooperatives is in line with the local traditions. The democratic nature of dairy cooperatives means that every registered member (whether male or female) has an equal voice in cooperative management matters through the vote than in any other type of enterprise because every member of a cooperative has an equal right to participate in meetings, take leadership positions, and be represented in leadership structures. (Katonya, 2017). Women still make up a very small percentage of cooperative members, though, and they are nearly nonexistent in cooperative management outside of savings and credit associations. Cooperatives guarantee that men and women participate equally in the decision-making structures because they are democratic organizations that uphold the principles of inclusivity and equity. Organizing women to participate in cooperatives helps to consolidate efforts and serves as a vehicle for socio-cultural transformation (Rao et al., 2016).

The change towards achieving the two-thirds threshold for women's representation in leadership within the dairy cooperatives continues to be uneven, with only 15% of women taking leadership positions (EADD, 2018). Such low levels of representation imply that women's views and voices in the dairy sector remain unrepresented, therefore affecting the overall development of the cooperative, communities, and nation (Njuki et al., 2016). This also prevents women from fully

utilizing their potential to enjoy the benefits of dairy production in Kenya (Farnworth, 2015).

According to Njuki et al. (2016), when women are involved in management and leadership, they bring a different political perspective. Njuki et al. further argued that empowering women to participate in leadership positions helps solve societal challenges associated with poverty since it not only aids in building the nation but also aids in balancing decision-making dynamics within a given community. This is so because providing opportunities for women to engage in leadership brings a different perspective to the management of the affairs of the cooperatives. Traditionally, women have been seen to exhibit characteristics of intuition, sensitivity, empathy, caring, organization, attention to detail, the ability to interact with other people, and provide motivation (Farnworth, 2015). Women tend to value ideas like cooperation, sharing, relationships, trust, and peace, while men value ideas of independence, hierarchy, competition, and dominance (Schemerhorn, 2001). Therefore, the overconcentration of social power by men affects the legitimacy of women's participation in political processes by limiting their access to decision-making processes, leading to discrimination and gender inequality.

Access to Dairy Cooperative Services

The successful participation of farmers in the dairy production and market systems can be improved through their engagement in the dairy cooperatives (BIRTHAL et al., 2015). As a result of improved access to market intelligence, inputs, and technology, improved milk price negotiation skills, and increased use of extension-related services,

farmers who are organized through dairy cooperatives can produce and market milk and other dairy products more efficiently (Lapar et al., 2016). Through self-help groups and social networks, the cooperatives empower dairy farmers through equitable, joint, and democratic ownership and management of resources. Dairy cooperatives use a value-based approach and principles, as they place emphasis on democratic practices, gender equality, social inclusion, job security, additional income, profit sharing, and better dividends.

A study by Lodiaga (2020) alluded to the fact that women's engagement in cooperatives provides them with an opportunity to access improved services and start an enterprise of their interest. However, low literacy levels hamper the ability of women to access information on support services (e.g., dairy production enhancement practices like feed technology, milk hygiene, pest and disease control, records management, and access to inputs) and contribute to the introduction and adoption of new dairy farming technologies, innovations, and practices (Lodiaga, 2020). With the help of formal institutions in particular, women could further accumulate sufficient capital, boost their income, and enhance their dairy farming practices and businesses with access to knowledge. Dairy cooperatives give women the opportunity to get the skills they need to understand cooperative management dynamics, the services provided, and fully participate in cooperative affairs decision-making.

Engage in political cultures where women are traditionally excluded from entrepreneurial leadership positions and activities, cooperatives help create opportunities for women to build economic and social capital, receive training cooperative

management, and agenda-setting. These actions enable women to overcome gender inequalities. Cooperative education increases members' capacity to comprehend their membership rights, how to benefit, and how to apply essential principles in their daily lives and choices. Members are required to understand, accept, and apply the rules and responsibilities of membership.

Access to Resource Base and Income

According to Lodiaga (2020), one of the philosophies of the cooperative's movement is the creation of a sustainable society where there is equitable sharing of resources and benefits as well as equal access to opportunities. In the dairy cooperatives, the contribution of members is voluntary, and the rights of women to own productive assets and property are still subjected to organizational by-laws that govern the cooperative as well as traditional practices that categorize women among men's property. Gallina (2016) stated that cooperative societies offer an instrument for women's economic empowerment by letting them be important in society and the economy. Cooperatives have the potential to give women the chance to expand their fundamental capacities, such as having access to property and important productive resources, as well as to be properly educated, fed, and accommodated.

As a democratic type of business, cooperatives incentivize women to engage in decision-making. The situation and needs are different in areas around the globe, but cooperatives have led to enhancing livelihoods for women and have served as an avenue where women have exercised their right to involvement. Membership includes other

rights and obligations. It provides them the opportunity to access financial benefits like dividends and credit (Gallina, 2016).

The cooperative governance structures and by-laws assume that individuals must be economically rewarded for their output in the production, supply, and marketing of an agricultural product. Dividends become the economic rewards. Members of a cooperative are encouraged to keep savings that they can accumulate and borrow at reasonable terms and interest rates. Such loans provide the income stream that enables the members to invest in other economic activities (as agriprenuers) that bring economic value and returns. Dairy cooperatives in Kenya have been recorded to offer other essential services at subsidized rates to the members and access other financial services like mobile money transfer systems (like the M-Pesa services), which offer real-time access to finances for their members. Due to their increased capabilities to comply with the requirements of other financial institutions, members who have access to credit are indeed able to access productive assets. Such services give the women the opportunities to realize economic independence (Lodiaga, 2020).

Summary and Conclusions

The literature review included evidence regarding women's involvement in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. From the review, I have extended knowledge in the discipline and elaborated on legal frameworks involving commitments by various government institutions and equitable involvement of women. This requires development of the right implementation strategies and machinery to address gender inequality issues related to underrepresentation of women in decision-

making processes. Contributions of women to dairy production systems, participation in dairy cooperatives and decision-making processes, access to dairy cooperative services, and access to resources and income were addressed to understand challenges that affect women's participation in dairy cooperatives and key themes that were used to develop data collection strategies. I used literature to examine the concept of women's representation in decision-making processes. Chapter 3 includes information about the methodology I used to gather data for analysis and a description and justification for this general qualitative study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to describe barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives. In this chapter, I presented procedures for research that were employed to gather and analyze data. Chapter 3 starts with an explanation of the research design and rationale, approach, appropriateness of methods, and their importance to the current study. I present a description of procedures for recruitment of respondents, data collection, data management, and data analysis methods. Aspects of issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations that guide this research process are explained.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design for this study was a general qualitative study. I was guided by the research question: What factors inhibit participation of women in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya? The phenomenon of focus was women's participation in decision-making processes in the context of dairy cooperatives in Kenya. To achieve this, data were collected via semi-structured interviews with 20 cooperative leaders purposively selected from 10 dairy cooperatives located in the Rift Valley regions of Kenya, specifically Uasin Gichu, Bomet, Nandi, and Kericho counties, whose farmers practice intensive dairy farming. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to gain insights regarding the issue.

I used the general qualitative approach, which was suitable to understand a phenomenon by exploring its richness, complexity, and depth. The qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study to address what, how, and why a phenomenon

occurred. Patton (1990) stated qualitative research involves inquiries regarding stories of individuals to capture and understand their perspectives. The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to hear views of participants about participation of women in decision-making processes. This study involved gathering insights regarding factors that hinder women's participation in decision-making processes as opposed to interpreting their lived experiences.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument and tool for collection of data and analysis, since research procedures are more inductive in nature (Merriam, 2009). As a researcher, I undertook the role of observer of the phenomenon via responses of participants during semi-structured interviews. As key observer, I followed all steps involved in research that entailed recruitment of participants, interviews for data collection, thematic data analysis, and report writing. During collection of data, I ensured interviews were audio recorded and took daily reflective notes to capture impressions, contexts, and views of participants. Since I had limited information and knowledge regarding women's participation in dairy cooperatives, I took an outsider position during my interactions with participants. Individual communication between participants and myself was critical during data collection. I ensured I kept my focus on research even as I attempted to remain objective as possible.

Obligations and commitment of researchers include recognizing and considering the personal and interpersonal nature of qualitative inquiry. To mitigate any challenges, during the invitation phase and introduction of interviews, I made sure I clarified that my

study results was solely intended for the achievement of an academic degree at Walden University and could be disseminated and used by both state and nonstate stakeholders to contribute to positive change in women's empowerment.

Methodology

I adopted a general qualitative approach to describe factors that inhibit participation of women in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. I used a descriptive design to respond to the research question. A descriptive approach was suitable for this study to describe dairy cooperatives. Descriptive designs are used to collect information about a population's habits, opinions, and behaviors in terms of social issues (Orodho & Kombo, 2002).

Participant Selection Logic

Through purposive sampling, I recruited 20 participants with the appropriate experience and knowledge regarding leadership of dairy cooperatives. 102 cooperatives (28% of the total number of cooperatives) in Kenya are in the Rift Valley region, which has the highest number of dairy producers, highest dairy milk production, and the largest number of dairy livestock, totaling 1,895,000 (KDB, 2020). The target population for this study were both women and men leaders in the 102 dairy cooperatives in the Rift Valley region of Kenya. Ten dairy cooperatives were purposively selected. Cooperatives were as follows: one from Kericho, four from Nandi, three from Bomet, and two from Uasin Gichu counties. I selected dairy cooperatives with the highest number of dairy producers. From the 10 selected dairy cooperatives, two participants in leadership positions were selected, leading to a total sample size of 20 participants.

Purposive sampling involves selection of rich data for the purpose of deep analysis related to the central issue (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The homogenous purposive sampling approach was used in this qualitative study, which entailed picking a sample with alike characteristics to describe a particular phenomenon in depth.

The selected sample was homogenous to obtain diverse, in-depth, and optimal insights from the sample. Having a sample of 20 participants was adequate to give a comprehensive review as well as manage repetitive data and saturation. I interviewed a diverse and inclusive group with multiple interests and needs, reducing risks of systemic biases or unfairness that are directed by cooperatives towards the participants, specifically women (Maxwell, 2012). I considered participants who were available, accessible, willing to offer information, and able to give insights regarding the topic under study.

All 20 participants were at least 21 years old, members of a cooperative for at least 5 years, held leadership positions at a dairy cooperative for at least 2 years or had been leaders in the past, and were able to read and write in English or Swahili.

During the recruitment process for the participants, I consulted with my networks in the dairy sector to identify the participants. An official invitation letter together with the NACOSTI permit was sent to the participants through the WhatsApp platform after the phone call invitation. The participants further consented to take part in the interview sessions by also confirming their most appropriate time and place for the interview. I ensured that before the start of the interview, the participants signed the consent form.

Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that researchers ensure data saturation by gathering data until no other evidence is available, and similar themes answer the research questions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) revealed the need to have a representative sample that provides data to the point of saturation; therefore, if the aim was to maximize data, the sample can be concluded where there is no forthcoming difference information from new sample pieces. During data collection, I ensured that the data collected was both rich in quality and thick in quantity and reached a point where no new information could be attained. In this study, data saturation was reached at respondent 12. I ensured that the interview questions were structured in a way that enabled me to ask multiple additional questions to the participants to confirm saturation points.

Instrumentation

As a qualitative study, the study used in-depth interviews as the key data collection technique with the dairy cooperative leaders. The instrument that was used to collect the information was an interview guide. The interview guide contained semi-structured open-ended questions to make sure similar questions were asked to all research participants. As Patton (1990) stated, interviews are open-ended questions that result from deep responses from study participants views and familiarity to a certain phenomenon. The data collected through interviews included precise quotes with adequate context to be interpreted. Rubin and Rubin (2005) stated that in-depth qualitative interviewing is one of the important research methodologies where researchers intentionally engage respondents that have the information that explains the study problem. By listening keenly to the respondents, the researcher thorough interviews

explore deeper their intentions and views and generates a world view from the perspectives of others than their own, extending their emotional and intellectual reach across many social issues.

Interviews gave me the freedom to probe the participants to elaborate and respond in depth to a line of inquiry and allowed me to encourage and prompt the participants to give additional information on the research topic. The use of in-depth interviews in the study enabled me to generate an atmosphere where the participants freely express themselves while focusing on the main aim of the research (Kallio et al., 2016). I carefully created the interview questions to link the interview with the women's economic empowerment theory, which looks at women's access, control, and participation, and the research question. In the interview guide, I included similar open-ended questions to all the participants to describe the factors that inhibit women's participation in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives. Including semi-structured interviews for the study gave me the freedom to ask similar questions as well as follow up questions for clarity and gave the participants the opportunity to share opinions in depth.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I reached out to my networks, who were well versed in the dairy cooperative landscapes in Kenya, and specifically the regions of interest, and explained the study in person, including the purpose of the research and the methodology to be used to engaging the participants in the research. I further requested that they refer participants who were purposively fit to be engaged in this study.

Prior to data collection, I submitted all the relevant documentation for approval from Walden University IRB and received an approval #12-08-21-0758500 which expires on August 7, 2024. The IRB report included the methods of recruitment, data collection, data analysis, and procedures for addressing ethical concerns, as well as potential risks and mitigation strategies for the same. The proposal and the tools for data collection were also submitted to NACOSTI to acquire the necessary data collection permits. I received my NACOSTI permit #NACOSTI/23/30678, which expires on October 26, 2024.

Upon acquiring the necessary data collection permits, in liaison with my network contact, I began calling the participants on the phone, mentioned the purpose of the study, and made sure that I clarified that the interview was meant to enable me to acquire a Ph.D. degree at Walden University. Every selected participant agreed to participate in the study and requested further information. Using the WhatsApp platform, I shared with them copies of the invitation letter, consent form, and NACOSTI permit. The invitation letter also mentioned that their participation was purely voluntary and that they had the option to opt out from the interview process without any fear of retaliation.

An interview guide was used to show relevant data from the cooperative leaders. The guide was also translated into a Swahili version, which I used interchangeably since some of the participants used both English and Swahili to communicate. Before administering the interview, I presented the consent form to the participants to sign. Similar questions were asked of each participant using the interview guide. I asked follow-up questions to ensure that the information collected was comprehensive.

The data points considered in the interview questions circled around the legal and policy framework, roles of women, elections to leadership, time, motivation of women to seek leadership positions, access to assets and resources, and management practices in dairy cooperatives.

The interviews took place at the dairy cooperative offices, which were within 5 kilometers of the participants' reach. None of the participants were interviewed at their place of work, since these leaders are smallholder dairy farmers. I ensured that the interview venue was private and that no one would overhear the conversation. Every participant was allocated 60–90 minutes for the interviews. A thirty-minute transition interval before the next interview was provided.

With the low prevalence of COVID-19 infections, I ensured that the required safety procedures and protocols for face-to-face meetings were adhered to, specifically ensuring adequate ventilation at the meeting site, and made provisions for a mask for those who requested one.

All the participants consented to the audio recording of the interviews for the purpose of transcription and reference. I also ensured that the participants were provided a chance to ascertain and validate their responses after the interview to ensure data accuracy. During the data collection process, I maintained the confidentiality of the participants and gave them assurance of the same.

Data Analysis Plan

Examining, arranging, and classifying data in a methodical manner to find meaning is known as data analysis (Hatch, 2002). Thematic data analysis techniques were

used for this study. A descriptive-focused coding strategy was used as the foundation for this qualitative inquiry, with the primary goal of helping readers see what a researcher sees and hear what the researcher hears in general (Walcott, 1994).

