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Culture As a Determinant to Gender Differentials in Adoption of Alternative Livelihoods Among Pastoralists in West Pokot County, Kenya

By

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate cultural determinants to gender differentials in adoption of Alternative Livelihoods (ALs) among pastoralists in West Pokot County, Kenya. Gender differentials have persisted in spite of concerted efforts to address them hence impeding adoption of ALs, a process considered by scholars and development experts to be the best pathway out of the community's myriad developmental challenges. The study specifically endeavoured to explain gender differentials in adoption of ALs, from a cultural perspective. The study was guided by Structural Functionalism Theory, complemented by Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis (CVA) framework. Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were applied. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and the target population included adult household members, elders and opinion leaders. Whereas multi-stage cluster sampling technique was employed to sample study respondents for the questionnaires, participants for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), were purposively selected. Data were collected using questionnaires, KII schedule and FGD guide. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS Version 23. The analyzed data were presented in Tables and Charts. Content analysis was employed in analyzing qualitative data which were then presented in narrative and verbatim forms. It was established that the gender differentials in adoption of ALs among the pastoralists in West Pokot are determined by an array of cultural factors, which impacted men and women unequally. These included beliefs, values, customs and practices, most of which constrained adoption of ALs, more so by women. Thus, this study concludes that the community's cultural structure greatly impacts adoption of ALs through its gender role plan, and the gendered access to and control over productive resources, thereby causing gender differentials in adoption of ALs. It is, therefore, recommended that development actors ought to consider initiatives that engage cultural aspects as this affects adoption of Alternative Livelihoods.

Key Words: Adoption, Alternative livelihoods, Cultural determinants, Gender differentials, Pastoralists.

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1. Introduction

Pastoralism involves the rearing of livestock as a primary economic activity (Belay, 2016). It is mostly practised by nomadic and transhumant pastoralists and is a global phenomenon that is a source of livelihood to millions of people (Dyer, 2011). According to scholars, including Kirkbride and Grahn (2008), pastoralism is effective and viable in places with low human population densities and extensive rangelands. These conditions have, however, been affected by adverse climatic changes and a host of socio-economic factors such as rapid population growth, loss of common property resources, urbanization and violent resource-based conflicts (Fratkin, et al., 2011). Consequently, pastoralism has declined, become unsustainable and no longer a reliable source of livelihood (Dong et al., 2011). As an adaptation and survival strategy, pastoralists have adopted Alternative Livelihoods (ALs) (Belay, 2016; Blench, 2001). However, the rate of adoption is very slow, making livestock production to remain the main source of livelihood for majority of pastoralists around the world (Gulelat, 2002; Mayaram, 2014; Moritz et al., 2011). Studies show that, one of the leading factors slowing down adoption of ALs in the strongly patriarchal and traditional pastoral communities is gender differentials (Flintan, 2011). Apart from undermining the power of complementarity among men and women, the differentials also limit the options of ALs they can adopt (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2016; de Jones & Flintan, 2020).

Available literature indicates that the differentials in adoption of ALs, are mostly skewed against women who have low socioeconomic power as they face double marginalization for being pastoralists (who are mostly marginalized) and women in men-dominated societies (Eneyew & Mengistu, 2013; O'Neil, 2011; Sherman, 2013). Consequently, as compared to men, women in most of the pastoral communities across the globe such as the Gujars of India (Mayaram, 2014) and Somalis of Ethiopia (Watson, 2010), had limited options and capacity for livelihood diversification. Thus, they generally lag behind men in adoption of ALs. Similar findings have been made by studies conducted among the major pastoral groups in Kenya, including, inter alia, the Maasai (Saranta, 2013), Turkana (Wawire, 2011), Rendille (Fratkin et al., 2011) and Borana (Aregu et al., 2007). However, there were contexts where women's adoption of ALs was either equal or surpassed that of men. For example, Farooquee and Rawat (2001) reported that, the level of adoption of ALs among the Bhotiya women in the Himalayan pastoral community of India was equal to that of men. In Uganda, Stites et al. (2016) established that, in the Karamojong pastoral community, agricultural and commercial activities were mostly done by women because men were engaged more in livestock management. Involvement of women in petty trade, which was an important source of livelihood in pastoral communities of East Africa, was also reported to be higher than that of men (Little, 2001).

Concerning the Pokot ethnic community, which was one of the major pastoral groups in Kenya, literature including Karmebäck (2015), Kristensen and Nairesiae (2009) and West Pokot County Government (2018) showed that, a deep gender divide cleaved its adoption of

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ALs. Just like in most pastoralist communities in Kenya, the differentials were skewed in favour of men, especially in more rewarding sectors of the economy (Karmebäck, 2015). This was also the case with Pokot pastoralists in Baringo County (Chepkangor, 2015). Thus, men dominated formal employment and trade, which had higher returns than petty informal trade and dairy farming, where women were the majority.