I transcribed the interview material after conducting the interviews so that I could arrange the interview's contents and perform an efficient analysis of the data. Following transcription and initial coding, I also conducted a 15-minute phone call with five participants to verify their responses. During the member checking, I shared my takeaways from the participants responses to allow them to confirm whether my interpretations were accurate and make the necessary adjustments.

Thematic data analysis was done by reading sets of data and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data to find common themes. By using thematic data analysis, I was able to identify the most significant themes and use them to address the research question. This entailed familiarization with the data sets (from notes and transcripts captured during the in-depth interviews) and setting categories based on key concepts used by the interviewees for data analysis. Themes and patterns were identified in the codes across the different interviews. A codebook was created to allow me to track codes from the interview transcripts. The codes allowed me to populate the main points and common themes that recur throughout the data. I then defined the final list of themes to help me understand the data. NVivo-14 (Qualitative Data Analysis Software) was used to organize, analyze, and visualize information by providing tools for classifying, sorting, and arranging information in a manner that enabled the identification of themes and patterns prevalent across the data. According to Saldana (2016), a code in qualitative

research is a brief sentence that captures the striking or evocative qualities of a subset of language-based data and symbolically assigns a summative essence. Charmaz (2008) characterizes coding as the crucial connection between the gathering of data and its interpretation into meaning. Key patterns were observed in every case, and these patterns' potential causes were determined, along with the characteristics that made each pattern distinct and how similar or dissimilar the patterns were (Goodrick, 2014).

All interview transcripts were saved in Microsoft Word format, as each transcript was coded separately to ensure that every segment of the text is relevant to or specifically addresses the research question. Sampled transcripts were returned to the participants for verification before the analysis was complete. I ensured that the participants' identities and personal data were kept private. Transcripts and records of the participants are stored separately and maintained with confidentiality throughout the study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is one of the ways that researchers in qualitative research demonstrate to both them and their readers the importance of the study's results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness is therefore measured through the criteria of transferability, credibility, confirmability, and dependability. These criteria have been defined with clear descriptions to conduct a trust-worth-general qualitative study.

Credibility

Tracy (2010) defined credibility as the plausibility, likelihood, and trustworthiness of research findings. Credibility is established, according to Guba and Lincoln (1989), when the reader is presented with a familiar experience. Credibility seeks

to address the issue of whether the study's standard operating procedures aligned with the qualitative approach in question. Further to that, demonstrating that one has spoken with knowledgeable individuals regarding the research concerns helps one gain credibility (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In this regard, I ensured that I spoke with dairy cooperative leaders with the experience in leadership, since they had firsthand knowledge and were informed about the study's phenomenon.

Credibility also looks at the “fit” between the researcher's presentation and the respondents' views. To ensure the credibility of the study information, I invested sufficient time in my interactions with the respondents to gain an adequate understanding of the factors that inhibit the participation of women in decision-making processes in the dairy cooperatives in Kenya. I established a relationship of trust between the respondents and me by interacting with them in a free and respectable manner. Prior to data analysis, I contacted the interviewees for a 15-minute phone call for member checking after transcription and initial coding. During the call, I gave the participants an opportunity to look at their responses and validate the accuracy of the data collected, as well as share my takeaways from their responses to allow them to confirm whether my interpretations were accurate.

Transferability

According to Tobin and Begley (2004), transferability is the inquiry's ability for generalization, or case-to-case transfer. The results of qualitative investigations are frequently applicable to a specific group or setting, and they are frequently specific (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order guarantee to transferability, I provided comprehensive

explanations of the procedures of data collection and situations so that others could assess how similar they were to other environments or application sites (Da Mota Pedrosa et al., 2012; Houghton et al., 2013; Stewart, 2012). The research methodology and examples of raw data were included in the broad descriptions of the data collected so that the reader could decide whether the findings could be applied in a different setting.

Readers may need to choose which findings are transferable and best fit their context. Through this study, I presented detailed descriptions and responses from the respondents and my personal reflections, which should allow individual readers to find value in the study and identify findings that can be transferred to their own context to judge transferability.

Dependability

According to Polit & Beck (2020), dependability is the ability of the data to remain consistent throughout time and in the study's specific conditions. A researcher makes sure the procedure is rational, traceable, and well recorded to attain dependability (Tobin & Begley, 2004). To ensure reliability, I made available an audit trail that detailed the procedures used to gather data, create categories, and make conclusions during the investigation. An audit trail was carried out to assess the data's accuracy and suitability for supporting the findings, interpretations, and conclusions.

Confirmability

To ensure confirmability, the researcher must show how conclusions and interpretations were arrived at by providing evidence that the results and interpretations were indeed drawn from the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004). When reliability, credibility,

and transferability are all attained, confirmability is established (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). To attain confirmability, I made sure that the results accurately reflect the opinions and replies of the participants rather than my personal prejudices and preferences. To do this, I created a reflective notebook in which I recorded my methodological choices, the study's logistics, and my introspective thoughts while I worked on the project.

Ethical Procedures

Ethics procedures are important in research since there are a lot of ethical concerns involving human subjects. Creswell & Creswell (2018) assert that ethical issues must be taken into consideration at every stage of the research process, from the researcher's arrival at the site to the interviewing procedure. Informed consent, participant confidentiality, data security, and voluntary involvement are examples of ethical concerns.

To ensure the rights of the participants are guaranteed, I obtained approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) #12-08-21-0758500 which expires on August 7, 2024. In the IRB report, I presented all the information and the procedures that will be involved in the research process, detailing how the risks to the participants will be minimized. In the report, I also included the procedures that will be followed during the recruitment process of the participants and how ethical issues will be met. The study proposal was also provided for review by the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) to enable me to acquire the necessary permits for data collection. NACOSTI permits were acquired on October 26th, 2023, on license #NACOSTI/P/23/30678, which expires on October 24th, 2024.

I sent a phone call invitation to all the selected participants. All the participants confirmed and consented to participate in the study but requested further details. Using the WhatsApp platform, I shared the invitation letter, the NACOSTI permit, and the informed consent form for their reference.

Since participation should be voluntary, I provided an explanation of the study before the interview to obtain informed consent. I also provided printed copies of the informed consent forms in relation to the purpose of the study, information on how the data will be handled, and the level to which participants will participate in the study. I also indicated that participation was voluntary and provided procedures for terminating consent in the interview process. I gave the participants time to consider their participation and to ask questions that may require clarity. The participants then signed the hard copy of the informed consent form.

Qualitative research methods utilize explanations, clarifications, and elaborations of the meanings of different aspects of the human life experience. Participants were not obliged to disclose their names or the names of the dairy cooperatives to which they belong, to protect and secure the data. I maintained the participants' confidentiality and enforced it throughout the data collection process. I also reminded the participants of the study's goal and intended use. I informed the participants that all data sheets and information gathered would be kept private and secure and that the study was only intended for academic reasons at Walden University.

During storage of the data, I utilized safe data storage systems by removing the biographical details, identifier components, amendments, and using pseudonyms.

(Applicable to names of places, individuals, and the organization.) All transcribed data was saved in the soft copy, and all printed data was discarded for safety.

I ensured that participation was voluntary, and checks were made to ensure that people related to me in any way through previous work relations were not allowed to participate in the study. This ensured that the study did not report any form of conflict of interest and that resources were not manipulated. Since the respondents were identified within the selected dairy cooperative societies, no incentives were provided to ‘motivate’ or ‘lure’ them to participate in the study. Women respondents were encouraged to participate of their own free will at the most appropriate time of the day to ensure they fully participated and were given the option irrespective of their having signed the consent form.

Electronic encryption (password protection) was used to store the research data and personal information on my hard drive. Hard copies have been filed and stored safely, and other electronic storage media have been protected as backup. To guard against data loss and destruction, I have stored the research data securely in a fireproof area. The information will be kept for a minimum of five years before it is removed as per Walden University's directions.

Summary

In this chapter, I addressed the methodology of this study, which includes procedures and strategies for recruitment and participation, instrumentation, the data analysis plan, and ethical considerations during the research process. The methodology was chosen to address the purpose of the study and answer the research question. Chapter

4 includes a description of data collection procedures, demographics of respondents, strategy for data analysis, and results of data collection.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to describe barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives. Chapter 4 includes data from participants, which were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 20 leaders of dairy cooperatives in Kenya. Findings are based on responses I received from participants. The research question was the following: What factors inhibit participation of women in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya?

Setting

Data collection for this study was done exclusively through face-to-face interviews. I requested that all participants select convenient times and places for interviews. Participants identified respective dairy cooperative board rooms, since they were easily accessible, quiet, comfortable, and private. I conducted 20 interviews without any interruptions or unexpected situations that could have impacted how results were interpreted and analyzed. No deviations were made from data collection procedures as explained in Chapter 3. To make coding and analysis simple, every interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Additionally, I kept a journal during interviews and wrote my reflections at the end of each day.

Demographics

Participants were leaders from 10 purposefully selected cooperatives in the Rift Valley Regions of Kenya, specifically Uasin Gichu, Bomet, Nandi, and Kericho counties. They were selected based on their years of experience in leadership, years as members of

cooperatives, and knowledge of management and leadership of cooperatives. participants spent 5 years on average as cooperative leaders and 8 years as members of dairy cooperatives (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Respondent	Sex	Position	Leadership Category	Yrs As Board Member	Yrs As Coop Member
R1	Female	Supervisory Extension	- Supervisory Committee	3	3
R2	Male	Vice Chair	Executive Board	4	15
R3	Female	Secretary	Executive Board	11	11
R4	Male	Chairperson	Executive Board	12	12
R5	Male	Vice Chair	Executive Board	6	12
R6	Female	Supervisory Extension	- Supervisory Committee	5	5
R7	Male	Chairperson	Executive Board	15	15
R8	Female	Treasurer	Executive Board	15	15
R9	Female	Secretary CEO	- Executive Board	1	8
R10	Male	Chairperson	Executive Board	6	8
R11	Female	Member	Member	2	11
R12	Male	Member	Member	5	5
R13	Male	Secretary	Executive Board	3	5
R14	Female	Treasurer	Executive Board	1	3
R15	Female	Committee Member	Member	2	5
R16	Male	Supervisory Extension	- Supervisory Committee	3	6

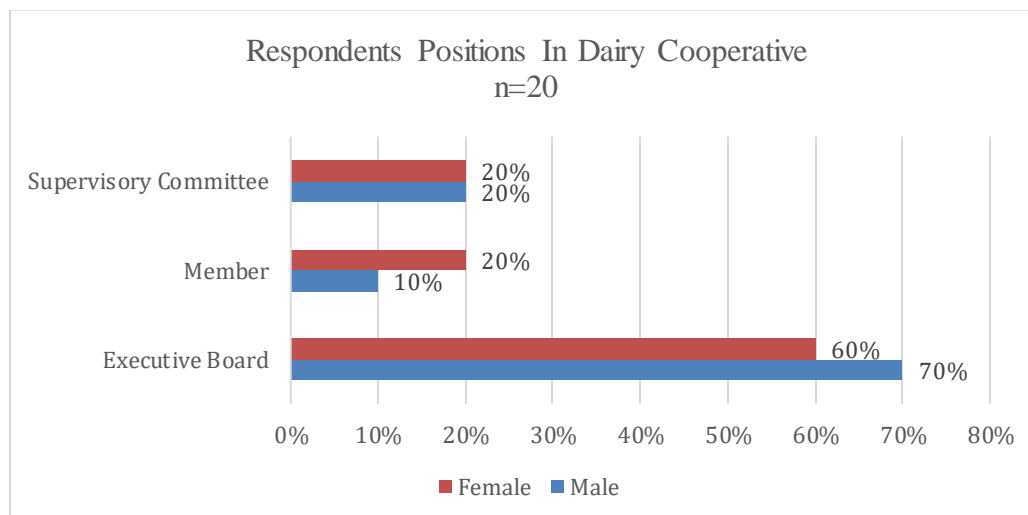
R17	Female	Secretary CEO	- Executive Board	5	5
R18	Male	Chairperson	Executive Board	6	10
R19	Female	Secretary CEO	- Executive Board	3	4
R20	Male	Supervisory Extension	- Supervisory Committee	1	11

*R – Respondent

Most participants held executive leadership positions in cooperatives. 70% of men and 60% of women held executive positions (as either chairpersons, vice chairs, secretaries, or treasurers). Executive leaders make key decisions and sign all legal documents on behalf of cooperatives.

Figure 1

Respondent Positions in Dairy Cooperative



Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews with 20 purposively selected leaders from 10 dairy cooperatives served as the study's source of primary data. Interviews took place between November 6 and 8, as well as November 20 and 21st, 2023. Interview questions (see

Appendix A and B) were created using an interview guide. Participants were given the freedom to respond in both English and Swahili, since I am conversant in both languages. I phoned all participants to invite them to interview. After confirming participation, I then sent invitation letters, consent forms, and NACOSTI permits for reference. I later called participants and agreed on the most appropriate days and times for interviews. I ensured that I reached agreed interview locations at least 30 minutes before confirmed times to assess interview rooms and prepare adequately for sessions. Data collection was done during the rainy season, which required addressing slippery roads and terrain. Upon arrival of participants in meeting rooms, I presented them with consent forms to sign before beginning the interview process. Interviews were conducted in dairy cooperative board rooms. All 20 interviews were conducted face-to-face. I advised participants that interviews were audio recorded for transcription and report-writing purposes during interviews. Four interviews were conducted per day for five calendar days which lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. An allowance of 10 minutes was given to review interview protocols. A time allowance of 30 minutes was also given for participants to allow final conversations and ample time for participants to arrive.

During interviews, I welcomed participants and stated my appreciation for their time and contributions. I also confirmed they had as much time as possible for interviews, and I gave them assurance that data would be handled confidentially. I also assured them they could end the interview process at any time with no pressure or duress. I then asked participants to ask any questions they had before continuing with interviews. I managed to respond to all questions before proceeding with interviews. After each interview, I

stated my appreciation for their contributions and asked if they had any final questions or reflections before ending interviews.

Upon conclusion of interviews, I listened to each recording and reflected at the end of every day to enable additional research notes involving similarities in responses. I transcribed audio recordings manually since interview responses were in both English and Swahili, and translations to the English language were necessary. I did a second review of transcripts a few days later based on audio recordings and corrected and cleaned transcriptions so they were ready for coding.

Data Analysis

In this general qualitative study, I used thematic data analysis method by looking at research data, going through data, identifying significant information, and generating codes and themes to answer the research question. The analysis was an inductive process that involved use of thick descriptions of participants views regarding factors that inhibit women from participating in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives. The thick descriptions were centered on participants views and responses in answering the research question. The study employed a descriptive-focused coding strategy where I extracted relevant statements, words, and respondents' reflections from interview transcripts, understood them, tagged, and coded them, reported what was said with guidance of the research question, and finally generated meaning from data. This is a technique that, according to Saldana (2016), groups coded data according to thematic or conceptual similarity by looking for the most common or important initial codes to create the most noticeable categories within the data corpus.

I employed a voice recording machine to document all the interviews and transcribed the data verbatim. I ensured that all voice recordings were well labeled and aligned to participant transcriptions, since some interviews had two voice recordings due to the length of interviews. Before starting the analysis process, I tidied up all transcripts by looking at spelling, fonts, and errors in reporting. I removed all identifiable data and inconsistencies that I might have captured during the transcription. I carefully reviewed notes and transcripts and developed a code book that includes descriptions of codes, categories, and themes that were mapped out and identified based on the responses from the semi-structured interviews.

In terms of the analysis, I coded and interpreted raw data's results using NVivo version 14 software to determine their significance and explain relationships between the various actors. NVivo coding in data analysis captures “descriptions that explain the basic problems to the analyst” (Strauss, 1987) and helps preserve participants meaning of their values and actions in the coding (Charmaz, 2014).

I uploaded all transcripts to NVivo, created a code for the research question, and began coding data, looking for relevant information and dragging into codes created. This first coding process was able to generate 38 codes. I went further to do second coding, where I grouped codes based on shared relationships, forming 13 categories. These categories were further reviewed, identifying emerging patterns that enabled me to develop themes, which I constantly analyzed to ensure they corresponded to categories and themes. This was done using the MS-Excel software. I then took new themes back to NVivo, and looking at the 13 themes, I further categorized them into five parent themes

according to the research question. These main themes include economics, personal agency, policy, and legal, social, cultural, and systemic barriers. There were no outliers.

I have presented below findings using theme-driven formats founded on the research question, embedding theoretical constructs of access and control of resources and services, agency and low decision-making power, and low-income streams to access services in the cooperative as well as integrating the study's theoretical framework into the research question, which was done during the coding process.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Several strategies were used to establish credibility throughout the whole data collection and analysis process. I spent sufficient time with the respondents. Those who showed more interest in the study's phenomenon provided deep insights into the study issue and were not limited in expressing their views. The average time spent with each participant was 45 minutes. For those with additional insights, their interview time was longer, between 60 and 80 minutes. During interviews, I ensured that respondents were correctly understood by asking follow-up questions to get comprehensive responses and insights. During the data analysis process, I also spent a lot of time interacting with the data. Since I did the transcriptions of all audio recordings myself, I also triangulated data with my own notes and the reflection journals written. Prior to actual coding and data analysis, I contacted three participants in a 15-minute phone call for a member to check after the transcription. During the call, I ensured that respondents validated their responses and confirmed the accuracy of the information presented.

Transferability

The concept of transferability examines how much a study's findings are specific to a given context and cannot be applied to other contexts. I gave thorough explanations of processes and situations so that others could assess how similar they were to other environments or application sites. During the analysis of data, I provided detailed descriptions of data collected and examples of raw data to allow a reader to decide whether to transfer the study findings to other settings. Interviews conducted targeted only 10 dairy cooperatives from Rift Valley Regions of Kenya, whose context might not be like other regions. Readers may need to choose which findings are transferable and best fit their context. Additionally, future research may use this study's methodology to document results and findings from other groups in different regions. For purposes of making the research easily understood, I have also provided thorough explanations of background, setting, demographics, and target population during the data collection process. In the detailed responses, I have included my personal reflections that allow individual readers to find value in the study and identify findings that can be transferred to their own context to judge transferability.

Dependability

Dependability provides details of the study procedures and analysis to allow the study to be replicated. To realize dependability, I made certain that the research procedure was traceable, logical, and well-documented. By transparently documenting all process logs, notes, and activities that occurred during the study, as well as decisions made regarding certain aspects of the study, such as the criteria and names of the

participants to be interviewed and involved in the research, I created an audit trail of the research process.

Confirmability

Confirmability means taking steps to guarantee that data and results are due to participant objectivity. To attain confirmability, I checked and rechecked the data collected and analysis to confirm that study results were clearly documented. I also recorded coding process and identified patterns and themes in the analysis. I also ensured that all narratives were a true reflection of study findings, which describe responses and ideas of participants and not my own. The interview guide, daily reflective journals, and interview notes were also clearly documented and retained.

Results

I centered on answering the research question of the study: what factors inhibit women's participation in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya? I have structured this segment by themes and subthemes and supportive quotes from participants responses to the research question. As earlier mentioned, I used NVivo 14 coding methods to code data. Appendix G provides a detailed coding approach. I transcribed the interview audio recordings for each of the 20 respondents and developed 597 primary codes from 20 case files. The relationships and patterns between codes emerged, and 38 primary themes were developed, which I further sorted and categorized into 13 sub-themes. According to Adu (2019), sorting codes involves grouping codes based on shared relationships. This involved examining the codes and combining them with commonalities. Tables 2 and 3 below illustrate how codes were further categorized

into 13 sub-themes and further grouped based on shared relationships to develop five main themes.

Table 2

Code Categorization and Theme Identification Theme 1-3

MAIN THEME	ECONOMIC BARRIERS		POLICY BARRIERS		SOCIOCULTURAL BARRIERS		
SUB-THEME	Cluster 5: Access, control and ownership to resources and assets	Cluster 11: Low income and capital for women	Cluster 7: Lack of documented policies	Cluster 10: Leadership terms and conditions	Cluster 2: Triple roles of women	Cluster 4: Unfavorable cultural traditions and gender norms	Cluster 1: Time poverty and mobility
PRIMARY CODES	Men access and control resources and assets	Low income and Capital	Gender Laws are implied - Not Documented No Laws promoting women participation	Voting is democratic and competitive Male dominance in shareholdership Low Attendance to meetings Leadership requires tough skin Low representation at nomination	Women overburdened by home and farm roles Dairy production Roles Reproduction Roles	Cultural Beliefs and traditions	Travel long Distances Women are very busy Time burden for other activities

Table 3*Code Categorization and Theme Identification Theme 4-5*

MAIN THEME	SYSTEMIC BARRIERS			PERSONAL AGENCY BARRIERS		
SUB-THEME	Cluster 3: Inadequate capacity	Cluster 6: Collective power of women	Cluster 12: Disenabling leadership environment	Cluster 9: Negative gender perceptions	Cluster 8: Autonomy	Cluster 13: Personal confidence and motivation
PRIMARY CODES	Lack capacity in leadership	Women are jealous do not support each other	Lack motivation to leadership	Negative gender perceptions	Low Decision-Making Power	Fearful and Shy
	Low communication skills	Lack of women cohesion	Women are Undermined or Intimidated	Lack trust in women's participation	Require permission to participate	Low Personal Confidence
	Literacy level is low		Women's opinions not valued in meetings	Men's preference to have men leaders		Women's Inferiority
	Low Capacity in Dairy Practices		Rejection of women by male board members	Women's preference to Men as Leaders		Lack of appreciation of women's efforts
			Male Dominance in Contributing to meeting			

As previously stated, every theme was connected to the research question, and there were no deviations. The five main themes identified in the collected data included: 1) Economic barriers, 2) Personal agency barriers, 3) Policy and legal barriers, 4) Social-cultural barriers, and 5) Systemic barriers. To best present the emergence and relationships between themes, this section is organized as per the sub-themes developed.

Theme 1: Economic Barriers

These are barriers that disempower women economically and constrain their ability to enter, influence, or benefit from the market systems. Every respondent (19/20) stated that economic barriers prevent women from participating in leadership roles and decision-making processes. Two sub-themes emerged from this main theme: low income and capital for women and access, ownership, and control of assets and resources.

Access, Ownership, and Control of Assets and Resources

This study established that women continue to experience low levels of access to, ownership, and control of assets and resources, which indirectly and directly hinders the ability of women to join cooperatives, utilize the services in the cooperative, and influence change as decision-makers. Respondent 19 noted, “A big percentage of women in our community have not been given the freedom to own property. ...Most women do not own the farms and hence cannot be elected to leadership.” Similar sentiments from R3 stated, “Our culture prohibits a woman from owning anything on the homestead ahead of a man.”

The study confirms that men own and control land and all the other household and production assets. For instance, R9 mentioned that,

Another challenge is land ownership; in most cases, ladies are married to families where they already have land in the name of the husband. So sometimes women are limited in their use of the land because when you want to do something, you are reminded that you are not in your own land. Such things

limit women. Even if they want to do something on the land, they won't. Even if you have a cow, you must be submissive to the family members uses of the land.

R12 confirms the same and stated that "...most of our lands are owned by men., but as we speak, men have taken everything, including the ownership of property." The limitations of ownership of land and property by women reduce their negotiating power within and outside the household as well as hinder the chances of women joining cooperatives, especially in dairy cooperatives where the rules of membership require women to own assets like land and money.

Responses from R3, R5, R6, R10, R11, R15, and R16 confirmed that culturally, men own the cow, while the woman takes care of the man's assets, and the man takes the money from the proceeds of milk supply to the cooperative. R10 mentioned that "maybe to an extent it is related to culture. In our culture, it is the men who own the cow." R11 also noted that "the men say the cows belong to them, but most of the work is done by the women... men own all the dairy assets."

The study established that rules of membership in dairy cooperatives and for consideration by leadership require that members have at least one cow and consistently supply at least 10 liters of milk per day in most of the cooperatives. Even though men own the cow and milk, some cooperatives encourage their members to give women at least one cow or allow women to register with the evening milk supply so that they too can become milk suppliers. R9 stated that, "Most cases, you find the milk supplied by women is little, 5 liters and below, while men supply a lot of milk, that is, 10 liters and above." When a cooperative demands a minimum of 10 liters of milk per day, women are

unable to supply that required amount since part of the evening milk is also used for home consumption. Such dynamics force women to sell the evening dairy milk to informal markets and pose a risk to their consideration for leadership positions in cooperatives.

Low Income and Capital for Women

Most of the respondents (15/20) mentioned that most of women in dairy households have very limited control over the income earned from dairy. A small fraction of women is involved in decisions on income, as R3 observed that “it’s only a few families where you find that the woman can go to collect the salary.” However, culturally, men are the heads of the home, and proceeds from the sale of milk in most dairy households belong to men. R8 recalled that,

I wish I had the best words to explain the discouragement that women get.

Because even after all this tiresome work, at least, even if it's the man's cow, you know, he should sympathize and give women some little money, maybe just to buy things. Even if it is for the purpose of getting women encouraged, that won't be bad. But on the contrary, once that money enters someone's pocket, women will never see it. You do all these activities, but somebody else will come to the cooperative to pick up the money. It is a letdown. Women get discouraged because there is nothing to give this woman to go forward after somebody pockets all the money.

Many women continue to experience economic imbalances since, if majority do not have any ownership of the property, they lack the necessary security to access

financial services like credit facilities which enable them to invest in enterprises that can enjoy profits, giving women a sense of financial freedom. R6 asserted that,

Lack of capital is a main challenge. You know, if you have nothing, you even lack the motivation to come out to be heard. It is the man who has money, so everything the woman needs depends on the man. If he refuses, the woman has no alternative. So that makes women see themselves as valueless.

Women in leadership positions influence decisions that enable financial products and services offered by the dairy cooperatives to enable women to venture into economic activities that help them improve their lives and those of their families.

This study also noted that some women also lack the financial capability to facilitate their attendance at cooperative activities. R15 mentioned that “the main challenge is lacking enough funds to attend various meetings. At times, a woman may be called for a meeting far away, since she doesn’t have enough money for transport, she may not attend.”

While the majority of respondents acknowledge financial challenges, a few of them (R1, R2, R4, R6, R9, R10, R17, and R19) recognize the efforts and initiatives that cooperatives have implemented to provide opportunities for their members, like the use of a check-off system (a payment arrangement) that allows members to get dairy inputs and other cooperative services like artificial insemination (AI), as well as register for membership on credit based on the farmers milk deliveries to the cooperative. This system has provided a ray of hope for potential members, increased chances of women

participating in dairy cooperatives as members, and provided an opportunity for them to obtain decision-making positions.

Theme 2: Personal Agency Barriers

These are barriers that affect an individual's sense of control and capacity to influence their own behaviors and thoughts, including the ability to manage issues. Personal agency barriers are influenced by their own beliefs about not being capable, low self-efficacy, low self-esteem, and a lack of self-confidence. This main theme has two sub-themes: autonomy and low self-efficacy.

Autonomy

Regarding autonomy, the study respondents acknowledged that women participate in dairy cooperative decision-making and family activities at a lower degree than men. For instance, in the household, decisions on how money is spent is made by the head of the home, who in many cases is a man. As alluded to by R14, "So maybe you (the woman) get the money; you are told 50% is for school fees and 50% for you; at this point, 50% that is meant for you will still break the money down to buy the missing items at home, spending more on the family than on yourself." In line with the above, R6 noted that "...at marriage, a woman is told it is the man who has it all."

Most of the respondents (11/20) confirmed that most married women tend to have fewer opportunities to engage in cooperative decision-making processes as well as take leadership positions without the permission of their husbands. Similarly, for single women, the family has a major stake in decision-making. R6 noted that "many women are willing to come out, but due to culture, some are not allowed by their husbands. If he

refuses, the woman has no alternative.” Men’s insecurities, to some extent, restrict women’s movement to community activities, events, and gatherings. For example, R11 reported that “men would not allow the woman to go out because they knew the woman would meet people in the meeting. They will question where she is going.” R6 confirmed this by stating that “they want a woman behind the man; they worry what might happen when women go ahead of men, like how they will behave towards other men.” One of the female leaders interviewed highlighted this as a key challenge that inhibits women from coming out to take leadership positions. She stated that “this becomes a challenge when you want to encourage women to take this leadership position because they are not given that opportunity in the first place.”

In terms of influencing decisions at the cooperative, the male respondents said that they unanimously make decisions as male and female directors. For instance, R13 said, “Women are very vocal. In the board we sit as directors not as men or women, so we normally give priority to our ladies. We let them contribute to what we can do as a cooperative that can make us proper, how we can bring more farmers to be members and how we can improve the cooperative in general”. Sentiments from R8, R13, R14 on the other hand, reported that male directors make the final decisions, “Men believe they're the ones to lead the cooperatives. From time immemorial, since our fathers, men felt they're supposed to be the ones who are leading. Because in our society, you don't have women standing to talk to men”. The discrepancy could be explained by the way in which men and women perceive decision-making: from the study men see it as a more collaborative process, while women see it as determined by who gets the final say.

This study was able to establish that women are not permitted to participate in positions of leadership and other dairy-related activities and further do not influence decisions. R4 noted that “Mmmh, not all men; there are men who have allowed their wives to come out and vie in the leadership posts. If a man is involved in business, they allow their wives to come out.” R20 recalled that “this is where the problem lies; it is not usual for women to get that permission to be elected to leadership. ... Some of the women have been over-controlled by their husbands at home. ... It is better for the man to leave the home but not the woman.”

Low Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy as a personal agency factor is related to a person’s sense of self-worth and their ability to believe that they can make a difference and have the confidence to effect the change. In this study, 16/20 respondents affirm that women have very low self-efficacy. Women do not believe in themselves, and their ability to speak confidently in open spaces does not influence decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives. R8, R9, R10, and R13 affirmed that sometimes some of the women might have the right qualifications needed to be considered for leadership, but they remain shy about taking up leadership positions. Women shy away from coming out to be elected because they believe that there is nothing they can say before men. R10, R10, R16, R17, and R19 reported that women were afraid of men, hindering them from coming out to take up leadership positions in the cooperative. R16 highlighted that. “The majority of women are not free from the control of their husbands; they fear men.”