Noting that the differentials impede diversification of livelihoods a process considered a panacea to myriad socio-economic challenges facing the community including violent livestock resource-based conflicts, poverty and gender inequality, various state and non-state development agencies have made efforts to bridge the gender gap (Muricho, 2015; West Pokot County Government, 2018). The initiatives include the 2010 Constitution and Vision 2030, which under Article 27 (2) and Social Pillar, respectively, were envisaged to guide the Kenya society towards attainment of equal gender rights, opportunities and participation in development (Republic of Kenya [RoK], 2013). In particular, gender-sensitive policies, plans and programmes were to be prioritized. At the local level, were the efforts by several non-state actors including the World Vision Kenya, Safaricom Foundation and the Catholic Church, and the County government of West Pokot, to transform livelihoods through equitable and sustainable utilization of resources (Adan & Pkalya, 2005). They have placed emphasis on gender equality, inclusivity and women empowerment.

Despite these efforts, literature show persistence of gender differentials in adoption of ALs. While studies such as Flintan (2011) report that the gender differentials in adoption of ALs among pastoralists were due to a complex mesh of factors which were mostly contextual, little was known concerning some communities as alluded to by Eneyew and Mengistu (2013). With a dearth of gender studies in regard to the Pokot pastoralist community, the reasons behind the pervasive gender differentials in adoption of ALs remained unclear. The community, being highly patriarchal, traditional and with a cultural disposition that encouraged strict gender roles, there were, however, indications that culture influenced the rate of adoption of ALs (Mutsotso, 2013; Ng'ang'a, 2013). In view of this, the current study endeavoured to investigate cultural determinants to gender differentials in adoption of ALs in the community. The community was predominantly made up of the Pokot and was known for the love of the cattle and adherence to strict patriarchal culture (Lolemum, et al., 2017; Mutsotso, 2013). It, therefore, epitomized pastoral culture and the associated problems of gender inequality, high poverty incidences, insecurity and violent livestock-based conflicts as noted by studies including Brown et al. (2016), and Kamerback et al. (2015). This means that the conclusions and recommendations of the study can also be generalized to other pastoral communities in Kenya, though with caution for the earlier mentioned reason that pastoral communities in Kenya are heterogeneous. This notwithstanding, it is hoped that the conclusions and recommendations of this study would help spur adoption of ALs and achieve general development in the hitherto marginalized and underdeveloped pastoral communities.

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2. Statement of the Problem

In the pastoral community of West Pokot County, literature indicates that men and women have adopted ALs differentially. This has impeded the process that is considered the best pathway out of the socio-economic challenges facing the community including high poverty levels and livestock resource-based conflicts. This is despite sustained efforts by state and non-state development actors to bridge the gender gap. The reasons for the persistence are, however, not clear due to scanty research on gender and diversification of livelihoods. The fact that the community is highly patriarchal and practices strict adherence to cultural practices, values and beliefs including gendered roles are, however, hints that culture influence the rate of adoption of ALs among men and women. Therefore, this study endeavoured to investigate cultural determinants to gender differentials in adoption of ALs in the community. This would help identify and explain the cultural aspects that influence adoption of ALs among pastoral men and women so that policymakers are able to formulate evidence-based strategies that would enhance adoption of ALs in the community.

3. Review of Related Literature

3.1 Alternative Livelihoods

Globally, pastoral systems have increasingly become vulnerable, unsustainable and declining (Dong et al., 2011). This has been attributed to a host of socio-economic factors such as rapid population growth, loss of common property resources and resource-based conflicts (Fratkin, et al., 2011). Scholars opine that these conditions have led to high poverty incidences among the pastoralists (Kirkbride & Grahn, 2008). Adoption of ALs, which are activities through which a pastoralist gains means of survival and living other than traditional livestock keeping, has been recommended by scholars, governments and non-state actors to be the best solution to the problem of poverty among pastoralists (Archambault, 2016). Indeed, out of their own resilience and with the assistance of state and non-state actors, pastoralists have sought new livelihoods in modern farming practices, agro-pastoralism, trade and commerce, craft production, and formal employment (Belay, 2016; Blench, 2001).

3.2 Culture and Gender Differentials in Adoption of Alternative Livelihoods

Pastoralists across the world are known for strict adherence to their cultural beliefs, values, norms and practices (O'neil, 2011). According to literature, the influences posed by the strong adherence to culture on adoption of ALs are significant and asymmetric in nature. On the negative side, whereas patriarchy undermines women's access to economic, political and ideological resources, thereby limiting their participation, strict adherence to gender roles restricts both men and women to specific options of ALs (Blench, 2001; Flintan, 2011). Further, in pastoral communities, gender division of labour means that women spend considerably more of their time than men on domestic tasks and have limited time for ALs (de Jones, & Flintan, 2020). This also compromises the power of complementarity between men and women in the process of adoption of ALs (IFAD, 2016). The high premium placed on cattle also makes it hard for pastoralists, especially the men, to trade them for other livelihoods (O'Neil, 2011; Sherman, 2013). On the positive side of the asymmetry, some elements of pastoral culture have been found to generally promote adoption of ALs. These include strong kinship ties, labour exchanges, and largely intact social system and network (Sharma et al., 2003). Sharma observed that these cultural aspects availed pastoralists with both material and social capital needed for diversification of livelihoods.