On issues to do with public expression, 8/20 of the respondents described women as having low self-confidence, especially when talking in a crowd. R13 specifically said that “Some women are fearful that they say they cannot speak in a crowd and wonder how people will perceive them in the crowd.” Despite efforts by some of the board members to sensitize women on other platforms, like in community women empowerment forums, to encourage them to come out to take advantage of available leadership opportunities, women continue to refuse to take up leadership positions. R8 said “So, when you organize for women's empowerment meetings to encourage women to take up leadership positions, you also hear men ask what these women are coming to do. This becomes a challenge when you want to encourage women to take this leadership position. They they're not given that opportunity in the first place. The women also say it's a man's work to lead. During the women empowerment meetings, I also call women from other cooperatives so that they also share their experiences, for other women sake but our women are not convinced”.

Despite R2’s recognition of women as strong, organized, and superior and that their views needed to be appreciated, R8 noted that “majority of women in the dairy sector feel a sense of lack of appreciation and recognition for the work they do, which results in many women quitting dairy management and going to sell vegetables or even undertake other types of business.” This affects their expression and their contribution at home and at the cooperative, resulting in low self-efficacy.

On the other hand, R8 further stated that, “If we now go to the level of the union, where I am the only woman on the board in the whole union, at times, I feel scared.

Sometimes I feel scared, because when in the meeting alone as a woman, they use certain terms, which men assume that I understand.” One of the male respondents (R17) mentioned, “Do I say that they are shy, because during the AGM, they (women) don’t come out voluntarily to also be elected?” R5 also noted that “women see themselves as inferior and cannot manage the leadership of the cooperative.” Such low levels of self-efficacy has influenced the way matters related to the women’s needs are handled at the cooperative, as most of women are not willing to come out and articulate the issues that affect them, as R11 only wished that “if there were many women on the board, we would try to push for women's agendas together, but as it stands, it is difficult to push for women's agendas when I am the only lady on the board.”

Theme 3: Policy and Legal Barriers

These are forms of barriers that govern organizations (both internally and externally) and affect opportunities for women and men. Such barriers could be consciously or unconsciously blind and may affect the design and implementation of legal frameworks that affect the mandate of a given organization. Policies and legal frameworks in each context have the potential to either support or impede women's involvement in decision-making within dairy-based organizations. Every (20/20) research participant identified legal and policy frameworks as a major impediment to women's involvement in decision-making. Two sub-themes were found under this theme, which are the disabling leadership terms and conditions and the absence of formal policies that support women's participation.

Disenabling Leadership Terms and Conditions

The study established that process of election to leadership positions in dairy cooperatives is democratic and highly competitive and would require one with “tough skin” to stand, especially since a woman must fight for her space in leadership. These were the sentiments of R3, R4, R9, R10, R12, and R19. Specifically, one of the female respondents stated, “Yes, you must fight for a leadership position.” Similarly, R19 observed that,

Any opportunity that is available, both men and women scramble for it, and the best candidate wins. The only thing that works to our advantage is the skills and education that one has, but physically, we cannot fight. So, we fight intellectually.

Any candidate nominated for a leadership position goes through a series of grilling and scrutiny by the members as well as the other leaders. R4 noted that “you must fight for your space as a woman. This leadership post needs someone firm; women are the ones who are allowed to battle for the positions... after nominations, the candidates are grilled, and when voting day comes, men normally take the lead.” As R9 further stated, “If it were some weak and silent lady, she could have been scared away by the men after a long and hot scrutiny and given up.”

All the participants interviewed presented a similar system of electing leaders. Leaders are nominated at zonal and regional levels. Members of the cooperatives are sent for a circular informing them to nominate and propose leaders for consideration during the AGM. The nominated members are requested to speak and offer their manifesto and goals once elected to leadership for the members to hear. Majority of the respondents

(9/20) alluded that despite the open announcement for both men and women members to apply for nominations, the highest number of milk suppliers and registered members of the cooperatives were men, as most of the owners of the cows are men. The study established that the reason most of the cooperatives had more male leaders than female leaders was due to the high number of men attending the elections. Very few women attend dairy cooperative activities, especially the annual general meetings for the elections, as most women prefer to stay at home. R12 noted that “during election period, both men and women go out to hunt for votes, but men are many.” Male dominance in shareholding enables them to take up most of the leadership roles and influence most of the decisions in the cooperatives. R3 also reiterated that “the majority of shareholders are men; that's why men are mostly elected.”

This study also observed that there were more stringent and extra conditions for the nomination of women to leadership positions. R1 observed,

So, if your ways are truthful, you stand an upper chance as a woman to take up leadership positions in the cooperative, but if you are not, the opposite is also true. In that case, people will not propose you for leadership positions in the cooperative because your character doesn't match what they accept. So, it settles on a woman's character and behavior in society; if these are not good, then you can't be a leader.

This study noted a lack of genuine commitment to having women nominated for leadership positions. R2 stated that, “We nominate the women, but we don't vote for them in case they are not elected. Because we cannot force the members to elect them to

leadership.” One of the respondents also observed that elections are mostly conducted through secret balloting, making it impossible to influence the votes beyond sensitization.

Lack of Documented Policies and Procedures

The voice of women in influencing decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives can only be achieved if women are in leadership positions. Organizational by-laws and procedures influence legal practices and processes in the dairy sector. This study established that compliance with gender laws that promote women’s participation is mostly implied and not documented. Many of the respondents (11/20) reported that spaces for women to get into leadership were open but were not documented as part of cooperative by-laws, missing the required mechanism that would make members accountable for promoting gender leadership. R5 noted,

During the election in this cooperative, people are elected in phases. We have phases 1, 2, and 3. During an election, we encourage ladies to participate. We don't do election at once but in phases, electing three at every phase: two men and one lady. ... No, the third gender rule is not documented anywhere. ... Our by-laws are silent about women's positions on the executive board.

Similar sentiments were shared by R2, R3, R10, R10, and R17, who noted that cooperatives have by-laws that guide the organizations but do not talk about gender. As a matter of fact, R17 and R3 observed that gender considerations are often forgotten during election process and are remembered only when there is a mention by the organization’s secretary or government cooperative officers present who remind them of the implementation of the 2/3 constitutional gender rule in leadership. R3 noted, “The

company secretary announced strictly during an AGM that he wanted a woman for that position.” R4 also stated that “if the directors have been elected, and let’s say five men have been elected, the secretary will remind the board to consider gender as per Kenya’s constitution, and they would then consider women.” These findings confirm the existing literature that shows the non-existence of gender clauses in cooperative by-laws makes the implementation of representation of women in leadership positions a key challenge.

Few of the respondents (3/20) confirmed that their cooperatives have established structures that encourage representation of women in positions of leadership. Through the by-laws, cooperatives have intentionally included a clause that gives provision for gender equitable representation in leadership and supervisory positions. As R13 indicated,

We have bylaws that came from the farmers. So that is what we follow in the cooperative. ... we have a clause that states that one-third of the members of the board should be women; we cannot select all the men in the cooperative. ... we have five zones. So, we sit down with the farmers and say, Last year, we let a lady from A or B. This year, we will let the lady from Zone C take the leadership position. So that after five years, we will get ladies from all the zones.

Expressing similar sentiments, R14 stated, “Our by-laws state that we should have a percentage or ratio of men to women, which is 3:10; in every 10 members, we should have three women.” R9 recalled that “yes, there is that window of allowing women to participate in leadership in the by-laws, but getting those women is not easy.”

Theme 4: Sociocultural Barriers

Social and cultural barriers in the context of this study refer to attitudes and ideas that restrict women's capacity for meaningful participation, access to resources, and decision-making authority, all of which have an impact on their sustainability and standard of living. The study identified three sub-themes, which include the triple roles of women, unfavorable cultural traditions and gender norms, and time poverty and mobility of women.

Unfavorable Cultural Traditions and Gender Norms

All the study respondents (20/20) reported that unfavorable cultural traditions and gender norms hinder women's participation in dairy activities, including taking leadership positions and further influencing decision-making processes. Elaborating on this point, R9 noted,

In our culture, as a woman, even if you work so hard, you don't own anything because everything belongs to the man. Whether it is from your pocket or not, the man has a say because everything belongs to him. ... In our tradition, we are told the man is the head of the house, and any decision made by the man is superior to that made by a woman. It is part of the custom. As one grows in the family set up, you grow to see the father as superior to the mother. So, it is something that you learn over time that the man is the head of the house. ... from the surroundings, you hear that the father is the head of the family. ... you find that as women grow, they just know that the man is ahead of me, and I need to submit to him and whatever he says. In our culture, I don't know if it is common with other

communities, but we still believe that the community cannot be led by women.

They don't believe in a woman's leadership. There is a belief in our culture that if a woman is more hardworking and has outstanding leadership qualities, then they conclude that the woman is controlling the man.

R8 also identifies culture and gender norms as a key barrier to women's involvement with decision-making processes and commented,

There are these barriers, like culture. And the reason why we have all these challenges is because the African culture believed that men were the ones to lead the cooperatives. Because in our society, it is a gender norm that we can't have women standing to talk to men. After all, who would want to speak where there are men? It demoralizes many women. If it is culture, then we can transform so that we accommodate the changes in the world that allow women to rise to leadership positions and influence decision making.

R18 also noted that, "You know, in a patriarchal society, we were brought up in a society where women are thought to be below the cadre of leadership. ... It is a cultural problem." R16 also said, "Our culture is that women are not born to be leaders; they are supposed to be behind the men in leadership matters. It is how our culture dictates it." Similar sentiments were shared by R11, who also said that "the culture is a big letdown to women who would wish to rise into leadership positions. They have been subjected to such treatment until it has settled in their minds that they are lesser than the men, therefore, women might be demotivated and discouraged from participating in dairy cooperative activities".

Few of the respondents (4/20) mentioned that their cooperatives encouraged women to actively supply milk to the cooperative to be considered for leadership roles and access services, as well as participate in other dairy-related activities, but men continue to dominate shareholding at the cooperatives, denying the women opportunities in their representation. R7 explained that “from this side, we have many families who have joined the cooperative using one account for supplying milk to the cooperative. Sometimes men allow the women to supply either the evening or the morning milk. If they get 10 liters, the man can give three liters to the woman for supply. That’s how they get onto the board.” However, such practices only exist in very few dairy cooperatives.

Triple Roles of Women and Work Burden

As in many African societies, this study confirms that women continue to be overburdened by time-consuming responsibilities, which are often considered “not work”. Additionally, their involvement in leadership roles in the community activities would add to the workload in these situations. As R14 confirms, “In most households, women are a source of labor.” Moser’s framework categorizes the roles of men and women as productive, reproductive, and community-managing roles.

Majority (14/20) of respondents confirm that women remain overburdened by reproductive roles. R15 noted that “women are preoccupied with many tasks at home. They are so involved in household chores that they can’t commit to the meetings and activities of the cooperative.”

R19 also shared similar sentiments: “Women lack work-life balance; you know, when you are given all the responsibilities like being on the farm as well as taking care of the family, it becomes tiresome for the women, and this in turn affects their dairy management. I think they (women) see that they have a lot of domestic commitment, and coming out to do other roles is a challenge.”

Some of the reproductive work that women do in the household includes childbearing, home management, food preparation, fuel collection, family health and nutrition care, housekeeping, etc. R9 noted that “women feel overwhelmed, and some feel it is not their duty to lead and to do the outdoor duty. They feel it is the man to do the outdoor leadership duties.” R13 also noted that “they (women) have a lot of work and cannot think about leadership positions; they must cook. They have a lot of tasks to perform at home.” The volume of reproductive work is high and tedious, which discourages women from participating in leadership activities.

Majority (16/20) of respondents recognize that women take on the majority of crop and dairy farming roles as farm managers. Some of the dairy productive roles include taking care of the cows, milking, and milk hygiene; giving the cows water; preparation and formulation of feeding; ensuring transportation of the milk to the cooperatives; and, for those who practice zero grazing, women ensuring that the grazing units are cleaned. R1, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, and R17 confirmed the role of women in the home includes milking the cows and caring for the animals. Specifically, R10 mentioned that “women are the ones who stay in the house because they are the ones who do the milking. ... they are also the ones who take care of the animals.” R2 also noted

that “I understand women play a very major role in dairy. ... women are the ones who take care of all the animals because most of the men are not found in their homes. ... they are the ones to feed, to give water, and to do the milking.”

Respondents defined participation in community groups as voluntary and needed to be done during a free time which they did not have. As expressed by R8 “Because especially during the annual general meeting and election of leaders, when the schools open. Women are busy preparing food for their children, taking care of the animals because their timetable for the day is always full”. R15, R16 and R17 also confirmed R8’s comments that women have no time to participate in the cooperative meetings since they are the ones who take the most time in household and dairy production roles. As mentioned by R3 stated that, “If both a woman and man are proposed for leadership position, they prefer a man to take the post even if it was a woman who had left the position earlier. Because men are expected to chair the cooperative while women attend to the small self-help group meetings”.

Time, Poverty, and Mobility

In most communities, women must dedicate a disproportionate share of their time to productive and reproductive unpaid work, which leaves very minimal time for women to participate in cooperative activities. One major obstacle preventing women from participating in dairy cooperative activities, according to some respondents (7/20), is time poverty. Respondent 2, R10, R16, R15, and R17 reported that women have no time to spend participating in cooperative meetings and attending to other non-household issues since they are the ones who spend considerable amount of time in dairy production work.

It was also observed that the timing of key cooperative meetings where decisions are made, like Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and board meetings, does not favor most of the female members, as the meetings begin at a time when women are committed to household responsibilities. For instance, R8 mentioned that,

Especially during AGMs, when the schools open, women are busy preparing food for their children. They're so busy taking care of these animals that they are always busy doing so many other things because their timetable is anytime from eight in the morning to midday. During such periods, their days are packed with activities. Because if you also look at that timetable, some women are supposed to pick up their kids at around 1 p.m. when the AGM is ongoing. So, it's only a few elderly people who will make it to the meetings by 10 in the morning.

Some of the respondents confirmed that they also require a lot of time to travel long distances to fetch wood and fuel for cooking and fetch water for the animals and household needs. As mentioned, women are unable to respond to the cooperative's call to attend meetings since they are busy performing demanding productive and reproductive roles. R1 stated that "some do not have boreholes; there are those who travel long distances in search of water." Additionally, R8 also mentioned that "women face a lot of challenges when it comes to travel because some must travel long distances to fetch water; it is tedious."

Theme 5: Systemic Barriers

According to this study, systemic barriers are gendered procedures, practices, interactions, and relations that are entrenched in the processes and structures of an

organization or sector's systems and exclude a category of people. This theme identified four sub-themes that included: disabling leadership environments, inadequate capacity of women in leadership, low collective power of women, and negative gender bias in leadership.

Disabling Leadership Environments

Majority (17/20) of respondents identified a disabling leadership environment in dairy cooperatives as an obstacle to women's involvement in decision-making. Respondents mentioned that cultural traditions about the position of women in leadership prevent women from speaking during meetings, which makes women feel undermined and intimidated. Respondent 11 mentioned that,

There are scenarios when a woman raises her hand, but because there is a man who also needs to speak, they would not give the woman the opportunity to speak before the man. If you are a woman in the meeting, you may end up raising your hand but won't get the opportunity to talk. Women will only speak when there is an opportunity to consider gender balance; by this time, all the men have had their opportunity.

Expressing similar sentiments, R14 stated, "I don't ever think that they (men) pay attention when a woman is speaking. No matter how good your point is, it is disregarded or regarded once it is paraphrased by a man. You see, most of the decisions or ideas given by women are not considered." R16 also mentioned that "in some instances, when women speak, they are booed, and that causes other women to fear going through such frustrations and results in keeping quiet".