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Most literature, however, focus on the negative side of the asymmetry and run the risk of portraying pastoral culture as totally detrimental to adoption of ALs. Further, as earlier noted, information on causal relationship between cultural factors and gender differentials in adoption of ALs, is still limited for lack of gender-focused and community-specific studies. This study filled the gaps, identified and explained the cultural factors determining gender differentials in adoption of ALs that are specific to the context of the pastoral community of West Pokot County.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Structural Functionalism Theory and complemented by Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis (CVA) framework.

Structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, is a theory that explains society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability (Macionis & Gerber, 2011). Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements. While structural functionalism is associated with several sociologists, the ideas of Herbet Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Structural Marxists had the conclusiveness that was required to underpin this study. Herbert Spencer popularized a common analogy, that presents the parts of society as “organs” which work toward the proper functioning of the “body” as a whole (Urry, 2000). Based on the metaphor above of an organism in which many parts function together to sustain the whole, Durkheim argued that complex societies are held together by organic solidarity (social bonds), based on specialization and interdependence, which are strong among members of a society (Macionis & Gerber, 2011). This theory, therefore, emphasizes the contributions that the various parts, structures and systems of a society make towards its social needs and how these structures and systems shape the behaviour of the individuals and groups within them (Muchangi, 2014). Structural Marxists on their part argue that the decisions and actions of individual and groups are fundamentally constrained by the structures in which they are located, and which exert influence over social, political and economic processes. Structural Marxist, emphasize that, every pattern of activity makes a positive or negative contribution to that society (Alexander & Colomy, 1990; Maryanski & Turner, 1991, as cited in Muchangi 2014, p. 56).

The tenets of this theory were used to explain the pastoral community of West Pokot as a complex structure with various parts (men and women), structures and systems (culture) that were interdependent and whose functions and interactions determined adoption of ALs. Therefore, the roles of men and women were considered equally important in adoption of ALs and were investigated to determine their respective contributions. The community’s prevailing cultural structures were also important and had the capacity to either enable or constraint adoption of ALs. This perspective helped this study to bring to the fore the cultural factors which influenced adoption of ALs by men and women in the community.

Structural Functionalism Theory looks at society as a whole and is, therefore, broad and general in perspective. Whereas it helped in addressing relevant variables in this study, as discussed in the foregoing paragraph, there was need for gender analysis frameworks to clearly bring out the impacts of cultural factors on both genders in the process of adoption of ALs in the pastoral community. Some relevant tenets of CVA addressed this need. The CVA framework is a gender analysis tool that critically considers gender and its associated roles, responsibilities and power dynamics in a particular community and seeks to meet its social needs (Birks & Hatfield, 2016). The framework was developed by Harvard Institute for

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International Development to help development agencies to plan interventions in such a way that they meet immediate needs and, at the same time, build on the strengths of people and their efforts to achieve long-term social and economic development (March et al., 1999). The authors stated that the framework was based on the central idea that people's existing capacities (strengths) and vulnerabilities (weaknesses), determined the impact that a crisis had on them, as well as the way they responded to it. Therefore, interventions should aim to increase people's capacities and reduce their vulnerabilities.

CVA uses an analysis matrix tool to distinguish between three categories of capacities and vulnerabilities which are physical, social, and motivational (Birks & Hatfield, 2016). All of these were different for women and men (March et al., 1999). This categorization of capacities and vulnerabilities, was instrumental in identifying and explaining the cultural factors that determined gender differentials in adoption of ALs in the community.

5. Methodology

This study was conducted in West Pokot County which was one of the 47 Counties in Kenya. It is situated in the North Rift along Kenya's Western boundary with Uganda and had a population estimated at 621,241 persons (Kenya Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2019). The dominant livelihood system in major parts of West Pokot was pastoralism, while in the southern-central parts with higher altitudes and more rainfall, agro-pastoralism and mixed farming were common (National Drought Management Authority, 2014). In all these livelihood strategies, men played a dominant role and the proportion of individuals below the poverty line was 68.7% (Nyberg et al., 2015).

In this study, cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. This allowed the researcher to establish the relationship between the key variables at the time of research. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study. The target population of the study was all adult members of the 116,182 households in West Pokot County (KNBS, 2019). Other research participants were Key Informants (KIs) in the County who included purposively selected opinion leaders, and officers (both state and non-state) who were in charge of dockets which were key to livelihoods diversification.

Due to the vastness of the study site, the study employed multi-stage cluster sampling technique where the sub-counties, divisions, locations, sub-locations and villages constituted the clusters. Therefore, a five-stage cluster sampling was adopted to arrive at 371 households which participated in the study. Each of the households produced an adult participant. To ensure gender balance, selection for participation, was done in a manner that men and women alternated from household to household. The few households without man or woman were skipped. Further, this study purposively selected nine registered groups for men, women and youths to participate in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The list of the registered groups was obtained at the office of Culture and Social Services in the County. The groups selected were those that had enabled members to adopt AIs and had adequate representation of women, men and youth. Purposive sampling technique was also applied to select 12 Key Informants (KIs) for the study, including the County Chief Executive Committee Member (CECM) in charge of agriculture and pastoral economy, and officers in charge of non-state development agencies, gender, culture and social services.

Both primary and secondary data was collected in this study. Whereas secondary data was obtained from libraries and e-resources, primary data was collected using semi-structured

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questionnaires, KI interview schedule and FGD guide. Quantitative data were edited, cleaned, coded and entered in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. The SPSS analysis generated descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, cross tabulations and percentages. The analyzed data were then presented in Tables and Charts. Qualitative data were typed (transcribed) verbatim in Excel Computer software. They were then subjected to thematic analysis and presented in narrative and verbatim forms.

6. Results and Discussion

This study sought to identify and explain the cultural factors that determined gender differentials in adoption of ALs in the pastoral community of West Pokot County. To respond to this objective, the study respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to cultural themes such as beliefs, values, practices, customs and traditions. The responses were rated on a five-point Likert Scale where: 1-Strongly Disagree (SD); 2-Disagree (D); 3-Undecided (U); 4-Agree (A) and 5-Strongly Agree (SA). The SPSS Version 23 was used to generate the Mean and Standard Deviations (SD). The findings are presented in Table 2, below. Further probing was done through KIIs and FGDs to explain the figures.

Table 1: Views on Cultural Factors that Influence Adoption of ALs

Cultural Factors	Mean	SD
There are ALs that men think are for women	3.78	1.08
There are ALs that women think are for men	3.95	0.91
People discourage their spouses from adopting some ALs	3.54	1.11
Most ALs adopted by women are decided (chosen) by men	3.77	1.26
Most members of the community believe that women should stick to domestic chores	3.54	1.27
In the community, livestock are the most valued form of wealth	4.05	1.16
There are cultural factors which do not favour adoption of ALs	3.41	0.98
There are cultural factors which stimulate adoption of ALs	2.64	0.93
Mean	3.58	0.97

Source: Field Data, 2019

As illustrated in Table 2, on whether there were ALSs that men thought were for women, the high mean rating of 3.78 imply that, most respondents agreed with the opinion. Conversely, the rating for the perception by women that there were ALSs for men was equally high (3.95), meaning that most respondents agreed with the view among women that some ALSs were just meant for men only. In support of this, one participant gave examples of ALSs shunned by either men or women:

In this community, men associate some jobs with women and are rarely involved in them. Examples are hair dressing, tailoring, sale of groceries and serving as waiters/stewards in hotels, food kiosks and retail shops. On the other hand, women think, working as driver or tout in a public transport vehicle, trading in livestock, mining, and performing construction tasks either artisan or labourer, are just cut for men (KII 13).

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The above direct quote shows that there were commonly held perceptions which resulted in a gendered adoption of ALSs. These further narrows down the scope of adoption of ALSs to only a few options for each gender. Since men and women have different capacities, working separately imply that the power of complementarity, which could result in meaningful adoption of most ALSs, is lost.

The mean rating of 3.54, as shown in Table 2 on whether there were ALSs which people discouraged spouses from adopting, indicate that majority of the respondents concurred with the opinion as expressed. These ALSs and their associated shortcomings which made men and women discourage their spouses from adopting, were named by the following FGDs:

Generally, we discourage our men against jobs such as livestock trade, bar businesses and any other that require a lot of travel or staying away from home for a long time. We fear, such may push them to have illicit intimate relationships with other women (FGD 2).

We do not like our spouses participating in ALSs that would lead to long absence from home such as military service, working in bars and public service transport. To be honest, we are not also very comfortable with our wives getting big jobs with a lot of salary as this may make them think that they can be as powerful as men (FGD 7).