It was also observed by R6, R11, R13, and R19 that during male dominance during AGMs and board meetings, men would be given more audience and air their opinions because of the presence of few women members in the cooperatives, as well as the assumption that R19 stated that,

A man always has something to say, while women don't. Sometimes, when there is a chance to speak, they say, let us hear from two men, then one person to represent gender. At some point, they might try to cut you short amidst your point.

Because it is evident that where men are, they will be the only ones to carry the day. Such disabling environments discourage and demotivate women from attending and participating in dairy cooperative activities like decision-making processes. R8 also recalled that,

More women are discouraged because whenever they want to give an opinion, male leaders say, "Let's discuss, and then we'll come back to you." If you cannot give an opinion, how do you become a leader? In other instances, when women raise their hands to contribute during the meetings, they are told to wait, and that chance will never come back to them. This demoralizes them and lowers their confidence. If it is me who has been denied an opportunity to speak because of my many years of experience as a board member in the cooperative, I will use other avenues. However, for a woman who has come for the first time and is told not to speak during the meeting, you will never see them again in the meetings.

During nomination processes, this study noted that women feel easily intimidated, which discourages them from even defending their goals and manifestos if considered for leadership positions. Most of the respondents (15/20) noted women's lack of motivation to take up leadership positions as a key disabling factor. The study noted that unpaid labor for women in dairy management demotivates women to seek positions of leadership, as some do not see the value. Sentiments by R4 indicated that "women do not have that zeal when it comes to leadership as compared to men. They don't participate in competitive elections. Even if you come, you will observe that mostly it is only the men who participate in competitive elections."

R14 stated that "women become demoralized because they're working without getting paid." R 6 further stated that "if you have nothing, you even lack the motivation to come out to be heard." R13 observed that "... if men give ladies the duties to take care of the cows and let them get the payment and not themselves, then the women will start to like the farming and, in turn, will be motivated to be leaders in the cooperative."

While most of the respondents reported the unjust treatment of women, R11 provided a vote of confidence for women's ability to provide meaningful change while in leadership and noted that,

I would say women are good leaders, and when given a chance to lead, they ease the burden of the work. Women are planners and visionaries, and they make sure things are done. They are committed to the roles they have been entrusted to do. I would advise them to give women a position to lead. ... Women should be

treated like men. All are equal and should be given similar opportunities.

Women have the potential to lead like men.

Inadequate Capacity of Women on Leadership

The findings of this study noted that literacy skills determine a woman's ability to join the cooperative as a leader and have a better social position in the community to influence decisions. R6 noted that "low education is a key factor, as most women are not educated." Expressing similar views, R15 stated, "Most of the women are not exposed; they are just dormant at home and do not have any educational background." As established from the respondents (R12), one of the conditions for a woman to be nominated to a leadership position was that they must have at least O-level education because of the nature of work as a board member, which requires one with the capacity to read, interpret, and decide.

Regarding women's leadership potential, most respondents (15/20) stated that there were no training programs especially created to help women develop their leadership skills. As stated by R11,

We have not yet received any training on governance. I have not seen any programs for women in leadership. There was once such a program for women, but you would see men attending the meetings. I have also not yet gone through any training as a woman leader and am really waiting for one because I really need the training. We have really raised concerns with the new chairperson that we have not attended any training since we got in.

R6, R8, R9, R19, and R20 also confirmed that no training has been conducted for the female board members on leadership and governance. However, R9 noted that “I think what our female board member has been given is the basic cooperative orientation, which majorly covers the vision, mission, targets, and values of the cooperative, as well as the expected code of conduct of board members, cooperative activities, how it operates its work, and the roles of the board.”

R8 also stated that,

But now, when they come to the elections and, let’s say, by chance, a woman is elected as a representative for women, sometimes, when there are no funded programs, such people are not trained. So, you just sit there as a member of the board; you don’t know your rights and will never give any opinion on any matter. Because you don’t even know your responsibilities.

A few of the respondents (4/20) reported that after every new election of members, the cooperatives partner with organizations and consultants where all the members, both new and old, are trained on governance and leadership. For instance, R4 stated that, “After elections, all the members go through the orientation course, and we identify a consultant, the one who will come to train us. We also partner with organizations, which plan a workshop lasting 3–4 days. They pay part of the workshop, and we also pay part of the consultant fees. You cannot be a director without going through training.” Expressing similar sentiments, R7 stated that.

... for us, all the training courses are attended by all board members. If it is finance training, all of us will go; if it is a seminar for leadership, all of us will

attend. All of us become students in the seminar. We don't separate women and men during training. We recognize that when there is a capacity gap in leadership this denies the members the opportunity to confidently articulate issues and influence decisions made, especially during board meetings".

This study also observed that low communication skills by women attributed to low self-esteem prevent women from taking up spaces of leadership in the cooperatives as well as confidently contributing during AGMs and other decision-making arms. R6, R11, R12, R13, and R16 posited that only a few women could stand and talk in a meeting. Poor communication skills and know-how contribute to factors that prevent women from speaking in crowds. Most women find it difficult to openly express their views, resulting in being silent during meetings.

Low Collective Power of Women

This study noted that few women in dairy cooperatives are members of self-help groups. The multiplicity of production and reproduction roles in households prevents them from joining and attending the women's group meetings. R3 observed that,

We are encouraging women to join the groups to have one voice during elections. ...that is why we have started the women's council for female suppliers and because you can't participate in the elections if you are not a shareholder. We are encouraging women so that we can be many in number so that when the cooperative carries out an election, we can have a fellow woman as a leader. The council can also influence decision-making procedures. If we

are many in number and talk as women, when it comes time to planning, it becomes easy.

R1 and R15 both noted that in their regions, there were very few self-help groups and village savings and loan associations (VSLA's) where women could easily access credit facilities that could boost them economically but reported that only a handful of women joined these few groups because some were restricted by their husbands from joining the groups.

When it comes to electing fellow women to take up leadership positions, respondents were asked to identify some of the challenges that women face in taking up leadership positions. Some of the respondents (7/20) pointed out that "...women do not support each other during the nominations and election processes, with the majority of the women not electing a fellow woman." Cultural factors can divide women and demonstrate that women are not a homogenous group, and that solidarity is never expected. Divergences between women have the potential to increase the social pressure that some women exert on others. Where there is low collective agency, conflicts also arise between women of different backgrounds. For instance, R13 mentioned,

The main problem is women's jealousy. When they (women) are in those leadership positions, they do not want to lift the other women. Recently, before this election, we had one who was very jealous. She was against all the women in the cooperative. So, women preferred seeing men because that lady would harass them. ... we have many cases of women harassing fellow women, and that is why we do not give positions to any women here.

Similar sentiments were expressed by R3, who stated that,

Women are also jealous of a fellow woman being in a leadership position. They are not okay at all. ... women feel jealous if a fellow woman rises to power. It is like they are quarreling over a leadership post”.

R6 also noted that,

There is a problem with women. Women are enemies of themselves, and I don't know the reason why. There is something in them that makes them lack trust in women in leadership, but sometimes if they are in support, they will just elect you. Let us say I want to vie for a political seat. Those who will be against me, the majority, will be women. Mostly, it is the men who support the women. Very few women will support a fellow woman.

Negative Gender Bias to Leadership

Many respondents (14/20) reported negative gender biases toward leadership as a key systemic barrier that prevent women from participating in decision-making activities.

Some respondents (11/20) noted that cooperative members have negative perceptions about women leaders and their opinions about cooperative management activities.

Historically, men were believed to be leaders and key decision-makers; as R8 stated, “From time immemorial, from our fathers, men feel they're supposed to be the ones who are leading and making all decisions.” R11 also noted,

Men have believed that they are superior to women, and that is why they would not want a woman to speak in meetings. It's like they assume there is nothing

good that can come out of women. Then men believed that they were superior to women, and that is why they would not want a woman to speak in meetings.

Patriarchal systems and cultural attitudes towards the ability of women to lead and constructively influence decision-making processes are key barriers that limit women's potential for leadership. As noted by R1, R3, R13, R14, and R17, men do not believe that women can lead, and such women are not seen as leaders because they are under men. R13 specifically said, "Some men believe that a lady should keep quiet in a gathering." R18 mentioned that "you know about the patriarchal society; we were brought up in a society where women are thought to be below the cadre of leadership. ...it is a cultural problem."

Some of the respondents mentioned that there is a sense of distrust by men regarding women's participation and decision-making capacity in cooperatives. For example, R9 mentioned that,

There is fear in men that if they release their wives to go into leadership positions, they might go away. There is fear of the woman being superior to the man. We have a lady who is hardworking, and her work involves movement from one place to another. Most of the time, the man is at home taking care of the children, but the perception in the community is that she is controlling the husband. With such stereotypes, women don't want decision-making positions. ... men want to see women at home, no matter what."

The extent of distrust for women in leadership was also exhibited when women leaders were given opportunities to lead community meetings, facilitate trainings, or

speak in public spaces. This perspective was strongly mentioned to by R8, who noted that,

When you want to come to leadership in a cooperative society, most of the time, you're not allowed to reach out to members of the cooperative. ...whatever I do in the extension programs, for example, they monitor what I'm telling the members and wonder what things we share. Most of the time, you get the men to even come to those meetings. ...or even come to assess if I am biased in what I tell the members. And even when you organize to have women's empowerment meetings for women, it's only during such meetings that you attract more women to these leadership positions. You will also see the male leaders coming to the meeting. And after the meeting, they would continue to inquire about what you were talking about. So, when you organize for women's empowerment meetings, you also hear them ask, what are these women coming to do? They allow women to take up those positions, but they remain strict on how they would want you to carry out yourself while in that position of leadership. This type of leadership becomes very challenging.

The study noted that both men and women prefer men as leaders to female leaders. Even if the nominations presented more women, the members prefer that men lead the cooperative. During the election process, R19 stated that “Both men and women vote in for a man but not a woman. ... they feel that men deserve more opportunities than women, and that’s how they vote them in.” Similar sentiments were expressed by R3, who stated that “if both a woman and a man are proposed for leadership positions, they

prefer a man to take the post even if it was a woman who had left the position earlier. ... you could see that during the elections women would prefer men mostly.”

Summary

This chapter included descriptions of the research methodology I used and findings in relation to the research question. Data were transcribed from audio interviews with 20 participants. Findings were presented based on factors that inhibit participation of women in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya.

There was a consensus among participants that gender inequality remains a major barrier to women’s involvement in decision-making processes. This study identified five main themes: economic barriers, personal agency barriers, policy and legal barriers, social and cultural barriers, and systemic barriers. Strong patriarchal systems, gender norms, and stereotypes have led to barriers which keep women from achieving social and economic empowerment and have a significant negative impact on sustainable development.

Building on results of this study, in Chapter 5, I present an analysis of literature, as well as key recommendations for future studies and necessary actions that would enable stakeholders in the dairy sector and policymakers to promote participation of women in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. Chapter 5 concludes with implications for positive social change, areas for further study, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to describe barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives. The study involved addressing underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes and nonavailability of sufficient data regarding obstacles preventing women from participating in these processes. Chapter 5 contains an analysis of literature and interpretations of data regarding the research question, the study's theoretical framework, and key themes that emerged from participants' answers to questions.

Additionally, findings of the study are related to the literature review in Chapter 2 to confirm new information regarding women's involvement in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives. I also address limitations of the study and recommendations for future research, positive social change implications, and a conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study includes important insights regarding gender equality issues in terms of participation of women in decision-making processes. To answer the research question, I asked open-ended questions during interviews. Findings included five key main themes, which were economic barriers in terms of access, control, and ownership of resources and assets, as well as low income and capital for women, personal agency barriers involving autonomy as well as personal confidence and motivation, policy and legal barriers involving lack of documented policies and leadership terms and conditions, sociocultural barriers in terms of unfavorable cultural traditions and gender norms, and

systemic barriers involving inadequate capacity, collective power of women, and disempowering leadership environments.

Theme One: Economic Barriers

Economic inequities between women and men in terms of asset ownership and control over assets and resources continue to exist in some communities. Women are subjected to patterns of socialization and patriarchal practices where they cannot own, inherit, or manage property without consent and permission of their spouses. Many communities still categorize women as men's property. Participants during interviews described barriers involving access to, ownership of, and control over assets and resources, as well as low income and capital as key economic barriers that inhibit participation of women in decision-making processes. Despite the crucial role that women play in the dairy value chain, they have less access to capital, income, and assets because these are primarily held by men. Participation of women in dairy cooperative activities is impeded by male dominance in terms of household decision-making and cooperative leadership, which has detrimental effects on women's economic empowerment objectives.

Women may find it more difficult to join cooperatives because of these obstacles, particularly if membership requirements include owning cash and/or land (Agarwal, 2001; Wiig, 2013). Their access to, ownership of, and control over resources and services that they can use to achieve social and economic success as well as sustainable development of their communities all has impact on their economic gains and successes, confirming literature on Women's Economic Empowerment theory.

Findings confirm contextual factors like social and cultural traditions, traditional practices related to gender norms and restrictive policies, and laws also reinforce effects of economic barriers. It is evident from findings that women lack the ability to make economic decisions in dairy value chains as well as enterprises. The study confirms Omondi et al. (2017) findings that claimed gender inequalities have an impact on access to and control over resources, economic opportunities, and political power and privileges. Control of economic decisions by men implies women are left vulnerable and incapable of improving their livelihoods as well as engaging in leadership in dairy cooperatives. For women to achieve some level of economic gain, there is a need to foster agency and choice in terms of what to access, own, and control.

Influencing decisions requires monetary, physical, social, and human capital. Economic empowerment of women is achieved when women have access, control, and ownership of resources and services, including income and capital, which enables them to invest in enterprises that empower them to become authentic members of dairy cooperatives who can build their agency and power to influence decisions that affect other members of cooperatives and social structures. Cooperatives play a key role in promoting women's economic empowerment by affording them the chance to acquire property and essential productive resources to enhance their economic capacities (Gallina et al., 2016). This enables them to effect lasting transformations in terms of administration, expansion, and advancement of the dairy industry.

One important aspect of encouraging women's economic empowerment is giving them access to financial services. Most assets are still owned by men, even after laws like

the Marriage Act of 2014 and Succession Act of 2021 that guaranteed equal access to and ownership of properties and assets for men and women. This is because women still encounter greater difficulties in terms of obtaining financial services because they lack necessary collateral to access economic resources. This study offers opportunities for state and nonstate actors to explore specific evidence-based interventions and innovative models that can enhance women's access to assets, financial resources, and credit resources. Examples include establishment of female financial unions, which are formed by female dairy farmers to provide financial services, and products that would allow them to access credits for both dairy and non-dairy enterprises, which would give them the financial ability to enable them to afford membership in dairy cooperatives as well as consideration in decision-making spaces.

Findings show when women have permission to participate in dairy cooperative activities and access income and benefits, this has a spillover effect in households. In some cooperatives, members can access loans to procure farm inputs and pay school fees for their children, and loans are recovered via a check-off system. Results supports literature that women's economic empowerment leads to increased household incomes, and consequently, increases the influence of women in family decision-making regarding nutrition and education (Omondi et al., 2014). More policies and development strategies that emphasize women's economic empowerment are needed to address gender inequality. Such policies should also have clear accountability mechanisms in place to guarantee economic transformation in both communities and organizations.

Theme Two: Personal Agency Barriers

Autonomy is a form of self-governance and self-efficacy where a woman can make decisions and act based on values, motives, and personal convictions (Nepal et al., 2023). This study indicated that men have larger decision-making authority in both the household and dairy cooperative activities. This aligns with the literature that women lack authority to make decisions that would empower them to be key contributors to the development and growth of cooperatives. Increasing women's agency can improve agricultural productivity, help reduce poverty, and ensure food security (Symour, 2017). This study demonstrates that if women's personal agency is strengthened, cooperatives have the potential to increase their decision-making power (Burchi & Vicari, 2014).

Empowerment is relational in nature, and for this to fully take place, there is a need for women to build their self-efficacy, self-determination, and self-confidence and ensure the accountability of those providing support to the women. There is need to support and promote women leaders, their roles, and their contributions in the dairy sector. Specifically, intense awareness is required to encourage women that they can influence great changes in the cooperative and the larger community if they take up positions of decision-making within the dairy sector and other spheres of development. Some of our cultural norms prevent women from speaking openly and hinder women's decision-making power, leaving them with weakened self-esteem and preventing them from bringing meaningful change to society.

This study demonstrated that women's empowerment to assume leadership roles in dairy cooperatives positively impacts their degree of independence in making

decisions, particularly when it comes to matters pertaining to access and control over income, assets, and resources. It also enhances their capacity to engage in and have an impact on decisions made at the dairy cooperative because they are regarded as legitimate members. However, patriarchal systems and gender norms restrict women from voicing their issues with confidence, consequently hindering women's capacity to engage in decision-making. The findings confirm literature from Lodiaga (2020), who alluded that cooperatives have the potential to build individuals autonomy and independence; Nonetheless, patriarchal contexts regarding women's involvement in decision-making may serve to undermine women's self-assurance, autonomy, and ability to make life decisions.

The participants also noted that personal agency is influenced by the dynamics of households. The views of the participants affirm Kaaria et al. (2016), observation regarding family relations between men and women, that gender norms restrict a woman's ability to speak freely and express herself and influence decisions. Farnworth (2015) stated that women's bargaining power depends on factors including the extent of personal agency and the support of family members. Thus, to increase women's bargaining power as a crucial first step toward enhancing their personal agency, involvement in decision-making, and leadership potential, it is necessary to strengthen women's agency through the adoption of various gender equality approaches and methodologies that aim to change gender relations.

Patriarchal authority systems are conditioned by women's autonomy society (Njuki et al., 2016), cooperative leadership has the potential to enhance women's self-

assurance and autonomy in decision-making, empowering them to pursue what they value. The ability of women to voice their issues and influence decisions that affect their lives is a key aspect of empowerment (Omondi et al., 2014). This research found that women's autonomy has an impact on their ability to access economic resources. This finding aligns with the study's theoretical framework of women's economic empowerment, which posits that women can achieve economic success and thrive provided they have the agency to obtain resources, the skills required to participate in the market, access to economic institutions, the capacity to make and carry out decisions, and the ability to manage resources. For women to succeed economically and socially, their power and agency can be advanced by redefining the gender norms that determine the participation of women in decision-making spaces (Golla et al., 2011).

Many participants also observed that women required additional skills in entrepreneurship, marketing, negotiation, leadership, and confidence building. For this to be achieved, some participants highlighted a lack of funds by the cooperative to undertake such trainings but also highlighted how they have benefited from programs implemented by non-profit organizations that partner with cooperatives to offer subsidized capacity development programs.

Studies by Katothya (2017) and Omondi et al. (2014) mentioned the benefits of collaboration among women through platforms for collective action like women's unions, self-help groups, and VSLA, as reported by some of the respondents, enhance women's access and agency and promote social cohesion and resilience. Such groups empower women to interact with actors in the market system and strengthen the process of

advocacy on behalf of marginalized groups to increase inclusiveness over time and strengthen sustainable development.

Theme Three: Policy and Legal Barriers

An enabling environment that shapes the empowerment of women gives organizations the responsibility to design and enforce laws, rules, and regulations. National policies and frameworks influence the way organizations design by-laws that govern them. The literature reviewed for this study outlined the different laws and legal frameworks that support women's rights to hold leadership and decision-making positions. Such include international laws and commitments like CEDAW and ACHPR, as well as the Constitution of Kenya, Cooperative Act, and the Agricultural Sector gender policy. These frameworks provide various commitments, mandates, and guidelines that all private and public institutions need to follow in the engagement of women in leadership. When participants were asked which legal frameworks guided their cooperative in promoting participation of women in leadership, most of participants (10/20) only mentioned that they had no mechanisms in place in their by-laws to ensure compliance to legal frameworks that promote gender equality.

The patriarchal nature of society, where men dominate in spaces of power and influence, demotivates women to take up political and leadership positions that empower them to contribute to society's development, as seen in the dairy cooperatives, as well as prevents women from positively influencing social change and sustainable development. The participants pointed out that most cooperatives do not have clear and documented laws that guide the process for engaging women in leadership and the position of the

cooperative in promoting gender equality. It was observed in this study that during election of leaders, some cooperatives engaged the government's cooperative officers to observe and often reminded the members to ensure gender balance. Having cooperative officers mention gender equality during elections without encouraging documentation of necessary laws that promote gender equity in the cooperatives is not enough. Laws need to be documented to intentionally address gender issues, and their worth should be upheld to enhance women's capacity to utilize their rights to association, as well as their rights to benefit from market systems.

Developing systems and necessary structures and mechanisms to assess cooperative integration of gender-just leadership gives more sustainable results. Achieving active and equal participation of women in dairy cooperative activities, like technical education, leadership trainings, dairy production processes, and system capacity development, makes them more knowledgeable about the affairs of the cooperative, which enables women to influence decision-making processes from an informed position (Lodiaga, 2020). To achieve this, there is a need for cooperatives to set up the right accountability mechanisms that ensure that laws and procedures that empower women to leadership decision-making positions are not only documented but also implemented.

The Kenyan government structures, thereby, at both national and county levels, have a role to play in establishing the needed machinery and guidelines that implement policies and regulations that promote gender-just leadership structures and mainstream gender equality in institutions like dairy cooperatives. The machinery can be independently developed and implemented through the National Gender Equality

Commission (NGEC) or integrated into the existing structures in the Ministry of Cooperatives at both at county and national levels. Such a mechanism, as noted by Leonard et al. (2015), should also include seconding gender experts in the agricultural sector ministries to provide technical assistance support in the implementation of agricultural gender policies and the national commitments to promoting gender equality in leadership and decision-making.

The responses from respondents indicated a lack of intentionality and affirmative decision-making to ensure women are given leadership positions. The study participants affirm that the national two-thirds gender rule for the representation of women in leadership should be valued and implemented through quota systems in organizations like cooperatives to enable women to emerge, assume charge, and have an impact on the processes that determine decisions at cooperatives and other political spaces. The establishment of the above mechanisms should be well-oriented to the cooperatives through continuous sensitization and follow-ups for the goal of compliance, adoption, and changing the organizational culture. Such actions should go beyond compliance to bring about lasting change and development in society.

Theme Four: Sociocultural Barriers

According to Markus and Kitayama (2010), culture is defined as “the dynamic patterns of ideas, institutions, practices, products, and behaviours shared by certain groups of people.” People who belong to the same culture, traditionally have comparable beliefs, customs, and values. The study results show that societal cultural practices and

beliefs form the basis of economic, personal agency, policy, and legal frameworks, as well as systemic barriers that inhibit participation of women in decision-making.

Previous studies by Sardernberg (2020) underscored the importance of cultural norms, beliefs, and attitudes to impact women's empowerment and the failure to reinforce power imbalances. Evidence suggests that cultural traditions and gender norms significantly influence the decision-making power among women in dairy cooperatives (Kaaria et. al., 2016). This study confirmed literature that patriarchal systems, strong gender norms, cultural traditions, and informal rules continue to prevail in many regions, and these continue to allow men to have control over women in all spheres of life and development. From the study findings, gender norms dictate that men lead married households, while the unmarried are led by either a father, or an uncle or whoever has official power and authority over them. This means that all the benefits, including leadership considerations, derived from membership are channelled to men in a household.

The participants pointed out that gender norms and social cultural barriers affect and determine the capacity of women to access, own, and control assets and resources, as well as influence mobility and the extent to which women allocate time for productive activities, including participation in cooperative activities. For instance, it was noted that since the head of the household is a man, society expects that the woman seek permission to participate in cooperative activities, which also includes consideration for a leadership position.

The participants identified interventions such as community awareness and dialogues that emphasize the value of empowering women in leadership roles within the community as some of the strategies that have the potential to change the dynamics of power within the household, challenge the status quo and empower women, encourage women's participation in decision-making, and help households recognize the importance of women's roles, entitlements, and time management in the home and community. The way and degree to which women in the dairy industry benefit from social and economic resources, opportunities, and services may be affected by such interventions. Community campaigns and lobby activities put the issues of gender equality in the minds of all stakeholders, including policymakers, legislators, and the public, pressuring them to develop the required structures that lobby for women's positions in leadership and decision-making processes.

Caroline Moser's division of labour framework recognizes that in many societies, women have triple roles and double work burdens which include the productive, reproductive and community roles. This study confirmed literature that relates to how roles of women and the power dynamics at the household determine the conditions of women's participation in decision-making processes. This study established that one of the main barriers to women's involvement in cooperative activities, particularly decision-making processes, is the triple role and workload of female dairy farmers. Both men and women take up productive roles which differ from one household to another, depending on the gender norms regarding male and female roles. Mann (2010) observed that the proportion of time allocated between several household roles and responsibilities for

women varies by region; Many women are believed to work 16 hours a day on average. Opportunities to participate in cooperative activities are severely limited, and, in such circumstances, their participation would increase their work burden. The study observed that men are less likely to be involved in reproductive work as much as productive work and more in community work. The multiplicity of women's roles and work burdens reduces their time and prevents them from influencing decisions as well as participating in the dairy cooperative activities, as when they participate, that extra time means less time for other tasks like childcare and food preparation.

The opinions expressed by participants support the findings of Farnworth (2015), who found that women can work as long as six hours a day managing dairy farms, which includes tasks like making fodder, getting water, milking, maintaining hygiene, and taking care of animals. Compared to men, the productive labour of women is less acknowledged and visible. Women still shoulder too much responsibility because it is still believed that their role is to care for the family, the farm, and the kids. Despite the advantages that working for the household and the community at large offers, women become time poor due to the conflicting demands of productive and reproductive roles at the household as well as community work, which goes unpaid and unacknowledged (FAO, 2016). As a result, women struggle with adapting to leadership roles since they do not have sufficient time and resources to attend cooperative meetings like the annual general meeting and the board meetings where decisions are made. The results of this study support research by Tavenner and Crane (2016) suggested that women are not assuming leadership positions at the same rate as men because of the heavy household

workload, which also contributes to the low number of women who register for cooperatives (Omondi et al., 2014).

The study also observed that heavy workload also prevented women from participating in cooperative activities like training, dairy farming learning days, exchange visits, social networks, and other community activities beyond their home, limiting their opportunities to access information, financial services, and support. They also considered taking up leadership positions since they were unaware of the issues that affected the cooperatives and hence unable to participate in decision-making spaces (Odero-Wanga, 2013). In addition to putting the women at risk and impairing their quality of life and decision-making, this also keeps them from fully utilizing economic opportunities by preventing them from engaging in activities that generate income. Women who are overworked impact the wellbeing of the family including the children and become less inclined to assume leadership roles in dairy cooperatives due to competing priorities (FAO, 2016).

Theme Five: Systemic Barriers

Systemic barriers are those obstacles that collectively affect specific groups of people disproportionately and perpetuate disparities. These can either be behaviours or practices in organizational systems that favour a certain group while systematically disadvantaging a marginalized group (Lodiaga, 2020). The inclusion of women in decision making in organizational structures and systems is important for the sustainability of the organization because having both women, men, and youth in leadership maximizes the skills available in the community as well as motivates members

to join the cooperative, therefore cultivating equitable active participation and loyalty, which are important for sustainable development (Golla et al., 2011).

Literature confirms that dairy cooperatives have a role in developing and documenting gender laws, policies, and strategies that consider systemic drivers and biases that affect women, their autonomy, self-efficacy, capacity development, economic freedoms, and access to and ownership of productive assets, resources, and services. This requires a continuous shift in gender norms, perceptions, and business practice norms, gender leadership, and a greater appreciation for the soft skills that women often excel in, which are beneficial for economic and social development. This also calls for the development of advocacy plans and frameworks on policy changes, the building of the necessary capacities at the organizational level, and the right wording that promotes the voice of women in decision-making.

Inadequate education opportunities and training negatively affect the confidence of women as well as their participation in cooperative activities, as women fear that their views will not be considered during key meetings (Coleman & Mwangi, 2012). The perspectives of the participants reported a lack of capacity in leadership and negotiation skills for some of the women leaders. A few of the cooperatives reported having participated in joint trainings on leadership and governance for both male and female board of directors. Kaaria et al. (2016) have observed that literacy and capacity building are crucial strategies for providing women with the abilities, information, and self-determination required to engage in decision-making. The degree of education that women have therefore influences how they participate in cooperative collective action.

Capacity building increases an individual's self-efficacy, control beliefs, and exposure. Skill development opens one's capability and ability to perform tasks more efficiently, make and influence decisions from a point of knowledge, and transform belief systems (Bandura, 1997).

Literacy is critical in leadership, and such a gap undermines the potential of women in leadership and sustainability. To ensure that women are empowered with the necessary skills and knowledge, women must be able to participate in governance and leadership roles, to influence decisions and speak out for the needs of other members of the cooperatives without fear or intimidation like their male counterparts. To achieve this support, institutions are key to ensuring that dairy cooperatives have access to resources, services, skills, and information.

Women's economic empowerment programs can be offered to women dairy cooperative members and leaders to help them develop their self-agency and confidence in taking on leadership and important decision-making roles in the cooperatives. Additionally, capacity-building institutions can be used to provide training and mentoring to cooperatives on gender equality in governance and women in leadership. Capacity-building opportunities for women in leadership make them better leaders at all levels. A more gender-transformative approach would be to engage, sensitize, and capacity-build male leaders in cooperatives on gender-just leadership practices, empowering them as champions to advocate for and promote women in leadership to break the gender inequality barriers. There is a need for both male and female leaders to be trained on how

to advocate for women in leadership and intentionally create advocacy programs with the community groups and their members in the cooperative.

This study identified poor collective power among women dairy farmers as one of the structural hurdles to their decision-making power in dairy cooperative procedures. One of the key areas of collective agency is participation in self-help groups. When women are engaged in collective action, they can stand together in solidarity and exercise one voice to transform power relations and institutions.

Collective action therefore stands as a strategy for social transformation and is key to women's empowerment on a societal level. The presence of women's self-help groups and village savings and loan associations provides platforms for women to gain access to information, credit facilities, and build their social networks, self-efficacy, and confidence.

Findings from the study also described negative perceptions of women in leadership as another key systemic barrier to the participation of women in decision-making processes. According to study participants' responses, most men did not believe that women belonged in leadership roles or that women had a place in that capacity. Women respondents also described that many women were not very interested and motivated to take up leadership positions because they knew that their fellow women would not vote them in since the place of the woman is to follow male leadership. Stereotypes about women's capacity for leadership persist, even among women themselves. This might be impacted by the community's current patriarchal structures, which dictate that women shouldn't hold leadership roles.