From the sentiments above, this study deduced that both men and women discouraged their spouses from adopting ALSs that would lead to long absence from the matrimonial home as it might cause promiscuity and infidelity. An additional fear for men was that their elevated position, both in the household and community, could be challenged if their wives took up high paying jobs and acquired “too much power” through financial and social capital. From the KIs, the observations of a 53-year-old Catholic Priest, confirmed the depth and impact of the belief that some ALSs would lead to promiscuity and infidelity:

In Kenya, being a driver of a *Matatu* (a public service vehicle) means that one is absent at home for many hours or days. The income earned is usually comparatively good especially in a well-managed transport company. These two issues make many men to be uncomfortable with women working in the industry. In fact, in my many years of service in West Pokot County, I think I have seen only three women driving *Matatu* and two of them are not married and I hear that the third one is having a rough time in an unstable marriage because of continuous suspicion of infidelity from the husband (KII 14).

From the statement, it is evident that women who by nature of profession, earned a modest income and were mostly absent from home, were rarely married and those already married were perpetually suspected of promiscuity. Thus, there was belief in the community that some ALSs were simply not for married people. Also, the data indicted power dynamics that were skewed against women. All these, according to this study, narrows down the scope of adoption to only a few options and causes slow pace of adoption of ALSs by both married men and women.

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On whether most ALSs adopted by women were decided (chosen) by men, the high mean rating of 3.77, as shown in Table 2, imply that the respondents affirmed the view as put. All KIs and FGDs were unanimous that this was the case in the community. For instance, women participants acknowledged:

In this pastoral community, we never make decisions independently even when one is single, separated or widowed, because, decisions of the son, brother or uncle will always be sought. Therefore, as a woman, you cannot move at the pace and manner you think is the best even when you are more educated than the man (FGD 5).

The data depicted lack of independence in decision-making among women and was one of the greatest impediments to their adoption of ALSs. Further, women were denied the power of discretion and latitude in decision-making. Therefore, the immense potential they possessed was not fully utilized. This could be based on the fact that most of the households are headed by men and, as a result, decision-making is one of their roles. It has also been noted that the pastoral community regard women as inferior and social minors and are, therefore, not trusted to make serious decisions such as adoption of ALSs (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs [IWGIA], 2012). Dometita (2017) also reports that the man/husband in pastoral communities make important decisions for the woman/wife because he has power over her, ‘owns’ her by virtue of paying dowry and is the head of the family or household. The man is also perceived to be always right and ought to be taken seriously by the women and children. According to the author, women have accepted the status and often choose to be passive in order to let men make the decisions.

Further, on whether it was believed in the community that women should stick to domestic chores, the mean rating shown in Table 2 is 3.54. This means that majority of the respondents agreed with the view as expressed. In concurrence, KIs and FGD participants reported that the belief was communicated and reinforced through cultural rituals and practices. For instance, during childbirth, one KI outlined how gender roles were entrenched:

Once a child is born, the midwife would go out to announce the sex of the child using coded language and metaphors. Thus, a baby boy is called a ‘person of the outside’ denoting that for the rest of his life, his chores will be done outside the house or the homestead. Conversely, a baby girl is referred to as the ‘person of the inside’ meaning her life activities will mainly revolve in or around the house and homestead. Consequently, boys and men are expected to be out there in the fields, grazing, farming and providing security while girls and women are mostly in or around the houses/homesteads performing domestic and caregiving chores (KII 14).

This revelation indicate that the rituals performed during childbirth in the community were some of the means through which gender roles were inadvertently assigned. Thus, from the onset, it was firmly cemented in people’s minds that women performed most of the reproductive roles within the house or homestead, and men did the productive ones outside the homesteads. Hall (2017), who has similar findings, states that domestic duties including washing, cooking, cleaning and childcare, are all culturally expected to be performed by

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women. The gender role allocation negatively influences adoption of ALSs as explained by a KI:

Women, who stick to their homes and have perfected performance of domestic chores are highly esteemed and respected in the community. In pursuit of this, many women have declined job offers that would reduce their performance of the highly valued roles as ‘good’ women at home (KII 15).

These sentiments show the aspiration and focus of a woman in the community - to be a “good” woman at home, meaning to perform and perfect reproductive roles. This was an achievement that the entire community also valued and esteemed. This belief restricts women and men to reproductive and productive roles, respectively. It denies the community the benefits of tapping into the potential existing in women that could be utilized to spur adoption of ALSs.

On whether livestock were the most valued form of wealth in the community, Table 2 shows a high mean score of 4.05, meaning that, this belief was held by most respondents. This was supported by KIs and participants in FGDs who further gave reasons for the belief and how it had influenced adoption of ALSs. The views of the following FGDs were particularly comprehensive:

We value livestock more than anything else because apart from helping meet basic needs, they earn one respect and position in the community so that the more they are, the higher the respect and status one is accorded. We also use them to pay dowry and reward our new brides because in this community, the first sign that a woman is officially married is the livestock she is given by the bridegroom and his kin on the morning of the first day of marriage. Therefore, without cattle, a man is poor and of low standing even when he earns good money from employment or business (FGD 1).

As women, we do not own livestock directly, but through association with the men mostly the husband for a married woman or father in the case of a spinster. There is nothing else that we can compare with these animals because through them, we feed our families, perform our ceremonies and sell to get money for other purposes such as paying fees and buying clothing. A rich man’s wife or daughter is also respected and esteemed in the community (FGD 5).

Therefore, in the views of the pastoral men and women, livestock, more than any other forms of wealth, were highly valued because they enabled the community to meet their most important needs. As stated, livestock were a symbol of status in the community for both men and women, and were used to pay dowry, reward new brides, and meet all basic needs and luxuries. The statements of both men and women FGDs give indications that men have access and control of the valued resource more than the women. This limits adoption of ALSs among women.

Findings of research done among the pastoral Pokot community, who are the majority in West Pokot County, the site of the current research, depict a community where livestock (especially the cattle) are the only symbol of wealth, hence endorsing the findings

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of this study. For example, Ng'ang'a (2012) writes that among the Pokot, cattle are a form of legal tender and considered a mobile bank. They gave a man prestige and wealth. Mutsotso (2013) adds that a Pokot man who has cattle, is considered wealthy and, therefore, commands a lot of respect from the community and his family is held in high esteem. Mutsotso, concludes that the Pokots have a stronger attachment to their cattle more than to anything else. It is for this reason that a substantial number of households in the pastoral community continue to engage in keeping livestock. This explains the slow pace of adoption of ALSs by the community. Further, the fact that women do not really own the cattle gives credence to the findings under Section 1.1 that women are faster than men in adoption of ALSs because they have to survive by finding a means of earning a living outside livestock production; a sector in which they are marginalized.

This study also asked the respondents whether there were beliefs, norms, values and practices in the pastoral community of West Pokot that did not favour/encourage adoption of ALSs. As illustrated in Table 2, the mean score of 3.41 indicated that most respondents agreed that they existed. Content analysis of data obtained during KIIs and FGDs revealed the commonly held beliefs. These are presented and discussed below.

(i) Lack of Belief in the Ability of Women to Perform Productive Roles

Lack of belief in the ability of women to effectively undertake productive roles in the pastoral community of West Pokot County, came out clearly from KIIs, such as:

In this community, there is an ingrained belief among both men and women that women, do not have the ability to perform tasks outside domestic and caregiving domains. This belief is so deeply rooted to the extent that women are mostly referred to as 'Children'. This means that not much is expected from them, just like the children. They are to remain at home to perform domestic chores which are perceived to be lighter tasks. The result is a culture where the man is expected to do everything, and the woman waits at home to only improve on what the man has brought. Look for example, the few men in the registered groups I have here, they have taken up all leadership positions because of the belief that a woman can never be a good leader. And the women themselves seem to believe so, because group leadership is never grabbed; women themselves who are the majority, elect the men meaning they have been socialized not to believe in themselves (KII 12).

Based on the KI's views, the Pokot pastoral community did not believe in the ability of women. As a result, they were relegated to reproductive duties which were considered less important, easier to perform and could be done by "children". The verbatim further shows that the women themselves subscribed to this stereotypic thinking and, worse still, many believed it was not their role to struggle, that is to engage in the "harder" productive tasks. Some researchers have come up with similar findings. For example, Fleischman (2012) notes that Pokot pastoralists lack faith/belief in women who they regard as inferior and social minors. Dometita (2017) has found out that, among the pastoralists of Northern Kenya, the belief is that, allowing women to take up leadership positions in society is disastrous. In leadership, for example, they are likely to make wrong decisions. According to Kasomo (2012), the traditional perceptions of women as inferior to men prevail because

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many people uphold cultural practices which enhance the subordination of women. Consequently, Kasomo notes that women are restricted to domestic and care-giving domains. Any other roles outside these domains, the author observes, are purely meant to either supplement what men do or just for subsistence. Clearly, this belief reinforces traditional gender roles implying that men and women do not complement each other fully in the process of adoption of ALSs.

(ii) Culture of Dowry Payment

The views of KIs and FGDs on the influences of dowry payment on adoption of ALSs were well represented by one youth FGD that had this to say:

In our community, dowry is mainly paid by use of livestock. In fact, one of the most important reasons of owning livestock in the community is payment of dowry. Therefore, young men would desperately use any means available, to acquire them, including cattle theft or rustling. On the other hand, families would ensure nothing hinders them from getting the bride wealth because livestock is a symbol of status and wealth in the community. As a result, girls are ‘sold’ to the highest bidder as if they are commodities. In fact, in some families, fees for boys are gotten from dowry. This practice, fuels early forced marriages, cattle rustling, FGM and dropping out of school for both boys and girls. All these, undermine education, meaning a person cannot adopt a lucrative ALS successfully. Where this culture is strong such as North Pokot, many people have nothing else except livestock which are dying at high rate because of droughts (FGD 3).