Such perceptions have conditioned many potential women leaders to perceive themselves as incapable of not taking leadership positions, which has resulted in women's low self-confidence and loss of interest. Such gender biases in leadership lead to discrimination, prejudice, and gender stereotypes. Challenging deeply rooted gender discriminative systems in organizational structures is a required process, which, as Kaaria et al. (2016) noted, is a long-term process that requires a holistic and multi-sectoral approach. Entry points and opportunities are required to enable a gender-just leadership approach. There is also a need for further capacity development for women on the strength of collective agency and to educate the community on the benefits of empowering women to leadership positions.

Gender-Just Leadership Systems in Dairy Cooperatives

This study acknowledges the need of advancing a gender-just leadership strategy in organizations such as dairy cooperatives, which involves being receptive to women being given more responsibilities in the public sector and increasing their involvement in higher positions of decision-making. This is best viewed as a positive approach to gender equality that promotes equity and helps to establish rights related to gender roles, power dynamics, changing gender relations in society, and redefining gendered hierarchies. The gender-just leadership approach requires different structures and systems that adopt gender-responsive and intentional measures in leadership, like the use of quota systems to ensure that women take representative positions of power and leadership.

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to describe barriers that prevent women from participating in decision-making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives. The limitations of the study were the same as those captured in Chapter 1. Given the geographic vastness of the dairy landscape, the study was limited to dairy cooperatives in four counties in the rift valley regions of Kenya and may not be generalizable to other dairy cooperatives in other dairy-producing counties and regions, thereby excluding the other dairy-producing regions.

Additionally, the use of purposive sampling techniques enabled me to engage participants that matched the selection criteria that included their number of years as leaders in the cooperatives, their knowledge, and their experiences in the dairy cooperative leadership. Also, this study used a sample of 20 dairy cooperative leaders to obtain in-depth data about their opinions on the participation of women in decision-making processes. The sample size appeared limited due to the study's purpose. However, importance was placed on the respondents' knowledge and experiences of the study phenomenon.

Recommendations

The needs and priorities of members of a producer organization can be met by the efforts and commitments of both women and men and their involvement in shaping and building the organization (Agarwal, 2001). This study was undertaken to contribute to the increased participation of women in decision-making processes and contribute to the body of knowledge advancing the objectives of gender equality in Kenya's agricultural

sectors. This study has provided evidence that women remain excluded from leadership roles and decision-making processes, calling for a systemic shift in advancing gender equality in the dairy sector.

The study establishes a baseline of gender equality issues that impact women's empowerment in decision-making processes. Further research is necessary to examine factors that contribute to disempowerment, particularly when women are perceived as having too much power, and consequences for shifting attitudes toward sustainable development, particularly regarding development backlash, gender-based violence, and autonomy in production systems.

This study identified personal agency as a barrier to women's participation in decision-making processes and learned that women continue to be challenged by their autonomy, self-determination, and self-efficacy, which reduces their self-confidence and ability to stand out and influence decision-making processes. A deeper understanding of how positive evaluations of personal agency promote outcomes, especially in taking up leadership positions, is required. Future research on the use of self-efficacy as a mediator of change in gender-just leadership in producer organizations' leadership is particularly promising.

The other promising area for future research is specific examination of collective action by women and its impact on organizational growth and development. Collective action has been seen as a key contributor to an individual's agency and a mechanism for building gender-just leadership. Thus, more investigation is required to determine the effectiveness of collective action and its potential to promote gender equality.

The study was limited to describing barriers that hinder women's decision-making processes. It is crucial to conduct more research in future on how women's economic status affects their appointment to leadership roles. The legal frameworks and laws as barriers were identified as a potential barrier to women's participation in decision-making processes. Future exploration of barriers that inhibit the implementation of national and county-level gender policies and machinery is necessary, including identifying interventions that can be used as strategies to address gender equality issues at a macro level.

Implications

It is evident that women are still underrepresented in the dairy industry's decision-making processes as dairy cooperatives are established and continue to thrive. This study also shows that although women's productive roles in dairy production systems contribute to food safety and security in the agricultural sector, the dairy industry still has an impact on their ability to succeed and contribute to sustainable development. Constraining women from reaching their maximum potential limits their capacity and ability to influence and participate in social change. As such, the goal of this study was to describe the main factors that inhibit the participation of women in decision-making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya.

This study brings to light five main factors, including social, cultural, policy, legal, economic, systemic, and personal agency barriers, that affect governments and policy efforts towards promoting gender equality in the agricultural sector. Through this evidence, there is a need for all actors (both state and non-state) and other institutions to

co-create, develop, and implement national policies, as well as allocate the necessary resources that would promote women's empowerment, capacity development, and the right accountability mechanisms to dairy cooperatives, unions, companies, and associations. There is a need for skills and knowledge development and transfer on leadership and governance to women, as well as access to resources and services, challenging cultural and gender norms that foster inequality and promoting the engagement of women in the governance systems for sustainable development.

This study highlights the importance of dairy cooperatives and urges cooperation among the Kenya Dairy Board, county governments, and development organizations operating within the dairy cooperative's various spheres of influence to create institutional policies and put in place frameworks required to give women in positions of authority within producer organizations. To fulfill SDG 5.5, which aims to guarantee women's effective and full participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public spaces, policies and procedures can also be improved globally. This will help achieve SDG 5 on gender equality.

From a public policy and administrative perspective, this study offers key pointers for the county and national governments to address gender inequalities in women's participation in decision-making processes in producer organizations. The findings of this study offer new perspectives important for policy players in the fields of agriculture, gender, and social inclusion that strengthen their knowledge base and change the way they talk about gender equality. This will have an impact on their choices about policy

and ultimately lead to changes in policy. Finally, the use of general qualitative approaches is a critical methodology that allows for gaining the necessary insights into the phenomenon through descriptive narratives of often overlooked cultures and practices. For targeted support, the various sectors must be made aware of and receive a clear understanding of the barriers that women face when making decisions.

Conclusion

This general qualitative study was conducted to gain the views of dairy cooperative leaders on factors that inhibit the participation of women in decision-making processes. To achieve the study objective, I obtained in-depth responses from 20 participants from 10 dairy cooperatives in Kenya. In the context of this study, there are five key barriers that inhibit women's decision-making power in the management and governance of dairy cooperatives.

Economic barriers related to access, control, and ownership of resources and assets and low income and capital for women disempower women economically and constrain their ability to enter, influence, and benefit from market systems. These barriers continue to subject women to patterns of socialization and gender norms where women cannot own, inherit, manage, or access capital and assets without the consent of their spouses. The findings confirm the literature on women's economic gains and successes is influenced by their access, control, and ownership of assets, resources, and services that women can draw from to achieve success socially and economically. Additionally, personal agency barriers that impact a woman's sense of self-efficacy and self-control were found. These barriers relate to the autonomy of women in decision-making and a

sense of personal confidence and self-worth that motivates women to take up positions of leadership and influence decision-making processes that bring meaningful change to society.

Policy and legal barriers govern the organization's mandate, affecting opportunities for women and men. The prevalence of disabling terms and conditions for electing women to spaces of leadership and a lack of documented policies and legal frameworks that promote women's participation in decision-making stand as a key challenge to women in dairy cooperatives. This study's findings also reveal that sociocultural barriers related to cultural perceptions, the triple role of women, unfavorable cultural traditions, and gender norms, as well as time poverty and mobility, influence women's involvement in dairy cooperative decision-making processes. Finally, systemic barriers associated with the organization's procedures, practices, interactions, relations, and structures continue to be obstacles that affect women disproportionately. Such barriers, including a disabling leadership environment, inadequate capacity of women in leadership, negative gender biases and perceptions of women in leadership, and low collective power of women, continue to affect the participation of women in decision-making processes.

Gender equality in dairy cooperatives can only be achieved through transformative approaches that challenge gender inequalities by transforming systems, policies, and legal frameworks, harmful social norms, cultural traditions, relations, and roles while working towards distributing resources, power, opportunities, and services more equitably. The participation of both genders in dairy cooperative activities, ongoing

challenges to gender norms, and unfavorable patriarchal systems hinder women's ability to participate in decision-making within the cooperatives, thereby impeding long-lasting positive change.

This study recognizes that gender inequalities continue to exist and acknowledge the need for implementing interventions that improve women's agency and setting the necessary accountability mechanisms, policies, and systems that can be used to address such barriers. The global gap in 2023 reported that it would take another 131 years to reach full gender parity. Specifically, countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa need to do much more to ensure that societal cultural systems, gender norms, beliefs, and perceptions do not hinder our efforts to achieve gender equality. The findings from this study confirm and provide a baseline of issues that need to be addressed.

A multisectoral approach to promoting gender-just leadership is necessary for the successful implementation of gender equality strategies in powerful institutions like dairy cooperatives. It also calls for engagement of support institutions to enhance the leadership capacity of both men and women, a shift in social and cultural norms and practices at the household and community levels, a bottom-up strategy for sustainable transformation, and the creation of a gender transformative institutional approach.

There is a need to create sustainable interventions that would bring about systemic change in the dairy sector in Kenya. This calls for policymakers, decision-makers, and implementing partners to also develop the necessary mechanisms and accountability systems that promote gender equality and its contributions and commitments to achieving the SDG goals. Addressing the barriers acts as a key to removing the roadblocks for

women in leadership. Therefore, we are calling for a paradigm shift in behavior and systems that will promote women's empowerment on all fronts and eliminate the obstacles that prevent women from being fully empowered.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions – English Version

1. Which leadership position do you hold at the cooperative.....

Follow up Interview Questions

1. What is the role of women in dairy farming in this region?
2. What challenges do women dairy farmers face in dairy farming systems?
3. What services does the cooperative offer to its members?
4. What strategies have been put in place to ensure women access and benefit from the services and resources at the cooperative?
5. What legal and policy frameworks guide the representation of women in leadership in the cooperative. What constraints deter the participation of women in decision making processes in the dairy cooperative?
6. What qualifies a cooperative member to be considered in the leadership position in the cooperative.
7. What organizational rules and management practices influence the participation of women in decision making processes.
8. What would motivate and influence women to participate in the leadership positions in the dairy cooperative?
9. What structures exist in the cooperative and how do these structures enable or disenable women to gain interest and apply for consideration in leadership positions?
10. What mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that the voice of women is heard and that they contribute to the decision-making process in the dairy cooperative?

11. Please describe your thoughts of barriers women in your cooperative face when aspiring for top leadership positions
12. What would be the causes of such barriers and the implications of the same to the cooperative and the members?
13. How can such barriers or challenges be overcome? Which actors or support systems do we require to address the above challenges?
14. How does being a woman leader influence the interactions with cooperative members? (Directed to women leaders)
15. What kind of training have you received in leadership and how has the training been beneficial to you as a leader (Directed to women leaders)?
16. What advice would you give to cooperatives to ensure that women are empowered and are engaged in decision making processes in dairy cooperatives?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add that I have not addressed in this interview?
18. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for participating in this discussion.

Appendix B: Interview Questions – Swahili Version

1. Ni nafasi gani ya uongozi unayoshikilia kwenye ushirika.....

Fuatilia Maswali ya Mahojiano

2. Je, ni jukumu gani la wanawake katika ufugaji wa ng'ombe katika eneo hili?
3. Je, ni changamoto gani ambazo wanawake wakulima wa maziwa wanakabiliwa nazo katika mifumo ya kilimo cha maziwa?
4. Je, ushirika unatoa huduma gani kwa wanachama wake?
5. Ni mikakati gani imewekwa kuhakikisha wanawake wanapata na kufaidika na huduma na rasilimali katika ushirika?
6. Ni mifumo gani ya kisheria inayoongoza uwakilishi wa wanawake katika uongozi katika ushirika.
7. Ni nini kinachostahili mwanachama wa ushirika kuzingatiwa katika nafasi ya uongozi katika ushirika.
8. Ni sheria gani za shirika na mazoea ya usimamizi huathiri ushiriki wa wanawake katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi.
9. Ni nini kitawahamasisha na kuwashawishi wanawake kushiriki katika nafasi za uongozi katika ushirika?
10. Ni miundo gani iliyopo katika ushirika na jinsi gani miundo hii inawawezesha au kuwanyima wanawake maslahi na kuomba kuzingatiwa katika nafasi za uongozi?
11. Ni utaratibu gani umewekwa kuhakikisha kuwa sauti ya wanawake inasikika na kwamba wanachangia katika mchakato wa kufanya maamuzi katika ushirika wa maziwa?

12. Tafadhali elezea mawazo yako ya vikwazo wanawake katika uso wako wa ushirika wakati wa kutamani nafasi za juu za uongozi
13. Nini itakuwa sababu ya vikwazo kama hivyo na matokeo ya sawa kwa vyama vya ushirika na wanachama?
14. Ni kwa namna gani vikwazo au changamoto kama hizi zinaweza kutatuliwa? Ni watendaji gani au mifumo ya usaidizi tunayohitaji kushughulikia changamoto zilizo hapo juu?
15. Je, kuwa kiongozi mwanamke kunaathirije mwingiliano na wanachama wa ushirika? (Elekezwa kutoka Viongozi wa Wanawake)
16. Ni mafunzo ya aina gani umeyapata katika uongozi na mafunzo hayo yamekunufaisha vipi wewe kama kiongozi (Elekezwa kwa viongozi wanawake)?
17. Ni ushauri gani unaweza kutoa kwa vyama vya ushirika ili kuhakikisha kuwa wanawake wanawezeshwa na wanajihusisha na michakato ya kufanya maamuzi katika vyama vya ushirika vya maziwa?
18. Je, kuna kitu kingine chochote ambacho ungependa kuongeza ambacho sijazungumzia katika mahojiano haya?
19. Je, una maswali yoyote kwa ajili yangu?

Asante sana kwa mda wako.

Appendix C: Consent Form – English Version

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INDEPTH INTERVIEW**Study Title: “Women’s Participation in Kenya Dairy Cooperative Decision-Making Processes”****Introduction**

My name is Caroline Mukeku. I am a Kenyan citizen but a student from Walden University working on a study titled: Women’s Participation in Kenya Dairy Cooperative Decision-Making Processes. This study is an academic study for a Ph.D., and I am self-sponsored.

Background

You are invited to take part in a research study about the participation of women in decision making processes in dairy cooperatives in Kenya. The study is intended to stimulate discussions and an understanding of the factors that inhibit women from participating in decision-making processes in the dairy cooperatives in Kenya and how this impacts the socioeconomic and sustainable development of the agricultural sector in Kenya.

This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study seeks 20 volunteers who:

- Are at least 21 years old and above to participate.
- Have been a member of the cooperative for at least five years,
- Hold a leadership position at the dairy cooperative for at least 2 years or have been leaders in the past and
- Have the ability to read and write in English and or Swahili.

This study is being conducted by Caroline Mukeku, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Study Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to describe the barriers that prevent women from participating in decision making processes in Kenya's dairy cooperatives.

Procedures:

This study will involve you completing the following steps:

- Participate in an in-depth interview that will take between 60- 90 minutes.
- Permit the face-to-face interview to be audio recorded.
- Once the interview has been transcribed, a follow up 15-minute phone call will be made to you to share my takeaways and reflections of your responses for you to confirm whether my interpretations are accurate.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research will be done with those who choose volunteer. Everyone involved in this study will respect your decision to join or not. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop by email me at any time. You can choose not to answer the questions that you feel you do not want to respond to at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

With the protection of participants in place, this study would pose minimal risks which do not affect your daily life. No sensitive information and identity will be shared.