Thus, it is evident that dowry payment in form of livestock was a deep-rooted culture in the pastoral community of West Pokot County. It resulted in commoditization of women, cattle rustling, FGM/C and low literacy levels. All these combined to directly and indirectly slow down the pace or cause lack of adoption of ALSs, especially among the women. Scholars have written a lot in this area. For example, Ng’ang’a (2013) states that for a young Pokot man to marry, he must pay a lot of cattle and in case of inability to afford, he would be advised to go and raid or forget about marriage. Magal (2016) and Tulel (2013) observe that it is very hard for a man to get a wife among the Pokots without cattle, and because of the high value placed on cattle, marriage for girls is prioritized at the expense of education. The findings of these researchers concur with those of the current study that the culture of dowry payment impedes adoption of ALSs, more so among the women.

(iii) Polygamy and Wife Inheritance

Further, during KIIs and FGDs, it was observed that the culture of polygamy and wife inheritance was rampant in the community and had negative effects on adoption of ALSs. One of the women FGDs was particularly candid about this:

Polygamy is highly practised in this community. Our men also get other wives through inheritance especially in insecurity prone areas where many men die. As a matter of fact, we get jealous, unhappy and stressed especially when we are forced to share what we have toiled for with the new co-wife or when part

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of it is used to pay dowry. The end state is, many women give up working hard, children do not get good education, living standards deteriorate, quarrels and fights become the order of the day. In this condition, there isn't much that one can do. The men are also having it rough and stressed (FGD 5).

The above sentiments show that polygamy and wife inheritance created conditions that were not conducive to adoption of ALSs for both men and women. These included additional burden occasioned by large family sizes, frequent feuds, stress, and diversion of resources to unproductive ventures such as dowry and rewards for in-laws. These findings are in line with those of Fleischman (2012) that pastoralists in West Pokot are mostly polygamous and this worsens the community's marital relations which are usually characterized by hostility and antagonism. Coast (2006) underscores the negative impacts of polygamy that it is an expensive undertaking because more wives mean greater number of children. This, according to Coast, reduces the likelihood of them all going to school and living quality lives. Coast further acknowledges that polygamy is prone to endless squabbles. UNICEF (2018), equally, names polygamy and wife inheritance to be among the harmful, cultural and traditional practices which hinder women's empowerment in Kenya.

(iv) Female Genital Mutilation and Cut

During KIIs and FGDs, Female Genital Mutilation and Cut (FGM/C), was also named as one of the harmful cultural practices impeding adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community. For example, one KI stated:

FGM/C is a very old cultural practice in this community. When a girl is cut, it means she is ready to be married. Therefore, many of the girls end up getting married and pregnant at tender age and drop out of school. This also affects the boys, because the girls are their peers. They also marry them, though many of the girls end up in the hands of older men. Lack of good education in the long run means one cannot get a stable and well rewarding ALS (KII 2).

As noted by the KI, FGM/C was an age-old cultural practice in the community, conducted as one of the preconditions for a girl to be married. Most of the girls, however, underwent the cut at a tender age and got married to either their male peers or older men. This, according to KI, dimmed the prospects of both boys and girls attaining good education and lucrative ALSs. A report by UNICEF Kenya and the Anti-FGM Board of Kenya (2017), similarly, argue that FGM/C in West Pokot County is a rampant age-old cultural practice conducted mostly on underage girls as a sign that they are ready for marriage. In the report, the rate of prevalence of FGM/C among girls aged between 10 and 17 is 62%. Overall, UNICEF (2017) reports that 74% of girls and women in West Pokot County have undergone FGM/C, a high rate that is way above the national average of 21%. The implications of these findings are that FGM/C stifles access to quality education, especially by girls and women. It also causes early marriages, thereby predisposing girls who are mostly not emotionally, physically and physiologically ready for sexual intercourse, pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood, to health complications. Further, the age difference, which occur when girls get married to older men, compounds men's control over women in the patriarchal community. Since good education (Amwata et al., 2015; Jinghan, 2002), health

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(Musyoki, 2016), gender equality and women empowerment (UN, 2015; UNDP, 2013) (all of which have been weakened by FGM/C), are critical ingredients for high productivity, this study notes that FGM/C is one of the greatest impediments to adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community of West Pokot County.

(v) Patriarchal Culture

Patriarchy is a system of society which institutionalizes male physical, social and economic power over women (Reeves & Baden, 2000). The impeding effects of patriarchy on adoption of ALSs were better articulated by women FGDs such as:

In our community, the man is “everything” and as women, we are at their mercy to get everything we need. They are the household heads, the leaders, and owners of the land, livestock, women and the children. They can inherit property and family lineage is traced through them. This means, we cannot progress at own pace and ability. For example, in our group of 10, it is only one of us who possess a land title deed, meaning, the rest of us do not own land. The lady, who has a land title deed, is a single woman and a teacher who purchased a plot using her SACCO loan. (FGD 2).

Therefore, the pastoral community of West Pokot was highly patriarchal and as indicated, wealth was passed down from father to son. Women accessed resources through men, more so their husbands. The impact of this culture could be deduced from status of land ownership among the women FGD participants where only one was reported to possess a land title deed, demonstrating that, the remaining nine did not own land directly. This means that, women in the community find it hard to own land which is a key factor of production. By and large, the fact that “everything” revolves around men, deny women access to and control over productive resources. This is, therefore, an impediment to adoption of ALSs. O’Neil (2011) and Sherman (2013) have also found out that pastoral communities are extremely male-dominated and patrilineal. Hence, compared to non-pastoral societies, O’Neil and Sherman observe that, the socioeconomic and political power of most pastoralist women is very low. In Kenya, patriarchy has resulted in women traditionally having minimal right to own or inherit land, and limited access to traditional means of financial credit relative to males (Njambi & Misiani 2016; ILO & IILS 2013, as cited in Hall, 2017). This creates a significant barrier in young women’s ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities or self-employment, as they are less likely to have such resources from which to draw. By and large, this study posits that, patriarchy reinforces inequality and is characterized by cultural and traditional beliefs and practices. These do not only undermine women’s access to and control of resources, but hinders general progress in many areas hence a big constraint in adoption of ALSs.

The view that there were beliefs, norms, values and practices in the community which stimulated adoption of ALSs had a mean of 2.64 as indicated in Table 2. This mean was slightly above average, implying that the majority of the respondents supported the view, though a significant number were of the contrary opinion. These different viewpoints among the respondents were further illustrated by KIs as follows:

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I think our culture is generally anti-development. For example, we have the cattle but because of the belief that the animals are a symbol of wealth and status, we rarely dispose them to do something else like educating a child and starting a business. Personally, I do not see any aspect of our culture that supports adoption of ALSs (KII 10).

In this community, it is believed that all cows belong to the entire community so they are easily donated to a person in need. Cohesion among family and clan members is also very strong in this community. Through these, survival and starting an ALS such as business is possible in the community, and this has been our strength (KII 11).

In the first statement, the community's culture undermined adoption of ALSs in totality. This finding is similar to what Mutsoso (2013) and Ng'ang'a (2012) have found out; Pokot's worldview revolves around cattle to which they have a fanatical attachment and as such ALSs are despised and shunned. This explains why the community's adoption of ALSs, is mainly a result of pull and push factors (Chepkangor et al., 2015). In the second statement, however, it is clear that there were some elements of culture such as the strong social network and communal ownership of livestock, which stimulated adoption of ALSs in the community. This supports the findings made by de Jones and Flintan (2020) and Sharma et al., (2003) that pastoral communities have strong social networks for cooperation and support which has enabled them to survive outside the livestock sector. The positive aspects of culture (strong kinship and communal support) could be leveraged to enhance adoption of ALSs in the community.

7. Conclusion

This study concludes that an array of cultural factors, acting either in isolation or jointly determine the rate at which men and women adopted ALs in the pastoral community of West Pokot County. The factors, which are mainly beliefs, values, practices, customs and traditions, reinforce and perpetuate gendered roles and gendered access to and control over productive resources, thereby causing gender differentials in adoption of ALs.

8. Recommendations

In order to achieve enhanced adoption of ALs in the pastoral community, this study recommends that all development actors should device mechanisms, including conducting empirical research, to clearly understand the dynamics and complexity around cultural factors influencing adoption of ALs among men and women. Based on this understanding, they should promote cultural aspects that increase capacities among men and women while reducing their vulnerabilities. In particular, the following strategies should be considered by the key development actors operating in the pastoralists-dominated County:

- a. The County Government should initiate efforts to eradicate retrogressive cultural practices, beliefs, norms, ideologies and values, such as Female Genital Mutilation and Cut (FGM/C), wife inheritance, patriarchy, gendered roles, fanatical attachment to cattle and early forced marriages.

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- b. The Community elites should help develop a culture in the community which is amenable to change and in tandem with the realities of the modern world through structured educational, mentorship and capacity-building programmes.
- c. The National Government's Micro and Small Enterprises Authority, needs to improve accessibility to Microfinance Facilities for enterprises, more so among women. This can be achieved by increasing number of the facilities and designing them to specifically suit the sociocultural situation in West Pokot County. In addition, the National Government's Ministry of Education, ought to guarantee inclusive and equitable quality education for the community by considering their unique cultural conditions. For example, the number of mobile and boarding schools should be increased to not only accommodate their nomadic lifestyle but also mitigate gender specific and contextual needs and concerns for education and acquisition of skills.
- d. The Non-State Actors should constantly research to establish new and innovative solutions, structures, and mechanisms specific to the pastoral community while discouraging the importation of one-size-fits-all interventions.

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