The study will fill a knowledge gap in understanding the factors that inhibit the empowerment of women from participating in decision-making processes in the dairy

sector. The study will also benefit the society by contributing to the greater inclusion of women in decision making processes as well as inform the development and implementation of policies that empower women in agricultural cooperatives. This study benefits participants by creating awareness on the opportunities and capabilities of women as key contributors of the sustainable development in the dairy sector.

Feedback/Dissemination

Once the analysis is complete the report will be published in ProQuest (a publication of Walden University research). A summary of the research results will be shared via email with the participants other key stakeholders including and not limited to the dairy cooperatives, policy makers in the dairy sector and the Kenya Dairy Board.

Reimbursement:

You will receive a reimbursement of Kshs 2,500 (Two Thousand Five Hundred) as a thank you to offset your transport cost.

Privacy:

Your identity will be kept confidential within the Kenyan law and the Walden University IRB requirements. The researcher will share your identity or contact information with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy) or with authorities if court-ordered (very rare). Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study report. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by using unique codes for each participant's information and electronic password

protection to store all documents and data electronically. Data will be kept for a period of five (5) years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You can ask questions to me. If you would like to talk someone other than the researcher(s) about; (1) concerns regarding this study, (2) research participants' rights, (3) research-related injuries, (4) other human subjects' issues, please contact:

The National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)

off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,

Or

You can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate. Walden University's approval number for this study is **#12-08-21-0758500**. It expires on **August 7, 2024**.

Obtaining Your Consent

Your participation is extremely voluntary, and you have the right and option to opt out of the interview without fear of retaliation.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information or had the above information read to me. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research. I am at leastyears of age.

Name of participant.....

Signature or thumbprint/mark of participant.....

Date.....

Name of the person obtaining consent.....

Signature of person obtaining consent

Date.....

Witness in case a person is illiterate.

Name of witness.....

Signature or thumbprint/mark of participant.....

Date.....

Appendix D: Consent Form – Swahili Version

Unaalikwa kushiriki katika utafiti wa utafiti kuhusu ushiriki wa wanawake katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi katika vyama vya ushirika vya maziwa nchini Kenya.

Utafiti huo unalenga kuchochea majadiliano na uelewa wa mambo yanayowazuia wanawake kushiriki katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi katika vyama vya ushirika vya maziwa nchini Kenya na jinsi hii inavyoathiri maendeleo ya kijamii na endelevu ya sekta ya kilimo nchini Kenya. Fomu hii ni sehemu ya mchakato unaoitwa "kibali cha habari" ili kukuwezesha kuelewa utafiti huu kabla ya kuamua ikiwa utashiriki.

Utafiti huu unawatafuta watu 20 ambao ni:

- Ni angalau umri wa miaka 21 na zaidi kushiriki.
- Wamekuwa wanachama wa ushirika kwa angalau miaka mitano,
- Kushikilia nafasi ya uongozi katika ushirika wa maziwa kwa angalau miaka 2 au wamekuwa viongozi katika siku za nyuma na
- Uwezo wa kusoma na kuandika kwa Kiingereza na au Kiswahili.

Utafiti huu unafanywa na Caroline Mukeku, ambaye ni mwanafunzi wa shahada ya udaktari katika Chuo Kikuu cha Walden.

Madhumuni ya Utafiti:

Madhumuni ya utafiti huu ni kuelezea vikwazo vinavyowazuia wanawake kushiriki katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi katika vyama vya ushirika vya maziwa nchini Kenya.

Taratibu:

Utafiti huu utakuhusisha kukamilisha hatua zifuatazo:

- Shiriki katika mahojiano ya kina ambayo itachukua kati ya dakika 60-90.
- Ruhusu mahojiano ya uso kwa uso kurekodiwa.
- Mara tu mahojiano yameandikwa, simu ya dakika ya 15 itafanywa kwako kushiriki maoni yangu na tafakari za majibu yako kwako ili kuthibitisha ikiwa tafsiri zangu ni sahihi.

Hapa ni baadhi ya maswali ya sampuli:

- 1) Je, ni jukumu gani la wanawake katika ufugaji wa ng'ombe katika eneo hili?
- 2) Je, ni changamoto gani ambazo wanawake wakulima wa maziwa wanakabiliwa nazo katika mifumo ya kilimo cha maziwa?
- 3) Je, ushirika unatoa huduma gani kwa wanachama wake?

Asili ya hiari ya utafiti:

Utafiti utafanywa na wale wanaochagua kujitolea. Kila mtu anayehusika katika utafiti huu ataheshimu uamuzi wako wa kujiunga au la. Ikiwa unaamua kujiunga na utafiti sasa, bado unaweza kubadilisha mawazo yako baadaye. Unaweza kuacha kwa email yangu wakati wowote. Unaweza kuchagua kutojibu maswali ambayo unahisi hutaki kujibu wakati wowote.

Hatari na faida za kuwa katika utafiti:

Kwa ulinzi wa washiriki mahali, utafiti huu utaleta hatari ndogo ambazo haziathiri maisha yako ya kila siku. Hakuna habari nyeti na utambulisho utashirikiwa. Utafiti huo utajaza pengo la maarifa katika kuelewa mambo ambayo yanazuia uwezesaji wa wanawake kushiriki katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi katika sekta ya maziwa.

Utafiti huo pia utainufaisha jamii kwa kuchangia ushirikishwaji mkubwa wa wanawake katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi pamoja na kuhabarisha maendeleo na utekelezaji wa sera zinazowawezesha wanawake katika vyama vya ushirika vya kilimo. Utafiti huu unawanufaisha washiriki kwa kujenga uelewa juu ya fursa na uwezo wa wanawake kama wachangiaji muhimu wa maendeleo endelevu katika sekta ya maziwa. Mara tu uchambuzi utakapokamilika utachapishwa katika ProQuest (chapisho la utafiti wa Chuo Kikuu cha Walden). Muhtasari wa matokeo ya utafiti utashirikiwa kupitia barua pepe na washiriki wadau wengine muhimu ikiwa ni pamoja na sio mdogo kwa vyama vya ushirika vya maziwa, watunga sera katika sekta ya maziwa na Bodi ya Maziwa ya Kenya.

Malipo:

Utapokea Kshs 2,500 kama shukrani ili kupunguza gharama yako ya usafiri.

Faragha:

Utambulisho wako utawekwa siri ndani ya sheria ya Kenya na mahitaji ya Chuo Kikuu cha Walden IRB. Mtafiti atashiriki utambulisho wako au maelezo ya mawasiliano na wasimamizi wa Chuo Kikuu cha Walden (ambao pia wanatakiwa kulinda faragha yako) au na mamlaka ikiwa imeagizwa na mahakama (nadra sana). Pia, mtafiti hatajumuisha jina lako au kitu kingine chochote ambacho kinaweza kukutambua katika ripoti ya utafiti. Kama mtafiti walikuwa kushiriki dataset hii na mtafiti mwingine katika siku zijazo, dataset bila kuwa na vitambulisho hivyo hii bila kuhusisha duru nyingine ya kupata ridhaa ya habari. Data itahifadhiwa salama kwa kutumia nambari za kipekee kwa habari ya kila mshiriki na ulinzi wa nenosiri la elektroniki kuhifadhi nyaraka zote na data kwa

njia ya elektroniki. Takwimu zitahifadhiwa kwa kipindi cha miaka mitano (5), kama inavyotakiwa na chuo kikuu.

Mawasiliano na maswali:

Unaweza kuuliza maswali kwangu kwa kuwasiliana na simu au kupitia barua pepe.

Ikiwa ungependa kuzungumza na mtu mwingine isipokuwa mtafiti (s) kuhusu; (1) wasiwasi kuhusu utafiti huu, (2) haki za washiriki wa utafiti, (3) majeraha yanayohusiana na utafiti, (4) masuala mengine ya masomo ya binadamu, tafadhali wasiliana na: Wakili wa Mshiriki wa Utafiti wa Chuo Kikuu cha Walden. Nambari ya idhini ya Chuo Kikuu cha Walden kwa utafiti huu ni **#12-08-21-0758500**. Inaisha kwenye **Agosti 7 2024**.

Unaweza kutaka kuhifadhi fomu hii ya idhini kwa rekodi zako. Unaweza kuuliza mtafiti au Chuo Kikuu cha Walden kwa nakala wakati wowote kwa kutumia maelezo ya mawasiliano hapo juu.

Kupata idhini yako

Ushiriki wako ni wa hiari sana, na una haki na chaguo la kuchagua kutoka kwa mahojiano bila hofu ya kulipiza kisasi. Tafadhali tumia baru pepe na kutumia maneno ‘Nimekubali’ katika kushiriki katika utafiti wa utafiti kuhusu ushiriki wa wanawake katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi katika vyama vya ushirika vya maziwa nchini Kenya ili kuonyesha maslahi yako.

Tafadhali wasiliana nami kwa simu ikiwa kuna maswali yoyote zaidi:

Appendix E: Invitation Letter – English Version

Email Invitation**Subject line:**

Interviewing dairy cooperative leaders in September 2023 (Kshs 2,500 transport reimbursement)

Email message:

You are invited to a new study about the factors that inhibit women from participating in decision-making processes in the dairy cooperatives in Kenya. For this study, you will be expected to describe your views about the participation of women in decision making processes.

About the study:

- One 60 to 90 minutes face to face interview that will be conducted at a mutually convenient time in a safe social hall and will be audio recorded.
- You will receive Kshs 2,500 as thank you to offset your transport cost.
- A follow up 15-minute phone call will be made to you to share my takeaways and reflection of your responses for you to confirm whether my interpretations are accurate.
- To protect your privacy, the published study will not reveal your identity.

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

20 volunteers are needed from dairy cooperatives who:

- a) Are at least 21 years old and above to participate.
- b) Have been a member of the cooperative for at least five years,

- c) Hold a leadership position at the dairy cooperative for at least 2 years or have been leaders in the past and
- d) Have the ability to read and write in English and or Swahili.

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Caroline Mukeku, a Ph.D. student at Walden University. Interviews will take place in September 2023

Be assured that your participation is extremely voluntary and that you have the right and option to opt out of the interview without fear of retaliation.

Please reply within 10 days with the words ‘I Consent to participate in the study’ to indicate your interest in participating.

Contact the researcher in case of any further questions.

Appendix F: Invitation Letter – Swahili Version

Mwaliko wa Barua Pepe**Mstari wa mada:**

Kuhoji viongozi wa vyama vya ushirika wa maziwa mnamo Septemba 2023 (Kshs 2,500 malipo ya usafiri)

Ujumbe wa barua pepe:

Unaalikwa kwenye utafiti mpya juu ya sababu zinazozuia wanawake kushiriki katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi katika vyama vya ushirika vya maziwa nchini Kenya. Kwa utafiti huu, utatarajiwa kuelezea maoni yako juu ya ushiriki wa wanawake katika michakato ya kufanya maamuzi.

Kuhusu utafiti:

- Dakika moja ya 60 hadi 90 uso kwa uso mahojiano ambayo yatafanyika kwa wakati unaofaa katika ukumbi salama wa kijamii na utarekodiwa sauti.
- Utapokea Kshs 2,500 kama shukrani kwa kupunguza gharama yako ya usafiri.
- Simu ya kufuatilia ya dakika 15 itafanywa kwako kushiriki kuchukua kwangu na kutafakari majibu yako kwako ili kuthibitisha ikiwa tafsiri zangu ni sahihi.
- Ili kulinda faragha yako, utafiti uliochapishwa hautafunua utambulisho wako.

Wafanyakazi wa kujitolea lazima watimize mahitaji haya:

Wafanyakazi wa kujitolea wa 20 wanahitajika kutoka kwa vyama vya ushirika vya maziwa ambao:

- a) Ni angalau umri wa miaka 21 na zaidi kushiriki.
- b) Nimekuwa mwanachama wa ushirika kwa angalau miaka mitano,

c) Kushikilia nafasi ya uongozi katika ushirika wa maziwa kwa angalau miaka 2 au wamekuwa viongozi katika siku za nyuma na

d) Kuwa na uwezo wa kusoma na kuandika kwa Kiingereza na au Kiswahili.

Mahojiano haya ni sehemu ya utafiti wa udaktari kwa Caroline Mukeku, mwanafunzi wa Ph.D. katika Chuo Kikuu cha Walden. Mahojiano yatafanyika Septemba 2023

Kuwa na uhakika kwamba ushiriki wako ni wa hiari sana na kwamba una haki na chaguo la kuchagua nje ya mahojiano bila hofu ya kulipiza kisasi.

Tafadhali jibu barua pepe ndani ya siku 10 na maneno 'Ninakubali kushiriki katika utafiti' ili kuonyesha nia yako ya kushiriki.

Wasiliana na mtafiti katika kesi ya maswali yoyote zaidi.

Appendix G: Study Themes and Codes

Name	Files (Case Count)	References (Code Count)
(RQ) Barriers to Women's Participation	20	597
THEME 1: ECONOMIC BARRIERS	19	67
Access, Ownership and Control of Assets and Resources	14	35
Men access and control resources and assets	14	35
Low Income and Capital for Women	15	32
Low income and Capital	15	32
THEME 2: PERSONAL AGENCY BARRIERS	18	82
Autonomy	14	37
Low Decision-Making Power	9	20
Require permission to participate	11	17
Low self-efficacy	16	45
Difficulty in pushing women's agenda	4	5
Fearful and Shy	9	17
Lack of appreciation of women's efforts	2	4
Low Personal Confidence	8	12
Women's Inferiority	5	7
THEME 3: POLICY & LEGAL BARRIERS	20	103
Lack of Documented Policies	15	41
Gender Laws are implied - Not Documented	14	33
No Laws promoting women participation	5	8
Leadership terms and conditions	18	62
Leadership requires tough skin	6	10
Low Attendance to meetings	7	10
Low representation at nomination	6	9
Male dominance in shareholdership	9	16
Voting is democratic and competitive	11	17
THEME 4: SOCIAL CULTURAL BARRIERS	20	132
Time Poverty and Mobility	7	11
Time burden for other activities	5	5
Travel long Distances	2	2
Women are terribly busy	1	4
Triple Roles of Women and Work Burden	20	82
Dairy production Roles	16	35

Name	Files (Case Count)	References (Code Count)
Reproduction Roles	12	19
Women overburdened by home and farm roles	14	28
Unfavorable cultural traditions and gender norms	15	39
Cultural Beliefs and traditions	15	39
THEME 5: SYSTEMIC BARRIERS	20	213
Disenabling leadership environment	17	77
Lack motivation to leadership	15	27
Male Dominance in Contributing to meetings	4	7
Women are Undermined or Intimidated	6	17
Women rejected by male leaders	3	7
Women's opinions not valued in meetings	8	19
Inadequate capacity of women on leadership	18	49
Lack capacity in leadership	15	31
Literacy level is low	4	6
Low Capacity in Dairy Practices	4	5
Low communication skills	6	7
Low Collective Power of Women	10	32
Lack of women's cohesion	7	13
Women are jealous and do not support each other	7	19
Negative gender bias to leadership	14	55
Lack trust in women's participation	6	15
Men's preference to have men leaders	2	5
Negative gender perceptions about women leaders	11	28
Women's preference to Men as Leaders	4	7